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HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 29 JUNE 2021

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**PV stands tall in TS**

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao along with others after the unveiling of a 26-feet tall statue of P.V. Narasimha Rao in Hyderabad on Monday to mark the conclusion of the former prime minister's year-long birth centenary celebrations. ■ More reports on Pg 45

## TS opts for online classes

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

No physical classes will be held when schools and colleges start functioning from July 1, for the 2021-22 academic year, education minister Sabitha Indra Reddy said on Monday.

The minister said that teaching for all classes

right up to the postgraduate level must be conducted online only. This decision was taken in view of the Coronavirus pandemic situation.

"The state government," the minister said, "has taken all the necessary steps to conduct classes via television on T-Sat channels. Those students who

miss the classes during the telecast can watch the lessons on the T-Sat App or DD App."

She said that 90 per cent of textbooks needed for students have been dispatched to government schools.

While classes for Class 3 to 10 will begin from July 1, classes for Class 1 and 2, will begin from August 1.

## Nirmala gives ₹6.2L-cr boost

### FM announces new stimulus

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO | DC  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

Keeping the economic impact of the coronavirus pandemic in view, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Monday announced a stimulus package worth ₹6.29 lakh crore through eight economic measures to provide relief to individuals as well as businesses in the country.

In the current package, the government said it has focused on health, tourism and others sectors, exports and employment, which were affected by Covid, to boost growth.

Briefing mediapersons, Sitharaman said, "We are announcing about eight economic relief measures, of which four are absolutely new and one is specific to health infrastructure. A stimulus package worth ₹6.28,993 crore will be spent to support the Indian economy in the fight against the Covid-19 pan-

demic. For Covid-affected areas, we are announcing a ₹1.1 lakh crore credit guarantee scheme, out of which ₹50,000 crore for the health sector and ₹60,000 crore for other sectors. This credit guarantee scheme will facilitate new lending among the smallest borrowers and stated that this includes the stressed borrowers."

For the health sector, she said that a maximum loan amount of ₹100 crore would be given and a maximum interest rate is capped at 7.95 per cent. "For other sectors, the interest rate is capped at 8.25 per cent. The coverage will be changed based on evolving needs," she added.

Apart from this, an additional ₹1.5 lakh crore under the Emergency Credit Line Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) has been announced.

■ Page 10: Small borrowers to get more loans

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# GHMC online meet stirs row

Opposition alleges Mayor is insecure, afraid of being held accountable

## BJP opposes online meet

**BALU PULIPAKA | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 28**  
The first-ever online Council meeting of the GHMC is to be held on Tuesday amid disillusionment among corporators, who sought the meeting in its traditional physical form.

The meeting is the first for the new 150-member Council that was elected last December.

Amidst rumblings of discontent over holding the meeting virtually, Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi said on Monday that the only reason for going online was to follow Covid-19 safety protocols.

"The Council hall is quite small and in all, including officials and corporators, there would be around 200 people in the space. I decided it would be best for everyone's safety, as a measure of abundant precaution, to hold the meeting online," she said.

She said a group of BJP corporators met her with their concerns. "Some said all sectors have been

opened up and there is no lockdown any more. I explained that given the pandemic situation, it would be best to have an online meeting. With the monsoon upon us, many corporators have issues they would like to discuss and bring to the notice of officials," she said.

However, it was clear that several corporations were unhappy with the decision.

## WEATHER

Max: 30.6°C  
Min: 22.5°C  
RH: 67%  
Rainfall: 25 mm

Forecast: Cloudy sky with a few spells of rain.  
Max/Min temp. 30/23°C

## ASTROGUIDE

Tithi: Jyeshta Bahula Panchami till 1.28 pm

Star: Satabhisham till 1.04 pm

Varjyam: 8.07 am to 9.44 am

Durmuhuram: 8.24 am to 9.17 am; 11.13 pm to 11.57 pm

Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Zeeqad 17,1441 AH

## PRAYERS

Fajar: 4.34 am

Zohar: 12.29 pm

Asar: 4.56 pm

Maghrib: 7.00 pm

Isha: 8.17 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6.54 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.45 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 9.09 PM

MOONSET TODAY 10.23 PM



One of the link roads inaugurated by the MA&UD minister K.T. Rama Rao in Hyderabad on Monday.

## IT corridor gets 4 link roads

**KTR hopes it will reduce congestion in financial district**

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA&UD) minister K.T. Rama Rao on Monday inaugurated four link roads at IT Corridor here and the financial district. These roads will solve the problem of traffic congestion and reduce the travel time.

The minister tweeted about the inauguration of the link roads on Sunday, saying, "Happy to be throwing open four more newly developed missing link roads" — Vasanthnagar-NAC, 0.75 km; IDPL Employees Colony-Srila Park Pride, 0.46 km; Novotel-RTA office 0.6 km; JV Hills Park to Masjid Banda, 1.01 km; and ISB Road-ORR, 1.94 km.

The new link roads help



Ministers K.T. Rama Rao and Sabitha Indra Reddy inaugurate the newly laid link roads in Hyderabad.

in removing the traffic congestion on JNTU-Hitec City road, improve the road connectivity from Miyapur, Sardar Patel Nagar, Vasanth Nagar and KPHB Phase 6 to Hitech City Road and Hafeezpet Road.

The roads have been laid at a cost of ₹23.43 crore by

the Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited (HRDCL).

"As of now, 16 roads have been constructed and the remaining six roads will be completed soon," the minister said.

He said the construction of four roads was under way in the second phase.

"The link roads are being developed to reduce traffic congestion and travel time," the minister said.

So far, 16 link roads in the city were developed and six more link roads would be developed soon. "These roads will decrease the traffic congestion in the city," he said. During the inauguration, he said these roads would play a vital role in the city's development and 133 link roads were being developed in a phased manner.

"We are working towards developing a better road network, under the Strategic Road Development Plan (SRDP) at a cost of ₹6,000 crore and the Hyderabad Road Development Corporation Limited (HRDCL) is also developing 22 link roads at a cost of ₹313.65 crore," he said.

The Hyderabadi Road Development Corporation Limited (HRDCL) is also developing 22 link roads at a cost of ₹313.65 crore,

## Pvt hosps for revised Covid care rate

KANIZA GARARI | DC  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Telangana Hospitals and Nursing Homes Association (THANA) and Telangana Network Hospitals Association (TNHA) have appealed to the state government that Covid-19 treatment rates in the state be revised "to salvage the private health-care sector." The appeal follows a meeting attended by representatives of member hospitals belonging to the two associations.

In a letter to Director of Public Health, they pointed out that Standard Schedule of Rates (SSR) applied for Aarogyasri must be made applicable

to private hospitals too. They will be able to continue treatment of the Covid-affected only if scientific steps are taken in calculating the rates, they maintained.

THANA member Dr C.R.K. Prasad stated, "When the state government itself has told the centre that it has spent ₹3.5 lakh for treatment of

a single Covid-19 patient at Gandhi Hospital, why are they giving us these low rates? We have given a representation for revision of rates, but there has been no response from the government."

Private hospitals say the state government has taken no step in controlling the high prices of Coronavirus medicines, including their black marketing. This has kept the costs of treatment high.

As per an analysis, only 20 per cent of registered private hospitals are providing Covid-19 treatment.

"Even then, some 75 per cent of patients in the second wave have been treated by private hospitals," TNHA president Dr V.

Rakesh underlined. He said treating Covid-19 patients is not easy, as it involves serious mental strain.

"Private hospitals are not into treating Coronavirus-affected for money. But yet they are being projected as villains looting patients with high charges. What is being charged is based on prevailing conditions. We want the government to understand this," Dr Rakesh stated. The associations say they are waiting for a discussion with the government.

Director of Health and Family Welfare could not be contacted for comment on the demand of private hospitals.

## MOM, CHILD SAVED AFTER UMBILICAL CORD FALLS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

A life-threatening complication of the umbilical cord detaching from the foetus and falling out of the uterus occurred in a 32-year-old woman, who was saved by Apollo Cradle and Children's Hospital.

The woman was in her eighth month of pregnancy when the emergency occurred. The amniotic fluid from the uterus was slowly draining out. Terrified, she alerted her family who in consultation with doctors shifted her in a supine position to the hospital.

Scans showed that the foetal heart beat was normal and there was a need for an urgent birthing process to save both mother and child. A C-section was performed and a baby weighing 2.45 kg was delivered.

Both mother and child recovered without complications. Umbilical cord prolapse in a patient who is regularly following up with doctors is rare. Experts opined that there was a pre-term labour or a premature rupture of membranes that led to the prolapse.

## C

## COVID PROFILE TESTS FREE AT SIDDIPET DIST. HOSPITAL

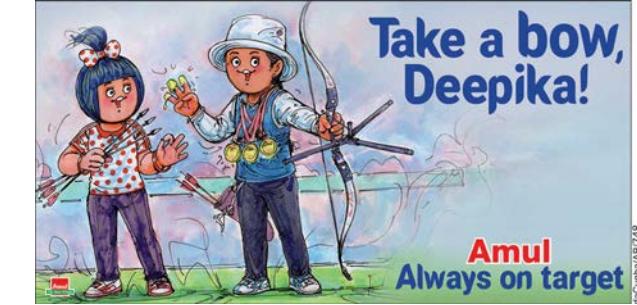
DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Finance minister T. Harish Rao on Monday announced the start of free Covid-19 profile tests at the Siddipet Government Medical College Hospital.

He said the plan was to introduce, in phases, this service in government super specialty hospitals in all districts.

The Covid-19 profile tests cost around ₹5,500 each, and the facility introduced on Monday will be available for Covid-19 patients admitted to the hospital.

Harish Rao said this was the first time these services were being provided free and poor patients will benefit the most from it.



## TS, Hyd cops top in passport verification

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Hyderabad police and the state police are the quickest in the country when it comes to verification of passport applications.

Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar said,

In an audio message posted on a social media platform, he said the half-yearly review by the external affairs ministry had rated

the TS police and the Hyderabad police as the best units in the country for passport verification. "The city police cleared 48,295 applications till June 26 with an average speed of four days for each application," he said. The passport verification cell of the Special Branch braved the Covid-19 pandemic and discharged its duty," Anjani Kumar said. Last year, the City Police had cleared 92,767 applications.

## BABY WITH ONE ARTERY OPERATED UPON

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

parents rushed her to the hospital. Dr Tapan K. Dash, clinical director and head of the department of Care Child-rens Heart Institute, said, "The surgery took four hours. The doctors connected the heart structures and allowed for proper flow of blood from the heart to the body." The newborn has fully recovered, doctors said.

With the child constantly crying and turning blue,

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Asst Controller of Communication Accounts (Admn)  
O/o the Pr. CCA, T.S. Circle, Hyderabad-20

## DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA

Update: Cases | Deaths

Fresh Cases	993
Deaths	9
Tests Done	1,12,982
Active Cases	13,869
Total Cases	6,21,606
Total Deaths	3,644

### Most new cases

GHMC (Hyderabad)	124	Adilabad
Nalgonda	78	Jogulambha Gadwal, Nirmal
Suryapet	72	Kamareddy, Narayanpet
Mancherial	58	Nizamabad
Bhadradri Kothagudem	58	Jangaon, Vikarabad, Sangareddy and Medak
	10	

## No district with zero new cases

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Active Covid-19 cases stood at 13,869 in the state on Monday, even as the reduction in the number of new cases continued. However, no district has reported zero cases.

This is being observed very closely by experts as they are analysing the transmission of the Coronavirus in the aftermath of lifting the lockdown.

Dr Yadgiri Rao, senior member of the Indian Medical Association, said, "Vaccinating a majority of the people before the onset of the

experts urged people to give vaccines a priority and not fall for misinformation.

third wave is very important. Data from Maharashtra shows that those who have got one and two doses of vaccine are better protected. We have to move into the districts and vaccinate people."

Experts urge people to give vaccines a priority and not fall for misinformation.

They state that it will help to deal with the third wave better if maximum people are vaccinated.

This is being observed very closely by experts as they are analysing the transmission of the Coronavirus in the aftermath of lifting the lockdown.

Dr Yadgiri Rao, senior member of the Indian Medical Association, said, "Vaccinating a majority of the people before the onset of the

## MARUTI SUZUKI ARENA

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BIG SAVINGS

S-PRESSO ₹44 000\*

SWIFT ₹43 000\*

**SHORT TAKES**  
**Skilling plan for LGBT**

**Hyderabad:** Celebrating Pride Day, Cyberabad police chief V.C. Sajjanar on Monday launched a skilling programme called Transform for the LGBT (lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender) community to enhance their skills and enable entrepreneurship. The programme is being supported by Society for Cyberabad Security Council. (SCSC).

**28-DAY VAX GAP FOR THOSE GOING ABROAD**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

The second dose of Covisheild vaccine will be given in a gap of 28 days for those who are going abroad for work, said the office of the director of public health on Monday.

Eligible persons may submit their passport and work visa permit at the Covid19 vaccination centres. This group will be given priority and can avail both the doses of Covisheild within 28 days.

To avail of the special facility, they have to upload the images of their work visa permit in CoWin portal. District medical and health officials have been asked to make arrangements to vaccinate this group of people.

The districts must also have a special officer designated for this category of people.

**TRS EQUAL TO MY CHAPPAL, SAYS ARAVIND**

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NIZAMABAD, JUNE 28

Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind said that the TRS was "equal to his chappal", and dared minister V. Prashanth Reddy to hold an open debate on the turmeric board issue.

The MP was speaking after being stopped on his way to the Tallampur primary agriculture cooperative society, where the BJP was holding a protest alleging misappropriation of funds.

TRS activists prevented the MP from reaching the dharna site. TRS and BJP activists raised slogans against each other. Police dispersed the two groups. Arvind alleged that Prashant Reddy was backing ganja smugglers in the district. The MP also warned police commissioner Kartikeya because the police had prevented him from reaching the dharna site.

**DRONE ATTACK SHOWS GOVT'S NEGLECT: OWAISI**

**ATHER MOIN I DC**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) president Asaduddin Owaisi asserted that the twin drone strikes on the Indian Air Force Base in Jammu was the failure of the Narendra Modi government.

Speaking to the media here on Monday, Owaisi said long-distance covered by the drones showed they were either American or Chinese. It was a Pulwama-like attack on Jammu Airbase, he said. "Will Modi once again swing into action or show cowardice? The responsibility falls on the government. Will the Modi government retaliate or exhibit its helplessness as it acted in Ladakh against China?" he questioned.

