

SHORT TAKES

VILLAGES BACK
ERRANT HEALTH
STAFF

From Page 1

The DM&HO said an inquiry was held into the matter. The medical and health department will seek an explanation from those who did this and action would be taken if guilt is established, he said.

He said the villagers are supporting the ANM, who administered the different doses. "The villagers say this ANM has been extending great service to them for the past many months. They are requesting us to not take any action on the ANM," the official said.

The official also maintained that they checked with those who got the different doses and found they remained healthy. "Our medical teams are camping at the village and closely observing their health conditions," he said.

However, the villagers alleged that no health official visited them. They told the media that the mistake was noticed when one of the victims of this oversight saw the vaccine vial and questioned the health officials. The villagers said they are scared about the outcome.

APSRTC TO
RESUME SERVICES
TO TELANGANADC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

The APSRTC resumed services to Telangana in different RTC zones in the state on Monday.

According to the RTC sources, nearly 100-odd buses were operated from the Andhra to Telangana mainly to Hyderabad.

"Nearly 35 buses were started from Vijayawada main bus station to Hyderabad," said an RTC official.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, the Vizianagaram zone executive director C. Ravi Kumar said that they could not operate the buses from Vizag to Hyderabad due to the curfew restrictions. They then decided to operate the buses from East Godavari's Ravulapalem and Rajahmundry to Hyderabad. Both the locations are closer to the border points at Telangana, where the curfew was lifted from Monday.

The zone incurred huge loss in the second wave, Ravi Kumar said while adding that they were currently earning ₹10 lakh per day against the average ₹3 crore by operating buses in all four districts from Srikakulam to East Godavari.

RAPE VICTIM GETS
₹5L COMPENSATION,
ASSURED JUSTICEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Home minister Mekathoti Sucharita and minister for women welfare Taneti Vanitha on Monday visited the gang-raped victim who is undergoing treatment at GGH in Guntur and assured justice to the victim. They stated that CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced ₹5 lakh compensation to the victim. The ministers affirmed that the police had launched searches to nab the culprits and subject them to severe punishment.

The young woman, who was working as a nurse in a private hospital in Vijayawada, had gone to Pushkar Ghat at Seethanagaram on Saturday night along with her fiancé, who works in a petrol pump at Gandhinagar. The couple's wedding was stalled because of Covid-19 lockdown.

According to police, two unknown culprits had attacked them and tied her fiancé with a rope and allegedly sexually assaulted her. They fled from the spot in a boat, after stealing their phones.

The injured couple somehow managed to reach Prakasam Barrage around midnight and informed the police on duty about the heinous incident.

Led by Additional SP Eswara Rao, Mangalagiri DSP Durga Prasad and Tadepalli CI Seshagiri Rao, police swung into action and first shifted the victim to GGH in Guntur. The couple lodged a formal complaint with Tadepalli police on Sunday.

Later, Sucharita said that the incident on the banks of the Krishna River was a dastardly act. She stated that four police teams have been deployed to locate them. She said that the government is setting up forensic labs in three places and recruiting sufficient staff for these labs. She further said that they are setting up surveillance systems.

Unemployed take to the streets



Unemployed youth display placards in protest against the government demanding jobs for them near GVMC Gandhi Statue junction in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

— P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

MSMEs proposal from
Chennai still in limbo

Change of govt delays KAIPA's ₹2,000 cr project at Kosalanagaram

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, JUNE 21

A proposal by 250 and odd Chennai-based MSME entrepreneurs to expand their manufacturing capacity by taking advantage of availability of land, abundance of power, water, and labour force available in Andhra Pradesh has been lying in cold storage for the last five years.

As the entrepreneurs, who are members of AIEMA (Ambattur Industrial Estate Manufacturers Association) were keen to have land close to Chennai, the AP government identified land at Kosalanagaram in Chittoor district.

Buoyed by the allocation, the industrialists formed an SPV - KAIPA (Kosalanagaram AIEMA Industrial Park Association) in 2016 and signed a MoU during the Industrial Conclave at Visakhapatnam during the TD regime four and half years back, according to A. Ramesh, Director of SPV.

After discussions, APIIC earmarked an area of 1500 acres situated at Kosalanagaram for the park. A Detailed Project

KAIPA SUGGESTS ALTERNATIVE SITE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 21

Kosalanagaram AIEMA Industrial Park (KAIPA) representatives have been urging the state government to develop a large extent of DKT land close to Tamil Nadu border at Nindra and Pichatur villages in Chittoor district.

They claim that the location has immediate Road access besides a steady availability of water while pointing to Aranari reservoir situated across the land.

"It can be developed within six months unlike Koasalanagaram, which is a hilly terrain and there are quite a few challenges like approach road permission from Tamil Nadu government and water to be sourced from

Report and feasibility study has already been completed. APIIC has also obtained clearance for the project from National Green Tribunal (NGT), Delhi.

As per the proposal submitted by KAIPA promoters, they would propel MSMEs with an investment of ₹2,000 crore and

Telugu Ganga. It will take anywhere between 18 to 24 months to complete the works in Kosalanagaram" said chairman of KAIPA, A. S. Hari prasad and Director Ramesh Aruvella.

Reminding that Chennai entrepreneurs are losing interest because of a long wait for land, they underlined the need to consider Pichatur proposal to prevent them from looking for alternative land in Tamil Nadu. They have sought that the park be named as 'Srivari Industrial Park'.

Stressing that Industries minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy is keen on encouraging Tamil Nadu MSME industry culture in Andhra Pradesh, Ramesh appealed to him to expedite their proposals.

the units would generate more than 10,000 jobs, thereby changing the face of Vijayanagar mandal in Chittoor district.

However, further progress of the project came to a grinding halt after change of government in the state.

KAIPA representatives said that they had met

minister for Industries, Mekapati Goutham Reddy and APIIC chairperson Roja several times to discuss the proposal. Incidentally, Kosalanagaram is part of Nagari Assembly constituency, which is represented by Roja.

The minister assured the entrepreneurs that he would provide developed land with plug and play facility of international standards at subsidised cost by getting a special grant from the Chief Minister.

In spite of all the efforts and positive encouragement given by the minister and APIIC, things have not moved at a fast phase, KAIPA members said. They added that the Covid-19 pandemic has further dampened their spirits. However, they entrepreneurs said that they have not given up on the proposal while expressing interest to pursue with the government to help the project take shape.

When contacted, Goutham Reddy said he was keen on grounding the project while attributing the delay to Covid-19 situation. He said he would talk to the Chennai entrepreneurs to expedite the project.

State employees body
gets govt recognitionDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Andhra Pradesh Government Employees Association (APGEA) president K.R. Suryanarayana said that the government accorded recognition to them to enable its members to make representations regarding their conditions of service and matters pertaining to their redressal besides being accorded permanent membership on AP Civil Services Joint Staff Council (State Level). He said that principal secretary to the government Shashi Bhushan Kumar issued GO 1062 on



K. Suryanarayana

Monday regarding the recognition.

Suryanarayana said that the government in order to review implementation of Employees Health Scheme (EHS), from time to time and make appropriate recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of

the scheme, has decided to constitute a steering committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary with 40% members from employee and pensioners associations and 60% members from the government side.

He said that the government has revised the ratio of 40:60 to 50:50 ratio in respect of members of employees/ pensioners associations and government in the composition of the steering committee to accommodate APGEA. He said that they were thankful to Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and his top officials for the recognition of APGEA.

CLASH | OF WORDS

Anil Kumar Yadav says irrigation projects in AP were there for decades

AP slams TS charges of 'illegal dam projects'

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Minister for water resources P. Anil Kumar Yadav has refuted allegations of Telangana state that Andhra Pradesh was constructing irrigation projects illegally. He claimed that Andhra Pradesh was using was allocated for the projects. He alleged that Telangana was constructing irrigation projects without any permissions and this would damage water allocations to Andhra

Pradesh.

Yadav clarified that the construction of irrigation projects in the State are subject to water allocations by tribunals and ridiculed the objections of Telangana State.

Speaking to the media here on Monday, he alleged that Telangana state had been constructing new projects without any permission and has increased the capacity of Kalwakurthy and Nettekpadu projects.

Asserting that the state government is not going

● **TELANGANA STATE** officials are falsely accusing the State, despite all the projects being administered as per allocations, says, the Minister. The CM wanted the 2 states to be on friendly terms, he adds.

beyond its allocations, the minister said that for the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project, the state cannot draw the allocated water of 44,000 cusecs from Srisaillam through Pothireddypadu if

Women to get
₹4,339.39cr under
Cheyutha schemeDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

As part of his government's move towards women empowerment, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will, for the second consecutive year, credit on Tuesday ₹4,339.39 crore into accounts of 23,14,342 women beneficiaries under YSR Cheyutha.

Cheyutha is primarily aimed at helping women contribute to economic progress, with government assisting them in marketing and other technical aspects of the business.

Under the scheme, women from BC, SC, ST and Minority communities aged between 45-60 years will be directly paid a total amount of ₹75,000 in four years at the rate of ₹18,750 per annum. The total expenditure of the government on this will be around ₹19,000 crore. So far, on YSR Cheyutha alone, the state government has spent ₹8,943.52 crore during the last two years.

Besides, the government has signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with banks and multinational companies, such as Amul, ITC, HUL, P&G and Reliance, to support women's entrepreneurs in establishing grocery stores, dairy farms and such business enterprises. About six lakh widows, single



Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

women and especially abled in the said age group are reaping the benefits of YSR Cheyutha.

All beneficiaries have complete freedom in using money provided under the scheme for any other livelihood activities.

As on date, 78,000 women have established grocery stores. 1,90,517 women are rearing cattle, including cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats to raise their family income. The government has set up a YSR Cheyutha Call Centre with numbers 0866-2468899 and 9392917899 to connect beneficiaries with corporate companies and banks. A Command Control Centre has also been put in place to monitor and provide training and assistance to women.

The MoU with Amul is such that an additional price of ₹5-15 will be provided on each litre of milk.

Nothing illegal in
e-bus tenders: Min.DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Andhra Pradesh has set a new record by vaccinating 13,72,481 people during a mega vaccination drive held on Sunday, said I&PR minister Perni Venkataramaiah, alias Nani, who also refuted false charges on e-bus tenders.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, the minister said that 47 per cent of vaccinations across the country on June 20, were administered in Andhra Pradesh. Of the total 13.72 lakh vaccinations, the first dose was given to 12,85,394 persons and second dose to 87,087, emerging as a role-model to other States. The state has crossed the milestone of one crore vaccinations. The first dose was inoculated on 1,10,09,820 persons and 27,32,596 given the second dose.

Nani stated that so far Andhra Pradesh had received 1,11,61,380 doses from Centre and had purchased 21,05,630 doses on its own by paying ₹300 for Covishield and ₹400 for Covaxin. In the mega vaccination drive, West Godavari district stood first with the highest number of inoculations, followed by East Godavari.

The drive focused on people above 45 years and mothers with children less than five years old. Almost thousands of ANMs, Asha workers, volunteers and secretariat staff took part in the drive.

The minister appealed to the Centre to provide more doses to Andhra

● **NANI STATED** that a section of the media has been falsely propagating that the government is awarding a single tender, which is completely untrue, as every tender is subject to judicial pre-view.

Pradesh, as the State is efficiently vaccinating people and has the capacity to administer more than 13 lakh doses a day.

Meanwhile, refuting the false allegations by a section of media on the tenders of electric buses, Nani clarified that the tender conditions were set as per rules. He said that the State government decided to purchase electric buses in 2020 itself but as the buses cost over ₹2.5 crore, the government withdrew the proposal, as it could end up burdening people despite Centre providing subsidy. However, as the cost of the buses have come down to ₹1.5 to 1.7 crore, the State government decided to call for tenders to ply 350 electric buses in the first phase.

Nani stated that a section of the media has been falsely propagating that the government is awarding a single tender, which is completely untrue, as every tender is subject to judicial pre-view. APSRTC has planned to procure 100 buses for the Tirupati-Tirumala ghat route, 100 for Visakhapatnam and 50 each in Vijayawada, Kakinada and Amaravati, to be run on various routes in the respective regions.

CM ASKS OFFICIALS
TO STAY ALERT
OVER COVID

From Page 1

The Chief Minister told the officials to be on alert as lockdown imposed in neighbouring states is being relaxed. The officials said 2,655 ICU beds and 13,824 oxygen beds are available at present and added that 91.48 per cent beds were occupied by patients who were being treated under Arogyasri. They said that 7,056 beds were occupied in Covid-19 care centres.

The state has registered 2,772 black fungus active cases till date and of them 922 patients underwent surgeries, 1,232 were discharged, 212 died while the remaining are undergoing treatment, they said.

