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HYDERABAD | WEDNESDAY | 9 JUNE 2021

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RH: 44%
Rain: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Rain likely. Max/Min
temp. 36/25°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttaryaya
Tithi: Vaishakha Bahula
Chaturdasi till 1.57 pm

Star: Krittika till 8.43 am

Variyam: 2.42 am to 4.30 am
(Thursday)

Durmuhurtam: 11.49 am to
12.41 pm

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Shawwal 27, 1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajr: 4.31 am

Zohar: 12.25 pm

Asar: 4.51 pm

Maghrib: 6.55 pm

Isha: 8.12 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.49 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.41 AM

MOONSET TODAY 5.59 PM

COUNTER POINT

Take action not only
against the cartoonist
but also those who
laughed at his cartoons!

SHORT TAKES**French President slapped in face**

Paris: French President Emmanuel Macron was slapped on Tuesday in the face by a man during a visit to a small town in south-eastern France, an incident that prompted a wide show of support for French politicians. He was greeting the public waiting for him behind barriers in Tain-l'Hermite after he visited a high school. A video shows a man slapping Macron in the face and his bodyguards pushing the man away as the French leader is quickly rushed from the scene.

■ Full report on Page 10

New income-tax portal launched

New Delhi: The new e-filing website of the Income Tax Department was launched on Monday with a host of new features for taxpayers.

The new URL <http://incometax.gov.in> replaced the long-existing <http://incometaxindiafilings.gov.in>, and it went live at 8:45 pm, the department said in a tweet. Users and taxpayers will be able to use all the features smoothly very soon, a senior tax officer said.

Twitter blocks JazzyB account

New Delhi: Twitter has blocked accounts of Punjabi rapper JazzyB, Sydney-based hip-hop artist L-Fresh the Lion and two others following demands by the Indian government. Jaswinder Singh Bains aka JazzyB is described by his website as a "transatlantic superstar" and "the Crowned Prince of Bhangra. Born in Punjab and raised in Canada."

■ Full report on Page 8

TRS nominee at last minute

Ruling party won't project anyone as candidate for HuzurabadDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) will not project anyone as its candidate for the upcoming Huzurabad Assembly bypoll till the deadline for filing nominations nears.

Sources in the TRS revealed that the party leadership had adopted the policy of announcing candidates at the last minute during the recent Nagarjunasagar bypoll.

The uncertainty over whether former minister Etala Rajendar or his wife Jamuna would contest the bypoll is said to be another reason for adopting a 'wait and watch' policy till the last minute as the party's

This strategy paid off in MLC polls and Nagarjunasagar bypoll as both the candidates emerged victorious and the TRS wants to continue the same strategy

strategy may change depending on the Opposition candidate.

The TRS announced Nomula Bhagat, son of deceased MLA Nomula Narasimhaiah, as candidate for Nagarjunasagar bypoll in April, a day before the deadline to file

the nominations.

Similarly, the party announced late former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao's daughter Surabhi

Vani Devi as candidate a day before the deadline to file the nomination for Legislative Council elections from the graduates constituency in March.

The TRS leadership has been adopting this policy of keeping everyone guessing on its candidate till the last minute after Dubbak bypoll in November 2020, which it lost to the BJP by a slender margin.

The party announced Solipeta Sujatha as candidate on October 6 even before the poll notification was issued on October 9. This has resulted in an exodus of disgruntled TRS leaders who failed to get tickets to other parties along with cadres. In fact, the Congress fielded its

candidate Cherukuri Srinivas Reddy, who quit the TRS the same day the ruling party announced Sujatha's candidature.

To prevent disgruntled leaders in the TRS, who fail to get party tickets joining other parties and contest elections from rival parties, the TRS has adopted the policy of declaring its candidates at the last minute since then.

This strategy paid off in MLC polls and Nagarjunasagar bypoll as both the candidates emerged victorious against all odds and the party wants to continue the same strategy for Huzurabad bypoll.

■ Page 2: TRS pacifying disgruntled members

Covid test for jumbo



Veterinary doctors collect a sample from an elephant for Covid-19 test, at the Topslip elephant camp in Coimbatore, on Tuesday. Captive animals are being tested following reports of lions and tigers becoming infected in zoos. — PTI

Centre places order for 44 cr doses of vaccines

AIIMS director rules out Covid risk to childrenDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 8

The Union health ministry on Tuesday said that fresh orders for 44 crore doses of vaccines have been placed.

"In an immediate follow-up of the Prime Minister's announcement of the changes in the guidelines for the national Covid vaccination programme, the health ministry has placed an order with the Serum Institute of India for 25 crore doses of Covishield and with Bharat Biotech for 19 crore doses of Covaxin. These 44 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines

will be available till December 2021, starting now," said Dr V.K. Paul, the Niti Aayog's member (health).

Additionally, he said 30 per cent of the advance for procurement of both the Covid vaccines has been released to the Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech. "Apart from these two vaccines, an order for 30 crore vaccines have been placed with Biological E's Corbevax. Combining all the three vaccines, we will have 74 crore doses."

The director of New Delhi's AIIMS, Dr Randeep Guleria, said

there is no data to show that children will be seriously infected in subsequent Covid-19 waves.

"It is a piece of misinformation that subsequent waves of the Covid-19 pandemic are going to cause severe illness in children. There is no data — either from India or globally — to show that children will be seriously infected in subsequent waves," Dr Guleria said.

He said 60-70 per cent of the children who got infected and were admitted to hospitals during India's second wave either had co-morbidities or low immunity.

■ Audio-only app for meetings becomes big hit; it is invite-only, users can switch groups

Clubhouse app is new craze on social media

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

would you invest in a social media app where users cannot upload pictures or videos, where you cannot type any text, where nothing remains after the moment passes — without cope to like, re-tweet or share, or even join by downloading it if you want? Unlike

But Twitter reached out to California-based Alpha Exploration Co, founded by Paul Davison and Rohan Seth, for acquisition at a

valuation of \$4 billion, which the firm turned down.

The app whose beta version was released on Android recently, namely Clubhouse, is currently open by invite-only. It is audio-only, which is being touted as the next big thing, and has become the hottest "talk of the town" app.

The audio app allows users to create or join voice chat rooms where users are discussing everything under the Sun.

It's a big hit not just

among the teenagers but also the new-gen politicians, bureaucrats, business analysts and stars and icons.

Discussion rooms currently range from politics, literature, cinema, history, sports, mental peace, office politics, parenting, music and Covid-19, among others.

Users can join in any discussion room of their choice, either silently listen to the ongoing conversations or add their own two cents to any debate, with permission from the

moderator(s). Users also have a choice to seamlessly switch between discussion rooms.

T. Namrata, 33, an app designer from Gachibowli, who has been using Clubhouse regularly ever since downloading the app on her phone two weeks ago, said, "The application is helpful as it offers lots of information on diverse topics through audio discussions held in multiple chat rooms. I easily jump in and out of chat rooms without having to notify or disturb anyone."

Namrata said she learned about the app through Twitter, where her friend posted an open invite. She said unlike Zoom and Google meeting apps that only allow employees, friends in a group or employees working in an organisation, everyone is welcome to Clubhouse rooms.

Kiran, 28, marketing professional, has been using the app for over a week and finds it fruitful.

■ Page 2: User privacy boosted Clubhouse's appeal

Clubhouse is nostalgia and addictive. It is like good old radio, where each one of us can run our own station. People listen, speak, meet and become friends. Just speak or just listen."

— KAALI SUDHEER,
Art curator and film producer

In the days to come, most significant political debates will be on Clubhouse. If 2014 was decided by Facebook and Twitter, surely, the Assembly polls of 2023 will be decided by Clubhouse."

— DR SRAVAN KUMAR DASOJU,
Congress leader

More lockdown but only at night

No curbs from 6 am to 5 pm; PRC approvedDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The state Cabinet on Tuesday decided to extend the lockdown by 10 more days from Wednesday till June 19 — with more relaxation period from 6 am to 5 pm, when shops and establishments will close at 5 pm.

The Cabinet has also approved the new Pay Revision Commission (PRC) for employees. The hiked salaries with 30 per cent fitment to be paid with the salary for June. The arrears for April and May arrears to be paid in 36 instalments.

The Cabinet also approved to set up special food processing zones in the nine undivided districts except Hyderabad. It directed the officials to set up rice mills and other food processing industries in not less than 250 acres.

The Cabinet had an in-depth review on kharif cultivation and the readiness of the agriculture department. It hailed the increase in cultivation under the Kaleshwaram and other irrigation projects. It also expressed happiness over 3 crore tonnes of paddy being produced in 1.06 crore acres in the last kharif and rabi seasons.

The Cabinet has taken a decision to constitute a sub-committee to deal with ration dealers' commission and other issues in the public distribution system. Another Cabinet sub-committee headed by finance minister T. Harish Rao has been constituted to recommend measures to improve facilities in government hospitals.

24 Chinese jets fly close to LAC

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 8

Around 24 Chinese fighter jets, including J-11s and J-16s, recently held exercises near eastern Ladakh amid the heavy deployment of forces on the ground at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) by both countries. The exercises come when both sides have been engaged in a military stand-off for over a year now at the LAC in Ladakh.

Reports said that several Chinese airbases, including Hotan, Gar Gunsa and Kashgar, were used for these exercises. The use of these bases is significant as they were used to sup-

port the People's Liberation Army's incursions into Ladakh last year. All these bases have been upgraded to carry out operations by all types of Chinese fighter aircraft. Besides these, four other bases — Shigatse, Lhasa Gongkar, Nyingchi and Chamdo Pangta — were also used. All seven bases are located in Tibet and Xinjiang.

While none of the Chinese jets crossed over into Indian airspace, the IAF was on high alert and watched the Chinese exercises. The Indian security agencies also kept a close watch, with the help of satellites and other forms of surveillance.

ties of holding this year's monsoon session are still being discussed.

The authorities are confident of holding the session in July itself as most of the parliamentarians, staff members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats and others have received at least one dose of vaccine. — PTI

■ Full report on Page 10

Parliament session from July

New Delhi, June 8: The government is hopeful that the monsoon session of Parliament will begin on its normal schedule in July, parliamentary affairs minister Pralhad Joshi said on Tuesday amid the second wave of Covid-19.

Since the pandemic began, three sessions of

parliament were curtailed and the winter session last year had to be cancelled.

Last year, the monsoon session, which usually starts in July, had begun in September. "I am hopeful that Parliament session will be held as per its normal schedule starting in July," Joshi said.

Sources said the modalities

of holding this year's monsoon session are still being discussed.

The authorities are confident of holding the session in July itself as most of the parliamentarians, staff members of both Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha secretariats and others have received at least one dose of vaccine. — PTI

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In the days to come, most significant political debates will be on Clubhouse. If 2014 was decided by Facebook and Twitter, surely, the Assembly polls

After row, zoo to drop name given to gaur calf

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The Nehru Zoological Park on Tuesday said that it was dropping the name Komaram Bheem given to a gaur calf that was born on June 2 at the zoo. The naming of the calf was objected to by the descendants of Komaram Bheem, the tribal leader who is legendary for his fight against the Nizam. Besides, Adivasi leaders had also objected to the naming of the calf after the tribal leader.

The calf was born at the zoo on June 2 and was named Komaram Bheem, as a mark of respect to the legendary hero of

the tribals who sacrificed his life fighting for the rights of the marginalised poor, as well as to mark state formation day.

The zoo clarified that no disrespect was intended to Komaram Bheem. However, keeping the sentiments of his family and followers, the name has been dropped.

Adivasi associations had said the ideal way to honour Komaram Bheem would be to name stadia, cultural centres and government schemes after him. The gaur, also known as the Indian bison, is a strong and powerfully built bovine, and one of the largest members of the family Bovidae.

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Politicians back water bodies' encroachment

Due to GHMC failure thousands of illegal buildings come up

MADDY DEEKSHITI | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

Despite the Telangana High Court repeatedly passing orders on the issue, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has failed in removing encroachments over city water bodies, including River Musi, city lakes and nala.

The failure of civic body has resulted in thousands of illegal structures including cattle sheds, multiple-storey buildings and mechanic sheds coming up in buffer zones of water bodies.

Expressing concern over failure of authorities in checking illegal construction in buffer zones of water bodies including Musi River, Telangana High Court had instructed authorities to file an action taken report on April 3. The failure of authorities to contain illegal constructions would compel one to think they

are hand-in-glove with persons who are raising such illegal structures, the High Court bench observed. It expressed surprise that authorities had failed to control unauthorised constructions despite having infra-structure and paraphernalia to do so.

GHMC authorities claim that only after the revenue department surveys and identifies these structures, can the corporation remove or demolish the encroachments.

However, despite multiple directions from the High Court, nodal agencies, including GHMC, revenue department and Musi Riverfront Development Corporation Limited (MRDCL) have failed in curtailing the growing encroachments along the Musi and other water bodies.

Highly placed sources say despite removing encroachments on city water bodies, they reappear as a few officials are

hand-in-glove with politi-

cians in the area who have been encouraging these illegal structures. One reason could be government asking authorities to pay compensation before removing long-standing encroachments, since that would displace several families eking out a livelihood at the spot.

"The onset has already happened over Hyderabad, and the state would be covered by June 11 or 12. Now, the winds are weak over the state and that is why there would be no rains," said IMD-Hyderabad director Dr K. Nagarathna explained.

"The winds further the movement of cumulonimbus clouds. We expect this to take place from June 11 with a low-pressure area expected to form over the north Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood, which would further the movement of the monsoon," Dr Nagarathna said.

IMD issues heavy rainfall warning

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The southwest monsoon has set over much of Telangana but for those wondering where the rains are, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has an explanation.

"The onset has already happened over Hyderabad, and the state would be covered by June 11 or 12. Now, the winds are weak over the state and that is why there would be no rains," said IMD-Hyderabad director Dr K. Nagarathna explained.

"The winds further the movement of cumulonimbus clouds. We expect this to take place from June 11 with a low-pressure area expected to form over the north Bay of Bengal and neighbourhood, which would further the movement of the monsoon," Dr Nagarathna said.

● THUNDERSTORMS accompanied with lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) are likely to occur

Under the influence of the monsoon trough, on June 11 and 12 there is expected to be heavy to very heavy rain at isolated places in Nizamabad, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Karimnagar, Peddapalle, Jayashankar-Bhupalpally, Mulugu, Bhadrakothi-Kothagudem, Mahabubabad, Warangal (Urban and Rural), and Jangaon districts.

Heavy rains are likely to occur on these two days at isolated places in the Adilabad, Komaram Bheem, Mancherial, Nirmal, Suryapet districts. Thunderstorms accompanied with lightning and gusty winds (30-40 kmph) are likely to occur at isolated places over Telangana state.

Fish markets see huge crowd on Mrigasira

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL I DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The party leadership is pacifying disgruntled leaders at the last minute by promising various posts after the election and preventing them from joining other parties. Since the TRS leadership is giving significance to the Huzurabad bypoll as it turned out to be a battle between Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and Rajendar who was sacked from the Cabinet, the party doesn't want to take any chances.

The party asked ministers, MLAs, MLCs, MPs and local bodies representatives in the erstwhile Karimnagar district to work on strengthening the party in Huzurabad and not focus or talk about the party's candidate till the party declares the candidate.

Incidentally, the Bathini Goud brothers, who every year on this day distribute their 'fish prasadam', refrained from doing so, for the second year in a row, in view of the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic and to prevent crowds from gathering.

The state government in years before the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic, used to make elaborate arrangements for the distribution of 'fish prasadam' — believed to be crucial to health and boosts immunity resulted in the crowds at both Ramnagar and Begum Bazaar fish markets. The crowds ignored physical distancing norms and people jostled with each other as they went from stall to stall to buy fish of their choice.

Meanwhile, sellers at the two markets on Tuesday hiked fish prices by 40 to 50 per cent, anticipating great demand. Traders and sellers who expected good sales this year, said they were disappointed with the demand being much less than last year.

Murli, a retailer and wholesaler at Ramnagar market, said, "This year, the sales fell by half compared



Huge crowds gather at fish market on the occasion of Mrigasira Karthe amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

to last year. There are around 80 sellers in the market who sold around 80 tonnes of fish as against the 160 tonnes sold last year."

