

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

CHENNAI | WEDNESDAY 16 | JUNE 2021

WEATHER



Max: 37°C
Min: 26°C
Rainfall: 6%

ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Aani 2
Tithi: Sashti
Star: Magam
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
Yamagandam: 7.30 am to 9 am

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.23 am
Luhar: 12.14 pm
Asar: 3.35 pm
Maghrib: 6.36 pm
Isha: 7.55 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.36 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.43 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 10.36 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 12.09 AM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+57,678)	(+2,489)
2,96,27,783	3,79,551

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+11,805)	(267)
TN: 23,78,298	30,068

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

17,68,55,363

DEATHS

38,22,178

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info

Parl panel summons Twitter officials on June 18

New Delhi: Days after the Centre issued a notice to Twitter, a parliamentary panel headed by Congress leader Shashi Tharoor has summoned top officials of the micro blogging site to depose before it on Friday and give a representation on prevention of misuse of the social media platform.

EPFO defers filing of PF return with Aadhaar seeded UANs

New Delhi: Retirement fund body Employees' Provident Fund Organisation on Tuesday deferred implementation of its order mandating filing of PF returns with Aadhaar-verified universal account numbers (UAN) till September 1, 2021. This will give more time to employers to link their employees Aadhaar number with PF accounts or UAN. Earlier, the EPFO had set the deadline of June 1, 2021.

COUNTER

POINT



He has agreed to join our party... along with party ticket he wants petrol for his campaign vehicle!

Afghan gunmen kill 4 of polio team

Kabul, June 15: Gunmen on Tuesday targeted members of polio teams in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least four staffers, officials said.

No militant group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks in the city of Jalalabad. Along with the four killed, at least three members of the polio vaccination teams were wounded, said Dr. Jan Mohammad, who coordinates the anti-polio drive for the country's east. Afghanistan and neigh-

boursing Pakistan are the only two remaining countries in the world where polio is endemic, after Nigeria was last year declared free of the virus.

In March, the Islamic State group said it shot and killed three women who were part of a polio vaccination team, also in Jalalabad, the capital of Afghanistan's Nangarhar province.

The IS affiliate is headquartered in eastern Afghanistan and while the Sunni militant group's numbers are believed to

have gone down after recent government offensives and clashes with the rival Taliban, IS militants have lately stepped up attacks on minority Shiite Muslims.

IS has also taken responsibility for several targeted killings that have taken aim at the country's nascent civil society, as well as journalists and legal professionals.

The Afghan government in recent months, with the help of UNICEF, has sought to inoculate 9.6 million children against polio. In 2020,

Afghanistan reported 54 new cases of polio.

Though not uncommon in Afghanistan, attacks on polio vaccination teams are more frequent in Pakistan, where the Pakistani Taliban and other militants regularly stage attacks on polio teams and security forces escorting them.

They also target vaccination centers and health workers, claiming that anti-polio drives are part of an alleged Western conspiracy to sterilise children or collect intelligence. — AP



CITY | 2

TN underreporting Covid deaths?



Sedition charge against Suu Kyi on day 2 of trial

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Messi on target, but Argentina held



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Walk in to get vaccinated: Centre

■ **Third wave will be worse if Covid norms are violated, warn experts**

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

The Union government on Tuesday said pre-registration for vaccination through online registration and prior booking of appointment are not mandatory to avail vaccination. Anyone aged 18 years or more can directly go to the nearest vaccination centre where the vaccinator would perform on-site registration and provide vaccination in the same visit, a release, uploaded by the Press Information Bureau, said. Registration through the common service centres on Co-WIN app is just one of the many modes of registration, the government said. The facilitators such as health workers or ASHAs also mobilise beneficiaries in rural areas and those residing in urban slums for on-site registration and vaccination directly at the nearest vaccination centers, it said. The facility for assisted registrations through the 1075 help line has also been operationalised, it said.

Meanwhile, experts warned that a major challenge for the cities that are opening up is to control the next wave which looks inevitable given the crowd that is out on roads and the number of people seen defying social distancing and mask norms. Doctors have warned a situation “worse than the second wave” may erupt if people do not adhere to safety norms.



People throng Ayanavaram ration shop in Chennai violating Covid protocols on Tuesday, the day when the state government started distribution of the second installment of Covid-19 financial relief and provisions kit containing 14 items through ration shops to rice family card holders.

— N. Sampath

Bring Covid under control, CM tells district collectors

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin on Tuesday asked district collectors to ensure that the Covid-19 pandemic was brought under control. He has also sought their cooperation in building a prosperous Tamil Nadu and facilitate the government achieve its seven goals in 10 years.

“This government is there not to just pass orders but also listen to the views and opinions of the Collectors in formulating policies,” Mr Stalin said while addressing the newly-appointed district collectors through video conferencing.

Urging the collectors to coordinate with ministers, MLAs and local body representatives in implementing the welfare

schemes of the government, he stressed the need to ensure the efficient functioning of the public distribution system and address the grievances of the public.

Rural and urban development were important to make the state prosperous, he said and enunciated on the seven goals of the government that should be realised in 10 years. ■ P4

Spread of Delta Plus new cause of worry

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

The ‘Delta Plus’ variant of Covid-19 detected in some countries is raising concern of its spread in India too. Though member-health NitiAayog Dr V.K. Paul said Delta Plus is not a cause for concern in India yet, a few cases of this variant have been found in India though the numbers are low. While there is no information

about the severity of this variant, it has been observed that Delta Plus is resistant to the monoclonal antibody cocktail treatment for Covid-19. Meanwhile, India recorded 60,471 new cases of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours, which is lowest in 75 days. The daily deaths were 2,726 and recoveries were more than double the fresh infections. The recovery rate has reached 95.64 per cent.

COVID HAS CENTRE CANCEL ALL HAJ APPLICATIONS

New Delhi, June 15: The Haj Committee of India on Tuesday announced that all the applications for the pilgrimage this year stand cancelled as Saudi Arabia has stated that only a limited number of people residing in the Kingdom will be allowed to perform Haj due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Union minister for minority affairs Mukhtar Abbas welcomed Saudi's decision and said the government had made all the preparations for Haj.

30-minute wait must after jab: AEFI panel

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

The death of a 68-year old man on March 8 after vaccination was due to anaphylaxis (allergic reaction) the government panel on Serious Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) said on Tuesday. “It is the first death linked to Covid vaccination due to anaphylaxis. It re-emphasises the need to wait for 30 minutes after receiving a jab. Most of the anaphylactic reactions occur during this period. Timely treatment can pre-

vent deaths,” said Dr N.K. Arora, chairman of the Covid working group.

Union health ministry in a statement said any death or hospitalisation following vaccination cannot be automatically assumed to be due to vaccination though states have been directed to make causality assessments to understand whether the AEFI was caused directly due to vaccine. “The number of deaths reported following Covid-19 vaccination in the country is only 0.0002 per cent of 23.5 crore doses administered,” it said.

PASWAN REMOVED AS NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF LJP

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

In a free for all within the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), Chirag Paswan was on Tuesday removed from the post of national president. This comes a day after five party MPs in the Lok Sabha rebelled against him in a coup led by his uncle and LJP leader, Pashupati Kumar Paras.

Mr Paswan was removed after an emergency meeting of the LJP national working committee on Tuesday. On the other hand Mr Paswan expelled his uncle, Mr Paras, and four other MPs from the party, signalling that the battle for reins of the LJP is not over. The statement said, “The national executive has unanimously decided to remove Pashupati Kumar Paras, Beena Devi, Mehboob Ali Kaiser, Chandan Singh and Prince Raj from the primary membership of the party with immediate effect. Chirag Paswan is authorised to take all decisions for the upcoming Assembly elections.” Mr Paswan posted an emotional tweet on Tuesday and shared a letter he had written to his uncle in March. ■ P4

Delhi HC blasts misuse of UAPA

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

In its anxiety to suppress dissent, the state has blurred the line between right to protest and terrorist activity and if such a mindset gains traction, it would be a “sad day for democracy”, the Delhi high court observed on Tuesday while granting bail to three students from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia arrested over a year ago for the riots that followed protests against the controversial citizenship law. Terming as “somewhat vague” the definition of a “terrorist act” under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) law and warning against its use in a “cavalier manner”, the high court set aside the trial court orders rejecting bail to JNU students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita and Jamia's Asif Iqbal Tanha,

allowing their appeals and admitting them to regular bail.

“We are of the view that the foundations of our nation stand on surer footing than to be likely to be shaken by a protest, however vicious, organised by a tribe of college students or other persons, operating as a coordination committee from the confines of a university situated in the heart of Delhi,” a bench of Justices Siddharth Mridul and Anup Jairam Bhambhani said.

Based on the assessment of the facts, the bench said: “In our opinion, the court must be careful in employing the definitional words and phrases in Section 15 in the absolute literal sense or use them lightly in a manner that would trivialise the extremely heinous offence of ‘terrorist act’, without understanding how terrorism is different even from conventional, heinous crime. ■ P4

SC closes murder case against Italian marines

New Delhi, June 15: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the closure of criminal proceedings in India against two Italian marines, accused of killing two fishermen off the Kerala coast in February 2012.

A vacation bench of Justices Indira Banerjee and M.R. Shah quashed the FIR and proceedings emanating from the case against the two Italian marines.

The bench said as per the international arbitral award accepted by India,

Italy shall resume further investigation in the case.

The top court termed the Rs 10 crore compensation paid by Italy over and above the payment already made as “reasonable and adequate”.

It said out of the Rs 10 crore, Rs 4 crore each shall be deposited in the name of heirs of two deceased Kerala fishermen and two crore shall be given to owner of boat. The marines on board an Italian flagged oil tanker when the incident occurred. — PTI

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SHORT TAKES

Man arrested for sexually harassing 18-year-old daughter

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

A 50-year-old man was arrested on Monday night on charges of sexually harassing his 18-year-old daughter in their house near Kelambakkam, police said.

Jothi Prakasam (40), an auto driver and a temple priest, was staying with his family, wife, a son and two minor daughters in a village near Kelambakkam in Chengalpet district. The accused allegedly forced himself on his 18-year-old daughter.

When the girl cried for help, the girl's brother, a college student, reportedly attacked his father. Irked by this, Jothi Prakasam approached Kelambakkam police station and lodged a complaint against his son. He told police that his son attacked him due to a property dispute. The Kelambakkam police arrested Jagadeesan(21) and remanded him to judicial custody.

Meanwhile, the victim with the help of her mother lodged a complaint with the Mamallapuram All women police. Police registered a case under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences Act and arrested the man. He has been remanded to judicial custody and lodged at the prison.

Webinar on cybersecurity

Chennai: A 5-day webinar on "Value Addition on Emerging Information Technologies" for engineering students and academic faculty of Dr. M.G.R. Educational & Research Institute University, Chennai is on till June 18.

The student development program will cover "Cyber Crime Awareness & Prevention Measures, Digital Forensic Investigation & Career Opportunities, Cyber Security & Current Situation, Ethical Hacking, Future Trends & Macans Digital Detox with Psychiatrist."

Specialised courses and training related to cyber security, cloud computing, data protection and digital forensic Investigation will also be offered for graduates, universities, schools, corporates, government sector & police officers by Macans.

‘Data from 6 hospitals shows Tamil Nadu’s Covid-19 deaths may be 9 times official count’
TN underreporting Covid deaths?OP. ARULN | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

A Chennai-based anti-corruption watchdog has alleged that the government has under reported deaths due to Covid-19 in the state. Releasing the report online on Tuesday, convener of Arappor Iyakkam, Jayaram Venkatesan said a study conducted in six hospitals reveals that the mortality in six government hospitals is 13.5 times more than the declared Covid-19 deaths. The report finds that the likely underreporting of Covid-19 deaths in these 6 hospitals is at least 8.4 to 9.8 times more than the declared deaths due to Covid-19 in the media bulletin for April and May 2021. The NGO conducted the study using the data provided by the government hospitals for the past three years. It studied the total number

of deaths in Government Rajaji Hospital, Madurai, Coimbatore Medical College Hospital, Mahatma Gandhi Memorial Medical College and Hospital, Trichy, Vellore Medical College, Karur Medical College and Tirupur Government Headquarters Hospital. These hospitals geographically cover the northern, western, central and southern parts of the state.

The hospitals were chosen for the study since data on 'death certificates' issued from these hospitals were uploaded for all three years- 2019 and 2020 and 2021. The study was conducted by collecting data on the number of death certificates issued by the six hospitals to the kin of the deceased between January and May in 2019, 2020 and 2021.

Analysis of death data in the hospitals revealed that

the total number of deaths for which death certificates have been issued in April, 2019 (4437 deaths) and May 2020 (3261 deaths) has increased drastically to 11699 in April and May, 2021.

According to the media bulletin of the department of health and family welfare the total death of patients declared as Covid-19 deaths in April and May 2021 was only 863 in these six hospitals. However, the report found that there has been an increase of at least 7,262 deaths in April and May 2021 compared to April and May months of 2019. There is an increase in deaths of 8,438 compared to 2020.

