

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

NELLORE | MONDAY | 12 JULY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 31.5°C
Min: 29.7°C
RH: 61%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: clear.
Max/Min
temp. 31/29 °C

WORLD | 5

**China to hit back
at US ban on firms**



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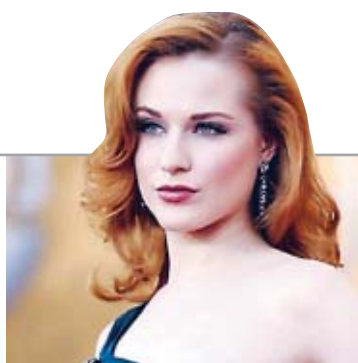
SPORTS | 8

**Messi's Argentina are
Copa champions**



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ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Ashada Shuddha Dwitiya
till 8.17 am
Star: Ashlesha till 3.12 am
(Tuesday)
Variyam: 3.36 pm to 5.15 pm
Durmuhurtam: 12.47 pm to
1.39 pm; 3.23 pm to 4.14 pm
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
HJRI CALENDAR
Zilhaj 1,1442 AH
PRAYERS
(SHAHI MASJID)
Fajar: 4.28 am
Zohar: 12.15 pm
Asar: 4.49 pm
Maghrib: 6.45 pm
Isha: 8.02 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.48 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 7.36 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 9.29 PM

COUNTER POINT



**Now only yogis and
sadhvis will be eligible
to contest polls!**

SHORT TAKES

Missile defence for Kabul airport

Kabul: Afghan authorities said on Sunday they have installed an anti-missile system at Kabul airport to counter incoming rockets, as the Taliban pressed on with a blistering offensive across the country. "The newly installed air defence system has been operational in Kabul since 2:00 am Sunday," the interior ministry said in a statement.

■ Full report on Page 5

I-T portal still facing glitches

New Delhi: A month after its launch and two weeks after the FM reviewed its functioning, technical glitches continue to mar the functioning of the new income tax portal as certain key utilities like e-proceedings and digital signature certificate are not yet functional, say chartered accountants.

RSS changes its BJP pointsman

New Delhi: The RSS, it was learnt, has decided to replace its pointsman for the BJP, with Arun Kumar to succeed Dr Krishna Gopal for the post. The decision, sources said, was taken by the RSS top brass at the ongoing meeting at Chitrakoot.

■ Full report on Page 4

Super Nova 20



Novak Djokovic poses with the Wimbledon trophy after beating Matteo Berrettini of Italy 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 in the men's singles final for a record-equaling 20th Grand Slam and sixth Wimbledon title at the All England Club in London on Sunday. The world number one is now level on 20 Grand Slams with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. Margaret Court leads the Grand Slam titles list with 24 followed by Serena Williams (23) and Steffi Graf (22). — PTI

■ Report on Pg 8

State orders CID probe into siphoning ₹242 crore funds

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

The AP government has ordered a CID probe into the siphoning off of public funds by network companies in relation to the Siemens Project.

The order was issued by G Jayalakshmi, principal secretary to government, on Sunday. The order said it has been brought to the notice of the government that the forensic audit ordered by the AP State Skill Development Corporation has been completed and a report

● **THE FUNDS** were diverted with the help of various shell companies by Designtech and Siemens, the order stated and that they had used only government's contribution of ₹370 cr

has been submitted by the corporation to the government on the Siemens Project. "It concluded that M/s Designtech and M/s Siemens reportedly diverted funds of ₹241,78,61,508 through various shell companies," the order said.

The report also revealed that M/s. Designtech and M/s. Siemens utilized only the government contribution of ₹370.78 crore (10 per cent), which was in contrast to the original terms of the scheme.

It has also been brought to the notice of the state government by central government agencies that a network of companies siphoned off funds from APSSDC through a bogus invoicing scheme pertaining to the Siemens Project.

■ Page 2: APSSDC submits report to government

YSRC MLA dodges TS cops to reach Pulichintala project

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

Telangana state police on Sunday stopped Jaggayyapet YSRC MLA Sami-neni Udayabhanu from going to Pulichintala dam to protest against the TS government using water in the project to generate hydroelectric power.

However, the MLA crossed River Krishna from Muktyala in a boat and reached Madipadu from where he successfully reached the multipurpose Pulichintala project site. He condemned the Telangana government for violating KRMB directions and using water for power generation illegally. Udayabhanu vented ire at being stopped by Telangana police. He

said that because of Telangana state government's trespass, there was a heavy wastage of water and this was not an ideal situation before the start of the Kharif season. The chief whip stated that water should be used as per the Bachawat Tribunal recommendations and rules framed in AP Reorganisation Act and KRMB. He said that the Pulichintala irrigation project was built as part of Jalayagnam when Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy was the chief minister. He slammed TS ministers like Prashant Reddy and Srinivas Goud for making inappropriate and unsavoury remarks against YSR.

■ Page 2: MLA deplores 1 TMC ft water wasted

AF CONSULATE RUN BY LOCAL STAFF, SAYS INDIA

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

With the Taliban trying to get control over parts of Afghanistan following the withdrawal of American troops from the war-torn country, India has quietly evacuated over 50 of its diplomatic staff and security personnel from its consulate in Kandahar. The consulate is, however, functional with the help of local staff.

A special aircraft of the Indian Air Force was sent to bring back the Indian diplomats, other staff members, including ITBP security personnel, without entering into Pakistan air space. The Indian embassy in Kabul as of now remains fully functional and the diplomats have not been removed from there. However, the IAF is on a standby to make sudden evacuation trips to Kabul

VIRGIN | FLIGHT

Showman bizman is first to fly in his own spaceship

Branson beats Bezos to space

Truth or Consequences (US), July 11: Swashbuckling entrepreneur Richard Branson hurtled into space aboard his own winged rocket ship Sunday in his boldest adventure yet, beating out fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos.

The nearly 71-year-old Branson and five crewmates from his Virgin Galactic space tourism company reached an altitude of about 88 km (53 miles) over the New Mexico desert enough to experience three to four minutes of weightlessness and see the curvature of the Earth and then safely glided back home to a runway landing.



Billionaire Richard Branson and his crew float in their spaceship as they experience the loss of gravity on the edge of earth's atmosphere at an altitude of 85.9 km.

"Seventeen years of hard work to get us this far," a jubilant Branson said as he congratulated his team on

the trip back. Branson became the first person to blast off in his own spaceship, beating

Bezos by nine days. With about 500 people watching, including Branson's wife, children and grandchildren, a twin-fuselage aircraft with his space plane attached underneath took off in the first stage of the flight.

The space plane then detached from the mother ship at an altitude of about 13 km (8.5 miles) and fired its engine, reaching the edge of space. The entire flight up and back aboard the sleek white ship, named Unity, took just under 15 minutes.

■ Page 5: Sirisha is 3rd Indian woman to fly to space

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References: 1. Bholte R et al 2020. J Diabetes Metab 11:846-2. As per FSSAI advertisement and claim regulation 2018 3. Maggini S et al. Nutrients. 2018;10(10):1631
For any questions about the use of the product, review the label on the product, contact the product manufacturer, and/or consult a physician.

SHORT TAKES

JAGAN HAILS SIRISHA'S ACHIEVEMENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has said that its a proud moment for the State as the Guntur born Bandla Sirisha flying on Virgin Galactic spaceflight, and wished her good luck in the space mission.

The trajectory of the 34 year aeronautical engineer has been amazing and reached great heights and Sirisha, the second Indian born woman in Space, would propel to higher orbits by the successful mission of Unity 22, the CM said.

POLAVARAM DEPLACED TO LAUNCH STIR

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JULY 11

The families affected by the mega Polavaram Irrigation Project have decided to launch agitations in multiple ways to achieve their demands and get justice. The families say they are in dire straits and have not been given fair compensation.

The government has not fulfilled the promises made to them via the Rehabilitation, Relief and Resettlement Packages. Worse, surveys were conducted in improper ways to list the number of the tribal people affected by the project and those among them who have completed age 18 for the right to take the benefits.

Some of the villagers have vacated their homes due to submergence threat. "We made a mistake by vacating our villages. Now, we are being shown in a bad light. We want to come back to our villages and decide whether to live or die," said a villager.

APSSDC SUBMITS REPORT TO GOVERNMENT

From page 1

Accordingly, APSSDC has submitted a report to the government and requested it to initiate further investigation into the matter through appropriate state government agencies.

The government, after a careful examination of the findings of the forensic audit report and the request of the managing director of APSSDC, decided to entrust the case to the Crime Investigation Department (CID) of Andhra Pradesh for a detailed investigation into the irregularities.

Accordingly, the additional director general of police, CID, called for further investigations into the matter, to do the needful in accordance with law, and submit a report to the government immediately.

SANSKRIT NO THREAT TO TELUGU, SAYS LAKSHMI

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

Andhra Pradesh Telugu Sanskrit Academy Chairperson Lakshmi said that there is no wrong in expansion of Telugu Academy into Telugu Sanskrit Academy as it would be helpful for the protection of ancient Sanskrit language. The Andhra Pradesh government expanded the Telugu Academy into Telugu Sanskrit Academy which received severe criticism from opposition parties and organisations terming the act would damage Telugu language development in Andhra Pradesh.

Ms Lakshmi Parvathi said that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy decided to develop the ancient Sanskrit language which is on the verge of disappearance and this is a good decision. She opined that no damage would be done to the Telugu language with the expansion of the Academy and refuted allegations of political parties and other organisations. She appealed to political leaders, parties and organisations to note that the government is arduously working for the development of the Telugu language and now embarking on protection and development of Sanskrit language.

● **AP TELUGU** Sanskrit Academy Chairperson said that CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy decided to develop the ancient Sanskrit language which is on the verge of disappearance and this is a good decision.



President of the Afghanistan Students Association Abeerullah Aabede along with students from Afghanistan studying at Andhra University during a religious event in Visakhapatnam.

Taliban return may hit studies, fear students

Studying abroad improved Afghan's economy, says ASA prez

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 11

Many students from Afghanistan are afraid that with total withdrawal of US forces after September this year, Taliban will enforce its diktats, making Afghan students in various countries, including India, the worst sufferers.

The issue is worrying Afghan students, including women, studying in colleges of Visakhapatnam. They fear theirs would be their last batch enrolled in various courses. From next year onwards, Afghan students have to enroll for studies within their own country, Afghanistan Students' Association (ASA) president Abeerullah Aabede told *Deccan Chronicle* on

Sunday.

He confessed to witnessing violence unleashed by Taliban in his childhood. He feared it would resume again, upsetting Afghan economy and education.

"Though they can never take over full power, they will unleash violence, which will have strong influence on youth in rural areas, where education is low," Abeerullah stated, pointing out that literacy percentage in Afghanistan is below 50 and less than 20 among women.

He pointed out that during last 20 years, many youth have taken advantage of studying abroad. This enabled them to serve Afghan government in various capacities and contribute to their country's progress. In the

process, Afghanistan's economy too has improved.

"We can only hope that Taliban will have the right sense and continue allowing Afghan students study abroad, so that our country could benefit in turn," the ASA president said.

But girl students, who have faced many strictures in the past, fear violence will be back. Girls will face many restrictions, including studying abroad.

"I am sure Taliban have not changed their mindset. They will bring back what has been forgotten by us," said Spogmay, doing her first year MBA in the campus college of Andhra University.

She told this correspondent that Taliban would close down small-scale

business units operated by women and restrict them to their homes. Girls cannot hope to study abroad. They will be forced to wear traditional attire as prescribed by Taliban.

"We are ready to wear burqas and follow their diktat, provided they allow us to continue education abroad and let women run their independent businesses in Afghanistan," Spogmay maintained.

There are about 200 Afghanistan students each in Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad. Some of them are studying in Guntur and Vijayawada. Around 1,000 Afghans have submitted their applications to Andhra University for doing various courses during the current academic year.



Telangana Police stopping Government whip and MLA Samineni Udayabhanu at the border near Buggamadharam, who was trying to visit Pulichintala Project on Sunday.

— DC

Samineni deplores that 1 TMC ft water is wasted

From page 1

Jaggayyapet MLA Samineni Udayabhanu urged Telangana state Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to rethink about the illegal draws from the Krishna projects and consider an amicable solution.

He deplored that on Saturday one TMC of water was wasted as it was released into the sea. He stated that a TMC of water can help cultivate

● **HE STATED** that a TMC of water can help cultivate 10,000 acres of farmland and lamented that 7.5 TMC water has been wasted due to power generation by TS which can be used to fulfill irrigation water requirements

10,000 acres of farmland and lamented that 7.5 TMC water has been wasted due to power generation by Telangana govern-

ment which can be used to fulfill irrigation water requirements of 75,000 acres.

The legislator recalled that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had reiterated that the two states should be on friendly terms and Minister K.T. Rama Rao should introspect about his recent statements on the issue. He said they would fight it out and ensure that Andhra Pradesh gets justice.

