

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

COIMBATORE | SATURDAY 26 | JUNE 2021

WEATHER



Max: 33°C
Min: 22°C
Rainfall: Nill

ASTROGUIDE

Pilava: Aani 12
Tithi: Dhuvidhiyai
Star: Pooradam
Rahukalam:
9 am to 10.30 am
Yamagandam:
1.30 pm to 3 pm

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.25 am
Luhar: 12.16 pm
Asar: 3.37 pm
Maghrib: 6.38 pm
Isha: 7.57 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.48 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 6.02 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 8.37 PM
MOONSET TOMORROW 9.25 AM

CORONA COUNT

| CASES | DEATHS |
|-------------|----------|
| (+48,618) | (+1,182) |
| 3,01,82,469 | 3,94,524 |

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

| | |
|----------|-------|
| (+5,755) | (150) |
|----------|-------|

TN: 24,55,332 32,051

WORLD CONFIRMED CASES

18,09,19,325

DEATHS

39,19,122

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 219

worldometers.info

Govt extends various I-T compliance deadlines

New Delhi: The government on Friday extended deadlines for various income tax compliances and said the amount paid by an employer to employees for COVID-19 treatment would be tax exempt. Also, ex gratia payment received from employer by family members in case of death of an employee due to COVID-19 would be exempt from income tax.

Pakistan continues to be in FATF ‘Grey List’

Islamabad: Pakistan continues to remain in the ‘Grey List’ of Financial Action Task Force (FATF) as the global body against money laundering and terror financing on Friday said that Islamabad has failed to take action against United Nations-designated terrorists like India’s most wanted Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar. The FATF also said that Pakistan should continue to work to address its strategically-important deficiencies.

COUNTER

POINT



You are very lucky... you have plain Covid, not the Delta plus variant!



Chennai police detain Kishore Swamy under Goondas Act

CITY | 3



TN allows malls, places of worship to reopen

■ Govt offices to work with full attendance in Chennai, 3 dists

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR, D. SEKAR | DC CHENNAI, JUNE 25

Life in Chennai and its neighbouring districts of Chengalpattu, Kanchipuram and Thiruvallur will return to near normal on Monday as the government announced more relaxations to the lockdown, which include opening of malls, shopping complexes, places of worship, textile shops and jewelries with regulations that include the shutting down of air-conditioners.

Chief Minister M.K. Stalin, who held discussions with the health minister, health secretary, medical experts and top officials of the medical department during the day, announced that only takeaway service would be allowed in hotels, restaurants, messes and other eateries all over the state, completely banning dine-in services.

Since the 38 districts of the state had already been divided into three categories based on the Coronavirus infection rate, different relaxations have been made for each of them.

In Chennai and its neighbouring districts that fall under the Type 3 category with least rate of Covid-19 infection, private and government offices will work with 100 per cent attendance from Monday and temples, churches and mosques will function but not conduct special festivals and exclusive religious rituals like Archanaais and Kudumuzhus.

Gyms and yoga centres can function with no air-conditioning and museums and monuments maintained by the archaeological department would be open between 10 am and 5 pm. ■ **P3**



A large number of passengers arrived at central railway station in Chennai on Friday after the state government relaxed lockdown conditions and allowed to travel on local and suburban trains.

— N. Sampath

Delta Plus variant is very localised: Govt

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

The Union government on Friday said 49 cases of the Delta Plus variant of Covid-19 have been found in 11 states from over 45,000 samples that have been sequenced for this mutated strain of the virus. The Union health ministry said till now the cases are “very localised”.

The Delta Plus has been termed as a ‘Variant of Concern’ by the World Health Organisation. The states with Delta Plus cases are Maharashtra (21), Tamil Nadu (9), Madhya Pradesh (7), Kerala (3), Punjab (2), Gujarat (2), Andhra Pradesh (1), Orissa (1), Rajasthan (1), Jammu (1) and Karnataka (1). So far

two deaths due to Delta Plus have been reported from Madhya Pradesh and one in Maharashtra. The Centre has written to all these states asking them to take immediate steps to contain the spread of Delta Plus.

India on Friday recorded 51,667 fresh cases and 1,329 Covid related deaths. Union health ministry officials said the numbers are higher on some days because the second wave has not subsided completely.

ICMR director general, Dr Balram Bhargava, said both Covidshield and Covaxin work well against all the variants of SARS CoV 2 -- Alpha, Beta, Gamma and Delta. He added that Delta Plus is present in 12 countries.

‘DELHI CLAIMS ON OXYGEN WAS EXAGGERATED’

New Delhi, June 25: The sub-group constituted by the Supreme Court to audit Oxygen consumption in hospitals in national capital during the second wave of Covid-19 said that the Delhi government “exaggerated” the consumption of oxygen and made a claim of 1140 MT, four times higher than the formula for bed capacity requirement of 289 MT. The panel was headed by AIIMS director Randeep Guleria.

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, however, said his only “crime” was that he “fought for the breath of two crore people”. He said those who lost their loved ones due to oxygen shortage should not be called “liars”. — *PTI*

Govt inaction against cops in Tuticorin firing riles HC

M. ARULOLI | DC WITH AGENCY INPUTS MADURAI, JUNE 25

The Madras high court on Friday took the Tamil Nadu government to task for its inaction against the police personnel involved in the firing on people protesting against the Sterlite copper plant at Tuticorin in May 2018 which resulted in 13 casualties.

“It is alarming that the state through police personnel fired on unarmed protestors and no action was taken against them even after three years,” the Madura bench of the high court, comprising Chief Justice Sanjib Banerjee and Justice Sivagnanam, observed.

Taking up a public interests litigation filed by human rights activist Henri Tiphagne challenging the closure of the enquiry by the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) into the police excess, the court

TOUGH QUESTION

Is it possible to hush up the matter by just throwing money at the affected people, asked Chief Justice.

directed the NHRC to forward the copy of its investigation report in a sealed cover to the court in four weeks. It also ordered the state government to file a counter and disclose the interim report of its enquiry commission. “Police excess on unarmed people has to come to light and made public,” the court said.

“Is it possible to hush up the matter by just throwing money at the affected people,” the Chief Justice asked, apparently referring to the ex-gratia announced to the kin of the victims.

“It may not augur well for a civil society governed by the constitutional principles that we have to merely throw money at the

families of the victims and give closure to an incident of possible brutality and excessive police action,” Chief Justice Banerjee added.

He, however, said no conclusion needs to be drawn yet before the facts come to light. But it is necessary the facts come to light and be made public, he said.

Appearing in person, Mr Tiphagne, also an advocate, told the bench that while the NHRC had closed the case in October 2018, it was yet to disclose the report filed by its team which had conducted an investigation at the site.

After considering the “adequate compensation” paid by the state to the victims, other appropriate steps taken to restore peace and normalcy by the government and the appointment of the judicial commission to look into police excesses, if any, the NHRC in its order passed in October 2018 held that “no further intervention in the matter is required”.

SC DIRECTS HC TO RECONSIDER DIDI, MIN PLEA

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

The Supreme Court on Friday directed the Calcutta high court to reconsider a plea by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee and state law minister Moloy Ghatak to take on record their reply affidavit countering the CBI’s plea that they had obstructed the arrest and subsequent production of the accused TMC leaders in the Narada scam case before the trial court on May 17.

The high court by its June 9 order declined to take on record the counter (reply) affidavits by Mr Ghatak and the state government, noting that the affidavits were filed belatedly.

160 MISSING AS MIAMI BUILDING COLLAPSES

Surfside (US), June 25: About 160 people were still unaccounted for Friday a day after an ocean-side condominium building collapsed into a pile of rubble, and searchers combing through a twisted, shifting pile of concrete and metal feared the death toll of at least four could go much higher.

With scores of firefighters working overnight to reach any possible survivors both from under and atop the remains of the building, hopes rested on how quickly crews using dogs and microphones to sift through the wreckage could complete their grim. ■ **P7**

Twitter blocks IT minister for US copyright violation

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Twitter on Friday blocked information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad’s account for an hour for alleged violation of the US Copyright Act, a move the minister said was arbitrary and a gross violation of India’s IT rules.

Hitting out a Twitter, Mr Prasad said in a couple of posts on Koo, another social media platform, that Twitter’s action was a breach of the IT rules, as Twitter failed to give prior notice before denying access to his account. The account was subsequently unblocked after a warning.



Mr Prasad, who is alleged to have breached the copyright law by posting clips of himself from television debates, said: “Twitter denied access to my account for almost an hour on the alleged ground that there was a violation of the US Digital Millennium Copyright Act. Subsequently, they allowed me to access the account.”

The minister added: “It is apparent that my statements calling out the high-handedness and arbitrary actions of Twitter, particularly sharing the clips of my interviews to TV channels and its powerful impact, have clearly ruffled its feathers.” He said Twitter’s actions were “in gross violation of Rule 4 (b) of Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules 2021, as they failed to provide any prior notice before denying me access to my own account.”

Twitter and the government have been at loggerheads over multiple instances in the past few months.

PM taunts Congress with Emergency barb

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Urging people to pledge to do everything possible to strengthen India’s democratic spirit and live up to the values enshrined in the Constitution, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the 46th anniversary of the imposition of Emergency on Friday, said those “dark days” can never be forgotten when the Congress “trampled over our democratic ethos.”

Senior BJP leaders,

including Union ministers, used the hashtag #DARK-DAYOFEMERGENCY to slam the Congress and the then Indira Gandhi-led government for the “monstrous conspiracy to crush Indian democracy.”

“The dark days of Emergency can never be forgotten. The period from 1975 to 1977 witnessed a systematic destruction of institutions. Let us pledge to do everything possible to strengthen India’s democratic spirit, and live up to the values enshrined in our Constitution... This is how



Congress trampled over our democratic ethos. We remember all those greats who resisted the Emergency and protected

Indian democracy,” the Priem Minister tweeted while sharing a link about several draconian measures taken by the then Congress government.

Union home minister Amit Shah said the Congress “murdered the largest democracy in the world” for its selfishness and arrogance of power.

Reacting to Mr Modi’s tweet, Congress general secretary and chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said the time has come for people to rise in unison to assess the “annihilation of

the very foundation of democracy in India by an arbitrary Modi regime.” Hitting back at Mr Modi, Mr Surjewala tweeted, “Says a PM, who is synonymous with three ‘S’ - Suppress, Stifle and Subjugate.”

“A PM-who has undermined Parliament, A PM who has disdain for Constitution, A PM who has eroded Institutions, A PM-who has trampled Democracy, shouldn’t preach, for India is under ‘Modi-gency’ for 7 years,” he alleged.

Sea trials of aircraft carrier INS Vikrant to begin soon

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Defence minister Rajnath Singh, who was in Kochi on Friday to review the construction progress of first indigenous aircraft carrier (IAC) *INS Vikrant*, said Indian Navy’s proactive forward deployment of its assets in sea during the Galwan standoff with China signalled “our intent that we seek peace

but are ready for any eventuality.”