One of the reasons, according to some of the sellers for the poor sales this year was Mrigasira Karthe falling in the middle of the week while last year, it fell on a Sunday, with the weekend demand adding

to the sales. Though there were large crowds, the number of people was less than last year, possibly because some people still feared the risk of catching Covid-19 if they moved around in large crowds, some sellers said.

Dr V.L.N. Sastry, former additional director of the customers at Ramnagar market, complained about the rates said, "On Sunday murrel fish which was ₹450 per kg is being sold today for ₹600, and rahu fish which was ₹80 per kg is sold for ₹140 today."

POLICE CRACK INTER-STATE SEED RACKET

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JUNE 8

The Suryapet police busted an inter-state racket and seized around 2.4 tonnes of spurious cotton seeds and pesticides.

However, sellers store these illegal seeds and pesticides in godowns and houses in secluded places. They sell them to gullible farmers with the onset of rains in Kharif season.

On Monday, Gadiguda police seized spurious cotton seeds worth ₹ 60,000 and arrested another two persons.

Rythu Swarajya Vedika district president Sangepu Boranna said already spurious cotton seeds and glyphosate have reached the interior villages in bordering mandals of old Adilabad district.

Police said that based on credible information, they intercepted one K. Srinivas who was transporting some spurious seeds on a motorcycle and questioned him. Based on his confession, police raided the house of one Ramanjaneyulu and seized around 2.4 tonnes of spurious seeds of cotton.

Investigation revealed the main accused, Veeranjaneyulu, who was absconding, was arrested by the Kalvakurthy police in 2019. After being released from bail, he shifted his base to Karnataka and manufactured the spurious seeds and sent it to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana," adds R. Bhaskaran, Suryapet superintendent of police. Police arrested Srinivas and his brother Sathish, Ramanjaneyulu and a helper Kondal Rao. The absconding Veeranjaneyulu is said to be the brother of Ramanjaneyulu.

In another case, three gang members — Satyanarayana, Murali, and Vijaya Bhaskar Rao — sold spurious seeds to farmers. The police seized around 450 kgs of spurious seeds from them and sent them to judicial custody.

Cong leader, 1st politician on the app says it is a fascinating

User privacy boosted Clubhouse's appeal

FROM PAGE 1

A regional head for a popular private firm, he has been hosting debates on topics ranging from politics, gender, sexuality, international relationship and Indo-China wars, among others.

"Since I have to communicate with people from diverse backgrounds professionally, the Clubhouse chat rooms are of help to me. I feel confident and learn a lot when great speakers talk on a topic and provide it a new dimension."

Kaali Sudheer, art curator and film producer, among the first from Hyderabad to join this, started a club called Hyderabad adda. He along with his friend Anuj

has been hosting several debates around the city's culture, food etc and said, "Clubhouse is nostalgic and addictive. It is like good old radio, where each one of us can run our own station. People listen, speak, meet and become friends. Just like 'just shut up', I love Chiru, 'I hate Covid19' and 'How many licks does it take' etc."

Congress leader Dr Sravan Kumar Dasoju, arguably Telangana's first politician on Clubhouse, said, "It is a fascinating app, which allows politicians to listen to people across the social spectrum and geography, with varied professions, age and political views. It can be a great feedback tool."

The tool saw its popularity soar in the lockdown atmosphere. Several Hyderabad users participated in serious discussions to light-hearted banter. Teenagers, vexed with the ongoing pandemic, binge-watching and other platforms, created rooms

of Telangana and AP are being discussed, besides food and Tollywood.

Congress leader Dr Sravan Kumar Dasoju, arguably Telangana's first politician on Clubhouse, said, "It is a fascinating app, which allows politicians to listen to people across the social

SHORT TAKES

MUSLIM LEADER ALLEGES POLICE HARASSMENTDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

A Muslim community leader, Moulana Jafar Pasha, head of the Amarat-e-Millat-e-Islamia, on Tuesday claimed that the police had harassed him at Afzalgunj on Monday before the lockdown began.

He claimed that he had a valid pass. About five minutes before the lockdown began, his car was stopped and he was not allowed to pass, he claimed adding that police officials behaved rudely with him.

Moulana Hafiz Peer Shabbir Ahmed, president, Jamiat Ulama Hind; Moulana Abdur Raheem Khurram Jamai, president, Abdulla Foundation; S.M.A. Quadeer, working president, Rashtriya Muslim Morcha, Mushtaq Malik, president, Muslim Shabban; Moulana Abdul Hameed Rahmani, president of the Islah-e-Muashira, and others expressed concern over the incident.

HC REJECTS CORE GROUP PLEA ON TRIDENT HOTELSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The Telangana High Court has rejected a petition of Core Group Hotels, which challenged the National Company Law Tribunal's (NCLT) decision in favour of a plan by Blackstone Hotels to take over the Trident Hotels (Golden Jubilee Group), which is in debt.

Around ₹950 crore is pending as dues to the Core Group from the Trident Hotels, and the consortium of banks led by Bank of Baroda had approached the NCLT.

Several proposals had come up for the takeover of the debt-ridden Trident Hotels and the NCLT gave its nod to the proposal of Blackstone Group. The group had agreed to pay ₹585 crore to the creditor banks by way of settlement.

The court instead suggested that the Core Group approach the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal.

CISF PROVIDES SECURITY TO BHARAT BIOTECHDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

Armed commandos of the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) provide security to the Hyderabad location of Bharat Biotech, one of the major Covid-19 vaccine manufacturers in the country, sources said on Tuesday. The force will be inducted at the facility on June 14.

CISF sources said that the office, located at Genome Valley in Shamirpet, will be secured by 64 armed personnel. The Union home ministry recently sanctioned a proposal to deploy the CISF at this facility, following which the force carried out a survey. "The organisation is an important facility when it comes to ensuring medical and health security of the country and it obviously faces a terror threat from various imminent elements. The CISF, hence, has been tasked to secure the Bharat Biotech facility in Hyderabad," an official said.

The force guards about 10 such facilities across the country, including the Infosys campuses in Pune and Mysuru, the Reliance IT Park in Navi Mumbai and Yoga exponent Ramdev's Patanjali factory premises in Uttarakhand's Haridwar.

HOME | TRUTHS

No special category has been established for Gulf expats in TSDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, JUNE 8

Gulf migrant workers are worried over Covid-19 vaccine slots for them in their native places in Telangana. Around 4,000 migrant workers reached their native places in north Telangana districts prior to the second wave of Covid-19. Due to the nonavailability of Covid-19 vaccines, Gulf migrant workers are unable to return to their workplaces.

Usually, Gulf migrants visit their native places once every two or three years for vacation. Based on their work rules, they stay in their native places for 2-6 months on vacation. The migrant workers, who

THE MIGRANT workers, who reached composite Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar and Warangal districts, are stranded due to Covid-19 pandemic.

reached composite Nizamabad, Adilabad, Karimnagar and Warangal districts, are stranded due to Covid-19 pandemic. The Gulf countries allowed the migrant workers to go back to work, only if they get Covid-19 vaccine. There is no special category for Gulf migrant workers to get Covid-19 vaccines. It is noted that the majority of workers are under the 20 to

44 years age group. They are not covered by any special groups designated for Covid-19 vaccination drive. Shockingly, there is no private hospital facility to provide vaccines for a cost in rural areas.

Speaking to this newspaper, Abdul Khadar, a migrant worker, said he should have reached Dubai by May end. Because of not getting Covid-19 vaccine, his visa was extended twice so far, he said. "I approached medical and health officials to get the vaccination done, but in vain," he lamented. The Telangana state government should provide a special category for Gulf migrant workers for jobs, he urged.

OVERSEAS MANPOWER RECRUITERS ASSN REQUEST JAB FOR JOB-SEEKERSDURGA PRASAD
SUNKU | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The Overseas Manpower Recruiters Association has written to Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao, requesting that overseas job-seekers be inoculated against Covid-19 on priority.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, D.S. Reddy, association president, said due to the pandemic many citizens returned to India. They and overseas job aspirants are unable to travel abroad due to the Covid-19 restrictions and require-

ments.

He said that restrictions in the Gulf countries would be lifted in a few months.

By this time, the government should vaccinate overseas job-seekers as was being done with students.

He pointed out Telangana state was among the four with the highest remittances.

He wanted the state to follow Kerala which was the first state to facilitate online updation of passport number in the vaccination certificates as the ID number for overseas job-seekers.

Vax drive in full swing

A large number of people in the superspreaders list gather to take the Covid-19 vaccine at a drive organised in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

In times of stress, cops offer psycho-social counsellingDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

As many as 253 persons availed the psycho-social counseling service started by Rachakonda police in May. The initiative was to help people facing mental health issues during the critical pandemic times. The service was launched with 14 counselors on May 10.

The police said it received 253 calls so far. Of these, 78 were of general stress, 52 were of Covid-related mental health issues, 15 were of depression, 18 were of psychological problems, nine were of suicidal tendencies, seven were of marital issues and the rest were of other reasons.

THE POLICE said it received 253 calls so far. Of these, 78 were of general stress, 52 were of Covid-related mental health issues, 15 were of depression, 18 were of psychological problems, nine were of suicidal tendencies, seven were of marital issues and the rest were of other reasons.

Police commissioner Bhagwat said, "The fear of suffering is more problematic than the actual suffering. In this period of pandemic, while many were affected by Covid-19, even more were affected by a fear of contracting Covid-19."

While those affected by Covid-19 can be treated, a concern is about those who are suffering silently with no easy way to share or overcome their fears.

"Many calls were from young people in depression and were feeling low in the uncertainty caused by Covid. Be it a software employee or a student or a hawker, everyone has a certain degree of fear of the future in these Covid times," Bhagwat said.

Rachakonda police said those who would like to avail its psycho social counseling service can call 040-48214800 during weekdays from 9am to 9pm. Professional counselors will offer their advice or treatment as required.

HC: ACT AGAINST POLLUTING UNITS IN RRDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

The Telangana High Court has said the GHMC must act tough against any pollution-causing industry or unit in Shastripuram and Tatanagar area of Rajendranagar mandal in Ranga Reddy district. The court directed the civic body to identify such units that ran contrary to the previous court orders and GHMC notices.

The court had in the past told the GHMC to remove all industries and commercial units in residential areas of Shastripuram. It had also advised the civic body to disconnect electricity connections to such units.

Petitioner counsel and amicus curiae Pushpindhar Kaur informed the court on Tuesday that after its directions, 80 per cent of such units had exited.

The remaining units are still functioning by only removing their name-boards.

More carriage and goods vehicles loaded with raw materials and finished goods are running at night time and units are operating at night, counsel submitted.

The court asked her to inform it about such units by way of geo-tagging of their locations. The court asked the GHMC to check on such information and vacate them from the area.

MED STAFF HELD FOR ILLEGAL SALE OF REMDESIVIRDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

A medical representative was caught selling remdesivir vials for a higher price in Hyderabad. The South Zone Task Force police, who arrested Mohd. Shafiuiddin, 38, seized 20 injection vials from him.

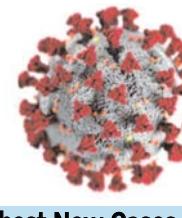
Shafiuiddin, a resident of Kishanbagh in Bahadurpura, works as a medical representative, was caught by the Task Force officials based on a tip-off. "He was black-marketing the vials by illegally procuring and selling them for ₹10,000 to ₹15,000 each depending on the urgency of the buyer," said an official.

Shafiuiddin, along with the seized injection vials, were handed over to the Hussaini Alam police for further action.

Update:

Cases | Deaths

Fresh Cases	1,897
Deaths	15
Tests Done	1,33,134
Active Cases	24,306
Total Cases	5,95,000
Total Deaths	3,409

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA

Highest New Cases	Lowest New Cases
GHMC 182	Adilabad 5
Khammam 163	Kamareddy 7
Nalgonda 151	Nirmal 10
Ranga Reddy 114	Komaram Bheem-Asifabad 11
Mechal-Malkajgiri 101	Medak 16

21-60 age group most vulnerable to Covid: ExpertsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

Positive cases of Covid-19 have been higher in men when compared to women and the most vulnerable age group has been 21 to 60 years in both the genders, according to reliable data.

The highest cases have been noted from 21 to 40 years with 43.5 per cent in males and 27.7 per cent in females. This age-group which is the most productive has suffered mild and serious cases also.

Experts say that in the second wave, the intensive care units had more young patients than middle-aged and old patients.

The long Covid complications have been noted in these age-groups with scarring of lungs, problems in functioning of heart and extreme fatigue.

The high infection rates in these age-groups are attributed to their work profile and caring for the Covid-19 patients and also creates scope for emergence of new variants. Experts say that vaccination of maximum people must be achieved in the next two months to have minimum new infections in the third wave.

JAWAHARLAL NEHRU UNIVERSITY NEW DELHI-110067

JNU invites application for MBA programme for the Academic Session 2021-22. Interested candidates may visit JNU website: www.jnu.ac.in for details.

davp 21284/11/0001/2122



National Institute of Electronics and Information Technology (NIELIT)
(An autonomous Scientific Society of Ministry of Electronics and IT, Govt. of India)
NIELIT Bhawan, Plot No. 3, PSP Pocket, Sector-8, Dwarka, New Delhi-110077
Phone: 011-23644849, 149

REVISIED VACANCIES AND RE-OPENING OF APPLICATIONS TO BE FILLED UP ON DIRECT RECRUITMENT BASIS IN STQC

Website: <http://www.nielit.gov.in>

In continuation to earlier Advertisement Number: NIELIT/DNL/STQC/2020/1 dated 02.12.2020 for filling vacancies in Standardisation Testing & Quality Certification Directorate (STQC) an attached office of MeitY, the vacancies have been revised and applications are re-opened for eligible and qualified persons for the following posts.

Post	Scale of Pay	Revised No. of Vacancies	Reserved for PWD
Scientist - B	Level-10 (Rs.56100-177500)	18 (UR: 12 EWS: 1 OBC: 4 ST: 1)	OH = 1
Scientific Assistant 'A'	Level-6 (Rs.35400-112400)	63 (UR: 26 EWS: 6 OBC: 23 SC: 8)	HH=2, LV =1, OH=2

ALL applicants are requested to go through the notice available on the website for details regarding revised stream-wise vacancies/reservation and instructions. Applicants who could not complete their applications/pay application fee earlier can complete their applications/pay application fee by closing date i.e 09.07.2021 (5:30 P.M.). New applicants are requested to apply online at <https://apply-delhi.nielit.gov.in> between 10.06.2021 (11:30 A.M.) and 09.07.2021 (5:30 P.M.). Before applying, applicants are advised to read the detailed advertisement carefully for determining their eligibility as per specified criteria for the post. Detailed advertisement is also available at nielit.gov.in, meity.gov.in and stqc.gov.in

Davp 06102/11/0001/2122

Registrar

Unmindful driving



A motorist falls from the bike as other motorists try to cut across and in the process hitting him, on the Necklace Road, Hyderabad on Tuesday. — R. PAVAN

Centre has given 20L vax to TS: BJP

Bandi slams KCR for not thanking PM

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay expressed happiness over Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement that the country would give free vaccines to people over 18 years of age. He thanked the Prime Minister on behalf of the people of Telangana.

Sanjay accused Chandrashekhar Rao for being negligent in delivering the fruits of development provided by the Centre to the people. He alleged that Rao was upset with the Centre as the latter was giving free vaccination and hence did not thank the Prime Minister because of not getting any commission in vaccine procurement.

He said the Chief Minister had allocated ₹2,500 crore for corona vaccination and questioned where the funds

had gone. Sanjay suggested allocating ₹500 crore to hire permanent doctors and staff. He demanded that the Chief Minister take steps to recruit doctors and other medical staff.

Sanjay demanded that the Chief Minister include the Covid and black fungus treatment under Aarogyasri and Ayushman Bharat. The Chief Minister was not interested to focus on Covid control even though he was handling the health portfolio after he sacked Etala Rajendar from the Cabinet, he said. Reacting to a question, he confirmed that Rajendar was likely to join the party on June 13 or 14 in Delhi in presence of party president JP Nadda and other key leaders of the party.

