





## SHORT TAKES

PRIORITY FOR  
HOSPS, NOT  
HERITAGE: OWAISIDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 11

Hyderabad Lok Sabha member Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday inaugurated a fully equipped 23-bed Covid ward at Indo US Hospital premises in Malakpet.

Owaisi assured cooperation to the hospital to further improve healthcare infrastructure and Covid preparedness with MP funds.

Addressing the gathering, he said, "Saving lives is more important than saving heritage. The condition of Osmania Hospital has been deteriorating with every passing day. Osmania Hospital needs a built up area of 20 lakh square feet."

He said "Osmania Hospital Medical College is the oldest medical college in the country and it has given us countless doctors in different disciplines. The annual number of surgeries has come down from 90,000 to 45,000. We will not let the government escape the Osmania Hospital issue, by citing heritage concerns".

Sahayata Trust's CEO Syed Aneesuddin said high-quality oxygen concentrators with dual output, dialysis machines and an in-house oxygen plant that is due to arrive on July 15 will provide support to Covid patients.

32 SCR ROUTES  
GET ELECTRONIC  
INTERLOCKINGDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 11

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

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

Vijayawada Junction is one of the major junction stations of Indian Railways, handling train movements on all four directions. Previously, there used to be a train detention whenever there was simultaneous movement of trains in both directions on the Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam route.

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

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

As part of it, a new cabin has been set-up, another cabin has been shifted and two existing cabins modified. A new bulb cabin with electronic interlocking (EI) has been commissioned with 32 routes.

The new west block hut (NWBH) cabin has been shifted and commissioned with 20 routes to provide connectivity with the newly added line of 1.5km. Two existing cabins, the bulb cabin and the D cabin have been altered to take into account the new yard modifications. The railway officials said as a result of these major yard modifications at this important junction station, it will avoid surface crossings and allow simultaneous train movements, particularly for trains on the Secunderabad-Visakhapatnam and vice versa without detentions.

It would further enhance the sectional capacity, allowing the possibility of handling more trains and further increasing the average speed of the trains in the section.

SCR general manager Gajanan Malliya has complimented the officers and staff of the Vijayawada division, the construction organisation and the headquarters who were pivotal in execution of this new facility.

He also opined that these major yard modifications paved the way for smooth operation of train services at Vijayawada junction, duly avoiding multiple crossings at this busy junction station.

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Airport in  
Warangal next  
on KTR's radarDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 11

After getting Indian garment major Kitex to Warangal, industries minister K.T. Rama Rao is seriously working on getting an airport to Warangal.

The state government had submitted proposals to the Centre to revive Mamnoon airport on Warangal outskirts in 2018, which is lying pending.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and Rama Rao met union civil aviation ministers on multiple occasions earlier and sought revival of Mamnoon airports, considered India's largest airport during the Nizam era. It was closed in 1981.

"We will absolutely make it happen. Working on Warangal airport," tweeted Rama Rao on Saturday.

Rama Rao's tweet was in response to a tweet made by a netizen, Srikanth Giddey, who tweeted, "KTR garu, Warangal needs your help to get an airport so that it can get it's upliftment that was pending due from a long time. Earlier governments in united Andhra didn't care for Warangal's betterment. We would be very grateful to you for the same."

Official sources said Rama Rao has decided to send a delegation of senior officials soon to Delhi to pursue the case with the Centre.

He asked officials to keep the required 400 acres ready for airport expansion to meet current needs. The DPR (detailed project report) of Mamnoon airport is expected to be ready in a

● **CHIEF MINISTER and Rama Rao met union civil aviation ministers on multiple occasions earlier and sought revival of Mamnoon airports, considered India's largest airport during the Nizam era. It was closed in 1981.**

month after which the state government will speed up land acquisition. In the Budget 2021-22, the government has sanctioned ₹100 crore towards development of civil aviation facilities in the state. The amount was allocated towards payment of fees to the Airports Authority of India and other preliminary examinations for setting up airports.

In August 2020, Rama Rao met the then civil aviation minister Hardeep Singh Puri and urged him to include Mamnoon airport in 'Udaan scheme' to improve regional connectivity.

The government already secured TEFR (techno economic feasibility report) from AAI for setting up new airport and only the DPR is awaited.

In April this year, the civil aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola called on Chandrasekhar Rao in Hyderabad. The latter explained the need to set up six airstrips in Telangana, including Mamnoon. After getting Indian garment major Kitex to Warangal, industries minister K.T. Rama Rao is seriously working on getting the airport to Warangal. The TS government had submitted proposals to Centre to revive Mamnoon airport on Warangal outskirts in 2018.

Af students  
in Vizag  
fear TalibanK.M.P. PATNAIK | DC  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 11

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

The issue is worrying Afghan students, including women, studying in colleges of Visakhapatnam. They fear theirs would be their last batch enrolled in various courses.

From next year onwards, Afghan students have to enrol for studies within their own country, Afghanistan Students' Association (ASA) president Abeedullah Aabede told *Deccan Chronicle* on Sunday.

