

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 11 JULY 2021



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Joe Biden nominates Los Angeles mayor Eric Garcetti as US ambassador to India



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Vietnam, India share vision of rules-based Indo-Pacific region: PM



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Coaches and veterans applaud the brilliance of Harleen Deol's catch

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Virginie Efira (left), Daphne Patakia pose for photographers upon arrival at the premiere of the film *Benedetta* at the 74th international film festival at Cannes in southern France on Friday. — AP

Shivakumar slaps man for trying to put his arms around him

Bengaluru: Karnataka Congress President D.K. Shivakumar has allegedly slapped a man who attempted to put his arms around him, drawing flak from the BJP and in social media. The incident occurred on Friday, and in the video that has since gone viral, Shivakumar can be seen getting irritated by the action of the man, who tried to get close to him and pace along with him. The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee Chief can then be heard telling the man, said to be a party worker: “...you should be responsible.” — PTI

Full report on Page 3

Mother Dairy hikes milk prices in Delhi

New Delhi: Leading milk supplier Mother Dairy has increased milk prices in Delhi-NCR and other cities by ₹2 per litre with effect from Sunday on rising input cost. The milk prices were last revised in December 2019. Justifying the hike, Mother Dairy said that procurement cost of milk from dairy farmers has gone up by 8-10 per cent in the last one year. Other operational costs have also risen.

Full report on Page 2

Assam CM: New dept for indigenous faith

Guwahati: The Assam cabinet decided to create a new department to protect the culture & practices of people belonging to tribal & other indigenous communities, CM Himanta Biswa Sarma said.

Full report on Page 4

COUNTERPOINT



Happy population day... more population, more voters!

WEATHER

Max: 36°C
Min: 28°C
RH: 64%
Rain: 30%

Forecast: Thunderstorms

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Ashada Shuddha Padyami till 7.45 am
Star: Pushyami till 2.19 am
Variyam: 9.26 am to 11.07 am
Durmuhurtam: 5.06 pm to 5.58 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
SUNSET TODAY 7.23 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.32 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 7.21 AM
MOONSET TODAY 8.39 PM

UTTAR PRADESH POPULATION DRAFT BILL

Two-child policy, stringent measures for all violators

Those with over 2 kids can't contest local polls, apply for govt jobs

Lucknow, July 10: According to a draft of the proposed population control bill, anyone violating two-child policy in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies elections, from applying for or getting promotion in government jobs, and receiving any kind of government subsidy.

The Uttar Pradesh State Law Commission (UPSLC) states that the provisions are part of the draft titled the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilization and Welfare) Bill, 2021.

The UPSLC website says, “The State Law Commission, UP, is working on control, stabilisation and welfare of the population of the state and has prepared a draft bill.”

Suggestions have been invited from the public to improve the draft bill and July 19 is the last date for it. Listing incentives for public servants who adopt the two-child norm, the draft bill says, “Public servants who adopt the two-child norm will get two additional increments during the entire service, maternity or as the case may be, paternity leave of 12 months, with full salary and allowances and three per cent increase in the employer's contribution fund under national pen-

▶ **ANYONE VIOLATING** the 2-child policy in UP will be debarred from contesting local bodies elections, from applying for or getting promotion in government jobs, and receiving any kind of govt subsidy

▶ **A STATE** Population Fund will be constituted for the purpose of implementation of the Act.

sion scheme.”

A State Population Fund will be constituted for the purpose of implementation of the Act.

Listing the government's duties, the draft bill says that maternity centres will be established at all primary health centres. The Centres and NGOs will distribute contraceptive pills, condoms, etc, spread awareness about family planning methods through community health workers and ensure mandatory registration of pregnancies, deliveries, births and deaths across the state.

The draft bill also says that it shall be the duty of the government to introduce a compulsory subject relating to population control in all secondary schools.

The bill seeks to revitalise efforts and provide for measures to control,

Public servants who adopt two-child norm will get 2 additional increments, maternity or paternity leave of 12 months, and 3% increase in employer's contribution fund under the pension scheme'

— Draft bill

stabilise and provide welfare to the population of the state by implementing and promoting two-child norm.

The draft bill reads, “In Uttar Pradesh, there are limited ecological and economic resources at hand. It is necessary and urgent that the provision of basic necessities of human life including affordable food, safe drinking water, decent housing, access to quality education, economic/livelihood opportunities, power/electricity for domestic consumption, and a secure living is accessible to all citizens.”

It is necessary to control, stabilise the population of the state for promotion of sustainable development with more equitable distribution, it says.

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Ashleigh Barty wins first Wimbledon title



Australia's Ashleigh Barty poses after winning her first Wimbledon title beating Czech Republic's Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in London on Saturday.

■ Report on Page 8

42,766 Covid-19 cases, 1,206 deaths in 24 hours

Only 50% occupancy allowed in Nainital, Dehradun hotels

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI JULY 10

India on Saturday recorded 42,766 fresh cases and 1,206 fatalities, taking the total Covid-19 death toll to 407,145. With 455,033 active Coronavirus cases, India's share of global active cases now stands at 3.82 per cent (one in 26) and it is the fourth most affected country in the world.

Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday sounded a note of caution against the blatant disregard of Covid-appropriate behaviour at hill stations and other

Covaxin may get approval from WHO in next 4-6 weeks

New Delhi: The World Health Organization (WHO) is likely to take a decision on including Bharat Biotech's Covid vaccine Covaxin in the emergency use list (EUL) within four to six weeks, Soumya Swaminathan, the global health body's chief scientist has said. — PTI

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tourist locations, stressing that the second wave

of the pandemic is not yet over.

Amid the huge influx of tourists in Uttarakhand, newly-appointed chief minister of the state, Pushkar Singh Dhami, on Saturday said that the state government has issued an order restricting occupancy of hotels in Nainital and Dehradun, the two most visited tourist places in the state.

Mr Dhami said that the government has issued an order saying only 50 per cent occupancy is allowed in hotels in Nainital and Dehradun. The CM also said that challans are

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As summer begins, severe water crisis hits Jaipur



Residents collect drinking water from a Nagar Nigam tanker at Jhalana Doongri Slum area in Jaipur on Saturday. Rajasthan is the most water deficient state in the country following short spell of monsoon coupled with erratic behavior and scanty rainfall. Drought is the most frequent disaster recurring in the state. — PTI

Hizb chief's 2 sons in J&K among 11 sacked in 'national interest'

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR JULY 10

The Jammu and Kashmir authorities on Saturday sacked 11 more government officials, including two sons of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Muhammad Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahuddin, “in the interest of the nation”.

Pursuing a tough policy against what it sees as “anti-national activities”, the J&K government has in the past two years dismissed a large number of its employees, including teachers, revenue officials, engineers and policemen, saying their being in the government service is a threat to the security and integrity of

the country, or for violating Government Servants Conduct Rules.

Official sources said that in the latest spell the service of Salahuddin's sons and nine others was terminated “in the interest of the nation as per the constitutional provision”. Sources said that action against the brothers-duo Syed Shakeel Ahmed and Syed Shahid Yusuf was taken in the light of investigations done by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in a terror funding case. The NIA had in January 2018 filed a charge-sheet in a Delhi court against Syed Salahuddin, amir or chief of Jama'at-ud-Da'wah,

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C'garh BJP MLA killing: 20 Naxals on NIA's radar

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
RAIPUR, JULY 10

NIA, probing the killing of the local BJP MLA Bheema Mandavi in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Dantewada in April, 2019 by Maoists, on Saturday released a list of 20 wanted Naxals in the case. The premier probe agency has issued a list of 20 Maoists including Nambala Keshav Rao alias Gaganna alias Basavraj, Kottam Sudarshan alias Anand alias Mohan and Madvi Hidma, the commander of battalion number one of CPI (Maoist), declaring different bounties on them. NIA has declared a reward of ₹10 lakh each on Basavraj and Mohan, while a bounty of Rs seven lakh has been announced on Hidma.

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₹10K-₹1L fine in Delhi for causing noise pollution

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Delhiites will have to pay ₹10,000 to ₹1 lakh for violating the noise pollution norms by using loudspeakers without permission or DG sets as the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has asked authorities to strictly implement the revised rules.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) revised penalties, one will have to pay ₹10,000 fine in case of noise violation caused by a loudspeaker or a public address system at a public place without permission or during night time and the equipment will also be confiscated.

A fine of ₹1 lakh has been set for diesel generator (DG) sets of over 1,000 KVA; ₹25,000 for DG sets between 62.5 KVA to 1,000

▶ **A FINE** of ₹1 lakh has been set for diesel generator (DG) sets of over 1,000 KVA; ₹25,000 for DG sets between 62.5 KVA to 1,000 KVA; and ₹10,000 for DG sets upto 62.5 KVA

KVA; and ₹10,000 for DG sets upto 62.5 KVA, the DPCC order said.

Permissible noise level in residential areas is 55 decibel during day time and 45 decibel during night. Similarly, in commercial areas, the permissible sound limit is 65 decibel during day time and 55 decibel during night. In sensitive areas, it is 50 decibel during the day and 40 decibel at night. Other than this, there are ‘silent zones’ that include areas which lie within 100 metres of premises of schools, colleges, hospitals, and courts.

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India, Georgia agree to work jointly to further strengthen their ties

India gifts holy relics of 17th Century Queen of Georgia

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Becoming the first Indian foreign minister to visit the strategically-located Caucasus nation of Georgia since its independence three decades ago, external affairs minister S. Jaishankar held talks with the Georgian leadership and made a goodwill gesture by permanently handing over a part of the Holy Relics of the revered 17th century martyr Georgian Queen St. Ketevan that had been preserved in Goa for centuries. The move, on the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has generated enormous goodwill for India in the Caucasus nation that borders Pakistan's friend Turkey, estranged neighbours Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as



External affairs minister S. Jaishankar with foreign minister of Georgia David Zalkaliani.

— PTI

India's time-tested friend Russia. But it is Georgia's troubled relations with Russia that has been viewed with a lot of interest by foreign policy watchers. Georgia claims that 20 per cent of its ter-

ritory comprising the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has been illegally occupied by Russia. It is an issue on which India is expected to tread carefully given New Delhi's close ties with Moscow even

Heroin worth ₹2,500 crore seized in Delhi, 4 men arrested

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested four persons, including an Afghan national, and recovered a record quantity of 354 kg Afghan heroin worth over ₹2,500 crore in international markets, officials said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Rizwan Kashmiri, a resident of Ghitori and native of Anantnag in J&K, Gurpreet Singh and Gurjot Singh, both residents of Jalandhar in Punjab, and Hazrat Ali, a native of Kandahar in Afghanistan, they said.

Police said that recently it came to notice that Rizwan Kashmiri was involved in drug peddling in Delhi and other states like Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana.

“On Monday, information was received that Kashmiri was going to deliver contraband in south Delhi's Ghitori area. Thereafter, a trap was laid and the accused was arrested when he was going to deliver a packet of one kilogram of heroin,” deputy commissioner of police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said.

Kashmiri revealed that he works under the command of an Afghan

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Cooperatives a state subject, says Cong

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Congress on Saturday launched a scathing attack on the Center over the creation of the new ministry of cooperation. Senior Maharashtra Congress leader and former chief minister Prithviraj Chavan questioned the need for carving out a separate ministry since there was already a department of cooperation. He said, “Administratively it makes no difference. Cooperatives are important for Gujarat and Maharashtra primarily. Both states are very important for the BJP,” and added that it's not clear in what way they will promote cooperatives. “It is only to control the cooperatives, because cooperative institutions hold mas-

sive influence locally,” he said.

Several Opposition leaders feel that the move is to “hijack the cooperative movement” that currently falls under the state governments. Senior Congress leader and MLA from Kerala, Ramesh Chennithala, said, “Cooperatives is a state subject under entry 32 of the state list under the Schedule 7 of the Constitution. How can they create a ministry without an Act of Parliament? The BJP wants total control of the cooperative movement across the country.” The cooperative model has been a source of political power in states such as Maharashtra, Kerala, Gujarat, parts of Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh and West Bengal.

though Georgia is understood to have thanked India for its “strong and steadfast support” for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Georgia was part of the erstwhile Soviet Union that broke up in 1991.

After talks on Saturday with both Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and Deputy PM and foreign minister David Zalkaliani, Mr Jaishankar said, “I come here in a sense with a sacred purpose. And we have, as you all know, kept and preserved a very valuable heritage of Georgia for many years – the Holy Relics of St. Queen Ketevan. There has obviously been an understandable interest in Georgia for the relics to be permanently transferred given the fact that the holy martyr is

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SHORT TAKES

Fake call centre busted, 15 women among 24 arrested

New Delhi: The Delhi Police has busted a fake call centre and arrested 24 people, including 15 women, from Rohini area, officials said on Saturday. The accused duped victims, mainly from the northeastern states and Odisha, on the pretext of offering them mobile phones at cheap rates through a lottery scheme, they said. Police said Ramkumar (34), Shyam Kumar (35) and Govind (22), all residents of Sultanpuri here, together owned the call centre. On Friday, the police received information about the fake call centre operating at Rohini Sector-7 which allegedly duped people on the pretext of offering them mobiles at cheap rates through a lottery scheme, a senior police officer said. "The police raided the call centre and nabbed the accused. Enquiry revealed that most of the victims belonged to the northeastern states," Deputy Commissioner of Police (Rohini) Pranav Tayal said. During interrogation, it was revealed that the accused used to collect mobile number of people residing in other states from the internet, the DCP said. They randomly made calls to people across the country and induced them with lucrative offers. They told the people that their number had been selected for the offer in which they will get a mobile phone worth ₹17,000 on payment of just ₹4,500, police said. In order to gain the confidence of customers, they used the post office as logistics service provider. However, instead of sending mobiles, they would send cheap wallets, belt, soaps etc. in the parcel, police said. Police also raided the warehouse of the accused at Rohini Sector-20 and recovered packets that were ready to be delivered.