He asked whether India had finally woken up to the real military threat from China. "With American help, action on China's south-western borders can surely prevent China from aggression in Taiwan and the South China Sea. Experts say the drone might be of American or Chinese origin. This is the strategic failure of our security agencies and strict action must be taken against the perpetrators," he opined.

He said Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Kashmir policy had failed. The BJP had accused the political leaders of Jammu & Kashmir of joining anti-India forces and creating a conflict in the valley. Modi once branded the leaders of Jammu and Kashmir as anti-nationals and later interacted with them, he said. "You are speaking about delimitation. What will be the criteria for delimitation? Will it be on population base or geographical territory? Your policy on Kashmir proved a failure and you gained nothing," the Hyderabad MP added.

# KCR aim: Cong. must lose deposit in bypoll

**Huzurabad fight between BJP, Cong for 2nd spot: KCR**

**L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had set two targets for ministers and party leaders for the upcoming Huzurabad Assembly bypoll.

The first one is to defeat the BJP with a decent majority and second is to ensure that Congress does not retain its deposit, according to TRS sources.

In the meeting, the Chief Minister asked them to work hard to ensure that Congress lost deposit in the very first election it would fight under the leadership of new TPCC chief A. Revanth Reddy.

He felt since Huzurabad bypoll is a straight fight between the TRS and Etala

Rajender (BJP), the Congress has no role in this bypoll and hence the TRS should win and the Congress should lose its deposit.

The Chief Minister said that each mandal in Huzurabad Assembly constituency should be monitored by a minister and five MLAs who would be assisted by party MPs, MLCs, ZP chairpersons, ZPTCs, MPTCs, municipal chairpersons, councillors, sarpanches and ward members from village-level to district level.

Ministers T. Harish Rao, K.T. Rama Rao and Planning Commission deputy chairman B.

Vinod Kumar will monitor the bypoll at state-level and coordinate with all in-charge ministers and leaders involved in the bypoll.

In the meeting, the comments of Congress MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy reportedly came up for discussion who wished new TPCC retained at least deposit in Huzurabad bypoll. Against this backdrop, the Chief Minister reportedly felt that it would be easier to make the Congress lose its deposit if proper strategies were worked out and executed effectively in the run up to the bypoll.

## Will end TRS rule in TS soon, claims Revanth

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

TRS leaders mocked the newly-appointed TPCC president A. Revanth Reddy's claims that he would lead the Congress back to power.

Addressing a press conference at the TRS Legislature Party office on the Legislative Assembly premises on Monday, Pasunuri Dayakar Rao, MP, Rajeshwar Rao, MLC, and legislators Balka Suman, Guvala Balaram, Chanti Kranthi Kiran and Nomula Bhagat said that the Congress would meet the fate of the Telugu Desam in Telangana under Revanth Reddy's leadership.

The TRS leaders said the Congress was on the ventilator in Telangana state and Revanth Reddy's entry as TPCC chief would mark the end of the party.

Suman said the TD vanished from Telangana state, when Revanth Reddy was its working president and the same would be repeated for the Congress under his tenure.

"Fissures erupted soon after Revanth was made TPCC chief. Senior leaders are angry at the high command for choosing a person like Revanth, who is junior to them and who is facing ACB and ED cases in the cash-for-vote scam. Senior leaders are planning to quit and join other parties. Even the cadre is upset over Revanth and is planning to leave the party. The Congress will soon become leaderless and cadreless in Telangana under Revanth's leadership," he said.

The TPCC chief criticised the TRS government for failing to instal Dr B.R. Ambedkar's statue at Panjagutta circle and shifting the statue to the police station. The Chief Minister had no respect for Dalits and betrayed them, he said. Revanth Reddy said during the Congress rule, SC/ST sub plan was implemented for uplift-



Newly appointed Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president A. Revanth Reddy said the fight against the TRS government ruled by Kalvakuntla family would begin soon. "We will bring to the notice of the Congress chief Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi the misrule of the TRS in Telangana state and after getting guidance from the high command, we will begin our fight," he said and termed Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao as 'traitor of Dalits'.

— BY ARRANGEMENT

ment of Dalits. Congress state president described Dalit empowerment programme initiated by the TRS government as an eyewash. "It is ridiculous to select merely 100 Dalits in each Assembly constituency, where their average population is 1 lakh (15 percent of total population), for the empowerment programme," he said. Revanth Reddy said he, along with state leaders and seniors, would prepare an action plan on people's problems and take up the agitation. Meanwhile, in his maid-

en programme after being named TPCC chief, Revanth Reddy paid rich tributes to former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. He also visited the residence of former MP Konda Vishveshwar Reddy and paid rich tributes to the latter's mother Konda Jayalata who passed away late last week. AICC secretary G. Chinnai Reddy and other leaders met the new PCC chief and congratulated him. Former Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy's aide Sureedu and others also met Revanth Reddy.

## Urdu body to Haj panel: Repay ₹1cr

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Organisations working under the minorities welfare department are striving for survival as they are unable to execute any schemes due to a lack of funds. In this scenario, the Urdu Academy is insisting that the Haj Committee repay a ₹1 crore loan dating back to 2019.

The Haj Committee

had borrowed ₹1 crore from the Urdu Academy in July 2019 during the Haj camp as it became difficult and was in need of money to bear the expenses. At that time, Executive Officer of Haj Committee B. Shaifullah, who was also holding additional charge of Secretary/Director Urdu Academy, had transferred the funds from Urdu Academy to the Haj Committee with the

consent of higher officials of the minorities welfare to meet the expenses.

The fund was transferred from the head of grants for the construction of the Urdu Ghar-e-Um - S-ha-d-i-k-h-a-n-a scheme of the academy. Almost two years have passed, but the state Haj Committee failed to repay the amount to the Urdu Academy.

Now, Urdu Academy

wants this amount to be returned to it to carry out their programmes.

Urdu Academy is insisting the Haj Committee for returning the amount and in this connection, it has sent letters but proved futile. It is learnt that the Haj Committee is not in a position to repay the amount as it is not receiving budgetary allocations from the government.

Malka added.

Jayesh Ranjan, principal secretary, IT, said effective implementation of the SDGs requires multi-stakeholder participation and all the stakeholders should be conscious not to allow the current pandemic situation to deter from achieving the 17 objectives. Ranjan said the event should bring all stakeholders on a single platform for achieving the SDGs.

As a country partnering with TiE for the summit, Israel was enthusiastic and looking forward to the summit.

Telangana, he said, was doing well on the SDG front and was recently ranked sixth by Niti

Aayog on drinking water and housing goals. The state was ahead in meeting the targets with initiatives such as housing for all, women self-help groups, and We-Hub.

Claudio Ansorena, Ambassador of Costa Rica, the second country that is partnering with TiE, said sustainability as a humanitarian issue and every country needs to join in this endeavour. Ansorena pointed out that Costa Rica was the first carbon neutral country. "We have pro-

hibited oil exploration.

Our tourism is eco-tourism. Our beaches are the cleanest beaches. Costa Rica is the leader in sustainable environmental issues. We are proud partners for the summit and we will contribute as much as we can," Ansorena said.

Manohar Reddy, president, TiE Hyderabad, said, "With this summit, Hyderabad could potentially become the destination for startups in the sustainability sector. We are excited about hosting this global event."

## City gears up to host Sustainability Summit on UN targets

## Education key to innovation: Malka

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Israel's Ambassador to India Ron Malka said the only way to achieve the Strategic Development Goals (SDGs) is through education leading to innovation and to sustainability. Israel has shown a path on how entrepreneurship can be achieved, he said.

SDGs refer to the 17 inter-linked objectives drawn up by the United Nations in 2015, to be achieved by 2030.

Speaking online at a

press conference on the

plans by The Indus Entrepreneurs (TiE) to hold the Sustainability Summit 2021 (TSS-2021) in October with Hyderabad as the host city, Malka said that when Israel was born, the country was without resources and therefore focused on education. Education helped the country to lead in innovation, he said.

As a country partnering with TiE for the summit, Israel was enthusiastic and looking forward to the summit.

Telangana, he said, was doing well on the SDG front and was recently ranked sixth by Niti

## Kishan faults Rahul for not acknowledging PV on b'day

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy paid tribute to former prime minister PV. Narasimha Rao on his 100th birth anniversary on behalf of the Centre, at PV Narasimha Rao Marg on Monday.

Kishan Reddy used the occasion to slam Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for neither tweeting nor paying tribute to Narasimha Rao on his birth anniversary. He said that this was an insult to Narasimha Rao and the Telugu people. He criticised the Congress for not bothering to pay homage to a staunch loyalist like Rao, and working under the directions of MIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi.

In a sharp rebuttal to Kishan Reddy's tweet, he accused the BJP of "shallowness and double standard". Dr Sravan questioned the BJP over the "sidelining and humiliating" of the party's stalwart founders like L.K. Advani and Dr Murali Manohar Joshi.

## DASOJU TO KISHAN: WHAT ABOUT ADVANI?

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

AICC spokesperson Dasoju Shravan rebuked Union minister of state G. Kishan Reddy of criticising Congress leader Rahul Gandhi during the P.V. Narasimha Rao's birthday centenary.

Recalling the contributions of Narasimha Rao, Kishan Reddy said that it was the former prime minister who established a global identity for India with his visionary policies.

Earlier, the minister visited Kadeguda, Gaganmal, Namanya vaccination centres and appealed to the peo-

ple to take the vaccination, which was being provided free of cost by the Centre.

He planted saplings at Jalagam Vengal Rao park along with former MLA Chintala Ramachandra Reddy. Kishan Reddy urged the railway minister to increase number of MMTS services in the city.

## TS ADVOCATES ELECTION ON SCHEDULE

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Justice T. Amaranta Goud of Telangana High Court on Monday clarified that election to Telangana High Court Advocates Association should continue as per schedule on June 30, through online mode.

Justice Goud rejected the proposals and resolution made to postpone the elections for 10 days. Challenging the resolution made by the association,

The court agreed with the contentions of the counsels and made it clear to conduct elections as per schedule.

## FORESTERS NARROWLY ESCAPE TIGER

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
ADILABAD, JUNE 28

Five persons, including field-level staff of Forest Department, narrowly escaped from being attacked by a tiger when they entered the forest to set up camera traps near Charigam village in Kagaznagar mandal on Sunday evening.

The forest staff, including beat officers Banaiah and Aravind, trackers Satti and Sailu, apart from cattle grazer Morle Guruvaiah, went to the place in the forest where the tiger had killed Guruvaiah's cow a couple of days ago.

As they started setting up camera traps, the tiger appeared from the surrounding lush greenery. When the five started shouting for help, the tiger vanished from the place.

## COPS ARREST TWO MAOISTS, RECOVER EXPLOSIVES

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
KHAMMAM, JUNE 28

Police arrested two Maoist militia members and recovered explosives from them in Chandugonda on Monday. The militia members were identified as Hemla Ithu, son of Pandu, 24, of Therram village in Bijapur district in Chhattisgarh and Badise Chandu, aka Vade Chandu, son of Ithu, 27. The Maoists tried to run away after noticing a police patrol. Police gave chase and arrested them and recovered 8 kg cortex wire, 35 detonators and 50 pamphlets.

They told the police that they were working on the directions of Maoist leader Ookey Kailash.

The Lord is near to those who have a broken heart. And He saves those who are broken in spirit. Psalms 34:18 You lived a humble and sacrificial life, One Year without you

## 3rd ANNIVERSARY

Blessed Are The Dead Who Die In The Lord. Rev. 14:13

**M. PAMELA JAYANTHI**

D.O.B. 29th March 1959

D.O.D. 29th June 2018

Your Memory and Love treasures us. You Are In Our Hearts Always.

Inserted by: Dr. Anand, Pranoy, Prudence, Jay, Jessica, Jonathan.

**Smt. Domakonda Jyothi**

W/o, Late Domakonda Rajiah

You will always be in our hearts forever & ever.

## IN BRIEF

## Constable ends life at home

**Hyderabad:** A constable working at the Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy died by suicide at his residence in Reddy Basti, Shivarampally, on Monday. Police said the constable, Bandi Vasu, had a quarrel with his family earlier in the morning. He had got married about 18 months ago. The Rajendranagar police booked a case of suspicious death and shifted the body to the Osmania General Hospital morgue for postmortem.

## Fraudster cheats woman of ₹9 lakh

**Hyderabad:** A woman from Hyderabad was swindled of ₹9 lakh by a fraudster who claimed that he was updating her know-your-customer (KYC) details via her bank. The Hyderabad cybercrimes police said she was approached by the scammers who posed as banking professionals and asked her credentials and the OTP. "As soon as she shared the OTP, about ₹9 lakh was transferred out of her account in installments," police said.

## Cops arrest 3 for smuggling ganja

**Hyderabad:** Two women drug peddlers and a juvenile who were smuggling 42 kg of ganja worth ₹6.9 lakh from Visakhapatnam to Mumbai were arrested by the Secunderabad railway police. The main accused Ravi is absconding, and the police arrested a 60-year-old woman, her daughter-in-law and her 14-year-old grandson. Police said they had transported the ganja from Visakhapatnam to Mumbai on Godavari Express and were waiting to take a train to Mumbai.

## 25 tonnes of PDS rice seized, 3 held

**Hyderabad:** Rachakonda police arrested three accused and seized 25 tonnes of rice meant for the public distribution system (PDS). The police is looking for the prime accused, Aitha Krishna who had purchased PDS rice from the beneficiaries at ₹9 per kg in Telangana and was transporting it to Andhra Pradesh to sell at poultry farms at ₹25 per kg, said K. Purushotham Reddy, ACP, Varanthalipuram. Those arrested were Nallavalli Maijal Reddy, Kyadari Sadashiva and Kalmala Praveen Kumar.

## 2 Tanzanians held for flesh trade

**Hyderabad:** In a decoy operation, the Malkajgiri Special Operations Team arrested two Tanzanian nationals Dayana and Kabangila Warren, both 24, for running a prostitution racket. Police said they had overstayed their visas, and were running the racket on social media. The duo had come to study at Osmania University. They stayed in a house at Neredmet by posing as husband and wife. Dayana would lure people with semi-nude pictures that she posted on a dating application, police said. They were arrested after a decoy operation.

