

THE ASIAN AGE

NEW DELHI SUNDAY 27 JUNE 2021



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Prince Harry comes back to UK for Princess Diana's statue unveiling at Kensington Palace



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WINDOWS



Workers re-install the statue of former Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru on its pedestal, in the premises of the Vidhana Soudha, in Bengaluru on Saturday. The statue was removed due to metro rail construction work near the Assembly. — PTI

Copter carrying Colombia's Prez attacked, all safe

Bucaramanga: Colombian President Iván Duque said on Friday, June 25, 2021, that a helicopter carrying him and several senior officials came under fire in the southern Catatumbo region bordering Venezuela, in a rare instance of a direct attack on a presidential aircraft. Mr Duque said everyone on board the helicopter was safe, including himself, defence minister Diego Molano, interior minister Daniel Palacios and the governor of Norte de Santander state, Silvano Serrano. ■ **More on Page 6**

Probe ordered into photo op with Sushil

New Delhi: An inquiry has been initiated by Delhi Police after a selfie session of police personnel with two-time Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar went viral on Friday. Cops posted with the special cell and 3rd battalion of Delhi Armed police took pictures with Kumar when he was being taken Tihar jail. ■ **More on Page 2**

Goa-bound Rajdhani derails at Ratnagiri

Mumbai: Goa-bound Rajdhani Express from Hazrat Nizamuddin derailed inside a tunnel in Ratnagiri district of Maharashtra early on Saturday, June 26, 2021, but there was no report of injury to any passenger, an official said.

COUNTERPOINT



Actually it was a profit wave!

WEATHER

Max: 39°C
Min: 29°C
RH: 39%
Rain: 10%

Forecast: Sunny

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Bahula Tadiya till 3.59 pm
Star: Shravanam till 1.24 am (Monday)
Variyam: 6.25 am to 7.56 am; 5.18 am to 6.52 am (Monday)
Durmuhurtam: 15.06 pm to 5.58 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
SUNSET TODAY 5.25 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 7.22 AM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 10.45 PM
MOONSET TODAY 7.49 AM

May we work now... virus will win if we fight: Kejriwal Not correct to say Delhi govt exaggerated O2 need: AIIMS

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

A day after Delhi's AAP government and the BJP were locked in a battle over the national capital's oxygen crisis during the second wave of Coronavirus in April-May, three of the five members of the Supreme Court appointed team have distanced themselves from the report, with AIIMS director Randeep Guleria saying that it's not correct to say the Arvind Kejriwal government exaggerated the city's requirement.

Dr Guleria, who heads the subgroup, said, "It would not be correct to say that Delhi oxygen audit is an interim report. We should wait for the final report."

Two other members, B.S. Bhalla, Delhi government's principal home secretary, home, and Max Healthcare's Sandeep Budhiraja, have also questioned the reported conclusions of the report and said that they had raised objections against several

After repeated corrections, the total calculation of oxygen consumption (based on actual consumption data of 214 hospitals) came to around 490 MT. This did not take into account oxygen cylinder refilling and non-Covid requirements of hospitals.

— **Dr Sandeep Budhiraja,** Director, Max Hospital



May we work now if your fight over oxygen is finished? Let us together make a system so no one faces shortage of oxygen in the third wave. There was an acute shortage of oxygen in the second wave. It should not be so in the third wave. Corona will win if we fight with each other.

— **Arvind Kejriwal** Delhi CM



claims that are being made.

"The manner in which the proceedings of the subgroup were conducted suggested that the purpose of proceedings was to satisfy a preconceived and predetermined conclusion and narrative to recommend a lower quantity of oxygen to Delhi. It was also aimed at further portraying an impression that the assessment by the GNCTD (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi) before the high court and the Supreme Court was

exaggerated or not genuine," Mr Bhalla had noted in a communication sent to the panel on May 31.

Max Hospital's director Sandeep Budhiraja said in his comments, included in annexure of the report, that a decision was taken in the panel's first meeting itself to get actual details of oxygen consumption from all the hospitals of NCT Delhi. "After repeated corrections (as hospital medical superintendent used a different format), the total calculation of oxygen consumption (based on actual

consumption data of 214 hospitals) came to around 490 MT. This did not take into account oxygen cylinder refilling and non-Covid requirements of hospitals," Dr Budhiraja said.

Relieved at the clarifications, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the acute shortage of oxygen during Covid's second wave was real and appealed for an end to political bickering and for everyone to work together so that no one suffers in the third wave.

"May we work now if your fight over oxygen is finished? Let us together make a system so no one faces shortage of oxygen in the third wave. There was an acute shortage of oxygen in the second wave. It should not be so in the third wave. Corona will win if we fight with each other. The nation will win if we fight together," Mr Kejriwal tweeted.

On Friday, several BJP leaders circulated a report in the media, claiming that the Delhi government had "exaggerated" the city's

■ **Turn to Page 4**

Delhi banquets may host weddings, gyms can reopen Monday

New Delhi, June 26: Gyms, yoga institutes will reopen and banquet halls will be allowed to host marriage events with the number of guests capped at 50 as part of the next round of relaxations of Covid restrictions being offered in the national capital from Monday.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) issued an order late Saturday specifying the course of the unlock. "Gymnasiums and yoga institutes will be permitted to open up to 50 per cent of the capacity," the DDMA order said. In the case of banquet halls, marriage halls, hotels, "only marriages shall be allowed with a ceiling of 50 persons..." it added.

However, restrictions in Delhi Metro will remain for at least another week. Currently, an eight-coach train that can carry up to 2400 passengers can run with around 250-300 people as the metro has been allowed to operate at 50 per cent seating capacity.

BJP top brass holds meeting to discuss 2022 polls

New Delhi, June 26: Preparation for the Assembly polls in five states early next year was the main agenda of a meeting of senior BJP leaders, including several Union ministers, on Saturday as they deliberated on political and governance issues linked to these states. Party president J.P. Nadda and Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, Narendra Singh Tomar, Smriti Irani, Piyush Goyal and Dharmendra Pradhan were among those who attended the meeting, party leaders said.

"Preparation for the assembly polls in five states was the main agenda of the meeting," a senior party leader told mediapersons after the meeting. — PTI

■ **More on Page 4**

Mimi falls sick after fake jab

Kolkata: Four days after taking a dubious dose of Covishield at a fake vaccination camp and getting the racket behind it busted with the help of the Kolkata Police, Bollywood actor and Trinamul Congress of Jadavpur MP Mimi Chakraborty fell ill at home early on Saturday. At around 4 am Mimi complained of illness which included a severe dehydration, low blood pressure and acute stomach pain.

■ **More on Page 3**

India on Saturday reported nearly 50,000 fresh Coronavirus cases while Delhi registered the lowest single daily spike this year with just 85 cases on Saturday. — Agencies

■ **More on Page 2**

Black Lives Matter: Floyd murderer gets record 22 1/2 yrs jail

Minneapolis, June 26: Former Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced Friday to 22 1/2 years in prison for the murder of George Floyd, whose dying gasps under Chauvin's knee led to the biggest outcry against racial injustice in the US in generations.

The punishment — which came after Chauvin broke his year-long silence to offer condolences to the Floyd family and express hope that they eventually have "some peace of mind" — is one of the longest prison terms ever imposed on a US police officer in the killing of a Black person.

Still, Floyd family members and others were disappointed. The sentence fell short of the 30 years prosecutors had requested. And with good behavior, Chauvin, 45, could get



Derek Chauvin

out on parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or about 15 years. "Just because it's the most time doesn't mean it's enough time," said Nekima Levy Armstrong, a Minneapolis protest leader.

Judge Peter Cahill went beyond the 12 1/2-year sentence prescribed under state guidelines, citing Chauvin's "abuse of a position of trust and authority and also the particular cruelty" shown to Floyd. — AP

■ **More on Page 6**

Farmers mark 7 months of protest; Tomar says ready to talk 25L farmers to march to Delhi: Tikait

AGE CORRESPONDENT with agency inputs
CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Marking the completion of seven months of agitation at Delhi's borders against the three farm laws passed by the Centre, scores of farmers from Punjab and Haryana on Saturday took out protest marches while farmers camping at Delhi's Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur observed July 26 as "Save Agriculture, Save Democracy Day".

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said at least four lakh tractors and 25 lakh farmers are ready to march towards Delhi. However, if talks with the Centre resume, then the march will not be taken forward, he said.

Mr Tikait announced two rallies in Delhi next month to intensify the protest against the Centre's three new farm laws. Mr Tikait, who held a meeting with farmers at Delhi's Ghazipur border, said two decisions were made at the meeting.



BKU spokesperson Rakesh Tikait rides a tractor during farmers' protest against three farm reform laws at Ghazipur border in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

First, a batch of farmers will leave on tractors for the Singhu border from Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district on July 9. And another such rally will start from Bijonr on July 24 and will head towards Ghazipur border via Meerut, he said.

Even as farmers in sev-

No Opp. alliance possible without Cong: NCP, Sena

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Days after the Rashta Manch met at the NCP supreme Sharad Pawar's house in New Delhi in a bid to explore the possibilities for a third front sans Congress, the NCP and Shiv Sena have made it clear that for any Opposition grouping to be a viable force against the BJP, the Congress will have to be a part of it. Sources in the NCP said on Saturday that since the Congress is present in all states, it will have to be accommodated in the larger anti-BJP alliance. After returning to Maharashtra, Mr Pawar also said that if any such coalition emerges, its leadership will have to be "collective".

On Saturday, the Shiv Sena too made it clear that no grand Opposition alliance can be possible without the Congress being part of it. Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut on Saturday said that work is on to bring all Opposition parties together at the national level, and this alliance will

Deshmukh skips ED's summons

Mumbai: The Enforcement Directorate has arrested former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh's personal secretary Sanjeev Palande and assistant, Kundan Shinde on Saturday in connection with the money laundering case related to charges of ₹100 crore bribery. The aides have been remanded in custody by the special PMLA court till June 1. Mr Deshmukh, a senior NCP leader, was also summoned by the central agency, but he didn't turn up for questioning.

■ **More on Page 4**

be incomplete without the Congress.

Speaking with reporters, Mr Raut said, "There is no need for the third front or any other front. Sharad Pawar has already made it clear. The Congress will play an important role in the alliance. It will be a strong alternative to the

■ **Turn to Page 4**

Woman dies in traffic hold up for Prez in Kanpur

4 cops suspended, police apologises

New Delhi, June 26: A 50-year-old chairperson of the women wing of the Indian Industries Association in Kanpur died after being stuck in traffic following diversions to facilitate the ongoing visit of President Ram Nath Kovind to Kanpur Dehat district on Friday.

According to media reports, the woman identified as Vandana Mishra was suffering from post-Covid complications. Her family had rushed her to a private hospital last night after she fell seriously ill.

She was being taken to the hospital at the time when President Kovind's arrival was due in Kanpur for which the police reportedly stopped traffic along the same route Mishra's family was taking. This led to an inordinate delay and the woman was pronounced dead on reaching the hospital.

Taking note of the incident, the Kanpur police commissioner apologised in a Twitter post. "On behalf of Kanpur Police and myself, I am deeply sorry about the demise of Vandana Mishra. This is a big lesson for the future. We pledge our 'route' system will be such that citizens are held up for the shortest possible time so such incidents are not repeated," Kanpur police chief Asim Arun said.

In another tweet, he wrote, "The Honourable President has expressed his condolences on the untimely death of sister Vandana Mishra. The Kanpur Police Commissioner and the District Magistrate were called by him (the President), where he inquired from them about the incident and conveyed condolences to the bereaved family. Both the senior officers attended the funeral and conveyed the President's message to the bereaved family."

Four police personnel — a Sub-Inspector and three Head Constables — had been suspended for stopping traffic longer than directed, said a police officer. Mishra had contracted Covid-19 between April 2 and 14 and was struggling with post-Covid

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US President assures sustained partnership with Kabul We're going to stick with you: Biden tells Afghans

LALIT K. JHA
WASHINGTON, JUNE 26

President Joe Biden has told his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani that the people of Afghanistan "are going to have to decide their future" but assured him that the US is going to "stick with you" even after the American troops leave the war-torn nation by September.

Mr Biden, who had his first face-to-face meeting with Ashraf Ghani at the White House on Friday said America's partnership with the South Asian nation is going to be sustained. The partnership between Afghanistan and the United States is not ending. It's going to be sustained, Biden told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House in a joint media appearance with President Ghani and the CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

American troops may be leaving, but support for Afghanistan is not ending



President Joe Biden meets with Afghan President Ashraf Ghani and chairman of the High Council for National Reconciliation Abdullah Abdullah in the Oval Office of the White House in Washington on Friday. — AP

in terms of helping maintain their military as well as economic and political support, Biden said.

"Afghans are going to have to decide their future of what they want they want. What they want. But it won't be for lack of us being a help. But we're going to stick with you. And we're going to do our best to see to it you have the tools you need," the US

president assured the top Afghan leaders ahead of the US troop withdrawal before September 11.

Mr Ghani, sitting alongside Mr Biden, said Afghanistan was grateful for the blood and treasure US had spilled during the past two decades to defend his country, which now finds itself facing direct battle against the Taliban. — PTI

■ **More on Page 6**

Pak seeks ties with US as India enjoys: Imran

Islamabad: Pakistan is seeking a "civilised" and "even-handed" relationship with Washington like the one that existed between the US and the UK or with India "right now", Prime Minister Imran Khan has said, underlining the role Islamabad could play in the region, including in Afghanistan after America leaves the war-torn country. Mr Khan made the comments during an interview with *The New York Times* in which he also expressed his disappointment that his bid to normalise ties with India did not make any progress though he approached Prime Minister Narendra Modi soon after assuming office in August 2018. — PTI

■ **More on Page 6**

SHORT TAKES

Plantation drive in city for next 15 days: Rai

New Delhi: The Delhi government will run a tree plantation drive across the national capital for the next 15 days as part of “Van Mahotsav”. Environment Minister Gopal Rai said on Saturday, Rai, who inaugurated the “Van Mahotsav” at Ghari Mandu on Yamuna Bank, said the government aims to plant 33 lakh saplings this year as part of its goal of planting two crore trees in its five-year term. “During the next 15 days, we will run the plantation program in all 70 assembly constituencies led by the respective MLAs. And we are hoping to meet most of our aim of planting 33 lakh saplings this year during this drive,” Rai said. He added that all the departments involved in plantation drives have been given directions for audit of the earlier programmes.

Webinars to be held on Delhi's draft master plan: DDA

New Delhi: A series of thematic webinars have been lined for July by DDA to seek people's opinion on the Master Plan 2041 draft, officials said on Saturday. This will facilitate citizens to understand the draft plan better and give more constructive suggestions, a senior official said. Greener environment with protection norms, vibrant economy, enhanced mobility, promoting cleaner fuels and rejuvenation of heritage fabric of the city are among the key areas encompassed in this vision document prepared by the Delhi Development Authority. The draft Master Plan of Delhi (MPD) 2041 was made available early June on the website of the Delhi Development Authority and public suggestions and objections have been invited.

53 youth join Delhi police's 'YUVA' initiative

New Delhi: On the occasion of International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, Delhi Police Commissioner S.N. Shrivastava on Saturday welcomed 53 drug-rehabilitated youth into Delhi Police's skill training “YUVA” initiative. The programme was conducted through web conferencing by linking five skill training centres in five districts where these new trainees are enrolled, while CP Delhi joined from Vimarsh Conference Hall of Police Headquarters. On this occasion, Mr Shrivastava spelt out the life debilitating ill impacts of drug abuse on youth and exhorted the youth to choose life with fighting spirit, not take recourse to drugs or psychotropic substances ever.

Protest held against order allowing street vendors at Sarojini Nagar market

New Delhi, June 26: The Sarojini Nagar market shopkeepers on Saturday kept their shops closed till 1 pm to protest against a Delhi government order permitting street vendors to operate there.

Ashok Randhawa, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, claimed the Delhi government has allowed street vendors to operate in the market and this has increased the risk of Covid spread.