The government has consistently underreported in each of the hospitals in April and May, it could be attributed that this phenomenon throughout the state. Tamil Nadu government has reported a total

number of deaths of 12,943 for the months of April and May 2021 as of June 13, 2021. Approximating the same underreporting factor of 8.4 to 9.8 times for the entire state, the likely number of deaths due to Covid in Tamil Nadu may be between 1,08,721 and 1,26,841 against the reported number of 12,943.

He said the medical certification for cause of death have not been issued to kin of victims and patients as per ICMR protocol and deaths are heavily underreported by skipping the mortality code U07.2 (Covid-19, virus not identified, Clinically-epidemiologically diagnosed Covid-19, Probable Covid-19 and Suspected Covid-19) almost completely. He requested the government to form an independent committee to audit and immediately correct the underreporting of Covid-19 deaths.

Dropping the guard



A crowded Richie street, city's electronics hub, on Tuesday.

— DC

My husband's sacrifice for India at Galwan makes me feel proud of him, says Havildar Palani's wife

Palani conferred Vir Chakra posthumously

Havildar (Gunner) K Palani, who was conferred the Vir Chakra posthumously, was a native of Kadukalur village in Ramanathapuram district and his remains were laid to rest with state honours at the village on June 18, 2020.

The state government provided a relief of ₹20 lakh and a junior assistant job in the district supply office at Ramanathapuram to Vanathi. She had also received ₹20 lakh from the Governor as relief. The Krishnan International school at Devipattinam, where her son is studying in the seventh standard and daughter in fourth, has assured the family that it would provide free education.

him.. "He told me his (retirement) papers were through and he would return home in a week's time and asked me to go ahead with the house warming ceremony on June 3 which I did," she said. Both hoped that they would reunite on their wedding day on June 6. But fate willed otherwise.

On June 15, she was informed about his sacrifice at Galwan Valley. "Our wish that we would begin

life anew in our newly constructed home never materialised," Vanathi said. Recalling the arduous life of a soldier guarding India's frontiers, she said, "most of us think a soldier's life is laid-back. But the lurking threat from enemies apart, there is then the health problems while serving at high altitudes (where the body is starved of oxygen)." People realised the need for oxy-

gen only during the second coronavirus wave, claimed Vanathi who herself recovered from Covid-19 recently. She contracted the infection after she performed election duty for the state assembly polls in April this year, but she recovered and resumed work. Speaking to PTI, Major (Retd) Madhan Kumar, a geopolitical analyst and co-founder of Armour of Care, a NGO, said: "Havildar Palani had a choice to stay back as he was due to retire. But he chose to join his colonel in resisting China's attempt to occupy our territory." Twenty Indian soldiers were killed on June 15 last year in the Galwan Valley in fierce hand-to-hand combat with Chinese troops, triggering a large deployment of troops and heavy weaponry by both armies at the friction points in eastern Ladakh. —PTI

HC: Applications filed by senior citizens should be disposed of within 2 months

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

Coming to the aid of the senior citizens in Tamil Nadu, the Madras high court has directed the chief secretary to issue circular to all the district collectors to ensure that the applications and appeals filed under the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007, are disposed of by conducting an enquiry within two months from the date of receipt of such applications or appeals.

"This circular in this regard would be imminent in order to protect the fundamental right of the senior citizen for life, which is to be meaningful and decent", said Justice S.M.Subramaniam while disposing of a petition filed by G.Balajian, which sought a direction to the authorities to dispose of his appeal relating to monthly maintenance.

Petitioner's counsel P.Vijendran submitted that the petitioner was a retired employee of Tamil Nadu State Transport Corporation. He has two daughters and a son by name B.Pattabiraman. He purchased a housing plot and constructed a house. All the children were educated and got married and living separately.

He relinquished his works to his son and his son was not taking care and further, usurped his property forcibly by obtaining a settlement. Thus, he filed a petition before the Revenue Divisional Officer, Tiruvavur district, under section 23 of the MWPSA Act and a sum of Rs 10,000 per month was ordered as maintenance. Even the said amount of maintenance has not been paid by his son.

Thus, he filed an appeal before the Tiruvavur district collector under section 16 of the said Act. Though he filed an application on January 22, 2021, for the past 5 months, he was suffering and not receiving any maintenance amount from his son, Vijendran

Court with heavy heart allows 'tainted' EO to voluntarily retire from service

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

Pointing out that as far as litigants are concerned, the court is a temple of justice, but, unfortunately, this court is not in a position to render justice to the temple, on account of the flaws committed by the authorities, the Madras high court, with a heavy heart, allowed a petition filed by an executive officer, a miscreant, who looted the temple properties to the tune of ₹1.39 crore, which sought to permit him to voluntarily retire from service.

Justice S.Vaidyanathan allowed the petition filed by R.Muthuswamy, while setting aside an order of the Commissioner of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment department, rejecting the application of the petitioner for voluntary retirement.

The case of the petitioner was that he joined the services of the HR & CE as executive officer grade-III on October 16, 2000, and was subsequently promoted as executive officer grade-I from June 19, 2016. He, after completing 20 years of service, had submitted an application for voluntary retirement from service on August 3, 2020.

According to HR & CE department, the application of the petitioner was received on August 17, 2020, and thereafter, on September

added.

Disposing of the petition, Justice Subramaniam said this court was of the considered opinion that the applications as well as the appeals filed under the provisions of the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, must be considered and disposed of by the competent authorities

Justice S.Vaidyanathan allowed the petition filed by R.Muthuswamy, while setting aside an order of the Commissioner of Hindu Religious and Charitable Endowment department, rejecting the application of the petitioner for voluntary retirement

8, 2020, there was a communication to the petitioner, stating that he has been placed under suspension for various irregularities committed by him during his tenure as executive officer grade-I and he was also paid subsistence allowance.

Pointing out Rule 56 (3) (f) of the Tamil Nadu Fundamental Rules, which stated that the appointing authority should take a decision on the application submitted by an employee for VRS within 3 months from the date of receipt of such application, Justice Vaidyanathan said in this case, the authorities should have either accepted or rejected the application for VRS on or before November 4, 2020, and to the contrary, though the rejection order was dated November 5, 2020, it was signed only on November 12, 2020, and the same would not have been communicated to the petitioner before November 12, 2020. Merely because the letter has been drafted, approved at the office level on November 5, 2020, cannot be a ground to state that there was a rejection within

as expeditiously as possible. Prolongation and procrastination of the application would cause prejudice to the livelihood of the elderly persons. The very purpose and object of the Act was to ensure that the aged persons were being maintained properly. Thus, the delay would result in denial of right and amounts to violation of the constitu-

to find a man in his early 20s lying dead near the electric fence. Based on the alert, the Madurantakam police rushed to the spot. They have sent the body of the deceased to Madurantakam government hospital for post-mortem. Police suspect that the man might have touched the fence connected to a high tension power supply and was electrocuted on the spot late on Monday night. Madurantakam police registered a case against Raja and Janarthanan and investigations were on.

The fence was erected illicitly with electricity to prevent animals from entering the field and causing damage to crops, police said. Rules permit fences with low voltage to give a mild shock to keep away animals from entering farms.

HC refuses to stay release of Tamil film Maha

How do you handle advocates misbehaving with officials on duty, high court asks BCTP

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

The Madras high court has declined to restrain M/s Etcetera Entertainment, represented by its authorized signatory V.Mathiazhagan, producer of the Tamil film 'Maha' from releasing the movie starring popular film star T.R.Silambarasan and Hansika, either by way of theatrical exhibition, in satellite or digital exhibition such as OTT platforms throughout the world.

Justice G.Jayachandran declined to grant an interim injunction while dismissing an application arising out of a suit filed by Ubaid Rahman Jameel, director of the film Maha.

The judge said according to the plaintiff, he has entered into an agreement with the Etcetera Entertainment to direct the movie Maha. He was not permitted to complete the movie as per his wish and the movie has been edited and completed with the help of his assistant Vijay, in his absence and hence, the suit has been filed to restrain the defendants from releasing the movie without vital scenes running to the tune of about 30 minutes and also to pay a sum of ₹15.85 lakh being the balance of the salary payable to him as per the director's agreement, besides compensation of ₹10 lakh, the judge added.

The judge said however, this application was contested by advocate Vijayan Subramanian, appearing for the producer on the ground that the movie shooting was completed and ready to be released at OTT platform, after obtaining clearance from Censor Board.

As far as the misunder-

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

The Madras high court has directed the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry to file a status report on June 17, 2021, as to the mechanism that is in place for taking action against members of the legal fraternity as also the action that have been taken against such of those advocates, who have misbehaved in the public place with the officials on duty.

Justice M.Dhandapani gave the directive while passing interim orders on the anticipatory bail petitions filed by Tanuja Rajan, a lawyer and her daughter, who apprehended arrest in connection with a case registered against them for various offences including deterring the officials from discharging their duty and threatening the police personnel on June 6, 2021 at Chetpet in the city.

standing between the plaintiff and the Etcetera Entertainment, the issue was escalated by a complaint given by the plaintiff to the Director's Association and after mediation, the plaintiff and the defendants agreed to settle the dispute as per the terms of agreement arrived at on February 18, 2021.

A sum of ₹5.50 lakh towards the balance remuneration has been paid by way of DD drawn in favour of Director's Association and in turn the plaintiff has agreed to complete the shooting and editing of the final ver-



The judge said amidst the pandemic, which has been raging through the entire human race, the health workers and the uniformed services were performing an arduous duty with due diligence and with scant care for their health and well being. Such was the enormity of their service, each and every common man throughout the country were recognising their service and were applauding their efforts in not only keeping under control the law and order of the state, but also keeping in check the spread of the deadly virus amongst the human race, the judge

added. "It is a harsh reality that instances of such nature by the members of the legal fraternity are on the increase. Though for unruly and indisciplined behaviour, other persons, who work for one or other arm of the government, mechanism of disciplinary action is contemplated under the relevant Acts and Rules governing the service, yet, when it comes to the legal fraternity, the initiative and control vests on the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu, to take appropriate action against such of those unruly advocates who involve themselves in these kinds of acts, which demeans the profession. However, the mechanism that is in place to take action against such individuals, who involve themselves in indisciplined acts and misbehave with the officials on duty, are not clearly spelt out by the Bar Council of Tamil Nadu," the judge said.

terms of the agreement, the director shall have no right, title interest or other claim whatsoever over the works created on the work generated for the film. In the said circumstances, this court is of the view that it is not a fit case for granting injunction. Hence, the application seeking injunction is dismissed. However, before the release of the movie Maha the producer shall ensure the payment of ₹5.50 lakh to the applicant as agreed and file a memo in the registry to vouchsafe the receipt of ₹5.50 lakh by the applicant", the judge added.

SHORT TAKES

DELHI HC BLASTS MISUSE OF UAPA

FROM PG1

The words 'terrorist act', including conspiracy and act preparatory to the commission of a terrorist act, were brought within the purview of UAPA by the amendment of 2004, on the heels of Parliament repealing POTA in 2004 and TADA having already been repealed in 1995," the court said.

On the "right to protest", the court said the government may prohibit public meetings, demonstrations or protests on streets or highways to avoid nuisance or disturbance of traffic, "but it cannot close all streets or open areas for public meetings, thereby defeating the fundamental right that flows from Article 19(1)(a) 19 (1)(b) of the Constitution".

Ms Narwal and Ms Kalita, both JNU Ph.D. scholars linked with women's rights group Pinira Tod Collective, and Mr Tanha were arrested in May 2020. They were accused of being "master-minds" of the February 2020 violence in northeast Delhi and denied regular bail by the trial court.

Ms Narwal, Ms Kalita and Mr Tanha are accused in four, three and two cases, respectively, relating to communal riots that broke out on February 24 last year and will now be released from jail as they have already got bail in other matters.

The high court directed Ms Narwal, Ms Kalita and Mr Tanha to surrender their passports and not to offer any inducement to prosecution witnesses or tamper with the evidence in the case. It also said the three accused shall not indulge in any unlawful activities and shall reside at the address as mentioned in records.

PASWAN REMOVED AS NATIONAL PRESIDENT OF LJP

FROM PG1

"I tried very hard to keep the party formed by my father and my family united, but I failed. Party is like a mother and we must never betray our mother. People are above all else in a democracy. I thank those who had faith in the party," he wrote.

According to the Paras group, Suraj Bhan will function as working president until a new president is elected and by the end of this week, Pashupati Kumar Paras' takeover of his brother's party will be complete. While the Chirag group maintains that it still has the reins and the hold of the party, Mr Paswan was ousted on the basis of the "One Man, One Post", said the rebel MP.

Both factions moved swiftly to take control of the party a day after Mr Paras, the youngest brother of Chirag Paswan's father and party founder Ram Vilas Paswan, was recognised by the Lok Sabha secretariat as the leader of the LJP in the Lower House on Monday evening.

While Chirag Paswan has been isolated in the parliamentary party as all other MPs have backed Mr Paras, insiders claim that he continues to draw support from other leaders in the organisation. The matter is now likely to reach the Election Commission as both factions have claimed to represent the party.

Seeds of revolt were sown last year when Chirag Paswan decided to break away from the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in Bihar's Assembly election and focus his energies on defeating ally Nitish Kumar. While the LJP won just one Assembly seat out of Bihar's 243.