Around 1,37,42,417 doses of Covid vaccine were administered of which the first dose was given to 82,77,225 people and two doses were completed on 27,32,596 persons. Vaccine was administered to 10,29,266 mothers of children below five years of age and the first dose of vaccination has been completed on 11,158 persons going abroad. 13,72,481 people were vaccinated in a single day during a mega vaccination drive on June 20, they said.

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, Chief Secretary Adityanath Das, DGP Gautam Sawang, Covid command control chairman Dr K. S. Jawahar Reddy, Health Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal, Covid-19 task force committee chairman M. T. Krishna Babu, Health Secretary M. Ravi Chandra, Health Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar, 104 call center in-charge A. Babu, APMSIDC boss Vijayarama Raju and other officials were present.

IRREGULARITIES IN
GROUP-1 EXAMS,
SAYS LOKESHDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

Nara Lokesh on Monday alleged that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government committed irregularities in the Group-1 exam along the lines of the Vyapam scam in Madhya Pradesh.

Lokesh demanded the government to immediately conduct a manual evaluation of the Group-1 mains answer sheets so as to ensure justice to the deserving candidates. It was unfortunate that there was no change in the attitude of the CM despite repeated strictures being passed by the courts against his regime's decisions. The Group-1 legal fight will continue till full and final justice was done to the genuine aspirants.

Addressing a meeting with the aspirants on 'irregularities in APPSC Group-1 and impact of a court order', Lokesh asked the job aspirants not to lose heart but continue their united struggle.

The court has stayed interviews for a month. Like never before, over 300 petitions were filed in the court against the manner in which the Group-1 exam was conducted.

Yadav questioned on what basis it would be wrong for Andhra Pradesh to construct lift irrigation just to ease the process of withdrawing the allocated share of water, while the same is being done by Telangana state. The minister said that the Rajolibanda project has an allocation of 4 tmc ft and Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will go to any extent to protect the interests of the state. Telangana state officials are falsely accusing the State, despite all the projects

being administered as per allocations, he added.

The minister said that the Chief Minister wanted the two states to be on friendly terms and took a step forward in that regard. He claimed that all these projects have been there for decades and the State government is only trying to increase their capacity. The minister stated that the Vamsadhara Tribunal has given clearance to construct the Neredi project and its construction would start soon.

SHORT TAKES

PARTS OF AP
TO GET LIGHT TO
MODERATE RAINSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

Light to moderate rains in most parts of the state, and moderate to heavy at one or two places in north coastal Andhra Pradesh will occur on June 22, an IMD alert stated on Monday.

Under the influence of cumulonimbus clouds and normal southwest monsoon winds over the state, the parts of Srikakulam, Anantapuram, Nellore and Prakasam received light rains on Monday, and would continue to pour across parts of the south coastal AP and Rayalaseema in the next 24 hours, the IMD officials said.

Since the maximum temperatures continued to prevail in some parts of the state on Monday, there would be heavy thunderstorms associated with lightening under the influence of the cumulonimbus clouds for the next few days.

TESTS FOR DRIVING
LICENCES RESUME
IN THE STATEDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

The AP Road Transport Authority (RTA) resumed the tests for the issuance of driving licence at seven districts - Vizianagaram, West Godavari, Prakasam, Nellore, Ananthapuram, Kadapa, and Kurnool on Monday.

The services will be available in the remaining districts from July 1. Speaking to *DC*, the RTC Visakhapatnam deputy transport commissioner G.C. Raja Ratnam said that hundreds of applications were pending for the driving licence tests due to the Covid-19 induced curfew from May, and also the pandemic fear among the applicants to attend the tests manually from March to April.

"Since the tests are mandatory for issuing the driving licenses to the eligible applicants, we will resume the services in Visakhapatnam from July 1. We have already made all arrangements with proper Covid-19 protocols to conduct the tests at our test center at Gambheeram on the city outskirts," Raja Ratnam added.

SI SUSPENDED FOR
DERELICTION OF
DUTY IN TIRUPATIDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 21

Tirupati urban district SP Ch. Venkata Appala Naidu placed one Sub-Inspector attached to the Muthyala Reddy Palli police station under suspension for dereliction of duty in connection with a case, booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

According to a statement, the SP on Monday released an order suspending the M.R. Palli SI S. Giri Babu for his negligence in handling a POCSO case. When a victim of sexual harassment went to the police station last week, the Sub-Inspector did not register her complaint and reportedly behaved negligently towards her. Having learnt about the incident, SP Venkata Appala Naidu ordered a departmental inquiry which revealed that SI Giri Babu failed to discharge his duties diligently.

BIO-TOILETS
SANCTIONED FOR
FISHERMENDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 21

Prakasam district authorities have sanctioned 9 bio-toilets for nine mechanised boats besides 39 boats, 32 Mopeds with ice boxes, seven battery operated three wheeler vehicles, seven cage culture units in the sea and five cage culture units in the reservoirs to the fishermen under Pradhan Mantri Matsya Sampada Yojana.

The scheme intends to address critical gaps in fish production and productivity, quality, technology, post-harvest infrastructure and management, modernisation and strengthening of value chain, traceability, establishing a robust fisheries management framework and fishers' welfare.

Collector Pravin Kumar said they have released ₹2.6 crore for 128 units sanctioned under the scheme as against the target of ₹5.5 crore for 210 units for 2020-21 financial year. He said they have received 398 applications for 210 units and they have found 128 applicants eligible for sanction.

More Covid tests



Medical staff collects swabs from a woman for Covid-19 testing at MVP Ward Secretariat in Visakhapatnam on Monday.
S— K. MURALI KRISHNA

Closure hits mental
health of students

Psychiatrists notice disorders among youngsters

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 21

Lockdowns and closure of educational institutions had an adverse impact on students of all ages and these are causing psychiatric problems.

Psychiatrists notice disorders and health problems among the youngsters due to lack of self-control and timely sleep as they are addicted to use of mobile phones day and night. Sleepless nights have become a common problem and this is leading to other disorders and hormonal imbalances.

Educational institutions were mostly closed for the past one year. Students were being taught through online

methods in the wake of the lockdown.

Lack of minimum physical exercise caused obesity and mental issues among several students. High school students faced obesity problems and are unable to wear their old dresses. Rajesh, school uniform supplier from Anantapur, noted that high school students — boys and girls — are facing obesity issues and their formal dresses as also the uniforms can no more be worn.

Watching mobile phones throughout the day led to complications in life. A study found untimely sleep and food intake led to disturbance of peace and harmony in families. A majority of students were attracted

● **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** were mostly closed for the past one year. Students were being taught through online methods in the wake of the lockdown.

to online games via mobile phone and spending time on this till late at night.

A study revealed that children were taking an extra diet with rich fats and dramatically increased their consumption of junk foods in addition to routine traditional foods. "During school and college hours, students had to follow menu and timings in the hostels and even at schools, but a peculiar situation prevailed for

the past one year during the Covid pandemic," teacher Satyanarayana observed.

A lack of minimum discipline is causing a disturbed situation among students and this is impacting on parents and other family members.

Dr Yendluri Prabhkar, head of the psychiatry ward at Anantapur government general hospital said untimely food and sleep is seen as a common disorder among students seeking counseling for disorders. "Students are advised to switch off their mobile phones after 7pm. This will help them overcome mental disorders instead of depending on doctors for medication", he told *DC*.

International Yoga Day
celebrated with gustoDC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 21

International yoga day was celebrated by Vivekananda Yoga Kendra through virtual mode, which was hosted by BEST Innovation University here on Monday.

Registrar of the university Shazil Ahmed observed that the negative energies flowing due to Covid-19 and International Yoga Day can bring people together on a positive note.

Dr P. Chowdappa, vice-chancellor of BEST University briefed about the importance of the day that is celebrated across the globe.

Themed 'Yoga for well-being', the event featured international yoga protocol demonstrations and saw the participation of a sizeable crowd.

Chancellor Dr Rupa Vasudevan highlighted the teachings of Swamy Vivekananda, who propagated yoga and the richness of Indian culture. She said people can overcome Covid

YOGA IS LIKE A DIVINE MEDICINE
SAYS DR M. RAMACHANDRA REDDYDC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA/KAKINADA, JUNE 21

Dr M. Ramachandra Reddy, special officer, YSR Sports School, Kadapa, said that the practice of yoga is like a divine medicine for man and everyone can mark some time for practicing to avoid physical ailments. A yoga training program was organized at Kadapa Indoor Stadium. Speaking on the occasion, he said that physical fitness can be increased with yoga and diseases like corona can be avoided by increasing

immunity.

Kadapa district revenue officer Malola said that youth can increase their concentration levels by practicing yoga. Yoga instructors Mahesh and Suman performed asanas. District tourism officer Rajasekhar Reddy, chief coach Basha Mohiddin, several gymnasts, coaches and students were present.

Meanwhile, a Class V student, Karri Karthik Ramachandra Reddy, bagged an appreciation certificate in the state-level yoga competition, conducted by Ayush department.

infection with medical treatment and yoga.

Joint Collector Dr A. Siri recalled how she overcame stress while fighting during a pandemic situation. MLA Ananta Venkatarami Reddy, MLC V. Gopal Reddy and Kendra president M.

Rajasekhar Reddy were present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, the day was celebrated at Central University with vice-chancellor Prof. A. Kori calling upon students to take to yoga on a daily basis to keep away from mental stress.

AP sees huge drop in
Covid-19 positive casesDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

New Coronavirus infections in AP have witnessed a major fall on Monday with the number of cases registered during the last 24 hours being 2,620 and 7,504 patients being discharged following their recovery throughout the state.

The new daily infections registered on Monday have been the lowest in two-and-a-half months. But this could be attributed to fewer tests, as only 55,002 samples had been tested in the past 24 hours, as against nearly one lakh samples tested daily.

The total Covid-19 tests conducted so far in AP have reached 2,12,05,849, with

positivity rate being 4.8 percent and recovery rate 96.2 percent. Total infections in 13 districts of the state have reached 1,85,3183 of which total recoveries are 17,82,680.

Chittoor district is on top in daily new infections, recording 531 cases, followed by East Godavari district 335, Krishna 213, West Godavari 211, Nellore 201, Kurnool 162, Kadapa 162, Visakhapatnam 160, Guntur 158, Srikakulam 144, Anantapur 128, Prakasam 127 and Vizianagaram registering the least number of 88 new infections.

AP has registered 44 new deaths, increasing the death toll to 12,363. Ten new deaths have been recorded

in Chittoor district, five each in Guntur and Srikakulam, four in East Godavari, three each in Anantapur, Kurnool, Prakasam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari, two in Krishna district and one each death in Kadapa, Nellore and Vizianagaram districts.

East Godavari is on top in total Coronavirus cases, registering 2,55,686 infections, followed by Chittoor 2,14,719, Guntur 1,59,820, West Godavari 1,56,887, Anantapur 1,52,161, Visakhapatnam 1,47,015, Nellore 1,25,360, Kurnool 1,20,981, Prakasam 1,18,246, Srikakulam 1,16,951, Kadapa 1,04,444, Krishna 98,697 and Vizianagaram 79,321 cases.

AP CID TO
SCREEN MOVIES
ON CYBERCRIMESDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

AP CID Department will screen for its officials Jamtara web series and Operation Java as part of a training programme at its headquarters here. Addressing trainees on Monday, CID additional DGP P. V. Sunil Kumar pointed out that cybercrimes are at a totally different level, as these are committed misusing technologies and luring gullible through innovative methods.

He said police officials should learn how cyber criminals use their intelligence for exploiting vulnerabilities of victims and committing crimes. Their psychology, social background and living environment have to be understood for cracking these mysteries. The additional DG pointed out that Jamtara is a sleepy little district in Jharkhand but has emerged as a hub of cybercrimes in India. There are even training centres in Jamtara that teach aspirants on how to successfully commit these crimes.

13 RED SANDERS
SMUGGLERS
ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA JUNE 21

Kadapa district police arrested 13 red sanders smugglers in two raids and seized 57 red sandalwood logs.

The Veeraballi police held eight such smugglers and the Porumamilla police five smugglers from two different areas.

A total of 1.468 tonne of such wood was seized. The police also seized a lorry, two axes and other materials, Kadapa SP Karur Anburajan told the media here on Monday.

Among the arrested, Chamarthi Amarendra Raju (43) from Gadikota village and Mude Mallikarjuna Naik (28) were previously involved in 16 red sanders cases. Both have close links with red sander smuggler Nazir from Bangalore, to whom they supplied the logs.

