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VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 16 JUNE 2021



Sonia asks govt to come clean on Galwan incident



Suu Kyi faces sedition charge

SPORTS | 8
Messi scores but Argentina held



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WEATHER



Max: 35.0°C
Min: 27.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: 1.6 mm

Forecast: Cloudy.
Max/Min temp.
35/27 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Shuddha
Shashti till 10.41 pm
Star: Magha till 10.10 pm
Varjyam: 9.54 am to 11.32 am
Durmuhurtam: 11.50 am to 12.43 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Zeeqad 4,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 5.10 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.15 pm
Maghrib: 6.47 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.34 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.41 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 10.29 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 00.09 AM

COUNTER POINT



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

SHORT TAKES

Panel cancels Haj pilgrimage

New Delhi: The Haj Committee of India on Tuesday announced that all the applications for the pilgrimage this year stand cancelled as Saudi Arabia has stated that only a limited number of people residing in the Kingdom will be allowed to perform Haj due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Last year also, Saudi Arabia asked India that pilgrims should not be sent in the wake of the pandemic.

Jobless rate drops to 8.7%

Chennai: There is a ray of hope on the job front. The unemployment data in the week ending June 13 shows an improvement from the lows a few weeks back. As per the data from Centre for Monitoring Indian Economy, in the second week of June unemployment rate has eased to 8.7 per cent from 13.6 per cent in the first week of June.

■ Full report on Page 7

SC shuts case against 2 Italians

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Tuesday directed the closure of criminal proceedings in India against two Italian marines, accused of killing two fishermen off the Kerala coast in February 2012, and asked the Kerala High Court to oversee the apportionment of ₹10 crore compensation to the heirs of the victim.

LEGAL | INFRA

Justice Ramana says intl arbitration centre is dream project

CJI to set up arbitration centre in Hyd

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 15

Chief Justice of India (CJI) Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana on Tuesday said he was putting in efforts to set up an international arbitration centre in Hyderabad in collaboration with the Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC). “Recently I talked to the Chief Justice of Singapore and he was pleased to cooperate with us in setting up

an international arbitration centre in Hyderabad, provided that the infrastructure is arranged by the Telangana state government,” Justice Ramana said.

Further, the CJI stated that the proposals for infrastructure had been sent to the Telangana state government and its response was awaited. “If a fully-equipped building will be given by the government to set up the international arbitration centre, then the

The CJI stated that the proposals for infrastructure had been sent to the Telangana State government and its response was awaited.

Supreme Court is ready to constitute a committee comprising a Supreme Court judge, the Telangana High Court Chief Justice and other eminent jurists to look after the setting up of the centre,” the Chief

Justice of India said.

Justice Ramana said it was his dream project to set up such a centre in Hyderabad, where he started his career.

Hyderabad had become an arbitration hub, where several international commercial organisations, IT industries, pharma and other companies were situated in larger numbers, he said adding that when legal issues were being raised, the companies were looking for international arbitration institutes.

The CJI announced that the work was under process to telecast live the Supreme Court arguments within three months without interruption. Responding to apprehensions over the possibility of misuse and misinterpretation of the live telecast of the hearing, the CJI said that the Supreme Court had initiated a new software with artificial intelligence to make sure no such issue of misuses of live telecast.

Trial run



A military train rolls with vehicles and equipment during a trial run conducted at a Dedicated Freight Corridor (DFC) from New Rewari in Haryana to New Phulera in Rajasthan on Tuesday. — PTI

Vizag to get tallest sky tower

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 15

Come next year tourist season, the city of destiny will have India's tallest tower perched on picturesque Kailasagiri Hill in the city. It will become a landmark structure for the city, drawing a lot of tourists round the year.

The sky tower, as it is called today, will be one of among the few such structures in the world. The tower, a huge observation centre with a lifting and rotating circular passenger cabin carrying 80 passengers, gives a 360 degree view of the entire city and the ocean.

The passengers will be seated at the circumference and with an out-

ward-facing seat row to enable a spectacular panoramic outside view. It is a true world-class tourism attraction suitable to all age groups, said the project proponent, Vinay Reddy, from Hyderabad.

Vinay Reddy of Swarnamukhi Agency signed a memorandum of understanding with the state government during the partnership held in 2017 for this project. Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Regional Development Authority (VMRDA) floated a notice inviting some more agencies to take up the project. None responded and VMRDA shelved the project.

Vinay Reddy then sent a

proposal to the state government to revive the project last December and the Cabinet approved it on May 4 this year along with other tourism projects.

The proposed sky tower is 120 meters tall sitting on 300-foot high Kailasagiri Hills. At night, it will be illuminated and can be seen from all the corners of the city. The ride will give an unsurpassed experience to passengers with the sensation of being on a flying balcony in the sky. The cabin is fully air-conditioned and comes with high-end finished seats automatic doors, illumination, automatic sound-system, distortion-free laminated safety glass

with UV-filter all around for a panoramic view.

With a travelling speed of 1.5 metres/sec and a revolution speed of 0.5 metres/sec, the sky tower will have an hourly capacity of 1600 passengers. “We will initially carry only 400 passengers and add more at a later stage,” Vinay Reddy said. He said the typhoon tower is being designed for the harsh environment in Visakhapatnam with strong winds, which calls for special design of the equipment and will be certified by appropriate agencies.

Intamin Worldwide from Switzerland will supply, install and maintain this safe and unique tower, he added.

LJP'S CHIRAG FACTION EXPELS FIVE REBEL MPs

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

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

Mr Paswan was removed after an emergency meeting of the LJP national working committee on Tuesday. On the other hand Mr Paswan expelled his uncle, Mr Paras, and four other MPs from the party.

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

CM doles out ₹248cr for auto, taxi drivers

Credits ₹10K each in banks for third year in row

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

MOM OF 2 IS VAHANA MITHRA BENEFICIARY

As many as 2,48,468 autorickshaw and taxi drivers across the state received ₹248.47 crore financial aid under YSR Vahana Mithra scheme on Tuesday. For the third year in a row and a month in advance, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy credited the money directly to their accounts. Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister asked them to utilise the aid was being provided to meet recurring expenses, insurance, maintenance and procurement of fitness certificate.

The CM said that during his 3,648 km padayatra he witnessed the difficulties of autorickshaw drivers, who hardly earn ₹500 a day and have to pay a huge sum of ₹10,000 towards insurance and other expenses required for getting a fitness certificate and, hence, the government came up with the initiative.

Almost 84 per cent of the

A woman who worked hard to find a way out of poverty was among those who benefited from the ₹10,000 incentive given to autorickshaw and taxi drivers under Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy Vahana Mithra scheme.

Parvathi, hailing from Chittoor district's Chandragiri, took up driving an autorickshaw three years ago and helped the family earn during the pandemic. Her husband was among those struck by the Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Parvathi, a mother of two,

received her third installment of cash incentive on Tuesday.

“My husband is a daily wage worker and used to do petty jobs, but he never made enough money to make a decent living. As a housewife, I did not go out and had no chance to earn. It became difficult for us to look after our two children. So, with the help of Rashtriya Seva Samithi (RASS), I got trained in driving an auto rickshaw and took it up as a profession three years ago,” Parvathi said.

■ Page 2: Parvathi thanks CM for financial help

beneficiaries are from SC, ST, BC and minorities, he noted, adding that the scheme not only benefits the drivers but also passengers who can experience a safe journey.

The Chief Minister informed that so far under

YSR Vahana Mithra, ₹759 crore was credited directly into the accounts of beneficiaries and such a scheme is available only in Andhra Pradesh in the country.