INS Vikrant, being built by Cochin Shipyard will begin sea trials in July-August this year and will be commissioned in first half of 2022 projecting India’s naval power and its reach. It would be India’s most potent sea-based asset. The ship shall operate MiG-29K fighter aircraft, Kamov-31 air early warning helicopters,

the soon to be inducted MH-60R multi-role helicopter and the indigenously manufactured advanced light helicopters. It would offer an incomparable military instrument with its ability to project air power over long distances, including air interdiction, anti-surface warfare, offensive and defensive counter-air, airborne anti-submarine warfare and airborne early warning.



SPORT | 8

India unlikely to get warm-up games in UK

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OTHER STORIES

Air France to introduce Chennai-Paris weekly flight

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 25:

Air France, the French flag carrier will begin its direct operations from June 26, from Paris Charles De Gaulle- Chennai.

The 10 hours and 25 minutes flight will be operated once a week from between Chennai and Paris (Charles De Gaulle). The airline will begin operations on 26th June and its first departure to Paris from Chennai will be on June 28. The airline will arrive on Thursday and depart on Saturday.

According to sources at the airport, this aircraft has a three-class configuration with 276 seats. It has 30 x business class, 21 x premium economy and 225 x economy seats.

The airline had initially planned to restart operations on the Paris-Chennai route as early as June last year. This plan hit the roadblock due to Covid and travel restrictions placed all over the globe. The airline had then announced it would start operating on October 26, 2020 which again was postponed and now it has announced it would commence operations on June 26, 2021.

Metro services on Sundays every 10 minutes

Chennai, June 25: CMRL has decided to operate its services from 7.00 am till 9.00 pm every 10 minutes without peak hours on Sunday (27-06-2021) and all other Sundays and government public holidays until further orders.

CMRL has been strictly following its policy to ensure all passengers wear their face masks properly and a separate squad has also been deployed for this purpose. So far a total of 13 number of passengers have been levied penalty from 21-06-2021 till 24-06-2021 for non-adherence and a sum of ₹2,600 has been collected as penalty, according to a CMRL press release.

Beaches opened for morning walks from 5 am to 9 am

From P1

Other relaxations include opening of beaches for morning walk between 5 and 9 am, allowing match factories to operate with 100 percent staff and removal of e-registration for travel for weddings within districts falling under Type 2 and 3.

In Type-1 districts comprising Coimbatore, Nilgiris, Tiruppur, Erode, Salem, Karur, Namakkal, Thanjavur, Thiruvavur, Nagapattinam and Mylāduthurai, tea shops and roadside eateries will be allowed to offer takeaway service from 6 am to 7 pm.

Shops that would be allowed to open from 9 am to 7 pm are those selling electrical appliances, hardware materials, books and stationery, footwear, vessels, home appliances, vehicle spare parts, construction material, mobile phones and computers.

Photo and video studios and copying centres too can open from 9 am to 7 pm while private offices, banks, insurance companies, other financial firms and ATMs will function with 50 per cent staff.

Only government essential services, including registrar offices, will function with 100 percent attendance.

Wishing Covid warriors



Children's greeting cards sent to corona frontline workers displayed at Government Omandur Medical College and Hospital. Hospital Dean Dr Jayanthi admires the cards on Friday.

— DC

Court upholds man's 10-year RI for molesting 11-year-old girl

J. STALIN | D
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

Expressing shock over the increase in the number of cases, where children are sexually assaulted by known persons, the Madras high court has upheld an order of a trial court, convicting and sentencing an accused to 10 years RI for raping his 11-year-old relative girl on July 27, 2010, in Pudukkottai.

"The right of the female child is always staked to peril. Despite the stringent laws and punishment, it is shocking and disturbing to note the increase in the number of cases where children are sexually assaulted by known persons. Such brutal acts create a deep impact in the minds of the child, traumatises her for a long period, or her entire life, affecting her physically as well as psychologically," said Justice K.Murali Shankar while dismissing



an appeal filed by the accused Mookan alias Murugan, challenging the order of the Mahila court, dated January 7, 2016.

The case of the prosecution was that on July 26, 2010, at about 10 pm, the complainant and his wife had gone to attend a condolence nearby, while their minor daughter (victim) and other children were asleep inside their house. The accused, who came to attend condolence, parked his cycle in front of the house of the complainant and after attending the condolence, while returning at about 3 a.m. on July 27, 2010, to take his cycle, and on

coming to know that the complainant and his wife were in the condolence house, lifted the minor girl, who was sleeping, by closing her mouth and took her to a field nearby. After disrobing himself, he disrobed her, committed penetrative sexual assault and thereby, the accused had committed the offence punishable under section 376 (2) (f) (committing rape on a woman when she is under 12 years of age). After the victim girl informed the incident to her parents, her father lodged a complaint against the accused, who was his relative, and the police registered a case.

After a full-fledged trial, the Mahila Court in Pudukkottai, had on January 7, 2016 convicted and sentenced the accused to 10 years RI. Aggrieved, the accused filed the present appeal.

Dismissing the appeal, Justice Murali Shankar

SI arrested for sexually harassing minor girl

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

A Chennai police sub inspector was arrested on the charges of sexual assault of a 15-year-old minor girl in Madhavaram.

The arrested has been identified as Sathish Kumar (37), a resident of Tiruvallur. He was working in a special team of police attached to the Kasimedu police station.

Police sources said the arrest came after a series of sexual exploitation by the policeman was exposed by a Tamil publication, based on a version given by the girl's father. Earlier when he was working in Madhavaram

When the girl threatened to disclose the matter to her father, the SI threatened to kill her father and brother with the help of rowdies in Kasimedu. Police said Sathish Kumar, made sexual advances to the teenager which her mother declined. However, Sathish Kumar managed to convince the woman and her sister by giving them iPhone and ₹1 lakh.

police station, he developed an extramarital relationship with the victim's mother who works in a ration shop. He later frequently visited her house and developed a relationship with the woman.

When the girl threatened to disclose the matter to her father, the SI threatened to kill her father and brother with the help of rowdies in Kasimedu. Police said Sathish Kumar, made sexual advances to the teenager which her mother declined. However, Sathish Kumar managed to convince the woman and her sister by giving them iPhone and ₹1 lakh.

He sexually harassed the victim multiple times, the sources said.

Unable to bear the harassment, the girl told her father about the SI. The girl's father tried to lodge a complaint with a local station, but he was chased away. Following which he approached the

Tamil magazine, which published his version. Deputy commissioner of police Jayalakshmi (Crime against Women and Children wing) ordered an inquiry into the matter and the accused was arrested subsequently.

A case was booked under sections 9 (Aggravated sexual assault) (a) (Whoever, being a police officer, commits sexual assault on a child), 10(Punishment for Aggravated sexual assault) of Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act and 506 (Punishment for criminal intimidation) of IPC.

The accused Sathish Kumar, the victim's mother and her aunt were remanded to judicial custody.

Sessions court refuses bail to AIADMK ex-min Manikandan

OP ARULN | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

The principal sessions court on Friday dismissed the bail application of former AIADMK minister Dr. M. Manikandan in connection with a rape charge by an actress.

Citing the verdict of the Madras high court on Manikandan's anticipatory bail plea recently, judge R. Selvakumar said the high court categorically held that the offence under section 376 IPC is made out with available materials and so this court is not in a position to differ from the said findings.

Judge Selvakumar said Manikandan is a powerful person having political and money power. If he is released on bail, there is every chance to tamper with the investigation.

Considering the short duration of custody and the nature of offences involved, this court is not inclined to grant him bail at present.

Manikandan was arrested on June 20, 2021 from Bengaluru by all-women police, Adyar.

The counsel for the petitioner submitted that a false complaint has been filed against the former minister in order to spoil his reputation. The so-called physical relationship between him and the complainant had taken place with full consent of the complainant. He was lured by the complainant.

Opposing the bail plea, the city public prosecutor submitted that with great difficulty, the accused was secured on June 20, 2021 from Bengaluru after the Madras high court dismissed his anticipatory

bail application. Investigation is at an early stage. The petitioner is a former MLA and former minister having much money and muscle power. Releasing him now is likely to affect the investigation and he may tamper with the witnesses using his clout.

The judge said the petitioner is not a layman. He was a responsible person who held a high position in the government. He had sexually abused the complainant is almost an admitted fact. Though he originally proclaimed his innocence about the identity of the complainant, subsequently, during the course of arguments he almost admitted their affinity. The woman says she gave consent only on believing his promise to marry her after divorcing his first wife.

Chennai police detain Kishore Swamy under Goondas Act

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

Social media commentator Kishore K. Swamy arrested by Chennai police for circulating defamatory posts against Chief Minister M.K. Stalin and former DMK leaders Annadurai and M. Karunanidhi on June 14 was detained under the Goondas Act on Friday.

Kishore Swamy was arrested on June 14 from his residence by the Sankar Nagar Police following a complaint from DMK IT wing coordinator Ravichandran for posting and circulating abusive, defamatory content against former chief ministers and present Chief Minister on his Twitter.

Acting on the complaint, police registered cases against Kishore Swamy

Kishore Swamy was held on June 14 by the Sankar Nagar Police after a complaint from DMK IT wing coordinator Ravichandran for posting and circulating abusive, defamatory content against former CMs, present CM on his twitter

under various sections of the IPC, including under Sec 153 (Wantonly giving provocation with intent to cause riot), 505(1)(b) (Causing fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may be induced to commit an offence against the state or the public tranquility) and 505(1)(c) (Whoever makes, publishes or circulates any statement or report containing rumour or alarming news with intent to create or pro-

mote, or which is likely to create or promote feelings of enmity, hatred or ill-will between different religious, racial, language or regional groups or castes or communities).

He was earlier arrested by the city police for posting derogatory comments against woman journalists Chennai Police Commissioner Shankar Jiwal invoked the Goondas act against Kishore on Friday

The Tamil Nadu Prevention of Dangerous Activities of Bootleggers, Cyberlaw offenders, Drug-offenders, Goondas, Immoral Traffic Offenders, Forest-offenders, Sand-offenders, Sexual-offenders, Slum-grabbers and Video Pirates Act, 1982, otherwise known as the Goondas Act allows authorities to do preventive detention of habitual offenders.

3,24,000 doses of Covishield arrive in Chennai

DC CORRESPONDENT
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

The Tamil Nadu health department on Thursday received 3,24,000 doses of the Covishield vaccine. On Friday afternoon, 3,24,000 doses of Covishield vaccine, manufactured by Serum Institute in Pune arrived here at Chennai airport on an Indigo airlines flight.

The processing of the shipment at the Chennai airport was completed quickly and it was handed over to department officials, airport sources said.

The vaccines were sent to the Directorate Of Medical And Rural Health Services in Teynampet in Chennai.

G. BABU JAYAKUMAR |
DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

If Chief Minister M. K. Stalin has launched a vociferous fight against the Union government's move to take control of minor ports from the state governments, former chief minister M. Karunanidhi had once openly expressed his opposition to such an idea.