Registrations for EAPCET exam likely to cross 3L

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JULY 11

It is anticipated that a large number of inter students will write the AP EAPCET examination this year due to several factors.

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation prevailing, the state government has promoted more than 5.2 lakh students. Hence, the number of students appearing for the exam is likely to be more than usual.

Most students who opted for engineering courses and belong to rural background can avail-fees-reimbursement scheme. AP EAPCET-2021 convener Ravindra said 2.77 lakh students had appeared for the examination last year and more than one lakh students have registered for AP EAPCET-2021 so far.

This year, the figure is likely to cross 3 lakhs. Some of the syllabus has been reduced. Many seats in private engineering colleges lay vacant due to non-joining of the students for the past three years.

However, last year, 70 per cent of the seats were filled in the first phase.

It is expected that, this

year, most of the engineering colleges can fill up their seats with the appearance of a large number of students.

AP EAPCET has already loaded the syllabus for the exams on its website. Nearly 25 sub-topics in mathematics have been deleted and the entire Binomial Theorem chapter too was deleted.

Some 25 sub-topics including Doppler effect and its two situations and Reflection of Light by Spherical Mirrors, the Mirror Equation, Scattering of Light, the reddish appearance of the Sun at sunrise and sunset, and the blue colour of the sky were deleted from Physics texts.

Four chapters like General Principles of Metallurgy, Polymers, Chemistry in Everyday Life and organic compounds containing Nitrogen were also deleted. Also, 30 sub-topics in various chapters in Chemistry texts were deleted.

The lecturers suggested to students that if they prepared for the syllabus prescribed by AP EAPCET, they can easily secure good ranks and get the seats in reputed engineering colleges for subjects of their choice.

Jagan, KCR cheating AP, TS people: Nani

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

Telugu Desam Vijayawada MP Kesineni Srinivas alias Nani has alleged that Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Chief Ministers Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and K. Chandrashekar Rao are close friends but staging a "drama of differences" over sharing Krishna waters.

Inaugurating the Telugu Desam Party office in Division 19 of Vijayawada on Sunday along with Vijayawada East MLA Gadde Rammoohan of TD, Nani accused Jagan, Y. S. Sharmila and KCR of playing dramas to serve their own political interests. In the process, they are deceiving people of both Telangana and AP states.

The MP recalled that

during Vijayawada Municipal Corporation elections, he had cautioned people about not voting YSRC government, as it would increase property taxes. But they did not listen to his words then. These very people will now be forced to sell their assets under the impact of new property tax policy introduced by Jagan Mohan Reddy g

overnment. Nani charged that the state government has placed an unbearable burden on people of the state in the name of welfare schemes. He protested that TD leaders, who had been fighting for people's welfare, have been placed under house arrest.

MLA Rammoohan criticised YSRC government for belying hopes of unemployed youth by failing to carrying out any recruitment for govt jobs.

Each mandal to have two Urban Health Centres: HM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharita on Sunday said that the YSR Congress government is giving priority to public health, which is evidenced by the revolutionary changes that are being brought in the health sector.

She was speaking after laying a foundation stone for Dr YSR Urban Health Centre at Gorantla in Guntur on Sunday in the presence of Guntur Mayor Kavati Siva Naga Manohar Naidu and GMC commissioner Challa Anuradha.

Sucharita said that they were establishing two health centres in each mandal in order to strengthen the sector and ensure quality medical services to the poor. Dr YSR Urban Health Centres that are coming across the state are part of

● **SUCHARITHA SAID** that the local secretariat staff and health centre ANMs would work together to tackle epidemics like Covid-19 and spread awareness among the public.

● **CM HAS** been paying attention to welfare programmes and public health despite the financial crisis, says Mayor.

this endeavour, she said, adding that Guntur would have 16 such centres. She said the government has allocated ₹80 lakh for each centre and has also sanctioned funds for renovation and repairs of the existing health centres in the city.

She said that the local secretariat staff and health centre ANMs would work together to tackle epidemics like Covid-19 and spread

ALLA SAYS HE IS NOT ASSOCIATED WITH RAMKY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

YSR Congress MLA of Mangalagiri Alla Ramakrishna Reddy has refuted corruption allegations levelled against him by Telugu Desam and challenged the Opposition to prove the charges.

The MLA said he was not associated with the Ramky Group now and the IT raids on it alone did not mean his involvement in the anomalies there.

IT was four days ago that IT sleuths held a raid on the group owned by the YSRC Rajya Sabha MP Alla Ayodhya Rami Reddy, a close relative of MLA Ramakrishna. IT officials noticed an artificially created loss of ₹1,200 crore to the company, as also some shady transactions.

Addressing a press meet on Sunday at Mangalagiri, the MLA said that as he was an employee in the Ramky group in 2006, he got 2,000 of its shares under employee quota and later took 10,000 more shares of the company by way of bonuses. He said the company went in for a public issue.

The MLA challenged TD leaders to show any transaction by him in the Ramky group. He stressed he was not involved in any corrupt activities in his political career. TD leaders should comment only after they collected the facts with proof.

The MLA admitted that the IT officials conducted raids on his house too but "did not find any illegalities".

He said the IT officials found him keeping ₹4 lakh, which was permissible under IT limits. Alla said the TD cannot win the Mangalagiri seat by targeting him. After winning as MLA for the second consecutive time, more responsibility lay on his shoulders. TD leaders involved in land grabbing, settlements and call money cases are levelling baseless allegations against him, he said.

● **THE MLA** challenged TD leaders to show any transaction by him in the Ramky group. TD leaders should comment only after they collected the facts with proof, he said.

awareness among the public.

The Minister said that the state government was taking the education sector to newer levels.

Manohar Naidu said that there are already 13 health centres in Guntur and each was provided ₹10 lakh for undertaking repair works. He said that the tender process has been completed. He said that sites have been identified for the new centres in Guntur East, West and Prathipadu constituencies. The 10-bedded centres will have infrastructure facilities to conduct 38 types of blood tests. The Mayor stated that Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has been paying attention to welfare programmes and public health despite the financial crisis.

Anuradha and others also addressed the gathering.

HISTORIC FINDINGS Sripravata was a centre of learning for Saivites, Lingayats, Siddhas

Srisailam copper plates takes one back in time

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JULY 11

P. Chenna Reddy, professor of epigraphy and dean at Telugu University campus in Srisailam, said the copper plates recently unearthed at Srisailam during the renovation of Ganta Matham, revealed the historic patronage it received from Reddi Kings, Chalukya and even

Kurnool Nawab.

Reddy, who was one of the key persons in deciphering the copper plates, said there were 11 Mathas that flourished in Srisailam between 8th century and 19th century. He said one of the 53 copper plates discovered belonged to Reddi kings as it was issued by King Virabhadra Reddi, son of Alla Reddi of Rajamahendravaram

● **THE COPPER** plate records were the gift of the village Vemavaram after renaming it as Alada Reddi Vemavaram to Lord Mallikarjuna of Sripravata by the king, for the merit of his father Allada Reddi, on the occasion of lunar eclipse, Reddy says.

Reddi Kings. It is written in Sanskrit language and Telugu characters, dated Saka 1358 (Vasu-Bana-Viswa) Anala, Vaisakha, su.15 which is equivalent to 1436 A.D., April 30,

Monday. He said the copper plate records were the gift of the village Vemavaram after renaming it as Alada Reddi Vemavaram to Lord Mallikarjuna of

Sripravata by the king, for the merit of his father Allada Reddi, on the occasion of lunar eclipse. The record was composed by Kommanamatya and engraved by Pinanumka, son of Goragapundi Numa. The record ends with the signature of Sri M a r k a n d e s h w a r a Vemareddy.

He said Srisailam, then known as Sripravata, was

a centre of great learning for different sects of Shiva which includes Saivites, Lingayats and Siddhas. The mathams played an important role in the social and religious life of Andhras during medieval times. Matham is an educational institution dedicated to higher learning and caters to the intellectual and spiritual needs of society.

SHORT TAKES

DESAM: REMOVE NUTHALAPATI FROM APPSC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 11

Former minister and TD Vice President Gollapalli Surya Rao on Sunday urged Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan to take steps for the removal of the recently appointed Sony Wood Nuthalapati as the member of the prestigious constitutional institution of the AP Public Service Commission (APPSC). Surya Rao wrote a letter to the Governor, saying that Sony Wood Nuthalapati would deserve the APPSC post as he has been igniting hatred between communities and also facing an inquiry for exploiting children in his NASA organisation. The APPSC is a constitutional body and it is unfortunate that people with questionable track records like Sony Wood Nuthalapati are appointed as members to such an august body.

COUNTERFEIT SEEDS HIT PAPAYA FARMERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA JULY 10

Counterfeit papaya seeds have flooded the market and hit farmers hard this year. Counterfeiting is done especially in Taiwanese, Gujarat and Surat variety of papaya seeds.

Farmers are having difficulty identifying counterfeit seeds from original ones. They come to know of the folly only some six months after the sowing. Farmers are being deceived on a large scale. In 2019, the Gujarat variety of seeds affected papaya cultivation in this region.

Farmers were in trouble last year due to corona. This year, again, the counterfeit seed crisis has begun.

There is no effective intervention from the government to help farmers or nail such rackets. Kadapa district is famous for horticultural crops, mainly in Railwaykoduru constituency. Papaya is mostly grown there. The cultivation has increased this year due to rainfall at the end of last year.

Papaya is currently grown on over 6,500 acres. Traders, noticing the interest among farmers, are selling the seeds left over from last year, mixed with the seeds that came in this year.

Seeds, especially from Taiwan, are imported by agencies in Pune and then supplied to states. They are being supplied to Telugu states via a nodal point in Hyderabad. These seeds have limited shelf life.

Horticulturists say if the seeds are sown after the expiry date, they will turn into counterfeit seeds.

Traders are engaged in this mischievous act as these seeds fetch them high profits. A farmer from Railwaykoduru mandal, Mysurevaripalle, said traders were giving the seeds from Gujarat, Surat and Taiwan under different names. Plant nurseries are unable to detect counterfeit seeds.

The farmer said he had cultivated eight acres last year and lost ₹10 lakh due to this menace. He said some seed traders were mixing the old stocks with new ones and selling.

Another normal day at the beach



Beach road jam-packed with the huge crowd and vehicular traffic in Visakhapatnam on Sunday evening. — K. MURALIKRISHNA

Vizag civic body begins survey of slum-dwellers

SMC staff on Sunday began surveying 793 slums in the city

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 11

Nearly 5,000 personnel of Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) began a two-day survey of 793 slums within the corporation limits on Sunday.

“We have launched the survey on Sunday since most people stay at home on the day. We are collecting every detail of slum dwellers, their requirements, infrastructure facilities, health, and employment status of eligible youngsters from every slum,” GVMC commissioner G. Srijana said. She visited Vinayakanagar, Ambedkar Colony and other areas in 24th and 34th wards in zones three and four of the corporation to check progress of the survey.

Prior to 2005, there had



GVMC commissioner G. Srijana interacts with survey team and slum dwellers in Visakhapatnam on Sunday —DC

been 450 slums in the Port City. With merger of Bheemili, Gajuwaka and Anakapalli into Visakhapatnam, their number has reached 793. “Slums had been completely neglected as there was no elected body for the corporation in the last decade. Now, the state government and

council have decided to improve slums with provision of all basic facilities. We will make Vizag a slum-free city soon,” GVMC mayor G. H. Venkata Kumari told *Deccan Chronicle*. Sources within the corporation disclosed that there are 426 notified slums and 367 non-noti-

fied ones in the Greater Visakhapatnam area. It is estimated that there are up to 20,000 households and a population of up to one lakh living in them.

“Slum dwellers occupy both private and government lands. We can have a clear picture only after completing the survey. We are conducting this survey in a transparent manner,” the mayor pointed out.

Urban Community Development (UCD) wing of GVMC is nodal agency for the survey. Teams comprising five members each are visiting every slum, UCD project director Y. Srinivasa Rao stated.

“We will prepare a detailed report on the slums based on survey inputs and place it before Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy,” mayor Venkata Kumari added.

Vijaya Rao takes charge as Nellore SP

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 11

A 2010 IPS officer Ch. Vijaya Rao took charge as Superintendent of Police, SPSR Nellore district at the District Police Officer on Sunday.

Speaking to the media on the occasion, he said he would pay special attention to maintain the law and order through teamwork and his priorities include crime prevention, crime detection, the safety of women, aged people and children, friendly policing and police welfare.

The new police chief will also focus on black spots on the highways to contain road accidents in

addition to streamlining the traffic movement.

Vijaya Rao said they will keep a close watch on habitual offenders and antisocial elements apart from holding crime meetings to reduce the pendency of cases.

He said he would resume the Spandana programme from Monday, July 12 following the Covid-19 protocol to resolve the issues affecting the public.

Vijaya Rao advised people to wear masks without fail while adding that they are going to conduct a drive to book cases against those not wearing masks and fine them through e-challan.

The SP also assured

measures to prevent illegal transportation of sand, liquor, gutka and ganja in association with Special Enforcement Bureau.