■ Page 2: Taxi drivers looted by previous govt: Jagan

Delhi HC says state blurred line between protest, terror

SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

In its anxiety to suppress dissent, the state has blurred the line between right to protest and terrorist activity and if such a mindset gains traction, it would be a “sad day for democracy”, the Delhi High Court observed on Tuesday while granting bail to three

students from Jawaharlal Nehru University and Jamia Millia Islamia arrested over a year ago for the riots that followed protests against the controversial citizenship law.

Terming as “somewhat vague” the definition of a “terrorist act” under the stringent UAPA law and warning against its use in a “cavalier manner”, the

high court set aside the trial court orders rejecting bail to JNU students Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita and Jamia's Asif Iqbal Tanha, allowing their appeals and admitting them to regular bail. “We are of the view that the foundations of our nation stand on surer footing than to be likely to be shaken by a protest,” the court said.

KAVACH

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* T.S. C. apply



SHORT TAKES

HC RESERVES
VERDICT ON
GROUP-1 EXAMSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

The AP High Court on Tuesday heard the petitions filed over alleged irregularities in the conduct of Group-1 Mains examinations. A total of nine petitions were taken for trial on Tuesday, and after hearing arguments from both the sides, the court reserved the judgment. The petitions were filed by advocates Yogesh Tandava, Adinarayana, G. Vidyasagar and others.

The counsels for the petitioners Adinarayana and Vidyasagar contended that the Group-1 Mains examinations were not conducted as per the rules. The petitioner's counsels brought to the notice of the court that the digital valuation of the examination paper was mentioned by the authorities in the final stage. The counsels for the petitioner informed that the valuation of Telugu medium papers was done in state while the English medium papers were done in other states, which was unfair to the students who wrote in English medium.

The counsels argued as to how the government could carry out the valuation process with the private individuals. The petitioners contended that the secretary had acted unilaterally by bypassing the chairman of the APPSC and asked to issue interim orders suspending the interviews.

The government lawyers argued that the Group-1 examinations were conducted in accordance with the regulations of APPSC. The public prosecutor brought to the notice of the court that there was no need to mention in advance about the valuation process.

After hearing arguments from both sides, Judge D.V.S.S. Somayajulu reserved the judgment.

FORMATION OF
KAPU BOARD
COMMENCESDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

The AP government issued orders on Tuesday for the constitution of the board of directors for AP State Kapu Welfare and Development Corporation. Special chief secretary G. Anantha Ramu issued a G.O.RT: 56 which said the board would have official and non-official directors.

Official directors will comprise director of BC welfare, MD of APBCCFC, CEO/MD of APSSDC, MD of APSKWD, additional secretary/joint secretary of the finance department, additional secretary/joint secretary or deputy secretary of the BC welfare department, and joint director of industries.

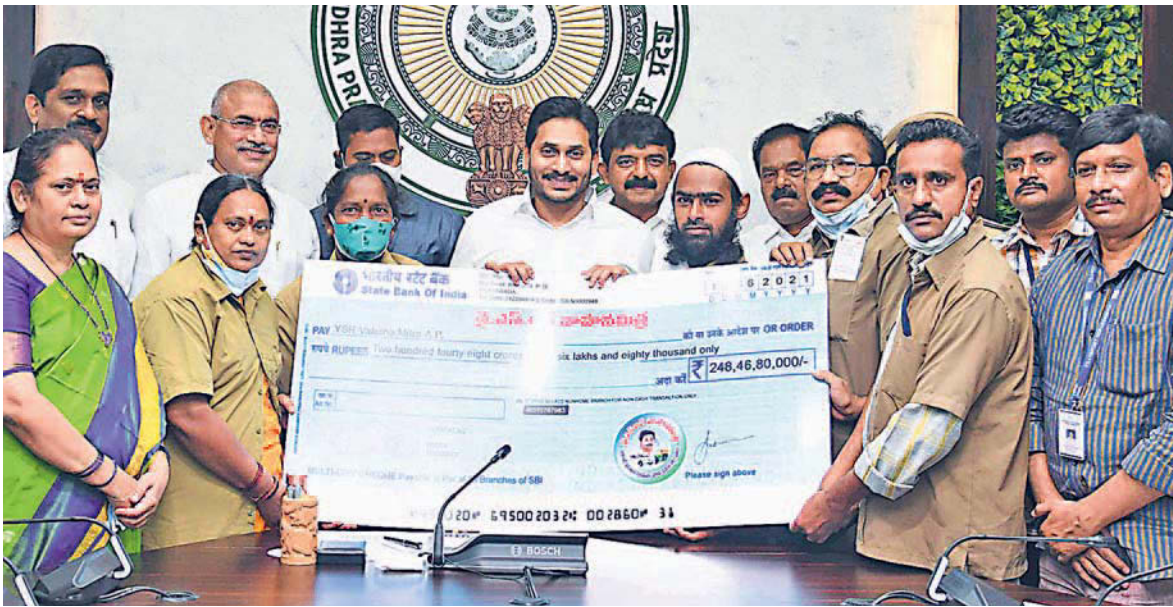
MUSLIM CLERICS
FOR SUNNIS, SHIAS
IN WAKF BOARDDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

Leaders of the Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat (Sunnis) in Andhra Pradesh have sought appointment for people of Sunni and Shia communities to the nominated posts of the state Wakf Board. Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat leader and Sufi mentor Altaf Ali Raza Baba and leaders Syed Hafiz and Hafiz Abdul Samad, at a press conference here on Tuesday, objected to the appointment of people from faiths other than Ahle Sunnat Wal Jamaat to the nominated posts of Wakf Board. They urged Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to appoint Jamaat's nominees to the Wakf Board.

AMBATI: GOVT
WILL RECLAIM ALL
GRABBED LANDSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

Asserting that the government will protect its lands and reclaim those under encroachments, YSRC MLA Ambati Rambabu said that lands worth ₹5,082 crore in about 430 acres have been reclaimed in Visakhapatnam alone.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, the MLA revealed that the former collector of Visakhapatnam, Praveen Kumar, had openly stated that the land records of 379 villages, 16,735 FMB copies of one lakh acres in Visakhapatnam district were missing. The former minister in TD government, Ayyanna Patrudu, also said that many people were involved in the land scam with the support of those in TD government.



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy hands over a symbolic cheque to the beneficiaries of the Vahana Mithra scheme at his camp office in Tadepalli on Tuesday. Ministers K. Narayana Swami, Perni Venkatramaiah, Ch. S. Venugopala Krishna, Principal secretary (transport) M.T. Krishnababu and others are also seen. — BY ARRANGEMENT

Auto drivers hail Jagan
for financial assistance

₹10,000 is a blessing in disguise to auto drivers' families, says Mani

DC CORRESPONDENTS
KURNOOL/NELLORE, JUNE 15

Auto drivers and cab owners expressed their gratitude to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for coming to their rescue by extending YSR Vahana Mithra when they are going through the worst phase of their lives due to the Covid pandemic, said Afzal Basha, an autorickshaw driver.

Each owner of a vehicle was granted ₹10,000 per year. This is the third year of the dole.

About 18,100 autorickshaws and taxi drivers benefited from the scheme in the district.

Thanking the CM, they said it is a great relief when petrol and diesel prices hit the roof. The scheme benefited 15,403 people in 2019 and 18,339 in 2020.

J. Philip from Lakshmi Nagar, an auto driver, said the grant was a booster dose to him as Covid crisis badly affected his livelihood. A graduate, he used to earn ₹400 daily earlier. After Covid outbreak, he was hardly getting not more than two trips a day, he said.

