

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI WEDNESDAY 23 JUNE 2021



NATION | 3

Amid Sidhu row, Amarinder meets 3-member Cong panel set up to end factionalism



WORLD | 6

‘Go to India or go to America’: Philippines Prez to those who don’t want to get vaccinated

DELHI AGE | 16

Shahid Kapoor talks about his maiden OTT venture, says he’s nervous about it



www.asianage.com

RNI No. 57290/94, Regd No: DL-SW-05/4189/15-17

Vol. 28 No. 127 | 16 PAGES | ₹5.00



Britain's Catherine, Duchess of Cambridge, arrives to visit the Urban Nature Project at the Natural History Museum in London on Tuesday. — AFP

Man refused flight sans RT-PCR test, held for IGI ruckus

New Delhi: A 36-year-old passenger was arrested for creating ruckus at the Indira Gandhi International Airport after allegedly being denied boarding by the airline for not carrying a mandatory RT-PCR test report, the police said on Tuesday. Suraj Pandey was arrested on Monday based on a complaint received from Vistara Airlines officials, it said. The official alleged that the passenger came to IGI Airport's Vistara airline counter for heading to Mumbai but he did not have an RT-PCR report and was not allowed to board the aircraft. — PTI
Full report on Page 3

IAF, US Navy to hold joint exercises today

New Delhi: The IAF and Navy will participate in a major combat exercise with the US Navy from Wednesday in the Indian Ocean region to further strengthen their military-to-military ties with an eye on China. The two-day exercise will be carried out with US carrier strike group led by nuclear-powered aircraft carrier *USS Ronald Reagan*.
Full report on Page 4

Tahawwur extradition hearing in US June 24

Washington: A federal US court is all set to hold on Thursday an in-person extradition hearing of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack. — PTI
Full report on Page 6

COUNTERPOINT



Leaders who didn't get the invitation for this meet are going to form the Fourth Front!

WEATHER

Max: 40°C
Min: 29°C
RH: 36%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Mostly sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Shuddha Trayodasi till 6.59 am
Star: Anuradha till 11.47 am
Variyam: 4.46 pm to 6.12 pm
Durmuhurtam: 11.52 am to 12.44 pm
Rahukalam: Noon to 1.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 7.22 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.24 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.01 PM
MOONSET TODAY 3.43 AM

■ 8 parties attend, Cong leaders stay away, say no Third Front without it

Leaders flock to Pawar's house, say meeting was 'non political'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The eight-party meet held at Maharashtra strongman and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar's residence here turned out to be "non-starter" for a united Opposition Third Front as was earlier being perceived. The meeting, that drew a lot of media attention as heralding the formation of a Third Front against the BJP juggernaut, was eventually termed as a "non-political meet" by the NCP. Speaking to reporters, NCP leader Majeed Memon, who was among those present the meeting, said: "The meeting was called by Yashwant Sinha, not Sharad Pawar, this was not a political meeting. There are talks that the meeting was for a Third Front without the Congress, which is not the truth. There is no discrimination. We called all like-



TMC leader Yashwant Sinha (fourth from left) with NCP chief Sharad Pawar (centre) and other Rashtra Manch leaders after a meeting at Mr Pawar's residence in New Delhi on Tuesday. — PTI

minded people. We also invited Congress leaders. I called Vivek Tanha, Manish Tewari, Abhishek "Manu" Singhvi and Shatrughan Sinha for the meeting. They couldn't come. It's not true that we didn't invite the Congress."

As the meeting was taking place at Mr Pawar's

house who is skilled at stitching up tricky alliances, many projected it as a precursor to a larger Opposition alliance before the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. "Yashwant Sinha heads the Rashtra Manch. He asked to meet with Mr Pawar. So, the meeting is an initiative of

the Rashtra Manch," said NCP leader Praful Patel. Insiders claimed that neither Mr Pawar nor his party had sent out any invitations. "This is a highly overrated and speculative meeting," they said.

National Conference leader Omar Abdullah, RLD's Jayant Choudhary, Samajwadi Party's Ghanashyam Tiwari, AAP leader Sushil Gupta, CPT's Binoy Viswam and CPI(M) leader Nilotpal Basu were among those who attended the meeting. Others at the gathering included retired Justice A.P. Shah, former ambassador K.C. Singh and lyricist Javed Akhtar. In addition, former Congress leader Sanjay Jha and former JD(U) leader Pavan K. Varma also attended. "It was not a political meeting but an interaction among like-minded people. Issues like

■ Turn to Page 4

Centre red-flags 'concern' over Delta Plus, with 22 cases so far

Cases down to 42K/day; Monday's 86L jabs a global record

VINEETA PANDEY
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Just as it was recovering from the sting of the mutated "Delta" variant of SARS-Cov-2, another mutated variant of the virus — "Delta Plus" — has been found to be making inroads in India. So far, 22 cases of the "Delta Plus" variant have been found in genome sequenced samples from Maharashtra's Ratnagiri and Jalgaon; Palakkad and Pathanamthitta in Kerala; and Bhopal and Shivpuri districts of Madhya Pradesh.

Maharashtra alone has 16 of these cases which Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan has said

■ THE 'DELTA PLUS' mutant has been found in nine countries in all — India, the United States, Britain, Portugal, Switzerland, Japan, Poland, China & Russia

is a "variant of concern". Sources in the government said, however, that the actual number of Delta Plus cases are higher than 22 as some other states too have "Delta Plus" infections. They said the only thing was that in MP, Maharashtra and Kerala these cases are found in clusters.

INSACOG, a consortium of 28 government laboratories, has said that the Delta Plus variant, now a

"Variant of Concern", has characteristics like increased transmissibility, stronger binding to receptors of lung cells and potential reduction in monoclonal antibody response.

The "Delta Plus" mutant has been found in nine countries in all — India, the United States, Britain, Portugal, Switzerland, Japan, Poland, China and Russia. The "Delta" variant is now in 80 countries.

Based on the recent findings of INSACOG, the Union health ministry has alerted and advised Maharashtra, Kerala and Madhya Pradesh on the Delta Plus variant of Covid-19 being found in

■ Turn to Page 4

Rahul targets govt over Covid; BJP calls him a 'circus clown'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Comparing Congress leader Rahul Gandhi with a "circus's clown", the BJP on Tuesday claimed that whenever the country was at a crossroads in its battle against Covid-19, Mr Gandhi and the Opposition party try to derail the efforts by playing politics. A day after over 86 lakh people got vaccinated in the country on the first day of the revised guidelines, Mr Gandhi attacked the Narendra Modi government for its mismanage-

ment of the Covid-19 crisis and also released a "white paper" on "what went wrong and how the nation can prepare for the imminent third wave".

Hitting back, the BJP said ever since the global pandemic hit India, the Congress has "really worked tirelessly to create hurdles and obstacles" to the Covid-19 management efforts and once again questioned whether or not the "Congress' first family" has been vaccinated.

"Since yesterday, we have been fearing this. Whenever something

good happens in our fight against the coronavirus, the Congress and Rahul Gandhi specially do something to derail it... Yesterday was a significant day when India became the first country in the world to administer 87 lakh vaccine doses in one day. People seemed excited and jubilant. There is a feeling that India is winning in its fight against the coronavirus, just then Rahul Gandhi spoke of a white paper and tried to derail it," said BJP national spokesman Sambit Patra.

■ Turn to Page 4



Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, greets Russian World War II veterans during a wreath-laying ceremony at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier in Moscow on Tuesday, marking the 80th anniversary of the Nazi invasion of the Soviet Union. — AP

4-wicket haul for Shami; WTC poised for close finish



Mohammed Shami celebrates with teammates the dismissal of New Zealand's Ross Taylor on the fifth day of the World Test Championship between New Zealand and India at the Rose Bowl in Southampton on Tuesday. Shami's four-wicket haul helped

India restrict the Kiwis to 249 in reply to India's 217, giving them a 32-run first innings lead. India were 64 for 2 at stumps on Tuesday, with the match poised for a close finish or headed for a draw on Wednesday, the final day. ■ Report on Page 8 — AP

Gupkar leaders will seek J&K CBMs at PM meet tomorrow

'No agenda, so we can raise every issue'

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, JUNE 22

The impasse seems to be breaking and the frozen political process in Kashmir may restart with the People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), a major component of the former state's mainstream camp, on Tuesday agreeing to participate in the all-party meeting called by Prime Minister Narendra Modi at his official residence on Thursday.

As reported by this newspaper last week, the PAGD is more than ready to bury the hatchet and in an apparent strategic flexibility or change of strategy wants to move away from the path of confrontation and fight on the issues confronting J&K within the existing system.

However, its leadership on Tuesday sought to dispel the notion that it has divorced or even veered off from its basic plank -- to seek restoration of the erstwhile state's special constitutional status which was revoked by the Centre on August 5, 2019.

Former J&K chief minister and PAGD president



Dr Farooq Abdullah

PAGE 3

► Increased activity reported at militant launch pads and training facilities in Pakistan, says Army

Farooq Abdullah, while announcing the alliance's decision to attend the all-party meeting on June 24, said: "Our stand is clear and all of you know what our stand is." He added there was no fixed agenda for the meeting and, therefore, "we can talk on any and every issue".

Elucidating it, PAGD spokesman and CPI(M) leader Mohammad Yousuf Tarigami said: "We will not ask for the moon. We will seek (return of) something that is ours and will remain ours." He added: "We will put forth the aspirations of people of Jammu, Kashmir and

■ Turn to Page 4

Mufti: If India could talk to Taliban, why not with Pak?

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, JUNE 22

Former J&K CM and People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti on Tuesday urged the Narendra Modi government to resume peace talks with Pakistan at earliest, saying harmonious and good neighbourly relations between the two nations leave a positive impact on the internal situation in J&K.

Ms Mufti, who is among the 14 mainstream J&K politicians invited to the all-party meeting on Thursday, said if India could talk to the Taliban in Afghanistan, what was the harm in talking to Pakistan. "They (India) are talking to the Taliban in Doha. They should talk with everyone in J&K and with Pakistan as well for the resolution (of Kashmir issue)." ■ More on Page 3

No US bases in Pak after Afghan pullout: Imran

Islamabad, June 22:

Prime Minister Imran Khan has ruled out hosting American bases in Pakistan for military action inside war-torn Afghanistan, fearing it might lead to his country being "targeted in revenge attacks" by terrorists.

In an opinion piece in the *Washington Post*, the Pakistan Prime Minister also questioned the efficacy of such US bases in Pakistan. — PTI
■ More on Page 6

Nepal SC quashes appointment of 20 Oli ministers, crisis gets worse

Kathmandu, June 22: The political crisis deepened in Nepal on Tuesday after the Supreme Court quashed the appointment of 20 ministers by beleaguered Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli, invalidating his two Cabinet expansions since the dissolution of the House of Representatives, according to a media report.

A division bench of Chief Justice Cholestendra Shumsher Rana and Justice Prakash Kumar Dhungana said that the Cabinet expansions after the dissolution of the

House were unconstitutional and hence, the ministers cannot discharge their duties, a report in the *Kathmandu Post* said.

With the order, there are only five ministers left in Mr Oli's Cabinet, including the PM, it said. The court passed the judgement on petitions filed on June 7 by six individuals, including senior advocate Dinesh Tripathi, demanding that the Cabinet expansions after the caretaker government

be quashed. Mr Oli, 69, who is heading a minority government after losing a trust vote in the House last month, expanded his Cabinet on June 10 and June 4, inducting 17 ministers, amid widespread criticism and the ongoing political crisis in the Himalayan nation. Three state ministers were also appointed.

The Supreme Court has issued an interim order asking not to allow the ministers appointed after the House dissolution to function, said senior advocate Tripathi. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Delhi may have to wait for another week for monsoon

New Delhi: The further progress of the monsoon into Delhi and parts of Rajasthan, Haryana and Punjab is “unlikely” during the next seven days, the India Meteorological Department said on Tuesday. “Southwest monsoon has so far covered most parts of the country except parts of Rajasthan, Delhi, Haryana and Punjab,” the IMD said in a statement. “The salient feature of the monsoon in 2021 is its progress to eastern, central and adjoining north-west India earlier than normal (up to 7-10 days). However, further progress over the remaining parts of the country is unlikely during the next seven days,” it said. Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD’s regional forecasting centre, said light rains are likely in Delhi-NCR around June 26 but the region will have to wait for monsoonal showers. The MeT office had earlier predicted that the wind system may reach Delhi by June 15, which would have been 12 days early. — PTI

Golden Temple replica at Delhi park dismantled

New Delhi: Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) president Manjinder Singh Sirsa on Tuesday said a replica of the Golden Temple being built at a park in Punjabi Bagh area of the national capital has been dismantled as it was against “Sikh decorum”. The Bharat Darshan Park, being developed by the South Delhi Municipal Corporation, has replicas of 18 popular monuments from across the country including Mysore Palace, Charminar and Khajuraho Temple. The Golden Temple replica was being built using scrap material and was the most expensive of all in the park, officials said. In a tweet, Sirsa said, “Big Victory for DSGMC: Thanking the Sangat. We have succeeded in getting the replica of Sri Darbar Sahib dismantled from Punjabi Bagh Park.”

Scribe waylaid, robbed by 5 men at gunpoint

New Delhi: A journalist was allegedly waylaid and robbed at gunpoint by five unidentified men in Greater Noida. The incident took place on the intervening night of June 19 and 20. The accused took around ₹5,000 cash that he was carrying in his wallet and tried to choke him, the journalist, Atul Agrawal, who works with a Hindi news channel, said in a Facebook post. Police said on Tuesday that they have not received a complaint from Agrawal regarding the incident but have launched an investigation into the matter after taking suo moto cognisance of his social media post.

Man held for duping many on pretext of providing jobs

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

A 28-year-old man has been arrested by the Delhi Police for allegedly duping several people on the pretext of providing jobs to them. The accused has been identified as Ashish Rana, a resident of Najafgarh.

According to the police, a complaint was lodged at the Kalkaji police station wherein the complainant alleged that he received a call and the caller who represented herself as executive of job portal naukri.com asked him to make a payment of ₹10 on their website.

He made a payment, however ₹5,000 was debited from his account. Following this a case was registered and the investigation was taken up.

During investigation it was found that accused persons have created hundreds of online payments bank accounts on Airtel, Paytm and Vips Wallet. One of the suspected Paytm accounts had used an IP address in an ISP account in which accused Ashish had provid-

Man drills hole in bank’s walls, steals ₹55 lakh

Accused was earlier entrusted with the task of fixing the same hole

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

A 34-year-old man was arrested for allegedly burgling over ₹55 lakh after breaking into a bank from an adjoining under-construction building in east Delhi’s Farsh Bazar area, police said on Tuesday.

Without knowing about the accused, the bank officials had earlier entrusted him the task of fixing a hole in the wall inside their premises that he had himself drilled for committing the crime, police said. The accused was wearing a helmet at the time of the burglary to hide his identity, they said. Police also said another person was arrested who received some amount of the stolen money.

The two accused men have been identified as Hariram and Kalicharan (39), both residents of Vishwas Nagar, they said. On Monday around 10.15 am, police received information regarding a burglary in a bank in Vishwas Nagar area.

Police inspected the spot and found that a hole was made in a wall of the server room of the bank from the adjacent under-construction building. Another hole in the wall of a strong room in the basement was made and cash worth ₹55,03,330 was stolen from the vault, a senior police officer said.

After checking over 50 CCTVs, one camera installed near an ATM located to another under-construction building was found facing upward. It was noticed that the CCTV was tampered. The man’s palm and some portions of his face were captured in the camera for a few microseconds, the officer said.

