

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | FRIDAY | 2 JULY 2021

WEATHER

Max: 35.5°C
Min: 29.4°C
RH: 57%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: clear.
Max/Min
temp. 35/29 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Bahula Ashtami
till 3:32 pm
Star: Revathi full day
Varjyam: 5:01 pm to 6:47 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8:25 am to
9:17 am; 12:46 pm to 1:38 pm
Rahukalam: 10:30 am to 12 noon
HIJRI CALENDAR
Zeeqad 20,1442 AH
PRAYERS
(SHAHI MASJID)
Fajar: 4:25 am
Zohar: 12:14 pm
Asar: 4:49 pm
Maghrib: 6:44 pm
Isha: 8:02 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6:43 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5:45 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 00:11 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 1:19 PM

COUNTER POINT



Don't worry... now, they want to legalise this!

SHORT TAKES

Cinematograph Act change

Mumbai: The government's proposal to amend the Cinematograph Act is another blow to the film fraternity and will potentially endanger freedom of expression and democratic dissent, says a letter signed by industry insiders such as Vishal Bhardwaj, Mira Nair and Pa Ranjith. The letter, with over 3,000 signatories, will be sent to the Information and Broadcasting Ministry on Friday. The ministry has asked the general public to send their comments on the draft bill by July 2.

Ban animal sacrifice: PETA

New Delhi: Ahead of Eid al-Adha, during which animals such as goats and sheep are sacrificed, PETA India has appealed to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to scrap a section of a law which allows killing of an animal as a religious ritual. Section 28 of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act (PCA) should be done away with as it says that nothing contained in this Act shall render it an offence to kill any animal in a manner required by the religion, PETA said.

130 nations back global min tax

Frankfurt (Germany): Some 130 countries have backed a global minimum tax as part of a worldwide effort to keep multinational firms from dodging taxes by shifting their profits to countries with low rates. The agreement announced by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development on Thursday also provides for taxing the largest global companies in countries where they earn profits through online businesses but may have no physical presence.

Call rates must rise, says Mittal

New Delhi: Bharti Airtel chairman Sunil Mittal said tariffs need to go up amid "tremendous stress" in the telecom sector, but Airtel will not hike rates unilaterally. The comments come when Vodafone Idea sought a one-year moratorium on payment of spectrum instalment of over ₹8,200 crore.

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Xi warns against bullying China

SPORTS | 8

Abhimanyu Mishra youngest ever chess Grandmaster

TABLOID

YS Jagan biopic on the anvil



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TS police restrains an AP official from entering Telangana at Nagarjunasagar project. A large number of police personnel were deployed at Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala projects.

Tension brims at N'sagar dam

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

High tension prevailed at Nagarjunasagar Dam as the Telangana police did not allow officials from AP to meet their Telangana counterparts and the latter also refused to meet officials from AP following the water dispute between both AP and Telangana on Thursday.

As Telangana authorities started hydroelectric power generation from Srisaillam, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala projects in the last few days in violation of norms of the Krishna river management board and draining out Krishna water into the sea, AP water resources department officials went to Nagarjunasagar Dam

KRMB CONVENES MEET ON JULY 7 TO RESOLVE KRISHNA WATER DISPUTE

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 1

Amid heightened tensions between the two states, the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) has decided to convene a meeting between TS and AP to resolve the dispute by

July 7. The decision was taken after the AP government had lodged a complaint against the TS government taking up hydel power generation at Srisaillam and Nagarjunasagar projects.

■ Page 2: KRMB objects to TS using more water

intending to meet TS Genco chief engineer and irrigation department superintending engineer to explain about how drawing of water would affect the interests of AP.

However, the Telangana police did not allow the AP

officials and when the latter wanted to meet the TS officials, they refused to meet them and instead asked them to send messages on social media platforms like WhatsApp.

■ Page 2: TS officials refuse to meet AP counterparts

JAGAN WRITES TO PM, WATER MIN AGAINST TS ACT

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister for Jalshakti, Gajendra Singh Shekawat, seeking a Central government notification on the jurisdiction of KRMB and a direction to Telangana to stop "illegal drawal" of water for power generation.

■ Report on Page 2

WHATSAPP HITS ROUGH PATCH FOR AN HOUR

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, JULY 1

Popular messaging app WhatsApp was paralysed for some time on Thursday evening, which was purportedly caused by a glitch in its server. Many people have complained that they could not download photos or forwarded videos at 10 pm. The issue got resolved after one hour.

According to IT experts, the problem could have been caused by some problem at the WhatsApp server network.

Amar Daniel, a software professional in Hyderabad, "Popular social networking sites will have the most high-end servers with high-security firewalls. Sometimes, these servers might encounter some errors due to software bugs, which don't allow a user to download heavy files."