4 criminals held in separate shootouts in city

New Delhi: The Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested four criminals in two separate shootouts in the national capital, officials said on Saturday. The incidents took place in Rohini and Dwarka areas of Delhi on Friday, they said. Two robbers — Yashpal and Vikas were apprehended from Rohini at around 9 pm following a shootout. Yashpal was involved in more than 15 cases of robberies and snatchings, a senior police officer said. In a separate incident, two illegal firearms suppliers, Abdul Wahab and Farman, hailing from Meerut, were apprehended at around 12.30 am from Dwarka, the officer said. The accused had come to the national capital to supply firearms and cartridges to a local criminal. Five sophisticated pistols and 60 cartridges were seized from the duo, police said. The injured have been hospitalised, they added.

Centre-appointed panel gave clean chit for bus procurement: Sisodia

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

"A Centre-appointed committee has given clean chit to the Delhi government for procurement of buses and this is proof of chief minister Arvind Kejriwal's honest politics, said his deputy Manish Sisodia on Saturday.

The three-member panel, including transport and vigilance commissioners of the Delhi government, was formed by Lieutenant-governor Anil Bajjal last month. The panel submitted its report to Mr Bajjal on July 8, officials said.

The BJP has been accusing the Kejriwal government of being involved in a scam in the annual maintenance contract of 1,000 low-floor buses to be procured by its agency, the Delhi Transport Corporation (DTC).

Mr Sisodia said the committee analysed 3,000 documents and raised several queries, after which they have concluded that the Kejriwal government was not involved in any scam in the procurement of buses.

"A Centre-appointed committee has said there was no scam. This is proof that Kejriwal is honest. Kejriwal works for those who choose him and doesn't indulge in fighting like BJP. Buses will be bought despite obstacles

₹10K-₹1L fine for causing noise pollution in Delhi

DPCC issues directions to authorities concerned for strict compliance of rules

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Delhiites will have to pay ₹10,000 to ₹1 lakh for violating the noise pollution norms by using loudspeakers without permission or DG sets as the Delhi Pollution Control Committee (DPCC) has asked authorities to strictly implement the revised rules.

According to the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) revised penalties, one will have to pay ₹10,000 fine in case of noise violation caused by a loudspeaker or a public address system at a public place without permission or during night time and the equipment will also be confiscated.

A fine of ₹1 lakh has been set for diesel generator (DG) sets of over 1,000 KVA; ₹25,000 for DG sets between 62.5 KVA to 1,000 KVA; and ₹10,000 for DG

▶ ACCORDING TO the Central Pollution Control Board's (CPCB) revised penalties, one will have to pay ₹10,000 fine in case of noise violation caused by a loudspeaker or a public address system at a public place without permission or during night time and the equipment will also be confiscated.

sets upto 62.5 KVA, the DPCC order said.

Permissible noise level in residential areas is 55 decibel during day time and 45 decibel during night. Similarly, in commercial areas, the permissible sound limit is 65 decibel during day time and 55 decibel during night. In sensitive areas, it is 50 decibel during the day and 40 decibel at night.

Other than this, there are 'silent zones' that

include areas which lie within 100 metres of premises of schools, colleges, hospitals, and courts.

According to the order, in case of bursting of fire crackers beyond the prescribed limit within the premises of any RWA or at a marriage function, the organiser and the owner of the premises will have to pay ₹20,000 for the first violation.

"For the second violation, the organiser and the owner will have to pay ₹40,000. For more than two violations within a fixed premise or at a marriage function, the organiser and the owner will have to pay a fine of ₹1 lakh. The premises will also be sealed," the DPCC order stated.

If noise pollution is caused by bursting of crackers beyond a limit at a marriage procession or in a public and religious

rally, the organisers will have to pay ₹10,000 fine and if it is in a silent zone then the fine will be doubled.

If an individual household bursts crackers in a residential or commercial zone, the fine will be ₹1,000. However, it will be ₹3,000 in case of violation in a silent zone.

In case construction equipment emit sound beyond the permissible limit, a fine of ₹50,000 will be imposed, the order said.

DPCC officials said the penalties were revised by the CPCB in 2020 wherein recommendations were made that people have to shell out more money for going beyond the noise pollution limits.

The DPCC has issued directions to all DMs, SDMs, the Delhi police, and the traffic police for strict compliance of these rules.

Kejriwal bats for free supply of electricity in Uttarakhand

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

A day before his visit to poll-bound Uttarakhand, Delhi chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday asked why the people of the hill state, which generates electricity, cannot get free power like in the national capital.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor will visit Dehradun on Sunday. The party has decided to contest the assembly polls in the state due next year.

Uttarakhand generates electricity and also sells it to other states. Then, why is electricity so expensive for the people of Uttarakhand? Delhi does not generate its own electricity and buys it from other states and yet, electricity in Delhi is free. Shouldn't the people of Uttarakhand get free electricity? See you tomorrow in Dehradun, Kejriwal said in a tweet in Hindi.



Arvind Kejriwal

■ Cow milk to cost ₹49/litre, toned milk ₹47

Mother Dairy milk to be costlier by ₹2 from today

New Delhi, July 10: Leading milk supplier Mother Dairy, owing to rising input cost, has increased milk prices in Delhi-NCR and other cities by ₹2 per litre with effect from Sunday. The milk prices were last revised in December 2019.

Justifying the hike, Mother Dairy said that the procurement cost of milk from dairy farmers has gone up by 8-10 per cent in the last one year. Other operational costs have also risen. On July 1, Amul hiked milk prices by ₹2 per litre across all cities.

Mother Dairy said it is "compelled to raise its liquid milk prices by ₹2 per litre in Delhi-NCR with effect from July 11, 2021."

It sells around 30 lakh litres of milk per day in Delhi-NCR, while the total sale is 35 lakh litres per day. "The company has been experiencing inflationary pressure on the overall input costs which has increased manifold in the last one year accompa-

nied by the distress in milk production due to the ongoing pandemic," the statement said.

In the last one year, the farm prices have increased to the tune of 8-10 per cent coupled with mounting operational costs of processing, packaging, and logistics.

"It is pertinent to note that the farm prices of milk alone have firmed up by about 4 per cent in the last 3-4 weeks. Despite paying higher prices towards milk procurement in the last one year, the consumer prices were kept intact. With this revision, the milk prices are undergoing a revision of 4 per cent," Mother Dairy said.

The company said it has always attempted to strike the right balance between the consumers and the milk producers.

"The surge in farm prices is only being partially passed on to the consumers, thereby securing the interests of both the stakeholders," it added.

Mother Dairy highlighted that it passes close to 75-80 per cent of the sales realisation from milk towards the procurement of milk. "The company believes in giving competitive and remunerative prices to the farmers to ensure sustainability of dairying and availability of safe milk for consumers," the statement said.

As per the revised prices, bulk vendored milk (token milk) will be sold at ₹44 per litre from Sunday as against the current price of ₹42 per litre. Full cream milk (poly pack) will be available at ₹57 per litre up from ₹55 per litre now.

Price of toned milk has been revised to ₹47 from ₹45 per litre while double toned milk (Live Lite) rates have gone up to ₹41 from ₹39 per litre.

Cow milk will cost ₹49 from Sunday as against ₹47 per litre now. Rates of half litre milk pouch have been increased by ₹1, which means an effective hike of ₹2 per litre. — PTI

Water crisis in Delhi due to less supply from Haryana: DJB

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Delhi Jal Board (DJB) vice-chairman Raghav Chadha on Saturday accused the Haryana government of reducing the water supply to the national capital and causing a severe crisis in the city.

Addressing a press conference here, the Aam Aadmi Party legislator said Haryana has been supplying around 100 million gallons less water per day, which has led to a crisis in NDMC areas and central, south, and west Delhi.

"The Haryana government has stopped the legal right of the people of Delhi as directed by the Supreme Court. Because they have reduced the water supply in Yamuna, the three major water treatment plants are producing less water per day," Chadha said. He further said that Haryana was providing 120 mgd (million gallons daily) water less, which has decreased the production of water in Delhi by over 100 mgd.

The water supply problem may soon affect major regions, including VIP areas of the Supreme Court, the prime minister's residence, the Rashtrapati Bhawan, the Delhi High Court and various international embassies, Chadha added. He said the Chandrawal treatment plant's production capacity has reduced to 55 mgd from its earlier

90 mgd, Wazirabad is producing 80 mgd compared to 135 mgd before and the Okhla water treatment plant is supplying 15mgd instead of its earlier 20 mgd.

"Since Haryana has deprived Delhiites of their rights, the daily water production in Delhi has come down from 245 mgd to 150-145 mgd. Haryana was directed by the Upper Yamuna River Board (UYRB) upon the Supreme Court's direction to supply 150 cusecs above Delhi's requirement. But Haryana is not even supplying the requirement, leave alone additional water," Chadha said.

Hitting out at the BJP-led Haryana government, AAP spokesperson Saurabh Bharadwaj on Saturday said that if Haryana did not release Delhi's rightful portion of water in 24 hours, then we shall stop the water connection of Delhi BJP chief Adesh Gupta's house.

Refuting Bharadwaj's claims, city BJP spokesperson Praveen Shankar Kapoor said AAP's melodramatic reaction is to cover up Delhi government's failure to provide Delhi proper water supply. "Infact the threat to cut Mr Gupta's water connection seems to have been copied by AAP from BJP's statement that if Jal Board fails to restore proper water supply we will cut DJB chairman's residence water supply," Kapoor said.



4 persons were arrested with 350 kg heroin worth ₹2,500 crore by Delhi police special cell in New Delhi on Saturday. — G. N JHA

YouTube vlogger denied visa to enter India, wife moves HC

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

YouTube vlogger Karl Edward Rice's wife has approached the Delhi High Court challenging the Central government's alleged "arbitrary and unreasonable" decision to blacklist him and deny visa to enter India.

The petitioner said by virtue of denying visa to her husband, who has been "arbitrarily blacklisted" by the respondents (Centre), she is deprived from living with him, thereby violating her fundamental right to life and dignity as guaranteed under Article 21 of the Constitution.

Petitioner Manisha



Karl Edward Rice with wife Manisha Malik

Malik and her husband, popularly known as Karl Rock, are YouTube vloggers. The petition said the authorities have not communicated the grounds of blacklisting Rice even though several representations have been preferred by him and his wife, which has led to the separation of a married

couple, lack of any opportunity or notice to them to indicate any violation of visa conditions and denial of issuance of visa to him.

Union home ministry officials had on Friday said the New Zealand national has been restricted from entering India till the next year for violating terms and conditions of his visa. He was found to be doing business activities on a tourist visa and also violating other visa conditions, they had said without specifying. The plea said since their marriage in 2019, the couple has been living in Delhi and Rice has not been able to return to India from New Zealand since October 10 last year.

PWD to monitor areas prone to waterlogging in real time

New Delhi, July 10: Delhi's Public Works Department (PWD) will for the first time conduct real-time round-the-clock monitoring of areas that are critically prone to waterlogging during the monsoon season, officials said on Saturday.

The work of installation of high speed internet CCTV cameras is in progress, and a control room is being set up on the 12th floor of the PWD headquarters near ITO, they told PTI.

There are around 25 crit-

ically vulnerable points for waterlogging in the city, the officials added.

"Taking a cue from last year's unprecedented waterlogging at Minto bridge, we have now decided that we should bring all vulnerable points under our round-the-clock real-time surveillance. This is the first time that PWD will conduct real-time 24-hour monitoring of critical areas with the help of latest technology," a senior PWD official said.

"The aim is to avoid last year's waterlogging crisis

situation where a man had also died," he added.

The officials added that the work of installation of CCTV cameras at about 15 vulnerable locations have been completed.

These include the Minto Road rail bridge underpass, Tilak bridge, Moolchand underpass, Pul Prahlad Pur on Mehrauli-Badarpur road, Zakhira underpass, Azadpur underpass, Shakti Nagar underpass, Punjabi Bagh underpass and the Badli underpass.

— PTI

‘Ensure Akali leader does not flee from justice’

New Delhi, July 10: A court here has directed the Delhi Police to ensure that Shiromani Akali Dal leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa does not flee from justice as he is facing probe in a case of alleged misappropriation of funds during his tenure as the secretary-general of Delhi Sikh Gurudwara Management Committee (DSGMC).

