

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | MONDAY 12 | JULY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 30°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: 6 mm

ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Aani 28
Tithi: Dhuvidhiyai
Star: Ayilyam
Rahukalam: 7.30 am to 9 am
Yamagandam: 10.30 am to 12 noon

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.27 am
Luhar: 12.18 pm
Asar: 3.38 pm
Maghrib: 6.39 pm
Isha: 7.58 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.49 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.06 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 7.55 AM

MOONSET TOMORROW 9.38 PM

CORONA COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+35,446)	(+691)
3,08,71,708	4,08,763

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+2,775)	(47)
TN:25,18,786	33,418

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

18,75,01,030

DEATHS

40,46,629

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES

219

worldometers.info

Chirag Paswan speaks to Lalu Yadav

Patna: Lok Janshakti Party leader Chirag Paswan met Rashtriya Janata Dal national general secretary Shyam Rajak on Saturday evening. The meeting comes amid the spat between Chirag Paswan and his uncle Union Minister Pashupati Kumar Paras over the claim of Ram Vilas Paswan's political legacy. Rajak's meeting with Paswan has set the speculations of Chairag joining hands with RJD high. "It was a courtesy meeting with Chirag Paswan. I went there to meet the Paswan family including Chirag Paswan," Rajak said. However, Rajak's meeting with Paswan a day after his meeting with RJD chief Lalu Yadav on Friday holds political significance. Asked whether Chirag is welcome in RJD or not, Rajak said, "All those who want to take forward the ideology of Lohia and Ambedkar are welcome, be it Chirag Paswan or anyone else."

COUNTER

POINT



Now only yogis and sadhvis will be eligible to contest polls!

Truth or Consequences (US), July 11: Swashbuckling entrepreneur Richard Branson hurtled into space aboard his own winged rocket ship Sunday in his boldest adventure yet, beating out fellow billionaire Jeff Bezos.

The nearly 71-year-old Branson and five crewmates from his Virgin Galactic space tourism company reached an altitude of about 88 km (53 miles) over the New Mexico desert enough to experience three to four minutes of weightless-



ness and see the curvature of the Earth and then safely glided back home to a runway landing.

"Seventeen years of hard work to get us this far," a jubilant Branson said as he congratulated his team on the trip back.

The Virgin Galactic SpaceShipTwo space plane Unity and mother-ship separate flying way above Spaceport America, near Truth and Consequences, New Mexico on Sunday

Branson became the first person to blast off in his own spaceship, beating Bezos by nine days. With about 500 people watching, including Branson's wife, children and grandchildren, a twin-fuselage aircraft with his space plane attached underneath took off in the first stage of the flight.

The space plane then detached from the mother ship at an altitude of about 13 km (8.5 miles) and fired its engine, reaching the edge of space. The entire flight

up and back aboard the sleek white ship, named Unity, took just under 15 minutes.

Branson, the flamboyant, London-born founder of Virgin Atlantic Airways wasn't supposed to fly until later this summer. But he assigned himself to an earlier flight after Bezos announced plans to ride his own rocket into space from Texas on July 20, the 52nd anniversary of the Apollo 11 moon landing. —AP

INDIAN IN TEAM: ■ P5

Sir Richard Branson speaks on stage with other crew members, after they flew into space aboard a Virgin Galactic vessel, a voyage he described as the 'experience of a lifetime' — and one he hopes will usher in an era of lucrative space tourism. Spaceport America, near Truth and Consequences, New Mexico on Sunday. — AP



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Argentina win Copa America



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NIA conducts raids in Kashmir valley, arrests six under UAPA

■ Agency books case against 'ISIS conspiracy to radicalise youth'

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, JULY 11

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday conducted raids at multiple locations across Kashmir Valley and arrested six persons including head of an Islamic seminary in connection with a 'jihadi terrorism' case.

The agency said it had registered a case on June 29 this year under various sections of the Indian Penal Code and Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, in connection with the "conspiracy of the ISIS (Islamic State) to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth in the country to wage violent jihad against the Indian state."

This comes a day after the J&K government sacked its 11 employees including two sons of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Muhammad Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahuddin on charges of being involved in anti-India activities. The Hizb chief's sons were fired based on the investigations done by the NIA in an alleged terror funding case, the government had said.

The NIA sources said

JAMMU AND KASHMIR

The catch: Six persons

The place: Kashmir valley

The case: Links to ISIS conspiracy to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth in the country to wage violent jihad against the Indian state.

Agency: NIA

UTTAR PRADESH

The catch: Six persons

The place: Kashmir valley

The case: Links to ISIS conspiracy to radicalise and recruit impressionable youth in the country to wage violent jihad against the Indian state.

Agency: NIA

WEST BENGAL

The catch: 3 suspected operatives of banned Jamaat-ul Mujahideen

The place: Kolkata

The case: To raise funds and recruit young members for a module of the JMB.

The agency: Special task force of Kolkata police

Source: Police, security agencies

3 Bangladeshis with 'JMB links' arrested

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JULY 11

Three suspected Jamaat-ul Mujahideen (JMB) operatives were arrested by the Special Task Force (STF) of the Kolkata police from the south western parts of the city in a secret operation early on Sunday.

The rare catch of the JMB operatives has prompted the central and state security agencies to investigate the possibility of a sleeper cell formation by the banned terror outfit. The accused are Naziur Rahaman,

Sheikh Sabir and Rabiul Islam. All of them are from Bangladesh and belong to JMB functionary Master Zia's camp, the STF has learnt. Their job was to raise funds and recruit young members for a module of the JMB quietly, according to preliminary investigation.

Originally hailing from Gopalganj in the neighbouring country, they allegedly forged documents and entered West Bengal through the India-Bangladesh border. ■ P4

BJP bags 'home' in Pondy ministry

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS PUDUCHERRY, JULY 11

BJP's A. Namassivayam was given the home portfolio in the AINRC-led NDA government in Puducherry on Sunday.

The exercise of cabinet formation was carried out in over two months after the alliance won the polls and the cabinet members other than Chief Minister N. Rangasamy were sworn-in on June 27.

In its first representation in any cabinet in Puducherry, the BJP

bagged the prized home portfolio while the chief Minister would hold a number of portfolios, including revenue, general administration, health and family welfare and Hindu religious institutions.

Besides home, Mr Namassivayam will handle electricity, industries and commerce, education, including collegiate education, sports and youth affairs and sainik welfare. ■ P4



Serbia's Novak Djokovic kisses the Wimbledon trophy as he celebrates his victory over Italy's Matteo Berrettini in the final on Sunday.

— AP

India says intense fighting in Kandahar; flies out staff

New Delhi, July 11: India has evacuated around 50 diplomats and security personnel from its consulate in Kandahar in a military aircraft in the wake of intense fighting between Afghan forces and Taliban militants who seized control of new areas around the key city, people familiar with the development said on Sunday.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) said the Indian consulate in

Kandahar has not been closed and it continues to operate through the local staff members.

The people cited above said the aircraft brought back the Indian diplomats, officials and other staff members, including a group of Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel, on Saturday evening as the situation around Kandahar deteriorated with Taliban fighters continuing their offensive.

It is learnt that the aircraft avoided entering the Pakistani airspace. However, there is no official confirmation about it. MEA spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said India-based personnel have been brought back for the time being in view of the intense fighting near Kandahar city and that New Delhi is closely monitoring the evolving security situation in Afghanistan. —PTI

UP unveils policy to reduce fertility rate

Lucknow, July 11: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday unveiled a policy aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh and reducing maternal and infant deaths in a time-bound manner as he termed rising population a "hurdle in development".

The Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030, unveiled on the occasion of World Population Day, also aims at bringing down the gross fertility

rate among women to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030.

A few days ago, a draft bill on population control was put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till July 19.

It says people having more than two children in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy.

KUMAR REPLACES GOPAL AS RSS' BJP POINTSMAN

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), it was learnt, has decided to replace its pointsman for the BJP, with Arun Kumar to succeed Dr Krishna Gopal for the post.

The decision, sources said, was taken by the RSS top brass at the ongoing meeting at Chitrakoot. Both Dr Gopal and Kumar are joint general secretaries in the Sangh. Dr Gopal, who had succeeded Suresh Soni in 2014 - the year BJP came to power at the Centre — to oversee the coordination between the BJP and the Sangh, it was learnt, had not been keeping well and had been infected with the Covid-19 twice.



NAME TALENTED PERSONS FOR PADMA AWARDS, PM TELLS PEOPLE

New Delhi, July 11: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged people to nominate their choice of persons, who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots, for Padma awards.

"India has many talented people, who are doing exceptional work at the grassroots," Mr Modi said in a tweet. "Often, we don't see or hear much of them. Do you know such inspiring people? You can nominate them for the #PeoplesPadma. Nominations are open till 15th September. http://padmaawards.gov.in," he tweeted, sharing the link of the website.

The Padma awards, namely, Padma Vibhushan, Padma Bhushan and Padma Shri are amongst the highest civilian awards of the country.

In the last few years, the Modi government has been honouring scores of unsung heroes with the Padma awards for their life-long contributions to the society and achievements in different fields. —PTI

OTHER STORIES

To block viruses and boost immunity

Chennai: The second wave of the pandemic may seem to be diminishing but scientists and medical experts keep warning the public of a third wave soon. From sanitisers to masks and immunity boosters, a huge number of products hit the market in the last two years.

The ongoing pandemic is based on an airborne disease that attacks the respiratory system, causing inflammation in the nose, throat, sinuses, and lungs. The dual strategy is to block the microbial passage from the oral cavity, deactivate it and additionally modulate the gut microbiota to enhance immunity. Aliniche has launched a novel product range under the brand name of Virobind, mouth spray and AB capsules to address both strategies to handle microbial infections.

The mouth spray, which forms a barrier in the oral cavity against the accumulation of pathogens, has an enzyme with effects on symptoms of sore throat, nose congestion, common cold, and other microbial infections. The spray can be used in the early stages of infection to recover and relieve sore throat, cough, rhinorrhoea, and other common cold symptoms. The AB (Veg. capsule) is a probiotic formulation for the treatment of respiratory infections. It improves the immune response and enhances the intestinal barrier function.



AR Rahman becomes brand ambassador

Chennai: Oscar, Grammy and Bafta winner AR Rahman has been roped in as the brand ambassador by a company that makes specialty coatings among a range of paints in manufacturing. Sheenlac says Rahman will promote the company's range of wood, protective, floor industrial and automotive coating products that have air purifying and self-cleaning properties. Rahman said he was glad to represent a brand that had transformed itself and grown over decades. "A R Rahman is a natural fit for our brand, which is committed to innovation, transformation, and tech adoption," said Sudhir Peter, MD, Sheenlac Paints Limited.

MOBILE DIAGNOSTIC CLINIC TO CONDUCT RURAL HEALTH CAMPS

Chennai, July 11: Madras Medical Mission (MMM) inaugurated a Mobile Diagnostic Clinic (MDC) unit for cardiac screening purpose which was sponsored by Johnson Lifts. The mission behind the launch of the mobile unit is to provide easy access to cardiac facility in rural areas.

The mobile unit (Bharat Benz bus) will travel across Tamil Nadu and Kerala with an aim to provide quick diagnoses of patients with cardiac ailments and advise them on the next course of medical and surgical action.

The unit is well-equipped to provide detailed Cardiac Screening with equipment for blood investigations like random sugar, BP, ECG, ECHO and Treadmill. The camp will be held in rural pockets all over Tamil Nadu and Kerala.

Commenting on the launch, Mr. M. M. Philip, Hon. Secretary, The Madras Medical Mission said, "Preventive cardiac care can help one to reduce the risks of heart disease by identifying the risk factors at an early stage and providing them with the guidance and care to improve cardiovascular health. This camp will facilitate the detection of various heart ailments, such as high blood pressure, coronary artery disease, valvular heart disease, and congenital heart disease among the general population, and patients in requirement of follow-up treatment will be treated at MMM."

The mobile unit (Bharat Benz bus) will travel across Tamil Nadu and Kerala with an aim to provide quick diagnoses of patients with cardiac ailments and advise them on the next course of medical and surgical action

Ex-AIADMK minister 'Thoppu' joins DMK

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JULY 11

In scenes of political enthusiasm with a few hundred supporters thronging the venue, former AIADMK minister Thoppu N.D. Venkatachalam joined the DMK in the presence of chief minister M.K. Stalin and other senior party leaders like Duraimurugan, T.R. Baalu and A. Raja on Sunday. Shifting parties on

Venkatcahalam had served as a minister in Jayalalithaa's regime but may have fallen out of favour with her successor Edappadi Palaniswami

Sunday was also the former MP and MLA, P.R. Sundaram of Namakkal, who like Venkatachalam comes from the western region of Tamil Nadu.

Venkatcahalam had served as a minister in Jayalalithaa's regime but may have fallen out of favour with her successor Edappadi Palaniswami.

