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HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 6 JULY 2021

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RH: 60%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Light to moderate rains.
Max/Min temp. 33/25°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshta Bahula Dwadasi till
1.01 am (Wednesday)
Star: Krittika till 3.18 pm

Variyam: Nil
Durmuhuram: 8.26 am to
9.18 am; 11.15 pm to 11.59 pm

Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Zeeqad 24, 1441 AH

PRAVERS

Fajar: 4.36 am
Zohar: 12.30 pm
Asar: 4.56 pm

Maghrib: 7.00 pm

Isha: 8.17 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.54 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.47 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 2.39 AM

MOONSET TODAY 3.54 PM

COUNTER POINT

Relax! There is a lot of time
for the polls... every MLA
will get a chance to be CM!

SHORT TAKES**CBSE Class X, XII assessment plan**

New Delhi: The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) on Monday announced a special assessment scheme for Class X and XII board exams for next year in view of the Covid-19 pandemic, splitting the academic session into two terms. The board also announced plans to rationalise the syllabus for 2021-22 academic session and make internal assessment and project work more "credible" and "valid".

■ Report on Page x

Tribals to get forest powers

New Delhi: The Union ministries of environment and tribal affairs have jointly decided to give more powers to the tribal communities in managing the forest resources. In an official statement, the ministry of environment said a "Joint Communication" to this effect is scheduled to be signed at the Indira Paryawaran Bhawan here on Tuesday.

AIPEF for talks on Electricity Act

New Delhi: The All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) has written to the prime Minister seeking "detailed deliberations" with various stakeholders on the proposed Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021, before rushing it to Parliament. The federation in a letter to the PM has stressed that the proposed bill should not be rushed to Parliament during the pandemic period and there should be detailed discussions with power sector engineers and employees, an AIPEF statement said.

Revenue officials make 4 lakh farmers struggle to get clear titles**17.3L ac. farmer land 'disputed'**

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Over 17.3 lakh acres of land had been categorised as 'disputed' during the drive to cleanse revenue records in 2017. Of this, the revenue department has resolved disputes over 10 lakh acres.

The department is sitting on resolution of over seven lakh acres even after four years. As a result, over four lakh farmers owning these lands are los-

ing all government benefits like Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima and crop loans among others as they do not have pattadar passbooks. The revenue department has kept issuance of passbooks for disputed land parcels placed under

pattadar free under Part-A. Digital pattadar passbooks were issued to these 63.25 lakh farmers in 2018. Only farmers having these passbooks are eligible to get ₹10,000 per acre per year (kharif and rabi) under Rythu Bandhu and ₹5 lakh free insurance cover under Rythu Bima in the event of death. Banks are providing crop loans only to such farmers.

■ Page 2: No solution in sight for farmers

Monsoon fury

Vehicles wade through a flooded area during the monsoon season in Motihari, Bihar on Monday. The Southwest Monsoon is set to revive and spread to remaining parts of north India, the IMD has said.

- PTI

SC shocked police book cases under invalid Sec.

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

The Supreme Court on Monday expressed 'shock' over the police registering FIRs under Section 66A of the Information Technology Act, which was struck down by the top court in 2015.

"What is going on is terrible. Why is it happening (registering FIRs under Section 66A)?" observed Justice Rohinton Fali

Nariman, heading a three-judge bench, as court issued notice to the Centre on a PIL by NGO Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUCL) seeking action against authorities allegedly involved in registering the FIRs invoking Section 66A of IT Act despite its being void in 2015. Other judges on the bench included Justice K.M. Joseph and Justice B.R. Gavai.

As senior counsel Sanjay

Parikh, appearing for NGO PUCL, urged the court to look at how the registration of cases have increased ever since the provision of IT Act was struck down. Justice Nariman said, "Yes, yes, we are issuing notice in the matter."

As Parikh said that prior to 2015, there were 687 cases under the struck down provision but now they stand at 1,307 and people were suffering,

As senior counsel Sanjay

Judge accuses TS of 'bench hunting'

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 4

Justice M.S. Ramachandra Rao of the Telangana High Court on Monday refused to recuse himself from a case relating to Krishna waters and took exception to the demand made by the state government.

The issue arose in relation to the hearing of a

petition filed by two farmers from Andhra Pradesh over the use of Srisailam waters by the Telangana state for power generation. The judge said the TS government's plea for recusal was nothing but an attempt at "bench hunting". Justice Rao said, "Advocate General, how could you ask the judge to recuse, without justifying

the request? Why do you want me to recuse myself from hearing the petition... what is the reason? This is unreasonable and in poor taste... We don't expect the Advocate General's office to make such an unreasonable request. You can't seek judges' recusal."

The division bench of the

High Court comprising

Justice Rao and Justice Vinod Kumar was dealing with a petition filed by the two farmers challenging Government Order 34 issued by the TS government for use of Krishna water for power generation.

When the writ petition came up before the bench, Additional Advocate-General (AAG) J.

Ramachandra Rao appealed to the bench that it should be heard by a bench headed by Chief Justice Hima Kohli as per the roster of sitting arrangements. Justice Rao said the bench would hear the matter during the post-lunch session.

■ Page 2: CJ bench refuses to hear farmers' plea

Telangana cuts supplies to liquor dealers to print revised prices on bottles**Beer price to be cut by ₹10 to boost demand**

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

It was a bad day for beer lovers on Monday as the state government stopped supplies of their favourite drink to liquor dealers across Telangana.

The sudden development triggered speculations that the supplies were stopped because the state government wants to reduce beer prices across all brands by ₹10 per bottle and print

revised prices on bottles which is expected to take two more days.

Although the state government has not made any official announcement on reducing beer prices so far, it is widely believed that the orders in this regard are expected in a day or two.

Official sources said the move was aimed to encourage beer sales which took a drastic hit due to Covid outbreak in March, 2020 with people avoiding consuming cold items because of the unfounded fear of catching the disease.

Liquor dealers said the depots of TS Breweries Corporation Ltd have 18 lakh cases of beer. Each

case has 12 bottles.

This apart, another 68 lakh cases are lying in beer distilleries.

The government now wants to print revised prices on all these stocks and supply them to liquor

dealers across the state.

In 2019-20, over 4.92 crore beer cases were sold in Telangana state while 3.48 crore cases of liquor were sold.

Due to Covid outbreak in 2020-21, beer sales fell sharply to 2.73 crore cases while liquor maintained almost the same level of 3.35 crore cases.

Popular brands Royal Challenge and Kingfisher are presently sold for ₹150 (light) and ₹160 (strong).

Mini beer bottles of all brands are sold for ₹100 (light) and ₹110 (strong).

Last year, the state government increased liquor rates by 16 per cent to generate more revenues to tide over the Coronavirus-induced financial crisis. With this, the beer price increased from ₹120 to ₹150 (light).

The government now wants to reduce this price by ₹10 per bottle on all brands. They should not be spared.

local leaders and cadres to convince them to stay in the TRS.

He appointed finance minister T. Harish Rao and former MP B. Vinod Kumar, the Telangana Planning Commission vice-chairman, at the state level to check any departure of local leaders and cadres from the TRS. This yielded desired results as no major leader or cadre joined hands with Rajendar.

Due to political turmoil in Huzurabad after Rajendar's exit, sources said Chandrashekhar Rao felt it was the right time to visit the constituency to boost the morale of party leaders and cadre to retain the seat in the bypoll with a decent majority.

■ Page 2: Dubbak setback made KCR change strategy

KCR gears up for Huzurabad bypoll**CM to address public meet in July third week**

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5



K. Chandrashekhar Rao

Chandrashekhar Rao immediately undertook damage-control exercise in Huzurabad by deploying ministers and party MLAs to ensure local party leaders and cadre do not sail with Rajendar but remain with the TRS.

The Chief Minister deputed minister Gangula Kamalakar and Koppula Eshwar to Huzurabad to hold negotiations with

TWITTER FAILED TO COMPLY WITH IT RULES: CENTRE

Fr Stan Swamy SJ

New Delhi, July 5: The Centre on Monday told the Delhi High Court that social media giant Twitter has failed to comply with India's new IT Rules, which could lead to losing its immunity conferred under the Information Technology (IT) Act.

The Centre, in an affidavit filed in the high court, said as per the details obtained from Twitter's website or mobile application, as an interim, the grievances from India are being handled by the platform's official located in the US which amounts to non-compliance of the IT Rules, 2021. The IT Rules, 2021 are the law of the land and Twitter is required to comply with the same, said the affidavit filed in response to a plea by lawyer Amit Acharya.

■ Page 2: Stan Swamy fought for tribals in Central India
■ More reports on Page 8

AIM AT LEGS, NOT CHEST: ASSAM CM ADVICE TO POLICE

MANOJ ANAND
GUWAHATI, JULY 5

Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma on Monday said that taking criminals head on should be the pattern of policing in the state.

Asserting that firing at criminals should be the police's style, the CM who was addressing a conference of police inspectors and officers-in-charge (OCs) of police stations, said, "We cannot aim at their chest but law permits to shoot in the leg."

Referring to reports in the media about at least six alleged criminals receiving gunshot wounds since May 10 while they were reportedly "trying to flee" from police custody in Assam, Mr. Sarma said that Assam police should not be afraid of any campaign or of being accused of being trigger happy. Instead, they must focus on justice being done, and when it comes to criminals like rape accused and drug peddlers, they should not be spared.

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State wants full KRMB meeting

AP working on Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation despite NGT order, alleges TS

No solution in sight for farmers on land disputes

From page 1

● **AT ONE** time it asks farmers to send their grievances to a WhatsApp number or e-mail specially devised for the purpose. Then it asks them to apply through Meeseva centres or the Dharani portal. Even after submitting applications through all modes, no solution seems in sight.

Meanwhile, the TS government filed a petition with the National Green Tribunal (NGT) again on Monday against the AP government as the earlier contempt case against AP would be coming up for hearing on July 12.

The petition alleged that the AP government was working on the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS) though the NGT had ordered on October 29, 2020, to stop the project works until AP secures the requisite approvals. It urged the NGT to initiate action against the AP government and SPML Infra Ltd for wilful violation of the NGT orders by taking up RLIS works.

In his letter to KRMB chairman, irrigation special chief secretary Rajat Kumar expressed objection over the board member secretaries mentioning discussion only on issues raised by Andhra Pradesh over utilisation of Krishna river waters in the July 9 meeting. He said several critical issues raised by Telangana state were not taken into consideration for discussion.

He said the TS government had sought discussion on revision of the water sharing ratio of Krishna river for the current water year, and steps

to stop construction of the "illegal" RLIS and Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (RDS) right canal by Andhra Pradesh immediately.

The TS government also

sought discussion on granting of additional Krishna water share of 45 tmc ft to Telangana subsequent to the clearance of Polavaram project by the Central Water Commission as per the terms of the Bachawat award, reckoning 20 percent of total water drawn as usage towards drinking water supply, and appropriate accounting of savings by Telangana out of water releases ordered by the KRMB.

Further, Rajat Kumar stated that the Srisailam project was sanctioned by the Planning Commission in 1963 as a hydro-electric project (HEP) for supplying water to Nagarjunasagar project by power generation. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)-I also held this as HEP without envisaging diversion of water to another watershed.

Nagarjunasagar project by power generation. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)-I also held this as HEP without envisaging diversion of water to another watershed.

"Srisailam project being an HEP for generating power without diverting water to another watershed.

shed does not involve consumptive use of water except for evaporation loss," he cited the extract of KWDT-I.

Rajat Kumar pointed out that water supply systems in the state were predominantly dependent on lift irrigation schemes requiring huge energy inputs during kharif season. Considering a severe power exigency in the state, he stated that power generation at Srisailam would ensure the transmission of sufficient waters to Nagarjunasagar project which is critical for meeting the needs of agricultural and drinking water needs in Telangana. Under these circumstances, he stated that the Telangana government was constrained to reject the requests of AP to stop power generation from Srisailam.

records on Dharani portal and only district collectors have the powers to do it. Farmers are making a beeline to collector offices every Monday to submit petitions as the state government holds "Praja Vani" on Monday at all collector offices to enable people to meet collectors directly and lodge their grievances.

Due to Covid outbreak, the Praja Vani was stopped for a year. Though it was relaunched recently, collectors are not taking grievances directly but instead asking farmers to drop their complaints in the grievances boxes set up at collectorates.

Kumar stated that the Srisailam project was sanctioned by the Planning Commission in 1963 as a hydro-electric project (HEP) for supplying water to Nagarjunasagar project by power generation. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)-I also held this as HEP without envisaging diversion of water to another watershed.

Nagarjunasagar project by power generation. The Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal (KWDT)-I also held this as HEP without envisaging diversion of water to another watershed.

"Srisailam project being an HEP for generating power without diverting water to another watershed.

helped the TRS to trounce Congress heavyweight K. Jana Reddy in his stronghold for the second time in a row with a huge majority of over 18,000 votes.

Sources said the Chief Minister wanted to adopt the same strategy in Huzurabad by addressing a public meeting before issuance of poll notification by the EC and address another meeting just before polling.

In the Nagarjunasagar Assembly bypoll held in April this year, Rao addressed two huge public meetings before the poll notification was issued, and another meeting just two days prior to polling on April 17. This

CJ bench refuses to hear farmers' plea

From page 1

Senior counsel Vedula Venkatramana appearing for the farmers said the plea should be heard by the same bench since the petition involved issues relating to the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act. As per roster, such matters are allocated to this bench, he stressed.

AAG Ramachandra Rao made a mention before the Chief Justice bench to hear the petition, as it was an inter-state water-related issue. The CJ declined the request of the AAG and made it clear that it will be heard by the roster bench.

After the lunch break, Justice Ramachandra Rao said the bench had got a clarification from the HC registry that it should hear the matter. Advocate-General B.S. Prasad immediately requested the judge to post it before the bench headed by the CJ. "When the matter was clarified by the CJ office, how can it be conveyed to them to hear the matter," the judge asked.

Thereon, the AG made an appeal requesting Justice Rao to recuse himself from hearing the writ petition. This was not agreed on by the judge. Finally, the AG dropped his request and the bench proceeded to hear the matter. When Vedula Venkatramana, senior counsel appearing for petitioners, tried to explain further details of the verdict. Justice Rao questioned counsel as to how the petition was maintainable. The judge said the Supreme Court had in 2008 decided that the issues related to interstate water disputes shall not be entertained by any court.

The bench told all counsels concerned to go through the judgment and come prepared to the court on Tuesday for presenting their contentions.

Atmalinga Reddy case that had challenged the awarding of the hydel power project at Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme (RDS) to the relatives of then Chief Minister Y.S. Rajashekhar Rao. The apex court had made it clear that when the enactment was made by Parliament to deal with sensitive issues like river valley matters, such establishments are the only authority to deal with the issues. "Such disputes cannot be the subject matter of petition either in High Court under Article 226 or in this court under Article 32 of the Constitution," the apex court had said.

Justice Rao made a mention before the Chief Justice bench to hear the petition, as it was an inter-state water-related issue. The CJ declined the request of the AAG and made it clear that it will be heard by the roster bench.

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KCR revised plan after Dubbik blow

From page 1

Rao was avoiding campaigning for bypolls since he became Chief Minister in 2014 as it was a cake-walk for the TRS. But after setbacks received in Dubbik bypoll and the GHMC elections in 2020-end, leading to the emergence of the BJP as a strong political force in the state, the CM said to have changed his strategy and started taking bypolls seriously.

As the Huzurabad bypoll holds much political significance for the TRS than any other bypoll till date, the Chief Minister wants to win this election, come what may, and check voices of dissent, if any within the TRS once and for all.

NIA brings blast accused to city

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC

HYDERABAD, JULY 5

National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Monday brought the two alleged Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorists involved in Darbhanga blast case to the city for reconstruc-

tion of crime and gathering evidence.

Mohammed Nasir Khan alias Nasir Malik and his younger brother Mohammed Imran Khan alias Imran Malik had been arrested by NIA on June 30 for planting a bomb in a parcel they booked

from Secunderabad Railway Station, which exploded at Darbhanga railway station.