B. Venkata Ramana, a resident of Joharapuram, said he was educated up to Intermediate and has been running the auto for the past 20 years. He said his mother and wife depend on his income. The financial assistance is a great boon for auto drivers who are facing high fuel prices and low transport fares, he said.

M.B. Suresh Babu, a native of Kondapet in Dhone town, said if an auto developed repairs, it would be the end of livelihoods for them. The meagre earnings on plying autos is worst hit by Covid and the benefit came amid a financial crunch, he said.

Beneficiaries of the YSR Vahana Mithra Scheme in Nellore said that they are all indebted to Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for the financial assistance under the scheme at a time when they are struggling for survival because of the pandemic.

A beneficiary, K. Mani, from Ayappa temple centre, Nellore, said the financial aid of ₹10,000 is a blessing in disguise to the families of auto drivers as



Parvathi from Chandragiri comes in her autorickshaw to receive Vahana Mithra Scheme benefits on Tuesday.

Parvathi thanks CM
for financial help

From page 1

Initially, Parvathi struggled to find passengers as no one in this tiny town believed her driving skills. Subsequently, she gained trust among the locals. However, the Covid-induced lockdown had a noticeable impact on her livelihood and daily earnings disappeared.

"I used to make around ₹600 a day by driving the autorickshaw. But it is hard to earn even ₹100 per day during this crisis. At this crucial time, the Vahana Mithra scheme came as a boon for all drivers like us and it is a big help for us to repay our loans or to help our family to eat three meals," Parvathi said.

She thanked the Chief Minister, saying that he

had been providing the financial assistance one month in advance and supporting lakhs of families of drivers like her. She expressed happiness that the CM had given a lot of courage to women like her by implementing every scheme in the name of women. She said both her children were studying in a government school and they benefited under the Amma Vodi scheme.

Meanwhile, Chittoor MP N. Reddeppa, MLAs M.S. Babu, P. Dwarakanath Reddy, collector M. Hari Narayanan and others handed over cheques and certificates to beneficiaries at Chittoor district collectorate. A total of ₹16.73 crore was disbursed to the 16,732 Vahana Mithra beneficiaries in the district.

Meanwhile, deputy transport commissioner of Prakasam district, B. Krishnaveni, said 40,091 persons were benefited under the scheme during the last 3 years.

Speaking on the occasion, Prakasam district collector Pravin Kumar told the beneficiaries to maintain the vehicles in good condition.

Jagananna Colonies
first of their kindDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 15

Housing minister Cherukuvada Sriranganatha Raju said a total of 17,000 Jagananna Model Colonies will be built across the state. Reviewing the progress of the housing project at the Vizianagaram collectorate on Tuesday, he said the colonies were the first of their kind in the country.

The minister said the government aimed to make them model colonies in the country, by providing all kinds of infrastructure and amenities. All the allied departments were asked to work in coordination and complete the construction in

a time-bound manner. Deputy chief minister Pamula Pushpa Srivani and Vizianagaram district in-charge minister Vellampalli Srinivas were also present at the review meeting.

Raju said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had envisioned the construction of 30 lakh houses for the poor. He made it clear that the aim of the government was to fulfil the housing dreams of all the poor irrespective of caste, creed and politics.

It was decided to complete around 15 lakh houses by March 31, 2022, the minister said, adding that the project would cost about ₹30,000 crore.

CM: TAXI DRIVERS
LOOTED BY
PREVIOUS GOVT

From page 1

He said as many as 42,932 beneficiaries newly applied for the scheme this year, taking the total number to 2,48,468. Those left out by the scheme can still apply at village/ward secretariats and their applications would be considered if they are eligible. He said people can contact on 9154294326 or 1902 to know details about the scheme or lodge a complaint. He said the government also set up a task force in the transport section for the smooth run of the scheme.

Hitting back at the opposition leaders over the false propaganda, the CM said that auto and taxi drivers were looted by the previous government with taxes and penalties. Going into the details, he said that ₹7.39 crore had been collected towards compounded fees, tax and penalties from the auto drivers during 2015-16.

Various fees and penalties amounted to ₹9.68 crore 2016-17, ₹10.19 crore in 2017-18 and ₹7.09 crore in 2018-19. In contrast, under the YSRC government, only ₹68.44 lakh was collected through penalties and taxes in 2019-20 and in 2020-21 it was just ₹35 lakh. He said the TD leaders published a book of 94 mistakes even as the government fulfilled over 94 per cent of the promises made in the last two years.

The opposition cited YSR Vahana Mithra as one of the 94 mistakes, but in reality, taxes and penalty fees came down significantly after YSRC came to power.

Further, the Chief Minister requested the auto drivers to follow traffic rules and never to drive under the influence of alcohol.

Deputy CM K. Narayana Swamy, ministers Perni Venkataramaiah, Ch. Venu Gopala Krishna, principal secretary (transport) M.T. Krishna Babu, Commissioner of Transport P.S.R. Anjaneyulu and other officials were present at the event.

English medium
must at UG levelDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

The Andhra Pradesh government has decided to make English medium compulsory across in government, aided and unaided degree colleges in the state from the academic year 2021-22. The department of higher education strongly feels the introduction of English medium at the UG level would enhance the career prospects of graduates.

According to the findings in India Skills Report of 2019, English figured among the top three skills, along with learning agility and adaptability, that employers look for in India.

Out of over 2.62 lakh students who have taken admissions into degree colleges across the state, only 65,981 students are admitted into the Telugu medium during 2020-21. Out of 65,981 Telugu medium students, 24,007, 16,925 and 24,960 enrolled for BA, B.Com and B.Sc courses respectively. The government decision is bound to benefit these students as well.

A 2016 report of Cambridge University titled 'Findings of English at Work: Global analysis of language skills in workplace' highlights that about 90 per cent of employers in India say that the English language skills are important for their organisation.

The English language skills would help B.Sc, BA and B.Com students a lot. A majority of B.Sc students have been seen to have taken up opportunities across the country, and in some cases abroad. Considering this, proficiency in the English lan-

guage becomes essential for opening up new avenues for the students and ensuring their career growth.

In the case of BA students, data shows that a large number of BA graduates prefer getting into sales and marketing, apart from journalism and research. Keeping in mind the fact that most companies have started preferring multilingual candidates and laying emphasis on English, it is essential that the students pursue their UG in the English medium.

For B.Com Students, with the advent of top-notch technology, the commerce industry has become highly dynamic, fast-paced and algorithm/software-oriented in the last two decades. Therefore, English language serves as an essential tool for professionals in the industry for becoming highly successful.

Further, the public sector recruitment process held through UPSC, APPSC, SSC, BSRB also tests language proficiency. As the 4th year of the UG curriculum is in research orientation, it would be difficult to pursue quality work in PhD, if the under graduation is studied in Telugu medium.

The 'Future of work' demands knowing English which will be met with studying UG in English medium so that the inherent inhibition wanes away. By studying core subjects in the English medium, the fluency in English increases.

Studying market-oriented programmes in degree in Telugu medium is difficult as the reference material is available in English.

GVMC postings
spur capital buzzDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 15

The Tuesday's reshuffle of five officials in Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) limits has given momentum to the executive capital buzz in the city.

A GO, issued by special chief secretary Y. Sri Lakshmi, mentioned that the current Sriakulam municipal commissioner, who is on leave, has been transferred and posted as deputy commissioner (revenue) of GVMC. Similarly, K. Ramesh Kumar, the deputy commissioner (revenue), has been transferred and posted as GVMC's deputy project officer.