## MEDICAL JAC TELLS STATE TO MEET DEMANDS

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

The Telangana Medical Joint Action Committee (TMJAC) has urged the state government to clear the arrears, promote doctors and fill the vacant posts in the directorate of medical education, nursing and other departments.

In a meeting at Koti on Monday, the JAC stated that the posts of additional directors of medical education have not been filled. It said some 10,000 recruitments are to be carried out and that can be done if the senior positions are filled.

JAC chairman Dr B. Ramesh said, "The health department is facing a lot of problems and the state government has not been properly represented. The JAC is for doctors, nurses and paramedical staff. The functioning of the department must be reviewed, as the results are not seen at the hospital and medical education level."

JAC has demanded that the arrears of healthcare workers be cleared. An amount of ₹200 crore is pending, they said.

## CM, Guv unveil 26-ft PV statue

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao on Monday unveiled the 26-foot bronze statue of former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to mark the conclusion of his birth centenary celebrations organised by the state government. The statue has been installed on a rotary leading to P.V. Narasimha Rao Marg, formerly called the Necklace Road, adjacent to Hussainasagar.

Later, the Governor opened the renamed road to traffic and released eight books, including four penned by the former PM. Dignitaries from various fields attended the programme.

Addressing the gathering, the Chief Minister hailed Narasimha Rao as a 'reformist' and said he had left an indelible mark in every field he was associated with, both at state-level and national-level. "When he was made Prime Minister heading a minority government, he took it up as a challenge and successfully completed a full five-year tenure," Chandrashekhar Rao said.

The CM stated that due to reforms introduced by Narasimha Rao, the country could come out of the economic crisis which contributed to steady inflow of investments into the country providing vast employment opportunities for all sections.

He recalled the land reforms introduced by him in the United Andhra Pradesh which set an example to other states. "He donated 800 acres of land owned by his family during land reforms introduced by him and led from the front," said the Chief Minister. Chandrashekhar Rao hailed the former PM as the architect of gurukuls and Navodaya schools in the country which he had set up as education minister in AP. These were later adopted by other states, he said and added that there was a need to follow the ideologies of the former PM. "Politicians and administrators need to be dynamic for ensuring welfare and development," remarked the CM.

He announced that the state government had approved the proposal of setting up P.V. Vidhya Peetham in Kakatiya University. He thanked the M. A. B. U. B. N. G. A. G. R. Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy Graduate MLC constituency voters for electing the former PM's daughter Vanu Devi as a tribute. He complimented the centenary celebrations committee for organising many programmes round the year



Outgoing TPCC chief N. Uttam Kumar Reddy pays floral tributes to the portrait of former prime minister P.V. Narasimha Rao to mark his centenary birth anniversary celebrations at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday. Former minister J. Geetha Reddy and other senior leaders were also present.

— P. SURENDRA

## PV gave new direction to India's economic, foreign policies: Singh

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh termed late Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao a political 'sanyasi' (monk) and said he was a rare scholar and statesman, who gave a new sense of direction to India's economic and foreign policies. "One of the significant aspects of the economic reforms that we initiated was that they took into account the unique nature of the realities of the Indian situation," Dr Singh said.

Dr Singh was addressing online, an event held to mark the concluding day of the centenary birth celebrations of Narasimha Rao on Monday. Dr Singh also presented a lifetime achievement award to renowned cardiologist and public health expert Dr K. Srinath Reddy. Narasimha Rao's personal physician, on the occasion.

Manmohan Singh said that Narasimha Rao strongly felt that reforms would have to be mindful

despite the Coronavirus pandemic.

The Governor said by organising the celebrations, the state government had saluted the former PM and a son of the soil. "He always respected the country more than the politics and for that reason, he was successful in every field," she said.

Centenary celebrations committee chairman K. Keshava Rao, Rajya Sabha member, said the

**DR MANMOHAN**  
Singh said that P.V. Narasimha Rao strongly felt that reforms would have to be mindful of Indian concerns, and would have to protect the interests of the poor and the working people.

**UTTAM KUMAR REDDY** appreciated the efforts of the P.V. Narasimha Rao Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee for its efforts in organising programmes to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of the former prime minister.

of Indian concerns, and would have to protect the interests of the poor and the working people.

Prime Minister Narasimha Rao brought realism to the fore in Indian foreign policy and tried to improve India's relations with neighbours," he said. He launched what has come to be known as India's 'Look East Policy,' linking India to many East and South-East Asian

countries. "Under his leadership we launched the Ballistic Missile Technology Programme. We successfully tested the Augmented Satellite Launch Vehicle (ASLV) and Polar Satellite Launch Vehicle (PSLV). We also tested our Prithvi Missile, which was subsequently developed into an intermediate range ballistic missile," the former PM explained. Dr Singh said that under the leadership of Dr Srinath Reddy, the Public Health Foundation of India had established five Indian Institutes of Public Health (IIPHs) in different regions to advance multidisciplinary public health education, research, health technologies, and implementation support for strengthening health systems.

Outgoing TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy said that Narasimha Rao is the greatest son of Telangana. Addressing the event, he said that the path-breaking land reforms brought by Narasimha Rao when

he was Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh empowered Dalits and tribals of Telangana.

"The leaders who are in power today lie to the weaker sections on land distribution. But the Land Ceiling Act brought PV ensured distribution of lakhs of acres of land to the landless tribals and Dalits of Telangana," he said.

Uttam Kumar Reddy appreciated the efforts of the P.V. Narasimha Rao Birth Centenary Celebrations Committee for its efforts in organising programmes to celebrate the 100th birth anniversary of the former prime minister.

Centenary committee chairman Dr J. Geetha Reddy, Narasimha Rao's brother P.V. Manohar Rao, senior leaders K. Jana Reddy and Ponnala Laxmaiah spoke.

Telangana state Congress in-charge Manickam Tagore, former union minister M.M. Pallam Raju, Dr Srinath Reddy addressed the event online.

state government had requested the Centre to name the University of Hyderabad after Narasimha Rao in recognition of the services rendered by him.

He said six statues of Narasimha Rao, including one in Delhi and his native village Vangara, would be installed shortly. He also said the Andhra Pradesh government had taken a decision to install the former PM's statue in Visakhapatnam.

A memorial and museum were also being planned at the Narasimha Rao Gnana Bhoomi by obtaining all permissions, he said.

## TS banks record 10% growth in 2020-21

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Despite being impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic, banks in Telangana state have registered a growth of nearly 10 per cent in dispensing loans during 2020-21. "Total advances grew by ₹56,621 crore or 9.92 per cent during the year," said SBI deputy managing director Om Prakash Mishra, who is president of the State-Level Bankers Committee (SLBC).

Total advances of all banks stood at ₹6,27,039 crore.

For the current financial year, the SLBC has an annual credit plan outlay of ₹1,86,035 crore. Of this, the share of the priority sector is ₹1,43,954 crore, which is 77.38 per cent of the credit outlay.

**BANKS HAVE** seen a higher growth in deposits at 18.05 per cent in the last fiscal year, as compared to growth in advances.

report, finance minister T. Harish Rao said despite Covid financial crisis, the state government had transferred ₹7,360 crore Rythu Bandhu into the accounts of over 61 lakh farmers within a week. He asked bankers not to adjust or divert Rythu Bandhu amount for previous crop loan arrears of farmers towards payment of interest on crop loans.

Banks have seen a higher growth in deposits at 18.05 per cent in the last fiscal year, as compared to growth in advances.

According to an SLBC press release,

bank deposits have grown by ₹87,469 crore during FY 20-21, with total deposits standing at ₹57,19,000 crore. Of this, banks have lent ₹41,200 crore during Kharif and Rabi crop seasons, while the industry received term loans amounting to ₹16,816 crore.

The minister asked bankers to expedite sanctioning of crop loans as Kharif agriculture activity has picked up across the state and help farmers to purchase seeds and fertilisers on time.

All banks together have disbursed ₹1,03,126 crore to borrowers under priority sector, achieving 84.04 per cent of annual targets," the SLBC statement said.

Under the Pradhan Mantri Mudra Yojana Scheme, banks have disbursed ₹6,445 crore against a target of ₹5,197 crore.

The finance minister urged bankers to extend more Mudra loans to small traders.

He said the state government has taken steps to administer the Covid vaccine to entire banking staff in the state soon.

## MADHYA PRADESH RURAL ROADS DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY (MPRRDA)

(An Agency of Panchayat & Rural Development Department)  
5th floor, Block-II, Paryawans Bhawan, Bhopal (M.P.) – 462011  
Phone No. : 0755-2551751, Email : mp-spc@nic.in

## PRESS NOTICE FOR REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES OF STATE QUALITY MONITORING UNDER PRADHAN MANTRI GRAM SADAK YOJANA

No. 8643/SQM/outsource/1/2021. Date: 28.06.2021

1. The Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), a fully funded programme of Ministry of Rural Development (MoRD), Government of India aims at providing all weather road connectivity to eligible unconnected habitation. The Programme is being implemented by the State Government of Madhya Pradesh with Madhya Pradesh Rural Roads Development Authority (MPRRDA) as the implementing Agency (hereinafter referred to as the Agency).
2. The Consultancy services are required for independent quality monitoring under second tier at State level as provided in PMGSY Programme Guidelines issued by Government of India.
3. The Agency invites Technical and Financial proposals on approved TOR from consulting engineering firms or bodies (hereinafter referred to as the Consultant) corporate to undertake and perform the duties and functions of State Quality Monitors. The Technical Proposal will be evaluated as per the criteria subject to fulfillment of technical qualifications. The financial offers of only those consultants would be opened whose Technical Proposal is found responsive. The award of services would be made to lowest evaluated Financial Proposal.
4. This Invitation for Proposals is open to all Consultants meeting the eligibility criteria. The applicant should be a private or government-owned legal entity provided they are financially autonomous and operate under commercial law.
5. RFP Document consisting of qualification information and eligibility criterion of bidders and the set of terms & condition of contract to be complied with by the consultants can be seen and downloaded online on the website <http://www.mptenders.gov.in>. RFP document may be purchased online from <http://www.mptenders.gov.in> as per time schedule mentioned in critical dates after making online payment of cost of tender documents Rs. 11200/- (including GST). Last date for online submission of proposal is: upto 17.30 hrs. on 02.08.2021. M.P. Madhyam/101118/2021 SQC, MP RRDA

## Amid row, TS to go full hydel at Srisailam dam

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Kumar Sultania issued orders stating, "Typical terrain of Telangana state leaves no option except to lift water from either of the rivers (Godavari, Krishna) to fulfill the aspirations of the farmers of the state. For this, huge power is required. At the same time, Telangana has around 2,500 MW hydel power generation installed capacity with much lower capacity utilisation. To tap more hydel power generation in the state up to 100% installed capacity."

The move is expected to escalate the ongoing water war between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh further over sharing of Krishna water. The AP government lodged a complaint with the union Jal Shakti ministry against Telangana state for utilising water in the Srisailam project for hydel power generation despite lower water levels. It sought immediate directions to the TS government against the move following which the Centre instructed the TS government on Sunday to stop hydel generation at Srisailam.

The Jal Shakti ministry has written to TS Genco stating, "The TS Genco authorities are requested to stop further release of water immediately through Srisailam left power house and follow the water release orders issued by KRMB (Krishna River Management Board) except in case of extreme grid exigency."

However, a day after this, Telangana energy department secretary Sandeep

COFMOW (INDIAN RAILWAYS)		
CORRIGENDUM, DATED: 29.06.2021		
Following corrigenda have been issued to e-Tenders already uploaded on the website <a href="http://www.irps.gov.in">www.irps.gov.in</a> :		
Tender No.	Corrigendum No.	Closing Date
G-108081	Corrigendum No.01 & 02	02.07.2021
OP-609270	Corrigendum No.01	14.07.2021
OP-407481	Corrigendum No.05	15.07.2021
OP-909710	Corrigendum No.01	20.07.2021
Bidders may visit the website to download the details mentioned in the corrigendum and submit e-Bids accordingly.		
"Serving Customers with a Smile."		

**राजत मंत्रालय / GOVERNMENT OF INDIA**  **परमाणु ऊर्जा विभाग / DEPARTMENT OF ATOMIC ENERGY**  **नामिनील कार्यालय / NUCLEAR ENERGY**  **ईसोलैटेशन ब्लॉक, हैदराबाद - 500062**  **ECL POST, HYDERABAD - 500 062**	**मिनिस्टरी आमन्त्रण सुनाना/NOTICE INVITING TENDER**  **गवर्नर के और से, वरिष्ठ प्रबोधक एजेंडाकॉमिटी&प्रोफेरिंग द्वारा दिनांक 13.07.2021, 14:00 बजे तक निम्नलिखित कार्यालय से दिलाकार मानवान्वय की जारी है।**

# DECCAN Chronicle

29 JUNE 2021

## Jammu drone attacks carry ominous signals

**D**id India see its first terrorist attack through the use of drones, in the early hours last Sunday, when the technical area of Jammu airport — namely the Air Force Station — saw two explosions go off? The picture is not clear yet. Fortunately, the explosions caused only very minor damage. Fighter planes were parked at a different location, but even Indian Air Force helicopters, in hangars nearby, not were affected. This is a matter of relief.

Had a helicopter been damaged, the consequences by now are likely to have been kinetic, sparking anxieties and fears of a wider military conflagration. It is to be borne in mind that the Air Force Station is barely 14 kilometres from the India-Pakistan border. However, the presumption of drones cannot be ruled out and will remain the working hypothesis until the investigators have had time to examine the episode from every possible angle and rule out the possibility. At any rate, the presumed dropping of two improvised explosive devices from "an aerial platform" does raise the spectre of drones coming into play in the India-Pakistan dynamics even if investigations eventually discount the possibility that drones were indeed used in the Jammu explosions.

In recent years drones — unmanned air vehicles (UAVs) which are barely 20 kilogram in weight and can fit into a small space — have carried deadly military payloads. In September 2019, the Houthi rebels of Yemen attacked oil processing plants in Saudi Arabia, causing an international geo-strategic scare. More recently, in May this year, the Houthis claimed to have dropped bombs just inside the Saudi border using drones. From the Afghan theatre, the Americans were sending out military drones into the tribal areas of Pakistan to target fighters of extremist factions.