Sources revealed the agency is questioning them about their motives and inquiring who all they have got in touch with within the country and their locations, so that they could get a clue to the all-India conspiracy. The New Delhi unit of NIA has re-registered a case in this regard on June 24.

Symbolic protest



Women from Left-leaning political parties throw a gas cylinder into Hussain Sagar lake to protest against the rise in LPG prices.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Stan Swamy fought battle for tribals' rights in central India

From page 1

SHORT TAKES
COP GIVEN LIFE SENTENCE FOR KILLING COLLEAGUE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

A police constable, Jella Prakasham, 44, who killed his woman colleague over a financial dispute in April 2019 was sentenced to undergo life imprisonment by a court in Sangareddy district on Monday.

Police said Prakasham and the victim were posted at the women police station in Sangareddy district. After killing her, Prakasham burnt her body on the outskirts of Venkatapuram of Sadashivapet mandal.

Police said the woman constable had purchased a 150-square yard plot at Malkaram, in which Prakasham had invested some money. However, Prakasham demanded that the woman constable return his money, which she refused and this led to the murder.

INTERSTATE GANG HELD FOR MOBILE PHONE ROBBERY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

In a joint operation, the Rachakonda and Kharagpur government railway police personnel nabbed an interstate gang involved in theft of mobile phones, from West Bengal. The accused were identified as Mohammed Muslim Sekh, 23, Mohammad Jasimuddin Sk and Rafiq-Ul-Shaik, both 19.

On July 1 the accused made a hole in the wall of a mobile phone shop and stole 26 phones and other accessories worth ₹3 lakh. A police team travelled in an aircraft and intercepted the accused who were in a train at Kharagpur, with help of from the local Government Railway Police.

IIT-H, WIN HOLD CONTEST OVER CHILD GROWTH

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

IIT-Hyderabad and WIN Foundation, a non-profit organisation, conducted the WIN Challenge in partnership with the The Telangana Social Startup Network, to seek innovative solutions to problems around child growth and health monitoring.

Romita Ghosh won the contest and Pankaj Saini was declared runner-up. The organisers said the virtual event received good response from students, researchers, academia, and entrepreneurs.

Paresh Vora, director, India operations, WIN Foundation, said, "The WIN Challenge aimed to identify and support start-ups to measure infant child growth from their photographs. This has the potential to address a major challenge of child nutrition programme, to measure the growth of large numbers of infants in urban slums, rural and tribal areas, and thereby enable quick suggestions for corrective measures in malnutrition."

● ROMITA GHOSH won the contest and Pankaj Saini was declared runner-up. The organisers said the virtual event received good response from students, researchers, academia, and entrepreneurs.

STP agency releases untreated sewerage

Govt arranges for more water supply, sewage is ignored

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Contamination of water bodies within the Greater Hyderabad region will continue until sufficient number of sewerage treatment plants (STPs) are not built by Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB).

The existing STPs can treat only 772 million litres a day (MLD) of sewage, whereas the city and its environs produce total sewage of 1,782 MLD. Officials confess the city is in dire need of new STPs that can treat at least 1,010 MLD of sewage.

Adding to the problem is non-maintenance of existing STPs. The board has paid ₹30 crore to a private agency for maintaining existing STPs for five years. When board officials conducted surprise inspections, they found that the agency was letting untreated sewage flow into the Musi, endan-

HOW WATER IS CLEANED

The capacity of major sewerage treatment plants (STPs), in million litres a day	
Amberpet	: 339
Nagole	: 172
Nallacheruvu	: 30
Ziguda	: 21
Nandimusaliguda	: 30
15 minor STPs treat 180 mld; bringing total capacity of STPs to 772 MLD	

gering aquatic and human life in downstream villages. It is open knowledge that untreated sewage water is flowing through various nalas within the limits of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The government has been busy bringing drinking water through Krishna phases I, II, and III and Godavari phase I, but without

improving the sewerage system.

This would lead to a weak sewage system contaminating drinking water flowing through water pipelines. "The Water Board must have made alternative plans for sewerage network too while building drinking water lines in the city," a source underlined.

In fact, HMWS&SB had sent its proposals to National River Conservation Directorate for improving the city sewerage system. But the directorate did not release any grants.

"Nalas of the city have become sewage carriers and lakes have become sewage ponds. These have ended up contaminating the Musi River. Untreated water flows through 50 villages downstream of Musi," the source, who wished not to be identified, disclosed. Villages affected include Choutuppal, Bhongir, Hayatnagar, Ghatkesar, Bibinagar, Ramayampet,

Suryapet, Edulabad and Pochampally. The situation would turn worse if establishment of STPs in the city is further delayed.

When asked about details of STPs, an official disclosed that as per the master plan, total sewage generated up to ORR during 2018 was about 1,782 MLD. Projected sewage generation by 2036 will be 2,815 MLD. Against these, the present installed treatment capacity of existing STPs is 772 MLD.

As per the Comprehensive Sewerage Master Plan (CSMP), it is proposed to establish 62 sewerage treatment plants with a capacity of 2,057 MLD before 2036. "Of these, 62 proposals have been sent for establishment of 31 STPs in three packages under a hybrid annuity model (HAM). As that would be time consuming, tenders have been invited only for 14 STPs," a board official maintained.

Malaysian Township cons residents over water fare

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Despite the state government providing for 20 kilolitres (KL) drinking water free to eligible consumers, resident welfare associations (RWAs) have been looting members.

One of these RWAs is Sito, which is popular as Malaysian Township, whose customer account number (CAN) is 614202520. Though it is not a legitimate RWA, it has been collecting ₹600 towards water charges.

The MA&UD department also fixed impact fees for all structures adjacent to these commercial roads apart from issuing parking guidelines. The impact fee would be paid into the escrow account of the Strategic Nala Development Programme (SNDP). The fee would be the percentage of basic land value.

The impact fee would ₹300 per square feet or six per cent up to ground floor and ₹150 or three per cent above ground floor on roads adjacent to multiplexes and commercial spaces, and ₹100 per sq ft or two per cent up to ground floor and ₹50 per sq ft or one per cent above ground floor on stretches adjacent to hospitals, schools, medical shops and similar outlets. As per Government Order 102 dated July 3, these rates will be applicable to all commercial roads. It will be over and above the conversion charges and other fees or charges. It would be applicable to pending cases where the applicants have not paid the impact fee as per earlier rates.

The order said required parking area as specified in the rules. There should be no compound wall or fencing and front set back area should be kept open and be at the same level as the footpath.

The association has collected ₹75 lakh towards water charges from residents despite Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) supplying 20 KL of water per month for free per water connection after the Aadhaar numbers of consumers are linked with their CAN.

Such blatant misuse of the government largesse

has occurred due to RWAs, local politicians and field staff of water board joining hands.

RWAs had also cheated the government when the latter gave flood relief of ₹10,000 cash to victims of floods in October 2020. Hundreds of families did not get this benefit. Essentially, this was the reason why the number of seats won by TRS in GHMC came down to 56 from 99.

According to Uppala Gopal Rao, a resident of Malaysian Township, which consists of 15,076 flats, the HMWS&SB stopped issuing water bills after announcement of free drinking water scheme. It asked residents to link their Aadhaar numbers with their CAN to avail the facility of 20 KL free drinking water.

Gopal Rao pointed out that the board issued ₹22 lakh as bills for water supplied from January to May while offering ₹14

lakh as subsidy since most consumers had linked their CAN numbers with Aadhaar. He further said in June, the water board issued bills worth ₹5 lakh and offered a subsidy of ₹4 lakh.

"Yet, since January, the management committee of RWA has been collecting ₹600 per flat towards water charges, apart from regular maintenance. Despite implementation of free water scheme, the association collected ₹75 lakh since January from residents in the township.

How can we not be allowed to enjoy the subsidy given by the government?" Gopal Rao asked.

He requested the state government and HMWS&SB to investigate into the issue and do justice to the residents. When contacted, water board officials said they will look into the issue and, if need be, book a police case against the RWA management.

Deplorable state



Pitiable condition of old Madanapet vegetable market which attracts of hundreds of customers regularly, in Hyderabad on Monday.

— P. SURENDRA

Bakrid, Bonalu festivities: Cops asked to be vigilant

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

DGP M. Mahender Reddy on Monday directed the police to take appropriate steps to ensure that Bakrid and Bonalu festivals are held without any incidents this year.

The DGP and animal husbandry secretary Anita Rajendran held a video conference with senior police officials, police commissioners, SPs and department officials with regard to ensuring festivals.

"Due to Covid, major festivals in the state had not been held for the last one and a half years and there is a possibil-

ity of large-scale gatherings following complete relaxation of lockdown. Bakrid, Ujjaini Mahankali bonalu and Old City Bonalu will be held this month. The police officials are ordered to be vigilant to prevent any untoward incidents as both the festivals are occurring at the same time. All necessary precautions are taken in the matter of transportation of cattle," said the official, who also called for strict action against those transporting cows and calves.

It was also clarified that transporting livestock should have proper, certified and valid documents. "Each district should set up special check posts at the borders of other states. Police personnel have to thoroughly examine the rules and regulations in the case of cattle being transported from other states," he added.

Officials were ordered to identify people who post hateful and provocative matters on social media and that they should strictly be dealt with.

Rajendra said that veterinary officers are being specially appointed near each check post. Cows and calves

should not be seen in cattle transport and livestock transport vehicles should have adequate space, fresh water facilities and first aid facilities.

FESTIVE SPIRITS

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

With no restriction on makeshift cattle markets on the eve of Bakrid in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, people are showing interest in the 'Full Qurbani Service', which includes buying and maintaining cattle for sacrifice, arranging their slaughter, cutting and processing the meat, and delivering it to customers' homes, or to others.

This year, Bakrid here is expected to fall on July 21. It is observed on the 10th day of the last Islamic month 'Zilhajjah'. The

faithful sacrifice animals for three days. In this month, Hajj is also performed. It takes place between the eighth and 13th days of the last lunar month.

The arrangements for the collective sacrifice of cattle on three days of Bakrid have been made by a few organisations, particularly at the Deeni Madarsa. Now traders and other organisations are also expressing interest in this practice.

It is difficult to follow the old practice — moving around in crowded markets for purchasing sheep, goat or buffaloes, feeding

the animal for two or three days, conforming to legal and social restrictions in sacrificing the animal at their door and searching for a butcher for slaughtering and cutting the meat. Many people are switching towards 'Full

Bakrid is observed on the 10th day of last Islamic month

People opt for 'full Qurbani service'

ATHER MOIN | DC
HYDERABAD, JULY 5



People crowd a vaccination centre for getting their Covid-19 vaccination at Musheerabad government school without following protocols. — DEEPAK DESHPANDE

State witnesses drop in micro CZs across districts

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JULY 5

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA

Update: Cases | Deaths



Fresh Cases	
808	Deaths
Tests Done	
1,03,398	Active Cases
Total Cases	6,27,498
Total Deaths	3,698

Highest New Cases

Adilabad	2
Jogulamba Gadwal, Nirmal	3
Karnareddy, Komarambheem	
Asifabad, Narayanpet, Vikarabad	4
Medak	6
Nizamabad	7

Lowest New Cases

Highline	2
GHMC (Hyderabad)	82
Nalgonda	62
Khammam	59
Karimnagar	58
Mancherial	51
Nizamabad	7

Zero but intensive care units are seeing a few patients coming in from the districts.

These patients, said doctors, were treated at home and in smaller hospitals. When there was no improvement in their condition, they were shifted to specialty centres

Hyderabad. Experts said the state will henceforth see sporadic rise in daily cases depending on gatherings and movement of people from one place to another as well as maintenance of Covid hygiene in terms of wearing masks and maintaining physical distancing.

Cops arrest 7 for abducting bizman

DC CORRESPONDENT

HYDERABAD, JULY 5

LB Nagar police arrested seven persons for the kidnap of a businessman, Mohd Arif Akbani, over a financial dispute. The accused were identified as Mohammed Luqman Fazlani, Mohammed Tarique Ameen Fazlani, Mohammed Nadeem, Mohammed Shakoor Sayani, Mohammed Imran, Mohammed Ghazi and Santhosh Masi.

SHORT TAKES

RAISE WATER ISSUES WITH KRMB: CONG.

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Senior Congress leader Ponnala Lakshmaiah dared Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao to prove that 50 lakh acres were irrigated with water from the Kaleshwaram lift irrigation scheme. The CM's claim was just false propaganda, alleged Lakshmaiah, a former irrigation minister.

Speaking to newsmen here on Monday, Lakshmaiah said that the Chief Minister should attend Krishna River Management Board meeting and raise the demands of Telangana state with regard to the river water. He said the CM had failed to react to the Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme taken up by AP government, he said.

Lakshmaiah said the Chief Minister will land behind bars for "countless sins."

HINDUTVA NOT INCLUSIVE: OWAISI TO RSS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi slammed RSS sansangchalam. Mohan Bhagwat on what he called attempts to distance the Hindutva ideology from those guilty of 'mob lynchings' of Muslims and other minorities.

Hitting out at Bhagwat's speech at a book launch function in Ghaziabad on Sunday, Owaisi tweeted on Monday that the lynching of Muslims is the result of Nathuram Godse's ideology of Hindutva. In a series of tweets, Owaisi said that 'cowardice, violence and murder' have been an integral part of Godse's Hindutva thinking.

Owaisi said, "RSS's Bhagwat said anti-Hindutva forces are lynching". These criminals would not know the difference between a cow and a buffalo, but the names of Junaid, Akhlaq, Pehlu, Rakbar and Alimuddin were enough to kill. This hatred is the product of Hindutva. These criminals have the backing of the Hindutva government."

He said Alimuddin's killers are garlanded at the hands of a Union minister, the Tricolour is laid over the body of Akhlaq's killer, and a maha panchayat is convened in support of the killers of Asif.

Owaisi asked if Bhagwat has accepted that the majority community has been radicalized due to RSS and Hindutva ideology. Is this ideology not responsible for radicalization, he asked. He said that Hindutva does not talk about unity but the Constitution does.

HITTING OUT at Bhagwat's speech at a book launch function in Ghaziabad on Sunday, Owaisi tweeted on Monday that the lynching of Muslims is the result of Nathuram Godse's ideology of Hindutva.

PUBLIC NOTICE

Our client is intending to purchase F.No. G-5 (GF) Adm., 1634 sq.ft. along with 60 sq.ft. car parking in 'Lakshmi Residency' in Plot Nos. 319 to 324 in Sy. Nos. 261 to 266 and 290, Nizampet Village, Qutubullapur Mandal, Ranga Reddy District, from Sri Kota Sivaiah Slo. Sri Janaki Raghava Rao Kola.

Any person or institution having any objection may contact the undersigned within 7 days with relevant documents failing which the transaction shall be finalized.

Sd/-
M.R. Harsha,
Vishnu Groves, T. Manjula
M/s. M.R. Harsha & Associates, Advocates
Cell: 98480 55717

PUBLIC NOTICE

All the public are hereby informed that my client M/s MGB Motor and Auto Agencies Pvt. Ltd. A company incorporated under the companies act, having its Registered office at H.No. 7-1-638, Bhamra Enclave, Near ESI Estate, Hyderabad, Rep. by Dr. D. D. Rao has entered into an agreement to purchase property mentioned in the schedule hereunder from its owner M/s Mining & Allied Products, a partnership firm, Rep. by its Managing Partner Mr. N. Krishna Raju Slo. Dr. N.M. Raju and Partner Mrs. N. Aruna (W/o N. V. N. Rao) and partner. Any person(s)/ organization having any objection/right/lien title, over the said property may please contact the under signed within 7 (seven) days from the date of publication of this Notice with relevant documents in support of their claim. As otherwise my client will take full consideration and get the same deed registered in its name treating no claims whatever in nature over the said property. No claims in any manner will entertained thereafter.

