

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | SATURDAY | 26 JUNE 2021

WEATHER



Max: 35.0°C
Min: 17°C
RH: 56%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Misty morning. Max/Min
temp. 35/17 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Bahula Dwitiya
till 6.15 pm
Star: Uttarashada till 2.37 am
(Sunday)
Varjyam: 11.49 am to 1.18 pm
Durmuhurtam: 5.47 am to
7.31 am
Rahukalam: 9 am to 10.30 am
HUIJI CALENDAR
Zeeqad 14,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.34 am
Zohar: 12.29 pm
Asar: 4.56 pm
Maghrib: 7.00 pm
Isha: 8.16 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.54 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.45 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 5.59 AM

COUNTER POINT



You are very lucky... you
have plain Covid, not the
Delta plus variant!

SHORT TAKES

Pak to remain in FATF's 'grey list'

New Delhi: Pakistan continues to remain in the 'Grey List' of FATF as the global body against money laundering and terror financing on Friday said that it failed to act against UN-designated terrorists like Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar. The FATF also said that Pakistan must continue to work to address its strategically-important deficiencies. Financial Action Task Force president Marcus Pleyer said the decision was taken at a virtual plenary of the Paris-based organisation.

Germany: 3 killed in knife attacks

Berlin: Several people were killed and others injured on Friday in the German city of Wuerzburg, police said, with media reporting a knife attack. "The attacker was overpowered after the police used firearms. There are several injured as well as fatalities," said police on Twitter, without giving details on the suspect's motives. German news outlets reported that the suspect had attacked people in the city-centre with a knife. Police were able to arrest the man after shooting him in the leg, the *Bild* newspaper reported.

CRICKET | COUP

Ex-captain suspended for not replying to notice

Azhar out, John interim HCA prez

MOSES KONDETY | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Push has come to shove in the Hyderabad Cricket Association, and the Apex Council dislodged its president Mohammed Azharuddin and appointed vice-president John Manoj as interim chief on Friday.

Five members of the Apex Council — secretary R. Vijayanand, John Manoj himself, joint secretary Naresh Sharma, treasurer Surender Agarwal and councillor P. Anuradha — who had been at loggerheads with Azharuddin decided to instal the vice-president as the head while placing the former Indian captain under suspension for his refusal to reply to the showcause notice served on June 10.



John Manoj

Azharuddin was issued the notice for serving a notice on the five, against the rules.

"The Apex Council has appointed me interim president and I will carry out the duties in tune with the constitution, which is sacred," John Manoj told this news-

paper on Friday. "According to the rule book, power is vested in the Apex Council and not any individual. Azharuddin has been taking independent decisions and terming our meetings illegal without attending them," he said.

He sought to quote the HCA constitution, which says: "Five members of the Apex Council shall form a quorum for its meetings. The President or in his absence the Vice-President or in the absence of both a member elected by those present at the meeting shall be the Chairperson. In the event of a tie, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote."

The nine-member Apex Council consists of the president, vice-president, secretary, joint secretary, trea-

surer, councillor, male and female players representatives and a nominee of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

John Manoj claimed the former Indian batsman did not play by the rules. "The Association has to be governed by the Apex Council. In what capacity did Azharuddin issue us Show Cause Notices?" he asked, adding they did reply to them though.

Azhar contends that a majority of the office-bearers are tainted, facing corruption charges in courts. An enquiry is pending against them by the HCA ombudsman, the appointment of whom is the bone of contention.

■ Page 2: Due process was followed: John Manoj

NATION | 5

Actor Payal Rohatgi held for bullying



deccanchronicle.com, facebook.com/deccannews, twitter.com/deccanchronicle



Sindhu likely flag-bearer at Olympic ceremony

SPORTS | 8

TABLOID

Sexless marriages, the new normal



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KCR orders help for custodial death victim

In a first, CM meets with Cong. leaders

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Quite unusually, the gates of Pragathi Bhavan, the official residence-cum-camp office of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao were opened for Opposition leaders for the first time, on Friday. Party MLAs led by Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka had sought an appointment from the CM to seek a probe into the recent lock-up death of a Dalit woman, Mariamma. When the CMO confirmed the appointment, this came as a surprise to not only Congress leaders but other political leaders too.

Congress MLAs D. Sridhar Babu, Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy, T. Jayaprakash 'Jagga' Reddy were present. This fuelled speculation of a noticeable change in the CM's style of functioning after Etala



The Congress Legislature Party led by Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka presents a memorandum to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to take action against attacks on Dalits in Telangana on Friday.

Rajendar's removal from the ministry.

Of late, the Chief Minister is busy touring districts and meeting people, contrary to his image of being confined to Pragathi Bhavan or his farm house for most of the time in the past seven years.

Opposition parties have been complaining of not

getting an appointment to meet the CM at least once in the past seven years.

This was so except for the Owaisi brothers of the AIMIM, who could meet the Chief Minister at Pragathi Bhavan repeatedly.

■ Page 2: CM to support Dalit victim's children

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is reportedly not keen on meeting his Andhra Pradesh counterpart Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for talks on resolving the Krishna water sharing dispute right now.

The two Chief Ministers had last met in Pragathi Bhavan in January 2020.

AP government adviser Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy and AP minister Purni Nani said on Friday that Jagan Mohan Reddy was ready for talks with Chandrashekar Rao to resolve the Krishna dispute in an amicable manner.

But, sources in the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti said that Chandrashekar Rao wants to hold talks only if AP government withdraws controversial projects over the Krishna and RDS and is willing to share surplus Godavari water with AP by constructing either joint projects or individual projects on Godavari for benefit of both the Telugu states.

Meanwhile, Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat is learnt



K. Chandrashekar Rao and Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in happier times

● KCR IS said to be of the view that he had extended a friendly hand to Jagan Mohan Reddy soon after he became the Chief Minister of AP by offering to share surplus water in the Godavari with AP since the availability of water in Krishna is comparatively low.

Chandrashekar Rao is said to be of the view that he had extended a friendly hand to Jagan Mohan Reddy soon after he became the Chief Minister of AP by offering to share surplus water in the Godavari with AP since the availability of water in Krishna is comparatively low.

It is felt that Jagan Mohan Reddy ignored him and unilaterally decided to take up the RLIS on the Krishna like his father Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy did by constructing the Pothireddypadu project, hurting the interests of south Telangana districts including Hyderabad.

Added to this, the Jagan Mohan Reddy government constructing a parallel canal along the Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (RDS) to divert even Tungabhadra water from erstwhile Mahabubnagar district angered Chandrashekar Rao even more. For these reasons, he is against holding talks with Jagan Mohan Reddy at this stage unless the AP CM withdraws those projects.

■ Page 2: CMs exhibited bonhomie in past meets

NGT ASKS KRISHNA BOARD TO VERIFY IF AP IS VIOLATING PREVIOUS ORDERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 25

The Southern Zone bench of National Green Tribunal on Friday asked the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to verify the genuineness of Andhra Pradesh's claims it was not taking up any civil works relating to the

Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS).

The bench was dealing with a petition filed by Telangana resident G. Srinivas, complaining that AP was going ahead with construction of RLIS in violation of the NGT orders.

■ Report on Page 2

to have called Chandrashekar Rao over the phone on Friday and discussed the Rayalseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS) works. He reportedly assured the

CM that his ministry would soon send a team from the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) to the RLIS site to assess the actual position of works.

EMERGENCY WAS HORROR, RECALLS VIDYASAGAR RAO

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Former Maharashtra governor Ch. Vidyasagar Rao recalled the horrific days of Emergency in 1975 and shared his experiences during those tumultuous days here on Friday.

Delivering a talk on the 'Darkest period of Indian democracy', under the auspices of the state BJP, he said that people of the country were terrified during those days and more so by the way the Indira Gandhi government went about troubling the people. He said that it was not easy to be in jail for 19 months. He said that all citizens have a responsibility to ensure that the country will never ever come to such a situation. He said that by bringing the word 'secularism' to the Constitution, Indira Gandhi had spread a fear-psychosis among people. Like a cheap politician, she did all these only to win votes and hang on to power.

Vidyasagar Rao praised Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who, he said, was perfectly fit to lead the country. The BJP administration will bring India to the level of global leader, he said. He said that BJP deserves to rule Telangana and he was waiting to see it happen. He urged party workers and cadre to work towards achieving this so that Telangana would have a BJP government.

Migrant Maha tigers lead to exodus of podu farmers

PILLALAMARRI
SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, JUNE 25

The 'migrant' tigers from Maharashtra are sending shivers down the spines of local farmers, forcing them to leave their podu lands and relocate to safer places in search of livelihoods. These farmers are unable to cultivate their lands due to utter fear, following frequent sightings of big cats and incidences of their attacks on animals and humans.

● IN ADDITION, the farmers are not being allowed to cultivate their podu lands by forest officials in many villages

are allegedly stopping the farmers, who are waiting for pattats to be issued by the state government, from cultivating the podu lands.

There are strong allegations that forest officials are deliberately not making serious efforts to trap the furious tiger named A2 that killed two persons within a month last year though the tiger has been moving frequently on the outskirts of villages and killing animals regularly, causing much panic among the locals.

Many podu farmers are migrating to other villages in neighbouring mandals in search of agriculture works and livelihood since they are not being allowed to cultivate their podu lands by the forest officials and also due to regular sighting of tigers that were migrated into Kagaznagar division of Telangana from the bordering Maharashtra.

People of nearly 30-40 villages are panic-gripped with the tigers' movement in their area and are apprehensive of possible attacks on human beings in Penchiklapet, Bejjur and Dahegam mandals.

Tiger movement is seen near Lodpalli, Digada, Loha, Gollaguda and Kondapalli villages.

According to unofficial sources, podu land cultivation has been stopped in nearly 14 villages in Kharif season in Kagaznagar division. There are reports that some families in Gollaguda of Kondapalli village of Penchiklapet mandal have migrated to neighbouring mandals in search of agricultural works.

Linganna of Gollaguda village in Kondapalli gram panchayat of Penchiklapet mandal said many small and marginal farmers who had been depending on podu lands and cultivating for the last 30 years were now sitting idle, adding that many farmers were panicked with the increased tiger movement near their lands.

Jaji Srinivas of Lodpalli village regretted that the tigers that migrated to their area from Maharashtra were now forcing local farmers cultivating podu lands to migrate to other places in search of livelihood.

PM, BJP slam Indira's Emergency

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Urging people to do everything possible to strengthen the nation's democratic spirit and live up to the values enshrined in the Constitution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday that the "dark days" of Emergency can never be forgotten.

Speaking on the 46th anniversary of the imposition of Emergency, the PM said those were the days when the Congress "trampled on our democratic ethos." Senior BJP leaders

including Union ministers used the hashtag #DARK-DAYOFEMERGENCY to slam the Congress and the then Indira Gandhi government for their "monstrous conspiracy to crush Indian democracy."

"The dark days of Emergency can never be forgotten. The period from 1975 to 1977 witnessed a systematic destruction of institutions. Let us pledge to do everything possible to strengthen India's democratic spirit, and live up to the values enshrined in our Constitution...This is how the Congress trampled

on our democratic ethos. We remember all those greats who resisted the Emergency and protected Indian democracy," the PM tweeted while sharing a link about several "draconian" steps taken by the then Congress government. Hitting out at the Congress, Union home minister Amit Shah said the Congress "murdered the largest democracy in the world" for its selfish designs and due to its arrogance of power. Emergency was imposed to trample on voices that were raised against a family, he said,

and called it a "dark chapter in India's democracy." BJP president JP Nadda paid tributes to those who fought against the Emergency and suffered "numerous atrocities". Union textiles minister Smriti Irani said the Emergency era "saw illegal arrests of 1.4 lakh plus people, muzzling of the freedom of press and expression, silencing of the judicial system and atrocities on innocent citizens. Today is a stark reminder of how our democracy was crushed by the Congress party to capture power."