BRING COVID UNDER CONTROL, STALIN TELLS DIST COLLECTORS

FROM PG1

A prosperous Tamil Nadu with abundant opportunities, happy farmers reaping bumper harvests, water for all, top class education and health-care facilities, a state of beautiful cities, high standard of living with top notch infrastructure and everything for everyone are the seven goals, he said.

The Chief Minister explained to the Collectors the various efforts made by the government to build a robust medical infrastructure in the recent past, thus ensuring that there was no scarcity for beds or oxygen and such facilities.



A beneficiary receives a dose of Covid-19 vaccine during a vaccination camp for students and citizens at a polyclinic in Gurugram on Tuesday. — PTI

India confirms 1st death following vaccination

Docs warn of worse crisis than 2nd wave if norms not followed

VINEETA PANDEY | DC with agencies input NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

A government panel studying Covid-19 vaccine side effects has confirmed the first death due to anaphylaxis following vaccination.

The causality assessment of 31 reported Serious Adverse Events Following Immunisation (AEFI) cases following Covid-19 vaccination was carried out by the panel.

"It is the first death linked to Covid vaccination due to anaphylaxis. It re-emphasises the need to wait for 30 minutes after receiving jab. Most of the anaphylactic reactions occur during this period. Timely treatment can prevent deaths," said Dr N.K. Arora, Chairman, of Covid working group. The Union health ministry in a statement said any death or hospitalisation following vaccination cannot be automatically assumed to be due to vaccination though states have been directed to make causality assessments to understand whether the "Adverse Event Following Immunisation" was caused directly due to vaccine.

"The number of deaths reported following Covid-19 vaccination in the country is only 0.0002% of 23.5 crore doses administered which is within the expected death rates in a population...It is also important to note that the mortality rates for those testing positive for Covid-19 disease is more than 1% and Covid-19 vaccination can prevent these deaths. Therefore, the risk of dying following vaccination is negligible as compared to the known risk of dying due to Covid-19 disease," the ministry said.

Meanwhile, India recorded 60,471 daily new



A beneficiary shows the money that she received as Covid relief provided by the state government in Kanyakumari district on Tuesday. — PTI

cases of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours which is lowest after 75 days. The daily deaths were 2,726 and recoveries were more than double the fresh detection. The Recovery Rate has reached 95.64%.

Mumbai's Dharavi, for the second consecutive day did not report a single case of Covid. The area has since January 2021 reported 6,861 cases and 359 deaths and has at present 13 active cases. The cases were much less in Mumbai too with 575 new detections. Delhi that too has seen a major dip on Tuesday recorded 228 new cases.

However, a major challenge for these cities that are now opening up is to control the next wave which looks inevitable given the crowd that s out on roads and number of people seen defying social distancing and masks norms. The latest to ease up curbs is Bihar from June 16 to 22 during which government and private offices will function till 5 pm, and shops will remain open till 6 pm. Night curfew will be in place from 8 pm to 5 am. Uttar Pradesh has reduced night curfew timings by two hours from next week while allowing restaurants and malls to function at 50 % capacity.

Doctors have warned that a situation 'worse than the second wave' may erupt if people do not adhere to safety norms and lower their guards. The remarks from many doctors have come after visuals of various crowded markets surfaced.

Dr Suranjit Chatterjee, a senior consultant at Delhi's Apollo Hospitals warned that if safety norms are not followed by people and if there is no strict enforcement in case of violations, then "we are in for a trouble again". He said if people show laxity then possibly the next wave could be worse than the second wave situation.

Dr Richa Sareen, consultant of pulmonology at Fortis hospital said, "The threat of the third wave hitting is quite real and not a hypothesis. We hoped that people will learn lessons from the second wave, but seems we are not being wise as common people. Situation will be worse than during the second wave if we do not wise up."

The Centre is hoping that with more vaccines available now, the pace of vaccination should pick up from next week. Till now less than 4% Indians have been fully vaccinated. Dr V.K. Paul said trial results of new vaccines Novavax are encouraging, and the vaccine is safe and efficacious.

ASSAM SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE TO REMAIN SHUT

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JUNE 15

Despite the failure of the state education department in facilitating online education to the students enrolled in government schools for various reasons during the first Covid lockdown in 2020, the Assam government on Tuesday decided to extend the closure of schools further after preponed summer vacation and directed the authorities to conduct online classes for students.

In an official order issued on Monday evening the principal secretary of the secondary education department B. Kalyan Chakravarty directed officials of district administrations to arrange for online classes so that there is continuity in students' learning process. The summer vacation, which was postponed due to Covid lockdown, ended on June 14.

He asked directors of secondary and elementary education, all inspectors of schools, other officials of the department and heads of government and private educational institutes to take steps to conduct online classes until further orders or till the reopening of these institutes.

The order which was issued on Monday came into force with immediate effect.

The government had advanced the one-month summer vacation in schools from May 15 amid a raging second wave of Covid-19.

Galwan 2020: The night that changed the neighbourhood

PROBAL DAS GUPTA

A year has passed since Colonel Santhosh Babu and his band of gallant men from 16 Bihar Regiment laid down their lives in the Galwan clash against the PLA, the Chinese army. The fateful night, a year ago, which claimed their lives will not go down in history as yet another night of betrayal by a bete noire whose characteristic reliance on deceit and denial is well known.

Instead, on this occasion, Col Babu's bravehearts decided to not let the enemy's surprise moves stun them. They acted fearlessly and inflicted upon an armed enemy a number of casualties they had never expected. These brave soldiers set into motion the template of India's actions to follow in Ladakh against an enemy that had broken a soldier's code of conduct. The Indian Army redoubled the aggression and vigil against China along the LAC.

Through their brave actions, they exposed Chinese doublespeak about honour and patriotism. PLA soldiers who died in Galwan clash were never recognised by China or given honour by their country, as the fallen Indian soldiers received. Col. Babu, in his death, showed that a courageous leader on ground can expose the machinations of a powerful nation known for its doublespeak.

The fateful incident was followed by action in August when the Indian Army outpaced the Chinese to dominate heights of Kailash ranges in eastern Ladakh and put China at a disadvantage.

On a strategic level, two countries slid down a path farther away from normalcy. The PLA increased its presence along the LAC and reinforced a robust rear infrastructure to support the forward troops. India too ramped up troop deployment and infrastructure on high priority. Galwan began a clamour for India to widen its sphere of rivalry with China and take advantage of the oceans.

It opened up Chinese insecurity about India's advantage in the region, especially the Indian Ocean region. Thus, China rebooted its influence in Sri Lanka, Nepal and Myanmar. India finally shed its inhibitions about expressing closeness to the US and finally threw its lot with the QUAD club.

American interests had traditionally aroused suspicion in India, but in 2020, China made sure it was a choice thrust upon India in the face of medieval hostilities and unconcealed belligerence. Indians are sometimes misled by history to often quote that this Indian Army is no longer the Army of 1962. Such an analogy is misplaced and ludicrous.

History has had two battles and standoffs between India and China since 1962. Those were in 1967 and 1987: India triumphed over China both times,

Sonia asks govt to come clean on Galwan incident

New Delhi, June 15: Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday asked the government to come clean on the Galwan Valley incident in which 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives a year ago and sought to know the progress made in restoring status quo ante at the border.

In a statement, she said no clarity is yet available on the Chinese transgressions at the border, which Prime Minister Narendra Modi has denied.

Gandhi said the Congress has patiently waited for the government to come clean and inform the nation about the circumstances in which the unprecedented incident happened and reassure the people that the sacrifice of our brave jawans was not in vain.

"The Congress party reiterates its concern that no clarity is yet available and the prime minister's last word on the subject a year ago was that no transgression had occurred," she said.

"We have repeatedly sought details of the episode in light of the PM's statement, as well as details of what progress

has been made towards restoring the status quo ante prior to April 2020," she also said.

The Congress chief said that the disengagement agreement with China "appears to have worked entirely to India's disadvantage so far".

"The Congress party urges the government to take the nation into confidence and ensure that their performance is worthy of the commitment of our soldiers who are standing bravely and resolutely at the borders," she said in her statement.

Gandhi also said, "As we approach the first anniversary of the tragic loss of 20 brave soldiers of the Bihar Regiment, including their commanding officer, in the confrontation with PLA troops of China on the night of June 15-16, 2020, the Congress party joins a grateful nation in remembrance of their supreme sacrifice."

The 20 Indian soldiers lost their lives in clashes with PLA troops at the India-China border in the Galwan Valley in eastern Ladakh on the intervening night of June 15 and 16, 2020. — PTI



Maj Gen Akash Kaushik, Officiating GOC Fire and Fury Corps laid a wreath at Leh War Memorial and paid homage to martyrs who laid down their lives at Galwan on June 15, 2020. — PTI

once by inflicting casualties and on another occasion without firing a single bullet.

Therefore, when the Indian Army took the Kailash heights in August last year and turned the tables on China, it was a reminder of 1987 instead, when the PLA was pushed back without fighting a battle.

Over four decades had passed without a single bullet being fired by the two countries at each other. And then, China disrupted history. It all started with that fateful night, when Col. Babu and his band of gallants walked up to the Chinese to ask them to leave.

The columnist is the author of 'Watershed 1967: India's Forgotten Victory Over China, who retired as a Major in the Indian Army and is a visiting faculty at Columbia University

I FEEL PROUD OF MY HUSBAND: PALANI'S WIFE

Chennai, June 15: A year after the Galwan skirmish, Vanathi Devi, widow of Havildar K. Palani, still remembers her beloved was not able to keep his promise of returning home but his final moments and heroic sacrifice in the fight with Chinese troops makes her feel proud of him.

Not only his sacrifice in the mountainous Galwan Valley, but also those of others besides the lives of soldiers guarding the frontiers in high altitude region speak volumes of the untold sacrifices of the country's army men, she said. "Even after a year, my life continues to be gloomy due to his demise." — PTI

VACCINE | HESITANCY

Local initiatives, intervention by state govt help create awareness among people on vaccine

In MP villages, social boycott, fatwa counter 'jab fears'

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 15

Elders and religious leaders have joined the campaign to overcome vaccine hesitancy particularly among the rural population in Madhya Pradesh by issuing social boycott calls and fatwas.

Village elders in four panchayats, Ratibad, Sarvor, Sikandarabad and Mundla, in Bhopal districts met in Khekra village, nearly 35 km from here last week to find a way to remove vaccine hesitancy among the locals.

"We have decided to deny the people who refuse to get vaccinated to participate in any social and religious functions in our villages since they have the potential to turn spreaders

in future", Naresh Kushwaha (69) of Ratibad, nearly 35 km from here told this newspaper on Tuesday.

The four panchayats have a population of around 20,000.

Of them, hardly 4,000 people have so far received at least the first dose of vaccine.

According to Kushwaha, rumours on the negative impact of the vaccine have turned many villagers away from vaccines. "We had held no less than half a dozen meetings of villagers to convince them to get vaccinated. But, they started arguing against vaccination forcing us to take the tough decision to keep them away from the social and religious functions in the interest of safety of other villagers", Nandan

● BESIDES, THE govt has launched 'Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti' drive to help generate awareness among the people on vaccination in the state.

Dwividy of Mundla panchayat said.

Almost the entire population of Fatehpur Dabra panchayat in Bhopal district has turned away the mobile vaccine teams following rumours that the vaccine causes serious illness. The panchayat has around 5,000 inhabitants. The local administration has taken the help of the local Muslim cleric to ensure vaccination of his community.

Accordingly, the local cleric Abdul Kalam Qasmi issued a fatwa asking people of his community to

get vaccinated in the interest of their health.

In fact, local sub-divisional magistrate (SDM) Jameel Khan had approached the cleric seeking his help for vaccination of people of his community, leading the latter to issue the fatwa.

Similar tactics being employed by leaders of societies in other villages in the districts of Indore, Chhatarpur, Tikamgarh, Damoh, Alirajpur, Dhar, Betul, Raisen, and Chhindwara have started paying dividends, official reports reaching state health department here said.

Besides the initiatives by the locals, intervention by the state government has helped remove vaccine hesitancy in many villages in the state, a senior health department officer

said. "We have developed a mechanism to tackle vaccine hesitancy among some people in the rural pockets of the state. We have prepared modules of rumours making rounds and how to act on them", state vaccine coordinator Dr Santosh Shukla told this newspaper.

The crisis management committees constituted at the village level have been effectively dealing with the challenge, he added.

Besides, the state government has launched 'Yuva Shakti Corona Mukti' campaign to generate awareness among the people on vaccination.

"We are going to deploy 16 lakh college students in the state after imparting them training to give a big push to the vaccination", Dr Shukla said.

KERALA ALL SET TO LIFT LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS FROM THURSDAY

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 15

The Kerala government on Tuesday decided to lift lockdown restrictions in the state from Thursday.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan while addressing his daily news conference said the restrictions would be lifted in a planned manner. However, curbs would continue in areas which still have high number of cases and increased test positivity rates.