These two along with

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 21

Protesting against the indiscriminate attitude of the state government towards the plight of mango growers in the district, hundreds of farmers staged a demonstration at the Collectorate in Chittoor on Monday.

The prices for mango being offered to farmers by the pulp industries in the district are at an all-time low. Mango growers criticised the district collector for his inability to press the pulp industries to offer a Minimum Support Price (MSP) for their crop. Pleading that the government intervene and ensure MSP for their crop, the mango growers dumped mangoes on the road in front of the collectorate.

According to them, farmers across the district cultivated mangoes in around 1.12 lakh hectare this season, of which the Totapuri variety was cultivated in 70,000 acres.

The production of mangoes has, however, come down drastically due to change in climatic conditions. Farmers suffered losses following a drop in the prices of mangoes in the

mandis.

For a fortnight, Chittoor District Collector M. Hari Narayana held several rounds of talks with mango growers as well as managements of the pulp industry. He requested these units to procure mangoes directly from farmers at MSP. Around 5 lakh metric tonnes of mangoes has been bought by pulp industries till now.

However, mango growers said though the district collector advised buyers to buy mangoes at the rate of ₹13 per kg, the representatives of pulp units offered only ₹11.

Subsequently, the pulp industries are paying a meagre amount of ₹7 per kg of Banganapalli and Totapuri mango varieties, they said.

Mango growers said the second wave of the pandemic has caused distress to them as it affected the mango business too. The prices of mangoes dropped by 40 to 50 per cent.

They pleaded that the government provide remunerative prices for their yields. The protests will be intensified in the coming days if no helpful action is taken by the collector and the government, they said.

	NMDC Limited (A Government of India Enterprise) 'Khanji Bhavan', 10-3-311/A, Castle Hills, Masab Tank, Hyderabad - 500 028. CIN: L31007TG1958GOI001674
	CONTRACTS DEPARTMENT Tender Enquiry No: HQ(Contracts)/NISPLDCP(Bal Work)/2021/118, Dated : 22-06-2021 NMDC Limited, A "NAVATRA" Public Sector Company under Ministry of Steel, Govt. of India, invites online bids from prospective domestic bidders for "Completion of Balance work of Lime & Dolomite Calcination plant (2 Nos. of 500 TPD Capacity Lime Kilns and 1 No. of 300 TPD Capacity Dolomite Kiln with one Lime Sizing Unit of 25 t/hr capacity) for 3.0 MTPA Integrated Steel Plant at Nagarnagar near Jagdalpur, Chhattisgarh State" (on divisible turnkey basis from experienced, reputed and Competent Tenderers. MECON Limited is the consultant for this package. The detailed NIT and Bid Documents can be viewed and / or downloaded from NMDC website http://www.nmdc.co.in , Central Public Procurement Portal http://www.eprocure.gov.in/epub/app & MSTC portal http://www.mstccommerce.co.in from 22-06-2021 to 20-07-2021. For Accessing the Bid document from NMDC website, the bidder has to register as ' New User ' in Bid section at NMDC's website link - http://www.nmdc.co.in/nmcdtender/default.aspx . For accessing the bid document from MSTC, bidders to visit website link - http://www.mstccommerce.co.in/eproc/home/nmcd/buyer_login.jsp and search Tender Event No. NMDC/HO/2421-22/ET/128 . Bidders are requested to register as 'New Vendor' for downloading the tender document. For further help refer to 'vendor guide' given in MSTC website. The bidders are requested to submit their bids through online mode and details of submission of bid through online are given in NIT. The bidders on regular basis are required to visit the NMDC's website / CPP Portal / MSTC website for corrigendum, if any, at a future date. For further clarification, the following can be contacted to : 1. General Manager (Contracts), NMDC Limited, Hyderabad, Fax No. +91-040-23534746, Tel No. +91-040-23532800, email: steelcontracts@nmcd.co.in 2. Sr. General Manager (NMDC Project), MECON Limited, Ranchi, Fax No. +91-651-2482214, Tel No. +91-0651-2483508, email: projnmcd@meconlimited.co.in General Manager (Contracts)

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SHORT TAKES

ODISHA STARTS CLASSES ON YOUTUBE

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 21

With no immediate possibility of reopening of schools for classroom teaching in sight, the Odisha government on Monday kicked off live streaming of classes on YouTube for Class I to Class X students.

The state school and mass education department has prepared a detailed blueprint to reach out to the students through virtual mode. The department has also prepared the time table for the subjects to be taught every day.

The teaching process for the students of Classes IX and X will continue till July 31. As many as four periods, beginning from 10.45 to 1 pm, will be held for five days from Monday to Friday for Class IX and X. Classes for the students of Class I to III will be held from 9 am to 10 am while class IV to VIII will be held live from 9 am to 10.30 am.

Teachers of the concerned subjects will look after their classes through online mode and clarify doubts of students through WhatsApp chat and voice call.

According to reports, 33 per cent students could access online classes last year while the rate has gone up to 40 per cent this year.

LENS ON MISHAP THAT CLAIMED FIVE LIVES

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
JUNE 21

A major accident that took place at Ramanattukara in Kozhikode district of Kerala in the wee hours of Monday killing five youths, has come under a cloud of suspicion.

The ill-fated car rammed into a lorry near Ramanattukara. Five youths who were in the car died on the spot.

Initially the police thought over speeding could have led to the mishap. However, the cops grew suspicious when they came to know that the vehicle had gone to Kozhikode from the airport before returning to Cherupulassery. Moreover the vehicle was followed by two other cars.

Six persons who were travelling by one of these vehicles have been detained. "We are looking into all aspects. These people belong to Cherupulassery. We are investigating why they went to Kozhikode. We are questioning the people who were following the vehicle," said Kozhikode city police commissioner A.V. George. The police suspect that the persons in the vehicle could be conduits of gold smugglers. They are examining the CCTV footage to obtain links of the detained persons with the deceased.

CRUCIAL MEET ON SECURITY THIS WEEK

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

The high level committee constituted to sort out differences on the new military structure of unified commands - Theatre Commands - is proposed to meet this week to formulate a way forward.

The different Theatre Commands will integrate the assets of Army, Air Force and Navy in a domain under one commander to give punitive response to any external threat. The committee has been formed to look into the issues raised by services and other ministries before a note is prepared on Theatre Command to be presented to Cabinet Committee on Security.

"The first meeting of the Committee is planned for this week. It will be one of the series of meetings to work out a plan," said a senior official.

The committee has three Vice Chiefs of the Armed Forces, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, and representatives from defence and other ministries.

India is expected to have two to three Integrated Theatre Commands over land looking at China and Pakistan, a Maritime Theatre Command and a National Integrated Air Defence Command. Each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory under an operational commander.

Health is wealth



Doctors and health workers perform yoga on International Day of Yoga at Government Institute of Medical Sciences in Greater Noida on Monday.

— PTI

Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu with his wife Usha performing Yoga on the occasion of the 7th International Day of Yoga in New Delhi on Monday.

— D. KAMRAJ



Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla with his wife Amita Birla and daughter performing yoga.

Amarnath yatra cancelled for second year in a row

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, JUNE 21

The Amarnath Yatra has been cancelled for the second year in a row due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Like last year, the pilgrimage will be only "symbolic", with all rituals to be performed quietly by a select number of priests and hermits at the revered cave-shrine at a height of 13,000 feet (3,882 metres) in the lower Himalayas in south Kashmir. Like last year, the morning and evening aarti will be telecast live.

Jammu and Kashmir's lieutenant-governor, Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), while announcing the cancellation of this year's yatra on Monday, tweeted, "Shri Amarnathji Yatra cancelled in wake of Covid-19 Pandemic. Decision after threadbare discussion with Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board members. Yatra to be symbolic only. However, all the traditional religious rituals shall be performed at the Holy Cave Shrine as per past practice". (sic)

He also said: "It's important to save people's lives. So, it is not advisable to hold and conduct this year's pilgrimage in the larger public interest". A J&K government spokesman said that after the decision to cancel the yatra was taken by the SASB at a "threadbare discussion" among its members, Mr Sinha held detailed deliberations with J&K chief secretary Arun Kumar Mehta, DGP Dilbag Singh, and other senior officers and direct-

● **THE SASB CEO** said the shrine board has made the arrangements for the mace of Lord Shiva 'Chhari Mubarak' to be taken to the holy cave on August 22, when the yatra is to conclude coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

● **HE SAID** that both morning telecast of aarti at 6 am and evening aarti at 5 pm, each for 30 minutes, is to be live-streamed on the board's official website and an app specifically dedicated for devotees.

● **THE DEVOTEES** can pay their virtual obeisance through the Shrine Board's aarti link.

ed them to ensure that devotees are able to attend the morning and evening aarti at the cave-shrine in online mode as it would help them to "pay their obeisance while also avoiding and travel and exposure".

The spokesman said the meeting was informed that the SASB has put in place a virtual and televised mechanism for live darshan of the aarti from the cave-shrine.

The 56-day annual pilgrimage was due to begin from both traditional Pahalgam and shorter Baltal routes on June 28, coinciding with Ashada Chaturthi, an auspicious day in Hindu calendar, and end on Shraavan Purnima (Raksha Bandhan) on August 22.

However, the SASB had on April 22 suspended registrations for the yatra

temporarily due to the grim Covid-19 situation across India.

Last year, the yatra was cancelled at the eleventh hour in the face of the threat posed by the pandemic, while in 2019 the government had asked devotees who had arrived in the Valley to pay obeisance at Amarnath and also tourists to cut short their visit and leave immediately, claiming that Pakistan-sponsored militants were planning a terror attack against the yatra, while the lives of outside holidaymakers too were in danger in view of the prevailing security situation in the Valley.

Subsequent events, however, proved it beyond a shadow of doubt that all the statements issued and measures taken by the government and other official agencies right from mid-July 2019 were part of the government's "strategy" to ensure the return of pilgrims and tourists from the Valley before the Centre's stripping J&K of its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and splitting it up into two Union territories on August 5, 2019.

The SASB had on March 13 this year said it has decided to increase the pilgrims' intake by 5,000 a day this year.

It also said the authorities were making arrangements to host over 600,000 devotees during the event after its decision to enhance the daily route-wise pilgrim ceiling from 7,500 to 10,000 on each route, excluding pilgrims who would be flying in helicopters to Amarnath.

Though bus operations have come as a relief to office-goers and others who depend on them for commuting, they plying in lesser numbers and with 50 per cent capacity is causing chaos at bus stands in several places of the city, with higher number of people wanting to avail its service. Similar reports are emerging from other places.

While the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation had said it is deploying 3,000 initially for local and inter-district long route bus operations,



2ND LAPSE IN SCINDIA'S COVER IN 10 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, JUNE 21

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia's pilot vehicle missed the car in which he was travelling at Nirawali point in Morena-Gwalior border on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, causing security scare.

Fourteen policemen including five sub-inspectors were on Monday suspended for lapse. This was the second case of security lapse involving Scindia in the last ten days.

A police vehicle started piloting the car in which Scindia was travelling from Delhi to Gwalior, when it entered Morena in Madhya Pradesh late on Sunday night. The pilot vehicle, however, got confused when another car had overtaken it at the Morena-Gwalior border and followed it mistaking it to be Scindia's car.

Following this, Scindia had to travel without security for nearly ten km. Later, a police inspector posted in Hazira police station in Gwalior district spotted Scindia's vehicle and followed it to its destination of Jay Vilas palace in Gwalior. Sources attributed the lapse to lack of coordination between security forces of Morena and Gwalior.

82.7L jabs given in single day

Well done India, says Modi; Covid cases continue to fall

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Over 82.7 lakh vaccine doses, the highest in a single day, were administered across the country on Monday as the revised guidelines for Covid-19 vaccination came into effect, the Union Health Ministry said.

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage was recorded at over 28.33 crore since January 16, according to the data from the CoWIN portal.

"Today's record-breaking vaccination numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight COVID-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the front-line warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine. Well done India!" Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

The previous single-day record was of over 48 lakh doses on April 1. In June so far, India saw an average vaccination of over 31 lakh per day.

The average single-day vaccinations fell to as low as around 16 lakh in the first week of May when the country was at the peak of the second wave.

Madhya Pradesh saw the maximum vaccinations on Monday followed by Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Union home minister Amit Shah said the pace of vaccinations will be stepped up in July-August and the target to vaccinate almost all will be reached "very fast".

The overall fresh cases of Covid-19 fell to 53,000 in India after 88 days while the figure in Delhi came down to two digits (89). With cases coming down, the Bihar government announced an easing of the restrictions. From June 23 to July 6, all government and private offices can function at 100 per cent capacity, shops can remain open till 7 pm,

OVER 2.98 CR COVID VACCINE DOSES STILL AVAILABLE WITH STATES, UTS

New Delhi, June 21: More than 2.98 crore Covid vaccine doses are still available with states and union territories, the Union health ministry said on Monday.