While working on the lead, it was established that the camera was tampered with from the first floor of the building,

police said. Three prime suspects were apprehended by police who had their presence in the building at the time the direction of the CCTV was already pointed towards the entry point in the under-construction building, they said. Detailed analysis of CCTV footage revealed that the person was Hariram, who lives nearby in a nearby street, and was known by the caretakers of the building that had the CCTV footage, the officer said.

“Later, Hariram was apprehended. During interrogation, he tried to mislead police by saying that a person gave him ₹1,000 to divert the direction of the camera, but later confessed to his crime,” DCP (Shahdara) R Sathiyasundaram said.

Hariram said he was called into the bank for renovation work at the strong room six months ago. During renovation, he conducted a detailed recte of the place and gathered all the information about the cash and possible entry and exit routes, the DCP said.

He further revealed that he had planned for the money heist for the last three months, but could not take it up due to the lockdown. Hariram got access to the under-construction building by removing the previous lock and replaced it with another similar one, Sathiyasundaram said. As soon as he got an opportunity, he entered inside the under-construction building, made small holes there and another one in the strong room.

Based on his inputs, cash worth ₹54,48,730 was recovered from a house in the same area where he was working as a guard and ₹49,200 seized from co-accused Kalicharan, who Hariram had lost to in gambling.

Unidentified men barge into Shalimar Bagh house, flee with cash, jewellery

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

An incident of burglary took place in northwest Delhi’s Shalimar Bagh area on early Tuesday morning where some unidentified persons barged into a house and escaped with cash and jewellery, police said.

They have also threatened a woman in the house during the burglary.

According to police, the incident took place on

► **THE WOMAN, who is around 25-year-old, said that around five persons entered the house on early Tuesday morning and took the cash and gold along with them, police said. The woman said that the accused persons did not harm her.**

Tuesday around 3.30 am. The woman, who is around 25-year-old, said that around five persons

entered the house on early Tuesday morning and took the cash and gold along with them, a senior police officer said.

The woman said that the accused persons did not harm her during the burglary and escape with the valuables, the officer said.

Her father and brother were in different room when the incident happened. Her extended family lives on the first floor of the house, police said.

Police also said that the family members have confirmed that the accused took the jewellery and cash along with them, however, they are not sure about the amount.

A case has been registered under relevant sections and investigation is underway, the officer said, adding that police the CCTV footage of the area to get the clue about the accused persons and their escaping route is also being checked.

Noida stadium shooting range to be named after ‘Shooter Dadi’

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

As a mark of respect to women power, the shooting range at the Noida stadium will be named after “Shooter Dadi” Chandro Tomar, Uttar Pradesh chief minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday.

Jewar’s BJP MLA Dharendra Singh wrote to the chief minister on Monday with a request that the recently-built shooting range in Noida’s Sector 21 be named after Tomar, who died on April 30 due to Covid-19.

Hailing from Baghat in western Uttar Pradesh, Tomar was above 60 years of age when she picked up the gun for the first time, but went on to win many national competitions for veterans, her feats inspiring the award-winning Bollywood movie, “Saand ki Aankh”.

Adityanath announced on Twitter that the shooting range would now be named after Tomar, an eminent shooter who symbolised “vitality, will power and women empow-



Chandro Tomar

erment”. “Naming the shooting range after Chandro Tomar is a tribute to women power, in line with the Mission Shakti programme of the Uttar Pradesh government,” he tweeted in Hindi.

In his letter to the chief minister, Singh had highlighted how Tomar, who hailed from Baghat’s Johri village, broke the barriers of orthodoxy to make the state and the country proud.

“In a region, where women stay in the confines of household responsibilities, she stepped out because of her strong will power and earned a place for herself in the world that today makes ordinary women in villages proud of her,” he wrote.

A befitting tribute to Tomar would pave the way for lakhs of women and girls, who have been inspired by “Shooter Dadi”, to achieve their goals, he added.

■ 80.3% Class 9 students and 96.9% Class 11 students promoted: DoE
Delhi Class 9, 11 results declared on mid-term exams performance basis

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Results for Classes 9 and 11 in Delhi government schools were announced on Tuesday, nearly two months after the exams were cancelled in view of the aggressive second wave of Covid-19.

According to the Directorate of Education (DoE), 2.58 lakh students were enrolled in Class 9 in 2020-21, out of which 2.45 lakh appeared for the mid-term exams.

The final results of students were collated based on mid-term and internal assessments. Based on this evaluation criterion, 1.97 lakh students in Class 9 have passed in Delhi.

“The pass percentage in Class 9 is 80.3 per cent. Last year, the pass percentage of students was 65 per cent, which increased to 85 per cent based on project-based assessments,” a government official said.

Similarly, out of 1.70 lakh students in Class 11, 1.69 lakh students appeared for the exams of which 1.65 lakh passed.

According to the official, 96.9 per cent of Class

► **A TOTAL of 12,500 students in Class 9 and 3,500 students in Class 11 did not appear for their mid-term examinations this year. All those students, who have not appeared for any exams, will be eligible for reassessment. The reassessment will be based on class-based assignments, project work, and other assessments, an official said.**

11 students have cleared the examinations.

“In 2019-20, 99.25 per cent students in Class 11 passed the compartment exams. Project-based assessment formed the evaluation criteria of Class 11 examinations, identical to the Class 9 evaluation criteria,” the official added.

The official said that the examinations of Social Studies, Sanskrit, and third language for Class 9 and Geography and Business Studies for Class 11 could not be conducted for the year 2020-21.

Further, the average marks of best two subjects out of the main five

Construction errors at schools found, Sisodia calls review meet

New Delhi, June 22: Deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia called for an urgent review meeting with the PWD Minister and officials on Tuesday after he encountered errors while inspecting construction of new classrooms during visit to a Delhi government-run school.

“Schools and classrooms should be designed keeping in mind the psyche of children. We should design schools in a way that they are interactive, so that when students return to the schools and look at their

colourful classes, they are motivated to learn and engage,” said Sisodia, who is also Delhi’s Education Minister, during a meeting with PWD Minister Satyendar Jain and officials of the PWD and the Directorate of Education (DoE).

According to officials, 95 per cent of the construction work in SKV Geeta Colony Block-13 is complete and will be fully finished by the end of month.

“At present, 20 new classrooms are being constructed in the school. Similarly, 90 per cent of

construction work is complete in SBV Rajgarh Colony, with 32 new classrooms in the process of being constructed by July 2021. Eight-seven per cent of construction work to build 48 new classrooms at RPVV Gandhi Nagar is complete and the school construction will be fully finished by August 2021.

“Eight-five per cent of classroom construction work is complete at RPVV Gandhi Nagar. It will be fully finished by August 2021 and will host 44 new classrooms,” a senior govt official said.

— PTI

subjects have been given in the subjects where the exams could not be conducted or the student was absent for whatever reason.

“A total of 12,500 students in Class 9 and 3,500 students in Class 11 did not appear for their mid-term examinations this year. All those students,

who have not appeared for any exams, will be eligible for reassessment. The reassessment will be based on class-based assignments, project work, and other assessments. Guidelines regarding reassessment will be released soon by the DoE,” the official said.

The results have been



A health worker inoculates a woman at a vaccination centre for international travellers in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— AFP

AAP, BJP engage in war of words over Covid vaccination in Delhi

New Delhi, June 22: The BJP and the AAP Tuesday engaged in a war of words over the availability of Covid vaccines in the national capital, with Union minister Hardeep Singh Puri slamming chief minister Arvind Kejriwal for visiting Punjab “instead of focusing on health & welfare of people of Delhi”.

Senior AAP leader and Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia hit out at Puri, asking him to provide enough vaccine doses to Delhi rather than “abusing” Kejriwal.

The Kejriwal government has been complaining of inadequate supply of vaccines for some time, all the while claiming it could administer vaccines to all Delhiites within three months if the Centre provides enough doses.

The Centre Monday rolled out free vaccination for the eligible category of people with a record 86 lakh-plus



H.S. Puri

Sisodia

beneficiaries getting inoculated on the inaugural day of the drive.

Kejriwal was in poll-bound Punjab on the day where a prominent Sikh personality joined his Aam Aadmi Party.

“On a day India vaccinated more than 84 lakh people, Delhi administered only 76,259 out of more than 11 lakh doses available. Why? Instead of focusing on health & welfare of people of Delhi, Kejriwal Ji is busy in Punjab searching for a Sikh CM face for his party,” Puri tweeted, attacking the AAP national convener.

Responding to him, Sisodia tweeted, “Hardeep ji: pls focus on providing

enough vaccines for the youth, rather than just abusing Arvind Kejriwal all the time. Central Govt’s vaccination flip-flops have created a crisis situation all over country.”

Sisodia also addressed a press conference where he claimed no vaccine doses were to be provided to Delhi in the current month after June 21.

Union Health Minister Harsh Vardhan joined the war of words, accusing Sisodia of lying.

Citing a Ramcharit Manas verse, Vardhan tweeted, “Some people accept only lies, offer lies to others and feed and chew lies only. This Ramcharit Manas chaupai fits Arvind Kejriwal and his ministers.”

According to the Delhi government’s daily bulletin, a total of 76,062 people received their vaccine doses on Monday.

— PTI

Delhi govt urges Centre to allow vaccines made by Pfizer, Moderna

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The Delhi government on Tuesday requested the Centre to approve international vaccines like Pfizer, Moderna, and Johnson&Johnson in order to protect the country against an anticipated third wave of Covid-19.

“We request the Centre to approve Pfizer, Moderna and Johnson&Johnson at the earliest and make it available to the Indian public. The faster India is vaccinated, the sooner it will be safe from Covid,” said AAP MLA Atishi, issuing the daily vaccination bulletin.

Referring to the Centre’s announcement on Tuesday that the state governments could use surplus vaccine doses in the 45-plus category

to vaccinate those in the 18-44 age group, Atishi said it was a request that the Delhi government had repeatedly made in the past.

“The Delhi government has repeatedly asked the Centre if the surplus stock of vaccines for the 45-plus category could be used for the 18-44 category, since the vaccination rate for the 45-plus group has been decreasing. “The Centre repeatedly refused and kept saying that the states needed to procure the vaccine stock for the 18-44 category from the companies directly,” the MLA from Kalkaji said.

“Today, finally the Centre has put out a press release, a day after the universal vaccine campaign started, and clarified that we can use the 45-plus vaccine for the 18-44 category,” she added.

According to her, the vacci-

nation rate for the 45 plus category has plateaued after over 50 per cent of the 45 plus population has been vaccinated. “We have been sharing daily in the Delhi govt bulletin that we have more than two months worth of stock for the 45-plus category but the vaccination in this group, despite going door-to-door, has plateaued,” Atishi said.

Delhi recorded 134 coronavirus cases on Tuesday with a positivity rate of 0.20 per cent, while eight more people succumbed to the disease, according to data shared by the city’s health department here. The eight new fatalities have pushed the death toll in the city to 24,933. Delhi has recorded 14,32,778 coronavirus cases since the pandemic started. Of this, over 14.05 lakh patients have recovered so far.

SHORT TAKES

Mithun seeks case transfer from judge

Kolkata: Following the footsteps of West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee, Bollywood actor Mithun Chakraborty has also sought the transfer of his case from being heard by Justice Kaushik Chanda, already linked by the Trinamul Congress to the BJP, to another judge of the Calcutta high court. On Tuesday the case against Mithun, who is now in the BJP, of making provocative speeches at a party campaign rally by Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the West Bengal Assembly Election came up for hearing before Justice Chanda. His lawyer Mrityunjay Pal made the appeal to Justice Chanda for hearing by a different judge. The hearing was adjourned immediately. It is likely to be held later this week. Mithun, who earlier prayed for the quashing of the FIR on him following a complaint by a TMC worker on May 6 but got no relief.

Another J&K police official shot dead

Srinagar: A police inspector was on Tuesday evening shot dead by suspected militants at Nowgam on the peripheries of Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar. The officials said that Inspector Parvez Ahmad Dar was targeted by masked gunmen near his residence. He was rushed to the City's Sri Maharaja Hari Singh Hospital, but the doctors declared him 'brought dead'. On June 17, a J&K policeman Javid Ahmed was shot dead by unidentified gunmen soon after he had returned home in Srinagar's Saidapora locality from duty.

MP mulls 2nd spl vaccination drive

Bhopal: Madhya Pradesh chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday indicated to launch second special vaccination drive in the state in the first week of July this year. A three-day second special vaccination drive would be launched on July one to further intensify the ongoing inoculation exercise in the state, he said while addressing his council of ministers here. Mr Chouhan said the measure would help keep up the momentum of ongoing vaccination drive in the state. He said a new strategy for vaccination would be adopted in the second drive. MP has set a national record by vaccinating 14.71 lakh people on Monday. Total 1.61 crore people in the state have so far received at least the first dose of the vaccine. The ongoing mega vaccination drive which was launched on Monday would end on June 30. Meanwhile, 3 people have died from Delta variant of coronavirus in Shivpuri district in Madhya Pradesh, leaving the state administration worried.

CITY'S NAME CHANGE SPARKS ROW IN ASSAM

MANOJ ANAND GUWAHATI, JUNE 22

In what has triggered a major controversy and anger in frontier state of Arunachal Pradesh, the Border Road Organisation, in order to avoid any confrontation with China, not only renamed a town of the frontier state but also showed it as part of Assam during a programme attended by union defence minister Rajnath Singh on June 17. Mr Singh had dedicated to the nation 12 BRO roads — all in Arunachal Pradesh except one each in the Union Territories of Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir — from Kimin. But the BRO projected the place as Billgarh in Assam and had white-washed all signs that had any reference to Kimin or Arunachal Pradesh. Union minister Kiren Rijiju while reacting to the controversy that has gone viral on social media among the people of Arunachal Pradesh, described it as a 'gross mistake' during an event where defence minister Rajnath Singh inaugurated 12 new and widened strategic roads. The All Arunachal Pradesh Students' Union and local organisations in Kimin, a town in Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district have demanded an apology from the BRO for the "blunder" that they said was done deliberately to let a "certain country" know that the Indian defence minister visited Assam and not Arunachal Pradesh, the state it claimed.

India 'supportive' of Taliban too for Afghan peace

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Naming the Taliban in a significant development, India has formally said it is "supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban", adding that it supports a "leading role for the United Nations" in the Afghan peace process. India also said it "welcomes any move towards a genuine political settlement and a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Afghanistan".

The comments on Tuesday evening — made by External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar while addressing the UN Security Council (UNSC) in a debate on the UN assistance mission in Afghanistan — assume significance in the wake of reports that New Delhi has opened lines of communication with a section of the Taliban that is not considered close to Pakistan which is globally seen as the main backer of the Taliban. India has been a strong supporter of the Afghan Government in Kabul led by the increasingly-embattled President Ashraf Ghani.

In a veiled jibe at Pakistan, New Delhi also demanded that "for enduring peace in Afghanistan, terrorist safe havens and sanctuaries must be dismantled immediately and terrorist supply chains disrupted, adding that "there needs to be zero tolerance for terrorism in all its forms and manifestations including its cross-border one". Stating that "it is equally important to ensure that the territory of Afghanistan is not used by terrorist groups to threaten or attack any other country", EAM Jaishankar said "those providing material and financial support to terrorist entities must be held accountable".