Miffed over being denied a ticket to stand in the 2021 Assembly elections, the two-time MLA from Perundhurai constituency in Erode district, Venkatachalam stood as a rebel candidate but lost after having been expelled from the party. He changed party affiliation

along with a number of his old party cadre while promising to bring many more to the ruling DMK fold. He mentioned a figure of 25,000 cadre crossing over in a month's time.

The western region may have voted more for AIADMK+ in the Assembly polls but more defections are not to be ruled out after the verdict in the State was in favour of DMK+. 'Thopu' claims that many are waiting to cross over.



HONOURING VETERAN POLITICO
Chief Minister M.K. Stalin visits DMDK leader Vijayakanth at his residence on Sunday. On hearing that Captain wished to donate to CM Relief Fund, Stalin himself went there

Puducherry schools and colleges to reopen on July 16: CM

Puducherry, July 11: (PTI) After months of closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic, schools and colleges in Puducherry will reopen on July 16.

"Colleges will reopen on July 16. Schools would also reopen partially and classes for ninth to 12th standards alone would resume that day," Chief Minister N Rangasamy said on Sunday.

He was speaking to reporters after submitting to Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, the list of portfolios for allocation to his newly inducted five ministerial colleagues.

The Chief Minister said the government took the decision as the situation was now improving in the Union Territory.

No Covid-19 death was reported in Puducherry on Sunday, while the number of fresh cases stood at 145.

— PTI

Tamil Nadu got 8.62 lakh vaccine doses over weekend

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JULY 11

Relieving a shortage of Covid19 vaccines that crippled the vaccination programme last week, the state received 3,62,410 Covishield doses on Sunday, besides a consignment of five lakh doses on Saturday night, which was sent to various districts where vaccination was stopped due to non-availability of vaccines.

The State's Department of Public Health and

Preventive Medicine had allotted 45,000 vaccines to Chennai; 24,000 to Coimbatore and the rest to other districts. According to data published by the department, 27,922 doses of vaccines were administered to take the total vaccination in the State to 1.61 crore by Saturday.

Talking to reporters, Health Minister Ma. Subramanian said that the health department was fully prepared to deal with the possible third wave of Covid19. "As part

of preparation to face the wave, oxygen production capacity of the state was built up to 900 metric tonnes. When the DMK government took office on May 7, the oxygen production in the state stood at 230 MT. In the last two months, the production has increased three fold with almost all government medical colleges and private hospitals setting up oxygen generators and concentrators considering the possible third wave", he said.

Tiruchy SP transfers 16 cops after surprise inspection

R. VALAYAPATHY | DC
TIRUCHY, JULY 11

Tiruchy superintendent of police P. Moorthy has ordered the transfer of 16 police personnel attached to the Lalgudi police station to the armed police wing for dereliction of duty on Saturday.

Police said Moorthy made a surprise inspection at the Lalgudi police station last night and went through the station records. He found

that registers were not maintained properly and a few of the duty police personnel were absent.

Following this, Moorthy transferred 16 police personnel including a special sub-inspector and five head constables including a woman head constable to the armed police wing, Tiruchy, and asked them to report for duty on Sunday.

Moorthy replaced the vacancies from the armed police wing.

Loan collection staff harass women with microfinance

OP. ARULN | DC
CHENNAI, JULY 11

Women in rural Tamil Nadu have been taken for a ride by micro finance companies offering micro-credit. As the banks are reluctant to offer loans to women self help groups, they rush to these companies.

The goal of microfinance is to give impoverished people an opportunity to become self-sufficient. However, the object of creating microfinance has been defeated as the company staff are involved in collecting the dues without fail. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown period the women were forced to repay EMIs.

S. Kalaivani of

Collectors will abuse the woman in the presence of other members of the family and community if she defaults. Fearing such abuse, women again borrow from known persons and repay the amount regularly

Kaveripattinam, Krishnagiri district said micro finance companies offer mini loans of ₹50,000. The staff will come to the villages to hand over the amount after deducting the first week's EMI of ₹580. They will visit every Monday for 104 weeks to collect ₹580.

A borrower ends up paying a total of ₹61,000 including interest.

Rain or shine, the company staffers reach the village to collect the amount

every week. After the amount is repaid, they will disburse similar loans to keep the women under a cycle of fear as anxiety would descend on a household when the due date nears. Women were forced to repay the amount even when they were deprived of any work during the lockdown.

S. Revathy of Cuddalore said chief minister M.K. Stalin had distributed loans and revolving funds to the women self help groups in the State when he was Deputy CM in the DMK government between 2006 and 2011. Similarly, the present government, under his leadership, should revive SHGs and distribute loans to them in a big way to protect them from loan

sharks. State Secretary, All India Agriculture Workers Union, K. Packrisamy said the microfinance companies have made the women who obtain mini credit into slaves. Once a woman takes the credit, she will not come out from the web. They have to repay EMIs whether they face any emergencies such as death at home or a natural calamity.

The collectors will abuse the woman in the presence of other members of the family and community if she defaults. Fearing such abuse, women again borrow from known persons and repay the amount regularly. As a result of such abuse, many women have attempted to commit suicide in the state.



The Victory Flame received by Indian Naval Station Kattabomman.

1971 war Victory Flame reaches Tirunelveli

Chennai, July 11: The Victory Flame, symbolising India's triumph over Pakistan in 1971 war, reached the Indian Naval Station (INS) Kattabomman near Tirunelveli on Sunday with a ceremonial guard of honour held to mark the occasion. Station Commander Captain Aashish K Sharma along with defence personnel, civil administration and veterans received the flame, an official release said here.

The Victory Flame commemorates India's victory in the 1971 Indo-Pak War and the golden jubilee cel-

ebrations to commemorate the triumph of armed forces commenced in December last year. A wreath laying ceremony and two minutes silence was observed to pay homage to the sacrifices made by the veterans, the release said.

The Victory Flame would be taken to Kanyakumari to felicitate the veterans by the district civil administration and it was also planned to take it to the houses of 1971 war heroes, including late sepoy Kasi- mani and late Naik Sangili Chelliah, who sacrificed their lives during the 1971 war.

After INS Kattabomman, the Victory Flame would be received by the Coast Guard in the presence of NCC cadets and later it would be handed over to INS Parundu.

Commemorating the Golden Jubilee celebrations in December 2020, Four Victory Flames were lit from the eternal flame of the National War Memorial and one each was being carried to the four cardinal directions through the cities and villages of 1971 war veterans and veernaris (war widows), the release added.

— PTI

A licence to take offence at everything



R. Mohan

Namma Chennai Diary

It is an action-packed summer of sport in Europe and the Americas. It's that time of year again when sports commentators become a part of living rooms. They wax eloquent at times over great sporting moments and at most times they do try to relieve us from the tedium in prosaic passages of play. But it is in the time of banality that they tend to trip and leave themselves open to criticism. And a lot of such criticism is around because the world has changed somewhat.

It appears it's anyone and everyone's turn to take offence at what is being said publicly by persons who have a reason to speak in public to the public. The

age of political correctness may be far behind us but now it is the age of taking offence at everything. One of our own fell into this trap of having to say something when play is interrupted, as it often is for injuries, equipment check or change.

The wicketkeeper-batsman Dinesh Karthik, who has been making quite an impression behind the mike in his debut season as a comments man in UK's summer of cricket, ran afoul of feminists and a host of others when he compared a bat to the 'neighbour's wife' while alluding that the latter always seemed more attractive. He had to be profusely apologetic about it after the broadcaster

was inundated with adverse comments on a sexist remark like that.

It might be said that Karthik may indeed have crossed a line when he said something that seemed funny at a moment when nothing was happening on the field save a change of bats. Locker room humour is, however, not so welcome in these days of "offendedness", which is the term Salma Rushdie invented for this modern phenomenon of taking offence at just about anything said or done in the public sphere.

The tennis legend Boris Becker found himself at the centre of a huge sexism row after describing a tennis player's fiancée as "very pretty", which indeed she was. The former Wimbledon champion said, "They do say they have the most beautiful women in Hungary" as the TV coverage cut to Márton Fucsovics's partner Annette. But Boris' fellow commentator John Inverdale may have been as guilty since he had



pointed out, "That's Fucsovics' fiancée. Her name is Annette Boszormenyi. If you're a tennis player, always good to have a partner called Annette."

Once again, let us say that they were way over the line in describing a lady thus on live TV and diversity campaign groups

descended with full fury on Becker for objectification" of women, which is what riles the women and feminists the most. The BBC had declined to criticise a light-hearted comment that was not intended to cause offence and that would have been the end if not for women critics piling on men commen-

tators for talking about what women look like.

All this had come on top of the day on which John McEnroe was pulled up for uncharitable comments about UK's latest budding tennis star Emma Raducanu. The tennis champion with a rage for perfection who was hardly the darling of the Establishment because of his predilection towards demonstrative behaviour on court and his constant run-ins with match officials, McEnroe was cruelly critical of what he saw as quitting because the player could not take the heat of competition when the national focus was on her.

Naomi Osaka, who could not stomach having to appear before the media in compulsory press conferences on days she was feeling too shy or diffident, was also dragged into it, which made it all seem so much more explosive. McEnroe was not seen apologising for his comments. Nor was Becker, known for his flamboyant lifestyle and his flings

with women, who once said that he does go borderline and sometimes over the border and that he takes chances, which is because that is who he is.

The two tennis champion-celebrities could get away with it without having to trot out a grovelling apology but poor Karthik who is just starting out on this road to fame behind a mike on television and he had to come out and say sorry. Perhaps, that was the best route out at this time when all it takes is one unguarded comment to unravel an entire career as commentator, as it happened to Dean Jones who made an unfair comment on the bearded Hashim Amla. Commentators are skating on thin ice when they stray from the banal. Such scrutiny comes as part of the baggage these days.

(R. Mohan is the Resident Editor of the Chennai and Coimbatore editions of Deccan Chronicle)

OTHER STORIES

Anganwadi staff hold demo

D C CORRESPONDENT
PUDUKKOTTAI, JULY 11

A section of employees of the Pudukkottai district unit of the Anganwadi employees association, led by their district vice-president Padma, wore black badges and staged a demonstration at Pudukkottai on Sunday in protest against the Union Government for enacting legislation to enable the handing over the anganwadi schemes to the private sector.

They were demanding that the union government give up this move and not to reduce the allocation for anganwadi schemes. Among others, the association's State general secretary Daisy, treasurer Devamani and district secretary Pachaiyammal spoke at the demonstration.

Insurance subsidy for 4,800 head of cattle

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUCHY, JULY 11

The Tamil Nadu Government has fixed a target of 4,800 head of cattle in Tiruchy district to cover the subsidised cattle insurance for the current fiscal, according to Tiruchy Collector S.Sivarasu.

He said in a press release at Tiruchy on Sunday that under the scheme cattle owners can have subsidised cattle insurance of upto ₹35,000 per cattle and 50 per cent subsidy for the above poverty line people and 70 percent subsidy for those below the poverty line and Scheduled caste and Scheduled tribe people. A family can avail this subsidised cattle insurance scheme for maximum 5 cows or buffaloes.

Those who wish to benefit from this can approach their nearest veterinary hospital, Mr.Sivarasu added.

A family can avail this subsidised cattle insurance scheme for maximum 5 cows or buffaloes

Welcome art



Interior walls of Omandurar multi super speciality hospital in Chennai have been adorned with colourful paintings. — DC

Villagers protest in front of police station with dead body

DC CORRESPONDENT
ARIYALUR, JULY 11

Tension prevailed for a while after a section of villagers placed the dead body of a farmer in front of the Thoothoor police station near Ariyalur on Sunday demanding immediate arrest of a group of persons who allegedly murdered him.

Police said the farmer was identified as Kannan (46), hailing from Vaipur village. He had a dispute with one Ajithkumar of the same village over his daughter's marriage. He lodged a complaint against Ajith and others at the Thoothoor police station. When Kannan went to the local fish market, Ajith and his brothers stabbed him after a quarrel and he died on the spot.

Tourism picks up in Nilgiris

B. RAVICHANDRAN I DC
OOTY, JULY 11

After an initial falling trend last week, since unlock 3.0 last Monday, the Covid-19 positive daily count in the Nilgiris began to show an increasing trend. Though it has brought a scare to the hill residents, this weekend saw a good influx of tourists due to the end of e-pass regime for Tamil Nadu residents, though the tourist spots are still closed in the hills here.

Though the daily count had come down to 74 last Sunday, from Monday, the

Though the daily count had come down to 74 last Sunday, from Monday, the day of Unlock 3.0 with more relaxations and end of e-pass regime to Tamil Nadu residents, the situation began to change as the daily test positivity rate once again began to climb

day of Unlock 3.0 with more relaxations and end of e-pass regime to Tamil Nadu residents, the situation began to change as the daily test positivity rate once again began to climb. The tally crossed

R. Valayapathy I DC
Perambalur, July 11

The police and the Perambalur district unit of the child protection committee on Sunday rescued a 7-year-old girl who was tortured by her father in an inebriated condition at Perambalur on Sunday. Police said Ramesh, 35, a coolie residing at Dheeran

BJP projecting 'Kongunadu' to counter DMK's 'Ondriyam'

M. ARULOLI I DC
TIRUNELVELI, JULY 11

The BJP leaders said the 'Kongunadu' issue is nothing but the training of guns on the DMK, which has been "testing the water for secession from India using its 'Ondriyam' narrative".