Recalling the incident that happened during a meeting at the Chennai Port Trust, Tamil Chamber of Commerce president Chozha Naachiar Rajasekar said Karunanidhi had reprimanded the then Union commerce minister Murali Manojan for telling the state government to hand over minor ports to the Union government if it could not develop them properly.

Rajasekar, who was a board member of the Chennai Port Trust, remem-

bered Karunanidhi telling Maran not to express such ideas of handing over any right of the state to the Union government at any time. The state had been fighting for autonomy for a long time, the then chief minister had said.

Besides Karunanidhi and Maran, the then Union minister of state for shipping T. G. Venkatraman was on the stage, on which the chief minister replied to Maran immediately, said Rajasekar, who has now appreciated Stalin, through a letter, for raising objections to the Draft Indian Ports Bill 2021.

Extending the full support of the Tamil Chamber of Commerce to Stalin's move to stop the Union shipping ministry from wresting the powers over minor ports from the state governments though his mobilization of the Chief Ministers of coastal states, he said the State

Chambers of Commerce lost their representation in the boards of Port Trusts after the Major Ports Act was amended.

Rajasekar, who was the board member of Chennai Port Trust during the tenures of T. R. Baalu, G. K. Vasan and Nitin Gadkari as Union shipping ministers, said though the Tamil Chamber of Commerce took up the matter with the Parliamentary committee on transport and even made a plea at the Parliamentary sub-committee meeting, nothing was done.

He had objected to the denial of representation in boards to State Chambers of Commerce on the ground that foreign exchange earnings and payment of customs duty in all major ports were being fully contributed by members of the various chambers.

Nominate RDOs in each dt to issue community, other certificates: HC

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

Pointing out that many number of cases are coming up before the court in which people belonging to other communities obtain false SC/ST community certificates from authorities, who also for various reasons, merrily issue such certificates, violating the constitutional rights of SC/ST people and by obtaining such false certificates, undeserving persons get unjustly enriched knocking away the rights of those belonging to SC/ST community, the Madras high court has made a suggestion to the state government to nominate an officer, not below the rank of Revenue Divisional Officer, in each district, who alone shall be competent to conduct an enquiry and issue not only SC/ST community certificates, but also income certificates and nativity certificates.

A division bench comprising

Justice N.Kirubakaran and T.V.Thamilselvi was passing interim orders on a Public Interest Litigation filed by Nirguna of Krishnagiri district. Suo motu impleading the state revenue secretary as fourth respondent in the case, the bench said the newly impleaded 4th respondent

has to respond with regard to implementation of the suggestion made by this court, i.e., nominating a Revenue Divisional Officer in each district exclusively as competent authorities to issue community certificates, income certificates, nativity certificates after due enquiry.

In its order, the bench said

like Dr Anandayya in the interest of society.

A division bench comprising Justices N.Kirubakaran and T.V.Thamilselvi made the observation while passing interim orders on a PIL filed by D.Saravanan, which sought a direction to the Union government to grant permission to multiple pharmaceutical companies to manufacture the 2-Deoxy D-Glucose (2DG) oral powder with affordable cost for the patients affected by

Covid-19 infection. The bench said pursuant to the 24 hours notice issued by this court with regard to the prayer made by the petitioner, Additional solicitor general R. Sankaranarayanan submitted that anti-Covid-19 therapeutic application of the drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG) has been developed by Institute of Nuclear Medicine and Allied Science, a lab of Defence Research and Development

Organisation, in collaboration with Dr.Reddy's Laboratories (DRL). Hyderabad and clinical trial results have shown this molecule helps in faster recovery of hospitalised patients and reduces supplemental oxygen dependence. Further, a higher proportion of patients treated with 2-DG showed RT-PCR negative conversion in Covid patients and that the drug will be of immense benefit to the people suffering from Covid-19.

The bench said as regards Dr Anandayya of Krishpatnam, Nellore district, who has developed a medicine which has been proved to be very effective in treating Covid patients within half-an-hour of applying the said medicine on eyes and nose of Covid patients and that the Andhra Pradesh government has also analysed the medicine and found it to be

very effective, ASG Sankaranarayanan submitted that pursuant to the directions given by the high court of Andhra Pradesh, the said medicine was now being analysed by Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). He undertakes to get instructions as to when the said process would be over so that the medicine could be made available not only to Covid patients within the country, but also worldwide as it

information, with regard to the community status of his father from Block Educational Officer, Soolagiri taluk, Krishnagiri district which got elected as president of Ayyanarpalli panchayat, which was exclusively reserved for ST. Coming to know about the fraud committed by him, by obtaining RTI

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SHORT TAKES

PAYAL ROHATGI
'THREATENS'
RESIDENTS, HELD

Ahmedabad, June 25: Bollywood actor Payal Rohatgi was arrested by the Ahmedabad city police on Friday for allegedly threatening the residents of her housing society, an official said.

An FIR was registered against her on Thursday based on a complaint lodged by society chairman Dr Parag Shah, inspector A.S. Roy of Satellite police station said.

The 36-year-old actor, who has been living with her parents in a posh society in Satellite area for the last over one year, was booked for uttering obscene words (IPC section 294-b), intentional insult (504) and criminal intimidation (506), said Roy, quoting the FIR. In his complaint, Shah claimed that Rohatgi has been harassing society members including children for some time, and she once even threatened children that she would "break their legs" if they played in the common area of the society.

Although she does not own a house in the society herself, she attended its annual general meeting with her parents on June 20 and refused to leave despite being pointed out that she was not a member, Shah alleged. Rohatgi abused society members during the meeting and posted an abusive message on the society's WhatsApp group, the FIR alleged.

She also threatened the members that she could get them arrested in false cases, the complaint alleged. Shah also claimed that the actor targeted him and other members on her Instagram account. Probe is on, the inspector said.

WB FAKE VACCINE
RACKET LINKS
BACK TO TMC

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
& PRANMOY
BRAHMACHARI | DC
KOLKATA/BERHAMPORE,
JUNE 25

The major fake Covid-19 vaccination racket, which Tollywood actor and Trinamul Congress MP of Jadavpur Mimi Chakraborty claimed to have busted with the help of Kolkata Police, after getting a false dose administered at a camp run by a bogus IAS officer, has boomeranged to her own party and its government in West Bengal within two days.

The backfire unfolded after photos featuring three TMC MLAs, including two heavy-weight cabinet colleagues of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, and a Rajya Sabha MP allegedly with the arrested kingpin Debanjan Deb, at various events were revealed by the BJP on Thursday evening.

The two state cabinet members are Firhad Hakim and Subrata Mukherjee. While Hakim is the state transport minister, Mukherjee is the state panchayat minister. Accused in the Narada sting bribery, they were arrested and chargesheeted by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) last month. The third TMC MLA is Debasish Kumar who was elected from Rashbehari seat this time. He is also a member of the board of administrators under Hakim at the Kolkata Municipal Corporation where Debanjan claimed to have been posted as a joint commissioner and allegedly forged official documents, signatures and emblems to run the racket.

TMC Rajya Sabha MP is Dr Santanu Sen who is now the Indian Medical Association West Bengal branch state secretary.

Homebound



President Ram Nath Kovind boards a special train on Friday to his birthplace in Uttar Pradesh from Safdarjung railway station in New Delhi. He will interact with his old acquaintances from school days and the early days of his social service. It would be after a gap of 15 years that an incumbent president is travelling by train.

— PTI

Pawar says Congress will
have to come on board

Pune, June 25: Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) chief Sharad Pawar on Friday claimed that formation of any national alliance was not the topic of discussion at the meeting of eight opposition parties hosted by him earlier this week, but also said that if any such coalition emerges, its leadership will have to be "collective".

"The aim of the meeting at his Delhi residence on Tuesday was to discuss how they can support the ongoing farmers' agitation, he told reporters here.

Speculation was rife that the agenda of the meeting, for which no Congress leader was present, was to discuss a possible alliance which could be an alternative to the BJP.

"Currently, farmers are protesting on the borders of Delhi. The protest is apolitical, however, we thought as it is related to agriculture, in which way we can support them..The aim was to come together and discuss how we can help the farmers by raising the issues in Parliament and giving suggestions to the Centre," Mr Pawar said. The idea was to come out with a white paper and put forth the issues related to the farm sector before the Union government, the former Union agriculture minister said.

Maha tightens curbs to
tackle Delta plus variant

SONU
SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

In the wake of Delta plus variant found in the state, Maharashtra has decided to impose stricter Covid restrictions in all districts notwithstanding weekly positivity rate and hospital beds availability. Maharashtra also became the first state in the country to adminis-

ter more than three crore vaccine doses. Maharashtra chief secretary Sitaram Kunte on Friday issued a notification stating that the first two levels having maximum relaxations have been removed till further order.

The government notification said, "given that the virus causing Covid is undergoing mutations in various geographies, and that these mutations are displaying more tra-

him leading such alliance, the veteran leader said, "Sharad Pawar did all such things for several years, but now my role will be to help, offer guidance and make efforts to keep everybody united."

On Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with leaders from Jammu and Kashmir and the talk of holding elections there, Mr Pawar said he welcomed the move. "When the decision to remove the special status of Kashmir (under Article 370) was taken, we had cautioned the government that it will have bad repercussions, but without paying heed to us, the decision was taken. It is good that now the government has finally come to the conclusion that the decision which was taken was not right," he said.

On Maharashtra Congress leaders' statements about contesting future elections without alliance, Mr Pawar said all parties have the right to expand their base. "To boost the morale of party workers, we all speak (in this way). If Congress is trying to do the same, we welcome it, because it is their right and they should do it," he said.

— PTI

J&K unhappy with leaders' show

Netizens ridicule leaders for their failure in presenting the case of people

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, JUNE 25

The sequel of Thursday's all-party meet on Jammu and Kashmir is a huge disappointment for many people in the Union Territory (UT) who took to social media platform to ridicule the invitees for their perceived failure in presenting the case of the people they claim to represent before Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, "expressly".

More importantly, as some of them pointed out, the mainstream leaders from the Valley did not speak in unison on the vital issue of restoration of the erstwhile state's special status with some of them taking refuge under the pretext of it being sub judice.

"The BJP leaders including ministers have been repeatedly and vociferously saying Articles 370 and 35A can't come back even as the matter is before the

Supreme Court. If it is not sub judice for them why are some of our so-called leaders so apologetic about it?" asked one of them.

Senior journalist Altaf Husain tweeted, "All-party meet on Kashmir yields nothing. Some leaders have, by their statements after the meeting, proved that they are collaborators. Others have proved they are spineless and inconsequential".

But Mushtaq Ahmed Alaqaband, a Srinagar resident, disagreed with him. He said, "I don't think major political decisions can be made in a single meeting, but require a continuous and comprehensive negotiation process, and Thursday's meeting was the beginning".