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

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

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

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

But girl students, who

● **THE STUDENT pointed out that during last 20 years, many youth have taken advantage of studying abroad. This enabled them to serve Afghan government in various capacities and contribute to their country's progress. In the process, Afghanistan's economy too has improved.**

● **There are about 200 Afghanistan students each in Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad. Some of them are studying in Guntur and Vijayawada.**

have faced many strictures in the past, fear violence will be back. Girls will face many restrictions, including studying abroad. "I am sure Taliban have not changed their mindset. They will bring back what has been forgotten by us," said Spogmay, doing her first year MBA in the campus college of Andhra University.

She told this correspondent that Taliban would close down small-scale business units operated by women and restrict them to their homes.

Girls cannot hope to study abroad. They will be forced to wear traditional attire as prescribed by Taliban.

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

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



An open drain without fencing and a temporary compound wall built around the Trinity church at KPHB Colony. — R. PAVAN



Motorists struggle to negotiate the road filled with potholes at Bahadurpura after it rained heavily on Sunday. —S. SURENDER REDDY

Smart city becomes flood city  
Due to heavy rains, several nalas and storm water drains overflowMADDY DEEKSHITH I DC  
HYDERABAD, JULY 11

Though Mayor G. Vijayalakshmi has boasted about the ability of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) in handling flood situation in the twin cities, several nalas and storm water drains overflowed in Sunday's rains, including in Nacharam, Miyapur, Gachibowli, Kukatpally, Narayanguda, Adikmet, Balkampet and Serilingampally, apart from stretches along Musi River.

Most nalas have no fencing, which means invitation for a tragedy. A seven-year-old boy B. Anand Sai drowned in an open drain at Old Bowenpally on Saturday. He accidentally

fell into the nala, as the damaged fencing around it had not been repaired since 2020. This is the second such incident in Hyderabad.

Last September, a 12-year-old girl named Sumedha Kapuria died after falling into an open drain at Neredmet.

At the time, municipal administration and urban development minister K. T. Rama Rao asked GHMC officials to ensure covers for all manholes and chain fencing of nalas. He made an administrative sanction of ₹300 crore for the purpose. However, his instructions fell on deaf ears.

At many places, there are no covers on nalas. Several areas lack street lights, increasing the



Uncovered potholes pose a major risk to motorists on the main road at Prashant Nagar in Moosarambagh. If GHMC fails to take up repairs, it would prove fatal, a resident said on Sunday. — P. SURENDRA



Motorists caught in the sudden spell of rain at Banjara Hills on Sunday. — DC

Heavy rains likely  
for 48 hours: IMDDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 11

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) issued a red alert for several districts in the state for Monday. According to the warning, heavy rains to isolated extremely heavy rains are very likely to occur in Nirmal, Nizamabad, Vikarabad, Sangareddy, Kamareddy, Mahabubabad, Warangal (Rural), Warangal (Urban), Janagaon, Siddipet, Yadadri Bhuvangiri, Mulugu, Rangareddy, Hyderabad, Medchal Malkajgiri and Nagarkurnool districts of Telangana. Gusty winds (speed up to 30-40 kmph) are very likely to occur in many districts in the state, it said.

As of Sunday, several parts of the state witnessed moderate to light rainfall. Following the sudden downpour, the traffic police urged the public not to stand under trees or near poles. The highest rainfall in the state was recorded at Chennarapet which had received 140 mm of rain fall and in the city, it was recorded at Srinagar Colony which had

received 18 mm till 8 pm.

The alert, issued on Sunday, said there was a low-pressure area over the Bay of Bengal, which when met with the southwest monsoon trough, would result in heavy rainfall.

"These rains are a result of the low-pressure zone that is located on the coast of Andhra Pradesh. Under the influence of these rains, the state would receive moderate to light rainfall, which at times can be heavy. Even the capital city is expected to receive good spells of rain," Mahesh Palawat, vice-president (meteorology), Skymet (a private weather forecasting agency) told this newspaper. These rains are expected to persist for over 48 hours.

The IMD said that there could be flooding in a few parts of low-lying areas in districts of Telangana. Also, it said that there was a chance of disruption of power supply, rail, and road transport for a few hours. It also mentioned that there was a chance of damage to standing crops due to rains.

Children, teenagers rush to  
hosps with stomach issuesDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 11

Many children have been reporting to hospitals with pain in the abdomen, diarrhoea, vomiting and gastro-intestinal problems in the last one week here. Children's hospitals are seeing teenage boys and girls coming in with such problems.

Doctors said that after the unlocking process, there has been a lot of 'eating out' in social gatherings, parties and mar-

riages, and some of these children could have picked up gastrointestinal problems.

Dr Altaf Naseem, senior paediatrician, said that during the lockdown people had completely given up on outside food. "They were not going out and nor were they indulging in outside food. After unlock, those who are venturing out and taking outside food are facing these problems."

"Investigations show that they went out for par-

ties or marriage and have fallen sick."

Another reason is the seasonal change with rains, flooding and dry days. When it rains, there is flooding in parts of the city where drainage is not proper. This led to contamination of water bodies. Dr B Narahari, senior paediatrician at Niloufer Hospital says: "Seasonal change is the major reason. There is nothing alarming about it. We see a large number of cases every year."



A flooded road in Kakaji Colony, Warangal, after heavy rain on Sunday. —DC

## STANDING CROPS DAMAGED DUE TO FLOOD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JULY 11

Floodwater inundated agriculture fields with streams and rivulets overflowing following incessant rains in the Dongargam village in

Indravelli mandal on Sunday.