BJP MLA Nainar Nagendran, reacting to the controversy over a sudden demand for a separate Kongunadu state, said neither the Tamil Nadu BJP nor the BJP-led Union government had any idea of creating a new state bifurcating Tamil Nadu. "It is they (the DMK and

the opposition parties in Tamil Nadu) who created a ruckus revealing their narrow-mindedness against national integrity by calling Indian government 'Ondriyam', explained Nagendran, who added that if the people of a region have such a demand it was the responsibility of the constitutionally-powerful central government to fulfil that.

BJP leader and Nagercoil MLA M.R. Gandhi clarified in the party's district functionary meeting in Tirunelveli on Sunday that the BJP does not harbour any intention to

bifurcate Tamil Nadu. A Nagercoil-based BJP's advocate wing functionary, however, said that the 'Kongunadu' issue was just a political strategy against the DMK's "Ondriyam" narrative. "We are well aware that DMK and its political allies including the Congress have taken up the "Ondriyam" issue to irritate the BJP and the nationalist forces in the state and to give them a fitting reply, we are doing the Kongunadu campaign," said the BJP leader.

Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi Karunanidhi,

reacting to the 'Kongunadu' issue after paying her tribute to freedom fighter Azhagu Muthu Kon on his 31st birth anniversary at his memorial in Kattalangulam village near Kovilpatti, said that Tamil Nadu is safe in the hands of M.K. Stalin, and "nobody needs to dream of bifurcating Tamil Nadu, which is an impossible task". The DMK MP also asserted that her party would continue to call India a Union of states, which is not against the integrity of the nation as the country is described so in its Constitution.

79 works worth ₹72.74 cr underway in Perambalur

DC CORRESPONDENT
PERAMBALUR, JULY 11

As many as 79 structural works in nine departments, at an estimated cost of Rs 72.74 crore aided by the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (Nabard), are going on in Perambalur district.

Perambalur Collector P.Sri Venkata Priya reviewed the works along with the officials of

DRDA, highways department, water resources department, PWD (buildings) TWAD, THADCO, agriculture engineering, agriculture marketing and town panchayats at Perambalur. She said that under this scheme the establishment of seed banks, rural area bridges and check dams are going on.

She said a check dam across the river Kallaru is coming up at a cost of Rs

12.0 crore and another one across river Chinnaru at a cost of Rs 5.6 crore. Once these two check dams are completed, 1,454 acres will get irrigation facility besides the groundwater table of 320 open wells and borewells will be increased in the area, she added.

Nabard district development manager Naveen Kumar, PWD executive engineer Ravichandran and others participated.

COFFEE-BREAK

Your day today By Dr C.V.B. Subrahmanyam



Aries: On this day you will stand up for your rights and fight against injustice. Make sure you don't neglect any important works or your physical and mental health.



Taurus: Today the situation at professional front will get better. Transactions pertaining to land will be favorable. You'll enjoy happiness and prosperity.



Gemini: A change of job is indicated for some of you. Today your work will be appreciated and duly recognized but do not over estimate your capabilities.



Cancer: You'll remain inspired by past contacts or ideas. Increase in income from past investments is foreseen. Overall a pleasant day ahead awaits you.



Leo: Focus on keeping a control over your temper. The day is expected to be busy and productive. An increase in your workload can affect your health.



Virgo: Broaden your horizons and look for new jobs or assignments. Ailments of the eyes or headache can bother you today. Chronic patients must be alert to aggravating symptoms.

You share your b'day with

Sundar Pichai is an Indian-American business executive. He is the chief executive officer of Alphabet Inc. and its subsidiary Google. Pichai earned his degree from IIT Kharagpur in metallurgical engineering.



Libra: Expressing yourself in an explicit way will open up some new avenues for you. Share your problems with close relatives, as they will be helpful.



Scorpio: An auspicious function may take place at your house. A loss of position, troubles from competitors or mistrust with coworkers can create problems.



Sagittarius: Your spouse can add to your distress. Promotions are likely to get delayed. Avoid confrontations with superiors. Property matters may develop problems.



Capricorn: Don't get involved in disputes between close associates as your efforts could backfire. Spending some time on planning the future will enable you to take a concrete action today.

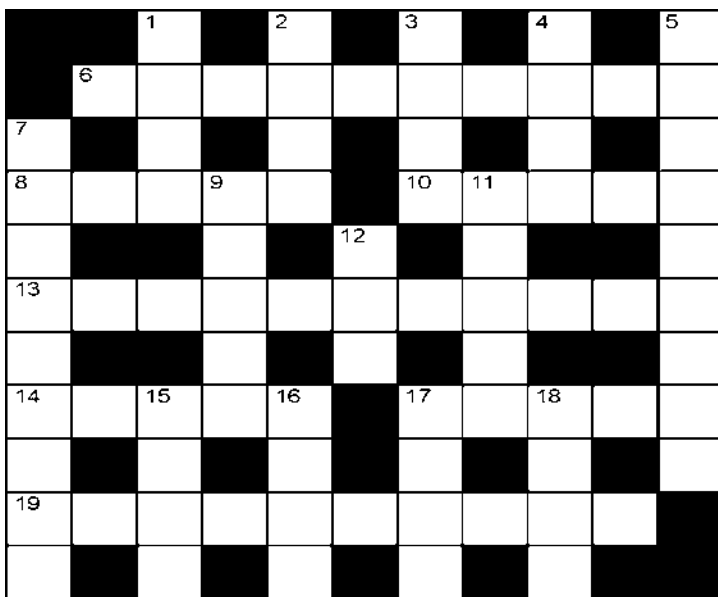


Aquarius: Effective organizational skills and creatively deploying your resources will minimize problems at work place. Today you need to control your expenses and invest wisely.



Pisces: Avoid eating unhealthy food. Your bank balance is likely to increase exponentially. Whatever you try today will lead you to success. Your health will be at it's best today.

QUICK CROSSWORD



Across

6. Groyne (10)
8. Spiteful (5)
10. Fear attack (5)
13. Fireplace shelf (11)
14. Astute (5)
17. Be worthy of (5)
19. Copy out in full (10)

Down

1. Arguments for (4)

2. Undulating (4)
3. Exchange (4)
4. Astound (4)
5. Produce offspring (9)
7. Bad blood (9)
9. Private teacher (5)
11. Crop up (5)
12. Tree (3)
15. Slightly open (4)
16. Nosegay (4)
17. Gloomy darkness (4)
18. Polishes (4)

YESTERDAY'S ANSWER

Across:
1. Crazes, 3. Fret, 7. Scum, 8. Banner, 10. Pelican, 13. Javelin, 16. Lackey, 17. Safe, 18. Nits, 19. Defeat.

Down: 1. Case, 2. Acumen, 4. Rand, 5. Thrice, 6. Cadaver, 9. Minaret, 11. Stolen, 12. Visage, 14. Scot, 15. Text.

Word Mine

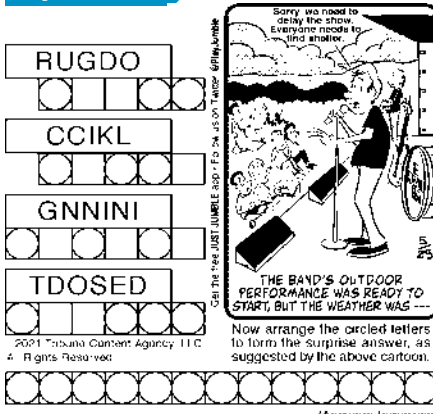
T
M
U
A
Y
I
N
N
I

TODAY'S RATINGS: 10 AVERAGE: 11
GOOD: 13 OUTSTANDING

How many words of four or more letters can you make from the letters shown in today's puzzle? In making a word, each letter may be used once only. Each word must contain the letter at the top of the pyramid. There should be at least one nine letter word. Plurals, foreign words and proper names are not allowed.

Answers: South: Vulnerable, Bath, South, West, North, East, 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100. 101. 102. 103. 104. 105. 106. 107. 108. 109. 110. 111. 112. 113. 114. 115. 116. 117. 118. 119. 120. 121. 122. 123. 124. 125. 126. 127. 128. 129. 130. 131. 132. 133. 134. 135. 136. 137. 138. 139. 140. 141. 142. 143. 144. 145. 146. 147. 148. 149. 150. 151. 152. 153. 154. 155. 156. 157. 158. 159. 160. 161. 162. 163. 164. 165. 166. 167. 168. 169. 170. 171. 172. 173. 174. 175. 176. 177. 178. 179. 180. 181. 182. 183. 184. 185. 186. 187. 188. 189. 190. 191. 192. 193. 194. 195. 196. 197. 198. 199. 200. 201. 202. 203. 204. 205. 206. 207. 208. 209. 210. 211. 212. 213. 214. 215. 216. 217. 218. 219. 220. 221. 222. 223. 224. 225. 226. 227. 228. 229. 230. 231. 232. 233. 234. 235. 236. 237. 238. 239. 240. 241. 242. 243. 244. 245. 246. 247. 248. 249. 250. 251. 252. 253. 254. 255. 256. 257. 258. 259. 260. 261. 262. 263. 264. 265. 266. 267. 268. 269. 270. 271. 272. 273. 274. 275. 276. 277. 278. 279. 280. 281. 282. 283. 284. 285. 286. 287. 288. 289. 290. 291. 292. 293. 294. 295. 296. 297. 298. 299. 300. 301. 302. 303. 304. 305. 306. 307. 308. 309. 310. 311. 312. 313. 314. 315. 316. 317. 318. 319. 320. 321. 322. 323. 324. 325. 326. 327. 328. 329. 330. 331. 332. 333. 334. 335. 336. 337. 338. 339. 340. 341. 342. 343. 344. 345. 346. 347. 348. 349. 350. 351. 352. 353. 354. 355. 356. 357. 358. 359. 360. 361. 362. 363. 364. 365. 366. 367. 368. 369. 370. 371. 372. 373. 374. 375. 376. 377. 378. 379. 380. 381. 382. 383. 384. 385. 386. 387. 388. 389. 390. 391. 392. 393. 394. 395. 396. 397. 398. 399. 400. 401. 402. 403. 404. 405. 406. 407. 408. 409. 410. 411. 412. 413. 414. 415. 416. 417. 418. 419. 420. 421. 422. 423. 424. 425. 426. 427. 428. 429. 430. 431. 432. 433. 434. 435. 436. 437. 438. 439. 440. 441. 442. 443. 444. 445. 446. 447. 448. 449. 450. 451. 452. 453. 454. 455. 456. 457. 458. 459. 460. 461. 462. 463. 464. 465. 466. 467. 468. 469. 470. 471. 472. 473. 474. 475. 476. 477. 478. 479. 480. 481. 482. 483. 484. 485. 486. 487. 488. 489. 490. 491. 492. 493. 494. 495. 496. 497. 498. 499. 500. 501. 502. 503. 504. 505. 506. 507. 508. 509. 510. 511. 512. 513. 514. 515. 516. 517. 518. 519. 520. 521. 522. 523. 524. 525. 526. 527. 528. 529. 530. 531. 532. 533. 534. 535. 536. 537. 538. 539. 540. 541. 542. 543. 544. 545. 546. 547. 548. 549. 550. 551. 552. 553. 554. 555. 556. 557. 558. 559. 560. 561. 562. 563. 564. 565. 566. 567. 568. 569. 570. 571. 572. 573. 574. 575. 576. 577. 578. 579. 580. 581. 582. 583. 584. 585. 586. 587. 588. 589. 590. 591. 592. 593. 594. 595. 596. 597. 598. 599. 600. 601. 602. 603. 604. 605. 606. 607. 608. 609. 610. 611. 612. 613. 614. 615. 616. 617. 618. 619. 620. 621. 622. 623. 624. 625. 626. 627. 628. 629. 630. 631. 632. 633. 634. 635. 636. 637. 638. 639. 640. 641. 642. 643. 644. 645. 646. 647. 648. 649. 650. 651. 652. 653. 654. 655. 656. 657. 658. 659. 660. 661. 662. 663. 664. 665. 666. 667. 668. 669. 670. 671. 672. 673. 674. 675. 676. 677. 678. 679. 680. 681. 682. 683. 684. 685. 686. 687. 688. 689. 690. 691. 692. 693. 694. 695. 696. 697. 698. 699. 700. 701. 702. 703. 704. 705. 706. 707. 708. 709. 710. 711. 712. 713. 714. 715. 716. 717. 718. 719. 720. 721. 722. 723. 724. 725. 726. 727. 728. 729. 730. 731. 732. 733. 734. 735. 736. 737. 738. 739. 740. 741. 742. 743. 744. 745. 746. 747. 748. 749. 750. 751. 752. 753. 754. 755. 756. 757. 758. 759. 760. 761. 762. 763. 764. 765. 766. 767. 768. 769. 770. 771. 772. 773. 774. 775. 776. 777. 778. 779. 780. 781. 782. 783. 784. 785. 786. 787. 788. 789. 790. 791. 792. 793. 794. 795. 796. 797. 798. 799. 800. 801. 802. 803. 804. 805. 806. 807. 808. 809. 810. 811. 812. 813. 814. 815. 816. 817. 818. 819. 820. 821. 822. 823. 824. 825. 826. 827. 828. 829. 830. 831. 832. 833. 834. 835. 836. 837. 838. 839. 840. 841. 842. 843. 844. 845. 846. 847. 848. 849. 850. 851. 852. 853. 854. 855. 856. 857. 858. 859. 860. 861. 862. 863. 864. 865. 866. 867. 868. 869. 870. 871. 872. 873. 874. 875. 876. 877. 878. 879. 880. 881. 882. 883. 884. 885. 886. 887. 888. 889. 890. 891. 892. 893. 894. 895. 896. 897. 898. 899. 900. 901. 902. 903. 904. 905. 906. 907. 908. 909. 910. 911. 912. 913. 914. 915. 916. 917. 918. 919. 920. 921. 922. 923. 924. 925. 926. 927. 928. 929. 930. 931. 932. 933. 934. 935. 936. 937. 938. 939. 940. 941. 942. 943. 944. 945. 946. 947. 948. 949. 950. 951. 952. 953. 954. 955. 956. 957. 958. 959. 960. 961. 962. 963. 964. 965. 966. 967. 968. 969. 970. 971. 972. 973. 974. 975. 976. 977. 978. 979. 980. 981. 982. 983. 984. 985. 986. 987. 988. 989. 990. 991. 992. 993. 994. 995. 996. 997. 998. 999. 1000.