“The government has allowed 92 vendors to operate here. The market anyway gets crowded and after this, the risk of another Covid spread has increased,” Randhawa told PTI.

He added that the shopkeepers had approached the New Delhi Municipal Council seeking to assure the civic body that there would be no “violation of covid guidelines” in the market and the market was reopened only after that.

“We told the NDMC authority that there was-

▶ **ASHOK RANDHAWA**, president of the Sarojini Nagar Mini Market Traders' Association, claimed the Delhi government has allowed 92 street vendors to operate in the market. The market anyway gets crowded and after this, the risk of another Covid spread has increased.

n't enough space to maintain a distance of 10 ft and this was a clear violation of the Covid guidelines. They have told the vendors to open shops on the odd-even basis,” he said.

He added that the NDMC officials will hold a meeting with the shopkeepers on Monday at which further decision will be taken.

The Sarojini Nagar Market along with other major markets in the city were allowed to open from June 14 with due adherence to the Covid guidelines of maintaining social distancing and wearing face masks among others. — PTI

Security tightened, police & paramilitary forces deployed Farmers march to Delhi, give memorandum to L-G

BHASKAR HARI SHARMA
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Marking seven months of their agitation at Delhi's borders against the farm laws passed by the Centre, farmers decided to march towards the national capital on Saturday.

The protest, called “Kheti Bachao, Loktantra Bachao Diwas” (Save agriculture, Save Democracy), comes in the backdrop of the 46th anniversary of the promulgation of Emergency.

The police and paramilitary forces were deployed as security tightened in Delhi in view of the farmers' rally. Meanwhile, the Delhi Metro also decided to shut three main stations on the Yellow Line for four hours on Saturday anticipating protest by farmers.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait announced two rallies in Delhi next month to intensify the protest against the Centre's three new farm laws. Mr Tikait, who held a meeting with farmers at Delhi's Ghazipur border, said two decisions were made at the meeting. First, a batch of farmers will leave on tractors for Singhu border from Uttar Pradesh's Shamli district on July 9. Second, another such rally will start from Bijoor on July 24 and will head towards Ghazipur border via Meerut.

He said at least 4 lakh tractors and 25 lakh farmers are ready to march towards Delhi. However, if the talks with the Centre resume, then the march will not be taken



BKU leader Rakesh Tikait meets farmers who are sitting on protest against farm law at Ghazipur border in New Delhi on Saturday. — G.N. JHA

forward.

The Samyukt Kisan Morcha (SKM) has also appealed to farmers across all states to submit memorandums addressed to the President to their respective governors.

Meanwhile, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar appealed to protesting farmers to end their agitation while saying that the government is ready to resume talks on the three farm laws.

Earlier in the day, reports about the arrest of Mr Tikait were circulating on social media. The Delhi police clarified that the reports were fake and said action would be taken against those spreading such news.

June 26 marked the seven months of protest by farmers over the three new farm laws.

Thousands of farmers across India took out rallies to Raj Bhawans in different states on Saturday to submit a memorandum seeking repeal of the new farm laws.

A few protesters were detained by the Delhi police for allegedly blocking the roads, primarily the Uttar Pradesh and Haryana borders. Reacting to this, Mr Tikait threatened to lead a march to Delhi and told the authorities to either send the detainees to Tihar Jail or let them meet with Delhi lieutenant-governor Anil Bajjal.

The SKM alleged in a statement that the protesters were not allowed to meet the L-G and were picked up and taken to the Wazirabad Police Training Centre. Later on, a brief virtual meet-

ing was arranged with the L-G and the memorandum was handed over to his representative, it said. The government and farmer Unions have held 11 rounds of talk so far, the last being on January 22. Talks were suspended between the two parties after widespread violence during a tractor rally by protesting farmers on January 26.

Thousands of farmers, mainly from Punjab, Haryana, and western Uttar Pradesh, have been camping at Delhi's borders since November 26, 2020, in protest against the three agri laws. While the farmers say the new laws will end state procurement of crops at MSP, the government is of the opinion that these laws will help increase the income of farmers.



Heavy traffic jam on the expressway at Gurgaon-Delhi border due to barricading by Delhi Police in the view of the farmers' protests in Gurgaon on Saturday. — PTI

Special vaccination drive started for workers at Central Vista project site

New Delhi, June 26: A special Covid vaccination drive has been started by the New Delhi district administration for 1,500 workers employed at the Central Vista redevelopment project site here, officials said on Saturday.

The vaccination drive, started on Friday, will continue for 8-10 days, they said, adding that the administration has set a target of inoculating 200 people daily.

“We vaccinated 190 people on Friday. The were administered Covishield vaccine. The workers just have to show their Aadhaar card or other identity detail to get themselves inoculated. There are approximately 1,500 construction workers at the site, and for most of them it would be their first dose,” said an official.

The district administration would be launching the drive to administer the second dose as well, he noted.

The redevelopment of the Central Vista — the nation's power corridor — envisages a new parliament building, a common central secretariat, revamping of the three kilometres-long Rajpath from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate, new office and residence of the prime minister,



A beneficiary at a mobile vaccination centre in New Delhi on Saturday. — PTI

and a new vice president enclave.

Till Friday, the city had administered 69,54,942 vaccine doses, out of which 53,09,546 people have been given the first dose and 16,45,396 have received both the jabs.

The national capital recorded 85 fresh cases of coronavirus, the lowest daily count this year, and nine more deaths on Saturday, according to data shared by the Health Department here.

The positivity rate dipped

to 0.12 per cent, it said.

The nine new fatalities have pushed the death toll in the city to 24,961.

On Monday, Delhi had reported 89 coronavirus cases with a positivity rate of 0.16 per cent, while 11 people had died, the data showed.

Ninety-four people had been diagnosed Covid positive on February 16 while the daily tally was 96 on January 27, according to official figures.

The 89 cases recorded on Monday was the first time

Probe ordered after cops click photos with Sushil

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

The Delhi Police has initiated an inquiry after a photo session of its personnel clicking pictures and selfies with two-time Olympic medallist wrestler and murder accused Sushil Kumar went viral on social media platforms, officials said on Saturday.

The incident happened on Friday at Mandoli Jail premises when Kumar was being shifted to Tihar in the presence of staff from Delhi Police's Special Cell team and the 3rd Battalion of Delhi Armed Police, they said. A senior police officer said “A suo-motu inquiry has been initiated into the matter and based on its outcome, further course of taken will be taken accordingly.”

Both Special Cell and 3rd

Battalion are conducting their internal inquiry into the incident as personnel from both departments were found to be present at the spot, police said.

A Delhi court on Friday extended the judicial custody of Kumar till July 9 in connection with the alleged murder of a young wrestler at Chhatrasal Stadium here. The officer said “Usually in cases of under trail prisoners (UTPs) who are in high risk, to record the proceedings, a dedicated staff from the 3rd battalion videograph the procedure which is also used for academic purposes. The staff is provided with a handi cam for the same so that activities can be monitored.”

On Friday also, a trained staff with handicam was engaged in videography as part of procedure but a few personnel among them were

seen clicking pictures and selfies with their mobile phones after getting carried away with the status of the UTP which was not “professional” and an inquiry is underway to ascertain the fact of the matter, the officer added. Police said personnel have been constantly briefed to act professional and maintain dignity of their uniform.

Kumar is facing charges of murder, culpable homicide, and kidnapping. According to the counsel of the accused, he has been shifted to Tihar jail number 2 from Mandoli jail, where he was earlier lodged. Kumar, along with his associates, allegedly assaulted Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends at the stadium on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over an alleged property dispute. Dhankar, 23, succumbed to the injuries later.

4 arrested for trying to kidnap Delhi bizman

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Four men were arrested for allegedly trying to kidnap a businessman and extort ₹2 crore from his family, police said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Sumit Dalal (28), Vijay (27), Amit (25) and Sumit Dahiya (21), all residents of Bahadurgarh in Haryana, they said.

On the intervening night of Wednesday and Thursday, the police were informed that four men had robbed the businessman of his mobile phone and car keys at gunpoint. The accused later fled towards Peeragarhi.

The police rushed to the spot and started chasing the accused, but the four men ran into nearby fields leaving their car behind.

The businessman said the four men in their car hit his SUV, following which an argument ensued between them. They took the businessman's car keys and mobile phone.

The businessman said the

four men also tried to push him inside their vehicle, but he raised the alarm and some passersby gathered.

The accused then ran away with the phone and keys of his vehicle, a senior police officer said.

“Police nabbed Dalal and Vijay on Thursday evening. One country-made pistol along with a live cartridge was recovered from their possession. Deputy Commissioner of Police (outer) Parvinder Singh said.

During interrogation, the accused disclosed that they were not trying to rob the SUV, instead they had planned to kidnap the businessman to extort Rs two crore, the DCP said.

They further revealed that the conspiracy was hatched by Dalal, who used to work as the driver of the businessman's wife. Dalal also included his friends into the plan, the police said.

On their instance, Amit and Dahiya were also arrested, Singh said, adding that Amit had shaved his head to avoid identification.

Man wanted in multiple murder cases arrested

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

A 32-year-old man working as a sleeper cell for gangsters like Neeraj Bawania and Tillu Tajpuria and wanted in multiple cases of murder was arrested by the police from outer Delhi's Bhalaswa Dairy area.

DCP (OuterNorth) Rajiv Ranjan Singh said, Sandeep (32) a resident of Bhalaswa Dairy was arrested under “Operation CLEAN” which was launched, to arrest the left out and wanted criminals as well as Gangsters of the area.

A country made pistol along with two cartridge was recovered from him.

During interrogation, he was hiding his identity later it was revealed that he was previously involved in two murder cases. He is also associated with Tillu Tajpuria and Neeraj Bawania Gang, cops said.

He was wanted after he jumped Parole in murder case executed in Tihar Jail with the help of all other associates of Tillu Tajpuria. Thereafter he started working as Sleeper Cell of Gang, police said adding that further probe underway.

Delhi govt to take over management of pvt school in Punjabi Bagh

New Delhi, June 26: After receiving several complaints from parents against Swami Shivanand Memorial School charging extra fees arbitrarily, the Delhi government on Saturday decided to take over the management of the private school in Punjabi Bagh, according to an official statement.

The Delhi government, taking into account the complaints of parents, had constituted an inquiry committee for this matter.

The issues raised by students' parents were found to be true by the committee, it noted.

“Considering the inadequacies and complaints which were found to be correct, the Delhi government has decided to initiate the process of taking over the School Management as per the provisions of Delhi School Education Act of 1973,” read the statement. The school management was given a chance to defend itself but it was not able to give any rea-

sonable answer about the anomalies in its functioning, it added.

Delhi deputy chief minister Manish Sisodia on Saturday visited Government Girls' Senior Secondary School (GGSSS) at Kohat Enclave and instructed officials to start the work for building a sports complex within the school premises. The new sports complex, which will include a swimming pool, tennis courts and badminton courts, will “prepare future sports medalists”, Sisodia said.

This is the fourth day that Sisodia, who is also the education minister, inspected the ongoing infrastructure development work in the government schools of Delhi.

The other schools he visited on Saturday included Government Boys Senior Secondary School Prashant Vihar, Sarvodaya Co-Ed Vidyalaya Sector-8 Rohini, and GGSSS Saraswati Vihar. — PTI

SHORT TAKES

Over 58.1L vaccines given on Saturday

New Delhi: India's cumulative Covid vaccination coverage has crossed 32 crore doses with over 58.10 lakh jabs being administered on Saturday. About 36,68,189 vaccine doses were administered as first dose and 1,14,506 doses given as second in the age group 18-44 years Saturday, the health ministry said. Cumulatively, 8,30,23,693 people across the country have received their first dose and a total 18,48,754 have received their second dose since the start of Phase-3 of the vaccination drive, it said. Andhra Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Kerala, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal have administered more than 10 lakh beneficiaries of the age group 18-44 years for the first dose. — PTI

Probe BMC's ₹84cr O2 plant: Congress

Mumbai: Congress minister Aslam Shaikh has demanded a vigilance department probe into Shiv Sena-ruled BMC's ₹84 crore project to install oxygen generation plants. A fortnight ago, the Rs 84 crore project was awarded to the company, which was allegedly penalised in the penguin enclosure project at Byculla zoo and an oxygen plant manufacturer who was allegedly blacklisted for sub-standard work by Jaipur's Sawai Man Singh Medical College in November last year. On June 8, the standing committee in BMC had approved the proposal to award the work to construct 16 oxygen plants at 12 locations in Mumbai to Highway Construction Co. However, the project was stuck after the BJP raised the objection to the tainted companies being in the race for the project.

Newly-wed alleges rape by hubby, kin

Budaun, UP: A newly-wed woman, battling critical injuries in a hospital here, has alleged that she was gangraped by her husband and two brothers-in-law and brutally tortured by other members of his family over demands for dowry, police said on Saturday. The husband she had married to only for three days has been arrested and cases filed against seven people, officials said. The 20-year-old alleged that she was sexually assaulted, her private parts burnt and was also tortured with a stick. Detailing her trauma, she also alleged that there were attempts to make her have a cold drink laced with poison. On receiving the information, the woman's father reached her house with a police team and admitted her to the hospital. — PTI

GOVT OPPOSES IN SC EX-GRATIA TO COVID VICTIMS' KIN

New Delhi: The Centre has told the Supreme Court that though there was no issue of "fiscal affordability" with it, but ex-gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh to the families of those who have died of Covid cannot be paid keeping in mind the "rational, judicious and optimum usage of resources of the nation". The Centre's additional affidavit has been filed in pursuance of the direction of the apex court which, on June 21, had reserved its verdict on two PILs seeking ex-gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh to the dependents of those who died of Covid and easing the procedures for issuance of death certificates to these victims specifying the pandemic as the reason of demise. Terming Covid as "once in a lifetime pandemic inflicted on the entire world", the Centre, in the 39-page written submission, said various steps to strategise the nation's response to the pandemic have been taken and not just the funds of National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and State Disaster Response Fund, but even the funds of Consolidated Fund of India are being utilised according to advice of experts. "It is submitted that, as specifically pleaded before this Hon'ble Court, the issue is not of fiscal affordability, but rather of the most rational, judicious and optimum usage of fiscal and all other resources of the nation," the Centre said. — PTI

Rajnath to visit Ladakh tomorrow

Will review India's operational preparedness along with Army Chief

New Delhi, June 26: Defence minister Rajnath Singh, accompanied by the Army Chief, will begin a three-day visit to Ladakh from Sunday to review India's operational readiness amid a stalemate with China on the next stage of disengagement at several friction points in eastern Ladakh, official sources said.

Mr Singh's visit with Army Chief Gen. M.M. Naravane comes two days after India and China held a fresh round of diplomatic talks to

resolve the prolonged military standoff that began in early May last year.

Sources said the defence minister will visit various key formations and high-altitude bases in eastern Ladakh to assess the ground situation as well as to boost the morale of the troops guarding the line of actual control in a hostile environment.

The defence minister will be given a detailed briefing about the overall situation in eastern Ladakh at the Leh-based headquarters of the 14



Rajnath Singh

Corps of the Army which is tasked to guard the LAC in the Ladakh sector, sources said.

It will be Mr Singh's first visit to eastern Ladakh after the Indian

and Chinese militaries pulled back troops, tanks, infantry and other equipment from the Pangong lake areas in February as part of an agreement.

The disengagement process in the remaining friction points including Hot Springs, Gogra and Depsang is deadlocked as China is reluctant to withdraw its troops from these areas.

Sources said the defence minister will also visit certain forward areas to take stock of the implementation of a number of key infrastructure projects. — PTI



A team of doctors interacts with a victim of fake Covid-19 vaccination during a check-up at City College in Kolkata on Saturday. — PRITAM BANDYOPADHYAY

■ BJP urges Centre to probe vaccine scam

TMC MP Mimi falls ill, days after taking fake jab

RAJIB CHOWDHURI with agency inputs KOLKATA, JUNE 26



Mimi Chakraborty

Four days after taking a fake dose of Covid vaccine at a camp in Kolkata's Kasba area, actor and star Trinamul Congress MP Mimi Chakraborty fell ill at home early on Saturday.

