


# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM | WEDNESDAY | 7 JULY 2021

WEATHER



**Max:** 36.0°C  
**Min:** 26.0°C  
**RH:** 69%  
**Rainfall:** 1.0mm

**Forecast:** Humid and Overcast.

Max/Min temp. 35/26 9C

ASTROGUIDE

**Plava:** Uttarayana

**Tithi:** Jyeshtha Bahula Trayodasi till 3.19 am (Thursday)

**Star:** Rohini till 6.16 pm

**Variyam:** 9.17 am to 11.05 am; 12.29 am to 2.16 am (Thursday)

**Durmuhurtam:** 11.55 am to 12.47 pm

**Rahukalam:** 12 noon to 1.30 pm

**HJURI CALENDAR**

**Zeeqad** 25,1441 AH

**PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)**

**Fajar:** 5.00 am

**Zohar:** 1.30 pm

**Asar:** 5.00 pm

**Maghrib:** 6.50 pm

**Isha:** 8.15 pm

**SUNRISE TOMORROW** 5.35 AM

**SUNSET TODAY** 6.40 PM

**MOONRISE TODAY** 3.08 AM

**MOONSET TOMORROW** 5.24 AM

COUNTER POINT



**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

If you want to continue in active politics, then take the Governor's post rather than the minister's!

SHORT TAKES

**MAN ARRESTED IN BODHAN ON TERROR CHARGES**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NIZAMABAD, JULY 6

One Tanvir, 38, of Renjal Base in Bodhan was arrested by Counter Intelligence sleuths two months ago on suspicion that he was involved in terrorist activities. The arrest came to light on Tuesday in connection with the National Investigation Agency conducting searches in the house of two Lashkar-e-Tayyaba suspects in Hyderabad.

According to sources, Tanvir went Saudi Arabia in search of livelihood a long time ago. He shared a room with a Pakistani, who is believed to be an ISI agent. Tanvir and the Pakistani were arrested by the Saudi Arabia police and released after one and a half years in prison. Tanvir allegedly disappeared from Saudi Arabia and reached Bodhan.

**Mamata seeks to revive Council**

**Kolkata:** The Mamata Banerjee government's ad-hoc committee report to bring back Vidhan Parishad or Legislative Council, five decades after it was abolished in West Bengal, was passed after discussion in the House on Tuesday with around two-third majority of votes by the MLAs.

■ Full report on Page 4

SAFE | COVER

**Delhi HC rebukes Twitter for non-compliance**

## Comply or face action, Twitter told

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 6

The Delhi High Court on Tuesday rebuked microblogging portal Twitter for misleading the court on the appointment of the resident grievance officer (RGO) and stated that it was in clear 'defiance with the country's digital law'. The court gave two days to inform it on the time required for complying with Indian rules.

"If he (interim RGO) went away on June 21, the least Twitter could do was to appoint another officer in

We are concerned with the issue of compliance. How long does your process (of appointing an RGO) take? If Twitter thinks it can take as long as it wants in my country, I will not allow that.

— DELHI HIGH COURT

these 15 days since you knew that this matter was coming up for hearing on July 6. We are considered with the compliance," said Justice Rekha Palli of the

Delhi High Court. The judge also observed that Twitter had misled the court by not clarifying that RGO appointment was merely interim in nature. Senior advocate Sajjan Poovayya, representing Twitter, said though Twitter was in process of making the appointment, it was true that as on this date there is no chief compliance officer, RGO and nodal contact person. "So as the court said yes Twitter is not in compliance with rules as of now. But it is in the process of appointing the officer.

When an intermediary is not in compliance with rules, it loses safe harbour protection. It is indeed that Twitter should and Twitter will comply with the rules. Please grant a reasonable time," he said. This Delhi High Court's observations came a day after the Centre told the Delhi High Court that the social media giant had failed to comply with India's new IT rules, which could lead to the social media major losing its immunity conferred under the Information Technology (IT) Act.



**WORLD | 5**

**Germany ends curbs on Indian travellers**



**SPORTS | 8**

**Federer oldest man to play Wimbledon quarters**

**TABLOID**

**Not the bod I want!**



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# Governor rejig points to Modi Cabinet reshuffle

New faces from BJP and allies may join Council of Ministers

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 6

In a clear indication that the much-awaited reshuffle of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Cabinet will take place soon, senior Cabinet minister and Leader of the House in the Rajya Sabha Thawarchand Gehlot was named as the governor of Karnataka by President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday.

Mr Kovind approved the appointment of eight governors, also including Mr Gehlot, as well as former Union minister Bandaru Dattatreya and Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar.

Speculation is rife that the much-anticipated rejig of the Union council of ministers, which will be first in NDA 2.0, will take place either on Wednesday or Thursday, and it will also have "new and young faces" and more representation of the BJP's alliance partners. Now the RPI's Ramdas Athawale is the only non-BJP leader in the NDA government. The rejig will also be done keeping mind the coming Assembly polls, mainly Uttar Pradesh, the 2024 Lok Sabha elections and the representation of OBCs, dalits and tribals and also the representation of regions. More women ministers could also be inducted in Team Modi.

Some ministers, sources said, could be sent back to

**DC CORRESPONDENTS**  
VISAKHAPATNAM/  
HYDERABAD, JULY 6

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday appointed senior BJP leader and former Visakhapatnam MP Dr Kambhampati Haribabu as the Mizoram governor. Currently, he is the second person from the two Telugu-speaking states to occupy the gubernatorial position.

Another senior BJP leader from Telugu states, Bandaru Dattatreya, was appointed as the Himachal Pradesh Governor on September 11, 2019.

However, as part of a minor reshuffle of Gover-



Kambhampati Hari Babu

nors, the Central government transferred Dattatreya to HP's neighbouring state Haryana.

The appointment of Haribabu as the governor would cap over two-decade-long active political partici-

the BJP organisation. A senior Cabinet minister, who is now recuperating, could also be asked to "take a complete rest" and another representative of his state, where elections are due early next year, could be accommodated in the team. At least 10 ministers are now holding more than one portfolio.

Some of the prospective new members of Team Modi, including former Congress leader Jyotiraditya Scindia, former Assam CM Sarbananda Sonowal and Maharashtra heavy-

weight Narayan Rane have reached New Delhi amid speculation that they were told to reach the national capital. JD(U) leader R.C.P. Singh and LJP's Pashupati Kumar Paras arrived in New Delhi from Bihar.

Earlier on Tuesday, the President appointed Mr Gehlot as governor of Karnataka while Mr Dattatreya was shifted from Himachal Pradesh to be made governor of Haryana.

Mr Kovind also named Mangubhai Chhaganbhai Patel as governor of Madhya Pradesh, while

● **HARIBABU DEFEATED** Congress candidate Sabbam Hari to win the Vizag-1 assembly constituency in 1999.

● **HE DEFEATED Y.S.** Vijayalakshmi, mother of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy in the 2014 polls from Visakhapatnam LS Constituency

pation. Born in Prakasam district, Haribabu pursued his B.Tech, ME and obtained a PhD from Andhra University.

■ **Page 2: Haribabu joined Jai Andhra stir as a student**

Hari Babu Kambhampati and Rajendra Vishwanath Arlekar were appointed as governors of Mizoram and Himachal Pradesh respectively.

Mr Kambhampati succeeds P.S. Sreedharan Pillai, who has been transferred and named governor of Goa, while Satyadev Narayan Arya, governor of Haryana, has been transferred and appointed as governor of Tripura while Tripura governor Ramesh Bais has been transferred and appointed governor of Jharkhand.

# J&K delimitation process begins

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC**  
SRINAGAR, JULY 6

The Delimitation Commission for Jammu and Kashmir set up by the Centre to redraw Lok Sabha and Assembly constituencies of the Union Territory on Tuesday began obtaining "first-hand" information towards completing the assignment by meeting the leaders and representatives of various regional and national registered politi-

cal parties here.

Barring the People's Democratic Party (PDP), all other political parties, including the National Conference (NC) which had earlier expressed serious reservations over the constitution and mandate of the commission, are meeting it at a hotel here to put forth their views on reorganisations of the constituencies.

The PDP said it is boycotting the commission as it does not want to be a part

of an exercise the outcome of which it believes is pre-planned. It also said that the very existence of this commission is questionable as the Constitution of India was specifically amended (84th amendment) in 2002, not to have interstate delimitation of constituencies till 2026. "Singling out J&K for such an exercise and the haste with which it is being carried out are an indication of the government's malevolence of disempowering the people of

the (erstwhile) state further," a PDP spokesman said.

During its four-day stay in J&K, apart from the leaders and representatives of various political parties registered with the Election Commission, the commission is also scheduled to meet the election officers of all 20 districts and some other government functionaries. The commission is also visiting Kashmir's Pahalgam, followed by a visit to Jammu.

# Land grabbing turns good biz in Chittoor

**AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC**  
TIRUPATI, JULY 6

Land grab is a thriving business in Chittoor district, especially in and around Tirupati city, with musclemen minting millions by grabbing and "selling" precious chunks of both private and state lands.

Opposition parties are pointing an accusing finger at the state government for its failure to take effective action to stem the trend. They demand the start of an anti-encroachment drive by police to retrieve the illegally occupied lands.

Land grabbers from neighbouring districts like Kadapa, Anantapur, Kurnool and Nellore are eyeing precious lands, especially those on the outskirts of Tirupati, Renigunta, Chandragiri, Yerpedu, Srikalahasti, Madanapalle and Chittoor.

In the past few years, there have been instances of anti-social elements, often armed, involved in land-grab by threatening the land owners who possess valid documents. There are also cases where in land grabbers used fabricated documents to get gov-

● **PROFESSIONAL LAND** grabbers from neighbouring districts as also anti-social elements eye precious state and private lands.

● **LAND GRABBERS** using fictitious documents to get government and private lands transferred in their names.

ernment and private lands transferred in their names. The Madanapalle police recently registered cases against five revenue employees including three tehsildars and two deputy tehsildars for their involvement in the transfer of government lands to private entities based on fictitious documents.

Based on a complaint lodged by Tehsildar Srinivasulu, police registered cases against previous tehsildars Sivarami Reddy, Rama Devi and Suresh Babu and two other deputy tehsildars Srinivasulu and Sayed Ahmed.

Even the poor Shikari (Nakkala) people are currently living in of land grabbers eyeing their DKT

lands in Audi Maratapuram of Chintalapalem in Yerpedu mandal. The shikari welfare association's organising secretary for Nellore and Chittoor districts Dabba Parasunath said they are facing threats from gangs trying to grab their land over 560 acres. He urged the government to protect their lands from encroachments.

There are also instances of land owners complaining to the Tirupati Urban Police on encroachment of their lands. With investigations into more cases reportedly revealing links to some YSRC leaders, city MLA Bhumana Reddy has warned gangs and asked the police department and the government to initiate stern action against them.

"We won't tolerate land grab activities by misusing some of our names or by posing as YSRC supporters. We have appealed to the police to not spare unlawful elements," the MLA said.

In a similar case, when a ruling party corporator faced allegations of land grab, the MLA asked civic commissioner Girisha to take stern action against him if there was any wrongdoing.

## TWO PEOPLE KILLED IN VIZAG ROAD MISHAP

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 6

In a ghastly road mishap, two persons were killed on the spot and three others escaped with minor injuries after two concrete beams of an under-construction flyover on the Anandapuram-Anakapalli stretch near Puppala Junction in Vizag district crashed on Tuesday evening.

The flyover is being constructed as a part of the six-lane project by the National Highway Authority of India (NHAI) under the Bharatmala Pariyojana Scheme, which had entrusted the work to a private construction firm.

Anakapalle DSP Sravani said the concrete structure collapsed on a car and tanker truck. Two people, who were on the front seat of the car were killed while two women on the back seat sustained injuries. An occupant of the tanker truck was rescued by the police. The deceased were Satish Kumar (35) of Sriharipuram and Sushanth Mohanty (38) of Arilova in Vizag city.

■ **Page 2: Cops suspect technical fault**



## SHORT TAKES

## HARIBABU JOINED JAI ANDHRA STIR AS A STUDENT

From page 1

Haribabu worked as an associate professor at Andhra University College of Engineering for 24 years. He resigned from the university to take part in active politics. He was elected as an MLA from the Vizag-1 constituency in 1999 and became the BJP's floor leader in the AP assembly in 2003. He served as a Vizag MP between 2014 and 2019.

Active in student politics, Haribabu became secretary of the students' union of Andhra University College of Engineering in 1972-73. He participated in the 'Jai Andhra' movement in the state alongside Tenneti Viswanadham, Sardar Gouthu Latchanna and the present vice-president M. Venkaiah Naidu. He was arrested under the Maintenance of Internal Security Act (MISA) during the Emergency and imprisoned for six months in Visakhapatnam central jail and the Mushirabad jail.

Haribabu defeated former mayor and Congress candidate Sabbam Hari to win the Visakhapatnam-1 assembly constituency in the 1999 elections and defeated high profile YSRC candidate Y.S. Vijayalakshmi, mother of chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy in the 2014 elections for Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha seat. Haribabu defeated her by a margin of 90,488 votes.

"I thank President Ram Nath Kovind, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and Home Minister Amit Shah for choosing me for this position. The north-eastern state of Mizoram has its own peculiar issues and opportunities. I worked as a party in charge of Assam, but I could not visit Mizoram. I will understand the situation in Mizoram and I will strive to develop Mizoram in coordination with the state government," he said while talking to the media.

## I-T SLEUTHS RAID 15 OFFICES OF RAMKY GROUP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 6

The officials of the income-tax (I-T) department raided 15 offices, including the headquarters, of the Ramky Group, owned by YSRC Rajya Sabha member Ayodhya Rami Reddy, in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

The I-T officials were reportedly verifying claims of losses shown by group companies. There are alleged to be hundreds of transactions between the group companies which are linked to the MP's family.

Sources said that though Ayodhya Rami Reddy chairman of the Ramky Group, he is not listed as director of any of these companies.

The Ramky group is also accused in the quid pro quo cases of AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) had in 2013 attached properties belonging to Ramky Pharma City and Ramky Group under the provisions of the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) over the case.

## SHARMILA'S PARTY AND MUCH ADD OVER A NAME

IREDDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC  
HYDERABAD, JULY 6

An interesting discussion is going on in political circles over the name of Y.S. Sharmila's party, which is similar to the YSRC of her brother and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The full name of the AP CM's party is Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress. What is the expansion of YSRTP that will be launched on Thursday by Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy's daughter?

Sharmila's camp registered the party's name as YSR Telangana Party and her followers call it YSRTP. In political discussions, YSR refers to the late Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy but some others read it as Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Telangana Party. Fact is they registered the party's name without any definition of YSR.

Deccan Chronicle asked party senior leader Indira Shobhan about the expansion of YSR: is it Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress or Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy? She replied that there is no definition for YSR as such. "It is only YSR, not like any of the cited names."

Congress leaders asked how Sharmila named her party after Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. YSR was a Congressman and she should refrain from using his name for her party, they said.

## Dogs Day Out



A veterinary doctor gives vaccination to a dog on the occasion of World Zoonoses Day in Vijayawada on Tuesday.  
— C. NARAYANA RAO

## Govt to begin tiger census from Oct. 20

Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve is best in country: Officials

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

Andhra Pradesh forest authorities will take up 'All India Tiger Estimate-2022' in Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve spread over 3,728 square kilometres covering parts of Kurnool, Prakasam and Guntur districts in four phases from October 20.