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SHORT TAKES

22 TEST POSITIVE
FOR COVID-19
IN NIZAMABAD

Nizamabad: There is a slight increase in Covid-19 positive cases in Nizamabad district. Of 1,524 tests conducted on Friday, 22 cases reported as positive, which is high in recent times. For the last few days, Covid-19 positive cases have been restricted to single digit numbers and suddenly positive cases have increased. It is believed that the unlock process might be the reason for the spread of Coronavirus in the district. For the last three days, Covid-19 positive cases reported nine on Tuesday, five on Wednesday and nine cases on Thursday. An average 1600 total tests of rapid antigen and RT-PCR tests were conducted daily in the district.

SHABIR ALI
HELPS THREE
COVID PATIENTS

Nizamabad: Senior Congress leader and former minister Mohammad Ali Shabbir through his foundation came forward to help three Covid patients in emergency on Friday. The foundation members provided oxygen cylinders to Dusa Ramesh of Lachpet village in Machareddy mandal and Daram Anasuya of Panchamukhi colony in Kamareddy town. The foundation members also provided A+ve blood to Vadla Shobha Rani of Yadaram village in Domakonda mandal.

Kamalakar accuses Etala
of neglecting Huzurabad

Rajendar used his power only to increase his wealth, says Min.

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 25

Backward class welfare minister Gangula Kamalakar handed over cheques worth ₹95 lakh to members of around 19 self-help groups (SHG) at a meeting here in Huzurabad in Karimnagar district on Friday. The amounts were pending for the past several months.

Speaking on the occasion, Kamalakar came down heavily on former minister and BJP leader Etala Rajendar for not utilising the money sanctioned by the state government for the betterment of women and accused him of not bringing myriad issues faced by women in the constituency to the notice of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao.

Kamalakar said when the state government was sanctioning money without any interest to the SHGs and providing many other facilities like Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak, the former minister never brought the issues of women in this region to the notice of the Chief Minister.

Rajendar used his power only to increase



Backward classes welfare minister Gangula Kamalakar hands over cheques to self-help group members at a meeting in Huzurabad in Karimnagar district on Friday

his wealth and protect his properties, but never bothered about the development of his constituency and the people who voted for him, he added.

Kamalakar said when the girl child lived happily, then only the society would be happy. Chandrashekar Rao always tried to keep the girl child and women happy and that was why he introduced several schemes for their wellbeing, the minister said.

After sanctioning a permanent building for the SHG Federation, Kamalakar said ₹50 lakh would be released for the

structure within two days. He also assured the members of SHGs to release ₹83 lakh which was still pending very soon and directed the officials of the concerned departments to take necessary steps for the same.

Kamalakar said when Chandrashekar Rao was striving hard for women's empowerment by introducing various welfare schemes, Rajendar treated all such schemes as useless. People should teach such leaders a fitting lesson, he appealed.

No other party in the

country introduced such welfare schemes like that of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) in the state, he said adding that the people of Huzurabad always stood for development, and they definitely would bless the TRS in the upcoming byelection in Huzurabad.

Municipal commissioner Swarupa Rani, MEPMA project director Ravinder, municipal chairperson Gande Radhika, vice-chairman Kolipaka Nirmala and TRS leader Basavaraju Saraiha were among those who were present.

Bhatti flays CM for silence
over AP's irrigation projectDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka found fault with Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao for delay in reacting on Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme works taken up by the Andhra Pradesh government. "If the Chief Minister had concern for state interests, he would have reacted on the day of the GO released by the AP government on Sangameshwara LI scheme," he said. Rao was always trying to get political mileage on the emotions of people, he said.

Speaking to newsmen here at the media point on the Assembly premises on Friday, Vikramarka said for political and financial interests, the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government intentionally kept quiet on Rayalaseema lift irrigation works for the last one year. To defend its faults, the TRS leaders were

trying to defame the Congress leaders, he said. Opposition parties, especially the Congress, reprimanded the TRS government on the RLIS, but it did not respond so far, he said.

The CLP leader alleged that gross negligence of the TRS government on the RLIS would affect 25 lakh acres in the state. Water was being provided to a total of 15.50 lakh acres including 6.40 lakh acres through Nagarjunasagar left canal, 3.4 lakh acres through Kalwakurthy lift irrigation scheme, 3.7 lakh acres through SLBC A. Madhav Reddy canal, and 2 lakh acres through Nettempadu by previous governments, he explained. The Chief Minister had failed to provide water from new projects so far though he had spent thousands of crores of rupees, he said.

Bhatti said Rao spent crores of rupees on the Palamuru-Ranga Reddy and Dindi projects across river Krishna, but no water was released so far to even a

single acre. The Pothireddypadu scheme was started during the N.T. Rama Rao regime, when Chandrasekhara Rao was drought minister, he said. Bhatti ruled out the charges that the Congress government started the Pothireddypadu project. He said 42 Congress MLAs sought Telangana state for solution of problems including irrigation.

Telangana state itself was carved out to fulfil the demand for water, funds and recruitment, but the TRS government failed to protect the basic needs, he said. The Godavari and the Krishna basins were neglected by the TRS government which ignored the spirit of Telangana movement, he said. The AP government was constructing Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme at deep cut of Srisailem project and it would adversely affect Nagarjunasagar and other dependent projects in Telangana, the Congress leader added.

SEARCH IS ON
FOR TS MAN
IN GULF: BANDIDC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 25

Following the initiative of BJP state chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar, the Karimnagar MP, the Centre has started taking steps to trace a Jagtial district resident, Sriramula Hari Prasad, who has gone missing in Abu Dhabi.

In a press note, Sanjay said Prasad of Manne-gudem of Medipally mandal went to Abu Dhabi in search of a job on December 27 last year, leaving his wife, children and parents at home.

He last contacted them on 19, and is missing since then. After many attempts to trace him, Prasad's family informed Karandla Madhukar, representative of a social welfare trust, who took the issue to the notice of Sanjay.

Responding immediately, the Karimnagar MP spoke with Central government officials and wrote to V. Muralidheeran, minister of state for external affairs and urged him to take steps to bring back Prasad.

In response, Muralidheeran ordered the officials of the local Indian embassy to take steps to trace Prasad.

● **RESPONDING immediately,** the Karimnagar MP, Bandi Sanjay spoke with Central government officials and wrote to V. Muralidheeran, minister of state for external affairs and urged him to take steps to bring back Prasad.

Awareness drive to
make Mahbubabad
district dengue-freeDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JUNE 25

Mahbubabad district collector V.P. Gautam on Friday asked the people to help make Mahbubabad district dengue-free.

District collector along with additional collector Abhilasha Abhinav and other officials inspected several areas in Mahbubabad town as part of the Friday-dryday programme.

The team visited the 35th ward, Mudukotla Center, bypass road and 14th ward on Narsampet Road to raise awareness on garbage and water stagnation in houses. He said that the spread of dengue mosquitoes should not be tolerated and all measures put an end to the mosquito breeding.

"In order to prevent it from the larval stage, people need to keep their houses clean. If it rains, one must spend the next day removing the stagnant water in their houses," he suggested.

He then visited a tire shop on the bypass road and made the shop keeper removed the water stored in

● **"IN ORDER** to prevent it from the larval stage, people need to keep their houses clean. If it rains, one must spend the next day removing the stagnant water in their houses," the collector suggested.

the tires. The Municipal Commissioner was ordered to seize the shop for not heeding the earlier warnings on water stagnation and not taking action.

The Collector also visited and inspected an old iron goods shop on Narsampet Road. The commissioner was then instructed to identify the debris in the vacant lots of the town and level it with a dozer and use it as a playground. He asked the officials to fine the owners of cattle which are causing trouble to motorists on the roads.

Municipal chairman Palvai Rammohan Reddy, Municipal Commissioner Narendar Reddy, 35th ward and 14th ward Councilors Gadde Neeraja, Pothuraju Municipal staff were present among others.

Rural Development Trust
takes up housing for poorDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JUNE 25

Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhupalipally district collector Krishna Aditya said that the district administration would extend full support to the Rural Development Trust, Ananthapur, for its efforts to uplift the poor Chenchu tribe families.

Members of the Rural Development Trust, which is constructing houses for the Chinchu tribes in Bhupalipally and Mulugu districts as part of their development project have promised to construct 520 houses for free to the Chenchu families in Mulugu and Jayashankar Bhupalipally districts.

The collector informed that 96 houses completed construction and another 102 houses are undergoing works. Land has been procured for construction of 14 houses in Shantinagar of Chityal. Land procurement for construction of another six houses is under process.

He asked officials to allot land for construction of houses in the villages so that all the poor Chenchu families in the district can be given houses.



Chenchu tribal beneficiaries receive housing documents from collector Krishna Aditya and members of RDT on Friday.

The District Collector thanked RDT for coming forward to build houses free of cost in both districts and for completing the construction of 96 houses which are ready for occupation.

"The RDT, which is part of the development of Chenchu tribesmen, will receive full assistance by the district administration. We will also assist in the speedy completion of constructions in Ghanpur, Gandhinagar, Ravinagar, Kondampally, Gollapally and Papaiahpally," he said.

The Collector directed the Mandal Tahsildars

over the phone to take steps to get permission to construct houses on the plots of land purchased by the tribesmen in Govindarao and Mulugu districts.

On this occasion, the allotment documents of houses were handed over to the beneficiaries from Ghanpur.

Ghanpur Tahsildar Krishna Chaitanya, Rural Development Trust Regional Director Shanmukha Rao, Area Team Leader Subba Rao, Coordinators Maruti, Hanumanthu, Ghanpur RI Sambaiah were present among others.

BELT SHOPS EARN
GOOD RETURNS
IN LOCKDOWN

Khammam: The timings of liquor shops are not a barrier to boozers during the lockdown. They consumed ₹130 crore worth liquor in 39 days of lockdown in Khammam district, thanks to the belt shops.

The government restricted the opening of liquor shops in the lockdown from May 12 to June 19.

The shops were allowed to open from 6 am to 10 am and later it was extended to 2 pm followed by 5 pm.

There are 89 licensed shops in the district and another 3,000 belt shops working during the time. The liquor consumption from April 6 to May 11 amounted to ₹110 crore.

Third wave threat
to ill-fed kids highRAVINDRA SESHU | DC
KHAMMAM, JUNE 25

Lack of physical growth matching their age is a big issue among children in Khammam district. This is causing worry as it is likely that this age-group may be vulnerable if there is a Covid-19 third wave. If obesity is a problem in urban areas, the interiors are hit by undergrowth, underweight and malnutrition problems, which is at an alarming 23.1 per cent among kids in the district. Though the government has been extending nutritious food in anganwadi centres, about 18,092 children are suffering from health problems. Experts point out that the percentage of children with a low-height (stunting) reflects the cumulative effects of undernutrition. This can be attributed to poor environmental conditions or long-term restriction of a child's growth potential. The government conducted a survey in two phases and selected 77,894 kids as respondents. It was found that about 8816 of them had poor growth rate, 3,004 with malnutrition, 1,427 with acute malnutrition and 4,845 underweight.

Doctor M.F. Gopinath suggested that the government give some vitamin syrups to bolster growth. Anganwadi workers have been directed to not only give eggs, milk and balamrutham but also frequently keep track of all kids, vis-a-vis weight, growth and malnutrition. District welfare officer C S Rani said that anganwadi teachers were asked to supply double ration to parents of children with health complications.

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IN BRIEF

Nizam kin speaks for OGH building

Hyderabad: The Nizam's family has requested Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao to restore the Osmania General Hospital heritage building. In a letter, Mir Najaf Ali Khan, grandson of last Nizam, said it is disheartening to see a structure built with a great vision suffering because of a sorry state of affairs.

He said the building constructed in 1919 is structurally safe, as per the Intach report. The government had also announced ₹25 crore for restoration of the heritage building and construction of four new towers in 2019.