▶ **INDIA HAS** formally said it is 'supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban', adding that it supports a 'leading role for the United Nations' in the Afghan peace process

Reiterating that a durable peace in Afghanistan requires a genuine "double peace"—"that is, peace within Afghanistan and peace around Afghanistan", India said "any political settlement in Afghanistan must ensure that the gains of the last two decades are protected, and not reversed". EAM Jaishankar said "it should, therefore, preserve the constitutional democratic framework and ensure the protection of rights of women, children and minorities".

The EAM said, "We have noted the report of the secretary general on the situation in Afghanistan issued last week. The report is clear that the intra-Afghan talks have not resulted in a reduction of violence in Afghanistan. On the contrary, violence has only increased, especially after 1st May. The country has been witnessing targeted attacks on religious and ethnic minorities, girl students, Afghan security forces, Ulemas, women occupying positions of responsibility, journalists, civil rights activists and youth."

He added, "India has been supportive of all the efforts being made to accelerate the dialogue between the Afghan government and the Taliban, including the intra-Afghan negotiations. India welcomes any move towards a genuine political settlement and a comprehensive and permanent ceasefire in Afghanistan. We support a leading role for the United Nations, since that would help improve the odds for a lasting and durable outcome."

If India can talk to Taliban, why not to Pak: Mehbooba

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JUNE 22

Former chief minister and president of People's Democratic Party (PDP), Mehbooba Mufti, on Tuesday urged the Narendra Modi government to resume peace dialogue with Pakistan at earliest, asserting that harmonious and good neighbourly relations between the two countries leave a positive impact on the internal situation in Jammu and Kashmir.

Ms Mufti who is among the 14 mainstream politicians of J&K who have been invited to an all-party meet to be chaired by the Prime Minister at his resi-



Mehbooba Mufti

dence on Thursday said that if India could talk to the Taliban in Afghanistan what was the harm in resuming a comprehensive bilateral dialogue with Pakistan to resolve the outstanding issue including Kashmir.

She said, "They (India) are talking to the Taliban in Doha. They should talk with everyone in Jammu and Kashmir and with Pakistan as well for the resolution (of Kashmir issue)."

A report from Doha had earlier quoted Mutlaq bin

Majed al-Qahtani, a senior Qatari diplomat involved in the Afghan peace process, as saying that Indian officials have engaged in the talks with the Taliban at Doha.

Ms Mufti while speaking to reporters after the leaders of People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) met here said that in order to restore peace in the region it was equally imperative to undo the "illegal and unconstitutional" abrogation of Articles 370 and 35A which guaranteed a special status to J&K within the India union. "You must return what you have snatched from us," she reiterated.

Man barred from boarding flight creates ruckus at IGI

New Delhi, June 22: A Mumbai-bound passenger created ruckus at Terminal Three of Delhi's Indira Gandhi Airport (IGI) after he was barred from boarding the flight as he did not have a mandatory RT-PCR report which is required for travelling by air. According to IGI Airport police, the incident occurred on Monday, June 21, when the passenger, who was travelling by a Vistara flight, was stopped from boarding the flight as he did not have an RT-PCR report.

After he was stopped, the man, identified as Suraj Panday, a resident of Deoria in Uttar Pradesh, sat in protest against the airline's staff. He reportedly also misbehaved with the airport staff, following which staff of the airline immediately called Aviation Security (CISF) at the airport. "Seeing the out of control situation despite repeated requests made by Air staff, we finally decided to hand him over



▶ **THE POLICE** said that Vistara Airline filed a complaint against the passenger who came at IGI Airport's Vistara Airline counter to travel to Mumbai by flight UK 933, but he was not allowed to board as he had no RT-PCR test report.

to the CISF. A complaint was filed with the Delhi Police for further action against the passenger," an airport official said. The police said that Vistara Airline filed a complaint against the passenger who came at IGI Airport's Vistara Airline counter to travel to Mumbai by flight UK 933, but he was not allowed to board as he had no RT-PCR test report. Later, he became violent and started shouting and also walked on the checking baggage belt and obstructed the working of the airline staff and other passengers, Vistara said. Based

on Vistara's complaint, a case was filed against the man by Delhi police. A Mumbai-bound passenger created ruckus at Terminal Three of Delhi's Indira Gandhi Airport (IGI) after he was barred from boarding the flight as he did not have a mandatory RT-PCR report which is required for travelling by air. According to IGI Airport police, the incident occurred on Monday, June 21, when the passenger, who was travelling by a Vistara flight, was stopped from boarding the flight as he did not have an RT-PCR report.

— Agencies

TMC slams PM for action on Alapan

'BJP has been trying to satisfy its ego by hook or crook as it fails to digest poll defeat'

RAJIB CHOWDHURI KOLKATA, JUNE 22

West Bengal's ruling Trinamul Congress on Tuesday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi of directing punitive steps through his ministry on former state chief secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay for skipping his meeting on the devastation of Cyclone Yaas at the Kalaikunda Air Force Station on May 28.

Defending the role of the retired 1987-batch IAS officer of the West Bengal cadre, three-time TMC MP Sougata Roy alleged, "The Centre is acting vindictively and

heartlessly against Mr Bandyopadhyay after his mother died last week. Since the latest action has been initiated against him by the department of personnel and training under the ministry of personnel and public grievances and pensions headed by the PM, it is clear that everything is happening on Mr Modi's instructions."

He also claimed that the BJP has been trying to satisfy its ego by hook or crook because of its failure to digest its defeat to the TMC in the Assembly Election. Mr Roy argued, "Mr Bandyopadhyay was actively involved in tackling



Alapan Bandyopadhyay

the Covid-19 crisis in the state. But the Centre decided to disrupt the process and initiate a disciplinary action against him. It is sad the best of our bureaucrats are not allowed to function sincerely."

He noted, "Mr Bandyopadhyay has been



Senior SAD leaders Prof Prem Singh Chandumajra (centre), Maheshinder Singh Grewal (right) and Dr Daljit Singh Cheema (left) during a press conference, Chandigarh. — PTI

Bustle at militant launch pads across LoC: Army

AGE CORRESPONDENT SRINAGAR, JUNE 22

The renewed ceasefire along the Line of Control (LoC) and other sectors of the India-Pakistan border has improved the security situation along the de facto border and in the hinterland in Jammu and Kashmir as well but intelligence reports talk of a heightened activity at militant launch pads and training facilities in Pakistan. Stating this at a

security review meeting of the "Core Group", consisting of senior officials of the Army, various other Central armed forces, J&K police, intelligence agencies and civil administration, held here on Tuesday, the officers said that these intelligence inputs from across the border call for maintaining alert along the LoC. "There are indications of heightened activity in the last two months. The cross-border smuggling of narcotics

and weapons continues to be a focus of the intelligence agencies and security forces. This includes continued vigil and checks on all passes leading to Kashmir Valley," a statement issued by the Army after the meeting said.

The officials said that a continued focus on vehicles of dubious antecedents is maintained as these are used for transportation of arms and contraband, and can also be used for Vehicle Based IEDs.

Scindia parries Cabinet query

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JUNE 22

Amid growing buzz about the possible expansion of Union cabinet ahead of monsoon session of parliament, senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia on Tuesday ducked the question as to if he would be

inducted in the Narendra Modi ministry, saying, "I am a sevak (servant) (of people)".

Talking to reporters at Shivpuri, nearly 300 km from here, on the sideline of his visit to the district hospital, Mr Scindia indicated that he was keener to take up causes of people than hold any position in the central ministry.

SEARCH FOR MISSING



General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Soni Mandal, S/o Sudershan, R/o 3536, F-Block, Tange Wali Gali, Swami Shardhanand Colony, Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi, Age: 34 years, Height: 5'6", Complexion: Shallow, Built: Medium, Face: Round, wearing Blue Shirt, Black Pant and Slipper in feet,** has been missing since 30.05.2021. In this regard a DD No. 77A, dated 01.06.2021 has been registered at P.S. Bhalswa Dairy, Delhi.

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website : <http://cbi.nic.in>
E-mail : cic@cbi.gov.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No. : 011-24368638, 24368641

DP/1078/ON/2021 SHO P.S. Bhalswa Dairy, New Delhi Ph: 011-27811933, 27811934

NORTHERN RAILWAY				
Invitation of Tenders through E-Procurement System				
Principal Chief Materials Manager, Northern Railway, New Delhi-110001, for and on behalf of the President of India, invites e-tenders through e-procurement system for supply of the following items:-				
S.No.	Tender No.	Brief Description	Qty.	Closing Date
1	092020408	Spring Plank Drawing NO: SK-69594	683 Nos.	15.07.2021
2	09212224	Air Brake Hose Coupling Support	21285 Nos.	15.07.2021
3	09212288	Flap Door Arrangement for BOXNHL Wagon	2070 Nos.	16.07.2021
4	09212398	Wear Plate For Bogie Brake Gear	16369 Nos.	16.07.2021
5	09213071	Petroleum Hydrocarbon Solvent	83520 LTR	16.07.2021
6	09212493A	POH Kit For KE2CSLA Distributor Valve	1263 Set	19.07.2021
7	07211111	Equalising Stay	9332 Nos.	19.07.2021
8	07211558	UIC Type Rubber Vestibule	1320 Nos.	19.07.2021
9	07213685	Push Type Flushing Valve	15227 Nos.	19.07.2021
10	07211501	Air Beak Hose Coupling	22284 Nos.	19.07.2021
11	07211167	Silent Block for Anchor Link	13175 Nos.	19.07.2021
12	07210248	Brake spring for Unit	200 Nos.	23.07.2021
13	09212327	Rubber Caliper For Draw Gear	1770 Set	23.07.2021
14	09202189A	Brake Wear Plate	24209 Nos.	30.07.2021
15	09212548	Constant contact Polyurethane	3045 Set	30.07.2021
16	09212355	L-Type Composition Brake Block	98722 Nos.	30.07.2021
17	09212305	'K' Type Composition Brake Block	34541 Nos.	30.07.2021
18	09212385	Torsion Spring with Steel Spring	5948 Nos.	30.07.2021
19	09215002	Cast Steel CASNUB 22-HS Bogie	400 Nos.	30.07.2021
20	09213403	381 MM Cylinder Combined	37 Nos.	08.08.2021
21	07211931	Gravity Copek Drawing NO: ICF/SK-6-3-389	106178 Nos.	11.08.2021
Note: 1. Vendors may visit the IREPS website i.e. www.ireps.gov.in for details. 2. No Manual offer will be entertained.				
Tender Notice No. : 21/2021-2022 Dated : 22.06.2021 1380/21				
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE				

charged under the Disaster Management Act for abstaining from the review meeting by the PM, also the chairman of the National Disaster Management Authority. But the section punishing 'any officer or employee of the central government or the state government, or a person authorised by the national authority or state authority in the discharge of his functions under this act' does not stand because the CM is chairperson of the state disaster management authority and the chief secretary is chairperson of its executive committee under section 20

of the act."

TMC Rajya Sabha MP Sukhendu Shekhar Roy said, "A retired IAS officer can not be made to face any disciplinary action unless and until there has been any financial mishandling under his tenure. Legal step can only be taken by him who has been served a notice. As a political party we are only taking a stand against such a conspiracy. Mr Bandyopadhyay is not an IAS officer now. He is our government's chief advisor to the CM. So any disciplinary action against him can not be initiated by the central government now."

Capt. meets Cong panel to tide over turmoil in Punjab

AGE CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI JUNE 22

Punjab chief minister Captain Amarinder Singh on Tuesday met the high powered committee constituted by the Congress president Sonia Gandhi. The committee consisting of Mallikarjun Kharge, Harish Rawat and J.P. Agarwal was briefed by the Punjab chief minister over the turmoil prevailing in the Punjab Congress. This was his second meeting with the high powered committee in the last couple of days. Insiders claim that Captain Amarinder Singh explained all the issues raised against him.

After the meeting committee member Mr Harish Rawat said, "the party is satisfied with whatever was told to us by the Punjab Chief Minister and action taken and enquiry in the sacrilege case and drug case." The problem arose in Punjab when former state minister and Congress leader Mr Navjot Singh Sidhu opened a front against Captain Amarinder Singh charging him with not keeping his promises to the people of the state.

Meanwhile it was a day of hectic political parleys in the national capital. Captain Amarinder Singh met Ms Ambika Soni to sort issues out. Congress leader Mr Rahul Gandhi has also been meeting MPs and MLAs from the state to come to an amicable solution to the problem. Mr Singh is also expected to meet the Congress president Sonia Gandhi soon.

Insiders claim that utterances of Mr Sidhu have not gone down well



Amarinder Singh

▶ **THE COMMITTEE** consisting of Mallikarjun Kharge, Harish Rawat and J.P. Agarwal was briefed by Amarinder over the turmoil prevailing in the Punjab Congress. This was his second meeting with the high powered committee in the last couple of days.

with many in the party. Mr Sidhu went on a tirade against Mr Amarinder in all publications and on his social media in the last two days.

Lok Sabha MP Mr Ravneet Singh Bittu after meeting Mr Rahul Gandhi said, "Captain sahib met the committee for three hours. The entire exercise is for election preparation. Within a week all issues will be resolved. But statements against a sitting Chief Minister are not good and can be easily ascribed as indiscipline."

Sources say that there is no change expected as far as the post of chief minister is concerned. The state union chief Mr Sunil Jakhar is all set to be replaced. At the moment an uneasy calm lies in the Punjab Congress with elections slated for early next year any further delay will only harm the prospects of the Congress.

IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is notified for the information of rail passengers that Railways have decided to change the timings of the following Trains effective from 26.06.2021 as per the details given below:-

01061 Lokmanya Tilak Terminus-Jaynagar Express Special				
STATION	Existing Timings	Revised Timings		
	Arrival	Departure	Arrival	Departure
BHULANPUR	12:12	12:13	12:08	12:09
VARANASI CITY	12:53	12:55	12:45	12:47
SARNATH	13:06	13:08	12:58	13:00
AUNRIHAR JN.	13:33	13:35	13:20	13:22
02562 New Delhi-Jaynagar Express Special				
GHAZIPUR CITY	10:00	10:05	09:30	09:35
BALLIA	11:05	11:10	10:55	11:00
04005 Sitamarhi-Anand Vihar Terminal Express Special				
SIWAN	09:50	09:55	09:30	09:35
MAIRWA	10:24	10:26	10:10	10:12
BHATPAR RANI	10:40	10:42	10:16	10:18
09454 Samastipur-Ahmedabad Express Special				
DEORIA SADAR	12:40	12:45	12:20	12:25
02564 New Delhi-Saharsa Express Special				
CHHAPRA	10:22	10:27	10:10	10:15
05115 Chhapra-Delhi Express Special				
CHHAPRA	---	11:30	---	11:25
BALLIA	12:58	13:00	12:25	12:30
YUSUFFPUR	13:38	13:40	13:13	13:15
GHAZIPUR CITY	14:15	14:20	13:35	13:40
AUNRIHAR JN.	14:53	14:58	14:20	14:25
DOBHI	15:14	15:16	14:51	14:53
KERAKAT	15:24	15:26	15:05	15:07

Passengers are advised to please check the detailed Time-Table of above trains through RailMadad Helpline No. 139 or visit Indian Railways website <https://enquiry.indianrail.gov.in> or NTES App.

All norms of the State and Central Government regarding COVID-19 including Social distancing, sanitization etc., may be followed in the trains and at the Railway stations. All other precautions associated with COVID-19 should also be ensured.

Visit RailMadad website www.railmadad.indianrailways.gov.in Download RailMadad app.