In phase-I, the forest personnel will take up the exercise with a forest beat as a base unit as there are nearly 1,000 forest beats in the reserve.

They adopt transact and trail modes for both herbivores and carnivores respectively by looking for signs of herbivores like their droppings and growth of vegetation. With regard to carnivores like tigers, they trail them for some distance.

In phase-II, whatever data collected will be analysed and will be submitted to the National Tiger Conservation Authority and also to the Wildlife Institute of India.

In phase-III, the person-

● **AS EACH** tiger will be having a typical and unique pattern of stripes with no similarities between two tigers, the authorities will figure out the number of images of tigers and arrive at the number of tigers living in the tiger reserve.

● **THE FOREST** authorities say that in the All India Tiger Estimate carried out in 2018, they found 48 images of tigers with its population to be between 58 and 76 in the tiger reserve.

nel will fix camera traps for getting random sampling of tiger population.

In phase-IV, the personnel will take up intensive camera traps and nearly 1,000 camera traps will be arranged with some already existing and they will be relocated to cover the uncovered areas. The data like images of animals including herbivores and carnivores collected in camera traps will be analysed at periodical intervals with a specially designed software application to find out the images and the presence of the number of tigers.

As each tiger will be having a typical and unique pattern of stripes with no similarities between two tigers, the authorities will

figure out the number of images of tigers and arrive at the number of tigers living in the tiger reserve.

The forest authorities say that in the All India Tiger Estimate-2022 from around October 20 as soon rainfall gets over, mainly in Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve and extended area covering nearly 5,000 square kilometres to find out the number of tigers present in AP. We are sure that the tiger population is on the rise in the state and the census will help us establish the presence of the number of tigers scientifically."

Meanwhile, the forest authorities maintain that the Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve is the best in the country with regard to its ecological services.

The tiger census will cover Gundla Brahmeswaram Wildlife Sanctuary, four forest divisions like

Atmakur and Nandyal in Kurnool district, Ongole and Giddalur in Prakasam district and extends up to Sri Lankamalleshwara wildlife sanctuary in Kadapa and Sri Venkateswara National Park, Papikondalu National Park and other areas covering nearly 5,000 square kilometres in the state.

Chief conservator of forests (wildlife management) Rahul Pandey said, "We will take up All India Tiger Estimate-2022 from around October 20 as soon rainfall gets over, mainly in Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve and extended area covering nearly 5,000 square kilometres to find out the number of tigers present in AP. We are sure that the tiger population is on the rise in the state and the census will help us establish the presence of the number of tigers scientifically."

Meanwhile, the forest authorities maintain that the Nagarjunasagar-Srisaillam tiger reserve is the best in the country with regard to its ecological services.

## MP wants Centre to restrain TS from using water illegally

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

YSR Congress MP Lavu Srikrishna Devarayalu on Tuesday wrote a letter to Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat objecting to the allegedly illegal drawing of water from the Krishna river by the Telangana state government, and seeking action for violation of Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) orders.

He said that on the Krishna, the Srisaillam and Nagarjunasagar projects are major common reservoirs catering to the needs of AP on the right side and Telangana state on the left side of the river. The Jurala project caters to Telangana state and Pulichintala and Prakasam barrage to AP. Deverayalu stated that

● The MP said that with the TS government releasing water, AP farmers would have to switch to irrigated dry crops like pulses which are not remunerative.

the KRMB was established in 2014 under the AP Reorganisation Act to look after the administration and maintenance of Srisaillam, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala but the exercise was not completed by the Centre and an interim arrangement was worked out for operation and maintenance of the projects. As a result, the KRMB has placed controls on the extent of power generation to save drinking and irrigation water. He stated that in sheer contempt of the

KRMB's instructions, Telangana state had started using 100 per cent of its power generating capacity by using 4 tmc ft, 3 tmc ft and 1.8 tmc ft water per day from Srisaillam, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala respectively.

Devarayalu said that Telangana's state's decision threatened the survival of farmers in the districts of Rayalaseema, Nellore, Prakasam and Guntur districts. He stated that the farmers in Prakasam and Guntur use 110 tmc ft of Krishna river water through the Nagarjunasagar right main canal to raise paddy and red chill in the Kharif season. He said that he represents the Palnadu region which is drought-prone and the right main canal is the only major irrigation source for farmers.

## Drones give sleepless nights to policemen

D. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC  
KURNOOL JULY 6

Kurnool police are literally star gazing during night times at Srisaillam since July 1 when people reportedly saw some drones over Sri Bramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy and the nearby Nallamala forests.

They are yet clueless as to who is flying the drones. While they had been first spotted on July 1, drones have reportedly sighted again 4-5 times subsequently, though during night times.

It is said flickering objects with infrared cameras have been making rounds of the sky over temple shikhara, Mallamma Kanneeru, Uttara Park, Viswamitra Matam, the reservoir and outer ring road.

Though the sightings commenced on July 1, temple executive officer K.S. Rama Rao lodged a complaint with police on July 4. Following this, Srisaillam police, led by circle inspector P.V. Ramana have started search operations to trace the drones as well as those flying th-

● It is said flickering objects with infrared cameras have been making rounds of the sky over temple shikhara, Mallamma Kanneeru, Uttara Park, Viswamitra Matam, the reservoir and outer ring road.

em. Police teams have interrogated local videographers who use drones for event photography. But they are not using the drones currently.

Atmakur DSP Y. Shruti under, whose jurisdiction important assets like Srisaillam dam, power house, and Srisaillam temple fall, is having to contend with drones even as tensions are escalating between TS and AP governments over Krishna waters at Srisaillam.

District superintendent of police K. Fakeerappa, along with Atmakur DSP, visited the Srisaillam temple and personally observed the skies from Monday night till Tuesday morning. Police suspect reports of drones being seen flying night after night are an exaggeration.

## Seema farmers lost 45k acres for Srisaillam: TG

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL JULY 6

BJP MP T.G. Venkatesh has called upon leaders of Rayalaseema to unite for protecting the legitimate share of Krishna waters.

He said forgetting sacrifices made by Rayalaseema farmers, who lost 45,000 acres of fertile land due to submergence under Srisaillam, Telangana government is now bringing new theories that Srisaillam waters are only

for power generation.

Speaking to media, the MP suspected that TS Chief Minister K. Chandrababhai Rao has upped the ante over Srisaillam waters only to win the Huzurabad by-election. He reminded that Brijesh Kumar tribunal on Krishna waters had clearly allocated 512.4 tmc of water to AP and 298.96 tmc to Telangana on June 19, 2015. "That agreement was signed by KCR himself," he recalled.

## ODISHA REFUSES AP REQUEST ON VAMSADHARA WATER DISPUTE

AKSHAYA KUMAR  
SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, JULY 6

The Odisha government on Tuesday declined to agree to Andhra Pradesh's request to grant its consent to the publication of the Vamsadhara Water Disputes Tribunal in the official Gazette, subject to finalisation of the Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the SC."

The state has refused to grant its consent saying the matter is subjudice in the Supreme Court.

"The decision of the

Vamsadhara Water Disputes Tribunal is subjudice in the Supreme Court. Odisha has declined to agree to the request of Andhra Pradesh to grant any consent in the publication of Vamsadhara Water Disputes Tribunal in the official Gazette, subject to finalisation of the Special Leave Petition (SLP) in the SC."

Odisha water resources department said in a press statement on Tuesday evening.

When the respondents

prayed the court to pardon

them considering their

age and the service they

rendered and also given

assurance to be more careful

in future in implementing the

court orders, the court observed

that it was not desirable

to send them to the jail in the

present situation of Covid-19

pandemic and modified the

sentence on humanitarian

grounds. Accordingly, they

were sentenced to imprisonment

till rising of the court which

means they were detained to

sit in the court until court

proceedings concluded for

the day and imposed a fine

of ₹1,000 each and on default,

it imposed simple imprisonment

for three days.

## Training nurses must to treat children, says CM

From page 1

The Chief Minister directed the officials to prepare an action plan at district level for the next two months and implement it. He told them to ensure all the medicines in the government hospitals met the standards of WHO and GMP. Also, he stressed on providing training to nurses in giving treatment to children.

Asserting that vaccination was the only solution to Covid, the Chief Minister ordered the officials not to deviate from the prescribed vaccination policy as still there was a long way to go in vaccination. He said the second dose should be prioritised, as everything would go in vain if the second dose was not given at the right time. So far, 1,28,84,201 people had been vaccinated, where 96,25,316 got single dose vaccination and 32,58,885 completed the two-dose vaccination. He told the officials to focus on other categories, after

● The CM directed the district collectors to monitor all the notified hospitals to ensure that quality food, infrastructure, medicines and sanitation were in place.

completing the 90 per cent vaccination for those over 45 years.

It has been decided to give lands as an incentive to set up 16 private multi and super specialty hospitals in each district centre and each corporation, where ₹100 crore should be invested over a period of three years in setting up a hospital. These private hospitals should be located in various cities and towns rather than in one place and get them empanelled with AarogyaSri, he added and instructed the collectors to identify land for the construction of these hospitals within a week.

Further, the Chief Minister emphasised on continuing the economic activity in those districts

where the curfew relaxations were given. He said the poor would suffer a lot, if the economic activity did not progress.

The Chief Minister directed the district collectors to monitor all the notified hospitals to ensure that quality food, infrastructure, medicines and sanitation were in place and told to review these aspects at least once in every 15 days. He said steps should be taken to provide free medical care under YSR AarogyaSri and develop 104 call centre as a one stop solution for the public, where they could receive services within three hours.

The officials informed that currently 322 hospitals were offering Covid treatment, where 3,196 ICU beds were still available of the total 4,592 ICU beds. Similarly, of the total 19,258 oxygen beds, 15,309 beds are available. The CM directed the officials to equip all those hospitals with a CCTV network and monitor.

## LEGAL | MATTERS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

Andhra Pradesh High Court has heard public interest litigation (PIL) on diversion of additional excise tax to AP State Development Corporation from 10 districts of the state.

Telugu Desam Visakhapatnam East MLA Velagapudi Ramakrishna Babu had filed the PIL in High Court contending that sec-

tion 12 (1) (4) (5) of Andhra Pradesh State Development Corporation Act 2020 is unconstitutional as per articles 266 and 204 of the Indian Constitution.

Petitioner's counsel Yelamanjula Balaji argued that the state government had issued GO 90, thereby diverting additional excise tax to the State Development Corporation unconstitutionally.

He submitted that public

tax should be protected by the state government. It should also ensure transparency and accountability in dealing with public taxes. If not, it would affect the constitutional right of every citizen in the state.

The counsel charged though the state government must deposit all tax money in Consolidated Fund of the state, it is diverting the taxes in vio-

lation of norms. He pointed out that as AP State Development Corporation has no sources of income, it could become a non-performing asset.

Hearing the PIL, a division bench comprising Chief Justice A.K. Goswami and Justice N. Jayasurya observed that it is a matter to be heard in detail.

However, Supreme Court senior counsel Dushyanth Dave, representing the

state government, requested the court not to serve any notices saying if they are served, there is a possibility that banks will stop sanctioning loans.

He pleaded the court to grant two days for filing a counter.

Dushyanth Dave said though the state government is diverting tax money, it is also depositing taxes in the Consolidated Fund of AP and withdraw-

ing money from it as per norms.

In this regard, the counsel wanted to place a Supreme Court judgement before the High Court.

At this, the petitioner's counsel also wanted to place citations from the SC before the court.

Following this, the High Court directed both the counsels to do so on July 8 and posted the next hearing for that day.



## SHORT TAKES

₹90L WORTH  
GANJA SEIZEDDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, JULY 6

Chinturu Circle police caught 3,030 kg of Ganja worth ₹90 lakh in two different police station limits. In the early hours of Tuesday, the smugglers stopped the van beside the road and fled away from the spot, after seeing the police.

The police found 2,160 kg of Ganja worth Rs 64 lakh under the Mothugudem police station limits. Mothugudem police registered a case. Chinturu police found 870 kg of Ganja in a coal load lorry and arrested two persons belonging to Uttar Pradesh. Chinturu Circle Inspector G. Yuva Kumar said that when the police were making vehicle checking, as per the information given by the Superintendent of Police of East Godavari, 870 kg of Ganja was found in a container which was carrying coal cargo to Uttar Pradesh from Visakhapatnam through Mareduilli-Chinturu Ghat Road. He said that the smugglers were carrying the Ganja in the coal bags without giving doubt to police officials. Mehtab Aalam and Sajib Ahman of Vigyana Village of Budhana in Muzaffarnagar in Uttar Pradesh were arrested. The Chinturu police registered a case.

REDUCE SAND  
PRICE, SAY REAL  
ESTATE FIRMSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

Confederation of Real Estate Developers' Associations of India (CREDAI) has requested AP government to open all sand reaches in the state for avoiding shortage of sand. This would boost growth in Andhra Pradesh, it said.

The confederation also sought, among other things, reduction in sand price from ₹475 per tonne to ₹375 per tonne, online payment facility, provision of GST bills, and supply of only quality sand.

CREDAI's requests emerged at a meeting AP Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC) organised on Tuesday between representatives of the confederation and sand supplying agency Jaiprakash Power Ventures Limited. APMDC managing director V. G. Venkata Reddy said the meeting has been organised to resolve issues being faced by the construction sector. CREDAI general secretary K. Subhash Chandrabose regretted that at certain sand reaches, it is taking 2-3 days to load vehicles, which is causing lot of difficulties for builders. They pointed out that developers and people can purchase sand from the nearest points if the government opens all sand reaches in the state. This would also reduce transportation costs.

Responding to issues raised by CREDAI representatives, the APMDC MD said these will be put forth before the government for smooth supply of construction sand.

WILL MAKE  
TOWNS FROM  
COLONIES: BOTSADC CORRESPONDENT  
VIZIANAGARAM, JULY 6

Minister for urban development and municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana said 16,000 layouts have been created for providing housing colonies to the poor in the state and these colonies would be converted into townships in the future.

Satyanarayana said that all the infrastructural facilities would be created in the townships for the comfort living of the people.

After enquiring with the MLAs on the problems being faced during grounding of the layouts, Satyanarayana said 30 lakh beneficiaries have been sanctioned houses under the Navaratnas and in the first phase 15 lakh houses were being constructed.

In Vizianagaram, 90 per cent of the houses were sanctioned in the first phase, the minister said. He asked the technical staff to develop CC roads, underground drainage and power connection, drinking water, hospitals and fibre net connection. He suggested digging borewells in all the layouts by the end of this month.

● Satyanarayana said that all the infrastructural facilities would be created in the townships for the comfort living of the people.

Jobless to be trained  
to handle 'third wave'

Youth with science background being enrolled, trained

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC  
NELLORE, JULY 6

Apart from holding training programmes for doctors and paramedical staff to treat children during the likely third wave of Covid-19, the health authorities have devised a training session for educated unemployed youths to involve them as stand-by support in such a critical situation.

Jobless youths with science background such as Bi-PC in intermediate or degree are being picked for skill development training in ways as to use them as anesthesia assistants.