At around 4 am, Mimi complained of illness which included severe dehydration, low blood pressure and acute stomach pain. A doctor advised her to rest with medication but suspected the symptoms as panic syndrome over the fake Covishield dose she got on June 22 rather than its side effects.

The actress-politician was previously diagnosed with gall bladder and liver-related ailments. On Wednesday, Debanjan Deb — who allegedly pretended to be an IAS officer and supervised thousands of vaccinations in Kolkata — was arrested.

To mount pressure on

the Mamata Banerjee government in West Bengal over the major racket run by a bogus IAS officer, allegedly linked to several TMC leaders, Leader of Opposition in the West Bengal Assembly Suwendu Adhikari also urged the Centre to order a probe by its agencies. While the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and state health department have already launched a drive to check the health of those who along with Mimi got the fake vaccine doses at the camp in Kasba, the Kolkata police slapped an attempt to murder charge on three arrested accused, including

Debanjan Deb.

In his letter to Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, Mr Adhikari alleged that the man, who was arrested after his drive was busted by the police, has "influence in the ruling party".

"Hundreds of people have already been inoculated in these camps...While copies of Aadhaar cards were procured from the recipients in Kasba, none of them received any certificate of vaccination.

"The big question is - were these shots really Covishield vaccines as being claimed by the accused? If so, then this raises a big question on pilferage of Covid vaccines from the government stock and this cannot happen without the complicity of top civic authorities.

"If these were not Covid vaccines, then an immediate investigation needs to be done," Mr Adhikari said in the letter written on Friday.

ED: Waze collected

₹4.7-cr cash from bar owners for 'No. 1'

Mumbai, June 26: Suspended police officer Sachin Waze has told the ED that he "collected" ₹4.70 crore cash from Mumbai bar owners and "handed it over" to the personal assistant of former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh, the central probe agency claimed on Saturday.

It also claimed that Mr Waze, the former head of crime intelligence unit of Mumbai police, informed the bar owners and managers that this money "will go to No. 1 and crime branch and social service branch of Mumbai police".

He further told the agency that "he was getting direct instructions from Anil Deshmukh, the then home minister in a number of police investigations".

The ED made these allegations in its remand application filed before a special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) court in Mumbai seeking custody of Mr Deshmukh's aides, personal secretary Sanjeev Palande (51) and personal assistant Kundan Shinde (45) whom it had arrested early on Saturday.



Sachin Waze

The court sent them to ED custody till July 1.

The former cop recorded his statement with the ED saying he was "called for a meeting at the official residence of Maharashtra home minister wherein he was given a list of bar and restaurant owners."

In the meeting, Mr Waze said, he was asked "to collect ₹3 lakh per month from each bar and restaurant."

"Waze has also stated that he had collected approx ₹4.70 crore from various bar owners between the months of December, 2020 to February, 2021 and handed over the same to Kundan Sambhaji Shinde, the PA of Anil Deshmukh, the home minister on instruction of Anil Deshmukh in two installments in the month of January and February 2021," the ED alleged. — PTI

Heavy rain in Patna, dy CM's house inundated

Patna, June 26: Several parts of Patna, including Bihar assembly premises and the residence of Deputy chief minister Renu Devi, were inundated on Saturday following heavy rain that began to pound the city since the previous evening.

According to the MeT Department, the city received 145 mm rainfall since the previous day, the highest for this date in a decade.

Residents woke up in the early hours to deafening sounds of thunderbolts though, so far, there have been no reports of deaths caused by lightning in the city or its outskirts.

By around 9 am, the showers abated but people had to wade through knee-deep water, with trousers rolled up and footwear in the hands, to venture out. Heavy water-logging was seen in most parts of the city, including posh localities like Shri Krishna Puri



Waterlogging at the Bharat Institute of Aeronautics campus after heavy rains in Patna on Saturday. — PTI

and Patel Nagar. Besides, the colonial-era Vidhan Sabha building stood like a desolate, marooned fortress with photo and video journalists dropping in at frequent intervals to capture the images.

Similar was the scene at the official bungalow of deputy chief minister Renu Devi, who resides a few hundred meters away.

However, Patna Municipal Corporation officials claimed that by

noon, water was pumped out from most of the "main roads" though water-logging at by-lanes and streets in low-lying areas remained a problem.

Local news channels beamed footages of residents of such localities expressing anxiety that fresh downpour might lead to "a repeat of October, 2019", when boats had to be plied on submerged roads and IAF helicopters had been roped in for air-dropping essential items. — PTI

CAN FIN HOMES LTD. POSSESSION NOTICE (for immovable property) [Rule 8(1)]

The undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd. under the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 and in exercise of the powers under the said Act and Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002, issued a demand notice on the below mentioned dates calling upon the following borrower(s)/co-borrowers/guarantors to repay the amount mentioned in the notice with further interest at contractual rates till date of realization within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice. The borrowers having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below, against each borrower, in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(4) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement Rules, 2002 on dates mentioned hereinafter.

S. No.	Name of borrowers and guarantors	Description of the property	Date of Demand Notice	Date of Possession	Amount Outstanding
1.	Mrs. Sunita Tomar W/o Mr. Somveer Tomar & Mr. Somveer Tomar S/o Mr. Satyapal Tomar and Guarantor/s Mr. Gurbaksh Singh S/o Mr. gumukh Singh	Flat No. 1205, 12th Floor, Tower-B2, Avlon Homes, Alwar Bypass Road, Bhiwadi Dist.: Alwar (Rajasthan) 301019 Bounded By : north : Passage, South : Flat No. 1204, East : Passage, West: Open Area	06.04.2021	24.06.2021	Rs. 20,60,267/-
2.	Mr. Mriganka Chakraborty S/o Mr. Sisir Chakraborty & Mrs. Haimi Chakraborty W/o Mr. Mriganka Chakraborty and Guarantor/s Mr. Gaurav Mishra S/o Mr. Ram Naresh Mishra	Flat No. 006, Ground Floor, Tower-C2, Avlon Homes, Alwar Bypass Road, Bhiwadi Dist.: Alwar (Rajasthan) 301019 Bounded by : North : Flat No. 005, South : Flat No. 007, East : Open Space, West: Passage	06.04.2021	24.06.2021	Rs. 13,13,633/-
3.	Mr. Ajaz Ahmad S/o Mr. Mohd. Jamal and Guarantor/s Mr. Gopi Ram Bairwa S/o Mr. Shivram Bairwa & Ms. Shabnum D/o Mr. Abdul Quyum	Flat No. 604, 6th Floor, Tower Sigma 12, Cammella Garden-1, Alwar Bypass Road, Bhiwadi, Dist. : Alwar (Rajasthan) 301019 Bounded By : North : Open Area, South : Flat No. 608, East: Staircase, West: Flat No. 603	06.04.2021	24.06.2021	Rs. 28,59,122/-
4.	Mrs. Divya Chokra W/o Mr. Anuj Bawa and Guarantor/s Mr. Anuj Bawa S/o Mr. Praveen Bawa	Flat No. 506, 5th Floor, Tower B-1, Avelon Residency, Alwar Bypass Road, Bhiwadi Dist.: Alwar (Rajasthan) 301019 Bounded by : North : Other Property, South : Staircase, East : Open, West: Flat No. 505	06.04.2021	24.06.2021	Rs. 27,88,902/-
5.	Mr. Rakesh S/o Mr. Kartare & Mr. Sagar S/o Mr. Rakesh and Guarantor/s Mr. Vijay S/o Mr. Karan Singh	Flat No. A-1114, 11th Floor, Krish ICON Village : Tatarpur, Tehsil-Tijara, Dist : Alwar (Rajasthan) 301019 measuring 555 sqft. Bounded By : North : Passage, South : Balcony, East : Open, West : Flat No. 1101	06.04.2021	24.06.2021	Rs. 17,88,652/-

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets. The borrowers in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of CFHL for the amount mentioned against each property along with further interest thereon till the date of realisation.

Date: 26.06.2021
Place: Rewari

Authorised Officer
Can Fin Homes Ltd.

CAN FIN HOMES LTD. DEMAND NOTICE

Under Section 13(2) of the Securitisation and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act 2002 (SARFAESI Act) read with Rule 3(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 (Rules) Whereas the undersigned being the Authorised Officer of Can Fin Homes Ltd., under SARFAESI Act and in exercise of powers conferred under Section 13(2) read with Rule 3, issued Demand Notice under Section 13(2) of the said Act, calling upon the Borrowers and guarantors listed hereunder (hereinafter referred to as the "said Borrowers"), to repay the amounts mentioned in the Notice, within 60 days from the date of receipt of Notice, as per details given below. The said Notices have been returned undelivered by the postal authorities / have not been duly acknowledged by the borrowers. Hence the Company by way of abundant caution is effecting this publication of the demand notice (as per the provisions of Rule 3 (1)). The undersigned has, therefore, caused these Notices to be pasted on the premises of the last known addresses of the said Borrowers, as per the said Act.

As security for due repayment of the loan, the following assets have been mortgaged to the Company by the respective parties as detailed below.

No.	Name of Borrowers/Guarantors with address	Amount claimed as per Demand Notice *	Description of the Secured Asset	Date of NPA
1.	1. Mr. Mohd Ziauddin S/o. Mehboob E-17/2, S/F, Kh. No.127, Gali No.1, Rajput Mohalla Ghonda Delhi 110053 (Borrower) 2. Mrs. Nazmeen Siddiqui W/o. Mohd Ziauddin No.127, Gali No.1, Rajput Mohalla Ghonda Delhi 110053 (Co Borrower) 3. Mr. Shahid S/o. Wali Mohamad H.no.A-18, Street No.1 Subhash Mohalla Moujpur Delhi 110053 (Guarantor)	RS. 16,46,123/-	Property Area Admeasuring 17 1/2 Sq. Yards Along With Constructed Building No.C-187/16, Gali No.2, Chauhan Banzer, Near Kalyan Cinema, Gonda, Delhi 110053 Boundaries: North : Road 20 Ft, South : Other Property, East : Other Property, West: Other Property.	30.11.2020
2.	1. Sh. Gyan Prakash S/o Sh. Raja Ram R/o Flat No. SF-1, Second Floor, Front Side LHS, Plot No. 70, Sector-1, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad - 201012, UP (borrower) 2. Smt. Alka Adley W/o Sh. Gyan Prakash R/o Flat No. SF-1, LG, Second Floor Front LHS, Plot No. 70, Sector-1, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad - 201012, UP (co Borrower) 3. Mr. Kumar Mastram S/o Jai Pal Singh R/o A-189, Vijay Nagar, Sector - 12, Ghaziabad - 201009, UP (guarantor)	RS. 18,54,878/-	Flat No. SF-1, LG, Second Floor Front LHS, Plot No. 70, Sector-1, Vasundhara, Ghaziabad - 201012, UP (borrower) Boundaries: North: Plot No. G-62, South: Other Plot, East: Road, West : Road, West : Road	28.02.2021
3.	1. Mr. Javir Khan S/o Mr. Alam Khan G-63-A, first Floor (front Side) Bengali Colony, mandir Marg, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi 110045 (borrower) 2. Mrs. Afreen Khan W/o Mr. Javir Khan G-63-A, first Floor (front Side) Bengali Colony, mandir Marg Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi 110045 (co Borrower)	RS. 27,09,151/-	Flat No. G-63-A, first Floor (front Side), bengali Colony, Mandir Marg, Mahavir Enclave, New Delhi 110045 Boundaries: North: Plot No. G-62, South: Other Plot, East: Road, West : Road, West : Road	31.01.2021
4.	1. Smt. Suneta Kapoor W/o vinod Kapoor C-162, G-1, Ground Floor Shalimar Garden Extn. 1 Ghaziabad 201005 (borrower) 2. Mr. Mohit Kapoor S/o vinod Kapoor C-162, G-1, Ground Floor Shalimar Garden Extn. 1 Ghaziabad 201005 (co Borrower) 3. Mr. shalinder Kumar K-3, Patel Nagar Sihani Gate Ghaziabad 201001 (guarantor)	RS. 15,17,926/-	Flat No. G-1, Ground Floor (front Side) Without Roof Rights, Property No C-162 (part), Block-C, Shalimar Garden Extension 2, Ghaziabad, UP Boundaries: North: remaining Part Of Plot, South: plot No. 161, East : 40 Ft. wide Road, West: service Lane	31.10.2020
5.	1. Sri. Mohd. Munawar Sheikh S/o. Mohd. Abdul Quayum Flat No. GF1, Ground Floor Plot No. D-2/2, DLF Ankur Vihar Vill Loni Pargana Ghaziabad 201102 (borrower) 2. Smt. nusrat Parvin W/o. Mohd. Munawar Sheikh Flat No. GF1, Ground Floor Plot No. D-2/2, DLF Ankur Vihar Vill Loni Pargana Ghaziabad 201102 (co Borrower) 3. Mr. Sona Sekh B-24, Gali No.1 Shastri Park Delhi 110053 (guarantor)	RS. 22,78,973/-	Flat No. GF- 1, Ground Floor (front Side), Plot No. D-2/2, DLF Ankur Vihar, loni, Ghaziabad 201102 Bounded By: North: Plot No. D-2/1T, South: plot No. D-2/3, East: other Land West: road	30.11.2020
6.	1. Smt. Sangeeta Garg W/o Sh. Vibhor Garg R/o Flat No. G-2, Ground Floor, Gupta Apartment, Plot No. 872, Shalimar Garden Extn.-1, Ghaziabad - 201005 (borrower) 2. Sh. Vibhor Garg S/o Sh. Ram Kumar Garg R/o Flat No. G-2, Ground Floor, Gupta Apartment, Plot No. - 872, Shalimar Garden Extn.-1, Ghaziabad - 201005 (co Borrower) 3. Mr. Lal Shankar Jha S/o Jawahar Lal Jha R/o M No 88 89, J Block, Old Seemarpur, Delhi - 110095 (guarantor)	RS. 20,70,046 /-	Flat No. G-2, Ground Floor MIG Flat, Plot No. 872, Gupta Apartment, Shalimar Garden Extn. 1, Ghaziabad - 201005, U.P. Boundaries: North: Road 40', South: Service Lane, East: Road 40', West: Plot No. 871	28.02.2021

*Payable with further interest at contractual rates as agreed from the date mentioned above till date of payment. We are hereby called upon to pay the above said amount with contracted rate of interest thereon within 60 days from the date of publication of this notice, failing which the undersigned will be constrained to initiate action under SARFAESI Act to enforce the above said security. Further, the attention of borrowers / guarantors is invited to provisions of Section 13 (8) of the Act, in respect of time available to them to redeem the secured assets

Date: 26.06.2021
Place: Delhi

Authorised Officer
Can Fin Homes Ltd.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SHORT TAKES

2 ayurvedic docs get UAE's Golden Visa

Dubai: Two Indian Ayurvedic doctors have received the UAE'S coveted Golden Visa, according to a media report on Saturday. Dr Shyam Vishwanathan Pillai and Dr Jasna Jamal, both from Kerala, were granted Golden Visas by the UAE's Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship (ICA), Khaleej Times reported. Pillai, CEO of Vaidyashala at the Burjeel Day Surgery Centre in Abu Dhabi, was granted the Golden Visa under the medical professionals and doctors category on June 17. My sincere gratitude to the rulers and policymakers of UAE for the kind support to Ayurveda and Ayurveda practitioners, Pillai said. I truly appreciate their vision in integrating the Ayurveda for the wellbeing of UAE residents and at the same time keeping in place strong measures to ensure the quality delivery of Ayurveda practice, he added. — PTI

Teen held for illegal entry in Navy base

Kochi: An 18 year-old boy has been booked for allegedly trespassing into the naval base here without a proper defence identity card, soon after defence minister Rajnath Singh's visit to Cochin Port on Friday, police said. "We were informed by the Naval base authorities about an 18-year-old boy trespassing into the naval base at around 9 PM. They handed him over, along with their report," Harbour police told PTI. Singh had arrived here on June 25 to review the construction progress of India's first indigenous Aircraft Carrier, at Ernakulam wharf of Cochin Port. Meanwhile, defence authorities said a boy in his late teens tried to enter the Naval Base through the gate without a proper Defence Identity Card. — PTI

'Abrogating Article 370 biggest mistake'

Srinagar: Senior Congress leader Saifuddin Soz on Saturday said the abrogation of Article 370, which accorded special status to Jammu and Kashmir, was a big mistake by the Centre. "While the home minister Shri Amit Shah is free to say what he said recently on our internal autonomy as enshrined by Article 370 of the Constitution of India, the fact remains that the abrogation of the said Article unilaterally is a very big mistake on the part of the Union of India," Mr Soz said in a statement. He said Shah's assertion that Article 370 was the root of terror in Jammu and Kashmir is not based on facts. "He (Shah) has not offered even a single fact in support of his assessment," the former union minister said. — PTI

Modi chairs meet on Ayodhya development plan

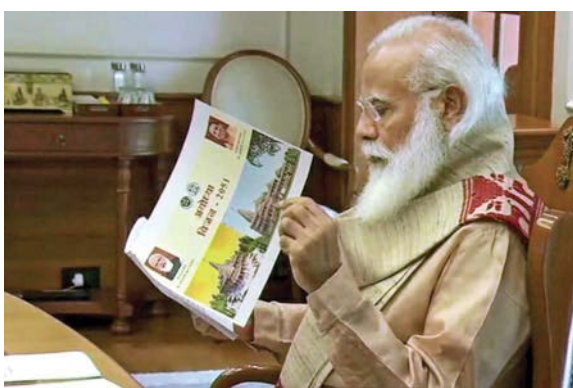
Ayodhya should manifest finest of our traditions: PM

New Delhi, Jun 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the development plan for Ayodhya and asserted that the temple town in Uttar Pradesh should manifest the "the finest of our traditions and the best of our developmental transformations".