SCHEDULE OF PROPERTY
All that the land bearing Plot No. 49/A, admeasuring 2182 Sq.yds in Sy. Nos. 334, 335, 336 and 337 & 160, Ac. 0.12 Gts. in Sy. Nos. 338 & 339, Ac. 0.08 Gts. and Ac. 0.05 Gts. in Sy. No. 489 total area bearing Ac. 1.01 Gts. situated at Bachupally Village and Grampanchayat, Qutubullapur Mandal (Now Bachupally Mandal), Ranga Reddy District (Now Medchal Malkajgiri District), Telangana State and bounded by:

NORTH: 30'-0" Wide Road, SOUTH: Gunasai Chemicals, EAST: 30'-0" Wide Road, WEST: Plot No. 49.

Sd/- A. Manohar Reddy,
Advocate
Office at: Flat No. 401, Megna's Lake City
beside Cyber City Convention Centre
Hi-Tex, Hyderabad-500 084.
Mobile: +91 939366440

Big fete for Revanth

Supporters go all out for swearing-in tomorrow

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

The swearing-in ceremony for the new office-bearers of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) will be a show of strength of the grand old party here on Wednesday, July 7.

Newly appointed TPCC president A. Revanth Reddy along with other office bearers, the election management committee, and the campaign committee will take charge at Gandhi Bhavan.

After the formation of Telangana state in 2014, the Congress has been facing major setbacks. Party MLAs, MLCs and other senior leaders switched their loyalties either to the ruling TRS or the BJP.

During municipal elections, the party had a bitter experience as contestants were not available for several slots. The appointment of a new TPCC led by Revanth Reddy, a member of Parliament, claims to have boosted the morale of the rank and file of the Congress.

Former Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah, Karnataka PCC president D.K. Shiva Kumar, Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, TS incharge Manickam Tagore and other leaders will attend the ceremony on Wednesday. A huge rally of activists will be taken out in the city.

District Congress units have conducted preparatory meetings for the swearing in ceremony. Covid-19 protocol will be adhered to by the Congress leaders, activists and front-line organisations while attending the fete.

A senior leader said that due to the pandemic, participants will prefer SUVs instead of heavy vehicles. "The cadre is in a jubilant mood as the party is now under the dynamic leadership of Revanth Reddy," he said.

The route map for the rally from the Peddamma temple to Gandhi Bhavan is ready. The new chief will offer prayers at the Peddamma temple before participating in the rally.

The rally will pass through Jubilee Hills



Indian National Trade Union Congress leaders greeted new TPCC president A. Revanth Reddy on his appointment and briefed him on the issues facing the unorganised sector and agriculture workers. They highlighted the issue of field assistants of the MGNREGA who were suspended in March last year after working for 16 years as they demanded withdrawal of Circular No 479 which they said is against the spirit of the fundamental principles and rights at work.

— DC

Revanth invites Rosaiah, top Congress leaders

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

crucial time.

On arrival in Bengaluru on Monday, Revanth Reddy was accorded a rousing welcome by party activists. He met the state's former chief minister Siddaramaiah, KPCC president D.K. Shiva Kumar, leader of opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, former Assembly Speaker Ramesh and others. The TPCC chief invited them for his swearing-in ceremony scheduled to be held on

July 7.

Speaking to reporters in Bengaluru on Monday, Revanth Reddy said that Karnataka was a traditional Congress stronghold. "We need suggestions from Karnataka Congress leaders to bring the party to power in Telangana state," he said.

"I have a good rapport with senior party Congress from Karnataka, who are playing a key role in national politics," the TPCC chief said.

Check Post, LV Prasad Eye Hospital, Nagarjuna Circle, Care Hospital, Masab Tank, Vijayanagar Colony, Bazaar Ghat, Nampally Dargah, and culminate at Gandhi Bhavan.

Newly appointed working presidents and committee chiefs are among those who will take charge.

Meanwhile, TPCC working president Anjan Kumar Yadav said that police must give permission for the swearing-in of the TPCC executive committee on July 7.

He said people were vexed with the anti-people policies of the BJP and TRS governments at the Centre and in the state.

Congress cadres have been invigorated and energised with the appointment of a new leadership for TPCC and are raring to put an end to KCR's misrule," said AICC spokesperson Dasoju Sravan

while announcing the details of the Congress events for Wednesday.

"While Sonia Gandhi has delivered Telangana, moved as she was by the sacrifices of activists and braving all odds, KCR has defeated the purpose of statehood. Sonia Gandhi believed in a socially justified and empowered Telangana where people belonging to all sections get equal opportunities," Dr Sravan said.

He said the family of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had turned Telangana state into their fiefdom and let down every household.

"With new leadership at the helm in TPCC, the Telangana cadres are determined to put an end to the TRS rule and fulfill the aspirations of Sonia Gandhi by bringing the Congress back to power," said Dr Sravan.

Dr Sravan urged Congress cadres to follow discipline and Covid-appropriate behaviour during the rally. Lakhhs of leaders and workers from all over Telangana are expected to participate in the rally, he said.

BJP Kisan Morcha demands TS join PM Fasal Bima plan

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

— S. SURENDER REDDY

BJP says implement Ayushman Bharat in TS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

tals as they had fleeced families of Covid patients.

Charging that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao was being biased against SCs, the party demanded release of all pending amounts to SC Corporation and sub-plan funds besides allotting three acres of land to dalit families.

He said that the party is demanding implementation of Ayushman Bharat in Telangana state. He condemned the state government's neglect of the public health sector and overlooking the corporate hospitals mafia. The party demanded the government to take action against hospital

against those selling spurious seeds.

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He said that the party is demanding implementation of Ayushman Bharat in Telangana state. He condemned the state government's neglect of the public health sector and overlooking the corporate hospitals mafia. The party demanded the government to take action against hospital

and sought stringent action

BJP YUVA MORCHA'S PROTEST FROM JULY 9

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

BJP Yuva Morcha will launch a statewide agitation on Tuesday against the state government's failure to release job notifications. This was announced by the Morcha's state president Bhanu Prakash here on Monday.

On the first day, BJYM activists will stage a "half-naked" protest in all district headquarters while on July 9 they will seek alms and on July 13 they will take out huge Nirudhyoga Garjana rallies. They will lay siege to mandal revenue offices on July 16. The protest will resume on July 20 in each mandal of every Assembly segment. Three days later they have round table meetings and take to blocking of roads on July 27. On July 30 they will lay siege to ministers' quarters in Hyderabad.

Bhanu Prakash said that on August 3, they will submit representations at Dr B.R. Ambedkar statues in every mandal and three days later they will protest with handcuffs followed by silent protests on August 10. On August 13, they will submit petitions to buffalos and on August 17 stage a knee-down protest while on August 20 they will take up a signature collection campaign against unemployment.

The BYJM is to take up dharna in the second week of this month in front of corporate educational institutions against excess fees collected from parents during Covid times.

1st DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Those of the righteous will be long remembered. Psalms 112:6



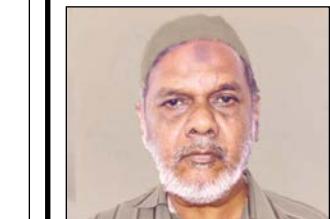
ELUKA JOHN WESLEY

Retired Inspector of Police
Intelligence Office, Lakdiyalip, Hyd. A.P.
(Served in Indian Police Service (IPS)
(Ho Late Eluka Manorama)
International Basketball Referee (FIBA)
DOB: 23-03-1958 DOD: 06-07-2020

Inserted by: Sons, Daughter,
Daughter-in-law, Son-in-law
Grand Children, Great Grand Child

(S/2122/D00412)

1st ANNIVERSARY



ALHAJ SYED KHAJA MIAN

DOB: 06-07-2020
Prop: G. B. Basha, Hyderabad
"Moments spent with you like treasure
Value of which no one can measure
Your smile made all our dreams come true
People like you in the world are a very few."
May Allah Grant you Jannah

Inserted by: Sons, Daughter,
Daughter-in-law, Son-in-law
Grand Children, Great Grand Child

Ph: 901097488 / 9849021177

IN LOVING MEMORY 23rd ANNIVERSARY



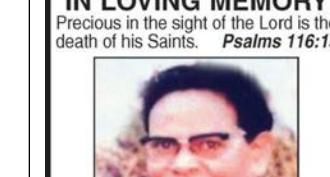
SRI R. A. SOLAIAPPAN

Ex. Service Man / Retd. Govt Employee
D.O.B: 1929 D.O.D: 6th July 1998

Sons: R.A. Vinod Kumar
R.A. Rajeshwar- Sarala,
Smt. R.A. Sarala Devi (Wife)
Daughters: S.Kalpana Ravi,
Nalini Tejender, Hitesh
& Grand Childrens
BHL Book & Courier Center
4-532/1, Sultanbazar, Hyd (TS) Ph: 2475903

IN LOVING MEMORY

Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his Saints. Psalms 116:15



G. ALBERT

DOB: 6th July 1988, S.E. (R&B) Retd.
Children, Grand Children,
Great Grand Children.
Banjara Hills, Hyderabad.
Ph: 9441530009

IN FOND MEMORY



DR. NEELAM KRISHNA

Departed us on 6th July, 2020

"Your hands have healed so many, your words have inspired many, your light has become a path for us all. It's been a year since you departed us to the heavenly abode but your presence is felt every moment of our lives."

We miss you and feel your love,
affection, care and kindness everyday.

Fondly remembered by: NEELAM FAMILY

IN BRIEF

THREE TEENAGE
GIRLS DROWN
IN TANKDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JULY 5

The bodies of three teenage girls were found floating in a tank in Singhamang village in Thanur mandal in Nirmal district on Monday. The deceased were identified as Sunitha (16), her younger sister Vaishali (14) and their relative Anjali (14) from the same village. The mobile phone they used was recovered from the tank.

It is believed that they could have fallen in the waters while taking selfies and drowned saving one another. The girls went to the village tank after attending a function in the village on Sunday evening. Police are also investigating whether it was accidental or whether there was a criminal angle.

HYDERABAD
PUBLIC SCHOOLS
WAIVE FEEDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

The Hyderabad Public Schools have declared up to 100 per cent fee waiver for students whose parents have been succumbed of Covid-19. Making the announcement, the school governing body also announced a further reduction of ₹10,000 in the annual tuition fees for the current academic year for all students.

The Hyderabad Public Schools, Begumpet and Ramnathpur, on Monday in a press release, said the decision to reduce the fee was taken in view of the prolonged shutdown of schools as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, and in line with directions from the government and the courts.

SBI ATM DEBITS
FROM ITS
CAPITAL ACCOUNTDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

An SBI ATM near the Ramnagar bridge had around ₹3.4 lakh debited from its capital account instead of the customers' accounts. Hyderabad cybercrimes police booked a case and started a probe.

The incident came to light when the bank staff noticed that money was being debited repeatedly from its account. "Bank officials suspect that this might be due to cyber-criminal activity. No other SBI ATM in the city has faced the issue," police said. The bank's manager has lodged a complaint with the Hyderabad cybercrime police station regarding.

TRS LEADERS
MEET DEFENCE
OFFICIALSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

TRS Malkajgiri Lok Sabha constituency in-charge Marri Rajasekhar Reddy along with Cantonment MLA G. Sayanna and former Cantonment Board members met Director General of Defence Estates (DGDE), Prachur Goyal, on Monday.

They submitted a list of development-related demands which they said were required for the Cantonment area. The TRS leaders said there must be a separate fund for the functioning of the Cantonment general hospital in Bolaram.

They said that the Board must issue an NOC for the proposal forwarded by it for shifting the dump yard from Mahatma Gandhi community Hall, Trimulgherry, to an alternative site at the military dairy farm.

FOOTFALL UP AT
SHAMSHABAD
AIRPORTDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

With several states easing lockdowns, the Hyderabad airport saw an increase in the number of flight operations.

From just over 100 on June 1, the air traffic movements increased to 199 on June 27. The number of passengers every day went up from about 10,000 to 22,000. The airport handled 4 lakh domestic passengers in June.

GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited said surveillance teams, state police and 20 special police officers ensured enforcement of Covid-19 safety guidelines.

Students of OU, JNTU
demand online exams

Students are against conducting physical examinations

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

The OU and JNTU students JAC (joint action committee) held a demonstration in front of education minister Sabitha Indra Reddy's residence on Monday seeking cancellation of physical examinations and holding of only online exams. The exams are starting on Tuesday.

A delegation of the students submitted a representation to the minister.

Hundreds of students from Osmania University (OU) and Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) gathered at the minister's residence in Srinagar Colony on Monday morning and shouted slogans against physical examinations.

The students told the minister they were worried over the prevalence of Covid-19 and the likelihood of a third wave. Most of the student community is yet to be vaccinated, they pointed out.

The minister assured



Students hold massive demonstration in front of education minister Sabitha Indra Reddy's residence in Hyderabad on Monday.

SC relief for TS: Hafeezpet land

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

In a relief to the state government and TS Wakf Board, the Supreme Court on Monday ordered status quo on the 140 acres of land in Survey No. 80 at Hafeezpet in Serilingampally mandal, which is reportedly marked as Wakf property.

A division bench issued the interim directions in special leave petition filed

by the Ranga Reddy district collector and Wakf Board, which challenged an order of the TS High Court.

While holding that the land belongs to private persons Sai Pawan Estates, P.S. Parthasarathy, K. Praveen Kumar and others, a High Court division bench had set aside the resolution passed by Wakf Board and the Gazette notifying the land as its property.

It also set aside entries made in the revenue

records, which were in favour of the government. The court had imposed costs of ₹50,000 on Wakf Board and the government.

This judgment was challenged by the district collector and Wakf Board members before the Supreme Court. Board counsel submitted that the Dargah of Hazrath Salar-E-Aulia has an attached Wakf land measuring about 140 acres in the survey number at Hafeezpet.

FORMER DIET
CONTRACTOR OF
NILOUFER HOSP.
ARRESTEDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

The Hyderabad Central Crime Station (CCS) police arrested Koduri Suresh Babu, former diet contractor of Niloufer Hospital, for allegedly misappropriating ₹1.2 crore by submitting fake invoices.

Babu was arrested on a complaint lodged by the hospital superintendent on June 17. The hospital claimed that Babu was providing normal meals to patients but was billing the hospital for high protein meals which are costlier.

"He also started preparing fake indents showing more quantity supplied than actual figures. Through such forgery, he caused a loss of ₹1.2 crore to the government," the hospital superintendent said in the complaint.

Babu was booked for cheating among other offences by the Economic Offences Wing (EOW) and Special Investigation Team of the CCS, Hyderabad.

After his arrest on Monday, Babu was produced before the XII additional chief metropolitan magistrate's court in the city and remanded to judicial custody.

JAGAN SEEKS
CENTRE'S HELP
TO STOP TS'
USE OF WATERDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 5

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy wrote a letter on Monday to Union Jal Shakti minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat to prevail upon the TS government to stop indiscriminate drawing of water solely for power generation from projects on the Krishnan and direct the Krishna River Management Board to be neutral in its functioning.

The Chief Minister, in his letter, said the TS government continued to blatantly violate the provision of AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, with utter disregard to operational protocols and directions of the KRMB. It was causing a lot of distress to AP and even depriving it of its rightful share of water, he said, adding that TS was wasting precious water by releasing it into the Bay of Bengal.

The Chief Minister said the TS government was not allowing water levels to be built up in the Srisailam reservoir and utilised 19 tmc ft (thousand million cubic feet) for power generation out of 26 tmc ft of inflows from June 1 onwards.

He expressed concern by saying that in view of this adamant attitude, water level to reach 854 feet in the reservoir seems to be a Herculean task even though it was essential for drawing water through gravity for schemes dependent on Pothireddypadu head regulator. He pointed out that this would cause severe distress to the drought-prone Rayalaseema, Nellore and Prakasam districts and also Chennai city as they depended upon Srisailam reservoir for their drinking water and irrigation needs.

TS Bajrang Dal chief
booked for hate speechDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

The Telangana High Court sought to know from the state government whether it had fully constituted designated bodies like Telangana State Heritage Committee and Greater Hyderabad Heritage Committee.