Arshad Ahmed, another resident, said, "People here as well in Jammu had attached several hopes with the meeting. But once again, they have been dis-

appointed."

Elaborating, he said, "If you wanted to win the hearts of the Kashmiris you should have sent through these leaders a gift, big enough to restore their faith in you and these leaders as well. Had you done it, people would have begun to trust you, these meetings and the entire system."

However, Sheikh Danish — also a Valley resident — was of the view that no one was any optimistic about this whole exercise. "In these two years, everything is finished. People here are living a miserable life. I think all those invited to the Prime Minister's meeting are running for chair."

They have always deceived people," he said and added, "Article 370 and 35A were taken away by Parliament and it alone can return these to us...neither Mehbooba Mufti nor Omar Abdullah."

Mehbooba must go
to Pak: UP minister

Ballia (UP), June 25: A UP minister has accused the Congress and Samajwadi Party of being allies of Islamic terrorists, and said madrassas are helping in the religious conversion of the poor with people involved in it getting money directly in their accounts from Muslim countries.

The allegations were made by Uttar Pradesh minister of state for parliamentary affairs Anand Swaroop Shukla while talking to reporters on Thursday late night.

The minister also attacked PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti saying "her heart is in Pakistan" and asked her to go to Pakistan.

Facts have come to light

that help of madrassas and voluntary organisations is being taken for the conversion and the people involved in the religious conversion of the poor and the deaf-mute children are getting money from Muslim countries in their personal accounts, Shukla said while talking to reporters at his residence here.

The conversion by inducing fear, greed and delusion is completely illegal and unconstitutional.

The Yogi government and the ATS is taking and will take strict action against this, Shukla said, referring to the recent arrest of two men allegedly involved in running a campaign to convert the poor and deaf-mute children to Islam.

— PTI

Rain alert



An LPG cylinder delivery man wades through a flooded street during high tide in Ganga river, at Kalighat area in Kolkata on Friday. Meanwhile, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Friday issued an 'orange' alert of heavy to very heavy rainfall for several districts in Madhya Pradesh and also a 'yellow' alert of heavy rain in some other areas. The forecasts are valid till Saturday morning.

— PTI

HC GRANTS BAIL
TO AYESHA
SULTHANA

Kochi, June 25: The Kerala High Court on Friday granted anticipatory bail to Lakshadweep filmmaker Ayesha Sulthana in a sedition case registered against her by the Kavaratti police.

A case was registered on June 9 under section 124-A (sedition) and 153 B (hate speech) of IPC on the basis of a petition lodged by a political leader hailing from Kavaratti.

Granting bail, Justice Ashok Menon said there was no apparent indication in her statement, which amounts to imputations or assertions prejudicial to the national interest, nor does it propagate any class of persons against another group of persons.

— PTI

ED searches Deshmukh's five
premises in Mumbai, Nagpur

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, JUNE 25

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Friday conducted searches on the five premises of former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh in Mumbai and Nagpur in connection with a money laundering case.

According to sources, the searches have been carried out as the ED has found a money trail of Rs four crore that was allegedly extorted from few bar owners in Mumbai by now suspended Assistant Police Inspector Sachin Waze at the behest of Deshmukh.

The probe agency has also recorded statements of some of the bar owners.

The ED had registered a case against Deshmukh soon after CBI registered an

● **ED REGISTERED** a case against Deshmukh soon after CBI registered an FIR against him in the case relating to the alleged demand of ₹100 crore as extortion from bars and hotels in Mumbai.

FIR against him in the case relating to the alleged demand of ₹100 crore as extortion from bars and hotels in Mumbai.

The agency has so far conducted a series of raids and searches in the city on Deshmukh and his son's associates including chartered accountants.

In Mumbai, the central probe agency also searched the premises of Deshmukh's personal assistant Kundan Shinde and personal secretary Sanjeev Palande.

In April the CBI had also carried out searches in Mumbai and Nagpur in this case registered with the Central Bureau of Investigation.

The CBI registered a case against Deshmukh following a preliminary inquiry against him. The high court had ordered the CBI to conduct the inquiry on the complaint of city based lawyer Jaysree Patil.

Patil had filed a petition seeking inquiry into the allegations made by Param Bir Singh, former Mumbai police commissioner, in a letter written to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray alleging corruption charges against Deshmukh. Patil had filed the petition claiming that the police didn't take any action on her complaint against Deshmukh.

COVID | HORRORS

Gross discrepancy in the data recorded: Report

Panel: Delhi O2 claims exaggerated

New Delhi, June 25: The sub-group constituted by the Supreme Court to audit Oxygen consumption in hospitals in national capital during the second wave of Covid-19 said that the Delhi government 'exaggerated' the consumption of oxygen and made a claim of 1,140 MT, four times higher than the formula for bed capacity requirement of 289 MT.

The five-member panel headed by AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria said the Delhi government had made the claims for allocation of 700 MT oxygen on April 30 of medical grade Oxygen using a wrong formula.

The top court had on May 6 named a sub-group for carrying out the audit exercise for Delhi's health infrastructure and allocation of

oxygen and said that it shall consists of Randeep Guleria of AIIMS, Sandeep Budhiraja of Max Healthcare and two IAS officers not below the rank of Joint Secretary — one each from the Centre and the Delhi government.

The panel in its report pointed out that four model hospitals in Delhi have claimed extremely high Oxygen consumption with very few beds and the claims appeared to be clearly erroneous, leading to extremely skewed information and significantly higher Oxygen requirement for entire state of Delhi.

The panel said that during the meetings of the sub-group, it was repeatedly noted that there was a gross discrepancy in the data recorded from proformas. — PTI

MY CRIME, I FOUGHT FOR BREATH OF 2 CR
PEOPLE: KEJRIWAL OVER PANEL'S REPORT

New Delhi, June 25: In face of the BJP's accusation of "criminal negligence" citing a report that the Delhi government "exaggerated" oxygen requirement during Covid-19 second wave, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Friday said his only "crime" was that he "fought for the breath of two crore people". He also said that those who lost their loved ones due to the shortage of oxygen should not be called "liars".

A sub-group constituted by the Supreme Court to audit oxygen consumption in the national capital's hospitals has said that the

Delhi government "exaggerated" consumption of the life-saving gas.

The five-member panel, headed by AIIMS director Randeep Guleria, said that during the second wave of Covid-19 infections, the Delhi government had made claims for allocation of 700 MT of oxygen on April 30 using a "wrong formula". Kejriwal took to Twitter to say, "My crime — I fought for the breath of my two crore people. When you were doing an election rally, I was awake all night arranging for oxygen. I fought, pleaded to get oxygen for people." — PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

26 JUNE 2021

J&K: Delimitation, polls on; statehood is carrot

There was no official agenda set for Prime Minister Narendra Modi's meeting with leaders of mainstream parties of Jammu and Kashmir last Thursday. That was evidently done to let the Valley politicians steam off if they so wished about the events of August 5, 2019 when the state's constitutional autonomy was taken away and its status reduced to that of a Union territory. But that does not mean Delhi did not have an agenda. And it is on this scheme of things that the PM was apparently able to secure the agreement of the Kashmiri leaders, although no papers appear to have been signed.

It's three years since the last popular government was pulled down. In this time no major objectives cited as justification for ending J&K's constitutional status—ending of terrorism, rapid development, and squelching of the separatist mindset (which does influence a segment of the population) have been achieved, although the Union home ministry has made extravagant claims. An elected government had to be installed.

To make that possible, the very politicians who were locked up in August 2019, and called the "Gupkar gang", had to be persuaded to engage in dialogue with the PM. And they did. This is perhaps the Modi government's singular achievement. But it is hard to bet on the people. It is useful to remember that alienation in the Valley has never been so complete. Still, as a rule the people of Kashmir do not refuse dialogue, and that is what we just saw. Does this mean that a chapter of hope has opened after the darkness that descended two years ago? Hardly. In no way can Mr Modi's effort be compared with the mood that captured the Valley when another PM — in a speech in Srinagar — spoke of meeting the aspirations of the people in a spirit of "insaniyat, jamhooriyat, Kashmiriyat". Alas, the present dispensation in Delhi lacks credibility in Kashmir as well as in Hindu-majority Jammu.

However, people in J&K are fed up with bureaucratic rule in which they have no voice. They have been hungering for an early Assembly election, and their politicians could not have turned against the popular mood. But the promise of Assembly polls comes with a caveat — that there would be a fresh delimitation exercise in the UT while the national-level delimitation is slated for 2026.

A plausible reason for this is the decades-old demand of the Sangh Parivar for more Hindu-dominated constituencies in the Muslim-majority state in the belief that this might offer a chance to have a Hindu CM. Will this hope of the BJP materialise after delimitation? That is an open question.

In light of the Thursday meeting, delimitation and state polls are now officially on the cards, and the Valley's main politicians appear to have lent the process their sanction. Without their endorsement these processes would lack credibility.

In spite of impassioned appeals by senior elements among those gathered for the discussion with the PM, the Centre has not budged on restoring J&K's statehood. The official mantra is this would happen at an "appropriate time". This suggests that J&K will be run from the Centre as a UT even after the Assembly poll. This leaves questions: Is the election idea deceptive? Is it what the people want? In the final analysis, will Kashmir politicians agree to such an election? The fundamental subject of restoring J&K's autonomy is before the Supreme Court, and that was cited as a reason to stymie discussion on it on Thursday.

McAfee: Fame and misfortune

The rich and famous may be destined to living their lives in a goldfish bowl unless they get obsessively reclusive. The rich also tend to come in all shapes, sizes and lifestyles with the only constant in their lives being that they are invariably led under public scrutiny. The cybersecurity pioneer John McAfee did not, however, fall into any well-known stereotypes of the rich with their lavish lifestyles whose privacy is invariably invaded by the tabloids, especially when their marriages run into the rocks as they often tend to in that charmed circle.

McAfee was an unusual man who made his fame and a bit of fortune when the first major computer virus named "Brain" hit the web in 1986 and he devised ways to combat it. To his misfortune he left the company in 1994 long after which Intel took it over, in 2011, for \$7.68 billion and built up a customer base of 500 million. McAfee's expertise in computer security meant he made a small pile himself but he said he lost most of it in the 2008 crash. In a replay of the sour grapes fable, he knocked McAfee for what it had become without him but all that brought him was 10 million viewers and more notoriety than fame.

His troubles as a disillusioned millionaire may serve as a general warning to all of his ilk. He seemed to lose his self control when suspected of shooting a neighbour in a tiny island off Belize because that man may have poisoned four of his dogs. He somehow emerged from it unscathed until he ran afoul of the US tax authorities. Avoiding income tax may be a plaything of the rich but McAfee, once a wannabe US presidential candidate, simply refused to pay taxes on principle and ended up in a Spanish jail where he said he didn't like the food. The fear of extradition to 30 years in a US prison pushed him into taking his own life, a final warning then that fame and fortune can lead to Shakespearean tragedy too.