Speaking at a virtual meeting, which was also attended by Uttar Pradesh CM Yogi Adityanath, Modi described Ayodhya as a city that is etched in the cultural consciousness of every Indian and said the human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure.

A PMO statement on the meeting said Ayodhya's development is being envisaged as a spiritual centre, global tourism hub and a sustainable smart city. At the meeting, Uttar Pradesh government officials made a presentation which encompassed various aspects of Ayodhya's development.

The Prime Minister was informed about various upcoming and proposed infrastructure projects to improve connectivity with Ayodhya and various projects like airport, expansion of railway station, bus station, roads and high-



Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a meeting on Ayodhya development plan via video conferencing in New Delhi. UP CM Yogi Adityanath & deputy CM Dr Dinesh Sharma also attended the meeting. — PTI

ways were discussed, the PMO said. An upcoming greenfield township was discussed which includes lodging facilities for devotees, space for ashrams, maths, hotels, bhavans of various states. A tourist facilitation centre and a world class museum will also be built, it said.

"Ayodhya should manifest the finest of our traditions and the best of our developmental transformations," the prime minister was quoted as saying at the meeting by the statement.

Noting that Ayodhya is both spiritual and sublime,

he said the human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure, which is beneficial for everyone including tourists and pilgrims.

PM Modi said that the coming generations should feel the desire to visit Ayodhya at least once in their lifetime.

The PM pointed out that developmental works in Ayodhya will continue in the foreseeable future and stressed that at the same time, the momentum towards heralding Ayodhya to this next leap of progress must begin now. — PTI

BJP abuzz with activity ahead of polls in five states

New Delhi, June 26: Preparation for the assembly polls in five states early next year was the main agenda of a meeting of senior BJP leaders, including several Union ministers, on Saturday as they deliberated on political and governance issues linked to these states.

Party president J.P. Nadda and Union ministers Amit Shah, Rajnath Singh, Nirmala Sitharaman, Narendra Singh Tomar, Smriti Irani, and Kiren Rijju were among those who attended the meeting, party leaders said.

"Preparation for the assembly polls in five states were the main agenda of the meeting," a party leader said after the meeting. Assembly polls in Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand, Punjab, Manipur and Goa are slated for early next year. The BJP is in power in all these states except Punjab, and has been holding a series of meetings of its senior leaders as it works to put up an impressive show in the next round of elections. — PTI

NCB busts drug cartel operating through darknet

New Delhi, June 26: The Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday claimed to have busted an international drugs trafficking syndicate with the arrest of eight people and seizure of 22 lakh psychotropic tablets and at least 245 kgs of similar drugs that were being allegedly peddled over the darknet. The central anti-narcotics agency said the illegal trade was unearthed after multiple raids were carried out by officials of the Delhi zonal unit in the NCR, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Himachal Pradesh over a two month period.

NCB deputy director (operations) K.P.S. Malhotra said, "22 lakh psychotropic drugs like Tramadol, 70,000 codeine-based cough syrups and 245 kgs of other category of drugs have been seized till now. A total of eight people have been arrested." The officer, who also heads the NCB's Delhi unit as its zonal director, said the accused deployed the "modus operandi of getting the orders through

the darknet, created secret websites and delivered the narcotics items through dedicated shippers to create anonymity between the receiver of the order and the logistics people."

Darknet denotes to a hidden network within the internet that can only be accessed with specific software and tools like the onion router.

Digital forensics show that the syndicate has shipped at least one lakh orders to places in the US, UK, Europe and some other countries under the label of herbal supplements, he said. Mr Malhotra said the agency questioned the arrested accused and found that a good chunk of the psychotropic drugs was being diverted from a Haridwar-based pharmaceutical manufacturing company. The agency also issued a statement to say that the syndicate was spread across Delhi-NCR, Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand and has links abroad like in the US, UK, Canada and the Philippines. — PTI

CJI prods minister on poor rural digital connectivity

New Delhi, June 26: Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana has written to Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad seeking steps to resolve poor digital connectivity in rural, tribal and hilly areas, saying this is "adversely impacting the pace of justice delivery".

In his letter to Prasad, who is also the minister for law and communications, Justice Ramana also referred to the "digital divide" and said "a whole generation of lawyers is being pushed out of the system" due to technological inequality.

The Chief Justice of India (CJI) informed about the letter, written on June 8, while speaking on Saturday at the virtual release of a book 'Anomalies in Law and



Poor connectivity in rural, tribal, remote and hilly areas is adversely impacting the pace of justice delivery and is also depriving thousands of young lawyers across the country of their livelihood.

— N.V. Ramana, CJI

Justice' authored by former Supreme Court Judge Justice R.V. Raveendran. During the course of a panel discussion that followed the book launch, Justice Ramana said that the issue of connectivity figured prominently at a two-day conference of chief justices of high courts that he had held recently.

"Poor connectivity in rural, tribal, remote and hilly areas is adversely impacting the pace of jus-

tice delivery and is also depriving thousands of young lawyers across the country of their livelihood. A whole generation of lawyers is being pushed out of the system due to digital divide," the CJI said. Justice Ramana said he recently wrote to the law, communications and IT minister, highlighting these issues, and requested him to initiate steps on priority to bridge the digital divide and evolve a mecha-

nism to help advocates who have lost their livelihood due to the Covid pandemic and who are in dire need of financial assistance.

The letter stated that there is "a need to strengthen the network and connectivity beyond major urban centres, particularly in rural and tribal areas, as the digital divide is adversely impacting the functioning of the courts in the wake of Covid."

"The judicial infrastructure needs to be augmented with latest information and communication technology tools to facilitate 'access to justice' during and post pandemic time. Further, the judicial infrastructure needs to be streamlined and revamped to deal with the challenges of pendency," the CJI said. — PTI

India & Greece discuss Cyprus, vow to boost diplomatic ties

AGE CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Visiting EAM S. Jaishankar on Saturday discussed the Cyprus issue with his Greek counterpart in Athens in what is being seen as a strong message to Pakistan's friend Turkey which has been playing an increasingly assertive role in the region.

Greece and Turkey have a long history of rivalry over the island of Cyprus, with Turkey having invaded the island in 1974. India has always supported the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity, and unity of Cyprus. On Saturday, India and Greece also agreed to work towards the establishment of a bilateral strategic partnership. In another veiled message, this time to Pakistan, both India and Greece "recognised the threat posed by radicalisation, violent extremism, as well as terrorism including cross border terrorism."

The MEA further said, "On the occasion of the 200th anniversary of Greek independence, the external affairs minister conveyed felicitations of the President and the Prime Minister of India to the government and the people of Greece. During the visit, the external affairs minister paid a courtesy call on H.E. Kyriakos Mitsotakis, the Prime Minister of Greece, and had bilateral talks with his counterpart, H.E. Nikos Dendias.

Deshmukh skips ED summons, asked to appear again next week

BHAGWAN PARAB
MUMBAI, JUNE 26

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has arrested former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh's personal secretary Sanjeev Palande and assistant, Kundan Shinde on Saturday in connection with the money laundering case related to charges of ₹100 crore bribery. Mr Deshmukh, a senior NCP leader, was also summoned by the central agency, but he didn't turn up for questioning.

According to ED sources, Mr Deshmukh was asked to depose before the investigating officer at the agency office in Ballard Estate here by 11 am, but he has



Anil Deshmukh

sought a fresh date for appearance. A team of Mr Deshmukh's lawyers visited the ED office to make the demand. The agency is expected to accept his request, the officials said.

Mr Deshmukh has been asked to appear before the ED for questioning early next week after he sought a fresh date for appearance in a money laundering case related to an alleged multi-crore bribery-cum-extortion

2 aides remanded in ED custody till July 1

Mumbai: A court here on Saturday remanded two aides of former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh in ED custody till July 1 in connection with a money laundering case lodged against the NCP politician. Deshmukh's personal secretary Sanjeev Palande and personal assistant Kundan Shinde were arrested after about nine hours of questioning under provisions of Prevention of Money Laundering Act, an official said. — PTI

racket that led to his resignation in April, officials said.



Workers during the re-installation of the statue of former Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru on its pedestal in the premises of the Vidhana Soudha in Bengaluru on Saturday. The statue was removed due to metro rail construction work near the Assembly. — PTI

Not correct to say Delhi govt exaggerated O2 need: AIIMS

Continued from Page 1

medical oxygen needs at the peak of the second wave of the pandemic. The Centre, based on that report, remarked that the Delhi government had used a wrong formula to calculate its oxygen requirements and "excess supply" to the capital "affected other states." It accused the Delhi government of "criminal negligence".

"The matter is in the Supreme Court. We need to wait and see what the top court says about it. Under counting of active cases and other factors need to be considered," Dr Guleria said on Saturday.

The Supreme Court-

appointed panel's report says the Delhi government sought 1,140 metric tonnes (MT) of medical grade oxygen during the second wave. This was four times higher than the 289 MT of LMO required as per the formula for bed capacity requirement. The sub-group also questioned the Delhi government's allocation of 700 MT of medical grade oxygen on April 30, saying it was done using a "wrong formula".

However, two panel members dissented after the interim report surfaced.

The report has an annexure of communication sent by Mr Bhalla on May 31 in which he said a reading of

the draft interim report makes it painfully apparent that the sub-group, instead of focussing on the task, delineated from the terms of order of the Supreme Court dated May 6.

He also objected to the finding of the sub-group that medical oxygen consumption as per actual bed occupancy was 250 tonnes in late April, 470-490 MT in the first week of May and 900 MT as claimed on May 10. "This para should be deleted as it is neither correct nor based on verified data. With the number of new positive cases peaking in the first week of May, and hospital bed occupancy continuing to rise even after

that, the Oxygen requirement based on occupancy was around 625 MT at the end of April and 700 MT in the first week of May," he said. Besides Dr Guleria, Mr Bhalla and Mr Buddhiraaj, the audit panel comprises Union Jal Shakti ministry joint secretary Subodh Yadav, and Sanjay Kumar Singh of the Petroleum and Oxygen Safety Organization (PESO).

A bench headed by Justice D. Y. Chandrachud had on May 5 had directed the Centre to maintain supply of 700 MT of oxygen to Delhi after Delhi faced a severe shortage of medical oxygen leading to scores of deaths.

Drugs worth over ₹1,300cr destroyed in Punjab

Chandigarh, June 26: Seized drugs including 659 kg heroin valuing Rs 1,318 crore in the international market were destroyed by the Punjab government on the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on Saturday.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh reiterated his demand for a national drug policy to tackle the menace of

drugs, according to an official statement issued here. Besides heroin, other narcotics which were destroyed included 3,000 kg of poppy husk, pills/capsules worth Rs 5.8 crore, 166 kg ganja, and 5 kg charas, it said.

Singh digitally launched the live destruction in Amritsar carried out by a special team led by Commissioner of Police (Amritsar) Sukhchain

Pradesh, and Delhi had agreed to put in place an effective mechanism for tackling drug smuggling, but no significant progress has been made.

Asserting his government's zero tolerance towards drugs, Singh attributed the problem to the strong nexus between smugglers, gangsters and terrorists who were promoting narco-terrorism in the state. — PTI

Woman dies in traffic hold up for Prez in Kanpur

Continued from Page 1

complications. She had gone to the hospital in the first half of Friday for tests. She returned home around 4 pm, but again complained of nausea and uneasiness around 6 pm. The family then left for the hospital again.

"Because there was a lot of traffic on the route to the hospital, they got late and she vomited while in the car. Her family members gave her CPR and tried to save her," Mishra's colleague was quoted as saying in news reports, adding that one of her family members is a doctor and tried to save her.

'Torture' of wife by MLA: Women's panel seeks report from Kangra SP

Shimla, June 26: The Himachal Pradesh State Commission for Women has sought report from Kangra superintendent of police over the allegations that Dharamshala BJP MLA Vishal Nehriya tortured his wife.

Commission chairperson Daisy Thakur told PTI that they took suo motu cognisance of the matter on the basis of a video that surfaced on the social media. In the video, 2020-batch Himachal Pradesh Administrative Services (HPAS) officer Oshin Sharma alleged that her husband Vishal Nehriya tortured her physically and mentally.

In a letter to Kangra SP Vimukt Ranjan, the commission asked him to sub-

mit a report immediately, she added. However, the SP was not available for comments despite repeated attempts.

In the video that surfaced on social media on Friday, Oshin Sharma alleged that the BJP legislator slapped her thrice on Thursday. Nehriya and Sharma had married two months ago on April 26.

Sharma said she has now returned to her maternal house. The HPAS officer claimed that Nehriya had also beaten her in February this year at a Chandigarh hotel.

The BJP MLA neither answered to the phone calls nor replied to messages sent to get his version. Nehriya (32) was elected as an MLA from

Dharamshala in the bypolls two years ago.

Sharma also alleged that her husband had expelled her from his house on the fourth day of their marriage when she tested positive for Covid.

Sharma said she had agreed to return then as he threatened to harm himself. The HPAS officer also stated that she knew Nehariya since their college days. She said she had ended her relationship with him then as he used to beat her even during those days.

However, Nehariya asked Sharma to marry him in 2019 after becoming the MLA and she agreed as she thought he was genuinely interested in her, according to the officer. — PTI

No Opp alliance possible without Cong: NCP, Sena

Continued from Page 1

present dispensation... Work is in progress to bring all the Opposition parties together, which will not be complete till the Congress is roped in."

Maharashtra strongman and NCP chief Sharad Pawar had called a meeting of several Opposition parties under the aegis of Rashtra Manch started by him and current TMC

leader Yashwant Sinha. The meeting that drew a lot of media attention as the formation of a third front against the Bharatiya Janata Party juggernaut was eventually termed as a "non-political meet" by the NCP.

Several Congress leaders were also called to the Rashtra Manch meeting but they decided not to attend. One of the leaders, speaking

on the condition of anonymity, said, "We have made our position clear even to the NCP. There can be no joint Opposition front without the Congress."

He further added that if the Rashtra Manch wanted the Congress to attend, it should have spoken with Congress president Sonia Gandhi and she would have deputised Congress leaders to attend.