He said he worked in Guntur rural and urban, police battalion and the railways before coming to Nellore.

Additional SP Ms P. Venkata Rathnam, additional SP (SEB) Ms Srilakshmi, SB DSP N. Kota Reddy, Nellore town DSP J. Srinivasa Reddy and Rural DSP Haranath Reddy were present among others.

Later, the SP met Industries and IT Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy at the latter's residence in Nellore.

Vizag-Sec'bad rail route made smarter for trains

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

The South Central Railway has commissioned a major yard modification along with an electronic interlocking system in the Vijayawada yard to ease train movements, particularly for those operating between Secunderabad and Visakhapatnam.

A new bulb cabin with electronic interlocking (EI) has been commissioned with 32 routes for hassle-free train operations.

Vijayawada Junction is one of the major junction stations of Indian Railways, handling train movements on all four directions. Previously, there used to be a train detention whenever there

was simultaneous movement of trains in both directions on the Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam route.

The detention of these trains used to have a cascading effect on the movement of other trains as well.

Railway officials have stated that in order to overcome these problems and remove lay-out-related detentions, South Central Railways undertook the important yard modification of the Vijayawada Yard, particularly involving the Northern section.

As part of it, a new cabin has been set-up, another has been shifted and two existing cabins modified. A new bulb cabin with electronic interlocking (EI) has been

commissioned with 32 routes.

The new west block hut (NWBH) cabin has been shifted and commissioned with 20 routes to provide connectivity with the newly added line of 1.5km. Two existing cabins, the bulb cabin and the D cabin have been altered to take into account the new yard modifications.

The railway officials said that as a result of these major yard modifications at this important junction station, it will avoid surface crossings and allow simultaneous train movements, particularly for trains on the Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam and vice versa without detentions.

It would further enhance the sectional capacity.

27 held for sale of darshan tickets in black in Tirumala

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JULY 11

Continuing the drive against the black-marketing of Srivari darshan tickets, the Tirumala police arrested 27 offenders who were involved in illegal sales of VIP break darshan and special entry darshan tickets by using fake recommendation letters and also for deceiving devotees with fake darshan tickets.

Disclosing the details to media persons at Tirumala on Sunday, ASP D. Muniramaiah said most of those arrested during the last couple of months were auto drivers and jeep drivers from Tirupati. “For some time now, these culprits have been targeting devotees who do not have tickets for the darshan

of Lord Venkateshwara at Tirumala temple. They cheated them with out-dated tickets, post-dated tickets and fake tickets. In addition, they were also deceiving devotees by selling VIP break darshan tickets at higher prices. They obtain these tickets on fake reference letters of some of the people's representatives from both the Telugu states”, the ASP said.

In the last two months, the Tirumala II Town police booked eight such cases and two similar cases were registered at the I Town police station. Following complaints, the Tirumala police formed special teams to nab the culprits and kept a watch on auto drivers and jeep drivers in Tirupati.

The ASP said in a case reg-

istered at the I Town PS, a man named Ananda Vardhan from Hyderabad, who was wearing an Army T-shirt, introduced himself as an Army officer to a Tirumala-bound devotee group. The tout took money from devotees, promising that he would arrange darshan tickets for them.

However, he gave them fake tickets and they were eventually denied darshan by the TTD staff. Upon receiving a complaint from the devotees, the police arrested him and opened a suspect sheet on him.

“We won't hesitate to open a PD Act against repeated offenders,” Muniramaiah said, while appealing to the devotees not to fall prey to such middlemen.

2,665 FRESH CORONAVIRUS INFECTIONS IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

The Covid recoveries were high compared to new infections in AP on Sunday. There were registration of 2,665 fresh Coronavirus infections and discharge of 3,231 Covid-patients after recovery, the state health bulletin for the day said.

As many as 91,677 samples were tested in the past 24 hours, in which 2,665 persons were found infected from Covid-19 while 16 such deaths were registered. This increased the cumulative corona deaths in the state so far to 13,002. A total of 2,29,86,288 samples were tested for Corona in 13 districts till date. The highest number of four fresh Covid19 deaths were registered in East Godavari, followed by Chittoor and Guntur districts with three each deaths. There were two deaths in Srikakulam district. One death each was registered in Krishna, Nellore, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam districts. The single day highest fresh corona infections of 529 were registered in East Godavari district followed by 353 infections in Chittoor district, 293 in West Godavari, 285 in Prakasam, 281 in Krishna, 223 in Guntur, 195 in Nellore, 161 in Kadapa, 112 in Visakhapatnam, 106 in Anantapur, 56 in Srikakulam, 38 in Vizianagaram and 33 in Kurnool district.

AP Legislative Council chairman backs VSP stir

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 11

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Council pro-tem chairman Vithapu Balasubrahmanyam on Sunday visited trade union leaders agitating against privatisation of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP) at Gandhi Statue near RTC Complex in Visakhapatnam.

He assured union leaders that the State Legislative Council fully supported their agitation. East and West Godavari teachers' constituency MLC Shaik Sabjee was present at the campsite of strike.

The council chairman appreciated VSP trade union leaders for their determination in continuing their agitation for more than 100 days despite the Covid-19 pandemic.

Balasubrahmanyam accused BJP leaders of having no respect for public sector enterprises, working class and general people. He said the steel plant has been providing funds to central and state governments in form of taxes and dividends. On the other hand, private and corporate companies have no respect for governments and have a track record of not paying taxes.

The council chairman pointed out that it was VSP that supplied tonnes of medical oxygen to patients admitted in hospitals and Covid care centres during the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic in the country.

“If we cannot protect the steel plant, we cannot save any other industry from privatisation,” Balasubrahmanyam warned

Sathya Sai Guntur unit aids Covid-hit

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

The Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation, Guntur district is actively participating in rendering needy service to people during the Corona crisis. Guntur District president K. Narayana Rao said that their organisation with the cooperation of devotees was rendering service to the needy in which Youth, Women, young women, Sevalad and spiritual wings were actively participating. He said that their organi-

sation is one of the first to launch service at a time when Covid-19 started disrupting the normal human life beyond the reach of human intelligence and pushing the public into a situation where they are not even able to arrange basic necessities of life along with food for themselves.

Mr Narayana said that Sri Sathya Sai Seva Organisation under Prana vayuvu Service is providing oxygen concentrators, distributing Medicines and Community kitchens were set up across Guntur.

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SHORT TAKES

U.P. CM TERMS
RISING POPULATION
HURDLE TO GROWTH

Lucknow, July 11: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday unveiled a policy aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh and reducing maternal and infant deaths in a time-bound manner as he termed rising population a “hurdle in development”.

The Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030, unveiled on the occasion of World Population Day, also aims at bringing down the gross fertility rate among women to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030.

A few days ago, a draft bill on population control was put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till July 19. It says people having more than two children in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy.

It also seeks to prohibit promotions in government jobs for such people, while offering incentives to those limiting their children to two.

Unveiling the population policy on Sunday, Adityanath said, “Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about increasing population being a hurdle in development. Discussions on it have been going on for the four decades.”

AMIT MITRA LIKELY
TO STEP DOWN AS
WB FINANCE MIN.

Kolkata, July 11: Noted economist and senior TMC leader Amit Mitra is likely to step down as the West Bengal finance minister and even retire from active politics due to ill health, party sources said on Sunday.

Mitra, 73, who has been the state finance minister since 2011 when the TMC came to power after ending the 34-year-long rule of the Left Front, had refrained from contesting this year's Assembly elections.

“Amit Da will not continue as the state finance minister as he will be completing six months in the post without being elected on November 4. He has already informed the party leadership that he doesn't want to continue in politics and administration due to ill health.

“But, due to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's insistence, Mitra had taken charge as the finance minister of the state after the party returned to power for the third time in May this year,” a senior TMC leader said on condition of anonymity.

After Mitra steps down, the Chief Minister will keep the ministry with her for some time before appointing the next finance minister, another TMC leader said, confirming the development.

Mitra was a two-time MLA from Khardah constituency in North 24 Parganas since 2011.

KERALA BATTLES
RISING COVID,
ZIKA OUTBREAKS

Thiruvananthapuram, July 11: Rising Covid-19 cases in Kerala, coupled with the recent outbreak of the Zika virus, is causing concern to the health authorities here as the southern state battles to bring down the fresh infections.

After winning accolades for its “Kerala model” of combating the contagion about a year ago, the state is now seeing daily fresh cases between 12,000 to 15,000 with no end in sight to the ‘prolonged surge’, as some experts put it.

The state had reported 14,087 fresh Covid infections on Saturday and 109 deaths taking the total caseload to 30,39,029 and toll to 14,380. The active cases touched 1,13,115.

Health minister Veena George had recently said the virus numbers spiked due to certain unlock measures and that they were expected to go down.

While on June 1 this year, Kerala reported 19,760 positive cases, there was a slight decline for a week with 9,313 new cases being recorded on June 7.

However, two days later it again shot up to 16,204. For over a month, the state has been reporting cases between 11,000 to 13,000 on a daily basis.

Incidentally, India's first Covid-19 case emerged from the state in January 2020 when a third year medical student from Wuhan, the epicentre of the virus in China, tested positive. Two other Wuhan returnees from the state had also tested positive and all the three had subsequently recovered.

NIA conducts multiple raids
in Kashmir, 6 persons held

Arrests made in connection with ‘jihadi terrorism’ case; Islamic seminary head held

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday conducted raids at multiple locations across Kashmir Valley and arrested six persons including head of an Islamic seminary in connection with a ‘jihadi terrorism’ case.

The agency said that the case was registered by it on June 29 this year under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967 in connection with the “conspiracy of the ISIS (Islamic State) to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth in the country to wage violent jihad against the Indian state.”

This comes a day after the J&K government sacked its eleven employees including two sons of Hizbul-Mujahideen chief Muhammad Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahuddin on charges of being involved in anti-India activities. The Hizb chief's sons were fired based on the investigations done by the NIA in an alleged terror funding case, the government had said.

The NIA sources said that its teams assisted by

Three suspected terrorists
from B'desh held in KolkataRAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, JULY 11

Three suspected Jamaatul Mujahideen (JMB) operatives were arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Kolkata Police from the south western parts of the city in a secret operation early on Sunday.

The rare catch of the JMB operatives from the city has prompted the central and state security agencies to investigate the possibility of a sleeper cell formation by the banned terror outfit. The accused are Nazim Rahaman, Sheikh Sabir

and Rabiul Islam.

All of them are from Bangladesh and belong to JMB functionary Master Zia's camp, the STF learnt.

Their job was to raise funds and recruit young members for a module of the JMB quietly, according to preliminary investigation.

Originally hailing from Gopalganj in the neighbouring country, they allegedly forged documents and entered West Bengal through the India-Bangladesh border, sources revealed.

Disguised as hawkers selling fruits and mosqui-

to nets, they started living over the last two months at a rented house in Haridevpur using it as their shelter.

While taking the house on rent, Nazim, who was the leader among the three, posed as Joyram Byapari to avoid suspicion.

He earlier served in jail in Bangladesh where he is believed to have met another JMB functionary, Al Ameen, whose contact number among others was found in a diary. Sabir, who was active in social networking, used the medium for radicalisation.

tions 17, 18, 18B, 38, 39 and 40 of UA(P) Act 1967.

“In order to execute its nefarious plan, an organised campaign has been launched over the cyber space which is supplemented by on ground (militant) financing activities,” it said.

The statement read, “ISIS operating from various conflict zones along with ISIS cadres in India, by assuming pseudo-online identities, have created a network wherein ISIS related propaganda material is disseminated for radicalising and recruiting members to the fold of ISIS.”

It added, “In this connection an India-centric online propaganda magazine ‘the Voice of Hind’ (VOH) is published on monthly basis with an aim to incite and radicalise impressionable youth by projecting a skewed narrative of imagined injustices in India to arouse a feeling of alienation and communal hatred.”

The NIA claimed that the searches led to recovery of documents and digital devices such as mobile phones, tablets, laptop, hard disks and T-Shirts having ISIS logo.”



Uttar Pradesh ATS personnel outside the house from where two accused allegedly linked with Al Qaeda were arrested in Dubagga area on Sunday. — PTI

2 ultras planning
to use bombs held

Lucknow, July 11: Two terrorists of the Al-Qaeda-supported Ansar Ghazwatul Hind were arrested from the outskirts of Lucknow on Sunday and they were planning explosions, including using “human bombs”, at several places in Uttar Pradesh, a senior official said.

Minhaz Ahmed and Maseeruddin were apprehended by the state police's Anti-Terrorist Squad (ATS) and a huge amount of explosive was also seized from their houses here. Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar told reporters.

They were planning to “unleash terror activities before August 15 (Independence Day) in different cities of the state”, including

Lucknow, Kumar said. “The ATS has arrested two active members belonging to Al-Qaeda-supported ‘Ansar Ghazwatul Hind’. Minhaz Ahmed, a resident of Lucknow's Dubagga area, and Maseeruddin, a resident of Lucknow's Madaon area, have been arrested. Explosive material has been recovered from them,” he said.