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Subhani



Do Indians and our govt really care about sports?



Shobhaa's Take

India rediscovered legendary athlete Milkha Singh after he died of Covid-19 complications at a Chandigarh hospital just five days after he lost Nirmal, his wife of 58 years, to the same disease. An avalanche of tributes poured in, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi calling him a "colossal sportsman who captured the nation's imagination". Several flowery tributes followed, but one thing that struck me amid all this gush was the sad fact that this outstanding sportsman, who brought so much fame and glory to India when he "flew" on the track, had only got the Padma Shri back in 1959, and nothing since. He declined the Arjuna Award and sulked publicly, hinting he expected a Padma Bhushan. We all know how Padma awards work; but surely years later Milkha should have been "upgraded"!

We can still do it! So many other sports stars have been richly rewarded for their achievements. Bharat Ratna Sachin Tendulkar, for example. No disrespect, but if a world-class cricketer can get the country's highest civilian award, why not an internationally recognised track star? There is talk of a posthumous award for Milkha, but frankly posthumous awards have little meaning. The recipient passes away without the thrill and joy of being publicly feted. Posthumous awards are a waste of time; those deserving should be celebrated when they are hale and hearty and can cherish the honour with their loved ones.

Milkha Singh must have been a fairly modest man: a huge attribute in today's times when every

second person is a brazen hustler. Had Milkha been shrewder or more calculating, he would have milked his awe-inspiring status and demanded all sorts of privileges, like many others. I watched *Bhaag Milkha, Bhaag* thrice in 2013. For one, I was a track athlete myself, and know what it takes to breast that tape and create new records. Farhan Akhtar played Milkha in the biopic, which grossed over ₹100 crores. Apparently, Milkha asked for ₹1 as his fee, but insisted that a share of the profits go to his foundation. Akhtar did a convincing job of not just acquiring a runner's taut frame, but sensitively portraying a runner's anxieties and vulnerabilities. The man behind the movie, Rakeysh Omprakash Mehra, said of Milkha: "He believed there are no short cuts if you want to be the best in the world."

It's not too late to course correct. Governments and sports bodies the world over are commissioning statues of living sports heroes — Rafael Nadal recently posed in front of his magnificent statue that was unveiled at Roland Garros as Rafa fans worldwide cheered and applauded the legend, winner of 20 Grand slams. In India, the politics of erecting statues of public figures is mired in controversy. It's bad enough that we have to endure the mediocrity of *netas* while they are alive. It's much worse to have precious urban spaces blocked by ugly statues of awful people whose "contribution" is dodgy at best. I'm sure nobody would question an appropriate statue of "The Flying Sikh" (a title given to him by Pakistan's Ayub Khan) outside Chandigarh airport. There is a wax statue of his at Delhi's Madame Tussaud's

museum. But is that really enough? Milkha Singh was orphaned during Partition and saw five members of his family being butchered. He arrived as a refugee in Delhi and joined the Indian Army after abandoning plans to become a dacoit out of sheer frustration! He went on to bring glory to the nation as a four-time Asian Games gold medallist. His 400 metres timing of 45.6 seconds was unbroken for 38 years. What a story for youngsters to derive inspiration from!

India really needs to value its sporting greats and reward them suitably. Since I am one of the growing voices saying "No" to the Tokyo Olympics (23 July-8 August 2021), I read sports minister Kiren Rijiju's comments on India's participation with interest. "This time we are aiming high, with full confidence and I believe we should do better than any of our previous performances." Wait a minute, Sirji. Our "best" show was way back in 2012, when we came back with six measly medals. Minister *saab* is expecting a record haul and says he has interacted with most of our elite players and Olympians. For the record, Mr Rijiju's ministry spent ₹1,000 crores in the past four years preparing for the Olympics.

While I admire his faith and am also hoping for a decent showing this year, despite the pandemic with all its challenges, it must be said that our contingent came back with two medals from the 2016 Rio Games (where China won 70). At that time, I was slaughtered across the social media for "criticising" our athletes for their dismal performance.

This outstanding sportsman had only got the Padma Shri back in 1959, and nothing since. He declined the Arjuna Award. We all know how Padma awards work; but surely Milkha should have been 'upgraded'!

formance. Our athletes are only as good as their support system. Mr Rijiju is a smart, young, dynamic politician (future Prime Minister material). He has as much riding on our medal haul as the athletes themselves, who have trained hard for this momentous event.

The problem is our casual attitude towards sports. Apart from cricket, almost no other sporting activity is "recognised" or encouraged as enthusiastically. Milkha Singh's son Jeev Milkha Singh (also an Arjuna Award winner) is arguably one of India's best golfers. We have our star tennis players and more recently, badminton is also receiving its due, along with table tennis. Our staple — hockey — where we used to be world leaders — has been relegated to a less hallowed position, after we failed to win any significant title after dominating the game for decades. The mindset of most Indian parents has not shifted sufficiently to support the sporting dreams of their children. Golf and tennis are seen as elitist sports that require generous financial support. Sports scholarships are hard to come by. Talented athletes have it tough. It's only now that we see women boxers and wrestlers coming into their own and shining at global events. As are female shooters. Archery is finding takers across the country, but in terms of commercial success, the megabucks are made by cricketers, and cricketers alone. With our Olympics contingent all set to compete in the most prestigious sporting event on earth, here's wishing them love and luck. Milkha Singh titled his autobiography *The Race of My Life*, and the nation ran it with him. His race ended on June 15, 2021. It's time to chorus "Bhaag India, Bhaag", and hope Mr Rijiju's prediction of a rich Olympics' haul goes beyond wishful thinking.

Instagram handle: @ShobhaaDe; Twitter: @DeShobhaa

LETTERS

DON'T LOSE TEMPER

The killing of an ordinary merchant for insolent conduct in public by a cop on the road is another example of tactlessness and intolerance on the part of the police who are expected to possess extreme sobriety and tolerance while discharging their duties. The very nature of their duties involves chances of losing temper and tolerance due to the rude and unruly behaviour of a few lawless members of the public. But if the policemen themselves lose temper and resort to high degree violence every time they confront unruly people they will only incur the risk of becoming an enemy of the people and such confrontations between the police and the public are never good for the peace of the state. The video of the Salem incident shows unwanted force applied on a senseless person due to overconsumption of alcohol. The SSI could have handled the situation in a clever manner by just bundling him into an auto or van with the help of the public and booked him for unruly conduct in public.

B S. Jayaraman Iyer, Coimbatore

CHAMPION KIWIS

New Zealand played exceedingly well to beat India in the inaugural World Test Championship final in Southampton. It was the dismal batting performance of India that cost them the match. Kiwi pacers Tim Southee and Kyle Jamieson really proved to be a thorn in the flesh of Indian batsmen including Virat Kohli and Rohit Sharma in both the innings and paved the way for their team's splendid victory. Kane Williamson, the New Zealand skipper deserves praise for utilising his resources in the best manner and scoring an unbeaten half-century (52) himself in the second innings to script a glorious chapter in world Test history.

S. Ramakrishnasayee, Chennai

It is quite unfortunate that India failed in the ultimate Test. Though India fought valiantly to stage a comeback, the final hour of the reserve day was most interesting and memorable. New Zealand deserved a win for its batting. Congratulations to Kane Williamson & co. The batting of captain Kane and Taylor with 52 and 47 not out in the second innings deserves special mention. Also, the bowling of Southee and Boult was superb. Southee became the leading wicket-taker for the Kiwis with 56 wickets in 11 Tests. Our batting with no batsman making 50 is hard to digest. India could at least have forced a draw. Rishab Pant and Ashwin gave some hope but could not take the pressure. It is a well-deserved victory for the Kiwis.

Gururajan Ramachandran, Chennai

Farrukh Dhondy
Cabbages & Kings



"The poets have all claimed the wine
From Rumi to Hafiz
I asked if they meant the draught
divine
And they said "mind your own biz!"
Now Bachchoo cries out in vain to Saki
Who replies with a fiendish grin
"Abh sab khuttam, Koochh nahi baki
The wages of your sin!"

— From **The Regrets of Messrs Rowe, Rowe and K Gumby-Harer**, by Bachchoo

Of 'flat earth' & science denial: New orthodoxy of intolerance

Think, gentle reader, as you skim this column, of Galileo, one of the fathers of science and hence of freedom from assertive superstition. He looked through telescopes and observed the movement of the planets and the sun. He proceeded to assert, from his observations, that the sun didn't circle the earth but, contrary to the firmly held doctrines and teachings of the Church, that our planet revolved and rotated, circling the sun, giving rise to day and night and to the seasons.

All hell broke loose on Twitter and Instagram. The bigots of Catholicism

accused him of blasphemy! The earth doesn't move, they insisted. The outcry led the leaders of the Church to arrest poor Galileo and subject him to a trial. If this pioneer of truth had any supporters at the time, they might have pointed out to the court, and indeed to the world, that Galileo had not called for the castration or execution of those who believed that the sun went round the earth. He hadn't even called for the banning of all documents or teaching materials which asserted that the earth was flat or that it didn't move.

Nevertheless, he was tried for merely saying what he had scientifically deduced. He was aware that if they found him guilty of blasphemy, he could be put to death. Such was the power of the prevalent orthodoxy. Realising this, Galileo confessed to the bigots of the Inquisition that he recanted his blasphemous outburst. Of course, the earth was the centre of the universe and, as God's central creation, didn't move a millimetre. He may not have been applauded by the court, but he was certainly spared twenty lashes of the whip or being burned at the stake.

The story goes that, true to his beliefs, as he left the court, he muttered to himself, or perhaps to his God if he still believed in Him, "*eppur si muove*" — and yet it moves!

I don't suppose one can quite call her the Galileo of our times but, gentle reader, here follows the story of an artist called Jess de Wahl who this week hit the headlines through a controversy which she had sparked.

Ms de Wahl is an embroidery artist, and her work is famous enough and deemed good enough to be adopted by and sold in the gallery shop of the Royal Academy of Arts. The RA is probably the premier institution run by artists of all sorts. Their permanent exhibition and other occasional displays are among the most respectable, reviewed and revered in Britain.

Apart from excellence in her floral patterns, Ms de Wahl declares a devoted, thematic commitment to feminist principles and to feminist radical activism through art. But! But she doesn't believe that men and women can through assertion, surgery, hormone treatment or all of these, change their gender. She expressed her scepti-

cism in a blog. She was very careful to assert that she absolutely supported the right of people to think as they like and for the political and social rights of everyone, including men who assert that they are women or women who assert that they are really men. Her reservations were about the scientific fact that you are born and grow with one gender determined by the chromosomes in your thirty trillion cells. I suppose the harshest way of putting it is that "trans-women are not really women and trans-men are not really men!"

The trans community's representatives, if there are such people, took exception to her expressing this view. Eight people wrote to the Royal Academy to point out that the RA's professed ethical stance was to respect and include, etc etc. The RA responded hastily and removed and banned all Ms Wahl's exhibits and work from their shop, labelling her "transphobic".