jumble



Yesterday's Jumbles: SLINKY, LAUGH, DFFAC, LOCKET
Answer: The young student looked up the word 'fun' in the dictionary which was - CLOSE AT HAND

CALVIN AND HOBES | Bill Watterson



THE WIZARD OF ID | Parker and Hartsd



ARCHIE | Bill Henry Scarpelli & craig boldman



BLONDIE | Dean Young and John Marshall



ANDY CAPP | Reg Smythe



AMAZING SPIDER-MAN | STAN LEE



WHICH OPPONENT DO YOU BELIEVE?

Lisa Alther, in "Kinflicks," wrote, "I happen to feel that the degree of a person's intelligence is directly reflected by the number of conflicting attitudes she can bring to bear on the same topic."

The declarer had conflicting evidence in this deal from a Bridge Base Online duplicate. It was played at 16 tables. At most of them, West overcalled two hearts, having only a six-card suit and being vulnerable. North

responded three clubs, South rebid three diamonds and North jumped to seven clubs. Real bridge robots do not need Blackwood!

At each of those tables, South took the first trick with the heart ace, ruffed a heart on the board (whew!), drew trumps and claimed. At one table, though, West jumped to three hearts. He hoped that if he was doubled and lost at least 800 points, his opponents could make a slam. In addition,

North	♠ A 3	♥ A 2	♦ A K Q J 4 3	♣ A 2
West	♠ K 2	♥ K Q J 4 3	♦ A K Q J 4 3	♣ A 2
East	♠ A K Q	♥ A 2	♦ A K Q J 4 3	♣ A 2
South	♠ A K Q	♥ A 2	♦ A K Q J 4 3	♣ A 2
Declarer: South				
Vulnerable: Both				
South	♠ A K Q	♥ A 2	♦ A K Q J 4 3	♣ A 2
West	♠ K 2	♥ K Q J 4 3	♦ A K Q J 4 3	♣ A

SHORT TAKES

U.P. CM TERMS
RISING POPULATION
HURDLE IN GROWTH

Lucknow, July 11: Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Sunday unveiled a policy aimed at stabilising the population in Uttar Pradesh and reducing maternal and infant deaths in a time-bound manner as he termed rising population a “hurdle in development”.

The Uttar Pradesh Population Policy 2021-2030, unveiled on the occasion of World Population Day, also aims at bringing down the gross fertility rate among women to 2.1 by 2026 and to 1.9 by 2030.

A few days ago, a draft bill on population control was put up on the website of the Uttar Pradesh law commission inviting suggestions from the public till July 19. It says people having more than two children in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies polls, applying for government jobs or receiving any kind of subsidy.

It also seeks to prohibit promotions in government jobs for such people, while offering incentives to those limiting their children to two.

Unveiling the population policy on Sunday, Adityanath said, “Across the world, concerns have been raised from time to time about increasing population being a hurdle in development. Discussions on it have been going on for the four decades.”

AMIT MITRA LIKELY
TO STEP DOWN AS
WB FINANCE MIN.

Kolkata, July 11: Noted economist and senior TMC leader Amit Mitra is likely to step down as the West Bengal finance minister and even retire from active politics due to ill health, party sources said on Sunday.

Mitra, 73, who has been the state finance minister since 2011 when the TMC came to power after ending the 34-year-long rule of the Left Front, had refrained from contesting this year's Assembly elections.

“Amit Da will not continue as the state finance minister as he will be completing six months in the post without being elected on November 4. He has already informed the party leadership that he doesn't want to continue in politics and administration due to ill health.

“But, due to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's insistence, Mitra had taken charge as the finance minister of the state after the party returned to power for the third time in May this year,” a senior TMC leader said on condition of anonymity.

After Mitra steps down, the Chief Minister will keep the ministry with her for some time before appointing the next finance minister, another TMC leader said, confirming the decision.

Mitra was a two-time MLA from Khardah constituency in North 24 Parganas since 2011.

SC ISSUES NOTICE
TO NGO CHIEF FOR
CONTEMPT

New Delhi, July 11: The Supreme Court has issued contempt notice to the chairperson of an NGO as to why he should not be proceeded against and sentenced for his endeavour to scandalise the court.

The apex court had in February issued bailable warrants against chairperson of NGO Suraz India Trust, Rajiv Daiya, for not depositing the cost of Rs 25 lakh for filing 64 PILs over the years without any success and “repeatedly misusing” the jurisdiction of the top court.

A bench headed by Justice S. K. Kaul in an order passed on July 9 said all kinds of pleadings are being made and letter written by Mr Daiya only to scandalise the court.

“On perusal of the record, we find that while the issue is simply of recovery of costs from the Trust/Daiya in terms of judgment of this court, all kinds of pleadings are being made, letter written only to scandalise the court and prevent the court from taking action to ensure recovery of costs. It is clearly an endeavour to browbeat the court and this court will not countenance the same.

The top court on December 5, 2017, had refused to modify its earlier order against the NGO for filing 64 PILs.

It had dismissed the plea filed by the NGO to modify the apex court's May 1 order which also barred the organisation from filing any plea before any court across the country.

— PTI

NIA conducts multiple raids
in Kashmir, 6 persons held

Arrests made in connection with ‘jihadi terrorism’ case; Islamic seminary head held

FROM PG 1

The NIA in a statement here said the searches were conducted at seven locations in Anantnag and Srinagar districts in “ISIS voice of Hind case” registered by it in New Delhi under sections 124A, 153A, and 153 B of IPC and sections 17, 18, 18B, 38, 39 and 40 of UA(P) Act 1967.

“In order to execute its nefarious plan, an organised campaign has been launched over the cyber space which is supplemented by on ground (militant) financing activities,” it said.

The statement read, “ISIS operating from var-

ious conflict zones along with ISIS cadres in India, by assuming pseudo-online identities, have created a network wherein ISIS related propaganda material is disseminated for radicalising and recruiting members to the fold of ISIS.” It added, “In this connection an India-centric online propaganda magazine ‘the Voice of Hind’ (VOH) is published on a monthly basis with an aim to incite and radicalise impressionable youth by projecting a skewed narrative of imagined injustices in India to arouse a feeling of alienation and communal hatred.”

Three suspected terrorists
from B'desh held in Kolkata

FROM PG 1

Disguised as hawkers selling fruits and mosquito nets, they started living over the last two months at a rented house in Haridevpur using it as their shelter. While taking the house on rent, Naziur, who was the leader among the three, posed as Joyram Byapari to avoid suspicion.

He earlier served in jail

in Bangladesh where he is believed to have met another JMB functionary, Al Ameen, whose contact number among others was found in a diary. Sabir, who was active in social networking, used the medium for radicalisation.

Joint commissioner of police (STF) V. Solomon Nesakumar said, “A handwritten diary containing some names and contact

numbers of important JMB members was found from them. Besides, some Jihadi literatures and cellphones were also seized. Their Facebook accounts are being scanned.”

The STF is interrogating the arrested trio at Labbazar, the city police headquarters, and will produce them at the court on Monday and seek their custody.

NEW MINISTRY WON'T AFFECT MAHA COOPERATIVE MOVEMENT: PAWAR

Mumbai, July 11: Nationalist Congress Party chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday refuted reports which claimed that the newly-formed Ministry of Cooperation at the Centre may ‘hijack the cooperative movement’ in Maharashtra. The concept is not new, but the Centre cannot interfere in the state's cooperative sector, Pawar told reporters in

Baramati town in Pune. “As per the Constitution, cooperative institutions registered in a state come under the (jurisdiction of that respective) state,” he said.

The Centre's newly-formed ministry is about multi-state cooperative institutions, the former Union minister said.

“A state cannot control a cooperative institution

registered in more than one state, which is called multi-state, and the central government has control over it,” said Pawar, whose party shares power with the Shiv Sena and Congress in Maharashtra.

He said taking a decision on such a multi-state cooperative institution comes under the central government's cooperation department.

“This is not a new decision as such. It was there when I was in the central government. But, unfortunately, the media is painting a different picture that the Centre's Ministry of Cooperation may hijack or end the cooperative movement in Maharashtra,” he said.

The central government recently carved out a new ministry for cooperation,

which earlier was a small department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare.

Union minister Amit Shah, who has been given the charge of the newly-created ministry, on Saturday said the government is determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered.

— PTI

DELHI ALLOWS
ACADEMIC
GATHERINGS
FROM TODAYDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

Unlocking Delhi further from next week, the Arvind Kejriwal-led Delhi government on Sunday, announced the seventh phase of unlocking for the Capital city. In this phase, the government has allowed academic gatherings and meetings at schools and colleges from Monday.

However, students will not be able to attend educational institutions physically and only teachers and professors will be allowed to attend schools for holding online lectures and other administrative work.

The Delhi Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) issued a notification on Sunday which read that only teachers and professors will be allowed inside educational institutions for online lectures and other administrative work,” the notification stated. However, Spas, social, political, cultural, religious, and other such gatherings continue to remain prohibited.

It further read, “Delhi government allows auditoriums/assembly halls in schools and educational institutions for educational training to function with 50% capacity.”. Exemption has also been given for Delhi Police and Army personnel to attend skill training classes.

They will no longer require permission from the DDMA to attend these programmes.

The notification issued stated that public transport, including Delhi Metro, will continue to operate with 50 per cent seating capacity.



People flout social distancing norms as authorities allowed Sunday bazaar to reopen after some relaxations in the ongoing lockdown in Bengaluru on Sunday.

— PTI

India sees a slight decrease in Covid cases

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

India on Friday witnessed a slight decrease in the number of Covid-19 infections and deaths in the last 24 hours. With 41,506 people testing positive in a day, the total tally of the viral infections has gone up to 3,08,37,222. The death toll has now climbed to 4,08,040 with 895 fresh fatalities.

While many countries like UK, Russia, Australia and Bangladesh are dealing with the resurgence in daily infections, the cases in India seem to be under control with daily infec-

tions being less than 50,000 for the past two weeks.

The active cases in India comprise 1.47 per cent of the total infections, while the national Covid-19 recovery rate has increased to 97.20 per cent. The daily positivity rate, which stands at 2.25 per cent, has been less than three per cent for 20 consecutive days. The weekly positivity rate has also declined to 2.32 per cent.

Sunday's case figures were 1,260 less than that of Saturday's, when 42,766 people were detected with Covid-19 infection. Even the toll count on Sunday was 311 less than that of

Saturday's, when 1,206 deaths were recorded.

The number of people who have recuperated from the disease surged to 2,99,75,064 and the case fatality rate stands at 1.32 per cent.

As many as 18,43,500 tests were conducted on Saturday taking the total cumulative tests conducted so far for detection of Covid-19 in the country to 43,08,85,470.

Cumulative number of vaccine doses administered so far has reached 37.60 crore under the nationwide vaccination drive. The Union health ministry said that over 1.44 crore balance and unutilised

Covid vaccine doses were still available with the states, UTs and private hospitals to be administered.

Over 38.60 crore vaccine doses have been provided to states and UTs so far through all sources and a further 11,25,140 doses are in the pipeline. Of this, the total consumption including wastage is 37,16,47,625 doses. The new phase of universalisation of Covid-19 vaccination is to commence from June 21.

