

SHORT TAKES

JITHENDER
INCHARGE OF
HUZURABADDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Senior BJP leader A.P. Jithender Reddy has been appointed the party's incharge for the upcoming Huzurabad Assembly byelection. The bypoll has been necessitated by the resignation of former minister Etala Rajendar from the Assembly; he subsequently joined the BJP.

Jithender Reddy played a key role in the Dubbak Assembly byelection last year which the BJP wrested from the TRS.

Tarun Chugh, BJP national secretary and Telangana incharge, made an announcement to this effect on Monday. Earlier, Chugh held a meeting with party state president Bandi Sanjay and senior leaders to discuss on the strategy for the Huzurabad bypoll.

It was decided to step up party activities in the Huzurabad constituency and reach out to all sections of the people and inform them of the TRS government's misrule and failures over the last seven years.

HC STAYS RULE ON
DETAILS FOR
NON-AGRI LANDDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The Telangana High Court on Monday extended the stay on a rule that required citizens to provide details of the Aadhaar card, caste identification and family members' particulars for registration of non-agriculture lands through the Dharani portal. Noting the plight of citizens following stoppage of registrations of non-agriculture properties for more than three months, the High Court had in December last stayed the rule. It then asked the government to explain why it wanted such details.

The court had also asked as to what the consequences would be if the Aadhaar and other details of property owners are hacked or such information went to third parties. The court also asked how the data collected from the property owners will be safeguarded.

So far, the government has not filed its replies to the questions raised by the court. On a request from Advocate General B.S. Prasad, the court granted more time to the government to submit the affidavit and extended the earlier stay.

TELANGANA PLANS
GRAND BONALU
CELEBRATIONSDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The state government has decided to celebrate Bonalu in a grand manner this year. The celebrations were suspended last year due to Covid-19 lockdown restrictions.

"The Chief Minister has directed us to make elaborate arrangements to celebrate Bonalu in a grand manner this year. Following his directions we have convened a high-level meeting with officials of all departments concerned on June 25," said minister Talasani Srinivasan Yadav on Monday.

Speaking to media personnel, the minister said the CM had sanctioned ₹15 crore to spruce up facilities.

Veterinary college
boon for animal
husbandry in IndurDC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, JUNE 21

The sanction of a veterinary medical college for Nizamabad district by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao comes as a boon for livestock in the district. The composite Nizamabad district area is known for its progressive agriculture operations and allied sectors.

Minister V. Prashanth Reddy thanked the Chief Minister for the college and said it will benefit farmers of Nizamabad and Kamareddy districts.

There are 2.07 lakh buffaloes, 1.01 lakh cows, 27.36 lakh sheep, 1.57 lakh goats in the district. Farmers depend on animal husbandry for their livelihood. Due to lack of medical facilities for animals, the farmers are incurring heavy losses. There is no adequate medical infrastructure and staff to treat the animals and birds.

In this context, the sanction of the veterinary medical college has brought happiness among farmers and those in animal husbandry. Manthala Gnanender, Veterinary Chemist and Druggists

Association state general secretary and Nizamabad district president, said that the college would resolve many problems. The farmers are facing difficulty for treatment of animals, he said.

It is necessary to get a prescription for animals' medicines but this is difficult, he said. Few farmers are aware about common health problems in animals and take the medicine, he explained. Students are forced to go either Maharashtra or far away places to pursue veterinary courses. The new veterinary medical college will change all that.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, district veterinary and animal husbandry officer Dr M. Bharath said that farmers will get advanced medical services for animals after setting up of the veterinary medical college.

"Veterinary doctors will be available in rural areas also in the near future," he said. Veterinary medical college along with hospital will be useful for farmers, he added. Students will get local opportunities in education and employment, he explained.

Yoga fans celebrate
with 'unlock'SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The International Yoga Day on Monday here was marked by yoga teachers expressing their concern over their students having had to suspend the regular courses due to the Covid pandemic. Yet, the day was celebrated with fanfare amid the sudden freedom the society gained from the 'unlock' exercise.

With no restriction of any kind, several yoga centres in the city opened their doors on Monday.

Some of the teachers expressed their concerns over the total lifting of the lockdown sans any restriction. They were also concerned over the general physical condition of those learning yoga who have returned for the classes after a long spell of confinement at their homes.

Rakesh Aripula, a yoga instructor, said, "Many of the trainees discontinued practising yoga at home during the lockdowns

even though they could have continued their practice from their homes. Yoga needs no equipment. All that it needs is about 30 minutes of concentration a day," he said. "Some of my students are out of shape, several have gained extra weight during the lockdown," he noted.

Ravindra Kapadia, director, Gandhi Gyan Mandir Yoga Kendra, said: "This time we are lucky that there are no restrictions on fitness

activity centres, unlike the last year. We reopened on Monday to mark International Yoga Day and celebrated it with physical classes as well as online classes attended by around a hundred participants."

He said, "After the nationwide lockdown, relaxations for the fitness center were given on August 5, 2020, during which the number of students grew to about 200 till December. From end of January, people started discontinuing the sessions.

RESTRICTIONS IMPOSED DURING
KCR'S VISIT TO WARANGALDC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JUNE 21

The Warangal police imposed strict restrictions on the movement of traffic in Warangal and Hanamkonda during the visit of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao on Monday.

Apart from regulating traffic to avoid interfer-

ence with the CM's convoy, several opposition leaders were also house arrested starting from the early hours.

Along with BJP and the Congress leaders, even some TRS leaders were house arrested. Senior TRS leader Rahimunnisa Begum expressed unhappiness over being house arrested.



People gather in crowded public places without maintaining social distancing as the government removes the lockdown, in Hyderabad on Monday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Third wave fears rise
as crowds hang out

Majority claim to be vaccinated; move without masks

KANIZA GARARI | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

As the state government lifted the clampdown on the movement of people and vehicles from Sunday, the city erupted in joy with residents rushing out in the open, without caring two hoots about a possible third wave of the pandemic of which experts have been warning for quite a while.

These unmindful assemblies of crowds in restaurants, malls, community halls and small gatherings in apartments and complexes create an ideal environment for proliferation of SARS-CoV-2, the Coronavirus that causes Covid-19, said experts. Majority of people who are out on the roads claim that they are vaccinated hence not wearing masks properly or following social distancing.

With the second wave on decline, economic considerations led to lifting of lockdown but the manner in which unnecessary activities are taking place has caused concerns among the authorities and medical fraternity.

Despite being vaccinated, the protection is only 80 per cent and there are concerns already being raised by scientists on the emergence of new variants.

The delta variant which was highly transmissible in the country leading to a large number of cases still exists around. Dr Prabhu Kumar C., a senior Covid-19 specialist, said, "The virus is an organism looking for survival. When people get vaccinated, it looks for means to fight the vaccine and escape it. This means that it evolves with another combination to survive. This survival

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Herd immunity is not possible with the risky behaviour of people immediately after unlocking, say experts. The process of unlocking according to the guidelines by epidemiologists has to be slow and gradual. Dr Rajan Shukla, associate professor of Indian Institute of Public Health says, "Restrictions are to be lifted in a controlled manner and according to step-wise plan using a two-week incubation period. Closure of essential businesses must be lifted first and returning of workforce to establishments

must be in a phased manner. Hurry to relax lockdown and failure to apply scientific principles expose the community to a rapid, large third wave with possibility of a virulent mutant."

With the process of vaccination going on and there being a large population to be covered, total lifting of restrictions has an adverse impact, he says.

Experts say that the persisting situation in India and the experiences of the world have affirmed that herd immunity is not anywhere close. A senior doctor and infection specialist on condition of anonymity says, "In the

medical set up, our evaluation is that herd immunity in the immediate future is a myth. It will require continuous and stronger interventions from time to time to reach herd immunity. Till then, we have to be prepared to meet the challenges of constant small and big waves of Covid-19."

Experts state that the situation will evolve differently once a sizable population is vaccinated. That too will be testing times as vaccinated people too are being infected. Although the severity is less, there are still people who are succumbing to the virus after vaccination, they add.

mechanism of the virus gets a boost when there is opportunity provided by humans — both vaccinated and non-vaccinated.

With innumerable host bodies available, their opportunity to survive is much better leading to an increase in their numbers."

Experts state that variants from the virus are expected but if the behaviour of people is lax, it gives an opportunity for a stronger variant.

Rushab Shah, a businessman, explained, "Unlocking has been for overcoming the economic crisis and livelihood challenges. But we are seeing luxurious weddings in community halls with more than 100 people participating. No masks and no so-

cial distancing. These are super spreader events which have already started."

Interstate travel and movement of people from one part of the country to another also lead to movement of the virus giving it the opportunity that it requires for further strengthening itself.

Experts state that only the most necessary and important activities must be allowed while the secondary and luxurious activities must be curtailed till the full population is vaccinated. Dr Minhaj Nasirabadi, general secretary of Indian Psychiatric Society, Telangana branch, said, "The main reason for this behaviour is that people want to come out and enjoy themselves. They are confident not to

be infected with the virus as they were previously infected."

He said that those who have been vaccinated are confident that it will protect them. "With the government lifting the lockdown, they believe that everything is normal and they can go out. The point is that there must be proper awareness on the need to use masks and social distance for their safety and of the community to protect health and also revive the economy. Practical implementation must be the target which will be easy to follow."

Experts are of the opinion that livelihood challenges are a consideration but luxurious superspreader events can be avoided till the situation improves.

TS might not begin free vax for 18+ soon

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The new phase of free Covid-19 vaccination for the 18-plus years category that was launched in the country on Monday will take some time before it arrives in Telangana state, it is learnt.

According to health department officials, Telangana state, with its current stocks of vaccines, was focused on vaccinating people from high-

● ON SUNDAY, the health dept said a total of 1,06,210 people had received their Covid-19 shots of whom 1,03,145 got their first dose.

risk categories that include people in the 18-44 age group, along with vaccinating those in the other upper age groups and those with existing comorbidities.

The new phase of free vaccination was recently announced by Prime

Minister Narendra Modi as part of the Centre's plan to provide vaccines free to all states.

According to the officials here, the current vaccination drive in the state is likely to continue till the end of this month with the existing doses supplied so far to the state.

Around 70 lakh people in the state will require, beginning July, to start getting their second dose shots. Adding fresh free

vaccination at government centres for the 18-plus category will mean a bigger requirement of vaccines.

On Sunday, the health department said a total of 1,06,210 people had received their Covid-19 shots of whom 1,03,145 got their first dose and 3,065 their second.

According to the Union ministry of health, on Monday Telangana state administered a total of 1,46,302 doses of vaccine.



A specially-abled man carries a placard seeking vaccination at home for disabled persons, on Monday.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

Dalit woman dies in lock-up;
TPCC wants action on copsDC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JUNE 21

TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy asked Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan to render justice to the Dalit woman who died in Addagudur police station in Bhongir district due to alleged police torture.

He wrote a letter to the Governor to take action against the police who resorted to the heinous crime.

"The atrocities against Dalits have increased after the formation of Telangana. The Addagudur incident is one among them where a Dalit woman Mariamma, a cook in a house in Govindapuram, died in lock-up. She and her son Uday Kiran were taken into custody from his house in

Komatlagudem in Chintakani mandal in Khammam district on charges of theft in her owner's house on June 16. They were taken to Addagudur police station," he said.

He said that Mariamma and her son Uday Kiran were beaten on June 17 and she was beaten black and blue from 10.30 pm to 3.30 am. She died in the police station while police tried to show it as a death by cardiac arrest.

Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka urged the Governor to get all the information on the lock-up death of Mariamma.

Bhatti called on members of the victim in Khammam. He said that she was lifted by the police as a suspect in a theft

case. "The Congress party will fight against the atrocity resorted to by police. We will go to any extent to get justice for her family," he said.

Bhatti said that Mariamma was beaten for four days at various places on her body and in the presence of her daughter.

"Mariamma's daughter requested the police not to beat her mother and the victim died in the hands of her daughter," he said.

The police had not stopped there but also beat Uday Kiran indiscriminately. He is undergoing treatment in the government hospital in Khammam.

Bhatti said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao is not doing anything to check such high-handedness of the police.

COVID | ALERT

Laboratory started testing animals for virus in August 2020

LaCones issues rules for zoo staff

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

The city-based Laboratory for the Conservation of Endangered Species (LaCONES) has called on veterinary staff, and animal keepers to be on the alert for Covid-19 symptoms in zoo animals, and immediately segregate them if they were found showing signs of having the disease. It also asked the zoo staff to take proper Covid-19 safety precautions. LaCones, one of the four designated centres in the country for testing animal samples for the Coronavirus, on Monday released guidelines for zoo front-

DETAILS OF VIRUS IN ANIMALS

COVID SUSCEPTIBLE ANIMALS: Lions, tigers, pumas, cougars, snow leopards, gorillas, cats, dogs, fruit bats, hamsters, pigs, rabbits.