Metropolitan Magistrate Pankaj Sharma passed the order on Friday while hearing an application of

one Bhupinder Singh, who had filed the graft complainant. The applicant informed the court that there was apprehension that Sirsa may run away from the country.

In view of the apprehension expressed on behalf of the complainant and for the interest of a proper investigation, investigation officer has to ensure that accused persons do not flee from the course of justice, the court said.

The court also sought a progress report from

▶ IN VIEW of the apprehension expressed on behalf of the complainant and for the interest of a proper investigation, investigation officer has to ensure that accused persons do not flee from the course of justice, the court said

Delhi Police in the case by July 26, when it will next hear the matter.

During the hearing held through video conferencing, the applicant's advocate Sanjay Abott told the

court that Sirsa has already sold his properties and he is in the process of fleeing as soon as flights resume.

The counsel further submitted that the investigation agency has not taken appropriate steps to prevent him from fleeing.

Meanwhile, the court also noted the submission of the Delhi Police that lookout circulars (LOCs) against the accused persons have not been opened as they are joining investigation as and when asked.

A Delhi court had earlier directed the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) of the Delhi police to register an FIR on the complaint filed by Bhupinder Singh. Singh had alleged that Sirsa, who at the time of the incident in 2013 was general secretary of DSGMC, had caused wrongful loss of public funds.

Following the direction of the court, the EOW of Delhi Police had registered an FIR against Sirsa. — PTI



A man sprays disinfectant outside closed shops as the Gaffar Market closed for 48 hours for flouting Covid norms in New Delhi on Saturday. The national capital recorded 76 coronavirus cases and one death in the last 24 hours. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Jagannath temple's last 'devadasi' dies

Puri: Parasmani Devi, the last surviving "devadasi" of the Shri Jagannath Temple in Puri, died due to old-age related ailments on Saturday, temple sources said. She was 90. Parasmani lived in a rented house in Balisahi area of the temple town with people's support as the Devadasi system had ended at the 12th-century shrine decades ago. Devadasis were married to Lord Jagannath and accepted him as the "divine husband", and they remained spinsters throughout their lives. The Devadasi system at the temple gradually ended after the Odisha government took over the administration of the shrine from the Puri royal family in 1955 through an Act. There were two types of devadasis in the temple — dancers and singers. Parasmani was a singer who sang devotional songs like Geeta Govinda during the bed-time of the presiding deities. — PTI

3 leopard hides seized, 4 arrested

Bhubaneswar: The wildlife protection wing of the Odisha forest department on Saturday busted a leopard skin smuggling syndicate in Kalahandi district. They seized three leopard skins and two nails of the big cats. Four members of the syndicate were arrested for possession of the wildlife products. Acting on a tip-off from a buyer of wildlife products from outside the state, a joint team of wildlife officials from Odisha, Chhattisgarh and Central Wildlife Crime Control Bureau conducted a raid and arrested the smugglers in Kalahandi while they were striking a deal to sell the leopard skins and nails. The accused were booked under various sections of the IPC and Wildlife Protection Act. Efforts were on to ascertain the possible involvement of other people in the smuggling syndicate.

Bengali actor says she got rape threats

Kolkata: Bengali TV actor Pratyusha Paul alleged that unknown persons have issued rape threats to her on social media and released a few morphed images of her on pornographic websites, hurting her image. She has filed a cyber complaint but none have been arrested yet. When contacted, Paul said, "This has been happening to me for the last one year. Initially, I ignored the threats but recently it went out of hand and I complained to the police. The person(s) keep changing his/her account when I block them and threaten me of rape." "The person(s) released my morphed images on pornographic websites and even sent those to my mother and friends. This is a matter of concern for me," she said. — PTI

BULLOCK CART STAGE COLLAPSE AT CONG RALLY

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, JULY 10

A bullock cart protest organized against rising fuel prices by Mumbai Congress came to a halt after the cart that was used to stage the demonstration collapsed on Saturday. Mumbai Congress chief Bhaji Jagtap and several party leaders were on the cart when the incident happened. The video of the incident went viral all over social media where the bullock cart can be seen collapse amidst all the sloganeering against the fuel price hike. The cart tumbled while almost a dozen workers were raising slogans of, "How our leader should be? He should be like Rahul Gandhi," standing on the cart. In the video, workers can be later seen helping those who fell to the ground. The bullock cart protest was the part of 10-day nationwide protest by the Congress against skyrocketing fuel prices and increasing inflation. BJP leader Pravin Darekar slammed the protests saying it was disjointed and there was no planning. Speaking to reporters at the airport here, former chief minister BJP leader Devendra Fadnis made fun of the toppling of a stage mounted on a bullock cart and taunted that the collapse took place when Congress workers were shouting slogans in praise of Gandhi.

Hotels vacated in Puri ahead of Rath Yatra



Chariots of Lord Jagannath, Balabhadra and Devi Subhadra near completion ahead of the annual Rath Yatra festival at Grand Road in Puri on Saturday. With less than 48 hours to go for the rath yatra, the Puri district administration directed all visitors to vacate hotels, lodges and guest houses as the Odisha government has banned public participation in the mega festival to be held on Monday.

Has Rahul has given 'licence for violence', asks BJP K'taka Cong chief slaps partyman

Bengaluru, July 10: Karnataka Congress president D.K. Shivakumar on Saturday allegedly slapped a man who attempted to put his arms around him, drawing criticism from the BJP and on social media. In the video that has since gone viral, Mr Shivakumar can be seen getting irritated by the action of the man, who tried to get close to him and pace along with him. The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee chief, who appeared to lose cool, can then be heard telling the man, said to be a party worker: "...you should be responsi-

ble...", before asking cameramen present there to delete the footage.

The incident took place during his visit to the district headquarters town of Mandya to inquire about the health of ailing veteran leader, former Minister and MP G. Made Gowda.

Tweeting the video of the incident, BJP national general secretary C.T. Ravi, asked Congress national leader Rahul Gandhi whether he had given "licence for violence" to Mr Shivakumar, whom he referred to as a follower of Kotwal Ramachandra, one of the underworld dons of Bengaluru in the 1970s



D.K. Shivakumar

and 1980s.

"Karnataka Congress President @DKShivakumar SLAPS his party worker in full public view. If this is how the "former shishya" of Kotwal Ramachandra treats his party worker,

one can imagine what he would do with Others. Have you given DKS the "licence for violence", @RahulGandhi?" he asked.

Karnataka BJP, hitting out at Shivakumar for his "behaviour" and calling him "Rowdi DKShi", said he should learn how to conduct himself in public.

Posting a video of an earlier incident where Shivakumar can be seen hitting a youth who was clicking selfies, as he was about to address the media, the BJP in a tweet asked him to quit public life if "underworld-like behaviour" is unavoidable. — PTI

Joe Biden picks LA mayor Eric as his envoy to India

AGE CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

United States President Joe Biden has nominated Los Angeles city mayor Eric M. Garcetti as the next US ambassador to India.

If confirmed by the Senate, Mr Garcetti, 50, would replace Kenneth Juster, who served as the US ambassador to India during the Trump administration.

Mr Juster's term had ended a few months ago. In between, after his departure, the US had appointed Daniel Smith as Chargé d'Affaires (CdA) to head the US embassy in New Delhi and after his retirement, had recently appointed senior career diplomat Atul Keshap — who is of Indian origin —



Eric M. Garcetti

as the CdA to head the US embassy in India.

Announcing the nomination along with several other ambassadors, the White House said Eric M. Garcetti has been the mayor of the City of Los Angeles since 2013, following 12 years as a member of the City Council, including six as Council President.

As mayor, Mr Garcetti oversees the busiest container port in the Western Hemisphere, the largest

municipal utility in the country, and one of the busiest airports in the world.

He led LA's successful bid to return the summer Olympic Games to American soil for the first time in three decades.

He currently chairs LA Metro, the country's second-busiest transit agency, which is building or extending 15 new transit lines, and shifting to an all-electric fleet.

Mr Garcetti, a Rhodes Scholar, had earlier spent 12 years as an intelligence officer in the US Navy Reserve Component and had served under the US Defence Intelligence Agency.

Mr Garcetti co-founded Climate Mayors and led more than 400 US mayors to adopt the Paris Climate agreement.

MP minister on inflation: No problems in life, no joy

Chhatrapur (MP), July 10: Putting a philosophical spin on inflation, Madhya Pradesh minister Om Prakash Sakhlecha said that without problems, happiness in life can not be savored.

"In life, problems give us the idea of happiness. If there is no problem, there is no sense of happiness," said Sakhlecha, the minister for MSME, science and technology.

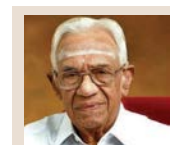
He was replying to a question about people facing the pain of rising prices of fuel and other essential commodities after going through the

second wave of the coronavirus pandemic.

When asked if price rise was a failure of the Narendra Modi government at the Centre, Mr Sakhlecha said, "This could be the thinking of people like you who are spreading rumors."

The Congress took 40 years to administer polio vaccine but Mr Modi had Covid-19 vaccine manufactured and administered across the country within a year, he said.

Sakhlecha, the minister in-charge of Chhatrapur district, was here to attend a few programmes. — PTI



Dr P.K. Warriar

► **BORN TO** Sreedharan Nambodiri and Panniyampilly Kunhi Wariyay on June 5, 1921, P.K. Warriar did his schooling in Kottakkal and joined KAS at the age of 20

► **THE COUNTRY** had honoured him with the Padmasree in 1999 and Padma Bhushan in 2010

Vijayan and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly M.B. Rajesh, condoling the death of the "patriarch" of Ayurvedic medicine.

The country had honoured him with the Padmasree in 1999 and

Padma Bhushan in 2010.

A prominent physician and a visionary who popularised the classical and authentic Ayurveda treatment across the world, Dr Warriar's birth centenary celebrations were held on

Opp. alleges misuse of official machinery

Yogi claims big win in block-panchayat polls

Lucknow, July 10: The BJP on Saturday claimed victory on 635 of the total 825 seats of block panchayat chiefs in Uttar Pradesh, where the local bodies elections were held amid scattered incidents of violence with the opposition alleging misuse of official machinery by the ruling party.

Polling for the 476 posts of block panchayat chiefs was held from 11 am to 3 pm, following which counting of votes had commenced.

A total of 349 candidates for the block panchayat chief posts were elected unopposed on Friday, the last day for the withdrawal of nomination papers, state election commissioner Manoj Kumar said.

Though at most of the places, counting had been completed, in some areas it was still continuing and the results were expected late in the night, a spokesman of the Commission said.

According to state police, clashes and other untoward incidents were reported from 17 districts during the election process and orders have been issued to respective district police heads to take strict action against those responsible for it.

Chief minister Yogi Adityanath held a press conference at the BJP headquarter and claimed victory on 635 seats, where counting had been completed, and attributed



Police personnel baton charge on locals allegedly causing ruckus during the block head elections in Ayodhya district on Saturday. — PTI

the success to the teamwork of the government and party organisation.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, home minister Amit Shah and other top BJP leaders congratulated the state unit for the performance.

"The benefits that the people have got from the Yogi Adityanath government's policies and public interest schemes have been reflected in the party's massive victory. All the party workers deserve congratulations for this victory," PM Modi tweeted.

The panchayat election results are an important morale-booster for the BJP ahead of assembly polls next year in the politically crucial state as it had drawn a lot of flak over its handling of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Chief minister Adityanath also praised

the State Election Commission for conducting peaceful and fair elections.

The opposition parties, however, accused the BJP government of misusing official machinery in the elections and unleashing anarchy.

In a statement, SP president Akhilesh Yadav alleged that the BJP had "forcibly" captured the posts of block chiefs with the help of government machinery and called it an insult of the mandate.

"The BJP government has no faith in democracy and the Constitution, he said and alleged candidates were "abducted openly" and those opposing these tactics were being harassed.

Democracy in Uttar Pradesh has been held hostage by BJP, he alleged. — PTI

'Jungle raj' is prevailing in UP: Mayawati

Lucknow, July 10: Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Saturday hit out at the Uttar Pradesh government over law and order, saying a jungle raj is prevailing in the state as violence marred the panchayat polls and women faced indecent behaviour.

Ms Mayawati's comments have come as the Opposition has slammed the state government over incidents of violence in the run-up to the polls for the block panchayat chief.

Reports of clashes had surfaced from several area of the state amid allegations that candidates backed by opposition parties were not allowed to file nomination papers.

On Friday, SP chief Akhilesh Yadav had alleged that in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri, BJP workers misbehaved with his party candidate Ritu Singh and her proposer Anita Yadav, pulling their sarees.

— PTI

Rahul, Priyanka slam UP govt over violence

New Delhi, July 10: The Congress on Saturday slammed the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh over incidents of alleged violence and misbehaviour with women during the filing of nominations for block panchayat chiefs, with party leader Rahul Gandhi saying that violence has been renamed "masterstroke" in the state.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra alleged that the BJP had "crossed" all limits to stop the nomination of a woman in the polls.

"A few years ago, a rape victim raised her voice against a BJP MLA and an attempt was made to kill her and her family. Today, the BJP crossed all limits to stop the nomination of a woman. Same government. Same behaviour," she said in a tweet in Hindi and also tagged a video purportedly showing a woman being stopped from filing her nomination in the polls.