Another officer B. Venkata Ramana has been posted as the zonal commissioner in place of M.V.D. Phani Ram. The government has appointed Phani Ram as the deputy project officer for the corporation. S. Venkata Ramana, the secretary to Nellore Urban Development Authority, has been transferred and posted as a zonal commissioner in GVMC.

All these transfers seem to indicate that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is speeding up the process of transferring this cosmopolitan city as the executive capital of the state, said a political observer in the port city.

'NAIDU PUTTING
OBSTACLES FOR
JUDICIAL CAPITAL'DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 15

Accusing TD president N. Chandrababu Naidu of causing a delay in turning Kurnool into the judicial capital, government chief whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy said the government was committed to the formation of the three capitals in the state.

Reddy, who was in Srisailem on Tuesday, told the media that the High Court would definitely come up in Kurnool but rued that Naidu became a stumbling block for the realisation of the dream of Rayalaseema. The advocate community in Kurnool was feeling neglected as the shifting of High Court could not be materialised despite a legislation to the effect.

The chief whip alleged Naidu was in a secret pact with the NDA government and questioned him why he was not criticising the NDA government or Prime Minister Narendra Modi. He arrived on a two-day personal visit to Srisailem temple along with his family.

COMMITMENT TO
SOCIAL JUSTICE
BRINGS KUDOS
TO JAGANDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy seems to be getting all praises for his commitment to social justice, which is reflected in the recent allocation of MLC seats with two out of four candidates entering the Upper House belonging to weaker sections.

Empowering weaker sections is no longer a slogan as the Chief Minister has made it a reality in his two years of governance.

In allocation of MLC seats, factors influencing the selection like social status, financial ability and political influence were side-lined paving the way for true political empowerment for the weaker sections.

Prominence was given to members of BC Yadava caste in the Governor-nominated MLC posts. With this decision, after six-and-a-half decades, a person belonging to Yadava caste has been nominated to the Governor's quota as an MLC. Since the formation of AP Legislative Council in 1958, almost 30 MLCs were elected from Kadapa district and for the first time the Yadav community got an opportunity.

Of the four MLC posts that went vacant under Governor's quota, the government selected one SC and one BC for two seats. Moshen Raju of West Godavari district, Ramesh Yadav of Kadapa, Thota Trimurthulu of East Godavari district and Lella Appireddy of Guntur have been nominated for the MLC posts under Governor quota.

Since the day of forming the government in 2019, a total of 15 MLCs were elected under nominated and MLA quota, where 11 of them have been given to BC, SC and minorities. In vacancies that were filled after 2018, 12 posts were given to BC, SC and Minorities, while three of them were given to upper castes. This shows the priority given by Jagan Mohan Reddy to social justice, especially empowering SC, ST, BC and minorities.

Members of marginalised communities elected and nominated as MLCs on behalf of YSRC since 2019 are P. Ravindra Babu (SC), Balli Kalyana Chakravarti (SC), Dokka Manikya Varaprasad (SC), Koyya Moshen Raju (SC), Mopidevi Venkata Ramana (BC), Duvvada Srinivas (BC), Potula Sunita (BC), Ramesh Yadav (BC), C. Ramachandraiah (BC), Zakia Khanum (minority), Muhammad Iqbal (minority), Mohammed Karimunnisa (minority), Challa Bhagirathareddy (OC), Lella Appireddy (OC) and Thota Trimurthulu (OC).

Vijayawada: AP Government Nurses Association has written a letter to the CM objecting to harassment of nurses by superintendents of various government hospitals. Association president D. Manjula Devi complained that nurses are facing considerable problems while discharging their duties these Corona times.

FOLLOWING | TRADITION

TD politburo member visits Paidithalli temple along with followers

Ashok Gajapathi Raju violates Covid norms

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 15

Former Union minister and TD politburo member P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju allegedly violated the Covid-19 protocol by visiting Paidithalli temple in Vizianagaram town along with hundreds of party workers and his followers on Tuesday morning. Normally, people visit this temple on Tuesdays, a tradition that has been followed since decades.

His followers said after winning the High Court case against the state government regarding his removal from the chairman post of Mansas and Simhachalam Temple Trust, Gajapathi Raju



Former Union minister P. Ashok Gajapathi Raju, along with his supporters, visits the Pydittallamma Temple in Vizianagaram town on Tuesday.

wanted to offer special prayers to the Goddess. But his critics said it was a clear violation of Covid-

19 protocol, taking hundreds of people inside the premises of the temple. "Ashok did not visit the

temple during Sirimano-tsav, the annual festival of the Goddess citing Covid-19. He also most of the ti-

me shut his bungalow to outsiders citing infection. Why did he go today?" said a retired school teacher and a devotee of the Goddess.

District Medical and Health Officer Dr S.V. Ramana Kumari said the administration was allowing one or two persons into the temple and not hundreds as per the Covid-19 protocol.

Superintendent of Police, Vizianagaram, B. Raju Kumari said as per information, only 60 to 70 persons accompanied Ashok Gajapathi Raju to the temple in the morning.

"But it is still a violation of Covid-19 protocol," the SP said.

IN BRIEF

**Sicma donates
02 concentrators**

South Indian Cement Manufacturers' Association (Sicma) has donated 200 oxygen concentrators worth ₹2 crore to the Chief Minister Relief Fund (CMRF).

Borewell owners responsible for accidents: Govt

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE JUNE 15

In the wake of several incidents where innocent children were killed after falling into abandoned borewells, the groundwater department has issued guidelines as per the directions of the Supreme Court to protect the children. These rules have made the borewell owners and rig managements responsible for any untoward incident.

According to the groundwater wing officials, negligence of the owners to remove the casing of the borewell and close the same when it becomes dry gave scope for children to fall in them.

Taking a serious view, the apex court made it mandatory for the rigs to register with the governmental agency irrespective of whether they belonged to the private or government sphere.

The rig owner and the borewell owner should put up a signboard and arrange a fence around the installation. A concrete platform is a must at the borewell as per the new specifications.

All the pits and muddy canals around the borewell should be closed and the ground should be leveled.

In the case of closed bore wells, the owners should obtain a certificate from officials about the closure to save themselves from the possible legal problems.

Records should be maintained on both functioning and defunct bore wells by the agriculture department in villages and by the municipal engineering and public health department in urban areas.

Officials should inspect the bore wells in their jurisdiction and ensure all safety norms, said the assistant director of the groundwater department.

Godavari water released to delta

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 15

Godavari water was let out into three delta canals—Eastern Delta, Central Delta and Western Delta—to East Godavari and West Godavari districts on Tuesday.

Irrigation officials released the water after performing the poojas. As high as 19,000 cusecs of water was released through Polavaram Project Spillway. Of these, the officials released 3,000 cusecs of water.

Irrigation headworks executive engineer

Srinivasa Rao said the release of waters is gradually being increased. Rajamahendravaram MP Bharat Ram inaugurated the release of waters at the Eastern Arm at Dowleswaram Barrage.

He said there would be no shortage of water even for small fields. A 20-TMCs capacity storage tank has been constructed at Polavaram Project and the project would supply water to the fields. Union Ministry for Water Resources has responded favourably to the state's plea to release funds for the polavaram project, he said.

NIT AP STUDENTS DEVELOP 'WI-FI MOUNTED MICROCONTROLLER'

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

Students from the National Institute of Technology Andhra Pradesh (NIT-AP), Tadepalligudem, have developed a 'Wi-Fi mounted microcontroller' that can integrate sensors for smart harvesting of rainwater. This system can automate the process of water storage, to make it more efficient, and reduce water-borne disease.