Alongside, ITI students

● Alongside, ITI students and intermediate students who got exposure to both practical and theoretical training are also being picked for training on handling patients in hospitals in the event of an acute shortage of manpower. Nellore collector Chakradhar Babu said field-level staff are identifying youths

and intermediate students who got exposure to both practical and theoretical training are also being picked for training on handling patients in hospitals in the event of an acute shortage of manpower.

Nellore collector Chakradhar Babu said field-level staff are identifying youths with such aptitude to work on a war footing for industries as well.

Training sessions were

completed for 600 such youths after obtaining details of skilled manpower requirements for the units in various parts of SPSR Nellore district.

“Our aim is to provide skilled manpower that is tailor-made to the requirements of industries coming up in the district,” the collector said and pointed out that Nellore is an important nodal point for both Chennai-Bengaluru and Visakapatnam-Chennai

industrial corridors.

The assistance of industries is also being taken to impart job-oriented skills to the unemployed.

“We are also offering awards to the best trainers,” Chakradhar Babu stated.

Referring to a survey in progress to identify unemployed youths suitable to work in hospitals in view of the Covid's likely third wave, he said the project director of the district rural development authority (DRDA) and chief executive officer of SETNEL (self-employment and training, Nellore) have been closely monitoring the survey.

AP REGISTERS  
3,042 COVID-19  
CASES, 28 DEATHSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

Andhra Pradesh registered rise in fresh Covid-19 infections at 3,042 and 28 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state reported a dip in Covid-29 cases at 2,100 on July 5 against the daily average of over 3,000 cases in the last few days. On July 3, AP reported 2,930 cases and on June 28, as many as 2,224 cases were reported.

The state health authorities reported on Tuesday that out of 88,378 samples tested, 3,042 persons were found infected with the Coronavirus. Out of a total number of 2,25,24,187 samples tested so far in the state, 19,08,065 persons were found infected with the virus and of them, 18,61,937 were recovered while 33,230 are still active with the virus.

East Godavari continued to report the highest number of daily infections at 665 followed by 360 in West Godavari, 358 in Chittoor, 310 in Prakasam, 277 in Guntur, 252 in Krishna, 251 in Nellore, 171 in Visakhapatnam, 116 in Srikakulam, 91 in Anantapur, 79 in Kadapa, 61 in Vizianagaram and 51 in Kurnool.

East Godavari topped the state by reporting highest number of total active cases at 5,560.

APOA: APPOINT  
SPORTSPERSONS  
TO HEAD SAAPDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

AP Olympic Association (APOA) has requested Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to nominate only prominent sportspersons as chairperson and directors of Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP).

Recalling the appointment of Olympic medalist Karanam Malleswari as vice chancellor of Sports University of Delhi, APOA secretary K.P. Rao pointed out that the state government has employed nearly 2,000 sportspersons under sports job quota last year, which is a record not only in AP but throughout India.

He pointed out that the AP government had also paid ₹5 crore to Indian Olympic Association for allotting National Games to Andhra Pradesh.

He observed that once these games are allotted to AP, Government of India will provide financial assistance of more than ₹1,000 crore for constructing international-standard stadia and accommodation for players, just as it had done during Hyderabad National Games in 2002, when an entire sports village had been created.

APOA secretary explained that presently Andhra Pradesh does not have sports infrastructure of international standards.

Hence, the Olympic association is requesting CM Jagan to nominate persons with knowledge in sports as chairman and directors of SAAP.

They will be able to establish best sports infrastructure and get name and fame for the state.

K.P. Rao appreciated that Delhi Chief Minister Aravind Kejriwal had nominated a Telugu Olympic medalist as vice chancellor of the capital's sports university. Likewise, appointment of sportspersons in AP too to SAAP will ensure smooth conduct of National Games and further development of sports.

● APOA secretary explained that presently Andhra Pradesh does not have sports infrastructure of international standards.

Minister wants  
transport wing to  
be corruption-freeDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

Transport minister Perni Venkataramaiah alias Nani on Tuesday asked Transport Department to render corruption-free services even as he issued a veiled warning.

“It is very painful for me to sign files of suspension and punishments to employees,” he remarked, while addressing a state-level meeting organised by the department.

He regretted that a few corrupt persons are tarnishing the image of the whole department.

The minister asked offi-

cials to make transport department corruption-free and people-friendly. He pointed out that bribes are being sought for issuing learning driver licenses, transport licenses and fitness certificates.

Transport department principal secretary M.T. Krishna Babu expressed concern that the number of road accidents in the state has gone up to 25 per day. In this regard, he announced that the state government has sanctioned ₹50 crore for removing black spots on roads, so that accidents could be reduced.

Krishna Babu said the central government has

Demand for O2 in  
Vizag on declineDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 6

The demand for medical oxygen, which had shot up during the Covid-19 second wave, has fallen since the last week.

“Now we have less than 20 patients in ICU units in government hospitals. There are no patients in the 40 private hospitals designated as Covid-19 hospitals,” said District Medical and Health Officer Dr P. Suryanarayana.

Talking to DC on Tuesday, he said 30 patients were undergoing treatment at CSR Block of the King George Hospital, 35 in VIMS Hospital and five in Government Hospital for Chest and Infectious Diseases.

He said during the peak infection stage, the district needed 170 tonnes of medical oxygen and friends and relatives of the patients were engaged in arranging oxygen cylinders to save the lives of their family members. Now, a negligible

amount of oxygen is being used like normal times, the DMHO added.

Keeping in view the demand, the Centre also sanctioned 14 oxygen plants to be located in Vizag city and rural areas. A 2.5-tonne capacity plant has been opened in King George Hospital premises and another two were being located in Chest Hospital and Araku Area Hospital of 1.5-tonne capacity each.

Like the Covid Care centres developed in first phase helped the second phase patients, these oxygen plants would come towards end of next month might come to the rescue of the third wave patients, said another senior medical officer of the district.

Vizag was also getting medical oxygen from Vizag Steel Plant of the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited as its share from the state quota.

“We were supplying 100 tonnes per day to the AP government during peak demand and now it has come down to less than 50

MASS ORGANISATIONS CONDEMN  
DEATH OF ACTIVIST STAN SWAMYDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 6

Several mass organisations and district unit of CPI staged a protest against the death of human rights activist and Jesuit Stan Swamy, at a dharna held at the Gandhi statue near RTC Complex in Visakhapatnam

on Tuesday.

State secretary of CPI, J.V. Satyanarayana Murthy and HRF State committee member V.S.

Krishna, while paying tributes to the tribal rights leader, called it a state sponsored murder and asked the government to own the responsibility.

OFFICIALS TOLD COMPLETE HOUSE  
CONSTRUCTIONS WITHIN 3 MONTHSDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, JULY 6

East Godavari district collector D. Muralidhar Reddy instructed the officials to take steps for completing the construction of houses which were grounded for the past five days, within the three months.

He said that 56,000 houses have been grounded for the past five days and these houses should be completed

on a war footing. He said that the housing officials should chalk-out a plan of action for grounding the houses of 1.48 lakh in the first phase.

He said that all the departments like housing, revenue, panchayat raj, rural water supply, municipal and other related officials should work with coordination to complete the houses by creating all infrastructure facilities.

## Yakub Ali dies

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, JULY 6

Yakub Ali, 50, a mentally challenged person died in an accident at Sakshinetipalli on Monday. But, there were rumours that he was an accused in burning the chariot of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy Temple at Antarvedi last year. But, the Sakshinetipalli Sub-Inspector Ch. Gopalakrishna condemned the social media comments. He said that during the chariot

burning incident time, Yakub Ali used to roam around the village and threw the stones at the houses. As per the village VRO's complaint, the police took him into custody and sent to a hospital in Visakhapatnam. After getting treatment he came again to Sakshinetipalli and he was produced before the Razole court and released. He said that there were nocases booked against him under Sakshinetipalli police station limits regarding Antarvedi chariot.

## Out into the open



Youngsters enjoy a horse ride at the Ramakrishna Beach in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday following the government lifting of the curfew rules for Covid-19.

— P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

NIT SECURES 78.7%  
PLACEMENTS IN  
MNCS IN '20-21DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 6

Tadepalligudem based Andhra Pradesh National Institute of Technology registered increase in campus placements at 78.7 per cent in 2020-21 against 70.62 per cent in 2019-20 despite prevalence of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The top recruiters include multinationals and reputed firms like L&T, Deloitte, Accenture, TCS, Infosys, Cognizant, Modak Analytics and others.

AP NIT director Prof. C.S.P. Rao said that, “Placements provide an opportunity to the students to test their employability skills gained for current industry requirements. Our institution lays emphasis on skill development.”

COTTON STATUE  
DAMAGEDDCCORRESPONDENT  
RAJAMAHENDRAVARAM,  
JULY 6

Sir Arthur Cotton statue was damaged in GPR School at Gadalamnagar under Bommuru police Station limits, the East Zone DSP A.T.V. Ravi Kumar said.

5 varsities in state to be  
made top-class: SureshDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JULY 6

Education minister Adimulapu Suresh has said the Andhra Pradesh government is keen on strengthening education with the aim to make the five state varsities stand among the top 10 at the national level. Reforms and strengthening the system would keep JNTU Anantapur, JNTU Kakinada, Andhra University, Sri Venkateswara University and IIIT University at top level, he said on Tuesday.

“As part of this, funding for large-scale varsities and recruitment of 2,000 assistant professors and other faculty and recruitment of backlog posts will be taken up,” the minister said.

Suresh along with roads and buildings minister Malagundla Shankara Narayana laid the foundation stone for the pharmacy clock and hostel buildings for girls and boys at the Oil Technological and Research Institute (OTRI) here.

About ₹20 crore has been sanctioned for the OTRI Institute.

Minister Suresh said the YSRC government is

## PROTESTS STOP MINISTER'S CONVOY

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JULY 6

Tense situation prevailed at the main road near Collectorate here on Tuesday after student unions and youth associations staged protest at the education minister Adimulapu Suresh and resisted his convoy against government failing

giving top priority to education. Reforms were being carried out at all levels in education — from pre-primary to higher education and technical education — in line with the new national education policy.

He said decisive steps have been taken to make pre-primary schools a part of primary schools like nowhere else in the country and to provide quality education to children below the age of five and set up a commission to regulate fees in corporate schools. In the coming academic year, the government will take serious steps against corporate schools to end a system of collection of heavy fees even for online education.

The minister said

ure to fill vacancies in the state government departments. The minister was on one day programme at OTRI institute in Anantapur. The student organisation led by AISF and unemployed youths by AIYF took out protest rally and blocked minister convoy near collectorate main road.

Andhra Kesari University will be renovated in Prakasam district.

A special ordinance will be brought in to reopen the university with 18 departments. A plea is before the government seeking ₹300 crore for development of the university. At least 160 new teaching posts are coming up in Andhra Kesari Varsity.

Similarly, two teacher training institutes will be set up in the state.

Already, a big number of students have opted for laptops through the Ammavodi scheme in the state.

MP Talari Rangaiah, MLAs Anantha Venkatrami Reddy, Tippteswamy, JNTU V-C Dr Ranga Janardhana were present.

## Man arrested in kidnap case

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, JUL. 6

The Tirupati urban police on Tuesday arrested a 36-year-old man in connection with the kidnap of a six-year-old boy at Alipiri bus stand on February 27. The accused was identified as Venkata Ramanappa Siva Prasad, a resident of Puttenahalli village in Mulbagal taluk of Karnataka state.

Disclosing the case details to media, ASP Mr S. Arifulla recalled that the six-year-old Chhattisgarh boy — Sivam Kumar Sahoo,

● Disclosing the case details to media, ASP Mr S. Arifulla recalled that the six-year-old Chhattisgarh boy — Sivam Kumar Sahoo, who was on a pilgrimage to Tirumala along with his parents, was abducted by an unknown person on February 27, when the family members were waiting to board a bus at the Alipiri link bus stand.

● The Tirupati police had reunited the boy with his anxious parents on March 14.

who was on a pilgrimage to Tirumala along with his parents, was abducted by an unknown person on February 27, when the family members were waiting to board a bus at the Alipiri link bus stand.

“Responding to the

complaint lodged by the parents at the Alipiri PS, special teams were formed and a search operation was launched to trace the body and his abductor. We have collected footages from various surveillance cameras and analysed the route

which he took to get away from the city. Following a massive search by the police, the kidnapper had abandoned the boy at Vijayawada”, the ASP said.

Later the Tirupati police had reunited the boy with his anxious parents on March 14. “The kidnapper has remained elusive for a long time and we have laid watch for him. The Alipiri police has managed to arrest the accused near the ISKCON temple in Tirupati on Tuesday and he was now being sent to remand”, the ASP said.



## SHORT TAKES

## MAN RUN OVER BY K'TAKA DY CM'S SON'S CAR DIES

**Bagalkote, July 6:** A 56-year-old man died after being allegedly run over by a car owned by Karnataka deputy chief minister Laxman Savadi's son, at Hungund in the district. The victim's kin have alleged that Chidanand Savadi was behind the wheels and he even asked the locals to delete videos recorded at the site, from their mobile phones or face consequences, a charge denied by the latter.

According to police, the accident took place when Kudleppa Boli was returning home on his bike on Monday evening. The farmer was rushed to the hospital, where he succumbed to injuries.

A case has been registered against the driver of the car, who was present on the spot, based on a complaint from the victim's relative. "We have seized the car and taken the driver in our custody," District Superintendent of Police Lokesh Jagalasar said.

The SP said investigation is on into the matter. Meanwhile, Mangalappa, son-in-law of the victim, alleged that Chidanand was driving the car. He accused Savadi's son of not taking his injured father-in-law to the hospital on time. "My uncle sustained injuries in his head and back. He was lying there. They should have made some arrangements on finding his lying there, but they did nothing," he told the media here.

## PUJA, DARSHAN AT AMARNATH GO ONLINE

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, JULY 6**

The consortium of the Amarnath cave shrine has made darshan, puja, hawan, and prasad rituals at the revered place of worship accessible to the devotees in the virtual mode.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Singh, who is also chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), on Tuesday launched various online services of it "providing a personal experience to the devotees of the holy cave-shrine."

On June 21, Sinha had announced the cancellation of the Amarnath yatra for the second year in a row amid Covid pandemic. The 56-day annual pilgrimage to the cave-shrine at a height of 13,000 feet in lower Himalayas in south Kashmir was to begin from both traditional Pahalgam and shorter Baltal routes on June 28, coinciding with Ashaad Chaturthi, an auspicious day in Hindu calendar, and conclude on Shravan Purnima (Raksha Bandhan) on August 22.

"For millions of devotees who are unable to visit the holy cave of Shri Amarnathji this year due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the shrine board has brought darshan, hawan, and prasad facility under the virtual mode," a statement issued here on Tuesday said.

## WB ASSEMBLY PASSES VIDHAN PARISHAD PLAN

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JULY 6**

The Mamata Banerjee government's ad-hoc committee report to bring back Vidhan Parishad with the Members of Legislative Council (MLC) posts, five decades after it was abolished in West Bengal, was passed after discussion in the House on Tuesday with around two-third majority of votes by the MLAs.