Former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi, in a tweet in Hindi, said that in



Rahul Gandhi

Priyanka Gandhi

Uttar Pradesh, violence has been renamed "masterstroke".

The brother-in-law of a block development committee member was killed in Bahraich as he resisted an alleged attempt to abduct his relative by a BJP candidate's husband and supporters ahead of the polls for the block panchayat head.

In another incident in Lakhimpur Kheri, a SP candidate was allegedly manhandled by BJP workers, after which six policemen were suspended with the administration ordering a magisterial probe.

A woman BDC member's saree was also pulled in front of police officers, alleged the Congress and sought an apology from the state government. — PTI

AIKSCC says Maha govt has betrayed farmers

SONU SHRIVASTAVA
MUMBAI, JULY 10

Farmers' union All-India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) of Maharashtra on Saturday alleged that the MVA government has betrayed the farmers by bringing three amendment bills in connection with the central farm laws. Despite giving assurance of passing a resolution in connection with revocation of all the farm laws, the MVA government has acted under pressure from the corporate lobby and the Union government, the AIKSCC said.

Dr Ajit Nawale of the All-India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) said that if the state government did not stop from implementing the proposed three bills, the farmers would protest in Mumbai on the lines of the Delhi protests.

Meanwhile, agriculture minister Dada Bhuse denied the allegation that the state government is working under anyone's pressure. The bills were drafted after several rounds of discussion and deliberations, he said.



Police personnel detain Youth Congress activists during their agitation outside the governor house to protest against hike in the fuel and LPG prices in Kolkata on Saturday. — PTI

Dr Warriar, man who brought Ayurveda to masses, dies at 100

Malappuram (Kerala), July 10: Doyen of Ayurveda and managing trustee of Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala (KAS) Dr P.K. Warriar passed away here on Saturday, family sources said.

He was 100. KAS sources said Dr Warriar breathed his last around noon.

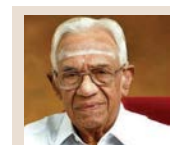
In his lifetime spanning a century, he treated tens of thousands of patients from across the globe and his patients included former presidents and former prime ministers of India

and abroad.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in a tweet, extended his condolences to Warriar's family.

"Saddened by the passing away of Dr P.K. Warriar. His contributions to popularise Ayurveda will always be remembered. Condolences to his family and friends. Om Shanti," he said in his tweet.

Messages poured in from all quarters, including Kerala governor Arif Mohammed Khan, chief minister Pinarayi



Dr P.K. Warriar

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Vijayan and Speaker of the Legislative Assembly M.B. Rajesh, condoling the death of the "patriarch" of Ayurvedic medicine.

The country had honoured him with the Padmasree in 1999 and

Padma Bhushan in 2010.

A prominent physician and a visionary who popularised the classical and authentic Ayurveda treatment across the world, Dr Warriar's birth centenary celebrations were held on

June 8. The renowned Arya Vaidya Sala in Kottakkal near here and the Ayurveda Medical college flourished and became synonymous with Ayurveda after Dr Warriar took the reins of the institution decades ago.

Born to Sreedharan Nambodiri and Panniyampilly Kunhi Wariyay on June 5, 1921, Panniyampilly Krishnankutty Warriar (PK Warriar) did his schooling in Kottakkal and joined KAS at the age of 20. However, he was attract-

ed to the freedom struggle during the Quit India movement and abandoned Ayurveda studies under the tutelage of his uncle and founder of KAS Vaidyarthnam P.S. Warriar.

However, Dr Warriar returned to studies after he realised that active politics was not his cup of tea. Soon after completion of his studies, he joined the KAS as a trustee at the age of 24. Warriar had steered the 119-year old charitable trust managing the KAS for over six decades. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

BJP expels Punjab's ex-minister Joshi

Chandigarh: The Punjab BJP on Saturday expelled former state minister Anil Joshi from the party for six years. The action against Mr Joshi came after he gave his reply to a show-cause notice issued by the BJP's state unit for his anti-party activities. According to the notice, Joshi had been making statements against the Union government, party's central leadership and policies. Mr Joshi did not give up his stubborn attitude of going against the party whereupon state BJP chief Ashwani Sharma on the recommendations of a disciplinary committee expelled him from the primary membership of the party for six years, the statement said. Earlier, in a two-page reply to the show-cause notice, Mr Joshi said he never spoke against the Centre's farm laws and asked the state party chief if it is indiscipline to talk about farmers. — PTI

TMC mouthpiece to become daily

Kolkata: The Trinamul Congress, after returning to power in West Bengal for the third time in a row, has decided to convert its weekly mouthpiece *Jago Bangla* (Bengal, awake) to a daily from July 21. "Jago Bangla has resonated with the people of #Bengal ever since its inception. Delivering the vision of @MamataOfficial it has steadily made its way into the hearts of people pan-state," TMC general secretary Abhishek Banerjee tweeted, tagging party supremo and chief minister Mamata Banerjee. Abhishek Banerjee used a hashtag "#NaboRupeJagoBangla" (Jago Bangla in new form) and said, "As @jago_bangla gets a fresh make over, stay tuned to find out more! Using the same hashtag, the Twitter handle of Jago Bangla said that the weekly mouthpiece will become daily from July 21. — PTI

Grenade hurled at Assam officials

Silchar/Hallakandi, Assam: A grenade was hurled at a team of Assam government officials in Cachar district by suspected miscreants of neighbouring Mizoram when an eviction drive against illegal encroachment was going on. Though no casualty was reported in the incident at Dholai Dholakhal locality, senior police officials have rushed to the spot to assess the situation. According to official sources, a section of the people of Mizoram allegedly encroached around 6.5 km area within the territory of Assam, following which the police started the eviction process a few days back. The encroachers, who were accompanied by a few armed men, crossed a ditch and threw a grenade at the officials of Assam visiting the place, the official said. — PTI

50% occupancy allowed in Nainital, Dehradun hotels

■ **Continued from Page 1**
being issued to those who are flouting the mandatory face mask rule. "We are making efforts and will follow guidelines to contain the spread of the virus," he said.
After undated videos circulated widely on social media showing a large number of tourists bathing at Mussorie's Kempts falls without maintaining social distancing norms, the state government said only 50 tourists will be allowed at the spot at a time with a maximum time limit of 30 minutes.
In neighbouring Himachal Pradesh, chief minister Jairam Thakur has appealed to tourists to follow Covid norms, adding that "Covid-19 is not over yet".
"We need to save the tourism industry also. I held a virtual meeting with district officials and directed them to monitor and regulate the crowd. Covid-19 is not over yet. Hotels are being asked to follow SOPs," he added.

Two-child policy...

■ **Continued from Page 1**
It is necessary to ensure healthy birth spacing through measures related to augmenting the availability, accessibility and affordability of quality reproductive health services to achieve the goal of population control, stabilisation and its welfare in the state, the draft bill reads. — PTI

WHO: Decision on Covaxin approval likely in 4-6 weeks

New Delhi, July 10: The World Health Organisation (WHO) is likely to take a decision on including Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin in the emergency use list (EUL) within four to six weeks, Soumya Swaminathan, the global health body's chief scientist has said.

Speaking at a webinar organised by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on Friday, Ms Swaminathan said the WHO is reviewing Covaxin as its manufacturer Bharat Biotech is now uploading its entire data on the health body's portal.

According to WHO guidelines, EUL is a procedure to streamline the process by which new or unlicensed products can be used during public health emergencies.

"There is a process to be followed for EUL and pre-qualification of vaccines under which a company has to complete phase 3 trials and submit the whole data to the regulatory department of WHO which is examined by an expert advisory group," Ms Swaminathan said.

"The completeness of the data, which includes safety and efficacy and also the manufacturing quality, standard is provided. So, I expect that Bharat Biotech has already submitted data and in four to six weeks there will be a decision on its inclusion," Ms Swaminathan added.

3 militants killed in Anantnag

AGE CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, JULY 10

The J&K police on Saturday said that it along with the Army and CRPF killed three Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants in a fire fight that broke out in southern Anantnag district.

The police claimed that one of the slain militants was involved in the murder of a Territorial Army (TA) soldier in June 2019. It said that the fighting broke out in Kawariganj village of Anantnag's Achabal area following a cordon-and-search operation.

They said that Arif Hajam, an LeT cadre, had killed the TA jawan on June 6, 2019 whereas the other two slain militants — Basit Ahmad and Suhail Ahmad — were involved in a series of terror incidents in south Kashmir.

Meanwhile, the security forces have reportedly arrested a woman during a search operation in Bangdara village of Baramulla district after two hand-grenades and ₹47,000 were recovered from her possession.

Hizb chief's 2 sons in J&K among 11 sacked in 'national interest'

■ **Continued from Page 1**
Haftiz Saeed, and 10 Kashmiri separatist activists in an alleged money laundering and terror funding case.

The J&K government has claimed that the NIA tracked terror funding and found that the brothers were involved in raising, receiving, collecting and transferring funds through hawala transactions to the Hizb, which has been declared a terrorist organisation in India and also by the US state department.

Syed Shakeel, who worked as a senior laboratory technician at Srinagar's Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences (SKIMS), was arrested by the NIA on August 30, 2018, during a raid at his residence in the city's Rambagh area in connection with a 2011 terror funding case.

The NIA had claimed that he used to receive funds through a US-based international wire transfer company from one Aijaz Ahmed Bhat, another accused in the case who is absconding and is presently based in Saudi Arabia.

The agency had in October 2017 arrested his brother Syed Shahid in connection with the same case. An employee of J&K's horticulture department, Syed Shahid is currently lodged in Delhi's Tihar jail.

A senior government functionary added that the Enforcement Directorate (ED)



Tourists clicks photographs in the Mulliyangiri hill range near Chikmagalur, Karnataka, on Saturday. — PTI

8,296 cases, 179 deaths in Maha

Mumbai: Maharashtra on Saturday reported 8,296 fresh coronavirus positive cases and 179 fatalities while 6,026 patients recovered, the state health department said. With the new additions, the Covid-19 tally in Maharashtra climbed to 61,49,264 and the death toll to 1,25,528. Of the 179 fatalities, 143 occurred in last 48 hours while 36 in the last week. Additionally, 315 deaths have been added to the cumulative toll report of Maharashtra, which means the overall fatality count has gone up by 494 compared to Friday, the health department said in a report. — PTI

At present, the WHO has approved vaccines by Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca, SK Bio/Serum Institute of India, AstraZeneca EU,

Janssen, Moderna and Sinopharm for emergency use.

"We currently have six vaccines approved with EUL and have recommendations from our Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE). We continue to look at Covaxin. Bharat Biotech has now started uploading their data on our portal and that is the next vaccine that will be reviewed by our experts committee," the chief scientist said.

She also mentioned the WHO Research and Development Blueprint prepared in 2016, shortly after the Ebola outbreak, in which a research roadmap for diseases with pandemic potential was laid out.

Ms Swaminathan also said the roadmap essentially laid out the steps in terms of developing target product profiles - like standards for vaccines, diagnostics regulatory standards, trial designs, and trial simulators. — PTI

RSS to go hi-tech for expansion, to set up own IT cell

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JULY 10

In a sharp departure from its traditions, Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) is set to allow its cadres to use social media to promote its ideology and reach out to people.

A plan in this regard is being given final shape at the ongoing four-day "Chintan Baithak" of "Prant Pracharakas and Saha Prant Pracharak" of the rightwing organisation began at Chitrakoot in Madhya Pradesh on Friday, sources said on Saturday.

"The RSS leadership has decided to go hi-tech for expansion. We are going to set up an information technology (IT) cell for this purpose. The cell will impart training to the cadres on effective use of social media to help them reach out to people by enlightening them about the ideology of the organisation," an RSS leader disclosed to this newspaper unwilling to be quoted since he is

not authorised to speak to the media.

■ **THE IT cell** will impart training to the cadres on effective use of social media to help them reach out to people

■ **THE RSS** is planning to expand to the villages by establishing 'shakhas' and drafting local people irrespective of their religions in them

The 'shakhas' which have remained dormant during the pandemic will be activated again by mobilizing cadres to work among the people to stop the third wave of coronavirus, sources said.

Sources said the 'Chintan Baithak' may lay out the roadmap for expansion of the organisation in the south and eastern states in the country.

Encounters continue unabated in Assam; 1 more killed, 2 hurt

At least 13 suspected insurgents, criminals were killed in last 2 months

Assam to create new dept for indigenous faith, culture

Guwahati: The Assam Cabinet on Saturday decided to create a new department to protect the culture and practices of people belonging to tribal and other indigenous communities, Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said here.

The new department, he stated, would ensure that

the state's indigenous population gets to preserve their faith and traditions, while providing requisite support to them.

Addressing a press meet, Mr Sarma also said that the cabinet, during the meeting, has agreed that financial and administrative reforms were necessary to remove red tape

was killed while attempting to escape from police custody in Chirang district. "Within 24 hrs police cracked the case of brutal murder of home guard Eyad Ali. 3 persons arrested & the murder weapons were recovered.

"In an attempt to flee from Police custody, escaping accused Abdul Khalek sustained bullet injuries and later succumbed to his injuries," Chirang dis-

trict police tweeted.