Standing crops of cotton, red gram and jowar were damaged as the floodwater entered into the agriculture fields. Local Adivasi leader Pushparani said many farmers had lost their standing crops in the floods.

She appealed to Bhavesh Mishra, project officer ITDA, Uttnoor to extend help to the farmers who lost their standing crops due to floods.

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

YSRC MLA SLAMS TS MINISTERS FOR  
MAKING INAPPROPRIATE REMARKS

From Page 1

He slammed Telangana ministers like Prashant Reddy and Srinivas Goud for making inappropriate, objectionable and unsavoury remarks against Rajasekhara Reddy.

The MLA urged Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to rethink about the illegal draws from the Krishna projects and consider an amicable solution. He deplored that on Saturday one TMC of water was wasted as it was released into the sea. He stated that a TMC of water can help cultivate

10, 000 acres of farmland and lamented that 7.5 TMC water has been wasted due to power generation by the Telangana government which can be used to fulfil irrigation water requirements of 75,000 acres.

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## SHORT TAKES

KALESHWARAM  
TEMPLE, PROJECT  
VISITS BANNEDDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, JULY 11

In view of the increasing Coronavirus cases in the Kaleshwaram, the village has been declared a containment zone by the Jayashankar Bhupalpally district administration.

In-charge collector Krishna Aditya said 50 positive cases have been recorded in a single day in the village and hence it has been decided to declare it a containment zone until the cases come under control.

Following the orders, Kataram DSP Bonala Kishan asked the devotees visiting the Kaleshwaram temple and Godavari river along with the tourists visiting the Kaleshwaram Project to postpone their travel plans. He said performing final rites rituals on the bank of river Godavari is also banned until further notice.

MANOHAR IS  
KOMARAM BHEEM  
ASIFABAD DMHODC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JULY 11

Dr Kudimetha Manohar, who was earlier worked as additional DMHO for Agency, has been appointed as DMHO for Komaram Bheem Asifabad district.

Actually, deputy DMHO Dr Sudhakar Naik was first appointed as DMHO before Kudimetha Manohar. Kudimetha Manohar formally met ZP chairperson Kova Laxmi on his appointment as a DMHO.

Adivasis staged a protest against surrendering DMHO Dr Kumra Balu and appointing Dr Sudhakar Naik in the vacated post.

Leaders of Adivasi Rai centres submitted a representation to the project officer of ITDA, Utnoor Bhavesh Mishra to take steps to register SC and ST Atrocity case against Sirpur (T) MLA Koneru Konappa and Wankidi ZPTC Arigela Nageshwar Rao for insulting and criticizing DMHO Balu without any concrete reasons and his fault during the ZP general body meeting that was held recently.

CANCER HOSPITAL  
INAUGURATED  
IN WARANGALDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, JULY 11

A new unit of the Omega hospitals has been inaugurated in Warangal on Sunday. Government Chief Whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar and GWMC Mayor Gundu Sudharani launched the hospital.

Dr Charanjit Reddy Veeramalla, Managing Director & Medical Director, Omega Bannu Hospitals said this is the first of its kind cancer care facility mainly catering to the second largest city of Telangana State and adjacent areas. He explained that with ultra-modern facilities and expertise, the new facility has bought quality cancer care to the doorstep of the people, who were earlier forced to go to Hyderabad.

“Ultra-modern Elekta Synergy radiation therapy facility, Digital Mammography along with requisite laboratory, radiology wings are provided here. For the first time in Warangal City, a PET CT Scan is made available in the hospital. This hospital with 150 beds capacity will also have specialists,” he said.

COPS TO HELP  
RIGHTS UNITS TO  
SAVE CHILDRENDC CORRESPONDENT  
KOTHAGUDEM, JULY 11

Bhadradi-Kothagudem district superintendent of police Sunil Dutt said that the police department will extend all help to the human rights activists and child rights protection organisations in rescuing the children from working places.

Sunil Dutt said that the police rescued 14 children from working places in Operation Muskan.

“We had confident information that the Maoists are involving kids to get various services like getting provisions, cooking food and guards. It is a blatant violation of child rights and the police will extend all help to the rights activists in rescuing such children,” he said.

TS farmers living in  
golden age: Errabelli

Calls Rythu Bandhu excellent programme for farmers

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KHAMMAM, JULY 11

Minister for panchayat raj and rural development Errabelli Dayakar Rao said farmers in Telangana were living in a golden age and the interests of farmers were being given the first priority in the state.

Addressing farmers during the Palle Pragathi programme here on Sunday, the minister said the Rythu Bandhu was an excellent programme for the welfare of farmers and they need not approach private financiers for loans. He said the government was giving top priority to farmers, who were paid

Rythu Bandhu amounts regularly.

He said they were relieved of the debt burden and getting good prices for their produce with the minimum support price being given by the government.

“The government lifted farm produce by taking loans from banks. It is the commitment of the TRS government towards farmers. The Congress and the BJP staged dharna on farm produce purchases and people should question such parties first. The farmers of Telangana produced 90 lakh tons of paddy during the rabi season,” Dayakar Rao said.