Ahmed and Maseeruddin, on the instructions of Umar Halmandi, the head of the Uttar Pradesh module of the Al-Qaeda, along with their associates were planning to “unleash terror activities before August 15 in different cities of the state”, including

ARUN KUMAR
REPLACES
GOPAL AS RSS'
BJP POINTSMANDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), it was learnt, has decided to replace its pointsman for the BJP, with Arun Kumar to succeed Dr Krishna Gopal for the post.

The decision, sources said, was taken by the RSS top brass at the ongoing meeting at Chitrakoot. Both Dr Gopal and Kumar are joint general secretaries in the Sangh. Dr Gopal, who had succeeded Suresh Soni in 2014 - the year BJP came to power at the Centre — to oversee the coordination between the BJP and the Sangh, it was learnt, had not been keeping well and had been infected with the Covid-19 twice since last year.

Kumar, who was the *prachaar pramukh* of the Sangh, was elevated to the post of joint general secretary in March this year when Dattatreya Hosabale replaced Suresh Bhaiyya Joshi as the RSS general secretary.

The RSS has also overhauled its West Bengal team by replacing the *Prant prachaarak*, *kshetra prachaarak* and the *sah-kshetra prachaarak*. This decision, sources said, was taken after the BJP failed to dislodge Mamata Banerjee-led TMC despite the entire BJP central leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union ministers campaigning in the state.

● **THE DECISION,** sources said, was taken by the RSS top brass at the ongoing meeting at Chitrakoot.



People flout social distancing norms as authorities allowed Sunday bazaar to reopen after some relaxations in the ongoing lockdown in Bengaluru on Sunday. — PTI

India sees a slight decrease in Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

India on Friday witnessed a slight decrease in the number of Covid-19 infections and deaths in the last 24 hours. With 41,506 people testing positive in a day, the total tally of the viral infections has gone up to 3,08,37,222. The death toll has now climbed to 4,08,040 with 895 fresh fatalities.

While many countries like UK, Russia, Australia and Bangladesh are dealing with the resurgence in daily infections, the cases in India seem to be under control with daily infections being less than 50,000 for the past two weeks.

The active cases in India comprise 1.47 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has increased to 97.20 per cent. The daily positivity rate, which stands at 2.25 per cent, has been less than three per cent for 20 consecutive days. The weekly positivity rate has also declined to 2.32 per cent.

Sunday's case figures were 1,260 less than that of Saturday's, when 42,766 people were detected with Covid-19 infection. Even the toll count on Sunday was 311 less than that of

Saturday's, when 1,206 deaths were recorded.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,99,75,064 and the case fatality rate stands at 1.32 per cent. As many as 18,43,500 tests were conducted on Saturday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of Covid-19 in the country to 43,08,85,470.

Cumulative number of vaccine doses administered so far has reached 37.60 crore under the nationwide vaccination drive. The Union health ministry said that over 1.44 crore balance and unutilised

Covid vaccine doses were still available with the states, UTs and private hospitals to be administered.

Over 38.60 crore vaccine doses have been provided to states and UTs so far through all sources and a further 11,25,140 doses are in the pipeline. Of this, the total consumption including wastage is 37,16,47,625 doses. The new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination is to commence from June 21.

The country's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It

went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

Of the 895 new fatalities reported in the last 24 hours, 494 were from Maharashtra and 109 from Kerala. A total of 4,08,040 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,25,528 Maharashtra, 35,779 Karnataka, 33,371 Tamil Nadu, 22,693 Uttar Pradesh, 17,903 West Bengal and 16,177 Punjab.

POLICE | KILLINGS

Delhi-based advocate from Assam lodges formal complaint with NHRC against Assam police

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, JULY 11

The issue of ongoing frequent encounters of Assam police with criminals have reached National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) as a Delhi-based advocate from Assam on Saturday lodged a formal complaint with the commission against the Assam police “on an encounter spree” since the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government took charge two months ago.

In his complaint which was lodged with the NHRC on Saturday, Advocate Arif Jwadder alleged that Assam police was shooting down criminals frequently and the reason cited for such “fake encounters” was that they tried to “flee from police custody snatching pistols”.

Pointing out that more than 20 such encounters had taken place so far and most of the persons at the receiving end were alleged drug dealers and cattle smugglers with a few hav-

ing died on the spot, he also referred Assam Chief Minister's remark at the police conference where in

the Chief Minister said that police should shoot at alleged criminals at legs which is permitted by the law.

“Following the statement of the Chief Minister, now police are staging fake encounters with impunity,” Jwadder alleged in his complaint.

He also listed 10 cases of encounters where the alleged criminals were either killed or injured. It includes Bubul Konwar, wanted for several crimes including murder, and

sacked Railway Protection Special Force sub-inspector Kanwaldeep Singh Sidhu wanted for abducting a businessman. They were gunned down on May 23 and July 3.

Alleged cattle smugglers Shah Jamal, Mozammel Haque and Sorangi Chinnai were shot in the leg between May 31 and July 2.

Alleged drug dealer Jaitul Kabir and Syed Ali, a 65-year-old arrested for rape and murder of a minor, met a similar fate

on May 31 and July 2 respectively.

Jwadder argued, “all the injured or dead persons were not militants and hence not trained to use pistols and it is very unlikely that they could use the pistols after snatching them from the police who outnumbered them and were heavily armed.”

In his complaint the Advocate said, “It also cannot be believed that the petty criminals could snatch a pistol from a

trained police officer whose pistols/guns are normally tied to the waist belt. It also cannot be believed that any Army or police officer could not stop the alleged criminals from fleeing from custody.”

Pleading before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to take cognisance of these cases, Jwadder said that the actions of the Assam police were denying the rights of the alleged criminals to a fair trial.

SHORT TAKES

TURKEY BUS
ACCIDENT
LEAVES 12 DEAD

Ankara: Twelve people died and 26 others were injured when a bus carrying migrants crashed in eastern Turkey on Saturday night, local media reported, quoting authorities in the prefecture of Van.

Among the dead were 11 migrants and a person who helped organise their illegal transport, the authorities were quoted as saying on Sunday.

The injured were taken to hospital and the owner of the bus was detained, they added.

Situated near Turkey's eastern border with Iran, the city of Van is used as a crossing point for migrants on their long journey to reach Europe, with many coming from Afghanistan.

In July 2020, a boat carrying up to 60 migrants sank on Lake Van.

TWO IS-LINKED
MILITANTS KILLED
IN C. INDONESIA

Palu (Indonesia): Indonesian security forces on Sunday killed two suspected militants with ties to the Islamic State group who were believed to be connected to the killing of Christian farmers on Sulawesi island, the country's military said.

The two men, identified as Rukli and Ahmad Gazali, were fatally shot during a pre-dawn raid by a five-man team of military and police in Central Sulawesi province's mountainous Parigi Moutong district, said Maj Gen Richard Tampubolon, who heads the joint operation. Parigi Moutong borders Poso district, considered an extremist hotbed in the province.

Security operations in Central Sulawesi have intensified in recent months to try to capture members of the East Indonesia Mujahideen network, particularly targeting Ali Kalora, the group's leader and Indonesia's most wanted militant.

EXPLOSION IN
SUDAN PORT CITY
KILLS FOUR

Khartoum: An explosion killed four people in a Sudanese Red Sea port city, officials said Sunday, the latest in a series of violent incidents in the area.

Tensions have been simmering in recent days in Port Sudan, where anti-government protesters have reportedly blocked roads over rising insecurity.

Local media have linked the unrest to rejection by the Hadendoa tribe of an October peace deal between rebel groups and the government.

The Hadendoa, the largest subdivision of the Beja people in the region, fear their tribe will be under-represented in regional legislative and executive bodies under the agreement.

Saturday's blast took place late in the evening at a busy sporting club in Port Sudan, the provincial capital of the Red Sea state and the country's main port, and also involved an armed attack.

"An explosive device went off at Al-Amir club... killing four people," the Central Committee of Sudan Doctors said in a statement. Three others were wounded after being shot or stabbed, it added.

GEORGIAN TV
CAMERAMAN
KILLED IN ATTACK

Tbilisi: A Georgian TV cameraman has died after being badly beaten by far-right assailants during a protest against an LGBTQ Pride march, his station said Sunday, as pressure mounted on authorities over attacks on journalists.

Alexander Lashkarava, a 37-year-old cameraman working for independent TV station Pirveli, was found dead in his bed in the early hours on Sunday, the channel reported.

On Monday, he was assaulted by a violent mob of anti-LGBTQ protesters and sustained fractures to his facial bones. More than 50 journalists were attacked that day by anti-LGBTQ groups protesting the planned Pride march, which was cancelled over safety fears.

Reporters Without Borders (RSF) condemned the attacks, saying journalists "sustained injuries that included concussion, chemical burns and broken arms." It accused authorities of "culpable passivity" and said police had failed to protect journalists.

Sirisha, 3rd Indian woman to fly to space

From Page 1

Branson's five-member crew also included a Guntur-born aeronautical engineer Sirisha Bandla. She became the third Indian-American woman to fly into space after Kalpana Chawla and Sunita Williams. Wing Commander Rakesh Sharma is the only Indian citizen to travel in space. The former Indian Air Force pilot flew aboard Soyuz T-11 on April 3, 1984, part of the Soviet Interkosmos programme.

Branson, the flamboyant, London-born founder of Virgin Atlantic Airways wasn't supposed to fly until later this summer. But he assigned himself to an earlier flight after Bezos announced plans to ride his own rocket into space from Texas on July 20, the 52nd

anniversary of the Apollo 11 landing.

Bezos' Blue Origin company intends to send tourists past the so-called Karman line 100 km (62 miles) above Earth, which is recognised by international aviation and aerospace federations as the threshold of space.

But NASA, the Air Force, the Federal Aviation Administration and some astrophysicists consider the boundary between the atmosphere and space to begin 80 km (50 miles) up.

Ever the showman, Branson insisted on a global livestream of the Sunday morning flight and invited celebrities and former space station astronauts to the company's Spaceport America base in New Mexico.

Virgin Galactic already has more than 600 reserva-

BOLDEST ADVENTURE

● The nearly 71-year-old Branson and five crewmates from his Virgin Galactic space-tourism company reached an altitude of about 53 miles (88 kilometers) over the New Mexico desert enough to experience three to four minutes of weightlessness and see the curvature of the Earth — and then safely glided to a runway landing.

● The brief, up-and-down flight — the rocket ship's portion took only about 15 minutes, or about as long as Alan Shepard's first U.S. space-flight in 1961 — was a splashy and unabashedly commercial plug for Virgin Galactic, which plans to start taking paying customers on joyrides next year.

● Branson became the first person to blast off in his own spaceship, beating Bezos by nine days. He also became only the second septuagenarian to go into space. Astronaut John Glenn flew on the shuttle at age 77 in 1998.

tions from would-be space tourists, with tickets initially costing \$250,000 apiece. Blue Origin is

waiting for Bezos' flight before announcing its ticket prices.

— Agencies



Virgin Galactic founder Richard Branson carries crew member Sirisha Bandla on his shoulders while celebrating their flight to space at Spaceport America near Truth or Consequences, N.M., Sunday.

— AP

Pak braces to fight fourth wave

Islamabad, July 11: Pakistan is bracing to battle the fourth wave of the coronavirus pandemic as the country saw a three-fold increase in number of people being tested positive everyday in less than three weeks. Health experts are blaming the reopening of businesses and tourism sector for the resurge in cases and have urged the government to announce a lockdown so that Eidul Azha is celebrated with the observance of strict health-related restrictions.

The country detected 1,980 new cases in the last 24 hours at the positivity rate of 4.09 per cent, according to the official data released on Sunday. On June 21, the tally of new cases was only 663. It is for the first time that the positivity rate crossed 4 per cent since May 30 when 4.05 per cent was recorded, according to the Ministry of National Health Services.

Positivity rate is the percentage of people who test positive for the virus compared to the total number of people who have been tested. A high value of positivity rate suggests high coronavirus infection rate, implying greater prevalence of the disease.

The national tally of confirmed cases reached 9,73,284 while the death toll touched 22,582 as 27 more patients died in the last 24 hours. The data showed that 9,13,203 people have fully recovered so far but still some 2,119 were in critical condition, meaning the death toll may rise. The government is banking on vaccination and so far has administered over 19.067 million doses. — PTI



People stand with empty oxygen canisters as they wait to fill them up outside a factory in Yangon on Sunday, amid a surge in Covid-19 cases.

— AFP

Myanmar caught off guard
as cases surge, O2 dwindles

Bangkok, July 11: Soe Win stood in line at a plant to buy oxygen for his grandmother, who is struggling with Covid-19 symptoms. "I have been waiting since 5 in the morning until 12 noon but I'm still in line. Oxygen is scarcer than money," said the resident of Myanmar's biggest city, Yangon. Consumed by a bitter and violent political struggle since the military seized power in February, Myanmar has been slow to wake up to a devastating surge in cases since mid-May.