MLA NAGENDER IGNORED POLL PROMISES: DASOJU

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

AICC official spokesperson Dasoju Shraavan criticised that MLA Danam Nagender ignored the poll promises and people of Khairatabad constituency are facing problems. "Congress is ready to fight on problems of the people and we are not bothered about the weaknesses of MLA Danam Nagender, who is unable to question Chief Minister K.Chandrasekhar Rao and minister KTR on various issues of the constituency", he said.

CRIME UP IN TS AFTER SPLIT, SAYS CONG.

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Congress Legislature Party members called on Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at Raj Bhavan here on Friday and complained of inaction in the lock-up death of a Dalit woman, Mariamma.

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and MLAs D. Sridhar Babu and T. Jayaprakash 'Jagga' Reddy informed the Governor that the custodial death showed law and order situation was worsening.

Speaking to reporters after meeting Dr Soundararajan, they pointed out that atrocities against Dalits and tribals had increased after bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh.

"A few police officers are working as TRS activists," they alleged. They charged that Mariamma had been murdered in police custody and her son Uday Kiran severely beaten up.

Congress leaders urged the Governor to order action against errant police officers in the lockup death case. They said Dr Soundararajan has assured them about taking necessary steps.

DUE PROCESS WAS FOLLOWED: JOHN MANOJ

From page 1

While Azharuddin declared Justice Deepak Verma appointed by a show of hands at the April annual general body meeting (AGM) before closing the meeting without completing the agenda, the rival faction continued the meeting and made their own appointments, which Azharuddin terms illegal.

The appointment has since been challenged and "the matter is in Supreme Court," John Manoj said.

The April AGM was already deferred, a first in HCA history, after members could not agree on the appointment of the ombudsman.

Meanwhile, the appointment of Suneel Kante as CEO has been challenged by Prakash Chand Jain, secretary of Evergreen Cricket Club, before the the III Additional Civil Judge in the Ranga Reddy court.

The matter was heard and the case posted for hearing next week with notice to the president, secretary of HCA as well as the BCCI.

Prakash contends that Kante's appointment is against applicable rules and the mandate of Supreme Court, which says the CEO shall be a management professional with management experience of at least five years as MD/CEO of a company with a turnover of at least ₹100 crore. Manoj refuted this charge. "Due process was followed in the appointment of the CEO, who has a sports background and has worked in top companies in the US and UK. He has been corresponding with the BCCI too," he said.

Telangana crosses 1 crore Covid-19 vaccination mark

Vaccination for teachers to start today, ahead of school reopening

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

Telangana state crossed the 1 crore vaccine doses mark across 33 districts on Friday. A total of 86,06,292 first doses and 14,47,066 second doses were administered, adding up to 1,00,53,000 vaccines.

On Friday, 2,03,145 vaccine doses were administered, the daily health bulletin said.

A special drive to vaccinate all teachers ahead of the July 1 reopening of educational institutions will begin on Saturday.

The state has to provide two doses of vaccination for a total adult population of 2.78 crore.

The government has been taking steps to administer free vaccines as the state began its unlock from the pandemic-linked restrictions. Public health director Dr Srinivas Rao announced that a "Vaccination on Wheels" drive was also on for street vendors and owners of commercial establishments in markets with the help of GHMC.

Volunteer groups came forward to inoculate people in various areas with the help of resident welfare associations, and free of cost. On Friday, the Sri Venkateswara Colony Welfare Association in Narayanguda gave the first and second doses of Covishield vaccine after spot registration for about 1,000 persons.

Help came from the Indian Dental Association, said residents association secretary Srikanth. The drive will take place until June 30. In Kukatpally UPHC and Ameerpet Kanakadurga temple, volunteer groups with help from GHMC ran mobile vaccination centres.



Nagababu, Prakash Raj and Sana ignore Covid-19 protocols at a meeting of the Movie Artists Association at the film chambers in Hyderabad on Friday. — DC

Number of containment zones now less than 100

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

The number of micro-containment zones (MCZ) for controlling the spread of Covid-19 has gone down from 120 three days ago to 99 on Friday. The MCZs were removed in areas having fewer cases compared to earlier.

Yet there are two districts where the MCZ numbers are high: Mahbubabad at 23 and Bhadrachalam at 20.

There is no MCZ in the GHMC area which reported the highest number of cases in the state at 135. Senior officials said the cases were spread out, and no need was felt to set up the MCZs.

The number of cases has increased in Karimnagar at 80, from 64 and 69 in the previous two days. Experts state that this phenomenon will be noted for the next 15 days as there is

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA		Update: Cases Deaths	
		Fresh Cases	1,061
		Deaths	11
		Tests Done	1,20,397
		Active Cases	15,524
		Total Cases	6,18,837
		Total Deaths	3,618
Most New Cases		Fewest New Cases	
GHMC (Hyderabad)	135	Adilabad, Kamareddy, Nirmal	3
Karimnagar	80	Komaram Bheem Asifabad	5
Suryapet	67	Jogulamba Gadwal	8
Ranga Reddy	66	Narayanpet	10
Nalgonda	65	Nizamabad	

movement of people for livelihood, agriculture and commercial reasons. There are also marriages scheduled.

Dr Yadgiri Rao, senior doctor with the Indian Medical Association, said, "We will have to wait and watch till the end of July.

The behaviour of people, total number of vaccinations and emergence of mutants will be known only then."

Dr Yadagiri Rao said people must get vaccinated, wear masks and follow physical distancing guidelines.

TRS accuses AP of stealing water

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

The TRS has intensified its attack against Andhra Pradesh over the proposed Rayala-seema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS).

Several ministers spoke out against what they described as "stealing of Telangana water by AP" and even personalised their attacks to the extent of calling AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy a 'dacoit' and his father and late Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy a 'thief'.

Telangana tourism minister V. Srinivas Goud went a step further and blamed Raja-sekhara Reddy for the death of popular Congress leader P. Janardhan Reddy who was insulted by the then dispensation for his relentless fight against diversion of Krishna waters to Rayalaseema through the Pothireddypadu project. "YSR was a devil in the form of a human being," he said.

The TRS has revived the attack on the RLIS in the past few days and accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy government of carrying out civil works relating to the project. The RLIS turned a bone of contention between the two states last year when the two government traded charges against each other on constructing illegal projects on Krishna and violating the KRMB directions.

The fresh attack gains significance against the backdrop of the political atmosphere getting charged in the run-up to the Huzurabad byelection.

Energy minister Jagadish Reddy questioned the silence of the BJP and the Congress. "Instead of fighting the AP government, the Opposition is targeting us," he said. The minister accused the BJP-led government at Centre for creating rift between the Telugu states by not finalising the sharing ratio even seven years after the bifurcation.

Agriculture minister Niranjana Reddy asked the Congress leaders to come out of the mindset of remaining as 'slaves' to Seemandhra rulers even after the formation of Telangana state.

He alleged that they were slaves to Rajasekhara Reddy in undivided AP and kept mum when he constructed the Pothireddypadu project to divert Krishna water.

STARS IGNORE COVID-19 SoPs AT MAA POLL MEETING

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25

The general public looks up to the film fraternity for inspiration. On Friday morning, however, they looked at some of them with a different feeling.

Some movie artistes were seen moving around without face mask and without observing the social distancing norm at the film chambers. The occasion, telecast soon after, was an event got up to introduce members of a panel contesting the Movie Artists Association's elections in September.

Actor Prakash Raj is planning to contest for the post of president of the association. It was his panel that met to introduce the other prospective contestants and also to discuss the agenda for the elections. The dignitaries on the dais threw Covid norms to the wind. Such meetings gain higher TRPs when telecast on TV screens.

The blatant disregard to Covid-19 norms from the film fraternity surprised many. They raised questions on social media. If someone is seen in the street without a face mask, will the police tolerate this or fine him or her? Why this exemption to movie stars, they asked.

Stardom means responsibility, especially when a pandemic spread is making lives miserable, they pointed out.

2 farmers take lives as banks deny govt aid

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JUNE 25

A farmer Rohidas Jadhav of Devapur village allegedly died by suicide as he was depressed over bank authorities not giving him Rythu Bandhu amount though the state government deposited the amount into his bank account, in Kerameri mandal in Komaram Bheem Asifabad district. He killed himself by consuming pesticide on Thursday evening, though the issue came to light only on Friday.

Family members of Rohidas said they found a suicide note written by Rohidas in which he lamented that he pinned lot of hopes on Rythu Bandhu and wanted to purchase seeds, fertilizers and pesticides with that money but the bank authorities were not ready to give the amount and wanted to adjust the amount towards the interest of the crop loans he had taken from the bank.

Meanwhile, Congress party Kisan cell state president Anwesh Reddy consoled the family members of a young farmer Aravind Chowhan of Tadihathoor who allegedly died by suicide after being depressed over

bankers not giving Rythu Bandhu money two days ago. A team of Congress leaders led by Anwesh Reddy criticised the state government for not ensuring that the Rythu Bandhu money reached the farmers and said bankers were adjusting the amount towards the interests of the crop loans taken by the farmers. Anwesh Reddy said this situation had arisen because the state government had failed to implement the crop loan waiver up to Rs 1 lakh. Congress leaders including Asifabad DCC president Vishawa Prasad, Adilabad Kisan cell district president Konda Gangadhar, Utnoor ZPTC Charulatha Rathod, were present among others.

3 nabbed for selling scales of pangolin

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 25



Pangolin scales seized by forest officers. — DC

Forest department officials arrested three persons for poaching and dealing in scales of the pangolin, commonly known as the ant-eater.

Foresters mounted a decoy operation, struck a deal with the poachers and nabbed them. The three persons hailed from Golleti in Rebanna mandal of Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.

The officials had arrested one person on June 23, who led them to two others. From them, officials seized a dummy pistol, a sword and over 200 pangolin scales. This said to be the biggest seizure in the district.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, forest range officer, Asifabad district, B. Purnima, said: "We saw that the hunters had commented on a video on YouTube. They had asked if anyone required pangolin scales, and that they had some in their possession. They had left their contact number on the comment as well. We planned a decoy operation and told them that we wanted to purchase the

From page 1

It may be remembered that the two CMs has exhibited unusual bonhomie by meeting over half a dozen times in less than eight months after Jagan Mohan Reddy became the Chief Minister of AP in May 2019 to hold talks to resolve several contentious issues between both the states post bifurcation of state in 2014.

During the talks, they discussed constructing joint projects over the

scales. When we struck a deal, they showed themselves and we arrested them, on Friday."

The pangolin is critically endangered as per the CITES (Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) and is listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife Protection Act. As per the law, hunting or trading of pangolins is punishable with rigorous imprisonment of a minimum for seven years along with a fine of not less than ₹5 lakh.

Pangolin scales are removed, without basis, to cure a range of issues from lactation problems in women and arthritis but nothing has ever been proven scientifically.

CMs exhibited bonhomie in previous meetings

Godavari to meet irrigation and drinking water needs of both the states and utilise surplus water in the Godavari for the betterment of both the states.

This bonhomie was short-lived after Jagan Mohan Reddy issued orders in May 2020 to construct the RLIS over the Krishna to divert water. Soon after, both the states filed cases in courts and tribunals accusing each other of taking up illegal projects on the Krishna. There have been no meetings since then.

LAST DATE FOR LAW CET JULY 5

Hyderabad: The last date for submission of online applications for Lawcet & PGLCet has been extended up to July 5 by the TS Council of Higher Education said on Friday. The state-level entrance exam is scheduled to be held on August 23. Eligible candidates can register on the official website lawcet.tsche.ac.in. The exam will enable admission into three and five-year LLB regular courses and two-year LLM course.

Govt to support lock-up death victim's kin

From Page 1

But, on Sunday, in another outreach, the CM decided to hold an all-party meet on June 27 to discuss the modalities for implementation of the new CM Dalit Empowerment Scheme. Floor leaders of all parties in the Assembly and Dalit leaders have been called for the meeting at Pragathi Bhavan. This, notably, is the first all-party meeting being conducted by Chandrashekar after 2014, and the first

time Pragathi Bhavan is hosting such a meeting.