SYMPTOMS IN ANIMALS: Lack of appetite, anorexia, coughing, sneezing, wheezing, nasal discharge, fever, respiratory distress.

SAMPLE COLLECTION FROM: Nasal or oral swabs if possible, nasal discharges/saliva/faecal samples, or rectal swabs.

line staff on Covid-19 investigation in captive animals.

"The guidelines provide detailed protocols that include pictorials and frequently asked questions

for an easier understanding of those collecting samples for Covid testing in wildlife," said Dr Vinay K. Nandicoori, Director, CSIR-CCMB.

LaCONES said it started

testing animal samples for possible SARS-CoV-2 infection in August 2020 with its scientists finding the first positive samples from Asiatic lions in Nehru Zoological

Park in the city in April. As part of developing a protocol for collecting samples from animals showing Covid-19 symptoms, the lab tested different kinds of nasal, oropharyngeal, rectal and faecal samples from the animals.

"We hope that our recommendations help zoo staff in collecting and packing the samples appropriately before they are sent for testing. Given how difficult it is to get samples from animals, it is all the more important that we make most of the samples we get," said Dr Karthikeyan Vasudevan, scientist-in-charge, LaCONES.

IN BRIEF

TUF recalls Jayasanker

Khammam: Telangana Udyamakarula Forum (TUF) district president K.V. Krishna Rao said that the fruits of development should be reached to the all oppressed classes in Telangana and it is the real tribute to Professor Jayasankar. He said that Jayasankar fought for a separate Telangana to achieve the goal of benefiting Bahujans in the state. Krishna Rao paid tributes to Jayasankar at Telangana Martyr's Memorial in Khammam on Monday.

13-YEAR-OLD MARRIED TO 26-YEAR-OLD

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JUNE 21

Warangal Rural child protection officials on Monday identified a child marriage conducted secretly in Gopanapalle of Parvathagiri mandal and found out that a 13-year-old girl was married to a 26-year-old man.

ICDS Project officer Ch. Sridevi and district child protection officer G. Mahender Reddy gathered information regarding the child marriage and lodged a complaint with the police station.

DCPO Mahender Reddy said they verified the information of the girl with the school and anganwadi centre before confirming her age. "The police officials are investigating the matter and soon the culprits would be taken into custody. It is shocking that the girl was married to a man who is twice her age," he said.

NEWLYWED COUPLE TRY TO END LIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NIZAMABAD, JUNE 21

Newlywed couple attempted suicide in Pachalanadkuda village in Velpur mandal on Sunday midnight. They consumed poison and fell unconscious. The family members immediately shifted them to Armour and later admitted in a private hospital in Nizamabad on Monday.

According to sources, Bheemaiah and Swathi got married on June 13. Allegedly, Bheemaiah had a love affair with another woman and informed his wife. Both had consumed poison to end their lives. Bheemaiah is battling for life and the condition of Swathi is stable. Velpur police registered a case and are investigating.

STRENGTHEN CPI IN DISTRICTS, SAYS CHADA

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 21

There is considerable scope for strengthening Communist Party of India (CPI) in the united Karimnagar and Adilabad districts. As such, party leaders must strive hard and take up people's issues, party state secretary Chada Venkata Reddy underlined on Monday.

He was addressing a meeting of state committee members and party leaders from the two united districts at Baddam Yellareddy Bhavan in Karimnagar on Monday. Venkata Reddy pointed out that Karimnagar had once been a stronghold of CPI. It also had a lot of support among working sections in Adilabad district. Party leaders must draw up an action plan to bring back the lost glory of party, he remarked.

He said after formation of separate Telangana, TRS government has divided the two united districts into several smaller districts. Party leadership must hence study the local problems in these districts, ask party cadres to spread out into various villages and create confidence among people that CPI will be able to resolve their issues," he remarked.

Venkata Reddy said there is a lot of scope in small districts for intensifying people's movements for resolving public issues. CPI must seize opportunity and strengthen the party, he added.

CPI leaders Kalaveni Shankar, Thakkallapelli Srinivas Rao, Ponaganti Keshari, Manda Pavan, Badri Satyanarayana, Tandra Sadanandam, Ganti Venu, Gaddam Vilas Reddy and Karre Bikshapathi were among those present at the meeting.

Yoga for wellness



Students performing yoga on the occasion of International Yoga Day celebrations, at Manair High School in Karimnagar on Monday.

— YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

Non-tribals are taking away jobs in all depts: Adivasis

SC had scrapped GO 3 giving 100 per cent jobs to Adivasis in Agency

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC
ADILABAD, JUNE 21

The Supreme Court order scrapping the Government Order (GO) 3, which guaranteed 100 per cent reservation in teacher jobs to local Adivasis in the Agency areas, is proving costly for tribals with the officials implementing the judgment in other departments in Telangana state.

Non-tribals are mounting pressure on the state government and officials to implement the Supreme Court judgment

in filling the posts in all government departments. The GO 3 was being implemented in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh state till the Supreme Court judgment came out.

The panchayat raj, police and forest departments are filling up many posts with non-tribals as per the judgment and now officials have allotted panchayat secretary posts also to non-tribals.

Adivasis have been demanding that the state government bring out an ordinance or an Act by guaranteeing 100 per cent

● Various tribal organisations and the state government have filed a review petition in the Supreme Court on its previous judgment on GO 3.

jobs to local Adivasis as per GO 3 as the tribals will suffer a lot in terms of lost job opportunities.

Various tribal organisations and the state government have filed a review petition in the Supreme Court on its previous judgment on GO 3. The Adivasi government teachers allege that the

officials tried to follow the judgment even in the promotions to teachers recently. They demanded that the state government issue orders not to implement the judgment since the review petition is pending in the Supreme Court.

Asifabad MLA Athram Sakku said it was unfortunate that the Supreme Court judgment on GO 3 was being implemented in various departments while filling jobs though the GO was related only to teachers' jobs. He asked the officials to stop recruiting candidates in

the panchayat raj department as per the GO No 3 during the zilla parishad meeting recently.

However, district collector Sikta Patnaik clarified that they were recruiting panchayat secretary posts as per the Supreme Court judgment.

Boath MLA Rathod Bapurao also appealed to the district panchayat officer to stop recruiting for some time since the tribals are losing their opportunities. Both the TRS MLAs represented the matter to collector Sikta Patnaik.

Ajay angry over garbage in drain

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JUNE 21

Transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar on Monday got visibly angry seeing piles of garbage dumped into side drains at Pandillapalli village in Chintakani mandal.

He was on a surprise visit of Pandillapalli when his eyes fell on piled up garbage in the drains. He immediately pulled up panchayat secretary V. Nikhil who was accompanying him. "Get them removed immediately. Otherwise, diseases will spread in the village," he warned.

Ajay Kumar visited a nursery in the village and made several suggestions on raising the plants there. He said government is giving top priority to Palle Pragathi and district administration should complete all sanctioned works in a time-bound manner.

The minister then went to Jagannathapuram and inspected the

Vaikuntadhamam, roads, streetlights and Rythu Vedika in the village. Here also he found fault with officials over

● He said government is giving top priority to Palle Pragathi and district administration should complete all sanctioned works

garbage piled up on both sides of the road.

"The idea of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao is to shape panchayats as per dreams of Mahatma Gandhi. Employees should work accordingly," he remarked. He maintained that Palle Pragathi and Haritha Haram are helping a lot in giving a facelift to villages.

In Khammam, Ajay Kumar handed over cheques worth ₹10.68 lakh to 24 beneficiaries under the Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He said so far, ₹6.77 crore worth CMRF cheques have been distributed to 1,543 persons in the district.

"Financial assistance extended by CM is helping a lot of families in getting out the debt trap they have fallen into due to hospitalisation expenses following Coronavirus," he stated.

'Money not deposited into farmers' accounts'

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 21

Though TRS government has procured food grains from farmers in the district over a month ago, it has not yet deposited the relevant amounts into their accounts, charged District Congress Cell chairman Puli Anjaneyulu Goud on Monday.

He accused the government of boasting about sanctioning Rythu Bandhu to farmers on one hand, but at the same time delaying payments to farmers for crops purchased from them.

Anjaneyulu pointed out that many ministers are making a beeline to Huzurabad constituency in view of the impending byelections. They are showering funds for various developmental works. This is just to divert the attention of people from the real problems people are facing, he said.

"Why have the government and ministers failed in preparing an action plan on distributing seeds and fertilisers, which will be highly essential for farmers in coming up days? Further, they should bring to notice of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao about the need to pay money for food grains procured from them.

Speaking on the occasion,

CONGRESS SEEKS ACTION AGAINST SPURIOUS SEED SELLERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JUNE 21

The Congress leaders and activists staged a dharna in front of the collectorate here on Monday demanding stern action against shop owners who are selling spurious cotton seeds in Adilabad district.

Congress workers led by Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee general secretary Gandrath Sujatha and party district in-charge president Sajid Khan staged the protest. Speaking on the occasion,

action plan on distributing seeds and fertilisers, which will be highly essential for farmers in coming up days? Further, they should bring to notice of Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao about the need to pay money for food grains procured from them.

sion, the leaders said owners of the fertilizers and seed shops who sold spurious cotton seeds would become more active and continue cheating gullible farmers if the district officials failed to take stern action against them.

The Congress leaders alleged that some agriculture officials had colluded with the owners of the fertiliser shops and were extending indirect help to them to continue their business. A team of Congress leaders submitted a memorandum to collector Sikta Patnaik.

Otherwise, how will they be able to procure their farm inputs," the Congress leader asked.

He suggested that civil supplies minister Gangula Kamalakara, who represents Karimnagar district, must focus on resolving the issue as early as possible.

The Congress leader said many sections of the society were planning to submit representations to the CM on various matters. However, the local police and administration took all such people into preventive custody before the CM's arrival.

"This is the worst form of dictatorship," he alleged.

KTR takes stock of 2BHK works

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 21

IT minister K.T. Rama Rao paid a sudden visit to Rajanna Sircilla district and inspected the construction works of double-bedroom houses which are in progress here at Mandepally village of Thangallapally mandal on Monday.

After inspecting the ongoing works of 2BHK houses, Rama Rao ordered the officials of the concerned department to provide all basic facilities in the double-bedroom houses and to keep them ready by Dasara for inauguration by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao.

He also inspected construction works of the international driving school at Bypass Road near Indiramma Colony and directed the concerned divisional engineer to speed up the works and complete them as early as possible.

Later, the minister inspected the construction works of the Government Nursing College and double-bedroom houses which are in progress here in Sircilla

town. He ordered the officials to construct a compound wall around the double-bedroom houses apart from making arrangements for electricity facilities and also asked them to take steps for planting saplings to create a pleasant atmosphere on the premises of 2 BHK houses.

Taking the double-bedroom houses in Rajanna Sircilla district as a model, the construction works of the same were taken up in Hyderabad city, so the officials must take special interest for completion of works maintaining standards, he said.

Rama Rao also inspected the ongoing construction works of the new collectorate complex building and directed the officials to complete the plantation works as early as possible and keep ready for inauguration.

Principal Secretary Aravind Kumar, district collector Krishna Bhaskar, additional collector Satya Prasad, revenue divisional officer Srinivas and zilla parishad chairperson Nyalakonda Aruna were among those who were present.

RFCL flags off first rake of fertilisers

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 21

The Ramagundam Fertilisers & Chemical Limited (RFCL) present in Ramagundam of Peddapalli district is the first fertiliser unit to start its commercial production amongst the five revived defunct fertiliser units across the country.

RFCL is the joint venture company of National Fertilizers Limited (NFL), Engineers India Limited (EIL) and Fertiliser Corporation of India Limited (FCIL) along with the State government of

Telangana with 11 per cent of equity participation.

With a capacity of 2,200 MTPD ammonia and 3,850 MTPD urea, the RFCL has commenced its continuous commercial operations. Working towards reducing urea fertilisers imports and making India self-sufficient, the company has flagged off its first rake loaded with 21 wagons carrying 1,310.7 tonnes of neem coated urea fertiliser in 45 kg bags. The load was dispatched on Sunday night from the wagon loading plant of RFCL to Sanathnagar, Hyderabad.

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SHORT TAKES

ODISHA STARTS CLASSES ON YOUTUBE

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 21

With no immediate possibility of reopening of schools for classroom teaching in sight, the Odisha government on Monday kicked off live streaming of classes on YouTube for Class I to Class X students.

The state school and mass education department has prepared a detailed blueprint to reach out to the students through virtual mode. The department has also prepared the time table for the subjects to be taught every day.