A division bench comprising Chief Justice Himanta Kohli and Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy directed the government to place the GOs related to the constitution of heritage committees.

In a separate case, police booked Md Kalem on the basis of a video in which he made a provocative speech.

Police said a conspiracy was being hatched to



Bajrang Dal activists burn an effigy of TRS government leader Koti on Monday alleging increased attacks on Gau Rakshaks and for failing to check slaughter of cows.

— P. SURENDRA

eliminate Kalu Singh. Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat warned

against people spreading messages of communal hatred and disturbing peace and harmony.

In memoriam



State BJP president Bandi Sanjay along with senior party leaders G. Narayan Reddy and SC Morcha national secretary S. Kumar visited former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy's residence and paid floral tributes to his mother Konda Jayalala, wife of late Justice Konda Madhava Reddy, who passed away recently.

5 cops suspended for false claims

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

A sub-inspector and four constables of the Mangalhat police station were placed under suspension by Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar for falsely reporting the cash seized from a raid.

Sub-inspector Venkateswarulu, head constables Murali and Emmanuel and beat constables Ravi Kiran and Janakiram had reportedly failed to properly account for cash seized during a raid on a gambling den on November 7, 2020.

"The raid was conduct-

ed by the SI, who called the other cops and nabbed 14 men from a gambling den," said the Mangalhat inspector, G. Ranaveer Reddy.

Sources said that the team had seized ₹15 lakh in the raid but showed the amount as ₹4 lakh.

The action was following an inquiry;

Eshwaraiah to be recommended for PM's medal

Home Guard saves 11th life

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Mantri Eshwaraiah rescues Kondula Kiran Kumar from the Saroornagar lake on Monday.

Saroornagar police two years ago, Eshwaraiah is in charge of the lake out-post. On Monday, at about 3 pm, Eshwaraiah saw a man attempting to commit suicide in the Saroornagar lake.

The victim, Kondula Kiran Kumar, 27, was drunk when he tried to take his life. Eshwaraiah

jumped into the water and rescued Kumar.

"My utmost satisfaction comes from service to the people," Eshwaraiah said, "I will continue this service throughout my life."

Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh M. Bhagwat appreciated the work of Eshwaraiah and said his name would be recommended for the Prime Minister's medal. The commissioner had recently presented a cash award to Eshwaraiah.

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DECCAN Chronicle

6 JULY 2021

After France orders Rafale deal probe, India must too

The reports about the French government initiating a judicial probe into the ₹59,000-crore inter-governmental deal between India and France for the purchase of 36 Rafale medium multi-role combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force have robbed the Government of India of its reasons not to order a similar probe here. It is understood that the French national financial prosecutors' office ordered the inquiry into suspected corruption after reports in the press as well as a complaint filed by Sherpa, a French NGO that specialises in financial crime. The reports had alleged that Reliance Defence, the Indian partner of Dassault Aviation, which manufactures the fighters, had prior knowledge of the deal, which was announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Paris on April 10, 2015. Mediapart, the French news portal that was tracking the deal, had alleged that Dassault Aviation had paid one million euros to an Indian middleman for facilitating the deal. The investigation will cover the role of then French President François Hollande as well as sitting President Emmanuel Macron, who was Mr Hollande's economy and finance minister, and then defence minister Jean-Yves Le Drian, the reports said.

It's not the first time that doubts have been cast on the mega deal. In fact, questions were raised as soon as the Prime Minister announced the scrapping of the negotiations India had launched with the French manufacturer for the purchase of 126 Rafale fighters. The negotiations were at an advanced stage for an agreement, under which 18 fighters were to be purchased off the shelf in fly-away condition and the rest to be manufactured in India at public sector Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd under a technology transfer agreement. Defence experts were at pains to explain why India chose to cut short the number of fighters from 126 to 36 at a time when it was facing threats at both its northern and eastern borders.

It is true the Supreme Court had in December 2018 dismissed a petition seeking an investigation by the CBI to be monitored by it. The court had ruled that it believed due process was followed in the acquisition process and that it was not equipped to analyse the pricing aspect, almost acceding to the government's line that it was unable to reveal the pricing aspects, citing national security. The court later dismissed many review petitions, saying there was no merit in the demand for an investigation. The Comptroller and Auditor-General, whose office is authorised to do the pricing analysis, had noted that India got a cheaper deal though it had noted that the new deal did not contain the clause for transfer of technology. It had also raised questions about some of the India-specific enhancements in the fighters.

The Centre has been steadfast in rejecting demands for an investigation saying it was a government-to-government deal and hence there was no scope for corruption. Now that one of the governmental partners in the deal has suspicions on the deal and has ordered a probe, it would be better that the Indian government also accede to the demand for a transparent investigation to find out if the allegations of corruption had merit in them.

Confusion at top in military

It is evident the country's military leadership remains in search of clarity in conceptualising future battlefields for all domains and designing the organisational and functional model that would best serve India's needs. Integrated theatre commands have been some years in the making but the nuts and bolts are yet to be nailed down. This was visible last week when Chief of Defence Staff Gen Bipin Rawat seemed to downplay the Indian Air Force's role in relation to that of the Army, and Air Chief Marshal R.K.S. Bhadauria was quick to offer a sharp response.

While public discussion is beneficial in developing ideas, this episode was entirely avoidable. The CDS' remarks appeared almost combative. If he is to be the operational head of all six theatre commands currently envisaged, he must reflect on this leadership role in a spirit of tri-service cooperation and quell any notions of inter-service competition. The government has a role here in quietly clearing the air and ensuring that a public exhibition of differences is eschewed in future.

The CDS needlessly described the IAF as a "support arm" while dilating on roles within the proposed integrated theatre commands. The Chief of Air Staff, in contrast, observed that "air power has a huge role" – which is hard to ignore if military history since the Second World War is surveyed. The Allied victory was brought about not only by the famous battles on land but by the decisive role of air power that deepened the battlefield and attacked the sinews of Germany's economy, its factories and other assets, crippling Hitler's war effort. In our own geography, just imagine if India only had an Army but no Air Force or Navy.

Those tasked with developing new military concepts and doctrines need to offer the country greater assurance that they grasp the meaning of "jointness" in mounting a comprehensive military effort in all conditions and will painstakingly smoothen out wrinkles. If the IAF has reservations about its assets being distributed over various theatre commands, and other matters such as nomenclature and rank, these need to be addressed, not dismissed.

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DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyd: 6, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256
Vijayawada: No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-255284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234
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Rajahmundry: Venagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208
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Cochin: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagai, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255
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KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

Aakar Patel

As world changes rapidly, Indians stuck in the past, not eyeing future

Column writing is referred to as "punditry" in America. Their definition of pundit is "an expert in a particular subject or field who is frequently called upon to give their opinions to the public". However, this is not how punditry usually expresses itself. Newspaper column writers are not experts in any particular subject or field. Almost all of them are drawn from the pool of journalists and used to be reporters or editors earlier.

If they are experts at anything (and this is highly disputable), it would be in the narrow reporting space that they worked in. But how much expertise in medicine and surgery does a reporter on the healthcare beat really have? None. Editors, and I have been one of four newspapers, are not experts at anything. Column writers are post-fact commentators. They write about what has already happened. We have no idea what is to happen. How many Indian columnists predicted the recession, the pandemic's second wave, the Chinese intrusion in Ladakh, the farm laws, the highest unemployment in history, the public's response to the CAA,

demonetisation and three years of declining GDP growth, the failure of GST or the dismembering of Kashmir? None.

Forget that, how many even predicted the landslide election result in West Bengal? We are not even experts in the political field and shouldn't be taken seriously. To be fair to us, it's not our fault. The near future is hard to predict as it involves human agency. The government chooses to do something or not do something, and this has effects. None of us can tell how it will end, including often even the government.

But the longer term is easier to predict because it is not based on human agency but on technology and science. Some things are bound to happen because technology and its rate of improvement is predictable. Computers will get faster, petroleum will finish, manufacturing will need fewer people, robots will get better. All of these are already happening and will continue to happen. To foresee the future is only to be able to examine the rate of progress. The climate will change because science tells us that it is changing. Inequality will increase because

companies are getting larger. Foreign influence will increase in the politics and economics of countries like India as they are technologically dependent. Warfare will become less violent but more decisive as military power is limited to technological power.

The question is what all of this will ultimately mean for us. For centuries, this sort of thing did not matter because progress was slow compared to today. For a period in the 19th century, when electricity and mechanised and locomotion were discovered and invented, the change was dramatic. The first man flew in December 1903, on a plane that could go a few metres. Within 66 years, one lifetime, Americans put men on the moon. That is change of a pace not seen before, but change has accelerated since then, because of increasing power in computing.

Today's supercomputers have far more capacity at computation than the human brain. It's only a particular software or algorithm that requires to be developed to make them like us, which means for a computer to have general intelligence. Already at narrow intelligence, a computer is much better than

us, from flying planes to playing chess to scanning X-rays. But a computer cannot read a book like we can and doesn't know the difference between a dog and a sitar. It has no ability to think and people are now working (most notable at Google-owned companies) on training computers to be like us.

What happens when such general intelligence is developed, as is being predicted will happen in the next few years? That machine will be able to improve itself rapidly, through instant evolution. AI being smarter than us will be able to make itself better and more intelligent to the point that we would think of it as God. Again, many books have been written on this and in some of the most intelligent circles in America, including people like Bill Gates and Elon Musk, these things are being discussed seriously. They are doing so because artificial intelligence of that sort is perhaps only 20 years away and may prove to be a threat to mankind. But while the world's most powerful people are talking about this, and to some extent some governments (both America and China have AI programmes in their military), these are

not subjects India thinks about. If the West transitions rapidly by 2030 to renewable energy and electric cars, what will that mean for crude oil production? An American company is planning to colonise Mars within the next 10 years. The rockets to do this are already being made and tested. What will that mean for the future of the earth and its nation-state system? In a world where the difference between natural and synthetic is fast vanishing, how long will competitive sport be popular? 3D printing will soon change manufacturing and make a lot of trade obsolete. What is the future of nations which, like India, are still poor and have not transitioned to becoming developed? Where will our crores of people get employed?

Life for all of us will be very different in 10 years from how it is today. In 20 years, life might be unrecognisable from how it is now. But wallowing in the narrowness of Indian politics and society, none of us can see it, much less predict it.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

Subhani



Cabinet rejig: PM needs to look for better talent



Mohan Guruswamy

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is expected to announce the expansion of his Cabinet soon. This has become necessary with an eye towards the state Assembly elections scheduled in early 2022 and the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. The Union Cabinet can have up to 81 members, but currently there are only 53 (with 28 vacancies).

On July 7, 2004, the 91st amendment to the Constitution took effect. This limits the size of the councils of ministers at the Centre and in the states, which now cannot exceed 15 per cent of the numbers in the Lok Sabha or state legislatures respectively. The logic underlying this amendment was quite obvious. Cost was not the issue, for in relation to the overall cost of government, expenditure on ministers is minuscule. The real problem is that with unlimited ministerships on offer the destabilisation of governments was made easier. Unfortunately, there seems to be little realisation that too many cooks spoil the broth.

Even the National Committee to Review the Working of the Constitution (NCRWC), which recommended that the number of ministers "be fixed at the maximum of 10 per cent of the total strength of the popular House of the Legislature", did not seem to have thought this matter through. But even this recommendation was tweaked a bit to fix the ceiling at 15 per cent, as we seem to have too many overly keen to be of greater service to the public by becoming ministers.

Whatever be the reasons for the ceiling, good governance considerations or management principles seem to have little to do with it. We

have 548 MPs in the Lok Sabha, which means that we can have up to 81 ministers in New Delhi. With 787 MPs in all, that means almost one in nine MPs can be a minister. The states have in all 4,020 MLAs; opening up the possibility for about 600 ministerial berths for 4,487 MLAs and MLCs. Uttar Pradesh has the biggest Legislative Assembly, with 403 MLAs or 60 ministers, while Sikkim at the other end of the spectrum has to make do with just 32 MLAs or five ministers.

Quite clearly, the persons who applied their minds to this amendment have not seen government as a responsibility that has to be sensibly shared and not as a basket of fruits to be distributed. No organisation that is meant to function can be designed on such a basis. Analogies are seldom entirely appropriate, but you will see what one has in mind when you consider the absurdity of limiting the number of functional responsibilities in a company to a function of the number of workers or shareholders.

Management structures and hierarchies are constructed on assignment of responsibilities according to the technical and managerial specialisation of tasks. Thus, a large corporation may have heads for the Production, Marketing, Finance, HRD, Legal and Secretarial and Research functions, while in a small company just one or two persons may perform all these functions. The important thing is that management structures apportion tasks and responsibilities.

Obviously, the management of government is a far more complex task, with an infinitely larger set of tasks than the biggest corporation, however professionally managed it may be. But to divide the management of

We could encourage the Prime Ministers and chief ministers to induct professionals and experienced persons rather than be limited to professional politicians.

Likewise, Transport

LETTERS

BHAGWAT'S SPEECH

In election times, the BJP is trying hard to create the image of a national party that is not exclusively for Hindus or Muslims (*Islam not in danger in India, Bhagwat assures Muslims, DC, July 5*). Bhagwat has finally recognised the reality that Hindu-Muslim unity is our greatest strength. The 'divide and rule' policy has failed the BJP. It must try to unite everyone as Indians.

Mansoor Dashti
Secunderabad

The RSS and the BJP must join forces to ensure during their tenure in power that the unity message is translated from words into deeds. Like-minded Hindus and Muslims have always yearned for harmony and unless they see visible action in curbing fundamentalism of all religions, they would feel that this was a comment because elections in five states are fast approaching.

D. Nagarjuna
Hyderabad

MISSING SCISSORS

It was hilarious to read the situation in which Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao found himself in (*'Missing' scissors angers KCR, DC, July 5*). This must have been the first incident of its kind in recent times.

Vaddeti Venunath
Hyderabad

Email your letters to
info@deccanmail.com,
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50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Supply of Soviet arms to Pak denied

NEW DELHI, JULY 5. Soviet Ambassador in India Nikolai Pegov today called on Foreign secretary TN Kaul and denied that any arms supply was made by his country to Pakistan since the Pakistani army cracked down in East Bengal.

Mr. Pegov's visit to the foreign office was prompted by a report in a New Delhi daily that the Soviet Union had supplied some military items including spare parts since March 25.

Official source said, this evening that report was an absolute canard.



Aakar Patel

DECCAN CHRONICLE

Editor

www.deccanchronicle.in

Email: info@deccanmail.com

Editor@deccanmail.com

www.deccanchronicle.com

www.deccanmail.com

www.deccanchronicle.in

www.deccanmail.com

SHORT TAKES

VACCINE DRIVE STOPPED IN MANY RAJ DISTS: GEHLOT

Jaipur, July 5: Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Monday accused the Centre of not allotting Covid vaccines to the state in sufficient numbers.

He said there are about 70,000 doses left in the state, which will be administered on Monday, and that vaccination has stopped in most districts.

Vaccination work has stopped in most of the districts on Monday due to lack of vaccines. Rajasthan is not getting vaccines as per its requirement from the Central government, due to which the vaccination work has stopped, he said.

Gehlot requested the Centre to provide an adequate number of vaccine doses to the state.

Vaccine wastage is negative in Rajasthan, but due to lack of vaccines, the public is upset.

"I again request the Central government to give a sufficient quantity of vaccines to Rajasthan so that the vaccination work can be completed at the earliest and the danger of the third wave can be eliminated," the Chief Minister tweeted.

SC TO HEAR RAMDEV'S PLEA ON JULY 12

New Delhi, July 5: The Supreme Court on Monday said it would hear on July 12 the plea of yoga guru Ramdev seeking a stay on proceedings in connection with multiple FIRs lodged over his alleged remarks against the use of allopathic medicines during the Covid-19 pandemic, saying it received original records of his statements late Sunday night only.

The apex court was scheduled to examine the original records of the statements of Ramdev on the use of allopathic medicine following his plea to stay investigation and transfer the cases lodged against him in this connection to Delhi.