Earlier, after receiving the representation from Congress MLAs, the CM advised DGP M. Mahendar Reddy to inquire into the lock up death of Mariamma and take stringent action against the police personnel responsible for this. If need be, remove them from service, the CM has said. He said the alleged lock-up death of Mariamma from Chintakaniki in Madhira Assembly segment under

● **THE CM** expressed his anguish over the "cruel behaviour" of the police.

● **HE SAID** DGP had promised to visit Mariamma's village on Saturday and inquire into the incident.

Khammam district was very painful to him, and that the government would never support such actions.

The CM said the government would support the

son and daughters of Mariamma. He asked Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar to ensure that Mariamma's son Uday Kiran is given a government job, a house and ₹15 lakh ex gratia. Mariamma's two daughters would be given ₹10 lakh each. The CM asked the DGP to visit Chintakaniki to collect the details about the lock-up death and meet the victim's family.

The Chief Minister expressed his anguish

over the "cruel behaviour" of the police. He suggested that local minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar, MP Nama Nageshwara Rao and the district collector take Mallu Bhatti along with them on June 28 and meet the victim's family members and console them.

Bhatti said the Chief Minister has assured them he would fulfill all the promises given to Mariamma's family in three days' time.

Speaking to the media

after his meeting with the CM, Bhatti said he sought stringent action against the errant police officials. The police have badly beaten up even Mariamma's son Uday Kiran and his friend Shankar. "Attacks on Dalits have increased in Telangana and there is no security for the poor and Dalits," he said.

He said DGP Mahendar Reddy had promised to visit Mariamma's village Komatlagudem on Saturday and inquire into the incident.

SHORT TAKES

PAYAL ROHATGI 'THREATENS' RESIDENTS, HELD

Ahmedabad, June 25: Bollywood actor Payal Rohatgi was arrested by the Ahmedabad city police on Friday for allegedly threatening the residents of her housing society, an official said.

An FIR was registered against her on Thursday based on a complaint lodged by society chairman Dr Parag Shah, inspector A.S. Roy of Satellite police station said.

The 36-year-old actor, who has been living with her parents in a posh society in Satellite area for the last over one year, was booked for uttering obscene words (IPC section 294-b), intentional insult (504) and criminal intimidation (506), said Roy, quoting the FIR.

In his complaint, Shah claimed that Rohatgi has been harassing society members including children for some time, and she once even threatened children that she would "break their legs" if they played in the common area of the society.

Although she does not own a house in the society herself, she attended its annual general meeting with her parents on June 20 and refused to leave despite being pointed out that she was not a member, Shah alleged.

Rohatgi abused society members during the meeting and posted an abusive message on the society's WhatsApp group, the FIR alleged.

She also threatened the members that she could get them arrested in false cases, the complaint alleged.

Shah also claimed that the actor targeted him and other members on her Instagram account.

Probe is on, the inspector said.

● ROHATGI ABUSED society members during the meeting and posted an abusive message on the society's WhatsApp group, the FIR alleged.

Homebound



President Ram Nath Kovind boards a special train on Friday to his birthplace in Uttar Pradesh from Safdarjung railway station in New Delhi. He will interact with his old acquaintances from school days and the early days of his social service. It would be after a gap of 15 years that an incumbent president is travelling by train.

— PTI

J&K unhappy with leaders' show

Netizens ridicule leaders for their failure in presenting the case of people

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, JUNE 25

The sequel of Thursday's all-party meet on Jammu and Kashmir is a huge disappointment for many people in the Union Territory (UT) who took to social media platform to ridicule the invitees for their perceived failure in presenting the case of the people they claim to represent before Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, "expressly".

More importantly, as some of them pointed out, the mainstream leaders from the Valley did not speak in unison on the vital issue of restoration of the erstwhile state's special status with some of them taking refuge under the pretext of it being sub judice.

"The BJP leaders including ministers have been repeatedly and vociferously saying Articles 370 and 35A can't come back even as the matter is before the

Supreme Court. If it is not sub judice for them why are some of our so-called leaders so apologetic about it?" asked one of them

Senior journalist Altaf Husain tweeted, "All-party meet on Kashmir yields nothing. Some leaders have, by their statements after the meeting, proved that they are collaborators. Others have proved they are spineless and inconsequential".

But Mushtaq Ahmed Alaqaband, a Srinagar resident, disagreed with him. He said, "I don't think major political decisions can be made in a single meeting, but require a continuous and comprehensive negotiation process, and Thursday's meeting was the beginning".

Arshad Ahmed, another resident, said, "People here as well in Jammu had attached several hopes with the meeting. But once again, they have been dis-

Mehbooba must go to Pak: UP minister

Ballia (UP), June 25: A UP minister has accused the Congress and Samajwadi Party of being allies of Islamic terrorists, and said madrassas are helping in the religious conversion of the poor with people involved in it getting money directly in their accounts from Muslim countries.

The allegations were made by Uttar Pradesh minister of state for parliamentary affairs Anand Swaroop Shukla while talking to reporters on Thursday late night.

The minister also attacked PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti saying "her heart is in Pakistan" and asked her to go to Pakistan.

Facts have come to light

that help of madrassas and voluntary organisations is being taken for the conversion and the people involved in the religious conversion of the poor and the deaf-mute children are getting money from Muslim countries in their personal accounts, Shukla said while talking to reporters at his residence here.

The conversion by inducing fear, greed and delusion is completely illegal and unconstitutional.

The Yogi government and the ATS is taking and will take strict action against this, Shukla said, referring to the recent arrest of two men allegedly involved in running a campaign to convert the poor and deaf-mute children to Islam.

— PTI

Panel: Delhi O2 claims exaggerated

New Delhi, June 25: The sub-group constituted by the Supreme Court to audit Oxygen consumption in hospitals in national capital during the second wave of Covid-19 said that the Delhi government 'exaggerated' the consumption of oxygen and made a claim of 1,140 MT, four times higher than the formula for bed capacity requirement of 289 MT. The five-member panel headed by AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria said the Delhi government had made the claims for allocation of 700 MT oxygen on April 30 of medical grade Oxygen using a wrong formula.

The top court had on

May 6 named a sub-group for carrying out the audit exercise for Delhi's health infrastructure and allocation of oxygen and said that it shall consists of Randeep Guleria of AIIMS, Sandeep Budhira of Max Healthcare and two IAS officers not below the rank of Joint Secretary — one each from the Centre and the Delhi government.

The panel in its report pointed out that four model hospitals in Delhi have claimed extremely high Oxygen consumption with very few beds and the claims appeared to be clearly erroneous, leading to extremely skewed information.

— PTI

MY CRIME, I FOUGHT FOR BREATH OF 2 CR PEOPLE: KEJRIWAL OVER PANEL'S REPORT

New Delhi, June 25: In face of the BJP's accusation of "criminal negligence" citing a report that the Delhi government "exaggerated" oxygen requirement during Covid-19 second wave, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said his only "crime" was that he "fought for the breath of two crore people".

He also said that those who lost their loved ones due to the shortage of oxygen should not be called "liars".

A sub-group constituted

by the Supreme Court to audit oxygen consumption in the national capital's hospitals has said that the Delhi government "exaggerated" consumption of the life-saving gas.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal took to Twitter to say, "My crime — I fought for the breath of my two crore people. When you were doing an election rally, I was awake all night arranging for oxygen. I fought, pleaded to get oxygen for people."

— PTI

Maha tightens curbs to tackle Delta plus variant

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 25

In the wake of Delta plus variant found in the state, Maharashtra has decided to impose stricter Covid restrictions in all districts notwithstanding weekly positivity rate and hospital beds availability. Maharashtra also became the first state in the country to administer more than three crore vaccine doses.

Maharashtra chief secretary Sitaram Kunte on Friday issued a notification stating that the first two levels having maximum

relaxations have been removed till further order. The government notification said, "given that the virus causing Covid is undergoing mutations in various geographies, and that these mutations are displaying more transmissibility and potential reductions in monoclonal antibody response, a state-level trigger mandating all the administrative units, irrespective of values of the indices of weekly positivity rate and oxygen bed occupancy percentage, to remain at a level not below 3 is to be in operation till withdrawn."

49 CASES OF DELTA PLUS VARIANT FOUND

Delhi: The Centre on Friday said 49 cases of the Delta plus variant of Covid-19 have been found in 11 states from over 45,000 samples that have been sequenced for this mutated strain of the virus.

The Union health ministry said till now the cases are "very localised".

The Delta plus has been termed as a "Variant of Concern" by the World Health Organisation.

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

EUROPEAN UNION DIVIDED ON MEETING PUTIN

Brussels, June 25: European Union countries bordering Russia rejected a Franco-German plan to resume official meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with one leader likening the move to an attempt to talk a bear out of stealing honey. In a statement in the early hours of Friday morning,

EU leaders said only that they "will explore formats and conditionalities of dialogue with Russia." There was no mention of any high-level meetings or plans for a summit with Putin. The European Union is deeply divided in its approach to Moscow.

Russia is the EU's biggest natural gas supplier, and plays a key role in a series of international conflicts and issues linked to Europe's strategic interests, including the Iran nuclear deal, and conflicts in Syria and Libya. European heavyweight Germany has strong economic interests.

275M USED DRUGS WORLDWIDE IN 2020, SAYS UN

Geneva, June 25: Around 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders as 275 million people used drugs worldwide in 2020, according to the 2021 World Drug Report which was released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Thursday.

As per the report, in the last 24 years, cannabis potency had increased by as much as four times in parts of the world during the Covid-19 pandemic. In surveys of health professionals across 77 countries, 42 per cent asserted that cannabis use had increased.

"Lower perception of drug use risks has been linked to higher rates of drug use, and the findings of UNODC's 2021 World Drug Report highlight the need to close the gap between perception and reality to educate young people and safeguard public health," said UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly.

160 missing in Miami mishap

Four dead, crews comb through rubble of collapsed condominium

Surfside (US), June 25: About 160 people were still unaccounted for Friday a day after an oceanside condominium building collapsed into a pile of rubble, and searchers combing through a twisted, shifting pile of concrete and metal feared the death toll of at least four could go much higher.

With scores of firefighters working overnight to reach any possible survivors both from under and atop the remains of the building, hopes rested on how quickly crews using dogs and microphones to sift through the wreckage could complete their grim, yet delicate task.

"Every time we hear a sound, we concentrate on those areas," said Assistant Miami-Dade Fire Chief Raide Jadallah. Three more bodies were removed overnight, and Miami-Dade Police Director Freddy Ramirez said authorities were working with the medical examiner's office to identify the victims. Eleven injuries were reported, with four people treated at hospitals.

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said rescuers were at "extreme



Rescue workers on a crane inspect the wreckage of a partially collapsed building in Surfside north of Miami Beach, Florida on Friday.

risk" going through the rubble.

"Debris is falling on them as they do their work. We have structural engineers on site to ensure that they will not be injured, but they are proceeding because they are so motivated and they are taking extraordinary risk on the site every day," she said.

With searchers using saws and jackhammers to look for pockets large enough to hold a person, Levine Cava said there was still hope of finding people alive.

The missing at what was left of the 12-story Champlain Towers South included people from around the world: A beloved retired Miami-

area teacher and his wife. Orthodox Jews from Russia. Israelis. The sister of Paraguay's first lady. Others from South America.

State Sen. Jason Pizzo of Miami Beach told the *Miami Herald* he watched as tactical teams of six worked early Friday to sift through the debris. He said he saw one body taken

in a yellow body bag and another that was marked. They were taken to a homicide unit tent that was set up along the beach. Many people remained at the reunification center set up near the collapse site early Friday morning, awaiting results of DNA swabs that could help identify victims.

— AP

US to keep 650 troops in Afghanistan

Washington, June 25: Roughly 650 US troops are expected to remain in Afghanistan to provide security for diplomats after the main American military force completes its withdrawal, which is set to be largely done in the next two weeks, U.S. officials told *The Associated Press*.