The teaching process for the students of Classes IX and X will continue till July 31. As many as four periods, beginning from 10.45 to 1 pm, will be held for five days from Monday to Friday for Class IX and X. Classes for the students of Class I to III will be held from 9 am to 10 am while class IV to VIII will be held live from 9 am to 10.30 am.

Teachers of the concerned subjects will look after their classes through online mode and clarify doubts of students through WhatsApp chat and voice call.

According to reports, 33 per cent students could access online classes last year while the rate has gone up to 40 per cent this year.

LENS ON MISHAP THAT CLAIMED FIVE LIVES

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 21

A major accident that took place at Ramanattukara in Kozhikode district of Kerala in the wee hours of Monday killing five youths, has come under a cloud of suspicion.

The ill-fated car rammed into a lorry near Ramanattukara. Five youths who were in the car died on the spot.

Initially the police thought over speeding could have led to the mishap. However, the cops grew suspicious when they came to know that the vehicle had gone to Kozhikode from the airport before returning to Cherpuassery. Moreover the vehicle was followed by two other cars.

Six persons who were travelling by one of these vehicles have been detained. "We are looking into all aspects. These people belong to Cherpuassery. We are investigating why they went to Kozhikode. We are questioning the people who were following the vehicle," said Kozhikode city police commissioner A.V. George. The police suspect that the persons in the vehicle could be conduits of gold smugglers. They are examining the CCTV footage to obtain links of the detained persons with the deceased.

CRUCIAL MEET ON SECURITY THIS WEEK

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

The high level committee constituted to sort out differences on the new military structure of unified commands - Theatre Commands - is proposed to meet this week to formulate a way forward.

The different Theatre Commands will integrate the assets of Army, Air Force and Navy in a domain under one commander to give punitive response to any external threat. The committee has been formed to look into the issues raised by services and other ministries before a note is prepared on Theatre Command to be presented to Cabinet Committee on Security.

"The first meeting of the Committee is planned for this week. It will be one of the series of meetings to work out a plan," said a senior official.

The committee has three Vice Chiefs of the Armed Forces, Chief of Integrated Defence Staff, and representatives from defence and other ministries.

India is expected to have two to three Integrated Theatre Commands over land looking at China and Pakistan, a Maritime Theatre Command and a National Integrated Air Defence Command. Each of the theatre commands will have units of the Army, the Navy and the Air Force and all of them will work as a single entity looking after security challenges in a specified geographical territory under an operational commander.

Health is wealth



Doctors and health workers perform yoga on International Day of Yoga at Government Institute of Medical Sciences in Greater Noida on Monday.

— PTI

Vice President of India M. Venkaiah Naidu with his wife Usha performing Yoga on the occasion of the 7th International Day of Yoga in New Delhi on Monday.

— D. KAMRAJ



Lok Sabha speaker Om Birla with his wife Amita Birla and daughter performing yoga.

Amarnath yatra cancelled for second year in a row

YUSUF JAMEEL SRINAGAR, JUNE 21

The Amarnath Yatra has been cancelled for the second year in a row due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Like last year, the pilgrimage will be only "symbolic", with all rituals to be performed quietly by a select number of priests and hermits at the revered cave-shrine at a height of 13,000 feet (3,882 metres) in the lower Himalayas in south Kashmir. Like last year, the morning and evening aarti will be telecast live.

Jammu and Kashmir's lieutenant-governor, Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of the Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), while announcing the cancellation of this year's yatra on Monday, tweeted, "Shri Amarnathji Yatra cancelled in wake of Covid-19 Pandemic. Decision after threadbare discussion with Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board members. Yatra to be symbolic only. However, all the traditional religious rituals shall be performed at the Holy Cave Shrine as per past practice". (sic)

He also said: "It's important to save people's lives. So, it is not advisable to hold and conduct this year's pilgrimage in the larger public interest".

A J&K government spokesman said that after the decision to cancel the yatra was taken by the SASB at a "threadbare discussion" among its members, Mr Sinha held detailed deliberations with J&K chief secretary Arun Kumar Mehta, DGP Dilbag Singh, and other senior officers and direct-

ly THE SASB CEO said the shrine board has made the arrangements for the mace of Lord Shiva 'Chhari Mubarak' to be taken to the holy cave on August 22, when the yatra is to conclude coinciding with the festival of Raksha Bandhan.

HE SAID that both morning telecast of aarti at 6 am and evening aarti at 5 pm, each for 30 minutes, is to be live-streamed on the board's official website and an app specifically dedicated for devotees.

THE DEVOTEES can pay their virtual obeisance through the Shrine Board's aarti link.

ed them to ensure that devotees are able to attend the morning and evening aarti at the cave-shrine in online mode as it would help them to "pay their obeisance while also avoiding and travel and exposure".

The spokesman said the meeting was informed that the SASB has put in place a virtual and televised mechanism for live darshan of the aarti from the cave-shrine.

The 56-day annual pilgrimage was due to begin from both traditional Pahalgam and shorter Baltal routes on June 28, coinciding with Ashaad Chaturthi, an auspicious day in Hindu calendar, and end on Shrawan Purnima (Raksha Bandhan) on August 22.

However, the SASB had on April 22 suspended registrations for the yatra

temporarily due to the grim Covid-19 situation across India.

Last year, the yatra was cancelled at the eleventh hour in the face of the threat posed by the pandemic, while in 2019 the government had asked devotees who had arrived in the Valley to pay obeisance at Amarnath and also tourists to cut short their visit and leave immediately, claiming that Pakistan-sponsored militants were planning a terror attack against the yatra, while the lives of outside holidaymakers too were in danger in view of the prevailing security situation in the Valley.

Subsequent events, however, proved it beyond a shadow of doubt that all the statements issued and measures taken by the government and other official agencies right from mid-July 2019 were part of the government's "strategy" to ensure the return of pilgrims and tourists from the Valley before the Centre's stripping J&K of its special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and splitting it up into two Union territories on August 5, 2019.

The SASB had on March 13 this year said it has decided to increase the pilgrims' intake by 5,000 a day this year.

It also said the authorities were making arrangements to host over 600,000 devotees during the event after its decision to enhance the daily route-wise pilgrim ceiling from 7,500 to 10,000 on each route, excluding pilgrims who would be flying in helicopters to Amarnath.



2ND LAPSE IN SCINDIA'S COVER IN 10 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JUNE 21

Senior BJP leader and Rajya Sabha member Jyotiraditya Scindia's pilot vehicle missed the car in which he was travelling at Nirawali point in Morena-Gwalior border on the intervening night of Sunday and Monday, causing security scare.

Fourteen policemen including five sub-inspectors were on Monday suspended for lapse. This was the second case of security lapse involving Scindia in the last ten days.

A police vehicle started piloting the car in which Scindia was travelling from Delhi to Gwalior; when it entered Morena in Madhya Pradesh late on Sunday night. The pilot vehicle, however, got confused when another car had overtaken it at the Morena-Gwalior border and followed it mistaking it to be Scindia's car.

Following this, Scindia had to travel without security for nearly ten km. Later, a police inspector posted in Hazira police station in Gwalior district spotted Scindia's vehicle and followed it to its destination of Jay Vilas palace in Gwalior. Sources attributed the lapse to lack of coordination between security forces of Morena and Gwalior.

82.7L jabs given in single day

Well done India, says Modi; Covid cases continue to fall

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

Over 82.7 lakh vaccine doses, the highest in a single day, were administered across the country on Monday as the revised guidelines for Covid-19 vaccination came into effect, the Union Health Ministry said.

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage was recorded at over 28.33 crore since January 16, according to the data from the CoWIN portal. "Today's record-breaking vaccination numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight COVID-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the front-line warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine. Well done India!" Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

The previous single-day record was of over 48 lakh doses on April 1. In June so far, India saw an average vaccination of over 31 lakh per day.

The average single-day vaccinations fell to as low as around 16 lakh in the first week of May when the country was at the peak of the second wave.

Madhya Pradesh saw the maximum vaccinations on Monday followed by Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

Union home minister Amit Shah said the pace of vaccinations will be stepped up in July-August and the target to vaccinate almost all will be reached "very fast".

The overall fresh cases of Covid-19 fell to 53,000 in India after 88 days while the figure in Delhi came down to two digits (89). With cases coming down, the Bihar government announced an easing of the restrictions.

From June 23 to July 6, all government and private offices can function at 100 per cent capacity, shops can remain open till 7 pm,

OVER 2.98 CR COVID VACCINE DOSES STILL AVAILABLE WITH STATES, UTs

New Delhi, June 21: More than 2.98 crore Covid vaccine doses are still available with states and union territories, the Union health ministry said on Monday.

So far, 29,35,04,820 vaccine doses have been provided to states and union territories (UTs) through the Centre's free of cost channel and the direct state procurement category, it said.

Of this, the total consumption, including wastage, is 26,36,26,884 doses, according to data available at 8 am on Monday, the ministry said.

"A total 2,98,77,936 Covid-19 vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs to be administered," the ministry said.

It said that as part of the nationwide vaccination

MP VACCINATES 14.71 LAKH PEOPLE IN A DAY

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY BHOPAL, JUNE 21

Madhya Pradesh set a new single-day vaccination record in the country with inoculation of 14.71 lakh people on Monday.

The Shivraj government launched a 10-day special vaccination drive in the state coinciding with the International Yoga Day on Monday.

Madhya Pradesh has overtaken the single-day vaccination record set by Andhra Pradesh on Sunday. As many as 13.41 lakh people were vaccinated in Andhra Pradesh on Sunday.

Indore set a record as being the first city in the country to have vaccinated 2.10 lakh people in a single day on Monday.

"The vaccination campaign started in all the 52 districts in MP simultaneously in an atmosphere of enthusiasm", chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan who launched the vaccination campaign at Parasari village in Datia district after paying obeisance to the famous Maa Pithambra temple in the district, told reporters.

Long queues of people were witnessed in all the 7,000 vaccination Centres established across the state on the opening day of the drive on Monday.

"We had set a target to vaccinate 10 lakh people on the first day. We have exceeded our target as more and more people poured in the vaccination Centre", Mr Chouhan said.

parks and gardens will open from 6 am to 12 noon, through night curfew will remain in force from 9 pm to 5 am.

OVER 2.98 CR COVID VACCINE DOSES STILL AVAILABLE WITH STATES, UTs

drive, the central government has been supporting states and UTs by providing them Covid vaccines free of cost.

In addition, the Centre has also been facilitating direct procurement of vaccines by the states and UTs, the ministry said.

Vaccination is an integral pillar of the comprehensive strategy for containment and management of the pandemic, along with 'test, track, treat' and Covid appropriate behaviour, it said.

Implementation of the liberalized and accelerated phase-3 strategy of vaccination started from May 1 and under it, every month, 50 per cent of the total Central Drugs Laboratory cleared vaccine doses of any manufacturer would be procured by the Centre, the ministry said.

MAHA TEEN ENDS LIFE OVER ONLINE CLASSES

Aurangabad, June 21: A 17-year-old girl in Maharashtra's Nanded district allegedly committed suicide as she did not have a mobile phone to attend online classes and her parents' financial condition did not permit them to buy her one, police said.

The girl, a resident of Nayaagon hanged herself in her home. "She is a Class XI student. A suicide note has been found. Her parents have also confirmed lack of a phone as the reason for the act," police said.

— PTI



SHORT TAKES

NINE CATALAN SEPARATISTS TO BE PARDONED

Madrid, June 21: Prime Minister Pedro Sanchez said Monday that the Spanish Cabinet will approve pardons for nine separatist Catalan politicians and activists imprisoned for their roles in the 2017 push to break away from Spain.

Sanchez made the announcement on Monday in Barcelona during a speech set to lay the roadmap for the future of the northeastern region before a few hundred representatives of the region's civil society. He said the Cabinet would approve the pardons on Tuesday.

DESPITE VISA ISSUES, TAIWAN TO KEEP HK OFFICE

Taipei, June 21: Taiwan says it will continue operating its de facto consulate in Hong Kong in spite of visa difficulties for its staffers while also providing consular services online.

The Taipei Economic and Cultural Office in Hong Kong has been unable to get new visas for its staff after the Hong Kong government in 2018 began requiring that Taiwanese personnel at the office sign a statement accepting the one-China principle, Taiwan's Mainland Affairs Council said.

The office has just one staffer left in Hong Kong whose visa is due to expire next month. The one-China principle holds that Taiwan is part of China and the Communist government in Beijing is China's sole legitimate government.

U.S. ENVOY HOPES N. KOREA ACCEPTS OFFER FOR TALKS

Seoul, June 21: President Joe Biden's special envoy for North Korea said on Monday he hopes to see a positive reaction from the North soon on US offers for talks after the North Korean leader ordered officials to prepare for both dialogue and confrontation.