Ms Wahl objected, saying she had not been in any sense the perpetrator of a "hate crime" and that her freedom to express a scientifically valid view should be respected. There was, from

her supporters, some mention of suing the RA for transgressing equality laws. No such action has yet been taken.

Following this row, Ms Wahl has received literally thousands of texts, tweets or whatever in support of her stance and also some nasty ones wishing that she was dead.

Her stance follows that of Harry Potter writer J.K. Rowling and feminist philosopher Germaine Greer, among others. It is also supported by feminists who object to trans-women entering women's athletic competitions and even challenge the idea that trans-women should use women's changing rooms and toilets and be confined in women's prisons when they offend.

The strictures against Ms de Wahl are part of a new orthodoxy of intolerance. Of course, individuals can assert what they please about their own gender or sexuality — though white people asserting that they are black would meet with the same intensity of strictures the orthodoxy favours. That "of course" should include the right to publicly assert scientific facts. The earth is not flat simply because I say so!

SHORT TAKES

EUROPEAN UNION
DIVIDED ON
MEETING PUTIN

Brussels, June 25: European Union countries bordering Russia rejected a Franco-German plan to resume official meetings with Russian President Vladimir Putin, with one leader likening the move to an attempt to talk a bear out of stealing honey. In a statement in the early hours of Friday morning,

EU leaders said only that they “will explore formats and conditionalities of dialogue with Russia.” There was no mention of any high-level meetings or plans for a summit with Putin. The European Union is deeply divided in its approach to Moscow.

Russia is the EU’s biggest natural gas supplier, and plays a key role in a series of international conflicts and issues linked to Europe’s strategic interests, including the Iran nuclear deal, and conflicts in Syria and Libya.

275M USED DRUGS
WORLDWIDE IN
2020, SAYS UN

Geneva, June 25: Around 36 million people suffered from drug use disorders as 275 million people used drugs worldwide in 2020, according to the 2021 World Drug Report which was released by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) on Thursday.

As per the report, in the last 24 years, cannabis potency had increased by as much as four times in parts of the world during the Covid-19 pandemic. In surveys of health professionals across 77 countries, 42 per cent asserted that cannabis use had increased. “Lower perception of drug use risks has been linked to higher rates of drug use, and the findings of UNODC’s 2021 World Drug Report highlight the need to close the gap between perception and reality to educate young people and safeguard public health,” said UNODC Executive Director Ghada Waly.

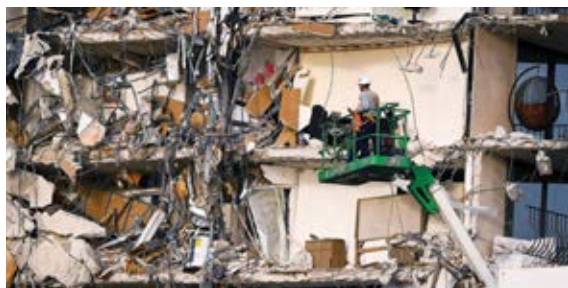
160 missing in Miami mishap

Four dead, crews comb through rubble of collapsed condominium

Surfside (US), June 25: About 160 people were still unaccounted for Friday a day after an ocean-side condominium building collapsed into a pile of rubble, and searchers combing through a twisted, shifting pile of concrete and metal feared the death toll of at least four could go much higher.

With scores of firefighters working overnight to reach any possible survivors both from under and atop the remains of the building, hopes rested on how quickly crews using dogs and microphones to sift through the wreckage could complete their grim, yet delicate task.

“Every time we hear a sound, we concentrate on



Rescue workers on a crane inspect the wreckage of a partially collapsed building in Surfside north of Miami Beach, Florida on Friday.

those areas,” said Assistant Miami-Dade Fire Chief Raide Jadallah. Three more bodies were removed overnight, and Miami-Dade Police Director Freddy Ramirez said authorities were working

with the medical examiner’s office to identify the victims. Eleven injuries were reported, with four people treated at hospitals.

Miami-Dade Mayor Daniella Levine Cava said rescuers were at

“extreme risk” going through the rubble.

“Debris is falling on them as they do their work. We have structural engineers on site to ensure that they will not be injured, but they are proceeding because they are so motivated and they are taking extraordinary risk on the site every day,” she said.

With searchers using saws and jackhammers to look for pockets large enough to hold a person, Levine Cava said there was still hope of finding people alive.

The missing at what was left of the 12-story Champlain Towers South included people from around the world: A beloved retired Miami-

area teacher and his wife. Orthodox Jews from Russia. Israelis. The sister of Paraguay’s first lady. Others from South America.

State Sen. Jason Pizzo of Miami Beach told the *Miami Herald* he watched as tactical teams of six worked early Friday to sift through the debris. He said he saw one body taken in a yellow body bag and another that was marked. They were taken to a homicide unit tent that was set up along the beach. Many people remained at the reunification center set up near the collapse site early Friday morning, awaiting results of DNA swabs that could help identify victims.

US TO KEEP ABOUT 650
TROOPS IN AFGHANISTAN

Washington, June 25: Roughly 650 US troops are expected to remain in Afghanistan to provide security for diplomats after the main American military force completes its withdrawal, which is set to be largely done in the next two weeks, U.S. officials told The Associated Press.

Moreover, several hundred additional American forces will remain at the Kabul airport, potentially until September. They’ll assist Turkish troops providing security, a temporary move until a more formal Turkey-led security operation is in place, the officials said on Thursday.

Overall, officials said the U.S. expects to have American and coalition military command, its leadership, and most troops out by July Fourth, or shortly after that, meeting an aspirational deadline that commanders developed months ago.

The officials were not authorized to discuss details of the withdrawal and spoke to the AP on condition of anonymity.

The departure of the bulk of the more than 4,000 troops that have been in the country in recent months is unfolding well before President Joe Biden’s September 11 deadline for withdrawal.

And it comes amid accelerating Taliban battlefield gains, fueling fears that the Afghan government and its military could collapse in a matter of months.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken, speaking Friday in Paris, noted the increased violence and cited “a real danger” that if the Taliban tries to take the country by force, “we’ll see a renewal of a war or possibly worse.”

But, Blinken said, the Biden administration came to the conclusion that not removing US troops, as the Trump administration had promised the Taliban in February 2020, would have been a bad choice.



The administration believes the Taliban would have resumed attacks on US forces, prompting an escalation of the war.

“Had we not announced that we were leaving, then that restraint, in terms of attacking our forces and attacking the capitals, would have ended,” Blinken said.

He said a continued US presence “certainly would have helped significantly” the Kabul government.

“But what is almost certain is that our military would have come to us and said, well, the situation has changed, we need more forces. And we would have repeated the cycle that we’ve been in for 20 years. And at some point, you have to say this has to stop.”

Biden faces strong criticism from some Republicans for pulling out of Afghanistan, even though President Donald Trump made the 2020 deal with the Taliban to withdrawing all U.S. forces by May 2021.

Officials have repeatedly stressed that security at the Hamid Karzai International Airport in Kabul is a critical requirement to keeping any US diplomatic staff in Afghanistan.

Still, the decision to keep additional troops there for several more months makes it more complicated for the Biden administration to declare a true end to America’s longest war until later this fall.

In a statement Thursday night, Pentagon press secretary John Kirby said that as Biden has ordered, the US will complete the withdrawal by early September. “Nothing has changed about that goal,” Kirby said.

— AP

Indian youth seek
White House help

Washington, June 25: A group of Indian youngsters from across America, facing imminent prospects of deportation, has met senior Biden administration officials at the White House and influential lawmakers, appealing them to “let us stay in the US”.

There are 2,00,000 such young Americans, who have spent their entire childhood and teenage in the US, who are facing the prospects of imminent deportation to the country of their origin as they have either attained the age of 21 or about to reach that age, after which they can no longer be dependent on their parent’s visas.

A significantly large number of these parents are in a decades-long wait for a Green Card. A Green Card, known officially as a Permanent Resident Card, is a document issued to immigrants to the US as evidence that the bearer has been granted the privilege

of residing permanently in the US.

The young Indians, led by Dip Patel, a clinical pharmacist in Illinois, surprised many of the congressmen and senators, who greeted them at the Capitol last week, as they were probably the first batch of lobbyists at the US Congress, after the recent lifting of social distancing restrictions by the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC).

Patel, 25, is founder of Improve The Dream, a youth-led organisation bringing awareness for children who face ageing out and self-deportation, was joined by Preen Mhatre, 21, a senior at the University of Iowa majoring in Biomedical Engineering and minoring in Business Administration; Naga Raghav Sreeram, 21, a senior at the University of California, Davis majoring in Computer Science.

— PTI

Australia, Israel bring
back mask rules

Sydney, June 25: Australia and Israel, which had been successful in fending off Covid-19, reimposed restrictions on Friday as cases surged of the highly contagious Delta variant which also threatened Africa with a brutal third wave.

The centre of Australia’s largest city Sydney entered lockdown, a shock for a population that had returned to relative normality after months of recording very few local cases, while vaccination success story Israel reimposed indoor mask-wearing less than two weeks after it lifted the measure.

And in Fiji, another country that saw early successes against the virus, health authorities admitted for the first time that Covid transmission is widespread in the community.

While vaccination campaigns have helped bring down infections in numerous — mostly wealthy — countries, the rise of the Delta variant which was first found in



India has led to fears of new waves of a virus that has already killed nearly 3.9 million people.

In Australia, which has been one of the most successful nations in containing the Coronavirus after shutting its borders, around a million people in four eastern and central Sydney neighbourhoods were ordered to stay home for at least a week.

— AFP

LIVE RICH
FINANCIAL
Chronicle

SATURDAY | 26 JUNE 2021 | COIMBATORE

quick
BITES

| INDICATORS | | % |
|------------------------|-----------|-------|
| Sensex | 52,925.04 | 0.43 |
| Nifty 50 | 15,860.40 | 0.44 |
| S&P 500* | 4,278.70 | 0.29 |
| Dollar (₹) | 74.20 | -0.04 |
| Pound Sterling (₹) | 103.17 | 0.39 |
| Euro (₹) | 88.59 | 0.00 |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹) | 46,309.66 | 0.14 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)* | 76.07 | 0.67 |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield | 6.028 | 0.00 |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 1.502 | 0.015 |

* As of 8:30 PM IST

LIC, SBI Life pick
up stake in Indian
Bank under QIP

Life Insurance Corporation, SBI Life and Canara Bank were among the top investors picking up stakes in Indian Bank under a qualified institutional placement (QIP) that closed on Thursday, a regulatory filing said. LIC picked up 17.60 per cent, SBI Life Insurance 11.87 per cent, SBI Mutual Fund and its various schemes 11.87 per cent, SocGen and its various schemes 9.74 per cent and Canara Bank 5.93 per cent of the shares offered.