The country's Covid-19 tally had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7, 30 lakh on August 23, 40 lakh on September 5 and 50 lakh on September 16. It

went past 60 lakh on September 28, 70 lakh on October 11, crossed 80 lakh on October 29, 90 lakh on November 20 and surpassed the one-crore mark on December 19. India crossed the grim milestone of two crore on May 4 and three crore on June 23.

Of the 895 new fatalities reported in the last 24 hours, 494 were from Maharashtra and 109 from Kerala. A total of 4,08,040 deaths have been reported so far in the country including 1,25,528 Maharashtra, 35,779 Karnataka, 33,371 Tamil Nadu, 22,693 Uttar Pradesh, 17,903 West Bengal and 16,177 Punjab.

BJP bags ‘home’
in Pondy ministry

FROM PG 1

AINRC's K. Lakshminarayanan has been given public works department, tourism and civil aviation, fisheries and fishermen Welfare, law and information technology. C. Djeacumar is agriculture minister and will also be handling, among others, animal husbandry and animal Welfare, forests and wild life.

Chandira Priyanga (AINRC), the first woman to be inducted in a cabinet in the UT in the last 40 years, is the transport minister with additional responsibilities of Adi Dravidar welfare, housing and labour and employment, art and culture and economics and statistics.

A.K. Sai J Saravanan Kumar has been given civil supplies and consumer affairs, consumer welfare, community development, urban basic services, fire services and minority affairs. While Mr Lakshminarayanan, Mr Djeacumar and Ms Priyanga are AINRC members in the ministry, the others—Mr Namassivayam and Mr Saravanan Kumar belong to the BJP.

Hours after the Chief Minister submitted the list of portfolios to Lt Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Sunday morning, a gazette notification of the confidential



and cabinet department said she “is pleased to allocate to the ministers the business of the government in consultation with the Chief Minister.”

Mr Rangasamy was sworn-in on May 7 after the NDA won the April 6 polls, beating the Congress-DMK combine. The other five cabinet members, three from AINRC and two from the BJP were inducted into the cabinet on June 27, took oath on June 27 and got their portfolios allocated on July 11.

Nearly two weeks after the ministers were sworn in, a list containing their portfolios was handed over by the Chief Minister to the Lt Governor on Sunday when he met the Lt Governor at her office.

In UT history, various chief ministers have held the home portfolio except on one or two occasions. Then chief minister V. Narayanasamy helmed the department in the previous Congress government, which fell in February this year due to lack of majority

ARUN KUMAR
REPLACES
GOPAL AS RSS'
BJP POINTSMANDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), it was learnt, has decided to replace its pointsman for the BJP, with Arun Kumar to succeed Dr Krishna Gopal for the post.

The decision, sources said, was taken by the RSS top brass at the ongoing meeting at Chitrakoot. Both Dr Gopal and Kumar are joint general secretaries in the Sangh. Dr Gopal, who had succeeded Suresh Soni in 2014 - the year BJP came to power at the Centre — to oversee the coordination between the BJP and the Sangh, it was learnt, had not been keeping well and had been infected with the Covid-19 twice since last year.

Kumar, who was the *prachaar pramukh* of the Sangh, was elevated to the post of joint general secretary in March this year when Dattatreya Hosabale replaced Suresh Bhaiyya Joshi as the RSS general secretary.

The RSS has also overhauled its West Bengal team by replacing the *Prant prachaarak*, *kshetra prachaarak* and the *sah-kshetra prachaarak*. This decision, sources said, was taken after the BJP failed to dislodge Mamata Banerjee-led TMC despite the entire BJP central leadership, including Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union ministers campaigning in the state.

● **THE DECISION**, sources said, was taken by the RSS top brass at the ongoing meeting at Chitrakoot.

POLICE | KILLINGS

Delhi-based advocate from Assam lodges formal complaint with NHRC against Assam police

Assam cops on ‘encounter spree’, NHRC urged to take note

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, JULY 11

The issue of ongoing frequent encounters of Assam police with criminals have reached National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) as a Delhi-based advocate from Assam on Saturday lodged a formal complaint with the commission against the Assam police “on an encounter spree” since the Himanta Biswa Sarma-led government took charge two months ago.

In his complaint which was lodged with the NHRC on Saturday, Advocate Arif Jwadder alleged that Assam police was shooting down criminals frequently and the reason cited for such “fake encounters” was that they tried to “flee from police custody snatching pistols”.

Pointing out that more than 20 such encounters had taken place so far and most of the persons at the receiving end were alleged drug dealers and cattle smugglers with a few hav-

● **THE LAWYER** points out in his complaint that more than 20 such encounters had taken place so far and most of the persons at the receiving end were alleged drug dealers and cattle smugglers with a few having died on the spot, he also referred Assam Chief Minister's remark at the police conference where in

the Chief Minister said that police should shoot at alleged criminals at legs which is permitted by the law.

“Following the statement of the Chief Minister, now police are staging fake encounters with impunity,” Jwadder alleged in his complaint.

He also listed 10 cases of encounters where the alleged criminals were either killed or injured. It includes Bubu Konwar, wanted for several crimes including murder, and

sacked Railway Protection Special Force sub-inspector Kanwaldeep Singh Sidhu wanted for abducting a businessman. They were gunned down on May 23 and July 3.

Alleged cattle smugglers Shah Jamal, Mozammil Haque and Sorangi Chinnai were shot in the leg between May 31 and July 2.

Alleged drug dealer Jaitul Kabir and Syed Ali, a 65-year-old arrested for rape and murder of a minor, met a similar fate

on May 31 and July 2 respectively.

Jwadder argued, “all the injured or dead persons were not militants and hence not trained to use pistols and it is very unlikely that they could use the pistols after snatching them from the police who outnumbered them and were heavily armed.”

In his complaint the Advocate said, “It also cannot be believed that the petty criminals could snatch a pistol from a

trained police officer whose pistols/guns are normally tied to the waist belt. It also cannot be believed that any Army or police officer could not stop the alleged criminals from fleeing from custody.”

Pleading before the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) to take cognisance of these cases, Jwadder said that the actions of the Assam police were denying the rights of the alleged criminals to a fair trial.

[illegible]

DECCAN Chronicle

12 JULY 2021

India must make clear its Afghan role after US exit

The pressure on India to delineate its future path in Afghanistan becomes apparent after the announcement by US President Joe Biden last week that US forces will be out of Afghanistan by August 31, sooner than the September 11 deadline indicated earlier.

The US leader also made it amply clear that sorting out the politics of that benighted country and its way forward in the world was for its people to decide. Putting a lid on an old debate, Mr Biden was clear that “nation-building” in Afghanistan was not America’s mandate.

The sense of drama has grown in light of practically daily news reports in recent weeks of rapid military gains made by the Taliban. Western media reporting has also amplified the Taliban claim that the insurgent group controls as much as 85 per cent of the country.

Is this true? Do the Taliban really have the capacity to hold territory? Is the Afghan military weak, helpless, and inadequately equipped? International reporting is practically silent on these crucial aspects of the situation. Nor has it shed any light on the internal political scenario in Afghanistan? In the event, a general scare seems to have been created about the Taliban storming Kabul in the not too distant future.

External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has lately been in Tehran and Moscow, New Delhi’s traditional allies in the Afghan context. It has to be ascertained to what extent Iran and Russia are changing.

If the past military performance of the Taliban is any guide, it will be surprising if it can storm to power in Kabul in the next year or so, although this is exactly what senior US Army officials have put out, feeding scare-mongering.

While Afghanistan’s Army is trained and equipped essentially as a counter-terrorism force (it does not have artillery and armour, for example), it is a first-rate fighting body. Numerous times in the past it has shown the capacity to recover lost ground from the Taliban, who have repeatedly displayed the inability to hold ground.

At suitable levels, India has opened channels of communication with the Taliban. New Delhi should not be left without options in an evolving scenario. But it needs to be appreciated that the Taliban are but a small part of the political spectrum, especially in light of the noteworthy fact that a new generation of Afghans has taken shape in the past 20 years (the period since the US intervened) which is far from extremist in outlook and looks toward a modernist, democracy-oriented transformation.

India is reasonably well-grounded in the non-Taliban political spaces, unlike arguably any other country. This is an enviable position to be in. Much depends on how New Delhi seeks to leverage itself politically. External affairs minister S. Jaishankar has lately been in Tehran and Moscow, New Delhi’s traditional allies in the Afghan context. These power centres had been anti-Taliban in the past. It has to be ascertained to what extent Iran and Russia are changing.

Regardless of this, however, India will have to decide its stance without equivocation if it wishes to be seen as a serious player. Standing by Pakistan’s side, resource-rich China has emerged as a new — and open — factor in Afghanistan. New Delhi has to bear this in mind while being conscious that Beijing and Islamabad will act in tandem, though Pakistan remains deeply unpopular in Afghanistan. Since the dice is rolling, India cannot indefinitely delay taking a posture. If this is to be to stand by the people of Afghanistan, in whom this country has invested much in the past two decades, the first charge on New Delhi is to ensure that non-Taliban factions mutually build a functional understanding even if they have differences with the leader of their government, President Ashraf Ghani.

Stem poll violence in UP

The Uttar Pradesh unit of the BJP, and its national leadership, exult over the results of the block panchayat elections in the state. The party claims that it has won elections in 685 of the 825 block panchayats. This comes close on the heels of the party claiming victory in 66 of the 75 posts of district panchayat chiefs for which elections were held last month. Given that the state Assembly polls are hardly a year away, the party has gone out of the way to present it as a precursor to the big fight. While chief minister Yogi Adityanath and the party’s state unit chief were attributing the win to the policies of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, the latter has commented on the chief minister’s leadership for the win.

The Opposition parties will, however, have none of it. They allege widespread violence by the ruling party in the polls, which include instances of stopping their people from filing the nomination papers to threatening their candidates. They say the BJP wants to paint a rose picture after it lost the gram panchayat elections. Samajwadi Party leader Akhilesh Yadav has reminded the BJP that his party had made similar claims after the polls five years ago but lost the Assembly comprehensively.

Claims and counterclaims apart, violence has emerged as a key player in the elections in the state this time around. It is not just the Opposition that complains about hooliganism on the part of the ruling party; the message of the police officer to his boss that BJP workers slapped him could be the reflection of the reality.


The picture the nation gets from Uttar Pradesh is that the Election Commission of India will have to go the extra mile and ensure that none gets to blame violence as a key factor in the election to the state Assembly. It must open its eyes and take early steps to meet its constitutional responsibilities.

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A.G. Noorani

Kashmir and the delicate activism of ensuring that delimitation fair

It is very unfortunate that at their very first test members of the People’s Alliance of the Gupkar Declaration in Kashmir split on the issue of delimitation of assembly constituencies. Mehbooba Mufti of the People’s Democratic Party refused to appear before the Delimitation Commission. All were agreed that the wrongs of Aug 4, 2019, should be undone first.

Delimitation is one of the most delicate and highly controversial problems in democratic governance. But it is also ignored until controversy catches up with it. The issue is simple. How do you draw up the boundaries of electoral constituencies in order to ensure fairness to all? Britain woke up pretty late to the problem. There is an electoral commission, a late entrant. It establishes boundary committees and evaluates its reports. Rules prescribe guidance.

Within the constraints of the existing majority electoral system it is clearly desirable that votes should be, as nearly as possible, of

equal value: a vote in A should be worth as much as a vote in B. If this is to be substantially achieved, the boundaries of constituencies should be drawn in such a way that their electorates do not differ too greatly in size. Other factors may also have to be taken into account in drawing the boundaries, but it is of the greatest importance that the process should not be influenced by considerations of party advantage. Another and a hugely neglected factor in India — the Muslim seats. They depend entirely on how Muslim majority areas are grouped.

India has a delimitation commission set up by an act of parliament. The commission is charged with the task of readjusting “on the basis of the latest census figures” the allocation of seats in the Lok Sabha to the states, the total number of seats in state assemblies, and the division of each state into territorial constituencies for the purpose of elections to the Lok Sabha and to the assemblies. The electoral roll is common to both. A given number of assembly constituencies

are grouped to form a parliamentary constituency. Upon publication “every such order shall have the force of law”. This is valid. Not so what follows: “And shall not be called in question in any court.” No law can oust the powers of judicial review conferred by the Indian constitution on the Supreme Court and the high courts. Even an amendment to the constitution cannot do that, for judicial review is incontestably an integral part of the ‘basic structure’ of the Constitution.

Ouster clauses are strictly construed by the courts. It does not prevent the courts from reviewing a delimitation order. Drawing the boundaries of any constituency on the ground inter alia that it is grossly unfair or that the commission did not follow the rules of natural justice by giving a reasonable opportunity for a hearing to the political parties or interested citizens’ bodies.

We owe to the research of Alistair McMillan details of the grossly unfair delimitation as it obtains now. He points out, for instance,

that “a vote in Calcutta North-West, with 698,009 electors, is worth roughly four times as much as one in Thane in Maharashtra, where there are 2,771,746 electors”.

In 1962, the US supreme court carried through a political revolution by ordering that long under-represented urban and suburban areas be given their proper weight in state legislatures. It is not a ‘political question’ exempt from judicial review. Two years later chief justice Earl Warren carried the process further and delivered the famous quotes on the weightage to rural areas.