While 196 TMC MLAs voted for the move, 69 BJP MLAs opposed it. The resolution will be sent to Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar for his approval. Once he gives his nod, it will be forwarded to the Union law ministry which will send it to the Parliament for its passage in both the houses before being presented to President Ram Nath Kovind for his ascent.

So far only seven states Uttar Pradesh, Maharashtra, Bihar, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Jammu and Kashmir have Vidhan Parishad in the country. West Bengal also had the same with 51 MLCs from June 5, 1952 before it was dissolved on March 21, 1969.

Though the Trinamul Congress supremo talked about setting up Vidhan Parishad in her 2011 election manifesto to come to power for the first time, it did not follow later. This time she had promised it again, if elected to power.



BJP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Jyotiraditya Scindia offers prayers at Mahakaleshwar temple during his visit in Ujjain on Tuesday. — PTI

## Jyotiraditya visits RSS office before Delhi visit

BJP leader likely to be inducted into new Modi cabinet

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JULY 6**

A 'call from Delhi' during his visit to the famous Mahakal temple in Ujjain on Tuesday prompted senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia to cancel his programmes in the state and air dash to the national capital.

The purported call from the central BJP leadership came amid speculation on his induction in the Narendra Modi ministry at the Centre in the upcoming expansion of the Union cabinet.

Sources close to the scion of erstwhile royal family of Gwalior said Mr Scindia received a call from the Central leadership of BJP soon after he emerged from the Ujjain temple after paying obeisance to the presiding deity of the ancient shrine spurring him to rush to Delhi from Indore in the afternoon.

"I offered my prayer in the Mahakal temple. After

completing my visit to Ujjain, I am going to Delhi", Scindia told reporters after emerging from the shrine. He dropped at the local Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) office in Ujjain before proceeding to Indore to catch his Delhi flight.

Scindia who had been on a four-day visit to Madhya Pradesh since July three to attend various programmes in Malwa region in the state was scheduled to leave for Delhi on Wednesday.

He, however, cut short his visit to MP and left for Delhi following the "call from Delhi". Scindia had switched over to BJP from Congress in March, 2020 triggering collapse of the 15-month-old Kamal Nath government.

Later, he was elected to Rajya Sabha on a BJP ticket. He had ensured that all his loyalists who had resigned from the Assembly and subsequently from Congress to join BJP 15 months ago, were later re-elected to the house on BJP ticket.

## Goa gets full-time Gov. ahead of polls

**Panaji, July 6:** Over ten months after the then governor Satya Pal Malik was transferred out of Goa and ahead of the Assembly elections due in February 2022, the coastal state has got a full-time governor with the appointment of P.S. Sreedharan Pillai.

Pillai was serving as Governor of Mizoram before he was shifted to the coastal state. Maharashtra Governor B.S. Koshiyari had been holding the additional charge of Goa after the then governor Malik was transferred within a year as governor of Meghalaya in August 2020.

Maharashtra Governor B.S. Koshiyari had been holding the additional charge of Goa after the then governor Malik was transferred within a year as governor of Meghalaya in August 2020. Congratulations Shri P.S. Sreedharan Pillai ji, on his appointment as Governor of Goa. Looking forward to welcome him in our beautiful state, Chief Minister Pramod Sawa tweeted.

Meanwhile, former Goa Speaker and BJP leader Rajendra Arlekar, who is appointed as Governor of Himachal Pradesh, told reporters that the BJP looks after ordinary workers of the party.

Arlekar, 67, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi informed him about the new responsibility on Monday. "On Tuesday, I was informed about my appointment as Himachal Pradesh governor by President Ram Nath Kovind. A notification has been issued," he said.

Arlekar had served as the speaker of the Goa Legislative Assembly from 2012 to 2015. — PTI

## NITISH DOESN'T RULE OUT JD(U) JOINING UNION GOVERNMENT

**Patna, July 6:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar Tuesday did not rule out the possibility of his JD(U) joining the Narendra Modi government during its likely expansion but insisted it was the party's national president who will take a call on the number of berths acceptable to it.

Talking to reporters here, Kumar said expansion of the Union council of ministers was a prerogative of the Prime Minister and that he "did not have much information" about what was being offered to his party. "I relinquished the party's national president post a few months ago. Current president RCP Singh has been authorised to take a call in the matter. Only he can share the details," the Chief Minister, the party's de facto leader, said with a smile playing on his lips.

When pointed out that he had disapproved of BJP's offer of "token representation" for allies in the government after the 2019 Lok Sabha polls, Kumar quipped, "I was then the national president of the party, a post which I no longer hold."

Responding to a query as to whether his party was likely to stick to its previous stand of not joining the Union council of ministers, the JD(U) leader said, "I do not think at any point of time it has been said that our party will never join the Union Cabinet."

He deflected questions about speculation in the media that the JD(U), which has become the largest ally of the BJP after Shiv Sena's exit from NDA, was bargaining for three to four berths. "These are things you should be asking RCP Singh," he said.

Incidentally, Singh, a former IAS officer, has risen to the top position in the party within a decade of taking the political plunge, and is seen as a frontrunner for a Cabinet berth.

He also said he was all set to revive his public interaction programme 'Janata ke darbar mein mukhyamantri' from next week. "Of course, there will be some constraints in view of the corona pandemic. Citizens who appear on any given day with their grievances will be extended all facilities, including transport," Kumar said. — PTI

## Sonia, Oppn. write to Prez over Stan Swamy's death

**New Delhi, July 6:** Leaders of 10 Opposition parties including Congress chief Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday wrote to President Ram Nath Kovind expressing "outrage" at the death of Father Stan Swamy "under custody", and seeking his intervention in holding accountable those responsible for "foisting false cases" on the activist, his continued detention and "inhuman treatment".

The signatories also include NCP chief Sharad Pawar, former prime minister and JDS leader H.D. Deve Gowda and National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah.

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee (TMC), Tamil Nadu CM M.K. Stalin (DMK) and his Jharkhand counterpart Hemant Soren (JMM) have also signed the letter, besides D. Raja (CPD), Sitaram Yechury (CPI-M) and Tejashwi Yadav (RJD).

The 84-year-old priest-activist Stan Swamy, arrested under the anti-terror law Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act in the Elgar Parishad case, died at a Mumbai hospital Monday in the middle of his fight for bail on health grounds.

"We the undersigned leaders of major opposition parties are writing to you in deep anguish expressing our intense grief and outrage at the death of Father Stan Swamy under custody," the Opposition leaders said in their joint letter.

"We are urging your immediate intervention as the President of India to direct your govern-

ment to act against those responsible for foisting false cases on him, his continued detention in jail and inhuman treatment," they said.

"They must be held accountable. It is now incumbent that all those jailed in the Bhima Koregaon case and other detainees under politically motivated cases, misusing draconian laws like UAPA, Sedition etc, be released forthwith," they said.

The leaders said the activist who championed the rights and causes of the adivasis in far flung areas of Jharkhand was jailed last October on "trumped-up" charges under the draconian Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and was sought to be linked with the Bhima Koregaon case.

They have also alleged that he was denied treatment for his various ailments including the debilitating Parkinson's disease.

"Only after a nationwide campaign was conducted that even a sipper to drink liquids was made available to him in jail. The numerous appeals made to shift him out of the over-crowded Talaja jail that had seen a huge rise in Covid cases went unheeded.

"His appeals for bail and being sent home too were rejected. Thanks to the Bombay High Court's intervention he was admitted to a private hospital when his condition started deteriorating after he was infected with Covid. But it was too late to prevent his death in custody," they also claimed in their letter.

— PTI



People hold posters next to candles outside a church holding memorial mass for the rights activist and Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy in Mumbai on Tuesday. — PTI

## SC: No 'rath yatra' at places other than Jagannath Puri

**PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JULY 6**

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to permit holding of Lord Jagannath's annual Rath Yatra in Odisha except for the one that is taken out from Lord Jagannath's temple at Puri, and allowed holding of rituals relating to Yatra within the premises of other Jagannath temples across the state.

Endorsing Odisha government's order that permits taking out of the Rath Yatra with all precautions at Puri and allowing performing of rituals within temple

premises of all other Jagannath temples, Chief Justice N.V. Ramana heading a three judge bench said, "If Rath Yatra is permitted, it will be the devotees who could suffer and we don't want to take the risk."

Telling that he himself is a devotee of Lord Jagannath and wants to visit Lord's temple at Puri for last one and a half year but had to be content by offering prayers from a distance, Chief Justice Ramana said, "Sorry, we don't want to interfere with the Odisha government's decision."

The court also observed that compared to the first

spell of Covid pandemic that had hit India last year, more people had died in its second wave and people can't be exposed to risks.

Ramana said this as the Odisha government informed the court that it would be impossible to enforce the observance of Covid protocol inducing social distancing if Yatras are allowed as sought by the petitioners.

The court was told that there will be Yatras in every village and it will not be able to control the situation.

There are thousands of Lord Jagannath temples across Odisha.

## SURPRISE | REFERENCE

## SC dismisses appeal against conviction of a man in a murder case

## SC quotes Sherlock Holmes to uphold HC order

**New Delhi, July 6:** "You see, but you do not observe," the Supreme Court said quoting Sherlock Holmes as it dismissed an appeal against the conviction and life term awarded to a man in a murder case.

The top court rejected the submission of amicus curiae that it was not possible for the four eye witnesses to see at night the face of the man who had committed the murder.

A bench of Justices R.F. Nariman, K.M. Joseph and B.R. Gavai said in its order passed, we find no ground to interfere with the impugned order passed by the High Court. The

Special Leave Petition is, accordingly, dismissed.

During the hearing, advocate Pijush Kanti Roy, who has been appointed amicus in the matter, said it was a dark night in an isolated place and there was no way the four eye witnesses in the case could have seen the face of the petitioner.

Justice Nariman then said, it's like Sherlock Holmes telling Dr Watson, "You see, but you do not observe".

Roy said that his only endeavour is that an innocent should not get punished for the crime he has not committed.

The bench said that there is a finding given by the trial court and upheld by the High Court that they (eye witnesses) have seen the face in the light of the headlight of the motorcycle.

It told Roy, You are flogging a dead horse. You have done more than the duty of amicus curiae. There is a clear cut finding.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by one Mukesh, currently lodged in Jaipur Jail, against the order of Rajasthan High Court passed on April 5, 2019 dismissing his petition against the conviction and life sentence

awarded to him by the trial court in a murder of fellow villager Gopal Lal on July 18, 2012.

In his appeal, Mukesh has contended that he was falsely implicated in the case and no case under section 302 of IPC, was made out against him.

The High Court while dismissing the appeal of the petitioner failed to appreciate that the incident took place in the dark night in an isolated place and there was no light near the place of occurrence, as such identification of the petitioner by the prosecution witness in such a dark night in an iso-

lated place remained questionable, as such evidence of the prosecution witnesses are not trustworthy, he has said in his appeal.

He said the high court ought to have appreciated the fact that there was no previous enmity between Mukesh and Gopal Lal and he had no intention to kill his co-villager.

Mukesh said that as per the prosecution the incident took place at the spur of the moment in course of their discussion and as such the case in hand at best could be a case under Section 304 Part-II of the order of conviction under

Section 302 IPC has resulted in serious miscarriage of Justice.

He submitted that there were three other persons at the site of crime but only he was made an accused and no charge sheet was filed against the other two persons.

According to the prosecution, on July 19, 2012, one Babulal had submitted a complaint at the police station that his younger brother on July 18, 2012 was coming from Bhanpur to their village at around 10-11 pm, when villagers informed him that Gopal Lal was being beaten by three persons. — PTI



## SHORT BRIEF

## 5 SUSPECTED MILITANTS KILLED IN PAK

**Quetta:** Security forces shot five suspected militants to death Monday during a raid on their hideout near Pakistan's southwestern city of Quetta, a spokesman for a counter-terrorism department said.

In a brief statement, it said there was an exchange of gunfire during the raid and officers seized weapons from the militant hideout after the successful operation.

Quetta is the capital of Baluchistan province, which has been the scene of frequent militant attacks and a long-running insurgency by small separatist groups that seek independence for the mineral- and gas-rich province bordering borders Iran and Afghanistan.

The Pakistani Taliban also have a presence there.

## THAILAND SEIZES 315 KILOGRAMS OF HEROIN

**Bangkok:** Customs officials in Thailand made their biggest seizure of heroin this year, about 315 kilograms (700 pounds) worth up to 944 million baht (\$29 million), bringing the total confiscated so far this year to 2 tons, officials said on Tuesday.

They did not say where the drugs originated, but the seizure comes amid concerns that production may surge in neighboring Myanmar, the region's main supplier of illicit drugs, because of severe instability following the military's ouster of an elected government in February.

Customs Department Director-General Patchara Anuntasilpa said 134 shrink-wrapped packets of heroin, each weighing about 2.4 kilograms (5.3 pounds), had been concealed in a shipment of acrylic paint headed for Australia.

He said the drugs were discovered on Monday because the packets of heroin were placed in square plastic containers which stood out on X-rays of the paint buckets.

## UK COURT QUASHES 1972 ROBBERY CONVICTIONS OF 3

**London:** Britain's Court of Appeal has exonerated three Black men who were convicted of robbery nearly 50 years ago, the latest in a series of cases that have been overturned because they relied on the testimony of a corrupt police officer who later died in prison.

The court on Monday quashed the convictions of Courtney Harriot, Paul Green and Cleveland Davidson, who were aged between 17 and 20 when they were accused of trying to rob a plainclothes detective on a London Underground train. The men always maintained their innocence and claimed that they were framed by the officer before his career ended in disgrace.

"It is most unfortunate that it has taken nearly 50 years to rectify the injustice suffered by these appellants," Judge Julian Flaux said.

The case is one of several involving questionable arrests of Black men in the 1970s by a British Transport Police unit run by the late Detective Sgt. Derek Ridgewell.

## NZ RECORDS WARMEST JUNE ON RECORD

**Wellington:** New Zealand recorded its hottest June on record as temperatures continued to soar in a pattern consistent with global warming, a government scientific agency said on Tuesday (Jul 6).

Daily temperatures averaged 10.6 degrees Celsius — 1.9 degrees Celsius above average despite a cold snap late in the month, the National Institute of Water and Atmospheric Research (NIWA) said.

"It's huge. There's only been 13 times since 1909 that we've had such an anomaly," NIWA scientist Chris Brandolino told public radio.

"What's alarming is that over the past 10 years that's happened six times." Brandolino said that while shorter-term factors such as warmer ocean temperatures helped heat the air over New Zealand, climate change was a constant underlying factor.

"We've had more north-easterly air flows than normal (from the Pacific), so they're coming from a warm place, and ocean temperatures are also warmer than average," he said.

## 6 kids among 9 held in alleged HK 'bomb plot'

Group was attempting to make the explosive TATP

## Big tech threaten to quit HK

**Hong Kong, July 6:** Nine people, including six secondary school students, were arrested in Hong Kong on Tuesday for allegedly plotting to set off homemade bombs in courts, tunnels and trash cans as political tensions rise in the city where China is tightening its grip.

Police said they were detained on suspicion of engaging in terrorist activity under a harsh national security law that Beijing imposed a year ago as part of a crack-down on dissent in the former British colony that has long enjoyed freedoms not seen on the Chinese mainland.