So far, 29,35,04,820 vaccine doses have been provided to states and union territories (UTs) through the Centre's free of cost channel and the direct state procurement category, it said.

Of this, the total consumption, including wastage, is 26,36,26,884 doses, according to data available at 8 am on Monday, the ministry said.

"A total 2,98,77,936 Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs to be administered," the ministry said.

It said that as part of the nationwide vaccination

MP VACCINATES 14.71 LAKH PEOPLE IN A DAY

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JUNE 21

Madhya Pradesh set a new single-day vaccination record in the country with inoculation of 14.71 lakh people on Monday.

The Shivraj government launched a 10-day special vaccination drive in the state coinciding with the International Yoga Day on Monday.

Madhya Pradesh has overtaken the single-day vaccination record set by Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. As many as 13.41 lakh people were vaccinated in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

Indore set a record as being the first city in the country to have vaccinated 2.10 lakh people in a single day on Monday.

"The vaccination campaign started in all the 52 districts in MP simultaneously in an atmosphere of enthusiasm", chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who launched the vaccination campaign at Parasari village in Datia district after paying obeisance to presiding deity of the famous Maa Pithambra temple in the district, told reporters.

Long queues of people were witnessed in all the 7,000 vaccination Centres established across the state on the opening day of the drive on Monday.

"We had set a target to vaccinate 10 lakh people on the first day. We have exceeded our target as more and more people poured in the vaccination Centre", Mr Chouhan said.

parks and gardens will open from 6 am to 12 noon, through night curfew will remain in force from 9 pm to 5 am.

drive, the central government has been supporting states and UTs by providing them Covid vaccines free of cost.

In addition, the Centre has also been facilitating direct procurement of vaccines by the states and UTs, the ministry said.

Vaccination is an integral pillar of the comprehensive strategy for containment and management of the pandemic, along with 'test, track, treat' and Covid appropriate behaviour, it said.

Implementation of the liberalized and accelerated phase-3 strategy of vaccination started from May 1 and under it, every month, 50 per cent of the total Central Drugs Laboratory cleared vaccine doses of any manufacturer would be procured by the Centre, the ministry said.

MAHA TEEN ENDS LIFE OVER ONLINE CLASSES

Aurangabad, June 21: A 17-year-old girl in Maharashtra's Nanded district allegedly committed suicide as she did not have a mobile phone to attend online classes and her parents' financial condition did not permit them to buy her one, police said.

The girl, a resident of Naygaon hanged herself in her home. "She is a Class XI student. A suicide note has been found. Her parents have also confirmed lack of a phone as the reason for the act," police said.

— PTI

— PTI

VITAL | COUNSEL

Don't be under illusion that Covid is gone, says Karnataka Chief Minister

BSY sounds alarm as K'taka unlocks more

Bengaluru, June 21: The Karnataka government on Monday added six more districts to the list of 17 districts under "Unlock 2.0", where Covid-19 curbs have been relaxed, allowing hotels, gyms, and public transport bus services to resume operations.

Udupi, Bengaluru Rural, Shivamogga, Ballari, Chitradurga and Vijayapura have been placed under Category-1 after considering the weekly moving average positivity rate and also taking into account the consistent declining trend of the Covid-19 case positivity

rate, the state government said in its order.

Earlier, the government had issued guidelines on Saturday, further relaxing the Covid-19 curbs in 17 districts where the positivity rate is below 5 per cent, including Bengaluru, that came into effect from 6 am today, allowing all shops to function from 6 am to 5 pm and public transport to resume operations with 50 per cent capacity.

In all, the government has now relaxed Covid-19 restrictions in 23 districts.

As the state entered into another phase of relaxation of lockdown meas-

● **AMONG OTHER THINGS**, hotels, clubs and restaurants have also opened for service until 5 pm with 50 per cent seating, but liquor will not be permitted.

ures, Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa told people not to be under the "illusion" that the Covid-19 pandemic is gone and asked them to be vigilant and follow all preventive measures. He said, "Covid numbers have come down than expected, so we decided to relax lockdown restrictions, but the fear of

corona still looms large."

Though bus operations have come as a relief to office-goers and others who depend on them for commuting, they plying in lesser numbers and with 50 per cent capacity is causing chaos at bus stands in several places of the city, with higher number of people wanting to avail its service. Similar reports are emerging from other places.

While the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation had said it is deploying 3,000 initially for local and inter-district long route bus operations,

the Bangalore Metropolitan Transport Corporation had said it will ply 2,000 buses.

KSRTC also said it will restart inter-state bus services to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana States as per the guidelines of respective States with effect from June 22 based on traffic density and need with 50 per cent seating capacity.

Hotels, clubs and restaurants without air conditioning opened this morning for service until 5 pm with 50 per cent seating, but liquor will not be permitted. Also, gyms began

their function at half capacity, and parks will be open from 5 am to 6 pm for walking and jogging.

Functioning of lodges and resorts with bookings up to 50 per cent, outdoor sports activities without spectators, outdoor film shooting are among the other things that are permitted from today.

However, there will be a curfew in place between 7 pm and 5 am on weekdays and during weekends curfew will be in place from 7 pm on Friday evening to 5 am on Monday morning throughout the state.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

NINE CATALAN SEPARATISTS TO BE PARDONED

Madrid, June 21: Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Monday that the Spanish Cabinet will approve pardons for nine separatist Catalan politicians and activists imprisoned for their roles in the 2017 push to break away from Spain.

Sanchez made the announcement on Monday in Barcelona during a speech set to lay the roadmap for the future of the northeastern region before a few hundred representatives of the region's civil society. He said the Cabinet would approve the pardons on Tuesday.

DESPITE VISA ISSUES, TAIWAN TO KEEP HK OFFICE

Taipei, June 21: Taiwan says it will continue operating its de facto consulate in Hong Kong in spite of visa difficulties for its staffers while also providing consular services online.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Hong Kong has been unable to get new visas for its staff after the Hong Kong government in 2018 began requiring that Taiwanese personnel at the office sign a statement accepting the one-China principle, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said.

The office has just one staffer left in Hong Kong whose visa is due to expire next month. The one-China principle holds that Taiwan is part of China and the Communist government in Beijing is China's sole legitimate government.

U.S. ENVOY HOPES N. KOREA ACCEPTS OFFER FOR TALKS

Seoul, June 21: President Joe Biden's special envoy for North Korea said on Monday he hopes to see a positive reaction from the North soon on US offers for talks after the North Korean leader ordered officials to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation.

Sung Kim, Biden's special representative for North Korea, is in Seoul to speak with South Korean and Japanese officials about the United States' stalled diplomacy with the North over its nuclear programme and US-led sanctions.

The trilateral talks followed a North Korean political conference last week where leader Kim Jong Un called for stronger efforts to improve his nation's economy.

ARMENIA PM'S PARTY WINS SNAP PARL ELECTION

Yerevan, June 21: Results released on Monday showed the party of Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan won the snap parliamentary elections he called to ease anger over a peace deal he signed with Azerbaijan.

With all precincts counted, Pashinyan's Civil Contract party won 53.9% of the vote and former President Robert Kocharyan's bloc was a distant second place with about 21%, the election commission said Monday. A bloc affiliated with another former president came third with 5.2%, and another party had nearly 4%. Blocs need 7% to get into parliament, however, Armenia's laws allow a third party or bloc to get seats if only two political forces pass the threshold to get into parliament. Pashinyan called the early election after months of

PHOTO SHOWS DUBAI PRINCESS IN SPAIN

Madrid, June 21: A Dubai princess who has been the subject of concern from a United Nations panel after being seized trying to flee the sheikhdom in 2018 appeared in a social media post early Monday that described her as being in Spain on a European holiday.

An Instagram image published by a woman identified in British media as former Royal Navy member Sioned Taylor shows Sheikhha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum at Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas Airport.

Taylor's caption, punctuated by a smiley face emoji, read: Great European holiday with Latifa. We're having fun exploring!" Comments by Taylor acknowledged the location of the image, which match other images of the airport.

Asked about Sheikhha Latifa, Taylor wrote in another comment she is great with a thumbs-up emoji. Taylor, the United Arab Emirates' embassies in London and Madrid, as well as the government's Dubai Media Office, did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday.

Taliban take key Afghan district

Insurgents add to string of recent victories

Kabul, June 21: Taliban fighters took control of a key district in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province on Monday and encircled the provincial capital, police said, as the insurgent group added to its string of recent victories on the battlefield.

Fighting around Imam Sahib district began late Sunday and by mid-day Monday the Taliban had overrun the district headquarters and were in control of police headquarters, said Inamuddin Rahmani, provincial police spokesman said.

Taliban militants were within a kilometre of Kunduz, the provincial capital but had not entered into the city, he said, although there were reports of small bands of Taliban near the outskirts and residents trying to leave for Kabul.

Dozens of districts have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when United States and Nato troops began their final departure from Afghanistan. Like Imam Sahib district in northern Kunduz, their significance often lies in their proximity to roads and major cities. Imam Sahib is strategically located near Afghanistan's northern border with Tajikistan, a key supply route from Central Asia.

Rahmani said police and Afghan National Army soldiers had jointly tried to defend the district. He said it still wasn't clear how many casualties the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces suffered in the protracted battle or how many Taliban were killed or wounded. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed confirmed Imam Sahib district was in Taliban hands. Several other districts in Kunduz have also fallen to the insurgent group in the latest round of fighting, including Dasht-e-Archi, which neighbours Imam Sahib, said Rahmani.

Syed Mohammad Mousavi drove with his family to the relative safety of Kabul from northern

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Syed Mohammad Mousavi drove with his family to the relative safety of Kabul from northern

Mazar-e-Sharif, about 120 kilometres west of Kunduz on Sunday. He said people were trying to leave Kunduz city for Kabul fearing additional fighting. "The Taliban were all over the road, checking cars. We were very scared," he said after reaching the capital.

In recent days, the Taliban have taken several districts across the three northern provinces of Kunduz, Baghlan and Balkh, said Mousavi. Significantly, witnesses said Doshi district in Baghlan province was in Taliban hands, which if it true gives the insurgent group control of the one road that links five northern provinces to the capital Kabul.

The Taliban have circulated videos on their website and to WhatsApp groups which they claim show government soldiers who have surrendered being told to return to their homes and receiving money from the Taliban.

On Sunday, Taliban leader Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhonzada issued a statement ordering his soldiers to "treat those who surrender well and display good behaviour with them".

— AP

Raisi says no Biden meet, missiles non-negotiable

Dubai, June 21: Iran's president-elect said on Monday he would not meet with President Joe Biden nor negotiate over Tehran's ballistic missile programme and its support of regional militias, sticking to a hard-line position following his landslide victory in last week's election.

Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi also described himself as a "defender of human rights" when asked about his involvement in the 1988 mass execution of some 5,000 people. It marked the first time he's been put on the spot on live television

over that dark moment in Iranian history at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

"The US is obliged to lift all oppressive sanctions against Iran," he said at the news conference. Raisi sat in front of a sea of microphones, most from Iran and countries home to militias supported by Tehran. He looked nervous at the beginning but slowly became more at ease over the hourlong news conference. Asked about Iran's ballistic missile programme and its support of regional militias, he described the issues as "non-negotiable".

Tehran's fleet of attack

aircraft date largely back to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, forcing Iran to instead invest in missiles as a hedge against its regional Arab neighbours, who have purchased billions of dollars in American military hardware over the years. Those missiles, with a self-imposed range limit of 2,000 kilometres can reach across the Middle East and US military bases in the region.

Iran also relies on militias like Yemen's Houthis rebels and Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group for counterbalance against enemies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

— AP

EU curbs to hurt Belarus economy

Brussels, June 21: European Union foreign ministers will approve Monday a fresh set of sanctions against scores of officials in Belarus and prepare a series of measures aimed at hurting the country's economy, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

The EU has ratcheted up sanctions since President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term last August in elections slammed as fraudulent by the 27-nation bloc. The measures have targeted people accused of electoral misconduct and responsibility for the police crackdown that followed.

We will approve the package of new sanctions, which is a wider package, Borrell told reporters as he arrived in Luxembourg to chair the ministerial meeting. He said asset freezes and travel bans will be slapped on a total of around 86 people and organisations.

Diplomats have said that a number of those targeted are linked to an in-

cident last month in which a Ryanair flight travelling from Greece to Lithuania was diverted to Minsk, where authorities arrested Raman Pratasevich, a dissident journalist who was on board the airliner. The EU has already banned Belarus airline companies from flying over the bloc's territory or using its airports.