Chief justice Earl Warren said: “A predominant consideration in determining whether a state’s legislative apportionment scheme constitutes an invidious discrimination violative of rights asserted under the Equal Protection Clause is that the rights allegedly impaired are individual and personal in nature. ... Undoubtedly, the right of suffrage is a fundamental matter in a free and democratic society. Especially since the right to exercise the franchise in a free

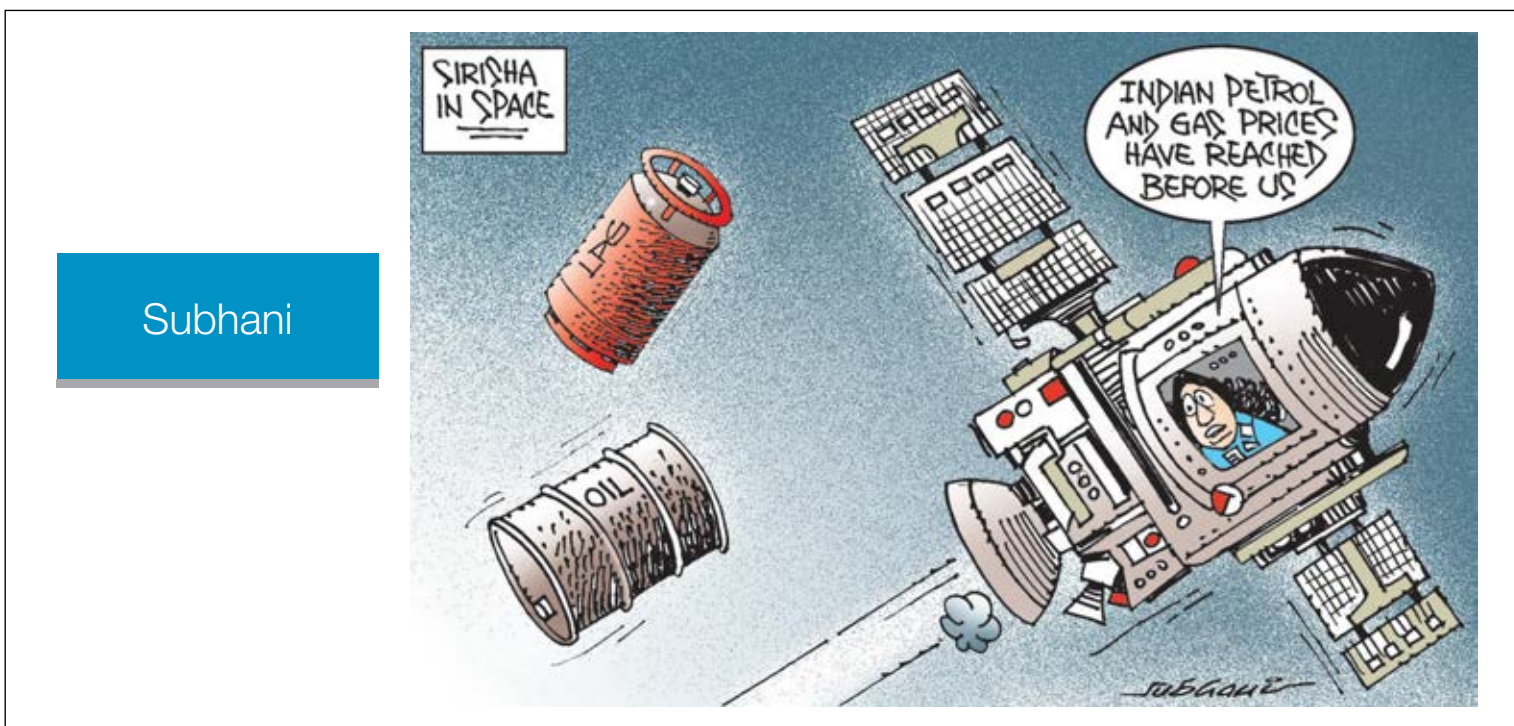
and unimpaired manner is preservative of other basic civil and political rights, any alleged infringement of the right of citizens to vote must be carefully and meticulously scrutinised.

“...Legislators are elected by voters, not farms or cities or economic interests. If ours is a representative form of government, and our legislatures are those instruments of government elected directly by and directly representative of the people, the right to elect legislators in a free and unimpaired fashion is a bedrock of our political system. ...

“And, if a state should provide that the votes of citizens in one part of the state should be given two times, or five times, or 10 times the weight of votes of citizens in another part of the state, it could hardly be contended that the right to vote of those residing in the disfavoured areas had not been effectively diluted.”

Muslims have suffered because their leaders do not do the homework which a challenge requires.

By arrangement with Dawn



Subhani

India-China: Bhai-bhai to buy-buy to bye-bye



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

This is a historic month for China. The Communist Party of China came into being 100 years ago, in July 1921. Communist China entered the international mainstream a half century ago, in July 1971, when the United States decided to come to terms with the reality of its existence. China’s spectacular rise over the past quarter century, as a global trading superpower, the “factory of the world”, and as Asia’s most powerful nation, ready to challenge America’s global dominance, is the stuff of legend.

Yet, even as China celebrates these landmark events, large parts of the world have become increasingly concerned about its assertion of newly acquired hard power — economic and military. In looking back at China’s rise a large part of the public discourse in India has been dominated by commentators on foreign policy, security and defence. Regrettably, very little has appeared in print on the social, cultural and human dimensions of China’s transformation and rise.

In his recently published pithy narration of the events at Beijing’s Tiananmen Square in the summer of 1989 (*Tiananmen Square: The Making of a Protest, A Diplomat Looks Back*), former foreign secretary and a former Indian ambassador to China Vijay Gokhale observes in passing: “Indians can no longer afford to have a superficial understanding of events involving their largest neighbour and to-be-hegemon, other than at their own peril”.

Mr Gokhale is spot on. Yet so much about what appears in print in India about China is about foreign affairs and the economy, written mostly by Westerners or Indians

mate knowledge of Western culture, science, literature, music and so on, but also benefitted from such knowledge.

India’s attitude towards China today should not be very different from the view that Mahatma Gandhi famously expressed of the kind of relationship that he sought with Britain and its people in the midst of the national movement for Independence. When asked by a Briton in that period “How far would you cut India off from the Empire?”, Gandhiji replied: “From the Empire, completely; from the British nation, not at all, if I want India to gain and not to grieve. The British Empire must go and I should love to be an equal partner with Britain, sharing her joys and sorrows. But it must be a partnership on equal terms.”

Even as India rejects China’s hegemonic ambitions, as it did the hegemony of the West, and disapproves of its authoritarian political system, Indians must acquire a better understanding and appreciation of Chinese society, culture and its knowledge-creating institutions. China is not merely an authoritarian, militarised Communist regime, which it is, but it is also a highly creative and productive knowledge-based society and economy. China has risen on the foundations of its human capabilities. Indians ought to have a better appreciation of that.

The Xi Jinping regime is itself to blame for the acute focus in Indian public discourse on China’s negative attributes. However, it is in India’s inter-

The Xi Jinping regime is itself to blame for the focus in Indian public discourse on China’s negative attributes. It is in India’s interest to balance that with a better understanding of life in China.

est to balance that with a better understanding of life in China. The Chinese too should realise that Indians are a proud people with their own memory of their civilisational inheritance and can be nobody’s cat’s paw.

The history of Indian nationalism is in many ways greater than the history of Chinese nationalism. Mahatma Gandhi and the Indian National Congress did not fight for India’s liberation alone. They fought for the liberation of all colonised people and against imperialism and colonialism in all its manifestations. Whatever strategic and foreign policy compromises India might make in the short run cannot be a deviation from its “tryst with destiny”.

In July 1971, when then US national security adviser Henry Kissinger met Chairman Mao Zedong in Beijing and proposed a US-China condominium against the Soviet Union, China did not give up its civilisational inheritance of being an independent-minded nation. It walked a path that gave it the strategic space for its own rise. India too seeks that space for its own development. Over the past 50 years the people-to-people contact between the United States and China has been intense and extensive. It has created the foundation for a durable relationship even when the two seek today greater strategic space for themselves.

It is in the interests of both China and India that there is similar engagement between their people, even as the two states jostle with each other for strategic space within Asia and the world. People-to-people relationships must stand on their own footing and not always be subject to state-to-state relations.

The writer, an economist and adviser to former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, has recently edited a collection of essays titled A New Cold War: Henry Kissinger and the Rise of China

LETTERS

SAD DEMISE

The demise of veteran Ayurveda physician and managing trustee of the Kottakkal Arya Vaidya Sala, Dr P.K. Warriar signals the end of an era in the field of medicine. A freedom fighter in his early days, the doyen of the Ayurveda system of medicine who had just completed his centenary last month, was that ideal ‘Karma Yogi’ who epitomised the principles of selfless service, simple living, high thinking and wide reading. At a time when the medical field has become increasingly commercialised, the late Dr Warriar whose career spanned nearly seven decades was that ideal physician and humanist who dedicated his entire life and services to the betterment of human society in keeping with the highest norms of medical ethics which endeared himself to people of all sections of society. The fact that Dr Warriar never accepted consultation fees either from the rich or the poor hold testimony to the sad facts.

B. Suresh Kumar, Coimbatore

BARTY PARTY

Barty made history and celebrated in Wimbledon. She came, saw, conquered the Centre Court with her perfect service, good coverage of the court and deft placements that flowed freely from her racquet. It was Australian tennis renaissance on Saturday. Barty emulated her idol Evonne Goolagong who had claimed the second of her All England Club titles in 1980. World number one Ash Barty became the first Australian woman to win the Wimbledon singles title in 41 years when she defeated Czech Karolina Pliskova 6-3 6-7(4) 6-3 in the final. The 25-year-old Barty, who won her maiden Grand Slam at Roland Garros in 2019, ten years after winning the girls’ singles title at Wimbledon. Barty came to the final having won five of the seven matches she had played against Pliskova.

M.R. Jayanthi, Coimbatore

WELCOME STEP

It is with reference to the news, UP to bar breakers of 2-child norm from local body polls. The population has crossed the optimum limit in India and has become a liability. So the problem of population explosion in India has proved to be a big hindrance to the success of economic planning and development. The large size of the population results in a large army of labour force and due to a shortage of capital resources, it becomes difficult to provide gainful employment to the entire working population. The rapid growth of the population accounts for the low standard of living and even the bare necessities are not available adequately. At this juncture, the proposed draft of the Uttar Pradesh Population Bill does not allow anyone who violates the 2-child policy from contesting local body elections, from applying for getting promotion in government jobs and receiving any kind of government subsidies is a welcome step.

P. Victor Selvaraj, Palayamkottai

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	52386.19 -0.35
Nifty 50	15689.80 -0.24
S&P 500*	4,369.55 1.13
Dollar (₹)	74.63 0.12
Pound Sterling (₹)	102.98 0.01
Euro (₹)	88.47 -0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,844▼451 0.96
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.56 1.94
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.186 1.01
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.343 0.055

* As of Friday/Saturday

Hero Electric Vehicles to invest ₹700 cr

Hero Electric Vehicles will invest Rs 700 crore by 2025 to rev up its business expansion, including setting up a new unit, for which it has raised Rs 220 crore to part-fund the activities. The firm plans to set up a facility with 10 lakh units capacity, besides increasing production at its current plant at Ludhiana to 3 lakh units per annum from 75,000 units at present, as it targets to sell around 10 lakh units a year by 2025-26.

Amazon sees rise in sellers grossing over ₹1 crore biz



Amazon India said it has seen six-fold growth in the number of sellers grossing over Rs 1 crore in sales during three-day Small Business Days event. "During the three-day event, more than 84,000 sellers received an order; 68 per cent of these sellers who received an order were from non-metro cities like Kodagu (Karnataka), Dholpur (Rajasthan), Eta (UP), Giridih (Jharkhand), Una (HP) and Tinsukia (Assam), Amazon said.

FPIs pull out ₹2,249 cr from equities in July

After a month of net inflows, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out Rs 2,249 crore from the equities market in the first seven trading sessions of July. This could be largely attributed to profit-taking by FPIs with markets trading near all-time highs and investors choosing to stay on the sidelines, said Morningstar India associate director (manager research) Himanshu Srivastava.

Tea exports may decline by 15% this year

The tea industry is bracing for a decline in exports to the tune of 30-40 million kg this year as compared to 2020, due to the availability of low-cost varieties in the global market and trade restrictions in user countries, industry sources said. For January-March this year, exports fell by 13.23 per cent year-on-year and by 29.03 per cent compared to 2019, as per Tea Board India data. Altogether, 45.86 million kg was exported.



Rules restrict gas supply to PSUs

BPCL LPG rights new selloff snag

AMMAR ZAIDI
NEW DELHI, JULY 11

A two-decade-old LPG supply order restricting supply of domestically produced LPG to only state-owned oil companies has stymied plans to allow Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) to continue selling subsidised cooking gas (LPG) after its privatisation.