Please join us on

Your Convenience-Our Concern

1375/21

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE Visit us at: www.nr.indianrailways.gov.in

SHORT TAKES

NIA opposes bail of Kashmiri woman

New Delhi: The NIA has opposed the bail application of a Kashmiri woman before a Delhi court in a case of allegedly planning a terror attack in the country during the anti-CAA protests here. The probe agency told the court that Hina Bashir Beg, arrested along with her husband Jahanzaib Sami and another accused Abdul Basith last year for their alleged link to the ISIS, incited Muslims against non-Muslims and "excite disaffection" against Indian State. It claimed that the accused was promoting the Islamic state's ideology and instigating protests against the CAA. The agency alleged that they were motivated by the ideology of proscribed terrorist organisation Islamic State of Iraq & Syria (ISIS) and were working for another banned terrorist organisation Islamic State-Khorasan Province (ISKP), which is a part of ISIS. — *PTI*

'Consider door-to-door vaccination campaign'

New Delhi: CPI MP Binoy Viswam wrote to PM Modi on Tuesday urging him to consider launching door-to-door vaccination drive to reach the socially and economically marginalised sections of society. The Rajya Sabha member said that the second wave of Covid caused immense havoc in the life of every person in the country. In the letter, he said that with the spike in death tolls and rapid spread of the virus across the country, the best efforts of health-care workers and emergency responders were undermined by the systemic failures of health infrastructure. "As the third wave is predicted by experts in 6-8 weeks, it is of utmost importance that governments at the Centre and in States work together to ensure that the maximum number of people are vaccinated by the end of July 2021, he wrote. — *PTI*

Odisha panchayat poll may be delayed

Bhubaneswar: The three-tier panchayat elections in Odisha scheduled for February 2022 are likely to get delayed due to inordinate holdup in completion of the ward delimitation and reservation works by the state. "We have written to the state multiple times asking it to complete the delimitation and reservation process for the conduct of rural polls as per schedule. But, the government has not yet commenced the work, raising apprehension of a delayed elections this time," Rabindranath Sahoo, secretary to the state EC said on Tuesday. "The Commission would prepare groundwork for the polls once the two important works- the delimitation and reservation process — get over," he added.

FAMOUS CARNATIC MUSICIAN PARASSALA PASSES AWAY AT 96

Thiruvananthapuram: Legendary Carnatic musician and Padmashree awardee, Parassala B. Ponnammal, who enthralled classical music lovers for the last eight decades through her incredible concerts, passed away at her home in Valliyasala here on Tuesday, family sources said. She was 96 and was suffering from age-related ailments for some time, they said. 'Guruvayur Puresa Suprabhatham', 'Trisivapuresa Suprabhatham', 'Ulsava Prabandam', 'Navarathri Kriti', 'Meenambika Stothram', and compositions of Irayamman Thampi were among her famous vocal renditions. A doyen of Carnatic music, Ponnammal was a musician who had broken gender stereotypes in classical music and became the first woman student to enroll in the historic Swathi Thirunal College of Music here during the 1940s. She had completed the courses-Gana Bhushanam and Gana Praveenam- from there with first rank before beginning her career as a music teacher at the Cottonhill Girls' School here. Ponnammal also scripted history by becoming the first woman faculty of the Swathi Thirunal College and the first ever woman principal of the famous RLV College of Music and Fine Arts, Tripunithura. — *PTI*

IAF & US Navy joint drill today

PAWAN BALI
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

Indian Air Force and navy will participate in a major combat exercise with US Navy from Wednesday in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR) to further strengthen their military to military relations with an eye on China. The two days exercise will be carried out with the US carrier strike group led by nuclear powered aircraft carrier Ronald Reagan along with Arleigh Burke-class guided-missile destroyer USS Halsey and Ticonderoga class guided-missile cruiser USS Shiloh. The CSG is currently deployed in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). IAF maritime-strike Jaguars and Su-30 MKI fighters, along with AWACS, AEW&C and air to air refueller aircraft will participate in the exercise. IAF forces will operate from bases under four operational commands. From Indian Navy Indian Naval Ships, Kochi and Teg along with P8I and MiG 29K aircraft are participating

The US CSG is expected to field F-18 fighters and E-2C Hawkeye AEW&C aircraft. The exercise will be carried out south of Thiruvananthapuram, on the western seaboard, over two days. The high tempo naval operations during the exercise include advanced air defence exercises, cross deck helicopter operations and anti-submarine exercises. The participating forces will endeavour to hone their war-fighting skills and enhance their interoperability as an integrated force to promote peace, security and stability in the maritime domain.

IAF also has extensive experience in maritime operations in the Indian Ocean Region. This has been consolidated over the years by the conduct of exercises from the country's island territories, including participation in international exercises. The multispectral capability of the IAF in IOR also includes Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief missions and logistics support undertaken in support of friendly nations in the region.

SC rejects plea against CBSE & ICSE

'UGC will not commence admission process in varsities, colleges till all boards results are declared'

PARMOD KUMAR
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The Supreme Court, on Tuesday, declined petitions challenging the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) and the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education's (ICSE) decision to cancel Class 12 board examination while upholding the evaluation scheme framed by the two boards for allocating marks to students who were to appear in the cancelled exams.

The court said that the University Grants Commission (UGC) will not commence the admission process in the universities and colleges till results by all the boards are declared.

"We hold that there is no need to interfere with the scheme propounded by Central Board of Secondary Education /ICSE. It takes into account the concerns of all students," said a bench comprising Justice A.M. Khanwilkar and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari. "Boards have decided to cancel the exams in larger public interest. The policy adopted by CBSE was adopted by an expert body

▶ **THE COURT** said the UGC will not commence the admission process in the varsities, colleges till boards results are declared. Boards have decided to cancel the exams in larger public interest. The policy adopted by CBSE was adopted by an expert body.

▶ **ON THE** plea challenging the cancellation of Class 12 board examinations, the court said that the decision was taken by the boards and the government at the highest level keeping in mind the safety of students and other logistical factors.

of 13 experts," it added.

Having endorsed the evaluation scheme of the two boards, the court rejected the plea that the students should be permitted to exercise the option at the beginning itself whether they wanted marks on the basis of the assessments of their performance in Classes 10, 11, and 12 (unit, midterm, and pre-board) examinations or they want to appear and write the exams in physical conduct of the examinations.

The court said, "We are of the considered opinion that entertaining this plea will create uncertainty until improvisation exams are conducted. After results are declared on July 31, the improvisation exam may be opted for."

On the plea challenging the cancellation of Class 12 board examinations, the court said that the decision was taken by the boards and the government at the highest level keeping in mind the safety of students and other logistical factors.

The other contention of senior counsel Vikas Singh, who had appeared for the Uttar Pradesh Parents' Association including uniform evaluation policy by Central Board of Secondary Education /Indian Certificate of Secondary Education, the scope of manipulation of results at school level evaluation of marks for Class 11 and 12 too did not find favour with the court as it noted that the school level Result Committee, to be

Amravati MP gets relief from Supreme Court

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The Supreme Court on Tuesday stayed the Bombay High Court's June 9 order cancelling the caste certificate of Navneet Kaur Rana — an independent member of Lok Sabha from Amravati reserved constituency in Maharashtra.

A vacation bench of Justice Vineet Saran and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari issued notice to the Maharashtra and others, including the person who had complained against Navneet Kaur Rana's caste certificate.

The High Court had not only cancelled her caste certificate obtainedal-



Navneet Kaur Rana

▶ **A VACATION** bench of Justice Vineet Saran and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari issued notice to the Maharashtra and others, including the person who had complained against Navneet Kaur Rana's caste certificate.

legedly using fabricated documents but also imposed a fine of ₹2 lakh on her.

headed by the respective school principals, will have two teachers from the school, teachers from outside, and an expert.

The court accepted Attorney General

K.L.K. Venugopal's submission that the Result Committee at school level with such a composition would guard against any scope of manipulations of marks.



Commuters waded past a flooded road during rainfall in Ahmedabad on Tuesday. — AP

■ It'll create confidence among customers, help stop virus: Dist collector Odisha: Covid certificate must for vendors

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 22

As part of its preventive measures against Covid-19, Odisha's Ganjam district administration, on Tuesday, advised all shopkeepers, vendors, and other retailers to display their vaccination certificate in front of their shops.

District collector Vijay Amruta Kulange said the initiative would be helpful in checking transmission of the deadly virus and create confidence

among customers. He further cautioned that enforcement will keep a strict vigil on implementation of the order.

"We request all shopkeepers, vendors, and other professionals to display Covid vaccination certificates (single/final dose) in front of their shops. It will create confidence among customers and help stop infection. It will be checked by the enforcement team," the collector said.

Notably, Ganjam has been earning praises from different quarters

▶ **DISTRICT COLLECTOR** Vijay Amruta Kulange said the initiative would be helpful in checking transmission of the deadly virus and create confidence among customers. Last month, the district administration made Covid test mandatory for bride, groom, their family members, and other participants before a marriage.

for its effective Covid-19 management model.

Last month, the district administration made Covid-19 test (Rapid Antigen) mandatory for

bride, groom, their family members, and other participants before a marriage.

On June 12, Odisha's S u n d a r g a r h Municipality authorities had come out with a novel idea to create mass awareness on Covid-19 vaccination.

In order to motivate more and more people to take jabs to defeat coronavirus, the district administration had announced that owners of business houses and shops, who have not taken vaccines, shall not

be allowed to open their establishments.

"The first norm of the Covid management protocol is that it is executed for the welfare of the public. So, people need to be aware and cooperate with the authorities for enforcement of guidelines or vaccination. The initiative aims at motivating people to align with the norms of the government, especially some sections of people who are hesitant to the inoculation drive," Sundargarh sub-collector Abhimanyu Behera had said.

Arnab named in TRP scam chargesheet

SHAHAB ANSARI
MUMBAI, JUNE 22

The Mumbai police has named Arnab Goswami, editor-in-chief of Republic TV as an accused in the Television Rating Points scam in its supplementary chargesheet.

The chargesheet was submitted before the Esplanade Metropolitan Magistrate's court by the police's crime intelligence unit. The police named Goswami and four others from ARG Outlier Media (that owns Republic TV) in their 1800 page supplementary chargesheet submitted before the court.

So far the police had

chargesheeted 15 people in the case, including former CEO of Broadcast Audience Research Council (BARC) Partho Dasgupta and Republic TV's CEO Vikash Khanchandani.

The alleged fake TRP scam came to light in October last year when the rating agency Broadcast Audience Research Council filed a complaint through Hansa Research Group, alleging that certain television channels were rigging TRP numbers. Hence the charges invoked on the case relate to cheating, forgery, criminal conspiracy etc.

SC to AP: If there is any fatality, we will hold state responsible

New Delhi, June 22: If there is any fatality, we will hold the state responsible, the Supreme Court told the Andhra Pradesh government on Tuesday on being informed of its decision to hold Class 12 board examination.

A bench of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari was informed that Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are the only two states which have till now decided to hold the Class 12 board examination.

You will have to give very good reasons to hold Class 12 board examinations. If there is any fatality, we will hold the state responsible, the bench told counsel for Andhra Pradesh.

At the outset, advocate Mahfooz Nazki, appearing for the state, said the government has till now decided to hold the examination but the final decision will be taken in the first week of July.

The bench sought to know as to why the state was creating uncertainty in the minds of students by delaying the final decision for the first week of July.

You take a decision by Wednesday and we will take up the matter on Thursday, the bench told Nazki.

The top court is hearing a plea seeking directions to state governments to not hold board examinations in view of the Covid pandemic.

▶ **A BENCH** of Justices A.M. Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari was informed that Andhra Pradesh and Kerala are the only two states which have till now decided to hold the Class 12 board examination

It asked Nazki as to what makes the Andhra Pradesh government think that it can manage to hold the examination and whether the state has all necessary logistics keeping in mind pandemic.

Nazki said it has nearly five lakh students and as per his instructions 15 students will be made to sit in one class room during the examination.

The bench further questioned the counsel whether the state has that many schools to accommodate the students during the examinations.

Why don't you have schemes like CBSE and CISCE to assess the students, the bench said.

Nazki said that they have a grade of problem because grace marks are given in class 10 in the state boards plus the internal assessment mechanism of students is not that strong.

The bench said, You must come up with a very good reason, if you want us to allow you to hold the Class 12 board exams. You must take the decision by tomorrow and file an affidavit. — *PTI*

Gupkar leaders will seek J&K CBMs at PM meet tomorrow

■ **Continued from Page 1** Ladakh in the meeting. Whatever is possible within the Indian Constitution is what we are going to seek."

Muzaffar A. Shah of the Awami National Conference hastened to add: "There can be no compromise on Articles 370 and 35A".

Dr Abdullah said he along with Tarigami and People's Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti, PAGD's vice-president, will attend the

Prime Minister's meeting. He did not say why his son and National Conference vice-president Omar Abdullah, who is among the four former CMs of the erstwhile state invited for the meet, has been excluded from the PAGD delegation.

Ms Mufti said a suggestion was made at Tuesday's meeting of its leaders that only Dr Farooq Abdullah may represent the PAGD in the June 24 meeting, but later the participants arrived

at consensus on all invitees attending it.

She said: "We're not against the dialogue. My late father Mufti Muhammad Sayeed always advocated dialogue for resolution of issues". She said the PAGD delegation will seek confidence-building-measures including the release of J&K's political prisoners at the meet. She said: "I believe New Delhi should have released all political prisoners towards creating an

atmosphere conducive for the talks, but it hasn't. Now we will demand the release of political prisoners as there are many who are ill in jails. We will also seek immediate shifting of prisoners back to J&K jails from various Indian prisons."

Facing a barrage of questions from reporters, Dr Abdullah said: "When the meeting ends, we will brief you on what we have done there, what we said and what was the response."

Centre red-flags 'concern' over Delta Plus, with 22 cases so far

■ **Continued from Page 1** some districts in these states. The Centre has sent an advisory to these states today explaining what kind of public health response should initiate to address this issue, which (now) looks fairly small in terms of numbers. But we would not like these to assume significant proportions and take a bigger form," said Mr Bhushan. He added genome sequencing of 45,000 samples has been done so far and the scientists are constantly monitoring the virus and its mutations.

Officials said the three states were advised that public health response measures, while broadly remaining the same as

implemented earlier, have to be more focused and effective. The states' chief secretaries have been advised to take up immediate containment measures in the districts and clusters (as identified by INSACOG), including preventing crowds and intermingling of people, widespread testing, prompt tracing as well as vaccine coverage on a priority basis. They were also advised to ensure that adequate samples of positive persons are promptly sent to the designated laboratories of INSACOG so that clinical epidemiological correlations can be made for further guidance to be provided to states.

India on Tuesday report-

ed 42,640 new Covid-19 cases in the past 24 hours, which came down under 50,000 for the first time in 91 days. The fatalities too are on the decline, 1,167 deaths reported in 24 hours. The country's recovery rate has increased to reach 96.49 per cent.

The government is still not sure when to open schools, but Niti Aayog member (health) V.K. Paul underscored the need for fast vaccination to enable India to open up its economy and resume normal work. "We need to do our daily work, maintain our social life, open schools, businesses, take care of our economy; we will be able to do all this only when we are able to vac-

nate at a fast pace," he said.

India administered 52.16 lakh vaccine doses on Tuesday. In Monday's vaccination of 86.16 lakh people, which the government said was the highest anywhere in the world in one day, the higher coverage was in rural areas, where 57 lakh doses were administered, which was 63.7 per cent of the total doses. The most shots were administered in Madhya Pradesh, followed by Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Haryana, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Maharashtra and Assam. Officials said the aim was to vaccinate at least one crore people in a day and by next month 20-22 crore doses will be available.