Hong Kong authorities have used the law, enacted in response to anti-government protests that rocked the city in 2019, to arrest many of the city's prominent activists. Others have fled abroad as a result.

If the allegations are true, the group appears to

unveiled plans to pass a new law targeting "doxxing" — the act of publishing someone's private details online so they can be harassed by others.

But the broad wording of the proposed legislation has spooked major tech companies who fear they

could be held liable and their employees prosecuted for users' content.

They detailed their concerns in a letter sent to Hong Kong's government by the Asia Internet Coalition which includes tech giants such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Apple. — *AFP*

chemicals.

Nine people between 15 and 39 years old were arrested Tuesday, according to Senior Superintendent Li Kwai-wah of the Hong Kong Police National Security Department.

Hong Kong chief executive Carrie Lam said at a weekly news briefing that she hopes the members of the public will "openly condemn threats of violence." — *AP*



An Afghan soldier plays a guitar that was left behind after the American military departed Bagram air base, in Parwan province north of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Tuesday. — *AP*

## US quits Bagram in a mess at night, Afghan commander not informed

**Bagram, Afghanistan, July 6:** The U.S. left Afghanistan's Bagram airfield after nearly 20 years by shutting off the electricity and slipping away in the night without notifying the base's new Afghan commander, who discovered the Americans' departure more than two hours after they left, Afghan military officials said.

Afghanistan's army showed off the sprawling air base Monday, providing a rare first glimpse of

what had been the epicenter of America's war to unseat the Taliban and hunt down the al-Qaida perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks on America.

The US announced on Friday it had completely vacated its biggest airfield in the country in advance of a final withdrawal the Pentagon says will be completed by the end of August.

"We (heard) some rumor that the Americans had left Bagram ... and finally by seven o'clock in the morning, we understood

that it was confirmed that they had already left Bagram," Gen. Mir Asadullah Kohistani, Bagram's new commander said. U.S. military spokesman Col. Sonny Leggett did not address the specific complaints of many Afghan soldiers who inherited the abandoned airfield, instead referring to a statement last week.

The statement said the handover of the many bases had been in the process soon after President Joe Biden's mid-April announcement that America

was withdrawing the last of its forces. Leggett said in the statement that they had coordinated their departures with Afghanistan's leaders.

Before the Afghan army could take control of the airfield about an hour's drive from the Afghan capital Kabul, it was invaded by a small army of looters, who ransacked barrack after barrack and rummaged through giant storage tents before being evicted, according to Afghan military officials. — *AFP*

## Plane wreckage found in E. Russia

**Moscow, July 6:** Search teams on Tuesday found wreckage of a passenger plane carrying 28 people that had disappeared in Russia's remote far eastern Kamchatka peninsula, but there was little hope of survivors.

Search and rescue operations were suspended after night fell and Russian news agencies quoted local sources as saying it appeared that all

the passengers and crew had died.

The An-26 plane was flying from Kamchatka's main city of Petropavlovsk-Kamchatsky to the coastal town of Palana when it disappeared at 2:40 pm (0240 GMT).

The governor of Kamchatka, a vast peninsula popular with adventure tourists for its abundant wildlife and live volcanoes, said search

teams had found parts of the fuselage along the coast and in the Okhotsk Sea. "There was a catastrophe during the go-around approach for landing," Vladimir Solodov said in a video released on the government website.

Russia's aviation agency said in a statement that the plane's debris had been found at 9:06 pm local time (0906 GMT).

Officials said that com-

munication with the plane had been lost nine kilometres (5.5 miles) from Palana's airport and 10 minutes before its scheduled landing time.

Russian news agencies quoted local officials as saying most of the passengers were from Palana — which has a population of about 3,000 — including four local government officials and the town's head Olga Mokhiryova. — *AFP*

## COVID AT A GLANCE

Can avoid quarantine if jabbed or recovered

## Germany relaxes curbs on travellers from UK, India

## Israel, S. Korea agree vax swap

**Berlin, July 6:** Germany's health agency said on Monday five so-called virus variant countries would be reclassified as "high incidence areas", lifting a ban on entry for travellers from those nations who are not German residents or citizens.

The Robert Koch Institute (RKI) said India, Nepal, Russia, Portugal and the UK would be reclassified from on Wednesday, meaning any traveller will be able to enter as long as they observe quarantine and testing rules.

Germany introduced its "virus variant country" travel category in a bid to stop new Coronavirus variants that have not yet spread widely on home soil.

But Health Minister Jens Spahn said last week that the Delta variant was fast becoming dominant in Germany, meaning that bans on most travellers from countries hit by that variant may be lifted.

Given the increasing spread of Delta, which was first detected in India, and research suggesting vaccines are effective against it, "we will look at the situation in the next few days", Spahn said.

Chancellor Angela Merkel also hinted at a potential softening in Germany's stance towards travellers from Britain during a visit to London on Friday.

Last month, Merkel called for tough restrictions, including longer quarantine, for people travelling from Britain, where the Delta variant has caused a surge in cases. But she indicated that the stance could soften as travel advice was reviewed.

"We think that in the foreseeable future, those who have received double jabs will... be able to travel again, without having to go into quarantine," she said. Only citizens and residents of Germany are permitted to enter from a variant country and are subject to a two-week quarantine, regardless of whether they are fully vaccinated or can provide

**Jerusalem, July 6:** Israel agreed a Covid vaccine swap with South Korea on Tuesday, sending 7,000,000 doses of the Pfizer/BioNTech jab to Seoul "immediately" in return for the same number in coming months.

A statement from Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's office said the deal, the first of its kind for Israel, would allow more effective use of the vaccine stocks of both countries.

The statement added that Bennett had spoken to Pfizer chief executive Albert Bourla about the arrangement.

Israel received a huge supply of the Pfizer/BioNTech vaccine shortly after its approval last year following an arrangement with the producers to share data

about its impact.

That deal helped Israel roll out one of the world's fastest inoculation drives but has also raised concerns about unused stock expiring.

The Palestinian Authority last month cancelled a deal that would have seen a million jabs from Israel's inventory sent to the occupied West Bank.

The PA said the doses "were about to expire". Israel insisted they were "completely valid".

More than 80 percent of Israel's adult population is fully inoculated against Covid-19 but cases are again rising, with officials raising concern about the surging Delta variant's ability to evade vaccine protection and cause mild illness. — *AFP*

## Cannes fest back after pandemic

**Cannes, France, July 6:** The famed Cannes Film Festival opens Tuesday, and despite social distancing subduing some of its signature glamour, excitement is rife for the first fully fledged film festival since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Last year's edition was cancelled over the health crisis, and although stars will be allowed to go maskless on the red carpet this year, a health pass is required for entrance and many of the glitzy after-parties that are the festival's calling card have been postponed because of distancing measures.

"Covid is still there, but

being here for the return of the festival, in the opening film... it's a huge sense of relief and excitement," US actor Adam Driver said.

Driver co-stars with French actor Marion Cotillard in the opening night film, "Annette", a musical directed by cult favourite Leos Carax.

Members of the jury — headed for the first time by a black man, US director Spike Lee — arrived Monday night and will give their traditional press conference on Tuesday afternoon, before embarking on their 24-film marathon. — *AFP*

a negative Covid-19 test. By contrast, anyone can enter from a high-incidence country as long as they provide a negative test on arrival. — *AFP*

## Israel ban on Arab unifications lapses

**Jerusalem, July 6:** Israel's Prime Minister Naftali Bennett accused his opponents on Tuesday of harming national security as his coalition failed to extend a ban on citizenship for Palestinian spouses from the West Bank and Gaza.

The ban first enacted in 2003 during the second Palestinian intifada, or uprising, has been justified by supporters on security grounds — but critics derided it as discriminatory toward Israel's Arab minority.

The ban has caused endless complications for Palestinians living across Israel and the territories it has occupied since 1967. Many of those affected live in annexed east Jerusalem, often with Israeli residency but not citizenship.

The failure to pass the ban's extension in a parliament vote early Tuesday highlighted tensions within Bennett's ideologically diverse

eight-party coalition that spans his far-right Yamina party to Raam, a conservative Islamist Arab faction.

It was also a success for Benjamin Netanyahu, who is now the opposition leader after Bennett ousted him following 12 straight years as premier.

"The opposition deliberately took a direct strike at the state's security, out of some sort of bitterness and frustration," Bennett fumed. "They ultimately harmed the good of the country."

In overnight talks, Bennett's coalition had sought a deal for nearly all of its members to back the ban's extension, including Jewish left-wingers and two Raam lawmakers.

In exchange, the government would have granted residency or citizenship rights to more than 1,500 Palestinians who have been living in Israel for many years. — *AFP*



Viktor Babaryko

## BELARUS OPPN FIGURE BABARYKO JAILED FOR 14 YRS

**Moscow, July 6:** One of Belarus's leading opposition figures was sentenced to 14 years in prison on Tuesday, the latest move in a months-long crackdown on critics of strongman leader Alexander Lukashenko.

Former banker Viktor Babaryko — considered one of Lukashenko's strongest opponents — was handed the sentence by the Supreme Court in Minsk.

His Twitter account, which is run by supporters, said he would serve the 14 years "in a maximum security colony".

The 57-year-old was arrested in June last year on fraud charges ahead of a disputed presidential election that sparked several months of protests.

He had planned to run in the election and was considered the strongest challenger to Lukashenko's almost three decade rule.

Babaryko was accused of receiving bribes and of money laundering when he was head of Belgazprombank, the Belarusian branch of a bank belonging to Russian energy giant Gazprom.

He was also ordered to pay 46 million Belarusian rubles (\$18 million, 15 million euros) in damages, according to local independent rights group Viasna. — *AFP*

## LETHAL WEAPON

Director Richard Donner had a 'powerful command of his movies'

## He gave us The Omen chills, Superman thrills

**Washington, July 6:** Richard Donner, a prolific filmmaker who directed the first *Superman* movie, *The Goonies* and other blockbuster hits, died on Monday at age 91, US media reported.

Donner's other credits include the 1976 horror classic *The Omen*, the *Lethal Weapon* cop franchise with Mel Gibson and Danny Glover starting in 1987, *Scrooged* (1988) and his final movie in 2006, *16 Blocks*. He also directed episodes of iconic

20th century television shows such as *Get Smart*, *Perry Mason*, *Gilligan's Island* and *The Twilight Zone*, according to IMDB, and took on a producer role for blockbuster hits including *X-Men* and *Free Willy*.

The *Hollywood Reporter* cited Donner's assistant in confirming his death, while *Deadline* said there was no cause of death revealed by Donner's business manager or producer wife, Lauren Schuler Donner.



Richard Donner

"Richard Donner had the biggest, boomiest voice you could imagine,"

● "RICHARD DONNER had the biggest, boomiest voice you could imagine," *Goonies* star Sean Astin said on Twitter. Richard Donner, a prolific filmmaker who directed many a blockbuster hits, died on Monday at age 91. Donner was born in the Bronx and grew up in New York before attending New York University.

*Goonies* star Sean Astin said on Twitter: "He commanded atten-

tion and he laughed like no man has ever laughed before. Dick was so much fun. What I perceived in him, as a 12 year old kid, is that he cared. I love how much he cared," Astin tweeted about his time acting in the 1985 teen treasure hunt movie.

Follow director Steven Spielberg, who wrote the story on which *The Goonies* was based, said in a statement that Donner had a "powerful command of his movies". "Being in his circle was

akin to hanging out with your favorite coach, smartest professor, fiercest motivator, most endearing friend, staunchest ally, and — of course — the greatest Goonie of all," Spielberg said in the statement tweeted by his production company Amblin.

Donner was born in the Bronx and grew up in New York before attending New York University and joining the US military, according to the *Hollywood Reporter*. — *AFP*



# DECCAN Chronicle

7 JULY 2021

## Who has the credibility to probe Stan Swamy death?

The death of the 84-year old Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy — who had emerged as one of India's foremost human rights defenders — in judicial custody in Mumbai on Sunday offers a great lesson in injustice. This death is a tragedy for India and the values it has cherished for centuries. Clearly, the ruling dispensation is not likely to see it in this way. Its vicious representatives and spokespersons have offered crude and laboured justifications on television for the late activist's unwarranted incarceration and, further, the denial to him of the smallest consideration on grounds of medical condition, advanced age, and his eminence which derived from 55 years of dedicated service to the cause of the adivasis and dalits, namely the poorest Indians.

The death of this indefatigable champion of poor people's causes invites us to ponder over the nature of the present Indian State whose hallmark is to pander to the fatcats, bring about policies for the further impoverishment of the already marginalised sections of our fellow citizens, ingratiate itself with international capital and the political masters in the West, and at home spread divisive venom through carefully articulated economic and social religio-populism.

**The matter deserves to be raised in the Monsoon Session of Parliament in a collective voice by all sections of the House, including those on the treasury benches who have a conscience**

The rampant misuse of agencies and institutions of the State for political agendas, and the non-stop spread of disinformation to soften up the citizenry, also appear to be integral to the designs of many in authority. Even so, instances from 20th century European history may not be apt to find meaningful parallels with the present Indian regime. It may be more apt to think of patterns of behaviour of police states that operate within the framework of a perfectly democratic Constitution. But does there exist such an example, or is today's India really quite unique?

The late Fr Swamy's shocking demise brings into question the conduct and attitude of the National Investigating Agency (NIA), which reports to the Union home ministry and was created to investigate terrorism-related crimes but all too often happily doubles — along with some other agencies of the Centre — virtually as political police. Alas, it also raises doubts about the judiciary at the trial court level and, in this instance, the Bombay high court, too. Taken together these pretty much constitute the panoply of the justice system in its entirety.

Given the gravity of the situation, to which our attention has been drawn by the death of one of our most eminent citizens, and the negative international attention it has drawn, Fr Swamy's demise makes an impartial high-level inquiry imperative. But today which institution has the experience, and also its credibility intact, to carry out this onerous task?

The matter deserves to be raised in the Monsoon Session of Parliament in a collective voice by all sections of the House, including those on the treasury benches who have a conscience. This is all the more necessary because nearly a dozen noted intellectuals, lawyers, activists, with a lifetime's record of work for the poor, are also being made to rot in prison without trial in the Elgar Parishad case- as the late Fr Swamy was — on the false pretext of their membership of banned organizations intent on violently destroying the sovereignty of India and assassinating the Prime Minister.

If there is transparent justice, these monstrous charges will not stick, but many of those in prison are elderly and suffer from severe health problems, much as Fr Swamy did. The tragedy that befell the country on Monday must not be permitted to play out again.

## Persecution with a quashed law

The Indian justice system is in focus after the death of the octogenarian rights activist Stan Swamy. The malaise, however, runs far deeper than just the highest courts of the land. The executive is constantly guilty of over reach when it comes to stifling dissent. The top court was flabbergasted recently when it came across many persons being arrested for posting dissenting opinions on social media under Section 66A of the IT Act which was struck off from the statute six years ago. It is apparent that police in some states are either unaware that the section is invalid or do not bother reading the footnote following an asterisk placed against Section 66 A in the law book.