In another incident, Kokrajhar district police intercepted a truck allegedly smuggling 840 kg of ganja worth over ₹2 crore, at Srirampur near the Assam-West Bengal inter-state border.

"While recovering another 10 kg of ganja, which the accused had hidden along the highway, the duo attacked the police personnel & tried to

and ensure speedy implementation of schemes.

It further decided that departmental heads will be entitled to give its nod for projects worth ₹2 crore and below, and a finance committee headed by chief secretary for those between ₹2 crore and ₹5 crore, the CM explained.

— PTI



Argentinian football fans decorate the rooftop of a house with flags and posters in Kolkata on Saturday ahead of the Copa America Championship final match between Argentina and Brazil. — PTI

'India, Vietnam share vision of rules-based Indo-Pacific'

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

In another veiled message to China, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday congratulated his Vietnamese counterpart Pham Minh Chinh on his appointment, while "welcoming the fact that both countries share a similar vision of an open, inclusive, peaceful and rules-based Indian Ocean Region", and adding that "hence the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership can contribute to promoting regional stability, prosperity and development". Vietnam is India's closest strategic partner in south-east Asia. Both nations have fought border wars with China in the past, with Vietnam having a maritime territorial dispute with China.

In a statement mean-



Narendra Modi

while, New Delhi said, "Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi had a phone call today with H.E. Pham Minh Chinh, Prime Minister of Vietnam. PM Modi congratulated H.E. Pham Minh Chinh on his appointment as the Prime Minister of Vietnam and expressed confidence that the India-Vietnam Comprehensive Strategic Partnership will continue to become stronger under his able guidance."

The MEA added, "Prime Minister thanked PM Chinh for the valuable support provided by the

Government and people of Vietnam during the 2nd wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in India. The leaders agreed that both countries should continue consultations and cooperation to support each other's continuing efforts against the pandemic."

New Delhi further said, "Both Prime Ministers reviewed the state of bilateral relations and shared their views on different areas of cooperation. Noting that year 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between the two countries, they agreed to celebrate this auspicious milestone in a befitting manner through various commemorative activities. Prime Minister Modi also invited PM Chinh to undertake an official visit to India at an early suitable date."

₹2,500cr worth heroin seized

■ **Continued from Page 1**
national Isha Khan who recently left India for Afghanistan. Khan directed him to contact Gurpreet and Gurjot who were currently operating a drug racket from Faridabad Sector-65 in Haryana, the DCP said.

At the instance of Kashmiri, Gurpreet and Gurjot were arrested, he said. Police recovered 166 kg and 115 kg heroin from two cars which were parked in the society. Later, 70 kg heroin was also recovered from the rented accommodation of the accused persons, police said.

Gurpreet and Gurjot revealed that they were operating the drug racket on the instructions of one Navpreet Singh, presently based in Portugal. Gurpreet met Navpreet in Kapurthala Jail, Punjab, when they were in judicial custody in different NDPS cases, the DCP said.

At the instance of Kashmiri, Ali was also arrested from Gurgaon in Haryana and two kg heroin was recovered from his possession. Around 100 kg of different chemicals used for preparation of heroin was also recovered, Mr Kushwah said.

Police said that opium grown in parts of

Afghanistan is concealed in different legitimate exports, i.e., talc stone, gypsum powder, basil seeds, and in packaging material like gunny bags, cartons etc. Then it is transported in containers to Chabahar port of Iran and from there the consignments containing the contraband are shipped to Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust Mumbai, they said. Thereafter, the material is separated from the legitimate exports and sent to the makeshift factories based in Shivpuri, MP, for its further extraction and processing to get the final product heroin, police said.

The locals, with the help of Afghan experts, process the heroin and the chemicals required for the process are procured from various chemical shops located in MP and Delhi, police said. After preparation, the heroin is delivered to Punjab, Delhi, Haryana, Rajasthan, J&K and various other parts of the country using different supply chains. The arrested accused are parts of different components of this network, police said.

In 2019, the Special Cell had seized 330 kg of Afghan heroin in a multi-state operation, they added.

India gifts holy relics of Queen of Georgia

■ **Continued from Page 1**
regarded with so much reverence in your society. And in view of our very close friendship and understanding the importance of it, Prime Minister Modi decided to gift one part of the Holy Relic to the Georgian people. And it was my honour, my privilege to personally carry it."

St. Queen Ketevan was a 17th century Georgian Queen who attained martyrdom. Her relics were found in 2005 at St. Augustine Convent in Old Goa, on the basis of medieval Portuguese records. They are believed to have been brought to Goa in 1627. India has gifted one part of the relics to Georgia.

Addressing the Georgian PM, Mr Jaishankar further said, "As you noted there are big Indian investments in projects in Georgia. In the hydel sector, hydroelectricity sector, in the steel sector, in the power transmission sector. I also understood even in agriculture there are Indians who have invested here. But I think a lot of that is reflection on your record of making it easier to do business. I really applaud your ranking... I particularly want to thank you, Prime Minister, for the care that you have taken of the Indian student community. This has been two very difficult years so we know that you went the extra mile to look after our students and in many cases help them come back home and then come back to Georgia for their studies and I do want on their behalf to really convey our appreciation."

THE ASIAN AGE

11 JULY 2021



Shashi Warriar

Off the beaten track

To keep power, redouble effort, hire triple agents

Murthy dropped in last week, the day I'd got a bottle of 12-year-old Irish whiskey. I don't know how he does it, but he invariably drops in — always without notice, mind you — just when I've got a bottle of something special that I want to keep for an occasion. But this time he drank my whiskey with a distracted air, staring out of the window at the grey drizzle falling outside. "What's up?" I asked.

"I need advice from a statistician," he said. "You know a lot of professors, and one of them might be good with statistical analysis, besides being able to keep a secret."

"Sure," I said, "I know a couple of guys. But why? You're into wheeling and dealing, not stats."

He evaded. "It's just some minor project that came up a few months ago, you know, after the recent state elections that took us all by surprise."

But I knew it was more than that, and, sure enough, a couple of whiskeys later, he got expansive. "Those elections," he said, "they're going to change the way elections are managed."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

He emptied his glass. After I poured him a refill, he continued. "I won't name any names," he said, "because all this is speculation. You know, during those last elections up in the east of the country, there was this local state-level party facing a national-level juggernaut. Every analyst predicted that the juggernaut, which had done very poorly thus far in that state, would give the local party a drubbing, or, if not that, at least a great fight. There were lots of people who said that the people hated the local party because it was corrupt and favoured some sections of the populace and so on.

"But when the results came, all that went up in smoke. The local party got a two-thirds majority, the juggernaut got half the seats they'd expected — and a third of what their leaders claimed they'd get — and everyone else got wiped out."

"Right," I said. Of course I remembered! "That was when all those MLAs who had deserted the local party for the juggernaut began to queue up to return... I don't remember seeing such a flood of sleaze ever before."

"You judge too quickly," he said. "It's human nature. You won't succeed if you sit around judging it instead of understanding it and using it."

"I'll do that when I can stomach it," I said, "but what's this all about?"

"Well, practically the only one who got it right was a hired advisor to the local party," he said. "He said that if the juggernaut got more than a hundred seats, he'd give up his career."

"Yes, I remember," I said.

"After the results came," said Murthy, "he quit the company that officially assisted the local party, the company that he founded, despite having called it right."

"So what?" I asked.

"Another state government that will be facing the juggernaut soon, and has dissent within its ranks, has hired him as an individual at an undisclosed fee... That fee must be stratospheric. So he has all the power and the money he wants but is accountable to no one. Brilliant!"

"So why are you looking for a good statistician?" I asked.

"Because I figured out what he did," he replied. "He figured out a way to beat all the pollsters and election-watchers. He's changed the way elections are managed. Permanently."

"You still haven't told me how," I complained.

"Ah, yes," he said, in his best superior manner. "Whenever there's an election, parties and candidates... Well, they offer voters money and booze to vote for them."

"Yes," I replied. "Part of the sleaze."

"Well, I think this guy took it a step further," he said. "He offered his flock the usual money to vote for his party, and a little extra to tell everyone that they were going to vote for the juggernaut."

"But why?" I asked. I'm a simpleton in these matters.

"Two things," he said. "It gave the juggernaut's people the wrong idea about how well they were progressing. Second, the poll analysts, too, thought the juggernaut would do better, and got thrown off."

"But that still doesn't explain why you need a statistician!" I said.

"I thought you'd understand," he said, disappointment in his voice. "This guy created a lie that's essentially a statistical bias, so I want to know if there's a statistical method to understand and neutralise it. The other thing is, the local party had limited cash. So the guy had to figure out a way to spend his money in critical constituencies in areas where it would have the most effect. There might be a mathematical way to do that."

"Well," I said, reaching for my phone, "I'll put you on to a couple of profs right away. You can speak to them directly."

"No thanks," he said, emptying his glass again. When I reached for the bottle, he waved it away. "No thanks for that, too. I've just figured out a possible solution."

"But you don't know any mathematics," I said.

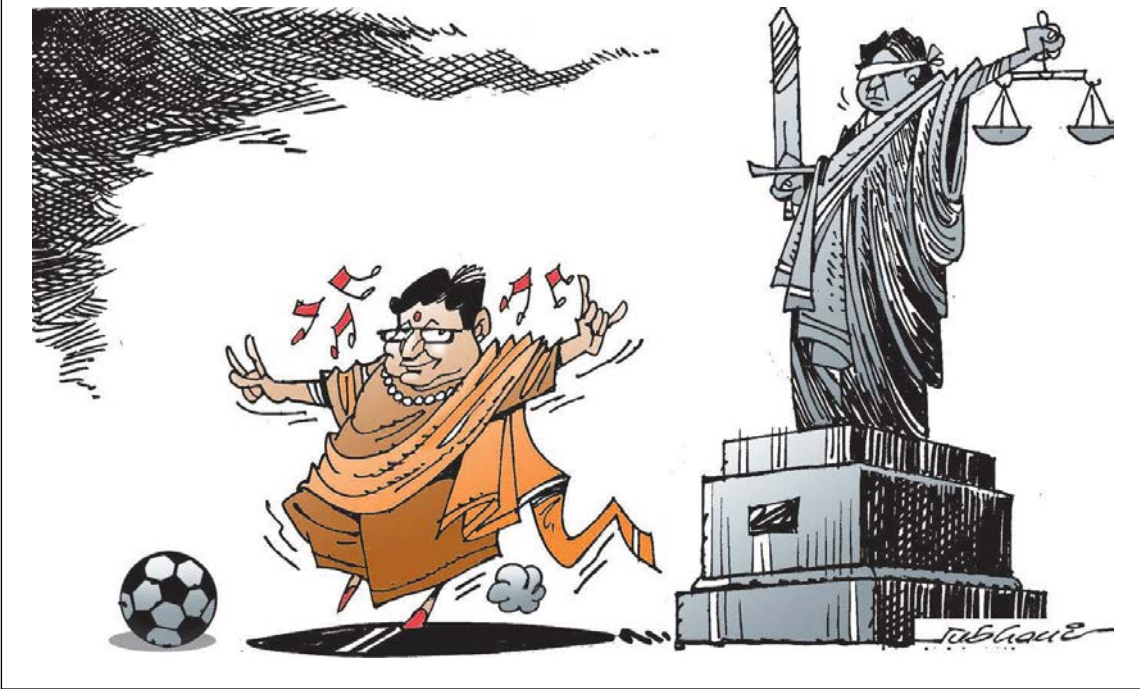
"I don't," he said. "But this is politics and people, not mathematics. This guy we were talking about, he told people to lie: they did one thing and said another. Like double agents, sort of."

"Yes," I said.

"If you want to beat him and his double agents," he said, rising to leave, "you pay some of those double agents a lot of money to change who they vote for, but not what they say. You pay them to tell the truth about who they're voting for. You spread the rumour that you're willing to pay other double agents as well. It won't cost much, since you're working with rumours and confusion. So you create not double but triple agents, see?"

Shashi Warriar has written fairy tales, thrillers, a semi-fictional biography, satires, and a love story. Besides writing, he teaches strategic communication at a business school.

Subhani



The method & madness of Modi's Cabinet shuffle



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Teams have been written on the recent Cabinet reshuffle, as though it marked a major milestone in the Modi Sarkar. However, such mid-term reshuffles are fairly routine exercises, and the temptation to over-interpret them, or to derive substantive consequences from them, should be resisted.

Any shifting around of ministers in the current dispensation has little meaning because the actual focus of power has shifted so dramatically to the all-powerful Prime Minister's Office (PMO). Ministers are like elevated bureaucrats, tasked to implement a brief given to them from the PMO, with little scope for personal initiative in a system where both directive and monitoring powers are vested elsewhere. Such a form of functioning makes a mockery of the consultative process that is the very essence of a Cabinet form of government. To be fair, this is not the hallmark only of this government. It has been the case whenever the PM becomes the sole fountainhead of power in the system, and Narendra Modi certainly is one such.