Rahul targets govt over Covid; BJP calls him a 'circus clown'

■ **Continued from Page 1** Alleging that the Congress had questioned every step taken by the government from the beginning of the fight to contain the pandemic, the BJP said instead of the "white paper", the Congress needs to answer why the states ruled by it have been lagging behind in Covid management. Reminding the Congress that the "second wave began with a Congress-ruled state, the largest number of the infected were from Congress-ruled states and so were the most number of deaths and the maximum vaccine hesitancy was seen in Congress-ruled states, so was the highest Covid-19 positivity rate," Mr Patra said even the demand for decentralisation of vaccines came, and then the "U-turn demanding centralisation too came from them"

"Instead of virtual press conferences and white papers, Rahul Gandhi should go to such states and give them this data," the Bharatiya Janata Party leader said.

Judge recuses; SC hearing on Mamata, WB plea on Friday

■ **Continued from Page 1** and the State Bengal were listed for Tuesday before a bench of Justices Gupta and Bose. The petitions submit that the State's right to file an affidavit should not be hampered, especially when the CBI was allowed to file additional affidavits. In its June 9 order that is under challenge, the high court had observed that the CM, law minister and the state government had "waited for the arguments in the case to be substantially completed before seeking to place on record their pleadings in response... It is nothing else but filling the lacunae or supporting

the accused". "The respondents have taken a calculated risk in not filing their affidavits at the right time, now they cannot be allowed to do so at their own whims and fancies, whenever they wish to do the same," the high court added.

At the last hearing of the matter on June 18, the Supreme Court asked the Calcutta high court to defer hearing on June 22 and 23, pending a hearing by it (SC) on the appeals of the West Bengal government and its law minister against the high court order not allowing not allowing them to file affidavits.

Leaders flock to Pawar's house

■ **Continued from Page 1** Covid management, the "attack" on institutions and unemployment were discussed," Mr Nilotpal Basu told reporters.

The surprising aspect of the meeting was that no important leader of the attending parties was present. Also, while many senior Congress leaders were invited to the meeting, they politely refused the invitation. A senior leader remarked that there could be no Opposition unity if the Congress was

not included. He further remarked, on condition of anonymity, that if the Rashtra Manch leaders were serious about a joint Opposition front they should have approached Sonia Gandhi and she would have deputed someone. Speculations about the Rashtra Manch meeting of a joint Opposition gained momentum as the meeting was announced after Mr Pawar had two meetings with political strategist Prashant Kishor on Monday.

THE ASIAN AGE

23 JUNE 2021

Yes we can: Jab milestone proves poor policy villain

India crossed a new milestone in its vaccination programme against Covid-19 pandemic on Monday when it administered 88.09 lakh doses, a record till now. The day also marks the launch of the revised vaccination policy that provides for the procurement of 75 per cent of the total vaccine available by the Union government for distribution to the states, scrapping the “Liberalised Vaccination Policy” which handed over the responsibility of inoculating people aged between 18 and 44 to the state governments. The government also had dropped its insistence on the people registering themselves on the CoWin app for being eligible for vaccination and instead made walk-ins possible where the health workers would register them. The twin measures would have immensely contributed to the surge in the vaccination numbers. Allegations of some of the BJP-ruled governments having planned the sudden spike notwithstanding, the success of the campaign, in fact, proves the point that India has the logistical wherewithal to set higher vaccination targets and meet them and that the government’s tardy planning was the real villain.

The success of the campaign proves the point that India has the logistical wherewithal to set higher vaccination targets and meet them and the government’s tardy planning was the real villain

As it stands today, India has vaccinated about 25 per cent of all its adults with at least one dose of the vaccine; every one in two persons above 45 have also been given at least one dose. Given that India will have to administer 82.1 lakh doses a day if we were to vaccinate all its adults by December 31, 2021, this momentum must be sustained. It is important that the Union government supported the states to maintain the tempo. It may be remembered that several states had to close down the vaccination camps they had opened. It must be ensured that all the camps are reopened now and that the vaccine supply chain does not suffer for lack of doses.

There are no definite reports about a third wave and who it will impact the most despite experts cautioning of its arrival in 8-12 weeks from now and the need to inoculate children, too. The World Health Organisation has advised all the south Asian countries to rev up the healthcare infrastructure in anticipation of a fresh wave. The WHO advisory should be seen as an endorsement of the demand which experts have been making for some time now about the need to upgrade our systems, especially in the rural areas. The second wave shook the nation by exposing the deep fissures in our healthcare delivery mechanism and their shortcomings, accentuated by an all-pervading ill-preparedness. Far too many precious lives have been lost, that too in tragic situations such as shortage of oxygen and essential drugs. It was not that there were no early warnings but the decision-makers sat on them.

The Union budget for 2021-22 had seen a substantial hike in financial allocation for the health and family welfare ministry — from ₹94,000 crore to ₹2.23 lakh crore. A part of the money is aimed at spending on projects with a span of several years, but the government should consider front-loading it and ensure that we are well-prepared for a third wave.

‘Dream team’ to advise TN govt

The state of Tamil Nadu, piloted by chief minister M.K. Stalin, has drafted a bevy of big name economists in its five-member Economic Advisory Council. Two macroeconomists, two development economists and a former Union finance ministry secretary are in a council that includes the Nobel laureate Ms Esther Duflo, feted for her work in poverty alleviation. The out-of-the-box thinking in putting together such a distinguished panel of honorary advisers upholds the primacy of the power of seasoned professionals to guide the state’s overall development.

It is said in jest that an economist is an expert who will know tomorrow why the things he predicted yesterday didn’t happen today. And at least two economists were not fully at ease with the larger scheme of things in India where they had major roles as RBI governor and chief economic adviser. The difference could lie in how accepting Tamil Nadu will be in putting into practice the advice on re-floating an economy hit by the pandemic.

Raghuram Rajan had an exceptional record in going against the tide and warning the US of the 2008 subprime crisis while others were busy fuelling what became globally the biggest economic meltdown until the pandemic of 2020. An optimistic surmise is that the highly industrialised state, the second wealthiest in the country in terms of GDP (estimated at \$290 billion in 2020-21), could get very sound advice. The state has also done well in the competitive environment of finding domestic and foreign investment for industry and services.

A reflection of the depth of thinking behind getting the new regime up and running is seen in proposals for an annual budget exclusively for agriculture, a separate ministry for management of water resources and a promise to use data to support decision making, especially in allocating scarce resources among competing claims. How much of financial resources will there be for public spending as the economy reopens may determine outcomes. No one can make water flow uphill but they have shown they are capable of putting thought into action.

THE ASIAN AGE

KAUSHIK MITTER

Editor

K. SUDHAKAR

Printer & Publisher

The ASIAN AGE office is located at:

New Delhi: Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Phone: (011) 23211124.

Published and Printed on behalf of and for

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

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

RNI Registration number: 57290/94

Subhani



China is many things, but it’s definitely not ‘lovable’

Abhijit Bhattacharyya

The apparent recent volte face by Beijing’s imperial overlord Xi Jinping, who called for the creation of a fresh, “favourable” image of a “lovable” and “humble” Middle Kingdom reminds one of a popular Bengali saying: “*Bhoot-er mukhe Ram naam*”. (It is not a translation, but it has some of the same meaning as “the devil quoting scripture”). The Hindu belief of the absurdity and impossibility of an evil and foul spirit of a dead man remembering Lord Ram, the ultimate in purity and pristine divinity — seen in the context of the People’s Republic in relation to the rest of the world — takes the whole scenario into the realm of farce. It can never be!

As long as Beijing and its 1.4 billion-plus population remains under the yoke of Emperor Xi and the ruthless and heartless Communist Party of China, which marks its centenary on July 1, the image of “love and humbleness” will prove elusive. Xi, who has been his nation’s paramount leader since 2012 (first as CPC general secretary, then as President), has followed a policy of avoidable aggression against the whole world, including all of China’s neighbours such as India, but with little to show for it. This so-called “change of heart” is just a tactical shift, in line with traditional Chinese deception as advocated in Sun Tzu’s *Art of War* and Chairman Mao Zedong’s *Military Writings*. Xi, like his mentors, tried to deploy the traditional tricks of the Dragon’s offensive-defence deceit: “Two steps forward, one step back”.

It will, therefore, be foolhardy to fall for Xi’s “charm offensive”; instead, we should study what lies behind the CPC’s new strategy. Can its troll army spreading its tentacles. The aim is to buy up every possible strategic asset overseas, by resorting to hostile takeovers of foreign tech companies, luring foreign politicians with cash or kind and manipulating the media by any or every means to build the image of the “lovable” Chinese.

A single country’s example will demonstrate this. The United Kingdom is a particular target of the CPC’s unwelcome attention, mainly due to its colonial history with a much-weakened Middle Kingdom — the Opium War (1839-1842), the retention of Hong Kong by London as a coveted commercial base up to 1997, the loot of the Chinese Emperor’s Summer Palace (1860) by British forces (which included a fair number of Indian soldiers), and the loss of almost all Chinese ports to the combined might of the West and Japan’s subjugation of Chinese territory in the early twentieth century. Britain’s strategic assets are thus a prime target for the CPC (like the “Carthage must be destroyed” psyche) for long.

Little wonder then that a top UK daily flagged in May 2021: “How China is buying Britain”. It showed how Chinese investors amassed a portfolio of UK businesses, infrastructure, property, and other assets worth nearly 135 billion pounds, almost twice as previously suspected. What shook the British establishment was the “swift and largely unnoticed buying spree which included purchases worth at least 44 billion pounds by Chinese state-owned-enterprises, linked to the PLA or CPC, or both. Alarmingly, over 80 of the 200 Chinese investments

The CPC’s economic/commercial invasion of London is a clear warning. ‘The Chinese are coming’ is no longer a slogan, what is real is that the ‘Chinese have come to corner all’.

What may perhaps be more

uncovered were since 2019, a time when London-Beijing ties started growing tense. Wasn’t that a “hostile takeover bid”? These included critical British infrastructure providers like Thames Water, UK Power Networks, Heathrow Airport; in addition to shares in FTSE, 100 companies, prime property in London and at least 17 private schools. *New Statesman* reported in July 2020: “Weak rules allowed China to acquire significant stakes in British nuclear power, oil, steel, water, and transport.” In a classic reversal of historical forces, the “East Asian Company of China” was taking revenge on the old “East India Company” of our history books.

The CPC’s economic/commercial invasion of London is a clear warning. “The Chinese are coming” is no longer a slogan, what is real is that the “Chinese have come to corner all”. All nations in the world should heed the danger signs — because the threat is real. And many have begun to wake up and started taking steps to protect themselves from the “China virus” in virtually every sector — from health to hydrology, commerce, industry, technology, and much more. The “total war” has begun, and it’s not the way the CPC had envisaged. The Belt and Road Initiative is no longer looking so attractive to foreigners, and many are challenging the Chinese, posing a serious threat to the CPC overlord’s grand plans. Hence his call to his minions to make China a “lovable” nation!

Post-script: As Xi’s New Delhi ambassador Su Weidong urged India — “Let’s cooperate, not confront each other” — came some other news: In one, “Chinese scam cheats 5 lakh Indians of crores”; and in another, “Dangerous Chinese spy-cum-criminal caught on India-Bangla border”. Are these the actions of a “lovable” country?

The writer is a Supreme Court advocate. The views expressed here are personal.

LETTERS

CRASS SERVILITY

The sad spectacle of Siddipet collector Venkatram Reddy bending down to touch the Telangana CM’s feet does not come as a surprise. It is no secret that the unholy bureaucrat-politician nexus has been surviving for centuries. Today it has gained devastating influence. While touching the feet of an elder is a commendable gesture, doing so at an official function certainly lowers the dignity of administrative office and puts a question mark on the integrity of the officer. In this case, was it a thanksgiving for the luxury cars so generously allotted to the 32 district collectors at a total cost of ₹10 crores during the pandemic at a time when the state was in huge debt?

Bhaskar Roy
New Delhi

WILL HE, WON’T HE?

SPECULATION IS RIFE after the hectic parleys that are being held in the capital by the Maratha strongman, Sharad Pawar, about the formation of a Third Front of “secular” parties that can take on the might of the BJP during the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. But, the multi-million dollar question that will earnestly beg for an answer is: “Is the Congress going to be made a part of this anti-saffron alliance?” If the reply is yes, then the problem of the leadership of the 24-member Mahagathbandhan will get instantly solved. And if the answer is no, then an inevitably three-cornered contest will vouchsafe a cake-walk for the BJP.

Arun Malankar
Mumbai

UNFAIR ADVANTAGE

NEW ZEALAND Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern on Tuesday defended the selection of transgender weightlifter Laurel Hubbard for the Tokyo Olympics, a decision that has fuelled a debate over inclusion and fairness in sport. Hubbard will become the first transgender athlete to compete at the Games after she was selected for the New Zealand team in the women’s super-heavy-weight 87 kg category. Many feel the decision to let her compete is unfair to women. Let the discussions begin.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

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

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



I-T filing mess: Why try to ‘fix’ a system that wasn’t broken?

At a time when eking out new tax revenues in a shrinking economy is the only goal, an unwarranted self-goal has a lot of knickers in a twist in North Block. The question that’s hovering over Raisina Hill is, why fix something that isn’t broken? That’s a question everyone seems to be now asking when the new e-filing website of the income tax department, lauded and much tooted about, turned out to be a non-starter. I-T officials had announced that the new portal was even designed to be “taxpayer-friendly” and would help ease the filing process and reduce dependence on tax advisors.

Numerous glitches in the software have now left irate taxpayers stranded — they have reported even basic issues such as login problems and complain that old tax filings critical to users are not visi-

ble on the new portal. Meantime, the old reliable website has been unfortunately shut down and the new one doesn’t work. A ripe old mess that comes at a really inconvenient moment.

And since even finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman has tweeted about it, I-T officials are in a frenzy trying to salvage the situation with Infosys, the corporate supplier outsourced with this task. A testing time for the newly-appointed acting chairperson of CBDT Jagannath Mohapatra to show his leadership skills. He took over his new assignment after his predecessor P.C. Mody hung up his bat after a prolonged and much extended innings that ended almost apocryphally on the very day the old website was shut down!

Hectic efforts are being made to fix the snafu — the vendor management tax babus are in talks with

Infosys and we are told that furious efforts are expected to ensure that the glitches will be removed very shortly. The taxpayers certainly hope so. Meanwhile, revenues are awaited.

GOVT TACKLES BABU CRITICS WITH FOOTBALL TACTIC

Football teams often employ a technique known as one-to-one marking during a game, in which a player is deputised to stop a rival player from taking possession of the ball for too long. Something along these lines is now in the works as the Centre’s sets about tackling the rising tide of insiders turned dissenters, especially if they happen to be retired babus who were once part of the ‘System’ but are now freely speaking their mind on issues that they feel strongly about.

What may perhaps be more

galling to the Centre is that the authors of these contrarian views are venerable ex-bureaucrats who were well-known for their administrative skills and subject expertise during their civil service career — former adviser to governor of Punjab and former ambassador to Romania Julio Ribeiro, former Cabinet secretary K.M. Chandrasekhar, former culture secretary Jawahar Sircar, former foreign secretary Shyam Saran and other similarly notable and “non-partisan” former civil servants. Their words carry weight. Collectively and individually they have written on wide-ranging subjects, including the PM Cares Fund, the farmers’ agitation, Article 370, the handling of the Covid pandemic, human rights abuses, the controversial Central Vista etc. They write edit page articles but also dash off open letters to

the Centre that are released to the media.