The following factors led to the decision to relax lockdown restrictions — on May 15 the active cases in Kerala were 4,45,333. As

on Tuesday the number stood at 1,12,361. Test positivity rate on May 15 was 27.8 per cent and on Tuesday it was below 15 per cent.

Meanwhile, the Jharkhand government on Tuesday extended Covid-related lockdown-like restrictions till June 24 with some relaxations, including opening of shopping malls and departmental stores till 4 pm, an official said.

Inter-state and Intra-state bus transport shall remain prohibited except for the buses specifically used by the district administration till June 24 morning, the state government said.

SHORT TAKES

4 DEAD, 4 HURT IN CHICAGO SHOOTING: COPS

Chicago, June 15: An argument in a house on Chicago's South Side early Tuesday erupted into gunfire, leaving four women dead and four other people injured, police said.

The shooting happened at 5:42 a.m. in the city's Englewood neighbourhood, police said, and no arrests were immediately made. Police had few details about the victims, but it appeared that none of them were juveniles. Detectives were still trying to determine if there was more than one gunman and that they were still trying to find witnesses, police spokesman Tom Ahern said. A young child was removed safely from the house and placed in protective custody, he said.

FIVE KILLED AS AFGHAN POLIO TEAMS ATTACKED

Kabul, June 15: Gunmen on Tuesday targeted an anti-polio drive in eastern Afghanistan, killing at least five members of two vaccination teams in separate attacks, officials said. No militant group immediately claimed responsibility for the attacks that took place in the city of Jalalabad, as well as in the nearby districts of Khoyani and Surkhrod, according to Attaullah Khogyani, spokesman for the governor in Nangarhar province. Jalalabad is the provincial capital.

Along with the five killed, at least four members of the polio vaccination teams were wounded, said Dr. Jan Mohammad, who coordinates the anti-polio drive for the country's east.

Khogyani added that two of the wounded were in critical condition.

FIRE HYDRANT PLANT WORKER KILLS TWO, SELF

Albertville, June 15: A worker who killed two people and wounded two more at an Alabama fire hydrant plant early Tuesday has been found dead, apparently after killing himself in a car, a police chief said. "The person was deceased from what appears to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound," Police Chief Jamie Smith told AL.com. The gunfire — among the latest in a spate of shootings across the U.S. — broke out about 2:30 a.m. at a Mueller Co. plant in Albertville, Smith told reporters.

The gunman then got in a vehicle and left the factory. His body was found hours later inside a car in Guntersville, about 15 miles (24 kilometres) away, Smith said. Smith says it wasn't immediately clear what prompted the shooting.

SECOND ARREST MADE IN DEADLY AUSTIN SHOOTING

Austin (US), June 15: Police made a second arrest in a weekend shooting that killed a man and left more than a dozen more people wounded after gunfire rang out on a busy, downtown Austin entertainment district.

Officers arrested a 17-year-old boy at Harker Heights High School in Harker Heights on Monday, according to statements from Austin police and the Killeen Independent School District. He is facing a charge of aggravated assault.

Austin police are working closely with the Killeen Independent School District and its police department in the investigation.

A spokesman for Killeen school police confirmed the arrest of the 17-year-old and referred further questions to the school district about 70 miles (112.65 km) north of Austin. The school district referred questions to Austin police, who did not immediately respond to a request for comment.

BIDEN EASES EU TRADE FRICTION AHEAD OF PUTIN MEET

Brussels, June 15: President Joe Biden on Tuesday moved to end a long-running dispute with the European Union over subsidies for aircraft manufacturers, a major breakthrough in the US-EU trade relationship that comes on the eve of his highly anticipated meeting with Russian President Vladimir Putin.

The announcement that the two sides reached resolution in a 17-year dispute over how much of a government subsidy each can provide for its aircraft manufacturing giant — Boeing in the United States and Airbus in the EU — came as Biden met with

European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

With the move, Biden eases a major point of tension in the trans-Atlantic relationship at a moment he's seeking to marshal widespread European support for his efforts to counter Russia prior to his Wednesday meeting in Geneva with Putin.

US Trade Representative Katherine Tai said that the agreement calls for a five-year suspension of the aircraft tariffs, and stressed that it was time to put aside the fight and focus on China's economic assertiveness.

Lancet study says Pfizer, AZ vaccines protect against Delta

Researchers say 2 doses offer better shield against the strain than one dose

London, June 15: The Delta variant of Coronavirus, first identified in India, doubles the risk of hospitalisation compared with the Alpha variant first found in the UK, but Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines provide good protection against the strain, says a study published in The Lancet journal.

Researchers at Public Health Scotland and the University of Edinburgh, UK, found that the Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine offered better protection against the Delta variant compared to the Oxford-AstraZeneca preventive, known as Covishield in India.

The analysis covered the period from April 1 to June 6, 2021, for the demographic distribution of cases. The team analysed 19,543 confirmed SARS-CoV-2 infections over the period of interest, of whom 377 were admitted to hospital for Covid-19 in Scotland.

Around 7,723 community cases and 134 hospitalisations were found to have the Delta variant of Coronavirus. The study found that the Pfizer vaccine offered 92 per cent protection against the Alpha variant and 79 per cent against the Delta strain two weeks after the second dose.

For AstraZeneca's vaccine, there was 60 per cent protection against Delta compared with 73 per cent for Alpha variant, the researchers said.

They also found that two doses of vaccine provide much better protection against the Delta variant compared to a single dose. "Risk of Covid-19 hospital admission was approximately doubled in those with the Delta variant of concern (VOC) when compared to the Alpha VOC, with risk of admission particularly increased in those with five or more relevant comorbidities," the authors of the study noted. "Both the Oxford-Ast-



Nearly 11,000 graduates, including more than 2,000 students who could not attend the graduation ceremony last year due to the Covid-19 outbreak, attend a graduation ceremony at Central China Normal University in Wuhan, in China's central Hubei province.

California reopens, bids adieu to most Covid curbs

San Francisco, June 15: California, the first state in America to put in place a Coronavirus lockdown, is now turning a page on the pandemic.

At the stroke of midnight, California is lifting most of its Covid-19 restrictions and ushering in what has been billed as the state's "Grand Reopening". Starting Tuesday, there will be no more state

rules on social distancing, and no more limits on capacity at restaurants, bars, supermarkets, gyms, stadiums or anywhere else. And masks — one of the most symbolic and fraught symbols of the pandemic — will no longer be mandated for vaccinated people in most settings, though businesses and counties can still require them.

Just in time for summer, California wants to send the message that life in the Golden State is getting much closer to normal. The economy is fully reopening for the first time in 15 months and people can largely return to pre-pandemic lifestyles. Fans can cheer mask-less at Dodgers and Giants games. Disneyland is throwing its doors open. — AP

raZeneca and Pfizer-BioNTech Covid-19 vaccines were effective in reducing the risk of SARS-CoV-2 infection and Covid-19 hospitalisation in people with the Delta VOC," they said. However, the researchers

noted that these effects on infection with Delta variant appeared to be diminished when compared to those with the Alpha VOC. The authors of the study warned that the vaccine comparison should be

interpreted with caution due to differences in the groups which received each type of vaccine, and also in how quickly immunity is developed with each shot.

— PTI

China gas blast toll rises to 25 Beijing says no radiation after N-power plant leak

Beijing, June 15: The death toll from a powerful gas explosion in central China's Hubei province has more than doubled to 25, according to the local authorities. The explosion ripped through a residential neighbourhood in Zhangwan district of Shiyan city on Sunday, killing at least 12 people and trapping a large number of people under the rubble of their homes.

The blast rocked a two-storey trade market building in a residential community. China's state-run Xinhua news agency reported on late Monday night that the death toll has risen to 25. Rescue and debris cleaning are still underway, the information office of the provincial government of Hubei told the media. A team has been set up to investigate the blast, and Hubei will launch a province-wide blanket inspection to root out potential work safety hazards, said Shi Zheng, the head of the provincial emergency management department.

The Chinese government has ordered an inspection of all commercial and domestic gas pipelines. Chinese President Xi Jinping had called for a thorough probe into the cause of the blast and ordered to rescue the injured. "In light of numerous

Beijing, June 15: China on Tuesday played down the reports of a leak at one of its nuclear power plants, asserting that there is no abnormal environmental radioactive level in the surrounding areas and the public "safety is guaranteed". China's response came after CNN reported on Monday that the US government was assessing a report of a leak at a Chinese nuclear power plant, after a French company that partly owns and helps to operate it warned of an "imminent radiological threat". The warning included an accusation that the Chinese safety

ty authority was raising the acceptable limits for radiation detection outside the Taishan Nuclear Power Plant in Guangdong province in order to avoid having to shut it down. "I want stress that based on the information we got from competent authorities to date, the Taishan Nuclear Power Plant meets the requirements of the technical specifications and there is no abnormal environmental radioactive level in areas surrounding the power plant, so safety is guaranteed", Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said.

accidents at companies and on campuses, all must work together to shoulder their responsibilities, strengthen their political comprehension and root out the causes of such hazards," Xi had said.

— PTI



MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (RAILWAY BOARD)

EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

Executive Director (PSU), Ministry of Railways (Railway Board), Government of India, invites 'Expression of Interest' from PSU's for "Assignment of Railway Works to PSU on competition basis" These works will be in the area of '**Road Over Bridges (RoB)**'. Based on the response to the EOI a masterlist of eligible PSU's shall be prepared.

Respective PSU's are requested to give their 'Expression of Interest' for the above work along with details of last five years comprising of financial data, experience in the sector, and the track record for the last five years i.e. details of projects awarded with list and details of projects completed in the last five years.

Details for 'Expression of Interest' are available for download on https://indianrailways.gov.in/railwayboard/view_section.jsp?id=0,1,304,366,542

Responses may be submitted within 15 days of publication of this EoI to Executive Director (PSU)/Railway Board, Room No. 316, Rail Bhawan, New Delhi - 110001, or by email to edpsu.rob@gmail.com along with all documents.

Follow us on: 

For DRMC(Comm.), Nagpur

RailMadad Helpline 139

IN OMAN, FATAL FUNGAL INFECTION IN SOME PATIENTS

Dubai, June 15: Oman announced on Tuesday that its doctors have detected a potentially fatal fungal infection afflicting some Coronavirus patients, the first such known cases on the Arabian Peninsula as the sultanate faces a surge in Covid-19 infections that has swamped its hospitals.

The country's Health Ministry reported that three Covid-19 patients in Oman have become infected with mucormycosis, a life-threatening condition commonly known as "black fungus", which has spread quickly among virus patients in hard-hit India.

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE FOR DEVELOPMENT OF RAIL MUSEUM

Srl. No. (1) E-Tender No. DRM-ENG-G-BSP-T-32-21-22, Date 09.06.2021.

Work: "Development to Heritage Rail Museum at Bilaspur under the jurisdiction Sr. DEN/Settlement/Bilaspur". Tender value (In Rs.): 1,88,50,184.54/-, EMD (In Rs.): 0/-, Completion Period: 09 Months

Start date of Submission of Tender: From 11.00 hrs. on 16.06.2021. Last date of Submission of Tender: Upto 11.00 hrs. on 30.06.2021

The Complete information of above e-tender Notices is available over websites <https://www.ireps.gov.in> Bids other than e-bids shall not be accepted against above tenders & tender document uploaded in web site on dated 09.06.2021.

Divl. Railway Manager (Engg.)
CPR/10/51 S.E.C. Railway/BSP
f South East Central Railway | e @secrail

SOUTH EAST CENTRAL RAILWAY

E-TENDER NOTICE

Tender Notice No.: CDMS-G-GSD-R-4-WHEELER-005 Name of work: Hiring of one Diesel Operated 4 wheeler multi utility vehicle (Mahindra Bolero Camper/ Tata Xenon or equivalent) for carriage of Railway Stores with minimum seating capacity of 4 person excluding driver & materials carrying capacity up to 01 MT (approx) for a period of 24 Months. Tender Value : Rs. 7,90,640.88/- EMD: Exempted. Submission of Tender: Upto 15:00 Hrs. on 19/07/2021. For further details/ purchase of tender document, eligibility criteria & the complete details for the above work. Please contact office of the CMM/GSD/ SECOR Raipur or refer/download tender document which is available on our website : www.ireps.gov.in

CMM/GSD
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f South East Central Railway | e @secrail

CENTRAL RAILWAY

Leasing of Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET)

TENDER NOTICE

Tender for Leasing of Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET) on round trip basis Ex GNQ to NTSK for the period of Six years combined from the experienced contractors/Registered Cooperative Societies/Firms & Registered lease holders and others having average annual turnover of Rs. 10 Crores during the last three financial years. Items: Nagpur/Ajni. E-Tender Notice No.: NGP/C-152/GNQ-NTSK/PCET/21. Name of work: Tender for Leasing of Parcel Cargo Express Train (PCET) on round trip basis Ex GNQ to NTSK for the period of Six years. Cost of Tender Form: ₹ 10,000/- (₹ Ten Thousand Only). Completion Period: Six years from the date of commencement of work. Reserve Price: ₹ 23,98,459/- (Per Round Trip). Approximate Value: ₹ 49,74,71,471/- Earnest Money: ₹ 10,00,000/- (₹ Ten Lakh Only). Tender closing date & time: 07.07.2021 at 15.00 Hrs. Validity of offer: 60 days from the date of opening of tender. Type of Bid: Two packet system. Website: www.ireps.gov.in

1902230 For DRMC(Comm.), Nagpur

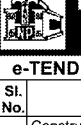
RailMadad Helpline 139

Sedition charge against Suu Kyi on day 2 of trial

Bangkok, June 15: The trial of Myanmar's deposed leader Aung San Suu Kyi entered its second day Tuesday, with the prosecution presenting arguments that she incited public disorder and flouted Coronavirus restrictions, part of a package of charges the ruling junta is seen as using to discredit her and consolidate its control. Suu Kyi and other members of her government and party were arrested by the military after the February 1 coup, with criminal charges brought

against some of the top figures on litany of charges that both their supporters and independent observers say are bogus.