Yesterday (Sunday) night at 11 pm, we got bulky files having copies of statements and videos, said a bench comprising Chief Justice N.V. Ramana and Justices A.S. Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy.

We are posting the matter after a week, the CJI said after senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Ramdev, offered that the matter can be taken up on some other day.

Earlier the bench had sought original records pertaining to the alleged statements made by Ramdev on the issue.

Multiple FIRs have been lodged against Ramdev in Patna and Raipur following complaints by the Indian Medical Association.

DURGA PUJA TO BE LOW-KEY AFFAIR IN WB

Kolkata, July 5: With three months to go for Durga puja, arrangements are afoot for the five-day festival, but organisers, much like last year, have decided to keep the celebrations low key in view of the Covid-19 situation.

The Forum for Durgotsab, a platform of 500 community Durga pujas in the city, took to Facebook to say that the countdown has begun, and a list of norms, to be adopted for this year's celebrations, would soon be prepared.

State minister and one of the spearheads of big-ticket Chetla Agrani Puja, Firhad Hakim, said "this is not the time to organise a gala Durga puja".

"We have asked our clay modeller to make an idol which is comparatively smaller in size," the transport and housing minister said.

Echoing him, his cabinet colleague Subrata Mukherjee, associated with Ekdala Evergreen committee, maintained that the panel has decided not to invest in dazzling illumination, which is the hallmark of the popular south Kolkata puja.

"The idol will be housed in a smaller-sized pandal, unlike the giant ones that we have made before the pandemic struck," he explained.

Organisers at Bhawanipore 75 Pally, one of the award-winning pujas in the city, said they are planning to stick to just the basics.

"With so many people having lost their dear ones during the second wave of the pandemic, this isn't the time for any ostentatious display or lavish celebrations. All that can wait for better days," Subir Das, the secretary of Bhawanipore 75 Pally, pointed out.

BIHAR EASES COVID CURBS: COLLEGES, GYMS TO REOPEN

Patna, July 5: The Nitish Kumar government in Bihar on Monday allowed reopening of colleges, universities and senior sections in schools, besides easing several other curbs that are in place as part of the Covid-induced lockdown clamped on the state two months ago.

The announcement to the effect was made by the Chief Minister on his Twitter handle after he chaired a meeting of the high-powered crisis management group which reviewed the Covid-19 situation in the state.

According to detailed guidelines issued by the home department later, the next phase of unlock will begin from Wednesday, July 7, and remain in force for a month.

During the period, lessons will be imparted in schools for students of classes XI and XII with not more than 50 per cent attendance and the same will be applicable to colleges, universities and technical institutes.

However, none of these educational institutions was given permission to conduct examinations during the period. Coaching institutes, too, will remain closed. Strict compliance of standard operating procedure and special arrangements for vaccination at all educational institutions will be a must, the home department stated.

Gyms, clubs and swimming pools would also be allowed to resume business with 50 per cent capacity, and only those who have been vaccinated would be permitted to use these facilities.

Stadiums and sports complexes may permit entry of sportspersons for their practice sessions, though no other activity shall be allowed, the notification said.

Restaurants have been told to resume dine-in facilities with 50 per cent capacity. All government and private offices will be able to function normally, doing away with the previous cap of 50 per cent attendance, though those in charge of these establishments will have to ensure that only vaccinated people are permitted. — PTI

He added that India adopted a completely digital approach while planning its vaccination strategy. "Secure and trustworthy proof helps people to establish when, where and by whom they have been vaccinated. Digital approach also helps in tracking the usage of vaccination and minimises the wastage," he said.

Sources said the CoWin Global Conclave was organised to share the success story of the CoWin digital platform, which forms the technological backbone of India's Covid-19 vaccination drive. India has offered the platform, which can be scaled up for health interventions



Crowded Dargah Bazaar after ease in lockdown restrictions in Ajmer on Monday. — PTI

CoWin platform to be made available to all countries: PM

PM talks of 'One Earth, One Health' approach to beat Coronavirus

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 5

India on Monday offered its CoWin platform for online registration of vaccination and certification to the world "as a digital public good to combat Covid-19."

Addressing the CoWin Global Conclave, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said that the CoWin platform is being made open source, and will be available to any and all countries.

He added that India adopted a completely digital approach while planning its vaccination strategy. "Secure and trustworthy proof helps people to establish when, where and by whom they have been vaccinated. Digital approach also helps in tracking the usage of vaccination and minimises the wastage," he said.

Sources said the CoWin Global Conclave was organised to share the success story of the CoWin digital platform, which forms the technological backbone of India's Covid-19 vaccination drive. India has offered the platform, which can be scaled up for health interventions

move ahead together... Guided by the approach of 'One Earth, One Health', humanity will certainly overcome this pandemic," Modi said.

He added that India adopted a completely digital approach while planning its vaccination strategy. "Secure and trustworthy proof helps people to establish when, where and by whom they have been vaccinated. Digital approach also helps in tracking the usage of vaccination and minimises the wastage," he said.

He said that with nearly 200 million users, the 'Aarogya Setu' app is a readily available package for the developers.

"There is no parallel to such a pandemic in a hundred years. Experience shows that no nation, however powerful that nation is, can solve a challenge like this in isolation. We have to work together and

across the world, to partner countries as a global public good.

The ministry of external affairs made arrangements for international participation at the conclave in which over 140 countries participated.

Close to 400 delegates from these countries, besides representatives from European Commission and UN Offices in India participated.

Ministers from five countries — Bangladesh

Zunaid Ahmed Palak, state minister, ICT Division, ministry of posts, telecommunications and information technology; Bhutan (Lypono Dechen Wangmo, minister of health); Maldives (Ahmed Naseem, health minister); Afghanistan (Dr. Wahid Majrooh, minister for public health); and Guyana (Dr. Frank C. Anthony, minister of health) spoke

at the Conclave.

Sources said several countries Vietnam, Lao PDR, Cyprus, Croatia, Sierra Leone, Zambia, Maldives, Malawi and Guyana have shown interest in the CoWin platform.

Now, the MEA will work with the National Health Authority for enabling adaptation and adoption of the platform by these interested countries.

The platform is also being offered to WHO's Covid Technology Access Pool (C-TAP).

"In our response to the

pandemic, one of our major setbacks has been collecting data in a timely manner and making real-time decisions.

We have been grappling with this challenge and searching for the right software and hardware that can work robustly. As we roll out this program, it becomes

more difficult to reach the remaining portion of our population without the use of proper technology. From what I have heard this morning, I think that we have found a solution in CoWin," said Frank C. Anthony, Guyana health minister.

Meanwhile, less than 40,000 daily new cases of Covid-19 were reported in the last 24 hours in India while the fatalities due to the virus came down to 723. This is the eighth consecutive days when less than 50,000 daily cases have been reported since eight continuous days. India's active caseload now constitutes 1.58% of the total cases and daily positivity rate has come down to 2.61%. The Union health ministry said the country's Covid-19 vaccination coverage has exceeded 35.28 crore.

OVER 2.01 CRORE VAX DOSES STILL AVAILABLE WITH STATES: CENTRE

New Delhi, July 5: More than 2.01 crore balance and unutilised Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with states, UTs and private hospitals to be administered, the Union health ministry said on Monday.

Over 36.97 crore vaccine doses have been provided to states and UTs so far through all sources. Of this, the total consumption including wastage is 34,95,74,408 doses, the ministry said.

The Centre is committed to accelerating the pace and expanding the scope of Covid-19 vaccination throughout the country. The new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination commenced from June 21.

The vaccination drive has been ramped up through availability of more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to states and UTs for enabling better planning by them, and streamlining the vaccine supply chain. — PTI

OBC quota: Maha resolution seeks data from Centre

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
with agency inputs
MUMBAI, JULY 5

ment is shifting its responsibility on the central government.

Darekar said that there is no need to demand empirical data from the Central government as the state government can itself collect it.

In the Lower House, Devadnis said that the Supreme Court had asked the Backward Class Commission to conduct an empirical inquiry to ascertain political backwardness of the Other Backward Classes (OBCs).

The Opposition also accused the MVA government of doing nothing on what the court had sought.

The Supreme Court earlier this year quashed quota for the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) in local bodies after observing that the total number of seats earmarked for various communities, including the SCs and STs, should not exceed 50 per cent of its total strength.

Talking to reporters ahead of the commencement of the Maharashtra Legislative monsoon session, Devadnis said the SC had asked for an empirical inquiry (into the issue of OBCs population) through the State Backward Class Commission.

"The apex court has not asked for census data. The resolution is time pass, face saver and misleading, and will not yield anything. But, we will support the resolution as we want to stand by the OBCs," the BJP leader said.

"With so many people having lost their dear ones during the second wave of the pandemic, this isn't the time for any ostentatious display or lavish celebrations. All that can wait for better days," Subir Das, the secretary of Bhawanipore 75 Pally, pointed out.

12 BJP MLAs suspended; BJP says Aghadi ploy to reduce numbers

RAUT: SENA-BJP TIES LIKE AAMIR KHAN-KIRAN RAO RELATIONSHIP

Mumbai, July 5: Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Monday evoked the post-divorce relationship between actor Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao to stress that the political paths of his party and BJP are separate but friendship remains between the former alliance partners.

"Look at Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao. (Their) paths have separated but (they) are friends. Same

here. (Our) paths are separate but friendship remains. There will be friendship in politics. But this doesn't mean that we are going to form government (in Maharashtra)," Raut said.

"There are differences, but as I have been saying for a long time, we are not India-Pakistan. There are meetings and talks. But our paths have diverged. In politics, our paths have separated, he said. — PTI

State parliamentary affairs minister Anil Parab moved the motion to suspend the MLAs, saying that they misbehaved

with Jadhav in the Speaker's chamber. The motion was passed by a majority voice vote.

During the period of sus-

pension, the 12 legislators will not be allowed to enter the Legislature premises in Mumbai and Nagpur, Parab said.

However, BJP's Devendra Fadnavis, leader of opposition in the Vidhan Sabha, alleged that it was a ploy to reduce the number of opposition benches.

"We exposed the state government's falsehood on the OBC reservation issue. Hence, the government suspended 12 BJP MLAs by levelling false allegations," he said.

Later, the suspended BJP MLAs met Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari to apprise him of the proceedings in the House.

They accused the MVA Government of being 'anti-democratic and oppressive.'

In a big jolt to the BJP, its 12 MLAs were suspended from the Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha for one year by the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) Government on Monday. The legislators were accused of 'using abusive language and misbehaving' with presiding officer Bhaskar Jadhav in the Speaker's chamber on Monday.

The 12 suspended members are — Ashish Shelar (party's whip in the state assembly), Sanjay Kute, Abhimanyu Pawar, Girish Mahajan, Atul Bhathalkar, Parag Alavani, Harish Pimpale, Yogesh Sagar, Jaykumar Rawal, Narayan Kuchre, Ram Satpute and Kirtikumar Bhangdia.

"Look at Aamir Khan and Kiran Rao. (Their) paths have separated but (they) are friends. Same

here. (Our) paths are separate but friendship remains. There will be friendship in politics. But this doesn't mean that we are going to form government (in Maharashtra)," Raut said.

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with Jadhav in the Speaker's chamber. The motion was passed by a majority voice vote.

During the period of sus-

pension, the 12 legislators will not be allowed to enter the Legislature premises in Mumbai and Nagpur, Parab said.

However, the official death toll due to the Covid-19 in Bhopal hardly crossed 700 during the period.

A record number of 100 bodies of Covid victims

were cremated on April 24 in the crematorium", he recounted.

"Ram Van is a befitting tribute to the memory of the people who succumbed to Coronavirus", a spokesman of MP government said.

The forest will be grown by using the Miyawaki method, developed by the world renowned Japanese botanist Akira Miyawaki.

The Miyawaki process involves growth of a forest of native tree species within two to three years.

The forest helps the temperature in the surrounding area drop by two to three degrees Celsius in summer.

comprising native species of plants and trees, will be grown on the soil mixed with the ashes of bodies of victims of Covid-19 in Bhopal between March and June this year.

Bodies of Covid victims who died in hospitals in Bhopal are cremated in Bhadbhada Ghat.

Chouhan and his wife Sadhana Singh by planting a sapling jointly will end on July 7.

Sharma who is in-charge of maintaining records of cremation of bodies in the crematorium disclosed said that a little over 7,000 bodies of Covid victims

were cremated in Bhadbhada Ghat between March and June this year.

Bodies of Covid victims who died in hospitals in Bhopal are cremated in Bhadbhada Ghat.

However, the official death toll due to the Covid-19 in Bhopal hardly crossed 700 during the period.

SHORT TAKES

NISHADS WANT TO SEE ME AS DYCM: SANJAY

Ballia, July 5: Nishad party president Sanjay Nishad has claimed that his community wants him to be made the deputy chief minister of Uttar Pradesh if a BJP-led alliance wins the state assembly elections next year.

He also said the BJP was pushed to the fourth spot in the UP panchayat polls because the Nishad community is angry with the party for not fulfilling its promise of granting reservation.

Sanjay Nishad was speaking to reporters here during a party programme. "It is the demand of the (Nishad) community that I be made the deputy chief minister (of UP). The chief minister is from a community that has fewer numbers. Our numbers are more. If the BJP puts up our face, then it will easily form the government in the state. We are friends who are partners in good and bad times," he said.

Asked if the BJP will accept his demand to be made the deputy CM, he said, if the BJP feels that it will gain by granting reservation to the Nishad community, it will accept the demand.

TWO-DAY-OLD BABY UNDERGOES OP FOR HEART

New Delhi, July 5: A two-day-old baby who suffered from a narrow heart valve condition successfully underwent operation at a leading facility here using balloon dilation technique by a minimally invasive procedure, hospital authorities said on Monday.

The newborn boy had aortic stenosis (narrow heart valve), a congenital heart condition. While the procedure has been performed on infants before, the condition is "rare in newborns" since it is mainly age-related, making this "one of the first cases in India" done on a two-day-old child, the hospital claimed.

In a procedure requiring maximum precision, a team of cardiologists at BLKMax Super Speciality Hospital saved the life of the boy by successfully treating him for a congenital heart condition called valvular aortic stenosis, the hospital said in a statement.

Aortic stenosis is a term used to describe congenital heart defects that obstruct blood flow from the heart to the body. Significant aortic stenosis is relatively uncommon, affecting about six of every 1,000 babies born, occurring more often in boys, it said.

MONSOON LIKELY TO REACH DELHI AROUND JULY 10

New Delhi, July 5: The Southwest Monsoon will reach Delhi around July 10 this year, making it the most-delayed in the last 15 years, the India Meteorological Department said on Monday.

"The monsoon is likely to advance over remaining parts of west Uttar Pradesh, some more parts of Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan and Delhi around July 10," the IMD said in a statement.

The weather system is very likely to increase rainfall activity over northwest and central India from July 10, it said.

According to Kuldeep Srivastava, the head of the IMD's regional forecasting centre, the monsoon had reached the capital on July 7 in 2012 and July 9 in 2006.

In 2002, Delhi received its first monsoonal showers on July 19. The city had recorded the most-delayed monsoon arrival on July 26 in 1987, he said.

After arriving two days late in Kerala, the monsoon had raced across the country, covering eastern, central and adjoining northwest India seven to 10 days earlier than normal.

But then, with conditions remaining unfavourable for its advance, the monsoon weakened and entered a "break" phase.

The meteorological office had earlier predicted that the wind system may reach Delhi by June 15, which would have been 12 days early.

Normally, monsoon reaches Delhi by June 27 and covers the entire country by July 8. Last year, the wind system had reached Delhi on June 25 and covered the entire country by June 29. Delhi has received 43.6 mm rainfall against the norm of 75.7 mm so far a deficiency of 42 per cent, since the monsoon season started.

I am part of the game. I am ready to pay the price, Stan Swamy had once said

**G BABU JAYAKUMAR
CHENNAI, JULY 5**



Deeply pained and outraged at the death of Father Stan Swamy. A jesuit priest & social activist he tirelessly helped the marginalised. Draconian UAPA custody, inhuman treatment since October 2020 with no charge established. Accountability must be fixed for this murder in custody

— SITARAM YECHURY
CPI(M)

of the tribals and also learn their language.