The government is clearly feeling affronted by this unsolicited advice, but since these are not ordinary voices that cannot be clamped by usual ploys, it has decided to retaliate by getting other “neutral” babus to respond to their colleagues. So, these days a critical piece on a delicate subject by a former babu is immediately responded to by another babu defending the government’s policies. If nothing else, it doesn’t hurt to muddy the waters without getting dirty yourself. And while the babus take on each other in the media, the government carries on with its usual business.

Share a babu experience! Follow [@dilipthecherian](https://twitter.com/dilipthecherian) on Twitter.com. Let’s multiply the effect.

SHORT TAKES

JUDGE DISMISSES
BID TO LOCK UP
FUJIMORI

Lima, June 22: A Peruvian judge on Monday dismissed a prosecutor's request for the detention of corruption-accused presidential hopeful Keiko Fujimori while the country awaits the outcome of June 6 elections in which she vied for the top job.

Fujimori, who narrowly trails leftist rival Pedro Castillo according to the unconfirmed vote count, risks an imminent corruption trial if she loses the race. If she wins, it will be delayed until after her term.

Fujimori has already spent 16 months in pre-trial detention on charges of taking money from scandal-tainted Brazilian construction giant Odebrecht to fund failed presidential bids in 2011 and 2016.

SARKOZY FACES
JAIL TERM IN POLL
FINANCING TRIAL

Paris, June 22: The trial of former French President Nicolas Sarkozy concludes Tuesday in Paris, after a month during which the court sought to determine whether he broke laws on campaign financing in his unsuccessful 2012 re-election bid.

The verdict is expected to be rendered at a later date. Prosecutors have requested a six-month prison term, as well as a six-month suspended sentence and a fine of 3,750 euros (\$4,468). Sarkozy, France's president from 2007 to 2012, denies wrongdoing. He is accused of having spent almost twice the maximum legal amount of 22.5 million euros (\$27.5 million) on the re-election bid that he lost to Socialist Francois Hollande.

THREE, INCLUDING
OFFICER, SUSPECT
KILLED IN DENVER

Arvada (US), June 22: A gunman is believed to have shot and killed an officer and another person in a shopping district in a Denver suburb before being fatally shot by police, authorities said.

An officer responded to a call at 1:15 pm on Monday about a suspicious incident near the library in the city of Arvada, and about 15 minutes later, a 911 call came in about shots fired and the officer hit, Deputy Chief Ed Brady said at a news conference. Another person believed to have been shot by the gunman was taken to a hospital and died, police said. The attacker also was shot and killed. Authorities didn't immediately describe the circumstances of the shooting.

SQUID SENT BY
NASA INTO SPACE
FOR RESEARCH

Honolulu (US), June 22: Dozens of baby squid from Hawaii are in space for study.

The baby Hawaiian bobtail squid were raised at the University of Hawaii's Kewalo Marine Laboratory and were blasted into space earlier this month on a SpaceX resupply mission to the International Space Station. Researcher Jamie Foster, who completed her doctorate at the University of Hawaii, is studying how spaceflight affects the squid in hopes of bolstering human health during long space missions, the Honolulu Star-Advertiser reported Monday. The squid have a symbiotic relationship with natural bacteria that help regulate their bioluminescence.

FIRES DESTROY 2
CHURCHES IN
BRITISH COLUMBIA

Oliver (Canada), June 22: Two Roman Catholic churches on First Nations reserves in British Columbia have burned to the ground in overnight fires, Canada's national police force said Monday.

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police said a patrol officer saw fire come from the Sacred Heart Church on the Penticton Indian Band reserve early Monday morning. By the time the officer arrived on scene, police say the church was fully engulfed. Less than two hours later, the RCMP in Oliver, British Columbia were called to St. Gregory's Church, located on the Osoyoos Indian Band reserve. They say police are liaising with both the Penticton and Osoyoos Indian Bands as part of the investigation.

The RCMP say both churches were destroyed and investigators are treating the fires as suspicious. "Should our investigations deem these fires as arson, the RCMP will be looking at all possible motives and allow the facts and evidence to direct our investigative action," Sgt. Jason Bayda says in the statement.

Protest rocks Paris



Demonstrators stand on the top of a truck during a rally called by the National Federation of Mines and Energy — General Confederation of Labour (FNME-CGT trade union) — in Paris on Tuesday. The workers are protesting against the Hercule project which is aimed at restructuring the French energy group Engie. — AFP

In-person hearing of
Rana set for tomorrow

India seeks his extradition for role in '08 Mumbai attack

Washington, June 22: A federal US court is all set to hold on Thursday an in-person extradition hearing of Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, who is sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack.

A team of officials from India is believed to have arrived in the US for the proceedings that will take place in a federal court in Los Angeles.

US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chooljian in her order on April 5 had moved the in-person extradition hearing of 59-year-old Rana to India from April 22 to June 24.

The United States government, in multiple submissions before the court, has made a declaration in support of the United States' Surrebuttal in Support of its Request for Certificati-

on of Extradition.

Rana, a childhood friend of prime convict David Coleman Headley, was rearrested on June 10, 2020 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, includ-

ing six Americans, were killed. He has been declared a fugitive by India.

Headley, 60, was made an approver in the case, and is currently serving a 35-year prison term in the US for his role in the attack. Rana has opposed his extradition to India, arguing that he has already been convicted by a US court in Chicago.

The United States government asserts that the premise of Rana's argument is incorrect because the Indian substantive charges are not considered lesser included offences of their conspiracy charges. As per the India-US Extradition Treaty, the Indian government has requested the formal extradition of Rana, and the United States has initiated this extradition proceeding. The US government has argued that Rana meets all the criteria war-

ranting certification of his extradition to India.

These are: The court has both personal and subject matter jurisdiction, there is an extradition treaty between the United States and India that is in full force and effect, and the crimes for which Rana's extradition is sought are covered by the terms of the treaty.

In his previous court submission on February 4, Rana's attorney had argued that Rana's extradition is barred under Article 6 of the United States-India extradition treaty because he had previously been acquitted of the offences for which his extradition is sought, and under Article 9 of the treaty because the government has not established probable cause to believe that Rana committed the alleged offences.

— PTI

US chambers seeks to
double H-1B visa quota

Washington, June 22: The powerful US Chambers of Commerce has launched a massive campaign to address the acute shortage of skilled and professional workforce in America, prominent among which includes urging the Biden administration and Congress to double the number of H-1B visas and eliminate per-country quota for the Green Card.

The most sought-after H-1B visa is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

The demand to increase the H-1B quota, which currently is at 65,000 and another 20,000 for those who have higher studies from the US, is part of the America Works campaign launched by the US Chambers of Commerce early this month.

“We must arm workers with the skills they need, we must remove barriers that are keeping too many Americans on the sidelines, and we must recruit the very best from around the world to help fill high-demand jobs

— SUZANNE CLARK
President, US Chamber of Commerce

“As we stand on the cusp of what could be a great American resurgence, a worker shortage is holding back job creators across the country,” US Chamber of Commerce president and CEO Suzanne Clark said.

Through the America Works Agenda, the US Chamber is calling for doubling the cap on employment-based visas, doubling the quota on H-1B and H-2B visas and implementing other reforms to the legal immigration system to help employers meet the demand for high-demand

jobs in labour-strapped sectors.

It is also calling for growing federal investments in employer-led job education and training programmes and expanding access to childcare for working parents.

“We must arm workers with the skills they need, we must remove barriers that are keeping too many Americans on the sidelines, and we must recruit the very best from around the world to help fill high-demand jobs,” Clark said.

The Chamber called for changes to be made on the issuance of employment-based immigrant visas including doubling the cap on employment-based immigrant visas from 140,000/year to 280,000/year. Eliminate the practice of counting spouses and minor children under the annual Green Card quota, which, if done alone, would practically double the amount of employment-based immigrant workers our nation admits every year, it said.

— PTI

Pak won't host US
bases, says Imran

Islamabad, June 22: Prime Minister Imran Khan has ruled out hosting American bases in Pakistan for military action inside war-torn Afghanistan, fearing it might lead to his country being “targeted in revenge attacks” by terrorists.

In an opinion piece in *The Washington Post* newspaper ahead of US President Joe Biden's meeting with top Afghan leaders at the White House later this week, Khan also questioned the efficacy of such US bases in Pakistan. “We simply cannot afford this. We have already paid too heavy a price, Khan said, amid reports that the US continues to focus on Pakistan for a military base in the region.

Elaborating the reasons for not giving the nod to the US to have bases in Pakistan, which were earlier allowed after 9/11 to coordinate operations in

Afghanistan, he said, If Pakistan were to agree to host US bases, from which to bomb Afghanistan, and an Afghan civil war ensued, Pakistan would be targeted for revenge by terrorists again.”

According to media reports, the US used the Shamsi air base in Balochistan to carry out drone strikes since 2008 that focused on suspected Al Qaeda operatives in mountainous tribal areas, but also crossed the border into Afghanistan. “If the US, with the most powerful military machine in history, couldn't win the war from inside Afghanistan after 20 years, how would America do it from our bases?” Khan asked.

He, however, underlined that Pakistan and the US have the same interests in Afghanistan: a political settlement, stability, economic development and the denial of any haven for terrorists.

— PTI



Kim Yo Jong

KIM'S SISTER:
NO CHANCE OF
TALKS WITH U.S.

Seoul, June 22: The powerful sister of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un dismissed prospects for an early resumption of diplomacy with the United States, saying Tuesday that US expectations of talks would “plunge them into a greater disappointment.” Kim Yo Jong's blunt statement indicates that the diplomatic impasse over North Korea's nuclear programme is likely to continue unless the North suffers greater economic and pandemic-related difficulties, some experts said.

Hope for a restart of nuclear talks flared briefly after Kim Jong Un said last week that his country must be ready for both dialogue and confrontation, though more for confrontation. US National Security adviser Jake Sullivan called Kim's comments an “interesting signal”.

On Tuesday, Kim Yo Jong derided Sullivan's response. “It seems that the US may interpret the situation in such a way as to seek a comfort for itself,” the official Korean Central News Agency quoted her as saying.

— AP

OZ FIGHTS U.N.
DOWNGRADE OF
BARRIER REEF

Canberra, June 22: Australia said Tuesday it will fight against plans to downgrade the Great Barrier Reef's World Heritage status due to climate change, while environmentalists have applauded the UN World Heritage Committee's proposal.

The committee said in a draft report on Monday that “there is no possible doubt” that the network of colourful corals off Australia's northeast coast was “facing ascertained danger”. The report recommends that the world's most extensive coral reef ecosystem be added to Unesco's List of World Heritage in Danger, which includes 53 sites, when the World Heritage Committee considers the question in China in July.

The listing could shake Australians' confidence in their government's ability to care for the natural wonder and create a role for UNESCO headquarters in devising so-called “corrective measures”, which would likely include tougher action.

— AP

Those refusing vax go to India: Duterte
Deaths in nursing homes up
32% in 2020 amid pandemic

Singapore, June 22: Warning that the second wave of the pandemic would be disastrous for the Philippines, President Rodrigo Duterte has threatened to arrest the Filipinos who don't want to get vaccinated against Covid-19 and asked them to leave and “go to India if you want or somewhere, to America”.

Speaking during a pre-recorded televised public address on Monday, Duterte said that the country is facing a national emergency and “we must triple our efforts” to contain the virus, according to media reports from Manila. “Don't get me wrong. There is a crisis being faced in this country. There is a national emergency. If you don't want to get vaccinated, I will have you arrested. And I will inject the vaccine in your butt. You are pests. We are already suffering and you're adding to the burden,” Duterte was quoted as saying by *INQUIRER.NET*.

“So all you Filipinos listening, watch out. Don't force my hand into it... I have a strong arm for that.

Washington, June 22: Deaths among Medicare patients in nursing homes soared by 32% last year, with two devastating spikes eight months apart, a government watchdog reported Tuesday in the most comprehensive look yet at the ravages of Covid-19 among its most vulnerable victims.

The report from the inspector general of the Department of Health and Human Services found that about 4 in 10 Medicare recipients in nursing homes had or likely had Covid-19 in 2020, and that deaths overall jumped by

169,291 from the previous year, before the coronavirus appeared.

“We knew this was going to be bad, but I don't think even those of us who work in this area thought it was going to be this bad,” said Harvard health policy professor David Grabowski, a nationally recognised expert on long-term care, who reviewed the report for *The Associated Press*.

“This was not individuals who were going to die anyway,” Grabowski added. “We are talking about a really big number of excess deaths.” Investigators used a generally accep-

— AP

Nobody likes it. But if you won't get vaccinated, leave the Philippines. Go to India if you want or somewhere — to America. But as long as you are here and you are a human being that can carry the virus,

get yourself vaccinated,” Duterte, known for his flamboyant and controversial remarks, said.

The Philippines is one of the worst-hit countries in South East Asia with more than one million cases and

over 20,000 deaths linked to Covid-19. According to studies cited in local media, more than half of Filipinos are unwilling to get vaccinated against Covid-19 over fears the shots are not safe.

— PTI

RODENT | SCOURGE

Carcasses, excrement are polluting farmers' water tanks

Oz to evacuate prison after mice attack

Canberra, June 22: A plague of mice that has ravaged vast swathes of eastern Australia has forced the evacuation of a prison while authorities repair air gnawed electrical wiring and clear dead and decaying mice from walls and ceilings.

Around 200 staff and 420 inmates will be transferred from the Wellington Correctional Center in rural New South Wales state to other prisons in the region during the next 10 days

while cleaning and repairs take place, Corrective Services Commissioner Peter Severin said on Tuesday.

“The health, safety and wellbeing of staff and inmates is our No. 1 priority so it's important for us to act now to carry out the vital remediation work,” Severin said.

Millions of mice have caused havoc in the grain-growing region of Australia's most populous state for months, devouring crops and haysta-

cks as well as invading homes, businesses, schools, hospitals and prisons.

The most common complaint about the plague is an ever-present stench of mice urine and decaying flesh. People report being bitten by mice in bed.

Mouse carcasses and excrement in roof guttering are polluting farmers' water tanks and causing sickness. The remediation work at the prison will include investigating ways to protect the facility from

future mice plagues, which are a phenomenon largely unique to Australia.

Plagues usually happen when rain follows several years of drought. The current plague is the worst that many can remember in some areas. Severin said the mice infestation was worst in prison buildings that weren't built from concrete.

“The mice have got into...wall cavities, into roof spaces. They're dead

but then they start obviously decaying and then the next problem is mites,” Severin told *Australian Broadcasting Corporation*.

Government mouse researcher Steve Henry said mice numbers had begun to plateau as the species always stops breeding during the Southern Hemisphere winter. But numbers could explode again if conditions are right in the spring.

— AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,588.71	0.03
Nifty 50	15,772.80	0.17
S&P 500*	4,238.88	0.33
Dollar (₹)	73.87	0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18	0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,213	0.45
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.73	-0.23
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.025	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.478	-0.007

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Kesoram Inds. suspends work at rayon factory

BK Birla Group company Kesoram Industries Ltd suspended work at its rayon factory in West Bengal's Hooghly district due to fall in demand. The company management blamed the slump in demand due to Covid-led disruptions for the suspension of work till further notice. The company employs 2,500 people in the loss making plant. Rayon division contribution is negligible for the company.

Sun settles patent litigation with Celgene



Sun Pharma said it has reached an agreement with Celgene Corporation, a subsidiary of Bristol Myers Squibb, to resolve the patent litigation regarding generic version of cancer drug Revlimid (lenalidomide capsules) in the US. As per the terms of the settlement, Celgene will grant Sun Pharma a licence to Celgene's patents required to manufacture and sell certain limited quantity of generic lenalidomide capsules in the US in 2022.