The students from Team LinkLer aim to address water shortage by deploying deep tech such as

internet of things (IoT) and machine learning. The team developed an end-to-end software stack that provides an easy interface to manage and control in-house water resources.

The system monitors wastewater and supply systems such as rainfall, water remaining in the storage tank, water quality index and water supply in a given area.

The NIT-AP students have also designed an underground storage tank with a material capable of holding the water long term and its treatment process.

THREE MAOIST COURIERS ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 15

The Chinturu division police arrested three Maoist couriers — Shaik Shamshuddin, 45, and Sode Raju, 21, of Abhicherla of Kunavaram mandal and Sonde Mudraju, 40, of Murumuru of Yetapaka mandal.

Additional doctors, staff to treat Covid children: Nani

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

Health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas alias Nani said on Tuesday that the government is taking steps including offering paediatric training to the medical staff to face the likely third wave of Covid-19 in an effective manner in Andhra Pradesh.

A meeting of the group of ministers to discuss the measures to limit a third wave's impact was held at Mangalagiri. The minister said the meeting decided to provide treatment facilities to children in all government hospitals across 13 districts in view of the anticipated third wave.

The meeting was attended by ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Buggana Rajendranath Reddy, Dr Seediri Appalaraju and Kurasala Kannababu, government advisers Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy and several senior officials of the health department.

Minister Nani said Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has advised officials to appoint additional doc-



Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana along with his wife participates in a special puja to Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy at Balalayam at Yadadri on Tuesday.

CJI visits Yadadri shrine

Ramana admires ₹1,000-cr renovation of famous temple

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 15

Chief Justice of India Justice N.V. Ramana, who is currently on a visit to Hyderabad, offered prayers to Lord Narasimhaswamy at the famous Yadadri temple on Tuesday.

As per tradition, the temple priests welcomed the CJI with purna kumbamon his arrival at Balalayam.

Justice Ramana and his wife participated in special puja at the Balalayam. He arrived at the temple by road from Hyderabad.

Endowments minister A. Indrakaran Reddy and energy minister G. Jagdish Reddy welcomed the CJI on his arrival at the VVIP suite on Yadadri hill.

Yadadri Bhongir zilla parishad chairman Alimineti Sandeep Reddy, government whip Gongidi Sunitha, district collector Pamela Satpathy, Yadadri Temple Development Authority (YTDA) vice chairman Kishan Rao and temple executive officer N. Geetha were also present.

The CJI also received a ceremonial salute from the police.

After offering prayers, Justice Ramana went through the renovation works of the main temple of Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy on the hill shrine being undertaken by the state government at a cost of over ₹1,000 crore to



Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana plants a sapling at Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday.

develop it as a world-class temple town. Ministers and officials explained to him the progress and status of works at the main temple.

Ministers said Justice Ramana was impressed by the complete makeover of Yadadri temple and the sculptures and structures on the temple premises

CJI PLANTS SAPLING AT RAJ BHAVAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 15

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Tuesday planted a sapling at the Raj Bhavan complex as part of the The Green India programme. Justice Ramana called upon the legal fraternity to take part and encourage the tree plantation programme to increase green cover which is essential to maintain balance in the ecosystem.

"It is important to protect Mother Nature by promoting greenery in a big way. We must ensure required green cover so as to protect nature and ensure sustainable development for the benefit of future generations," he said.

Calling the Green India programme launched by Rajya Sabha member J. Santosh Kumar, who was present at the ceremony. "A good and timely initiative to promote awareness and greenery in our country."

being erected as part of renovation works. He also inspected the works at the temple town and Presidential suite later. He spent over four hours.

New Covid-19 infections rise a bit in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 15

The Covid-19 new infections slightly increased on Tuesday in the state. As many as 5,741 new cases were registered as against 4,549 on Monday.

However, the recovery rate has improved with the discharge of 10,567

Corona patients from various hospitals. As many as 96,153 samples were tested in the past 24 hours in which 5,741 found infected. A total of 2,06,34,891

Corona tests were conducted in the 13 districts of the state.

The total number of Covid-19 infections in AP was 18,20,134 of which

total recoveries account for 17,32,948. A total of 53 new deaths were registered, taking the total toll to 12,052.

East Godavari district is at the top with the highest daily new infections at 831, followed by 830 in Chittoor, 703 in West Godavari, 463 each in Krishna and Prakasam

districts, 428 in Srikakulam, 385 in Guntur, 353 in Anantapur, 339 in Visakhapatnam, 325 in Kadapa, 266 in Nellore, 225 in Vizianagaram and the least number of 130 infections was registered in Kurnool district. Chittoor district reported 12 new deaths, followed by six in

East Godavari, four each in Kadapa, Krishna, Prakasam, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts. Three deaths each were registered in Anantapur, Guntur and West Godavari districts. Two deaths each took place in Kurnool, Nellore and Vizianagaram districts.

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SHORT TAKES

ODISHA SEES A DIP IN CASES, DAILY TOLL AROUND 40

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 15

The daily cases of Covid-19 dipped further on Tuesday as the state witnessed 3,405 new cases, 934 less than Monday's figure. With this, the positive tally in the state climbed to 8,59,526.

However, despite the fall in the new cases, the fatalities due to Covid continue to surge in the state. At least 42 patients undergoing treatment for Covid have succumbed to the disease in the last 24 hours taking the death toll to 3,388.

Khurdha district with 500 fresh infections in the last 24 hours has the maximum cases among all districts followed by Jajpur (391), Balasore (296), Cuttack (230), Mayurbhanj (187), Angul (183), Bhadrak (179), Puri (141) and Jagat-singhpur (129).

The active cases in the state now stood at 51,104 while 8,04,981 patients have recovered from the disease, state health department said. The state has so far tested a total of 1,27,20,932 samples including 68,535 on Monday. The overall epidemic situation analysis by the state health department brings two contrasting facts. While Kendrapara becomes the only district to post a rise in positive rate in the week ended on June 14, Jharsuguda cuts the test positive rate to around 2 per cent from 12 per cent a week ago.

FAMILY ALLEGES HOSP. NEGLIGENCE, ATTACKS STAFF

PRANMOY BRAHMACHARI | DC BHERHAMPORE, JUNE 15

Family members of a Covid patient went on rampage at a private hospital in Murshidabad of West Bengal and beat three of its staff following death of the patient on Monday night due to alleged medical negligence even after a payment of ₹10 lakh for her treatment.

The deceased, Santana Mondal (36), was from Bharatpur in Bherhampore. She died of suffocation, according to her family members who later erupted in protests and attacked the hospital staff.

Mondal's elder sister Rani claimed, "My sister was admitted at the hospital 28 days ago after she tested positive. She was suffering from suffocation and was on the ventilator. But we came to know that the ventilator was useless which pushed her to death." She added that though ₹10 lakh was paid to the hospital on demand for her sister's treatment, oxygen was not given to the patient.

Hospital official, however, denied the allegations. He said, "The patient died despite our best efforts to save her. But her kin turned violent. Instead of paying heed to us, they ransacked the hospital furniture and assaulted our staff when they tried to resist them."

IB STARTS DRIVE TO CURB ONLINE FRAUD

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 15

With a sharp increase in usage of online medium for financial and business transactions following outbreak of Coronavirus, the Cyber Unit of the Intelligence Bureau has started a drive along with Cyber Cell of various state police to further strengthen their mechanism to check online frauds.