Sung Kim, Biden's special representative for North Korea, is in Seoul to speak with South Korean and Japanese officials about the United States' stalled diplomacy with the North over its nuclear programme and US-led sanctions.

The trilateral talks followed a North Korean political conference last week where leader Kim Jong Un called for stronger efforts to improve his nation's economy.

ARMENIA PM'S PARTY WINS SNAP PARL ELECTION

Yerevan, June 21: Results released on Monday showed the party of Armenia's acting Prime Minister Nikol Pashinyan won the snap parliamentary elections he called to ease anger over a peace deal he signed with Azerbaijan.

With all precincts counted, Pashinyan's Civil Contract party won 53.9% of the vote and former President Robert Kocharyan's bloc was a distant second place with about 21%, the election commission said Monday. A bloc affiliated with another former president came third with 5.2%, and another party had nearly 4%. Blocs need 7% to get into parliament, however, Armenia's laws allow a third party or bloc to get seats if only two political forces pass the threshold to get into parliament. Pashinyan called the early election after months of

PHOTO SHOWS DUBAI PRINCESS IN SPAIN

Madrid, June 21: A Dubai princess who has been the subject of concern from a United Nations panel after being seized trying to flee the sheikhdom in 2018 appeared in a social media post early Monday that described her as being in Spain on a European holiday.

An Instagram image published by a woman identified in British media as former Royal Navy member Sioned Taylor shows Sheikhha Latifa bint Mohammed Al Maktoum at Adolfo Suarez Madrid-Barajas Airport.

Taylor's caption, punctuated by a smiley face emoji, read: Great European holiday with Latifa. We're having fun exploring! Comments by Taylor acknowledged the location of the image, which match other images of the airport.

Asked about Sheikhha Latifa, Taylor wrote in another comment she is great with a thumbs-up emoji. Taylor, the United Arab Emirates' embassies in London and Madrid, as well as the government's Dubai Media Office, did not immediately respond to requests for comment Monday.

Taliban take key Afghan district

Insurgents add to string of recent victories

Kabul, June 21: Taliban fighters took control of a key district in Afghanistan's northern Kunduz province on Monday and encircled the provincial capital, police said, as the insurgent group added to its string of recent victories on the battlefield.

Fighting around Imam Sahib district began late Sunday and by mid-day Monday the Taliban had overrun the district headquarters and were in control of police headquarters, said Inamuddin Rahmani, provincial police spokesman said.

Taliban militants were within a kilometre of Kunduz, the provincial capital but had not entered into the city, he said, although there were reports of small bands of Taliban near the outskirts and residents trying to leave for Kabul.

Dozens of districts have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when United States and Nato troops began their final departure from Afghanistan. Like Imam Sahib district in northern Kunduz, their significance often lies in their proximity to roads and major cities. Imam Sahib is strategically located near Afghanistan's northern border with Tajikistan, a key supply route from Central Asia.

Rahmani said police and Afghan National Army soldiers had jointly tried to defend the district. He said it still wasn't clear how many casualties the Afghan National Security and Defence Forces suffered in the protracted battle or how many Taliban were killed or wounded. Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahed confirmed Imam Sahib district was in Taliban hands.

Several other districts in Kunduz have also fallen to the insurgent group in the latest round of fighting, including Dasht-e Archi, which neighbours Imam Sahib, said Rahmani.

Syed Mohammad Mousavi drove with his family to the relative safety of Kabul from northern

ern border with Tajikistan, a key supply route from Central Asia.

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Syed Mohammad Mousavi drove with his family to the relative safety of Kabul from northern

Mazar-e-Sharif, about 120 kilometres west of Kunduz on Sunday. He said people were trying to leave Kunduz city for Kabul fearing additional fighting. "The Taliban were all over the road, checking cars. We were very scared," he said after reaching the capital.

In recent days, the Taliban have taken several districts across the three northern provinces of Kunduz, Baghlan and Balkh, said Mousavi. Significantly, witnesses said Doshi district in Baghlan province was in Taliban hands, which if it true gives the insurgent group control of the one road that links five northern provinces to the capital Kabul.

The Taliban have circulated videos on their website and to WhatsApp groups which they claim show government soldiers who have surrendered being told to return to their homes and receiving money from the Taliban.

On Sunday, Taliban leader Mawlawi Hibatullah Akhonzada issued a statement ordering his soldiers to "treat those who surrender well and display good behaviour with them".

— AP

Raisi says no Biden meet, missiles non-negotiable

Dubai, June 21: Iran's president-elect said on Monday he would not meet with President Joe Biden nor negotiate over Tehran's ballistic missile programme and its support of regional militias, sticking to a hard-line position following his landslide victory in last week's election.

Judiciary chief Ebrahim Raisi also described himself as a "defender of human rights" when asked about his involvement in the 1988 mass execution of some 5,000 people. It marked the first time he's been put on the spot on live television

over that dark moment in Iranian history at the end of the Iran-Iraq war.

"The US is obliged to lift all oppressive sanctions against Iran," he said at the news conference. Raisi sat in front of a sea of microphones, most from Iran and countries home to militias supported by Tehran. He looked nervous at the beginning but slowly became more at ease over the hourlong news conference. Asked about Iran's ballistic missile programme and its support of regional militias, he described the issues as "non-negotiable". Tehran's fleet of attack

aircraft date largely back to before the 1979 Islamic Revolution, forcing Iran to instead invest in missiles as a hedge against its regional Arab neighbours, who have purchased billions of dollars in American military hardware over the years. Those missiles, with a self-imposed range limit of 2,000 kilometres can reach across the Middle East and US military bases in the region.

Iran also relies on militias like Yemen's Houthi rebels and Lebanon's militant Hezbollah group for counterbalance against enemies such as Saudi Arabia and Israel.

— AP

Israeli FM in UAE next week

Jerusalem, June 21: Israel's new foreign minister will head to the United Arab Emirates next week for the first-ever visit by a top Israeli diplomat to the Gulf Arab country, the ministry said Monday.

Foreign Minister Yair Lapid's trip comes after the two countries normalised relations last year in an agreement brokered by the Trump administration, the first of four similar deals with Arab states that had long shunned Israel over its conflict with the Palestinians.

Both Israel's new government and the Biden administration have said they hope to reach similar accords with other Arab states.

Israel and the UAE have meanwhile continued working to deepen ties despite last month's Gaza war. The Israeli Foreign Ministry said Lapid will visit the UAE June 29-30, and will inaugurate an Israeli Embassy in Abu Dhabi and a consulate in Dubai. "Ties between Israel and the UAE are an important relationship, the fruits of which will be enjoyed not only by the citizens of the two countries, but by the entire Middle East," it said in a statement.

Lapid was the driving force behind a new Israeli government sworn in just over a week ago that ended Benjamin Netanyahu's record 12-year run as prime

minister. Netanyahu and Trump had held up the agreements with the UAE, Bahrain, Sudan and Morocco as among their biggest achievements.

Israelis have flocked to the UAE since the agreement was reached to enjoy futuristic Dubai. The UAE is a major global travel hub, and normalisation has made it much easier for Israelis to travel further afield. The two countries have also signed a raft of agreements to cooperate in commerce, technology and other fields.

Shortly after the accord was reached, the Trump administration authorised the sale of 50 advanced F-35 fighter jets to the

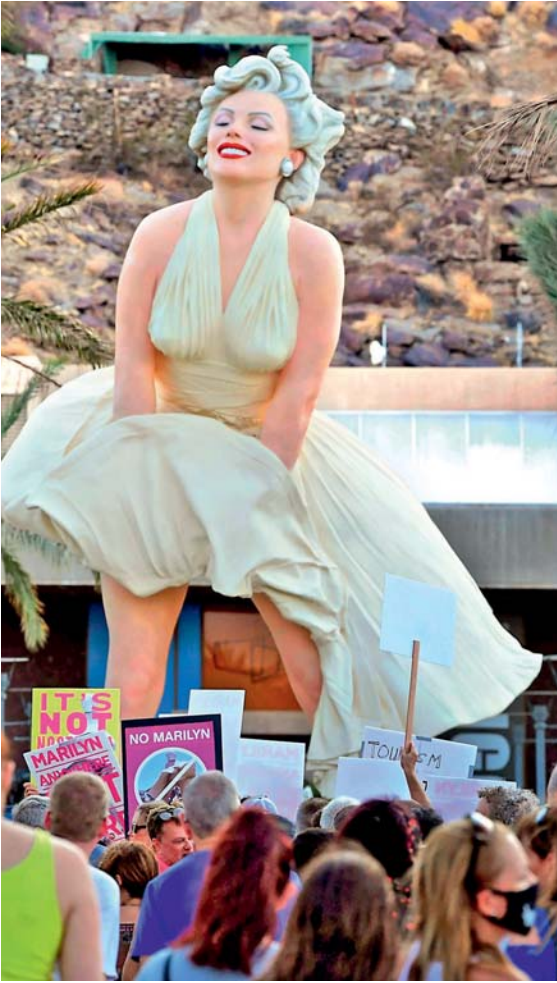
UAE, which would make it only the second country in the Middle East, after Israel, to acquire them.

The Biden administration put that agreement on hold in January after it drew fierce criticism from Democrats in Congress, who argued that the sale had unfolded too quickly and without sufficient transparency. But in April, the administration decided to proceed with the \$23 billion arms sale, saying it would work with the UAE to ensure adherence to human rights standards and the laws of war.

The Palestinians strongly criticised the normalisation agreements.

— AP

Tumult over statue



Protesters gather in front of the "Forever Marilyn" statue unveiled on its return to Palm Springs, California. The 26-foot tall and 17-tonne sculpture by artist Seward Johnson Atelier was displayed earlier this decade in Palm Springs, but the return has drawn the ire of residents on infringement of surrounding natural landscape views and on allegations that the statue is sexist and inappropriate, despite the popularity of Marilyn Monroe's iconic dress-flying pose from the 1955 comedy "The Seven Year Itch".

— Photo by Frederic J. Brown/AFP

Sweden's PM loses confidence vote over realty

Stockholm, June 21: Stefan Lofven, Sweden's Social Democratic prime minister since 2014, lost a confidence vote in parliament on Monday amid a housing crisis and skyrocketing real estate prices, making him the first Swedish government leader ever to lose such a motion. The vote was initiated by the small Left Party, an ally of the minority government that is not in the two-party centre-left coalition but had provided the votes to pass legislation.

At the centre of a controversy that sparked the Left Party to lose confidence and vote against Lofven are plans to deregulate Sweden's housing market because of accelerating price increases that took place during the pandemic. Sweden has strict regulations on rents aimed at maintaining affordable prices in larger cities.

However, this disincents property developers from building new homes for the rental market. People needing to rent a home can find themselves waiting for years for a contract, and buying property is increasingly hard amid soaring home prices. However, the Left Party fears that deregulating the rental market will lead to rapid price increases and deeper segregation between rich and poor. It is unclear what will happen next in Sweden.

Lofven said last week he would wait for the vote and then "think through what is best for Sweden."

The prime minister has one week to decide whether to call an early election. Over the weekend, Lofven held last-minute meetings seeking to secure a majority in parliament for his proposed rent reforms.

On Sunday, he sought to soften the reforms by inviting landlords and tenant organisations for talks. However, the leader of the Left Party Nooshi Dadgostar stood by its decision to oppose Lofven and said his effort was "a political show."

"We have done something that is perceived as unusual in politics... kept our word," she said.

— AP

EU curbs to hurt Belarus economy

Brussels, June 21: European Union foreign ministers will approve Monday a fresh set of sanctions against scores of officials in Belarus and prepare a series of measures aimed at hurting the country's economy, EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

The EU has ratcheted up sanctions since President Alexander Lukashenko won a sixth term last August in elections slammed as fraudulent by the 27-nation bloc. The measures have targeted people accused of electoral misconduct and responsibility for the police crackdown that followed.

We will approve the package of new sanctions, which is a wider package, Borrell told reporters as he arrived in Luxembourg to chair the ministerial meeting. He said asset freezes and travel bans will be slapped on a total of around 86 people and organisations.

Diplomats have said that a number of those targeted are linked to an incident last month in which a Ryanair flight travelling from Greece to Lithuania was diverted to Minsk, where authorities arrested Raman Pratasevich, a dissident journalist who was on board the airliner. The EU has already banned Belarus airline companies from flying over the bloc's territory or using its airports.

Borrell said the ministers will also prepare a raft of economic sanctions for EU leaders to endorse at a summit on Thursday. These are going to hurt, going to hurt the economy of Belarus heavily, he said. The measures may include action against the export of potash and petroleum products.

"We will no longer just sanction individuals. We will now also impose sectoral sanctions — meaning that we will now get to work on the economic areas that are of particular significance for Belarus and for the regime's income," German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas said.