EV makers laud Gujarat policy with subsidy

Companies like Tata Motors, Mahindra and Hero Electric lauded the Gujarat government for bringing a new electric vehicle policy in the state. Chief minister Vijay Rupani unveiled the 'Gujarat Electric Vehicle Policy 2021', which has been designed to see at least 2 lakh electric vehicles on the state roads in the next four years. The state will provide subsidies ranging from Rs 20,000 to Rs 1,50,000 to buyers of vehicles.

NMDC's Q4 profit after tax zooms to ₹2,838 crore

India's largest iron ore producer NMDC said its profit after tax for the March quarter was 708 per cent higher at Rs 2,838 crore compared to Rs 351 crore during the year-ago quarter. Turnover stood at Rs 6,848 crore compared with Rs 3,187 crore a year ago. Sumit Deb, CMD, NMDC, said, "This has been an excellent year for the iron and steel sector and it gives me great pride to share these impressive results."

Printed & Published by K. Sudhakar on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited. Printed at BFL Infotech Ltd, C-9 Sector 3, Noida-201301. Published at 219, N D Tiwari Bhawan, Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi-110002. Editor: Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 30074/09, Air surcharge Re 1. © All rights reserved. Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission of The Editor, Financial Chronicle ® is prohibited.

NCLT approves resolution plan Jet Air to get wings again

FC BUREAU with agency inputs NEW DELHI, JUNE 22

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) has ruled that Jet Airways India Ltd can resume operations under a new owner more than two years after it collapsed under heavy debt burden, according to Ashish Chhawchharia, the tribunal-appointed resolution professional.

Jet Airways, once the country's biggest private carrier, needs to apply for slots within 90 days and the aviation regulator will make a final decision on allotting them, reports said.

Describing the NCLT nod for the resolution plan as one of the biggest turnaround events for the troubled aviation sector, Chhawchharia hoped that the carrier will be back in the skies by the end of this year provided everything goes well.

The NCLT Mumbai bench, chaired by Mohammed Ajmal and V. Nallasenapathy, has approved the resolution plan for Jet Airways that will have to be implemented in 90 days starting from June 22.

"We are delighted with the go-ahead to the plan. Certainly, we are quite hopeful of the airline's revival. And if all go well, we hope that by the end of this year, we can see some Jet Airways flights in the skies again," Chhawchharia, a partner at Grant Thornton Bharat



LLP, said.

The airline fell into bankruptcy in 2019 after failing to repay debts. A rescue plan was laid out last year by Dubai-based businessman Murari Lal Jalan and Kalrock Capital Management Ltd, a London-based financial advisory and alternative asset manager.

They pledged in December that Jet Airways would fly again by this summer, operating its historic domestic slots as well restarting international routes. The revival plan included a dedicated freighter service and hubs in smaller cities beyond Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru, according to a Bloomberg report.

Though it is difficult to say by when the issues of slots will be resolved, Chhawchharia said he was hopeful since the effective date for implementation of the plan is 90 days from the date of approval.

"Everyone will work towards that (resolution of the slot issue as well)," he noted.

In a separate statement, Chhawchharia said the

NCLT approval will pave the way for the revival of Jet Airways 2.0 even as there are a few concerns related to the availability of routes/slots for the airlines to fly again.

Even before Covid-19 crushed demand for air travel, the country was a tough place to make money in aviation. Bruising fare wars and high costs made it difficult for many carriers to survive. Kingfisher Airlines Ltd, once the country's second-largest domestic carrier, collapsed in 2012, and flag carrier Air India Ltd is saddled with debt and has been searching for a buyer for years.

Jet Airways has almost 21,000 creditors seeking claims of around \$6 billion. It has lost most of its landing slots in the time it hasn't been flying.

Investors remained optimistic about the airline successfully emerging from a restructuring, sending its shares soaring 316 per cent in 2020 despite the industry being plunged into crisis. Jet Airways rose 5 per cent on Tuesday.

Not against flash sales that benefit consumers: Govt

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 22

The government on Tuesday clarified that discount sales will continue on e-commerce platforms, but not "fraudulent flash sales". The government stated that it will not seek disclosure of flash sales, but did not provide clarity as to how it will ascertain whether a flash sale is fraudulent.

Discount sales that benefit maximum to consumers will continue, but not fraudulent flash sales on the e-commerce platforms, Nidhi Khare, additional secretary in the consumer affairs ministry told the media.

"Such competition actually helps the business overall to bring goods at better prices to consumers. We are not against that," she said. However, in Monday's notification in the ministry had defined "flash sale" as "a sale at significantly reduced prices, high discounts or any other such promotions or attractive offers for a pre-determined period of time on selective goods and services or otherwise with an intent to draw a large number of consumers". This definition applies to all sales events organised by e-commerce players.

Without elaborating on what is defined as "fraudulent flash sales", she said that in western countries many times shell companies organise flash sales without any inventory, which is against the interest of consumers and limits fair competition.

Ankur Pahwa, partner and e-commerce sector leader, EY India, said, "In some of the western countries there are companies which put up only rejected and low quality products for a few hours or single day. They dupe customers by not having any return policy or product guarantee. In India, there are some very small e-commerce companies which do such fraudulent sales."

Ministry said that in western countries many times shell companies organise flash sales without any inventory, which is against the interest of consumers and limits fair competition.

This updated Mini range will be available in petrol engines as completely built-up units (CBUs). Mini has updated the models for 2021. The cars get a large radiator grille that stretches over the bumper, giving them a distinct look. The rear features new LED tail lamps with the 'Union Jack' detailing and a redesigned bumper.

ONLINE CHANNELS SELL 45% MOBILES

New Delhi, June 22: Online channel accounted for about 45 per cent of the mobile phone sales in the country in 2020, according to Counterpoint Research.

Online sales accounted for about 26 per cent share of the global mobile phone market last year.

"Covid-19 had a big role in this change in consumer behaviour. By major country, India showed the highest online share at 45 per cent, followed by the UK

at 39 per cent and China at 34 per cent," the report said.

Online sales accounted for 31 per cent share in Brazil, 24 per cent in the US, 16 per cent in South Korea and 8 per cent in Nigeria, as per the report.

The share of online handset sales (global) in 2020 increased by nearly 6 per cent points compared to the previous year, while it increased by more than 10 per cent in terms of market size, it added.

—PTI

SENSEX CROSSES 53K-MARK BEFORE RETREATING

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 22

The Sensex crossed the 53000-mark for the first time and made a new high of 53,057 on Tuesday in intraday trade, but profit taking erased the day's gains as the index closed almost flat at 52,588.71, up 14.25 points. The Fifty-50 closed at 15,772.75, up 26.25 points.

Market volatility remained high ahead of the monthly derivative contracts expiry on Thursday.

Strong overnight global markets, record number of Covid vaccinations in a day, daily Covid cases dropping below 50,000 and good monsoon rains coverage cheered the market as it opened. But there was profit taking as valuations are looking stretched.

The market reaching all-time high is great news for hundreds of thousands of small investors who entered the stock market over the last 12-15 months, as they are sitting on pretty strong gains right now.

But analysts warned investors who entered the market during the pandemic period against the inherent risks. "Nearly every stock has a certain intrinsic value and with markets at all time highs, more and more stocks are trading close to or even higher than their carefully estimated intrinsic values," said Rahul Shah, co-head of research, Equitymaster.

The market is likely to see volatile trading till Thursday as equity derivative expiry and index heavy weight Reliance Industries annual general meeting are scheduled on June 24.

FPIs were net sellers of equities worth Rs 1,027.94 crore.

Confidence levels drop for working women, young pros

New Delhi, June 22: The second wave of the pandemic has left young Indian professionals and working women increasingly vulnerable to the economic uncertainty, says a survey.

According to LinkedIn's latest Workforce Confidence Index, the plight of India's working women has worsened after the second Covid-19 wave, as the Individual Confidence Index scores of female professionals fell from 57 in March to 49 in early June—a 4x decline compared to working men (58 in March to 56 in June).

Further, the pandemic's recent peak in India has amplified the importance of work experience and professional connections, as young Indians were found twice as worried as their older cohorts about the impact of Covid-19 on their careers.

Nearly 30 per cent of Gen Z professionals and



26 per cent of millennials are troubled due to lack of jobs, in comparison to 18 per cent of Baby Boomers, said the survey based on responses of 1,891 professionals from May 8 to June 4. Gen Z refers to those born between 1997 and 2015. Millennials are those born between 1981 and 1994/6 and Baby Boomers are born between 1946 and 1964.

"As India slowly begins to come out of the second wave of Covid-19 cases, we see the year-over-year hiring rate recover from a low of 10 per cent in April

to 35 per cent at the end of May. Despite this modest revival, confidence levels of working women and young professionals are amongst the lowest in the workforce today," said Ashutosh Gupta, country manager, LinkedIn.

Gupta said "twice as many working women are concerned with job availability compared to working men, and 30 per cent of Gen Z professionals worry due to lack of jobs."

The survey said, India's overall workforce confidence has declined after peaking in early March, with a composite score of 54 (down 4 points from 58 in March).

This decline in confidence is reflected strongly across professionals from creative industries such as entertainment, design, and media and communications, who expressed being uncertain about the future of their employers.

—PTI

YouTube wins user copyright fight in EU

FOO YUN CHEE LUXEMBOURG, JUNE 22

Google's YouTube won its latest copyright-infringement challenge after Europe's top court said online platforms are not liable for users uploading unauthorised works unless the platforms failed to take quick action to remove or block access to the content.

The case marks the latest development in a long-running battle between Europe's \$1 trillion cre-

ative industry and online platforms, with the former seeking redress for unauthorised works that are uploaded.

It is also part of the wider debate on how much online platforms and social media should do to police the posting of unauthorised, illegal or hateful content, an issue that European Union regulators are targeting with tough new rules that could come into force next year.

"As currently stands, operators of online plat-

forms do not, in principle, themselves make a communication to the public of copyright-protected content illegally posted online by users of those platforms," the EU Court of Justice said.

"However, those operators do make such a communication in breach of copyright where they contribute, beyond merely making those platforms available, to giving access to such content to the public," judges said.

—Reuters

Non-finance firms cut debt, shore up reserves in FY21

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 22

During the pandemic-hit FY21, listed non-finance companies used their increased profits to reduce debt and fortify reserves while keeping their investments low.

After studying the balance sheet data of 1,326 non-finance companies, the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE) found that profits grew by 48.5 per cent in 2020-21.

This was used for deleveraging purposes and to reduce their outstanding borrowing and other liabilities. Outstanding borrowings declined by 9.3 per cent as of March 2021 compared to March 2020. This is the first time that listed companies registered a fall in outstanding borrowings since September 2010. The fall in outstanding borrowings seen in company financial statements squares with RBI data on credit disbursements. It shows that the outstanding loans to large companies as of March 2021 were 0.8 per cent lower than they were a year ago.

This brought down the debt: equity ratio of listed companies significantly below that of unlisted companies. While the ratio for all companies, including listed and unlisted companies, as evident from the annual reports, was in the range of 1 to 1.1 in the five years till 2019-20, that of listed companies, as seen from their interim financial statements, was in the range of 0.5 to 0.6 with an average of 0.54.

Reserves and surplus of these non-finance companies also expanded 15 per cent over the year as of March 2021. This is the highest yearly jump in reserves in the last decade, said Mahesh Vyas, founder and CEO of CMIE.

While reducing debt and increasing reserves, investments suffered. Non-finance companies were not enthusiastic about deploying their profits into expansion of capacities. In spite of profits growing by a robust 48.5 per cent in 2020-21, companies grew their net fixed assets by a meagre 3.7 per cent at the year ended March 2021. The average year-on-year growth in net fixed assets since March 2017 has been close to 10 per cent.

companies significantly below that of unlisted companies. While the ratio for all companies, including listed and unlisted companies, as evident from the annual reports, was in the range of 1 to 1.1 in the five years till 2019-20, that of listed companies, as seen from their interim financial statements, was in the range of 0.5 to 0.6 with an average of 0.54.

Reserves and surplus of these non-finance companies also expanded 15 per cent over the year as of March 2021. This is the highest yearly jump in reserves in the last decade, said Mahesh Vyas, founder and CEO of CMIE.

While reducing debt and increasing reserves, investments suffered. Non-finance companies were not enthusiastic about deploying their profits into expansion of capacities. In spite of profits growing by a robust 48.5 per cent in 2020-21, companies grew their net fixed assets by a meagre 3.7 per cent at the year ended March 2021. The average year-on-year growth in net fixed assets since March 2017 has been close to 10 per cent.

HUL HIKES SUPPLY CHAIN CAPACITY, PREPARE FOR THIRD COVID WAVE



Sanjiv Mehta

New Delhi, June 22: FMCG major HUL has added 30 per cent more capacity in its supply chain, making it more flexible and agile, while adding alternate sources in order to meet the challenges in case of a third wave of Covid-19, its chairman and managing director Sanjiv Mehta said on Tuesday.

Addressing the company's 88th annual general meeting (AGM) virtually, Mehta also expressed optimism that the rural markets will continue to be strong despite the second wave of the pandemic impacting the hinterlands.

With commodity prices increasing, the company is keeping a close eye on the situation and going for calibrated price hikes so as to avoid impacting consumers in a big way, he added.

Replying to a shareholder's query on the preparedness of the company in case of a third wave of the pandemic, Mehta said, "Now we have made the supply chain much more agile, we have taken a number of initiatives to improve efficiency. We have added much more flexibility in our supply chain by adding 30 per cent more capacity, and we aim to preserve resilience through alternate sourcing."

"We also continue to invest in technological capabilities, and we have invested in creating a very safe environment for our workforce through tiered protocols," he added.

HUL's supply chain is undergoing a massive transformation across the verticals and the company is digitising upstream sourcing network which allows optimisation of cost, Mehta said.

—PTI

HYBRID | SPACE It's not just office and home. There could be a satellite office too

Tata explores 'third place' in workplace model

SARITHA RAI JUNE 22

The pandemic has changed the nature of work, accelerating the adoption of digital technologies by at least a decade and ushering in a hybrid model where work extends beyond offices and engages more women, Tata Sons chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran said.

While the office remains a critical hub and staff will gradually return, the world won't return to its pre-Covid norm, Chandrasekaran, head of

India's biggest private-sector employer, said during the Qatar Economic Forum on Tuesday. The Indian executive, joined by fellow employers such as Iwg Plc CEO Mark Dixon, said workplaces will benefit from allowing staff greater leeway with the help of technology.

When the pandemic hit India in early 2020, the 150-year-old steel-to-airlines conglomerate scrambled to adapt to lockdown restrictions. At Tata Consultancy Services Ltd—its largest company by employee numbers and profitability



N. Chandrasekaran

—nearly half a million workers began working from home within weeks, continuing to deliver software projects and support to Wall Street banks,

retailers and airlines.

TCS declared early on it expects only a fourth of its workforce to be in the office on any given day by 2025. Yet many of its employees asked for a return to the office. Companies will have to adopt a model somewhere in-between, Chandrasekaran said during a session about the future of work.

"If the hybrid model has to work, let's not think of it as only office and home," he said. "There's going to be a concept of a third place. I call it a 'third place,' you may

want to call it a satellite office."