Borrell said the ministers will also prepare a raft of economic sanctions for EU leaders to endorse at a summit on Thursday. These are going to hurt, going to hurt the economy of Belarus heavily, he said. The measures may include action against the export of potash and petroleum products.

"We will no longer just sanction individuals. We will now also impose sectoral sanctions — meaning that we will now get to work on the economic areas that are of particular significance for Belarus and for the regime's income," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said.

— AP

Israeli FM in UAE next week

Jerusalem, June 21: Israel's new foreign minister will head to the United Arab Emirates next week for the first-ever visit by a top Israeli diplomat to the Gulf Arab country, the ministry said Monday.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's trip comes after the two countries normalised relations last year in an agreement brokered by the Trump administration, the first of four similar deals with Arab states that had long shunned Israel over its conflict with the Palestinians.

Both Israel's new government and the Biden administration have said they hope to reach similar accords with other Arab states.

Israel and the UAE have meanwhile continued working to deepen ties despite last month's Gaza war. The Israeli Foreign Ministry said Lapid will visit the UAE June 29-30, and will inaugurate an Israeli Embassy in Abu Dhabi and a consulate in Dubai. "Ties between Israel and the UAE are an important relationship, the fruits of which will be enjoyed not only by the citizens of the two countries, but by the entire Middle East," it said in a statement.

Lapid was the driving force behind a new Israeli government sworn in just over a week ago that ended Benjamin Netanyahu's record 12-year run as prime

minister. Netanyahu and Trump had held up the agreements with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco as among their biggest achievements.

Israelis have flocked to the UAE since the agreement was reached to enjoy futuristic Dubai. The UAE is a major global travel hub, and normalisation has made it much easier for Israelis to travel further afield. The two countries have also signed a raft of agreements to cooperate in commerce, technology and other fields.

Shortly after the accord was reached, the Trump administration authorised the sale of 50 advanced F-35 fighter jets to the

UAE, which would make it only the second country in the Middle East, after Israel, to acquire them.

The Biden administration put that agreement on hold in January after it drew fierce criticism from Democrats in Congress, who argued that the sale had unfolded too quickly and without sufficient transparency. But in April, the administration decided to proceed with the \$23 billion arms sale, saying it would work with the UAE to ensure adherence to human rights standards and the laws of war.

The Palestinians strongly criticised the normalisation agreements.

— AP

Tumult over statue



Protesters gather in front of the "Forever Marilyn" statue unveiled on its return to Palm Springs, California. The 26-foot tall and 17-tonne sculpture by artist Seward Johnson Atelier was displayed earlier this decade in Palm Springs, but the return has drawn the ire of residents on infringement of surrounding natural landscape views and on allegations that the statue is sexist and inappropriate, despite the popularity of Marilyn Monroe's iconic dress-flying pose from the 1955 comedy "The Seven Year Itch".

— Photo by Frederic J. Brown/APF

Oz official: Stick with AZ for 2nd dose 92 Indian factory workers in Lanka Covid positive

Colombo, June 21: Nine-two Indian workers at an iron works factory in Sri Lanka tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday, health officials said.

The Indians were among the 128 workers at the factory in Colombo north suburb of Wattala who were found to have contracted the virus. They have been put under quarantine. The factory, which has a total of 194 workers, has been closed temporarily, a report in the Newcenter.lk said. Those who have tested negative have been put under quarantine in the factory premises, the report said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka on Monday ended its

Covid-19 lockdown by lifting travel restrictions, amid concerns by health officials who insisted that it must be continued in view of the raging third wave. For the first time in nearly four weeks, the travel restrictions were lifted at 4 am on Monday and will be re-imposed at 10 pm on June 23.

"We will be closely monitoring people's movements through special units," police spokesman and Senior Deputy Inspector General Ajith Rohana said. He said the public must stay indoors as much as possible despite the lifting of restrictions. No inter-district travel will be allowed, the police said.

Health officials issued more guidelines on public behaviour during the lifting of the lockdown. The health authorities were wary of the Delta variant of the coronavirus which is spreading fast across the country. "We still view this as dangerous, the travel restrictions were only loosely observed. The lifting of even that could be dangerous," Upul Rohana, a spokesman for the public health inspectors said.

The nation has recorded nearly 2,000 cases per day since the third wave which began mid-April. The total number of cases in the country stood at 239,689, while 201,389 are recovering.

— PTI

lifted its recommended age limit for AstraZeneca from 50 to 60 after a 52-year-old woman died of clots. A 48-year-old woman

died in April. Pfizer is currently the only alternative to AstraZeneca in Australia, although Moderna is expected to be registered

soon. The government hopes that every Australian adult who wants a vaccine will have access to one by the end of the year.

— AP

PAK'S DEATH TOLL CROSSES MARK OF 22K

Islamabad, June 21: Pakistan's Coronavirus death toll crossed the grim figure of 22,000 on Monday, as Sindh province continued to report the highest number of fresh cases in the country. Thirty patients died and 907 new cases were detected in the last 24 hours, the Ministry of National Health Services said in its daily bulletin. Now, the death toll stands at 22,007 and national caseload at 949,175.

Of the 907 new cases, the majority of them were reported from Sindh province at 595 cases. The Coronavirus has greatly impacted the province. So far, Sindh has reported over 3.07 lakh cases. Pakistan on Sunday received 1.55 million doses of a China-made Coronavirus vaccine, as the immunisation drive picks up pace in the country.

— PTI

SENSITIVE | PROJECT

Millions of Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian or Slovakian citizens had lost their homes

Museum on WWII-expelled Germans raises Nazi crimes

Berlin, June 21: Germany is opening a museum exploring the fate of millions of Germans forced to leave eastern and central Europe at the end of World War II, along with other forced displacements of the 20th and 21st centuries — a sensitive project that has taken years to realise.

Chancellor Angela Merkel is due to speak to an opening ceremony Monday for the Documentation Ce-

nter for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, more than 13 years after her government gave the plan the go-ahead.

Housed in a late-1920s building in downtown Berlin, it features some 700 exhibits over 1,500 square metres (16,000 square feet). Making the project reality was long viewed as "an impossible balancing act," said the center's director, Gundula Bavendamm, recall-

ing "heated arguments about priorities and contextualisation."

Controversies revolved around one central question, she said: "How can the exodus and expulsion of Germans at the end of and after World War II be portrayed without raising the slightest doubt that this country is aware of its lasting responsibility for the German crimes of World War II and the murder of

European Jews?"

The project centres on the millions of Germans who fled from advancing Soviet forces or were kicked out of parts of eastern and central Europe as Germany's borders were moved westward after the war, "in the historical context" of Nazi crimes, said Bavendamm — the project's third director.

"Without the Nazi policies of expulsion and annihilation, 14 million Ger-

mans wouldn't have lost their homes as a result of flight and expulsion," she added. "But that doesn't change the fact that their expulsion by the Allies and the eastern and central European states in the aftermath of World War II was also an injustice."

In its efforts to provide context, the exhibition explores "forced migration as a phenomenon of mod-

ern Europe," including displacements during World War I, the arrival of Vietnamese "boat people" in West Germany in the 1970s, the fallout from the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1990s and the European migration crisis of recent years.

Exhibits include some 30 passports, including a German Jew's passport stamped with the letter "J" in the Nazi era, a "Nansen

passport" for stateless refugees from 1937 and a modern-day provisional refugee passport. There is the diary of a girl from East Prussia, a territory Germany lost at the end of the war, chronicling sexual violence. There's also a bicycle used by a Syrian refugee to cross the Russian-Norwegian border in 2016. There are audio accounts by people recounting their arrival in Germany.

— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

22 JUNE 2021

Will harassment of Sena MLAs hit Maha coalition?

Three Shiv Sena MLAs, including transport minister Anil Parab who is said to be close to Chief Minister Udhav Thackeray, are being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate and other central agencies for money laundering and other corrupt practices. One of the three has gone public and urged the CM to re-forge ties with BJP and ditch NCP and Congress, Sena's alliance partners in the MVA government. The MLA in question contends that the harassment of Sena legislators and their families will cease if the Sena returns to partnering BJP, to begin with in the upcoming local bodies election. On the face of it, this is an old tactical line in play.

Investigation agencies of the Union government have been unleashed in the past to harass political opponents, break parties, and re-shape politics.

In Maharashtra, the most prominent case was the ED notice to NCP leader Sharad Pawar before the October 2019 Assembly poll, with the ED running for cover only when Mr Pawar threatened to descend on the agency's office in Mumbai with thousands of his supporters. In West Bengal too, the central agencies tormented Trinamul Congress leaders until their defection to BJP was secured. In the end, the low tactics failed to impress and the BJP suffered a humiliating defeat in the recent state poll. The defectors are now begging CM Mamata Banerjee for forgiveness.

For the ruling alliance in Maharashtra, security is not likely to lie in succumbing to BJP's indirect pressure, and Mr Thackeray reneging on his own coalition allies on the strength of a legislator becoming a cry baby. He had broken off ties with the BJP after fighting the polls in alliance with the saffron party because the latter evidently went back on its promise to share the post of CM with the Sena. If the Sena, on the strength of a complaining MLA, returns to the BJP's embrace, it is unlikely Mr Thackeray will be able to hold on to his position for long.

On the other hand, if the partners in the ruling coalition contest the forthcoming municipal polls jointly, rather than separately as the Congress has threatened in pique, a strong political message will go to the electorate- and to the BJP. If the event they perform creditably, BJP pressures may be expected to ease. It is useful to bear in mind the full import of the words of Sena leader Sanjay Raut, who urges that it is important to fathom who is building pressure on Sena MLAs, and why.

The pressure on the Sena MLAs has come at about the same time as Sena and NCP agreeing to contest elections together in the foreseeable future, with the Congress being the outlier in the ruling alliance. Although the Congress in Maharashtra won 44 seats — three more than in 2014 — on its own steam, and when the party received no assistance from its headquarters in Delhi, it remains organisationally weak in the state.

There is glaring factionalism which keeps the party weak and the ruling coalition somewhat off-balance. The state party chief, Nana Patole, is cultivating the habit of firing broadsides at the Sena. For the overall health of the state government and the Congress organisation, the party's leadership at the Centre will do well to impart the lesson of responsible political conduct to its Maharashtra unit.

Can Raisi make peace with US?

The election of headline cleric Ibrahim Raisi as Iran's new President was a foregone conclusion. To say the disillusioned electors were guided into choosing the former chief justice is to put it mildly, since there were reasons to assume this was a rigged election in which blank ballots placed second to Mr Raisi, who took 62 per cent of the "popular" vote. The new President has a dubious record that goes beyond his being the chosen one from seven candidates who were allowed to contest by Iran's conservative Guardian Council from among 600 who had initially applied. He was the youngest member of the 1988 Tehran death commission that has been accused of killing 3,000 Opposition prisoners.

What Mr Raisi, who is known to be close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, inherits as President is an economy in shambles, riven by corruption and mismanagement and throwing into disaffection large sections of its people. The question that arises despite his known record is whether Mr Raisi, as a member of the innermost ruling theocracy, can make peace with the Americans under President Joe Biden and pursue the 2015 Obama-era nuclear deal that Mr Biden's predecessor Donald Trump had torn to pieces in 2018. A revival of the economy would be contingent on US sanctions being lifted and Iran being allowed to sell its oil internationally without constraints.

The suspicion is that Iran has been enriching its uranium to levels far beyond what constitutes a peaceful programme. Its offer to abandon enrichment, which could be made in talks that are on in Vienna among Iran, Russia, China, Germany, France and Britain, with the US indirectly involved, may be contingent on a guarantee that any nuclear deal it signs with the West would be permanent and not subject to the whims of a US President, but a democratic America can hardly make such a commitment unless a treaty is forged. The fact remains that Iran is a major player in a region fraught with tensions and the mullahs would have to be willing to pursue real peace at least for the sake of its people.

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Subhani



Biden B3W vs China BRI: Is India the odd man out?



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

India's embattled government cannot draw much comfort from US President Joe Biden's promise (or was it a threat?) to lead an alliance of global democracies against the world's autocracies, with specific reference to the challenge that Communist China presents.

But then, does the government at all feel embattled? Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcements, bland when not boastful, suggest that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Evidence to the contrary can be brushed aside, as Mr Modi has told us that "neither have they (the Chinese) intruded into our border, nor has any post been taken over by them". Why then the defensive rhetoric, the emphasis on security in a region that we are flattered to note has been dubbed the "Indo-Pacific"? Why, too, the "Quad", or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, with the United States, Japan and Australia which everyone, the Chinese especially, see as countering Beijing?