Drones from Pakistan are known to have airdropped cargo of arms and ammunition for use by terrorists inside J&K as well as in Punjab. But the Jammu incident suggests that the authors of the airdropping of explosives near high-value military targets are playing a game of brinkmanship, if they have the sanction of a government. In case the unloading of explosives from the air was done by terrorist elements, then the exercise puts at risk the tenuous calm that obtains in J&K. In that event the political processes under consideration in the Union Territory can potentially be derailed as the security grid is intensified manifold by the government and overt oppression of the populace once again becomes the norm. In that case, the military-to-military agreement of February 25 between the defence establishments of India and Pakistan, which had led to the sincere observance of ceasefire, is likely to come under serious strain.

The June 27 airdropping of explosive devices in Jammu could conceivably be a trial run, with better targeted attempts to follow. At any rate, India would do well to refine its tactics in neutralizing this new technique being used by terrorists or an unfriendly power. When attack drones come into play, putting more troops on the ground and the use of anti-aircraft guns are not the answer. The electromagnetic spectrum warriors will need to step up to neutralise the GPS fittings on the hostile drones. A new dimension in counter-terrorism measures, even warfare, is at hand.

## Who spied on UK minister?

**U**K health secretary, Matt Hancock, had to go. Political authority needs legitimacy and his actions in an extramarital affair in which he was seen hugging an aide in his office were the very epitome of flagrant disregard of normal rules of morality as well as poor timing. In a democracy that prides itself on very old foundations even within a ceremonial monarchy, there can't be one rule for the suffering public and another for privileged rulers.

Hancock, who had had the unenviable task of leading the battle against waves of the Coronavirus pandemic, had imposed such severe lockdown restrictions on the British public that they could not even hug their near and dear ones, not even at a funeral, which they were in most cases forbidden to attend anyway. The pressure that was brought upon the "hugging" Tory minister to do the decent thing and hand in his papers was impressive and succeeded despite Prime Minister Boris Johnson being inclined towards keeping him in the job.

Hancock's authority to lead the NHS and decide on health policies and order Covid restrictions had been eroded. But the real issue is who ordered the placing of spy cameras inside Whitehall, the seat of UK government. Was the camera, which was hidden inside a smoke detector, placed there by spy agencies like MI 5 or MI 6 without the authority of the bosses? That brings us back to whether these spy games are being played without the knowledge of the leaders of a democratically elected government.

The thought that Big Brother may be watching everyone all the time, especially in CCTV-camera-obsessed Britain which has one of the world's highest density in cameras placed in public places, gains greater currency in the light of l'affaire Hancock involving aide Gina Coladangelo. It is strange that UK authorities are probing how the footage from the CCTV device was leaked to The Sun rather than how a minister's office came to be spied upon like this. The acceptance at this level that secret taping is going on appears ludicrous and it is by no means restricted to the UK.

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**T**hree years ago, the Indian government would use the phrase "fastest growing economy". Prime Minister Narendra Modi would repeat the phrase "one bright spot in the global economy" to describe the country, and used it last at 8 pm on Tuesday, November 8, 2016, when he gave us the demonetisation speech.

Since then, we have not heard much about the fastest growing bright spot. There is not much talk about the economy and has not been for the past four years. When it looked like India's economy had run into trouble, the boasting paused. Now that it is clear that India's economy has been ruined, we have stopped speaking about it entirely. Of course, just because the government does not speak about something does not mean that the problem does not exist. It does and we must try and understand what has happened to India.

According to the government data, our economic growth began braking sharply before January 2018. From here, for some reasons which we need

not speculate about today, we fell into a decline which we could not pull out of. For the four quarters of 2018 and for the next four quarters of 2019 and for the first quarter of 2020, we fell. This was before the Covid-19 pandemic and by the time the nationwide lockdown was announced, we had stopped growing completely.

The government did not tell us why our economy had imploded. The PM simply stopped speaking on the subject. On October 14, 2019, *the Hindu* published a piece written by Parakala Prabhakar, who is finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman's husband. Assessing the economy, he wrote: "There is anxiety all over about the economic slowdown in the country. While the government is still in denial mode, data flowing uninterruptedly into the public domain show that sector after sector is staring at a seriously challenging situation. Private consumption has contracted and is at an 18-quarter low of 3.1 per cent; rural consumption is in a deep southward dive and is double the rate of the urban slowdown; the credit offtake by micro and small

industries remains stagnant; net exports have shown little or no growth; GDP growth is at a six-year low with the first quarter of FY20 registering just five per cent; and unemployment is at a 45-year-high. The government, however, is yet to show any signs that it has come to grips with what ails the economy. Much less evidence is available to believe that it has a strategic vision to address the challenges."

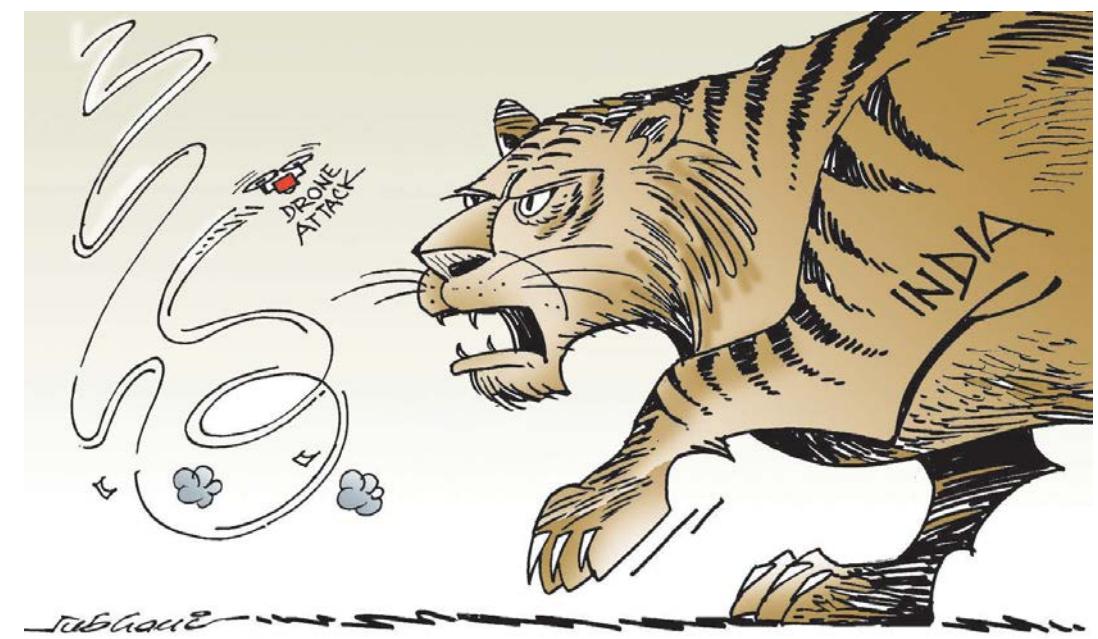
This was 20 months ago and before the pandemic, and before the recession of 2020 and before the second wave of Covid-19. I received a newsletter from a business daily this week which listed what the position was for the last financial year, which ended a few weeks ago in April. Consumer spending had contracted by nine per cent and investments contracted by more than 10 per cent. Manufacturing, services and construction lost value somewhere in the range of eight per cent. What happened in the last financial year was that we went back to the past. We slowed down, then we stopped growing and then we started going back. The rest of the world kept growing and left us behind.

The reason the average Indian is today poorer than the average Bangladeshi is to be found in the last 48 months. By April 2021, manufacturing, trade, transport and communications was down at the same level that it was in 2018. That is three years of growth lost. Construction has lost two years.

The output of core industries such as cement, refineries, steel is the same as it was in March 2017. That is four years India lost while the rest of the world produced more. The sales of passenger vehicles, including cars, have gone back to their 2016 levels. That's a loss of five years. This is not an anomaly. The auto sector has been hammered for many years now and it is clear that the middle class has stopped growing. Two-wheeler sales are today at the same point that they were 10 years ago. The sales of commercial vehicles, meaning the trucks that carry around goods, are today below where they were when Narendra Modi first became Prime Minister.

Is this some new data that I am referring to? No, this is publicly available and has been known to all who are part

Subhani



## After J&K olive branch, will Pak ties normalise?



K.C. Singh

should have been alert to Chinese mischief at the Line of Actual Control (LAC), especially as China had quickly managed to contain the epidemic. Instead of showing contrition for letting the virus escape and cause a global health and economic crisis, China chose to push its People's Liberation Army at multiple points in the Pangong Tso and Kailash Hills sectors, its intrusions remain in Dapsang Plains, Gogra and Hot Springs, etc.

The third unforeseen factor was the defeat of President Donald Trump in November 2020. After Joe Biden assumed the presidency, India realised that his Democratic Party's left wing had evangelistic interest in human rights and freedom of faith and expression. Ironically, two Indian-origin members of Congress, Pramila Jaypal and Ro Khanna, are among the strongest critics of the BJP majoritarian agenda, including its draconian Kashmir policy. President Biden too strongly advocated an alliance of democracies to counter the challenge from the strategic convergence of Russia and China. It was because of this that at the recent G-7 summit in Cornwall, four democracies were invited as "guests" — Australia, India, South Korea and South Africa.

Critics would say US foreign policy rests on pragmatic considerations, often ignoring its own advocated values of democracy and human rights. However, the times have changed, and Cold War arguments may now be inapplicable, particularly after Mr Trump's attempt at undermining US democracy itself. Moreover, China presents a different challenge from the one

**The PM's session with the Kashmiri political leaders is a recognition that the government's Kashmir policy has yielded poor results at home and abroad.**

*The writer is a former secretary in the external affairs ministry. He tweets at @ambkcsingh.*

## LETTERS

### DRONE ATTACK

It is a wake up call for India (*Drone attack on Jammu IAF base, DC, June 28*). Thankfully, there were no casualties. The use of drones is proving to be dangerous. Authorities must upgrade their technology to counter such attacks.

**D. Robert Surya Prakash**  
*Hyderabad*

The drone attack is an intelligence failure. Our armed forces must be proactive in neutralising enemy attacks instead of being reactive.

**T. Kailash Ditya**  
*Hyderabad*

### TRAGIC MISHAP

It was a tragic mishap (*Elderly man crushed between 2 RTC buses, DC, June 28*). Since there is a road divider and the carriageway on the other side is so narrow, buses from Rathifile that need to take a right turn through a gap in the median find it very difficult to do so in one go. It is best to close the median, and direct all such buses to proceed till Alpha Hotel and take a U-turn to ensure safety.

**George Sekaran**  
*Secunderabad*

### URDU IS MISSING

Urdu is often missing from TS government's official communications in spite of it being the second official language. In the latest instance, none of the display and direction boards erected on the occasion of P.V. Narasimha Rao's centenary celebrations on the road renamed after the former PM is in Urdu. It is sad the government does not implement its own policy.

**Syed Maqsood**  
*Hyderabad*

### 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

#### India may take Bangla issue to UN

**N**EW DELHI, JUNE 28. The Minister of External Affairs, Mr. Swaran Singh, told the Lok Sabha today that India had already initiated consultations with various Governments and depending upon the support we get, we will definitely raise (the issue of) Bangla Desh at an appropriate United Nations body.

But these efforts would be "ancillary and supplementary to our main effort to realise our objectives" — to secure a political settlement acceptable to the elected representatives of Bangla Desh. Led by Sheikh Mujibur Rahman and return of the six million Bangla Deshi citizens to their hearths and homes.

Aakar Patel



## As world keeps growing, India's sinking, going back to the past

Three years ago, the Indian government would use the phrase "fastest growing economy". Prime Minister Narendra Modi would repeat the phrase "one bright spot in the global economy" to describe the country, and used it last at 8 pm on Tuesday, November 8, 2016, when he gave us the demonetisation speech.

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Is this some new data that I am referring to? No, this is publicly available and has been known to all who are part

of the sector. If some of us have not known that the situation is this grim, it is purely because it has not featured in a "Mann Ki Baat" yet.

If you don't acknowledge a problem, as Dr Manmohan Singh said about the economy in an interview last year, then you cannot afford to solve it. This is why we will not solve this problem. India's leader has too much pride to admit to us that he has failed us on the economy. His Cabinet of *chamchas* dare not say it either. His finance minister's husband must write an article in one of India's most reputable newspapers to bring to the notice of the world that we are sunk.

The impoverishing of Indians and the wrecking of our economy is happening at the same time when the concentration of our wealth is being skewed towards a few. The two richest men in Asia are not from China, whose economy is six times bigger than India's. They are two Gujarati men who represent the model of "growth" in India.

*The writer is a columnist and a senior journalist*

## SHORT TAKES

## 13-YEAR-OLD GANGRAGED IN UTTAR PRADESH

Mahoba (UP), June 28: A 13-year-old girl was allegedly gang-raped four months ago and a health worker colluding with the criminals gave anti-abortion pills to the pregnant minor, police said on Monday.

Three of the four men who allegedly raped the girl in a village under Srinagar Police Station area of the district and the health worker have been arrested, they said.

The incident came to light on Friday when the condition of the girl, who became pregnant, deteriorated after she was given anti-abortion pills by the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) worker named Sushila, police said.

In her statement to police, the victim alleged that B.P. Singh, Ram Babu Singh, Raghu Raikwar and Shatrughan Singh had raped her while Sushila was part of a conspiracy to cover up the crime.

After a case was registered on Sunday, the four accused including the ASHA worker were arrested while the hunt is on for the fifth culprit, SHO of Srinagar Police Station Sanjay Sharma said. The victim's statement will be recorded in the court soon, he added.

## TOP LASHKAR COMMANDER ARRESTED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 28

Two officers and a jawan of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) have been injured in a fierce gunfight with militants, raging in Malhoora area on the peripheries of Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar since Monday afternoon. An earlier report had said that a suspected Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) cadre was killed in the clash but the officials did not confirm it.

Earlier during the day on Monday, the J&K police had arrested what it claimed is a top commander of the LeT from a car after it was stopped at a makeshift checkpoint laid by it at Parimpura neighbourhood.

It is believed that the LeT commander Nadeem Abrar, who the police said has been involved in several militancy related incidents, identified the place where the militants' group currently engaged in the gunfight with the security forces was hiding.

The police and CRPF sources said that the injured CRPF Assistant Commandant Satender Kumar and Constable Muhammad Waseem who were injured in the clash were immediately taken to the 92-Base Hospital of the Army in Srinagar's Badami Bagh Cantonment.