— AP

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— AP

Oz official: Stick with AZ for 2nd dose

92 Indian factory workers in Lanka Covid positive

Canberra, June 21: A top health official is urging Australians to get their second doses of AstraZeneca despite deaths from the vaccine exceeding the nation's Covid-19 death toll this year.

Two women in Australia have died from rare blood clots caused by the vaccine. The only Covid-19 fatality this year was an 80-year-old traveller who died in April after being infected overseas and diagnosed in hotel quarantine. Chief Medical Officer Paul Kelly told state leaders on Monday that health authorities did not recommend people follow up their first AstraZeneca dose with a different vaccine.

Globally, the safety and effectiveness of switching vaccines between doses is still being tested. He urged people not to cancel their second AstraZeneca jab, which is booked three months after the first, saying the chances of developing blood clots after a second dose were 1.5 in a million.

Covid-19 has claimed 910 lives in Australia, but vaccine hesitancy is on the rise as the death rate slows. Australia last week

lifted its recommended age limit for AstraZeneca from 50 to 60 after a 52-year-old woman died of clots. A 48-year-old woman

Colombo, June 21: Ninety two Indian workers at an iron works factory in Sri Lanka tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday, health officials said. The Indians were among the 128 workers at the factory in Colombo north suburb of Wattala who were found to have contracted the virus. They have been put under quarantine. The factory, which has a total of 194 workers, has been closed temporarily, a report in the Newscenter.lk said. Those who have tested negative have been put under quarantine in the factory premises, the report said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka on Monday ended its

Covid-19 lockdown by lifting travel restrictions, amid concerns by health officials who insisted that it must be continued in view of the raging third wave. For the first time in nearly four weeks, the travel restrictions were lifted at 4 am on Monday and will be re-imposed at 10 pm on June 23.

"We will be closely monitoring people's movements through special units," police spokesman and Senior Deputy Inspector General Ajith Rohana said. He said the public must stay indoors as much as possible despite the lifting of restrictions. No inter-district travel will be allowed, the police said.

Health officials issued more guidelines on public behaviour during the lifting of the lockdown. The health authorities were wary of the Delta variant of the coronavirus which is spreading fast across the country. "We still view this as dangerous, the travel restrictions were only loosely observed. The lifting of even that could be dangerous," Upul Rohana, a spokesman for the public health inspectors said.

The nation has recorded nearly 2,000 cases per day since the third wave which began mid April. The total number of cases in the country stood at 239,689, while 201,389 are recovering.

— PTI

soon. The government hopes that every Australian adult who wants a vaccine will have access to one by the end of the year.

— AP

PAK'S DEATH TOLL CROSSES MARK OF 22K

Islamabad, June 21: Pakistan's Coronavirus death toll crossed the grim figure of 22,000 on Monday, as Sindh province continued to report the highest number of fresh cases in the country. Thirty patients died and 907 new cases were detected in the last 24 hours, the Ministry of National Health Services said in its daily bulletin. Now, the death toll stands at 22,007 and national caseload at 949,175.

Of the 907 new cases, the majority of them were reported from Sindh province at 595 cases. The Coronavirus has greatly impacted the province. So far, Sindh has reported over 3.07 lakh cases. Pakistan on Sunday received 1.55 million doses of a China-made Coronavirus vaccine, as the immunisation drive picks up pace in the country.

— PTI

SENSITIVE | PROJECT

Millions of Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian or Slovakian citizens had lost their homes

Museum on WWII-expelled Germans raises Nazi crimes

Berlin, June 21: Germany is opening a museum exploring the fate of millions of Germans forced to leave eastern and central Europe at the end of World War II, along with other forced displacements of the 20th and 21st centuries — a sensitive project that has taken years to realise.

Chancellor Angela Merkel is due to speak to an opening ceremony Monday for the Documentation Ce-

nter for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, more than 13 years after her government gave the plan the go-ahead.

Housed in a late-1920s building in downtown Berlin, it features some 700 exhibits over 1,500 square metres (16,000 square feet). Making the project reality was long viewed as "an impossible balancing act," said the center's director, Gundula Bavendamm, recalling

"heated arguments about priorities and contextualisation."

Controversies revolved around one central question, she said: "How can the exodus and expulsion of Germans at the end of and after World War II be portrayed without raising the slightest doubt that this country is aware of its lasting responsibility for the German crimes of World War II and the murder of

European Jews?"

The project centres on the millions of Germans who fled from advancing Soviet forces or were kicked out of parts of eastern and central Europe as Germany's borders were moved westward after the war, "in the historical context" of Nazi crimes, said Bavendamm — the project's third director.

"Without the Nazi policies of expulsion and annihilation, 14 million Germans wouldn't have lost their homes as a result of flight and expulsion," she added. "But that doesn't change the fact that their expulsion by the Allies and the eastern and central European states in the aftermath of World War II was also an injustice."

In its efforts to provide context, the exhibition explores "forced migration as a phenomenon of modern Europe," including displacements during World War I, the arrival of Vietnamese "boat people" in West Germany in the 1970s, the fallout from the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1990s and the European migration crisis of recent years.

Exhibits include some 30 passports, including a German Jew's passport stamped with the letter "J" in the Nazi era, a "Nansen

passport" for stateless refugees from 1937 and a modern-day provisional refugee passport. There is the diary of a girl from East Prussia, a territory Germany lost at the end of the war, chronicling sexual violence. There's also a bicycle used by a Syrian refugee to cross the Russian-Norwegian border in 2016. There are audio accounts by people recounting their arrival in Germany.

— AP

DECCAN Chronicle

22 JUNE 2021

Will harassment of Sena MLAs hit Maha coalition?

Three Shiv Sena MLAs, including transport minister Anil Parab who is said to be close to Chief Minister Udhav Thackeray, are being investigated by the Enforcement Directorate and other central agencies for money laundering and other corrupt practices. One of the three has gone public and urged the CM to re-forge ties with BJP and ditch NCP and Congress, Sena's alliance partners in the MVA government. The MLA in question contends that the harassment of Sena legislators and their families will cease if the Sena returns to partnering BJP, to begin with in the upcoming local bodies election. On the face of it, this is an old tactical line in play.

Investigation agencies of the Union government have been unleashed in the past to harass political opponents, break parties, and re-shape politics. In Maharashtra, the most prominent case was the ED notice to NCP leader Sharad Pawar before the October 2019 Assembly poll, with the ED running for cover only when Mr Pawar threatened to descend on the agency's office in Mumbai with thousands of his supporters. In West Bengal too, the central agencies tormented Trinamul Congress leaders until their defection to BJP was secured. In the end, the low tactics failed to impress and the BJP suffered a humiliating defeat in the recent state poll. The defectors are now begging CM Mamata Banerjee for forgiveness.

For the ruling alliance in Maharashtra, security is not likely to lie in succumbing to BJP's indirect pressure, and Mr Thackeray reneging on his own coalition allies on the strength of a legislator becoming a cry baby. He had broken off ties with the BJP after fighting the polls in alliance with the saffron party because the latter evidently went back on its promise to share the post of CM with the Sena. If the Sena, on the strength of a complaining MLA, returns to the BJP's embrace, it is unlikely Mr Thackeray will be able to hold on to his position for long.

On the other hand, if the partners in the ruling coalition contest the forthcoming municipal polls jointly, rather than separately as the Congress has threatened in pique, a strong political message will go to the electorate- and to the BJP. If the event they perform creditably, BJP pressures may be expected to ease. It is useful to bear in mind the full import of the words of Sena leader Sanjay Raut, who urges that it is important to fathom who is building pressure on Sena MLAs, and why.

The pressure on the Sena MLAs has come at about the same time as Sena and NCP agreeing to contest elections together in the foreseeable future, with the Congress being the outlier in the ruling alliance. Although the Congress in Maharashtra won 44 seats — three more than in 2014 — on its own steam, and when the party received no assistance from its headquarters in Delhi, it remains organisationally weak in the state.

There is glaring factionalism which keeps the party weak and the ruling coalition somewhat off-balance. The state party chief, Nana Patole, is cultivating the habit of firing broadsides at the Sena. For the overall health of the state government and the Congress organisation, the party's leadership at the Centre will do well to impart the lesson of responsible political conduct to its Maharashtra unit.

Can Raisi make peace with US?

The election of hardline cleric Ibrahim Raisi as Iran's new President was a foregone conclusion. To say the disillusioned electors were guided into choosing the former chief justice is to put it mildly, since there were reasons to assume this was a rigged election in which blank ballots placed second to Mr Raisi, who took 62 per cent of the "popular" vote. The new President has a dubious record that goes beyond his being the chosen one from seven candidates who were allowed to contest by Iran's conservative Guardian Council from among 600 who had initially applied. He was the youngest member of the 1988 Tehran death commission that has been accused of killing 3,000 Opposition prisoners.

What Mr Raisi, who is known to be close to Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, inherits as President is an economy in shambles, riven by corruption and mismanagement and throwing into disaffection large sections of its people. The question that arises despite his known record is whether Mr Raisi, as a member of the innermost ruling theocracy, can make peace with the Americans under President Joe Biden and pursue the 2015 Obama-era nuclear deal that Mr Biden's predecessor Donald Trump had torn to pieces in 2018. A revival of the economy would be contingent on US sanctions being lifted and Iran being allowed to sell its oil internationally without constraints.

The suspicion is that Iran has been enriching its uranium to levels far beyond what constitutes a peaceful programme. Its offer to abandon enrichment, which could be made in talks that are on in Vienna among Iran, Russia, China, Germany, France and Britain, with the US indirectly involved, may be contingent on a guarantee that any nuclear deal it signs with the West would be permanent and not subject to the whims of a US President, but a democratic America can hardly make such a commitment unless a treaty is forged. The fact remains that Iran is a major player in a region fraught with tensions and the mullahs would have to be willing to pursue real peace at least for the sake of its people.

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Subhani



Biden B3W vs China BRI: Is India the odd man out?



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray
Reflections

India's embattled government cannot draw much comfort from US President Joe Biden's promise (or was it a threat?) to lead an alliance of global democracies against the world's autocracies, with specific reference to the challenge that Communist China presents.

But then, does the government at all feel embattled? Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcements, bland when not boastful, suggest that all is for the best in this best of all possible worlds. Evidence to the contrary can be brushed aside, as Mr Modi has told us that "neither have they (the Chinese) intruded into our border, nor has any post been taken over by them". Why then the defensive rhetoric, the emphasis on security in a region that we are flattered to note has been dubbed the "Indo-Pacific"? Why, too, the "Quad", or the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, with the United States, Japan and Australia which everyone, the Chinese especially, see as countering Beijing?

True, "20 of our jawans were martyred" in hand-to-hand combat with the People's Liberation Army in eastern Ladakh. But we can gloat over the revelation that "those who dared Bharat Mata, they were taught a lesson".

Were they? Mr Modi has no doubts. India is so mighty "that no one can eye even one inch of our land". It's the Chinese who should quake in their boots for "India's armed forces have the capability to move into multiple sectors at one go". It would be interesting to hear what defence officials have to say about that. Or diplomats. Or the external affairs minister, with his experience of Beijing where he repre-

sented India from 2009 to 2013.

Far from indulging in braggadocio or inviting ridicule, Mr Biden used his first official overseas trip to mobilise support against his country's two main perceived adversaries. Problems with Russia revive the Cold War postures that were briefly laid to rest during Mikhail Gorbachev's time. But China, whose all-powerful ruling Communist Party is celebrating its centenary next month and which has now sent three astronauts into orbit to become the only country to own and run its own space station, is seen as the real threat of the future. Of course, China rejects the view of North Atlantic Treaty Organisation leaders that its rise presents "systemic challenges" for the world. When Jens Stoltenberg, Nato's secretary-general, levelled that charge in Brussels, China promptly accused Nato of "slandering" its "peaceful development". Being committed to a "defensive" defence policy, China did "not present 'systematic challenges' to anyone" but would "not sit by and do nothing if 'systematic challenges' come closer to us".

Echoes of the arguments that preceded the first Opium War (1839-1842) between Qing China and Britain can be heard all over again. Then, the British reported that the Chinese hoped there would be "much talk-ee-talkee" before "fight-ee-fightee". This time round it's the West that appears to be sending pacific smoke signals even while the defiant talk gets louder.

The main reason why there might not be any serious friction after all lies in the disclosure that in the last few weeks, top Chinese and US trade and treasury officials have

engaged in a series of virtual chats on the business of doing business. China has invested substantially in British companies as well as public utilities. The US, the European Union and Japan are among China's biggest trade partners, with exports and imports totalling more than \$1,660 billion. Neither side will easily risk that.

India can expect even less sympathy (and no support) from Asean, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose collective trade with China jumped last year to \$731.9 billion, making Asean China's largest trading partner for the first time while China remained Asean's largest trading partner for the 12th successive year.