It has left many of the

sick like Soe Win's grandmother to suffer at home if they cannot find a bed at an army hospital, or prefer not to trust their care to the widely disliked government.

Under Aung San Suu Kyi, the civilian leader ousted by the military, Myanmar had weathered its second coronavirus surge beginning in August last year by severely restricting travel, sealing off Yangon, and curbing election campaigning in virus hot spots where lockdowns were imposed.

Suu Kyi appeared frequently on television with stern but empathetic entreaties to the public on how to deal with the situation. Vaccine supplies were secured from India and China. Her ouster came less than a week after the first jabs were given to health workers.

Suu Kyi's removal by the military sparked widespread protests, and medical workers spearheaded a popular civil disobedience movement that called on professionals and civil servants not to cooperate with the military-installed government.

— AP

US swelters as 30M
under heat warning

Los Angeles, July 11: Hot weather alerts are in place for more than 30 million people across the western United States after the region's second heat wave in weeks brought another round of record-equalling high temperatures.

Sweltering conditions have hit much of the Pacific seaboard and as far inland as the western edge of the Rocky Mountains over the weekend, with forecasters warning of more to come on Sunday.

Las Vegas matched its

all-time record of 117 degrees Fahrenheit (47.2 Celsius), according to the National Weather Service (NWS) — a temperature record in the desert entertainment city once in 1942 and three other times since 2005.

Forecasters issued an excessive heat warning for the city along with several other urban centers including the southern city of Phoenix and San Jose, the center of the Silicon Valley tech industry south of San Francisco.

— AFP

China vows retaliation as US bans firms

Beijing, July 11: China on Sunday said it will take "necessary measures" to respond to the U.S. blacklisting of Chinese companies over their alleged role in abuses of Uyghur people and other Muslim ethnic minorities.

The Commerce Ministry said the US move constituted an "unreasonable suppression of Chinese enterprises and a serious breach of international economic and trade rules."

China will "take necessary measures to firmly safeguard Chinese companies' legitimate rights and interests," the ministry's statement said.

No details were given, but China has denied allegations of arbitrary detention and forced labor in the far western region of Xinjiang and increasingly responded to sanctions against companies and officials with its own bans on visas and financial links.

The US Commerce Department said in a statement Friday that the electronics and technology firms and other businesses helped enable "Beijing's campaign of repression, mass detention and high-technology surveillance" against Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.

The penalties prohibit Americans from selling equipment or other goods to the firms. The United States has stepped up financial and trade penalties over China's treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, along with its crackdown on democracy in the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong.

The Chinese government since 2017 has detained a million or more people in Xinjiang. Critics accuse China of operating forced labor camps and carrying out torture and coerced sterilization as it allegedly seeks to assimilate Muslim ethnic minority

groups.

The US Commerce Department said 14 companies were added to its Entity List over their dealings in Xinjiang, and another five for aiding China's armed forces.

"The Department of Commerce remains firmly committed to taking strong, decisive action to target entities that are enabling human rights abuses in Xinjiang or that use US technology to fuel China's destabilising military modernisation efforts," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said in a statement posted on the department's website. — AP



Abiy Ahmed

ETHIOPIA: ABIY'S
PARTY BAGS
LANDSLIDE WIN

Addis Ababa, July 11: Ethiopia's ruling Prosperity Party on Saturday was declared the winner of last month's national election in a landslide, assuring a second five-year term for Prime Minister Abiy Ahmed.

The National Election Board of Ethiopia said the ruling party won 410 seats out of 436 contested in the federal parliament, which will see dozens of other seats remain vacant after one-fifth of constituencies didn't vote due to unrest or logistical reasons.

Ethiopia's new government is expected to be formed in October. The vote was a major test for Abiy, who came to power in 2018 after the former prime minister resigned amid widespread protests. Abiy oversaw dramatic political reforms that led in part to a Nobel Peace Prize the following year, but critics say he is backtracking on political and media freedoms. — AP

BAD | DOG

Researchers warn of global public health risk in range of raw dog food

Study finds superbug link to man's best friend

Paris, July 11: Antibiotic-resistant "superbugs" — which the World Health Organisation calls one of the top global threats to public health — usually conjure images of hospital settings.

But new research may point to a less-obvious source: the family dog.

Researchers warned Sunday of "an international public health risk" after finding antibiotic-resistant bacteria in a range of different types of raw dog food.

"The trend for feeding dogs raw food may be

fuelling the spread of antibiotic resistant-bacteria", the researchers said in a press release for their study, to be presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

Separate research to be presented at the same conference found resistance to a last-resort antibiotic may be passing between pet dogs and their owners.

Antibiotic resistant bugs can render minor injuries and common infections potentially deadly.

Resistance has grown in recent years due to over-

● THE BACTERIA is able to live harmlessly in human and animal intestines but can be dangerous in other parts of the body and can be resistant to antibiotics.

use of such drugs in humans and farm animals.

In the dog food study, a team from the University of Porto analysed 55 samples of dog food from 25 brands including 14 raw frozen types, looking for Enterococci bacteria.

The bacteria is able to

live harmlessly in human and animal intestines but can be dangerous in other parts of the body and can be resistant to antibiotics.

Researchers found that all of the raw dog food samples contained antibiotic-resistant Enterococci, including bacteria resistant to the last-resort antibiotic linezolid.

Genetic sequencing revealed that some of these antibiotic-resistant bacteria in the raw dog food were the same kind found in hospital patients in the UK, Germany and

the Netherlands.

"The close contact of humans with dogs and the commercialisation of the studied brands in different countries poses an international public health risk," said researcher Ana Freitas.

European authorities must raise awareness about the potential health risks when feeding raw diets to pets and the manufacture of dog food, including ingredient selection and hygiene practices, must be reviewed." She added that dog owners should wash their hands

after handling pet food and disposing of faeces.

In a separate study, which has not yet been submitted to a medical journal for publication, another team from Portugal tested pet owners and animals from 80 households for bacteria with the mcr-1 gene, which provides resistance to the last-resort antibiotic colistin. Drug-resistant infections kill an estimated 7,00,000 people a year globally and the UN has warned that could rise to 10 million by 2050 if no action is taken. — AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

12 JULY 2021

India must make clear its Afghan role after US exit

The pressure on India to delineate its future path in Afghanistan becomes apparent after the announcement by US President Joe Biden last week that US forces will be out of Afghanistan by August 31, sooner than the September 11 deadline indicated earlier.

The US leader also made it amply clear that sorting out the politics of that benighted country and its way forward in the world was for its people to decide. Putting a lid on old debate, Mr Biden was clear that “nation-building” in Afghanistan was not America’s mandate.

The sense of drama has grown in light of practically daily news reports in recent weeks of rapid military gains made by the Taliban. Western media reporting has also amplified the Taliban claim that the insurgent group controls as much as 85 per cent of the country.

Is this true? Do the Taliban really have the capacity to hold territory? Is the Afghan military weak, helpless, and inadequately equipped? International reporting is practically silent on these crucial aspects of the situation. Nor has it shed any light on the internal political scenario in Afghanistan? In the event, a general

scare seems to have been created about the Taliban storming Kabul in the not too distant future.

If the past military performance of the Taliban is any guide, it will be surprising if it can storm to power in Kabul in the next year or so, although this is exactly what senior US Army officials have put out, feeding scare-mongering. While Afghanistan’s Army is trained and equipped essentially as a counter-terrorism force (it does not have artillery and armour, for example), it is a first-rate fighting body. Numerous times in the past it has shown the capacity to recover lost ground from the Taliban, who have repeatedly displayed the inability to hold ground.

At suitable levels, India has opened channels of communication with the Taliban. New Delhi should not be left without options in an evolving scenario. But it needs to be appreciated that the Taliban are but a small part of the political spectrum, especially in light of the noteworthy fact that a new generation of Afghans has taken shape in the past 20 years (the period since the US intervened) which is far from extremist in outlook and looks toward a modernist, democracy-oriented transformation.

India is reasonably well-grounded in the non-Taliban political spaces, unlike arguably any other country. This is an enviable position to be in. Much depends on how New Delhi seeks to leverage itself politically. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has lately been in Tehran and Moscow, New Delhi’s traditional allies in the Afghan context. These power centres had been anti-Taliban in the past. It has to be ascertained to what extent Iran and Russia are changing.

Regardless of this, however, India will have to decide its stance without equivocation if it wishes to be seen as a serious player. Standing by Pakistan’s side, resource-rich China has emerged as a new — and open — factor in Afghanistan. New Delhi has to bear this in mind while being conscious that Beijing and Islamabad will act in tandem, though Pakistan remains deeply unpopular in Afghanistan. Since the dice is rolling, India cannot indefinitely delay taking a posture. If this is to be to stand by the people of Afghanistan, in whom this country has invested much in the past two decades, the first charge on New Delhi is to ensure that non-Taliban factions mutually build a functional understanding even if they have differences with the leader of their government, President Ashraf Ghani.

Stem poll violence in UP

The Uttar Pradesh unit of the BJP, and its national leadership, exult over the results of the block panchayat elections in the state. The party claims that it has won elections in 685 of the 825 block panchayats. This comes close on the heels of the party claiming victory in 66 of the 75 posts of district panchayat chiefs for which elections were held last month. Given that the state Assembly polls are hardly a year away, the party has gone out of the way to present it as a precursor to the big fight. While chief minister Yogi Adityanath and the party’s state unit chief were attributing the win to the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the latter has commented on the chief minister’s leadership for the win.

The Opposition parties will, however, have none of it. They allege widespread violence by the ruling party in the polls, which include instances of stopping their people from filing the nomination papers to threatening their candidates. They say the BJP wants to paint a rosy picture after it lost the gram panchayat elections. Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav has reminded the BJP that his party had made similar claims after the polls five years ago but lost the Assembly comprehensively.

Claims and counterclaims apart, violence has emerged as a key player in the elections in the state this time around. It is not just the Opposition that complains about hooliganism on the part of the ruling party; the message of the police officer to his boss that BJP workers slapped him could be the reflection of the reality.

The picture the nation gets from Uttar Pradesh is that the Election Commission of India will have to go the extra mile and ensure that none gets to blame violence as a key factor in the election to the state Assembly. It must open its eyes and take early steps to meet its constitutional responsibilities.

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KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

K. SUDHAKAR
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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax : 040-27805256

Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Venagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

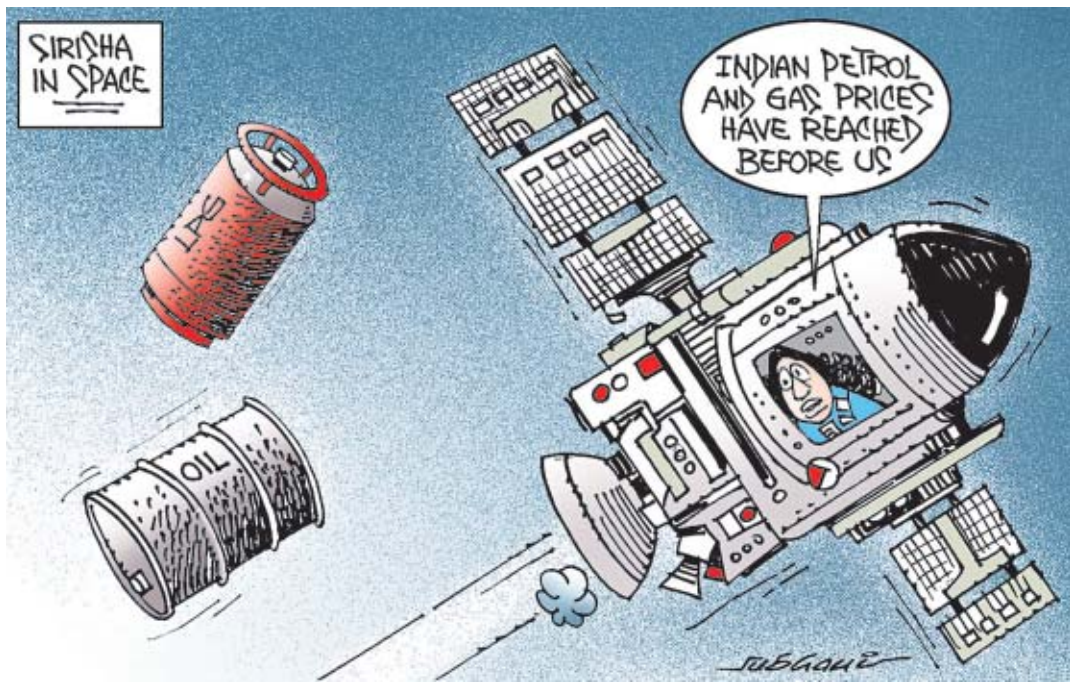
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrampur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

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Subhani



India-China: Bhai-bhai to buy-buy to bye-bye



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

This is a historic month for China. The Communist Party of China came into being 100 years ago, in July 1921. Communist China entered the international mainstream a half century ago, in July 1971, when the United States decided to come to terms with the reality of its existence. China’s spectacular rise over the past quarter century, as a global trading superpower, the “factory of the world”, and as Asia’s most powerful nation, ready to challenge America’s global dominance, is the stuff of legend.