The cause of such distressing and illegal action of police in going after dissent expressed on social media stems from the eagerness to please their political masters than any great desire to uphold the law. The usual logic behind such action is public order may be affected by the spread of restlessness. The social media is, however, known to host all kinds of rebellious, unconventional, outlandish or even outright cranky opinions but they have hardly wrought greater damage than cause a flutter. It is a well-known fact that posts against politicians are likely to draw the attention of netas ruling in states with Maharashtra, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Rajasthan seen to be most active in using the inoperative Sec. 66A.

What is more distressing than the sheer unintelligence of the police in using non-existent provisions of the law to go after critics or rebels is the prevailing atmosphere of distrust and the extreme sensitivity of the ruling class tending to take umbrage at the slightest provocation. It is the harassment of citizens with contrary opinions that is the aim. The registering of cases, which often get thrown out by the courts, is aimed to draw the "accused" into a legal net and use just the process to persecute him. What is to be balked at is the intent more than the ignorance of the police.

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Subhani



## China's hard talk: Sign of Xi's confidence or worry?



K.C. Singh

President Xi Jinping of China, after assuming office in 2012, declared twin goals for his country — a moderately developed China by the centenary of the Communist Party of China (CPC) on July 1 this year and a fully developed, rich and powerful nation by 2049 — the centenary of the People's Republic of China. By most accounts he has been able to achieve the first.

However, China, by its stated ambitions and aggressive behaviour, has also concomitantly set off concerns of its neighbours and the developed nations. Thus, the meetings of the Group of Seven and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation the week before the Chinese kicked off the CPC's centenary celebrations, sounded the alarm. The Chinese behaviour, said Nato, presented "systemic challenges". US President Joe Biden, to the immense relief of America's European allies after his predecessor Donald Trump's dithering, committed the United States fully to the alliance, calling the mutual defence mandate a "sacred obligation". This was a win for Mr Biden as the European allies have earlier been chary of naming and shaming China due to their dependence on Chinese markets. For instance, in 2020, Germany's trade with China was \$256 billion, as that of the US topped \$559 billion.

The two summits also brought the focus back on China's gross abuse of human rights in Xinjiang and the forced assimilation of Hong Kong. Of course, China called all such debates and resolutions "slander". Chinese irritation was understandable as the criticism came on the very eve of their centennial celebrations. It was also a personal affront for President Xi Jinping as the post-2008 Chinese

assertiveness has his imprint on it. Slowly he has tightened the leash of the CPC and increased his centralised control over almost all levers of power. The personality cult and re-education evangelism is a reminder more of Mao Zedong than any of his successors, including the creator of China's economic miracle Deng Xiaoping.

It was therefore not surprising that President Xi's address on July 1 provided the response to the critique. Dressed in a grey Mao button-up assemblage, though his usual attire is a business suit, he spoke at Beijing's Tiananmen Square from the very platform and stage used by Mao. He delivered a stern message, warning that China would not tolerate any attempt by foreign powers at bullying, oppressing or subjugating them. He spun China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), seen by most of the developed world and India as a debt trap and a means of creating permanent dependence on China, as an instrument for China to share the fruits of its development with developing and underdeveloped nations. A strong nation needs a strong military and China is fulfilling that need, he said. President Xi was addressing not just the 95 million-odd members of the CPC, or indeed other citizens of China, but the entire neighbourhood and the world beyond. It was a clarion call that China had now fully arrived and willing and able to match its wits with the United States.

Just in case countries like India did not get the message, a running commentary was provided in English publications like *Global Times*.

Coincidentally, the century fell soon after India marked one year of the bloody Galwan clash between the armies of India and China. For decades China has consid-

ered India as an inferior power, incapable of mounting a challenge to it. However, the rising profile of the "Quad", US President Joe Biden persisting with his predecessor's sceptical line on China and the BJP's consolidation of domestic political power has combined to irk China. India therefore began to get elevated in Beijing's perception as a strategic rival, if not yet a threat. This explains the sudden Chinese incursions in Ladakh and reluctance to vacate forward military ingress at a number of points. China has always used the unsettled border as a pressure point to condition India's strategic conduct.

It is also noteworthy that when the 19th Central Committee Politburo of the CPC met on June 25, the focus was on party affairs, foreign policy and security and military matters. Under previous Presidents, post-Mao, much greater attention was paid to economic issues. It is worth examining whether the jingoism and strong language, evoking the powerful imagery that foreign bullies will "face broken heads and bloodshed", is a sign of confidence or deep worry?

Although the Chinese economy has recovered faster and better than the economies of the developed world during the Covid-19 pandemic, its exports have performed better than domestic consumption growth. There is also the Chinese worry over demographics as their population growth continues to fall below sustainable levels. There may also be murmurs within the party about President Xi's confrontational foreign policy as China now faces the potential danger

**There may be murmurs within the party about Xi's confrontational foreign policy as China now faces the potential danger of antagonists restraining it through cooperation and coordinated response**

of antagonists restraining it through cooperation and coordinated response. The Quad, with its implicit membership criteria being based on democratic credentials, presents an imminent threat. The fact that G-7 invited Australia, India, South Korea and South Africa as dialogue partners for the summit in the UK again underscored an attempt to align the interests of democracies across all continents. The direct or implicit message is that China is the new danger that needs to be contained by all means, including hard and soft power.

The *Global Times*, the perennial tool for disinformation and propaganda, warned India that because it cannot afford a "long and high-intensity confrontation" it should not try siding with the US in any power games in Indo-Pacific. Reports have been discounted that India had moved more troops to the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in response to China's troop deployment surge. President Xi's jingoism may be more for domestic consolidation than international browbeating as the neighbourhood has known Chinese high-handedness for many years. Thus, the rhetoric does not add to the reality of Chinese unilateralism in real and invented disputes.

India's concerns would be heightened by the new drone-based terrorism from Pakistan and the rapidly succeeding Taliban in Afghanistan. China appears less worried about the Afghan imbroglio than Russia, having the Pakistani assurances in hand. Iran has a new and more conservative President, leaving a question mark over Iranian interests in Afghanistan. Iran's priority would be to get the US sanctions lifted and its nuclear programme restored. India can only hope that China will moderate its "wolf warrior" diplomacy and move towards a genuinely stabilising role in South Asia. However, events appear to be moving in the reverse direction after the American exit from Afghanistan.

*The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.*

### LETTERS

#### JUDICIARY

The AP Lawyers Association, in a letter written to CJI N.V. Ramana has alleged that the higher echelons of Indian judiciary are appointing judges to higher courts "from their known people, close relatives and particular castes" which is highly disturbing and deplorable (*Zero judges from BCs, STs in HC decried, DC, July 6*). This shocking allegations and amounts to favoritism and nepotism in judiciary system that too in apex bodies. Generally aggrieved and victimised appellants seek higher court's intervention when their complaints were not justly n unbiasedly addressed by lower courts.

**K. Venkataramudu**  
Anantapur

#### TOBACCO RAIDS

It is sad that women in India's low-income households lost jobs more often compared to men and they are also taking longer to re-enter the work force (*Poorer Indian women lost more jobs, ate less, DC, July 6*). After the first wave of the Covid-19 pandemic they had to eat less or had to run out of food which is really hurting point. Why are the governments failing to save these hapless women? Is this not shameful for our country? A country which is having bumper food grain stocks, why does anyone have to go empty stomach during pandemic?

**Panchakarla.Govardhana Rao**  
Kankipadu

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### Jazz king dead

NEW YORK, July 6. Louis Armstrong is dead. The satchel-mouthed, eye-rolling one-time waif who learned to love the trumpet in Louisiana school and blew and sang his way into the hearts of millions the world over, died today. He was 71 on Sunday. Armstrong spent ten weeks in both Israel Hospital after winding up date at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in late February.

That was long way from the Waifs' Home in New Orleans where a 13-year-old boy got his first coronet. He was sent to the home for shooting off a revolver on New Year's eve.

Wolfgang Münchau



## Merkel's legacy: German leader leaves behind an Europe in chaos

Perhaps the most absurd thing I ever said about Angela Merkel is that she was the de facto leader of the Western world. She has certainly been one of Europe's most successful politicians, if you define success as political survival. But as she nears the end of her 16 years in office, her luck is deserting her and the mess she created is becoming apparent. She leaves behind a split EU that isn't just unled but might be unleadable.

Humiliating reminders of Ms Merkel's imploded authority come regularly. Take her latest idea to keep British tourists out of the EU this summer. Germany is imposing a mandatory 14-day quarantine for UK arrivals, whether they are vaccinated or not, and Ms Merkel wanted other EU states to do the same. Malta and Portugal refused, saying only the unvaccinated should quarantine. Spain said it wouldn't quarantine anyone who came with a negative test.

Ms Merkel's ban failed as it wasn't really about the virus but about the German elections. The nightmare scenario for her Christian Democratic Union is a rise of infections after the

summer holidays but before the September polls. It's unclear how banning British tourists would help to suppress Covid. The Delta variant is moving fast through Europe. It makes up 20 per cent of cases in Spain and 40 per cent in Austria.

An even more stark sign of the deterioration of EU unity came last week when a Franco-German proposal for a summit with Vladimir Putin triggered one of the most ill-tempered disputes ever seen in European politics. Ms Merkel and French President Emmanuel Macron were irked because US President Joe Biden had recently been to Geneva to meet Mr Putin and, like children, they didn't want to be left out. Ms Merkel's idea was for all 27 EU nations to hold talks with the Kremlin. Former Communist states, the Baltic ones in particular, which feel under threat from a resurgent Mr Putin, were appalled. They saw it as a push for a softer approach towards Moscow.

The Baltic states were united in opposition with Poland and Romania. Mateusz Morawiecki, Poland's PM, said that a dialogue with Russia can only happen after Mr Putin ends his

aggressive policies towards Ukraine. Even Dutch PM Mark Rutte drew the line, noting Russia's involvement in the missile attack on the Malaysia Airlines MH17 flight that crashed in Ukraine while en route from Amsterdam to Kuala Lumpur. Gustav Gressel from the European Council on Foreign Relations wrote that Ms Merkel had destroyed her legacy in 24 hours.

I think it is worse than that. What we are witnessing is the birth of a new breed of Euroscepticism. Not the nationalist sort that led to Brexit and the rise of various right-wing parties, but a principled one that supports democracy and human rights and refuses, on principle, to get close to Moscow. This all amounts to a moment of great danger for the EU.

Perhaps Ms Merkel's most consequential act was not a strategic choice, but a spontaneous executive act: her decision to open Europe's borders for refugees in 2015. She did not consult with the coalition partners, nor with other EU member states - many of which are still living with the political ramifications of her decision. Where

was the leadership? She didn't stop to think about where this would end. In her entire 16 years as Chancellor, she never picked a battle with a genuine strategic advantage.

Her lasting legacy will be a recognition that "Europe" as a political entity — the idea of European strategic autonomy — has been tried and that it has failed. If neither Ms Merkel nor Mr Macron can "lead" Europe, then who can? Look at the field of their potential successors in Germany and France. No one else is on the horizon. So, the EU's future depends on weaning itself off the illusion of Franco-German leadership.

The failed summit proposal ended another European delusion: the idea that the EU can decide foreign policy by majority voting. To many in the EU, this is crucial if Brussels is to issue pronouncements on foreign events. Ursula von der Leyen, European Commission president, had said in September she's tired of "simple statements on EU values being delayed, watered down or held hostage for other motives". Wouldn't it be easier if the EU decided such issues by holding a vote?

But if majority voting was in place

this time, a majority of 20 countries would have been able to back Ms Merkel's plan for talks with Mr Putin. So the Baltics will never give up their veto, especially if they see a fundamental conflict between their interests and those of countries like Germany.

The Merkel years will come to be seen as the last hurrah of a bygone, late-industrial era. When it ends, people will ask the uncomfortable questions they didn't ask during her time: why did a rich country like Germany fail to invest in new technologies? Why did she refuse to lay solid foundations for the eurozone? Why did she do business with Mr Putin and make her country dependent on Russia's natural resources? Why did she agree to climate change targets and then fail to implement them?

I concluded some time ago that Ms Merkel is the most overrated political leader of our time. If she really had been the leader of the West, she would have done what she could to create a strong, united EU. Instead, we see bedlam. And that will be Ms Merkel's lasting legacy.

*By arrangement with the Spectator*



quick BITES

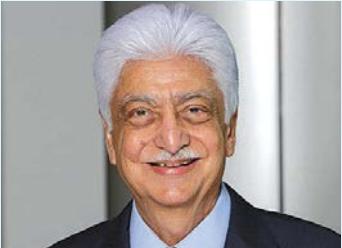
INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,861.18	-0.04
Nifty 50	15,818.30	-0.10
S&P 500*	4,326.13	-0.60
Dollar (₹)	74.55	-0.30
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.21	-0.25
Euro (₹)	88.26	-0.01
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,762,389	0.83
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.45	-3.51
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.175	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.360	-0.072

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

British Airways settles class action over data

British Airways settled a UK class-action lawsuit involving hundreds of thousands of customers caught up in a 2018 data breach. The settlement, for an undisclosed sum, followed the leak of the personal data of 420,000 customers and staff, including bank details, contact information and addresses. The deal between IAG-owned British Airways and law firm PGMBM doesn't include any admission of liability by the airline.

Wipro commits ₹1,000 cr more for Covid-19 relief



Wipro's philanthropic arm has committed an additional Rs 1,000 crore of grants over and above the Rs 1,125-crore support it had announced in the early days of the pandemic last year, its founder chairman Azim Premji said. The additional grant will be directed primarily on universal vaccination, Premji said while speaking at the foundation day event of the Bombay Chartered Accountants' Society.

Malabar Gold on hiring spree, with 5,000 vacancies

Malabar Gold and Diamonds announced hiring to fill more than 5,000 vacancies across its retail operations in India. The current vacancies are mainly in retail jewellery sales, store operations and accountants across India, along with other functions. Half of these openings are set aside for deserving female candidates. Internships and traineeships are also being offered for fresh BTech/MBA entrants to learn jewellery sales.

IIFL Home Fin's unsecured NCDs offer 10% interest

IIFL Home Finance, a subsidiary of IIFL Finance, announced the public issue of unsecured non-convertible debentures (NCDs) with coupon rates ranging from 9.60 per cent to 10.00 per cent per annum for a tenure of 7 years and 3 months (87 months). The issue with a base issue size of Rs 100 crore with an option to retain oversubscription up to Rs 900 crore, has been rated AA by Crisil Ratings and Brickwork Ratings.



Talks collapse after UAE puts foot down Saudis up prices after Opec+ feud

SERENE CHEONG, SHARON CHO & ANTHONY DI PAOLA JULY 6

Saudi Arabia raised oil prices for buyers from Asia to the US for August after Opec+ talks broke down just as the market was clamouring for more supply.

The Saudis, along with Russia, sought over the past week to rally other members around a plan to unwind production cuts incrementally and to extend their accord through to the end of next year. The proposal collapsed when the United Arab Emirates balked at keeping in place what it says is an unfair production baseline for its quota for longer.

In its main market of Asia, Saudi Aramco increased the official selling price, or OSP, for Arab Light crude by 80 cents a barrel to \$2.70 above the regional benchmark. That's the biggest month-on-month increase since January, and suggests the oil giant won't raise supply next month even as it sees the market tightening.

"With domestic demand peaking around August, there will be less crude available for exports unless they draw down from the inventories," said Giovanni Staunovo, a commodities analyst at UBS Group AG. "As the market was looking for a slightly smaller OSP increase for Asia, Asian refineries can't expect additional vol-



umes from Saudi Arabia."