## DIDI ALLEGES DHANKHAR HAS 'TAINTED' PAST

RAJIB CHOWDHURY | DC  
KOLKATA, JUNE 28

Describing West Bengal governor Jagdeep Dhankhar as "corrupt", Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday alleged in an explosive outburst that he was earlier charged with his role in the infamous 1996 Jain hawala scam.

The Trinamul Congress boss also claimed while Dhankhar's name was later dropped after "the court was managed", a PIL was filed later and has since been pending against him in the court.

She further challenged the Centre, if it was unaware of Dhankhar's tainted past, to check the chargesheet in the high-profile financial scam.

Retaliating over Banerjee's unprecedented attack within hours, a "disappointed" governor denounced her claims for creating a "sensation" and accused her of lying.

Banerjee told the media at Nabanna, the state secretariat: "Someone, who was a journalist, told me the present governor's name was in the Jain hawala case in 1996. He was charged with his role in the case. Again, a public interest litigation was filed there. It is still pending. He is a corrupt man, a corruption-oriented man. What more do you want to know?" She added: "Why does the Central government allow a Governor like him to continue? If the Central government is unaware of his involvement, I can explain it. Let the chargesheet of the Jain hawala case be brought out to check whether his name was there or not. The court was managed... But another case was filed later. It is yet to bear any outcome."

## Militants kill cop, his wife and daughter

SPO's son is in the Army; IGP says perpetrators of this 'act of cowardice' could be foreign militants

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 28

A special police officer (SPO) was shot dead, and his wife and daughter critically injured by suspected militants in J&K's Pulwama district late on Sunday night.

The mother-daughter duo succumbed to their injuries in hospital later. The SPO's son is reportedly serving in the Army.

The police said two to three gunmen barged into the house of SPO Fayaz Ahmed at Hariparigam village of Awantipora area of Pulwama and started indiscriminate firing, resulting in the on-the-spot death of the police official and grievously injuring his 45-year-old wife Raja Banoo and daughter Rafia Jan, aged 23.

Local sources said the SPO's wife and daughter had tried to save him from the assailants' bullets. The trio was rushed to a nearby healthcare facility, where doctors declared Ahmed brought dead while his wife and daughter were shifted to the Government Medical College Hospital in Anantnag district.

Reports said Ahmed's son is serving in the Territorial Army and was on duty when the attack took place.

IGP (Kashmir range) Vijay Kumar, who with other police officers visited the family on Monday, said the perpetrators of this "act of cowardice" could be foreign militants of Jaish-e-Muhammad.

"The J&K police will soon identify and neutralise the terrorists involved in this barbaric act soon. We are saddened by this incident. There is a movement of Jaish-e-Muhammad in this area, and it must be them," he told reporters, adding: "Targeting the wife and daughter of a policeman is an act of cowardice."

As the condition of the SPO's daughter deteriorated, she was brought to Srinagar's Sher-i-Kashmir Institute of Medical Sciences for specialised treatment, but she too died around 4 am on Monday, the hospital said.

Local sources said the SPO's wife and daughter had tried to save him from the assailants' bullets.



Army personnel patrol during a high alert after two drones were noticed hovering over Ratnachak-Kaluchak military station area on Sunday night in Jammu on Monday. — PTI

## More than 300 drones sighted after Aug. 2019 along border with Pak

## New generation Agni Prime missile test fired successfully

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC  
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 28

India on Monday successfully test-fired new generation nuclear capable Agni Prime, an advanced version of Agni-1 missile off the Odisha coast.

The surface-to-surface short-range ballistic missile was fired at 10:55 am from the Abdul Kalam Island in Bhadrak district.

Various telemetry and radar stations positioned along the eastern coast tracked and monitored the missile, Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) official sources said.

The nuclear-capable missile has been designed and developed by the DRDO.

With a range of 1,000 km to 2,000 km, Agni-Prime can carry a payload of 1000 kg.

The missile is

than 400-km range. Source said that the airframe and booster of the missile have been developed indigenously.

BrahMos Aerospace is a joint venture between India's DRDO and Federal State Unitary Enterprise NPO Mashinostroyenia of Russia.

The missile can be launched from submarines, ships, aircrafts, as well as from land platforms.

BrahMos is regarded as the fastest supersonic cruise missile in the world. It is operational with Indian Army, Navy and Air Force.

On September 30, 2020, India had successfully test-fired an extended version of surface-to-surface supersonic cruise missile BrahMos. The missile was tested from Chandipur Integrated Test Range in Odisha's Balasore district.

BrahMos is capable of hitting targets at more

two Union Territories.

There were 167 sightings of drones along the western front (largely Jammu and Punjab) in 2019, 77 last year and about 60 this year till now, as per the data.

"These are minimum or to say the confirmed sightings by BSF troops and other security agencies personnel along the India-Pakistan border," a senior officer in the security establishment said.

There could be 50-60 more such sightings

which are not included in the data for reasons like capturing only the whirring sound of the drone, difficulty to differentiate between a balloon and a drone and un-specified suspicious flying objects, the officer said.

Officials said the BSF also tested a prototype of a counter-drone system along this front in October 2019 while some similar trials were held at its campus in Bhubaneswar near here around the

same time.

The latter was part of a multi-stakeholder national conference held by the central police think tank, Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD).

"What is largely available technology at present is a circular counter-drone security system that is suited well to secure a military installation or campus," another officer said on the condition of anonymity. — PTI

## Twitter shows J&amp;K, Ladakh outside India

New Delhi, June 28:

Amid a stand-off with the Indian government over compliance with new IT rules, the Twitter website is displaying a wrong map of the country that shows Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh as separate countries.

The glaring distortion, which appears on the career section of Twitter website under the header 'Tweep Life', has triggered a heavy backlash from netizens who are demanding strict action against the microblogging platform.

This is not the first time that Twitter has misrepresented India's map. Earlier, it had shown Leh as part of China.

A mail sent to Twitter on the issue did not elicit a response.

The US digital giant has been engaged in a tussle with the Indian government over the new social media rules. The government has confronted Twitter for deliberate defiance and failure to comply with the country's new IT rules, despite repeated reminders.

Notably, the microblogging platform has lost its legal shield as an intermediary in India, becoming liable for users posting any unlawful content.

On Monday, social media users slammed Twitter's gross misrepresentation of India's map, that appears on its career section. The global map, showing Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh outside India, triggered

angry responses from netizens who are demanding stringent action be initiated against the microblogging platform that has flouted rules on multiple occasions in the past.

In October last year, Twitter came under heavy criticism and faced backlash after its geotagging feature displayed 'Jammu & Kashmir, People's Republic of China' in a live broadcast from Leh's Hall of Fame, a war memorial for fallen soldiers in the Union Territory of Ladakh.

India has issued a stern warning to Twitter that time, making it clear that any disrespect of the country's sovereignty and integrity is totally unacceptable.

In November, government issued a notice to Twitter for showing Leh as part of Jammu and Kashmir instead of the Union Territory of Ladakh, as Centre lambasted the platform for disrespecting the territorial integrity of India by showing an incorrect map.

Twitter's apparent heavy handedness has come under government scrutiny when the microblogging platform did not fully complied with the new rules, called intermedia Guidelines, that mandate setting up a robust grievance redressal mechanism and appointing officers to coordinate with law enforcement.

— PTI

## TIES | VITAL

## Lieutenant Governor asks cops to speed up probe into suspicious interfaith marriages

## Lens on interfaith marriages in Valley

DC CORRESPONDENT  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 28

The Jammu and Kashmir police has stepped up investigation into alleged manoeuvring in a recent case of interfaith marriage which has caused considerable suspicion and mistrust between the majority Muslim and minority Sikh communities of the Valley.

The official sources said that Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha, has asked senior police officers to hold fast investigation into the incidents. The police officers - Inspector General of police, Vijay Kumar, and SSP Srinagar, Sandeep Chaudhary were present at a meeting of joint delegation of Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee and members of several Sikh



Members of Jago Party stage a protest outside J&K House over the abduction of a Sikh woman in Srinagar, in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

Gurdwara Management Committees of Kashmir had met with Sinha to raise the issue. DSGMC president S. Manjinder Singh Sirsa, in the backdrop of the latest and previous incidents of Sikh women's embracing

Islam either before or after marrying Muslim men demanded official ban on conversions in J&K. While the Sikh community leaders allege that these women were converted to Islam and married to Muslim men in "suspicious manner" and the police and other authorities appeared to be part of such manipulations rather apparently acted as facilitators, some couples and their families have publicly claimed that these interfaith marriages were solemnised at the own sweet will of these Sikh women.

The Sikh leaders said that in the latest incident the police made the parents of the girl sit at the

outer gate of a court here while the judge was hearing the case.

"Not only that, the police made the parents of the girl married to a 50-year-old man who has already been through two divorces to sign some papers which caused suspicion not only in the couple but the entire community," said a Sikh leader.

Former CM Omar Abdullah tweeted, "Any move to drive a wedge between Sikhs & Muslims in Kashmir will cause irreparable harm to J&K. The two communities have supported each other through thick & thin, having withstood countless attempts to damage age old relationships."

## SHORT TAKES

## DIDI EXTENDS LOCKDOWN TILL JULY 15

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC  
KOLKATA, JUNE 28

Extending the Covid-19 lockdown till July 15 with an ease of curbs in West Bengal, chief minister Mamata Banerjee broke her silence on the fake vaccine scam on Monday and ruled out her government's link to the racket and its kingpin, Debanjan Deb, in wake of his viral photos with several Trinamul Congress leaders including two state cabinet ministers.

On the fresh relaxations, the CM informed that the movement of public transport including intra-state (inter-district) government and private buses, inland waterways transport, trams, local taxis, cabs and auto-rickshaws will be allowed with passengers not more than 50 per cent of seating capacity at a time.

## L'DWEEP STAGES 'COCONUT LEAVES' PROTESTS

Kochi, June 28: Residents of Lakshadweep on Monday staged "coconut leaves and palm" protest across inhabited islands against the administration's order to levy a fine if coconut palm leaves, shells or trunks were found in and around their dwelling places.

Holding placards which read "introduce mulching" and "stop imposing fine", the islanders, under the banner of Save Lakshadweep Forum (SLF), stood in front of a pile of coconut leaves in the properties urging the administration to withdraw the "anti-people" order.

In their one-hour long protest, the islanders urged the administration to withdraw the decision to impose fine on them and introduce technology to convert the organic materials from the coconuts as compost — a mixture of ingredients used to fertilise and improve the soil.

"Our demand is that the fine imposed on the people should be withdrawn and a proper waste management system should be implemented. Unless the waste management system is implemented there is no genuine right from the side of administration to collect fine on falling of coconut leaves and other palms in their property," Lakshadweep MP Mohammed Faizal P.P. said.

"Wherever the people of islands are expected to do the scientific processing of leaves and palms," he asked.

He said an islander cannot afford to have his own scientific processing unit or incinerator and it is the prime duty of the Lakshadweep administration to provide such a facility.

## SC JUNKS PLEA FOR PROBE INTO CONVERSATIONS

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

The Supreme Court on Monday refused to entertain a petition seeking setting up of a Special Investigation Team to probe the alleged "forceful" conversion of the Hindus in Nuh district of Haryana.

Dismissing the plea, Chief Justice N.V. Ramana headed a three-judge bench also comprising Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice Hrishikesh Roy said, "This is not a matter for the Supreme Court to take up."

"Sorry, the plea is dismissed," the court said. The petitioners have alleged continuous erosion of life, personal liberty and religious rights of the Hindus in the area by a minority community having a dominating position in the area.

Senior lawyer Vikas Singh, appearing for the petitioners, referred to a score of media reports and told the court that two of them had visited the area and also met people including the family of 21-year-old Nikita Tomar, who was shot dead outside her college in Ballabgarh in October last.

One of the murder accused, identified as Tausif, was trying to force the student to marry him. A fast-track court in Haryana's Faridabad district had sentenced two men to life imprisonment in the murder case. "We do not think we can entertain this petition based on newspaper reports," the Chief Justice remarked.

The petition, filed by a group of lawyers and a social worker based in Uttar Pradesh, had claimed that the state government, district administration and the police have failed to exercise their powers and so need for a SIT probe, personnel of CBI and NIA under the supervision of a retired top court judge.

## U.P. BJP EX-MLA ALLEGES PARTY OUTSOURCING ITS LEADERS

Ballia (UP), June 28: A former UP BJP MLA and party office-bearer on Monday accused his party of "outsourcing" its leaders while reiterating his charge against the Yogi Adityanath government of mishandling the Covid crisis.

Within days after claiming at least ten deaths in each village of Uttar Pradesh due to Covid during its second wave, BJP's state Working Committee member Ram Iqbal Singh on Monday upped his claim, saying the Covid death toll in the state could be "over 10 lakh".

Singh made the assertion while talking to reporters at his residence in Mundera, near here.

Reacting to Ram Iqbal's statement, BJP's Gorakhpur region president Dharmendra Singh said the party has taken note of his continued anti-government statements and the state leadership will take action against him.

Details of his controversial statements are being collected and being sent to the party leadership, he added.

Earlier on Saturday, former MLA Ram Iqbal Singh had said at least ten people died due to corona infection in every village and this number could be many times more in villages having larger populations.

A large number of people have died in cities too, he added on Monday.

Taking a dig at leaders joining the BJP from other parties, he said, "The BJP has changed with the times and the leaders outsourced by the party have become dominant."

The one who made objectionable statements about the Ram temple has become a Cabinet minister in the Yogi government, he added.

Singh claimed he had raised the issue of corruption in tehsils and police stations in the BJP's State Working Committee meeting on March 15 but there has been no improvement, he said.

The situation has only worsened since then, he added.

Singh also accused the state government of favouring a BSP MLA, saying all criminal cases against him have been withdrawn.

— PTI

## BJP'S DHARMENDRA

Singh said the party has taken note of his continued anti-government statements and will take action against him.

Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel welcomes President Ram Nath Kovind and first lady Savita Kovind at Raj Bhavan in Lucknow on Monday. — PTI

## Prez in Lucknow on two-day visit

Lucknow, June 28: President Ram Nath Kovind reached here on Monday by the Presidential Express Train on a two-day visit.

The President, who is currently on a five-day trip to his home state, was received at the Charbagh railway station here around noon by Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, state ministers and a large number of senior officials and people's representatives.

From the railway station, the president went directly to the Raj Bhawan where he will spend the next two days. He is scheduled to attend a high tea programme at the Raj Bhawan in the evening with senior judges of the Allahabad High Court.