■ Open offer made on ₹4,546-cr deal
Pharmeasy to take
reins of Thyrocare

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 25

In yet another transaction in the online pharma space, digital healthcare company Pharmeasy on Friday announced it will acquire a controlling stake in diagnostic chain Thyrocare for Rs 4,546 crore in an all-cash deal. With this, the online space is witnessing acquisition of a listed entity by a startup.

API Holdings, the parent of the Pharmeasy, will buy a 66.11 per cent stake in Thyrocare from A. Velumani, chairman and managing director of the company and his affiliates at Rs 1,300 per share, according to a statement. The affiliates include A. Sundararaju, Amruta Velumani, Anand Velumani, Thyrocare Properties & Infrastructure, Pavilion Commercial, Thyrocare Publications, Sumathi Infra Project and Mahima Advertising.

The acquisition of a majority stake in the listed entity will also see a subsidiary of API Holdings, Docon Technologies, making an open offer to acquire an additional 26 per cent stake of Thyrocare.

Docon Technologies along with API Holdings has announced an open offer for acquisition of up to 1,37,55,077 fully paid-up equity shares of face value of Rs 10 each from the public shareholders of Thyrocare Technologies, representing 26 per cent of the expanded voting share



capital, at a price of Rs 1,300 per equity share aggregating to total consideration of Rs 1,788 crore in cash. Thyrocare informed the exchanges.

Velumani will be separately acquiring a minority non-controlling stake of less than 5 per cent in API as part of a series of equity investments by existing and new investors of API. According to reports, Velumani will be investing Rs 1,500 crore and hold a 4.9 per cent stake in API. Shares of Thyrocare closed 6.23 per cent up at Rs 1,448.05 apiece on the BSE on Friday.

Pharmeasy has a user base of 12 million consumers, and a network of 6,000 digital consultation clinics and 90,000 partner retailers across the country. Thyrocare performs over 110 million diagnostic tests annually. It is the largest B2B player in the diagnostics space and has a network of 3,330 collection centres across 2,000 towns in India. “The

unique reach and strength of Thyrocare in diagnostics blended with the young and dynamic team of PharmEasy will bring in better healthcare solutions for common man nationwide” said Velumani, CMD of Thyrocare. Earlier in May, Pharmeasy had fully acquired Medlife after entering the unicorn club. API Holdings is reported to be strengthening its portfolio ahead of an initial public offering, probably in 12-18 months.

In other major deals struck in the online healthcare space in recent times, Tata Digital bought a majority stake in IMG Technologies. Reliance too had acquired a majority stake in Netmeds to enter the online pharmacy space.

According to consultants RedSeer, the e-health space touched a gross merchandise value of \$1.2 billion in FY20 and is estimated to have clocked a value of \$2 billion in FY21.

Bids invited
for leasing
out 16 railway
land parcels

New Delhi, June 25: The Rail Land Development Authority (RLDA) has called for bids for leasing out 16 land parcels across the country with the aim of generating revenue of over Rs 1,900 crore.

Prominent among these 16 sites are Boulevard Road Colony in Delhi, land near Moula Ali Flyover in Secunderabad, Ramgarh Tal Colony in Gorakhpur, Lucknow Railway Station Redevelopment, plots at Gomti Nagar in Lucknow and at Salt Golah in Howrah.

These sites have been chosen due to their marketability and exclusive locations, which make them eminently suitable for commercial development, the authority said.

“RLDA will lease out these land parcels to prospective developers who will be mandated to develop these sites in line with local by-laws,” RLDA vice-chairman Ved Parkash Dudeja said.

The authority is targeting revenue generation of Rs 2,000 crore for the Indian Railways in 2021-22, up from Rs 352 crore the previous year.

RLDA is a statutory authority under the Ministry of Railways for the development of railway land.

Indian Railways has about 43,000 hectares of vacant land across India.

— PTI

No tax liability on
Covid-related receipts

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JUNE 25

Providing a much-needed tax concession to the people who may have received financial help from their employers and well-wishers for meeting expenses incurred for Covid-19 treatment, the government on Friday announced that there will be no tax liability on such amounts received.

“In order to ensure that no income-tax liability arises on this account, it has been decided to provide income-tax exemption to the amount received by a taxpayer for medical treatment from an employer or from any person for treatment of Covid-19 during FY2019-20 and subsequent years,” the finance ministry said in a notification.

“Ex-gratia payments received by family members of a person who has died due to Covid 19 from an employer will also be tax exempt without any limit. Such a payment from other persons aggregating to Rs 10 lakh will be tax exempt,” the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said.

Besides, the government also announced various tax exemptions and extended some key tax compliance deadlines.

Of the deadline relaxation, the most important deadline extension involves the linking of PAN and the Aadhaar card. It has been extended by three months. “Other than that, the time to invest in residential house for tax deduction has been extended by more than three months

DEADLINES RELAXED

- ▶ Linking of PAN and the Aadhaar card extended to Sept. 30
- ▶ On sale of residential property the re-investment deadline extended to Sept. 30
- ▶ Due date for furnishing TDS statement for Q4 is now July 15

- ▶ Date for furnishing TDS certificate in Form 16 extended till July 31
- ▶ Quarterly statement in Form 15CC can be furnished by July 31
- ▶ Equalisation Levy Statement in Form No. 1 can be submitted by July 31

and the ‘Vivad se Viswas’ payment without interest has been extended by two months from June 30 to August 31,” the notification said.

In case of taxing capital gains arising out of transfer of residential house property, the CBDT further said that for relief in taxation, the re-investment deadline would be September 3, 2021 for such capital gains. Generally, Section 54 of the Income Tax Act provides that in case there is capital gain on account of transfer of a residential house property, such capital gain can be exempt from tax if the taxpayer invests the capital gain amount into another house property within two years (in case of purchase of new house) or within three years (in case of construction of a house) from date of transfer of original house property.

However, the CBDT circular now provides that in case any such time period of two/three years is expiring between April 1, 2021 and September 29, 2021, will

be extended to September 30, 2021. “Besides, the deadline for making payments under the Vivad Se Vishwas direct tax dispute resolution scheme has been extended by two months till August 31,” it said.

“The last date for PAN-Aadhaar linking too has been extended by three months to September 30, 2021, while the same for furnishing Tax Deducted at Source (TDS) certificate in Form 16 to the employees by employers has been extended till July 31, from July 15, 2021,” it added.

The due date for furnishing TDS statement for the last (January-March) quarter has also been extended to July 15, from June 30. “The quarterly statement in Form 15CC to be furnished by an authorised dealer for remittances made for the June quarter would have to be furnished by July 31.”

“Also, the deadline for furnishing Equalisation Levy Statement in Form No. 1 for the financial year 2020-21, has been extended by a month till July 31, 2021, the CBDT said.

SHORT TAKES

Sam & Liam seal series for England

Cardiff: Sam Billings and Liam Livingstone burnished their Twenty20 credentials as England withstood a top-order wobble to seal a series win over Sri Lanka following a rain-affected second contest. The duo are on the fringes of the limited-overs setup but after England stuttered to 36-4 in pursuit of 112 — a target reduced to 103 from 18 overs following a sharp shower — they put on a crucial 54 from 48 balls. Billings departed with 13 still needed but Livingstone and Sam Curran got England over the line with five wickets and 11 balls to spare as they moved into an 2-0 lead. — *PTI*

Brief scores: Sri Lanka 111/7 (Kusal Mendis 39; Mark Wood 2/18, Adil Rashid 2/24) lost to England 108/5 (Livingstone 29 (not out), Sam Billings 24; W. Hasaranga 2/20). (*Won by five wickets, D/L method*)

Bronze for Indian women shooters

Osijek (Croatia): The Indian troika of Manu Bhaker, Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Rahi Sarnobat claimed the bronze medal in the 10m air pistol women's team event of the ISSF Shooting World Cup here on Friday. They defeated the Hungarian team of Veronika Major, Miriam Jakó and Sara Rahel Fabian 16-12 in the bronze medal match. The three Indians had qualified third with a score of 573. Earlier, in the 10m air rifle events, the men's trio of Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Deepak Kumar and Divyansh Singh Panwar lost the bronze medal match, while the women shooters failed to get past the qualifying round. Tomar, Kumar and Panwar lost 14-16 to the Serbian team of Milenko Sebic, Milutin Stefanovic and Lazar Kovacevic in the third-place match. — *PTI*

Women archers enter Cup final

Paris: The Indian women's recurve archery team, who failed to book an Olympic quota in the Qualifier, bounced back strongly to storm into the final of the World Cup Stage 3 here on Friday. The fancied trio of Deepika Kumari, Anikta Bhakat and Komalika Bari had lost to lower-ranked Colombia on Sunday to miss the Olympic team qualification, but on Friday they just dropped a set before defeating sixth-ranked France 6-2 in the semi-finals. World Cup Stage 3 is not an Olympic qualifying tournament. The trio, who had won the first stage of the World Cup in Guatemala City in April, will face Mexico on Sunday in a repeat of the first stage final. Deepika will be in the hunt for a hat-trick of gold medals. Deepika is also in the semi-final of the recurve section. — *PTI*

Judoka Sushila gets Olympic spot

New Delhi: Ace Indian judoka Sushila Devi has qualified for the Tokyo Olympics through the continental quota, the sport's international federation confirmed on Friday. Sushila, who competes in the 48kg category, has 989 points which puts her at seventh spot in the Asian list, the International Judo Federation said. The continental quotas are allotted based on a judoka's ranking in the region. Asia has 10 quota slots. This will be the 26-year-old's first participation at the Olympics. Each NOC is entitled to only one spot through the continental quota. — *PTI*

Aditi get off to creditable start

Johns Creek (Georgia): Indian golfer Aditi Ashok carded a one-over 73 in the opening round to be placed tied 39th at the KPMG Women's PGA Championship, which is her 17th Major start. Still searching for first Top-10 in a Major, Aditi was one-under through 12 holes. Till then she had given a bogey soon after birdies on second, fifth and ninth. Then a birdie on 12th put her once again at one-under. But a double bogey on the 13th was a spoiler and she played out safely with each of the last five holes yielding pars. — *PTI*

ASSURED AZZURRI

Italy look to continue unbeaten streak, face Austria

London, June 25: Italy's unbeaten streak won't last forever, and Austria coach Franco Foda is plotting to be the one to stop it. The Italians have become one of the favourites at the European Championship after winning all three of their games in the group stage, scoring seven goals and conceding none. Those three victories at Euro 2020 extended the team's unbeaten streak under coach Roberto Mancini to 30 games — matching the previous record set in the 1930s. "Initially it seemed to be an insurmountable and impossible challenge for us, because they haven't lost for an eternity," Foda said. "But sooner or later even Mancini's team will lose."

Austria have reached the round of 16 at the tournament for the first time, will get their chance on Saturday at Wembley Stadium.

Besides the unbeaten streak, Italy will also be trying to set another record. They have not conceded a goal in 11 matches, a total of 1,055 minutes. If Austria fail to score, Italy will surpass the record of 1,143 minutes set between 1972 and 1974.