Then moving to an urban milieu, after training many youth on social analysis and community organization at the Indian Social Institute at Bangalore between 1975-90 when the country was facing a social upsurge among students and youth with Jayaprakash Narayan giving the clarion call for political change, he would return to his first love: Adivasis of Jharkhand.

When the Adivasis faced displacement due to government projects like the Netaurhat Field Firing Range, which affected over 2 lakh people from 245 villages, and the Koel-Karo Dam, where even official figures estimated that 7,013 families in 112 vil-

Fr. Stan Swamy deserved justice, humaneness: Rahul

New Delhi, July 5: Congress leader Hemant Soren in a tweet alleged that the Central Government should be held accountable for the absolute apathy towards Stan Swamy.

Heartfelt condolences on the passing of Father Stan Swamy. He deserved justice and humaneness," he wrote on Twitter.

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti expressed shock over the death of 84-year-old tribal activist Stan Swamy, saying a "ruthless and callous government deprived him of dignity and has blood on its hands."

Deeply disturbed by the passing away of 84 year old tribal activist Stan Swamy. A ruthless & callous government that deprived him of dignity even while he was alive has blood on its hands. Absolutely shocked & appalled. May his soul rest in peace, Mehbooba wrote on Twitter.

Similarly, cutting across

lages would be displaced, Stan Swamy was with the people he loved most.

In the mid-2010s, the Munde Adivasis of Khunti district began a movement called Pathalgadi to protect their lands. It was perceived as anti-development and anti-national by the government that deployed troops, evoking a

custody. Such travesty of justice should have no place in our democracy. Heartfelt condolences!" Vijayan tweeted. Chandy said Swamy would remain a "painful memory" in the conscience of India, the largest democracy in the world.

Kerala Catholic Bishops' Council (KCBC) condoled the death of human rights activist Stan Swamy, with Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan saying such "travesty of justice should have no place in our democracy."

Apart from Vijayan, Minister K. Rajan, Assembly Speaker M.B. Rajesh, former Chief Minister Oommen Chandy and former leader of the Opposition Ramesh Chennithala were among those who condoled the demise of Swamy.

Deeply saddened by the passing of Fr. Stan Swamy. Unjustifiable that a man who fought all through his life for our society's most downtrodden had to die in

flurry of posts on social media demanding dialogue with the tribals. So sedition charges were filed against 20 activists, including Stan Swamy.

Then came Bhima Koregaon, which gave the government a pretext to file cases under the draconian UAPA against several people. Stan Swamy

hailed from Tamil Nadu. He was born in Viragalur, about 40 km from Trichy. He studied at the local St Joseph's School, where he was inspired by the work of the Jesuits and started preparing for joining the order in 1957. But he chose the then undivided Bihar for his mission, far away from home.



Trinamool Congress Lok Sabha MP Sudip Bandopadhyay (R) greets son of former president late Pranab Mukherjee, Abhijit Mukherjee, as he joins Trinamul Congress in Kolkata on Monday. — PTI

Pranab's son joins Trinamul

Abhijit says he had offer to join TMC for some time now

**RAJIB CHOWDHURI & PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC
KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE,
JULY 5**

THE FORMER Congress leader, who blamed the party's Assembly poll alliance with CPI(M)-led Left Front for its decimation, however claimed of having no aspiration to get posts.

Partha Chatterjee said, "He recently expressed his wish through Mr Banerjee to the CM to join the TMC. His entry with a rich political family background, experience and judgment will strengthen our battle against the BJP."

Expressing gratitude to the CM and her nephew, Mr Mukherjee said, "In the Congress, I had no posts except having primary membership. Here I, being a primary member, will work as a foot soldier. I joined the TMC inspired by the way Ms Banerjee defeated the BJP in the Assembly polls."

The former Congress leader, who blamed the party's Assembly poll alliance with CPI(M)-led Left Front for its decimation, however claimed of having no aspiration to get posts.

"That is why I took the decision to switch now. If I would have done it before the polls, many would have alleged of me hankering after posts," he argued.

Stunned by Mr Mukherjee's switch, state Congress chief Adhir Chowdhury said, "I have nothing to say on why he left the Congress by resigning from all party posts in an email. It is better to ask him why he did so. After all, he is the son of Congress stalwart and former president and has strong connections. He might be personally having a future game plan."



Police deploy water cannons to disperse Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha protesters during an agitation against Punjab Government over the illegal drug issue in the state, in Chandigarh, on Monday. — PTI

Punjab CM vs Sidhu: Amarinder likely to meet Sonia Gandhi today

Chandigarh, July 5: Amid infighting in the Punjab Congress, Chief Minister Amarinder Singh is likely to meet party president Sonia Gandhi on Tuesday, sources said. Singh is likely to leave for Delhi on Tuesday morning, they said.

Congress leader Navjot Singh Sidhu has been at loggerheads with the chief minister, attacking him on issues like the alleged delay in the completion of a probe into the 2015 desecration of Sikh texts and the subsequent police firing on protesters.

The party high command has been trying to resolve the internal rift in the Punjab unit and there is talk of its revamp, with just months to go before the next assembly polls.

There is some speculation that Sidhu may get an

important role in the planned revamp.

A few days back, Sidhu met Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra in Delhi.

On June 22, Amarinder Singh appeared before a three-member AICC panel headed by leader of opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, set up to resolve the infighting in the Punjab Congress. But he returned to Chandigarh without an audience with party president Sonia Gandhi or Rahul Gandhi.

The panel had then asked Amarinder to deliver on 18 pending promises, including on the 2015 sacrilege issue and power purchase agreements signed by the previous government. The panel had earlier met other party leaders and has submitted a report to the party high command.

Rahul Gandhi has also met several party leaders, including legislators from Punjab, for their views on what is needed to strengthen the party ahead of the 2022 assembly polls.

— PTI

Lalu Yadav who is currently residing in Delhi due to his ill health says will visit Patna soon

Lalu makes first public appearance, attacks NDA

**NAYEER AZAD | DC
PATNA, JULY 5**



anniversary on Monday via video conferencing from Delhi.

This was his first public appearance after being released from jail.

RJD insiders said that his address during the

event will motivate the workers which will further help in strengthening the party's base at the grass-root level.

Party insiders said that the inaugural ceremony was kept low-key and was

confined mainly to virtual mode due to Covid protocol. Lalu Yadav who is currently residing in Delhi due to his ill health inaugurated the event and addressed his party cadres through a video conference.

"I still have the strength

and will come to Patna soon. I will also visit all the districts of Bihar and talk to my party workers".

Lalu Yadav said that he was released on bail in April.

During his speech, Lalu Yadav said that "RJD has a

bright future and I want to

assure you that I am not going to step back despite all obstacles and challenges against me."

Lashing out at the Centre he said that "inflation and unemployment have impacted the people of our country. RJD played a vital role in forming governments at the Centre and gave five prime ministers and soon it will rise again and pull the nation out of the crisis".

Lalu Yadav and his son Tejashwi Yadav also celebrated the birth anniversary of veteran Dalit leader Ram Vilas Paswan on Monday. They expressed their condolences at his demise.

Covid protocols went for a toss at the Patna airport which was chock-a-block with the young Jamui MP's supporters, who waited for hours awaiting

ON FIRST VISIT TO BIHAR AFTER LJP SPLIT, CHIRAG GETS ROUSING WELCOME

Patna, July 5: Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) leader Chirag Paswan on Monday received a rousing welcome here upon his first visit to Bihar since a rebellion within the party, founded by his late father Ram Vilas Paswan, pushed him into a battle to reclaim his status as the rightful political heir.

Covid protocols went for a toss at the Patna airport which was chock-a-block with the young Jamui MP's supporters, who waited for hours awaiting

their leader's arrival while venting their ire at the rebel faction led by his paternal uncle Pashupati Kumar Paras.

Paras, who is MP from his deceased brother's pocket borough Hajipur, presided over a function held at the LJP state headquarters here to mark late Paswan's birth anniversary and iterated that his nephew has gone astray, forcing him to part ways,

and demand a Bharat Ratna for the party's founding president. — PTI

SHORT TAKES
POPE IN 'GOOD' CONDITION AFTER SURGERY

Vatican City: Pope Francis, 84, was doing well Monday after surgery for an inflamed large colon, but was expected to spend around seven days recovering in hospital, the Vatican said.

Francis "is in good general condition, alert and breathing spontaneously", spokesman Matteo Bruni said in a statement, adding that the surgery "lasted about three hours".

"A stay of about seven days is expected barring complications," he said.

BLAST ROCKS CASPIAN SEA AREA NEAR AZERBAIJAN

Moscow: A strong explosion shook the Caspian Sea area where Azerbaijan has extensive offshore oil and gas fields and a column of fire rose from the area, but the state oil company said none of its platforms were damaged.

The state oil company SOCAR said the blaze late Sunday may have come from a mud volcano. The Caspian Sea has a high concentration of such volcanoes, which spew both mud and flammable gas.

SOCAR spokesman Ibrahim Ahmadov told the Interfax-Azerbaijan news agency on Monday that the company staff found a mud volcano ablaze on the uninhabited island of Dashly about 30 km (20 miles) off the coast of Azerbaijan between the towns of Alat and Neftchala.

Azerbaijan's Emergency Ministry said that the volcano continued to burn on Monday morning, but the fire "doesn't pose a threat neither to the sea oil and gas infrastructure and other objects, nor to people's lives".

'RED NOTICE' ISSUED AGAINST THE GUPTAS

Johannesburg: South African prosecutors on Monday announced a key step in their bid to extradite Indian-born brothers who were allegedly at the centre of a massive web of corruption.

The three Gupta brothers — Ajay, Atul and Rajesh — are at the centre of a long-running probe into the embezzlement of state assets under former president Jacob Zuma.

In a statement, the prosecution authority's chief investigator, Hermione Cronje, said Interpol had issued a "red notice" against two of the brothers, Atul and Rajesh.

Red notices are a global alert enabling law enforcers to arrest a person sought for prosecution or serving a sentence and detain them pending extradition. The three brothers are at the centre of a 2016 graft report by South Africa's anti-corruption watchdog, which claims they paid bribes in exchange for massive state contracts and influence ministerial appointments.

They fled South Africa shortly after a judicial commission started in 2018 and are suspected to be in the United Arab Emirates (UAE).

CHINA LAUNCHES NEW SATELLITE FOR METEOROLOGY

Beijing: China on Monday successfully launched a new meteorological satellite with 11 remote sensing payloads, which besides enhancing the country's weather forecasting capacity, will monitor global snow coverage and sea surface temperatures. The satellite was launched into planned orbit from the Jiuquan Satellite Launch Centre in northwestern China, state-run Xinhua news agency reported.

Equipped with 11 remote sensing payloads, FY-3E will be the world's first meteorological satellite in early morning orbit for civil service, the report said. It is designed with a lifespan of eight years and will mainly obtain the atmospheric temperature, humidity and other meteorological parameters for numerical prediction applications, improving China's weather forecast capacity.

It will also monitor the global snow cover, sea surface temperature, natural disasters and ecology to better respond to climate change and prevent and mitigate meteorological disasters. In addition, the satellite will monitor solar and space environments and their effects, as well as ionospheric data to meet the needs of space weather forecasts and supporting services, the report said. — PTI

Israel finds vax weak against Delta variant

But experts say it is early to decide jab impact against variant due to lesser cases among vaccinated



Britain's Prime Minister Boris Johnson wears a face mask to combat the spread of the Covid-19 as he arrives for a Service of Thanksgiving at St Paul's Cathedral in London on Monday, celebrating the 73rd anniversary of the NHS (National Health Service). — AFP

Boris says learn to live with virus as UK to end mask rule

London, July 5: Prime Minister Boris Johnson will on Monday unveil a plan to lift most if not all of England's pandemic restrictions from July 19, as he urged the public to "learn to live with" the Coronavirus.

Vaccinations had brought transmission down to about five local new cases per day but that figure has risen to around 300 in recent days, with the Delta variant raging.

About half of the daily cases are among children, and half are among mostly vaccinated adults.

"To some extent that could be expected since 85 percent of Israeli adults are vaccinated," Balicer said.

"But the rates in which we see these breakthrough cases make some believe they extend beyond that expected point and suggest some decrease in vaccine effectiveness against mild illness — but not severe illness — is likely."

The number of severe cases among vaccinated Israelis has risen in recent days from roughly one every two days up to five cases per day, Balicer said.

He said it was also too early to draw conclusions about the vaccine's effectiveness against serious illness caused by the Delta variant.

— AFP

The prime minister is set to outline the planned easing for England at an afternoon news conference. The UK's other nations — Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland — are moving at a slower pace.

"Thanks to the successful rollout of our vaccination programme, we are progressing cautiously through our roadmap," Johnson said, vowing to "restore people's freedoms".

"But I must stress that the pandemic is not over and that cases will continue to rise over the coming weeks," he added.

"As we begin to learn to live with this virus, we must all continue to care-

fully manage the risks from Covid and exercise judgment when going about our lives," Care minister Helen Whately said. 86 per cent of British adults have had their first dose of a coronavirus vaccine, and 63 percent their second dose.

"So that's far more protection from Covid," she told Sky News.

But the government's emphasis on personal judgment was met with concern by scientists, who worry that hospitals and medicines could yet be stretched anew if the Delta variant runs amok or new strains emerge.

— AFP

Pfizer vax effective against variants

London, July 5: Two doses of the Pfizer Covid-19 vaccine induce a "very good" antibody response against the SARS-CoV-2 variants, according to a study on 180 health care workers in Finland.

The research, published in the journal Nature Communications on June 28, found that the immune response was as strong against the Alpha variant first identified in the UK, as against the original virus found in Wuhan, China in 2019. The immune response was somewhat decreased against the Beta variant first found in South Africa, but the vaccine generated neutralising antibodies that give relatively good protection against the variant.

All vaccinated subjects were found to have an excellent antibody level against the original virus after two vaccine doses.

— PTI

A neutralising antibody is responsible for defend-

FRANCE ON ALERT FOR 4TH WAVE BY END OF JULY

Paris, July 5: France could see a new spike in Covid cases by the end of July due to the spread of the more contagious Delta variant of the virus, the government spokesman said Monday.

"Over the past week the epidemic is again gaining ground," Gabriel Attal told France Inter radio, with the Delta variant now accounting for 30 percent of new infections in the country.

A fourth wave of infections is "a possibility" by the end of this month, he said, echoing a warning issued by Health Minister Olivier Véran late Sunday.

Several countries, including Britain and Russia, have already seen alarming jumps in new cases because of the variant, which was first identified in India.

French officials acknowledge that not enough people are getting vaccinated despite ample supplies, which could lead to a rise in cases. — AFP

LUXEMBOURG PM HOSPITALISED OVER COVID-19

Brussels, July 5: Luxembourg Prime Minister Xavier Bettel has been hospitalised and is under observation "as a precautionary measure" after testing positive for Covid-19 a week earlier.

A government official, who spoke on customary condition of anonymity, said there was no update with new information early Monday after Bettel had been taken in for 24 hours of testing and medical analysis on Sunday.

The 48-year-old Bettel announced his positive test just after he had attended an European Union summit with 26 other leaders from the bloc for two days.

At first he experienced only mild symptoms. But on Sunday, he had to be hospitalised. EU summit organisers said that they were confident that all virus precaution measures had been strictly adhered to during the two-day meeting. — AP

US 'coming back' but virus remains, says Biden

Washington, July 5: Calling a vaccination "the most patriotic thing you can do," President Joe Biden on Sunday mixed the nation's birthday party with a celebration of freedom from the worst of the pandemic. He tempered the strides against Covid-19 with a warning that the fight against the virus wasn't over. "Today, all across this nation, we can say with confidence: America

is coming back together," Biden declared as he hosted more than 1,000 service members, first responders and other guests for a July Fourth celebration on the South Lawn of the White House.