## Prayers at Amarnath



J&K Lt Gov. Manoj Sinha, who is also the chairman of the Amarnathji Shrine Board, pays his obeisance at the holy cave shrine of Amarnath. The annual yatra has been cancelled this year due to the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. "May the divine blessings of Lord Shiva ensure good health and happiness in everyone's life and bless us with the strength to overcome the ongoing health crisis," said the Lt Governor. — PTI

## DIGVIJAY FILES COMPLAINT OVER 'TAMPERED' CLUBHOUSE CHAT

RABINDRA NATH CHAUDHURY | DC  
Bhopal, JUNE 28

Congress veteran and former chief minister Digvijay Singh on Monday lodged a complaint with the cyber cell of Madhya Pradesh police here alleging that his chat in the Clubhouse app, leaked on June 12, was tampered with.

The purported chat in which Singh was heard saying that abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir was a wrong decision by the Centre and there should be a 'relook' at it when Congress returned to power at the Centre, had sparked an uproar landing Congress in an awkward situation.

Talking to reporters here, Singh said he filed the complaint under the Information Technology (IT) Act seeking action against those who "edited, doctored, shared and distorted" my statement during a Clubhouse session with a motive to taint my image.

Singh wondered why an 'edited' portion of the chat was leaked and indicated that he was going to send a legal notice to the Clubhouse app for leaking his chat.

The Congress leader further said he has already sent a notice to Twitter for sharing the 'distorted' chat. "FIR should be filed against those who shared and re-tweeted the post", he added.

State cyber cell superintendent of police Gurkaran Singh said no case has so far been registered in connection with the complaint filed by the Congress leader.

## A-G VENUGOPAL GETS ANOTHER EXTENSION

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 28

The Centre on Monday extended by another year the term of Attorney General K.K. Venugopal who will turn 90 on September 6. He will continue to serve as Attorney General till June 30, 2022.

Being the oldest serving Attorney General of India, Venugopal was appointed as A-G by the Modi government on July 1, 2017 for a three-year term.

On the expiry of his initial term last year, Venugopal was given one year extension which ends tomorrow (June 30). In view of the fresh extension, he will continue to serve as Attorney General for another year.

Venugopal was appointed as A-G after his predecessor senior lawyer Mukul Rohatgi had resigned as Attorney General citing personal reasons.

Venugopal has been a practicing lawyer for nearly six decades. He was Additional Solicitor General once in late prime minister Morarji Desai's government.

He enrolled at the Bar in January 1954 in the then Mysore High Court and thereafter in the Madras High Court. He was designated as senior lawyer by the Supreme Court in 1972.

## Free electricity in Punjab if AAP wins, says Kejriwal

New Delhi, June 28: Ahead of Assembly elections in Punjab next year, Delhi Chief minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday promised free electricity in that state if his Aam Aadmi Party wins the polls.

A day ahead of his visit to Chandigarh, the AAP leader also claimed that women in Punjab are very unhappy with inflation.

"In Delhi we provide 200 units of free electricity to every family. The women are very happy. Women in Punjab are also very unhappy with inflation. The AAP government will also provide free electricity in Punjab. See you tomorrow in Chandigarh," Kejriwal tweeted in Punjabi.

Assembly elections in Punjab are scheduled to be held in February or March next year.

Dismissing the accusation, Punjab Chief Minister asked why would the state government stop Kejriwal from holding a press conference when he was allowed to hold a party programme a few days back.

"Totally not true. We let Arvind Kejriwal address rally here just a few days back. So why should we stop him now from holding a press conference? If he wants I'd be happy to arrange his lunch too. Aam Aadmi Party just wants to do drama even if it means lying: Amarinder Singh," read a tweet by the Punjab chief minister's media advisor. — PTI

After the meeting, committee member Harish Rawat said Sidhu had been speaking out of turn. He added, "You have to keep patience when you are at the top and wait for the right time. You have to be more cautious... I didn't like the timing of his

statements."

In a bid to solve the Punjab imbroglio, Rahul Gandhi has been meeting several leaders from the

## SII asks Centre to take up inclusion of Covishield in EU vaccination passport

New Delhi, June 28: Serum Institute of India (SII) has requested the government to take up the matter of inclusion of Covishield vaccine in the EU Covid-19 Vaccination Passport with the European Union and other countries, citing this will affect students and business travellers and cause severe disruptions to travel within the European Union during the pandemic.

Only four vaccines — Comirnaty of Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, Vaxzervria by AstraZeneca-Oxford and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen — have been approved by the European Medicines Agency (EMA) and only those vaccinated by these vaccines will be given vaccination passports and will be allowed to travel within the European Union during the pandemic.

"India has a large population. However, not including Covishield into the EU Covid-19 Vaccination Passport will not allow Covishield vaccinated people to travel to European countries and this will affect students, business travellers back and forth, and cause severe disruptions to our economy and to the global economy," a source quoted Adar C. Poonawalla, CEO of SII, as having communicated to a letter to external affairs minister S. Jaishankar.

Sources said referring to Poornawalla's letter, director, government and regulatory affairs at SII, Prakash Kumar Singh, has also sought Jaishankar's intervention at the highest level, saying, "It will be in the national interest as well as in the interest of people at large globally if Covishield vaccine is included in the EU Covid-19 Vaccination Passport." — PTI

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**SHORT TAKES**  
**1 DEAD, 13 HURT  
 IN TWO CHICAGO  
 SHOOTINGS**

**Chicago:** Two separate shootings left one person dead and at least 13 others injured on Sunday night in Chicago, police said.

A woman died and four men and a teenager were wounded when an SUV drove by and shots were fired in the South Shore area just before 9 pm, news outlets reported. The group of six was standing outside when the gunfire erupted. The woman was shot six times and taken to a hospital where she was later pronounced dead, police said. The four men and a 15-year-old boy were taken to hospitals where their conditions were said to be stable.

About two hours later, a separate shooting in the Marquette Park area wounded eight people, Chicago fire officials said. A vehicle collision was also reported nearby in which two people were injured.

It was not immediately clear how the shooting and the crash may be related.

**UKRAINE, U.S.  
 BEGIN BLACK  
 SEA DRILLS**

**Kiev:** Ukraine and the United States launched joint naval exercises in the Black Sea on Monday in a show of Western cooperation with Kiev as it faces off with Russia.

The drills come just days after the British navy's HMS Defender passed near Russian-annexed Crimea in the Black Sea, with Moscow saying it fired warning shots at the destroyer to ward it off.

The Sea Breeze drills — which have taken place 21 times since 1997 — will involve some 5,000 military personnel from more than 30 countries. The exercises will last two weeks and involve around 30 ships, including the missile destroyer USS Ross.

Ukrainian navy commander Oleksiy Neizhuppa said during an opening ceremony in Odessa that the exercises would send a "powerful message to maintain stability and peace in our region." Russia said it fired warning shots last Wednesday at the HMS Defender after what it said was a violation of its territorial waters.

**U.S. NORTHWEST,  
 CANADA RECORD  
 HIGHEST TEMP.**

**Ottawa:** Swathes of the United States and Canada endured record-setting heat on Sunday, forcing schools and Covid-19 testing centers to close and the postponement of an Olympic athletics qualifying event, with forecasters warning of worse to come.

The village of Lytton in British Columbia broke the record for Canada's all-time high, with a temperature of 46.6 degrees Celsius (116 Fahrenheit), said Environment Canada.

And in Eugene, Oregon, a temperature of 43.3 degrees Celsius (110 degrees Fahrenheit) forced organisers to postpone the final day of the US Olympic track and field trials, moving afternoon events to the evening.

On Sunday in Seattle, Washington state, the temperature hit 40 degrees Celsius (104 degrees Fahrenheit), a record that surprised residents not used to warmer climes.

**SWEDISH PM  
 RESIGNS AFTER  
 NO-TRUST VOTE**

**Stockholm:** Sweden's Prime Minister Stefan Lofven resigned on Monday, one week after he lost a vote of no confidence, leaving it up to the speaker of parliament to begin the search for a replacement.

Lofven could have either called a snap election or resigned following the no-confidence vote last week.

He told a press conference that a snap election was "not what is best for Sweden," pointing to the difficult situation the Covid-19 pandemic posed, coupled with the fact that the next general election — which would go ahead regardless — is a year away.

"With that starting point, I have requested the speaker to release me as prime minister," Lofven said.

The Social Democrat leader — a master of consensus for some, a dull and visionless party man for others — had seven days after the confidence vote to contemplate his options and try and secure a parliamentary majority for a potential reforming of his government.

# US attacks Iran-backed forces

Air strike marks Biden admin's second military action in region

## Iraq slams air strikes by US on pro-Iran armed groups

**Washington, June 28:** The US military, under the direction of President Joe Biden, conducted air strikes on Sunday against what it said were facilities used by Iran-backed militia groups near the border between Iraq and Syria.

Pentagon Press Secretary John Kirby said that the militias were using the facilities to launch unmanned aerial vehicle attacks against US troops in Iraq.

Biden said the US military targeted three operational and weapons storage facilities two in Syria and one in Iraq.

He described the air strikes as defensive, saying they were launched in response to the attacks by Iran-backed groups.

The United States took necessary, appropriate, and deliberate action

**Baghdad, June 28:** Iraq condemned overnight US air strikes against Iran-backed armed groups on the Syrian-Iraqi border that killed at least seven fighters and sparked calls for revenge from Iraqi armed factions.

The second such raid on pro-Iran targets since US President Joe Biden took office, described by the Pentagon as "retaliatory," led to fears of a new escalation between Tehran and Washington and came

despite faltering efforts to revive a key deal over Iran's nuclear programme.

Iraq's Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi condemned the attack as a "blatant and unacceptable violation of Iraqi sovereignty and Iraqi national security".

"Iraq reiterates its refusal to be an arena for settling scores," Kadhimi added in a statement, urging all sides to avoid any further escalation.

The Hashid, an Iraqi

paramilitary alliance that includes several Iranian proxies and has become the main power broker in Baghdad, said the strikes killed four of its fighters in the Qaim region, some 13 kilometres (eight miles) away from the border.

The fighters were stationed there to prevent jihadists from infiltrating Iraq, the group said, denying that they had taken part in any attacks against US interests or personnel.

The Hashid, an Iraqi

the region. In February, the US launched airstrikes against facilities in Syria, near the Iraqi border, that it said were used by Iranian-backed militia groups.

The Pentagon said those strikes were retaliation for a rocket attack in Iraq in February that killed one civilian contractor and wounded a US service member and other coalition troops.

At that time, Biden said Iraq should view his decision to authorise US airstrikes in Syria as a warning that it can expect consequences for its support of militia groups that threaten US interests or personnel.

You can't act with impunity. Be careful, Biden said when a reporter asked what message he had intended to send.

— AFP

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## quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	52735.59 -0.36
Nifty 50	15814.70 -0.29
S&P 500*	4,281.34 0.01
Dollar (₹)	73.87 0.28
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.18 0.31
Euro (₹)	88.36 0.19
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,337 ▲116 0.25
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.08 -1.44
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.056 0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.490 -0.046

\* As of 8:30 PM IST

## Dr Reddy's Lab launches Covid drug 2-DG

Dr Reddy's Laboratories (DRL) has launched Covid drug 2-deoxy-D-glucose (2-DG), developed by the DRDO as an adjunct therapy to treat mild to severe coronavirus infections. Trials revealed the drug will reduce the patient's dependency of supplemental oxygen and ensures his faster recovery by over two days. The company will sell the drug under the brand name 2DG for a retail price of Rs 990 per sachet.

## Emirates may resume flights to India from July 7



Dubai's flag carrier Emirates may resume its flights from India to Dubai from July 7, over two months after the UAE suspended its operations owing to the surge in coronavirus cases in India, the *Khaleej Times* reported. The airline is awaiting exact travel protocols and guidelines from the government regarding the resumption of the flight operations. The airline's website shows seats are available for booking from July 7.

## Dodla Dairy up 42% on debut, KIMS gains 22%

Hyderabad-based Dodla Dairy and Krishna Institute of Medical Sciences (KIMS) Hospitals listed on the bourses at premiums of 28.50 per cent and 22.3 per cent to the issue price. Dodla Dairy shares opened at Rs 550 against the IPO price of Rs 428 and touched a high of Rs 652, up 52.33 per cent, but closed at Rs 609.90, up 42.5 per cent. KIMS closed at Rs 996.95, gaining 20.84 per cent, against the IPO price of Rs 825.

## Rohini Nilekani to retire from own foundation

Argyham Foundation said Rohini Nilekani will retire from the foundation as chairperson and member of the board on Sept. 30 and will be succeeded by Sunita Nadhamuni, a member of the board and head of Digital LifeCare at Dell Giving and Social Innovation. Nilekani had set up Argyham in 2001 as a vehicle for her personal philanthropy. Argyham has been working exclusively on water sector issues since 2005.

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## Paediatric care gets ₹23,220-cr funds Focus on health infra for children

### CENTRE TO PAY PF SHARE TILL MARCH

New Delhi, June 28: The government extended the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana, which was launched in October last year to encourage employment generation, by nine months till March 31, 2022.

Under the ABRY, the Government of India is crediting for a period of two years both the employees' share (12 per cent of wages) and employers' share (12 per cent of wages) of contri-

bution payable for establishment strength up to 1,000 employees and giving a salary of up to Rs 15,000 a month. In case of establishment strength of more than 1,000, for all those with Rs 15,000 per month salary, only employee's share (12 per cent of wages) is credited by the government to the EPFO. The scheme is being implemented through the Employee Provident Fund Organisation.

—FC Bureau

### GUARANTEE ON TRAVEL & TOURISM LOANS

New Delhi, June 28: Announcing free visas to 5 lakh tourists visiting India this fiscal, finance minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Monday

financial support would be provided to more than 11,000 registered tourist guides and travel & tourism stakeholders. She said the total financial implication of free visa

—FC Bureau

dren. So paediatric care is the emphasis," Sitharaman said at a press conference.

She said last year a Rs 15,000 crore emergency health systems project was implemented. Using that Rs 15,000 crore, there was a 25-fold increase in Covid-dedicated hospitals.

Besides, 7,929 Covid health centres and 9,954 Covid care centres were set

up, and oxygen supported beds increased by 7.5 times. There was also an increase in isolation beds and ICU beds by 42-fold and 45-fold, respectively.