Yet, even as China celebrates these landmark events, large parts of the world have become increasingly concerned about its assertion of newly acquired hard power — economic and military. In looking back at China’s rise a large part of the public discourse in India has been dominated by commentators on foreign policy, security and defence. Regrettably, very little has appeared in print on the social, cultural and human dimensions of China’s transformation and rise.

In his recently published pithy narration of the events at Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in the summer of 1989 (*Tiananmen Square: The Making of a Protest, A Diplomat Looks Back*), former foreign secretary and a former Indian ambassador to China Vijay Gokhale observes in passing: “Indians can no longer afford to have a superficial understanding of events involving their largest neighbour and to-be-hegemon, other than at their own peril”.

Mr Gokhale is spot on. Yet so much about what appears in print in India about China is about foreign affairs and the economy, written mostly by Westerners or Indians

living in the West, and so little from Indians with a first-hand knowledge and experience of life and people in China. For most Indians China is an adversary, a source of cheap products or the home of chow mien.

At one level this is not surprising. The fact is that the interaction between the neighbours has been limited through most history. More important, people-to-people interaction between the two republics over the past three quarters of a century has been even more limited. Little wonder then that even today we depend so much on retired diplomats to educate us about contemporary China. Only a couple of bright Indian journalists and a handful of scholars have been able to bridge the public awareness gap between the two.

This worryingly low level of social and cultural interaction between China and India has dipped further thanks to renewed tensions between the two and the post-Galwan and post-Covid freeze in bilateral interactions. The China-India relationship has moved from the honeymoon days of “*Hindi-Chini bhai-bhai*”, and the post-Cold War phase of increased economic and business interaction — “India-China buy-buy”, as someone put it — to the current “Cold War” phase of “India-China bye-bye”. This is not a satisfactory state of affairs.

Whatever the differences between the two countries, and there are many, there ought to be both a better understanding of each other within both societies and increased people-to-people interaction. For over a century Indians fought Western imperialism and colonialism and yet not only acquired an inti-

mate knowledge of Western culture, science, literature, music and so on, but also benefitted from such knowledge.

India’s attitude towards China today should not be very different from the view that Mahatma Gandhi famously expressed of the kind of relationship that he sought with Britain and its people in the midst of the national movement for Independence. When asked by a Briton in that period “How far would you cut India off from the Empire?”, Gandhiji replied: “From the Empire, completely; from the British nation, not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire must go and I should love to be an equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows. But it must be a partnership on equal terms.”

Even as India rejects China’s hegemonic ambitions, as it did the hegemony of the West, and disapproves of its authoritarian political system, Indians must acquire a better understanding and appreciation of Chinese society, culture and its knowledge-creating institutions. China is not merely an authoritarian, militarised Communist regime, which it is, but it is also a highly creative and productive knowledge-based society and economy. China has risen on the foundations of its human capabilities. Indians ought to have a better appreciation of that.

The Xi Jinping regime is itself to blame for the acute focus in Indian public discourse on China’s negative attributes. However, it is in India’s inter-

The Xi Jinping regime is itself to blame for the focus in Indian public discourse on China’s negative attributes. It is in India’s interest to balance that with a better understanding of life in China.

est to balance that with a better understanding of life in China. The Chinese too should realise that Indians are a proud people with their own memory of their civilisational inheritance and can be nobody’s cat’s paw.

The history of Indian nationalism is in many ways greater than the history of Chinese nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress did not fight for India’s liberation alone. They fought for the liberation of all colonised people and against imperialism and colonialism in all its manifestations. Whatever strategic and foreign policy compromises India might make in the short run cannot be a deviation from its “tryst with destiny”.

In July 1971, when then US national security adviser Henry Kissinger met Chairman Mao Zedong in Beijing and proposed a US-China condominium against the Soviet Union, China did not give up its civilisational inheritance of being an independent-minded nation. It walked a path that gave it the strategic space for its own rise. India too seeks that space for its own development. Over the past 50 years the people-to-people contact between the United States and China has been intense and extensive. It has created the foundation for a durable relationship even when the two seek today greater strategic space for themselves.

It is in the interests of both China and India that there is similar engagement between their people, even as the two states jostle with each other for strategic space within Asia and the world. People-to-people relationships must stand on their own footing and not always be subject to state-to-state relations.

The writer, an economist and adviser to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has recently edited a collection of essays titled A New Cold War: Henry Kissinger and the Rise of China

LETTERS

CABINET RESHUFFLE

The article by Pavan K. Varma (*The method and madness of the Modi’s Cabinet shuffle, DC, July 11*) on the recent Cabinet reshuffle at the Centre has been discerning and scathing and he made no bones about the rejig. He was right in saying that the actual focus of power is vested in PMO and the task of ministers is to implement the directives only.

Dr C. Ghanshyam

Visakhapatnam

BACK IN BUSINESS

All those involved in business want normalcy restored and boat owners are no exception (*Boat owners want tourism to restart, DC, July 11*). But the strangest part is they (businesses) are not practising or implementing the pandemic protocol as they did earlier during the first wave. If this continues, the second wave will prolong and the third wave might step-in too.

Govardhana Myneedu

Vijayawada

TWO-CHILD NORM

UP government’s plan to control population is welcome but to achieve it people must be educated and convinced (*UP to reward 2 child parents, DC, July 11*). The population becoming an asset or liability depends on government policies. While education, health-care and promotion of hard work make people “asset”, freebies, subsidies will make them a “liability”.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao

Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Vajpayee calls for NIC meet

BHOOL, JULY 11.

Jana Sangh Chief Atal Behari Vajpayee today called for convening of a meeting of the National Integration Council in view of the need of national integrity in the wake of Bangla Desh Crisis.

Addressing a news conference here, he accused Prime Minister Indira Gandhi of trying to divert the public attention from her Government’s failure to implement Parliament’s resolution in respect of Bangla Desh by raising the bogey of communalism.

The need of the present, he said, was immediate convening of the NIC meeting which had not been done for two years.

A.G. Noorani



Kashmir and the delicate activism of ensuring that delimitation fair

It is very unfortunate that at their very first test members of the People’s Alliance of the Gupkar Declaration in Kashmir split on the issue of delimitation of assembly constituencies. Mehbooba Mufti of the People’s Democratic Party refused to appear before the Delimitation Commission. All were agreed that the wrongs of Aug 4, 2019, should be undone first.

Delimitation is one of the most delicate and highly controversial problems in democratic governance. But it is also ignored until controversy catches up with it. The issue is simple. How do you draw up the boundaries of electoral constituencies in order to ensure fairness to all? Britain woke up pretty late to the problem. There is an electoral commission, a late entrant. It establishes boundary committees and evaluates its reports. Rules prescribe guidance.

Within the constraints of the existing majority electoral system it is clearly desirable that votes should be, as nearly as possible, of

equal value: a vote in A should be worth as much as a vote in B. If this is to be substantially achieved, the boundaries of constituencies should be drawn in such a way that their electorates do not differ too greatly in size. Other factors may also have to be taken into account in drawing the boundaries, but it is of the greatest importance that the process should not be influenced by considerations of party advantage. Another and a hugely neglected factor in India — the Muslim seats. They depend entirely on how Muslim majority areas are grouped.

India has a delimitation commission set up by an act of parliament.

The commission is charged with the task of readjusting “on the basis of the latest census figures” the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha to the states, the total number of seats in state assemblies, and the division of each state into territorial constituencies for the purpose of elections to the Lok Sabha and to the assemblies. The electoral roll is common to both. A given number of assembly constituencies

are grouped to form a parliamentary constituency. Upon publication “every such order shall have the force of law”. This is valid. Not so what follows: “And shall not be called in question in any court.” No law can oust the powers of judicial review conferred by the Indian constitution on the Supreme Court and the high courts. Even an amendment to the constitution cannot do that, for judicial review is incontestably an integral part of the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution.

Ouster clauses are strictly construed by the courts. It does not prevent the courts from reviewing a delimitation order. Drawing the boundaries of any constituency on the ground inter alia that it is grossly unfair or that the commission did not follow the rules of natural justice by giving a reasonable opportunity for a hearing to the political parties or interested citizens’ bodies.

We owe to the research of Alistair McMillan details of the grossly unfair delimitation as it obtains now. He points out, for instance,

that “a vote in Calcutta North-West, with 698,009 electors, is worth roughly four times as much as one in Thane in Maharashtra, where there are 2,771,746 electors”.

In 1962, the US supreme court carried through a political revolution by ordering that long under-represented urban and suburban areas be given their proper weight in state legislatures. It is not a ‘political question’ exempt from judicial review. Two years later chief justice Earl Warren carried the process further and delivered the famous quotes on the weightage to rural areas.

Chief justice Earl Warren said: “A predominant consideration in determining whether a state’s legislative apportionment scheme constitutes an invidious discrimination violative of rights asserted under the Equal Protection Clause is that the rights allegedly impaired are individual and personal in nature. ... Undoubtedly, the right of suffrage is a fundamental matter in a free and democratic society. Especially since the right to exercise the franchise in a free

and unimpaired manner is preservative of other basic civil and political rights, any alleged infringement of the right of citizens to vote must be carefully and meticulously scrutinised.

“...Legislatures are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests. If ours is a representative form of government, and our legislatures are those instruments of government elected directly by and directly representative of the people, the right to elect legislators in a free and unimpaired fashion is a bedrock of our political system. ... “And, if a state should provide that the votes of citizens in one part of the state should be given two times, or five times, or 10 times the weight of votes of citizens in another part of the state, it could hardly be contended that the right to vote of those residing in the disfavoured areas had not been effectively diluted.”

Muslims have suffered because their leaders do not do the homework which a challenge requires.

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS

		%
Sensex	52386.19	-0.35
Nifty 50	15689.80	-0.24
S&P 500*	4,369.55	1.13
Dollar (₹)	74.63	0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.98	0.01
Euro (₹)	88.47	-0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,844	451 0.96
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.56	1.94
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.186	1.01
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.343	0.055

* As of Friday/Saturday

Hero Electric Vehicles to invest ₹700 cr

Hero Electric Vehicles will invest Rs 700 crore by 2025 to rev up its business expansion, including setting up a new unit, for which it has raised Rs 220 crore to part-fund the activities. The firm plans to set up a facility with 10 lakh units capacity, besides increasing production at its current plant at Ludhiana to 3 lakh units per annum from 75,000 units at present, as it targets to sell around 10 lakh units a year by 2025-26.

Amazon sees rise in sellers grossing over ₹1 crore biz



Amazon India said it has seen six-fold growth in the number of sellers grossing over Rs 1 crore in sales during three-day Small Business Days event. "During the three-day event, more than 84,000 sellers received an order; 68 per cent of these sellers who received an order were from non-metro cities like Kodagu (Karnataka), Dholpur (Rajasthan), Eta (UP), Giridih (Jharkhand), Una (HP) and Tinsukia (Assam), Amazon said.

FPIs pull out ₹2,249 cr from equities in July

After a month of net inflows, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out Rs 2,249 crore from the equities market in the first seven trading sessions of July. This could be largely attributed to profit-taking by FPIs with markets trading near all-time highs and investors choosing to stay on the sidelines, said Morningstar India associate director (manager research) Himanshu Srivastava.

Tea exports may decline by 15% this year

The tea industry is bracing for a decline in exports to the tune of 30-40 million kg this year as compared to 2020, due to the availability of low-cost varieties in the global market and trade restrictions in user countries, industry sources said. For January-March this year, exports fell by 13.23 per cent year-on-year and by 29.03 per cent compared to 2019, as per Tea Board India data. Altogether, 45.86 million kg was exported.



Rules restrict gas supply to PSUs BPCL LPG rights new selloff snag

AMMAR ZAIDI
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

A two-decade-old LPG supply order restricting supply of domestically produced LPG to only state-owned oil companies has stymied plans to allow Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) to continue selling subsidised cooking gas (LPG) after its privatisation.

A legal opinion has now been sought to ascertain if privatised BPCL will be eligible to receive liquefied petroleum gas produced by companies such as ONGC and Gail, two government officials with knowledge of the development said.

Currently, BPCL has more than 8.4 crore domestic LPG customers, including 2.1 crore Ujjwala customers. The company does not produce enough LPG at its refineries to be able to cater to the requirement of all these.

It, like other oil marketing companies, buys LPG from state-owned firms like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Gail (India) Ltd as well as private companies such as Reliance Industries Ltd.

The Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2020, known as LPG Control Order of 2000, restricts sale of indigenously produced cooking gas only to state-owned oil marketing companies, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and BPCL.



It restricts supply of LPG produced by firms such as ONGC and GAIL to private firms. Private LPG retailers, called parallel marketers, have to use imported gas for supplying to customers.