Moreover, several hundred additional American forces will remain at the Kabul airport, potentially until September. They'll assist Turkish troops providing security, a temporary move until a more formal Turkey-led security operation is in place, the officials said on Thursday.

Overall, officials said the U.S. expects to have American and coalition military command, its leadership, and most troops out by July Fourth, or shortly after that, meeting an aspirational deadline that commanders developed months ago.

The officials were not authorized to discuss details of the withdrawal and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The departure of the bulk of the more than 4,000 troops that have been in the country in recent months is unfolding well before President Joe Biden's September 11 deadline for withdrawal.

And it comes amid accelerating Taliban battlefield gains, fueling fears that the Afghan government and its military could collapse in a matter of months.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking Friday in Paris, noted the increased violence and cited "a real danger" that if the Taliban tries to take the country by force, "we'll see a renewal of a war or possibly worse."

But, Blinken said, the Biden administration came to the conclusion that not removing US

troops, as the Trump administration had promised the Taliban in February 2020, would have been a bad choice.

The administration believes the Taliban would have resumed attacks on US forces, prompting an escalation of the war.

"Had we not announced that we were leaving, then that restraint, in terms of attacking our forces and attacking the capitals, would have ended," Blinken said.

He said a continued US presence "certainly would have helped significantly" the Kabul government.

"But what is almost certain is that our military would have come to us and said, well, the situation has changed, we need more forces. And we would have repeated the cycle that we've been in for 20 years. And at some point, you have to say this has to stop."

Biden faces strong criticism from some Republicans for pulling out of Afghanistan, even though President Donald Trump made the 2020 deal with the Taliban to withdrawing all U.S. forces by May 2021.

Officials have repeatedly stressed that security at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul is a critical requirement to keeping any US diplomatic staff in Afghanistan.

Still, the decision to keep additional troops there for several more months makes it more complicated for the Biden administration to declare a true end to America's longest war until later this fall.

In a statement Thursday night, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said that as Biden has ordered, the US will complete the withdrawal by early September. "Nothing has changed about that goal," Kirby said.

— AP

Oz, Israel bring back mask rules

Sydney, June 25: Australia and Israel, which had been successful in fending off Covid-19, reimposed restrictions on Friday as cases surged of the highly contagious Delta variant which also threatened Africa with a brutal third wave.

The centre of Australia's largest city Sydney entered lockdown, a shock for a population that had returned to relative normality after months of recording very few local cases, while vaccination success story Israel reimposed indoor mask-wearing less than two weeks after it lifted the measure.

And in Fiji, another country that saw early

successes against the virus, health authorities admitted for the first time that Covid transmission is widespread in the community. While vaccination campaigns have helped bring down infections in numerous — mostly wealthy — countries, the rise of the Delta variant which was first found in India has led to fears of new waves of a virus that has already killed nearly 3.9 million people.

In Australia, which has been one of the most successful nations in containing the Coronavirus after shutting its borders, around a million people were ordered to stay home for at least a week. — AFP

Facing deportation, Indian youth seek White House aid

Washington, June 25: A group of Indian youngsters from across America, facing imminent prospects of deportation, has met senior Biden administration officials at the White House and influential lawmakers, appealing them to "let us stay in the US".

There are 2,00,000 such young Americans, who have spent their entire childhood and teenage in the US, who are facing the prospects of imminent deportation to the country of their origin as they have either attained the age of 21 or about to reach that age, after which they can no longer

be dependent on their parent's visas.

A significantly large number of these parents are in a decades-long wait for a Green Card. A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege of residing permanently in the US.

The young Indians, led by Dip Patel, a clinical pharmacist in Illinois, surprised many of the congressmen and senators, who greeted them at the Capitol last week, as they were probably the first batch of lobbyists after the US Congress, after the

recent lifting of social distancing restrictions by the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC).

Patel, 25, is founder of Improve The Dream, a youth-led organisation bringing awareness for children who face ageing out and self-deportation, was joined by Pareen Mhatre, 21, a senior at the University of Iowa majoring in Biomedical Engineering and minoring in Business Administration; Naga Raghav Sreeram, 21, a senior at the University of California, Davis majoring in Computer Science.

— PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

26 JUNE 2021

J&K: Delimitation, polls on; statehood is carrot

There was no official agenda set for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with leaders of mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir last Thursday. That was evidently done to let the Valley politicians steam off if they so wished about the events of August 5, 2019 when the state's constitutional autonomy was taken away and its status reduced to that of a Union territory. But that does not mean Delhi did not have an agenda. And it is on this scheme of things that the PM was apparently able to secure the agreement of the Kashmiri leaders, although no papers appear to have been signed.

It's three years since the last popular government was pulled down. In this time no major objectives cited as justification for ending J&K's constitutional status-ending of terrorism, rapid development, and squelching of the separatist mindset (which does influence a segment of the population) have been achieved, although the Union home ministry has made extravagant claims. An elected government had to be installed.

To make that possible, the very politicians who were locked up in August 2019, and called the "Gupkar gang", had to be persuaded to engage in dialogue with the PM. And they did. This is perhaps the Modi government's singular achievement. But it is hard to bet on the people. It is useful to remember that alienation in the Valley has never been so complete. Still, as a rule the people of Kashmir do not refuse dialogue, and that is what we just saw. Does this mean that a chapter of hope has opened after the darkness that descended two years ago? Hardly. In no way can Mr Modi's effort be compared with the mood that captured the Valley when another PM — in a speech in Srinagar — spoke of meeting the aspirations of the people in a spirit of "insaniyat, jamhooriyat, Kashmiriyat". Alas, the present dispensation in Delhi lacks credibility in Kashmir as well as in Hindu-majority Jammu.

However, people in J&K are fed up with bureaucratic rule in which they have no voice. They have been hungering for an early Assembly election, and their politicians could not have turned against the popular mood. But the promise of Assembly polls comes with a caveat — that there would be a fresh delimitation exercise in the UT while the national-level delimitation is slated for 2026.

A plausible reason for this is the decades-old demand of the Sangh Parivar for more Hindu-dominated constituencies in the Muslim-majority state in the belief that this might offer a chance to have a Hindu CM. Will this hope of the BJP materialise after delimitation? That is an open question.

In light of the Thursday meeting, delimitation and state polls are now officially on the cards, and the Valley's main politicians appear to have lent the process their sanction. Without their endorsement these processes would lack credibility.

In spite of impassioned appeals by senior elements among those gathered for the discussion with the PM, the Centre has not budged on restoring J&K's statehood. The official mantra is this would happen at an "appropriate time". This suggests that J&K will be run from the Centre as a UT even after the Assembly poll. This leaves questions: Is the election idea deceptive? Is it what the people want? In the final analysis, will Kashmir politicians agree to such an election? The fundamental subject of restoring J&K's autonomy is before the Supreme Court, and that was cited as a reason to stymie discussion on it on Thursday.

McAfee: Fame and misfortune

The rich and famous may be destined to living their lives in a goldfish bowl unless they get obsessively reclusive. The rich also tend to come in all shapes, sizes and lifestyles with the only constant in their lives being that they are invariably led under public scrutiny. The cybersecurity pioneer John McAfee did not, however, fall into any well-known stereotypes of the rich with their lavish lifestyles whose privacy is invariably invaded by the tabloids, especially when their marriages run into the rocks as they often tend to in that charmed circle.

McAfee was an unusual man who made his fame and a bit of fortune when the first major computer virus named "Brain" hit the web in 1986 and he devised ways to combat it. To his misfortune he left the company in 1994 long after which Intel took it over, in 2011, for \$7.68 billion and built up a customer base of 500 million. McAfee's expertise in computer security meant he made a small pile himself but he said he lost most of it in the 2008 crash. In a replay of the sour grapes fable, he knocked McAfee for what it had become without him but all that brought him was 10 million viewers and more notoriety than fame.

His troubles as a disillusioned millionaire may serve as a general warning to all of his ilk. He seemed to lose his self control when suspected of shooting a neighbour in a tiny island off Belize because that man may have poisoned four of his dogs. He somehow emerged from it unscathed until he ran afoul of the US tax authorities. Avoiding income tax may be a plaything of the rich but McAfee, once a wannabe US presidential candidate, simply refused to pay taxes on principle and ended up in a Spanish jail where he said he didn't like the food. The fear of extradition to 30 years in a US prison pushed him into taking his own life, a final warning then that fame and fortune can lead to Shakespearean tragedy too.

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Subhani



Do Indians and our govt really care about sports?



Shobhaa's Take

India rediscovered legendary athlete Milkha Singh after he died of Covid-19 complications at a Chandigarh hospital just five days after he lost Nirmal, his wife of 58 years, to the same disease. An avalanche of tributes poured in, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling him a "colossal sportsman who captured the nation's imagination". Several flowery tributes followed, but one thing that struck me amid all this gush was the sad fact that this outstanding sportsman, who brought so much fame and glory to India when he "flew" on the track, had only got the Padma Shri back in 1959, and nothing since. He declined the Arjuna Award and sulked publicly, hinting he expected a Padma Bhushan. We all know how Padma awards work; but surely years later Milkha should have been "upgraded".

We can still do it! So many other sports stars have been richly rewarded for their achievements. Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar, for example. No disrespect, but if a world-class cricketer can get the country's highest civilian award, why not an international recognised track star? There is talk of a posthumous award for Milkha, but frankly posthumous awards have little meaning. The only people who benefit are family members. The recipient passes away without the thrill and joy of being publicly feted. Posthumous awards are a waste of time; those deserving should be celebrated when they are hale and hearty and can cherish the honour with their loved ones.

Milkha Singh must have been a fairly modest man: a huge attribute in today's times when every

second person is a brazen hustler. Had Milkha been shrewder or more calculating, he would have milked his awe-inspiring status and demanded all sorts of privileges, like many others. I watched *Bhaag Milkha, Bhaag* thrice in 2013. For one, I was a track athlete myself, and know what it takes to breast that tape and create new records. Farhan Akhtar played Milkha in the biopic, which grossed over ₹100 crores. Apparently, Milkha asked for ₹1 as his fee, but insisted that a share of the profits go to his foundation. Akhtar did a convincing job of not just acquiring a runner's taut frame, but sensitively portraying a runner's anxieties and vulnerabilities. The man behind the movie, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, said of Milkha: "He believed there are no short cuts if you want to be the best in the world."

It's not too late to course correct. Governments and sports bodies the world over are commissioning statues of living sports heroes — Rafael Nadal recently posed in front of his magnificent statue that was unveiled at Roland Garros as Rafa fans worldwide cheered and applauded the legend, winner of 20 Grand slams. In India, the politics of erecting statues of public figures is mired in controversy. It's bad enough that we have to endure the mediocrity of *netas* while they are alive. It's much worse to have precious urban spaces blocked by ugly statues of awful people whose "contribution" is dodgy at best. I'm sure nobody would question an appropriate statue of "The Flying Sikh" (a title given to him by Pakistan's Ayub Khan) outside Chandigarh airport. There is a wax statue of his at Delhi's Madame Tussaud's

museum. But is that really enough? Milkha Singh was orphaned during Partition and saw five members of his family being butchered. He arrived as a refugee in Delhi and joined the Indian Army after abandoning plans to become a dacoit out of sheer frustration! He went on to bring glory to the nation as a four-time Asian Games gold medalist. His 400 metres timing of 45.6 seconds was unbroken for 38 years. What a story for youngsters to derive inspiration from!

India really needs to value its sporting greats and reward them suitably. Since I am one of the growing voices saying "No" to the Tokyo Olympics (23 July-8 August 2021), I read sports minister Kiren Rijiju's comments on India's participation with interest. "This time we are aiming high, with full confidence and I believe we should do better than any of our previous performances." Wait a minute, Sirji. Our "best" show was way back in 2012, when we came back with six measly medals. Minister *saab* is expecting a record haul and says he has interacted with most of our elite players and Olympians. For the record, Mr Rijiju's ministry spent ₹1,000 crores in the past four years preparing for the Olympics.