Vietnamese or Filipino grievances in the South China Sea or Malaysia's complaint about Chinese military aircraft intruding into its Exclusive Economic Zone are not likely to be vigorously or collectively pursued when trade registers seven per cent growth.

China has also redefined aid to make it an integral feature of about 60 developing countries that can expect \$500 billion from Beijing over the next few years, while President Xi Jinping's Belt and Road Initiative could mobilise \$1 trillion of Chinese state financing. Conventional aid plays only a marginal role in China's commerce-is-development vision of growth as articulated by Justin Yifu Lin, a former World Bank chief economist and author of the book *Going Beyond Aid*. More than 100 countries have joined

India can expect even less sympathy (and no support) from Asean, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations, whose collective trade with China jumped to \$731.9 bn last year, making Asean China's largest trading partner for the first time

BRI projects, of which there were more than 2,600 costing \$3.7 trillion in mid-2020. Beijing says that the Covid-19 pandemic has seriously affected about 20 per cent of them.

The G-7 representatives whom Mr Biden met in England at the start of his European mission enthusiastically supported his Build Back Better World (B3W) Partnership, an alternative to the BRI, and promised to "collectively catalyse hundreds of billions of dollars of infrastructure investment". While China's focus is on big-ticket projects in traditional infrastructure — like Sri Lanka's \$1.4 billion Hambantota Port — Mr Biden's plan will focus on climate, health and health security, digital technology, gender equity and equality. That doesn't suggest direct competition. But the commitment to "rally the world's democracies to meet the challenges" of dictatorship, human rights abuse and forced labour identifies the target easily enough.

These are worthy aims in keeping with the lofty vision of the nation whose Marshall Plan rescued Europe from the ravages of World War II. But they are not of as much gripping interest in war-torn Yemen or famine-stricken Somalia as the BRI's promised ports, highways, airports and dams. Whether or not the promises will be kept is another matter but the hope generates at least initial support.

Various factors make India the odd man out in this contest for hearts and minds. It cannot promise lavish help like the BRI or B3W. It doesn't brandish an ideological banner like the United States. So far as anyone knows, the dispute is only over territory, and rocky, inhospitable, uninhabited terrain at that. And if India's Prime Minister is to be believed, there is no aggression either.

So, what are we fighting about? And why do we need the Quad?

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

SCHOOL PLAN

It is a welcome decision to open schools. However, it must done be in a phased manner. Otherwise it may add to the health problems of students as they are not vaccinated. Let students till Class IV go to school from July 1. Classes for students in Classes V, VI and VII can be held on alternate days with Classes VIII, IX and X. This will restrict the number of students in school. After a month, classes for all students can be started.

Suhas Kate
Secunderabad

CM'S PV OBSESSION

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao must change his name to P.V. Narsimha Rao given the way in which he is renaming different projects after the late prime minister. First he renamed the Mehdiapatnam-Attapur bridge as 'P.V. Narsimha Rao expressway'. Recently he renamed the Necklace Road as P.V. Narsimha Rao Marg. Earlier he submitted a request to Centre to change the name of University of Hyderabad to P.V. Narsimha Rao University. Now he is planning to rename Huzurabad after Narasimha Rao.

Khazi Atiyuddin
Hyderabad

MONSOON READY

With the onset of monsoon, the TRS government has done well to clean all drains in the twin cities and in important villages and districts. The government providing new vehicles for works to be done efficiently is laudable. Now, officers in charge must take advantage of the facilities and the youngsters must prove their mettle.

Vishal K.
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Soyuz men resume research

MOSCOW, JUNE 21.

The Soviet cosmonauts began their third week abroad world's first manned space laboratory today.

The operation of the orbital astrophysical "orion" observatory on board the station was continued today.

In the new orbit a "grip" of one of the stars in ophiuchus constellation was carried by means of a sight system.

tests at the Kumbh Mela has been reported, and this is also par for the course.

At the G-7 summit earlier this month in Britain, Prime Minister Modi, who attended virtually, endorsed a document called the "Open Societies Statement" in which he pledged India would practice and promote human rights and civil liberties. At home, those who ask for these have been locked up under UAPA. The farmers' protest continues with tens of thousands living on the highways outside Delhi. The three controversial farm laws have been suspended, but not withdrawn. Why? We do not know because Mr Modi has not spoken about the laws since they were suspended by the Supreme Court six months ago.

It doesn't matter whether you are a supporter of Prime Minister Modi or an opponent or neutral. Anyone looking around the state that India finds itself in will find it hard to extract any good news and will find it difficult to be optimistic.

The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist

Aakar Patel



No good news: It's difficult to be an optimist in India today

It is not easy to find good news in India and has not been easy for a long time now. A recent report said that the Indian economy is contracting again in this quarter, between April and June, by more than double digits.

This report from one agency was carried in multiple media outlets but it was not refuted or commented upon by others, including by the government. It was just assumed to be true. After 24 months of slowdown starting in January 2018 before the Covid-19 pandemic, and then 18 months of collapse since January 2020, we have turned into the world's worst performing economy.

India's economic growth has been falling for 42 months now, but the government has not spoken about why that is so and what went wrong or what it plans to do to correct it. Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh in an interview last year offered five points to correct course, but he also added that a course-correction was possible only after one had acknowledged that there was a problem.

Since we have not accepted that

anything is wrong, we will continue.

CMIE, the only body offering regular employment data (the Narendra Modi government has little data and says that it is conducting some surveys, whose results will come around the end of the year) says that unemployment in India is at 11 per cent, higher than Pakistan and Bangladesh.

Inflation is high though demand is low, and wholesale prices are at their highest since 1992. Petrol is around ₹100 a litre, diesel is almost there and the price of crude oil is expected to rise another 20 per cent by the end of the year. Exports are at the same level as they were in 2014 and in seven years under Narendra Modi have shown no growth, though in the same period Bangladesh and Vietnam have grown and China has held onto its share.

Eighty crore Indians are being given free food for seven months from May till November. Five kilos of wheat or rice per person per month and one kilo of dal. In May, 16 lakh tonnes of wheat and 15 lakh tonnes of rice was distributed.

Sixty per cent of Indians depend on

free food. This should tell you more than enough about the state of poverty in India today.

When Mr Modi took over in 2014, he said MGNREGA was a monument to the failure of the Manmohan Singh government. He would give people real jobs, and not MGNREGA jobs. The MGNREGA programme's size last year was three times what it was under UPA rule because crores of people have lost their jobs and fallen into poverty and now depend on MGNREGA and free foodgrains. The Gujarat government put out a statement last week which said that MGNREGA was a lifesaver.

Elsewhere, it has been a year since the clash in Ladakh. China has stopped its disengagement. This means India has to keep tens of thousands of troops in that area almost permanently.

China has also told us that it is demoting the level of talks, and now only area commanders will discuss specific issues rather than general disagreement. Our soldiers still cannot patrol in the Depsang Plain but the government has not acknowledged that or held a single press

briefing on Ladakh since the crisis began a year ago. Opacity is the hallmark of dictatorships and not democracies, but this is the status of our national security.

India was supposed to be the Vaccine Guru and Vaccine Factory for the world. Instead, India has wrecked the world's vaccination programme by stopping the delivery of vaccines others already paid for in advance and which were manufactured in India. Our government has begun taking over those stocks while the world waits. Even with that, India has only managed to fully vaccinate only three per cent of its population against the world's average of nine per cent. Why? We have not been told.

Every day there is a report of excess deaths from states being between four and 10 times the official Covid-19 toll. India seems to lead the world by far in both cases and deaths. There has not been a government initiative to find out the true number of cases and deaths and the media continues to parrot the official numbers and at the same time publishing reports on the excess deaths. Mass faking of

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,574.46	0.44
Nifty 50	15,746.50	0.40
S&P 500*	4,216.89	1.21
Dollar (₹)	73.87	0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18	0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36	0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,277▲250	0.54
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	74.85	1.82
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.029	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.468	0.018

Transmission charges waived for RE till June '25

The power ministry announced the extension of timeline by two years for waiver on interstate transmission charge for electricity generated from solar and wind sources. Now, the waiver would be available till June 30, 2025 against June 30, 2023 earlier. Besides, the waiver would now be available for hydro pumped storage plant (PSP) and battery energy storage system (BESS) projects also.

Housing prices up in major cities in Q4: RBI data



The All-India Housing Price Index (HPI) increased 2.7 per cent year-on-year in the March quarter of 2020-21, the latest RBI data shows. The index takes into account transaction-level data received from housing registration authorities in ten cities—Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Kanpur, Kochi, Kolkata, Lucknow and Mumbai. The All-India HPI rose year-on-year by 2.7 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020-21.

Umbrella unit of 170 MSME bodies formed

As many as 170 industry associations have joined hands to form All-India Council of Association of MSMEs (AICA) in order to deal with issues of the sector hit hard by the pandemic. "AICA today announced that 170 industry associations have joined together to address post Covid issues faced by two lakh MSMEs across India," AICA said in a statement. It said the pandemic has affected every industry.

Honeywell's new tech to detect counterfeit drugs

Honeywell announced digital authentication technology for the pharmaceutical industry in response to the growing menace of counterfeit products, especially in vaccines and Covid drugs. The Honeywell solution comprises a digital code embedded in the packaging of pharmaceutical products. The end user can validate the authenticity of the product by scanning the digital code with a smartphone.



Govt to alter consumer protection norms Rules seek to curb e-com flash sale

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 21

Tightening the rules governing e-commerce companies, the central government has proposed to restrict e-commerce entities from organising "flash sale" of goods or services. It also seeks to bar any e-commerce entity from using information collected through its platform for unfair advantage of its related parties and associated enterprises and manipulating price of the goods or services to gain unreasonable profit.

By the proposed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020, notified by the government on Monday, no e-commerce entity should organise a "flash sale" of goods or services offered on its platform. This restricts the entity from organising a sale at significantly reduced prices, high discounts or any other such promotions or attractive offers for a predetermined period of time on selective goods and services or otherwise with an intent to draw a large number of consumers.

E-commerce entities have been holding such sales around festivals and similar occasions and have been receiving tremendous response from customers. However, the rules restrict such sales "provided such sales are organised by fraudulently intercepting the ordinary course of business using technological means with an intent to

HEMMING IN BIG SELLERS

- ▶ No e-commerce entity should organise a "flash sale" on its platform
- ▶ It should not use any info collected for the unfair advantage of its related parties
- ▶ It should should not impose cancellation charges unless it bears

similar charges

- ▶ Should appoint nodal contact, grievance officer and compliance officer
- ▶ Sellers should also have a grievance officer
- ▶ No seller should post false reviews about goods or services.

enable only a specified seller or group of sellers managed by such entity to sell goods or services on its platform."

Experts doubted the practical impact of this measure. "At first glance it will be interesting to see how practically these changes will be implemented," said Archana Tewary, partner, J Sagar Associates.

According to the proposals, no entity having a dominant position cannot abuse its position. "Abuse of dominant position" will have the same meaning as prescribed under Section 4 of the Competition Act, 2002.

It should not use any information collected through its platform for unfair advantage of its related parties and associated enterprises; none of its related parties and associated enterprises are enlisted as sellers for sale to consumers directly; and ensure that nothing is done by related parties which the e-commerce entity cannot do itself.

An e-commerce entity

should ensure that sponsored listing of products and services are distinctly identified.

It should should not impose cancellation charges on consumers unless similar charges are also borne by it.

The e-commerce companies are mandated to register with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade. It should appoint a nodal person of contact, Resident Grievance Officer to address concerns of customers, Chief Compliance Officer to ensure compliance to rules and a nodal contact person for 24x7 coordination with law enforcement agencies.

Sellers on the e-commerce platform also should also have a grievance officer; acknowledge receipt of consumer complaints within 48 hours and redress the complaint within one month.

No seller should falsely represent itself as a consumer and post reviews about goods or services.

SAT sets aside Sebi direction; allows PNB HF voting today

New Delhi, June 21: Setting aside Sebi's direction, the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) on Monday allowed PNB Housing Finance to go ahead with the shareholders' meeting on Tuesday to consider a Rs 4,000 crore-investment by private equity firm Carlyle and others in the mortgage firm.

However, results of the shareholders' voting will not be disclosed till further directions from the tribunal.

The ruling comes hours after PNB Housing Finance informed stock exchanges it has appealed against Sebi's direction on June 18 wherein it was asked to defer consideration of the proposed capital infusion proposal till a valuation of the company's shares is done by a registered independent valuer.

The extraordinary general meeting (EGM) is scheduled for June 22.