The 2000 Control Order was issued as the nation is short in LPG production.

Once BPCL is privatised, the 2000 order will bar ONGC and GAIL from selling LPG to BPCL, the officials said.

"Post-divestment of the government's stake in BPCL, it shall cease to be a government oil company in terms of clause 2(g) of LPG Control Order of 2000," an official said.

With no access to indigenously produced LPG, BPCL won't be able to serve its customers and it would not be possible to shift the customers to IOC and HPCL, as LPG cylinder equipment at customer end will need to be changed. Also, IOC and HPCL may not have the required infrastructure to cater to such a large customer base, the officials said.

As a way out, it is being considered to continue to treat BPCL as a government company for the purpose of the 2000 Control Order for three years, the officials said adding that a legal opinion has been sought to ascertain if such a move is tenable under the law.

The other alternative is to amend the LPG Control Order itself to allow private firms to access indigenously produced LPG. This would open up LPG retailing to other private firms.

Officials said law ministry opinion has been sought to determine if the term government oil company in the LPG Control Order necessary requires the company to be a government company and if BPCL post-privatisation can be notified as a government oil company.

To interpret the term 'government company', the opinion of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MoCA) has been sought, they said. —PTI

Six North-eastern states have no hallmarking centres

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JULY 11

Though mandatory hallmarking has come into force in the country, most of the North-eastern region will remain outside the purview of the rules, as six of the eight north-eastern states have no hallmarking centres.

Hallmarking for gold jewellery and artefacts has been mandated in districts which have hallmarking centres. However, a large part of the North-east will remain out of the mandate, as Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Sikkim have no hallmarking centres.

Further, among the eight districts in Tripura, only two—North Tripura and West Tripura—have



hallmarking centres. Even a bigger state like Assam, which has 33 districts, has hallmarking centres only in Barpeta, Cachar and Kamrup Metro.

The story is no different in the small states of the eastern region. Among the 28 districts in Chhattisgarh, only Raipur and Durg have hallmarking centres. The presence of such centres is limited to four districts

in Jharkhand. Though the Northern region has a fairly large number of centres, smaller state Uttarakhand has hallmark centres only in two districts. Western and southern regions account for a major share of the hallmarking centres.

As per the recent government decision, the jewellers in all the districts with hallmarking centres have to sell only hallmarked jewellery and

get their entire inventory hallmarked by September 1. Till then, the government officials will not take any coercive action against the jewellers.

In the rest of the districts, steps will be taken to set up hallmarking centres at a fast pace. As and when the centres are set up, jewellers will have to get a Bureau of Indian Standards licence and get their inventory hallmarked. The government will also provide subsidies to set up new centres in these districts.

In the past few years, hallmarking centres have been coming up in regions which have a higher share of gold consumption. Several jewellers in these regions are already selling fully hallmarked jewellery.

Big insurers launch net-zero climate alliance

Milan, July 11: Eight of the world's leading insurance and reinsurance companies on Sunday launched an alliance to help speed up a transition to a net zero emissions economy.

The companies, which include Europe's top three insurers by premiums—Allianz, AXA and Generali—said the Net-Zero Insurance Alliance (NZIA) would work to shift underwriting portfolios towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The move comes as insurers come under

increasing pressure to spell out how they plan to decarbonise their businesses amid growing calls for them to stop underwriting and investing in fossil fuel projects.

Each of the companies will individually set intermediate targets every five years and report on progress annually in cooperation with competition authorities, the NZIA members said in a statement.

"With this new Net-Zero Insurance Alliance, we are raising our climate ambition further," said Thomas Buberl, Chief Executive of

the AXA Group, which chairs the NZIA.

NZIA members, which also include Aviva, Munich Re, SCOR, Swiss Re and Zurich Insurance Group, will set underwriting criteria for the most carbon-intensive activities in their underwriting portfolios and offer solutions for low-emission and zero-emission technologies.

They will also include net-zero and decarbonisation risk criteria in their risk management frameworks.

"By committing to join the gold standard alliance for net zero, the (NZIA)

will ultimately make underwriting contingent on underlying companies having credible net-zero transition strategies," said UN climate envoy Mark Carney.

The Alliance, first outlined in April, was presented by Generali CEO Philippe Donnet at Sunday's G20 Climate Summit in Venice. Many of the leading Europe-based insurers have already adopted climate-friendly policies.

Last month, Generali pledged to reach carbon neutrality in its direct investment portfolio by 2050. —Reuters

Goyal for faceless vetting of subsidy applications

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JULY 11

The applications received under subsidy-oriented schemes for the textile industry should be processed transparently, using automation so that personal contact between industry and department is eliminated, Piyush Goyal, who has taken charge as the textile minister, suggested.

"The applications received under subsidy-oriented schemes should be processed in a transparent manner using automation keeping in view the broad objective of each scheme and necessary mechanisms should be devised so that personal contact of industry and department can be eliminated," he said while talking to industry representatives. He also suggested a special dispensation for MSMEs.

According to A Shaktivel, chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, automation and elimination of human interface will reduce the delay in the processing. Once automated, there would be a specific time-



Piyush Goyal

line to process the applications and this will benefit the industry.

Goyal said the formats for submission of statutory returns from industry needs to be simplified, and emphasised on rationalisation and optimal use of manpower at the Office of the Textile Commissioner and Textiles Committee.

In order to increase productivity of cotton, the minister suggested that the Cotton Corporation of India can work out possibilities for providing kapas plucking machines to the cotton farmers. These machines can be provided by start-ups by availing of mudra loan.

He also suggested a meeting with stakeholders to make a strategic plan to eliminate child labour in the textiles sector.

SONY TO USE ROBOTS TO CUT COSTS

ANCHALEE WORRACHATE
JULY 11

Sony Corp. predicts that robots will take over its manufacturing of televisions, smartphones and cameras as the company shifts attention to services, the *Financial Times* reported.

Unmanned production lines are expected to cut costs by 70 per cent at Sony's mainstay TV factory in Malaysia by the fiscal year 2023, compared with 2018, the *FT* cited Kimio Maki, head of Sony's electronics businesses, as saying in an interview. The acceleration of factory automation will also reduce product defects, he said.

The plan will be carried out in conjunction with an increased focus on online sales and data analysis. Sales data will be analysed using artificial intelligence to more effectively set manufacturing volume, Maki said.

—Bloomberg

Woman infected with 2 Covid variants highlights next risk

SUZI RING
JULY 11

A 90-year-old woman died after becoming infected with two different strains of Covid-19, revealing another risk in the fight against the disease, Belgian researchers found.

In the first peer-reviewed analysis of an infection with multiple strains, scientists found the woman had contracted both the alpha variant, which first surfaced in the UK, and the beta strain, first found in South Africa. The infections probably came from separate people, according to a report published on Saturday and presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

The woman was admitted to a Belgian hospital in March after a number of falls, and tested positive for Covid-19 the same day. She lived alone, receiving nursing care at home, and hadn't been vaccinated. Her respiratory symptoms rapidly worsened and she died five days later. When her respiratory samples were tested for variants of concern, both

strains were found in two tests. The researchers couldn't say whether the co-infection played a role in her rapid deterioration. The idea of multiple infections isn't completely new. In January, Brazilian scientists reported two cases of Covid-19 co-infection, but the study hasn't

yet been released in a scientific journal. Researchers have also previously found evidence of people becoming infected with multiple strains of influenza. The cases suggest co-infection might be more common than currently known.

—Bloomberg

AUSTRALIA-S'PORE TRAVEL BUBBLE TIMING PUSHED BACK TO END 2021

EMILY CADMAN
JULY 11

Sydney's virus outbreak means plans for an Australian-Singapore travel bubble have been delayed until at least the end of the year, the Australian trade minister said on Sunday.

While opening up the travel corridor remains a priority, the scale of the outbreak that has forced the country's largest city into a renewed lockdown means plans are on hold, Dan Tehan told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"It has been put back due to the third wave of

the virus," he said. "The hope might be towards the end of the year that you could look at a travel bubble with Singapore."

Following the initial discussions, the two countries haven't committed to a specific date for the travel bubble.

While Australia was an early success story in the fight against the coronavirus, a sluggish vaccine rollout means even as the rest of the world opens up the country's borders are expected to stay shut until mid-2022. Just 26 per cent of the population have received their first jab.

—Bloomberg

CHINESE CHECKERS

One of the last chip firms is being acquired by a Chinese firm

UK sold off \$42 bn of chip firms before review

GILES TURNER & KITTY DONALDSON
JULY 11

The UK was once the leading semiconductor innovator in Europe, producing the likes of Arm Ltd, whose technology is found in 90 per cent of all mobile devices, and Imagination Technologies Group Ltd, which supplies chip designs used by Apple Inc.

But that was before they were sold off to foreign buyers. Arm was acquired by Japan's SoftBank Group Corp. with the government's approval before being handed off to Nvidia Corp. Imagination was sold to a Chinese buyout fund, signed off by then-Prime Minister Theresa May, even as one of the

funds' founders was under investigation by the FBI for insider trading.

In total, semiconductor companies valued at about \$42 billion have been sold to foreign buyers since May 2010, when the current Conservative government came to power, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That figure excludes Arm's most recent sale to Nvidia.

Now, in the middle of a semiconductor shortage, one of the last of those assets, Newport Wafer Fab Ltd, is being snapped up by a Chinese manufacturer for around \$87 million, according to a person familiar with the deal. After initially waving it through, Prime Minister



Boris Johnson's government is pledging to review the deal, but critics say it's too little too late.

Newport Wafer Fab has become a test case: it's the first high-profile Chinese takeover in Britain since the government strengthened takeover laws to give itself 30 days to call deals in for scrutiny.

"Newport Wafer Fab is extremely worrying,"

Conservative MP Bob Seely said in an interview. "We need coherence on dealing with the Chinese state. I worry that we are still not there, and I worry that we are still failing to understand our dependency on China and the need to move away from that trade dependency."

It's rare for the UK to halt a sale over national security. When it does, the deals have often been small and involved the aerospace industry. In 2020, a Chinese investor ditched a bid for defence manufacturer Mettis Aerospace Ltd after the government said it would review the deal. The same year, the government also halted a deal for Improcross Ltd from a China-backed buyer.

Instead, the UK has preferred to place conditions such as increasing local jobs and investment.

Unlike Arm and Imagination Technologies, which are multibillion-dollar companies that play key roles in semiconductor supply chains, it's unclear whether Newport Wafer Fab is of strategic importance to the UK.

The firm makes and prepares the ultra-small sheets of silicon, which serve as the base for microchips and are used for power management in products like cars. It reported a loss of 6.05 million pounds on revenues of 49 million pounds in the fiscal year ending in Sept. 2019, its most recent financial report. —Bloomberg

Kolkata, July 11: Unprecedentedly high prices of iron-ore and pellet are compelling small, secondary steel units in various states, including West Bengal, to down shutters or curtail production, officials said on Sunday.

In West Bengal, at least five such MSME units have closed down while 100-115 others curtailed production between 15 and 50 per cent, Steel Rolling Mills Association chairman Vivek Adukia said.

"The secondary steel MSMEs are also surrendering power requirements from the DVC and the WBSEDCL (West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited)," Adukia told PTI.

In Bengal, about 500 units are engaged in sponge iron, rolling mills and steel making through the induction furnace route. All these units are suffering along with mills in other states in the wake of unprecedented iron ore, pellet prices from unhindered export.

The secondary steel associations of West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have jointly appealed to the Prime Minister and steel minister for their intervention and imposing export duty of 50 per cent on pellets.

The secondary steel-makers had been pleading for imposing export duty on pellets for the last one year, Adukia said. West Bengal Sponge Iron Manufacturers Association president Shankar Lal Agarwal said pellet price soared from Rs 4,500 per tonne in May 2020 to Rs 15,000 per tonne in June this year resulting in a cost impact on a tonne of steel of Rs 20,800. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

India hit back to level T20 series

Hove: Indian spinners worked wonders during the final overs as visitors edged out England by eight runs in the second women's T20 to level the three-match series here on Sunday. Batting first, India lost way after a good start provided by opener Shafali Verma (48 off 38 balls) to finish on 148 for 4. In reply, Tammy Beaumont's 59 off 50 balls put England in good position before they were restricted to 140/8 in 20 overs. Poonam Yadav (2/17) and Deepti Sharma (1/17) brought India back in the game during final five overs. — *PTI*

Brief scores: India 148/4 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 48, Harmanpreet Kaur 31) bt England 140/8 in 20 overs (T. Beaumont 59; P. Yadav 2/17).