Congress insiders claim that the change in NCP and Shiv Sena's stand regarding the joint Opposition front has come after a stern message was conveyed to the NCP.

Speculation about a joint Opposition gained momentum as the Rashtra Manch meeting took place after Mr Pawar had several meetings with political strategist Prashant Kishor.

THE ASIAN AGE

27 JUNE 2021



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

The wonder years start at dauntless 50

Watching The Masked Dancer UK with my children last weekend, I was struck by the age, élan, and agility of two of the three finalists, both in their mid-fifties. When I grow up, I said to myself, that's how I want to be. But if growing up is getting to fifty then it isn't miles away, and with my two left feet, dancing's not on my bucket list.

Of course it's not about dancing at all, which is clearly just an extension of these fifty-somethings' love for life and who-gives-an-eff-about-convention stance. It's a metaphor for the verve with which they've waltzed into aging.

Convention, you see, would want us to age in a particular way. When they talk about aging gracefully, they don't mean you should enter a televised dance contest with competitors half your age. Or wear body-hugging outfits, or get in society's face. They mean you should disappear.

Disappear in a manner however, that suits society; hovering obsequiously on its periphery. You still need to turn up and be counted at funerals. At family functions that are any fun, you are lumped with children to look after; eliminating you from the action. In fact, wherever there's a thankless job, without recognition or reward, you're the one it's pegged for. Because, after all, as the scriptures confirm, you're at that stage of life — Sanyas — when you must renounce it all. Even far-sighted Shakespeare wrote about the "spectacles on nose and pouch on side (colostomy bag?), shrunk shank, and childish treble" of the post-fifty brigade. But he died at 52, without ever having experienced this stage, so what did he know?

I know that if I'm to toddle back to my childhood again, I will cherry pick, like a child might, the bits I want to swallow, spitting the rest out like unpalatable pips. Like the youngest kids, we are undoubtedly more vulnerable to diseases (as this pandemic has proved). Like them as well, we are not at the peak of our physical strength; not as robust as folks in their teens, twenties, or early thirties. We've been there, got the t-shirt, fallen over inelegantly onto the other, twilit side, and got it badly blemished. But there are oh-so-many advantages to being weather-beaten and worldly-wise.

I know this *before* I've got to fifty because this locked-down pandemic has been an enforced aging. My stay-at-home-cooking-baking-pottering-in-the-garden avatar has descended on me ten years ahead of time. So have the array of diseases it has accelerated, which, had I been allowed to remain active and less anxiety-ridden, I may have side-stepped nimbly for another decade. But you could also look at this imposed maturation as early acquisition of wisdom; a bringing into sharp focus of all that really matters in life.

Yet, because growing old is so reviled by popular culture, and strikes such terror in the human heart, I too was a bit iffy about entering my thirties, but it turned out infinitely better than the decade before that. Arguably, my forties have been even more rewarding (though it does help to have a failing memory; lifting each decade I'm living through to the top). The fifties might be the best yet. Limbering up for it as I have been through this speed-aging pandemic, I feel ready. I feel almost Zen.

Isn't that a lot like Sanyas? Disappearing with 'dignity' aka. not making a fuss? No, because vanishing only as much as we want to, from society's bleeping radar, is a whole other trip called freedom.

I've never known more liberty than now; a couple of years, plus a couple of months, away from my half-century. As we grow, conventions bind us and social expectations pin us down, till one day we discover we've been put out to pasture. With society's gaze irrevocably averted in this so-called second childhood, we can be ourselves again like carefree kids.

For example: Not one for superficial chatter, lockdown's one boon has been its cessation, and I'll never again feel compelled. Yet, I'm deeply interested in the welfare of those I love, as well as the world at large. But both these concerns require in-depth conversation and not trivial natter.

Nor will I wear anything ever again that makes me squirm. Not high heels, except when in the mood. And even less often — bras! Both socially imposed, they're uncomfortable, if not injurious to health. And do they really make us more presentable? To whom exactly? Those who care will want us to be comfy, and to everyone else I have this to say: go find something sensible to rant about instead!

Strenuously discouraged from dyeing my hair purple recently, on the grounds that it was unbecoming for my age, I went ahead. It caused a few jaws to drop undoubtedly, but well-wishers and my mirror loved it.

So, come and see me by all means, wild-haired in my flats and ganjee, looking more like my Dadu than ever, and as unwilling to indulge in frivolities.

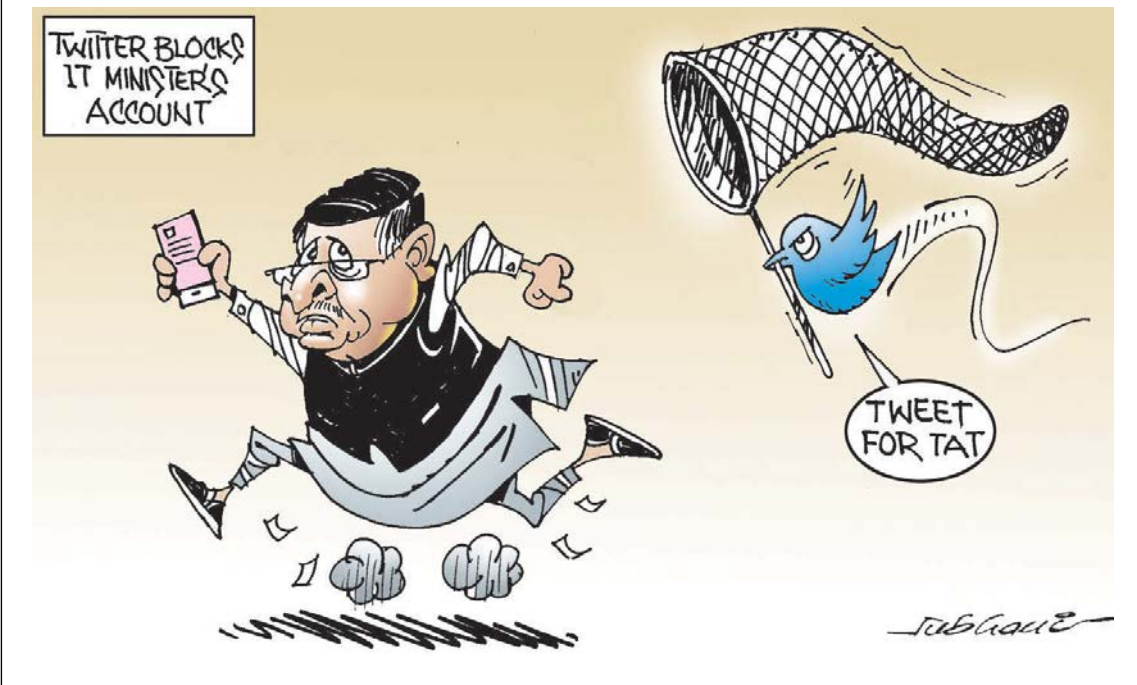
This freedom goes way beyond the trappings of course, though not having to toe the line with even these are considerable victories. Age is then an invisibility cloak, but one that confers a powerful forcefield, allowing us to be ourselves, even as it embargoes the narrow-minded and the nasty.

Growing older and less decorous, like children but in reverse, because we know better now and our bodies won't conform anymore anyhow; society begins to give us a wide berth, not just from disinterest but fear! No longer hounded to deliver on this hide-bound expectation or that, there's peace at last.

Age is indeed more than just a number; it's a wondrous new world.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures*. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhana.

Subhani



With trust as weapon, forge a Naya Kashmir



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Chanakya had a basic dictum: you cannot rule a people against their will. Perpetual intimidation of an unwilling populace is a tempting but unworkable solution. You have to win the trust of those you govern. It is good that this principle is at last being followed by the BJP government at the Centre where Kashmir is concerned. The importance of Prime Minister Modi's meeting with 14 leaders from Kashmir on June 24 has to be understood in this context.

Since August 5, 2019, when Article 370 was revoked, the people of Kashmir have literally been incarcerated in their own homes. Landline, mobile and Internet connections were cut; as many as 3,800 political leaders and activists were jailed or put under house arrest; curfews and lockdowns were imposed; and an army of troops and police personnel converted the Valley into occupied barracks.

The time to break through this impasse was long overdue. The PM himself acknowledged that he would have had the meeting earlier, where he could meet leaders face to face instead of virtually, but for Covid.

The most important takeaway from the meeting was that the principal Opposition parties in Kashmir, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Conference (NC), attended. Both Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were present. The second takeaway was that, in spite of the strong feelings in both these parties against the abrogation of Article 370 — on which the Centre would not yield — there was no veto on discussions, and other

issues of great import could be discussed.

The discussion on Article 370 was deflected by the simple fact that the question of its constitutionality was before the Supreme Court (SC) and, therefore, sub judice. There is, indeed, a good case for the reservations of the Kashmiri parties on the manner in which Article was revoked. According to the Constitution, while 370 is a temporary measure and can be done away with, this step requires a recommendation from the J&K Assembly. This was not obtained. The Assembly had been suspended. There was President's rule. The powers of the Assembly were being exercised by the Centre directly through the governor. The government thus obtained the recommendation from the governor, their own nominee. That was tantamount to seeking concurrence from itself. The decision is under challenge, and rightly so, in the SC, and we would respectfully urge the highest court to expedite a decision.

Two other issues were on the table: the restoration of full statehood to J&K, and the holding of democratic elections. There is understandable resentment in Kashmir that their state has been converted into a Union Territory (UT). The Centre wisely gave in to this demand. The PM reiterated his resolve to restore statehood, and Amit Shah said that he had given this assurance on the floor of the House. The holding of democratic elections were made conditional on the completion of the delimitation exercise in J&K.

Delimitation is the act of redrawing boundaries of the Assembly seats to represent changes in the popula-

tion over time. Although delimitation for the rest of India is scheduled for 2026, there is no doubt that delimitation is overdue in J&K. Earlier, delimitation exercises were done in 1963, 1975 and 1995. Since no census was carried out in the state in 1991, there has been no delimitation since 2001. Delimitation will have an impact on the number of seats currently divided between Jammu and Kashmir. Currently, Kashmir has 46 seats, and Jammu 37. It is expected that after delimitation the number of seats in Jammu would go up, thereby upsetting the current numerical domination of Kashmir representatives.

The Delimitation Commission for J&K was set up on March 6, 2020, under the chairpersonship of retired SC judge, Ranjana Prakash Desai, with the mandate to finish the exercise in one year. The other members of the Commission were Union minister Jitendra Singh, Jugal Kishore Sharma of the BJP, and Farooq Abdullah, Akbar Lone and Hasnain Masoodi of the NC. The Commission did not hold a single meeting until February 2021, ostensibly due to the pandemic. In the first meeting, only the BJP representatives attended. The NC leaders boycotted the meeting to protest against the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.

The key question is whether the representatives of the NC, and, indeed, other key Opposition parties like the PDP, will now cooperate with the delimitation process. Not having com-

pleted its work in the one-year deadline, the Commission has been given a year's extension that lapses in March 2022. It is very important to keep to this deadline since the holding of democratic elections is conditional on it. Ultimately, the return of democracy in the troubled state is the best antidote to the existing resentment and anger. Democracy — if genuine — gives people the ventilation valve to express their feelings, and feel that they are stakeholders in unfolding events.

The way forward will be hugely dependent on the creation of trust, ending the *dil ki doori*. The Centre will have to walk the extra mile to ensure this. Its past actions have militated directly against it. Apart from incarcerating an entire state, BJP leaders have till recently reviled the grouping of the Opposition parties in Kashmir as the Gupkar gang. The Centre must take necessary steps to rectify the memories of the past, release political detainees wherever feasible, and carry out the delimitation exercise with utmost transparency and sincerity. An onus also rests on political parties in Kashmir. They must desist from taking extreme positions dictated by a sense of catering to the anger among the Kashmiris. They must work, as Ghulam Nabi Azad said, for the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits. And, they must desist from making — as Mehbooba Mufti seemed to suggest — Pakistan a stakeholder in what is entirely an internal matter of India. The Central government would also have to retain its full vigilance against terrorism emanating from Pakistan, which would do its best to derail a peace and reconciliation process. With trust as a weapon, the entire country hopes that normalcy would soon be restored, and we would have a *Naya Kashmir*.

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

The Centre must take necessary steps to rectify the memories of the past, release political detainees wherever feasible, and carry out the delimitation exercise with utmost transparency and sincerity

LETTERS

MILKING PANDEMIC

We are a country of great innovators who display their ingenuity in various fields which also includes fraudsters who transform a national crisis into a personal opportunity. How else can one explain the handiwork of the criminals who palmed off fire extinguishers as oxygen cylinders to unsuspecting people in Delhi during the height of the Covid massacre and those presently caught administering fake vaccines in Mumbai and Kolkata? In the past, we've had instances of baby food being adulterated for pecuniary gain. Since our judicial process is long and unending, instant justice should be meted out to such criminals from the nearest lamp post for such heinous crimes against humanity.

Bhaskar Roy
New Delhi

SHOE ON OTHER FOOT

THE SNIVELLING Ravi Shankar Prasad on national television complaining about the treatment meted out to him by Twitter has denied the "majboot sarkar" claims of the government. Instead of harassing the Indian employees of the micro-blogging platform the government could ban it. There have been calls on other social media platforms to unfollow Twitter by supporters of the government. Why don't our ministers unfollow it, beginning with the Prime Minister?

Anthony Henriques
Mumbai

TOO MANY FELINES

THERE IS NO OFFICIAL data is available on the number of stray cats in the city which is increasing at the alarming rate in the city of Mumbai. While the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation conducts a dog census every five years, it is yet to conduct one for cats. The BMC must appoint an agency for cat sterilisation after last year's plan failed to take off due to lockdowns. While four agencies were given work orders for the purpose, work could not begin. The Mumbai Veterinary College, in Defense of Animals in Parel, Universal Animal Welfare Society in Govandi and Animal and Bird Care and Advanced Research Centre in Goregaon were shortlisted to carry out sterilisations.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

CANCEL TOKYO

THE TOKYO OLYMPICS, delayed by an entire year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is now less than a month away from inauguration. From February 17 to June 23, the island nation has managed to fully vaccinate only 8.7 per cent of its population. That apart, the country's Covid-19 situation, which saw Tokyo go under an emergency state lifted only on June 20, has left many seething at the government's priorities. Lately, there have been a number of protests in Tokyo against the country hosting the Olympics. In the totality of the circumstances cancellation may be a better choice.

Sankar Paul
Chakdaha, West Bengal

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

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



Ayodhya leak radar on Yogi; Cong ready to forgive senior

The recent charges of corruption in the purchase of land for the construction of the Ram Temple complex at Ayodhya has led to animated discussions in Lucknow about how Opposition leader, AAP's Uttar Pradesh in-charge Sanjay Singh, managed to lay his hands on the documents about the deals. People in Uttar Pradesh were surprised how the Opposition managed to get hold of these papers because chief minister Yogi Adityanath has a vice-like grip on the administration and anyone suspected of leaking such information or even talking about it publicly would normally be handed out stringent punishment. There is also all-round agreement that the Opposition in Uttar Pradesh is incapable of unearthing such exposes as it is virtually defunct. It is, therefore, surmised that the documents were leaked with Yogi Adityanath's permission. According to the grapevine, the chief minister wanted to get back at the BJP leadership after he was pulled up by the party top brass for flying solo and marginalising his party colleagues. The temple con-

struction committee of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust is headed by Nripendra Misra, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's former principal secretary, while Champat Rai, also known to be close to Modi, is the Trust general secretary. It is for the Trust office-bearers to defend these allegations while Yogi is out of the picture.

When he was replaced as leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly last month, senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala shot off a letter to party president Sonia Gandhi to complain about the insulting manner in which he had been eased out. He has since been making amends by posting his old photographs with Indira and Rajiv Gandhi on his Twitter handle to underline his special bond with the Congress and the Gandhi family. For instance, one post shows a photograph of Indira Gandhi campaigning in Chennithala's constituency while another tweet mentions how she signed a letter appointing him as NSUI president chief at the airport before boarding a flight to Russia.