A legal opinion has now been sought to ascertain if privatised BPCL will be eligible to receive liquefied petroleum gas produced by companies such as ONGC and Gail, two government officials with knowledge of the development said.

Currently, BPCL has more than 8.4 crore domestic LPG customers, including 2.1 crore Ujjwala customers. The company does not produce enough LPG at its refineries to be able to cater to the requirement of all these.

It, like other oil marketing companies, buys LPG from state-owned firms like Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) and Gail (India) Ltd as well as private companies such as Reliance Industries Ltd.

The Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2020, known as LPG Control Order of 2000, restricts sale of indigenously produced cooking gas only to state-owned oil marketing companies, Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) and BPCL.



It restricts supply of LPG produced by firms such as ONGC and GAIL to private firms. Private LPG retailers, called parallel marketers, have to use imported gas for supplying to customers.

The 2000 Control Order was issued as the nation is short in LPG production.

Once BPCL is privatised, the 2000 order will bar ONGC and GAIL from selling LPG to BPCL, the officials said.

"Post-divestment of the government's stake in BPCL, it shall cease to be a government oil company in terms of clause 2(g) of LPG Control Order of 2000," an official said.

With no access to indigenously produced LPG, BPCL won't be able to serve its customers and it would not be possible to shift the customers to IOC and HPCL, as LPG cylinder equipment at customer end will need to be changed. Also, IOC and HPCL may not have the required infrastructure to cater to such a large customer base, the officials said.

As a way out, it is being considered to continue to treat BPCL as a government company for the purpose of the 2000 Control Order for three years, the officials said adding that a legal opinion has been sought to ascertain if such a move is tenable under the law.

The other alternative is to amend the LPG Control Order itself to allow private firms to access indigenously produced LPG. This would open up LPG retailing to other private firms.

Officials said law ministry opinion has been sought to determine if the term government oil company in the LPG Control Order necessary requires the company to be a government company and if BPCL post-privatisation can be notified as a government oil company.

To interpret the term 'government company', the opinion of the Ministry of Corporate Affairs and the Ministry of Consumer Affairs (MoCA) has been sought, they said. —PTI

Six North-eastern states have no hallmarking centres

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JULY 11

Though mandatory hall-marking has come into force in the country, most of the North-eastern region will remain outside the purview of the rules, as six of the eight north-eastern states have no hall-marking centres.

Hallmarking for gold jewellery and artefacts has been mandated in districts which have hall-marking centres. However, a large part of the North-east will remain out of the mandate, as Mizoram, Meghalaya, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Manipur and Sikkim have no hall-marking centres.

Further, among the eight districts in Tripura, only two—North Tripura and West Tripura—have



hallmarking centres. Even a bigger state like Assam, which has 33 districts, has hall-marking centres only in Barpeta, Cachar and Kamrup Metro.

The story is no different in the small states of the eastern region. Among the 28 districts in Chhattisgarh, only Raipur and Durg have hall-marking centres. The presence of such centres is limited to four districts

in Jharkhand.

Though the Northern region has a fairly large number of centres, smaller state Uttarakhand has hall-mark centres only in two districts. Western and southern regions account for a major share of the hall-marking centres.

As per the recent government decision, the jewellers in all the districts with hall-marking centres have to sell only hall-marked jewellery and

get their entire inventory hall-marked by September 1. Till then, the government officials will not take any coercive action against the jewellers.

In the rest of the districts, steps will be taken to set up hall-marking centres at a fast pace. As and when the centres are set up, jewellers will have to get a Bureau of Indian Standards licence and get their inventory hall-marked. The government will also provide subsidies to set up new centres in these districts.

In the past few years, hall-marking centres have been coming up in regions which have a higher share of gold consumption. Several jewellers in these regions are already selling fully hall-marked jewellery.

Big insurers launch net-zero climate alliance

Milan, July 11: Eight of the world's leading insurance and reinsurance companies on Sunday launched an alliance to help speed up a transition to a net zero emissions economy.

The companies, which include Europe's top three insurers by premiums—Allianz, AXA and Generali—said the Net-Zero Insurance Alliance (NZIA) would work to shift underwriting portfolios towards net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050.

The move comes as insurers come under increasing pressure to

spell out how they plan to decarbonise their businesses amid growing calls for them to stop underwriting and investing in fossil fuel projects.

Each of the companies will individually set intermediate targets every five years and report on progress annually in cooperation with competition authorities, the NZIA members said in a statement.

"With this new Net-Zero Insurance Alliance, we are raising our climate ambition further," said Thomas Buberl, Chief Executive of the AXA Group, which

chairs the NZIA.

NZIA members, which also include Aviva, Munich Re, SCOR, Swiss Re and Zurich Insurance Group, will set underwriting criteria for the most carbon-intensive activities in their underwriting portfolios and offer solutions for low-emission and zero-emission technologies.

They will also include net-zero and decarbonisation risk criteria in their risk management frameworks.

"By committing to join the gold standard alliance for net zero, the (NZIA) will ultimately make

underwriting contingent on underlying companies having credible net-zero transition strategies," said UN climate envoy Mark Carney.

The Alliance, first outlined in April, was presented by Generali CEO Philippe Donnet at Sunday's G20 Climate Summit in Venice.

Many of the leading Europe-based insurers have already adopted climate-friendly policies. Last month, Generali pledged to reach carbon neutrality in its direct investment portfolio by 2050. —Reuters

Goyal for faceless vetting of subsidy applications

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JULY 11

The applications received under subsidy-oriented schemes for the textile industry should be processed transparently, using automation so that personal contact between industry and department is eliminated, Piyush Goyal, who has taken charge as the textile minister, suggested.

"The applications received under subsidy-oriented schemes should be processed in a transparent manner using automation keeping in view the broad objective of each scheme and necessary mechanisms should be devised so that personal contact of industry and department can be eliminated," he said while talking to industry representatives. He also suggested a special dispensation for MSMEs.

According to A Shaktivel, chairman of the Apparel Export Promotion Council, automation and elimination of human interface will reduce the delay in the processing. Once automated, there would be a specific time-



Piyush Goyal

line to process the applications and this will benefit the industry.

Goyal said the formats for submission of statutory returns from industry needs to be simplified, and emphasised on rationalisation and optimal use of manpower at the Office of the Textile Commissioner and Textiles Committee.

In order to increase productivity of cotton, the minister suggested that the Cotton Corporation of India can work out possibilities for providing kapas plucking machines to the cotton farmers. These machines can be provided by start-ups by availing of mudra loan.

He also suggested a meeting with stakeholders to make a strategic plan to eliminate child labour in the textiles sector.

SONY TO USE ROBOTS TO CUT COSTS

ANCHALEE WORRACHATE
JULY 11

Sony Corp. predicts that robots will take over its manufacturing of televisions, smartphones and cameras as the company shifts attention to services, the *Financial Times* reported.

Unmanned production lines are expected to cut costs by 70 per cent at Sony's mainstay TV factory in Malaysia by the fiscal year 2023, compared with 2018, the *FT* cited Kimio Maki, head of Sony's electronics businesses, as saying in an interview. The acceleration of factory automation will also reduce product defects, he said.

The plan will be carried out in conjunction with an increased focus on online sales and data analysis. Sales data will be analysed using artificial intelligence to more effectively set manufacturing volume, Maki said.

—Bloomberg

Woman infected with 2 Covid variants highlights next risk

SUZI RING
JULY 11

A 90-year-old woman died after becoming infected with two different strains of Covid-19, revealing another risk in the fight against the disease, Belgian researchers found.

In the first peer-reviewed analysis of an infection with multiple strains, scientists found the woman had contracted both the alpha variant, which first surfaced in the UK, and the beta strain, first found in South Africa. The infections probably came from separate people, according to a report published on Saturday and presented at the European Congress of Clinical Microbiology & Infectious Diseases.

The woman was admitted to a Belgian hospital in March after a number of falls, and tested positive for Covid-19 the same day. She lived alone, receiving nursing care at home, and hadn't been vaccinated. Her respiratory symptoms rapidly worsened and she died five days later. When her respiratory samples were tested for variants of concern, both

strains were found in two tests. The researchers couldn't say whether the co-infection played a role in her rapid deterioration. The idea of multiple infections isn't completely new. In January, Brazilian scientists reported two cases of Covid-19 co-infection, but the study hasn't

yet been released in a scientific journal. Researchers have also previously found evidence of people becoming infected with multiple strains of influenza. The cases suggest co-infection might be more common than currently known.

—Bloomberg

AUSTRALIA-S'PORE TRAVEL BUBBLE TIMING PUSHED BACK TO END 2021

EMILY CADMAN
JULY 11

Sydney's virus outbreak means plans for an Australian-Singapore travel bubble have been delayed until at least the end of the year, the Australian trade minister said on Sunday.

While opening up the travel corridor remains a priority, the scale of the outbreak that has forced the country's largest city into a renewed lockdown means plans are on hold, Dan Tehan told the Sydney Morning Herald.

"It has been put back due to the third wave of

the virus," he said. "The hope might be towards the end of the year that you could look at a travel bubble with Singapore."

Following the initial discussions, the two countries haven't committed to a specific date for the travel bubble.

While Australia was an early success story in the fight against the coronavirus, a sluggish vaccine rollout means even as the rest of the world opens up the country's borders are expected to stay shut until mid-2022. Just 26 per cent of the population have received their first jab.

—Bloomberg

CHINESE CHECKERS

One of the last chip firms is being acquired by a Chinese firm

UK sold off \$42 bn of chip firms before review

GILES TURNER & KITTY DONALDSON
JULY 11

The UK was once the leading semiconductor innovator in Europe, producing the likes of Arm Ltd, whose technology is found in 90 per cent of all mobile devices, and Imagination Technologies Group Ltd, which supplies chip designs used by Apple Inc.

But that was before they were sold off to foreign buyers. Arm was acquired by Japan's SoftBank Group Corp. with the government's approval before being handed off to Nvidia Corp. Imagination was sold to a Chinese buyout fund, signed off by then-Prime Minister Theresa May, even as one of the

funds' founders was under investigation by the FBI for insider trading.

In total, semiconductor companies valued at about \$42 billion have been sold to foreign buyers since May 2010, when the current Conservative government came to power, according to data compiled by Bloomberg. That figure excludes Arm's most recent sale to Nvidia.

Now, in the middle of a semiconductor shortage, one of the last of those assets, Newport Wafer Fab Ltd, is being snapped up by a Chinese manufacturer for around 63 million pounds (\$87 million), according to a person familiar with the deal. After initially waving it through, Prime Minister



Boris Johnson's government is pledging to review the deal, but critics say it's too little too late.

Newport Wafer Fab has become a test case: it's the first high-profile Chinese takeover in Britain since the government strengthened takeover laws to give itself 30 days to call deals in for scrutiny.

"Newport Wafer Fab is extremely worrying,"

Conservative MP Bob Seely said in an interview. "We need coherence on dealing with the Chinese state. I worry that we are still not there, and I worry that we are still failing to understand our dependency on China and the need to move away from that trade dependency."

It's rare for the UK to halt a sale over national security. When it does, the deals have often been small and involved the aerospace industry. In 2020, a Chinese investor ditched a bid for defence manufacturer Mettis Aerospace Ltd after the government said it would review the deal. The same year, the government also halted a deal for Impress Ltd from a China-backed buyer.

Instead, the UK has preferred to place conditions such as increasing local jobs and investment.

Unlike Arm and Imagination Technologies, which are multibillion-dollar companies that play key roles in semiconductor supply chains, it's unclear whether Newport Wafer Fab is of strategic importance to the UK.

The firm makes and prepares the ultra-small sheets of silicon, which serve as the base for microchips and are used for power management in products like cars. It reported a loss of 6.05 million pounds on revenues of 49 million pounds in the fiscal year ending in Sept. 2019, its most recent financial report. —Bloomberg

Kolkata, July 11: Unprecedentedly high prices of iron-ore and pellet are compelling small, secondary steel units in various states, including West Bengal, to down shutters or curtail production, officials said on Sunday.

In West Bengal, at least five such MSME units have closed down while 100-115 others curtailed production between 15 and 50 per cent, Steel Rolling Mills Association chairman Vivek Adukia said.

"The secondary steel MSMEs are also surrendering power requirements from the DVC and the WBSEDCL (West Bengal State Electricity Distribution Company Limited)," Adukia told PTI.

In Bengal, about 500 units are engaged in sponge iron, rolling mills and steel making through the induction furnace route. All these units are suffering along with mills in other states in the wake of unprecedented iron ore, pellet prices from unhindered export.

The secondary steel associations of West Bengal, Odisha, Madhya Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Karnataka, Maharashtra and Andhra Pradesh have jointly appealed to the Prime Minister and steel minister for their intervention and imposing export duty of 50 per cent on pellets.

The secondary steel-makers had been pleading for imposing export duty on pellets for the last one year, Adukia said.