Addressing the media online on Tuesday, he said the Centre had so far given 80 lakh doses to Telangana as part of vaccination. Sanjay clarified that 20 lakh vaccine doses were likely to reach Telangana on June 20 and another 20 lakhs by July 20. While the

Etala joining BJP upsets Jeevan

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

Congress senior leader and MLC T. Jeevan Reddy said he was saddened by former minister Etala Rajendar's decision to join the BJP and said it would cost him his credibility. Rajendar's importance in the state where he had fought for statehood would decrease, the Congress leader said.

Speaking at the Assembly media point, Jeevan Reddy said Rajendar had played a key role in the statehood agitation along with Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao. If he had contested as an independent in the Huzurabad bypoll he would have won by 50,000 votes. Rajendar would lose if he contested on a BJP ticket, Jeevan Reddy said.

On other issues, the MLC condemned the

sacking of village field assistants, 90 per cent of whom belong to the Dalit community. He demanded their reinstatement.

Jeevan Reddy asked BJP state chief Bandi Sanjay when the Centre would sent Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to jail, in a reference to the claim of the BJP leader. He pointed out that Sanjay had made the statement one-and-a-half years ago.

He alleged that the BJP was protecting the TRS to secure its votes to pass key bills in Parliament. Jeevan Reddy made said that Congress leader Rahul Gandhi had stayed true to the party agenda, and dismissed Rajendar's comments. He said the former minister was losing his balance and blaming other parties for his plight.

ARUNA LAUDS PM FOR DECISION ON FREE VACCINE TO ALL ADULTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 8

BJP vice-president D.K. Aruna on Tuesday lauded the decision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to vaccinate all the adults free of cost.

In a media statement, Aruna said, "States need not spend a rupee on vaccines. The Centre has also provided an option to get the vaccine in private hospitals. So far the Centre has supplied about 71.23 lakh doses of vaccine to Telangana. The government has purchased just 4 lakh doses," she explained.

Aruna said that under Garib Kalyan Yojana, the Centre had provided rations free to about 80 crore people. She thanked the Prime Minister for extending the scheme till November.

Criticising Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao for failing in controlling the Covid pandemic, she said that due to his "thoughtless decisions" Telangana state had sustained losses. She alleged that the Chief Minister was more busy in politics than in taking steps to control Covid-19.

● **D.K. ARUNA, BJP** vice president, said that under Garib Kalyan Yojana, the Centre had provided rations free to about 80 crore people. She thanked the Prime Minister for extending the scheme till November.

10TH DAY CEREMONY



SHRI KUKUTLA SATHAIAH
DOB: 20-06-1946, DOD: 31-05-2021
"We miss you every moment. The warmth of your love & blessings will always be in our hearts forever."
Dasha Dinakarma on 09-06-2021
At our Residence, Saffiguda, Hyderabad,
followed by Lunch at 11.00 a.m.
with Love Kukulta Family
Ph: 9949283482, 9989338998

ETALA WELCOMED

Karimnagar: People of Shabunipally and Kaniparthi villages in Kamalapur mandal of Huzurabad accorded a warm welcome to former minister Etala Rajendar when the latter visited his assembly constituency for the after meeting BJP leaders.



S N VIDHYA BHUSHAN

Passed away on 10th May 2021 in Hyderabad. Nelareshamam on June 9th, 2021.

Words cannot express how much we miss you. Your memories, love and blessings remind us of your presence in every moment of our lives. You will always live in our hearts.

We love you. You will smile forever.

S V LAVANYA, wife
S V VIKAS, elder son
S V VISHAL, younger son
Y SWETHA, daughter
Y PRAVEEN KUMAR, son-in-law
Y SUNNY, grandson
Mobile: 9441196584; 9704868738

SHRADHANJALI



Dr. Neeraj K.S. Thakur

26-01-1976 - 05-06-2021

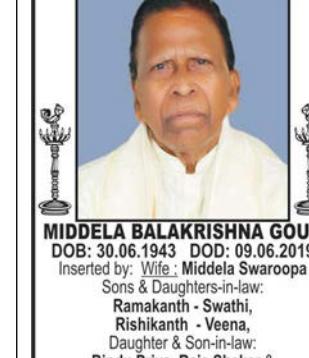
Founder and General Secretary,

Telangana Chamber of Events Industry

THE LIFE IN HIS YEARS COUNTED MORE THAN THE YEARS IN HIS LIFE.

IN GRIEF: Shagun Events

SECOND DEATH ANNIVERSARY



MIDDLELA BALAKRISHNA GOUD

DOB: 30-06-1943 DOD: 09-06-2019

Inserted by: Wife: Middlela Swaroopa

Sons & Daughters-in-Law:

Ramakanth - Swathi,

Rishikanth - Veena,

Daughter & Son-in-Law:

Bindu Priya, Raja Shekar &

Grand Children:

Ph: 8374119573 (WhatsApp only)

Celebrating Life of



GANTA RANI SAMYUKTHA

Treasurer, RBI (Retd.)

19-10-1949 - 30-05-2021

11th day ritual will be performed on

9th June 2021 (Wednesday) at My

Residence RTC X Roads, Hyderabad.

Vinnakota Prasanna, Vinnakota Pampa

Vinnakota Keerti, Vinnakota Veeksha &

& Family Members.

9989049786, 7095078679

SHRADHANJALI



LATE MRS. P. DAMAYANTHI ABRAHAM

(Retd. Stanley School Teacher)

DOB: 02-06-1965 - DOD: 01-05-2021

Memorial Service - Wednesday

9th June 2021 (10am on Zoom)

Meeting ID: 98320295094

Inserted by: Family Members

Ph: 9885399426 / 8790105525

MEMORIAL SERVICE



DR. NEERAJ K.S. THAKUR

26-01-1976 - 05-06-2021

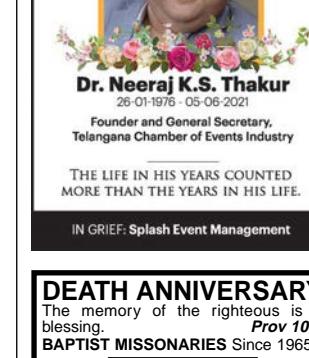
Founder and General Secretary,

Telangana Chamber of Events Industry

THE LIFE IN HIS YEARS COUNTED MORE THAN THE YEARS IN HIS LIFE.

IN GRIEF: Pearl Marvel Events & Exhibitions

10TH DAY CEREMONY



SMT. SANGA INDRAMANI

Expired on 31-05-2021

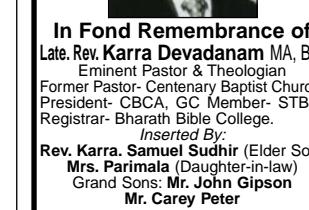
W/o: Late Sanga Ramchander

Retd. E.O., Panchayat Raj Dept.

Inserted by:

Sanga Family members

SHRADHANJALI



DR. NEERAJ K.S. THAKUR

26-01-1976 - 05-06-2021

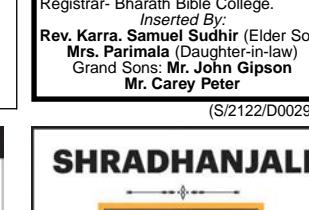
Founder and General Secretary,

Telangana Chamber of Events Industry

THE LIFE IN HIS YEARS COUNTED MORE THAN THE YEARS IN HIS LIFE.

IN GRIEF: Shooting Starz Events & More

40TH DAY CEREMONY



MR. JOHN BOSCO PETERS

Retd: HTNC/SCR/HYD.DN

D.O.B: 25-02-1942 D.O.D: 30-04-2021

S/o: Late Joseph Peters

Inserted by: Wife, Sisters,

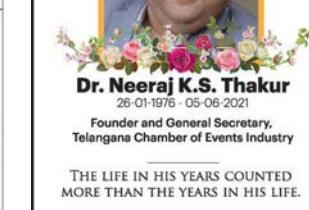
Brother, in-laws, Children,

Daughters, Son-in-laws,

Grand Children & Great Grand Son.

(S/2122/D00290)

SHRADHANJALI



LATE SMT. G. NAGENDRAMANI

DOB: 6.9.1947 DOD: 9.6.2016

"Your memories are always in

our hearts forever".

Inserted by:

Prof. G. Jagmohanadas and Family Members

5TH DEATH ANNIVERSARY



DR. NEERAJ K.S. THAKUR

26-01-1976 - 05-06-2021

Founder and General Secretary,

Telangana Chamber of Events Industry

THE LIFE IN HIS YEARS COUNTED MORE THAN THE YEARS IN HIS LIFE.

IN GRIEF: SSP Events-Ayushma Decor

SHRADHANJALI

LATE P.P. GOPALAN

Expired on: 9-6-2009

"We Miss you"

Inserted by:

DECCAN Chronicle

9 JUNE 2021

A welcome shift in vaccine policy, but hurdles remain

The Union government's decision to rework its "liberalised vaccine policy" and return to centralised procurement of vaccine doses for all people aged above 18 years is welcome. This is perhaps for the first time that the government has chosen to reverse its policy seeing its adverse impact on the people. It is no secret that the Supreme Court's tough stance that it will have to subject the government decision to exclude a section of people from its vaccination policy to judicial review based on Articles 14 and 21 which guarantees the right to equality and the right to life, respectively, which led to this crucial policy change.

The court's decision to call for files that led to the questionable decision must have rung alarm bells in the corridors of power, though the court has repeatedly assured the government that it had no plans to interfere with its executive functions. The court's insistence that the government produce an account of the ₹35,000 crores earmarked in the 2021-22 Union Budget for vaccine purchase might, too, have forced the Centre's hand. Credit must be given to the political Opposition, led by Kerala chief minister Pinarayi Vijayan, who first suggested that the Union government should procure the vaccine for the states, too, which was endorsed by several other chief ministers including Tamil Nadu's M.K. Stalin and Odisha's Naveen Patnaik.

The job is half done now, and the governments at the Centre and in the states have a lot of distance to cover to secure Indian people. We are into the sixth month of the "world's largest vaccination programme" but have been able to fully inoculate only 3.3 per cent of the population; the figure for the share of population who have been given at least one dose is below 12 per cent. This is not a satisfactory pace by any reckoning. Given that a third wave could hit the children, too, and they also need to be given the jabs, the figures fall to pathetic lows when the number of children eligible for vaccination becomes part of the denominator. Added to this is the issue of digital divide, which the Supreme Court has flagged: This could deprive the most marginalised sections of society of vaccination. As per the government's own records, there are about 13,000 villages in the country where there is not a single common service centre through which the people there can register themselves on the CoWin app.

The challenges are formidable but not insurmountable. The government has taken some baby steps to address them, which included the agreement it recently signed with Hyderabad-based Biological E. for the purchase of 30 crore doses of the vaccine which is in the advanced stages of clinical trials and the upfront payment of ₹1,500 crores. It is also getting Covaxin produced in more facilities. The government has now to prepare a workable schedule on the procurement and administration of the vaccine to meet the deadline of December 31 which it itself has fixed for the universal vaccination before it gets back to the Supreme Court on June 30 for the next hearing.

Winning new frontier in space

The founder of Amazon who revolutionised the way people shop in the new millennium will be beating fellow billionaires Richard Branson and Elon Musk to blast off into space, fly 105 km up, spend three breathtaking minutes of weightlessness in about 10 minutes or so at the apogee of the flight and return to planet earth. The race to create space tourism 60 years after Yuri Gagarin became the first man to travel into space may be heralded by the seeming vanity of a rich owner of a spacecraft taking a thrilling ride into the sky along with his brother Mark, besides the highest bidder in an online charity auction which is now at \$2.8 million, and two pilots.

Non-astronaut civilians have flown into space before but if the world's richest man is prepared to do it while possessing some \$200 billion of assets on the ground it might just signal increasing confidence in man's mastery over space flights just as an expensive tourism industry is set to expand. What we do for science in terms of spacecraft exploring Mars and space probes flying a lot further may be a lot more productive. But it is in taking untrained civilians along for up-and-down flights that earth will resonate with stories from space to rekindle the imagination. When Armstrong stepped on the man, the whole of humanity was figuratively with him.

The flight will usher in the crossing of a frontier signalling human capabilities in engineering safety and reliability in space. Several astronauts who have enjoyed the thrill of viewing our planet from way above have waxed eloquent about their experience. The Bezos brothers and others will have even better viewing seats in the roomy Blue Origin's New Shepard capsule with very large windows. What opening the door for rich civilians to tag along means is that the human endeavour to explore space would get a fillip and further propel the human race towards a long stated ambition of colonising Mars and other planets that seemed way beyond reach in billions of years.

DECCAN CHRONICLE

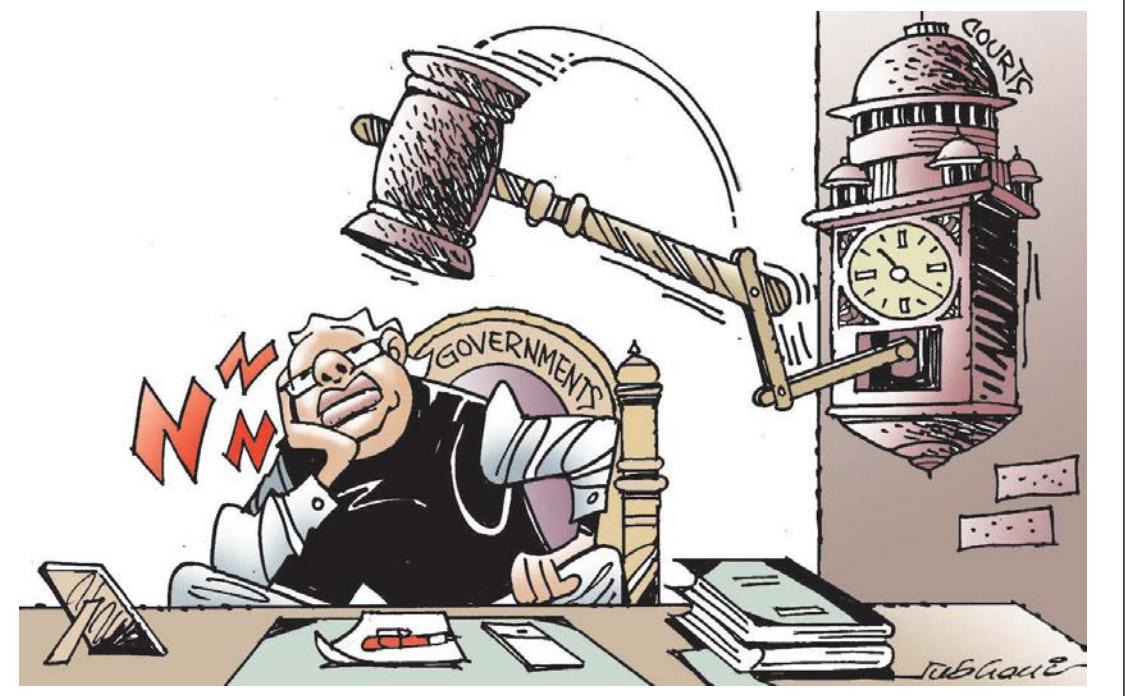
K. SUDHAKAR
Printer & Publisher

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Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P.), Ph: 0891-255233/255234; Fax: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904
Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilalapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433
Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burrapur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chemmudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580
Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254766/22254766/4230525
Cochin: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammangal, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
Gram: CHRONICLE Postal registration no: No. H/SD-348/2006-08

K. SUDHAKAR

Subhani



Turbulent Afghanistan could impact Kashmir

Syed Ata Hasnain



One feels glad to see Jammu and Kashmir drop steeply in the hierarchy of India's security concerns. I am not going to spoil the party by suggesting that the current situation is just a smokescreen behind which lie many scheming ideas and thoughts to take it all back to 2001. Why 2001? It is simply because that is a landmark year recorded as the one with the highest terrorist casualties (2,100 killed); or, in other words, the year with a disproportionately high number of engagements, contacts, gunbattles. It was also the year when we saw the beginning of the Nato onslaught into Afghanistan (then usually referred as AfPak) after 9/11. Afghanistan and J&K have a long association; I am not alluding to their deep history but only to recent times. It's the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan at the end of 1979 that brought the mercenaries, often called jihadis, to Afghanistan under the sponsorship of the United States and Saudi Arabia. The rise of Islamic obscurantism can be traced back mostly to the 1980s when the refugee camps on the Pak-Afghan border became the centres of conversion to more radical beliefs of Islam. Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence gained much of its experience in handling tricky intelligence and operations related situations in Afghanistan. As soon as the war ended with the Soviet defeat, the mercenaries were available for a song and became the new jihadis in J&K. People unaware of the nuances of the issues in J&K over the last 30 years need to be informed that the original separatist movement of 1989 was largely indigenous and may have been controlled, but for the sudden availability of the merce-

nary jihadis freed from the war in Afghanistan. The ISI got them together with funds, weapons and military wherewithal but no had control over. They were then infiltrated into Kashmir from every conceivable direction to add to the growing footprint of terror. Many of them were Afghans who had no love lost for Kashmiris. The Indian Army and its fledgling anti-terror force, Rashtriya Rifles, neutralised hundreds as intelligence on them was never far, with them getting on to the wrong side of many in the local population, especially women. The pipeline of so-called jihadis dried up by 1996, when the remnants of the mercenaries who fought the Soviet Army in Afghanistan had either met their end or returned to do service with the Taliban when it came to power. The infiltration of foreign terrorists from 1996 onwards was mainly that of Pakistanis who flooded North Kashmir, in particular in the Bandipur, Sopore, Lolab and Handwara tracts.