There are many inexplicable factors in this round of the shuffling of the pack. For instance, Mansukh Mandaviya has been given charge of the crucial portfolio of health. Its importance can hardly be overstated during pandemic times. Glaring inadequacies have been revealed, and major restructuring is required in the health sector. Given this, one would have thought that Mansukhji would be dealing only with health. But, he has also been made in charge of chemicals and

fertilisers, major subjects in themselves. Why?

The way portfolios have been combined leaves one, frankly, flummoxed. Why should Sarbananda Sonowal be dealing with ports, shipping and waterways and Ayush? What is common between ports and Ayurveda? Similarly, the new blue-eyed boy Ashwini Vaishnav holds the railways portfolio. Anyone even remotely familiar with the functioning of government knows that railways is an empire in itself, requiring the full time and concentrated focus of the minister in charge. But, Vaishnav has also been given the electronics and information technology portfolio. There will be those who say that there is an overlap between IT and electronics and railways. Maybe, but these are big portfolios in their own right, and a minister trying to deal with both may end not giving enough time to either.

Other appointments also raise worrying questions. What is common between petroleum, and housing and urban affairs, which Hardeep Puri has been tasked to deal with? G. Kishan Reddy has been given culture, tourism, and development of Northeast region. Firstly, given that India is a civilisational entity of great antiquity and refinement, and has an abundance of neglected talent in the realm of the arts, culture should have merited a full time Cabinet minister, especially since this government never tires of paying tribute to our ancient past. The tremendous potential of tourism, and the consistent record of neglect it has suffered, should have made the PM think of giving this sector too to a full time Cabinet

minister. Now, the overwhelmed Shri Reddy, will end up doing effectively neither culture nor tourism, even as he struggles to deal with the affairs of the Northeast. He will be further surprised to find that his minister of state in the ministry of tourism is simultaneously dealing with ports and shipping!

Home minister Amit Shah has been saddled with a new ministry of "cooperation". Its task is to "provide a separate administrative, legal and policy framework for strengthening the cooperative movement in the country", and to streamline the processes for ease of doing business and enable development of multi-state cooperative banks. What has this brief to do with the home ministry will remain an eternal mystery, unless the idea is to improve the law and order situation in the functioning of cooperatives!

One feels sorry for the ministers who have been dropped, for they were but puppets — less or more agile — in a system where the strings were in the hands of the PMO. Harsha Vardhan, the health minister, needed to go for his terrible handling of the pandemic, but surely the blamegame should have also included those who are in charge of the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA)? The NDMA kicked in in March 2020 when the pandemic was declared a national disaster. All subsequent steps to handle it, including a

Mansukh Mandaviya has been given charge of the crucial portfolio of health. Its importance can hardly be overstated during pandemic times. But, he has also been made in charge of chemicals and fertilisers, major subjects in themselves. Why?

national plan devised for this purpose, were in the hands of the NDMA. The Prime Minister is the chairperson of the NDMA. Where should responsibility rest for the gross incompetence and lack of anticipation that was seen when the second wave hit us?

Ravi Shankar Prasad and Prakash Javdekar, more loyal than the king, faced the axe. I am sure they must be still wondering what they did wrong. Prasad could not have adopted his abrasive response to Twitter and social media without clearance from the PMO. Others have been equally culpable. Eighty-four years old and seriously unwell, Father Stan Swamy died in custody, begging for a straw sipper to drink water because he suffered from Parkinson's, while the National Investigation Authority (NIA), doggedly argued against his bail. There was justifiable national and international outrage over his death. The NIA is under the Home ministry, but its incumbent was not touched. On the other hand, Anurag Singh Thakur, who was seen on public video footage openly inciting a mob to kill during the anti CAA-NRC protests, has been promoted. What is the message?

Prime Minister Modi has been lucky so far. Very often his decisions, escape close scrutiny by the media and the public, because of his aura, and the ever-efficient publicity and propaganda departments of his party. But, that aura is severely dented today. It is time to ask the right questions, rather than be mesmerised by his ordained claim to invincibility. When such questions are asked, it will be seen that the much hyped Cabinet reshuffle was another routine and lacking exercise rather than the gamechanger it has been so assiduously projected to represent.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

LETTERS

STALIN'S RESOLVE

While it was a master-stroke by Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin to constitute an Economic Advisory Council comprising giants like Esther Duflo, Raghuram Rajan, Arvind Subramanian, Jean Dreze and S. Narayan, it is highly laudable that in the very first virtual meeting with the members of the council, the CM has given them a free hand. His clarion call to world-renowned economists to make the state a role model for the rest of the country in all parameters echoes the honest determination of the chief minister. There can be no doubt that with such a potential and talented economic team around him and P.T.R. Palanivel Thiagarajan, a financial wizard of international repute as his finance minister, the day is not far off for the chief minister to achieve his goals.

Tharcus S. Fernando
Chennai

IN FR STAN'S NAME

THIS REFERS TO Shobhaa De's article, "Of a strategic reshuffle & Fr Stan's death in custody". The secular character of the Indian people was clearly on display in the manner the death of Fr Stan was mourned. Except for the usual suspects, spineless superstars, paid trolls and BJP spokespersons, there was none defending the government's actions. Only those who are unaware of the work done by Fr Stan for the past 30 years could think he was a Naxalite. There are many others like him languishing in jails for being the voice of the oppressed. Fr Stan is no more, but we can and must raise our voice for them.

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

TRADITION ENDS

GIVEN THAT KASHMIR Valley is susceptible to landslides, a convention started 149 years ago of shifting the capital of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) from Srinagar in summers to Jammu in winters. This custom is set to end after the LG's administration decided to shift to e-offices this month. The administration says the epic bi-annual 'Darbar Move' is just too pricey and takes up time and resources. But the decision has left a whole bunch of households nervous that their decades-old network could fade away.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

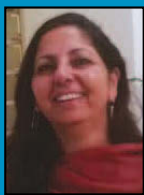
ITALIAN DOUBLE?

MATTEO BERRETTINI fought off Polish opponent Hubert Hurkacz to become the first Italian to reach the Wimbledon singles final. The latter had knocked out eight-time champion Roger Federer in the quarter-finals but found the Italian too hot to handle. On Sunday, Berrettini will lock horns with the top seed, Novak Djokovic, as he attempts to become Italy's first men's Grand Slam champion since Adriano Panatta won at the 1976 French Open. Besides, Berrettini could be one half of a famous Italian double with the Azzurri facing England in the Euro 2020 final in London.

N.J. Ravi Chander
Bengaluru

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

Anita Katyal
Political Gup-Shup



Amit Shah's secret of utmost 'cooperation'; Twitter & Puri

The creation of a new ministry, the ministry of cooperation, which is mandated to strengthen the country's cooperative movement, has led to considerable speculation about the real purpose behind this move. The fact that it is headed by home minister Amit Shah, the second-most important leader in the Narendra Modi government, is a sure sign that the new ministry is politically important for this dispensation. It is said the new ministry is aimed at checkmating state leaders like Sharad Pawar, who derive political clout from these cash-rich cooperatives. Mr Shah is not new to this game. He has had a long association with the Ahmedabad District Cooperative Bank which was embroiled in a controversy post-demonetisation when RTI replies revealed it had received the highest deposits of banned old currency notes. Mr Shah has been a director with the bank and also served as its chairman in 2000. He even fought a bitter court battle to gain control of the bank. Tushar Mehta, the present solicitor general of India, was his lawyer. CPI(M) general secretary Sitaram Yechury has already

sounded alarm bells, saying cooperative societies are a state subject that the new ministry will be encroaching on their rights.

It clearly pays to be visible on social media. The newly-promoted petroleum and urban affairs minister Hardeep Puri can testify to that. Mr Puri was hyperactive on Twitter in the run-up to the Cabinet reshuffle. While he took care to amplify Prime Minister Narendra Modi's messages, speeches and articles, describing him as "Karmayogi PM" and his writings as brilliant, Mr Puri was equally busy trolling his opponents, especially those who dared to criticise the Central Vista redevelopment project. Mr Puri even persuaded friendly media-persons and former bureaucrats to pen articles praising the project and castigating those who dared to quizz the government on the need to line the three-kilometre stretch on Rajpath with aesthetically questionable concrete structures. Mr Puri's efforts clearly paid off as he was rewarded with an upgrade as a Cabinet rank.

While health minister Harsh Vardhan's exit from the Cabinet did not come as a surprise given how the second wave of the coronavirus pandemic was mismanaged, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Prakash Javadekar's resignation was a bolt from the blue. Mr Prasad, who was heading the law and information technology ministries, assumed it would be business as usual for him. He believed he had successfully filled the vacuum created by Arun Jaitley's death as he was often called upon to take on the Opposition and defend the government and the party. It was, therefore, a shock for Mr Prasad when he received a phone call on Wednesday morning asking him to put in his papers. No one, not even Mr Prasad, knows why he was shown the door. It is being assumed that his running battle with Twitter cost Mr Prasad his job but it is well known that in this government, a minister cannot go so far without permission from top bosses.

Stung by criticism that there is a talent deficit in the Modi government, its media managers were

at pains to point to the educational qualifications of the Prime Minister's ministerial team, including the foreign universities they attended. But a study of the list of ministers shows the talent deficit persists as Mr Modi has entrusted key ministries to leaders who are not from the BJP ranks. The all-important civil aviation ministry is headed by Jyotiraditya Scindia, a recent entrant to the BJP. Ashwini Vaishnav, a former career civil servant, is in charge of the ministries of railways as well as information technology. Kiren Rijju, now promoted as law minister, is originally from the Congress and Maratha strongman Narayan Rane, the new MSME minister, was with the Shiv Sena and had a brief stint in the Congress before he joined the BJP. Not to forget S.Jaishankar, Hardeep Puri and Raj Kumar Singh, all former bureaucrats, who head the important ministries of foreign affairs, petroleum and power, respectively. Even the Janata Dal (United) nominee RCP Singh, the new steel minister, is a former bureaucrat.

The inclusion of Uttarakhand's Ajay Bhatt in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet and the appointment of Pushkar Singh Dhami as CM of the hill state has baffled many people. Both Mr Bhatt and Mr Dhami hail from the Kumaon region while the BJP has its base in the Thakur-dominated Garhwal region which has shown a marked preference for the saffron party. It was expected that leaders from Garhwal would be accommodated to send out the right message before next year's crucial Assembly election. But the BJP leadership in Delhi apparently believes the Thakurs are loyal to the party and will not desert the saffron camp. It, therefore, decided to focus on the Kumaon region to take on Congress leader and former chief minister Harish Rawat who, in BJP's reckoning, needs to be countered as he is the Opposition's only tall leader in Uttarakhand. Time will tell if the BJP's change of tactics will pay electoral dividends.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

UKRAINIAN
SOLDIER KILLED,
THREE WOUNDED

Kiev, July 10: The Ukrainian army said on Saturday that a soldier had been killed and three others wounded in the country's pro-Russian separatist east, amid rising tensions in the conflict-torn region.

It was the fourth Ukrainian soldier killed in the past week. The wounded were being treated in hospital and their injuries not life-threatening. Ukrainian positions on the frontline had been targeted by artillery, mortars, grenade launchers and machine gun fire. The war, which has left more than 13,000 people dead, broke out in 2014 shortly after Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula.

TAJIKISTAN
QUAKE CLAIMS
FIVE LIVES

Dushanbe, July 10: An earthquake struck eastern Tajikistan on Saturday morning, killing at least five people, according to authorities in the mountainous Central Asian country. Tremors from the 5.9 magnitude quake could be felt in the capital of Dushanbe, 165 kilometres (100 miles) southwest of the epicentre.

"Dozens of houses were destroyed," the Tajik committee for emergency situations said.

"Power lines were also partly damaged" in three villages in the district of Tajikabad, where all the victims lived.

The quake struck at 7:14 am (0214 GMT) and at a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the committee and state news agency Khovar.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon has ordered a commission of inquiry.

MOGADISHU
BLAST: UNKNOWN
CASUALTIES

Mogadishu, July 10: A car bomb targeting a top police chief exploded in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on Saturday, causing an unknown number of casualties, police and witnesses said. "The commissioner is unharmed but there are other casualties the attack inflicted," said Somali police spokesman Sadiiq Dudishe.

He said the bomber, using an explosive-laden vehicle, struck the convoy of Benadir region police commissioner Farhan Mohamud at a busy intersection in the capital.

"It caused huge devastation and casualties of both police and civilians," said Mire Adan, who was a few metres from the scene, adding that he counted six bodies.

Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

ZELDA GAME
CARTRIDGE SELLS
FOR \$870,000

New York, July 10: A sealed cartridge of "The Legend of Zelda" for the old Nintendo NES console has sold for a world record sum of \$870,000, auction house Heritage Auctions said in a statement Friday.

The cartridge, dated to 1987, is still in its original packaging and trumps the previous world record sale of a video game — \$660,000 for a 1986 "Super Mario Bros" cartridge sold in April — according to the auction house. The game was the "masterpiece" in a sale of 443 lots that runs until Sunday, Eric Bradley, spokesperson for the Dallas-based company, said. The auction house has not revealed buyer's identity.

Blending adventure, action and exploration in a magical universe, Zelda is one of the most significant titles in the history of video games.