Sources said since the country went into lockdown in March last year following Covid-19, there has been on an average a 20 to 30 per cent increase in cases of financial cyber crime across the country.

As a large number of people are still avoiding going to banks or other financial institutions there has been a sharp increase in usage of online banking and the financial transactions. This is in addition to increase in online shopping of essential commodities and other stuff also as most states have been imposing some form of lockdown since last March.

Taking advantage of this "cyber criminals" have been using different modus operandi to cheat users of their money. For instance messages are being sent on WhatsApp and SMS to update this vaccination status or KYC or apply for loan. Once a users clicks on the links the entire data from a smart phone or computer gets transferred to the unknown servers of these cyber criminals.



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

India confirms 1st death following vaccination

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

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

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

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

"It is the first death linked to Covid vaccination due to anaphylaxis. It re-emphasises the need to wait for 30 minutes after receiving jab. Most of the anaphylactic reactions occur during this period. Timely treatment can prevent deaths," said Dr N.K. Arora, Chairman, of Covid working group.

The Union health ministry in a statement said any death or hospitalisation following vaccination cannot be automatically assumed to be due to vaccination though states have been directed to make causality assessments to understand whether the "Adverse Event Following Immunisation" was caused directly due to vaccine.

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

Meanwhile, India recorded 60,471 daily new



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

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

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

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

Doctors have warned that a situation 'worse

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

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

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

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

ASSAM SCHOOLS TO CONTINUE TO REMAIN SHUT

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, JUNE 15

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

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

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

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

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

Galwan 2020: The night that changed the neighbourhood

PROBAL DAS GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sonia asks govt to come clean on Galwan incident

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

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

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

"The Congress party reiterates its concern that no clarity is yet available and the prime minister's last word on the subject a year ago was that no transgression had occurred," she said. "We have repeatedly sought details of the episode in light of the PM's statement, as well as details of what progress

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

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

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

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

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



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

I FEEL PROUD OF MY HUSBAND: PALANI'S WIFE

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

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

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

VACCINE | HESITANCY

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

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

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to Kushwaha, rumours on the negative impact of the vaccine have turned many villagers away from vaccines.

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

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

Dwividy of Mundla panchayat said.

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

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

get vaccinated in the interest of their health.

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

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

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

said.

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

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

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

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

KERALA ALL SET TO LIFT LOCKDOWN RESTRICTIONS FROM THURSDAY

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC WITH agency inputs THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

SHORT TAKES

4 DEAD, 4 HURT IN CHICAGO SHOOTING: COPS

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

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

FIVE KILLED AS AFGHAN POLIO TEAMS ATTACKED

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

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

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

FIRE HYDRANT PLANT WORKER KILLS TWO, SELF

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

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

SECOND ARREST MADE IN DEADLY AUSTIN SHOOTING

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

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

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

A spokesman for Killen school police confirmed the arrest of the 17-year-old and referred further questions to the school.

SUICIDE BOMBER KILLS AT LEAST 15 IN SOMALIA

Mogadishu, June 15: Police in Somalia say at least 15 people were killed and more than 20 others wounded when a suicide bomber attacked a military training centre in the capital, Mogadishu, on Tuesday.

Police spokesman Sadiq Ali Aden said that the bomber, wearing an explosives-packed vest, impersonated a trainee to enter the camp in the city's Medina district.

The al-Qaida-linked al-Shabab extremist group claimed responsibility.

The training centre is used by the Somali National Army for new recruits. All of the dead and wounded were rushed to the Medina hospital, where health officials said at least 14 were seriously wounded.

Hundreds of people gathered at the hospital to check whether loved ones were among the victims.

Lancet study says Pfizer, AZ vaccines protect against Delta

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

California reopens, bids adieu to most Covid curbs

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

At the stroke of midnight, California is lifting most of its Covid-19 restrictions and ushering in what has been billed as the state's "Grand Reopening". Starting Tuesday, there will be no more state rules on social distancing, and no more limits on capacity at restaurants, bars, supermarkets, gyms, stadiums or anywhere else. And masks — one of the most symbolic and fraught symbols of the pandemic — will no longer be mandated for vaccinated people in most settings, though businesses and counties can still require them.

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

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

However, the researchers

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

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

— PTI

IN OMAN, FATAL FUNGAL INFECTION IN SOME PATIENTS

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

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

— AP

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

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

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

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

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

Gas explosions occur in various parts of China every year. The worst being the 2015 explosions in Tianjin port in which 173 people were killed and hund-

reds injured. Sunday's explosion came a day after eight people died and three were injured when toxic methyl formate leaked from a vehicle at a chemical handling facility in Guiyang.

— PTI

LAM CONCERNED ABOUT CHINESE NUCLEAR PLANT

Hong Kong, June 15: Hong Kong's leader said Tuesday that her government is "highly concerned" about the situation at a nearby nuclear power plant in mainland China, following media reports that the plant could be experiencing a leak.

Still, data from the Hong Kong Observatory and other departments showed that as of Monday night the radiation levels in the city were normal, leader Carrie Lam said.

— AP

Sedition charge against Suu Kyi on day 2 of trial

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

The coup reversed years democratic reforms in Myanmar after decades of military rule and sparked widespread protests and international condemnation. Suu Kyi and her National League for Democracy party had been due to start a second five-year term of office after winning a landslide victory in a general election last November. Suu Kyi has not been seen in public since her arrest and her lawyers say they don't know exactly where she is currently being held.



Aung San Suu Kyi

She has also had only limited time to consult with her legal team. Tuesday's session was to cover a sedition charge brought against Suu Kyi, along with a second count of violating Covid-19 restrictions. The sedition charge, which is sometimes described as incitement, calls for up to two years' imprisonment for anyone found guilty of causing fear or alarm that could cause an offence against the state or public tranquility. The offence has been law since Myanmar was a British colony, and has been criticised as a catch-all stature that infringes on freedom of speech and is used for political repression. The trial, which is closed to the public and media, opened Monday in the capital Naypyitaw, with police outlining several of the cases against her.

— AP

Taiwan reports China incursion

Taipei, June 15: Taiwan said a record 28 Chinese military aircraft including fighter jets and nuclear capable bombers flew into its defence zone on Tuesday, as Beijing hit out at international criticism of its military posturing. The incursion came a day after Nato said China's increasingly aggressive military goals threatened international order — and after G7 leaders issued a landmark statement urging peace in the Taiwan Strait.

Taiwan's defence ministry said it scrambled its own aircraft to broadcast warnings and deployed missile batteries to track the Chinese jets after they entered the island's southwest Air Defence Identification Zone (ADIZ).

The flights occurred the same day Beijing accused Nato of exaggerating the threat from China and "creating confrontation" after a vow from the

Western allies to work together to counter the "systemic challenges" posed by its policies.

Nato leaders made the commitment on Monday, as US President Joe Biden renewed Washington's trans-Atlantic ties at his first summit with the allies. In a broad statement of intent, the leaders said China's increasingly assertive actions in building a nuclear arsenal and space and cyber warfare capabilities threatened the international order.

Democratic and self-ruled Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by China, which has vowed to one day seize the island, by force if needed.

The two sides are separated by the narrow Taiwan Strait and some Chinese jets had crossed over the de facto border or so-called "median line" of the strait in previous incursions.

— AFP

Canadian faces terror charge

Ottawa, June 15: Canada is pressing terrorism charges against a man accused of moving down a Muslim family with a pickup truck, killing four, prosecutors said Monday.