While I admire his faith and am also hoping for a decent showing this year, despite the pandemic with all its challenges, it must be said that our contingent came back with two medals from the 2016 Rio Games (where China won 70). At that time, I was slaughtered across the social media for "criticising" our athletes for their dismal per-

This outstanding sportsman had only got the Padma Shri back in 1959, and nothing since. He declined the Arjuna Award. We all know how Padma awards work; but surely Milkha should have been 'upgraded'!

formance. Our athletes are only as good as their support system. Mr Rijiju is a smart, young, dynamic politician (future Prime Minister material). He has as much riding on our medal haul as the athletes themselves, who have trained hard for this momentous event.

The problem is our casual attitude towards sports. Apart from cricket, almost no other sporting activity is "recognised" or encouraged as enthusiastically. Milkha Singh's son Jeev Milkha Singh (also an Arjuna Award winner) is arguably one of India's best golfers. We have our star tennis players and more recently, badminton is also receiving its due, along with table tennis. Our staple — hockey — where we used to be world leaders — has been relegated to a less hallowed position, after we failed to win any significant title after dominating the game for decades. The mindset of most Indian parents has not shifted sufficiently to support the sporting dreams of their children. Golf and tennis are seen as elitist sports that require generous financial support. Sports scholarships are hard to come by. Talented athletes have it tough. It's only now that we see women boxers and wrestlers coming into their own and shining at global events. As are female shooters. Archery is finding takers across the country, but in terms of commercial success, the megabucks are made by cricketers, and cricketers alone. With our Olympics contingent all set to compete in the most prestigious sporting event on earth, here's wishing them love and luck. Milkha Singh titled his autobiography *The Race of My Life*, and the nation ran it with him. His race ended on June 15, 2021. It's time to chorus "Bhaag India, Bhaag", and hope Mr Rijiju's prediction of a rich Olympics' haul goes beyond wishful thinking.

Instagram handle: @ShobhaaDe; Twitter: @DeShobhaa

LETTERS

SCHOOLS, COLLEGES

When it comes to school-children, it is difficult to ensure that all Covid protocols are followed as they lack awareness or discipline. I saw Covid rules flouted in colleges when they were briefly reopened in February. Students were not wearing masks or keeping social distance. Colleges and schools often have students crammed inside small classrooms. These may turn into Covid-19 hotspots.

Akshat Mohan
Hyderabad

UNEASY ON CITIZENS

Serilingampally GHMC telephone numbers and names of contacts are incorrect. The least a government can do is provide the correct details. The numbers must be corrected in the agricultural marketing department like Rythu bazaars. Citizens find it hard to contact government departments.

Buddhavarapu Gopalakrishna
Hyderabad

CRICKET SURRENDER

India's abject capitulation in the WTC final left a bad taste for Indian fans. Losing in a final is not a disgrace but losing without a fight is. We hoped Team India will go the full distance and bring cheer to us. The street smart skipper and the redoubtable coach appeared to have missed a trick in not including the additional seamer Siraj. The rival skipper played admirably and was easily the best batsman. Our bowlers lacked imagination and performed below par. The team must get its act together for the England Test series.

Dr V.K.V. Prasad
Secunderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Experts' panel on irrigation projects

NEW DELHI, JUNE 25.

An experts committee of engineers and economists is being appointed by the Government to examine how the cost of irrigation projects could be brought down.

This was announced in the Lok Sabha today by Irrigation and Power Minister K.L. Rao, while replying to the debate on demands for grants for his ministry. The House later voted for the demands, after rejecting all the cut motions.

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"The poets have all claimed the wine
From Rumi to Hafiz
I asked if they meant the draught
divine
And they said "mind your own biz!"
Now Bachchoo cries out in vain to Saki
Who replies with a fiendish grin
"Abh sab khuttam, Koochh nahi baki
The wages of your sin!"

— From **The Regrets of Messrs Rowe, Rowe and K Gumby-Harer**, by Bachchoo

Of 'flat earth' & science denial: New orthodoxy of intolerance

Think, gentle reader, as you skim this column, of Galileo, one of the fathers of science and hence of freedom from assertive superstition. He looked through telescopes and observed the movement of the planets and the sun. He proceeded to assert, from his observations, that the sun didn't circle the earth but, contrary to the firmly held doctrines and teachings of the Church, that our planet revolved and rotated, circling the sun, giving rise to day and night and to the seasons.

All hell broke loose on Twitter and Instagram. The bigots of Catholicism

accused him of blasphemy! The earth doesn't move, they insisted. The outcry led the leaders of the Church to arrest poor Galileo and subject him to a trial. If this pioneer of truth had any supporters at the time, they might have pointed out to the court, and indeed to the world, that Galileo had not called for the castration or execution of those who believed that the sun went round the earth. He hadn't even called for the banning of all documents or teaching materials which asserted that the earth was flat or that it didn't move.

Nevertheless, he was tried for merely saying what he had scientifically deduced. He was aware that if they found him guilty of blasphemy, he could be put to death. Such was the power of the prevalent orthodoxy. Realising this, Galileo confessed to the bigots of the Inquisition that he recanted his blasphemous outburst. Of course, the earth was the centre of the universe and, as God's central creation, didn't move a millimetre. He may not have been applauded by the court, but he was certainly spared twenty lashes of the whip or being burned at the stake.

The story goes that, true to his beliefs, as he left the court, he muttered to himself, or perhaps to his God if he still believed in Him, "eppur si muove" — and yet it moves!

I don't suppose one can quite call her the Galileo of our times but, gentle reader, here follows the story of an artist called Jess de Wahl who this week hit the headlines through a controversy which she had sparked.

Ms de Wahl is an embroidery artist, and her work is famous enough and deemed good enough to be adopted by and sold in the gallery shop of the Royal Academy of Arts. The RA is probably the premier institution run by artists of all sorts. Their permanent exhibition and other occasional displays are among the most respectable, reviewed and revered in Britain.

Apart from excellence in her floral patterns, Ms de Wahl declares a devoted, thematic commitment to feminist principles and to feminist radical activism through art. But! But she doesn't believe that men and women can through assertion, surgery, hormone treatment or all of these, change their gender. She expressed her scepti-

cism in a blog. She was very careful to assert that she absolutely supported the right of people to think as they like and for the political and social rights of everyone, including men who assert that they are women or women who assert that they are really men. Her reservations were about the scientific fact that you are born and grow with one gender determined by the chromosomes in your thirty trillion cells. I suppose the harshest way of putting it is that "trans-women are not really women and trans-men are not really men!"

The trans community's representatives, if there are such people, took exception to her expressing this view. Eight people wrote to the Royal Academy to point out that the RA's professed ethical stance was to respect and include, etc etc. The RA responded hastily and removed and banned all Ms Wahl's exhibits and work from their shop, labelling her "transphobic".

Ms Wahl objected, saying she had not been in any sense the perpetrator of a "hate crime" and that her freedom to express a scientifically valid view should be respected. There was, from

her supporters, some mention of suing the RA for transgressing equality laws. No such action has yet been taken.

Following this row, Ms Wahl has received literally thousands of texts, tweets or whatever in support of her stance and also some nasty ones wishing that she was dead.

Her stance follows that of Harry Potter writer J.K. Rowling and feminist philosopher Germaine Greer, among others. It is also supported by feminists who object to trans-women entering women's athletic competitions and even challenge the idea that trans-women should use women's changing rooms and toilets and be confined in women's prisons when they offend.

The strictures against Ms de Wahl are part of a new orthodoxy of intolerance. Of course, individuals can assert what they please about their own gender or sexuality — though white people asserting that they are black would meet with the same intensity of strictures the orthodoxy favours. That "of course" should include the right to publicly assert scientific facts. The earth is not flat simply because I say so!

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,925.04	0.43
Nifty 50	15,860.40	0.44
S&P 500*	4,278.70	0.29
Dollar (₹)	74.20	-0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.17	0.39
Euro (₹)	88.59	0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,309▼66	0.14
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	76.07	0.67
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.028	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.502	0.015

* As of 8:30 PM IST

PNB HF voting okays red-flagged re-appointments

PNB Housing Finance shareholders have passed the resolutions regarding appointment of Hardayal Prasad as managing director and CEO and re-appointments of others on the company's board. Among various passed resolutions were re-appointments of independent directors (IDs) Chandrasekaran Ramakrishnan and Nilesh S. Vikamsey—whose re-induction was red flagged by a proxy advisory firm this month.

LIC, SBI Life pick up stake in Indian Bank under QIP



Life Insurance Corporation, SBI Life and Canara Bank were among the top investors picking up stakes in Indian Bank under a qualified institutional placement (QIP) that closed on Thursday, a regulatory filing said. LIC picked up 17.80 per cent, SBI Life Insurance 11.87 per cent, SBI Mutual Fund and its various schemes 11.87 per cent, SocGen and its various schemes 9.74 per cent and Canara Bank 5.93 per cent of the shares offered.

FAME Phase-II scheme extended by two years

The government said it has extended the second phase of FAME India scheme by two years till March 31, 2024, for faster adoption of electric mobility and development of its manufacturing ecosystem. The second phase of FAME (Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles) India scheme focuses on supporting electrification of public and shared transportation.

India Pesticides IPO subscribed 29 times

The IPO of India Pesticides Limited was subscribed 29 times on the closing day of the subscription. The Rs 800-crore IPO received bids for 56,07,11,650 shares against 1,93,10,345 shares on offer. The qualified institutional buyers category was subscribed 42.95 times, non-institutional investors 51.88 times, and those for retail individual investors 11.30 times. The offer was in a price range of Rs 290-296.



Open offer makes it over ₹6,300-cr deal Pharmeasy to take reins of Thyrocare

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 25

In yet another transaction in the online pharma space, digital healthcare company Pharmeasy on Friday announced it will acquire a controlling stake in diagnostic chain Thyrocare for Rs 4,546 crore in an all-cash deal. With this, the online space is witnessing acquisition of a listed entity by a start-up.

API Holdings, the parent of the Pharmeasy, will buy a 66.11 per cent stake in Thyrocare from A. Velumani, chairman and managing director of the company and his affiliates at Rs 1,300 per share, according to a statement.

The affiliates include A. Sundararaju, Amruta Velumani, Anand Velumani, Thyrocare Properties & Infrastructure, Pavilion Commercial, Thyrocare Publications, Sumathi Infra Project and Mahima Advertising.

The acquisition of a majority stake in the listed entity will also see a subsidiary of API Holdings, Docon Technologies, making an open offer to acquire an additional 26 per cent stake of Thyrocare.

Docon Technologies along with API Holdings has announced an open offer for acquisition of up to 1,37,55,077 fully paid-up equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each from the public shareholders of Thyrocare Technologies, representing 26 per cent of the expanded voting share



capital, at a price of Rs 1,300 per equity share aggregating to total consideration of Rs 1,788 crore in cash, Thyrocare informed the exchanges. This takes the total value of the deal to about Rs 6,334 crore.

Velumani will be separately acquiring a minority non-controlling stake of less than 5 per cent in API as part of a series of equity investments by existing and new investors of API. According to reports, Velumani will be investing Rs 1,500 crore and hold a 4.9 per cent stake in API.

Shares of Thyrocare closed 6.23 per cent up at Rs 1,448.05 apiece on the BSE on Friday.

Pharmeasy has a user base of 12 million consumers, and a network of 6,000 digital consultation clinics and 90,000 partner retailers across the country. Thyrocare performs over 110 million diagnostic tests annually. It is the largest B2B player in the diagnostics space and has a network of 3,330 collec-

tion centres across 2,000 towns in India. "The unique reach and strength of Thyrocare in diagnostics blended with the young and dynamic team of PharmEasy will bring in better healthcare solutions for common man nationwide" said Velumani, CMD of Thyrocare. Earlier in May, Pharmeasy had fully acquired Medlife after entering the unicorn club. API Holdings is reported to be strengthening its portfolio ahead of an initial public offering, probably in 12-18 months.