REMOVAL OF
U.S. CAPITOL
FENCING BEGINS

Washington, July 10: More than six months after the deadly US Capitol insurrection, authorities on Friday began the process of dismantling fencing and barricades surrounding the iconic Washington building, although some access restrictions will remain in place.

Personnel were seen removing bars connecting sections of the eight-foot (2.4-metre) black metal fencing that had been erected in the days following the violent unrest at the citadel of American democracy.

Removal of the fence itself was to begin early Saturday, workers on the site said, with the operation expected to last through the weekend. Thousands of National Guard troops were stationed there following the attack, and a wide security boundary complete with razor wire turned the Capitol into a fortress for months.

EU hits goal of delivering
vaccines for 70% of adults

Brussels, July 10: The European Union has hit its target of delivering enough Coronavirus vaccine to cover 70 percent of the adult population, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Saturday.

The 27 EU member state governments are responsible for administering the vaccines to citizens — and some are working much faster than others — but von der Leyen stressed that: "The EU has kept its word." The EU joint vaccine purchasing scheme, run by von der Leyen's European Commission, has delivered 330 million BioNTech-Pfizer shots, 100 million AstraZeneca, 50 million from Moderna and 20 million Johnson & Johnson.

All but the J&J jab require two doses to achieve full efficacy, and the EU is home to an estimated 366 million adults.

"This weekend, we delivered enough vaccine to member states to fully vaccinate at least 70 percent of the adult population this month. By tomorrow, some 500 million doses will have been distributed to all regions of Europe," von der Leyen said.

"Covid-19 is not yet defeated. But we are prepared to continue supplying vaccines — also against new variants. Now the member states must do everything they can to ensure that vaccinations move forward. Only then will we all be safe." When the Coronavirus epidemic hit Europe last year, the European Commission — which previously had little role in health policy — stepped in to coordinate a joint buying programme for members.

This was criticised at first by some for having been slow to get into gear and to negotiate contracts with drug suppliers, and the plan was hampered later when some firms — notably UK-based AstraZeneca — fell short in deliveries. But, as industry raced to boost production of the newly developed vaccines, purchases started flowing in, and von der Leyen will see meeting the European Commission's self-imposed July deadline for 70 percent coverage as vindication.

"The EU is delivering," she said. "Our vaccination campaign has accelerated tremendously since the beginning of the year. The joint approach is a success. Only together can we come out of this crisis well."

— AFP



People wait in a queue to register for the Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine at a convention hall building in Banda Aceh on Saturday.

— AFP

Delta variant cases mark
32% weekly surge in UK

London, July 10: UK health officials said the Delta variant of Covid-19 continues as the dominant strain of Coronavirus and marked a sharp increase in the UK with 54,268 more cases logged on Friday, which marks a 32 per cent increase over the previous week.

Public Health England (PHE) said its weekly analysis shows the continued rise in infections is not followed by a similar increase in hospitalisations and deaths, which reflects a high protection

offered by both doses of a Coronavirus vaccine. In a separate study, PHE also found that all the vaccines being administered are as effective at preventing symptomatic disease

in the majority of people with underlying health conditions as the rest of the population.

The data continues to show that the sharp increase in cases that we are seeing is not being followed by a similar increase in hospitalisation and death, said Dr Jenny Harries, Chief Executive of the UK Health Security Agency.

This is because two doses of the available vaccines offer a high level of protection against the Delta variant.

— PTI

Tencent game merger blocked
China to remove 25
Didi service apps

Beijing, July 10: China's financial regulator has blocked a merger of the nation's two largest video game live-streaming sites planned by tech giant Tencent over antitrust concerns, it said Saturday.

Beijing has launched a major crackdown on the biggest players in its tech sector after years of runaway growth and lax regulation, partly due to fears over their growing influence and the security of troves of sensitive consumer data.

Analysts have estimated the planned merger of live streaming services Huya and Douyu could have brought the combined platforms' domestic market share to between 80 to 90 per cent. "If Huya and Douyu merged, that would... further strengthen Tencent's dominant position in the video game live-streaming market," Beijing's State

Administration for Market Regulation (SAMR) said in an online statement. "This has the effect of eliminating or restricting competition, is not conducive to fair market competition ... and is not conducive to the healthy and sustainable development of the online gaming and video game livestreaming

market." The blocked merger comes shortly after regulators abruptly announced a cybersecurity review into ride-hailing app Didi Chuxing on the heels of a US IPO that raised \$4.4 billion.

Plans for the deal were initially announced by Tencent last October, but SAMR said it would undertake an antitrust review into the merger in December. The same month, it announced an antitrust investigation into e-commerce giant Alibaba, whose fintech arm Ant Financial's IPO was shelved at the last minute by regulators in November.

The company was later slapped with a record 18.2 billion yuan (\$2.78 billion) fine for anti-competitive practices. Tencent currently has a majority stake in Huya and a 38 per cent stake in Douyu.

A spokesperson for Didi did not immediately respond to a request for comment. The move comes after Chinese authorities said earlier this week they would step up supervision of companies listed overseas.

— AP

HISTORIC | DEAL

Final agreement not expected until the run-up to the leaders' meet in Oct
G20 finance ministers endorse global tax reform

Venice, July 10: G20 finance ministers on Saturday gave their backing to a "historic" global deal to tax multinational companies more fairly and urged hold-out countries to sign up.

A framework for international tax reform, including a minimum corporate rate of 15%, was agreed this month by 131 countries. But the endorsement

by the 19 biggest economies plus the European Union will help ensure it becomes a reality following years of negotiations.

"After many years of discussions and building on the progress made last year, we have achieved a historic agreement on a more stable and fairer international tax architecture," the final statement said. "We endorse the key

components of the two pillars on the reallocation of profits of multinational enterprises and an effective global minimum tax." French Finance Minister Bruno Le Maire was quick to hail the agreement, saying it was a once-in-a-century opportunity for reform. "There is no turning back. We are putting an end to the fiscal race to the bottom and the digital giants

will now pay their fair share of taxes," he said.

The reforms aim to prevent countries competing to offer the lowest tax rates to attract investment, which has often resulted in multinationals paying derisory levels of tax.

Final agreement is not expected until the run-up to the G20 leaders' summit in Rome in October.

The 15% minimum tax

Kabul rushes
troops to border

Afghans try to retake Taliaban-held crossing

Kabul, July 10: Afghan authorities prepared Saturday to try to retake a key border crossing seized by the Taliban in a sweeping offensive that the insurgents claim has helped capture a vast swath of the violence-wracked nation.

As US troops continued their withdrawal, the Taliban said its fighters had seized two crossings in western Afghanistan — completing an arc of territory from the Iranian border to the frontier with China. It now held 85 per cent of the country, a Taliban official said Friday, controlling about 250 of Afghanistan's nearly 400 districts — a claim impossible to verify, and disputed by the government. Beijing, meanwhile, which has criticised Washington for its hasty withdrawal, urged its citizens to leave the country "as soon as possible" after evacuating 210 nationals.

The "complex and severe domestic security situation" prompted the evacuation warning, the foreign ministry said, adding that 22 of those flown out tested positive for Coronavirus on arrival in China.

On Friday Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said their fighters had captured the border town of Islam Qala on the Iranian frontier and the Torg-hundi crossing with Turkmenistan. Herat governor spokesman Jilani Farhad said Saturday the authorities were deploying fresh troops to retake Islam Qala post, the biggest trade crossing between Iran and Afghanistan.

"They will be sent there soon," he said.

The Afghan government has repeatedly dismissed the Taliban's gains as having little strategic value, but the seizure of multiple border crossings and the taxes they generate will likely fill the group's coffers with new revenue.

In a clear sign fighting was getting closer to major urban centres, an official at one hospital in Kandahar — the country's second-largest city and the birthplace of the Taliban — said Saturday dozens of wounded had been admitted in the past 24 hours, including at least 15 service members.

With the Taliban having routed much of northern

Afghanistan in recent weeks, the government holds little more than a constellation of provincial capitals that must largely be reinforced and resupplied by air.

The air force was under severe strain even before the Taliban's lightning offensive overwhelmed the government's northern and western positions, putting further pressure on the country's limited aircraft and pilots.

On Thursday President Joe Biden said the US military mission would end on August 31 — nearly 20 years after it began — but he admitted it was "highly unlikely" Kabul would be able to control the entire country. "The status quo is not an option," Biden said of staying in the country. "I will not send another generation of Americans to war in Afghanistan." Biden said the Afghan people alone should determine their future, but he acknowledged the uncertainty about what that would look like.

Asked if a Taliban takeover was inevitable, the president said: "No, it is not."

— AFP

Cyberattack hits
Iranian ministry

Tehran, July 10: Iran's transportation ministry said Saturday a "cyber disruption" had affected its computer systems and website, while the country's national railway company denied reports of being hit by a cyber attack. The disruption started before noon (0730 GMT), taking down the body's website and links associated with it, the ministry said in a statement reported by state news agency IRNA.

It said "technical experts" were investigating the issue and will announce when they are back up, without elaborating further. The body's website was still inaccessible around 5 PM (1230 GMT).

The railway company's announcement came a day after *Fars* news agency reported "unprecedented chaos" at stations with hundreds of trains delayed or cancelled.

In the now-deleted report, it said the incident followed "a widespread disruption in... computer systems that is probably due to a cyber attack."

Sadegh Sekri, a spokesman for Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, said on Saturday that "there has been no disruption or cyber attack for passenger, cargo or intercity

NO CASUALTIES
FROM TEHRAN
BLAST: OFFICIALS

Tehran, July 10: Iranian police said a reported explosion early Saturday at a public park near state TV headquarters in the capital Tehran caused no casualties or damage, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Tehran deputy police chief Gen. Hamid Hoda-vand said the case was under investigation and details would be provided later. He accused foreign media outlets of exaggerating the reported blast. At 12:52 a.m. Iranian media reported an explosion in northern Tehran.

— AP

trains." The company had said in a statement late Friday that trains were arriving and departing on schedule with "no problems". This followed the *Fars* report, which had included a picture of a station's departures and arrivals board showing rows of cancelled trips with a message reading "long delays due to cyber attacks".

— AFP

Factory owner in B'desh
nabbed after fire kills 52

Dhaka, July 10: The owner of a factory where 52 people died in a fire was arrested for murder Saturday along with seven others, as it emerged that children as young as 11 had been working there.

Police said Abul Hashem and four of his sons were among eight people detained over the inferno, which broke out Thursday and raged for more than a day. A separate inquiry has been launched into the use of child labour at

the food factory. Jayedul Alam, police chief for Narayanganj district where the factory is located, said the entrance had been padlocked at the time of the blaze and the factory breached multiple safety regulations.

"It was a deliberate murder," the police chief said. All eight people detained face murder charges.

Before his arrest, Hashem told the *Daily Star* newspaper the fire "may have been a result of wor-

kers' carelessness", suggesting a discarded cigarette could have sparked the carnage.

Emergency services found 48 of the bodies on the third floor of the Hashem Food and Beverage factory in Rupganj, an industrial town outside Dhaka.

The fire department said the exit door to the main staircase had been padlocked and highly flammable chemicals and plastics had been stored in the building.

— AFP

HEAT, WIND
SPUR CALIF FIRE

Beckwourth (US), July 10: A California wildfire that closed nearly 200 square miles of forest forced evacuations across state lines into Nevada on Friday as winds and scorching, dry weather drove flames forward through trees and brush. The Beckwourth Complex showed "extreme behaviour," fire information officer Lisa Cox said Friday evening.

— AP

SHORT TAKES

India-Lanka series
now from July 18

New Delhi: The Indian team's six-match limited-overs series in Sri Lanka will now start from July 18, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday, a day after a Covid-19 outbreak in the home team camp forced the postponement. The series, which was originally scheduled to start with the three ODIs on July 13, had to be rescheduled after Sri Lanka's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst G.T. Niroshan tested positive for the dreaded virus on their return from the UK tour. It also meant an extended quarantine period for the squad members. While the tentative date that was originally being discussed was July 17, but Shah confirmed that it will start from July 18. — *PTI*

Sciver shines as
England beat India

Northampton: England all-rounder Nat Sciver smashed a record-equaling half century before the bowlers put the struggling Indian batters under pressure to ensure an 18 run-win for the hosts via DLS method in the rain-curtailed first T20I against here. Put in to bat, England rode on Sciver's 27-ball 55 and wicket-keeper Amy Jones' 43 off 27 balls to reach 177/7 in 20 overs. Sciver's sensational fifty was England's joint fastest in the format. In reply, India failed to keep up with the required run-rate despite vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's quickfire 29 off 17 balls before rain gods had the last laugh with the visitors at 54/3 in 8.4 overs, 18 runs behind England via the DLS method. — *PTI*

Brief scores: England 177/7 (Sciver 55, Jones 43, Pandey 3-22) bt India 54/3 (Mandhana 29, Deol 17, Glenn 1-6) by 18 runs (DLS method)

Pope doubtful for
first Test vs India

London: England batsman Ollie Pope was on Saturday rendered a doubtful starter for the opening Test against India after suffering a thigh injury during his stint for Surrey in the Vitality Blast. The 23-year-old wicket-keeper-batsman sustained a thigh muscle injury on July 2 during Surrey's match against Kent in the domestic T20 tournament. "Pope has been ruled out until England's LV= Insurance Test Series against India after suffering a left thigh muscle injury," England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) said in a statement.