Kashmir's proactive media repeatedly queried the US Central Command and the principles of the "COIN" (counterinsurgency) doctrine were in full flow in Afghanistan. I always answered with the stock reply that almost became a byline: "When you throw a stone into water there are ripples in every direction. Ripples from the conflict in Afghanistan will invariably travel to J&K." I usually left it at that, and if someone persisted, I would usually say: "Let no one imagine that 2011 is 1989, we are far superior in deployment and even

more in experience." All these words are coming back to me in bits and pieces to create a picture for the region once the Americans are out of Afghanistan. That is expected largely by July 2021, without waiting for President Joe Biden's September 11, 2021 deadline.

So, is a resurgence of extremist violence in the region likely after July? The American presence being sought at some Pakistani airbases to afford drone operations and possibly other forms of aerial warfare including Special Forces is with a view to ensure that Afghan territory, and maybe some Pakistani territory as well, is not used to conduct activities that are detrimental to US interests. It's to keep a vigil over these areas which have provided much sorrow to the world in the last two decades. Of course, this will never be sufficient to have full regional coverage, but the US can always be advised to include India in its coverage too, simply as emerging strategic partners, and Pakistan is in no position to resist that, given its precarious financial position.

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SHORT TAKES

CORRECTION

TMC MP Abhishek Banerjee was inadvertently referred to as Abhijeet in June 8, 2021 edition. The error is regretted. —Editor

J&K HAMLET 1ST TO GET 100% ADULTS JABBED

Srinagar, June 8: A remote hamlet in Bandipora district of Jammu and Kashmir has become the first village in India to vaccinate all its adult population against Covid-19, officials said on Tuesday.

The credit goes to the healthcare workers whose strenuous efforts shot Weyan hamlet, with an adult population of 362, to national fame, they said.

"The village is located only 28 kilometres away from Bandipora district headquarters, but a distance of 18 kilometres has to be covered by foot as there is no motorable road," an official of the health department said.

He said the task of vaccinating all the residents was even more difficult as the village consists of nomadic families who go to higher reaches for grazing their livestock. "There is no internet access in the village. So it was not possible for the residents to get appointments for vaccination like the way people in urban areas do," Bashir Ahmed Khan, Chief Medical Officer, Bandipora said while explaining the difficulty faced by the healthcare workers.

The vaccination in the village was covered under 'J&K model', which is a 10-point strategy to vaccinate entire eligible population at accelerated pace.

Despite initial vaccine hesitancy, Jammu and Kashmir has achieved 70 per cent vaccination in the 45+ age group, almost double the national average, the official said.

Commenting on the achievement, Yatish Yadav, media advisor to Jammu and Kashmir government, said the Union territory was raising the bar in the Covid-19 vaccination drive.

MAHA BJP SEEKS ₹7K-CR PACKAGE TO HELP PEOPLE

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 8

The BJP on Tuesday demanded that ₹7,000 crore kept aside by Maharashtra government to buy Covid vaccines should be used to give a financial package to common people suffering due to lockdown. On May 1, Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray had said that the state government has kept the money to pay for 12 crore doses of Covid vaccines in a single payment.

The BJP said that since the Centre is now going to provide free vaccines, the money kept by the state for the same to provide financial assistance to people.

Maharashtra BJP spokesperson chief Keshav Upadhye said that the MVA government should provide a financial package to downtrodden people and farmers from ₹7,000 crore, which were kept aside for vaccines.

He said, "The MVA government has issued a global tender to purchase jabs for vaccination for citizens in the age group 18 to 44 years. The Chief Minister had said that the state government had earmarked ₹7,000 crore for the vaccination programme. The state government did not get any response for the tender. Since Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the free vaccination, the funds kept for buying vaccines should be used to provide a relief package for farmers, small entrepreneurs, hairdressers, vegetable sellers, rickshaw-taxi drivers and the poor."

'Unlock' in Bihar begins as Nitish eases Covid-19 curbs

Malls, educational institutions, religious places to remain closed

K'taka to take call on unlock soon

Bengaluru, June 8:

After almost 35 days of lockdown, the Bihar government on Tuesday decided to ease restrictions in the state. The announcement was made by Chief Minister Nitish Kumar after he held a review meeting with the crisis management group.

Announcing his decision on social media, Kumar said that, "since there has been a decline in Coronavirus cases we have decided to end lockdown in Bihar. But night curfew would remain in place from 7 pm to 5 am. The government and private offices would be opened with 50 per cent attendance till 4 pm but malls and other educational institutions, religious places, and cinema halls would remain closed".

The state is currently under lockdown till June 14, and there are indications that the government is likely to go for graded relaxation of restrictions, in districts that have less positivity rate to

begin with.

"The Chief Minister, after discussing with everyone, will take a decision on what measures need to be taken in this regard, by taking everyone into confidence," deputy chief minister C.N. Ashwath Narayan said on Tuesday in response to a question on unlocking.

Speaking to reporters here, he said, the Chief Minister is likely to call a meeting (with experts, ministers and officials), in a day or two, during which

all aspects will be discussed and the outcome will be made known.

"In most of the districts, other than a few, the numbers have come down. We will also have to ensure that the cases don't increase again, it will also be looked into," he added.

Yediyurappa had earlier said that the state will start its unlock process only in those districts where the Covid-19 positivity rate drops below 5 per cent.

The Karnataka govern-

ment had initially announced 14 days "close down" from April 27, but subsequently imposed a complete lockdown from May 10 to May 24, as the Covid cases continued to spike.

Citing lockdown yielding results and experts advice, it was further extended till June 7 and then again till June 14. Karnataka on Monday had reported 11,958 fresh cases and 340 fatalities, taking the tally to over 27 lakh and the toll to 31,920. —PTI

UP extends relaxation in all 75 districts as cases dip

Lucknow, June 8: The Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday extended relaxation in Covid restrictions to all 75 districts of the state, with the active cases coming down the 600-mark in each of these districts.

The night curfew from 7 pm to 7 am and weekend curfew (for the entire day) will, however, continue throughout the state, an official spokesman said.

By Monday, the relaxation was extended to 72 districts barring Meerut, Lucknow and Gorakhpur.

"There will be relaxation in Coronavirus curfew in all the districts of the state from Wednesday onwards, from 7 am to 7 pm, for five days as the active Covid cases have come below 600," the spokesman said.

In a high-level meeting

convened through virtual medium on Tuesday, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath reviewed the Covid-19 situation and decided to give the relaxations in the Covid curfew.

The spokesman said in view of the decreasing infection rate, a standard of 600 active cases was set for having curfew effective in the districts.

"Only 797 new cases were reported in the state in the past 24 hours. Now, there are 14,000 active cases in the state," he said.

"On Monday, 2,85 lakh Covid tests were done. The positivity rate of the state is 0.2 per cent, while the recovery rate has gone up to 97.9 per cent," he added. In an order issued in this regard by additional chief secretary, Home, Awanshi Kumar Awasthi said the curfew will be relaxed as

per the conditions mentioned in the government order issued on May 30 by chief secretary R.K. Tiwari. According to the order issued by Tiwari, shops and markets outside containment zones would be allowed to open for five days (Monday to Friday).

Instructions were issued that over the weekend, cleanliness, sanitisation and fogging campaigns will be carried out.

Shopkeepers and their employees will have to wear masks, maintain two-yard distance with each other and customers, and ensure the arrangement of hand sanitisers.

While there would be full attendance for frontline workers, for the rest of the government employees, there would be 50 per cent attendance on rotation. —PTI

almost all the districts there are less than 50 cases. We also observed that people in villages

were less alert and mostly ignored Covid guidelines like wearing masks and maintaining distance.

Despite all these issues, there is less than one percent positivity rate. The Bihar government's deci-

sion to end the lockdown and impose night curfew is in favour of the people of the state".

Newly-wed seeks help for ailing husband

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 8

A newly-wed woman in Odisha has appealed to the people for financial assistance to take her critically Covid-19 infected husband to a hospital in Kolkata for better treatment.

Mousumi Mohanty, the woman, said around ₹1 crore is required to treat her husband Abhisek Mohapatra. Abhisek requires urgent ECMO (Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation) treatment. He will be shifted to Kolkata from Bhubaneswar by road as funds crunch has posed hindrance for his airlift to West Bengal.

Abhisek will be taken to Kolkata through a special ambulance with ECMO support on Tuesday evening, said his family members seeking help from the public for the costly treatment. Hospital sources said his treatment will cost around ₹1 crore.

"We belong to a middle class family. We can't arrange such a huge amount for the expensive treatment of my husband. I have arranged as much as I can. We can't

afford airlifting him to Kolkata and planning to take him there by road tonight. I request all brothers and sisters to extend some financial assistance so that I can treat my husband. Your small assistance can help my husband's safe return home," Mousumi pleaded to the public.

Noted Odia cine artist Bobby Mishra also appealed to people to extend a helping hand to Abhisek. Abhisek is currently undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Bhubaneswar. As his condition is deteriorating he needs ECMO treatment. I request all of you to help him as per your ability," Bobby said.

Those who want to lend financial assistance for the youth can visit MILAP.ORG/FUNDRAISER/SUPPORT-ABHISEK-MOHAPATRA. People can also donate through PhonePe/GooglePay with Mobile no 9583596886.

Abhisek had married only a month ago. Eight days after his marriage, he was found infected with Covid-19 and subsequently admitted to private hospital in Bhubaneswar after his health condition worsened.

"We belong to a middle class family. We can't arrange such a huge amount for the expensive treatment of my husband. I have arranged as much as I can. We can't

'Panic' alert



Police force deployed after many patients died during a mock drill at Paras hospital in Agra on Tuesday. The Agra administration ordered an enquiry after a video clip surfaced in which the owner of a private hospital was purportedly heard saying that he conducted a "mock drill" during which oxygen supply was cut off for Covid patients for five minutes. The owner was also heard saying that bodies of some patients started turning blue after the oxygen supply was cut off. —PTI

Assam CM advises Rahul to not 'knit-pick' like an immature kid

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JUNE 8

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma who took on Congress leader Rahul Gandhi by disclosing as to how he was busy feeding his dog when Assam government wanted to discuss urgent issues with him in 2015, on Tuesday told him to not "knit-pick like an immature kid" while referring to his remark on Prime

Minister Narendra Modi's announcement on free universal vaccination.

While many Opposition leaders lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of free universal vaccination for all adults in India and centralisation of vaccine procurement, some also accused the government of "wasting crucial time". However, Rahul Gandhi in his reaction on Twitter said he had, "one simple question -

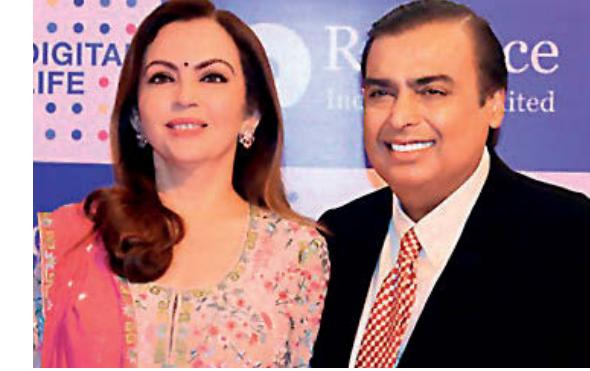
If vaccines are free for all, why should private hospitals charge for them?"

Sarma took to Twitter and hit back at the Wayanad MP, telling him to not "knit-pick like an immature kid". Sarma in his tweet said, "One simple answer — Every 18+ Indian will be given free vaccines by PM @narendramodi. Govt at public hospitals, those who want to pay can opt for a private. Don't knit-pick like an immature kid." (sic)

● JOSEPH WAS 'much worried' about the deaths caused by the virus, says the hand-written letter, in the form of a scroll, accompanied by a colourful illustration showing a bespectacled judge using his gavel to give Covid-19 a knock on its head.

To alleviate the sufferings of her fellow citizens in the grip of the pandemic, "I am happy and feel

proud your honourable court has moved orders for supply of oxygen and saved many lives. I understand your honourable court has initiated effective steps in bringing down Covid-19 and the death rate in our country, especially in Delhi. I thank Your Honour for this. Now I feel very proud and happy," Joseph, a resident of Thrissur in Kerala, wrote in her letter that the Supreme Court



Mukesh Ambani, chairman and managing director of Reliance Industries Ltd., and his wife Nita Ambani have always adopted an employees-first policy.

Accordingly, the company has announced a slew of relief measures for the family members of those RIL employees who succumbed to Covid-19 and also for the employees who are battling the disease.

The company will fund education of the children of the deceased employees upto graduation level. It will also provide medical coverage for the spouse and children of the employee. Also, 5 years of salary of the employee will be given to the family. Similarly, ₹10 lakh will be given to the families of the off-roll employees. The company is also providing vaccines to the employees and their family members.

Odisha announces spl aid for vendors

DC CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 8

mid-way because of the pandemic situation. As a result, nearly 1.20 lakh street vendors could find a place in the government's list. We appeal to the Chief Minister to order for resumption of the enumeration process so that the interest of the street vendors could be saved," said Pratap Sahu, president of Odisha Uthadokani Mahasangha.

Meanwhile, the Covid-19 single-day cases on Tuesday continued to dip in Odisha for the sixth consecutive day with the state recording 5,896 new cases.

With this, the positive tally in the state surged to 8,25,110. Odisha Uthadokani Mahasangha, an organisation of the street vendors, welcomed the decision and appealed to the Chief Minister to extend the assistance to those who have been left over.

"There are nearly two lakh street vendors in Odisha. In fact, the Odisha government was carrying out a survey before the pandemic period set in. It was stopped

of the fresh cases detected across 30 districts of the state on Tuesday, a total of 3,332 cases were reported from quarantine centres, while the rest 2,564 were local transmission cases.

GOOD WORK Girl says how 'happy, proud' she felt to see SC's intervention

CJI lauds 10-year-old's letter hailing SC

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 8

received towards May-end. Joseph was "much worried" about the deaths caused by the virus, says the hand-written letter, in the form of a scroll, accompanied by a colourful illustration showing a bespectacled judge using his gavel to give Covid-19 a knock on its head. I thank Your Honour for this. Now I feel very proud and happy," Joseph, a resident of Thrissur in Kerala, wrote in her letter that the Supreme Court

back to Joseph, saying that he was impressed by the way she kept track of the happenings in the country, particularly her concern for the well-being of her compatriots.

"I am sure you will grow up into an alert, informed and responsible citizen who will contribute immensely towards nation-building," Chief Justice Ramana wrote in his reply and sent her a signed copy of the Constitution of India.