The coup reversed years democratic reforms in Myanmar after decades of military rule and sparked widespread protests and international condemnation. Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party had been due to start a second five-year term of office after winning a landslide victory in a general election last November.



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e-TENDER - INVITATION FOR BIDS NO. 05/2021-22 Dt: 14.06.2021

Sl. No.	Name of work	App. Value Rs. in Lakhs	Sale Period	Opening
1.	Construction of New Office Building for Assistant Commissioner of Police, Puzhal Range at Puzhal in Chennai city. (SE/CC/DB/200/2021)	233.85	01.07.2021 to 14.07.2021	16.07.2021
2.	Construction of New Building for Fire and Rescue Service Station at T. Nagar in South Chennai Division. (Re-tender) (SE/CC/DB/1639/2020)	96.15	21.06.2021 to 30.06.2021	02.07.2021
3.	Construction of Deputy Superintendent of Police Camp Office cum Residence at Ponneri in Thiruvallur District. (SE/CC/DB/159/2021)	94.83	21.06.2021 to 30.06.2021	02.07.2021
4.	Construction of Traffic Police Station Building at Sholavaram in Thiruvallur District. (SE/CC/DB/581/2021)	89.18	21.06.2021 to 30.06.2021	02.07.2021

For other details visit: www.tntenders.gov.in and TNPHC website: www.tnphc.com

DIPR/1770/Tender/2021 Superintending Engineer/CC TNPHC Ltd., Chennai



CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

E-AUCTION SCHEDULE

Sub.: Schedule of E-Auction for the month of JULY 2021, AUGUST 2021 & SEPTEMBER 2021. It is proposed to hold following e-auction date in the month of July 2021, August 2021 & September 2021.: MONTH: JULY 2021. TYPE OF AUCTION: e-Auction. DATE: 07.07.2021 (Wednesday), 14.07.2021 (Wednesday), 22.07.2021 (Thursday). TIME: 10:00 hrs. MONTH: AUGUST 2021. TYPE OF AUCTION: e-Auction. DATE: 03.08.2021 (Tuesday), 10.08.2021 (Tuesday), 17.08.2021 (Tuesday). TIME: 10:00 hrs. MONTH: SEPTEMBER 2021. TYPE OF AUCTION: e-Auction. DATE: 01.09.2021 (Wednesday), 08.09.2021 (Wednesday), 15.09.2021 (Wednesday), 24.09.2021 (Friday). TIME: 10:00 hrs. On above mentioned date, time fixing for E-Auction for sale of various types of Vehicles, Crane, Machines i.e. Lathe, Drilling/ Milling/ Boring, Transformer, Rectifier, Ferrous and Non-ferrous scraps i.e. copper, aluminum etc. Non-ferrous scrap will be sold only to those who are registered by Ministry of Environment & Forest/Govt. of India/New Delhi. One time Registration Fees will be Rupees 10,000/- for each firm (Refundable, if a purchaser deems to permanently withdraw his registration for bidding from Indian Railways e-auction) in forms of Demand Draft in favour of PFA/CLW/Chittaranjan along with Affidavit. Catalogue of materials can be viewed in IREPS website before e-auction date.

PR6-078 Principal Chief Materials Manager CLW/Chittaranjan

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NORTHERN RAILWAY


TENDER NOTICE

Invitation of Tender through E-Tendering (E-Procurement Systems)

N.I.T. No.	S.N.	01-A, B & C-2021-22-W-V
1	Name of work with its location	1. Construction of balance boundary wall fencing with sleepers and steel channels at various locations on JNC-PWL section in the section of ADEN/TKD. Similar nature of work: Any civil work other than track work. 2. Repair and Strengthening of abutment, piers, underside RCC structure of ROB 4A (Anand Parbat), 7A Jakhira & 16A Naraina DEE-DEC section under ADEN/DEE. Similar nature of work: Construction of any bridge work. 3. CTR (P) of 38.0 Kms. on Delhi - Rewari (UP line) with 60kg 90 UTS rails laid on PSC wide sleepers 1660 density ballast cushion 25 to 35 cm. section of DLI Division. Similar nature of work: CTR/TRR/TFR/TTTR including raising of track, Deeping screening, distressing of track, pre & post works for track maintenance machine, TTR/PQRS/ballast, screening/regulating machines & TTR by T-28.
2	Approx. Cost of work	1 Rs. 7199994.49 2 Rs. 10999611.27 3 Rs. 62715702.10
3	Completion period of Work	1 12 Months 2 12 Months 3 12 Months
4	Date and time for submission of tender and opening of tender	Upto 15:00 hrs on 09.07.2021 Opening of tender at 15:00 hrs. On 09.07.2021.
5	Website particulars notice board location complete details of tender can be seen and address of the office from where the tender form can be purchased etc.	Above tender available on IREPS site i.e. www.ireps.gov.in

No. 128-W/280/OET/2021-22W-V/INT-01-A, B & C Dated: 14.06.2021 1310/21

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE



CHITTARANJAN LOCOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN TENDER

The following e-Tenders can be accessed under the link www.ireps.gov.in. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link www.ireps.gov.in → login → E-Tender Stores/Supply. Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any, Dy.CMM/HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 0341-2525594 or SMM/CON/HQ, 0341-2535631. [A] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/ e-Tender/19/0162 Date: 11/06/2021. Sl. No.: Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Qty.; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): [1]; 71211088; Cubical SB1 & SB2 (Bare) for WAG-9, WAP7 & WAP5 Electric Locomotive, as per Specn. CLW/MS/03/ 098Alt.10; 383.00 Set; 479980.00; 26/07/2021 at 11:00 am. [2]; 71211160B; Battery Box Complete & General Arrgt. of Battery Box Assy ; 1300.00 Numbers; 2000000.00; 02/08/2021 at 11:00 am. [3]; 81210095A; High Temperature Non Asbestos Fabric Mat, Size: 0.762 X 914 MM WIDE ; 390.00 Metre; 0.00; 15/07/2021 at 11:00 am. [4]; 81200863A; Polyamide Paper [NOMEX] Pap1, Size: 0.38 X 914 mm. [In continuous roll of 10m.]; 28.00 Metre; 0.00; 06/07/2021 at 11:00 am. [B] No. COS/CRJ/PUB/e-Tender/19/0162 Date: 12/06/2021. Sl. No.: Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Qty.; Earnest Money Deposit (Rupees); Tender Closing Date & Time (IST): [1]; 75213734; Housing Ring for WAG-9HC & WAP-7 as per CLW Drg. No. - 1209-01.313-004 Alt-1.; 1575.00 Numbers; 52180.00; 19/07/2021 at 11:00 am. [2]; 81210869A; Polyamide (NOMEX Type-410) Strip [U-Shaped Insulation]. Size: 5 Mil Thk X 25 plus minus 1 mm width X 140 plus minus 1 mm long; 53200.00 Numbers 0.00; 09/07/2021 at 11:00 am. [3]; 75204128A; Set of Fabricated Items For WAG-9HC Loco; 180.00 Set; 50880.00; 09/07/2021 at 11:00 am

Principal Chief Material Manager, CLW/Chittaranjan

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DECCAN Chronicle

16 JUNE 2021

G-7 endorses US plans to target China, Russia

The G-7 summit, the gathering of the leaders of the seven richest capitalist economies (the US, UK, Canada, Japan, France, Germany, Italy), in Cornwall (June 11-13) might have passed as another deliberative exercise to smoothen the pathways of the international market system, but it turned out to be a lot more, conceptually.

The practical aspects of the agenda of action outlined in the communiqué are for the future as it elaborates high-order political concerns. These ideas will necessarily have to be considered at the summit of the G-20 countries, the top 20 most consequential nations, which is not far away. In this group are China and Russia, which were at the receiving end in the G-7 deliberations. Fighting the pandemic, reviving the world economy, and climate change topped the agenda in Cornwall, but upholding democratic values seemed the real thing.

Leaders of the G-7 began to meet annually in the 1970s when the combined GDP of the member countries was around 80 per cent of the world GDP. The GDP of the G-7 is now only around 40 per cent of that of the world. The 47th summit due in 2020 had to be cancelled on account of the Covid pandemic, which has ravaged the international economy.

India backed the summit on free expression, and the need for democracies to take responsibility that pandemics don't strike the world again. It is the company that will matter, not the substance.

These key issues, seen through the prism of US foreign policy, appeared to hold primacy in Cornwall. Besides fighting the pandemic, working to arrest greenhouse gas emissions, imposing a minimum 15 per cent tax on international companies, and modernising the rules of the world trading system, the all-too-clear focus was building of an open society and its obverse — to check the authoritarian countries. In a loose sort of way, authoritarianism seems the new Communism, and fighting it is the new mantra. In this context, China and Russia, more so the former, were flagged as posing a danger to the world.

This was President Joe Biden's first international outing and he was keen to flag that he prioritised the re-building of ties with trans-Atlantic allies, which his predecessor had junked, and announce the return of America as leader. The G-7 communiqué had paragraphs on regions, countries, and issues of particular interest to US foreign policy, not all of which may be shared with the same intensity by other member countries.

At the Nato summit, held in Brussels just a day after the G-7 meet, Russia was characterised as a "threat" to Nato, but serious concern was raised about the rapid military rise of China, whose military expenditure is now surpassed only by the US. Held in sequence, the two events seemed like a twin-act, the first underlining politics, and the second security matters.

A key takeaway from G-7 was the concept of B3W (Building Back a Better World) to build infrastructure in poor and middle income countries. A counterpoint to China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI), this evidently seeks to limit China's geostrategic space.

India had been invited along with Australia, South Africa and South Korea as a G-7 "guest". PM Narendra Modi attended virtually. His slogan was "One Earth, One Health". India backed the summit on free expression, and the need for democracies to take responsibility that pandemics don't strike the world again. It is the company that will matter, not the substance.

New era dawns in Israel

It is not so much a change of Prime Ministers in a country inured to being ruled amid fractious politics of a coalition of parties as a turn of a whole era with Benjamin Netanyahu, whose uninterrupted 12-year regime ended abruptly and reduced his role to that of a combative Opposition leader.

The new Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett's reign began with an immediate challenge as a nationalist march commemorating the capture of Jerusalem in 1967 was to run through the historic city on Tuesday and air defences were put on alert in case Hamas launches retributive action from Gaza in the form of incendiary balloons, if not quite the explosive rockets that had triggered an 11-day war.

The tests to come will be many for the leaders of a wildly disparate and precarious collection of eight parties, including an Islamic party representing Palestinians of Israel and secular as well as religious parties, which assumed power on Monday. The longest serving Prime Minister Netanyahu's Likud party had led coalitions over the years even as Israel transformed economically into a modern country with a security apparatus to be envied in a region filled with uncertainties, conflicts and eternal religious tensions.

While checks and balances are not new to a country that once saw Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres share power, what is unique about the new arrangement is the veto power that rests with foreign minister Yair Lapid, who will replace Mr Bennett as PM in two years if the coalition lasts long enough. Mr Netanyahu, who recently achieved startling diplomatic success in settling right ties with four more Arab countries, has vowed to bring down Mr Bennett's government.

With the change in regime, years of tension with the Democratic Party led by US President Joe Biden may, however, be a thing of the past. But what will not change is the approach to the Palestinian statehood issue because the new rulers will continue to treat Palestinians as a security threat and will aim to perpetuate control over most of the occupied West Bank. It will be fraught with interest how Iran responds to changes in Israel.

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Subhani



India must back Dalai's choice on his successor



Claude Arpi

The issue of the Dalai Lama's succession has been in the news for quite some time, especially after the Tibetan diaspora elected Penpa Tsering as the new "Sikyong", or president; incidentally, this election must have irritated no end Communist China that always proclaims its "superior", though undemocratic, system of governance to the world, especially on the occasion of the centenary of the Communist Party of China in July.

During an interaction with the Tibetan media, the Sikyong, who heads the Tibetan government-in-exile based in Dharamsala, said after taking the oath on May 27 that he already had three video audiences with the Dalai Lama, who "expressed his wish to visit China and Tibet. He has this wish for a long time", Mr Tsering told Tibetan journalists.

Visiting China may not be a great idea now, but it's up to the Tibetan supreme leader and for his people to decide.