"The ECB and Surrey fitness teams will work together to deliver Pope's rehabilitation with a focus for him to be available to return for the first Test against India."

The first Test starts at Trent Bridge on August 4. — *PTI*

Player tests +ve in
alternate SL squad

Colombo: A Sri Lankan player in one of the two bio-bubbles has tested positive for Covid-19 as the virus outbreak continued to rock the home team ahead of its limited-overs series against India. The group of players are training separately even as the virus outbreak forced a postponement of the series by four days after the home team's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst G.T. Niroshan have contracted the virus.

'NewsWire.lk' quoted Sri Lankan sources as saying that batsman Sandun Weerakkodi has tested positive for Covid.

According to the report in the website, Weerakkodi was with the 15 senior cricketers who were training here while staying at the Cinnamon Grand Hotel. The report further stated that Weerakkodi, along with Bhanuka Rajapaksa and several other cricketers, were sent to Dambulla on Friday to play practice matches ahead of the India series. — *PTI*

Bhaji blessed
with baby boy

Mumbai: Former Indian off-spinner Harbhajan Singh on Saturday announced the arrival of his second child with wife, actor Geeta Basra.

The 41-year-old sports star shared the news on his official Instagram page.

"Blessed with a baby boy #grateful #babyboy," Singh wrote.

He said both mother and child are "doing well".

The cricketer went on to express gratitude to their well-wishers for their constant love and support.

Basra and Singh, who got married in the 2015, are also parents to four-year-old daughter, Hinaya Heer Plaha. — *AP*

IT'S BARTY TIME

Barty first Australian woman to lift Wimbledon trophy since 1980

London, July 10: Ashleigh Barty won her first Wimbledon title on the 50th anniversary of fellow indigenous Australian Evonne Cawley's maiden crown, beating Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in the final on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Australian — who wore a specially-designed dress in tribute to Cawley's iconic scallop one she sported in 1971 — adds the Wimbledon crown to her 2019 French Open title.

"It took me a long time to verbalise, to dare to dream it and say it," said Barty.

"I didn't sleep a lot last night, I was thinking of all the what-ifs. I hope I made Evonne proud."

It was the first women's Wimbledon final to go to three sets since 2012 when Serena Williams beat Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska.

Barty had looked like cruising to victory after soaring into a 4-0 lead over her opponent — the Australian's start so blistering that she won the first 14 points.

However, 29-year-old Pliskova steadied herself while Barty faltered when she served for the match at 6-5 in the second set. The Czech broke and then swept the tiebreaker to take the final into a decider.

Barty got the break for 2-0 in the final set and despite one or two wobbles she got herself over the line sinking to her knees, her hands over her face in disbelief.

She wiped a couple of tears away before climbing up to the player's box, just like her compatriot Pat Cash did when he won the Wimbledon men's title in 1987.

"This is incredible,"



Ashleigh Barty reacts after defeating Karolina Pliskova in the women's singles final in London on Saturday. — *AP*

● The 25-year-old Australian — who wore a specially-designed dress in tribute to Cawley's iconic scallop one she sported in 1971 — adds the Wimbledon crown to her 2019 French Open title.

said Barty, the third Australian woman to be crowned Wimbledon singles champion in the Open era (Cawley and Margaret Court (1970) the others).

"I have to start with Kaja (Karolina Pliskova). "Congratulations on an incredible tournament to you and your team. I love testing myself against you and I'm sure we'll have many many matches."

Barty is masterful at remaining poker-faced on court and she managed to restrain her emotions largely at the presentation ceremony.

However, once off court she sobbed as she hugged her boyfriend Gary Kissick. — *AFP*

DJOKOVIC INTO 30TH SLAM FINAL

London, July 10: Novak Djokovic reached his 30th Grand Slam final on Friday with a straight sets win over Canada's Denis Shapovalov to move one victory away from a sixth Wimbledon title and record-equaling 20th major.

The world number one triumphed 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 7-5 in a tense semi-final in which he crucially saved 10 of 11 break points.

Shapovalov was so distraught that he left Centre Court in tears.

In his seventh Wimbledon final, Djokovic will face Matteo Berrettini after the world number nine became the first Italian to reach a Wimbledon singles final by beating Hubert Hurkacz 6-3, 6-0, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4.

"I don't think the scoreline says enough about the performance or the match. He (Shapovalov) was serving for

the first set and was probably the better player," said Djokovic.

"I would like to give him a big round of applause for everything he has done today and also this two weeks. We are going to see a lot of him in the future, he is a great player."

Victory on Sunday will not only take Djokovic level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Slam wins.

He will also just need the US Open to become only the third man in history, and first since 1969, to complete the calendar Grand Slam. "I am trying to make the maximum of my own abilities each match and see what happens," said 34-year-old Djokovic.

"At this stage of my career, Grand Slams are everything and I have been very privileged to make history in the sport I truly love." — *AFP*

MAHMUDULLAH
SAYS GOODBYE
TO TEST CRICKET

Dhaka, July 10: Senior Bangladesh all-rounder Mahmudullah has made a sudden decision to stop playing Test cricket, a day after recording a career-best 150 in the ongoing one-off Test against Zimbabwe in Harare.

According to a report in Cricbuzz, Mahmudullah informed his colleagues that he is not willing to continue his Test career anymore, leaving the team management shocked. "Yes, he (Mahmudullah) had informed that he does not want to prolong his Test career after this game. But he did not inform us anything officially and we have to see whether it's an emotional outburst or not," the website quoted a top Bangladesh Cricket Board official as saying.

Mahmudullah has played 49 Tests with 2764 runs at an average of 31 plus and four half-centuries. — *PTI*

PACER PANKAJ
ANNOUNCES
RETIREMENT

Jaipur, July 10: Pacer Pankaj Singh, who contributed in Rajasthan's two Ranji Trophy triumphs and briefly played for India, on Saturday announced his retirement from all forms of cricket.

The 36-year-old Singh, who now runs a cricket academy at the Sawai Man Singh Stadium here, made the announcement through a letter to the Rajasthan Cricket Association (RCA).

Singh's maiden ODI appearance came against Sri Lanka in a tri-series in Zimbabwe in 2010, while his two Test outings came against England in 2014 when he took two wickets. "Playing for RCA, IPL and CAP (Cricket Association of Pondicherry) has been a tremendous honour for me. I have been part of RCA for close to 15 years," he said in the letter. — *PTI*



Pakistan's Hasan Ali (centre) celebrates the dismissal of England's John Simpson during the second ODI at the Lord's cricket ground in London on Saturday. — *AP*

Ali takes five wickets as
England rally in 2nd ODI

London, July 10: Pakistan's Hasan Ali took five wickets but England recovered to 247 all out in the second one-day international at Lord's on Saturday.

England were set for a commanding total in a match reduced by rain to 47 overs per side while Phil Salt (60) and James Vince (56) were sharing a third-wicket stand of 97 after both Dawid Malan and Zak Crawley had fallen for ducks.

From 118-2, however, England lost five wickets for 42 runs to be 160-7 in what was the first one-day international at Lord's since England's dramatic 2019 World Cup final win over New Zealand and the first in

the UK where a capacity crowd had been allowed since the start of the coronavirus pandemic.

Fast bowler Ali, a star of Pakistan's 2017 Champions Trophy triumph in England, finished with 5-51 in 9.2 overs — his fourth five-wicket haul in 56 matches at this level — when Saqib Mahmood holed out.

But by then Lewis Gregory (40) and Brydon Carse (31), both playing their maiden ODI innings, had frustrated Pakistan with an eighth-wicket stand of 69.

And with the floodlights switched on at a gloomy home of cricket, a Pakistan side bowled out for just 141 in the

first ODI on Thursday had work to do in difficult batting conditions if they were to level this three-match series at 1-1.

Both sides were unchanged after England, forced into selecting a wholly new squad after a Covid outbreak within their camp, had thrashed Pakistan by nine wickets at Cardiff's Sophia Gardens.

But after Pakistan captain Babar Azam had won the toss, Shaheen Shah Afridi and Ali reduced England to 21-2 inside five overs.

— *AFP*

Brief scores: England 247 (Phil Salt 60, James Vince 56, Hasan Ali 5/51) vs Pakistan.

Ready for long
wait at airportIOA cautions athletes may have
to spend hours at immigration

TOKYO | GAMES

● **Batra was informed of the inconveniences the athletes from other countries are facing on landing in Tokyo by the Indian Chef De mission B. P. Baishya on Friday.**

New Delhi, July 10: IOA President Narinder Batra on Saturday highlighted fresh concerns that India's Olympic-bound athletes may face on arrival in Tokyo, including spending long hours in immigration without food and water.

Batra was informed of the inconveniences the athletes from other countries are facing on landing in Tokyo by the Indian Chef De mission B.P. Baishya on Friday. He has raised the issue to the Games' organisers ahead of the Indian contingent's departure.

"Important issues brought to my notice from Chef De Mission meeting on July 9. Same issue was highlighted in the meeting by different countries including Czech, those who arrived at Narita airport," Batra said in a statement.

"They have to wait for 4 HRS, before the immigration process to begin and they waited for three hours to board the transport. No food and no water was provided."

"Germany highlighted the Volunteer services are almost non-existent," the statement read.

The first batch of India's Olympic-bound athletes is set to depart for Tokyo on July 17. More than 120 athletes are bound for the Games.

"Sharing with all of you so that you are mentally prepared for what you may very likely expect at the airport until you reach the Village, these Games are being held under extraordinary circumstances and we should try to sup-

port Japan and go through everything with a smile," Batra said.

Addressing the concerns raised by Batra, the organisers said, "The issue has been raised today to the organising committee. They will work on it with the government to make sure it does not happen anymore."

Baishya said the athletes need to be prepared for spending long hours at the airport after landing in Tokyo for testing, immigration and other clearances.

"...We have raised the problems we are facing and likely to face in Tokyo and the organisers have promised to look into them. But one thing is clear that our athletes will have to stay at the Tokyo airport for 5 to 6 hours after arrival," Baishya said.

"The first thing after arrival will be Covid tests of all the Indian contingent. Then we have to complete immigration and other required process. After that the Covid test results will come and only after that the Indian contingent will be allowed to board the bus." — *PTI*

NAVNEET FEELS INDIA COOL
PLAYING STRONG TEAMS

Bengaluru, July 10: Olympic-bound forward Navneet Kaur feels the Indian women's hockey team's mindset has changed in the past few years, adding that the side now doesn't panic playing against top teams.

"A lot has changed in the mindset of our team in the past few years, we don't fear the stronger opponents anymore," Kaur was quoted as saying in a Hockey India release.

"Earlier, when we used to play against the Netherlands or Great Britain, we used to panic. That's not the case now. We fight until the final whistle. It's not over until it's over."

Kaur, who has played 79 matches for the national team, is all set to take part in her first Olympic campaign in Tokyo.

"Playing at the Olympics is my childhood dream and I will leave no stone unturned to make it wonderful. With experience comes responsibility."

Kaur feels heading into the games with a clear mindset will be key in the Tokyo Games.

"This team is like a family. Rani and Savita keep exchanging their ideas with us on how we can improve together as a team."

"The coaches and the entire team are working towards that goal." — *PTI*

TOKYO | OLYMPICS

Fans barred from
outlying venues

Tokyo, July 10: Two more prefectures outside the immediate Tokyo area have decided to bar fans from attending Olympic events because of rising coronavirus infections, Tokyo Olympic organizers confirmed on Saturday with the pandemic-delayed games opening in just under two weeks.

Tokyo organizers and the IOC earlier in the week barred all fans from venues in Tokyo and three neighboring prefectures. They make up the overwhelming majority of Olympic venues, although a smattering of outlying areas were allowed initially to have limited attendance.

All fans from abroad were banned months ago. Now, two prefectures that were permitted to have fans have backed out of those plans.

Fukushima prefecture in northeastern Japan has decided to hold its baseball and softball events without spectators. It has been joined by the northern prefecture of Hokkaido, which will hold soccer games without fans at the Sapporo Dome.

"Many people including children have been looking forward to the games, and

I'm very sorry to take away their chance of watching baseball and softball at the stadium," Fukushima Governor Masao Uchibori said Saturday. "It was a very tough decision to make."

Fukushima was the early focus of the Olympics, trying to shine a light on recovery efforts in an area devastated in 2011 by an earthquake, tsunami, and the subsequent meltdown of three nuclear reactors.

Uchibori said the move by Hokkaido on Friday encouraged him to follow suit. He said it was important to have consistency among prefectures.

A few other events being held in the outlying prefectures of Miyagi, Shizuoka and Ibaraki will go ahead with limited spectators, organizers said Saturday.

IOC President Thomas Bach probably didn't notice, but on Saturday about 40 people staged a small anti-Olympic protest outside the five-star hotel where he is self-isolating after arriving in Tokyo on Thursday. "He (Bach) seems not to have thought anything about our critical situation and suffering, which makes me more angry," protester Ayako Yoshida said. — *AP*