SHORT TAKES

TEMPLE LAND DOCUMENTS IN TN TO GO ONLINE

Chennai, June 8: Ownership documents pertaining to the lands belonging to temples under the ambit of the Tamil Nadu Hindu Religious and Charitable and Endowments (HR & CE) Department, across the state, will be uploaded on its website on Wednesday.

Particulars of the lands to the extent of 3,43,647 acres will be published in the first phase out of a total of 4,78,272 acres of land identified to belong to the temples in the state.

"Nearly 70 per cent of the total property containing the ownership documents will be uploaded," HR & CE Minister P K Sekar Babu said in a statement on Tuesday.

There are over 36,000 temples under the department's control and the verification of title deeds was on, he said.

"Title deeds of temple lands were corroborated with the software available with the state Revenue department. These were classified into three categories viz. fully compatible, partly compatible and new group," he added.

About 3,43,647 acres currently identified as compatible and the A Register / Urban Land Survey Record and Cita of those lands will be published on the department's website on Wednesday for public viewing, the minister said.

Steps will be taken to ensure that the title deeds of all the lands belonging to the temples are in the name of the temples concerned, Sekar Babu said.

5-YR-OLD DIES OF THIRST IN RAJASTHAN

Jodhpur, June 8: After a five-year-old girl died of thirst while walking in scorching heat through an uninhabited stretch in Rajasthan's Jalore district, Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Tuesday attacked the state government for its indifference towards Centre's Jal Jeevan Mission.

Manju died due to dehydration while her grandmother Sukhi (60) fell unconscious in Raniwara on Sunday afternoon when they were walking to meet a family member in Roda village, Station House Officer Padma Ram said on Tuesday.

While on the way, they felt thirsty but could not find water around as the place was uninhabited, he said.

In a series of tweets on Tuesday, the union minister attacked the Ashok Gehlot-led state government for distancing itself from Central government schemes and for not utilising the budget it received for implementation of the Jal Jeevan Mission.

He said that Rajasthan ranked 29 among 33 states and UTs in giving water connections in rural areas.

Rajasthan was allocated ₹2,252 crore for providing tap connections under the 2020-21 budget of the Central government but only ₹630 crore was spent, the union minister said.

"In 2021-22, the state was allocated ₹10,180.5 crore under the mission which was four times the previous budget," Shekhawat said in a tweet in Hindi.

TOMAR: GOVT READY TO TALK TO FARMERS

Gwalior, June 8: The government is ready to talk with the agitating farmers on "options other than the farm Bills", Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said on Tuesday.

Farmers have been agitating on Delhi borders against the three new farm laws since November last year.

"The Central government has always talked in the interest of farmers' welfare, and it is ready to talk with farmers," Tomar said, speaking to reporters here.

"If the farmers' organisations are ready to discuss options other than the agriculture Bills, then the government is ready to talk with them," he added.

Tomar, who represents the Morena seat in the Lok Sabha, is on a tour of Gwalior-Chambal region.

Asked about the rising inflation, the minister said, "The government is keeping an eye on the prices of lentils and edible oils."

The prices of lentils have come down after the government released stocks, but the prices of mustard oil have increased as the government has decided that no other edible oil will be mixed in it to ensure purity, he said.

MET DEPT WARNS OF HEAVY RAINS IN NORTH EAST

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JUNE 8

With incessant rain for last two days and discharge of excess water from Ranganadi Power project of Neepco, the flood scenario in Assam has worsened with more than 31,000 people getting affected in two districts - Biswanath and north Lakhimpur on Tuesday.

The reports said that about 31,900 people have been affected by the floods in the two districts of Biswanath and Lakhimpur so far. The situation may further deteriorate with the Meteorological department indicating that heavy rainfall is likely to continue across the state over the next three-four days.

The first wave of flood had hit Lakhimpur district on Sunday itself in which about 3,000 people were affected.

According to an Assam State Disaster Management Authority (ASDMA) bulletin, no less than 31,970 people — including over 10,000 children — in 22 villages in three revenue circles in Lakhimpur and one in Biswanath districts have been affected by the floods.

In Lakhimpur district, Bihupuria is the worst hit with 28,928 people in 13 villages being affected by flood waters.

The Meteorological department has also warned that heavy rain and thundershowers are likely to occur at most places in Arunachal Pradesh, Assam and Meghalaya and at many places in Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

HC cancels Amravati MP's caste certificate

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 8

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday imposed a cost of ₹2 lakh and cancelled the caste certificate of Navneet Kaur Rana, an independent member of Parliament from Amravati in Maharashtra saying it was validated fraudulently. The court had directed her to surrender her certificate within six weeks.

Reacting to the court's judgement Ms Kaur stated that she respects the court's order as a citizen of this country.

"I will approach the Supreme Court. I am confident that I will get justice," she said.

Meanwhile, Kaur said she would approach the Supreme Court against this order.

The HC passed this order on the petition filed by veteran Shiv Sena leader Anandrao Adsul.

Rana, the former Telugu actress, defeated Adsul in the 2019 Lok Sabha elections. She won as an Independent candidate with support from the Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP).

Mr Adsul in his petition alleged that the Caste Scrutiny Committee validated Ms Kaur's caste certificate knowing well that she does not belong to that caste," said the bench.

The bench also imposed a fine of ₹2,00,000 which

Water woes



Workers put sandbags on the bank of the river Brahmaputra to control soil erosion ahead of the monsoon season in Guwahati on Tuesday. - PTI

SHE HAS been told to surrender her certificate within six weeks.

she needs to pay to the Maharashtra Legal Services Authority within two weeks.

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Vigilance Cell. He further claimed that the committee had already signed the order on her plea on September 11, 2013 while the file was put before the committee in a meeting held on September 25, 2013.

According to the Petitioner, the said caste validity certificate was obtained under the influence of Ms Kaur's husband Ravi Rana, who was a Member of Legislative Assembly.

The judgment said Ms Kaur's claim of belonging to 'Mochi' caste for obtaining the Scheduled Caste certificate itself was fraudulent.

"In our view the caste claim made by the respondent no.3 (Ms Kaur) for obtaining a caste certificate as schedule caste itself was fraudulent and was made with intention to obtain various benefits available to a candidate from such schedule caste category knowingly well that she does not belong to that caste," said the bench.

Finance Minister K.N. Balagopal, however,

JAZZYB joined farmers protesting against the government's farm laws at the Singhu border in December last year and has been frequently tweeting in favour of the protests.

When contacted, a Twitter spokesperson said when it receives a valid legal request, it reviews it under both the Twitter Rules and local law.

"If the content violates Twitter Rules, the content will be removed from the service. If it is determined to be illegal in a particular jurisdiction, but not in violation of the Twitter Rules, we may withhold access to the content in India only," the spokesperson added.

Users checking JazzyB and L-Fresh the Lion's account are shown a message saying "account has been withheld in India in response to a legal demand".

received a legal order pertaining to the account.

"We notify the user(s) by sending a message to the e-mail address associated with the account(s), if available... Twitter is committed to the principles of openness, transparency, details of the requests to withhold content have been published on Lumen," the spokesperson said.

Reports suggest that JazzyB had frequently tweeted in support of farmers' protests.

Earlier this year, more than 500 accounts were suspended and access to hundreds of others in India blocked after the government ordered the microblogging platform to restrain the spread of misinformation and inflammatory content related to farmers' protests.

Over the past many months, Twitter has been embroiled in a number of issues. Twitter had drawn flak after it marked several tweets by ruling BJP leaders on an alleged strategy document of the Opposition to target the government over Covid as containing "manipulated media", triggering a sharp rebuke from the government.

The row over Twitter's handling of certain messages had recently blown up into all-out war of words between the Centre and the social media platform. Last week, the government issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act. Twitter has an estimated 1.75 crore users in India, as per data cited by the government recently.

The new IT rules for social media companies that came into effect last month mandate large platforms like Facebook and Twitter to undertake greater due diligence and make these digital platforms more accountable and responsible for the content hosted by them.

The rules also require significant social media intermediaries — those with over 50 lakh users — to appoint a grievance officer, nodal officer and a chief compliance officer. These personnel are required to be resident in India.

- PTI

Earlier, over 500 accounts were suspended for spreading misinformation

JazzyB, L-Fresh's Twitter a/cs blocked

New Delhi, June 8: Twitter has blocked accounts of Punjabi rapper JazzyB, Sydney-based hip-hop artist L-Fresh the Lion and two others following demands by the Indian government.

Jaswinder Singh Bains aka JazzyB is described by his website as a "transatlantic superstar" and "the Crowned Prince of Bhangra, born in Punjab and raised in Canada."

Hits by JazzyB include "Ghugian da Jorra, Dil Aah Gey Ya Tere Te, Londono Patola, Husna di Sarkar and Naag."

He joined farmers protesting against the government's controversial farm laws at the Singhu border in December last year and has been frequently tweeting in favour of the protests.

Sukhdev Singh Bhogal, who is known as L-Fresh the Lion, is an Australian hip-hop artist from

Sydney, Australia. He too had tweeted in favour of farm law protesters, highlighting deaths during the protests.

Both artists took to Instagram to confirm that their Twitter accounts have been blocked in India.

According to an information on Lumen database, Twitter received a legal request from the Indian government on June 6 for actioning four accounts, including that of JazzyB.

Requests received by Twitter for withholding content are published on Lumen database — an independent research project studying cease and desist letters concerning online content.

Users checking JazzyB and L-Fresh the Lion's account are shown a message saying "account has been withheld in India in response to a legal demand".

The spokesperson noted that in all cases, it notifies the account holder directly so that they're aware that the company has

received a legal order pertaining to the account.

"We notify the user(s) by sending a message to the e-mail address associated with the account(s), if available... Twitter is committed to the principles of openness, transparency, details of the requests to withhold content have been published on Lumen," the spokesperson said.

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Earlier this year, more than 500 accounts were suspended and access to hundreds of others in India blocked after the government ordered the microblogging platform to restrain the spread of misinformation and inflammatory content related to farmers' protests.

Over the past many months, Twitter has been embroiled in a number of issues. Twitter had drawn flak after it marked several tweets by ruling BJP leaders on an alleged strategy document of the Opposition to target the government over Covid as containing "manipulated media", triggering a sharp rebuke from the government.

Last week, the government issued a notice to Twitter giving it one last chance to "immediately" comply with the new IT rules and warned that failure to adhere to the norms will lead to the platform losing exemption from liability under the IT Act.

Twitter has an estimated 1.75 crore users in India, as per data cited by the government recently.

Stalin rallies CMs against Centre

Seeks relief for MSMEs, small businesses

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 8

In a bold move, Chief Minister M.K. Stalin mobilised his counterparts in 12 states that are not under BJP regime to 'show our collective strength at this hour of great need' on demanding a moratorium on loan repayment for MSMEs and small businesses.

In a letter to the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Delhi, Jharkhand, Kerala, Maharashtra, Odisha, Punjab, Rajasthan, Telangana and West Bengal on Tuesday, Stalin stressed on the need to come together.

Stating that it the collective efforts of the states that made the Union Government and the Prime Minister reverse the earlier policy on vaccine procurement, he said, "I believe all the state governments should again come together on the pressing issue of asymmetry in treatment of borrowers, particularly MSME units and small borrowers, during the first and second waves of Covid-19."

He recalled the Government of India originally undertaking to vaccinate all frontline workers and the general population above the age of 45 free of cost and subsequently deviating from the policy and shifting the responsibility to procure and administer vaccines to people in the age group of 18 to 45 to the state governments.

"Many amongst us pointed out the fact that

the most appropriate monopsonic purchaser would be the Government of India. Further, considering that the Union Government also has considerably larger fiscal resources and a budget provision of ₹35,000 crore in the Union Budget for 2021-2022, it was further emphasized by us that the Union Government should purchase the vaccines centrally and issue them free of cost to all states."

Stalin said that he was

among such old buildings, he added.

Balagopal also cautioned the Opposition that avoiding extravagant spending does not mean refraining from minimum things to be done by the government.

There were media reports that the second LDF government had granted permission to renovate Vijayan's official residence here spending over 90 lakh rupees and the contract was awarded to Uralalungal, a labour society based in north Kerala, without allegedly inviting any formal tender.

A royal era building constructed 79 years ago, Cliff House, located at Nanthancode in the heart of the city, had been the official residence of majority of Chief Ministers, after the state of Kerala was formed in 1957.

Earlier, it was the residence of 'diwan peshkar' (secretary of the state) during erstwhile royal rule.

rejecting the criticism of the Opposition saying the government was taking all possible steps to reduce expenditure.

"At the same time, it is also important to conserve the heritage buildings under the ownership of the government by making necessary repair and renovation," he said during the question hour.

There are buildings which are 100 to 120 years old in the state and necessary maintenance work should be carried out to preserve them and the Cliff House was one

of the most important to conserve the heritage buildings under the ownership of the government by making necessary repair and renovation," he said during the question hour.

There are buildings which are 100 to 120 years old in the state and necessary maintenance work should be carried out to preserve them and the Cliff House was one

of the most important to conserve the heritage buildings under the ownership of the government by making necessary repair and renovation," he said during the question hour.

The decision to appoint Sudhakaran as PCC chief was conveyed by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over phone.

Sudhakaran, 73, replaces Mr Mullapally Ramachandran.

SHORT TAKES**SECURITY FORCES KILL 3 AFGHAN PROTESTERS**

Kabul, June 8: Security forces opened fire Tuesday on dozens of demonstrators in northeastern Afghanistan demanding clean tap water and electricity, killing three and injuring 42 others, protesters and provincial authorities said. Some 200 people rallied in the city of Faizabad outside the offices of the governor of Badakhshan province demanding clean drinking water, the immediate inauguration of a new power plant and an end to insecurity in the province.

Protester Sebghatullah Andeshmand said the demonstrators wanted Gov. Mohammad Zakarya Sawda, to respond to their demands but that guards at his office building fired on them with live rounds.

DAUGHTER ACCEPTS Navalny HR AWARD

Geneva, June 8: The daughter of jailed Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny accepted a human rights award on her father's behalf on Tuesday for his courage in facing down President Vladimir Putin's government. Daria Navalnaya, a 20-year-old student at Stanford University in California, said her father was dedicating the courage award given by the Geneva Summit for Human Rights to all political prisoners in Russia and Belarus.

"You really should be looking at my father instead, but he's in a Russian prison right now simply because of what he says, does and believes in — and because he didn't die when the Russian government wanted him to," Navalnaya said in a video message.

6/1 ATTACK: SENATE REPORT DETAILS FAILURES

Washington, June 8: A Senate investigation of the January 6 insurrection at the US Capitol has uncovered broad government, military and law enforcement missteps before the violent attack, including a breakdown within multiple intelligence agencies and a lack of training and preparation for Capitol Police officers who were quickly overwhelmed by the rioters.

The Senate report released Tuesday is the first — and could be the last — bipartisan review of how hundreds of former President Donald Trump's supporters were able to violently push past security lines and break into the Capitol that day, interrupting the certification of President Joe Biden's victory.

RUSSIA HITS 9 CANADIANS WITH SANCTIONS

Moscow, June 8: Russia targeted nine Canadian officials with sanctions in retaliation to Canada's restrictions against Russian officials accused of involvement in the imprisonment of Russian opposition leader Alexei Navalny.

Those indefinitely barred from entering Russia are David Lametti, Canada's justice minister and attorney general, Brenda Lucki, the Canadian police commissioner, Anne Kelly, the commissioner of Correctional Service, Dominic LeBlanc, minister for intergovernmental affairs, Marc Turcotte, policy director for PM Justin Trudeau, Jody Thomas, deputy minister of the national defence department, Lt. Gen. Mike Rouleau of the Canadian armed forces, Rear Adm. Scott Bishop, the head of the military intelligence command, and Brian Brennan, a deputy police commissioner.

KIDNAP, RAPE OF WOMAN: UK COP PLEADS GUILTY

London, June 8: A British police officer has pleaded guilty to the kidnap and rape of a woman as she walked home in south London and whose body was found a week later in the woods.