West Bengal Sponge Iron Manufacturers Association president Shankar Lal Agarwal said pellet price soared from Rs 4,500 per tonne in May 2020 to Rs 15,000 per tonne in June this year resulting in a cost impact on a tonne of steel of Rs 20,800. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

India hit back to level T20 series

Hove: Indian spinners worked wonders during the final overs as visitors edged out England by eight runs in the second women's T20 International to level the three-match series here on Sunday. Batting first, India lost way after a good start provided by opener Shafali Verma (48 off 38 balls) to finish on 148 for 4. In reply, opener Tammy Beaumont's 59 off 50 balls put England in good position before they were restricted to 140/8 in 20 overs. Poonam Yadav and Deepti Sharma brought India back in the game during final five overs. — *PTI*

Brief scores: India Women 148 for 4 in 20 overs (Shafali Verma 48, Harmanpreet Kaur 31, Nat Sciver 1/20) bt England 140 for 8 in 20 overs (Tammy Beaumont 59, Poonam Yadav 2/17, Deepti Sharma 1/17).

Sri Lanka's first team test negative

Colombo: The entire Sri Lankan first team, including senior players Kusal Perera, Dushmantha Chameera and Dhananjaya de Silva, have all returned negative in their latest RT-PCR tests ahead of the limited overs series against India. The tests were conducted by Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC). It is now expected that the players would be allowed to enter the bio-bubble by Monday as they complete a week-long hard quarantine after their arrival from the United Kingdom. "There has been another round of RT-PCR tests conducted yesterday and the results were supposed to come today. We only get the results if there is any positive cases," a source in SLC said. — *PTI*

England clinch Pakistan series

London: Lewis Gregory starred with both bat and ball as England beat Pakistan by 52 runs in the second one-day international at Lord's on Saturday to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in a three-match series. Set 248 to win in a game reduced to 47 overs per side by rain, Pakistan were dismissed for 195. Somerset pace-bowling all-rounder Gregory, in just his second match at this level, struck with his first ball on Saturday on the way to 3-44 as England won with six overs to spare. — *AFP*

Brief scores: England 247 (Phil Salt 60, James Vince 56, Lewis Gregory 40; Hasan Ali 5/51) bt Pakistan 195 (Saud Shakeel 56; Lewis Gregory 3/44).

Bangladesh put it past Zimbabwe

Harare: Some resolute batting and dropped catches held up Bangladesh before they completed a crushing 220-run win over Zimbabwe on the final day of a one-off Test at Harare on Sunday. Needing a world record 477 to win, the hosts were all out for 256 after brave innings from nightwatchman Donald Tiripano and fast-medium bowler Blessing Muzarabani delayed the tourists' celebrations. — *AFP*

Brief scores: Bangladesh 468 & 284/1 (Shadman Islam 115 (not out), Najmul Hossain Shanto 117 (not out)) bt Zimbabwe 276 & 256 (Brendan Taylor 92, Donald Tiripano 52; Mehidy Hasan Miraz 4/66, Taskin Ahmed 4/82).

St. Joseph's sports quota selection

Chennai: Selection for the sports quota admission at St. Joseph's College of Engineering and Institute of Technology will be conducted at its sports village on Wednesday (9am). Achievements in the approved state/national level competitions will be the eligibility criteria for the participation in the trials besides academic qualifications and fulfillment of eligibility fixed by the Anna University norms.

Trials for both men and women categories: athletics, basketball, volleyball, ball badminton, kabaddi, tennis, table tennis, hand ball, chess, khokho, swimming, shuttle badminton, football, fencing, weight lifting, and power lifting. **For men only:** Hockey and Best Physique. **For more details contact:** 98409 86678/7358346871.

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Argentina's Lionel Messi holds the trophy aloft as he celebrates with teammates after winning the Copa America final against Brazil on Saturday.

— AFP

MESSI, NEYMAR NAMED BEST OF COPA AMERICA

Rio De Janeiro, July 11: Argentina's Lionel Messi and Brazil's Neymar were picked as the two best players of the Copa America just before they met in the final on Saturday.

"It is not possible to choose only one (best) player because this tournament has two of them," CONMEBOL said in a statement.

Messi dished up four goals and five assists in six matches.

Neymar delivered two goals and three assists in five games.

CONMEBOL's technical study group added that the players had a positive impact on their teams and were "the reflection of the South American DNA in every match they played" in the Copa.

Neymar has steered Brazil with his dribbles, passes and shots. His exchanges with Lucas Paqueta have made Brazil more fluid up front.

— AP

ANGEL TO THE RESCUE

Di Maria delivers as Argentina beat rivals Brazil for Copa America title

Rio de Janeiro, July 11: Superstar Lionel Messi won his first trophy with his national team as Angel Di Maria's goal gave Argentina a 1-0 win over hosts Brazil in the Copa America final on Saturday. The victory at Rio de Janeiro's Maracana stadium ended Argentina's 28-year wait for a major trophy, and also ended Brazil's unbeaten home record that stretched back more than 2,500 days.

Argentina had last tasted success at a major tournament in 1993 when the great Gabriel Batistuta's brace gave them a 2-1 win over Mexico in the Copa final in Ecuador.

"It's a great title, especially for our people. The fans support the team unconditionally. I think they can identify with this team that never gives in," said Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni.

It was the first time in six editions playing at home that Brazil had failed to lift the trophy.



Brazil's Neymar (left) with Lionel Messi at the end of the Copa final in Rio de Janeiro on Saturday.

— AP

Argentina edged a brutal and fractious affair thanks to Di Maria's goal on 22 minutes.

The 33-year-old winger ran onto Rodrigo De Paul's sumptuous through ball to lob Brazil goalkeeper Ederson with a first time finish.

"We fell short so many times, we dreamt so much about this, fought so hard," said Di Maria, who was named man of the match.

"Many people said we wouldn't manage it, we were criticized a lot. But we kept knocking at the door and kept going until today we knocked it down and entered."

Messi could have wrapped up the win two minutes from time but slipped when clean through with only Ederson to beat.

"We have to be big enough to recognize (the

defeat) regardless of how painful and difficult it is," said Brazil coach Tite.

In a frantic start, Argentina's burly enforcer Nicolas Otamendi was quickly in with his first foul while Brazilian midfielder Fred picked up the first booking after just three minutes for a studs up lunge at Gonzalo Montiel.

Brazil were unchanged from their semi-final win over Peru while Scaloni made five alterations, notably bringing in Di Maria — who made an energetic and decisive entry off the bench against Colombia last time out.

Brazil struggled to create anything of note and even when they had a free-kick from shooting range, Neymar couldn't beat the wall.

When the hosts did finally maintain some pressure late in the first half, Everton's deflected strike bobbled though to goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

— *AFP*

Messi's quest for glory finally comes to an end

Rio De Janeiro, July 11: When Lionel Messi, already a regular starter for the mighty Barcelona, made his international bow in 2005 as an 18-year-old for a powerful Argentina side he surely never imagined it would take him 16 years to finally claim a trophy with his country.

But the six time Ballon d'Or winner had to suffer numerous disappointments, including losing four finals, before leading his country to a 1-0 victory over "eternal rivals" Brazil in the Copa America final at Rio de Janeiro's iconic Maracana stadium on Saturday.

Despite a glittering career that has seen him

MESSI'S ARGENTINA HONOURS

- 2021 Copa America title & golden boot winner
- Fifa U-20 World Cup in 2005.
- Olympic Gold Medal in 2008.
- Record number of appearances for Argentina: 151

help Barcelona to win the Champions League four times, La Liga 10 times and the Copa Del Rey seven times, Messi's hopes of matching that with inter-

national success were repeatedly frustrated.

In truth he wasn't as inspired in the final as throughout the tournament, even slipping over when clean through two minutes from time and facing Brazil's goalkeeper Ederson with a chance to finish the match.

But the way his teammates threw him into the air after the final whistle showed how important and appreciated he is within the Argentina camp.

"It was my dream. It was what I wanted most in the world," said Argentina goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez following the triumph. "We gave it to Messi, who deserved it the most." — *AFP*

N-OLE, OLE, OLE!

Djokovic wins 20th slam, joins Federer, Nadal at top

London, July 11: Novak Djokovic won a record-equaling 20th Grand Slam title and sixth Wimbledon on Sunday with a four-set victory over battling Matteo Berrettini of Italy.

The world number one triumphed 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 to move level on 20 majors with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

His win also put him three-quarters of the way to the first calendar Grand Slam of all four majors since 1969.

A sixth victory at the All England Club for Djokovic, who was playing in his 30th final at the Slams, added to his nine Australian Opens, two Roland Garros titles as well as three at the US Open.

Should he win a fourth title in New York in September, he will become just the third man in history after Don Budge (1938) and Rod Laver (1962 and 1969) to complete the calendar Grand Slam.

"It was more than a battle. He is a true Italian hammer I felt it on my skin," said Djokovic of Berrettini.

"It means none of us three will stop. Roger and Rafa are legends they are the reason I am where I am today."

Federer — who bowed out in the quarter-finals while Nadal did not play — tweeted his congratulations. "Congrats Novak on your 20th major," he said. "I'm proud to have the opportunity to play in a special era of tennis champions. Wonderful performance, well done!"



Serbian star Novak Djokovic celebrates after beating Matteo Berrettini of Italy in the Wimbledon final on Sunday.

— AFP

MOST SLAMS

(Men's singles)

- Roger Federer 20
- Rafael Nadal 20
- Novak Djokovic 20
- Pete Sampras 14
- Roy Emerson 12

The Serb also now has 85 career titles while he has become the first man to break the \$150 million prize money barrier.

A gold medal at the Tokyo Olympics could give him the first ever Golden Grand Slam by a

male player.

Djokovic overcame a nervy start to break for 3-1, which he stretched to 5-2. He even had a set point in a marathon eighth game which the Italian saved after eight deuces.

Reinvigorated, he broke

Djokovic when he served for the set and then dominated the tiebreaker which he sealed with his fourth ace of the contest.

The top seed stormed to a 5-1 lead in the second set on the back of a double break. Berrettini, bidding

to be Italy's first men's Grand Slam winner since Adriano Panatta at the 1976 French Open, clawed his way back to 4-5, saving three set points, but Djokovic this time served it out for a set apiece.

Djokovic struck first again for a 2-1 lead in the third set and fought off three break points in the sixth game, a show of defiance which brought watching Hollywood star Tom Cruise to his feet.

That was Berrettini's last chance of the set as Djokovic served it out in the 10th game.

INDIAN-ORIGIN SAMIR LIFTS BOYS' TITLE

Indo-American tennis player Samir Banerjee lifted the Wimbledon boys' singles title on Sunday, a remarkable triumph for the youngster who was testing his skills in a Grand Slam for only the second time in his fledgling career.

All of 17, the boy from New Jersey just wanted to win a match at the biggest stage in the junior circuit, but little did he know that he would be the last boy standing at the hallowed grass courts. Up against compatriot Victor Lillo, the teenager won 7-5 6-3 in the summit clash that lasted one hour 22 minutes. He broke his rival thrice and dropped serve only once in a facile win.

"I came into this tournament looking to win a round and trying to play well because I knew I was playing well before this," he was quoted as saying by *iftennis.com*.

— Agencies

Olympic briefs

Music keeps Neeraj positive

Starved for competitive exposure in the build-up to the Olympics, star India javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra has found a unique way to ensure that his mind feels ready for his maiden appearance in the Games. "I listen to slow music and imagine that I am in a competition, taking part and throwing in the Olympics, so that I don't feel completely new in my first competition," Chopra said. Touted as one of India's strongest bets for a medal in Tokyo, Chopra said his build-up to the Games has been quite challenging given the lack of competitive exposure.

Boxers to leave on July 17

India's Olympic-bound boxing contingent, which is preparing for the Games in Italy right now, will leave for Tokyo from their training base in Assisi on July 17. An unprecedented nine Indian pugilists have qualified for the Tokyo Olympics, including five men and four women. All of them are giving final touches to their Games preparations in Assisi. The Games will open on July 23 with boxing competitions starting the next day. The men who have qualified are world number one and Asian Games champion Amit Panghal (52kg), Manish Kaushik (63kg), Vikas Krishan (69kg), Ashish Kumar (75kg), and Satish Kumar (+91kg).

Anand defeats Kasparov again

Zagreb, July 11: Former world champion Viswanathan Anand defeated long-time rival Garry Kasparov for the second consecutive time, in the 13th round of the Croatia Grand Chess Tour's Blitz event here on Sunday. He had beaten Kasparov on the first day too.

The victory came for the Indian maestro after three straight draws in rounds 10, 11 and 12 against Anish Giri (the Netherlands), Jan-Krzysztof Duda (Poland) and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave (France) respectively. He followed it up with a

superb win over Russian Ian Nepomniachtchi, the top-seed in the 14th round to be joint third in the standings with Giri on 18 points.

Playing black, Anand got the better of Kasparov in 25 moves in a Nimzo-Indian defence game.

On the first day of the Blitz on Saturday, the Indian ace had recorded four wins, drawn three matches and suffered two defeats. The former world champion had ended up seventh after the Rapid section, with nine points. He had posted two wins and drawn five and lost two matches. — *PTI*