For a team who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, Italy's recent results are quite remarkable.

"It's something that makes us proud, especially considering what they thought of us before the tournament started," Italy forward Lorenzo Insigne said.

"But we have to stay focused, calm and think about ourselves. Our



Italian players Giorgio Chiellini and Ciro Immobile during a training session ahead of their Euro Last 16 clash against Austria. — *Twitter*

objective is to go all the way, it wasn't just to get through the group stage."

DENMARK ON EURO ROAD FOR FIRST TIME

After three emotional European Championship matches in Copenhagen, Denmark will next play in a city that Christian Eriksen once called home.

The Danes will take on Wales in the round of 16 at the Johan Cruyff Arena on Saturday, a stadium where Eriksen is fondly remembered by Ajax fans as a stylish midfield playmaker from 2010-13 before his transfer to Tottenham.

Denmark lost their first match to Finland 0-1 after Eriksen suffered cardiac

arrest on the field and had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator. The Danes also lost to Belgium before beating Russia 4-1 to finish second in Group B and advance to knockout rounds.

While Denmark are hitting the road for the first time at a tournament that is being played in 11 cities

Live on TV

Wales vs Denmark from 9.30 pm
Italy vs Austria from 12.30 am (Sunday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

HEAD TO HEAD

WALES-DENMARK

● **Matches:** 10. Denmark: 6. Wales: 4
● **EURO MEETINGS**
1987: Wales beat Denmark 1-0 in Cardiff.
1987: Denmark beat Wales 1-0 in Copenhagen.
1998: Wales beat Denmark 2-1 in Copenhagen.
1999: Denmark beat Wales 2-0 in Anfield.

ITALY-AUSTRIA

● **Matches:** 35. Italy: 16. Austria: 11. Drawn: 8.
● **EURO MEETINGS**
1970: Italy beat Austria 2-1 in Vienna.
1971: 2-2 in Rome.

— **S. PERVEZ KAISER**

across Europe, Wales have had a tougher travel schedule.

Wales' victory over Turkey and a draw with Switzerland were enough for second place behind Italy in Group A. The Welsh lost 1-0 in their final match against the Italian, one of the tournament's top teams. — *AP*

COPA | AMERICA

Cool Cavani fires Uruguay into QF

Sao Paulo, June 25: Uruguay and Paraguay secured their spots in the Copa America knockout stage by winning their Group A matches by 2-0 scores.

Uruguay had their first win in the tournament against Bolivia, who could have jumped ahead on the table, but are out of the tournament due to Paraguay's convincing victory against Chile on Thursday.

Argentina lead Group A with seven points, followed by Paraguay with six. Chile have five, one more than Uruguay. Bolivia have none.

Uruguay's victory started after Bolivian goalkeeper Carlos Lampe, one of the best players of the match, had an own goal in the 40th minute.

Edinson Cavani doubled the Uruguayan lead from short range in the 79th minute at the Arena Pantanal in Cuiaba. It was the veteran striker's first goal for Uruguay since November.

Paraguay beat Chile with a header by Braian Samudio in the 33rd minute and a goal from the spot by Miguel Almiron in the 58th at the Man Garrincha stadium in Brasilia.

Uruguay and Paraguay will clash on Monday in a match that will decide who face defending champions and favourites Brazil in the quarterfinals.

If they draw or Uruguay win, Chile will face the hosts. A Paraguayan victory means Uruguay will take that spot.

"We have to think about winning, not about choos-

| COPA RESULTS | |
|--|---|
| Uruguay (Jairo Quinteros 40-og, Edinson Cavani 79) | 2 |
| Bolivia | 0 |
| Paraguay (Braian Samudio 33, Miguel Almiron 58-p) | 2 |
| Chile | 0 |



Uruguay's Edinson Cavani celebrates after scoring a goal against Bolivia in Copa America. — *Twitter*

ing rivals," Uruguay midfielder Georgian de Arrascaeta said.

"We created a lot of opportunities, we missed some that were very clear, but this gives us confidence. We never stopped believing in this squad."

Paraguay's Almiron is also optimistic about the future of his team in the tournament.

"We have done great work here," he said.

"Winning was the most important thing, but the most important thing is how we are playing," he said. — *AP*

SINDHU SET TO CARRY TRI-COLOUR AT GAMES

New Delhi, June 25: India's star badminton player and Rio Games silver medallist PV Sindhu is a front-runner to become one of the two flag-bearers for the Indian contingent at the Tokyo Olympics. This time, India will have one male and female athlete as the flag bearer at the opening ceremony. The Olympics begin July 23.

The official announcement will happen at the end of this month but it is all but certain that Sindhu will be one of the flag-bearers.

"Sindhu is likely to be one of the flag-bearers," an IOA source said.

Although there is no rule but the convention

has been that last edition's medal winner always has been the flag-bearer for the next edition.

From last edition, there were two medallists and one of them wrestler Sakshi Malik has not qualified during this edition.

It is still not clear who among the male athletes will be the joint flag-bearer. Some of the big names include athlete Neeraj Chopra, TT player Sharath Kamal, wrestler Bajrang Punia, boxer Amit Panghal to name a few.

No male athletes got any medal at the last edition in Rio de Janeiro. — *PTI*

WIMBLEDON | DRAW

It could be Novak vs Federer in final

Wimbledon, June 25: Novak Djokovic and Roger Federer were placed on opposite sides of the Wimbledon bracket in Friday's draw, meaning they only could meet in the final — which would be a rematch of their epic 2019 title showdown.

The top-seeded Djokovic will have a lot at stake when play begins at the All England Club on Monday, a year after the grass-court tournament was canceled because of the pandemic.

He seeks a 20th major title, which would tie the men's record shared by Federer and Rafael Nadal;

he can move closer to a calendar-year Grand Slam after winning the Australian Open in February and the French Open this month; he will be trying to win his third consecutive trophy, and sixth overall, at Wimbledon.

Two years ago, Djokovic edged Federer in a fifth-set tiebreaker after saving two championship points in the final.

Two of the top five men are out: No. 3 Nadal and No. 5 Dominic Thiem.

The possible men's quarterfinals are Djokovic vs No. 5 Andrey Rublev, and No. 3 Stefanos Tsitsipas vs. No. 8 Roberto Bautista Agut in the top half; No. 2

Daniil Medvedev vs. No. 6 Federer, and No. 4 Alexander Zverev vs. No. 7 Matteo Berrettini in the bottom half.

Among the noteworthy first-round men's matchups are Djokovic against wild-card entry Jack Draper, a 19-year-old from England who was the Wimbledon boys' runner-up in 2018; two-time champion Andy Murray against No. 24 seed Nikoloz Basilashvili; and No. 21 Ugo Humbert against Nick Kyrgios.

DEFENDING CHAMPION HALEP WITHDRAWS

Simona Halep said she was "really down and upset" at not being able to defend her ladies singles title at Wimbledon due to a calf injury.

The 29-year-old Romanian had been battling to be fit since withdrawing from her second round match at the Italian Open in mid-May.

"It is with great sadness that I'm announcing my withdrawal from the Championships as my calf injury has not fully recovered," she said.

Halep's withdrawal came minutes before the draw for the championships which get underway on Monday. — *AFP*

Team India unlikely to get warm-up matches

New Delhi, June 25: The Indian cricket team will play two intra-squad games at the Riverside ground in Durham before the five-match Test series against England as Virat Kohli's men are unlikely to get any warm-up first-class games against county sides.

Virat Kohli had expressed his displeasure at not being given any first-class games before the England series, starting in Nottingham on August 4.

"Due to Covid-19 protocols, they will play two intra-squad four-day matches before the first Test in August," an ECB spokesperson said on Friday.

While it is understood that BCCI had requested ECB for a few practice games, the Covid-19 situation won't allow any such plan to go ahead.

Asked if there is any chance of a game against county sides, the spokesperson said, "No".

In England, cricketers from various counties are regularly being tested for Covid but are not being kept in any bubble.

The Indian team, once it assembles in London on July 14 and moves to Durham, will be once again be in a bubble.

"The domestic cricketers of England not being in a bubble is an issue for sure. That's why the games in Durham will be intra-squad ones," a BCCI official said on conditions of anonymity.

India are currently travelling with 24 players



(From left) India's Rohit Sharma, Shubman Gill, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma Vihari and Ravindra Jadeja.

— 20 in the official squad and four reserves — which will allow them to play intra-squad games.

However, legends like Sunil Gavaskar have questioned the amount of preparedness that a simulated match can give the team.

The touring teams, in the past, have played multiple first-class games against county sides.

BCCI SELECTORS NOT TO TRAVEL TO UK

Chairman of national selectors Chetan Sharma and another senior selector Sunil Joshi are not going to England for the five-Test series as strict quarantine rules have become an impediment.

It is understood that India being among the Red List countries, there are no direct flights to the United Kingdom.

Anyone travelling from India either needs to travel by a charter flight like the team or first fly to a country which is not in UK's Red List, quarantine there and then take a connecting flight to England.

"Yes, Debu (Debasish Mohanty) and Abbey (Kuruvilla) are going to Sri Lanka where the white-ball squad will play six games. They are in quarantine at the Mumbai hotel along with rest of the team. But no selector is travelling to UK," a BCCI source informed.

It is also understood in the year of a T20 World Cup, it is more important to check out the younger crop of players in Sri Lanka rather than the tried and tested automatic choices who are in the UK for the traditional format. — *PTI*

Sakariya raring to go in SL series

Mumbai, June 25: Rookie left-arm pacer Chetan Sakariya says he has done his work-outs properly during the hard quarantine period here and is raring to go for the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka starting July 13.

The Indian players, led by Shikhar Dhawan, started their quarantine on June 14 and will continue till June 28. However, their hard quarantine period is over.

"Everybody is now used

to quarantine ... it is good to come out of the quarantine and meet other players and everybody has done work out as per the needs. I am feeling very good," the 23-year-old Sakariya, who has earned his maiden India call-up, told *bcci.tv*.

"When I got out of the room, I was constantly looking at myself, I was feeling good wearing the jersey, but once I came to the gym, I started doing my normal workout," said the Saurashtra pacer, who



Chetan Sakariya

recently lost his father due to Covid-19.

Attacking Delhi top-order batsman Nitish

Rana, who also got his first call-up in the national team, echoed similar sentiments.

"The first seven days were difficult for me, as I was waiting to meet my teammates and I was waiting to wear the jersey. That time was a bit tough for me as each hour was feeling like a year," said 27-year-old.

Rana is looking forward to more intense work-out sessions with a new trainer.

"The atmosphere here is

good and I am excited for the series to start. With a new trainer, I learned and did a new thing.

"After seven days I did intense training and I am looking forward to more intense workout sessions," said the left-handed batsman.

Karnataka players Devdutt Padikkal and Krishnappa Gowtham who too earned their maiden call ups in the national team, also sounded pleased.

— *PTI*