A court at London's Old Bailey heard Tuesday that Wayne Couzens, 48, accepted responsibility for the death of Sarah Everard though he was not asked to enter a plea to a charge of murder. Medical reports into the former Metropolitan Police officer, who appeared by video link from Belmarsh prison, are being prepared. A further hearing before the judge, Adrian Fulford, will take place July 9. Everard, a 33-year-old marketing executive, went missing as she walked home from a friend's house in Clapham, south London, on March 3.

Charles 'back to' college

Britain's Prince Charles, Prince of Wales meets student and staff as he visits Somerville College on its 140th anniversary in Oxford on Tuesday. — AFP

Death toll rises to 65 in Pak's train tragedy

Oppn for probe into reasons behind one of worst accidents

Van falls into Pak river; 17, including 16 of a family, die

Islamabad, June 8: All 17 people on a van, including 16 members of a family, were killed when their vehicle plunged into the Indus River in Pakistan's Sindh province rose to 65 on Tuesday, according to an official, even as the Opposition parties demanded an immediate probe into the reasons for one of the country's worst train accidents. At least 65 people were killed and over 100 others injured in the twin accidents between Reti and Daharki railway stations where eight carriages of Millat Express derailed just before Sir Syed Express rammed into them near Dharki, a city located in the Ghouti district of upper Sindh early Monday morning.

The rescue operation was completed and the track has been cleared after retrieving 17 coaches that had been damaged by the crash and the engine of the train, *Gee News* quoted as saying Divisional Superintendent, Raiway Sukkur Tariq Latif.

"The up and down track has been restored. We have received orders to resume train service," he said. Senior Superintendent of Police (SSP) Ghoutki, Umar Tufail, told reporters that the death toll rose to 65 after more bodies were retrieved. He said that over 100 people were also injured, some of them seriously.

Minister for Railways Azam Swati said if his resignation meant the deceased can come back to life, he was ready to do so even as he promised a comprehensive inquiry.

He said that train tracks in the Sukkur Division were in poor condition. "We have to find out now who is responsible for this accident," he said.

The deadly accident occurred when the Sir Syed Express headed from Rawalpindi to Karachi, coming from the other direction, smashed into derailed coaches of the first train in the adjacent track, a spokesperson of Pakistan Railways said. "The driver tried to apply emergency brakes but the locomotive hit the infringing coaches," the railways said in an initial report. Rescuing trapped passengers was a "challenge" for the rescue officials who had to employ heavy machinery to free people.

— PTI

Pak-origin family's killing saddens Imran

Islamabad/Toronto, June 8: Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday denounced the killing of four members of a Pakistani-origin Canadian family in Canada, saying this "act of terrorism" reveals the growing "Islamophobia" in Western countries.

On Sunday, a 20-year-old man, wearing a vest like body armour, slammed a pickup truck into a Pakistani family of five, killing four of them, in what police allege was a planned, premeditated act motivated by hate," acc-

ording to media reports from Canada. The incident happened near the intersection of Hyde Park Road and South Carriage Road when the Muslim family was out for a walk in the evening, the *Toronto Star* reported. A black pickup truck driven by Nathaniel Veltman mounted the curb of a busy London intersection and struck a family of five as they waited to cross the street. The driver sped off, leaving a scene of chaos and tragedy, the report said. Veltman was arrested five minutes later. — PTI

Biden forms unit to clear supply chain bottlenecks

Washington, June 8: The Joe Biden administration has completed a 100-day review of supply chains and will now form a task force to address the bottlenecks in the semiconductor, construction, transportation and agriculture sectors. Administration officials said their goal is to increase domestic manufacturing, limit shortages of vital goods and reduce dependence on geopolitical competitors such as

China. The officials, speaking before the release of the 250-page review Tuesday, noted that the goal is to get ahead of crises such as the computer chip shortage that has hurt auto-makers this year.

"More secure and resilient supply chains are essential to our national and economic security, and our technological leadership," the report said, noting how the pandemic and subsequent economic turmo-

il exposed the US supply chain vulnerabilities.

A shortage of raw materials has made it harder for the US economy to recover from the pandemic-induced recession. The supply bottleneck has helped fuel a bout of inflation that the administration believes will be temporary, though it has provided Republican lawmakers and some economists with grounds for criticising Biden's \$1.9 trillion Coron-

avirus relief package. The new task force will be led by the secretaries of Commerce, Agriculture and Transportation to focus on parts of the economy where there is a mismatch between supply and demand.

Besides the task force, the administration will take several other steps to bolster supply chains, with an effort spread across the government. The Department of Health and Human Services will use

the Defence Production Act to create a public-private partnership for manufacturing essential pharmaceutical drugs.

It will also commit \$60 million to increase the production of pharmaceutical ingredients. The Energy Department will release a blueprint to develop supplies for lithium batteries, in addition to providing roughly \$17 billion in loans for advanced batteries that would help shift

the country to electric vehicles. The Interior Department will create a working group to determine where critical minerals can be produced and processed in the United States.

The Commerce Department plans to increase cooperation and investments within the semiconductor industry, while the Labour Department will announce \$100 million in grants for state-led apprenticeship programmes. — AP

Event could not be observed at Pietermaritzburg station due to Covid**Gandhi train ejection commemorated in S. Africa**

Johannesburg, June 8: The seed for Satyagraha (non-violent resistance) was planted in South Africa's Pietermaritzburg on the night of June 7, 1893, when a young barrister, Mohandas Karamchand Gandhi, was ejected from a train for being a non-white.

David Gagan, Chairman of Pietermaritzburg Gandhi Memorial Committee, reminded this once again on Monday while commemorating the incident and sending out Mah-

atma's messages to the world, especially at a time when the global Covid-19 pandemic is wreaking havoc.

The Pietermaritzburg Gandhi Memorial Committee decided some years ago that the story of June 7, 1893, and its impact on young Gandhi would be told every year on the anniversary of the event, said Gagan.

Every year, the Gandhi memorial committee had been observing the event at the very station; however,

it had been unable to do so since last year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

This year various speakers from across the world spoke about the relevance of the messages of India's Father of the Nation for the world today.

Gagan said Gandhi's 21 years in South Africa shaped his philosophy, especially as it relates to peace and non-violence.

Gandhi's granddaughter Ela Gandhi, 80, who heads the Gandhi Development Trust, which oversees the

Phoenix Settlement that he started during his stay in Durban, said that during the course of his life, Mahatma discovered many truths.

"These truths I believe are of great relevance for us today as we face the challenge of dealing with the Covid-19 pandemic.

As we struggle with the Covid-19 realities, we are becoming aware of the need for a change in our perception and behaviours to create a new normal," she said.

Ela added that in this context, Gandhi's seven observations have attained even greater significance.

Sello Hatang, Chief Executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation, said Gandhi's observations were something that was attainable by all human beings.

"It is when we try our best to be better humans that we build a world that (Mandela and Gandhi) dreamt of, one that cares about the downtrodden, the forgotten, those who feel that they are the out-

casts," Hatang said.

Javie Ravjee of the Mahatma Gandhi Remembrance Organisation in Johannesburg, which has revived the Tolstoy Farm commune started by Gandhi during his stay in the city after it had been left derelict for several decades, called for all similar organisations across the globe to form an association.

Dr Sriram Sonty from Chicago agreed with this idea. — PTI

Will act if UK doesn't honour Brexit deal: EU

GANDHI'S GREAT GRANDDAUGHTER GETS 7 YRS' JAIL

Johannesburg, June 8: A 56-year-old great-granddaughter of Mahatma Gandhi, who was an accused in a six-million rand fraud and forgery case, has been sentenced to seven years in jail by a Durban court.

Ashish Lata Ramgobin was found guilty by the court on Monday.

She was accused of defrauding businessman S.R. Maharaj after he advanced R6.2 million to her for allegedly clearing import and Customs duties for a non-existent consignment from India. He was promised a share of profits.

Lata Ramgobin, who is the daughter of noted rights activists Ela Gandhi and late Mewa Ramgobin, was also refused leave to appeal both the conviction and the sentence by the Durban Specialised Commercial Crime Court.

— PTI

S'pore lecturer suspended for race rant at Sino-Indians**Racial tweets to Indians: Man jailed**

Singapore, June 8: A Singapore polytechnic lecturer of Chinese-origin has been suspended from teaching duties for allegedly making racist remarks towards an interracial couple of a half-India and a half-Chinese descent, local media reported on Tuesday. The incident was captured on a video that was widely circulated online over the weekend.

A spokesperson for Ngree Ann Polytechnic (NP) said the Chinese-origin lecturer has been suspended. The polytechnic is aware of the video, the *Channel News Asia* quoted an NP spokesperson on Monday.

"We regret that the individual in question is a member of our staff. We take a very serious view of the matter as the remarks made by the individual are highly offensive, disrespectful and goes against our staff Code of Conduct and values as a community," said the spokesperson. "We are investigating this matter internally, including considering the appropriate disciplinary action to be taken. Meanwhile, the staff in question has been suspended from his teaching duties."

The polytechnic cannot comment further as police investigations are ongoing, said the spokesperson.

The man in red, who acknowledged he is a "Chinese Singaporean", then added: "I've got nothing against you personally, but I think it's racist that the Indian prey on a Chinese girl." When Parkash, 26, called him a racist, the man in red agreed that he was. In the video, Parkash said he is "half Indian, half Filipino", while his girlfriend is "half Singaporean Chinese, half Thai". — PTI

charges were considered in sentencing, *Channel News Asia* reported. A member of the public called the police in April 2020 after seeing a tweet by the user "sharonliew86" condemning Indian immigrants about Covid-19. Zainal, a senior director at a software company, used the pseudonym "Sharon Liew" (Chinese name), had sole control of the account.

In March 2020, he also posted that "smart Chinese" women have done social distancing inside the Mass Rapid Transit subway trains. — PTI

ISRAELI PARL TO VOTE ON NEW GOVT ON SUNDAY

Jerusalem, June 8: Israel's parliament speaker has scheduled a vote for Sunday on a new government that would end Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year rule, the longest in the country's history.

Parliament speaker Yair Levin, a Netanyahu ally, announced the timing of the vote on Tuesday, a day after acknowledging that a coalition had been formed. The fragile coalition consists of eight parties spanning Israel's political spectrum, with only a narrow majority in the 120-member Knesset, or parliament. But it appears to have held together despite a furious campaign by Netanyahu's supporters that has included death threats and protests outside lawmakers' homes. Netanyahu has accused his erstwhile right-wing allies of betrayal for allying with leftists and a small Arab party, Naftali Bennett, an ultranationalist former Netanyahu ally, would serve as prime minister for two years, followed by the centrist Yair Lapid. — AP

SHORT TAKES

OZ POWER CO.
LOSES CASE TO
GREENPEACE

Canberra, June 8: Australia's largest electricity generator on Tuesday largely lost its court case alleging that the environmental group Greenpeace had breached copyright and trademark laws by using its logo in a campaign that described the company as the nation's "biggest climate polluter". Justice Stephen Burley ruled that AGL Energy had failed in its trademark infringement claim and failed in its copyright infringement claim for all of the uses of the logo except for three social media posts as well as some photographs and placards. Burley denied AGL's request for damages. Greenpeace had argued the Federal Court case had significant implications for charities and advocacy groups.

SERB MILITARY
CHIEF MLADIC TO
STAY IN JAIL

The Hague, June 8: UN appeals judges have upheld the convictions of former Bosnian Serb military chief Ratko Mladic for genocide and other offenses during Bosnia's 1992-95 war and confirmed his life sentence. The judgment Tuesday means the 79-year-old former general who terrorised Bosnia throughout the war will spend the rest of his life in prison. He is the last major figure from the conflict that ended more than a quarter century ago to face justice. Presiding Judge Prisca Matimba Nyambe of Zambia said the court dismissed Mladic's appeal "in its entirety" and affirmed his life sentence. It also rejected an appeal by prosecutors against Mladic's acquittal on one other count of genocide.

INDIAN GETS 14
MONTHS' JAIL
FOR FRAUD

Washington, June 8: A court in Seattle has sentenced an Indian national to 14 months in prison for defrauding his employer of nearly \$800,000 in used equipment sales, according to Acting US Attorney Tessa M. Gorman. Arunkumar Singal, 42, pleaded guilty to wire fraud on January 3 and faces deportation after the completion of sentence. "You put everything at risk for one thing: to add to your wealth... You stopped because you were caught by law enforcement, but you continued to lie and deceive," US District Judge Richard A. Jones told Singal during the sentencing hearing on June 4.

According to records filed in the case, in 2014 Singal was the director of Global Product Support at Spacelabs Healthcare Inc. The company was established in the 1950s to make medical monitoring devices for astronauts and then expanded its business to include medical monitoring devices for hospitals and clinics.

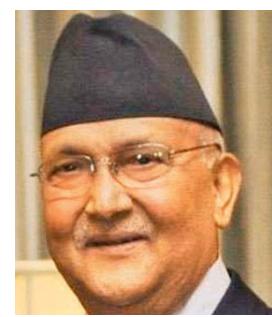
MACRON SLAPPED
DURING VISIT TO
SMALL TOWN

Paris, June 8: French President Emmanuel Macron was slapped Tuesday in the face by a man during a visit to a small town in southeast France. Macron's office confirmed a video that is widely circulating online. The French president can be seen greeting the public waiting for him behind traffic barriers in the small town of Tain-l'Hermitage after he visited a high school that is training students to work in hotels and restaurants.

The video shows a man slapping Macron in the face and his bodyguards pushing the man away as the French leader is quickly rushed from the scene. French news broadcaster BFM TV said two people have been detained by police in the assault. Macron has not commented yet on the incident and continued his visit.

Speaking at the National Assembly, Prime Minister Jean Castex said "through the head of state, that's democracy that has been targeted," in comments prompting loud applause from lawmakers from all ranks, standing up in a show of support. "Democracy is about debate, dialogue, confrontation of ideas, expression of legitimate disagreements, of course, but in no case it can be violence, verbal assault and even less physical assault," Castex said.

Far-right leader Marine Le Pen firmly condemned on Twitter "the intolerable physical aggression targeting the president of the Republic." Visibly fuming, she said later that while Macron is her top political adversary, the assault was "deeply, deeply reprehensible." Less than one year before France's next presidential election, Macron last week started a political "tour de France".



K.P. Sharma Oli

RIVAL FACTION
REJECTS OLI
MOVE TO REVIVE
PARTY PANELS

Kathmandu, June 8: The rival faction of Nepal's ruling CPN-UML has rejected beleaguered Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli's offer to revive the party's committees prior to its merger with CPN-MC led by Pushpa Kamal Dahal Prachanda, questioning the premier's intentions to keep the party united.

The rival faction led by veteran leaders Madhav Kumar Nepal and Jhalanath Khanal said that the six-point proposal put forth by Oli, who is also the chairman of the Communist Party of Nepal (Unified Marxist Leninist), harboured an intention to divide their faction and further delay their attempt to take forward the 'communist movement' in a new manner, according to a report in *myRepublika.com*.

"Instead of keeping (party committees) that existed on May 16, 2018, it has been said that they will be in line with his factional interest. This kind of proposal does not seem to have come with an intention to keep the party unity intact. This is simply unacceptable," the Nepal-Khanal faction has said in a statement on Monday.

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, meanwhile, called on leaders of the developed Group of Seven countries to help the UN-backed vaccination programme against Covid-19 to boost access to doses in the developing world.

Geneva, June 8: A top World Health Organisation official estimated Monday that Covid-19 vaccination coverage of at least 80% is needed to significantly lower the risk that "imported" Coronavirus cases like those linked to new variants could spawn a cluster or a wider outbreak. Dr. Michael Ryan, WHO's emergencies chief, told a news conference that ultimately, "high levels of vaccination coverage are the way out of this pandemic."

Many rich countries have been moving to vaccinate teenagers and children — who have lower risk of more dangerous cases of Covid-19 than the elderly or people with comorbidities — even as those same countries face pressure to share vaccines with poorer ones that lack them. Britain, which has vastly reduced case counts thanks to an aggressive vaccination campaign, has seen a recent uptick in cases attributed largely to the so-called delta variant that originally appeared in India — a former British colony.