● Farmers were relieved of the debt burden and getting good prices for their produce with the minimum support price being given by the government, said the minister

Referring to free power, he said no other state in India was giving free power to agriculture. He said the Central government was insisting Telangana to implement Telangana to implement pre-paid smart meters to all farm connections in the state.

“The farmers have to spend crores of rupees to fix the meters and the government is opposing

it,” he said, adding that 30 per cent of power being supplied by the Transco in the state was being consumed for farming.

The welfare schemes were not stopped even during the Covid-19 times.

The minister visited various villages in Sathupalli, Penuballi and Kalluru mandals and participated in the Palle Pragathi programme. He said TS stood first in the country in raising of greenery.

He said forest cover in the state increased in recent times and it was the contribution of the TRS government to protect the environment.



Under the leadership of OBC Mocha district unit president Venu Prasad Tulabaranam of books with BJP state chief and MP, Bandi Sanjay Kumar was held in Karimnagar on Sunday.

## Bandi marks b'day with donations

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, JULY 11

Marking his birthday, BJP state chief and Karimnagar MP, Bandi Sanjay Kumar, donated medical equipment and four ambulances equipped with advanced modern facilities, together worth ₹3 crore, to the government hospitals here on Sunday.

He said he did so by deriving inspiration from Prime Minister, Narendra Modi.

The ambulances were donated to four main government hospitals under the Karimnagar parliament limits — K a r i m n a g a r, Vemulawada, Sircilla

and Huzurabad —along with distributing essential medical equipment for the ICUs.

Since many are facing a lot of hardships because of the Coronavirus, Bandi Sanjay arranged oxygen concentrators and cylinders for providing emergency medical services free of cost to patients here.

The handover was done at the MP office in Karimnagar.

Bandi said he would arrange the ambulances in the remaining Assembly segments under Parliament segment in the coming days. He also announced plans to provide security to around 5,000 members

of BJP party under the Pradhana Mantri Suraksha Bima Yojana and Pradhana Manthri Jeevan Jyothi Bima Yojana schemes.

On the occasion of his birthday, he also paid the premium amount to around 1,000 BJP members and assured them that after collecting the details of the remaining active workers, he would pay the premium to them too. He said he would continue to pay the premium as long as he remained an MP.

Bandi expressed thanks to those who went to his house in Karimnagar to convey their birthday wishes to him.

The BJP leader said he

took up social service on this occasion in response to a call from Prime Minister Narendra Modi to partymen to stir up and reach help to the needy. With the help of his friends and relatives, he donated four ambulances to hospitals, he said.

Bandi Sanjay along with his family members offered prayers at Mahashakti temple and planted a sapling at the district party headquarters.

Several leaders of the BJP organised programmes on the occasion. Some held blood donation camps while others distributed books and sweets to orphans.

## People will teach TRS a lesson: Congress

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KARIMNAGAR, JULY 11

Having silently taken of how adamantly ministers are behaving with them, the people are eagerly waiting to reach a fitting lesson to them, said city Congress president, Komatireddy Narendar Reddy here on Sunday.

Speaking to media persons, Reddy alleged that two days back, minister Gangula Kamalakara accompanied by mayor Y. Sunil Rao visited SRR college to inspect the college ground, where a convention hall is being constructed.

When a student asked him why they were denying students and public a good playing area by coming up with a convention hall, an infuriated Kamalakara, rather than clear the student's doubts, ordered police officials to bash up the student. This even as there was an ample number of district officials. He also insulted officials, who were trying to explain the consequences if they select the college ground for the hall, the Congress leader said. He pointed out that Pattana pragathi programme was being held just for name sake and that too in select divisions. He said that this was similar to the shoddy manner the Telugu Desam government had conducted Janma Bhoomi programmes.

Pattana Pragathi is only intended to divert attention of the public away from their follies and a waste of public money, Reddy said.

He alleged that Kamalakara was behaving like he was still in the TD. During Saturday's meeting, he had said that it was former chief minister N. Chandrababu

Naidu, who took care of the people by introducing welfare schemes. Even though they are yet to come out of the Telugu Desam party obsession, TRS leaders were trying to attack Congress, which the people have taken note of, Reddy said.

Party leaders Samad Nawab, Gundeti Srinivas Reddy, Uppari Ravi, Md. Taaz, Puly Anjaneyulu, K. Pochaiah, L. Babu, M. Satyanarayana Reddy, K. Sunil, K. Anil, K. Gupta, Kumar, Ezra, K. Arun Kumar, M. Bhaskar and Satish were present on the occasion.

## GREEN | DRIVE

## TRS MLAs compete in planting saplings

## 3cr saplings for KTR birthday

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JULY 11

As part of celebrating the birthday of TRS working president and minister K.T. Rama Rao on July 24, party ministers, MLAs and workers will perform “Mukkoti Vruksharchana” by planting three crore saplings in one hour throughout the state on the day.

The tagline of the programme reads *Prathi*

*Okkaram Mudu Mokkalu Natudam... KTR Gariki Janmadina Kanuka Iddam* (All of us shall plant three saplings each as birthday gift to KTR).

Those who WhatsApp pictures of planting saplings will receive from Rama Rao Vanamali awards through WhatsApp and e-mail within a week. The event is being organised as part of Green India Challenge and Haritha Haram. Organisers will

send the Mobile App once people send a GIC message to 90003-65000.