The question of succession was apparently not discussed though it is vital in the present context of China becoming more authoritarian and belligerent, using every occasion to reaffirm that it's the Communist leadership who will decide the present Dalai Lama's successor.

The recently published white paper "Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity" states: "In 1793, the Qing [Manchu] government restored order in Tibet and promulgated the Imperially Approved Ordinance for Better Governance of Tibet (the 29-article ordinance) ...[which] stipulated that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other grand Living Buddhas had to follow the procedure of drawing lots from the golden urn."

Though the Golden Urn procedure was rarely used thereafter, the fact is the Manchus realised the weakness in Tibet's system of governance, that is rule by reincarnation, and were quick to exploit it.

In the eighteenth century, on three occasions, Manchu troops marched into Tibet, each time at the request of the Tibetan government — once to defend Tibet against the Gurkha invasion (1792), and twice to restore civil order after internal troubles (1728 and 1751).

Each time, the special relationship, known "Choe-yon" (priest-patron), was invoked by Lhasa: the Dalai Lamas and other lamas were the gurus (or priests) while the Manchus were the "patrons", or protectors of the Buddhist state.

The instability of the rule by incarnation can be attributed to the gap between the time a Dalai Lama passes away and when his successor is old enough and able to practically assume power. The 20 crucial years in between the two have always been used by incompetent regents or the Ambans (Chinese ambassadors in Lhasa) to influence Tibetan politics.

It was even murmured that the Chinese Ambans had found the trick: during the nineteenth century, four Dalai Lamas died before reaching majority: Luntok Gyatso, ninth Dalai Lama (1805-1815); Tsultrim Gyatso, tenth Dalai Lama (1816-1837); Khedup Gyalsto, eleventh Dalai Lama (1838-1855); and Trinley Gyatso, twelfth Dalai Lama (1856-75). They never ruled.

Later, with the decline of the Manchus, there was no protector to look after the "priests", this until the thirteenth Dalai Lama assumed power and asserted Tibet's independence.

When one studies the history of modern Tibet,

one realises just how unstable what the British officials called the "minority" was; most of the time, no decision was taken by regents too cautious that they could be criticised at a later stage.

Many concrete examples can be given; it would show that it is probably the main reason why Tibet lost its independence.

After the thirteenth Dalai Lama passed away in 1933, two regents ruled over Tibet; but soon, a dispute between the Reting and Taktra Rinpoches ended in a near civil war, with the Tibetan Army supporting Taktra and bombing Sera Monastery, Reting's alma mater. The least that could be said is that most of the regents were not up to the mark.

One solution to avoid the past situation after the present Dalai Lama's departure has been mentioned by the Tibetan leader himself in 2011, in an elaborate statement about his succession.

The Dalai Lama spoke of the origin of the custom of recognising "Emanation Bodies", or "tulkus"; and he elaborated: "The main purpose of the appearance of a reincarnation is to continue the predecessor's unfinished work to serve Dharma and beings. In the case of a lama who is an ordinary being, instead of having a reincarnation belonging to the same mind-stream, someone else with connections to that lama through pure karma and prayers, may be recognised as his or her emanation."

The Tibetan leader continued with his esoteric description: "Alternatively it is possible for the lama to appoint a successor who is either his disciple or someone young who is to be recognised as his emanation. Since these options are possible

in the case of an ordinary being, an emanation before death that is not of the same mind-stream, is feasible."

He cited great nineteenth century master Jamyang Khyentse Wangpo, who said: "Reincarnation is what happens when someone takes rebirth after the predecessor's passing away; emanation is when manifestations take place without the source's passing away."

Another problem linked to incarnations is finding a new reincarnation is a rather unscientific process which can be manipulated at will; for example, doubts have been raised about the authenticity of many "high tulkus" such as Gyaltsen Norbu, the Chinese-selected Panchen Lama, as well as other "high" lamas like Reting Rinpoche, the regent's incarnation during the Dalai Lama's minority, Samding Dorjee Pagmo, the senior-most female "tulku", Tsemoling, reincarnation of another former regent, or Phagpala Delek Namgyal, head lama of Chamdo monastery; all of whom live in Tibet today and are actively collaborating with Communist China. Are they genuine tulkus?

Viewed from a political angle, many issues would be solved if the Dalai Lama decides to go for an "emanation". First, he himself would select the next Dalai Lama and the Chinese will have no say in the process; further, it would bring a far greater stability to the political scene in exile.

Ultimately, of course, it's the Dalai Lama's choice and India, a secular republic, cannot intervene in his decision. But New Delhi must officially declare that the Indian government will stand by the Dalai Lama's decision, while he should keep in mind the Indian population on the borders with Tibet.

In the meantime, one can only wish the new Sikyong good luck to keep the flock together in these tumultuous times.

The writer is based in South India for the past 42 years. He writes on India, China, Tibet and Indo-French relations.

Viewed from a political angle, many issues would be solved if the Dalai Lama decides to go for an 'emanation'. First, the Chinese will have no say in the process...

LETTERS

CHANCE TO PAY TAX

Netizens in India have been very active during the pandemic due to the ample time available to them due to the lockdowns in involving in unfruitful comments and suggestions. Kareena Kapoor is now at the receiving end as comments are trending on social media that she should not be allowed to play the role of Sita in a film as she is infamous for not respecting Gods and religions. They have also expressed their desire/recommended that Kangana Ranaut may be given that role. This will be a good idea as she could use the remuneration she receives to pay her long pending Income Tax dues.

M.C. Vijay Shankar, Chennai

GIVE BLOOD MONEY

Becks Krishnan, the youth from Thrissur district in Kerala, undoubtedly owes his 'second life' to NRI businessman M.A. Yousuffali. But for the timely intervention of the business tycoon, Krishnan would have been sent to the gallows for his offence of killing a Sudanese boy in a road accident in Abu Dhabi in 2012. A blood money of 500,000 Dirhams (Rs.1 crore approximately), deposited by Yousuffali in Abu Dhabi court, has saved Krishnan's life. India, too, should adopt the concept of 'blood money' to be given by the accused to the victim. For example, take actor Salman Khan's hit-and-run case in Mumbai. The celluloid hero had spent lakhs of rupees on a clever lawyer, but never thought of sparing a single rupee for the hapless victim.

P.G. Menon, Chennai

PRIVATISATION OF BANKS

It's good news that the fourth quarter results of Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) have shown a remarkable turn-around for the better with a twofold surge in its net profit amounting to Rs 350 crores. A close look into the numbers announced by the bank reveals that the public sector bank has done excellently well in all key parameters and at this rate, the future is very bright for the bank. The government has time and again pumped in additional capital into most of the PSBs and has also floated a new bad bank; National Asset Reconstruction Company Ltd into which the entire non-performing assets of all the PSBs are going to be transferred. All these measures were taken to cleanse the balance sheets of those banks so that they can commence their operations with a clean slate and perform well. At a time when banks like IOB have started to perform excellently well, it is distressing to learn that the government is bent on selling most of the PSBs including IOB to the corporate private players. The government should have a rethink on their decision, if any, to privatise the said banks.

Tharcus S. Fernando, Chennai

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



EC & UP: All 3 commissioners from state; Arora yet to find a role

Senior about-to-retire babus of two BJP-ruled states are a miffed lot with the appointment of former Uttar Pradesh chief secretary Anup Chandra Pandey as the new Election Commissioner of India having been done and dusted in a surprise move. But it was clearly in the works in Delhi, long before the skirmishes between UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath and the Big Two split out into the open. Thanks to the need for surprise, even babus in his home cadre were left gasping.

Many see the appointment of Mr Pandey as the Centre's initial steps to focus on retaining Uttar Pradesh and remote central control on the coming Assembly polls.

But the incumbents will walk on eggs since the ghost of election commissioners past still lurks over Nirvachan Bhavan. This because an appropriate landing spot has not yet been found for former Chief Election Commissioner (CEC) Sunil Arora.

Mr Pandey has joined Sushil Chandra and Election Commissioner Rajiv Kumar at the poll panel. Not surprisingly, given Mr Pandey's background questions are being raised about his appointment. Some point out the significance of the fact that all three election commissioners are from UP! Current CEC Sushil Chandra did a long stint in the state's revenue department and EC Rajiv Kumar is a former finance secretary of the state. Besides his tenure as the state chief secretary under chief minister Yogi Adityanath until 2019, Mr Pandey was also the state's industrial development commissioner.

Prepare for more babu surprises to emerge in and around UP as the polls draw near.

A TWIST IN THE AIR INDIA TALE?

The Air India disinvestment has got stuck between a rock and a hard landing! The second wave of the Covid pandemic has now delayed it

further. It is beginning to seem that the government may have been a trifle too ambitious and optimistic about closing this chapter. While there is no dearth of suitors of the beleaguered carrier, the civil aviation ministry babus have come up against a new stumbling block — the potential seizure of Air India's assets by Cairn Energy, after India lost the tax dispute case against the company in an international arbitration tribunal.

Civil aviation secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola actually now has a new headache to deal with, even as the government is still to finalize the timeline for completion of the stake sale or the valuation of the airline and its assets. Too many loose ends!

The loss to Cairn is a major blow and loss of face for the Modi sarkar. Of course, the Centre says that it will defend any attempt by Cairn to take over the airline's assets and has in fact challenged the arbitration award, but until the case is resolved and the award overturned

in India's favour, Kharola and his cohorts in the Civil Aviation Ministry cannot rest easy. In fact, as a result of this new threat, civil aviation babus are now scurrying between their ministry and the Law Ministry to deal with this legal threat. This saga may have a few more seasons left to go.

BABU CRISIS AT THE CENTRE

There is a crisis of babus in the Modi sarkar. The department of personnel and training (DOPT) secretary Deepak Khandekar has informed his multiple bosses that despite the government repeatedly requesting the states to depute more officers at the Centre nothing is moving, and nobody is willing. It has reportedly asked for more officers at the deputy secretary, director and joint secretary levels. Most states however say they are dealing with their own shortage of officers, leading to senior state officials holding several portfolios in many states. Though both Karnataka and Himachal have promised to help

recently, this to-ing and fro-ing has been going on for several months now, with the states' response to the Centre being seen as decidedly poor.

Sources say that the department of personnel and training (DoPT) has made a fresh request to the states last week stating that their lack of appropriate response to the Centre's request is creating a cadre management problem for the Centre. But sources say there is a veiled new warning in the Modi sarkar's latest missive to the states on the issue. Apparently, the letter from DoPT says that the cadres who have not sent adequate nominations for the central staffing scheme at various may find that they have to settle for fewer additional senior duty posts in the future. Will the states take note? Is this a babu pushback or due to political masters unwilling to allow their best to migrate to Delhi?

Share a babu experience! Follow dilipthecherian@Twitter.com.

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52773.05	0.42
Nifty 50	15869.30	0.36
S&P 500*	4,245.70	-0.22
Dollar (₹)	73.31	-0.04
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.19	0.06
Euro (₹)	88.90	-0.15
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,853*303	0.63
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	73.97	1.52
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.040	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.504	0.003

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Coal India to close down 23 unviable mines

Coal India Ltd will close down 23 unviable mines, which would help it save around Rs 500 crore, officials said. The world's largest miner has shut down 82 such mines in the last four years. Those 23 mines, comprising open cast and underground ones, to be closed were identified in the last fiscal. Some 158 underground mines employ 43 per cent of the workforce but contribute only 5 per cent of the total production, they said.

74% insurance FDI under auto route notified



The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade has notified the government's decision to increase the foreign direct investment limit in the insurance sector under the automatic route to 75 per cent from 49 per cent. A press note said the decision will take effect from the date of FEMA (Foreign Exchange Management Act) notification. The Insurance (Amendment) Bill, 2021, was passed in March.

HDFC Bank mobile app was down for 1 hour

The mobile banking app of the largest private sector lender HDFC Bank, which has been under the regulatory lens for network outages, was down for an hour on Tuesday due to unspecified issues. The bank said the issues were faced for an hour late in the morning on Tuesday and the same was resolved in an hour. It urged customers to use the net banking alternative to transact in the interim.

BMW Motorrad rides in S1000R naked superbike

BMW Motorrad India launched the all-new BMW S 1000 R naked sports bike in India with price starting at Rs 17.90 lakh. BMW S1000R is a rival to the recently launched Ducati Streetfighter V4 naked sports bike. The second-generation BMW S 1000 R is being imported as a completely built-up unit (CBU). The roadster is fitted with a newly developed water cooled 4-cylinder in-line engine with a displacement of 999 cc.

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■ Sharp dip in jobless rate in June 2nd week

Job numbers signal economy on mend

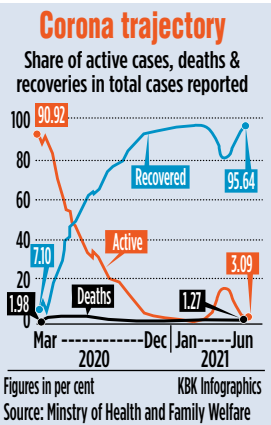
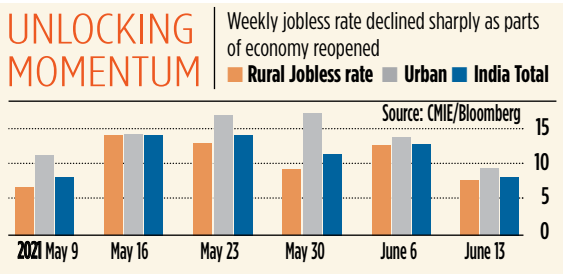
SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 15

The unemployment rate dropped sharply last week from a week ago, in the first sign that the economy may be on the mend, as the second wave of the coronavirus outbreak subsides. While exports were already growing in May, power consumption, mobility and industrial activity have improved in June, as the unlocking process started in several states.