Similarly, there are several pictures of Chennithala with Rajiv Gandhi while on tour and one of Gandhi attending the Kerala leader's wedding reception where he told him about his appointment as Youth Congress president. Chennithala's efforts in getting back into the good books of the Gandhis may well pay off, as there are reports he has been promised a slot as Congress general secretary in Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance at an all-party meeting last week that holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir is a priority, is in line with the BJP's eagerness to test the electoral waters in the newly-carved Union territory. Though the BJP did not fare well in last year's local elections, the party has not given up on its ambition to install a Hindu chief minister in Jammu and Kashmir as it believes the redrawing of the constituencies by the Delimitation Commission will work to its advantage. Failing this, the BJP is also extending an olive branch to National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah in the belief he will

be amenable to an understanding with the saffron camp. The National Conference has aligned with the BJP in the past and it could well do so in the future. There are unconfirmed reports that back-channel discussions with Abdullah have already been initiated.

The Congress leadership has reason to worry as its party units in several poll-bound states are in turmoil. While the never-ending battle between Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh and his bete noire Navjot Singh Sidhu can only be described as a soap opera, the situation is no better in Uttarakhand. The post of legislative party leader in Uttarakhand fell vacant recently after senior leader Indira Hridayesh's death but the party is struggling to find her replacement. State unit president Pritam Singh is being persuaded to take over this post but he has declined and threatened to resign if the Central leadership insists on giving him Hridayesh's job. Former chief minister Harish Rawat is keen that his rival Pritam Singh accept this post because then

the latter will not be directly involved in the distribution of tickets for the Assembly polls, giving the former chief minister a free hand in picking his own candidates.

There is a strong buzz in Madhya Pradesh political circles that newly-minted BJP member Jyotiraditya Scindia is eyeing Indore as his next Lok Sabha constituency. This speculation has gathered momentum as the frequency of Mr Scindia's trips to Indore has increased in recent months. Ideally, Mr Scindia would like to return to the Gwalior Parliamentary seat. But he is being given a hard time in his old pocket boroughs of Gwalior and Guna by the sitting MPs Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar and Krishna Pal Singh Yadav. Both the BJP leaders have the distinction of defeating Mr Scindia in his stronghold and they are clearly in no hurry to cede ground to him again. Meanwhile, there is no end to their turf war as all three are quick to take credit for any development work undertaken in the region.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

UAE's GOLDEN VISA TO 2 INDIAN AYURVEDIC DOCS

Dubai, June 26: Two Indian Ayurvedic doctors have received the UAE's coveted Golden Visa, according to a media report on Saturday. Dr Shyam Vishwanathan Pillai and Dr Jasna Jamal, both from Kerala, were granted Golden Visas by the UAE's Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship.

Pillai, CEO of Vaidyashala at the Burjeel Day Surgery Centre in Abu Dhabi, was granted the Golden Visa under the medical professionals and doctors category on June 17. A resident of Al Mamzar in Dubai, Dr Jasna Jamal was given the Golden Visa on June 24.

AQUINO, WHO CHALLENGED CHINA, BURIED

Manila, June 26: Former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III was buried in austere state rites during the pandemic Saturday with many remembering him for standing up to China over territorial disputes, striking a peace deal with Muslim guerrillas and defending democracy in a nation where his parents helped topple a dictator. Aquino died Thursday at age 61 of kidney disease arising from diabetes following a long public absence, after his single, six-year term ended in 2016. Family and friends sang a patriotic song after a silver urn with Aquino's remains was placed beside the tomb of his mother.

COLOMBIA PREZ SAYS COPTER HIT NEAR BORDER

Bogota, June 26: Colombian President Ivan Duque said Friday the helicopter he was flying in near the border with Venezuela was hit by gunfire.

"It is a cowardly attack, where you can see bullet holes in the presidential aircraft," Duque said in a statement. Duque said he was flying with the defence and interior ministers and the governor of Norte de Santander province, which borders Venezuela, when the helicopter was attacked.

They had left Sardinata and were headed to Cucuta. "We are not frightened by violence or acts of terrorism," he said.

MEXICO CARTEL SHOOTOUT LEAVES 18 DEAD

Mexico City, June 26: A shootout between suspected drug cartels left 18 people dead Friday in Mexico.

The gunfight happened in a remote area of Zacatecas state in the country's north, said Rocio Aguilar, a spokeswoman for the state government.

Drug-related violence has claimed more than 300,000 lives in Mexico since 2006, when the government started deploying federal troops to fight the cartels. "There were 18 dead, and the confrontation occurred in the community of San Juan Capistrano, in the municipality of Valparaiso," he added.

REPORT SHOWS DAMAGE BEFORE CONDO COLLAPSE

Surfside (US), June 26: The oceanfront condominium building that collapsed near Miami had "major structural damage" to a concrete structural slab below its pool deck that needed to be extensively repaired, according to a 2018 engineering report on the building.

The report was among a series of documents released by the city of Surfside as rescuers continued to dig Saturday through the rubble of the building in an effort to find any of the 159 people who remain unaccounted for after its collapse. At least four people were killed.

PAK IDENTIFIES BLAST KEY MAN, NABS 3 MORE

Lahore, June 26: Pakistani security agencies have identified the key person behind the car bomb blast outside the house of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of the banned Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) Hafiz Saeed here and arrested three more persons in connection with the case, officials said on Saturday.

Three teams of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) have been sent to Karachi, Peshawar and Sheikhupura for gleaned more information about those involved in the blast, an official said.

According to Punjab Law Minister Basharat Raja, so far eight suspects have been taken into custody.



Patrons dine at City Winery in New York. Customers wanting to wine, dine and unwind to live music at the City Winery's flagship restaurant in New York must show proof of a Covid-19 vaccination to get in. But that's not required at most other dining establishments in the city. And it's not necessary at other City Winery sites around the United States. — AP

B'desh shuts over virus spike

Only medical-related transport will be allowed, says govt

Dhaka, June 26: Bangladesh has announced it will impose a tough new lockdown starting Monday, after a "dangerous and alarming" surge in Delta variant cases of Coronavirus.

All government and private offices will be shut for a week and only medical-related transport will be allowed, the government said late Friday.

"No one can step out of their homes except in emergency cases," a statement added.

Health department spokesman Robed Amin said police and border guards would be deployed to enforce the lockdown and the army may be involved if needed.

"It is a dangerous and alarming situation. If we don't contain it now, we will face an India-like situation," Amin said, referring to a surge in cases in neighbouring India in April and May.

Infection rates have been rising sharply since mid-

NZ suspends travel bubble with Oz

Wellington, June 26: New Zealand announced a three-day suspension of its quarantine-free travel arrangement with Australia on Saturday, with Wellington citing "multiple" outbreaks of Covid-19 in the neighbouring country.

The announcement comes as a two-week lockdown begins in Sydney to contain a rapidly spreading outbreak of the Delta Coronavirus variant.

More than 80 cases have been reported in Australia's largest city, while a handful of community cases have also been recorded in the Northern Territory, Victoria and Queensland in recent days. "But given the high level of transmissibility of what appears to be the Delta variant, and the fact that there are now multiple community clusters (in Australia), it is the right thing to keep Covid-19 out of New Zealand," said NZ's Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins. — AFP

May in Bangladesh, home to around 170 million people. On Friday the government recorded almost 6,000 new cases and 108 fatalities, the second-highest death toll yet in the

pandemic. Authorities say the situation in districts near the Indian border is catastrophic, with hospitals in the cities of Khulna and Rajshahi overwhelmed. — AFP

GERMANY BANS ARRIVALS FROM PORTUGAL, RUSSIA

Berlin, June 26: Germany on Friday classed Portugal and Russia as so-called Coronavirus variant countries, banning most arrivals from both nations. From Tuesday, only citizens and residents of Germany will be allowed in from the two countries, with air, rail and bus companies prohibited from transporting other passengers. Those allowed to enter from Russia and Portugal will be subject to a two-week quarantine, regardless of whether they can provide a negative Covid-19 test.

Both are reporting a surge in cases over the Delta variant. Fourteen others have been placed in Germany's highest-risk "virus variant" category. — AFP

Down with drugs



A member of security forces loyal to Yemen's Huthi rebels stands near a bonfire incinerating seized narcotic substances, in the Huthi-held capital on Saturday, the United Nations designated "International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking". — AFP

Pak for 'even-handed' ties with US

Islamabad, June 26: Pakistan is seeking a "civilised" and "even-handed" relationship with Washington like the one that existed between the US and the UK or with India "right now", Prime Minister Imran Khan has said, underlining the role Islamabad could play in the region, including in Afghanistan after America leaves the war-torn country.

Khan made the comments during an interview with *The New York Times* in which he also expressed his disappointment that his bid to normalise ties with India did not make any progress though he approached Prime Minister Narendra Modi soon after assuming office in August 2018.

In the interview that comes as US President Joe Biden had his first face-to-face meeting with his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghan on Friday, Khan recalled

the 27 points of the action handed out by the global body against money laundering and terror financing. Qureshi's comments came a day after the Financial Action Task

Force (FATF), during its plenary meeting from June 21-25, retained Pakistan in its 'grey list' for failing to check money laundering, leading to terror financing. — PTI

'NO ROOM' TO KEEP PAK ON FATF GREY LIST, SAYS SMQ

Islamabad, June 26: Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi on Saturday said there was "no room" to keep Pakistan on the FATF's 'grey list' since it has implemented 26 out

of the 27 points of the action handed out by the global body against money laundering and terror financing. Qureshi's comments came a day after the Financial Action Task

Force (FATF), during its plenary meeting from June 21-25, retained Pakistan in its 'grey list' for failing to check money laundering, leading to terror financing. — PTI

22 1/2 years in jail for Chauvin

Ex-cop sentenced for George Floyd murder

Minneapolis, June 26: Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced Friday to 22 1/2 years in prison for the murder of George Floyd, whose dying gasps under Chauvin's knee led to the biggest outcry against racial injustice in the US in generations.

The punishment — which came after Chauvin broke his yearlong silence to offer condolences to the Floyd family and express hope that they eventually have "some peace of mind" — is one of the longest prison terms ever imposed on a US police officer in the killing of a Black person.

Still, Floyd family members and others were disappointed. The sentence fell short of the 30 years prosecutors had requested. And with good behavior, Chauvin, 45, could get out on parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or about 15 years. "Just because it's the most time doesn't mean it's enough time," said Nekima Levy Armstrong, a Minneapolis protest leader.

Judge Peter Cahill went beyond the 12 1/2-year se-



Derek Chauvin

ntence prescribed under state guidelines, citing Chauvin's "abuse of a position of trust and authority and also the particular cruelty" shown to Floyd. Floyd family attorney Ben Crump said the family had gotten "some measure of accountability" but is hoping Chauvin gets the maximum at his upcoming federal civil rights trial.

Crump said this was the longest sentence a police officer has ever received in Minnesota. But he added: "Real justice in America will be PoC men and PoC women and people of colour who will not have to fear being killed by the police just because the colour of their skin. That

would be real justice."

Outside the courthouse, a crowd of about 50 people clasped hands or placed them on each other's shoulders. The reaction was subdued as people debated whether the sentence was long enough.

Some cursed in disgust. At George Floyd Square, as the intersection where Floyd was pinned to the pavement is now known, members of the crowd broke into applause, and several said, "We'll take it."

Chauvin was immediately led back to prison. He showed little emotion when the judge pronounced the sentence. His eyes moved rapidly around the courtroom, his Covid-19 mask obscuring much of his face.

The fired white officer was convicted in April of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee against Floyd's neck for up to 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old man gasped that he couldn't breathe and went limp on May 25, 2020. — AP

US won't dump Afghans: Biden

Washington, June 26: President Joe Biden has told his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani that the people of Afghanistan "are going to have to decide their future" but assured him that the US is going to "stick with you" even after the American troops leave the war-torn nation by September.

Biden, who had his first face-to-face meeting with Ashraf Ghani at the White House on Friday said America's partnership with the South Asian nation is going to be sustained.

The partnership between Afghanistan and the United States is not ending. It's going to be sustained, Biden told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House in a joint media appearance with President Ghani and the CEO Abdullah Abdullah.

American troops may be leaving, but support for Afghanistan is not ending in terms of helping maintain their military as well as economic and political support, Biden said.

"Afghans are going to have to decide their future of what they want. What they want. But it won't be for lack of us being a help."

"But we're going to stick with you. And we're going to do our best to see to it you have the tools you need," the US president assured the top Afghan leaders ahead of the US troop withdrawal before September 11.

Ghani, sitting alongside Biden, said Afghanistan was grateful for the blood and treasure America had spilled during the past two decades to defend his country, which now finds itself facing direct battle against the Taliban militants. — PTI

THOUSANDS FLEE KUNDUZ OVER FIGHTING

Kunduz, Afghanistan, June 26: About 5,000 Afghan families have fled their homes in Kunduz after days of fighting between the Taliban and government forces, officials said Saturday, with the insurgents continuing to surround the key northern city.

The Taliban briefly seized the city twice in recent years but have now captured the surrounding districts and a nearby border crossing with Tajikistan. — AFP

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TESLA TO RECALL 2.85L CARS OVER FAULTY SOFTWARE

Beijing, June 26: Electric car giant Tesla will "recall" over 285,000 cars from the Chinese market after an investigation found issues with its assisted driving software that could cause road collisions, a government regulator announced late Friday. Tesla would contact affected users to upgrade their vehicle's software remotely for free, a State Administration of Market Regulation (SAMR) notice said, adding that it affects some imported and domestically manufactured Model 3 and Model Y vehicles.

"The recall plan was filed with the State Administration of Market Regulation, and it was decided to recall the following vehicles from today," SAMR said.

The order is the latest blow to the American self-driving car pioneer, which has come under growing regulatory scrutiny in China due to several deadly collisions involving Tesla vehicles in recent months.

"Due to issues with the cruise control system... the driver can easily activate the cruise control function by mistake," the Chinese government agency said in the notice.

"A sudden increase in vehicle speed will occur, which could... in extreme cases, cause a collision, posing safety hazards." The carmaker has also been targeted by numerous social media complaints from Chinese users regarding quality and service issues, culminating in a high-profile customer protest at the Shanghai Auto Show in April.

The cruise control function, which "matches the speed of your car to that of the surrounding traffic" is a key part of Tesla's Autopilot assisted driving function, according to the manufacturer's website. — AFP

UNUSUAL MOVEMENT

Officials say there were no clear indications that sightings can be linked to alien life

US govt's intelligence report inconclusive about UFOs

Washington, June 26: A long-awaited US government report on UFOs released Friday makes at least one thing clear: The truth is still out there.

Investigators did not find extraterrestrial links in reviewing 144 sightings of aircraft or other devices apparently flying at mysterious speeds or trajectories. But they drew few other conclusions and instead highlighted the need for better data collection about what's increasingly seen by Democrats and Republicans as a national

security concern.

In all but one of the sightings investigated, there was too little information for investigators to even broadly characterise the nature of the incident.

There were 18 cases in which witnesses saw unusual patterns of movement or flight characteristics, the report said, adding that more analysis was needed to determine if those sightings represented breakthrough technology.

Long the domain of science fiction and so-called ufologists, the subject of

UFOs has in recent years drawn serious study from the Pentagon and intelligence agencies. The prospect of an adversary spying with unknown technology has alarmed lawmakers in both parties.

Congress last year required the creation of the report delivered Friday. While its lack of conclusions has already been made public, the report still represents a milestone in the study of the issue.

US officials who briefed reporters on condition of anonymity said there were

no clear indications that the sightings could be linked to alien life. There is also no definitive linkage of sightings to potentially unknown technology of an adversary like Russia or China. It's clear that we need to improve our capacity to further analyse remaining UAP observations, even as we accept that there are some limits to our capacity to characterise and understand some of the observations that we have," one official said. The report was published online and delivered to

the House and Senate intelligence committees with a classified annex. Lawmakers were given a briefing last week on the investigation. One person who attended the classified briefing and spoke on condition of anonymity said lawmakers were given little information beyond what's publicly available and that the only videos shown had already been made public.