"The Rs 15,000 crore which was used till March 2021 aiming at providing additional infrastructure and facilitating Covid care had good response," the minister said.

She also announced an extra ₹23,220 crore for short-term emergency preparedness with an emphasis on paediatrics care.

In the tourism scheme, free tourist visas will be offered to five lakh tourists. This scheme is applicable till March 31, 2022, or till the first five lakh tourist visas get covered, whichever is earlier.

One tourist can avail benefit only once," she added.

The Rs 100 crore scheme would be applicable till March 31, 2022, or till 5 lakh visas are issued, whichever is earlier.

Sitharaman said loans will be provided with 100 per cent guarantee with a limit of Rs 10 lakh for travel & tourism stakeholders and Rs 1 lakh for registered tourist guides.

—FC Bureau

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## CENTRE WANTS BANKS TO GIVE SMALL LOANS TO BORROWERS

From Page 1

This is additional to the ₹3 lakh crore announced under the scheme last year. "The new credit guarantee scheme will give loans to small borrowers, through Micro Finance Institutions (MFIs), where the maximum loan to individuals will be ₹1.25 lakh at an interest rate below two per cent — as prescribed by the RBI. Our focus will be new loans, stressed borrowers except NPAAs to be covered and the loan duration of three years under the scheme," she said.

The finance minister also announced job benefits, extending the Atmanirbhar Bharat Rozgar Yojana and loan guarantees for Covid-affected sectors such as tourism.

For the tourism sector, the finance minister unveiled a new scheme to revive the sector. "Financial support will be extended to more than 11,000 registered tourist guides and travel & tourism stakeholders (TTS). These TTS will receive up to ₹10 lakh loan, while licensed tourist guides will get up to ₹1 lakh loan," Sitharaman said.

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## Indians invest nearly \$40 bn in crypto assets

SUVA SHREE GHOSH &amp; RONJOY MAZUMDAR

JUNE 28



The cryptocurrency aficionados' mantra that Bitcoin is equivalent to digital gold is winning converts among the world's biggest holders of the precious metal.

In India, where households own more than 25,000 tonnes of gold, investments in crypto grew from about \$200 million to nearly \$40 billion in the past year, according to Chainalysis. That's despite outright hostility toward the asset class from the central bank and a proposed trading ban.

Richi Sood, a 32-year-old entrepreneur is one of those who swerved from gold to crypto. Since December, she's put in just over Rs 10 lakh—some of it borrowed from her father—into Bitcoin, Dogecoin and Ether.

And she's been fortunate with her timing. She cashed out part of her position when Bitcoin smashed through \$50,000 in February and bought back in after the recent tumble, allowing her to fund the overseas expansion of her education startup Study Mate India.

"I'd rather put my money in crypto than gold," Ms Sood said. "Crypto is more transparent than gold or property and returns are more in a short period of time."

She's part of a growing number of Indians now totalling more than 15 million—buying and selling digital coins. That's catching up with the 23

class and six months ago the Indian government proposed a ban on trading in digital coins, though it has been silent on the topic since.

"I am flying blind," said Ms Sood. "I have a risk-taking appetite, so I'm willing to take a risk of a ban." It's not the only country where regulators are cracking down. The UK's financial watchdog has just banned Binance Markets Ltd from doing any regulated business in the country.

The official hostility though means many bigger individual investors are reluctant to speak openly about their holdings. One banker Bloomberg spoke to who invested more than \$1 million into crypto assets said with no clear income tax rules at present he was concerned about the possibility of retrospective tax raids if he was publicly known to be a big-ticket crypto investor.

He's already got contingency plans in place to move his trading to an offshore Singapore bank account if a ban was to be introduced.

To be sure, the value of Indian digital asset holdings remain a sliver of its gold market. Still, the growth is clear, especially in trading—the four biggest crypto exchanges saw daily trading jump to \$102 million from \$10.6 million a year ago, according to CoinGecko.

The country's \$40 billion market significantly trails China's \$161 billion, according to Chainalysis.

—Bloomberg

### SECURITIES TRIBUNAL STAYS SEBI ORDER ON FRANKLIN TEMPLETON

#### ALGORITHMS | RULE

#### MACHINES ARE OFTEN THE BOSS; HIRING, RATING AND FIRING WITH NO HUMAN OVERSIGHT

## How does it feel to be sacked by a bot?

### SPENCER SOPHER

JUNE 28

Stephen Normandin spent almost four years racing around Phoenix delivering packages as a contract driver for Amazon.com Inc. Then one day, he received an automated email. The algorithms tracking him had decided he wasn't doing his job properly.

The 63-year-old Army veteran was stunned. He'd been fired by a machine. Normandin says Amazon punished him for things beyond his control that prevented him from completing his deliveries, such as locked apartment complexes. He said he took the termination hard and

priding himself on a strong work ethic, recalled that during his military career he helped cook for 250,000 Vietnamese refugees at Fort Chaffee in Arkansas.

"I'm an old-school kind of guy, and I give every job 110 per cent," he said. "This really upset me because we're talking about my reputation. They say I didn't do the job when I know damn well I did."

Normandin's experience is a twist on the decades-old prediction that robots will replace workers. At Amazon, machines are often the boss—hiring, rating and firing millions of people with little or no human oversight.

Amazon became the

world's largest online retailer in part by outsourcing its sprawling operations to algorithmic sets of computer instructions designed to solve specific problems. For years, Amazon has used algorithms to manage the millions of third-party merchants on its online marketplace, drawing com-

plaints that sellers have been booted off after being falsely accused of selling counterfeit goods and jacking up prices. Increasingly, the company is ceding its human-resources operation to machines as well, using software not only to manage workers in its warehouses but to oversee contract drivers, independent delivery companies and even the performance of office workers. People familiar with the strategy say CEO Jeff Bezos believes machines make decisions more quickly and accurately than people, reducing costs and giving Amazon a competitive advantage.

Amazon started its gig-

style Flex delivery service in 2015, and the army of contract drivers quickly became a critical part of the company's delivery machine. Typically, Flex drivers handle packages that haven't been loaded on an Amazon van before the driver leaves. They ensure the packages are delivered the same day. They also handle a large number of same-day grocery deliveries from Amazon's Whole Foods Market chain. Flex drivers help keep Amazon humming during the pandemic and were only too happy to earn about \$25 an hour shuttling packages.

But the moment they sign on, Flex drivers discover algorithms are mon-

itoring their every move. Did they get to the delivery station when they said they would? Did they complete their route in the pre-specified window? Did they leave a package in full view of porch pirates instead of hidden behind a planter as requested? Amazon algorithms scan the gusher of incoming data for performance patterns and decide which drivers get more routes and which are deactivated. Human feedback is rare. Drivers occasionally receive automated emails, but mostly they're left to obsess about their ratings, which include four categories: Fantastic, Great, Fair or At Risk.

—Bloomberg

**SHORT TAKES**  
**Sarnobat shoots gold at World Cup**

**Osijek:** Olympic-bound Rahi Sarnobat displayed sensational form to clinch the women's 25m pistol gold medal at the ISSF shooting World Cup here on Monday but teen sensation Manu Bhaker ended seventh in the same event. Sarnobat's gold is India's first in the ongoing edition after the country secured one silver and two bronze medals earlier in the tournament. The 30-year-old Sarnobat fired a final score of 39 after qualifying second with a total of 591. Her stupendous performance in the final included perfect scores in the third, fourth, fifth and the sixth series. The silver went to France's Mathilde Lamolle, who scored 31 in the final. — PTI

**Deepika reclaims world No.1 spot**

**Paris:** Star Indian archer Deepika Kumari on Monday regained the number one position in global rankings following her hat-trick of gold medals at the World Cup Stage 3 here. The 27-year-old from Ranchi, who had achieved the top spot for the first time in 2012, on Sunday claimed gold medals in three recurve events — women's individual, team and mixed pair. "This is going to take Deepika to the number one spot in the world rankings on Monday," World Archery had tweeted on its official handle after Deepika's gold rush. Deepika first combined with Ankita Bhakat and Komalika Bari to notch up the women's recurve team gold. She then paired up with husband Atanu Das and the couple from a 0-2 deficit to down the Netherlands' Sjef van den Berg and Gabriela Schloesser 5-3 for the gold medal. — PTI

**Champ Roehler to miss Tokyo Games**

**Berlin, Germany:** Defending men's javelin champion Thomas Roehler has pulled out of competing at the Tokyo Olympics due to a back injury, he confirmed Monday. "It was incredibly difficult for me to turn down Tokyo. Together with my coach I have weighed things up carefully, but in the end my health has priority," said the 29-year-old, who injured his back while training. "I have to listen to my body now, because I want to compete at the top level for a few more years. "By participating at the Olympic Games, I would be risking too much, because of the back injury." Roehler, who is also the reigning European champion, claimed the gold medal at the Rio de Janeiro Olympic Games with a winning throw of 90.30m. — AFP

**Thomas injured in Tour de France fall**

**Pontivy, France:** Ineos leader Geraint Thomas dislocated his left shoulder in a hard fall on the third stage of the Tour de France on Monday, kicking his legs out in pain as doctors put it back in before gingerly retaking his saddle to resume racing. Welshman Thomas was at first left to his own fate by team-mates clearly fearful he would have to pull out. He was trailing the main pack by three minutes when he set off again and fellow Welshman Luke Rowe then dropped back in an attempt to help Thomas reel in the peloton. Race judges reacted angrily when the pair tucked in to the tailwind of an Ineos team car, and two other riders fell back to shepherd the 35-year-old back into the main peloton with 125km of rainy route remaining. — AFP

**Maradona's doc questioned**

**Buenos Aires, Argentina:** Diego Maradona's doctor was questioned by prosecutors Monday in an investigation into claims that he and six other medical personnel had neglected the ailing football icon in his final days, precipitating his death. The appearance of Leopoldo Luque, 39, closes a two-week process of interrogation, with the seven having appeared one by one to defend themselves against the accusations.

The neurosurgeon arrived at the prosecutor's office in San Isidro, Buenos Aires, in a dark suit and tie and dark glasses an hour before his hearing was due to start, declining to make a statement to waiting journalists. Judicial sources told his lawyers had submitted a document to prosecutors ahead of the hearing that is expected to last several hours. — AFP

# GREEK TRAGEDY

## Third seed Tsitsipas out in Wimbledon first round

**London, June 28:** Novak Djokovic overcame an early wobble before getting his bid for a sixth Wimbledon and record-equaling 20th Grand Slam title off to a winning start on Monday and then saw potential semi-final opponent Stefanos Tsitsipas crash out.

One year after the 2020 tournament was cancelled due to the coronavirus pandemic, defending champion and world number one Djokovic claimed a 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2 win over Britain's 253rd-ranked Jack Draper.

Third seed Tsitsipas, however, beaten by Djokovic in the French Open final just two weeks ago, slumped to his third first round defeat in four visits to the tournament.

America's Frances Tiafoe, ranked 57, stunned the Greek star 6-4, 6-4, 6-3.

Djokovic, 34, struggled on the slippery Centre Court surface with the roof closed above it due to the rain which had delayed play on outside courts for five hours.

Left-handed Draper, playing just his fifth match on the main tour, saved seven of seven break points in the opener to stun the top seed.

But Djokovic soon snuffed out any danger of him becoming only the third defending champion to lose in the first round, by sweeping through the remainder of the tie.

He finished with an impressive 25 aces and 47 winners as his 19-year-old opponent, who grew up just six miles (9.5km) from the All England Club, wilted. "I probably had one of the best serving performances that I can recall on any surface," said Djokovic who fired 25 aces and 47 winners.

**'IT SOUNDS GOOD'**

With the Australian and French Open titles under his belt, the Serb is bidding to become only the third man in history to claim a calendar Grand Slam.

His match was preceded by a standing ovation for Professor Sarah Gilbert, one of the key scientists behind the Oxford AstraZeneca Covid-19 vac-



Aryna Sabalenka of Belarus en route to her 6-1, 6-4 win over Romania's Monica Niculescu in the first round of the Wimbledon Tennis Championships in London on Monday. — AP

cine who was a special guest in the Royal Box.

Tiafoe won a second-tier grass court Challenger event in Nottingham this month before making the quarter-finals at Queen's Club.

On Monday, he made that match hardness pay against Tsitsipas, playing only his 16th match on grass.

It was the first time in 12 attempts that 23-year-old Tiafoe had beaten a player ranked in the top five. "It sounds pretty damn good," said Tiafoe.

Wimbledon looks very

different this year with Covid-19 protocols in place and a 50% capacity until finals day, but one familiar feature was the summer rain.

Play on the outside courts started so late that 16 of the day's scheduled 64 matches were cancelled until Tuesday.

Belarus' second seed Aryna Sabalenka had the honour of being the first winner at the tournament in two years when she downed Romanian qualifier Monica Niculescu 6-1, 6-4 under the roof of Court One. — AFP



Frances Tiafoe celebrates his win over Stefanos Tsitsipas. — AP

## KONTA IS OUT OF WIMBLEDON OVER COVID-19 CONTACT

**London, June 28:** Britain's Johanna Konta was forced to withdraw from Wimbledon on Sunday after being identified as a close contact of a positive coronavirus case, the All England Club announced.

The world number 31, a semi-finalist at the tournament in 2017, had been drawn to face Katerina Siniakova of the Czech Republic in her opener.

The 30-year-old's place in the draw will be taken by 123rd-ranked lucky loser Wang Yafan of China.

"The Referee's Office has advised that Johanna Konta has been withdrawn from the Ladies' Singles Draw, having been classified as a close contact of a positive test for Covid-19," said a statement from the All England Club.

"In line with government legislation, Konta is required to spend 10 days in self isolation."

A year after Wimbledon was cancelled due to the pandemic, all players are confined to a central London hotel 'bubble' rather than their own homes or in rented accommodation closer to the All England Club.

On Saturday, former men's doubles champion Frederik Nielsen was also forced to withdraw after being identified as a close contact. — AFP

## THE RESULTS

**Men's 1st rd:** Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Jack Draper (GBR) 4-6, 6-1, 6-2, 6-2; Frances Tiafoe (USA) bt Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x3) 6-4, 6-4, 6-3. **Women's 1st rd:** Sloane Stephens (USA) bt Petra Kvitova (CZE x10) 6-3, 6-4; Lauren Davis (USA) bt Jodie Burrage (GBR) 6-2, 6-1; Madison Keys (USA x23) bt Katie Swan (GBR) 6-3, 6-4; Lesley Kerkhove (NED) bt Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS) 6-3, 6-3; Garbine Muguruza (ESP x11) bt Fiona Ferro (FRA) 6-0, 6-1. Aryna Sabalenka (BLR x2) bt Monica Niculescu (ROM) 6-1, 6-4.