As per the data from the Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy (CMIE), in the second week of June unemployment rate has eased sharply to 8.7 per cent from 13.6 per cent in the first week of June. In the week ended May 23, the jobless rate was as worse as 14.7 per cent. There was a slight improvement at 12.2 per cent in the week to May 30. The recovery is visible both in the rural and urban markets. Rural unemployment rate has eased to 8.2 per cent from 13.5 per cent. Urban jobless rate too has come down to 9.7 per cent from 17.9 per cent.

"We have just received the data. We will have to analyse the data to understand the factors that have triggered this improvement on the job front," Mahesh Vyas, founder and CEO of CMIE told *Financial Chronicle*.

In the first week of June, CMIE had expected a recovery of sorts in employment. "This relentless loss of employment



can be expected to abate somewhat in the coming weeks as many parts of the country that were under a lockdown have started announcing cautious relaxations," it had said. Most of the states, including Tamil Nadu, Delhi, Maharashtra, Kerala and Karnataka have relaxed their restrictions while getting into the unlocking process.

Monster.com has also found growth in job postings in several sectors. Around 45 per cent of the industries indicate positive month-on-month growth in May against

April in job postings, with retail, home appliances and telecom showing the highest growth, it said. Other industries that are doing well compared to the previous month include IT hardware & software, banking & financial services, insurance, office equipment & automation, healthcare, biotechnology & life sciences and pharmaceuticals.

Further, the Google Mobility report released recently too has indicated improvement in activity in Indian public places and offices, denoting more relaxation in states under lockdown.

Power consumption too had grown by 12.6 per cent in the first week of June, indicating improved industrial and manufacturing activity.

Merchandise exports grew both yearly as well as sequentially in May. Exports in May 2021 were 67 per cent higher than the low base of the lock-down-hit May 2020. The exports were also 7.93 per cent higher than May 2019. Most importantly, exports continued to grow sequentially by 6.6 per cent over April 2021.

AstraZeneca's antibody cocktail fails to prevent Covid

SUZI RING
JUNE 15

AstraZeneca Plc's antibody cocktail was found to be only 33 per cent effective at preventing Covid-19 symptoms in people who had been exposed to the virus, failing the study's main goal and dealing a setback to the drugmaker.

The study, named Storm Chaser, looked at whether the long-acting antibody combination could protect people who had recently been in contact with the Sars-CoV-2 virus in places like care homes.

The outcome is a blow to Astra for a drug that was hoped to be a bright spot in the company's pandemic efforts following the mixed success of its vaccine with the University of Oxford. One of the first shots to be authorised, the vaccine has since faced issues with take-up after a link emerged with rare

blood clots. The study looked at about 1,121 unvaccinated adults in the US and UK. As many as 23 volunteers who got the drug cocktail developed symptomatic Covid-19 after exposure, compared with 17 cases in the group that got a placebo, Astra said in a statement on Tuesday.

The antibody trial is one of six advanced-stage studies Astra is running to test its drug against different endpoints. Another study called Provent, looking at whether the cocktail can prevent infection in people at high risk of catching Covid or with compromised immune systems, is also expected to readout soon. The US has ordered up to 700,000 doses of the medicine for delivery in 2021, while the UK was already reconsidering an earlier order for one million.

— *Bloomberg*

RBI BANS DHFL FROM TAKING DEPOSITS UNDER PIRAMAL FOLD

Mumbai, June 15: The Reserve Bank has revoked the deposit-taking status of Dewan Housing Finance (DHFL) and has reclassified it as a non-deposit taking housing finance company, before approving the Piramal Group's bid to take over the firm towards the end of the resolution process.

The revelation comes in the June 7 NCLT Mumbai order that has approved the Rs 35,250-crore bid for the once second largest mortgage lender by Piramal Capital & Housing Finance, forcing over 65 per cent haircut on the creditors and just Re 1 to its NCD holders to whom it owes more than Rs 45,000-crore.

On the 14th page of the 86-page NCLT order by H.P. Chaturvedi and Ravikumar Duraisamy, it says DHFL no longer is a deposit taking NBFC but a non-deposit taking one.

The changes were made in February 2021, after the RBI gave a non-objection to the January 25, 2021 application by R.Subramaniakumar, the DHFL administrator, citing Rule 5 of its FSP (financial services providers) Rules.

In the concluding part of the NCLT order, the bench reiterates that the resolution is subject to the fact that RBf's non-objection, based on the condition that "the status of the corporate debtor (DHFL) is changed from a deposit-taking company to a non-deposit-taking housing finance company.

— *PTI*

MF industry equity assets cross ₹11L cr

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JUNE 15

Equity assets of the mutual fund industry reached a new high of Rs 11 lakh crore in May, aided by a 6.5 per cent rally in the Nifty-50 Index and robust inflows in equity funds and other funds with equity as a component.

Redemption from equity funds also fell, helping the equity assets swell. "Equity assets under management (AUM), including ELSS and index funds of mutual funds,

increased 7.7 per cent month-on-month (MoM) to Rs 11.1 lakh crore in May 2021. This was on account of a rise in market indices (Nifty up 6.5 per cent MoM) and an increase in equity scheme sales, which was up 15 per cent MoM to Rs 27,700 crore," said the Fund Folio report by Motilal Oswal Financial Services. The total equity value of the top 20 AMCs increased 7.2 per cent MoM in May '21 versus a rise of 6.5 per cent MoM in the Nifty.

Among the top 10 mutu-

al funds, the highest MoM increase was seen in Kotak Mahindra Mutual Fund (8.1 per cent), SBI Mutual Fund (7.7 per cent), Mirae Asset Mutual Fund (7.6 per cent), HDFC Mutual Fund (7.6 per cent), and DSP Mutual Fund (7.5 per cent).

MFs top picks in May were PSU banks, oil & gas, automobiles, capital goods, insurance, and private banks.

Healthcare, metals, consumer, technology, telecom, chemicals, durables, and cement reported MoM decline in weights.

Draft on revising WPI base year issued

New Delhi, June 15: The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) has issued a draft technical report of a working group, which suggests revising wholesale price index base year from 2011-12 to 2017-18 and proposes addition of about 480 new items such as medicinal plants, pen drive, lifts, gymnasium equipment, and certain motorcycle engines in the new series.

Revising the base year to 2017-18 for computation of wholesale inflation would help in presenting a more realistic picture of the price situation, the report has suggested. In the case of agriculture commodities, new items such as medicinal plants like isabgol, aloe vera and menthol; fennel seed and methi seed, mushroom and watermelon were proposed to be added in the new series subject to availability of data.

Currently, the index has a total of 697 items, includ-

ing primary articles (117), fuel and power (16) and manufactured products (564).

In the new series, a total of 1,176 items in these three categories have been proposed—primary articles (131), fuel and power (19) and manufactured products (1,026).

"No items have been dropped at this stage. The items of the current series would be dropped only after consultation with the stakeholders," it added.

— *PTI*

Auditors are grappling with managing quality in WFH phase

PwC to add 100,000 jobs in \$12 bn revamp

and Assurance Standards Board has revised standards for auditors, coming into effect in 2022, to boost technology use, help manage new risks, and improve quality management.

PwC is also seeking ways to address growing calls for transparency in the profession from stakeholders after several accounting scandals among the Big Four auditing firms knocked public trust. In South Africa, for example, KPMG has put in place a variety of reforms after it came under fire in 2017 for work done for a politically connected family accused of plundering the government's coffers. The South African unit

of PwC will add at least 2,500 new employees over the next five years, chief executive officer in the region Dion Shango told reporters in a conference call. Across Africa, where it has a presence in 34 countries, the firm plans to bulk up its operations with a \$400 million investment. The company is also interviewing for non-executive directors to strengthen audit oversight.

PwC has also set aside \$3 billion of its total global investment to help double the scale of its Asia-Pacific operations, it said. The firm's spending will also focus on responding to environmental, social and governance trends across its operations.

— *Bloomberg*

US RETAIL BOON FOR G&J EXPORTS

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 16

With the US retail market projected to grow in double-digits in 2021, Indian gems and jewellery exports are expected to rebound. Over 200 per cent growth in US jewellery sales has already lifted exports of studded gold jewellery and polished diamond sales above pre-Covid levels in April-May.

The National Retail Federation of the US has issued its revised annual forecast for 2021, anticipating that retail sales will grow between 10.5 and 13.5 per cent against the initial projection of 6.5 per cent.

"The combination of vaccine distribution, fiscal stimulus and private-sector ingenuity has put millions of Americans back to work", NRF president and CEO Matthew Shay said.

This is good news for Indian gems and jew-

ellery exporters, who have been witnessing stagnant growth in shipments for the past few years. US retail jewellery sales grew 203 per cent in May 2021 compared to May 2020 and grew 44.7 per cent compared to May 2019, according to the Mastercard Spending Pulse monthly macroeconomic report.

The positive momentum is already visible in the April-May exports from India. Studded gold jewellery saw a growth of 41 per cent in April-May 2021 compared to pre-Covid April-May of 2019. Cut and polished diamond exports too have witnessed an increase of 21 per cent. "The revival of exports has happened due to the opening of international markets, resurgent demand and strong unstinted support from the Government of India on various issues," said Colin Shah, chairman, GJEPC.

"BIS reports find that around 5 crore jewellery pieces were hallmarked last year and this can come to almost two-thirds of the annual consumption, or around 400 tonnes. An additional 200 tonnes need to be hallmarked every year and this can be done at the 25 to 30 per cent of hall-marking centres which are under-utilised," said James Jose, managing director, CGR Hallmarkers.

JLR PLANS TO TEST PROTOTYPE HYDROGEN LAND ROVER



NICK CAREY
LONDON, JUNE 15

Jaguar Land Rover will begin tests later this year on a hydrogen fuel-cell prototype model based on its Land Rover Defender vehicle as the carmaker looks to expand its zero-emission car options, the company said on Tuesday.

JLR, owned by India's Tata Motors, earlier this year said that its luxury Jaguar brand will be entirely electric by 2025, and the more rugged, off-road Land Rover brand will launch six pure electric models over the next five years, read more.

Most of the auto industry is focusing its efforts on developing battery-electric cars to meet tightening emission standards in Europe and China.

But JLR is one of a small number of carmakers that sees possibilities for the mass adoption of hydrogen fuel cells, which emit only water as they produce electricity, and has said it believes hydrogen has a future role in the auto industry.

Hydrogen fuel cells "provide high energy density and rapid refuelling, and minimal loss of range in low temperatures, making the technology ideal for larger, longer-range vehicles, or those operated in hot or cold environments," JLR said.

The hydrogen Land Rover Defender will undergo tests to "verify key attributes such as off-road capability and fuel consumption," the company said in a release.

As well as offering the prospect of harmless emissions, hydrogen fuel cells also provide greater range than battery-electric cars. But there is little fuelling infrastructure currently in place to support mass adoption of the technology.

— *Reuters*

SHORT TAKES

Nurse told 'not to disturb Maradona'

Buenos Aires: A nurse accused of neglect in Diego Maradona's death told Argentine prosecutors on Monday that he was following orders "not to disturb" the football icon while he slept.

Ricardo Almiron, 37, was Maradona's nighttime carer and was one of the last people to see the World Cup winning captain alive. He is suspected of lying when he claimed Maradona was sleeping and breathing normally hours before he died. An autopsy revealed he was dying at that time. Almiron is one of seven people under investigation for manslaughter after a board of experts looking into Maradona's death found he had received inadequate care and was abandoned to his fate for a "prolonged, agonising period".

— AFP

Ollie to return for Sussex 2nd team

Sussex: Suspended England pacer Ollie Robinson, who had taken a short break last week from international cricket, will return to action with Sussex's second team on Tuesday, the county announced. Robinson was suspended by the ECB for his offensive racist and sexist tweets, dating back to 2012-13 when he was 18 and 19. Robinson missed Sussex's Vitality Blast T20 fixtures against Gloucestershire and Hampshire Hawks last week as the pacer decided to take a break to spend time with his family. Robinson has already apologised for his tweets and he got support from his teammates even as a few said the ECB did the right thing. — PTI

India, Afghanistan play out 1-1 draw

Doha: India benefitted from an own goal by Afghanistan goalie as they ended their World Cup Qualifiers campaign with a 1-1 draw to book a berth in the next qualifying round of the Asian Cup here on Tuesday. A howler by Afghanistan goalie Ovays Azizi handed India a 1-0 lead in the 75th minute but Hossein Zamani equalised in the 81st minute in a match marred by poor refereeing. The two sides had also played out a 1-1 draw in the first leg match in Dushanbe in 2019. — PTI



C.R. Visswanathan

Veteran football administrator dead

Chennai: Former All India Football Federation Vice-President and veteran administrator C.R. Visswanathan on Tuesday died after suffering a heart attack. He was 85. He is survived by his wife, son and daughter. Popularly known as CRV, Visswanathan died at a hospital here at around 3am due to a heart attack, Tamil Nadu Football Association sources said. Apart from holding the post of AIFF vice-president (2004-08), Visswanathan was a long-time office-bearer of the Tamil Nadu Football Association (TFA) and held the post of president and secretary. He was also a member of the AIFF Executive Committee from 2008 to 2012 and the Chairman of the AIFF Technical Committee from 2009 to 2012.