Five members of the Afzaal family were out for a walk in London, Ontario — around 125 miles (200 kilometres) southwest of Toronto — on June 6, when a truck driver struck them on purpose, according to authorities.

Salman Afzaal, 46, his wife Madiha, 44, their daughter Yumna, 15, and Salman's mother Talat, 74, were all killed. The couple's nine-year-old son Fayeze survived, but was seriously injured.

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau previously said the killings were "a terrorist attack, motivated by hatred." Prosecutors revealed in a brief hearing Monday that they were adding terrorism charges to the four counts of premeditated murder and one of attempted murder levelled last week against 20-year-old Nathaniel Velتمان. "The federal and provincial attorneys general provided their consent to commence terrorism proceedings, alleging that the murders and the attempted murder also constitute terrorist activity," the Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) said.

— AFP

PAST | DISPUTE

Counter China's non-market practices, says US Trade Representative Tai

Biden eases EU trade friction ahead of Putin meet

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

The announcement that the two sides reached resolution in a 17-year dispute over how much of a government subsidy each can

provide for its aircraft manufacturing giant — Boeing in the United States and Airbus in the EU — came as Biden met with European Council President Charles Michel and European Commission President Ursula von der Leyen.

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

Wednesday meeting in Geneva with Putin.

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

"Today's announcement resolves a longstanding trade irritant in the US-Europe relationship. Instead of fighting with one of our closest allies, we are finally coming together

against a common threat," Tai said.

"We agreed to work together to challenge and counter China's non-market practices in this sector in specific ways that reflect our standards for fair competition."

She added that the tariffs could be reimplemented if the US determines US companies are not able to "compete fairly" with the EU's. The tariffs had been temporarily suspended on March 11 for four months, and the new agreement

will officially go into effect on July 11.

To be certain, the US-EU relationship faces other trade-related friction. The continent's leaders are becoming impatient that Biden has not yet addressed Donald Trump's 2018 decision to impose import taxes on foreign steel and aluminum. Even without resolving all trade disputes, White House officials expressed confidence that they can build more goodwill with Europe ahead of the face-to-face

meeting with Putin. The White House on Tuesday announced the creation of a joint US-EU trade and technology council.

The council will work on coordinating standards for artificial intelligence, quantum computing and biotechnologies, as well as coordinating efforts on bolstering supply chain resilience. Biden is appointing Secretary of State Antony Blinken, Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo and Tai to co-chair the US side of the effort.

— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

16 JUNE 2021

G-7 endorses US plans to target China, Russia

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

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

Leaders of the G-7 began to meet annually in the 1970s when the combined GDP of the member countries was around 80 per cent of the world GDP. The GDP of the G-7 is now only around 40 per cent of that of the world. The 47th summit due in 2020 had to be cancelled on account of the Covid pandemic, which has ravaged the international economy. Besides, the US, the driving force in G-7, had a close shave as a political system early this year when authoritarian forces associated with former President Trump nearly overturned the American system.

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

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

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

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

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

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

New era dawns in Israel

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

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

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

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

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

DECCAN CHRONICLE

KAUSHIK MITTER
Editor

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

Hyderabad: 36, 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: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234

Visakhapatnam: Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285

Rajahmundry: Vemagiri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208

Anantapur: Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904

Karimnagar: Survey No.1341, Vavilapally Colony, Jagityala Road, Karimnagar - 505 001, Ph: 0878-2228908; Telefax: 0878-2220433

Nellore: Survey No.527/2, Burranpur Village, Venkatachalam (M), Chennudugunta Panchayat, Nellore, Ph: 0861-2348581/82; Telefax: 0861-2348580

Chennai: SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325

Coimbatore: 77, Vivekananda Road, Rammagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255

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Subhani



India must back Dalai's choice on his successor

Claude Arpi



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

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

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

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

The recently published white paper "Tibet Since 1951: Liberation, Development and Prosperity" states: "In 1979, the Qing [Manchu] government restored order in Tibet and promulgated the Imperially Approved Ordinance for Better Governance of Tibet (the 29-article ordinance) ...[which] stipulated that the reincarnation of the Dalai Lama and other grand Living Buddhas had to follow the procedure of drawing lots from the golden urn."

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

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

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

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

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

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

When one studies the history of modern Tibet,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

G-7 AND INDIA

G-7 whose heads met in the UK for three days has taken far-reaching resolutions in its Carbis Bay declaration. The grouping also pointed out China in four references that all are negative. But it equally expressed its concern on open societies in the areas of rising authoritarianism, net shutdowns, infodemics, rights violations etc.. But India voiced against them as it resorted to many of them during revoking of Art. 370 in J&K and in protest against Citizenship Amendment Act. Thus India ought to know that there should not be any deviation between words and deeds.

Pratapa Reddy Yaramala
Tiruvuru

BETTER WORLD

The world's elite group G7 had made good optics and has come up with an attractive slogan B3W i.e. Build Back Better World while the world, including them is reeling under the Covid-19 pandemic. For the famous informal group's collective statement should not remain a non-starter; they have to handhold other countries with their concrete support to fight the pandemic at global stage. The promise of one billion vaccines to the world countries should be made realised earlier along with other needed gestures.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Heavy rush for B.Com., B.Sc.

HYDERABAD, JUNE 15 There has been heavy rush for admission to the the First Year of B.Com. and B.Sc. (both general) in the Osmania University constituent colleges in the City.

With the shifting of B.A., B.Sc. and B.Com. (general courses), except some rare combinations in B.A. and B.Sc., from the campus colleges to constituent colleges, the pressure of admission to the latter is likely to increase.

For 120 seats in B.Com. First Year in Nizam College and Secunderabad Arts and Science College, 1,660 applications have been received. This large number of applications make one feel that only those who secured very high marks (more than 60 per cent) stand a chance of getting selected.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



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

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

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

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

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

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

A TWIST IN THE AIR INDIA TALE?

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

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

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

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

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

BABU CRISIS AT THE CENTRE

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

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

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

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

quick BITES

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

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Coal India to close down 23 unviable mines

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

74% insurance FDI under auto route notified



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

HDFC Bank mobile app was down for 1 hour

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

BMW Motorrad rides in S1000R naked superbike

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



■ Sharp dip in jobless rate in June 2nd week Job numbers signal economy on mend

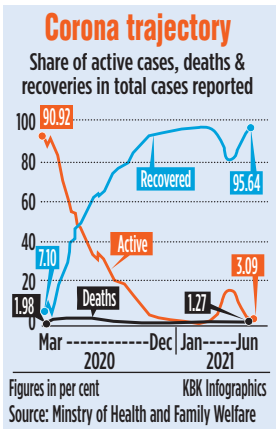
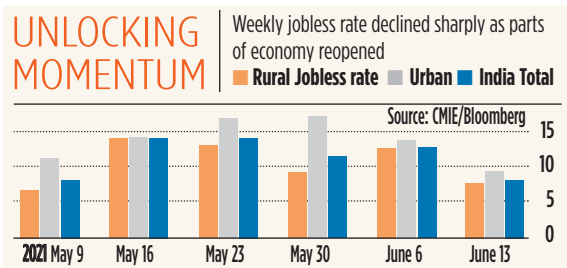
SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 15

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

RBI BANS DHFL FROM TAKING DEPOSITS UNDER PIRAMAL FOLD

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

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

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

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

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

Jewellery hallmarking must in 256 districts from today

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 15

The government has announced that mandatory hallmarking will be implemented in 256 districts which have hallmarking centres. There will be no coercive action against jewellers till September 1.