# World T20 shifted from India to UAE

**New Delhi, June 28:** The T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in India is being shifted to the UAE owing to the health safety concerns posed by Covid-19. BCCI President Sourav Ganguly said on Monday, ending weeks of speculation surrounding the mega-event in October-November.

"We have officially intimated the ICC that the T20 World Cup can be shifted to the UAE. The details are being chalked out. The decision was taken keeping health safety concerns of all stakeholders in mind.

— SOURAV GANGULY

BCCI president

try tournament across nine cities with so many layers of health safety concerns being there.

In fact, the ICC had already started its preparations and logistics for the tournament which will be held in Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi.

The qualifying round could be held in Muscat, which will give ideal time to the pitches in UAE to freshen up after 31 remaining games of IPL are held till October 15.

Even an ICC spokesperson confirmed that the global body is yet to zero in on a final schedule.

The ICC,

at the start of

the month,

had given BCCI a four-week window to decide and inform whether India could host the marquee event considering the Covid-19 situation in the country.

This was after the pandemic forced the postponement of IPL, the second part of which is also being held in the UAE in September-October.

It was a foregone conclusion that India will find it difficult to host a 16-coun-

try tournament across nine cities with so many layers of health safety concerns being there.

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Kusal Mendis

Niroshan Dickwella

# Banned SL players asked to leave early

BY BIPIN DANI

players said they were not aware about the curfew timings at this venue," the source adds.

"They are allowed to have a walk but it does not look as if the players went for a walk. In the video Mendis was seen secretly trying to smoke and Dickwella is seen as supervising whether anyone is watching them."

The team is staying at the Radisson Blu hotel. The players went out of the hotel without the knowledge of the team management and the offence of breaching the bio-bubble has proved costly for them.

## NO GARLAND CEREMONY FOR INDIAN TEAM

For the first time in recent history, the Indian team was not garlanded at the Hotel Taj Samudra in Colombo on Monday. This was due to the Covid-19 pandemic. "Leave aside the garland ceremony, we would hardly have a glimpse at the players," Pankaj Sampat, general manager of the hotel, said.

"Both teams — India and Sri Lanka (arriving from the UK tour on July 5) — will be in a strict bio-bubble. They will be catered to by designated staff, who are also staying at the hotel. Players will have their food at specified places only," he added.

# City paddler Snehit to play for club in Poland

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JUNE 28

Hyderabad-based table tennis player S. Fidel R. Snehit signed with Polish 1st league club UKS Villa Verde Olesno, to represent it in the next season.

Snehit, former national youth champion and bronze medallist in the latest edition of the Senior Nationals, interacted with club owner Marek Tatarczuch and signed a contract on Sunday. The Olesno-based club recruited Snehit for one year.

Snehit is the first Telugu player to get an opportunity to play in European leagues from a continental club.



Snehit (left) with Marek Tatarczuch, owner of the Polish 1st league club UKS Villa Verde Olesno.

great opportunity in terms of international match exposure," Snehit said.

Snehit, a final year Mass Communication and Journalism student of St Joseph's College, has been in Spain since May to play league

matches. Later, he moved to Poland where he won a league title last week.

He is all set to play in a couple of league matches in Germany in July before coming to Hyderabad to take his final examinations.

Snehit thanked his coach Somnath Ghosh of 'Somnath Ghosh MLR-UTT Academy' for his strong support and guidance. "I am happy for Snehit. It is a great opportunity for him to be in the league of international players," Somnath said.

Action will then shift to Denmark which will host the Thomas & Uber Cup Finals 2020 in Aarhus (October 9-17), which was postponed last year.

"Covid-19 restrictions have meant it is not feasible to conduct tournaments in China this year. Therefore, alternative host cities have been identified for the TotalEnergies BWF Sudirman Cup Finals 2021 and the HSBC BWF World Tour Finals 2021," BWF said.

"Vantaa, Finland is the new host of the TotalEnergies BWF Sudirman Cup Finals 2021 in Week 39 (26 September to 3 October 2021)," BWF said.

The governing body will then create a bio-bubble in Indonesia, similar to Thailand, to host a three-tournament Asian Leg in Bali, including the World Tour Finals.

## PROTEAS BOUNCE BACK TO LEVEL T20 SERIES

St George's (Grenada), June 28: South Africa turned the tables on the West Indies in the second match of their Twenty20 series, winning by 16 runs to level the five-match series at 1-1.

Only 24 hours after losing the opening match by eight wickets, an unchanged South Africa lineup produced an improved but still imperfect bowling and fielding performance to restrict the West Indies to 150-9 in reply to its 166-7 on Sunday.

The match stayed alive until the final over, thanks to a superb rear-guard innings from Fabian Allen whose 34 runs from 12 balls included five sixes.

The West Indies came to the final over bowled by Lungi Ngidi needing 36 runs to win six sixes. Allen raised their hopes with maximums off the first two balls. After a dot ball, a wide kept their faint chances alive. A third six from Allen created the possibility of an extraordinary finish but he was trapped lbw next ball and South Africa held on.

**Brief scores:** South Africa 166/7 (Bavuma 46, Hendricks 42, McCoy 3/25) beat West Indies 150/9 (Fletcher 35, Rabada 3/37).

## Quick passes



Brazil's Neymar (top) drinks water as he waits on the bench during the Copa America group phase match against Ecuador at the Olympic Stadium in Goiania, Brazil, on Sunday. — AFP

## Eden, De Bruyne to undergo scans

Belgium coach Roberto Martinez said Eden Hazard and Kevin De Bruyne will both undergo scans on Monday to diagnose the extent of their injuries suffered in Sunday's 1-0 win over Portugal at Euro 2020.

De Bruyne was taken off just after half-time with an ankle injury while Hazard departed in the 87th minute due to a muscle problem, with Belgium now facing an anxious wait ahead of the quarterfinal against Italy on Friday. "We need 48 hours to find out the extent of the injuries," said Martinez.

"KDB is his ankle, it was a really bad tackle. Eden is more of a muscle feeling. We will go back to Belgium tonight and do scans tomorrow," added Martinez.

Belgium edged into the quarterfinals thanks to a fizzing strike from Eden Hazard's younger brother Thorgan towards the end of the first half. — AFP

## De Ligt takes the blame for ouster

Netherlands defender Matthijs de Ligt said he felt he was the player to blame for his team's Euro 2020 Last 16 exit after being sent off in Sunday's 0-2 loss to the Czech Republic. He was dismissed 10 minutes into the second half in Budapest for a deliberate handball after he was forced into an error by Czech striker Patrik Schick.

As De Ligt fell to the ground he pushed the ball away from Schick to deny his opponent a goalscoring opportunity. He initially escaped with just a booking, but received a red card following a VAR review. "I had it under control. The ball came and I let it bounce. I fell to the ground and got pushed, which made me use my hands. The moment changed the game and I feel responsible. I saw how the guys fought after and I'm proud of it. But I feel bad about the incident," De Ligt said. — AFP

## Luis wants probe into Morata abuse

Spain coach Luis Enrique said on Sunday the fans who have abused Alvaro Morata and his family committed a "serious crime" and should be investigated by the police. Morata said on Thursday night his wife and children had been subjected to abuse by fans in Seville, with the striker under pressure after missing chances during Spain's three group games at Euro.

"People have said 'I hope your children die.' I've had to put my phone away. My children go to Seville with their dad's name on their shirts. I understand criticism for not doing my job well. But there's a limit," Morata said.

"It's bad enough that it should be put in the hands of the police. It is a serious crime. Insulting his family is a serious issue and the authorities should deal with it in the strongest possible way. It is his wife and children," Luis Enrique said. — AFP

# THORGUN SHOT

**Big gun Belgium fires defending champs Portugal**

**Seville (Spain), June 28:** A rocket from Thorgan Hazard knocked reigning champions Portugal out of Euro 2020 on Sunday and earned Belgium a blockbuster quarterfinal with Italy.

Hazard's swerving shot before half-time sealed a 1-0 win for Belgium and settled a scrappy contest in Seville that never really lived up to its billing as the stand-out tie of the Last 16.

Cristiano Ronaldo tested Thibaut Courtois with a dipping free-kick in the first half but the 36-year-old neither broke the international goals record nor added to his five for the tournament.

Raphael Guerreiro went closest to a late equaliser when his shot came back off the post, one of 29

**Belgium 1**  
(Thorgan Hazard 42)

**Portugal 0**

shots Portugal had, six of them on target.

But before the late rally, Belgium were the braver, more fluid team and Martinez hailed his side's fighting spirit to hold on.

For all the superstar names on the pitch, it was Eden Hazard's less heralded brother Thorgan who proved decisive, the Borussia Dortmund winger who Eden once said had even more talent than him.

Portugal, meanwhile, stuck to the defensive approach that served them so well in France five years ago but has perhaps been outgunned by a side that now boasts some of the most creative technicians in the world.

"I think it's an unfair result but they scored and we didn't," said Portugal coach Fernando Santos.

Eden Hazard started in Belgium's front three again after playing 90 minutes against Finland on Monday. Portugal's Diogo



Portugal's Cristiano Ronaldo vies for the ball with Belgium's Thomas Vermaelen (left) during their Euro Round of 16 match at La Cartuja stadium in Seville, Spain, on Sunday. — AFP

Dalot came in at right-back for the injured Nelson Semedo.

Eden Hazard skied an early shot over after a neat exchange with Romelu Lukaku while Diogo Jota skewed wide, slipped in down the left by the impressive Renato Sanches.

Ronaldo cut an isolated figure up front, his every touch booted early on by the Belgian fans, who then cheered when he was robbed of the ball before being bumped to the ground by Thomas Meunier.

The closest Ronaldo came to an all-time record 110th international goal was a dipping free-kick from 30 yards which Courtois parried away while at the other end,

## Ecuador, Brazil play stalemate

**Goiania (Brazil), June 28:** An Ecuador side fighting to keep their Copa America hopes alive managed to hold a previously perfect Brazil — playing without a resting Neymar — to a 1-1 draw Sunday and reach the quarterfinals.

Peru meanwhile defeated Venezuela 1-0 in the other Group 'B' match to send the Covid-deimated "Vinotinto" team packing from the South American championships.

Seeking to extend a 10-match winning streak, Brazil came out pressuring in Goiania on the group's final match day.

Coach Tite opted to rest Paris Saint-Germain star Neymar, but the "Selecao" still dominated the first half.

A free kick in the 37th minute set up Eder Militao, who headed the ball at a sharp angle into the top right corner of the net, well clear of Ecuador keeper Hernan Galindez's outstretched arm.

But facing the spectre of an early exit, Ecuador came out fighting in the second half.

They got the equaliser in the 53rd minute, as Brazil tried to clear a corner kick.

Enner Valencia managed to head it back the other way, setting up Angel Mena, who sprinted in to fire the ball past Brazil's Alisson.

"We played a good first half where we managed to impose our style of play. The first half was much better than the second," said Brazil defender Marquinhos.

"Now we're in the decisive part, the knock-out stage, so we have to work on playing our best football for the full match," he added.

Peru meanwhile finished

**Brazil 1**  
(Eder Militao 37)

**Ecuador 1**  
(Angel Mena 53)

the group stage on a high note after a spectacular turnaround.

The Incas opened the tournament with a 4-0 thrashing by Brazil.

But they went on to defeat Colombia, then battle back from 2-0 down against Ecuador Wednesday to secure a draw.

They added three more points Sunday thanks to Andre Carrillo, who capitalized on Venezuela's clumsy failure to clear a corner in Brasilia.

"Peru shouldn't give up what we've been working on. I think we've shown our ability to fight back throughout the Copa America," said Argentine coach Ricardo Gareca.

Brazil finished the group stage as heavy favourites with 10 points from four matches — three points clear of runners-up Peru in Group 'B'.

Colombia finished third with four points and Ecuador fourth with three.

Venezuela joined Group 'A' side Bolivia as the two teams eliminated from the group stage.

Group 'A' have one more round of matches Monday, when Uruguay and Bolivia face Argentina.

With the final eight already decided, the real stakes will be deciding whether Chile or Uruguay face defending champions Brazil in the quarterfinals.

— AFP

## Spain tame Croatia in thriller



Spain's Alvaro Morata heads the ball next to Croatia's Domagoj Vida during their Euro Round of 16 match at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen on Monday. — AFP

cross with one deft touch and then sent a rising shot past goalkeeper Dominik Livakovic for his second goal of the tournament.

Oyarzabal doubled the lead three minutes later.

Morata had received a torrent of online abuse — including death threats — after a string of misses

during the group stage. But his fierce finish from a tight angle proved decisive on Monday.

Earlier, Spain had looked to be cruising, thanks to goals from Pablo Sarabia, Cesar Azpilicueta and Ferran Torres which put Luis Enrique's side 3-1 ahead

with 13 minutes remaining.

However, Mislav Orsic pulled one back following a goalmouth scramble in the 85th minute and Mario Pasalic headed Croatia level in the second minute of stoppage time to take the match to the additional 30 minutes. — Agencies

## CAPTAIN RON 'PROUD' OF TEAM EFFORT

**Lisbon, June 28:** Captain Cristiano Ronaldo said on Monday he was "proud" of holders Portugal's efforts despite bowing out of Euro 2020 after the weekend's 0-1 Last 16 loss to Belgium.

"We did not get the result we wanted and we leave the competition sooner than expected," the five-time Ballon d'or winner admitted as his side failed to match their 2016 exploits.

"But we are proud of our showing. We did everything we could to retain the title of European champions and this group proved it could still give the Portuguese people much joy," the former Manchester United and Real Madrid attacker posted on social media after Sunday's loss.

"Congratulations to Belgium and good luck to all the teams left in. As for us, we shall return stronger," vowed the veteran who at least could console himself with having matched the 109 international goals record of Iran's Ali Daei during the tournament. — AFP

Lukaku was a more dynamic force.

One scintillating break

saw Lukaku tear through

Portugal's midfield and

with his shirt being pulled

behind him, he was just

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