TRS MLAs are preparing to compete and plant saplings in an overwhelming way to draw attention of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao and Rama Rao in view of possible cabinet expansion.

The Vruksharchana is expected to begin at 10 am on July 24. TRS MLAs have already started campaigning for the

event on social media. They are also identifying places where they will plant saplings on a large scale within one hour.

Recently, Adilabad MLA Jogu Ramanna planted 3.5 lakh saplings in a record time of one hour on his birthday in Adilabad district. TRS MLA Atram Sakku announced that they have already finalised arrangements for planting the three crore saplings in one hour.

REVANTH TO  
BEGIN HIS NEW  
ROLE FROM  
NIRMALDC CORRESPONDENT  
ADILABAD, JULY 11

TPCC president Anumula Revanth Reddy will be launching the first programme under his leadership by riding a bicycle to protest against the soaring prices of petrol and diesel in Nirmal Monday morning. The cycle rally is being organised from Gandhi park to Ambedkar chowk, under the auspices of former MLA Aleti Maheshwar Reddy, who has been appointed as chairman of AICC programme implementation committee.

Revanth Reddy has selected Nirmal town for his first programme. It is where Rahul Gandhi on May 15, 2015 had participated in a 15 km ‘Kisan Sandesh Padayatra’ taken out to highlight farmers’ suicides. Now, Revanth Reddy also chose Nirmal for the first programme under his leadership to send a strong message to people and government and other political parties. Nirmal Assembly constituency is represented by Indrakaran Reddy, minister for forest Allola Indrakaran Reddy who was with TD earlier. Some of his supporters said that it would have been appropriate if he had chosen a bullock cart ride to protest instead of a cycle.



Participants in the cycle rally at Warangal on Sunday.

Warangal plans to  
promote cyclingDC CORRESPONDENT  
WARANGAL, JULY 11

In its bid to promote cycling for daily commute in Warangal, Tricity Riders organised an awareness rally in the city on Sunday. Warangal police commissioner Tarun Joshi too took part in the rally by riding a bicycle with other participants.

Significantly, six members of Hyderabad Cycling Group rode their bicycles overnight from Hyderabad to Warangal for taking part in the awareness rally.

Despite rain, the cycle rally started off from Warangal Police Commissionerate.

It passed through KU Cross, Peddammagadda, Mulugu Road, Pochamma Maidan and Venkatrama Junction before reaching Qila Warangal.

Speaking on the occasion, commissioner Tarun Joshi said cycling is a good mode of transport for daily activities within the city.

“This will reduce air and

noise pollution, apart from protecting environment. In addition, our health will also improve, and we will be physically fit,” he remarked.

The Hyderabad Cycling Group announced that a cycling league will be organised between June 21 and July 21 in which cyclists from across the country will participate, including 18 from Warangal. HCG founding president N. Ravinder said about 10,000 group members cycle regularly in Hyderabad city. He urged men, women and youth of Warangal city too to cycle regularly. Cycle Rally coordinator Sravanti Reddy said that cycling helps exercise most muscles of the body. It keeps one physically and mentally fit.

A person can also steer clear of cardiovascular problems by cycling, she remarked.

Central zone in-charge DCP Pushpa and Hanmakonda ACP Jitender Reddy were among those present at the rally.

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## SHORT TAKES

U.P. CM TERMS  
RISING POPULATION  
HURDLE TO GROWTH

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

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

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

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

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

AMIT MITRA LIKELY  
TO STEP DOWN AS  
WB FINANCE MIN.

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

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

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

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

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

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

KERALA BATTLES  
RISING COVID,  
ZIKA OUTBREAKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

NIA conducts multiple raids  
in Kashmir, 6 persons held

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

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, JULY 11

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

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

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

The NIA sources said that its teams assisted by

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

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

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

and Rabiul Islam.

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

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

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

Disguised as hawkers selling fruits and mosqui-

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— PTI

2 ultras planning  
to use bombs held

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

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

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

Lucknow, Kumar said.

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

Ahmed and Maseeruddin, on the instructions of Umar Halmandi, the head of the Uttar Pradesh module of the Al-Qaeda, along with their associates were planning to “unleash terror activities before August 15 in different cities of the state, especially its capital Lucknow”, the additional director general of police (ADGP) said.

— PTI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

— PTI

## India sees a slight decrease in Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

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

While many countries like UK, Russia, Australia and Bangladesh are dealing with the resurgence in daily infections, the cases in India seem to be under control with daily infec-

tions being less than 50,000 for the past two weeks.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Over 38.60 crore vaccine doses have been provided to states and UTs so far through all sources and a further 11.25,140 doses are in the pipeline. Of this, the total consumption including wastage is 37,16,47,625 doses. The new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination is to commence from June 21.

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

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

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

## POLICE | KILLINGS

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

## Assam cops on ‘encounter spree’, NHRC urged to take note

MANOJ ANAND | DC  
GUWAHATI, JULY 11

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

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

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

● **THE LAWYER** points out in his complaint that more than 20 such encounters had taken place so far and most of the persons at the receiving end were alleged drug dealers and cattle smugglers with a few having died on the spot.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

on May 31 and July 2 respectively.