After a meeting with jewellers and trade representatives, the minister of commerce and industry Piyush Goyal said that mandatory hallmarking will come into effect from Wednesday in these 256 districts. The jewellers will have to sell hallmarking jewellery and get their entire inventory hallmarking by September 1. Till then, the government officials will not take any coercive action against the jewellers for stocking non-hallmarked jewellery.

In the remaining districts, steps will be taken to set up hallmarking centres at a fast pace. As and when the centres are set up, jewellers will have to get the Bureau of Indian Standards licence and get their inventory hallmarking. There will be more than 450 districts which do not have hallmarking centres, said a traders' association.

Mandatory hallmarking has been exempted for jewellers with less than Rs 40 lakh turnover. Kundan and polka jewellery, and jewel-studded watches are also exempt from hallmarking.

The fee for BIS registration has been withdrawn. In future hallmarking will be the responsibility

US RETAIL BOON FOR G&J EXPORTS

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 16

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

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

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

This is good news for Indian gems and jew-

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

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

of the manufacturer.

Over 37,000 jewellers have already registered their business with the BIS and another 63,000 are expected to get their registration done.

Meanwhile, the Nagpur bench of the Bombay High Court has adjourned the hearing of the case on hallmarking to June 28. Earlier, it had given a relief from coercive action till June 14th. This relief will also get extended till then.

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

MF industry equity assets cross ₹11L cr

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, JUNE 15

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

Redemption from equity funds also fell, helping the equity assets swell.

"Equity assets under management (AUM), including ELSS and index funds of mutual funds,

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

The total equity value of the top 20 AMCs increased 7.2 per cent MoM in May '21 versus a rise of 6.5 per cent MoM in the Nifty.

Among the top 10 mutu-

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

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

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

Draft on revising WPI base year issued

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

Revising the base year to

2017-18 for computation of wholesale inflation would help in presenting a more realistic picture of the price situation, the report has suggested.

In the case of agriculture commodities, new items such as medicinal plants like isabgol, aloe vera and methi seed, mushroom and watermelon were proposed to be added in the new series subject to availability of data.

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

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

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

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

—PTI

JLR PLANS TO TEST PROTOTYPE HYDROGEN LAND ROVER



NICK CAREY LONDON, JUNE 15

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—Reuters

FIVE-YEAR TARGET

Auditors are grappling with managing quality in WFH phase

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

BELLA GENG & ROXANNE HENDERSON JUNE 15

PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP is investing \$12 billion across its global business in an overhaul targeting better audits, digitization of services and greener operations.

The professional-services provider will hire 100,000 employees and develop the skills of existing staff over the next five years as it seeks to respond to the post-pandemic operating environment, it said in an emailed statement on Tuesday.

"We will continue to evolve our ways of working, and expand our capabilities in the areas that



matter most for the future, while remaining steadfast in our commitment to quality," PwC chairman Bob Moritz said. "We want our people to be the most sought

after in the market."

Auditors are grappling with managing quality amid a shift in ways of working introduced by the Covid-19 pandemic. The International Auditing

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

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

The South African unit

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

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

—Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Nurse was told not to disturb Diego

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

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

Ollie to return for Sussex 2nd team

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

IOC VP arrives in Tokyo for Games

Tokyo: International Olympic Committee vice-president John Coates arrived in Japan on Tuesday, as organisers ramp up final preparations with just over five weeks until the pandemic-postponed Games open. Ahead of his arrival, several dozen people protested against the Games in Tokyo, though recent opinion polls suggest public opposition may be weakening. Organisers will release the final version of their virus countermeasures for athletes in a so-called "playbook" that they say will keep the event safe. They have already announced measures including daily testing for athletes and GPS tracking of journalists coming from abroad, in an attempt to reassure a sceptical public. — *AFP*

India, Afghanistan play out 1-1 draw

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

Anand to feature in Croatia leg of GCT

Chennai: Former world champion Viswanathan Anand will participate in the Croatia Grand Chess Tour Rapid and Blitz tournament to be held in Zagreb from July 5 to 12. The tournament will be the third leg of the 2021 Grand Chess Tour. Apart from the Indian Grandmaster Anand, the event will also see former world champion Garry Kasparov, who will feature in the blitz section. It will be the first across-the-board event for Anand (ELO rating 2753) in over a year as sporting schedules across the world have been hit owing to the Covid-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions. — *PTI*

Live on TV

EURO

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

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RED CHILE BITE

Messi on target, but spicy Chile frustrate Argentina in Copa

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

Messi's magical left foot gave dominant Argentina a deserved first half lead but Eduardo Vargas equalised in the second half after Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez saved veteran midfielder Arturo Vidal's penalty.

Despite Argentina's dominance, Messi lamented that "we weren't calm, we didn't have control of the ball."

His coach Lionel Scaloni saw things differently, though.

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

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

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

Minutes later, Giovanni Lo Celso crossed from the left but a sliding Lautaro Martinez could only spoon the ball over the bar from inside the six-yard box.

Argentina were in total command and Lo Celso picked out Nicolas Gonzalez to shoot from 20 yards but goalkeeper Claudio Bravo got down well to his right to tip the ball around the post.

From Messi's corner Gonzalez headed over the bar and moments later he was released by Lo Celos but shot straight at Bravo.

It would be a frustrating night for Gonzalez.

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

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

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

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

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

— *AFP*

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— *AFP*

ROMEROS DO IT FOR PARAGUAY

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

Argentina's next match is against Uruguay on Friday.

— *AFP*

Paraguay 3 (Alejandro Romero 62, Angel Romero 65, 80)

Bolivia 1 (Erwin Saavedra 10-pen)



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

— *AP*

EURO | FOOTBALL

Spain & Sweden in dull 0-0 draw

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

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

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

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

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

In the wake of that

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

SKRINIAR FIRES SLOVAKIA PAST POLAND

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

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

Slovakia 2 (Wojciech Szczesny 18-own goal, Milan Skriniar 69)

Poland 1 (Karol Linetty 46)

Quick passes

Eriksen thanks supporters

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

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



Christian Eriksen

Ronaldo shuns Cola bottles

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

Swedes sound out police

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

INDIA VS ENGLAND | ONE-OFF TEST

Seven-year wait ends for women

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

After multiple quarantines in India and UK, the Mithali Raj-led squad got little over a week to prepare for their first red ball game since November 2014.

Mithali was among the seven current players, who were a part of that victorious eleven against South Africa in Mysuru.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Swiss ready for Italian challenge

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

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

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

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

Group A game against Switzerland.

FINLAND FACE RUSSIA

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

The Finns, playing in their first ever game at a major soccer tournament, won 1-0 in Copenhagen.

It will likely go down as one of the most over-

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

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

TURKEY SEEK WIN

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

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

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

ADVANTAGE INDIA

Sachin expects fast bowlers to deliver knockout blow

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Siraj, 27, played a key

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

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

"I see a high probability there because both spin-

UMESH PIPS SHARDUL IN INDIA SQUAD

Southampton, June 15: Veteran speedster Umesh Yadav pipped Brisbane Test hero Shardul Thakur as the 15th member of the Indian squad that will take on New Zealand in the World Test Championship final starting here on June 18.

Umesh, along with Mohammed Shami, and Hanuma Vihari all of whom got injured during the Australia tour, were back in the 15 that needed to be announced as per ICC squad protocol.

Apart from Shardul, the notable names to miss out were Mayank Agarwal, and Washington Sundar.

England series hero Axar Patel also missed out.

WILLIAMSON TO LEAD KIWIS

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

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

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