In India's case, it could also see improved workplace diversity, another positive outcome of a hybrid model, Chandrasekaran said. "Only 23 per cent of women who could be potentially working are in the workforce because issues like commuting, the lack of social infrastructure like child care," he said. "We should not miss this opportunity, it is not just good for GDP and growth, but also it is the right thing to do."

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Maharaj bowls SA to series victory

Gros Islet: Keshav Maharaj completed just the second hat-trick by a South African in Test history as the Proteas completed a 158-run victory over the West Indies on the fourth day of the second Test of the two-match series at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St Lucia on Monday. In the penultimate over before lunch the left-arm spinner removed Kieran Powell, Jason Holder and Joshua da Silva in successive deliveries to join fast bowler Geoff Griffen, who achieved the feat at Lord's in 1960, in the record books. Maharaj then followed up with two of the last three to fall in the afternoon to finish with figures of five for 36.

— AFP

Brief scores: South Africa 298 & 174 bt West Indies 149 & 165 in 58.3 overs (Kieran Powell 51, Keshav Maharaj 5/36, Kagiso Rabada 3/44).

Ex-Indian athletics coach Yuri dies

New Delhi: Former Indian athletics coach Yuri Ogorodnik, who was sacked for his alleged involvement in the infamous 2011 dope scandal, has died at his native place in Ukraine, the national federation said on Tuesday. He was 84. He was associated with Indian athletics for nearly two decades since the early 2000s, training the Indian athletes during his multiple stints. The Athletics Federation of India consoled his death in Kharkiv on Monday. AFI President Adille Sumariwalla described Ogorodnik as a friend of Indian athletics. — PTI

Malleswari 1st VC of sports varsity

New Delhi: Olympic medalist Karnam Malleswari was on Tuesday appointed first vice chancellor of the Delhi Sports University. “The Lt Governor, who is also Chancellor of Delhi Sports University, is pleased to appoint the Padmashri awardee as first Vice Chancellor of the university,” said an official order. Malleswari is the first Indian woman weightlifter to bring home an Olympic medal. She created history at the Sydney Olympics in 2000. The Delhi Assembly had in 2019 passed a bill to set up a Delhi Sports University (DSU), which will offer graduation, post-graduation and doctorate degrees in cricket, football, and hockey among other sports. — PTI



Younis quits as Pak batting coach

Karachi: Former captain Younis Khan on Tuesday stepped down as Pakistan's batting coach in a surprise decision which the cricket board said was agreed upon “reluctantly but amicably” even though no reasons were specified for it. The Pakistan team is due to start a tour of the UK from June 25 to July 20 for three ODIs and three T20Is. The team will next go to the West Indies from July 21 to August 24 to feature in five T20Is and two Tests. “The team will travel to the United Kingdom without a batting coach, while the decision to appoint replacement for the West Indies tour will be made in due course,” a PCB statement said. — PTI

Live on TV

CRICKET

World Test Championship final, Reserve day: India vs New Zealand from 3pm on Star Sports 1, HDI

EURO

Group Stage: Sweden vs Poland, Slovakia vs Spain from 9.30 pm; Germany vs Hungary, Portugal vs France from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, HD

COPA AMERICA

Group Stage: Ecuador vs Peru from 2.30 am (Thursday); Brazil vs Colombia from 5.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 1, 2, HD

Published by K. Sudhakar for and on behalf of Deccan Chronicle Holdings Limited at Jawaharlal Nehru National Youth Centre, 219 Deen Dayal Upadhyay Marg, New Delhi 110 002. and Printed by him at BFL Infotech Limited, C-9, Sector-11, Noida-201301. Editor — Kaushik Mitter, RNI Registration number 57290/94, Price in Nepal - Nep.Rs. 20.00 per copy.

SHAMI KABAB

Mohammed on fire as India bowl Kiwis out for 249

Southampton, June 22: Mohammed Shami's artistry was on full display as India bowled New Zealand out for 249 on the fifth day of the World Test Championship final here. India were 64 for two with a lead of 32 runs at stumps.

Pacer Tim Southee removed both the openers, Shubman Gill and Rohit Sharma.

The finale is tantalisingly poised with the contest now spilling into the reserve day.

New Zealand showed more intent on keeping the scoreboard ticking with Kyle Jamieson (21) and Tim Southee (30) throwing their bats around for useful runs which certainly put the pressure back on India going into the final session of the day.

The tea break was called after the fall of last New Zealand wicket.

Mohammed Shami (4/76), after a mesmerising morning spell, got a couple of more wickets in the post-lunch session. He dismissed Colin de Grandhomme with a delivery angled in and Jamieson with a bouncer.

During the final half-an-hour, India's senior-most player Ishant Sharma (3/48) denied half-century to a dogged skipper Kane Williamson (49) with a classic Test match dismissal — delivery rearing up and shaping out which was edged to Virat Kohli at third slip.

Sensing that mere survival would spell doom,



India pacer Mohammed Shami celebrates a New Zealand wicket during Day 5 of the World Test Championship final in Southampton on Tuesday.

New Zealand scored 114 runs in the post lunch session even as Shami and Ishant remained standout performer bowling their hearts out.

Jamieson and New Zealand's all-time third highest six-hitter Southee got some easy runs at the

fag end which could prove to be useful in the final context.

But no amount of praise is enough for Shami, who brought India back in the match before New Zealand could press its foot on the pedal.

Such was his domina-

tion that Williamson managed only seven runs in an entire session of play.

Ross Taylor (11) was dismissed as Shami reaped the rewards for finding the fuller length which enticed the batsman to go for a drive.

— PTI

SCORECARD

India (1st Innings): 217
New Zealand (1st Innings): Tom Latham c Kohli b R. Ashwin 30, Devon Conway c M Shami b I Sharma 54, Kane Williamson c Kohli b I Sharma 49, Ross Taylor c S. Gill b M. Shami 11, Henry Nicholls c R Sharma b I Sharma 7, BJ Watling b M. Shami 1, Colin de Grandhomme lbw b M. Shami 13, Kyle Jamieson c J Bumrah b M. Shami 21, Tim Southee b R Jadeja 30, Neil Wagner c A Rahane b R. Ashwin 0, Trent Boult (not out) 7. **Extras (B-4, LB-10, NB-5) 19. Total (in 99.2 overs) 249.**
FoW: 1-70, 2-101, 3-117, 4-134, 5-135, 6-162, 7-192, 8-221, 9-234.
Bowling: Ishant Sharma 25-9-48-3, Jasprit Bumrah 26-9-57-0, Mohammed Shami 26-8-76-4, Ravichandran Ashwin 15-5-28-2, R. Jadeja 7.2-2-20-1.
India (2nd Innings): Rohit Sharma lbw b Southee 30, Shubman Gill lbw b Southee 8, Cheteshwar Pujara (batting) 12, Virat Kohli (batting) 8. **Extras (lb 4, nb 1, w 1) 6. Total (for two wickets in 30 overs) 64.**
FoW: 1-24, 2-51.
Bowling: Tim Southee 9-3-17-2, Trent Boult 8-1-20-0, Kyle Jamieson 10-4-15-0, Neil Wagner 3-0-8-0.

Rijiju hopes for best Olympic show ever

AGE CORRESPONDENT
 HYDERABAD, JUNE 22

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju threw his weight behind Indian athletes on Tuesday, eve of International Olympic Day, promising all support from the government as they gear up to do the country proud at next month's Tokyo Olympics.

“We need to galvanise the country in cheering our athletes. They need our support as they set out for the biggest sporting competition,” Rijiju said in an online interaction with media while

announcing the launch of a slew of programmes to pump up the Indian contingent ahead of the tough task in Tokyo.

“India's presence at the Olympics must be big. For that we have short, medium and long term targets,” he said, setting off the 30-day countdown.

Asked about medal expectations, he did not put a number to it but said: “India should do better than what it has in the previous editions. We are looking forward to a new standard and record (in terms of medal count). I am very hopeful.”



Kiren Rijiju

“Our athletes have been provided the best platforms to practice, some of them are training abroad, others in important and well-equipped centres in

India. The government has been providing full support and reaching out to the athletes. The total funding through Annual Calendar and Training Competition (including TOPS — Target Olympic Podium Scheme) in the last four years has been ₹1,100 crore for the training of athletes,” he informed.

Speaking about the tough conditions imposed on the Indian contingent by Japan, Rijiju said “as per the Olympic charter there cannot be any discrimination against any country.”

“I have already conveyed to the Indian Olympic Association to register our concern with the Organising committee in Japan that it will not be acceptable to us. They (the IOA) have already written to the organising committee. We will strongly raise any issue which affects our athletes' preparation and chances,” he added.

The Minister also said that an Olympic Cell has been created in the Indian Embassy in Tokyo to assist athletes. “We will provide them all the necessary back-up support,” he said.

DANISH DELIGHT

Denmark thrash Russia to reach Last 16, Austria edge through

Paris, June 22: Denmark powered into the last 16 of Euro 2020 with a brilliant 4-1 thrashing of Russia at a raucous Parken Stadium on Monday, helping to send five other teams through in the process. It was a joyous night in Copenhagen as goals from Mikkel Damsgaard, Yussuf Poulsen, Andreas Christensen and Joakim Maehle saw the hosts through in style, as Belgium scored two late goals to beat the Finns.

Kasper Hjulmand's men will meet Wales in the last 16 in Amsterdam on Saturday.

“The most important (thing) is that we are now united as Denmark,” Maehle told Danish broadcaster DR after the win in front of a 25,000-strong crowd.

The results in Group B also saw Switzerland, who finished third in Group A, the Czech Republic, England, Sweden and France — all yet to play their final group games — move into the knockout phase.

Austria edged to a 1-0 win over Ukraine to beat their opponents to a spot in the last 16. Christoph Baumgartner's 21st-minute goal proved enough for Austria to secure second place in Group C behind the Netherlands, who saw off North Macedonia 3-0 in a dead rubber in Amsterdam.

Austria will face Group A winners Italy at



Denmark's Mikkel Damsgaard (right) celebrates after scoring his team's first goal against Russia during a group match in Copenhagen on Monday.

Wembley on Saturday for a quarter-final berth. “We wanted to write history,” Austria coach Franco Foda told uefa.com.

FINLAND ON THE BRINK OF EXIT

Belgium scored two late goals to see off a valiant Finland 2-0 on Monday, pushing their opponents to the brink of a group-stage exit.

Finnish goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky's 74th-minute own goal and Romelu Lukaku's third strike of the tournament ensured Roberto Martinez's Belgium finished top of Group B. The world's number-one-ranked side will face a third-placed team in the next round on Sunday in Seville.

— AFP

CHAMPIONS PORTUGAL TAKE ON FRANCE, FACE RISK OF SHOCK EXIT

Budapest, June 22: Germany can secure a place in the last 16 of Euro 2020 on Wednesday, but holders Portugal are at real risk of crashing out despite a prolific start to Group F by Cristiano Ronaldo.

France top the section with four points heading into their final game against Portugal, a repeat of the Euro 2016 final, despite an underwhelming 1-1 draw with bottom side Hungary in Budapest.

Germany and Portugal are locked on three points apiece but Joachim Loew's side crucially have the head-to-head edge follow-

EURO RESULTS

Belgium (Lukas Hradecky 74-og, Romelu Lukaku 81)	2
Finland	0
Denmark (Mikkel Damsgaard 38, Yussuf Poulsen 59, Andreas Christensen 80, Joakim Maehle 82)	4
Russia (Dzyuba 70-p)	1
Austria (Christoph Baumgartner 21)	1
Ukraine	0
Netherlands (Memphis Depay 24, Georginio Wijnaldum 51, 58)	3
N. Macedonia	0



Paraguay's Angel Romero takes a free-kick against Argentina during their Copa America match in Brasilia on Monday.

— AP

Argentina, Chile enter QF

Brasilia, June 22: Argentina and Chile on Monday booked their places in the Copa America quarter-finals, ending top of Group A after low-scoring matches that left the other two spots up for grabs. Argentina logged its second win in three group matches played, beating Paraguay 1-0, with Alejandro “Papu” Gomez scoring the sole goal of a lacklustre match in Brasilia in the ninth minute.

The win placed Lionel Messi's La Albiceleste top of Group A with seven points — enough to secure its spot in the next phase of the tournament being played in empty stadiums in coronavirus-battered Brazil.

The match marked a personal milestone for Messi, who tied Javier Mascherano's record for the most games played for Argentina — 147.

30 DAYS TO GO

Final countdown begins for Tokyo

Tokyo, June 22: The Tokyo Olympics have weathered a historic postponement, an unprecedented ban on overseas fans and persistent domestic opposition, but with one month to go, the finish line is finally in sight.

The journey to this year's Games has involved a long list of complications that sometimes threatened to make them the first modern Olympics cancelled in peacetime.

Now, just four weeks remain until the opening ceremony on July 23, and while the mood is far from jubilant, organisers might just have cause to celebrate.

The first Olympic teams are already in Japan, along with key officials and some overseas media. And polls suggest long-standing public opposition to the Games may be weakening as D-day approaches.

“We are in the full delivery phase,” International Olympic Committee chief

Thomas Bach said on Monday.

“Athletes are beginning to arrive in Tokyo, ready to make their Olympic dreams become a reality.”

It has been an uphill battle since the unprecedented decision to postpone the Games in March 2020, as the scale of the pandemic started to emerge.

NO CHEERING, NO HIGH-FIVES

Even with some spectators in the stands, there's no doubt this year's Games will be a pale imitation of Olympics past.

Cheering will be banned, and athletes can't hug or high-five. They must wear masks at all times except when eating, sleeping or competing, and are only allowed to move between the Olympic Village and their venues. Punishments for violating the rules will range from verbal warnings and fines to being kicked out of the Games altogether.

— AFP

Indians at Games

Golfer Lahiri makes the cut

Seasoned pro Anirban Lahiri qualified for his second successive Olympic appearance after finishing as the best-placed Indian golfer in the final Tokyo Games Rankings for men released on Tuesday. The Indian made the cut at the 60th spot, the last available quota in the Games rankings. India was eligible for one spot and Lahiri was the highest-placed in the latest official world golf rankings at the 340th position. “Best surprise I have got in a while. @Tokyo2020 can't believe I will have the opportunity once again to represent the tricolor,” Lahiri tweeted. Aditi Ashok is also in contention to make the cut.

SFI nominates 2 swimmers

The Swimming Federation of India has nominated Srihari Nataraj and Maana Patel to compete in the Olympics via the Universality places qualification system, which allows countries to recommend their two highest ranked swimmers for the showpiece if none makes the cut through the regulation process. The Universality quota allows one male and one female competitor from a country to participate in the Olympics.

Manpreet to lead India

India on Tuesday named incumbent Manpreet Singh as the skipper of the men's hockey team for the upcoming Tokyo Olympics where he will have two deputies in defenders Birendra Lakra and Harmanpreet Singh. India had announced a 16-member team for the showpiece event last week but refrained from naming the team's leadership group. “I am humbled to have this opportunity of representing India at the Olympics for the third time, this time as team Captain. It is a very proud moment for me to be given this charge,” Manpreet said.

COPA RESULTS

Argentina (Alejandro Gomez 10)	1
Paraguay	0
Uruguay (Arturo Vidal 66-og)	1
Chile (Eduardo Vargas 26)	1

But it was not a night of glory for Messi or his team, who in the second half seemed to resign themselves to defending a spirited, but ultimately fruitless, Paraguayan attack.

In the other match Monday, Chile drew 1-1 with Uruguay to end the day with five log points.

With four matches left to play in Group A, Paraguay has three points, Uruguay one, and Bolivia zero, meaning they all still stand a theoretical chance to go to the quarter-finals.

— AFP