True, "20 of our jawans were martyred" in hand-to-hand combat with the People's Liberation Army in eastern Ladakh. But we can gloat over the revelation that "those who dared Bharat Mata, they were taught a lesson".

Were they? Mr Modi has no doubts. India is so mighty "that no one can eye even one inch of our land". It's the Chinese who should quake in their boots for "India's armed forces have the capability to move into multiple sectors at one go". It would be interesting to hear what defence officials have to say about that. Or diplomatists. Or the external affairs minister, with his experience of Beijing where he repre-

sented India from 2009 to 2013.

Far from indulging in braggadocio or inviting ridicule, Mr Biden used his first official overseas trip to mobilise support against his country's two main perceived adversaries. Problems with Russia revive the Cold War postures that were briefly laid to rest during Mikhail Gorbachev's time. But China, whose all-powerful ruling Communist Party is celebrating its centenary next month and which has now sent three astronauts into orbit to become the only country to own and run its own space station, is seen as the real threat of the future. Of course, China rejects the view of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation leaders that its rise presents "systemic challenges" for the world. When Jens Stoltenberg, Nato's secretary-general, levelled that charge in Brussels, China promptly accused Nato of "slandering" its "peaceful development". Being committed to a "defensive" defence policy, China did "not present 'systematic challenges' to anyone" but would "not sit by and do nothing if 'systematic challenges' come closer to us".

Echoes of the arguments that preceded the first Opium War (1839-1842) between Qing China and Britain can be heard all over again. Then, the British reported that the Chinese hoped there would be "much talk-ee-talk-ee" before "fight-ee-fight-ee". This time round it's the West that appears to be sending pacific smoke signals even while the defiant talk gets louder.

The main reason why there might not be any serious friction after all lies in the disclosure that in the last few weeks, top Chinese and US trade and treasury officials have

engaged in a series of virtual chats on the business of doing business. China has invested substantially in British companies as well as public utilities. The US, the European Union and Japan are among China's biggest trade partners, with exports and imports totalling more than \$1,660 billion. Neither side will easily risk that.

India can expect even less sympathy (and no support) from Asean, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose collective trade with China jumped last year to \$731.9 billion, making Asean China's largest trading partner for the first time while China remained Asean's largest trading partner for the 12th successive year.

Vietnamese or Filipino grievances in the South China Sea or Malaysia's complaint about Chinese military aircraft intruding into its Exclusive Economic Zone are not likely to be vigorously or collectively pursued when trade registers seven per cent growth.

China has also redefined aid to make it an integral feature of about 60 developing countries that can expect \$500 billion from Beijing over the next few years, while President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative could mobilise \$1 trillion of Chinese state financing. Conventional aid plays only a marginal role in China's commerce-is-development vision of growth as articulated by Justin Yifu Lin, a former World Bank chief economist and author of the book *Going Beyond Aid*. More than 100 countries have joined

India can expect even less sympathy (and no support) from Asean, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose collective trade with China jumped to \$731.9 bn last year, making Asean China's largest trading partner for the first time

BRI projects, of which there were more than 2,600 costing \$3.7 trillion in mid-2020. Beijing says that the Covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected about 20 per cent of them.

The G-7 representatives whom Mr Biden met in England at the start of his European mission enthusiastically supported his Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership, an alternative to the BRI, and promised to "collectively catalyse hundreds of billions of dollars of infrastructure investment". While China's focus is on big-ticket projects in traditional infrastructure — like Sri Lanka's \$1.4 billion Hambantota Port — Mr Biden's plan will focus on climate, health and health security, digital technology, gender equity and equality. That doesn't suggest direct competition. But the commitment to "rally the world's democracies to meet the challenges" of dictatorship, human rights abuse and forced labour identifies the target easily enough.

These are worthy aims in keeping with the lofty vision of the nation whose Marshall Plan rescued Europe from the ravages of World War II. But they are not of as much gripping interest in war-torn Yemen or famine-stricken Somalia as the BRI's promised ports, highways, airports and dams. Whether or not the promises will be kept is another matter but the hope generates at least initial support.

Various factors make India the odd man out in this contest for hearts and minds. It cannot promise lavish help like the BRI or B3W. It doesn't brandish an ideological banner like the United States. So far as anyone knows, the dispute is only over territory, and rocky, inhospitable, uninhabited terrain at that. And if India's Prime Minister is to be believed, there is no aggression either.

So, what are we fighting about? And why do we need the Quad?

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

WELL DONE AP

Andhra Pradesh deserves praise for vaccinating over 13 lakh people on a single day while other states are able to vaccinate only three or four lakh people daily in such drives. Good planning and preparatory work have made this rare feat possible. All other states should emulate AP in this regard as effective vaccination for maximum number of people is the key step in fighting against Covid-19.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

Kudos to Andhra Pradesh's health department for 'AP vaccinates 13.4 lakh people in a single day' (*DC, June 21*). This is a mega record and worth to be a part of *Guinness Book of World Records*. Hope someone will initiate for this. Statistics also show this figure stands as 47 per cent of the total jabs done in the country as a whole on Sunday. This also proves that 'If there's will, there's a way'. The CM too can take this forward.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

KASHMIR DIALOGUE

The Centre's invitation to representatives of political parties from both J&K for a meeting in New Delhi can be a notable step to end political stalemate after the abrogation of Article 370 and converting the state into Union Territory (*Setting the road ahead for Kashmir's political future, DC, June 21*). However, there needs to be a beginning towards a sturdy and sound democratic resolution of Kashmir issue and not an exercise in managing the Centre's image.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Soyuz men resume research

MOSCOW, JUNE 21.

The Soviet cosmonauts began their third week abroad world's first manned space laboratory today.

The operation of the orbital astrophysical "orion" observatory on board the station was continued today.

In the new orbit a "grip" of one of the stars in ophiuchus constellation was carried by means of a sight system.

Aakar Patel



No good news: It's difficult to be an optimist in India today

It is not easy to find good news in India and has not been easy for a long time now. A recent report said that the Indian economy is contracting again in this quarter, between April and June, by more than double digits.

This report from one agency was carried in multiple media outlets but it was not refuted or commented upon by others, including by the government. It was just assumed to be true. After 24 months of slowdown starting in January 2018 before the Covid-19 pandemic, and then 18 months of collapse since January 2020, we have turned into the world's worst performing economy.

India's economic growth has been falling for 42 months now, but the government has not spoken about why that is so and what went wrong or what it plans to do to correct it. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in an interview last year offered five points to correct course, but he also added that a course-correction was possible only after one had acknowledged that there was a problem.

Since we have not accepted that

anything is wrong, we will continue.

CMIE, the only body offering regular employment data (the Narendra Modi government has little data and says that it is conducting some surveys, whose results will come around the end of the year) says that unemployment in India is at 11 per cent, higher than Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Inflation is high though demand is low, and wholesale prices are at their highest since 1992. Petrol is around ₹100 a litre, diesel is almost there and the price of crude oil is expected to rise another 20 per cent by the end of the year. Exports are at the same level as they were in 2014 and in seven years under Narendra Modi have shown no growth, though in the same period Bangladesh and Vietnam have grown and China has held onto its share.

Eighty crore Indians are being given free food for seven months from May till November. Five kilos of wheat or rice per person per month and one kilo of dal. In May, 16 lakh tonnes of wheat and 15 lakh tonnes of rice was distributed.

Sixty per cent of Indians depend on

free food. This should tell you more than enough about the state of poverty in India today.

When Mr Modi took over in 2014, he said MGNREGA was a monument to the failure of the Manmohan Singh government. He would give people real jobs, and not MGNREGA jobs. The MGNREGA programme's size last year was three times what it was under UPA rule because crores of people have lost their jobs and fallen into poverty and now depend on MGNREGA and free foodgrains. The Gujarat government put out a statement last week which said that MGNREGA was a lifesaver.

Elsewhere, it has been a year since the clash in Ladakh. China has stopped its disengagement. This means India has to keep tens of thousands of troops in that area almost permanently.

China has also told us that it is demoting the level of talks, and now only area commanders will discuss specific issues rather than general disagreement. Our soldiers still cannot patrol in the Depsang Plain but the government has not acknowledged that or held a single press

briefing on Ladakh since the crisis began a year ago. Opacity is the hallmark of dictatorships and not democracies, but this is the status of our national security.

India was supposed to be the Vaccine Guru and Vaccine Factory for the world. Instead, India has wrecked the world's vaccination programme by stopping the delivery of vaccines others already paid for in advance and which were manufactured in India. Our government has begun taking over those stocks while the world waits. Even with that, India has only managed to fully vaccinate only three per cent of its population against the world's average of nine per cent. Why? We have not been told.

Every day there is a report of excess deaths from states being between four and 10 times the official Covid-19 toll. India seems to lead the world by far in both cases and deaths. There has not been a government initiative to find out the true number of cases and deaths and the media continues to parrot the official numbers and at the same time publishing reports on the excess deaths. Mass faking of

tests at the Kumbh Mela has been reported, and this is also par for the course.

At the G-7 summit earlier this month in Britain, Prime Minister Modi, who attended virtually, endorsed a document called the "Open Societies Statement" in which he pledged India would practice and promote human rights and civil liberties. At home, those who ask for these have been locked up under UAPA. The farmers' protest continues with tens of thousands living on the highways outside Delhi. The three controversial farm laws have been suspended, but not withdrawn. Why? We do not know because Mr Modi has not spoken about the laws since they were suspended by the Supreme Court six months ago.

It doesn't matter whether you are a supporter of Prime Minister Modi or an opponent or neutral. Anyone looking around the state that India finds itself in will find it hard to extract any good news and will find it difficult to be optimistic.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,574.46	0.44
Nifty 50	15,746.50	0.40
S&P 500*	4,216.89	1.21
Dollar (₹)	73.87	0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18	0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,277.250	0.54
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.85	1.82
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.029	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.468	0.018

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Transmission charges waived for RE till June '25

The power ministry announced the extension of timeline by two years for waiver on interstate transmission charge for electricity generated from solar and wind sources. Now, the waiver would be available till June 30, 2025 against June 30, 2023 earlier. Besides, the waiver would now be available for hydro pumped storage plant (PSP) and battery energy storage system (BESS) projects also.

Housing prices up in major cities in Q4: RBI data



The All-India Housing Price Index (HPI) increased 2.7 per cent year-on-year in the March quarter of 2020-21, the latest RBI data shows. The index takes into account transaction-level data received from housing registration authorities in ten cities—Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai. The All-India HPI rose year-on-year by 2.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020-21.

Umbrella unit of 170 MSME bodies formed

As many as 170 industry associations have joined hands to form All-India Council of Association of MSMEs (AICA) in order to deal with issues of the sector hit hard by the pandemic. "AICA today announced that 170 industry associations have joined together to address post Covid issues faced by two lakh MSMEs across India," AICA said in a statement. It said the pandemic has affected every industry.

Honeywell's new tech to detect counterfeit drugs

Honeywell announced digital authentication technology for the pharmaceutical industry in response to the growing menace of counterfeit products, especially in vaccines and Covid drugs. The Honeywell solution comprises a digital code embedded in the packaging of pharmaceutical products. The end user can validate the authenticity of the product by scanning the digital code with a smartphone.



Govt to alter consumer protection norms Rules seek to curb e-com flash sale

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 21

Tightening the rules governing e-commerce companies, the central government has proposed to restrict e-commerce entities from organising "flash sale" of goods or services. It also seeks to bar any e-commerce entity from using information collected through its platform for unfair advantage of its related parties and associated enterprises and manipulating price of the goods or services to gain unreasonable profit. By the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, notified by the government on Monday, no e-commerce entity should organise a "flash sale" of goods or services offered on its platform. This restricts the entity from organising a sale at significantly reduced prices, high discounts or any other such promotions or attractive offers for a predetermined period of time on selective goods and services or otherwise with an intent to draw a large number of consumers. E-commerce entities have been holding such sales around festivals and similar occasions and have been receiving tremendous response from customers. However, the rules restrict such sales "provided such sales are organised by fraudulently intercepting the ordinary course of business using technological means with an intent to

enable only a specified seller or group of sellers managed by such entity to sell goods or services on its platform." Experts doubted the practical impact of this measure. "At first glance it will be interesting to see how practically these changes will be implemented," said Archana Tewary, partner, J Sagar Associates. According to the proposals, no entity having a dominant position cannot abuse its position. "Abuse of dominant position" will have the same meaning as prescribed under Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002. It should not use any information collected through its platform for unfair advantage of its related parties and associated enterprises; none of its related parties and associated enterprises are enlisted as sellers for sale to consumers directly; and ensure that nothing is done by related parties which the e-commerce entity cannot do itself. An e-commerce entity

- HEMMING IN BIG SELLERS
- ▶ No e-commerce entity should organise a "flash sale" on its platform
- ▶ It should not use any info collected for the unfair advantage of its related parties
- ▶ It should should not impose cancellation charges unless it bears

similar charges- ▶ Should appoint nodal contact, grievance officer and compliance officer
- ▶ Sellers should also have a grievance officer
- ▶ No seller should post false reviews about goods or services.

should ensure that sponsored listing of products and services are distinctly identified. It should should not impose cancellation charges on consumers unless similar charges are also borne by it. The e-commerce companies are mandated to register with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. It should appoint a nodal person of contact, Resident Grievance Officer to address concerns of customers, Chief Compliance Officer to ensure compliance to rules and a nodal contact person for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies. Sellers on the e-commerce platform also should also have a grievance officer; acknowledge receipt of consumer complaints within 48 hours and redress the complaint within one month. No seller should falsely represent itself as a consumer and post reviews about goods or services.