Sri Lanka's first team test negative

Colombo: The entire Sri Lankan first team, including senior players Kusal Perera, Dushmantha Chameera and Dhananjaya de Silva, have all returned negative in their latest RT-PCR tests ahead of the limited overs series against India.The tests were conducted by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). It is now expected that the players would be allowed to enter the bio-bubble by Monday as they complete a week-long hard quarantine after their arrival from the United Kingdom. “Normally, the moment we get any positive result we announce. There has been another round of RT-PCR tests conducted yesterday and the results were supposed to come today. We only get the results if there is any positive cases,” a source in SLC said. — *PTI*

England clinch Pakistan series

London: Lewis Gregory starred with both bat and ball as England beat Pakistan by 52 runs in the second one-day international at Lord's on Saturday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match series. Set 248 to win in a game reduced to 47 overs per side by rain, Pakistan were dismissed for 195. Somerset pace-bowling all-rounder Gregory, in just his second match at this level, struck with his first ball on Saturday on the way to 3-44 as England won with six overs to spare. That followed his valuable 40 and an eighth-wicket stand of 69 with Brydon Carse (31), in a maiden ODI innings for both batsmen, after England had slumped to 160-7.

Brief scores: England 247 (Phil Salt 60, James Vince 56, Lewis Gregory 40; Hasan Ali 5/51) bt Pakistan 195 (Saud Shakeel 56; Lewis Gregory 3/44).

Bangladesh put it past Zimbabwe

Harare: Some resolute batting and dropped catches held up Bangladesh before they completed a crushing 220-run win over Zimbabwe on the final day of a one-off Test at Harare Sports Club on Sunday. Needing a world record 477 to win, the hosts were all out for 256 after brave innings from Donald Tiripano and fast-medium bowler Blessing Muzarabani delayed the tourists' celebrations. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Bangladesh 468 & 284/1 (Shadman Islam 115 n.o, Najmul Hossain Shanto 117 n.o) bt Zimbabwe 276 & 256 (B. Taylor 92, D. Tiripano 52; M. Hasan 4/66, T. Ahmed 4/82).

Hetmyer shines in Windies' easy win

Saint Lucia: Shimron Hetmyer led a formidable West Indies batting effort on the way to a comfortable 56-run victory and a 2-0 lead over Australia in the second T20 International of their five-match series at the Daren Sammy Stadium in St Lucia on Saturday. Hetmyer's 61 off 36 balls paced the home side to 196 for four after they were sent in to bat yet again by Aaron Finch. He received excellent support from Dwayne Bravo, who contributed an unbeaten 47 to a 103-run partnership. — *AFP*

Brief scores: West Indies 196/4 (S. Hetmyer 61, D. Bravo 47 n.o) bt Australia 140 (M. Marsh 54; Hayden Walsh 3/29).

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Argentina's Lionel Messi holds the trophy aloft as he celebrates with teammates after winning the Copa America final against Brazil on Saturday.

— AFP

MESSI, NEYMAR NAMED BEST OF COPA AMERICA

Rio De Janeiro, July 11: Argentina's Lionel Messi and Brazil's Neymar were picked as the two best players of the Copa America just before they met in the final on Saturday.

“It is not possible to choose only one (best) player because this tournament has two of them,” CONMEBOL said in a statement.

Messi dished up four goals and five assists in six matches.

Neymar delivered two goals and three assists in five games.

CONMEBOL's technical study group added that the players had a positive impact on their teams and were “the reflection of the South American DNA in every match they played” in the Copa.

Neymar has steered Brazil with his dribbles, passes and shots. His exchanges with Lucas Paqueta have made Brazil more fluid up front.

— AP

ANGEL TO THE RESCUE

Di Maria delivers as Argentina beat rivals Brazil for Copa America title

Rio de Janeiro, July 11: Superstar Lionel Messi won his first trophy with his national team as Angel Di Maria's goal gave Argentina a 1-0 win over hosts Brazil in the Copa America final on Saturday. The victory at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium ended Argentina's 28-year wait for a major trophy, and also ended Brazil's unbeaten home record that stretched back more than 2,500 days.

Argentina had last tasted success at a major tournament in 1993 when the great Gabriel Batistuta's brace gave them a 2-1 win over Mexico in the Copa final in Ecuador.

“It's a great title, especially for our people. The fans support the team unconditionally. I think they can identify with this team that never gives in,” said Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni.

It was the first time in six editions playing at home that Brazil had failed to lift the trophy.



Brazil's Neymar (left) with Lionel Messi at the end of the Copa final in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday.

— AP

Argentina edged a brutal and fractious affair thanks to Di Maria's goal on 22 minutes.

The 33-year-old winger ran onto Rodrigo De Paul's sumptuous through ball to lob Brazil goalkeeper Ederson with a first time finish.

“We fell short so many times, we dreamt so much about this, fought so hard,” said Di Maria, who was named man of the match.

“Many people said we wouldn't manage it, we were criticized a lot. But we kept knocking at the door and kept going until today we knocked it down and entered.”

Messi could have wrapped up the win two minutes from time but slipped when clean through with only Ederson to beat.

“We have to be big enough to recognize (the

defeat) regardless of how painful and difficult it is,” said Brazil coach Tite.

In a frantic start, Argentina's burly enforcer Nicolas Otamendi was quickly in with his first foul while Brazilian midfielder Fred picked up the first booking after just three minutes for a studs up lunge at Gonzalo Montiel.

Brazil were unchanged from their semi-final win over Peru while Scaloni made five alterations, notably bringing in Di Maria — who made an energetic and decisive entry off the bench against Colombia last time out.

Brazil struggled to create anything of note and even when they had a free-kick from shooting range, Neymar couldn't beat the wall.

When the hosts did finally maintain some pressure late in the first half, Everton's deflected strike bobbed though to goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

— *AFP*

Messi's quest for glory finally comes to an end

Rio De Janeiro, July 11: When Lionel Messi, already a regular starter for the mighty Barcelona, made his international bow in 2005 as an 18-year-old for a powerful Argentina side he surely never imagined it would take him 16 years to finally claim a trophy with his country.

But the six time Ballon d'Or winner had to suffer numerous disappointments, including losing four finals, before leading his country to a 1-0 victory over “eternal rivals” Brazil in the Copa America final at Rio de Janeiro's iconic Maracana stadium on Saturday.

Despite a glittering career that has seen him

MESSI'S ARGENTINA HONOURS

- 2021 Copa America title & golden boot winner
- FIFA U-20 World Cup in 2005.
- Olympic Gold Medal in 2008.
- Record number of appearances for Argentina: 151

help Barcelona to win the Champions League four times, La Liga 10 times and the Copa Del Rey seven times, Messi's hopes of matching that with inter-

national success were repeatedly frustrated.

In truth he wasn't as inspired in the final as throughout the tournament, even slipping over when clean through two minutes from time and facing Brazil's goalkeeper Ederson with a chance to finish the match.

But the way his teammates threw him into the air after the final whistle showed how important and appreciated he is within the Argentina camp.

“It was my dream. It was what I wanted most in the world,” said Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez following the triumph. “We gave it to Messi, who deserved it the most.” — *AFP*

Olympic briefs

Music keeps Neeraj positive

Starved for competitive exposure in the build-up to the Olympics, star India javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has found a unique way to ensure that his mind feels ready for his maiden appearance in the Games. “I listen to slow music and imagine that I am in a competition, taking part and throwing in the Olympics, so that I don't feel completely new in my first competition,” Chopra said. Touted as one of India's strongest bets for a medal in Tokyo, Chopra said his build-up to the Games has been quite challenging given the lack of competitive exposure.

Boxers to leave on July 17

India's Olympic-bound boxing contingent, which is preparing for the Games in Italy right now, will leave for Tokyo from their training base in Assisi on July 17. An unprecedented nine Indian pugilists have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, including five men and four women. All of them are giving final touches to their Games preparations in Assisi. The Games will open on July 23 with boxing competitions starting the next day. The men who have qualified are world number one and Asian Games champion Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg), and Satish Kumar (+91kg).

Anand defeats Kasparov again

Zagreb, July 11: Former world champion Viswanathan Anand defeated long-time rival Garry Kasparov for the second consecutive time, in the 13th round of the Croatia Grand Chess Tour's Blitz event here on Sunday.He had beaten Kasparov on the first day too.

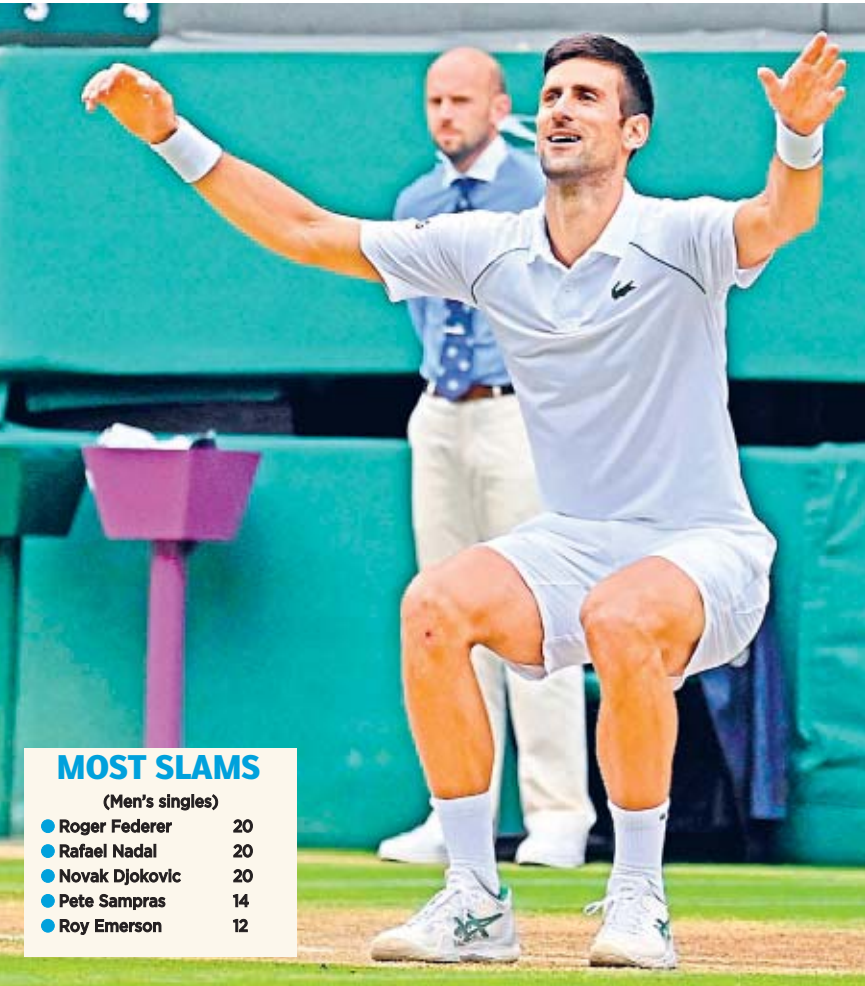
The victory came for the Indian maestro after three straight draws in rounds 10, 11 and 12 against Anish Giri (the Netherlands), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Poland) and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (France) respectively.

He followed it up with a

superb win over Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi, the top-seed in the 14th round to be joint third in the standings with Giri on 18 points.

Playing black, Anand got the better of Kasparov in 25 moves in a Nimzo-Indian defence game.

On the first day of the Blitz on Saturday, the Indian ace had recorded four wins, drawn three matches and suffered two defeats. The former world champion had ended up seventh after the Rapid section, with nine points. He had posted two wins and drawn five and lost two matches. — *PTI*



Serbian star Novak Djokovic celebrates after beating Matteo Berrettini of Italy in the Wimbledon final on Sunday.

— AFP

The Serb also now has 85 career titles while he has become the first man to break the \$150 million prize money barrier.

A gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics could give him the first ever Golden Grand Slam by a

male player.

Djokovic overcame a nervy start to break for 3-1, which he stretched to 5-2. He even had a set point in a marathon eighth game which the Italian saved after eight deuces.

Reinvigorated, he broke

Djokovic when he served

for the set and then dominated the tiebreaker which he sealed with his fourth ace of the contest.

The top seed stormed to a 5-1 lead in the second set on the back of a double break. Berrettini, bidding

to be Italy's first men's Grand Slam winner since Adriano Panatta at the 1976 French Open, clawed his way back to 4-5, saving three set points, but Djokovic this time served it out for a set apiece.

Djokovic struck first again for a 2-1 lead in the third set and fought off three break points in the sixth game, a show of defiance which brought watching Hollywood star Tom Cruise to his feet.

That was Berrettini's last chance of the set as Djokovic served it out in the 10th game.

INDIAN-ORIGIN SAMIR LIFTS BOYS' TITLE

Indo-American tennis player Samir Banerjee lifted the Wimbledon boys' singles title on Sunday, a remarkable triumph for the youngster who was testing his skills in a Grand Slam for only the second time in his fledgling career.

All of 17, the boy from New Jersey just wanted to win a match at the biggest stage in the junior circuit, but little did he know that he would be the last boy standing at the hallowed grass courts. Up against compatriot Victor Lillov, the teenager won 7-5 6-3 in the summit clash that lasted one hour 22 minutes. He broke his rival thrice and dropped serve only once in a facile win.

“I came into this tournament looking to win a round and trying to play well because I knew I was playing well before this,” he was quoted as saying by *iftennis.com*.

— Agencies