For Biden it was a long-awaited opportunity to highlight the success of the vaccination campaign he championed. The event was the largest yet of his presidency, the clearest

indication yet that the US had moved into a new phase of virus response. Shifting from a national emergency to a localised crisis of individual responsibility, the nation also moved from vaccinating Americans to promoting global health.

"This year the Fourth of July is a day of special celebration, for we're emerging from the darkness of a year of pandemic and iso-

lation, a year of pain fear and heartbreaking loss," the president said before fireworks lit up the sky over the National Mall.

Noting the lockdowns that shuttered businesses, put millions out of work and separated untold numbers of families, Biden said,

"Today we're closer than ever to declaring our independence from a deadly virus. That's not to say the battle against Covid-19 is over. We've got a lot more work to do."

Biden wanted all Americans to celebrate, too, after enduring 16 months of disruption in the pandemic and more than 605,000 deaths. The White House encouraged gatherings and fireworks displays all around the country to mark, as though ripped from a Hollywood script, the nation's "independence" from the virus. — AP

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1K Afghan troops flee into Tajikistan

Kabul, July 5: More than 1,000 Afghan troops fled into neighbouring Tajikistan following earlier clashes that saw the Taliban take control of a major border crossing between the countries.

The exodus of troops followed another weekend of fighting across much of the northern countryside where the Taliban have overrun dozens of districts, spurring fears that Afghan forces are in crisis.

They did not want to surrender. They had asked for reinforcements but their call was ignored," said Abdul Basir, a soldier based with a battalion in Badakhshan province that

Tajikistan's national security committee said that 1,037 Afghan government troops had fled into the ex-Soviet country "to save their lives" after clashes with the Taliban during the night.

"Taking into account the principle of good neighbourliness and adhering to the position of non-interference in the internal affairs of Afghanistan, the military personnel of the Afghan government forces were allowed to enter Tajik territory," said the statement, published by Tajikistan's state information agency.

Afghan troops had already crossed into Tajikistan following earlier clashes that saw the Taliban take control of a major border crossing between the countries.

The United States announced Friday that it had handed over Bagram Air Base — the centre of its operations — to Afghan security forces, effectively wrapping up operations in the country following nearly two decades of fighting.

Afghan troops had already crossed into Tajikistan following earlier clashes that saw the Taliban take control of a major border crossing between the countries.

Alredy thinly stretched with supply lines strained, Afghan security forces have been crumbling in the face of the Taliban onslaught, with several bases and outposts surrendering to the insurgents without firing a shot. — AFP

istán following earlier clashes that saw the Taliban take control of a major border crossing between the countries.

The Afghan government has vowed to launch a counteroffensive in the north. Hamdullah Mohib, the country's national security advisor, told Russia's RIA news agency that an operation was "absolutely" in the works.

Already thinly stretched with supply lines strained, Afghan security forces have been crumbling in the face of the Taliban onslaught, with several bases and outposts surrendering to the insurgents without firing a shot. — AFP

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quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	52,880.00
Nifty 50	15,834.40
S&P 500*	4,352.34
Dollar (\$)	74.31
Pound Sterling (\$)	102.94
Euro (\$)	88.25
Gold (10gm)* (\$)	46,408.69
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	76.95
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.088
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.431

* As of 8:30 PM IST

India's services sector activities slump in June

Services sector activities contracted further in June as the Covid-19 crisis and reintroduction of containment measures restricted demand. The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 46.4 in May to 41.2 in June, as new work intakes and output contracted at the fastest rates since July 2020. The pace of contraction was sharp and the quickest since July 2020, the survey said.

Comments on e-com rules can be made till Aug. 5



The government extended till August 5 the deadline for comments on the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. The earlier deadline was July 6. "It has now been decided to extend the timeline for receipt of comments/suggestions on the draft E-Commerce Rules. Views/ comments/ suggestions on the proposed amendments may be sent by August 5, 2021," a notice said.

NSE sees listing of 100th exchange traded fund

Exchange traded funds (ETFs) are becoming popular. The NSE said it has witnessed the listing of 100th ETF. ETFs began their journey in India in 2002, when the first ETF by Nippon India Mutual Fund (erstwhile Benchmark Asset Management Company) was launched on the Nifty 50 Index. The journey to listing of the 100th ETF took more than 19 years. The last one-year period has seen 21 ETFs getting listed on the NSE.

HDFC Bank loans grow over 14% in June quarter

HDFC Bank said it has registered 14.4 per cent growth in its advances to over Rs 11,47 lakh crore as of June 30 this year. "The bank's advances aggregated to approximately Rs 11,475 billion as of June 30, 2021, a growth of around 14.4 per cent over Rs 10,033 billion as of June 30, 2020, and a growth of around 1.3 per cent over Rs 11,328 billion as of March 31, 2021," HDFC Bank said in a regulatory filing.

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■ Sebi sets steep penalty for mkt disruption Technical glitches to cost bourses dearly

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JULY 5



Market regulator Sebi has revised the "standard operating procedure" for handling technical glitches by the stock exchanges and other market infrastructure institutions (MIIs) with effect from August 16. In the light of recent technical glitches experienced by market participants at NSE and BSE, in future MIIs have to make payment of "financial disincentives" for technical glitches as high as 10 per cent of average of standalone net profit for previous two financial years or Rs 2 crore, whichever is higher.

The "financial disincentive" will be credited by MIIs, such as to Stock Exchanges, to Investor Protection Fund (IPF), by Clearing Corporations to Core Settlement Guarantee Fund (Core SGF) and by Depositories to IPF.

"This circular shall come into effect from August 16, 2021 and shall supersede the Sebi directions dated August 06, 2019 to the MIIs with regard to handling of technical glitches," the Sebi said.

Said MIIs will have to provide information of technical glitch to the Sebi immediately, but not later than 2 hours from the time of occurrence of the glitch, preliminary report within 24 hours and comprehensive Root Cause Analysis (RCA) report and corrective action taken to address the technical glitch within 21 days.

In order to ensure that MIIs address technical glitch within the timeline specified by Sebi, progressive slab-wise "financial disincentive" shall be paid from the expiry of the timeline—first 15 working days Rs 2 lakh per working day, subsequent 15 working days Rs 3 lakh per working day. Beyond 30 working days Rs 25 lakh in addition will have to be paid.

Failure to restore normalcy in cases of disruption, not being in the nature of a "disaster" within 75 minutes to 3 hours will attract financial disincentive of Rs 50 lakh and beyond 3 hours of the incident it will be Rs 1 crore.

"In case of delay in submission or submission of incomplete/ inadequate RCA by an MII, a "financial disincentive" of Rs 1,00,000 per working day shall be paid by the MII for each working day of delay from the timeline specified," Sebi said.

For such failures financial disincentive on managing director and chief technology officer of MII separately will be 10 per cent each of their annual pay (both fixed and variable components) for the financial year.

Further, if an MII fails to restore operations of critical systems including from Disaster Recovery Site within three hours from the occurrence of the disaster additional "financial disincentive" has to be paid which will be again at 10 per cent of average of standalone net profit for previous two financial years or Rs 2 crore, whichever is higher and financial disincentive on MD and COO separately will be 10 per cent each of their annual pay.

Failure to restore normalcy in cases of disruption, not being in the nature of a "disaster" within 75 minutes to 3 hours will attract financial disincentive of Rs 50 lakh and beyond 3 hours of the incident it will be Rs 1 crore.

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SHORT TAKES
Aditi finishes T-47, Ko takes top spot

The Colony, US: Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded a one-under 71 in the final round to sign off tied 47th at the Volunteers of America Classic here.

Aditi, who has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, dropped her second double bogey of the week on the Par-4 12th but hung on with birdies on 15th and 17th to take her total to three-under 285.

Jin Young Ko, who just got herself a new house in Texas, about half an hour from the golf course, added a Trophy to it by winning the Volunteers of America Classic, a week after losing her No. 1 world ranking. Ko carded 2-under 69 and finished at 16-under 268 for her eighth career LPGA victory. She remains at No. 2 in the world. — PTI

Sharma, Bhullar end way down

Kilkenny: Indian golfer Shubhankar Sharma had contrasting fortunes on the front and back nines of the Mount Juliet Estate as he finished the week at tied 56th after carding an even par 72 on the final day of the Dubai Duty Free Irish Open. Sharma's compatriot Gaganjeet Bhullar had a complete collapse on the back nine, that saw him slip from overnight T-21 to T-66. Australia's Lucas Herbert won his second European Tour title in wire-to-wire fashion.

LAHIRI TAKES POSITIVES

Olympic-bound Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri shot a four-under 68, his best of the week, in the final round to finish tied 52nd at the Rocket Mortgage Classic in Detroit. Lahiri's earlier rounds were 71-69-73 and he totalled 7-under 281. — PTI

MTV to telecast La Liga matches

New Delhi: Viacom18's flagship youth brand MTV has teamed up with La Liga to bring the Spanish football league exclusively to the Indian sub-continent for the next three years.

Enabled and supported by Rise Worldwide, LaLiga will air exclusively on MTV in India, along with select national and regional network channels and live-streamed on Voot and Jio platforms.

The three-year exclusive partnership will give the network linear and digital rights across the Indian subcontinent.

Viacom18 will leverage its TV, digital and social assets to make LaLiga a household name in the region. Currently in its 91st season, the iconic league is one of the most followed football events across the world and is home to Europe's finest talent.

Hero Team riders among top five

Gorno-Altaysk, Russia: Hero MotoSports Team Rally completed the marathon stage of the Silk Way Rally on Monday with all three riders arriving at the bivouac at Gorno-Altaysk inside the top 10 rankings. Sebastian Buhler finished the stage in fourth place.

Franco Caimi got stuck in a river a couple of times but was able to complete the stage without any further complications. He finished the stage in the fifth position, but the lost time meant he lost a position in the overall rankings and dropped to third overall.

Joaquim Rodrigues, whose engine had flooded on Sunday, also had a much better day on Monday.

He rode carefully to prevent any further damage to the engine. The bike also held up well, allowing him to finish the stage in the eighth position.

Suns, Bucks look to end title drought

Phoenix, United States: Two long-frustrated franchises, the Phoenix Suns and Milwaukee Bucks, will meet in the NBA Finals starting on Tuesday and one of them will put an end to an epic title drought.

The Bucks captured their only title half a century ago while the Suns have never claimed the crown since the club began play in 1968.

With star guard Chris Paul reaching the best-of-seven championship series for the first time in his 16-season career, the Suns have reached the NBA Finals for the first time since 1993.

A Charles Barkley-led Suns squad lost to the Michael Jordan-sparked Chicago Bulls 28 years ago and the Suns also dropped the 1976 NBA Finals to the Boston Celtics. — PTI

NEWBIES ON FIRE

Djokovic joined by parade of newcomers in Wimbledon quarters

THE RESULTS

Men's 4th rd: Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Christian Garin (CHI x17) 6-2, 6-4, 6-2; Karen Khachanov (RUS x25) bt Sebastian Korda (USA) 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 10-8; Denis Shapovalov (CAN x10) bt Roberto Bautista Agut (ESP) 6-1, 6-3, 7-5; Matteo Berrettini (ITA x7) bt Ilya Ivashka (BLR) 6-4, 6-3, 6-1

Women's 4th rd: Ashleigh Barty (AUS x1) bt Barbora Krejčíková (CZE x14) 7-5, 6-3; Karolina Plíšková (CZE x8) bt Liudmila Samonova (RUS) 6-2, 6-3; Ons Jabeur (TUN x21) bt Iga Świątek (POL x7) 5-7, 6-1, 6-1; Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2) bt Elena Rybáriková (KAZ x18) 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

Korda said, "I fought my hardest. I don't know what was happening out there. We just couldn't hold serve."

Khachanov will next face the No. 10-seeded Shapovalov, who hit 15 aces and beat No. 8 Roberto Bautista Agut 6-1, 6-3, 7-5.

The No. 7-seeded Berrettini became the first Italian man in 23 years to reach the Wimbledon quarterfinals by ousting Ilya Ivashka 6-4, 6-3, 6-1.

The unseeded, 29-year-old Fucsovics became the first Hungarian to reach the Wimbledon men's quarterfinals since 1948 by upsetting No. 5 Andrey Rublev 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-0, 6-3.

Jabeur became the first Arab woman to reach the quarters by rallying past 2020 French Open champion Iga Świątek 5-7, 6-1, 6-1. Jabeur, seeded 21st, converted all seven-break point chances and enjoyed hearing happy fans singing at the end of her match.

"It's a privilege to break records in the sport that I truly love," Djokovic said. "I'm devoted to this sport as much as I think anybody out there on the tour. I just try to do my best."

Khachanov, seeded No. 25, outlasted Korda 3-6, 6-4, 6-3, 5-7, 10-8. With both players battling fatigue and nerves, there were 13 service breaks in the final set, and for Korda, it was a disappointing end to an otherwise impressive Wimbledon debut.

"I'm still super happy with how the whole tournament and today was," AP



Marton Fucsovics of Hungary celebrates his 6-3, 4-6, 4-6, 6-0, 6-3 win over Russia's Andrey Rublev in their fourth round match of the Wimbledon Championships at the All England Tennis Club in Wimbledon on Monday. Fucsovics becomes just the third Hungarian man and first in 73 years to reach the Wimbledon quarter-finals. — AFP

Mary, Manpreet are flag bearers

New Delhi, July 5: Celebrated boxer M.C. Mary Kom and men's hockey team skipper Manpreet Singh will be the country's flag bearers at the opening ceremony of Tokyo Olympics, the Indian Olympic Association announced on Monday.

One of India's biggest medal hopes, wrestler Bajrang Punia, will be the flag bearer at the closing ceremony on August 8.

The IOA has communicated the decision in this regard to the organising committee of the Tokyo Games.

In a first, India is having two flag-bearers — one male and one female — at the upcoming Tokyo Games to ensure "gender parity". This was recently informed by IOA chief executive Narinder Batra.

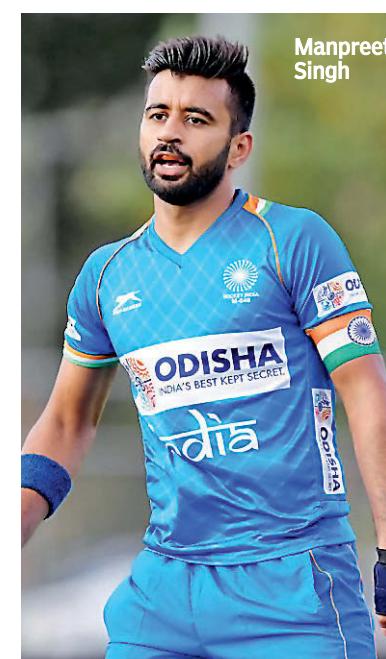
"It would be a huge moment for me given that it is my last Olympics. Who knows I might even get emotionally overwhelmed," Mary Kom said after being named as one of the flag bearers.

"I am truly honoured to get this opportunity of leading the team out during the opening ceremony and I thank the sports ministry and IOA for naming me. It would be added motivation for me. I promise to do my best for a medal," the six-time world champion added.

The country's lone individual Olympic gold-medallist Abhinav Bindra was the flag bearer at the opening ceremony of the 2016 Games in Rio de Janeiro.

The Tokyo Games are scheduled to open on July 23 and over 100 Indian athletes would be gunning for podium finishes at the showpiece, which was postponed by a year because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

At its executive board meeting last year, the International Olympic Committee had made provisions for flag-bearers from both genders at the opening ceremony. — PTI



Switzerland name Federer in Tokyo Olympics squad

Paris (France), July 5: Roger Federer was named by Switzerland's Olympic Committee in their team for the upcoming Tokyo Games on Monday.

The 20-time Grand Slam champion had said he would wait until the end of Wimbledon, with the men's final scheduled for this Sunday, to confirm his participation at Tokyo, with the men's singles starting on July 24.

The only major title Federer has yet to win is the Olympic singles but he claimed the doubles in Beijing 13 years ago.

"My feeling is I would like to go to the Olympics," he said in late-June.