SAT sets aside Sebi direction; allows PNB HF voting today

New Delhi, June 21: Setting aside Sebi's direction, the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Monday allowed PNB Housing Finance to go ahead with the shareholders' meeting on Tuesday to consider a Rs 4,000 crore-investment by private equity firm Carlyle and others in the mortgage firm. However, results of the shareholders' voting will not be disclosed till further directions from the tribunal. The ruling comes hours after PNB Housing Finance informed stock exchanges it has appealed against Sebi's direction on June 18 wherein it was asked to defer consideration of the proposed capital infusion proposal till a valuation of the company's shares is done by a registered independent valuer. The extraordinary general meeting (EGM) is scheduled for June 22. Taking up the matter on an urgent basis, a two-member bench of the tribunal said as "electronic voting has already commenced it would not be fair to stay the consideration of agenda no. 1 (issuance of preference shares)." The bench of Justices Tarun Agarwala and M. T. Joshi said no factual dispute exists and only an interpretation of the provisions of the ICDR Regulations and Companies Act read with Articles of Association is required to be considered. —PTI

Top economists to advise TN CM

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 21



Some of the globally acclaimed economists, including Nobel laureate Esther Duflo, former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and former chief economic advisor to the Government of India Arvind Subramanian will advise the chief minister of Tamil Nadu. Development Economist Jean Dreze and former Union finance secretary S. Narayan also will be part of the 'Economic Advisory Council to the Chief Minister'. "In recent years, we have seen a slowdown in Tamil Nadu's economic growth rate. This government will make all out efforts to reverse this trend and usher in a period of rapid economic growth taking full advantage of the available limited window of the demographic dividend. To chart out a rapid and inclusive economic growth path for Tamil Nadu, this government will constitute an 'Economic Advisory Council to the Chief Minister' with leading economic experts from all over the world as its members," governor Banwarilal Purohit announced on Monday in his customary address to the first session of the 16th state legislative assembly, which also marks the commencement of the first session after the formation of the DMK government last month. Esther Duflo is professor of Poverty Alleviation and Development Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She along with her husband and economist Abhijit Banerjee and co-researcher Michael Kremer received the Nobel Prize in economics for in 2019 for their "experimental approach to alleviating global poverty". Former Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan is Katherine Dusak Miller Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. Former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian is non-resident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics. Belgian-born development economist Jean Dreze is an Indian national. He has been a member of the UPA's National Advisory Council and is visiting professor at the department of economics, Ranchi University. S. Narayan has served as the finance secretary of Government of India and as the economic advisor to the Prime Minister. "Based on the recommendations of this council, the government will revitalise the state's economy and ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach all segments of the society," Purohit said. He also noted that the fiscal health of the state is a cause for concern. The government will focus on improving the fiscal position and bringing down the overall debt burden. As a first step, a white paper detailing the true state of Tamil Nadu's finances will be released in the month of July, so that the people of Tamil Nadu are fully informed, he said. There could be no social justice when there is high economic inequality and stratification. Inclusive growth is government's priority and growth and progress must benefit all sections of society and not just the top of the economic pyramid, the governor noted.

India's return to LNG spot market hints at recovery

STEPHEN STAPCZYNSKI JUNE 21

India started buying prompt shipments of liquefied natural gas from the spot market after a two-month absence, indicating a rebound in demand as the nation exits a deadly phase of the Covid-19 pandemic. Petronet LNG Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation awarded tenders for delivery over the next few months, the first spot purchases since March, according to traders with knowledge of the matter. Both cargoes cost more than \$11 per million British thermal units, an unusually high level for Indian buyers able to turn to alternatives such as fuel oil and LPG. Global energy use is quickly recovering from the devastation wrought by the pandemic, and the positive signal from India will help to push natural gas prices higher, though the nation's demand

recovery is still uneven and not all buyers there are eager to boost purchases. LNG spot prices for North Asia have rallied due to robust Chinese demand and supply issues, and been bolstered by a surge in European gas benchmarks to near their highest in 13 years. India is emerging from the Covid-19 wave that overwhelmed healthcare infrastructure and triggered localised lockdowns, causing a slump in natural gas consumption in the transport, commercial and industrial sectors. Now, daily cases have sunk back below 60,000 from more than 400,000 at the outbreak's peak, and curbs are being eased. India's return to the spot market is in stark contrast to just last month, when companies were seeking to cancel and divert shipments due to a glut at import facilities. —Bloomberg

KKR TO MAJORITY OWN VINI COSMETICS FOR ₹4,600 CR

Mumbai, June 21: Global buyout major KKR on Monday announced a \$625 million, or Rs 4,600-crore, investment in deodorant maker Vini Cosmetics for a controlling stake. The PE major has signed a definitive agreement, by which Vini's founder group led by Darshan Patel, chairman and joint managing director (JMD), and Dipam Patel, JMD, and Sequoia Capital will sell stakes. The co-founders of the 11-year-old company, which manufactures and markets brands like FOGG, will continue to hold a significant stake in Vini and will collaborate with KKR in the next phase of the company's growth, as per the statement. In addition, existing investor Westbridge Capital will acquire a further stake from the founder group to increase its shareholding, it said. The statement said Patel will continue to be the chairman while Dipam Patel will be appointed as the vice-chairman.

Murdoch Jr. to tap billionaire families for India investment

BEN STUPPLES JUNE 21

James Murdoch is considering raising funds from ultra-rich families around the globe, a move that would give him more firepower to make acquisitions and further establish his investment firm. Murdoch's Lupa Systems is looking for about \$150 million each from fewer than half-a-dozen family offices for investments in India, according to a person with knowledge of the matter. It intends to use an external fundraiser to help with the drive, said the person, who asked not to be identified as the plans are private and still tentative. A spokesperson for Murdoch declined to comment. James, 48, set up Lupa Systems in 2019. Based in New York and Mumbai, it already counts Indian startups Doubnut and Harappa Education among its investments. The firm is also backing a US blank-cheque company



James Murdoch

that will focus on India as it hunts for targets across South and Southeast Asia. Nitin Kukreja, a former Morgan Stanley banker, is managing director of Lupa Systems's operations in India. The firm also owns a \$160-million stake in MCH Group, the organiser of the Art Basel shows. In 2019, it invested in Norwegian drone technology company UBIQ Aerospace, New York-based comic book publishing startup Artists Writers & Artisans and

the owner of the Tribeca Film Festival. James Murdoch was once in pole position to lead his family's sprawling media operations. He was chief executive officer of 21st Century Fox before Walt Disney Company acquired most of its assets in 2019, leaving him and Rupert Murdoch's five other children in line to receive about \$2 billion each from the deal. James cut ties with his family's media businesses -- News Corp and Fox Corp -- last year after clashing over its editorial direction. His brother Lachlan, 49, now helps to run both companies. Rupert Murdoch, 90, has a net worth of \$8.9 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. "At great news organisations, the mission really should be to introduce fact to disperse doubt—not to sow doubt, to obscure fact, if you will," James told the New York Times in October. —Bloomberg

Aparna to invest ₹100 cr to strengthen Alteza brand

FC BUREAU HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Hyderabad-based building materials firm Aparna Enterprises Ltd said on Monday it would invest Rs 100 crore towards building its aluminium window and door system brand Alteza in the next four years. The investment will also be used for setting up a new manufacturing unit in Hyderabad. Sixty per cent of our investment will be used for strengthening our manufacturing capacity and the rest towards research & development and building our dealership network, said Ashwin Reddy, the managing director of Aparna Enterprises. After launching the company's latest range of slim aluminium sliding door system, the ACA M-19 series, Reddy said the demand for quality products and services is growing in the country and wants the company to gear up to address this demand. The aluminium window and door system market is worth around Rs 20,000 crore in India and is growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 7.9 per cent.

MARUTI SUZUKI TO HIKE PRICES IN Q2

New Delhi, June 21: The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said it will increase prices of its entire product portfolio in the second quarter of the current fiscal due to rise in prices of various commodities, including steel. The auto major, which has already taken a price increase in April, noted that the price of steel and various precious metals has gone up considerably, prompting the company to pass on some of the impact to the customers. —PTI

FIFTH | LARGEST

Inflow rose from \$51 bn in '19 to \$64 bn in '20

FDI inflow surges 25% in 2020

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 21

FDI inflow into India grew 25 per cent to \$64 billion in 2020, taking the country to the fifth position globally. Pushed up by acquisitions in the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, FDI inflow into India grew from \$51 billion in 2019 to \$64 billion in 2020. India improved its global ranking from eight to fifth position in the pandemic year, finds Unctad. Amid India's struggle to contain the Covid-19 outbreak, robust investment through acquisitions in ICT (software and hardware) and construction bolstered FDI. Cross-border mergers and acquisitions surged 83 per cent to



\$27 billion, with major deals in ICT, health, infrastructure and energy. Large transactions included the acquisition of Jio Platforms by Facebook's subsidiary Jaadhu for \$5.7 billion, the acquisition of Tower Infrastructure Trust by Brookfield and GIC Singapore for \$3.7 billion and the sale of the electrical and automation division of Larsen & Toubro India for \$2.1 billion.

India helped FDI in South Asia rise by 20 per cent to \$71 billion. Meanwhile, FDI outflow from South Asia fell 12 per cent to \$12 billion, once again driven by a drop in investment from India. FDI from India dropped to \$12 billion 2020 from \$13 billion 2019. Companies in India are South Asia's largest investors, with more than 90 per cent of outflows in 2020. Investments from India are expected to stabilise in 2021, supported by the country's resumption of free trade agreement (FTA) talks with the European Union (EU) and its strong investment in Africa, finds Unctad. India's FDI stock stood at \$480 billion in 2020 against \$205 billion in 2010.

Going ahead, Unctad says India will continue to attract foreign investment in high-tech industries, given their market size and their advanced digital and technology ecosystem. However, the recent second wave of Covid-19 shows that significant uncertainties remain. This has major impacts on the prospects for South Asia as well. According to the UN body, announced greenfield projects in India contracted by 19 per cent to \$24 billion, and the second wave in April 2021 is affecting economic activities, which could lead to a larger contraction in 2021. The outbreak severely hit main investment destinations such as Maharashtra and Karnataka, it said.

SHORT TAKES

Maharaj hat-trick puts SA on course

Gros Islet: Keshav Maharaj became just the second South African to take a hat-trick in Test and the Proteas were on course for a series victory as West Indies slid to 109-6 at lunch on day four of the second Test on Monday. West Indies were still 215 runs short of its target of 324 and South Africa was in sight of a 2-0 series sweep. Maharaj's hat trick came in the second-to-last over of the session. He claimed a big breakthrough when Kieran Powell was caught near the square leg boundary for 51. But the spinner added the wickets off Holder and Joshua Da Silva off his next two balls. — **AP**

Brief scores (Day 4, at lunch): South Africa 298 & 174 (van der Dussen 75 n.o., Roach 4/52) vs West Indies 149 & 109/6 in 38 overs (Kieran Powell 51, Keshav Maharaj 3/20).