Ryan acknowledged that data wasn't fully clear about the what percentage of vaccination coverage was necessary to fully have an impact on transmission. "But... it's certainly north of 80% coverage to be in a position where you could be significantly affecting the risk of an imported case potentially generating secondary cases or causing a cluster or an outbreak," he said.

"So it does require quite high levels of vaccination, particularly in the context of more transmissible variants, to be on the safe side," Ryan added.

Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead on



People sunbathe on the beach in Barcelona, Spain, on Tuesday. Spain is jumpstarting its summer tourism season by welcoming vaccinated visitors from most countries as well as European visitors. — AP

Covid-19, noted the delta variant is spreading in more than 60 countries, and is more transmissible than the alpha variant, which first emerged in Britain. She cited "worrying trends of increased transmissibility, increased social mixing, relaxing of public health and social measures, and uneven and inequitable vaccine distribution around the world."

WHO Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, meanwhile, called on leaders of the developed Group of Seven countries to help the UN-backed vaccination programme against Covid-19 to boost access to doses in the developing world.

— AP

US to continue to press China to be transparent: Sullivan

Washington, June 8: The United States in coordination with the international community will continue to press China to be transparent and forthcoming with information on the origins of Covid-19, National Security Advisor Jake Sullivan has said.

He also said that at the same time, the US will also launch its own review and process. "We are going to continue to press in coordination with the international community, China to be transparent,

to be forthcoming with data and information, we're not going to just stand by and accept that they've said they're not going to participate," Sullivan told a White House news conference on Monday. This would be also one of the topics of discussion with foreign leaders as President Joe Biden departs on his maiden overseas trip — after this week, he said.

Meanwhile, at a Congressional testimony, Secretary

of State Tony Blinken said that there are two possible scenarios on the origins of the Coronavirus. One is that it emerged from a laboratory and the other is that it was naturally occurring, he said.

"President Biden has ordered a comprehensive government-wide review to try to get to the bottom of what happened," Blinken said in response to a question from Congressman Steve Chabot, a member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee. — PTI

BLINKEN: NEED
TO RAISE VAX
PRODUCTION
AROUND WORLD

Washington, June 8: With the US sending millions of its Covid-19 vaccines to several countries, including India, Secretary of State Tony Blinken said that there is a need to increase production capacity on a regional basis across the globe. US President Joe Biden had announced that the US will allocate 75 per cent — nearly 1.9 crore of the first tranche of 2.5 crore doses — of unused Covid-19 vaccines from its stockpile through the UN-backed COVAX global vaccine sharing programme to countries in South and Southeast Asia as well as Africa.

Testifying before the House Foreign Affairs Committee on the State Department's 2022 budgetary proposals, Blinken asserted that it is important to have three-fourths of the world vaccinated soon.

"If we stayed on the current course, before we were distributing the 80 million vaccines, before we're looking at increasing production around the world, not just in the United States, we're on track to have the world vaccinated, or at least to have 75 or so per cent of the world vaccinated, not until 2024," he said in response to a question.

The US, he said, has 80 million vaccines that will be distributed. — PTI

Global glitch: Cloud outage crashes Net

London, June 8: Multiple websites went offline briefly across the globe on Tuesday morning after an outage at cloud service company Fastly, revealing how critical a handful of companies running the internet's plumbing have become.

Dozens of sites including the *New York Times*, CNN, some Amazon websites, Twitch, Reddit, the *Guardian*, and the UK government's home page, could not be reached.

All major future markets in the US dipped sharply minutes after the outage hit, almost exactly a month after a cyberattack that caused the operator of

the largest fuel pipeline in America to halt its operations.

When the outage hit, some visitors trying to access CNN.com got a message that said: "Fastly error: unknown domain: cnn.com...". Attempts to access the *Financial Times* website turned up a similar message, while visits to *The New York Times* and the UK government's government site returned an "Error 503 Service Unavailable" message, along with the line "Varnish cache server," which is a technology that Fastly is built on.

About an hour later, the company said the issue has been identified and a fix has been applied. "Customers may experience increased origin load as global services return."

Fastly said it had identified a service configuration that triggered disruptions, meaning the outage

appeared to be caused internally.

A number of sites that were hit appeared to be coming back online after the issue was resolved.

Internet traffic measurement by Kentik show that Fastly began to recover from the outage roughly an hour after it struck at mid-morning European time, and before most Americans were awake.

"Looks like it is slowly coming back," said Doug Madory, an internet infrastructure expert at Kentik.

He added it is serious because Fastly is one of the world's biggest content-delivery network and this was a global outage. It pro-

vides vital but behind-the-scenes cloud computing "edge servers" to many of the web's popular sites.

These servers store, or "cache" content such as images and video in places around the world so they are closer to users, allowing them to fetch it more quickly and smoothly instead of having to access the site's original server. Fastly says its services mean that a European user going to an American website can get the content 200 to 500 milliseconds faster.

The impact of Fastly's trouble highlights the relative fragility of the internet's current architecture. — AP

Junta to start case against Suu Kyi next week



Aung San Suu Kyi

Suu Kyi also faces two counts of violating the Natural Disaster Management Law for allegedly breaking the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions during the 2020 election campaign, besides charges of illegally importing walkie-talkies for her bodyguards, and unlicensed use of radios.

A sixth charge that Suu Kyi faces is the most serious one: Breaching the colonial-era Official Secrets Act, which carries a penalty of up to 14 years' imprisonment.

It has been handled separately from the other charges and was filed in a court in Yangon, the country's biggest city. It was recently transferred to the Union Supreme Court in Naypyitaw, said San Mar La Nyunt, another of her lawyers. Her supporters say the charges against her are politically motivated. — AP

Maldives' FM
Shahid is UNGA's
76th session Prez

Abdulla Shahid

so I intend to get to work right away....I intend to hit the ground running on day one in September as soon as I take my oath of office," Shahid, 59, said in his remarks to the press following his election. The Maldivian minister said his "immediate priority" will be recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic and working to ensure "vaccine equity" to restore hope from a year characterised by "disease, despair and devastation".

"We approach the 76th session in challenging times. Disease, despair and devastation have characterised the past year. Inequality, injustice and instability have increased. The environment, the ocean, our planet is suffering. But we need to get moving again," he said. — PTI

G-7, Nato meetings: Biden to talk Covid, Afghanistan

Washington, June 8: US President Joe Biden is scheduled to leave on his maiden official overseas trip during which he will hold discussions with top global leaders, including at the G-7 summit in the UK and the Nato meetings, on issues such as the impact of Covid-19, security challenges and drawdown of forces from Afghanistan, a top official said.

Biden will leave for the UK on Wednesday and then visit Brussels and Geneva as part of the trip that ends next week.

The visits will advance the fundamental thrust of Joe Biden's foreign policy to rally the world's democracies, to tackle the great challenges of the time, US National Security Advisor (NSA) Jake Sullivan said.

We believe that President Biden goes on this trip from a position of strength. Dramatic progress against the pandemic at home, strong projected growth that will help power the global economic recovery as well, renewed American power and purpose and a rock-solid founda-

tion of alliances that will serve as force multipliers for our global agenda.

At the G-7, Sullivan said Biden will join with his fellow leaders to lay out a plan to end the Covid-19 pandemic with further specific commitments.

He will announce a new initiative to provide financing for physical, digital and health infrastructure in the developing a high standard, climate friendly, transparent and rules-based alternative to what China is offering, Sullivan said. — PTI

sion on ways forward, and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

India was elected in the Asia-Pacific States category, along with Afghanistan, Kazakhstan and Oman in the elections held on Monday. India's Permanent Representative to the UN, Ambassador T.S. Tirumurti, thanked all the member states for their vote of confidence. "I thank all Member States of the UN for their vote of confidence in India for #Ecosoc," Tirumurti tweeted.

Among the African states, Côte d'Ivoire, Eswatini, Mauritius, Tunisia and the United Republic of Tanzania were elected to Ecosoc, while from the eastern European states, Croatia and the Czech Republic were chosen. Among the Latin American and Caribbean states, Belize, Chile and Peru were elected. Meanwhile, in the Economic and Social Council by-election, Greece, New Zealand and Denmark were elected for a term of office from January to December 2022 and Israel was elected for January 2022-December 2023 term.

India is currently serving the 2021-22 term as a non-permanent member of the powerful UN Security Council and will assume the Presidency of the 15-nation UN organ in August. The UN Charter established Ecosoc in 1945 as one of the six main organs of the United Nations. Ecosoc's 54 members are elected for three-year terms by the General Assembly. Seats on the council are allotted based on geographical representation with 14 allocated to African states, 11 to Asian countries, six to eastern European, 10 to Latin American and Caribbean states and 13 to western European and other states.

Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Oman also chosen from Asia-Pacific

India elected to Ecosoc for '22-24 term

United Nations, June 8: India has been elected to the Economic and Social Council, one of the six main organs of the United Nations, for the 2022-24 term. The 54-member Economic and Social Council (Ecosoc) is at the heart of the UN system to advance the three dimensions of sustainable development — economic, social and environmental. It is the central platform for fostering debate and innovative thinking, forging consensus

and coordinating efforts to achieve internationally agreed goals. It is also responsible for the follow-up to major UN conferences and summits.

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quick BITES

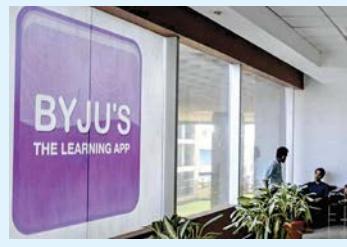
INDICATORS	%
Sensex	52275.57 -0.10
Nifty 50	15740.10 -0.07
S&P 500*	4,229.93 0.08
Dollar (₹)	72.89 -0.10
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.04 -0.06
Euro (₹)	88.74 -0.22
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	49,113/30 0.06
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	71.90 0.57
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.006 0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.533 -0.037

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Vedanta firm Twin Star to take over Videocon

NCLT allowed Anil Agarwal's Twin Star Technologies to take over Videocon Industries Ltd for about Rs 3,000 crore. Twin Star, part of the Vedanta Group, will pay around Rs 500 crore within 90 days as upfront payment and the rest as non-convertible debentures over a period. A two-member Mumbai bench of the National Company Law Tribunal approved the resolution plan by Twin Star Technologies.

CCI clears Byju's buyout of Aakash Educational



The Competition Commission of India has approved ed-tech startup Byju's proposed acquisition of Aakash Educational Services Ltd (AESL). The \$1 bn deal, which will bolster Byju's presence in the test preparation segment, was announced in April this year. The CCI said it has approved the proposed combination relating to Think & Learn Pvt Ltd (Byju's) acquisition of certain stake of AESL and thereafter their merger.

ReNew Power merger with RMG II approved

The proposed merger of ReNew Power with blank-check company RMG Acquisition Corporation II (RMG II) has received clearance from the Competition Commission of India. An official release said the CCI has approved exchange of equity shareholding by shareholders of ReNew Power Pvt Ltd with shares of ReNew Global Ltd, along with a reverse triangular merger of subsidiary of ReNew Global with RMG II.

Ougen pays BB \$15 mn for Canada rights of Covaxin

Ougen Inc, the US partner for Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine, has announced the payment of \$15 million upfront to the Indian firm for extending the vaccine rights to Canada. Ougen said it has agreed to pay another \$10 million to Bharat Biotech within a month from the commercial launch of Covaxin in the North American country. Bharat Biotech earlier said it has agreed to expand the agreement with Ougen.

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■ 460 claims cleared for ₹50 lakh insurance cover Over ₹200 cr death claims paid for Covid warriors

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO
NEW DELHI, JUNE 8

With increasing fatalities of health workers fighting Covid-19, the government has fast-tracked settlement of Covid death claims under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Package (PMGKP), which provides an insurance cover of Rs 50 lakh to Covid frontline workers.

India's largest non-life insurer, New India Assurance Company Ltd (NIACL), has so far settled 419 claims under the scheme, disbursing around Rs 210 crore to the claimants.

The PMGKP covers almost all healthcare workers, including doctors, nurses, paramedics, community health workers and even daily wage staff engaged in Covid duty. This scheme covers loss of life due to Covid-19 and accidental death in the line of duty. This is scheme managed solely by the NIACL, with the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare paying the entire premium for over 22



lakh health workers covered under the scheme.

According to Atul Sahai, chairman and managing director of NIACL, "The NIACL has received over 1,100 claims intimations approximately, though only 600 claims were supported by the documents.

Though the claim documents were simple to access-like a laboratory test report and death summary by the hospital-getting them approved through the competent state authority was proving to be time-consuming. So, the government has from this month further simplified the claims procedure by routing them through the district collector. This is expected to improve the claim settle-

"We have already

received Rs 350 crore from the government in three tranches in the form of premium for the scheme so far. A total of 22.12 lakh health workers across the country are covered under the scheme by NIACL," Sahai added.

However, health workers are concerned that the scheme does not cover death from post-Covid complications. Explaining, a senior doctor from Faridabad's Escort Heart Institute said, "Insurers now ask for all Covid-19 related documents immediately after the patient's death. So, there is no question of claim settlement from insurers if the patient dies of post-Covid complications. Besides, any type of treatment or quarantine cost is not covered."

ment ratio, which is now less than 55 per cent.

"Now, the government has decided to ease the claims procedure that was finalised between the concerned company and MoH&SW, and the district collectors have to verify that claim documents, counter verified by the state health nodal agencies in just one single page document. The documents shall remain carefully recorded at their office. It's a welcome step for speedy settlement of the claims," Sahai said.

Early on Tuesday morning, Sitharaman took to Twitter to announce the launch of the new portal, www.incometax.gov.in, saying that the "important milestone to make the compliance experience more taxpayer-friendly" went live at 2045 Hrs on Monday.

But, soon, her timeline was flooded with user complaints.

"I see in my TL grievances and glitches. Hope @Infosys & @NandanNilekani will not let down our taxpayers in the quality of service being provided," she tweeted later.

— PTI

FM ASKS INFOSYS TO FIX TECH GLITCHES ON NEW INCOME TAX E-FILING PORTAL

New Delhi, June 8: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday asked Infosys and its chairman Nandan Nilekani to fix technical glitches being encountered on the income tax department's new e-filing website, after users flooded her Twitter timeline with complaints.

Infosys was in 2019 awarded a contract to develop the next-generation income tax filing system to reduce processing time for returns from 63 days to one day and expedite refunds.

The portal went live Monday evening.

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— PTI

SHYAM METALICS' ₹900-CRORE IPO OPENS ON JUNE 14

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JUNE 8

Steel products maker Shyam Metalics and Energy's Rs 900-crore initial public offering opens on June 14.

The company on Tuesday announced the price band for the public issue as Rs 303 to Rs 306 per share of Rs 10 face value.

The public issue comprises a fresh issue of equity shares, aggregating up to Rs 657 crore and an offer for sale of equity shares aggregating up to Rs 252 crore by the selling shareholders.

Shyam Metalics proposes to utilise the net proceeds from the fresh issue towards repayment of up to Rs 470 crore of its debt and that of its subsidiary, Shyam SEL and Power Limited, and for general corporate purposes.

Shyam Metalics' manufacturing plants are located at Sambalpur in Orissa and Jamuria in West Bengal.

The plants are strategically located to benefit from nearby iron ore mines for steel manufacturing. It also has a captive power plant.

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 8

For India, the Bank projected 8.3% growth in FY22 and 7.5% in FY23

about 2 per cent below pre-pandemic projections by the end of this year. Per capita income losses will not be unwound by 2022 for about two-thirds of emerging market and developing economies.

"While there are welcome signs of global recovery, the pandemic continues to inflict poverty and inequality on people in developing countries around the world," said World Bank Group president David Malpass.

Emerging market and developing economies as a group are forecast to expand 6 per cent this year, supported by higher demand and elevated commodity prices.

However, the recovery in many countries is being held back by a resurgence of Covid-19 cases and lagging vaccination progress, as well as the

withdrawal of policy support in some instances.

In the case of India, the World Bank projected 8.3 per cent growth in FY22 followed by 7.5 per cent in FY23. This is supported by plans for higher spending on infrastructure, rural development, and health, and a stronger-than-expected recovery in services.