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

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

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

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



SHORT TAKES

TURKEY BUS ACCIDENT LEAVES 12 DEAD

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

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

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

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

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

TWO IS-LINKED MILITANTS KILLED IN C. INDONESIA

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

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

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

EXPLOSION IN SUDAN PORT CITY KILLS FOUR

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

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

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

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

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

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

GEORGIAN TV CAMERAMAN KILLED IN ATTACK

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

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

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

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

Sirisha, 3rd Indian woman to fly to space

From Page 1

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

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

anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing.

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

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

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

Virgin Galactic already has more than 600 reserva-

BOLDEST ADVENTURE

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

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

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

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

waiting for Bezos' flight before announcing its ticket prices.

— Agencies



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

— AP

Pak braces to fight fourth wave

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

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

Positivity rate is the percentage of people who test positive for the virus compared to the total number of people who have been tested. A high value of positivity rate suggests high Coronavirus infection rate, implying greater prevalence of the disease. The national tally of confirmed cases reached 9,73,284 while the death toll touched 22,582 as 27 more patients died in the last 24 hours. The data showed that 9,13,203 people have fully recovered so far but still some 2,119 were in critical condition, meaning the death toll may rise. The government is banking on vaccination and so far has administered over 19.067 million doses. — PTI



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

— AFP

Myanmar caught off guard as cases surge, O2 dwindles

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

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

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

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

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

US swelters as 30M under heat warning

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

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

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

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

China vows retaliation as US bans firms

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

groups.

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

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

the Netherlands.

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

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

after handling pet food and disposing of faeces.

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



Abiy Ahmed

ETHIOPIA: ABIY'S PARTY BAGS LANDSLIDE WIN

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

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

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





DECCAN  
Chronicle

12 JULY 2021

India must make clear its  
Afghan role after US exit

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

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

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

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

**External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has lately been in Tehran and Moscow, New Delhi’s traditional allies in the Afghan context. It has to be ascertained to what extent Iran and Russia are changing.**

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

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

who have repeatedly displayed the inability to hold ground.

At suitable levels, India has opened channels of communication with the Taliban. New Delhi seeks to leverage itself politically. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has lately been in Tehran and Moscow, New Delhi’s traditional allies in the Afghan context. These power centres had been anti-Taliban in the past. It has to be ascertained to what extent Iran and Russia are changing.

Regardless of this, however, India will have to decide its stance without equivocation if it wishes to be seen as a serious player. Standing by Pakistan’s side, resource-rich China has emerged as a new — and open — factor in Afghanistan. New Delhi has to bear this in mind while being conscious that Beijing and Islamabad will act in tandem, though Pakistan remains deeply unpopular in Afghanistan. Since the dice is rolling, India cannot indefinitely delay taking a posture.

If this is to be to stand by the people of Afghanistan, in whom this country has invested much in the past two decades, the first charge on New Delhi is to ensure that non-Taliban factions mutually build a functional understanding even if they have differences with the leader of their government, President Ashraf Ghani.

## Stem poll violence in UP

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

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

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

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

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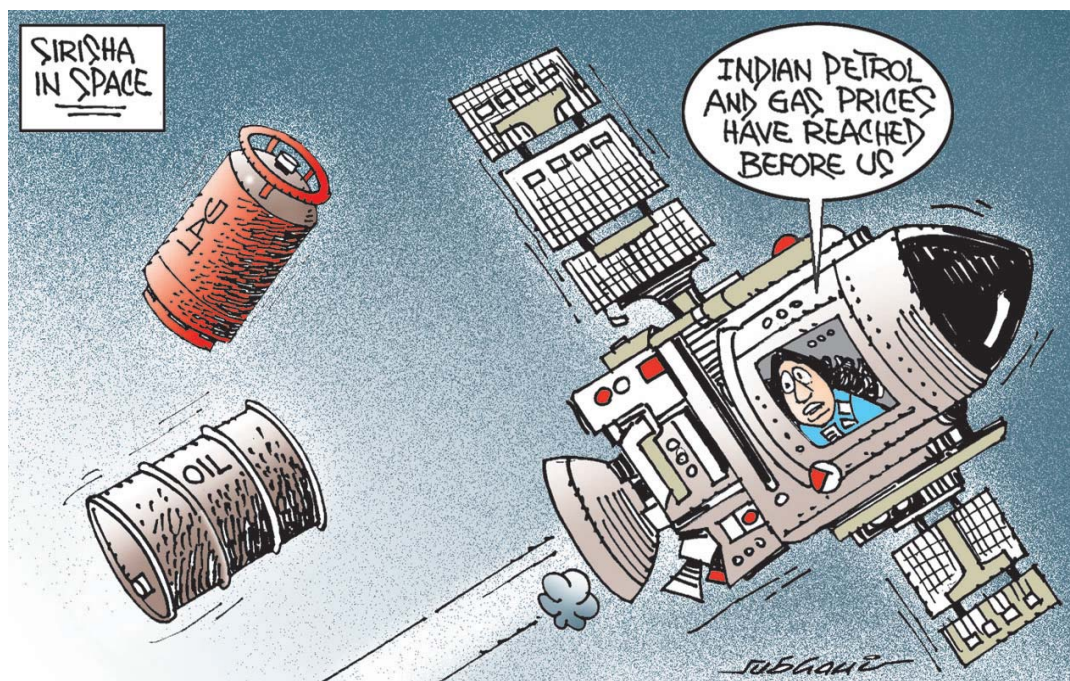
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Subhani

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

Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## LETTERS

## UNFAIR TO NURSES

It is unfair to treat nurses with apathy (*Nurses hold protest, DC, July 10*). After relying on them heavily when the Covid-19 cases were overwhelming, it is reprehensible that the state forgot their untiring, relentless and noble service during the pandemic and sacked them. It must take them back.