"I would like to play as many tournaments as possible."

OSAKA SAYS PREPARING FOR GAMES, WILL TALK TO MEDIA

Tokyo (Japan), July 5: Tennis star Naomi Osaka said Monday she wants to be on top form at the Olympics and will take part in press conferences, after pulling out of several tournaments citing her struggles with depression and anxiety.

The world number two told Japan's national broadcaster NHK she was getting ready to play on home turf at the pandemic-postponed Tokyo Games, after having withdrawn from Wimbledon and the French Open.

"I am preparing myself little by little so I can be at the top of my game for the Olympics," the 23-year-old wrote in a message published by the broadcaster.

"But I think we decided now let's just get through Wimbledon, sit down as a team, and then decide where we go from there," Later on Monday Federer, who turns 40 on August 8, plays Italy's Lorenzo Sonego, and can become the oldest quarter-finalist at Wimbledon in the Open era. — AFP

WRESTLER MALIK TO CHALLENGE TWO-YEAR BAN

New Delhi, July 5: Wrestler Sumit Malik has decided to challenge the two-year ban imposed on him by the sport's world body for failing a dope test and seek a lesser punishment so that he can compete in next year's Commonwealth Games and defend his title.

The 2018 CWG gold medalist Malik was on Friday banned for two years by the sport's world governing body United World Wrestling (UWW) after his B sample also returned positive for a prohibited stimulant.

Malik, who had qualified for the Tokyo Games in the 125kg category, admitted that he is responsible for the substance found in his body but since the intention was not to cheat, he will appeal to the UWW that the punishment period is reduced to six months. — PTI

AFI ANNOUNCES 26-MEMBER TEAM FOR TOKYO GAMES

New Delhi, July 5: The Athletics Federation of India on Monday announced a 26-member team, including ace sprinter Dutee Chand, to compete in the upcoming Olympic Games in Tokyo.

The squad: Men: Avinash Sable (3000m Steeplechase); MP Jabin (400m Hurdles); M Sreeshan (Long Jump); Tajinderpal Singh Toor (Shot Put); Neeraj Chopra and Shivpal Singh (Javelin Throw); KT Irfan, Sandeep Kumar and Rahul Rohilla (20km Walk) and Gurpreet Singh (50km Walk); 4x400m Relay: Amoj Jacob, Arokia Rajiv, Muhammed Anas, Naganathan Pandi, Noah Nirmal Tom; 4x400m Mixed Relay: Sarthak Bhamori, Alex Antony.

Women: Dutee Chand (100m and 200m); Kamalpreet Kaur and Seema Antil-Punja (Discus Throw) and Annu Rani (Javelin Throw); Bhawna Jat and Priyanka Goswami (20km Walk) and (Mixed 4x400m Relay); Revathi Veeramani, Subha Venkatesan and Dhanalakshmi Sekhar.



Hyderabad Cricket Association vice president John Manoj (left) and secretary R. Vijayanand (right, partially seen) try to reason with a police official at the entrance of the Gymkhana Ground in Secunderabad after being stopped from entering it on Monday. — DECCAN CHRONICLE

HCA big fight, just not cricket

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Fight in the Hyderabad Cricket Association has spilled on to the street. On Monday, president Mohammed Azharuddin took police assistance to lock five office-bearers out of the Gymkhana Ground, forcing them to address reporters outside the gate of the city's cricket cradle. Grave situation.

Azhar was acting on the order of Justice Deepak Verma, who on Sunday temporarily disqualified the five and reinstated the suspended Azhar as president. The quintet do not acknowledge the order.

Justice Deepak Verma is not the Ombudsman of the Hyderabad Cricket Association. Justice Nissar Ahmed Kakru has been elected to the post at the April 11 Annual General Body Meeting, which president Azharuddin and 24 of his supporters left midway without completing the agenda. Just a handful of members had raised their hands to vote for Justice Verma at the AGM while 107 had stayed back and voted for Justice Kakru. We have signatures of the members to prove it. Azhar is trying to bulldoze, it won't work. We will not accept a self-appointed Ombudsman," vice president John Manoj said.

"Even now we challenge Azharuddin to put the appointment (of Justice Verma) to vote at the General Body by secret ballot and see how many members vote for him," he added. "Justice Deepak Verma (Retd.) was never appointed to the club secretaries: "The HCA intends to start the season beginning with T20 league for all the clubs, since BCCI is starting the season with T20 Syed Mustaq Ali trophy. Subsequently the 3-day league, 2-day league and other leagues will start. Details will be furnished at the earliest."

One hopes the cricketers don't get caught up in this game of one-upmanship.



Padidala Vishwanath in action in this file photo.

City's youngster for sailing worlds

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 5

Padidala Vishwanath, 15, a young sailor who lives and trains at Navy Boys Sports Company (NBSC), INS Mandovi, Goa has been selected in Junior Boys Yachting team to represent India in Optimist World Sailing Championship 2021 being organised at Riva Del Garda, Italy.

Vishwanath, a resident of Hyderabad is from a very humble background. His parents are daily wage labourers. Vishwanath strives to live his dream of becoming a professional sailor. He was selected by Navy Boys Sports Company when he was 12. NBSC, a joint venture between Indian Navy and Sports Authority of India has been training young talents like P. Vishwanath with an aim to winning medals at Asian Championships as well as Olympics.

His prior achievement in an international event includes a silver medal in the sub junior Regatta in 2017. He has been a part of the national squad in Optimist class since then.

Quick passes

Gareth Southgate

Eng ready to end semis jinx: Gareth

Gareth Southgate says England are ready to end their semifinal hoodoo as they prepare to face Denmark in the last four of Euro 2020, bidding to reach their first final at a major tournament since 1966.

England topped their group and beat old foes Germany in the Round of 16 before ratcheting up expectations with Saturday's thumping 4-0 quarterfinal win against Ukraine in Rome. England have fallen at the penultimate hurdle at major tournaments on four occasions since winning the World Cup in 1966. But Southgate believes his side have learned from that disappointment and are ready to take the next step.

"We've knocked off so many hoodoo or perceived barriers already and I feel like this group of players will feel this is just the next challenge," he said.

"I guess the interesting part for us is we won't feel totally satisfied if it's just a semi-final for us, whereas maybe three years ago, although there was massive disappointment after the semifinal, there was a feeling we'd come a long way," he added. — AFP

Successful surgery for Spinazzola

Italy defender Leonardo Spinazzola had surgery on his Achilles tendon on Monday in Finland.

Spinazzola injured the tendon in his left leg in Italy's 2-1 win over Belgium on Friday in the quarterfinals of the European Championship.

The 28-year-old Spinazzola was in tears when he was taken off the field on a stretcher but he posted a photo on Instagram of himself smiling from his hospital bed after the surgery in Turku.

"Surgery done perfectly. I thank everyone for showing me such support, there have really been so many of you," Spinazzola wrote.

The countdown has begun we'll see each other soon," he further added.

Spinazzola's injury affected the Italy players, who were upset for their teammate after the match.

But it has also given them extra drive ahead of the semi-final match against Spain on Tuesday. — AP

Czech captain bids internationals bye

A day after the Czech Republic were eliminated from the European Championship, team captain Vladimir Darida retired from international football.

He missed the 2-0 victory over the Netherlands in the Round of 16 with an unspecified injury and came on as a substitute in the 2-1 loss to Denmark in the Euro 2020 quarterfinals on Saturday.

Since his debut in a warmup match for Euro 2012 against Israel, Darida played 76 games for the national team, scoring eight goals.

"I experienced beautiful moments in the national team. Now, I'd like to spend much more time with my family and my young son," Darida said in a statement on Sunday. — AP

Live on TV

EURO
Semifinal-1: Italy vs Spain from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2

COPA AMERICA
Semifinal-2: Argentina vs Colombia from 6.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

Advantage Azzurri

On a bull run, unbeaten Italy take on Spain

London, July 5: Luis Enrique thought for a couple of seconds, looked straight back at the questioner, and gave the curt test of replies.

"No," said the Spain coach, with the bluntest of looks on his face, after being asked if he had seen a better team than his at the European Championship.

An answer out of blind loyalty? Perhaps.

Or was it the fact that Spain were the leading scorer at Euro 2020? Maybe.

Or the fact that La Roja are on an unbeaten streak stretching back to October; a run of 13 games? Quite possibly.

Spain's opponent in the European Championship semifinals on Tuesday might have something to say about all that.

Italy, another of the continent's traditional powers, bring an even better run of form to Wembley Stadium — a national-record 32 matches unbeaten, going all the way back to September 2018.

From the moment tenor Andrea Belotti cleared the field at Stadio Olimpico after his stirring rendition of "Nessun Dorma" at the opening ceremony, making way for the start of the tournament, the Italians have been right on the money.

Three impressive wins in the group stage, without conceding. A gutsy victory over a better-than-expected Austria in the Round of 16. The elimination of top-ranked Belgium in the quarterfinals.

Maybe Luis Enrique isn't aware, but Italy are rolling at the moment.

This might be a match between teams who have almost forgotten what it feels like to lose — Spain have only one defeat in their last 29 games — but Italy look to have the edge,



Spain's Aymeric Laporte (centre) in action during a training session at the Ciudad del Futbol in Las Rozas near Madrid on Monday, on the eve of their Euro semifinal match against Italy. — AFP

at both ends of the field.

Much has changed since Roberto Mancini took charge in May 2018, with the team having evolved into a high-energy unit that presses hard and attacks at pace. But the Azzurri's defense needs little introduction.

Formidable centre backs Leonardo Bonucci and Giorgio Chiellini are still holding the fort, like they have been for more than a decade, and Italy have conceded only two goals so far.

Spain's defense, on the other hand, is a work in

progress while centre back Aymeric Laporte integrates his switch of nationality from France.

In attack, striker Alvaro Morata continues to frustrate for Spain and Luis Enrique has seemingly yet to settle on his preferred wingers. Italy, though, have had strong and reliable performances from striker Ciro Immobile and wide forward Lorenzo Insigne, the scorer of the decisive second goal against Belgium.

It's in midfield where

Spain can seriously challenge Italy, potentially making it the department where the match could be won or lost. Jorginho, Nicola Barella and probably Marco Verratti for Italy versus Sergio Busquets, Pedri Gonzalez and Koke for Spain is a must-watch duel all by itself.

Neither team have made it this far in a major international competition since 2012, when they met in the European Championship final in Kyiv. Spain won that match 4-0. Two play-

ers remain from each country: Bonucci and Chiellini for Italy, and Jordi Alba and Busquets for Spain.

A win for Spain, who have the youngest squad at the tournament, sets up the prospect of a third European Championship title in four editions and potentially the start of a new period of success for a nation that dominated football world from 2008-12. A win for Italy surely means Mancini's team would enter the final as the favorite. — AP

Spain's coach out to settle old scores

London, July 5: Luis Enrique's belligerent self-belief has led Spain to the semifinals of Euro 2020, but the former Barcelona boss has another personal score to settle in Tuesday's Last four against Italy.

His playing career at major tournaments is best remembered for the vicious elbow from Mauro Tassotti that left blood flowing from his burst nose over his white Spain shirt at the 1994 World Cup.

Tassotti escaped without punishment at the time — Spain denied a stoppage time penalty and the chance to take the game to extra-time as the Azzurri ran out 2-1 winners.

The Italy defender was subsequently banned for eight games by FIFA, but the damage was already done for Spain as they exited at the quarterfinals. That was a familiar story for Spanish football at the time as generations of talented players came and went without leaving a trace at major competitions.

The Italy defender was subsequently banned for eight games by FIFA, but the damage was already done for Spain as they exited at the quarterfinals. That was a familiar story for Spanish football at the time as generations of talented players came and went without leaving a trace at major competitions.

"I always said we were one of the eight candidates to win the European Championship and now we are among the four best," Luis added.

"It would be ridiculous to be in the semifinals and not think about taking one step more," he further added.

— AFP

"I am one of the leaders, like all coaches. If that is not the case, it is a bad signal."

— LUIS ENRIQUE
Spain coach



Spain's coach Luis Enrique attends a training session at the Ciudad del Futbol in Las Rozas near Madrid on Monday, on the eve of their Euro semifinal match against Italy. — AFP

JORGINHO, THE REASON BEHIND ITALY'S REVIVAL

Milan, July 5: A discreet but "irreplaceable" midfield presence Jorginho has been the cornerstone of Italy's revival from World Cup flops to Euro 2020 contenders with a semi-final against Spain awaiting in the London of his club side Chelsea on Tuesday.

One of the Azzurri's Brazilian contingent along with domestic team-mate Emerson Palmieri and Atalanta defender Rafael Toloi, Jorginho, born in the southern town of Imbituba, has brought the technical flair of his birth to his adopted Italy.

"With Jorginho, everything seems simple. He is essential to this team, untouchable," said midfield partner Marco Verratti.

"Jorginho and Verratti are two phenomena and make the team turn," continued Inter Milan midfielder Nicolo Barella, who scored the opener in a 2-1 win over favourites Belgium which fired Italy into the final four. — AFP



Ecuador's Moises Caicedo (left) prays as Argentina's Lionel Messi walks by at the end of their Copa America quarterfinal match at the Olympic Stadium in Goiania, Brazil, Saturday. — AFP

Peter backs son to handle pressure

London, July 5: Peter Schmeichel says son Kasper will be ready for penalties if needed when Denmark take on England in the Euro 2020 semi-finals on Thursday, warning the Danes should not be underestimated.

The former Manchester United goalkeeper was part of the Danish team that stunned the world in 1992 when they won the European Championship for the first and only time after receiving a late call-up to the tournament when the former Yugoslavia were disqualified.

Schmeichel senior kept a clean sheet against England in a Group One stalemate but more crucially was able to deny Marco van Basten from the spot in a 5-4 penalty shootout success over the Netherlands in the Last four before he shut out Germany in the final to help his country claim silverware.

"I think one thing he will think of is the last time Denmark was in the European Championship semi-finals, Denmark did win on penalties so he can bring that into it," he added.

England are favourites to progress at Wembley on Wednesday and reach a first-ever European Championship final but Schmeichel warned England not to underestimate Denmark, who have recovered from the trauma of Christian Eriksen's on-pitch cardiac arrest to reach the Last four. — AP

Team thrive on home advantage

London, July 5: Euro 2020 has delivered more drama than even then-UEFA president Michel Platini could have envisaged when he announced the event would be held around Europe nine years ago, but it has still been slammed as a "joke" and "not really fair".

The tournament has been played across 11 cities in 11 countries as the culmination of Platini's plan for a continental-wide celebration of the championship's 60th anniversary, albeit a year late due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

But the unique set-up of the Euro — which by goals

per game is the highest-scoring since 1976 — has led to criticism and a semi-final line-up consisting of four of the nine host nations to qualify.

While England, Spain, Denmark and Italy all played all three of their group matches on home turf, others had to travel thousands of kilometres between games.

Wales played their first two matches in Azerbaijani capital Baku before a near 4,000-kilometre (2,480 miles) trip to Rome to face Italy.

An exhausted side, who reached the semifinals in 2016, were then thrashed 4-0 by Denmark, who had

played all their group games in Copenhagen, in the last 16 in Amsterdam.

Due to travel restrictions, Welsh fans from the UK could not even attend that tie, while the Danes were roared on by thousands of supporters.

"Written off before a bag of air was kicked, 3,000 miles from home," said Wales full-back Chris Gunter.

"Every nation had fans wherever they went. You and us deserved more from this joke set-up of a tournament, but who said life was fair," he added.

Switzerland made it to the quarterfinals despite a similarly hectic schedule.

"We travelled a lot. We moved often and each time we had to adapt the biological rhythm of the players.

"I want to congratulate them for having shown so much flexibility, because nobody is complaining. Besides, you journalists, you haven't talked much about it, I think," he added.

England did not play away until their 4-0 quarterfinal victory over Ukraine at the Stadio Olimpico on Saturday, and they will be back at Wembley, which will also hold the final, next Wednesday to take on Denmark in the Last four. — AFP