Rahm wins first US Open crown

La Jolla: Jon Rahm made tension-packed long birdie putts on the last two holes on Sunday to win the 121st US Open and capture his first major title, defeating South African Louis Oosthuizen by one stroke. The 26-year-old Spaniard curled in a spectacular birdie putt from just inside 25 feet at the par-4 17th hole then made his fourth birdie of the week at the par-5 18th, blasting out of a bunker and rolling in an 18-footer to seize the lead. "I have a hard time explaining what just happened because I can't even believe I made the last two putts," Rahm said. — **AFP**

Chhetri extends stay with BFC

Bengaluru: India captain Sunil Chhetri has extended his contract with Bengaluru FC for another two years and will be with the Indian Super League side till 2023. The new deal will enable Chhetri, who joined 'the Blues' in 2013, to extend his stay with the club into the 10th season. Chhetri has made 203 appearances for the club, scoring 101 goals in eight seasons. "I'm really happy to have signed on for two more years at Bengaluru FC. The city is home now, and the people at this club are like family to me," said the 36-year-old, who has led the club since its inception in 2013. — **PTI**

Elina into top five in WTA rankings

Paris: Elina Svitolina of Ukraine moved into the top five in the latest WTA rankings published on Monday, displacing American Sofia Kenin a week before Wimbledon starts. Recently crowned French Open champion Barbora Krejickova slipped two places to 17th while Swiss Belinda Bencic is once again on the cusp of the top ten after her run to the grass-court final in Berlin. Ashleigh Barty retains the top rank ahead of Naomi Osaka, who will miss Wimbledon and hence an opportunity to close the gap. — **AFP**

Hawks upset top seeded Sixers

Los Angeles: Kevin Huerter scored a playoff career-high 27 points as the upstart Atlanta Hawks punched their ticket to their first Eastern Conference finals in six years on Sunday, with a 103-96 game seven win over the Philadelphia 76ers. Trae Young finished with 21 points and 10 assists, John Collins had 14 points and 16 rebounds and Danilo Gallinari garnered scored 17 points for the Hawks, who won three games in Philadelphia to take the series 4-3. The Hawks will now face the Milwaukee Bucks in game one of their series on Wednesday. — **AFP**

Live on TV

CRICKET

World Test Championship final, Day 5: India vs New Zealand from 3pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

EURO

Group Stage: Czech Republic vs England; Croatia vs Scotland from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, 2

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DRAW LOOMS

Weather plays havoc as another day washed out

Southampton, June 21: The fickle English weather played spoilsport in a game promising high quality contest as day four of the inaugural World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand was washed out due to rain.

For the second time in the one-off clash, a whole day was lost after no play was possible also on the opening day.

With the weather not improving since morning at the Hampshire Bowl, the umpires took the call almost four hours and 30 minutes after the scheduled start time of 10.30 am local time (3 pm IST).

"Day four of the #WTC21 Final has been abandoned due to persistent rain," read an ICC update.

The fans who were patiently waiting for the play to start had to leave disappointed. "We thank our fans who turned up and kept the tempo high. See you again, tomorrow," the BCCI added.

Rain is not forecast for the remaining two days of the big final but it is likely to remain overcast as it has been the case so far when play did take place. When it wasn't the rain, bad light stopped play on both day two and day three.

A maximum of 196 overs can be played in the game to force a result. The trophy will be shared if the game is drawn.

The final was nicely poised at stumps on day three with New Zealand reaching 101 for two in response to India's 217 all out. The Black Caps however remain in control of the game despite a late strike from Ishant Sharma close to stumps.

Weather has played havoc with the final and Former India opener Virender Sehwag was among many who questioned ICC's decision to host the final in Southampton. — **PTI**



India's Ajinkya Rahane (left) and Cheteshwar Pujara during Day 4 of the World Test Championship final in Southampton on Monday. — **ICC**

Jamieson relishes Kohli wicket

Southampton, June 21: Rookie New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson, who rattled India with a fifer, on the second day of the World Test Championship final, feels that any batsman could have been dismissed with that inswinger that got rid of rival skipper Virat Kohli. Jamieson got a five-wicket haul as New Zealand dismissed India for 217 on the third day of the WTC final.

Asked if setting up Kohli with outswingers and then bringing one back in like they did in New Zealand is a template

they have said, Jamieson answered in affirmative.

"Oh, I guess yes. May be there is some sort of pattern and this we know talk about huge amount, the one that I was able to get him (Kohli) today certainly seemed back a little bit.

"And that was pretty hard to control as a bowler and pretty harder to manage as a batter no matter who you are. So I don't think it is necessarily just for him (Kohli)," Jamieson said.

According to the 26-year-old lanky speedster, who returned with fine figures

of 5-31, Kohli's dismissal played a key part in how things unfolded on the second day.

"Yeah, obviously he (Kohli) is a massive part of their team and pretty big wicket to get, so to get him pretty early morning, was I guess was nice and pleasing and pretty crucial for how the day followed," added the right-arm pacer.

However he didn't feel that Kohli has any apparent glitches in his technique.

"Oh, not really I think, he is (Kohli) world class batter and those guys

FINAL SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HELD IN UK: KP

Southampton, June 21: Former England captain Kevin Pietersen feels that no "one-off" cricket games of "incredible importance" should ever be held in the UK, which is famous for its fickle weather as one is witnessing during the World Test Championship final.

"It pains me to say it, but a ONE OFF & incredibly important cricket game should NOT be played in the UK," Pietersen tweeted taking a dig at the ICC for opting Hampshire Bowl in Southampton as the venue for a marquee final.

"If it was up to me, Dubai would always host a one off match like this WTC game. neutral venue, fabulous stadium, guaranteed weather, excellent training facilities and a travel hub! Oh, and ICC home is next to the stadium," the former England batsman wrote.

— **PTI**

don't tend to have too many chinks in their armoury. He is obviously a massive part of their line-up and to get him early certainly set things up nicely for us."

Jamieson at times got the ball to wobble and it was satisfying to keep Kohli under control as the Indian captain in his 132-ball innings had a single boundary to his name.

"It is pleasing in terms of for myself trying to wobble the ball and try and keep him in check a little-bit and to get that was pleasing," the lanky pacer signed off. — **PTI**

Lack of practice hurt India: Doull

Southampton, June 21: Former Kiwi pacer Simon Doull feels lack of match practice in the run-up to the ongoing World Test Championship final against New Zealand was hurting India's pace bowling attack.

Unlike New Zealand, who played two Tests against England before the WTC final, India have been devoid of match practice ahead of the marquee clash.

The Virat Kohli-led side's last five-day match was against England in a 2-1 series win at home in March.

"...at times you look and overthink and say 'did they (India) have enough preparation?' I think they did. I am sure in the last 10-12 days they would have bowled enough deliveries to make sure they are ready and raring to go," Doull told Harsha Bhogle in a *cricbuzz* show.

"But its hard to simulate match practice. You can try in these intra-squad games but it just doesn't quite work and that's the key. It is genuinely hard to replace match practice that makes you better and get you ready for those matches."

Doull made the statement in reference to Indian pacers below-par display in New Zealand's first innings score of 101 for 2 in reply to India's 217 all out.

The pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami failed to extract consider-



Jasprit Bumrah

able amount of swing from the favourable Ageas Bowl conditions, unlike their Kiwi counterparts.

Kyle Jamieson (5/31), Neil Wagner (2/40) and Trent Boult (2/47) used the seaming conditions well to bundle out India for a timid total in the rain-affected match.

Doull said New Zealand were definitely benefited by the two games against England ahead of the marquee clash.

"...New Zealand went into their first Test match at Lord's against England, they had the very same preparation that India had coming into this Test match. New Zealand were in Southampton for around 10-11 days, played intra-squad matches, training practices and when they turned at Lord's they looked pretty set and ready to go." — **PTI**

THUNDER & SAINT



In a social media post, Usain Bolt shared the names of his newborn twin sons, Thunder and Saint Leo. — **Twitter**

Olympic briefs

Shot-putter Toor qualifies

Shot-putter Tejinder Singh Toor qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with a new national record at the Indian Grand Prix 4 on a day when the national women's 4x100m relay team and sprinter Dutee Chand also breached the previous best marks in the country. Toor crossed the Olympic Qualification mark with a throw of 21.49m and brpke his own National Record. The Olympic Qualifying effort in this event is 21.10m. The previous record, which was also in Toor's name, stood at 20.92m and was set in 2019. The women's relay team, however, failed to place themselves inside the Olympic qualifying bracket despite the record effort of their own. The quartet of Hima Das, Dutee Chand, S. Dhanalakshmi and Archana Suseendran clocked 43.37 seconds to win the race ahead of India 'B' team (48.02 seconds) and Maldives (50.74) in the three team race.

Trailblazing transgender

Laurel Hubbard hefted 628 pounds (185 kilograms) in two lifts on the way to qualifying in the women's super-heavyweight division for the Tokyo Olympics. That's heavy. But it's nowhere near the figurative weight Hubbard has carried to become the first transgender athlete to compete at an Olympic Games.

Hubbard was among five weightlifters confirmed Monday in New Zealand's team for Tokyo. At 43, she will also be the oldest weightlifter at the games, and will be ranked fourth in the competition on Aug. 2 for women 87 kilograms (192 pounds) and over. Hubbard won a silver medal at the 2017 World Championships and gold in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.



Laurel Hubbard

Local fans limited to 10K

The Tokyo Olympics will allow some local fans to attend when the games open in just over a month, organising committee officials and the IOC said on Monday. Organisers set a limit of 50% of capacity up to a maximum of 10,000 fans for all Olympic venues. The decision was announced after so-called Five Party talks online with local organisers, the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, the Japanese government and the government of metropolitan Tokyo. The decision contradicts the country's top medical adviser, Dr. Shigeru Omi, who recommended last week that the safest way to hold the Olympics would be without fans.

England look to get back on track against Czech

London, June 21: English football manager Gareth Southgate insists England can overcome their growing pains as his young side aim to get their Euro 2020 campaign back on track by winning Group D against the Czech Republic on Tuesday.

England are level on four points with the Czechs and will be guaranteed a first-place finish if they win their last group match.

A victory at Wembley feels essential for England to lift the gloom that descended after they were booed off following Friday's lacklustre 0-0 draw with old rivals Scotland.

With an average age of 25 years and 31 days, England's starting line-up against Scotland was the youngest they had ever fielded in a major tournament.



(From left) England's Harry Kane, Jack Grealish and Harry Maguire during a training session. — **AP**

SCOTLAND ON BRINK OF QUALIFYING

After a 23-year wait to even reach a major tournament, more history beckons for Scotland on Tuesday if they can beat Croatia at Hampden to reach the knockout stage for the first time at Euro.

A hard-earned 0-0 draw against England at

Wembley has restored belief in the Scottish support that had been shaken by a 2-0 defeat to the Czech Republic in their opening match.

Victory against the World Cup finalists should be enough to seal Scotland's place in the last 16.

— **AFP**

Peru pip Colombia, keep hopes alive

Sao Paulo, June 21: Peru beat Colombia 2-1 on Sunday to keep alive their chances of advancing to the knockout stage of Copa America.

Sergio Pena opened the scoring for the Peruvians in the 17th minute. Miguel Borja equalised from the spot in the 53rd but an own goal 11 minutes later by Colombian defender Yerry Mina decided the match at the Olimpico stadium in Goiania.

Peru are in third position in Group B with three points after two matches. Colombia remains with four points in the second spot, but with only two games remaining. Leader Brazil has six points. The top four teams will qualify for the quarterfinals.

"This gives us a lot of hope in what is to come at



Peru's Christian Cueva (left) and Colombia's Wilmar Barrios in action during their Copa America match on Sunday. — **AP**

this Copa America," Peru defender Renato Tapia said. "We are in a good position, but we have to keep rowing to go farther."

Peru lost 4-0 to Brazil in their first game in the tournament, which raised doubts about coach

Ricardo Gareca's team. The 2019 Copa America finalists are also struggling in South American World Cup qualifiers.

VENEZUELA, ECUADOR SHARE SPOILS

Ronald Hernandez scored an injury time equaliser

COPA RESULTS

Peru (Sergio Pena 17', Yerry Mina 64-og)
Colombia (Miguel Borja 53)
Venezuela (Edson Castillo 51, Ronald Hernandez 91)
Ecuador (Ayrton Preciado 39, Gonzalo Plata 71)

to earn minnows Venezuela a share of the spoils in a 2-2 draw with Ecuador on Sunday.

Ecuador twice took the lead through Ayrton Preciado and Gonzalo Plata either side of a powerful headed goal from Venezuela's Edson

EURO RESULTS

Italy (Matteo Pessina 39)
Wales
Switzerland (Harris Seferovic 6, Xherdan Shaqiri 26, 68')
Turkey (Irfan Can Kahveci 62)

to wait to see if they reach the last 16 of Euro 2020 as one of the four best third-placed teams.

Shaqiri's goals came after Haris Seferovic's first-half opener and either side of Irfan Kahveci scoring Turkey's only goal of the tournament. "Over the next few days I can't do anything. We have to wait," Switzerland coach Vladimir Petkovic said.

Turkey boss Senol Gunes said he would not consider standing down despite his team finishing bottom of the group.

— **AFP**