Better growth prospects since January however, masks significant damage to economic activity from Covid-19. The economy is expected to follow the same, yet less pronounced, collapse and recovery seen during the first wave. Growth in FY23 is expected to slow to 7.5 per cent, says the Bank.

South Asia's growth is projected to rebound to a stronger-than-expected 6.8 per cent in 2021, with India accounting for most of the upgrade as strong services sector activity more than offsets the economic effects of the worsening pandemic.

The outlook is underpinned by a rebound in private consumption.

Global economy to expand 5.6% in 2021: World Bank

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 8

The World Bank expects the global economy to expand 5.6 per cent in 2021, the fastest post-recession pace in 80 years. Despite the recovery, global output will be about 2 per cent below pre-pandemic projections by the end of this year.

The World Bank also finds that services sector and private consumption will offset pandemic effects in India.

The global economy's expansion will largely be on strong rebounds from a few major economies, says WB's latest edition of Global Economic Prospects.

Among major economies, US growth is projected to reach 6.8 per cent this year, reflecting large-scale fiscal support and the easing of pandemic restrictions.

Growth in other advanced economies is also firming, but to a lesser extent. China is anticipated to rebound to 8.5 per cent this year.

Despite the recovery, global output will be

Privatisation-bound banks may come out with VRS

New Delhi, June 8: Two state-owned banks being picked up for privatisation by the government are likely to come out with an attractive voluntary retirement scheme (VRS) to get rid of the extra flab, sources said.

Finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman while unveiling Budget 2021-22 on February 1 had announced that the government proposed to take up the privatisation of two public sector banks (PSBs) and one general insurance company.

An attractive VRS will make them lean and fit for takeover by the private sector entities that are keen to enter the banking space, the sources said.

VRS is not forced exit but option for those who would like to take early retirement with good financial package, the sources said, adding that it has been done in the past before the consolidation of some of the PSBs.

The Niti Aayog, which has been entrusted with the job of identifying suitable candidates for the privatisation, has recommended the names to a high-level panel headed by Cabinet secretary Rajiv Gauba.

Central Bank of India, Indian Overseas Bank, Bank of Maharashtra and Bank of India are some of the names that may be considered for privatisation by the Core Group of Secretaries on Disinvestment.

Following clearance from the Core Group of Secretaries, the finalised names will go to the Alternative Mechanism



Banks asked to keep CCTV recordings of DeMo period

Mumbai, June 8: The RBI on Tuesday asked banks to preserve the CCTV recordings of their branches and currency chests from November 8, 2016, to December 30, 2016, till further orders with a view to assisting the enforcement agencies to take actions against persons involved in illegal activities during the demonetisation period.

The government had demonetised the then in circulation high value currency notes of Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 on November 8, 2016. As part of the exercise, the government gave the opportunity to the people to exchange junked currency notes or deposit them in their bank accounts. Huge crowds were witnessed at bank branches across the country for exchanging or depositing the demonetised currency.

On the basis of various inputs, the investigative agencies also started probing matters relating to illegal accumulation of new currency notes.

In order to facilitate such investigations, the RBI has asked the banks not to destroy the CCTV recordings of the period of demonetisation till further orders.

The present order is a continuation of an earlier advisory issued to the lenders in December 2016 to preserve the CCTV footage of operations at bank branches and currency chests.

Of the Rs 15.41 lakh crore worth Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 notes in circulation on November 8, 2016, when the note ban was announced, notes worth Rs 15.31 lakh crore have been returned.

(AM) for its approval and eventually to the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the final nod.

Changes on the regulatory side to facilitate privatisation would start after the Cabinet approval.

RBI buys 61 tonne gold since January 2020

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 8

The Reserve Bank of India bought 61 tonnes of gold since January 2020 in staggered purchases.

The World Gold Council says central banks will continue to be positive on gold in 2021 as well, though their purchases might be lower than in 2020.

During the pandemic year of 2020, the RBI purchased 41 tonnes of gold. Its gold reserves stood at 635 tonnes at the end of 2019 and expanded to 676.6 tonnes at the end of the year. The central bank continued its staggered purchases in 2021 as well by accumulating 20 tonnes till May. At the end of May 2021, the gold reserves stood at 696.2 tonnes.

The World Gold Council's central bank gold reserves survey found that central banks will continue to be positive on gold, with roughly the same number of central banks expected to buy gold compared to last year.

Around 21 per cent of central banks intend to increase their gold reserves over the next 12

months. Central banks are also increasingly valuing gold's performance during periods of crisis.

Though the Bank of Russia had announced to halt its regular purchases, 52 per cent of respondents believe that global central bank gold holdings will grow in the coming year. However, 75 per cent of respondents believed so last year. At the same time, only 11 per cent do not know their plans for gold this year compared to 20 per cent last year.

Further 32 per cent of respondents say that global central bank gold holdings will remain unchanged while 5 per cent say that they will decrease.

These results may reflect the slowdown in central bank gold buying in 2020 when net purchases declined to 326 tonnes compared to 422 per cent from 47 per cent, says a Crisil report.

While 17 SME steel makers saw their revenues shrinking by 4 per cent in FY21, the top steel-makers registered a 10 per cent growth in revenues and 60 per cent growth in Ebitda. The top four steel-makers also reduced their net debt in their Indian operations by 16 per cent or by Rs 34,000-35,000 crore.

The improvement in financials was driven by supply-chain efficiencies, higher exports and captive mines.

LARGE STEEL FIRMS RAISE MARKET SHARE

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 8

Rising steel prices helped large steel-makers more as they have grabbed a part of the market share from small and mid-sized companies.

Five large steel makers, including Tata Steel, JSPL, JSW and SAIL and AMNS, increased their market share to 58 per cent in FY21 from 53 per cent in FY20. As a result, the market share of small and medium steel companies came down to 42 per cent from 47 per cent, says a Crisil report.

While 17 SME steel makers saw their revenues shrinking by 4 per cent in FY21, the top steel-makers registered a 10 per cent growth in revenues and 60 per cent growth in Ebitda. The top four steel-makers

SHORT TAKES
Refugee team picked for Tokyo

Lausanne: The refugee team for the Tokyo Olympics has 29 athletes competing in 12 sports.

The team selected by the International Olympic Committee on Tuesday was drawn from 55 athletes who fled their home countries and got scholarships to train for the games in a new home country.

The 29 — a rise from 10 in the inaugural refugee team at the 2016 Rio de Janeiro Olympics — are originally from Afghanistan, Cameroon, Congo, Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Iran, Iraq, South Sudan, Sudan, Syria, Venezuela. They will compete in swimming, athletics, badminton, boxing, canoeing, cycling, judo, karate, shooting, taekwondo, weightlifting, and wrestling. The refugee athletes will compete against 206 national teams with identifier EOR, for the French acronym of the team name. — AP

Deepak pulls out of Poland Open

Warsaw: Olympic-bound Indian wrestler Deepak Punia on Tuesday pulled out of the Poland Open here to avoid aggravating his left-hand injury that he carried into the last Ranking Series event before the Tokyo Games.

Punia was to take mat for the 86kg event but forfeited his quarterfinal against American

Zahid Valencia. It has been learnt that the 2019 World championships bronze-winner had suffered the injury two-three days before leaving for Warsaw during practice.

"He did not want to aggravate the injury and had informed the Federation that he will take a call on competing after reaching. After assessing his hand this morning, he decided not to take the mat," a source in the Indian camp said. — PTI

English FA gets 1st female leader

London: The English Football Association nominated Debbie Hewitt on Tuesday to be its first female leader of soccer's original national body created 158 years ago. The experienced businesswoman is set to join the English FA in January, 14 months after Greg Clarke resigned in fallout from making offensive comments on race, gender and sexuality at a parliamentary hearing.

Hewitt said in an FA statement she would "relish the opportunity to chair an organisation that has the potential to be a very positive force for good throughout the game and across society."

The FA said its ruling council will be asked to formally ratify Hewitt's appointment at a July 22 meeting. — AP

ISL teams to field 7 Indian players

Mumbai: The Indian Super League's 2021-22 season will witness an increase in local players' on-field participation thanks to a new set of guidelines that mandates clubs to field a minimum of seven footballers at one time from the previous six.

A rise in the number of Indian players means one spot less for foreign stars which will now be capped at four.

"Hero Indian Super League 2021-22 season will witness an increase in number of Indian players in the playing XI, as the new Coach & Player Selection Guidelines of Football Sports Development Limited (FSDL) now mandates clubs to have a minimum of seven (7) Indian players on the field at any point of time," the ISL said in a release on Tuesday. — PTI

Nets crush Bucks to take series lead

Los Angeles: Kevin Durant had 32 points and six assists as the Brooklyn Nets rolled to their largest playoff win in franchise history on Monday with a 125-86 beat down of the Milwaukee Bucks in game two of their NBA series.

Kyrie Irving finished with 22 points and four three's while Joe Harris and Bruce Brown each scored 13 for the Nets, who seized a 2-0 lead in the best-of-seven Eastern Conference series.

Durant said he didn't want to settle for anything less than a championship. "We still got a long ways to go," he said. "When we play hard together, good things happen."

"I think we're capable of greatness every single night," Irving said.

The series now switches to Milwaukee for game three on Thursday. — AFP

SLOVE & STEADY

Zidansek first woman from Slovenia to reach Slam semis



Slovenia's Tamara Zidansek celebrates her 7-5, 4-6, 8-6 win over Paula Badosa of Spain in the French Open quarterfinal in Paris on Tuesday. — AP

'Baffled' Nadal reaches quarters

Paris, June 8: Rafael Nadal reached the French Open quarter-finals for the 15th time on Monday to stay on course for a 14th title and record-setting 21st Grand Slam with his biggest challenge posed by blinding stadium lights.

Third seed Nadal downed 19-year-old Jannik Sinner 7-5, 6-3, 6-0 and goes on to face 10th-seeded Diego Schwartzman of Argentina who he defeated in the semi-final stage at the majors on six previous occasions since her 2007 debut.

Nadal has now won 104 matches at Roland Garros

THE RESULTS

Women's singles quarterfinals: Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (RUS x31) bt Elena Rybakina (KAZ x21) 6-7 (2/7), 6-2, 9-7; Tamara Zidansek (SLO) bt Paula Badosa (ESP x33) 7-5, 4-6, 8-6.

against just two defeats since his 2005 debut while Monday's victory extended his run of consecutive sets won to 35.

Despite Monday's match being played in bright sunshine and in temperatures of 25 degrees Nadal was baffled as to why the lights inside Court Philippe Chatrier were switched

on. "I don't know why they put the lights on that early. We have been playing without lights here in Roland Garros for forever," said Nadal.

"At 4:00 or 5:00 in the afternoon we have been playing tennis until 9:00 in the evening without lights.

"They say it's because of TV. But my answer is we

used to have TV before we had the lights on. I saw plenty of matches here, and from the TV the quality of the image was great without the lights."

"I started well but was a little too defensive. I gave him the chance to come inside the court and play his best shots. That was a mistake," added Nadal.

"I broke back at 5-4 in the first set and the match changed after that. I played at a great level."

Nadal had beaten Sinner in the quarter-finals in Paris in 2020 as well as at this year's Italian Open. — AFP

MUELLER ON THE MARK AS GERMANY EASE PAST LATVIA

Düsseldorf (Germany), June 8: Thomas Mueller scored his first international goal for three years on Monday as Germany crushed minnows Latvia 7-1 in their final warm-up friendly before the Euro 2020 finals.

Latvia, ranked 138th in the world, rarely got out of their half as Germany tuned up for their opening game of the European Championship against world champions France in eight days time in Munich. After a two-year exile from international football, 2014 World Cup winner Mueller got on the scoresheet while Premier League stars Ilkay Gundogan and Timo Werner also found the net in the rout.

"The result wasn't the most important thing, it was more about the way we wanted to play football and implement things," said Mueller, who claimed his first Germany goal since March 2018.

Germany captain Manuel Neuer was applauded onto the pitch by his team-mates before kick-off as he became the first goalkeeper to make 100 appearances for the national team. — AFP

ENGLAND CRICKET | RACISM ROW

Second player under scanner

London, June 8: One more current England player is being investigated by the country's cricket board for his allegedly racist remarks on Twitter as a teenager after Ollie Robinson was suspended for similar conduct.

The old tweets of the player in question were unearthed by *Wisden.com*, which did not reveal the identity of the cricketer since he had not reached the age of 16 at that time.

The website posted screenshots of the tweet without revealing the player's identity.

".....Your going out with a asian," the player seem to have posted with hashtags of #asianthroughhand-through #hwelooll #chinky.

The England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) is now investigating the matter. "It has been brought to our attention that an England player has posted historic offensive material on their social media account. We are looking into it and will make a further comment in due course," an ECB spokesperson was quoted as saying by the website.

The offensive posts came to fore hours after the ECB

suspended Robinson pending an investigation into his racist tweets in 2012 and 2013. The player's identity has not been revealed as he was not 16 at that time.

Robinson, who scored 42 runs and took seven wickets on his Test debut against New Zealand, has already apologised for his behaviour after his old tweets emerged.

England's Culture Secretary Oliver Dowden, however, criticised the ECB's decision to suspend Robinson, calling it "over the top". The country's Prime Minister Boris Johnson also agreed with him.

Dowden contended that Robinson's tweets were a decade old, "written by a teenager" but agreed that they were offensive and wrong. — PTI

KOHLI & CO TO GET 3-WEEK BREAK AFTER WTC FINAL

London, June 8: The Indian team management has decided to give a three-week break to its players after the World Test Championship final in a bid to address the mental fatigue that might be triggered by lengthy spells in a bio-bubble.

The WTC final against New Zealand will be held from June 18 to 22 at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton and the members of the Indian squad will disperse for close to three weeks (20 days) before regrouping on July 14 to prepare for the five-match series against England starting in Nottingham from August 4.

As skipper Virat Kohli and coach Ravi Shastri had told the media at the pre-departure press conference, there will be a break. There is a six-week gap between WTC final and opening Test against England, so we had to address the issue of players' well-being. Within UK, they can disperse off, go for a holiday, meet friends and family," a senior BCCI official said.

Obviously, there could be some team get-togethers also but players would be free to choose how they want to spend their time.

"Most of them have come to UK for multiple times and have friends and acquaintances around the country. It's only fair that they can switch off," said the source.



SL to tour England amid contract row

Colombo, June 8: The Sri Lankan cricketers have agreed to compete against England on a tour-specific contract but would not sign the annual contracts unless governing body SLC explains the evaluation process.

Sri Lanka are scheduled to tour England for three Twenty20s and as many ODIs between June 18 and July 4.

Following a stormy round of talks, the players were told by the management that they would either call off the England tour or send a third string side.

The players told the management they would sign a tour-specific contract but need more time to sign the annual contracts.

The players had defied a June 3 deadline to sign the contracts, citing lack of transparency in the process.

While defying the dead-

Manu feels Croatia tour 'perfect' before Oly

New Delhi, June 8: One of India's strongest Olympic medal hopes, ace shooter Manu Bhaker feels preparations "cannot get better" than the ongoing training-cum-competition tour of Croatia as she works on her consistency ahead of the Tokyo Games.

Thirteen Olympic-bound pistol and rifle shooters are currently training in Zagreb after having participated as guest invitees in the European Championship recently in Osijek. They will also compete in the ISSF World Cup, also scheduled in Osijek from June 22 to

July 3. The Croatia tour was arranged after the National Rifle Association of India realised that it was not possible to hold camps in India amid a deadly second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The tour is very helpful. We are well looked after, our health and fitness needs are taken care of, and, most importantly, we are getting to train at a very good shooting range and with some good competition as well."

wants to live up to her own expectations, the remark can be interpreted as a burning desire to win the gold medal, and it has often panned out that way in a stellar career seeking its zenith in a few weeks' time.

says she is wants to avoid being weighed down by expectations. "I just want to meet my own expectations. I am not thinking about anything else but focusing on giving my best for India in the Games."

The 19-year-old pistol ace will enter Tokyo as one of India's biggest medal hopes having won almost everything one can after a

— MANU BHAKER
Tokyo Olympics-bound shooter