Live on TV

EURO

Group Stage: Finland vs Russia from 6.30 pm; Turkey vs Wales from 9.30 pm; Italy vs Switzerland from 12.30 am (Thursday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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RED CHILE BITE

Messi on target, but spicy Chile frustrate Argentina in Copa

Rio De Janeiro, June 15: Argentina superstar Lionel Messi scored a stunning freekick but Chile hit back to earn a 1-1 draw in the Copa America on Monday.

Messi's magical left foot gave dominant Argentina a deserved first half lead but Eduardo Vargas equalised in the second half after Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez saved veteran midfielder Arturo Vidal's penalty. Despite Argentina's dominance, Messi lamented that "we weren't calm, we didn't have control of the ball."

His coach Lionel Scaloni saw things differently, though.

"We deserved to win but in the end we drew. In any case, it's only the start of a very tough tournament," said Scaloni.

Before the Group A game started in the Nelson Santos stadium in Rio de Janeiro, there was a light and effects tribute to Argentina legend Diego Maradona, who died in November aged 60, although the ground was empty due to coronavirus restrictions.

The first chance fell to Messi on eight minutes as Leandro Paredes picked out Nicolas Tagliafico on the left and the fullback nodded the ball down for his captain, who sent a volley wide.

Minutes later, Giovanni Lo Celso crossed from the left but a sliding Lautaro Martinez could only spoon the ball over the bar from inside the six-yard box. Argentina were in total command and Lo Celso picked out Nicolas Gonzalez to shoot from 20 yards but goalkeeper Claudio Bravo got down well to his right to tip the ball around the post.

From Messi's corner

Gonzalez headed over the bar and moments later he was released by Lo Celos but shot straight at Bravo. It would be a frustrating night for Gonzalez.

Argentina got the goal their domination deserved on 33 minutes, and inevitably it was Messi who scored, curling a free-kick from 25 yards out just beyond Bravo's dive.

They should have had a second soon afterwards but teed up by Gonzalo Montiel 10 yards out, Martinez screwed his shot horribly wide.

"I would be worried if the team wasn't creating chances. The important thing is we are, we're getting lots of players in the box. And it will go in," said Scaloni.

Chile started the second half with more intent and Erick Pulgar played Vargas into the area but his shot on the stretch was saved by Martinez.

However, Vidal stormed in to try to fire home the rebound and was caught by Tagliafico as he shot.

ROMEROS DO IT FOR PARAGUAY

Paraguay lead group A after a 3-1 win over Bolivia at the Olimpico stadium in Goiania. Bolivia scored first via Erwin Saavedra's first-half penalty, but Paraguay changed its fortunes after the break with goals by Alejandro Romero and a brace by Angel Romero. Argentina's next match is against Uruguay on Friday. — AFP

Paraguay	3
(Alejandro Romero 62, Angel Romero 65, 80)	
Bolivia	1
(Erwin Saavedra 10-pen)	



Argentina's Lionel Messi in action during a group game against Chile in Copa America on Monday.

— AP

Swiss ready for Italian challenge

Rome, June 15: A 74-year-old chain-smoking Czech coach might have made just as much of an impact on this Italy squad as Roberto Mancini has.

Ciro Immobile, Lorenzo Insigne and Marco Verratti each had break-out seasons under Zdenek Zeman in Serie B nearly a decade ago at Pescara, where they learned an attacking philosophy that they're currently employing at the European Championship.

Italy's third goal in their 3-0 win over Turkey in the Euro 2020 tournament opener was a case in point, as Immobile hardly even looked when he slotted a pass between two defenders to set up Insigne for one of his preferred curled shots.

Having missed the game against Turkey as he works his way back from a right knee injury, Verratti is expected to take a spot on Italy's bench for Wednesday's second

Group A game against Switzerland.

FINLAND FACE RUSSIA

Lost, perhaps, in the drama surrounding Christian Eriksen's collapse during Denmark's game against Finland at the Euro was the result after play resumed.

The Finns, playing in their first ever game at a major soccer tournament, won 1-0 in Copenhagen. It will likely go down as one of the most over-

looked scorelines in the history of the tournament, given what had happened to Eriksen. Indeed, Finland captain Tim Sparv said there were barely any celebrations in the dressing room.

"It was very quiet," Sparv said, "and understandably so."

TURKEY SEEK WIN

Turkey will be expecting a big boost from a supportive crowd in Baku, and they might just need it.

After a 3-0 loss to Italy without even a shot on target, Turkey will face a Wales team looking to build on their opening draw when the teams meet Wednesday at the European Championship.

"Hopefully we can feed off the negative energy of the Turkey fans as opposed to the positive one. We can try and have the game on our terms, which is always the objective," said Wales midfielder Joe Morrell. — Agencies

UMESH PIPS SHARDUL IN INDIA SQUAD

Southampton, June 15: Veteran speedster Umesh Yadav pipped Brisbane Test hero Shardul Thakur as the 15th member of the Indian squad that will take on New Zealand in the World Test Championship final starting here on June 18. Umesh, along with Mohammed Shami, and Hanuma Vihari all of whom got injured during the Australia tour, were back in the 15 that needed to be announced as per ICC squad protocol.

Apart from Shardul, the notable names to miss out were Mayank Agarwal, and Washington Sundar. England series hero Axar Patel also missed out.

WILLIAMSON TO LEAD KIWIS

Kane Williamson will be available to lead New Zealand against India in the World Test Championship final, head coach Gary Stead announced. — Agencies

India squad: Virat Kohli (c), Shubman Gill, Rohit Sharma, C. Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Rishabh Pant (wk), R. Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Md Shami, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Mohammed Siraj, W. Saha, Umesh Yadav and Hanuma Vihari.

NZ squad: Kane Williamson (C), Tom Blundell, Trent Boult, Devon Conway, Colin de Grandhomme, Matt Henry, Kyle Jamieson, Tom Latham, Henry Nicholls, Ajaz Patel, Tim Southee, Ross Taylor, Neil Wagner BJ Watling and Will Young.

EURO

2020

Spain & Sweden in dull 0-0 draw

Seville (Spain), June 15: Spain's new team struggled with the familiar problems on Monday as a string of missed chances allowed Sweden to hang on for a goalless draw in their Euro 2020 opener in Seville.

Alvaro Morata wasted the best opportunity of a dominant first half, in which Spain churned out 419 passes, the most of any team on record in the opening 45 minutes of a European Championship fixture.

But Luis Enrique's team lost their rhythm after the interval and Sweden might even have won it, the excellent Alexander Isak hitting the post before his strike partner Marcus Berg missed a sitter from two yards out.

A goalless draw leaves Spain playing catch-up in Group E after Slovakia earlier pulled off a shock 2-1 victory over Poland, raising the stakes for the game between Spain and Poland on Saturday, when a loser would be left struggling to qualify.

Another failure to convert possession into chances was reminiscent of recent disappointments for Spain, most notably when they were frustrated by Russia at the 2018 World Cup, before going out on penalties.

In the wake of that

defeat, Luis Enrique was tasked with launching a new era as coach, a project that involved promoting a fresh crop of players but also a more direct, penetrative style.

SKRINIAR FIRES SLOVAKIA PAST POLAND

Inter Milan defender Milan Skriniar fired Slovakia to a 2-1 victory over neighbours Poland on Monday in their opening game in Saint Petersburg. An own goal from Poland goalkeeper Wojciech Szczesny handed Slovakia the lead on 18 minutes, but Karol Linetty equalised for Poland right at the start of the second half.

Poland were reduced to 10 men on the hour when midfielder Grzegorz Krychowiak picked up a second yellow card, and Slovakia made their advantage count as Skriniar drove in a well-taken winner at a corner. "We're delighted to start the competition with a win. It was a difficult game, Poland are a quality team," said Skriniar. — AFP

Slovakia	2
(Wojciech Szczesny 18-own goal, Milan Skriniar 69)	
Poland	1
(Karol Linetty 46)	

Quick passes

Eriksen thanks supporters

Christian Eriksen sent his first public message from the hospital on Tuesday, thanking supporters for their "sweet and amazing" well-wishes after his collapse at the European Championship. Eriksen remains in the hospital after suffering cardiac arrest during the game against Finland on Saturday, when he had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator on the field.

"Big thanks for your sweet and amazing greetings and messages from all around the world. It means a lot to me and my family," Eriksen wrote in a message that was shared by the Danish association on Twitter.



Christian Eriksen

Ronaldo shuns Cola bottles

Ronaldinho has built a reputation as one of the hardest workers in the game, taking his fitness obsessions to another level in order to push his top playing days well into his late 30s. In a move likely to anger the Euro sponsor, the Juventus and Portugal forward glanced to the side before moving two glass bottles away from his position and saying "drink water" to the media while his microphone was still turned off before disapprovingly saying: "Coca-Cola!"

Sweden sound out police

The Swedish football federation filed a police report on Tuesday after striker Marcus Berg was subjected to a flood of social media abuse and threats from fans after missing a late chance against Spain at the Euro. Berg couldn't connect cleanly with the ball and missed the target when he had an open net in the second half of the 0-0 draw in Seville. He received a torrent of abuse online after the game and team officials said some of the posts contained illegal threats that have been reported to Swedish police. Berg said he turned off his social media channels but had been told about the threats. "It was tough. What happens on social media is really sad," Berg said.

INDIA VS ENGLAND | ONE-OFF TEST

Seven-year wait ends for women

Bristol, June 15: A favourable record in England and "positive mindset" despite inadequate preparation time will spur the Indian women when they take on the seasoned hosts in their first Test engagement in nearly seven years here from Wednesday.

After multiple quarantines in India and UK, the Mithali Raj-led squad got little over a week to prepare for their first red ball game since November 2014. Mithali was among the seven current players, who were a part of that victorious eleven against South Africa in Mysuru.

While experienced players like the skipper, her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and Jhulan Goswami have not played red ball cricket at all in recent times, it will be a tougher test for the younger lot who don't get to play first-class matches in domestic cricket.

Unlike the men's squad, which played intra-squad

games in Southampton ahead of the WTC final, the women prepared only in the nets which might hurt them in the four-day game.

Mithali said she would not want rookie players to be burdened with expectations and would advise them to enjoy the game.

"Well, we did brief them (players) about how the long format is played and clearly for someone who is making a debut, you don't want to burden them with expectations and responsibility.

"So, it is just that I would brief together as a team, support them on the field and they should just enjoy playing this format," the skipper added.

Mithali also batted for having all three formats in a bilateral series going ahead, saying the away Tests against England and Australia are just the beginning. India will also play a Test, a day-night match, when they tour Australia. — PTI

ADVANTAGE INDIA

Sachin expects fast bowlers to deliver knockout blow

New Delhi, June 15: Cricket legend Sachin Tendulkar said New Zealand will be well prepared for this week's World Test Championship final but warned that India's fast bowlers could deliver the "knockout blow".

In an interview, the record-breaking batsman said India can draw on their stunning Test win in Australia as they prepare to take on the in-form Kiwis.

While New Zealand thumped England by eight wickets to clinch a 1-0 Test series win on Sunday, Virat Kohli's team last played in March and are coming out of a stint in quarantine.

But India upset the odds to beat Australia in January, and Tendulkar pointed to their wealth of pace options for the inaugural championship's title clash starting Friday in Southampton.

Swing bowler Bhuvneshwar Kumar did not make the squad, but India can call on Jasprit Bumrah, Mohammed Shami, Mohammed Siraj, Umesh Yadav and Ishant Sharma.

"All these guys are talented bowlers and successful bowlers," Tendulkar said.

"They would go out and do their best and are fully capable of launching a knockout blow."

Tendulkar said it would be a toss-up between the veteran Ishant and the up-and-coming Siraj, who



India skipper Virat Kohli during an ICC photoshoot ahead of the World Test Championship final against New Zealand.

— ICC

starred in Australia, for a place in the starting XI.

"It will be a nice challenge for the team management to have in front of them where you have more bowlers who are capable of playing and delivering," he said.

"All these bowlers are terrific bowlers. I have not seen their practise sessions and don't know who is in good rhythm or not. I feel it is going to be between Ishant and Siraj."

Siraj, 27, played a key

role in India's triumph in Australia as they recovered from a heavy loss to win the four-match series 2-1, sealed with a memorable victory by their second-stringers in Brisbane.

But despite India's pace stocks, Tendulkar also expected spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja to make the team with their ability to bat in the middle order.

"I see a high probability there because both spin-

— PTI