The report lists five potential categories of what the government calls unidentified aerial phenomena, including the possi-

bility of foreign adversaries flying unknown technology to events occurring naturally in the atmosphere.

But only one was categorised as airborne clutter and believed to be a large, deflating balloon. The rest are uncategorised due to lack of information. That includes three instances of potential sightings captured on videos that were declassified and released in recent years.

The Department of Defense will over the next three months develop a new strategy for collecting

and tracking information on potential sightings. Part of the data collection effort is destigmatising UAPs and pushing pilots to report what they see, even when what they see is implausible.

"A big problem around UAPs has been the cultural stigma," said US Rep. Andre Carson, an Indiana Democrat and member of the House intelligence committee, in an interview last week. "It has largely been relegated to science fiction."

— AP

SHORT TAKES

Manu, Saurabh settle for silver

Osijek, Croatia: Continuing their impressive run, the Indian duo of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker clinched the silver medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF Shooting World Cup here on Saturday.

Having won five golds in the previous editions, it was the duo's sixth 10m air pistol mixed World Cup medal on the trot. The Indian duo fought hard, clawing back from 6-12 to level the match at 12-12, before losing the last two series to go down 12-16 to Russia's Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov. Representing the other Indian team in the same event, Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Abhishek Verma missed out on a bronze medal. — PTI

Tendulkar praises Kiwi Jamieson

New Delhi: Kyle Jamieson has the ability to become one of the leading all-rounders in world cricket in days to come, reckons legendary Sachin Tendulkar after watching the giant Black Cap torment India's best batsmen in the recently concluded World Test Championship Final. In New Zealand's emphatic title triumph, Jamieson played a major role with match figures of 7/61 in 44 overs along with 21 valuable runs in his team's first essay. "Kyle Jamieson is a fantastic all-rounder. He is going to go on and become one of the leading all-rounders in world cricket," Tendulkar said on his YouTube channel. "When I had seen him last year in NZ, he impressed me," the maestro said. Tendulkar also liked how Jamieson used his height to play the big shots. — PTI

Shafali set for ODI debut vs England

Bristol: Teen sensation Shafali Verma is set to make her eagerly-anticipated ODI debut as the Indian women's team seek white-ball course correction against a strong world champions England side in the first game of the three-match series, here on Sunday. The 17-year-old batting sensation, who has taken world cricket by storm, has so far played 22 T20I but was inexplicably not picked for the last home series against South Africa Women. India lost 1-4 against South Africa and there was a lot of debate about Shafali's omission from that series. However on Sunday, no such harakiri is expected to be committed by the Indian team management, which now understands Shafali's true value all the more after her Test debut against England last week with scores of 96 and 63. — PTI

Honda Team look to bounce back

Netherlands: After two days full of promise, Repsol Honda Team's Pol Espargaro and Marc Marquez were left disappointed after being unable to deliver in Qualifying, Marquez walking away from his second fall of the event. Saturday in Assen continued Espargaro's fine form from Friday, keeping his RC213V consistently inside the top ten as he showed impressive pace throughout the morning session, improving to a 1'33.170 before the late time attack began and Espargaro found another half a second to end FP3 in third with a 1'32.641. Putting together a competitive FP4, Espargaro headed into Q2 ready to challenge and started the session well with a competitive first run.

Bucks win to even East final series

Los Angeles, United States: Giannis Antetokounmpo scored 25 points and Jrue Holiday delivered 22 as the third-seeded Milwaukee Bucks crushed the Atlanta Hawks 125-91 to level their Eastern Conference final series at 1-1. Milwaukee used a 20-0 run in the second quarter to seize command on Friday, outscoring the fifth-seeded Hawks 43-17 in the quarter to grab a 77-45 halftime lead in front of a crowd of 16,400 at the Fiserv Forum in Milwaukee. "We just needed to do more things better in this game. The effort was great," said Bucks coach Mike Budenholzer. "The guys were committed and now we got to go to it again." Two-time league MVP Antetokounmpo made 11 of 18 shots from the field and Holiday went nine-of-14 for the Bucks, who shot 52 percent overall. — AFP

FARAH FALTERS

Defending champ Mo fails to qualify for Tokyo Games

London, June 26: Four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah's hopes of ending his track career at the Tokyo Games ended as he fell short of the qualifying mark for the 10,000 metres in Manchester on Friday.

The 38-year-old won a specially-arranged race to give him a final chance to qualify at the British Championships, but his time of 27 minutes 47 seconds was nearly 20 seconds off the time required to qualify.

Farah won the 5,000m-10,000m double at the London Olympics in 2012 and repeated the feat four years later in Rio de Janeiro. He then turned his attention to the marathon, but after mixed results returned to the track in the hope of one final shot at Olympic glory.

"I've been lucky enough to have had the long career I've had. I'm very grateful but that's all I had today," said Farah, who refused to confirm if he had just run his final track race.

"It's a tough one. I always said if I can't compete with the best I'm not just going to go there to finish in a final. Tonight it shows it's not good enough."

Farah was blighted by an ankle problem when he finished eighth at the British 10,000m Championships on June 5 in a time of 27:50.64.

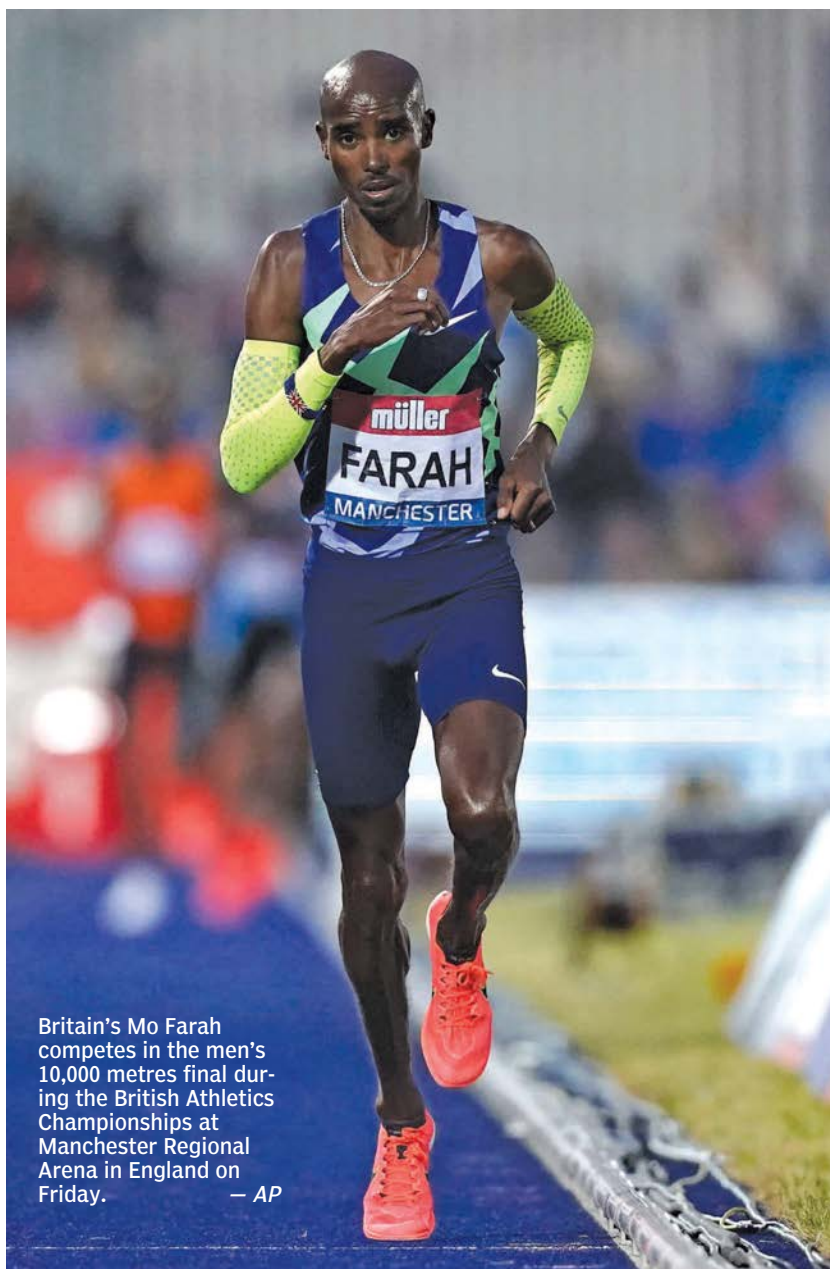
Despite having the help of pacemakers in Manchester, his time improved by only three seconds to remain well off the pace needed to qualify.

After his Belgian training partner Bashir Abdi peeled off the front with nine laps to go, Farah steadily started falling behind the required time and he wore a pained expression as he came down the final straight on the last lap.

That contrasted sharply to the kick Farah had in his glory years to become an Olympic great.

He famously capped "Super Saturday" on the track for Team GB at the home games in 2012 as Jessica Ennis-Hill claimed heptathlon gold and Greg Rutherford won the long jump in the space of 44 minutes.

Farah also won six world championship gold medals and two silvers. — AFP



Britain's Mo Farah competes in the men's 10,000 metres final during the British Athletics Championships at Manchester Regional Arena in England on Friday. — AP

Rijiju launches 'Cheer Up' campaign

New Delhi, June 26: Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday announced a 'Cheer Up' campaign for the Olympic-bound Indian athletes across the country and urged people to come out in support of the sportspersons, who will be competing at the Tokyo Games beginning July 23.

Over 100 athletes from India have so far qualified for the Games and Rijiju said over 6000 selfie points will be set up in the country for people to show their support. "I have spoken to Railway Minister Piyush

● **Over 100 athletes from India have so far qualified for the Games and Rijiju said over 6,000 selfie points will be set up in the country for people to show their support.**

Goyal and he immediately deployed space across 6000 railway stations across the country where Olympics Selfie Points have been set up," Rijiju said at a virtual interaction organised by CII-Sportscom Industry Confederation.

"The Chief Minister of Haryana has also clicked a selfie photograph with the symbol to encourage others to join the campaign and encourage the

Tokyo-bound players.

"I wanted the Olympics movement and the importance of Olympics to be understood by everyone, spread across the length and breadth of India. Sports is the biggest soft power of a nation," he said in a release.

Chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand said the Tokyo-bound Indian athletes are more confident this time around than

BAJRANG SAYS HE'S FINE AFTER INJURING KNEE

New Delhi, June 26: Olympic-bound wrestler Bajrang Punia on Saturday assured that he has not suffered a major injury but the extent of damage done to his right knee will be known only by Monday since the inflammation takes at least 48 hours to subside.

Bajrang injured his right knee on Friday evening while competing in the semi-finals of the Russian tournament — Ali Aliyev, against Abulmazzhid Kudiev.

Kudiev got hold of Bajrang's right leg and pulled him abruptly in the first period of the bout. The impact had an effect on Bajrang's right knee and the limping grappler immediately forfeited the bout.

"I am fine. It (getting injured) happens in sport," Bajrang said from Kaspiysk in a terse message when he was asked if it was a serious injury.

While Bajrang did not elaborate on his injury, sources close the elite wrestler said that it is a good sign that he could walk without help but it will take at least two days to assess him properly.

"There is an injury. It's too early to comment right now. We will observe it for next 48 hours. Let the inflammation subside a bit," said the source. — PTI

their compatriots in the past.

"Today I can confidently say that every member of the team is training to be in their best form and possibly win a medal and if they don't have a medal or have good performances, I am sure they are going to be very disappointed," Gopichand said.

The sports minister also stressed on the role that the government has played along with federations and players in creating a conducive atmosphere for the sportspersons to strive for excellence. — PTI



Sindhu carries flag and Indian hopes

MOSES KONDETY
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

P. V. Sindhu can't wait for the Olympics to begin. The badminton ace will have the rare honour of leading the country at the world's biggest sporting spectacle when the Games begin in Tokyo next month. The Hyderabad girl will carry the tri-colour as she heads the Indian contingent at the Opening Ceremony.

"Being the flag-bearer is such a proud moment altogether," a chuffed Sindhu said.

"To think that you would be carrying the national flag and leading the Indian contingent at the opening ceremony is staggering. I am thrilled and excited because that sort of opportunity is rare... it's a huge honour," the 25-year-old said during an interaction post her talk at TEDxYouth@SuchitraAcademy organised by Suchitra Academy International School in Hyderabad on Saturday.

The Covid pandemic may have pulled everyone back a bit but the gritty girl is gung-ho. "I am emotionally attached since the entire country is showing support and wanting me to get the medal. I am really looking forward to doing that," the Khel Ratna awardee said.

Preparations are in full swing. "Since February I have been practicing at the Gachibowli Stadium, which is the same as the one in Tokyo where the badminton events will be held. The venue has come in handy to get myself used to the air-conditioning and flight of the shuttle. I am thankful to the government, the Sports Authority and the badminton association for the facility. Whenever I asked

for permission to practice, they readily granted my request," Sindhu said.

"In the evenings, I go to the Suchitra Academy for my recovery sessions — pool, ice-bath, gym and running — that are very much needed as there is not much time left for the Games."

Suchitra Academy also provides her with sparring partners of different styles and skills — left, right-handed, aggressive, defensive, et al. Everyday there are different players and Sindhu has been up against two, sometimes three, opponents at a time as she gears up to take on the world.

The pressure is intense though. "This Olympics will definitely be different compared to Rio 2016 (where she won silver). Now, everyone wants me to get a medal wherever I play, so yes, there is pressure and we have to deal with it. At the end of the day, Olympics are Olympics — right up there. We have to be prepared for everything and anything."

Earlier, the Padma Bhushan awardee delivered a talk on the theme "pause, reset, think and come back strong, which she said were important for sportspersons and everyone in general."

Despite the disruption in sporting activity because of the pandemic, Sindhu urged sportspersons to stay spirited. "We have to get used to this new normal," she said, adding, "I understand a lot of tournaments are being cancelled for the well-being of everyone. At the same time I think it's very important to have some kind of match-play at training sessions which does a lot of good for youngsters to get a measure of them and improve."

AITA REQUESTS ITF TO GIVE ANKITA ENTRY IN SINGLES

New Delhi, June 26: The national tennis federation has requested the ITF to consider Ankita Raina's bronze-medal winning performance at the 2018 Asian Games for a place in the women's singles draw of the Tokyo Olympics since the gold and silver medallists from China are eligible for a direct entry due to their higher ranks.

Ankita had won a bronze at the 2018 Asian Games, where the winner was assured of a Continental qualification place in the women's singles draw at the Tokyo Olympics. — PTI

TOKYO | GAMES

Wang Qiang had won the gold while her Chinese compatriot Zhang Shuai took silver at the Games held in Jakarta and Palembang. As per the June 14 WTA rankings, both Zhang (world number 36) Shuai (world number 38) are eligible for direct entry.

As per the ITF rules, if the winner does not accept the quota or becomes ineligible for it, the Continental place can be given to the silver medallist and so on.

Injury for Hima, on verge of missing out on Tokyo

Patiala, June 26: Star sprinter Hima Das on Saturday suffered a hamstring injury during the 100m heats at the ongoing National Inter-State Athletics Championships here, leaving her on the verge of missing out on the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. Hima, who has had a lower back injury problem for a long time, did not start in the 100m final due to the injury though she qualified for it. She did complete her heat race and finished third with a timing of 12.01 seconds during the morning session. "We hope Hima Das recovers ASAP after muscle pull during 100m heats this morning at Inter-State meet," the Athletics Federation of India wrote

on its twitter handle.

The severity of her injury could not be ascertained officially, but it is learnt that the Assam athlete is highly unlikely to run the 200m race scheduled on Sunday as well as the women's 4x100m relay final on June 29.

She had run her personal best of 20.88 seconds in 200m at the Indian Grand Prix 4 but missed the automatic qualification mark of 20.80 seconds.