The kingdom sends more than 60 per cent of its crude exports to Asia, with China, Japan, South Korea and India being the biggest buyers. Last month, it shipped 5.7 million barrels a day globally, according to preliminary data compiled by Bloomberg.

Oil futures and physical markets have strengthened with widespread virus vaccinations supporting demand. The breakdown in Opec+ talks means current production limits will remain in place for August, likely leading to a deeper supply deficit.

Crude could rise to as high as \$90 a barrel with out higher output, Fereidun Fesharaki, chairman of industry consultant FGE, said in a Bloomberg Television interview. He said a compromise between the feuding Opec nations was likely.

Reuters adds from London: Oil prices were looking towards three-year highs on Tuesday, towing petrocurrencies and bond yields with

them, after the world's main oil producers failed to agree on production plans.

Europe's stocks spluttered at the prospect of faster inflation. China had spooked its tech sector too with another high profile clamp down, but the main action was all around the black stuff.

The Opec+ were forced to abandon talks on Monday after the UAE had rejected an eight-month extension to output curbs.

Some Opec+ sources said there would be no oil output increase in August, while others said a new meeting would take place in the coming days and they believed there will be a boost in August.

Crude traders were not hanging around to find out. They pushed Brent up as far as \$77.66—the highest level since October 2018—and US crude to its highest since late 2014 at \$76.90 a barrel. Oil is up roughly 50 per cent this year and over 385 per cent since last year's Covid-driven slump.

Govt plans to develop 10 'freight smart cities'

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JULY 6

The Centre has asked state governments to identify ten cities which can be developed as 'freight smart cities'.

Since final-mile freight movement accounts for 50 per cent of logistics costs in e-commerce supply chains in India, the commerce ministry has come up with a plan to develop freight smart cities, starting with 10 cities in the initial phase, with the ambition to scale it up to 75 cities in the next phase.

The focus of the cities should be on the quick-wins like developing peri-urban freight centres, night-time deliveries, creating truck routes, using Intelligent Transportation Systems and other modern technologies and promoting electrification of urban freight, parcel delivery terminals and the like.

The Centre has asked state governments to set up institutional mechanisms for the same by involving private stakeholders like logistics services providers, users and citizens.

On this, the Logistics Division of the ministry is working closely with Germany's GIZ under Indo-German Development Cooperation. Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) and RMI India. A challenge could also be announced to encourage the participation in the initiative.

After SBI, ICICI Bank too revises ATM charges

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JULY 6

After State Bank of India, private lender ICICI Bank is all set to change rules and charges for cash withdrawals from ATMs, cheque books and other financial transactions for domestic savings accounts, including salary accounts. The revised charges would come into effect from August 1.

According to the bank's website, four cash transactions per month are free, after which the bank would charge Rs 150 per transaction. The cash transactions include both deposits and withdrawals at ICICI bank branches.

At the home branch, the value limit for ICICI Bank customers would be Rs 1 lakh free cash transaction per month, per account. To deposit or withdraw more than the fixed



amount, ICICI bank account-holders need to pay Rs 5 per Rs 1,000, subject to a minimum of Rs 150. For non-home branch, cash transactions up to Rs 25,000 per day is free. Above Rs 25,000, the bank would charge Rs 5 per Rs 1,000, subject to a minimum of Rs 150. For third party cash transaction, up to a limit of Rs 25,000 per transaction, the charge would be Rs 150 per transaction.

Customers will get three free cash withdrawals from non-ICICI Bank

ATMs in six metro cities (Mumbai, New Delhi, Chennai, Kolkata, Bengaluru and Hyderabad) in a month. In all other locations, first five transactions will be free. Beyond this limit, the bank will charge Rs 20 per financial transaction and Rs 8.50 per non-financial transactions.

Cheque book fee will be nil for 25 payable-at-par cheque leaves in a year; Rs 20 for every additional cheque book of 10 leaves.

For regular plus salary accounts, no charges will be levied for the first four transactions in a month; thereafter Rs 5 per Rs 1,000 or part thereof, subject to a minimum of Rs 150 in the same month.

A few days ago, State Bank of India introduced new rules and charges for cash withdrawals from its ATMs and bank branches from July 1.

GST collections fall below ₹1 lakh crore

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JULY 6

Hit by the second wave, GST collections for June slipped below the Rs 1-lakh crore mark after a gap of eight months.

The gross GST revenue collected in June stood at Rs 92,849 crore against Rs 1,02,709 crore in May. But the mop-up is 2 per cent higher than that of Rs 90,917 crore in June 2020.

GST collections have remained above Rs 1 lakh crore for eight months in a row since September 2020. The collections for June for

the business transactions made during May, when most of the states were under either complete or partial lock down. In May, only 3.99 crore e-way bills were generated compared to 5.88 crore in April, down by more than 30 per cent, the government said.

Further, taxpayers with a turnover of up to Rs 5 crore were given waiver and reduction in interest on delayed return filing for 15 days.

The government expects the collections to increase again from July. With the reduction in virus caseload

and easing of lockdowns, the e-way bills generated during June stood at 5.5 crore, indicating recovery of trade and business.

Despite declining to a 10-month low, the June 2021 GST collections provided a positive surprise, says Aditi Nayar, chief economist, Ica.

The collections were significantly higher for the April-June quarter. The GST collections in the June quarter are nearly twice as high as the same quarter last year, highlighting the narrower impact of the second wave, Nayar said.

Nilekani joins e-com open network project

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JULY 6

The government plan to develop an inclusive Open Network for Digital Commerce (ONDC) for e-commerce got a boost with former UIADI chairman Nandan Nilekani and Co-WIN committee chairman R. S. Sharma joining the advisory council for the project. While Nilekani is co-founder and non-executive chairman of Infosys, Sharma is a former Trai chairman and the current CEO of the National Health Authority.

ONDC aims to promote open networks developed on open source platforms. ONDC is expected to digitise the entire value chain, standardise operations and promote inclusion of suppliers.

Similar to UPI for payments, ONDC would be a common protocol for digital commerce which can be adopted by various stakeholders. ONDC will go beyond the current platform-centric digital commerce model, where

the buyer and seller must use the same platform to do a transaction. On ONDC platform, the portals connected with an open network, buyers and sellers can transact irrespective of the portals they deal with.

"It will democratise e-commerce, enabling small retailers to showcase themselves easier and customers find products easier. The protocol will provide ease to showcase, list, find and transact on e-commerce platforms," said Kumar Rajagopalan, CEO, Retailers Association of India (RAI).

"It will be one of the most innovative initiatives in e-commerce by any government in the world that will provide uniform opportunities to all e-commerce entities conducting their business activities through any mode of e-commerce," said Praveen Khandelwal, secretary general of the Confederation of All India Traders (Cait.) Both RAI and Cait were part of the steering committee for the project.

PINE LABS CLOSES \$600 MN FUND RAISING ROUND

SARITHA RAI JULY 6

Pine Labs Pvt Ltd, a payments platform for merchants, closed a \$600 million fundraising round with some of the world's largest investors, including Fidelity Management & Research Company and BlackRock Inc, as it targets a public offering within 18 months.

The Singapore-based startup, which offers solutions for in-store and online payments as well as prepaid, loyalty and "pay later" programmes, is valued at \$3 billion, CEO Amrish Rau said. Investors participating in the round included a fund advised by Neuberger Berman Group LLC and India's IIFL Finance Ltd. and Kotak Funds.

"It's a product from India that's succeeded in Malaysia and Singapore and is entering Indonesia and Thailand," Rau said in an interview via video call. "We've got a good, Ebitda-positive story as we plan our IPO in the next 18 months." The IPO will likely take place in the US, Rau said. — Bloomberg

Sumitomo Mitsui to acquire Fullerton Credit for \$2.5 bn

FC BANKING BUREAU with agency inputs MUMBAI, JULY 6

In what is billed as the first entry into India's retail financial business by a Japanese bank, Sumitomo Mitsui Financial Group Inc (SMFG) on Tuesday reached an agreement with Fullerton Financial Holdings (FFH) to acquire a 74.9 per cent stake in the Indian firm's non-banking arm, Fullerton India Credit Company, in a reported

\$2.5 billion deal. SMFG, Japan's second-largest lender, will eventually acquire 100 per cent of Fullerton India Credit Company (FICC).

Sources said Sumitomo will pay around \$2 billion for the 74.9 per cent stake in the first leg of the deal.

Fullerton Financial is a unit of Singapore's state investment fund Temasek Holdings Pte.

"This investment brings together SMFG's state push towards consumer

Tata Motors tanks over chip concerns

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JULY 6

Tata Motors shares price fell over 10 per cent in the last hour of trade and finally closed 8.4 per cent down after the company flagged concerns of chip supply shortage impacting sales at its wholly owned subsidiary Jaguar Land Rover (UK) in the second quarter (Q2) of FY22.

Tata Motors touched a low of Rs 311.45 on the BSE before closing 8.41 per cent down at Rs 316.95.

While disclosing JLR first quarter (Q1) retail

sales performance during the market hours, Tata Motors said, "The chip shortage is presently very dynamic and difficult to forecast. Based on recent input from suppliers, we now expect chip supply shortages in the second quarter ended 30 September 2021 to be greater than in the first quarter, potentially resulting in wholesale volumes about 50 per cent lower than planned."

"We expect the situation will start to improve in the second half... However, the broader underlying struc-

ture and MSME lending, with FICC's expertise in serving mass-market consumers and MSME customers in India," said a statement from Fullerton India.

"We intend to leverage our expertise in Japan market as well as capabilities of our franchisees across key emerging Asian markets," said Jun Ohta, president & group CEO of SMFG.

"India is one of our focus markets where we believe in its high growth potential

and want to build a deeper presence," added Ohta.

Faced with weak growth prospects at home, Sumitomo Mitsui has been allocating resources to Asia's emerging markets in recent years. The bank took control of Indonesian lender PT Bank Tabungan Pensiunan Nasional in 2019 after acquiring a minority stake earlier. Sumitomo Mitsui is looking for targets in Vietnam, the Philippines and India, Ohta said in December.

DIAMOND: ALROSA ADDS TRACK AND TRACE FEATURE

YULIYA FEDORINOVA JULY 6

Russia's Alrosa PJSC is offering diamond buyers a new laser-marking technology that will allow customers to trace rough stones and polished gems from the mine to the jewelry store.

Alrosa applies a so-called nano mark to the atomic structure of the diamond, replicating a process that occurs in stones over millions of years, said Oleg Kovalchuk, a researcher at Alrosa's institute in Siberia. The physical mark is only visible with a special scanner, and differs from other modern tracing techniques based on keeping a digital copy of the gem, including with blockchain, or laser engraving, which can be polished off, Alrosa said.

"By purchasing jewellery with a diamond protected by a nano mark, the buyer can be sure that it is actually made by Alrosa," CEO Sergey Ivanov said.

The diamond industry has worked hard to reassure consumers that its stones aren't linked to the gems-for-weapons dealing that sullied its reputation in the wake of wars in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Angola. While so-called "blood diamonds" were addressed in the 2002 agreement known as the Kimberly Process, more recent trafficking in precious stones from countries such Central African Republic have highlighted the need to trace the origin of gems. — Bloomberg

SMART FOAM New material allows robots to sense nearby objects

Robots get ability to self-heal

TRAVIS TEO & LEE YING SHAN SINGAPORE, JULY 6

Singapore researchers have developed a smart foam material that allows robots to sense nearby objects, and repairs itself when damaged, just like human skin.

Artificially innervated foam, or AiFoam, is a highly elastic polymer created by mixing fluoropolymer with a compound that lowers surface tension.

This allows the spongy material to fuse easily into one piece when cut, according to the researchers at the National University of Singapore.

"There are many applications for such a materi-



al, especially in robotics and prosthetic devices, where robots need to be a lot more intelligent when working around humans," explained lead researcher Benjamin Tee.

To replicate the human sense of touch, the researchers infused the material with microscopic metal particles and added tiny electrodes underneath the surface of the foam.

When pressure is applied, the metal particles draw closer within the polymer matrix, changing their electrical properties. These changes can be detected by the electrodes connected to a computer, which then tells the robot what to do, Tee said.

"When I move my finger near the sensor, you can see the sensor is measuring the changes of my

electrical field and responds accordingly to my touch," he said.

This feature enables the robotic hand to detect not only the amount but also the direction of applied force, potentially making robots more intelligent and interactive.

Tee said AiFoam is the first of its kind to combine both self-healing properties and proximity and pressure sensing. After spending over two years developing it, he and his team hope the material can be put to practical use within five years.

"It can also allow prosthetic users to have more intuitive use of their robotic arms when grabbing objects," he said.

— Reuters



## SHORT TAKES

## Mithali reclaims No.1 rank in ODIs

**Dubai:** India skipper Mithali Raj on Tuesday reclaimed the number one spot in the women's ODI rankings after more than three years following a stellar show in the three-match series against England. India lost the series 1-2 but the 38-year-old Raj hit a half-century in each of the contest. She struck 72 and 59 in the first two ODIs and then guided India to a four-wicket victory in the final match of the series with an unbeaten 75, gaining four spots to reach the top of the ladder. She last occupied the top spot in February 2018. The first time she reached number one position was in April 2005 after scoring an unbeaten 91 against New Zealand at the World Cup in Potchefstroom and the difference of more than 16 years at No.1 is the largest for any woman batter. — PTI

## Rashid to lead Afghan T20 side

**New Delhi:** Star leg-spinner Rashid Khan was appointed captain of Afghanistan's T20 team keeping the ICC T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in UAE from October 17 to November 14 in mind. Left-handed batsman Najibullah Zadran was appointed as the vice-captain of the team. "Rashid, one of the well-known global faces of the game, was selected by senior ACB leadership led by ACB Chairman Farhan Yousafzai, for the role considering his experience, brilliant performance as well as leadership skills with the National team over the years," Afghanistan Cricket Board said in a statement. Rashid, who is ranked world no 2 among bowlers, had earlier declined Afghanistan captaincy, saying that he believes he is more valuable as a player. — PTI

## Anand returns to action after a year

**Zagreb:** Five-time world champion Viswanathan Anand will resume his storied rivalry with Russian legend Garry Kasparov in the Croatia Grand Chess Tour Rapid and Blitz tournament beginning here on Wednesday, returning to over-the-board action after more than a year. The Indian maestro's last over-the-board event was in March 2020. Anand will be featuring in both the rapid and blitz segments, while his long-time rival and former world champion Kasparov will take part only in the blitz event. Anand and Kasparov, who retired in 2005, have been involved in several memorable matches including the 1995 PCA World final in New York in 1995. — PTI

## Injured Hima vows to return stronger

**New Delhi:** Star Indian sprinter Hima Das on Tuesday vowed to make a strong comeback in the major events next year after missing the Tokyo Olympics due to an injury. "I will miss the Olympics due to untimely injury when I was close to achieve the qualification standard in my new event 100m and 200m," Hima said. "I would like to thank my coaches, support staff and my teammates for their continuous support. But I will make a strong comeback and looking forward to Commonwealth Games 2022, Asian Games 2022 and World Championship 2022." — PTI

## Australian Grand Prix cancelled

**Melbourne:** The Australian F1 Grand Prix has been cancelled after local organisers and Formula One couldn't come up with a compromise over Australia's strict travel and quarantine issues relating to the Covid-19 pandemic. The race was postponed from its original season-opening spot on March 21 and had been rescheduled for November 21. The 2020 Australian GP in Melbourne last March was called off at the last minute at the start of the coronavirus pandemic shutdown. — AP

## Live on TV

EURO

**Semifinal-2:** England vs Denmark from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2

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## IN THE LIONS' DEN

## Denmark wander into Wembley, to take on England

**London, July 6:** England are shouldering rising expectations. Denmark are powered by resilience and recovery.

And emotions will be high at Wembley Stadium before their European Championship semifinal match even kicks off on Wednesday when there will be a moment to remember the tournament's most harrowing incident and the player who won't be playing for Denmark.