In other major deals in the online healthcare space in recent times, Tata Digital bought a majority stake in 1MG Technologies. Reliance too had acquired a majority stake in Netmeds to enter the online pharmacy space.

According to consultants RedSeer, the e-health space touched a gross merchandise value of \$1.2 billion in FY20 and is estimated to have clocked a value of \$2 billion in FY21.

Bids invited for leasing out 16 railway land parcels

New Delhi, June 25: The Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) has called for bids for leasing out 16 land parcels across the country with the aim of generating revenue of over Rs 1,900 crore.

Prominent among these 16 sites are Boulevard Road Colony in Delhi, land near Moula Ali Flyover in Secunderabad, Ramgarh Tal Colony in Gorakhpur, Lucknow Railway Station Redevelopment, plots at Gomti Nagar in Lucknow and at Salt Golah in Howrah.

These sites have been chosen due to their marketability and exclusive locations, which make them eminently suitable for commercial and residential development, the authority said.

"RLDA will lease out these land parcels to prospective developers who will be mandated to develop these sites in line with local by-laws," RLDA vice-chairman Ved Parkash Dudeja said.

The authority is targeting revenue generation of Rs 2,000 crore for the Indian Railways in 2021-22, up from Rs 352 crore the previous year.

RLDA is a statutory authority under the Ministry of Railways for the development of railway land.

Indian Railways has about 43,000 hectares of vacant land across India. — PTI

No tax liability on Covid-related receipts

FC BUREAU NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Providing a much-needed tax concession to the people who may have received financial help from their employers and well-wishers for meeting expenses incurred for Covid-19 treatment, the government on Friday announced that there will be no tax liability on such amounts received.

"In order to ensure that no income-tax liability arises on this account, it has been decided to provide income-tax exemption to the amount received by a taxpayer for medical treatment from an employer or from any person for treatment of Covid-19 during FY2019-20 and subsequent years," the finance ministry said in a notification.

"Ex-gratia payments received by family members of a person who has died due to Covid 19 from an employer will also be tax exempt without any limit. Such a payment from other persons aggregating to Rs 10 lakh will be tax exempt," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said.

Besides, the government also announced various tax exemptions and extended some key tax compliance deadlines.

Of the deadline relaxation, the most important deadline extension involves the linking of PAN and the Aadhaar card. It has been extended by three months. "Other than that, the time to invest in residential house for tax deduction has been extended by more than three months

DEADLINES RELAXED	
▶ Linking of PAN and the Aadhaar card extended to Sept. 30	▶ Date for furnishing TDS certificate in Form 16 extended till July 31
▶ On sale of residential property the re-investment deadline extended to Sept. 30	▶ Quarterly statement in Form 15CC can be furnished by July 31
▶ Due date for furnishing TDS statement for Q4 is now July 15	▶ Equalisation Levy Statement in Form No. 1 can be submitted by July 31

and the 'Vivad se Viswas' payment without interest has been extended by two months from June 30 to August 31," the notification said.

In case of taxing capital gains arising out of transfer of residential house property, the CBDT further said that for relief in taxation, the re-investment deadline would be September 3, 2021 for such capital gains. Generally, Section 54 of the Income Tax Act provides that in case there is capital gain on account of transfer of a residential house property, such capital gain can be exempt from tax if the taxpayer invests the capital gain amount into another house property within two years (in case of purchase of new house) or within three years (in case of construction of a house) from date of transfer of original house property.

However, the CBDT circular now provides that in case any such time period of two/three years is expiring between April 1, 2021 and September 29, 2021, will

be extended to September 30, 2021. "Besides, the deadline for making payments under the Vivad Se Vishwas direct tax dispute resolution scheme has been extended by two months till August 31," it said.

"The last date for PAN-Aadhaar linking too has been extended by three months to September 30, 2021, while the same for furnishing Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) certificate in Form 16 to the employees by employers has been extended till July 31, from July 15, 2021," it added.

The due date for furnishing TDS statement for the last (January-March) quarter has also been extended to July 15, from June 30. "The quarterly statement in Form 15CC to be furnished by an authorised dealer for remittances made for the June quarter would have to be furnished by July 31."

"Also, the deadline for furnishing Equalisation Levy Statement in Form No. 1 for the financial year 2020-21, has been extended by a month till July 31, 2021, the CBDT said.

RBI bars MPs, MLAs from urban co-op bank helm

FC BANKING BUREAU MUMBAI, JUNE 25

To curtail the nexus between urban co-operative banks and political leaders that have resulted in frauds and led to bank failures, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Friday prescribed educational qualifications and 'fit and proper' criteria for managing directors (MDs) and whole-time directors (WTDs) of primary urban cooperative banks and barred MPs and MLAs from these posts.

Issuing the guidelines for appointment of MDs and WTDs, the RBI said MPs, MLAs and representatives of municipal corporations will not be eligible to hold such positions in the primary urban cooperative banks (UCBs).

It further said the MD/WTD should be a post graduate or have qualifications in finance discipline. He or she could be either chartered/cost accountant, MBA (finance) or have a diploma in banking or cooperative business management. The person

should not be below 35 years of age or more than 70 years, it added.

"The person shall have a combined experience of at least eight years at the middle/senior management level in the banking sector (including the experience gained in the concerned UCB) or non-banking finance companies engaged in lending (loan companies) and asset financing," the notification said.

Besides MPs, MLAs and representatives of municipal corporations and local bodies, persons engaged in

business, trade or having substantial interest in any company too will not be eligible for appointment to such positions.

Regarding the tenure, the RBI said the person can be appointed for a maximum of five years and will be eligible for re-appointment, but not beyond 15 years. After that, the person, if necessary, may be re-appointed after a three-year cooling period.

It said the "UCBs whose existing MD/CEO has completed a tenure of five years may approach RBI."

SBI will weather any wave: Khara

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JUNE 25

The country's largest lender, State Bank of India, has adjusted itself to the challenges posed by the pandemic and is well-positioned to tackle any subsequent Covid wave and as well continue the performance trajectory of FY21 in FY22, its chairman Dinesh Khara said at the bank's 66th annual general meeting on Friday.

"In conclusion, the bank adjusted to the challenges posed by the Covid-19 pandemic and is better positioned to tackle any subsequent wave. I am cautiously optimistic that the performance trajectory of FY2021 will continue in FY2022 as well," said Khara.

He said in the current financial year, the bank will continue to accelerate its digital agenda besides also focussing on recovery from bad loans. The bank will focus on expanding the scope and reach of app Yono further.

"With the rollout of pre-package insolvency for resolution, resumption of courts and formation of National Asset Reconstruction Company, efforts will be in full force to keep the momentum in stressed asset recovery in the current financial year."

He said that the Bank is comfortably placed in terms of growth capital and opportunities for lending in promising sectors will be explored.

Despite FY2021 being an extremely challenging year, SBI reported the highest ever net profit of Rs 20,410 crore, he said.

BEING | 'COOL' Prez offers \$30 worth of Bitcoin to citizens to boost its use Bitcoin to be legal tender in El Salvador

MICHAEL MCDONALD JUNE 25

El Salvador President Nayib Bukele doubled down on the country's new law making Bitcoin legal tender and offered \$30 worth of the cryptocurrency to any citizen who signs up for a digital wallet.

The government will create its own Bitcoin wallet called Chivo, which is slang for "cool" in El Salvador, Bukele said during a national address on Thursday night. The funds will be deposited into the account of any citizen who downloads it and registers as a user with their phone number and ID number, he said.

The law making Bitcoin

legal tender will enter into force on September 7, he said.

Bukele, 39, reiterated his arguments that using the cryptocurrency will help attract investment, boost consumption and cut the cost of sending remittances for millions of Salvadorans working abroad. But bank accounts in dollars will remain in dollars, and salaries and pensions will continue to be paid in dollars, he said.

"Why create this law? Because Bitcoin has a \$600 billion market capitalisation globally and if we do this, investors and tourists who own Bitcoin will come to the country and benefit Salvadorans and the economy," Bukele said.



Nayib Bukele

der," he said. The Chivo wallet will be available to download in September and it will be compatible with other Bitcoin wallets, Bukele said.

The government will provide training for businesses on Bitcoin transactions and seek to improve Internet and mobile phone penetration to encourage the cryptocurrency's use, he said. Businesses that are technologically unable to receive e-payments will be excluded from the law, he added.

Not everyone shares Bukele's enthusiasm for the plan. Fitch Ratings said in a report on Thursday that the legislation establishing Bitcoin as legal tender would

increase regulatory risks for financial institutions, including the potential of violating international anti-money laundering and terrorist financing standards.

"A rushed implementation of the new alternative payment system platform will affect financial institutions' management framework for operational, cyber/ransomware, currency and liquidity risks," Fitch analysts including Rolando Martinez wrote.

The International Monetary Fund has also criticised the move, while the World Bank rejected a request from the government to assist with Bitcoin implementation.

— Bloomberg

Kolkata, June 25: The production linked incentive (PLI) scheme announced by the government for ramping up large-scale manufacturing capacity does not compensate for obstacles in an uncompetitive business environment, Maruti Suzuki chairman R. C. Bhargava said on Friday.

He advocated policies directed at making manufacturing globally competitive by bringing down costs.

"The PLI scheme will help certain sectors and products. It cannot compensate for the obstacles of being uncompetitive," Bhargava said at an interactive session with The Bengal Chamber.

The government had announced an outlay of Rs 1.97 lakh crore for the PLI scheme for 13 sectors, including automobile, in the 2021-22 Union budget.

To a question, Bhargava said the Maruti Suzuki was not looking for new manufacturing plants as the industry CAGR for the last few years was less than 2 per cent.

To attract investment, there has to be political and administrative will, besides measures that ensure that costs are competitive, he said in the context of revitalisation of industry in West Bengal.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

Sam & Liam seal series for England

Cardiff: Sam Billings and Liam Livingstone burnished their Twenty20 credentials as England withstood a top-order wobble to seal a series win over Sri Lanka following a rain-affected second contest. The duo are on the fringes of the limited-overs setup but after England stuttered to 36-4 in pursuit of 112 — a target reduced to 103 from 18 overs following a sharp shower — they put on a crucial 54 from 48 balls. Billings departed with 13 still needed but Livingstone and Sam Curran got England over the line with five wickets and 11 balls to spare as they moved into an 2-0 lead. — *PTI*

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 111/7 (Kusal Mendis 39; Mark Wood 2/18, Adil Rashid 2/24) lost to England 108/5 (Livingstone 29 (not out), Sam Billings 24; W. Hasaranga 2/20). (Won by five wickets, D/L method)

Bronze for Indian women shooters

Osijek, Croatia: The Indian trika of Manu Bhaker, Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Rahi Sarnobat claimed the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol women's team event of the ISSF Shooting World Cup here on Friday. They defeated the Hungarian team of Veronika Major, Miriam Jako and Sara Rahel Fabian 16-12 in the bronze medal match. The three Indians had qualified third with a score of 573. Earlier, in the 10m air rifle events, the men's trio of Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Deepak Kumar and Divyansh Singh Panwar lost the bronze medal match, while the women shooters failed to get past the qualifying round. Tomar, Kumar and Panwar lost 14-16 to the Serbian team of Milenko Sebic, Milutin Stefanovic and Lazar Kovacevic in the third-place match. — *PTI*

Women archers enter Cup final

Paris: The Indian women's recurve archery team, who failed to book an Olympic quota in the Qualifier, bounced back strongly to storm into the final of the World Cup Stage 3 here on Friday. The fancied trio of Deepika Kumari, Ankita Bhakat and Komalika Bari had lost to lower-ranked Colombia on Sunday to miss the Olympic team qualification, but on Friday they just dropped a set before defeating sixth-ranked France 6-2 in the semi-finals. World Cup Stage 3 is not an Olympic qualifying tournament. The trio, who had won the first stage of the World Cup in Guatemala City in April, will face Mexico on Sunday in a repeat of the first stage final. Deepika will be in the hunt for a hat-trick of gold medals. Deepika is also in the semi-final of the recurve section. — *PTI*