Hima's injury is also a big blow to 4x100m women's relay team's qualification bid for the Tokyo Games as she is a vital member of the quartet, also comprising Dutee Chand, S. Dhanalakshmi and Archana Suseendran. — PTI

SAJAN 1ST INDIAN SWIMMER TO MAKE OLYMPIC 'A' CUT

New Delhi, June 26: Sajjan Prakash on Saturday became the first-ever Indian swimmer to qualify for the Olympic Games by breaching the 'A' standard time, clocking 1:56:38 seconds in the men's 200m butterfly event at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome, Italy.

The Games 'A' standard was set at 1:56.48 seconds and the 27-year-old Prakash completed the run 0.10 seconds faster at a 1'32.641. Putting together a competitive FP4, Espargaro headed into Q2 ready to challenge and started the session well with a competitive first run.

"I have worked very hard for this, and I was confident with the way I had trained," Prakash was quoted as saying in a press release.

Prakash also rewrote his own national record of 1:56.96s that he had set last week at the Belgrade Trophy swimming competition.

This will be Prakash's second successive Olympics, having represented India in the 2016 Rio Games.

"Historic moment in Indian Swimming !!! Sajjan Prakash breaks the glass ceiling clocks 1:56.38 an Olympic qualification time. CONGRATULATIONS," tweeted Swimming Federation of India.

Prakash will take part in the Tokyo Games alongside Maana Patel. — PTI

Max takes Styrian GP pole

Spielberg (Austria), June 26: World Championship leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull produced the quickest lap in qualifying on Saturday to claim pole position for the Styrian Grand Prix.

Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas was second quickest but drops to fifth on the grid because of a three-place penalty imposed on Friday, leaving teammate Lewis Hamilton to start on the front row with Verstappen.

McLaren's Lando Norris produced the performance of the day, pushing the front runners all the way and finishing fourth, meaning he will start from third.

Norris was followed by the second Red Bull of Sergio Perez and the AlphaTauris of Pierre Gasly and Yuki Tsunoda who were split by Charles



Red Bull's Max Verstappen celebrates after winning the Styrian GP qualifying in Spielberg, Austria, on Saturday. — AP

Leclerc's Ferrari in seventh. Fernando Alonso in the Alpine and Lance Stroll's Aston Martin rounded out the top 10 with George

Russell just missing out in his Williams.

Verstappen had been the standout performer in practice on Friday and looked in supreme control as he claimed his third pole position of the season, clocking a fastest time of 1min 3.841secs.

"It has been a very good weekend," said Verstappen. Bottas made a late dart and finished 0.194secs behind Verstappen.

The Finn, however, was penalised on Friday for "dangerous driving" after spinning in the pit lane and will start from fifth on the third row of the grid.

That penalty opened the door for his teammate Lewis Hamilton to keep up the pressure on Verstappen who leads him by just 12 points after seven rounds of the championship. — AFP

Diego psychiatrist denies death blame

San Isidro (Argentina), June 26: The psychiatrist who was treating Diego Maradona when he died last November has denied any responsibility for his demise, which an expert panel has blamed on neglect, her lawyer said Friday.

Agustina Cosachov "provided evidence that she did not commit a homicide," her lawyer said after the 36-year-old was questioned at the San Isidro Prosecutor's Office outside Buenos Aires.

"There is no suspicion to say that the psychiatric medication (that Cosachov prescribed) and in those doses could have caused a deficiency in the

heart," Vadim Mischanchuk added.

The 1986 World Cup-winning captain died of a heart attack at the age of 60, weeks after undergoing brain surgery for a blood clot.

Cosachov and psychologist Carlos Diaz found Maradona dead in bed in a rented house in an exclusive Buenos Aires neighborhood where he was receiving home care.

Cosachov was questioned for more than six hours at the prosecutor's office Friday, and presented a voluminous letter before leaving without speaking to the press.

"She was a psychiatric doctor," Mischanchuk had

● **Cosachov and psychologist Carlos Diaz found Maradona dead in bed in a rented house in an exclusive Buenos Aires neighborhood where he was receiving home care.**

said as they entered the office. "She had nothing to do with the clinical management of the patient."

The addiction specialist is one of seven medical professionals under investigation for manslaughter over Maradona's death in a case that has gripped Argentina. According to the investi-

gation record, Cosachov and neurosurgeon Leopoldo Luque, 39, were the key personnel in charge of Maradona's care.

The phase of questioning suspects will finish next Monday with Luque appearing before prosecutors. He has also repeatedly denied any blame.

In the next phase of the investigation, a judge will decide whether or not to order a trial.

If found guilty at the end of the process, which could take years, the seven risk between eight and 25 years in prison. All are barred from leaving the country pending the outcome.

'THEY KILLED DIEGO'

Prosecutors opened an investigation after a board of experts looking into the footballer's death found he had received inadequate care and was abandoned to his fate.

Last week, a lawyer for co-accused nurse Dahiana Madrid, 36, told prosecutors the doctors in charge had "killed Diego."

Psychologist Diaz, 29, has — like Cosachov — denied the psychiatric medication Maradona was taking had worsened his heart condition.

As well as Diaz and Cosachov, four other people under investigation have given testimony so far. — AFP

Quick passes



England defender Kieran Trippier runs during a training session at St George's Park in London on Saturday, in preparation for their Euro Round of 16 match against Germany on Tuesday. — AFP

Record Covid toll in Saint Petersburg

Russia's Euro 2020 host Saint Petersburg on Saturday reported the country's highest daily Covid-19 toll for a city since the start of the pandemic, data showed. Official figures said the city, which has already hosted six Euro 2020 matches and is due to host a quarterfinal on Friday, recorded 107 virus deaths over the last 24 hours. Russian news agencies said this was the highest toll of any Russian city since the start of the pandemic. Saint Petersburg was where dozens of Finland supporters caught coronavirus after they travelled to the city for their team's defeat against Belgium. Russia has seen an explosion of new Coronavirus cases since mid-June driven by the highly infectious Delta variant first identified India. The nation as a whole reported 21,665 new infections on Saturday, the highest daily figure since January. — AFP

Copa contest heats up for knockouts

Peru, Ecuador and Venezuela are in the fight for the last two spots in the Copa America quarterfinals. The prize is likely Lionel Messi's Argentina. The top four in each group advance to the knockout stage of the troubled tournament in Brazil, rife with the Coronavirus. Group 'B' has Brazil with nine points, followed by Colombia and Peru with four; Venezuela at three, and Ecuador counting two. Colombia is the only side that have already played all of their four group games. If Peru don't lose to Venezuela on Sunday they will advance for sure. Ecuador need to beat host and defending champion Brazil. Ecuador can still advance with a defeat as long as Venezuela fail to win against Peru and the goal difference doesn't change much. — AP

Brazil coach rapped for criticising Copa

South American football body CONMEBOL fined Brazil coach Tite \$5,000 for criticising the organisation of the Copa America. The sanction came less than a week after a Bolivia player was also sanctioned for attacking the tournament, which is taking place amid a growing Covid-19 pandemic after the two original hosts, Colombia and Argentina, were withdrawn. Tite said in a news conference on June 12 that the Copa America was shifted to his country in a "confusing manner." CONMEBOL named Brazil as host less than two weeks before kick off. The Brazilian Football Confederation cannot appeal the decision against Tite, CONMEBOL said. Eduardo Gross Brown, the president of CONMEBOL's disciplinary commission, added that Tite could suffer new penalties if he criticises the tournament organisers again. — AP

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GREAT DANES

Denmark dump Wales after Dolberg double

Amsterdam, June 26: Denmark marked the 29th anniversary of their greatest triumph by marching on to the quarterfinals of Euro 2020 on Saturday as Kasper Dolberg scored twice in an emphatic 4-0 win over Wales before an exultant travelling support in Amsterdam. In the city where Christian Eriksen made his name, it was Dolberg — another former Ajax player — who opened the scoring with a fizzing strike in the 27th minute. That came after Wales had started so well but Denmark never looked back and Dolberg struck again just after the restart before Joakim Maehle and

Denmark	4
(Kasper Dolberg 27, 48, Joakim Maehle 88, Martin Braithwaite 90+4)	
Wales	0

Martin Braithwaite added more goals late on. Carried by a wave of emotion, Danish dreams are still intact in a tournament that began in such traumatic circumstances for them with Eriksen's collapse in their opening match against Finland in Copenhagen. They now go on to a last-eight tie in Baku against the Netherlands or the Czech Republic. Eriksen, still recovering at home after his cardiac arrest, was present in everyone's minds at the home of Ajax, and that combined with a vast Danish support inside the one-third full Johan Cruyff Arena made this occasion really like a home game for them. European champions against all odds when they beat Germany in the final on this day in 1992, Denmark finally have their first win in the knockout phase of a Euro since then and it would be a truly extraordinary story if they could repeat the feat this time. Nobody in Denmark will want to get ahead of themselves but Wales — who



Kasper Dolberg of Denmark shoots to score his second goal against Wales during the Euro Round of 16 match at Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam on Saturday. — AP

finished with 10 men after Harry Wilson's late red card — could certainly have no complaints about the outcome and there will be no repeat of their run to the semifinals at Euro 2016. They needed a moment of magic from captain Gareth Bale or Aaron Ramsey which never came, but in truth they were up against it from the outset.

To their credit Wales started well, with the probing Bale leading by example in the early stages. He crashed a shot just wide in the 10th minute, but then Chelsea's Andreas Christensen — Denmark's third centre-back — stepped up into midfield and they took control. They were rewarded when Dolberg, now of

Nice in France and selected ahead of Yussuf Poulsen in attack, collected the ball just outside the area and unleashed a superb strike into the far corner of the net. For Wales, the signs that it was not to be their night kept coming, as right-back Connor Roberts suffered a groin injury and had to come off. — AFP

WELSH PRINT 'ERIKSEN' ON THEIR JERSEY

Amsterdam, June 26: A framed Wales national team shirt with Christian Eriksen's name on it was given to Denmark captain Simon Kjaer before the teams played in the Round of 16 at the European Championship. Eriksen collapsed on the field during Denmark's opening match at Euro 2020 and had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator. The Wales jersey had "CHRISTIAN" written on top of Eriksen's No. 10 and BRYSLA WELLA underneath. Bryslawella means get well soon in Welsh. Kjaer, Wales captain Gareth Bale and the three match officials in Amsterdam then posed for a photo with the framed jersey moments before kickoff. The vast majority of fans at the Johan Cruyff Arena were supporting Denmark in the team's European Championship match against Wales. Only a handful of Welsh dragon flags were visible among a sea of Danish flags being waved by about 16,000 fans in Amsterdam for the match in the Round of 16. Wales fans were warned not to travel to the Netherlands because of Coronavirus restrictions in that country. Denmark played all three of their group matches at Parken Stadium in Copenhagen and Saturday's game had a similar feel. The Johan Cruyff Arena is the home of Ajax. The Amsterdam club has a long history of signing Danish players. One of them was Christian Eriksen. The Denmark playmaker suffered cardiac arrest in his team's first match at Euro 2020 and was resuscitated with a defibrillator. — AP



Portugal captain Cristiano Ronaldo leaps in the air as he runs onto the pitch for the Euro match against France in Budapest, Hungary, on Wednesday. — AP

Belgians look to stop Ronaldo run

Seville (Spain), June 26: Cristiano Ronaldo certainly attracts most of the attention, just not all of the attention. Ronaldo is on the verge of becoming the all-time leading scorer in international football. He can set that record on Sunday when Portugal face Belgium in the Round at 16 of the European Championship. Belgium coach Roberto Martinez wants to make sure his players won't only be looking at Ronaldo, though. "When you put a plan against a player specifically, you could be hurt by other players," Martinez said. "Of course, Cristiano Ronaldo seems to be the player that gets the right moment, that right pass and the right chance and you have to be always aware, but you have to defend the 10 players of Portugal in the same measure," he added. Martinez said Portugal have "an incredible accumulation" of good players in their squad to support Ronaldo, from Bernardo Silva to Diogo Jota to Bruno Fernandes to Renato Sanches to Joao Moutinho. "You know why this team has been successful, you know why this team has won the Euros and the Nations League. They've got an incredible mentality

and they know how to play big games" Martinez said. Ronaldo is the tournament's leading scorer with five goals after three matches. He is one goal from breaking the overall men's scoring record in international soccer. The 36-year-old Juventus striker is level with former Iran striker Ali Daei at 109 goals. "We all know he's one of the best footballers in the world," Martinez said. "Every player adapts when you get a little bit older, you become a little more clinical with what you do. I think Cristiano Ronaldo knows how to use the space, he penetrates from different areas, he's got an incredible aerial threat," he added. But Belgium also have their threats, from Kevin De Bruyne to Eden Hazard to Romelu Lukaku, who has three goals entering the knockout stages. De Bruyne and Hazard, along with Axel Witsel, are back after gradually returning to the team during the group matches. They had not been completely available during Belgium's preparations because of injuries. The Red Devils, ranked No.1 in the world, have won 13 straight games, including its three group games at Euro 2020 and all 10 qualifiers for the tournament. — AP



Czech Republic players take part in a training session in Prague ahead of their Round of 16 match against Netherlands on Sunday. — AFP

Dutchmen determined to get their way past Czechs

Budapest (Hungary), June 26: The European Championship is finally giving Memphis Depay the chance to shine on the big stage. The Netherlands forward has two goals and two assists heading into Sunday's match against the Czech Republic in the Round of 16. He has scored seven goals in eight games in 2021. Depay's mercurial ability played a large part in the team's three wins in the group stage at Euro 2020, with the soon-to-be Barcelona forward scoring or creating half of the eight goals. The Czechs have a major scoring threat of their own in striker Patrik Schick. He has

scored three goals so far at Euro, the same as Netherlands midfielder Georginio Wijnaldum. Schick scored one of the tournament's best goals with a spectacular looping shot from just inside the halfway line in a 2-0 win over Scotland. But he is the only player to have scored for the Czechs, who scraped through as one of the four best third-place teams. The two sides have met before, when then-Czechoslovakia beat the Netherlands 3-1 after extra time in the 1976 semifinals. The Dutch had Johan Cruyff back then. His signature move was standing with his back to a defender, then spinning around him

while flicking the ball through his legs in one swift movement. It became known as "The Cruyff Turn." But the Czechs had a player who would become famous in his own right. When the final against West Germany went to penalty kicks, midfielder Antonin Panenka had the tournament-winning kick at his feet. In front of him was the imposing Sepp Maier, one of the greatest goalkeepers of his era. Panenka took a long run-up but then softly chipped the ball down the middle of the goal as Maier despairingly dived to the left. This style of penalty kick is known as a "Panenka." — AP

Hoopster Jordan inspires Lukaku

Seville, June 26: Romelu Lukaku was watching the documentary *The Last Dance* when he realised he had something in common with basketball great Michael Jordan. "When I saw *The Last Dance* and Michael Jordan talking about how he motivates himself, I thought to myself, I'm not alone," the Belgium striker said. Lukaku said watching the documentary about the Chicago Bulls made him realise that he draws his motivation the same way Jordan did, using criticism against him to become a better player and prove others wrong. "I'm not saying I'm Michael Jordan, but some people need that, I'm not the only one," Lukaku said through a translator. "Cristiano (Ronaldo) will always want to be the best and break all the records, (Kylian) Mbappe will always want to win everything and be the next great one... People need something to push themselves. I need that as well," he

Live on TV

EURO
Pre-quarterfinals: Netherlands vs Czech Republic from 9.30 pm; Belgium vs Portugal from 12.30 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

COPA AMERICA
Group Stage: Brazil vs Ecuador, Venezuela vs Peru from 2.30 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 1, 2

added. Lukaku said his first reaction when he is criticised, or when people say someone is better than him, is to go "practice to improve and show what I can do." Lukaku will be playing against Ronaldo on Sunday when Belgium take on Portugal in the Round of 16. The 28-year-old Lukaku said he needs to take his "hat off" to Ronaldo for his "impressive" career numbers. "If there's anyone who can achieve those numbers, it's Ronaldo," Lukaku said. — AP