Dr Aadil Syed  
Hyderabad

## GARBAGE DISPOSAL

Some volunteers are solving the garbage disposal issue for the past five years in Sainikpuri and Vayupuri and keeping the streets free from litter. Benefactors contributed to this drive to employ some women for the upkeep of not only our society’s streets, but the colonies around Sainikpuri. Instead of waiting for the GHMC, we citizens must stop this lethargic practice of throwing garbage anywhere but in the bins provided. The GHMC is doing its best to keep the city clean.

Vijaya Naidu  
Sainikpuri

## OU DEGREE EXAMS

I am a degree student writing the third year, fifth semester, exam at Sardar Patel Degree College in Padmaranagar, Secunderabad (*Fears run high over OU exams, DC, July 10*). The classroom was not sanitised. Some students were coughing and sneezing in the exam hall and no invigilator or college staff was present to take care of those students.

Rahul Kumar  
Hyderabad

## 50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN  
ChronicleVajpayee calls  
for NIC meet

BHOOL, JULY 11.

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

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

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

A.G. Noorani

Kashmir and the  
delicate activism  
of ensuring that  
delimitation fair

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

By arrangement with Dawn



## quick BITES

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

\* As of Friday/Saturday

## Hero Electric Vehicles to invest ₹700 cr

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

## Amazon sees rise in sellers grossing over ₹1 crore biz



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

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

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

## Tea exports may decline by 15% this year

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



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

AMMAR ZAIDI  
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Goyal for faceless vetting of subsidy applications

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JULY 11

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

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

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



Piyush Goyal

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

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

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

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

## SONY TO USE ROBOTS TO CUT COSTS

ANCHALEE WORRACHATE  
JULY 11

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

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

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

—Bloomberg

## Six North-eastern states have no hallmarking centres

SANGEETHA G  
CHENNAI, JULY 11

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

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

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



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

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

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

As per the recent government decision, the jewellers in all the districts with hall-marking centres have to sell only hall-marked jewellery and

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

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

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

## Big insurers launch net-zero climate alliance

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

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

The move comes as insurers come under

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

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

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

the AXA Group, which chairs the NZIA.

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

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

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

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

The Alliance, first outlined in April, was presented by Generali CEO Philippe Donnet at Sunday's G20 Climate Summit in Venice. Many of the leading Europe-based insurers have already adopted climate-friendly policies. Last month, Generali pledged to reach carbon neutrality in its direct investment portfolio by 2050. —Reuters

## Woman infected with 2 Covid variants highlights next risk

SUZI RING  
JULY 11

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

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

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

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

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

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

EMILY CADMAN  
JULY 11

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

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

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

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

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

## HIGH IRON-ORE, PELLET PRICES FORCING SMALL UNITS TO EXIT



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

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

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

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

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

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

## CHINESE CHECKERS

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

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

GILES TURNER & KITTY DONALDSON  
JULY 11

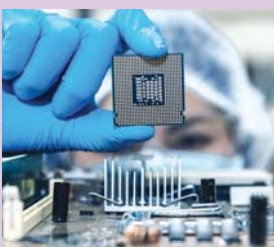
The UK was once the leading semiconductor innovator in Europe, producing the likes of Arm Ltd, whose technology is found in 90 per cent of all mobile devices, and Imagination Technologies Group Ltd, which supplies chip designs used by Apple Inc.

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

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

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

Now, in the middle of a semiconductor shortage, one of the last of those assets, Newport Wafer Fab Ltd, is being snapped up by a Chinese manufacturer for around 63 million pounds (\$87 million), according to a person familiar with the deal. After initially waving it through, Prime Minister



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

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

"Newport Wafer Fab is extremely worrying,"

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

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

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

## India hit back to level T20 series

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

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

## Sri Lanka's first team test negative

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

## England clinch Pakistan series

**London:** Lewis Gregory starred with both bat and ball as England beat Pakistan by 52 runs in the second one-day international at Lord's on Saturday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match series. Set 248 to win in a game reduced to 47 overs per side by rain, Pakistan were dismissed for 195. Somerset pace-bowling all-rounder Gregory, in just his second match at this level, struck with his first ball on Saturday on the way to 3-44 as England won with six overs to spare. That followed his valuable 40 and an eighth-wicket stand of 69 with Brydon Carse (31), in a maiden ODI innings for both batsmen, after England had slumped to 160-7. **Brief scores:** England 247 (Phil Salt 60, James Vince 56, Lewis Gregory 40; Hasan Ali 5/51) bt Pakistan 195 (Saud Shakeel 56; Lewis Gregory 3/44).