Judoka Sushila gets Olympic spot

New Delhi: Ace Indian judoka Sushila Devi has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics through the continental quota, the sport's international federation confirmed on Friday. Sushila, who competes in the 48kg category, has 989 points which puts her at seventh spot in the Asian list; the International Judo Federation said. The continental quotas are allotted based on a judoka's ranking in the region. Asia has 10 quota slots. This will be the 26-year-old's first participation at the Olympics. Only one athlete per NOC (National Olympic Committee) per division can qualify. Each NOC is entitled to only one spot through the continental quota. Avtar Singh (90kg) was the lone Indian judoka to compete at the 2016 Rio Olympics. — *PTI*

Aditi is off to a creditable start

Johns Creek, USA: Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded a one-over 73 in the opening round to be placed tied 39th at the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, which is her 17th Major start. Still searching for first Top-10 in a Major, Aditi was one-under through 12 holes. Till then she had given a bogey soon after birdies on second, fifth and ninth. Then a birdie on 12th put her once again at one-under. But a double bogey on the 13th was a spoiler and she played out safely with each of the last five holes yielding pars. Aditi's 17 Major appearances are the most by any Indian and she now overtakes Anirban Lahiri with whom she was tied at 16. It must be noted that women have five Majors and men have four each year. — *PTI*

ASSURED AZZURRI

Italy look to continue unbeaten streak, face Austria

London, June 25: Italy's unbeaten streak won't last forever, and Austria coach Franco Foda is plotting to be the one to stop it. The Italians have become one of the favourites at the European Championship after winning all three of their games in the group stage, scoring seven goals and conceding none. Those three victories at Euro 2020 extended the team's unbeaten streak under coach Roberto Mancini to 30 games — matching the previous record set in the 1930s. "Initially it seemed to be an insurmountable and impossible challenge for us, because they haven't lost for an eternity," Foda said. "But sooner or later even Mancini's team will lose."

Austria have reached the round of 16 at the tournament for the first time, will get their chance on Saturday at Wembley Stadium. Besides the unbeaten streak, Italy will also be trying to set another record. They have not conceded a goal in 11 matches, a total of 1,055 minutes. If Austria fail to score, Italy will surpass the record of 1,143 minutes set between 1972 and 1974.

For a team who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, Italy's recent results are quite remarkable. "It's something that makes us proud, especially considering what they thought of us before the tournament started," Italy forward Lorenzo Insigne said. "But we have to stay focused, calm and think about ourselves. Our



Italian players Giorgio Chiellini and Ciro Immobile during a training session ahead of their Euro Last 16 clash against Austria. — *Twitter*

objective is to go all the way, it wasn't just to get through the group stage."

DENMARK ON EURO ROAD FOR FIRST TIME

After three emotional European Championship matches in Copenhagen, Denmark will next play in a city that Christian Eriksen once called home.

The Danes will take on Wales in the round of 16 at the Johan Cruyff Arena on Saturday, a stadium where Eriksen is fondly remembered by Ajax fans as a stylish midfield playmaker from 2010-13 before his transfer to Tottenham. Denmark lost their first match to Finland 0-1 after Eriksen suffered cardiac

arrest on the field and had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator. The Danes also lost to Belgium before beating Russia 4-1 to finish second in Group B and advance to knockout rounds.

While Denmark are hitting the road for the first time at a tournament that is being played in 11 cities

Live on TV

Wales vs Denmark from 9.30 pm; Italy vs Austria from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

HEAD TO HEAD

WALES-DENMARK

● **Matches:** 10. Denmark: 6. Wales: 4
● **EURO MEETINGS**
1987: Wales beat Denmark 1-0 in Cardiff.
1987: Denmark beat Wales 1-0 in Copenhagen.
1998: Wales beat Denmark 2-1 in Copenhagen.
1999: Denmark beat Wales 2-0 in Anfield.

ITALY-AUSTRIA

● **Matches:** 35. Italy: 16. Austria: 11. Drawn: 8.
● **EURO MEETINGS**
1970: Italy beat Austria 2-1 in Vienna.
1971: 2-2 in Rome.

— **S. PERVEZ KAISER**

COPA | AMERICA

Cool Cavani fires Uruguay into QF

Sao Paulo, June 25: Uruguay secured their spots in the Copa America knockout stage by winning their Group A matches by 2-0 scores.

Uruguay had their first win in the tournament against Bolivia, who could have jumped ahead on the table, but are out of the tournament due to Paraguay's convincing victory against Chile on Thursday.

Argentina lead Group A with seven points, followed by Paraguay with six. Chile have five, one more than Uruguay. Bolivia have none.

Uruguay's victory started after Bolivian goalkeeper Carlos Lampe, one of the best players of the match, had an own goal in the 40th minute.

Edinson Cavani doubled the Uruguayan lead from short range in the 79th minute at the Arena Pantanal in Cuiaba. It was the veteran striker's first goal for Uruguay since November.

Paraguay beat Chile with a header by Braian Samudio in the 33rd minute and a goal from the spot by Miguel Almiron in the 58th at the Man Garrincha stadium in Brasilia.

Uruguay and Paraguay will clash on Monday in a match that will decide who face defending champions and favourites Brazil in the quarterfinals.

If they draw or Uruguay win, Chile will face the hosts. A Paraguayan victory means Uruguay will take that spot.

"We have to think about winning, not about choos-

COPA RESULTS

Uruguay (Jairo Quinteros 40-og, Edinson Cavani 79)	2
Bolivia	0
Paraguay (Braian Samudio 33, Miguel Almiron 58-p)	2
Chile	0



Uruguay's Edinson Cavani celebrates after scoring a goal against Bolivia in Copa America. — *Twitter*

ing rivals," Uruguay midfielder Giorgian de Arrascaeta said.

"We created a lot of opportunities, we missed some that were very clear, but this gives us confidence. We never stopped believing in this squad."

Paraguay's Almiron is also optimistic about the future of his team in the tournament.

"We have done great work here," he said.

"Winning was the most important thing, but the most important thing is how we are playing," he said. — *AP*

Amaceing journey



New Zealand's World Test Championship Mace is heading home in style. — *Twitter*

IT IS YET TO SINK IN, SAYS SOUTHEE ON WTC VICTORY

Southampton, June 25: New Zealand pacer Tim Southee says the World Test Championship triumph over the mighty Indian team will take at least a couple of weeks to sink in.

For Southee, it wasn't just about 15 players in the current squad.

"It is amazing to be part of this team. We have been working for this (WTC final win) for the last two years. Not only the 15 players but others probably in the last 5-6 years (have contributed) to get us to where we are now."

"It is very special. We had come very close to a few tournaments. It is yet to sink in and may take a couple of weeks."

Southee believes that the crucial wickets of India captain Virat Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara on the

● **Kiwi quick Tim Southee believes that the crucial wickets of India captain Virat Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara on the final day had set up his side's triumph.**

final day had set up his side's triumph.

India lost Kohli and Pujara to Kyle Jamieson inside the first eight overs of the day.

"We knew it was going to be tough on the final day, three results were possible then and the first hour to be crucial. But picking up the two wickets in that period was crucial in the end," Southee said in a video interview released by NZ Cricket. — *PTI*

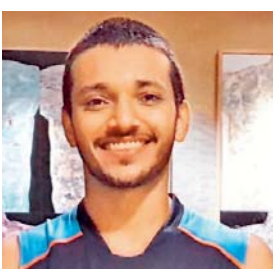
Sakariya raring to go in SL series

Mumbai, June 25: Rookie left-arm pacer Chetan Sakariya says he has done his work-overs properly during the hard quarantine period here and is raring to go for the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka starting July 13.

The Indian players, led by Shikhar Dhawan, started their quarantine on June 14 and will continue till June 28. However, their hard quarantine period is over. "Everybody is now used

to quarantine ... it is good to come out of the quarantine and meet other players and everybody has done work out as per the needs. I am feeling very good," the 23-year-old Sakariya, who has earned his maiden India call-up, told *bcci.tv*.

"When I got out of the room, I was constantly looking at myself, I was feeling good wearing the jersey, but once I came to the gym, I started doing my normal workout," said the Saurashtra pacer, who



Chetan Sakariya

recently lost his father due to Covid-19.

Attacking Delhi top-order batsman Nitish

Rana, who also got his first call-up in the national team, echoed similar sentiments.

"The first seven days were difficult for me, as I was waiting to meet my teammates and I was waiting to wear the jersey. That time was a bit tough for me as each hour was feeling like a year," said 27-year-old.

Rana is looking forward to more intense work-out sessions with a new trainer.

"The atmosphere here is

good and I am excited for the series to start. With a new trainer, I learned and did a new thing."

"After seven days I did intense training and I am looking forward to more intense workout sessions," said the left-handed batsman.

Karnataka players Devdutt Padikkal and Krishnappa Gowtham who too earned their maiden call ups in the national team, also sounded pleased.

— *PTI*

1983 once more



Indian cricketers of 1983 World Cup winning team — Mohinder Amarnath, captain Kapil Dev, Syed Kirmani and Roger Binny — pose with the team signatures during the launch of the newest edition of "The 1983 World Cup Opus" in Gurgaon on Friday, June 25, the day India won the 1983 World Cup in London. — *AFP*

SINDHU SET TO CARRY TRI-COLOUR AT GAMES

New Delhi, June 25: India's star badminton player and Rio Games silver medallist PV Sindhu is a front-runner to become one of the two flag-bearers for the Indian contingent at the Tokyo Olympics. This time, India will have one male and female athlete as the flag bearer at the opening ceremony. The Olympics begin July 23.

The official announcement will happen at the end of this month but it is all but certain that Sindhu will be one of the flag-bearers.

"Sindhu is likely to be one of the flag-bearers," an IOA source said.

Although there is no rule but the convention

has been that last edition's medal winner always has been the flag-bearer for the next edition.

From last edition, there were two medallists and one of them wrestler Sakshi Malik has not qualified during this edition.

It is still not clear who among the male athletes will be the joint flag-bearer. Some of the big names include athlete Neeraj Chopra, TT player Sharath Kamal, wrestler Bajrang Punia, boxer Amit Panghal to name a few.

No male athletes got any medal at the last edition in Rio de Janeiro. — *PTI*

WIMBLEDON | DRAW

It could be Novak vs Federer in final

Wimbledon, June 25: Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer were placed on opposite sides of the Wimbledon bracket in Friday's draw, meaning they only could meet in the final — which would be a rematch of their epic 2019 title showdown.

The top-seeded Djokovic will have a lot at stake when play begins at the All England Club on Monday, a year after the grass-court tournament was canceled because of the pandemic.

He seeks a 20th major title, which would tie the men's record shared by Federer and Rafael Nadal; he can move closer to a calendar-year Grand Slam after winning the Australian Open in February and the French Open this month; he will be trying to win his third consecutive trophy, and sixth overall, at Wimbledon.

Two years ago, Djokovic edged Federer in a fifth-set tiebreaker after saving two championship points in the final.

Two of the top five men

are out: No. 3 Nadal and No. 5 Dominic Thiem.

Among the noteworthy first-round men's matchups are Djokovic against wild-card entry Jack Draper, a 19-year-old from England who was the Wimbledon boys' runner-up in 2018; two-time champion Andy Murray against No. 24 seed Nikoloz Basilashvili; and No. 21 Ugo Humbert against Nick Kyrgios.

DEFENDING CHAMPION HALEP WITHDRAWALS

Simona Halep said she was "really down and upset" at not being able to defend her ladies singles title at Wimbledon due to a calf injury.

The 29-year-old Romanian had been battling to be fit since withdrawing from her second round match at the Italian Open in mid-May.

"It is with great sadness that I'm announcing my withdrawal from The Championships as my calf injury has not fully recovered," she said. — *AFP*