Taking up the matter on an urgent basis, a two-member bench of the tribunal said as "electronic voting has already commenced it would not be fair to stay the consideration of agenda no. 1 (issuance of preference shares)." The bench of Justices Tarun Agarwala and M. T. Joshi said no factual dispute exists and only an interpretation of the provisions of the ICDR Regulations and Companies Act read with Articles of Association is required to be considered. — PTI

Top economists to advise TN CM

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 21

Some of the globally acclaimed economists, including Nobel laureate Esther Duflo, former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan and former chief economic advisor to the Government of India Arvind Subramanian will advise the chief minister of Tamil Nadu, Development Economist Jean Dreze and former Union finance secretary S. Narayan also will be part of the 'Economic Advisory Council to the Chief Minister'.

"In recent years, we have seen a slowdown in Tamil Nadu's economic growth rate. This government will make all out efforts to reverse this trend and usher in a period of rapid economic growth taking full advantage of the available limited window of the demographic dividend. To chart out a rapid and inclusive economic growth path for Tamil Nadu, this government will constitute an 'Economic Advisory Council to the Chief Minister' with leading economic experts from all over the world as its members," governor Banwarilal Purohit announced on Monday in his customary address to the first session of the 16th state legislative assembly, which also marks the commencement of the first session after the formation of the DMK government last month.

Esther Duflo is professor of Poverty



Alleviation and Development Economics at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She along with her husband and economist Abhijit Banerjee and co-researcher Michael Kremer received the Nobel Prize in economics for in 2019 for their "experimental approach to alleviating global poverty".

Former Reserve Bank of India governor Raghuram Rajan is Katherine Dusak Miller Distinguished Service Professor of Finance at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business.

Former chief economic advisor Arvind Subramanian is non-resident senior fellow at the Peterson Institute for International Economics.

Belgian-born development economist Jean Dreze is an Indian national. He has been a member of the UPA's National Advisory Council and is visiting professor at the department of economics, Ranchi University. S. Narayan has served as

the finance secretary of Government of India and as the economic advisor to the Prime Minister.

"Based on the recommendations of this council, the government will revitalise the state's economy and ensure that the benefits of economic growth reach all segments of the society," Purohit said.

He also noted that the fiscal health of the state is a cause for concern. The government will focus on improving the fiscal position and bringing down the overall debt burden. As a first step, a white paper detailing the true state of Tamil Nadu's finances will be released in the month of July, so that the people of Tamil Nadu are fully informed, he said.

There could be no social justice when there is high economic inequality and stratification. Inclusive growth is government's priority and growth and progress must benefit all sections of society and not just the top of the economic pyramid, the governor noted.

India's return to LNG spot market hints at recovery

STEPHEN STAPCZYNSKI MUMBAI, JUNE 21

India started buying prompt shipments of liquefied natural gas from the spot market after a two-month absence, indicating a rebound in demand as the nation exits a deadly phase of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Petronet LNG Ltd and Indian Oil Corporation awarded tenders for delivery over the next few months, the first spot purchases since March, according to traders with knowledge of the matter. Both cargoes cost more than \$11 per million British thermal units, an unusually high level for Indian buyers able to turn to alternatives such as fuel oil and LPG.

Global energy use is quickly recovering from the devastation wrought by the pandemic, and the positive signal from India will help to push natural gas prices higher, though the nation's demand

recovery is still uneven and not all buyers there are eager to boost purchases. LNG spot prices for North Asia have rallied due to robust Chinese demand and supply issues, and been bolstered by a surge in European gas benchmarks to near their highest in 13 years.

India is emerging from the Covid-19 wave that overwhelmed healthcare infrastructure and triggered localised lockdowns, causing a slump in natural gas consumption in the transport, commercial and industrial sectors. Now, daily cases have sunk back below 60,000 from more than 400,000 at the outbreak's peak, and curbs are being eased.

India's return to the spot market is in stark contrast to just last month, when companies were seeking to cancel and divert shipments due to a glut at import facilities. — Bloomberg

KKR TO MAJORITY OWN VINI COSMETICS FOR ₹4,600 CR

Mumbai, June 21: Global buyout major KKR on Monday announced a \$625 million, or Rs 4,600-crore, investment in deodorant maker Vini Cosmetics for a controlling stake.

The PE major has signed a definitive agreement, by which Vini's founder group led by Darshan Patel, chairman and joint managing director (JMD), and Dipam Patel, JMD, and Sequoia Capital will sell stakes.

The co-founders of the 11-year-old company, which manufactures and markets brands like FOGG, will continue to hold a significant stake in Vini and will collaborate with KKR in the next phase of the company's growth, as per the statement. In addition, existing investor Westbridge Capital will acquire a further stake from the founder group to increase its shareholding, it said.

The statement said Patel will continue to be the chairman while Dipam Patel will be appointed as the vice-chairman.

Murdoch Jr. to tap billionaire families for India investment

BEN STUPPLES MUMBAI, JUNE 21

James Murdoch is considering raising funds from ultra-rich families around the globe, a move that would give him more firepower to make acquisitions and further establish his investment firm.

Murdoch's Lupa Systems is looking for about \$150 million each from fewer than half-a-dozen family offices for investments in India, according to a person with knowledge of the matter. It intends to use an external fundraiser to help with the drive, said the person, who asked not to be identified as the plans are private and still tentative.

A spokesperson for Murdoch declined to comment.

James, 48, set up Lupa Systems in 2019. Based in New York and Mumbai, it already counts Indian startups Doubtmnt and Harappa Education among its investments. The firm is also backing a US blank-cheque company



James Murdoch

that will focus on India as it hunts for targets across South and Southeast Asia.

Nitin Kukreja, a former Morgan Stanley banker, is managing director of Lupa Systems's operations in India.

The firm also owns a \$160-million stake in MCH Group, the organiser of the Art Basel shows. In 2019, it invested in Norwegian drone technology company UBIQ Aerospace, New York-based comic book publishing startup Artists Writers & Artisans and

the owner of the Tribeca Film Festival.

James Murdoch was once in pole position to lead his family's sprawling media operations. He was chief executive officer of 21st Century Fox before Walt Disney Company acquired most of its assets in 2019, leaving him and Rupert Murdoch's five other children in line to receive about \$2 billion each from the deal.

James cut ties with his family's media businesses -- News Corp and Fox Corp -- last year after clashing over its editorial direction. His brother Lachlan, 49, now helps to run both companies.

Rupert Murdoch, 90, has a net worth of \$8.9 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. "At great news organisations, the mission really should be to introduce fact to disperse doubt—not to sow doubt, to obscure fact, if you will," James told the New York Times in October. — Bloomberg

Aparna to invest ₹100 cr to strengthen Alteza brand

FC BUREAU HYDERABAD, JUNE 21

Hyderabad-based building materials firm Aparna Enterprises Ltd said on Monday it would invest Rs 100 crore towards building its aluminium window and door system brand Alteza in the next four years. The investment will also be used for setting up a new manufacturing unit in Hyderabad.

Sixty per cent of the investment will be used for strengthening our manufacturing capacity and the rest towards research & development and building our dealership network, said Ashwin Reddy, the managing director of Aparna Enterprises.

After launching the company's latest range of slim aluminium sliding door system, the ACA M-19 series, Reddy said the demand for quality products and services is growing in the country and wants the company to gear up to address this demand.

The aluminium window and door system market is worth around Rs 20,000 crore in India and is growing at a compounded annual growth rate of 7.9 per cent.

MARUTI SUZUKI TO HIKE PRICES IN Q2

New Delhi, June 21: The country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Monday said it will increase prices of its entire product portfolio in the second quarter of the current fiscal due to rise in prices of various commodities, including steel. The auto major, which has already taken a price increase in April, noted that the price of steel and various precious metals has gone up considerably, prompting the company to pass on some of the impact to the customers. — PTI

FIFTH | LARGEST Inflow rose from \$51 bn in '19 to \$64 bn in '20 FDI inflow surges 25% in 2020

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JUNE 21

FDI inflow into India grew 25 per cent to \$64 billion in 2020, taking the country to the fifth position globally.

Pushed up by acquisitions in the information and communication technology (ICT) industry, FDI inflow into India grew from \$51 billion in 2019 to \$64 billion in 2020. India improved its global ranking from eight to fifth position in the pandemic year, finds Unctad.

Amid India's struggle to contain the Covid-19 outbreak, robust investment through acquisitions in ICT (software and hardware) and construction bolstered FDI. Cross-border mergers and acquisitions surged 83 per cent to



\$27 billion, with major deals in ICT, health, infrastructure and energy.

Large transactions included the acquisition of Jio Platforms by Facebook's subsidiary Jaadhu for \$5.7 billion, the acquisition of Tower Infrastructure Trust by Brookfield and GIC Singapore for \$3.7 billion and the sale of the electrical and automation division of Larsen & Toubro India for \$2.1 billion.

India helped FDI in South Asia rise by 20 per cent to \$71 billion.

Meanwhile, FDI outflow from South Asia fell 12 per cent to \$12 billion, once again driven by a drop in investment from India. FDI from India dropped to \$12 billion 2020 from \$13 billion 2019. Companies in India are South Asia's largest investors, with more than 90 per cent of outflows in 2020. Investments from India are expected to stabilise in 2021, supported by the country's resumption of free trade agreement (FTA) talks with the European Union (EU) and its strong investment in Africa, finds Unctad.

India's FDI stock stood at \$480 billion in 2020 against \$205 billion in 2010.

Going ahead, Unctad says India will continue to attract foreign investment in high-tech industries, given their market size and their advanced digital and technology ecosystem. However, the recent second wave of Covid-19 shows that significant uncertainties remain. This has major impacts on the prospects for South Asia as well.

According to the UN body, announced greenfield projects in India contracted by 19 per cent to \$24 billion, and the second wave in April 2021 is affecting economic activities, which could lead to a larger contraction in 2021. The outbreak severely hit main investment destinations such as Maharashtra and Karnataka, it said.

SHORT TAKES

Maharaj hat-trick puts SA on course

Gros Islet: Keshav Maharaj became just the second South African to take a hat-trick in Test and the Proteas were on course for a series victory as West Indies slid to 109-6 at lunch on day four of the second Test on Monday. West Indies were still 215 runs short of its target of 324 and South Africa was in sight of a 2-0 series sweep. Maharaj's hat trick came in the second-to-last over of the session. He claimed a big breakthrough when Kieran Powell was caught near the square leg boundary for 51. But the spinner added the wickets of Holder and Joshua Da Silva off his next two balls. — **AP**

Brief scores (Day 4, at lunch): South Africa 298 & 174 (van der Dussen 75 n.o., Roach 4/52) vs West Indies 149 & 109/6 in 38 overs (Kieran Powell 51, Keshav Maharaj 3/20).

Rahm wins first US Open crown

La Jolla: Jon Rahm made tension-packed long birdie putts on the last two holes on Sunday to win the 121st US Open and capture his first major title, defeating South African Louis Oosthuizen by one stroke. The 26-year-old Spaniard curled in a spectacular birdie putt from just inside 25 feet at the par-4 17th hole then made his fourth birdie of the week at the par-5 18th, blasting out of a bunker and rolling in an 18-footer to seize the lead. "I have a hard time explaining what just happened because I can't even believe I made the last two putts," Rahm said. — **AFP**

Chhetri extends stay with BFC

Bengaluru: India captain Sunil Chhetri has extended his contract with Bengaluru FC for another two years and will be with the Indian Super League side till 2023. The new deal will enable Chhetri, who joined 'the Blues' in 2013, to extend his stay with the club into the 10th season. Chhetri has made 203 appearances for the club, scoring 101 goals in eight seasons. "I'm really happy to have signed on for two more years at Bengaluru FC. The city is home now, and the people at this club are like family to me," said the 36-year-old, who has led the club since its inception in 2013. — **PTI**

Elina into top five in WTA rankings

Paris: Elina Svitolina of Ukraine moved into the top five in the latest WTA rankings published on Monday, displacing American Sofia Kenin a week before Wimbledon starts. Recently crowned French Open champion Barbora Krejickova slipped two places to 17th while Swiss Belinda Bencic is once again on the cusp of the top ten after her run to the grass-court final in Berlin. Ashleigh Barty retains the top rank ahead of Naomi Osaka, who will miss Wimbledon and hence an opportunity to close the gap. — **AFP**

Hawks upset top seeded Sixers

Los Angeles: Kevin Huerter scored a playoff career-high 27 points as the upstart Atlanta Hawks punched their ticket to their first Eastern Conference finals in six years on Sunday, with a 103-96 game seven win over the Philadelphia 76ers. Trae Young finished with 21 points and 10 assists, John Collins had 14 points and 16 rebounds and Danilo Gallinari garnered scored 17 points for the Hawks, who won three games in Philadelphia to take the series 4-3. The Hawks will now face the Milwaukee Bucks in game one of their series on Wednesday. — **AFP**

Live on TV

CRICKET

World Test Championship final, Day 5: India vs New Zealand from 3pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

EURO

Group Stage: Czech Republic vs England; Croatia vs Scotland from 12.30 am (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 1, 2

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DRAW LOOMS

Weather plays havoc as another day washed out

Southampton, June 21: The fickle English weather played spoilsport in a game promising high quality contest as day four of the inaugural World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand was washed out due to rain.