## Bangladesh put it past Zimbabwe

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

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

## Hetmyer shines in Windies' easy win

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

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



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

— AFP

## MESSI, NEYMAR NAMED BEST OF COPA AMERICA

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

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

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

Neymar delivered two goals and three assists in five games.

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

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

— AP

## ANGEL TO THE RESCUE

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

## Messi's quest for glory finally comes to an end

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

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

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

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



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

— AP

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

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

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

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

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

"We have to be big enough to recognize (the

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

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

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

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

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

— AFP

**Rio De Janeiro, July 11:**

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

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

Despite a glittering career that has seen him

## MESSI'S ARGENTINA HONOURS

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

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

national success were repeatedly frustrated.

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

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

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

## N-OLE, OLE, OLE!

Djokovic wins 20th slam, joins Federer, Nadal at top

**London, July 11:** Novak Djokovic won a record-equaling 20th Grand Slam title and sixth Wimbledon on Sunday with a four-set victory over battling Matteo Berrettini of Italy.

The world number one triumphed 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 to move level on 20 majors with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

His win also put him three-quarters of the way to the first calendar Grand Slam of all four majors since 1969.

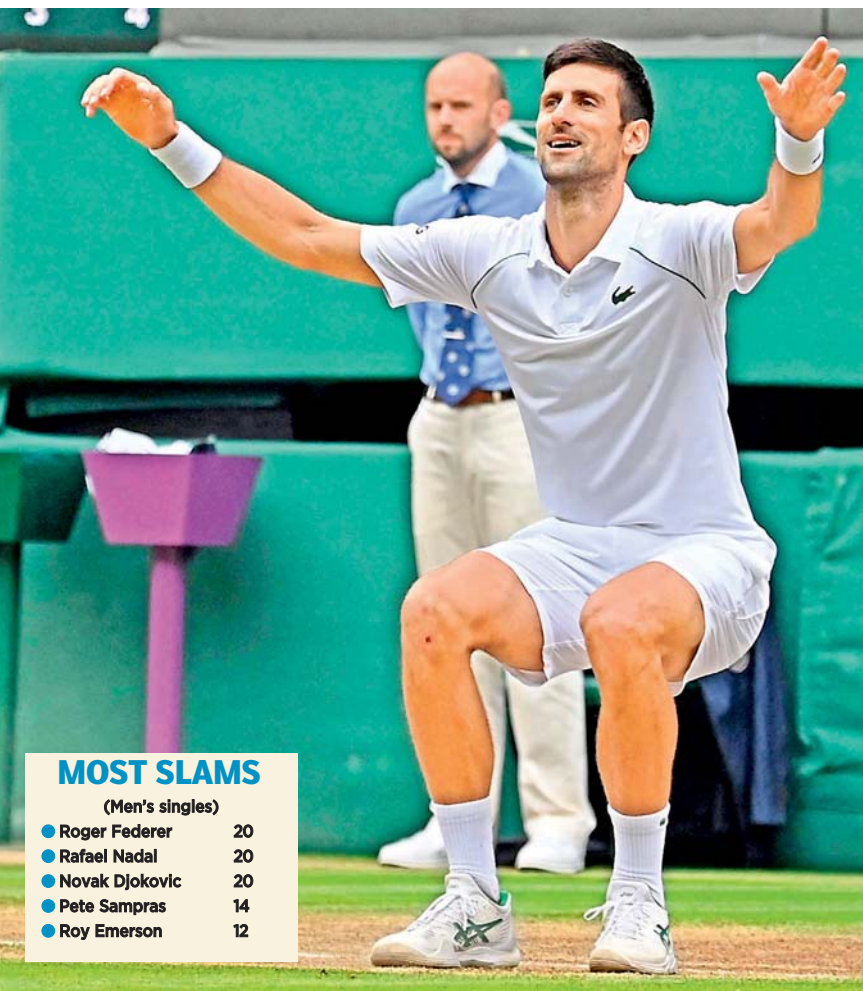
A sixth victory at the All England Club for Djokovic, who was playing in his 30th final at the Slams, added to his nine Australian Opens, two Roland Garros titles as well as three at the US Open.

Should he win a fourth title in New York in September, he will become just the third man in history after Don Budge (1938) and Rod Laver (1962 and 1969) to complete the calendar Grand Slam.

"It was more than a battle. He is a true Italian hammer I felt it on my skin," said Djokovic of Berrettini.

"It means none of us three will stop. Roger and Rafa are legends they are the reason I am where I am today."

Federer — who bowed out in the quarter-finals while Nadal did not play — tweeted his congratulations. "Congrats Novak on your 20th major," he said. "I'm proud to have the opportunity to play in a special era of tennis champions. Wonderful performance, well done!"



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

— AFP

## MOST SLAMS

(Men's singles)

- Roger Federer 20
- Rafael Nadal 20
- Novak Djokovic 20
- Pete Sampras 14
- Roy Emerson 12

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

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

male player.

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

Reinvigorated, he broke

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

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

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

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

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

## INDIAN-ORIGIN SAMIR LIFTS BOYS' TITLE

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

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

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

— Agencies

## Olympic briefs

## Music keeps Neeraj positive

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

## Boxers to leave on July 17

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

## Anand defeats Kasparov again

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

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

He followed it up with a

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

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

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