The England squad has signed a No.10 jersey emblazoned with Christian Eriksen's name that will be handed to Denmark captain Simon Kjaer by England counterpart Harry Kane.

The England players were on a bus traveling to London from their training base to prepare for their opening game of Euro 2020 on June 12 when Eriksen collapsed on the field while playing against Finland. He had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator.

"We saw it on the screens. I was close with Christian. The most important thing is he is getting better," said England defender Kieran Trippier, a former teammate of Eriksen's at Tottenham.

Perhaps what is most remarkable is that while Eriksen recovers from his cardiac arrest, Denmark have managed to reach the semifinals for the first time since unexpectedly winning the European Championship in 1992.

After losing the opening two games, the Danes looked on the verge of elimination. But they got used to the formation switch from 4-2-3-1 to 3-4-3 and beat Russia in their final group game to advance before ousting Wales and the Czech Republic.

Kasper Dolberg has scored three goals, Pierre-Emile Højbjerg has been excellent and Kasper Schmeichel has provided leadership even beyond his saves in goal. "We had to pinch ourselves in the arms sometimes to realise what we've achieved," midfielder Christian Norgaard said. — AP



England captain Harry Kane (right) warms up with teammates during a training session at St George's Park on Tuesday, ahead of their Euro semifinal against Denmark. — AP

## Fab five out to make mark

**London, July 6:** England manager Gareth Southgate has been able to regularly change his team, with a plethora of attacking talent at his disposal.

Here is a look at five England players who could make an impact off the bench if not named in the starting line-up:

## JACK GREALISH

The Aston Villa forward has impressed during the tournament despite seeing limited game time. The 25-year-old, who has been linked with a move to Manchester City, set up Raheem Sterling's winner on his only start in the final group game against the Czech Republic. "This is what I was born to do. I

can't wait," he said before the Last-16 match against Germany, when he came off the bench to claim another assist, for Harry Kane.

He did not feature in the quarter-final thrashing of Ukraine at the Stadio Olimpico, so will be fresh if called upon by Southgate this week.

## PHIL FODEN

The 21-year-old enjoyed a stellar season for Manchester City, scoring 16 goals in all competitions as Pep Guardiola's men won the Premier League and reached the Champions League final. Foden was widely tipped to be one of the stars of Euro 2020, but after starting England's opening two

matches, has not played since.

## JADON SANCHO

When England were struggling to create chances during the group stage, Southgate was criticised by pundits and supporters for not giving a chance to Sancho, who made one late substitute appearance across the first four games. But he started in Rome and caught the eye with his dribbling skills and direct style of play.

## BUKAYO SAKA

The Arsenal teenager was a slightly surprising selection in the 26-man squad ahead of Jesse Lingard, but has more than played his part in England's run.

Saka shone against the Czech Republic and then kept his place in the starting line-up for the Germany match, only to miss out on the quarter-final with an injury. Southgate has the luxury of choosing between Foden, Sancho and Saka for a spot on the right wing.

## MARCUS RASHFORD

The most experienced player on this list is the only one yet to make a start at Euro 2020, although the winger is carrying foot and shoulder injuries and is expected to undergo surgery following the tournament.

Rashford has scored 12 goals in 45 international appearances. — AFP

## SURYA TO START FROM SCRATCH IN LANKA SERIES

**Colombo, July 6:** The high of a successful debut series behind him, Indian batsman Suryakumar Yadav on Tuesday said he would be looking to "start from the scratch" in the upcoming limited-overs assignment against Sri Lanka, eager to learn from "calm and composed" head coach Rahul Dravid. "It will be a great challenge and I am really looking forward to it," said the Mumbai batsman.

Asked if a successful debut series would help him cope better with the pressure, Yadav said, "Everytime you go in or play a different game, you start from scratch," he added. — PTI

## BHUVI RELISHES RESPONSIBILITY AS VICE-CAPTAIN

**Colombo, July 6:** Senior India speedster and vice-captain for the ongoing tour of Sri Lanka, Bhuvneshwar Kumar, says his role as Shikhar Dhawan's deputy would be to help other players in "improving their skills and mental health" during the upcoming limited-overs series. "But I don't think things will change. I think being a senior player my role is to do things that help other players in improving their skills and mental health," Bhuvneshwar said.

"I have played against Rahul Dravid (coach) and he was a part of the RCB team just when I got inducted into the team. When I got to the NCA, we did have some chats," he added. — PTI

## COPA | SEMIFINAL

## Paqueta powers Brazil past Peru

**Rio De Janeiro, July 6:** Star forward Neymar set up Lucas Paqueta to score the only goal as hosts Brazil beat Peru 1-0 on Monday to qualify for the Copa America final.

The semi-final was a repeat of the last final, two years ago, when a Brazil team shorn of the injured Neymar also triumphed on home soil.

The Selecao will play either Lionel Messi's Argentina or Colombia, who meet in Brasilia on Wednesday in Saturday's final at Rio de Janeiro's iconic Maracana stadium.

Brazil totally dominated the first half at the empty Nilton Santos stadium in Rio but had to survive some nervous moments after the break before securing a spot in the final.

They opened up Peru on eight minutes as Paqueta's pass sent Richarlison in behind the defense, but after beating goalkeeper Pedro Gallese to the ball, the forward tried to pull it back to Neymar who blazed high and wide under pressure.

Gallese spilled a fierce Casemiro free-kick from distance but gathered the loose ball before winger Everton could turn in the rebound.

Brazil were turning the screw and Everton cut in off the right flank but shot straight at Gallese. The Peruvian shot-stopper was the busiest player on the pitch in the first quarter and after saving another Casemiro piledriver from distance he made an incredible double point blank save from Neymar and then Richarlison.

And when Gallese suffered a rush of blood to the head and charged out of his area only to be beaten to the ball by Richarlison, Brazil couldn't capitalize as Peru's defenders threw themselves in front of Everton's shot.

Peru were non-existent as an attacking force and when they did manage to win a corner just after the half hour, they ended up playing the ball all the way back to Gallese. Brazil deservedly took the lead 10 minutes before halftime after Peru gave the ball away in midfield for the umpteenth time. — AFP



Lucas Paqueta (left) and Neymar of Brazil celebrate after the former scored the goal against Peru during a Copa America semifinal in Rio de Janeiro on Monday. — AP

## Olympic briefs

## Maiden Games berth for Mane

**U**dayan Mane on Tuesday officially booked himself a maiden Olympic berth, becoming the second Indian male golfer after Anirban Lahiri to be Tokyo-bound for the mega-event starting July 23. The 30-year-old Mane, currently the second-highest ranked Indian in the world at 356, was all set to make the cut after Argentina's Emiliano Grillo announced his withdrawal from the quadrennial event on June 24. The official announcement was made on Tuesday with Mane finding himself at the 60th spot in the Olympic golf ranking list which was made available on the International Golf Federation's (IGF) website.

## Coach Gopichand opts out

**C**hief National coach Pullela Gopichand, who guided India to two Olympic medals, has opted out of India's Olympic-bound badminton contingent to create space for Indonesian Agus Dwi Santosa, who trains singles shuttler B. Sai Praneeth. Gopichand, under whose guidance Saina Nehwal and PV Sindhu claimed a bronze and a silver medal at London and Rio Games respectively, opted out after the Indian Olympic Association (IOA) cleared only five-members support staff, that includes three coaches and two physios.

## COVID | OUTBREAK

## England forced to pick new team

**London, July 6:** England were forced to select a completely new group of players and management on Tuesday for the one-day international series against Pakistan after the coronavirus infected three players and four members of staff.

The initially selected squad went into isolation following the results of tests taken on Monday, a day after the team's last ODI against Sri Lanka in Bristol. The names of those who tested positive have not been disclosed. The remainder of the group were identified as close contacts.

The three ODIs and three Twenty20s against Pakistan, starting on Thursday with the first ODI in Cardiff, were still going ahead and at the same venues.

Ashley Giles, director of England's men's cricket, said he was confident there

had not been a breach of coronavirus protocols in the squad but that it was a natural consequence of restrictions being slightly eased around the squad in line with general society, despite cases rising in England because of the delta variant.

The players, for example, have been staying in shared hotels as opposed to living in strict bio-secure bubbles like last summer. "Given this variant, which is clearly more infectious, the risks of us catching an infection was going to go up," Giles said on a video call. — AP

**Revised squad:** Ben Stokes (captain), Jake Ball, Danny Briggs, Brydon Carse, Zak Crawley, Ben Duckett, Lewis Gregory, Tom Helm, Will Jacks, Dan Lawrence, Saqib Mahmood, Dawid Malan, Craig Overton, Matt Parkinson, David Payne, Phil Salt, John Simpson, James Vince.

## HUBERT HURRICANE

## Poland's Hurkacz knocks out second seed Medvedev

**London, July 6:** Hubert Hurkacz became just the fourth Polish man to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals on Tuesday with a five-set win over Russian second seed Daniil Medvedev.

World number 18 Hurkacz triumphed 2-6, 7-6 (7/2), 3-6, 6-3, 6-4 in a match held over from Monday due to rain and will now face Roger Federer for a place in the semi-finals.

"For this sport, Roger is unbelievable, what he does, how he plays and the titles he has won throughout his career. He inspired so many people and it's going to be fun," said Hurkacz.

The Pole has only met Federer once — a straight sets loss at Indian Wells in the quarter-finals in 2019.

His run to the Wimbledon last-eight is impressive as he had won just one match on tour between his surprise Miami Masters title in March and the start of Wimbledon.

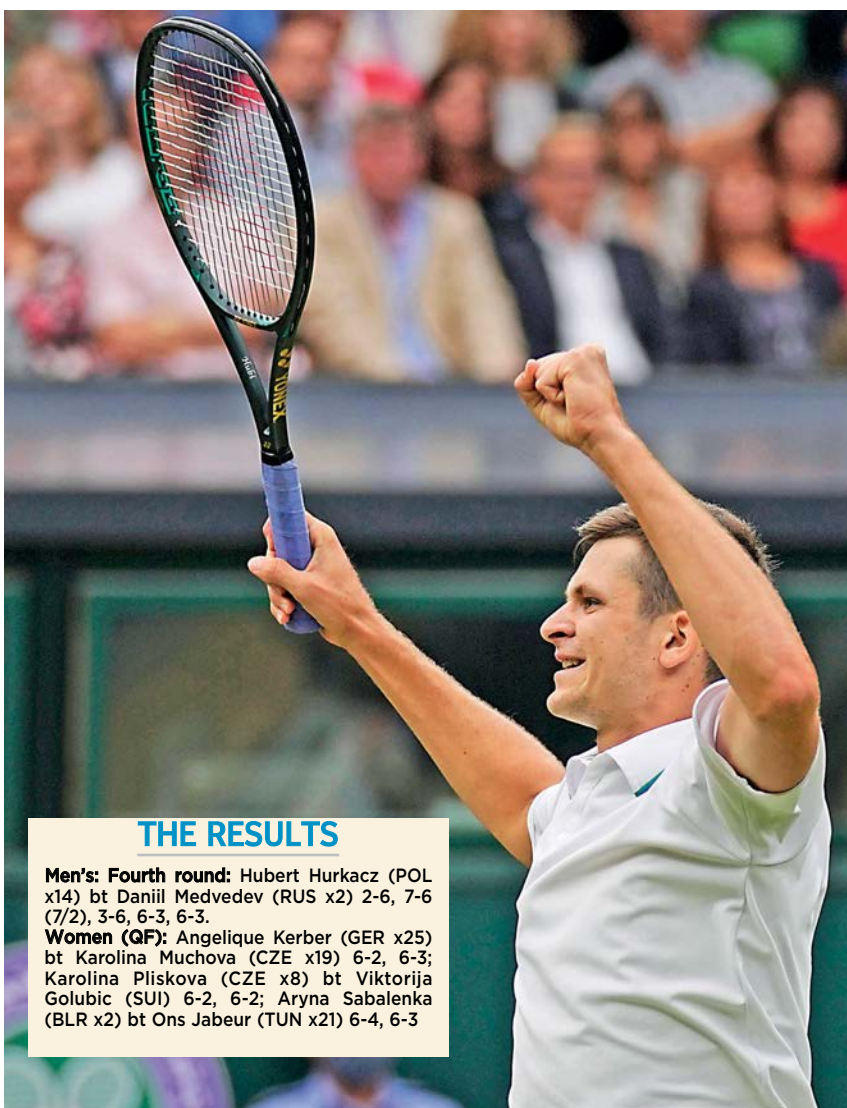
That dismal streak included defeat in the first round of the French Open to world number 154 Botic Van de Zandschulp and first-upt losses in the grass court events at Stuttgart and Halle.

The defeat in Stuttgart was particularly painful as it came at the hands of Dominic Stricker, ranked a lowly 335 at the time.

## KERBER IN SEMIS

Former champion Angelique Kerber reached the Wimbledon semi-finals for the fourth time with a 6-2, 6-3 win over Karolina Muchova of the Czech Republic.

The German world number 28, who won the title in 2018, will face either top seed Ashleigh Barty or Ajla



Poland's Hubert Hurkacz celebrates after defeating Russia's Daniil Medvedev in the Wimbledon fourth round on Tuesday. — AP

## THE RESULTS

**Men's: Fourth round:** Hubert Hurkacz (POL x14) bt Daniil Medvedev (RUS x2) 2-6, 7-6 (7/2), 3-6, 6-3, 6-3.  
**Women (GF):** Angelique Kerber (GER x25) bt Karolina Muchova (CZE x19) 6-2, 6-3; Karolina Pliskova (CZE x8) bt Viktorija Golubic (SUI) 6-2, 6-2; Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2) bt Ons Jabeur (TUN x21) 6-4, 6-3

Tomljanovic for a place in Saturday's final.

"It's a magical place for me," said Kerber, who is a three-time major winner, after securing the 80th victory of her career on grass.

Aryna Sabalenka ended Ons Jabeur's historic run at Wimbledon, the second-seeded Belarus play-

er's power getting the better of the guile of the Tunisian 6-4, 6-3 in 74 minutes.

The 23-year-old, who had only won one match on her three previous visits to Wimbledon, will play former world number one Karolina Pliskova who eased into the last four with a straight sets

win over Viktorija Golubic. Jabeur departs having lost in her second Grand Slam quarter-final.

However, the 26-year-old has done wonders in her goal to use her exploits to encourage young Arab women — especially North African — to take up the sport. — AFP