For the second time in the one-off clash, a whole day was lost after no play was possible also on the opening day.

With the weather not improving since morning at the Hampshire Bowl, the umpires took the call almost four hours and 30 minutes after the scheduled start time of 10.30 am local time (3 pm IST).

"Day four of the #WTC21 Final has been abandoned due to persistent rain," read an ICC update.

The fans who were patiently waiting for the play to start had to leave disappointed. "We thank our fans who turned up and kept the tempo high. See you again, tomorrow," the BCCI added.

Rain is not forecast for the remaining two days of the big final but it is likely to remain overcast as it has been the case so far when play did take place. When it wasn't the rain, bad light stopped play on both day two and day three.

A maximum of 196 overs can be played in the game to force a result. The trophy will be shared if the game is drawn.

The final was nicely poised at stumps on day three with New Zealand reaching 101 for two in response to India's 217 all out. The Black Caps however remain in control of the game despite a late strike from Ishant Sharma close to stumps.

Weather has played havoc with the final and Former India opener Virender Sehwag was among many who questioned ICC's decision to host the final in Southampton. — **PTI**



India's Ajinkya Rahane (left) and Cheteshwar Pujara during Day 4 of the World Test Championship final in Southampton on Monday. — **ICC**

Jamieson relishes Kohli wicket

Southampton, June 21: Rookie New Zealand pacer Kyle Jamieson, who rattled India with a fiver, on the second day of the World Test Championship final, feels that any batsman could have been dismissed with that inswinger that got rid of rival skipper Virat Kohli.

Jamieson got a five-wicket haul as New Zealand dismissed India for 217 on the third day of the WTC final.

Asked if setting up Kohli with outswingers and then bringing one back in like they did in New Zealand is a template

they have said, Jamieson answered in affirmative.

"Oh, I guess yes. May be there is some sort of pattern and this we know talk about huge amount, the one that I was able to get him (Kohli) today certainly seemed back a little-bit."

"And that was pretty hard to control as a bowler and pretty harder to manage as a batter no matter who you are. So I don't think it is necessarily just for him (Kohli)," Jamieson said.

According to the 26-year-old lanky speedster, who returned with fine figures

of 5-31, Kohli's dismissal played a key part in how things unfolded on the second day.

"Yeah, obviously he (Kohli) is a massive part of their team and pretty big wicket to get, so to get him pretty early morning, was I guess was nice and pleasing and pretty crucial for how the day followed," added the right-arm pacer.

However he didn't feel that Kohli has any apparent glitches in his technique.

"Oh, not really I think, he is (Kohli) world class batter and those guys

FINAL SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HELD IN UK: KP

Southampton, June 21: Former England captain Kevin Pietersen feels that no "one-off" cricket games of "incredible importance" should ever be held in the UK, which is famous for its fickle weather as one is witnessing during the World Test Championship final.

"It pains me to say it, but a ONE OFF & incredibly important cricket game should NOT be played in the UK," Pietersen tweeted taking a dig at the ICC for opting Hampshire Bowl in Southampton as the venue for a marquee final.

"If it was up to me, Dubai would always host a one off match like this WTC game. eutral venue, fabulous stadium, guaranteed weather, excellent training facilities and a travel hub! Oh, and ICC home is next to the stadium," the former England batsman wrote. — **PTI**

don't tend to have too many chinks in their armoury. He is obviously a massive part of their line-up and to get him early certainly set things up nicely for us."

Jamieson at times got the ball to wobble and it was satisfying to keep Kohli under control as the Indian captain in his 132-ball innings had a single boundary to his name.

"It is pleasing in terms of for myself trying to wobble the ball and try and keep him in check a little-bit and to get that was pleasing," the lanky pacer signed off. — **PTI**

ITALY CLAIM TOP SPOT, WALES ENTER LAST 16

Rome, June 21: Matteo Pessina scored as Italy made it three wins out of three at Euro 2020 by beating 10-man Wales 1-0 to finish top of Group A on Sunday with both teams advancing to the last 16.

Pessina's goal means Italy will play the runner-up from Group C in the next round, with Wales facing the team that comes second in Group B.

Roberto Mancini, who took over the Azzurri after they failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, also saw his side match an 82-year Italian record.

Italy extended their unbeaten run to 30 games — 25 wins and five draws — a feat last achieved under two-time World Cup winning coach Vittorio Pozzo between 1935 and 1939.

SHAQIRI PUSHES SWISS PAST TURKEY

Xherdan Shaqiri scored twice as Switzerland beat Turkey 3-1 in Baku on Sunday but they will have

EURO RESULTS	
Italy (Matteo Pessina 39)	1
Wales	0
Switzerland (Haris Seferovic 6, Xherdan Shaqiri 26, 68')	3
Turkey (Irfan Can Kahveci 62)	1

to wait to see if they reach the last 16 of Euro 2020 as one of the four best third-placed teams.

Shaqiri's goals came after Haris Seferovic's first-half opener and either side of Irfan Kahveci scoring Turkey's only goal of the tournament. "Over the next few days I can't do anything. We have to wait," Switzerland coach Vladimir Petkovic said.

Turkey boss Senol Gunes said he would not consider standing down despite his team finishing bottom of the group. — **AFP**

England look to get back on track against Czech

London, June 21: English football manager Gareth Southgate insists England can overcome their growing pains as his young side aim to get their Euro 2020 campaign back on track by winning Group D against the Czech Republic on Tuesday.

England are level on four points with the Czechs and will be guaranteed a first-place finish if they win their last group match.

A victory at Wembley feels essential for England to lift the gloom that descended after they were booed off following Friday's lacklustre 0-0 draw with old rivals Scotland.

With an average age of 25 years and 31 days, England's starting line-up against Scotland was the youngest they had ever fielded in a major tournament.



(From left) England's Harry Kane, Jack Grealish and Harry Maguire during a training session. — **AP**

SCOTLAND ON BRINK OF QUALIFYING

After a 23-year wait to even reach a major tournament, more history beckons for Scotland on Tuesday if they can beat Croatia at Hampden to reach the knockout stage for the first time at Euro.

A hard-earned 0-0 draw against England at

Wembley has restored belief in the Scottish support that had been shaken by a 2-0 defeat to the Czech Republic in their opening match.

Victory against the World Cup finalists should be enough to seal Scotland's place in the last 16. — **AFP**

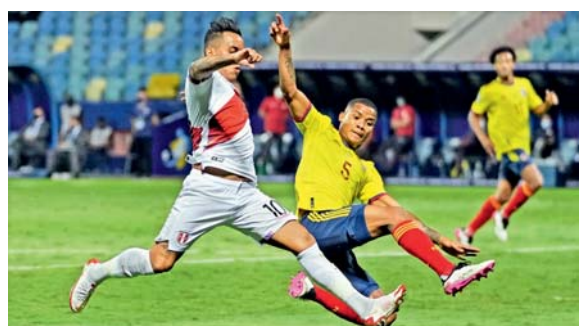
Peru pip Colombia, keep hopes alive

Sao Paulo, June 21: Peru beat Colombia 2-1 on Sunday to keep alive their chances of advancing to the knockout stage of Copa America.

Sergio Pena opened the scoring for the Peruvians in the 17th minute. Miguel Borja equalised from the spot in the 53rd but an own goal 11 minutes later by Colombian defender Yerry Mina decided the match at the Olimpico stadium in Goiania.

Peru are in third position in Group B with three points after two matches. Colombia remains with four points in the second spot, but with only two games remaining. Leader Brazil has six points. The top four teams will qualify for the quarterfinals.

"This gives us a lot of hope in what is to come at



Peru's Christian Cueva (left) and Colombia's Wilmar Barrios in action during their Copa America match on Sunday. — **AP**

this Copa America," Peru defender Renato Tapia said. "We are in a good position, but we have to keep rowing to go farther."

Peru lost 4-0 to Brazil in their first game in the tournament, which raised doubts about coach

Ricardo Gareca's team. The 2019 Copa America finalists are also struggling in South American World Cup qualifiers.

VENEZUELA, ECUADOR SHARE SPOILS

Ronald Hernandez scored an injury time equaliser

to earn minnows Venezuela a share of the spoils in a 2-2 draw with Ecuador on Sunday.

Ecuador twice took the lead through Ayrton Preciado and Gonzalo Plata either side of a powerful headed goal from Venezuela's Edson

COPA RESULTS	
Peru (Sergio Pena 17', Yerry Mina 64-og)	2
Colombia (Miguel Borja 53)	1
Venezuela (Edson Castillo 51, Ronald Hernandez 91)	2
Ecuador (Ayrton Preciado 39, Gonzalo Plata 71)	2

Lack of practice hurt India: Doull

Southampton, June 21: Former Kiwi pacer Simon Doull feels lack of match practice in the run-up to the ongoing World Test Championship final against New Zealand was hurting India's pace bowling attack.

Unlike New Zealand, who played two Tests against England before the WTC final, India have been devoid of match practice ahead of the marquee clash.

The Virat Kohli-led side's last five-day match was against England in a 2-1 series win at home in March.

"...at times you look and overthink and say 'did they (India) have enough preparation?' I think they did. I am sure in the last 10-12 days they would have bowled enough deliveries to make sure they are ready and raring to go," Doull told Harsha Bhogle in a *cricketbuzz* show.

"But its hard to simulate match practice. You can try in these intra-squad games but it just doesn't quite work and that's the key. It is genuinely hard to replace match practice that makes you better and get you ready for those matches."

Doull made the statement in reference to 10 Indian pacers below-par display in New Zealand's first innings score of 101 for 2 in reply to India's 217 all out.

The pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami failed to extract consider-



Jasprit Bumrah

able amount of swing from the favourable Ageas Bowl conditions, unlike their Kiwi counterparts.

Kyle Jamieson (5/31), Neil Wagner (2/40) and Trent Boult (2/47) used the seaming conditions well to bundle out India for a timid total in the rain-affected match.

Doull said New Zealand were definitely benefited by the two games against England ahead of the marquee clash.

"...New Zealand went into their first Test match at Lord's against England, they had the very same preparation that India had coming into this Test match. New Zealand were in Southampton for around 10-11 days, played intra-squad matches, training practices and when they turned at Lord's they looked pretty set and ready to go." — **PTI**

THUNDER & SAINT



In a social media post, Usain Bolt shared the names of his newborn twin sons, Thunder and Saint Leo. — **Twitter**

Olympic briefs

Shot-putter Toor qualifies

Shot-putter Tejinder Singh Toor qualified for the Tokyo Olympics with a new national record at the Indian Grand Prix 4 on a day when the national women's 4x100m relay team and sprinter Dutee Chand also breached the previous best marks in the country. Toor crossed the Olympic Qualification mark with a throw of 21.49m and broke his own National Record. The Olympic Qualifying effort in this event is 21.10m. The previous record, which was also in Toor's name, stood at 20.92m and was set in 2019. The women's relay team, however, failed to place themselves inside the Olympic qualifying bracket despite the record effort of their own. The quartet of Hima Das, Dutee Chand, S. Dhanalakshmi and Archana Suseendran clocked 43.37 seconds to win the race ahead of India 'B' team (48.02 seconds) and Maldives (50.74) in the three team race.

Trailblazing transgender

Laurel Hubbard hefted 628 pounds (185 kilograms) in two lifts on the way to qualifying in the women's super-heavyweight division for the Tokyo Olympics. That's heavy. But it's nowhere near the figurative weight Hubbard has carried to become the first transgender athlete to compete at an Olympic Games.

Hubbard was among five weightlifters confirmed Monday in New Zealand's team for Tokyo. At 43, she will also be the oldest weightlifter at the games, and will be ranked fourth in the competition on Aug. 2 for women 87 kilograms (192 pounds) and over. Hubbard won a silver medal at the 2017 World Championships and gold in the 2019 Pacific Games in Samoa.



Laurel Hubbard

Local fans limited to 10K

The Tokyo Olympics will allow some local fans to attend when the games open in just over a month, organising committee officials and the IOC said on Monday. Organisers set a limit of 50% of capacity up to a maximum of 10,000 fans for all Olympic venues. The decision was announced after so-called Five Party talks online with local organisers, the International Olympic Committee, the International Paralympic Committee, the Japanese government and the government of metropolitan Tokyo. The decision contradicts the country's top medical adviser, Dr. Shigeru Omi, who recommended last week that the safest way to hold the Olympics would be without fans.