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

The YSRC government on Thursday revised the guidelines for the YSR Bima scheme enabling the state government to directly pay the insurance amount to family of the deceased and make insurance claims easier. This was necessitated after the Centre, paying 50 per cent of premium, stopped paying its share from April 2020, forcing the AP government to step in. Apart from that the Centre also put more clauses and closed the existing group insurance system and made it mandatory that every person in the family has a bank account.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy pointed out that the state government had brought 1.2 crore families under the insurance coverage and paid premium to banks. However, only 62.5 lakh accounts could be opened



Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

and the remaining accounts were yet to be opened by banks though AP had credited the insurance premium. He said that the banks which had to follow up about individual insurance claims with the insurance firms to process the registration, were unable to do so on time. This bottleneck led to a severe delay in receipt of claims.

In an additional clause put by the Centre, a 45-day lien period from the day of account opening, meant that if someone dies within 45 days, the insurance will not be paid. Due to

this, around 12,039 families who lost someone, after being enrolled with the 45-day lien period, were not eligible for the claims. The Chief Minister said that due to this, the state government came forward and paid for all those 12,039 claims at a cost of ₹254 crore.

"After witnessing all the chaos, the government took the entire responsibility of the scheme and shall clear the claims within one month of receiving the application. The responsibility for screening of insurance applications has been given to village/ward secretariats monitored by the Joint Collectors. Any eligible person who was left out from YSR Bima can call toll free number 155214 for getting registered or to resolve their issues related," the Chief Minister said.

■ Page 2: CM: YSRC gave priority for health

Justice Ramana blames government for not giving priority to medical sector

BASIC | RIGHT

BALU PULIPAKA | DC
HYDERABAD, JULY 1

Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana said huge economic losses inflicted by the Covid-19 pandemic on India, and across the globe, "should wake us up to the reality that there is no substitute for a free and universal public healthcare system that focuses on disease prevention."

"The government," the Chief Justice of India said, was "not giving priority to the medical sector or

issues of immediate concern."

Launching the 'Defeat Diabetes' campaign by the Research Society for the Study of Diabetes in India on Thursday, Justice Ramana, in a virtual address, said if diabetes was to be battled effectively, the state had to come up with a comprehensive policy framework in which awareness campaign became a part of diabetes eradication endeavours.

"For the programme to be successful, it needs to



CJI Justice N.V. Ramana

be integrated into a free and universal public healthcare system. Left to

individuals, we will never reach the goal," he said.

On the rising diabetes cases in India, he said, "One must pause and wonder about the implications of this on the already strained healthcare system in the country. Formulating public healthcare policies based on intense scientific research is needed."

Studies, Justice Ramana said, had shown that knowledge and awareness was negligible in rural India on diabetes. The knowledge gap leads to

myths like it is the obese, those who consume more sugar, are the ones who get the disease, or that it is contagious and the one that says women are immune to the disease.

"Where there is room for myths, there is room for quackery. Quackery is the biggest disease affecting India. Quackery begins where awareness ends," he said.

Quoting the Telugu saying 'Aarogyamev mahabhagya', the Chief Justice of India said it was the uni-

versal truth that health was wealth. "Any investment is justified to acquire this wealth because only a healthy nation can become a wealthy nation," he said.

Here are a "few thoughts and facts for all stakeholders to ponder over," he said, adding, "Our doctors are being attacked while on duty. Why is it that our medical professionals are at the receiving end for someone else's failure?"

■ Page 2: CJI points out at insufficient medical infra

9 EU nations give nod to Covishield

More likely to lift travel restrictions

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 1

TS' e-pass plan gets SC approval

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 1

The Supreme Court on Thursday gave its nod to the e-pass mandated by the TS government for entering into its capital city of Hyderabad.

A bench of Justice Indira Banerjee and Justice V. Ramasubramanian refused to entertain a plea

World Health Organisation. However, while AstraZeneca's Vaxzevria is approved by EU, the fate of its Indian version Covishield remains under suspense as the EMA has approved only four vaccines so far -- Pfizer-BioNTech's Comirnaty, Moderna's Covid vaccine, the AstraZeneca shot manufactured and sold in Europe as Vaxzevria, and Johnson & Johnson's Janssen.

India has already asked the EU member countries to individually consider

by a law student against the state government's notification, saying it is a temporary measure and the validity of the notification has expired.

The petition accused the TS government of illegally denying the people of AP the right of unimpeded access to Hyderabad by mandating the e-pass mid-Covid.

allowing Indians who have taken Covishield and Covaxin vaccines and want to travel to Europe.

There has been apprehension in India that people who took Covishield and Covaxin jabs are unlikely to be eligible for travel to the European Union member states under its "Green Pass" scheme. The EU Digital Covid certificate or 'Green Pass' will be mandatory to travel to European countries and the document will serve as proof that a person is vaccinated against Covid-19.

POLAVARAM TO BECOME TOURIST ATTRACTION: MIN

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JULY 1

Tourism minister M. Srinivasa Rao announced that the state government proposes to develop an image park, restaurants and other facilities near Polavaram Project to attract tourists from within and outside the state to the scenic sites along River Godavari.

Flagging off a tourism boat at Gandhi Pochamma Temple in Devipatnam mandal on Thursday, he said the government is setting up command control centres at various places in the state including Gandhi Pochamma temple, Pochavaram, Rajamahendravaram, Singampalli, Peratalapalli in East and West Godavari districts, Rishikonda in Visakhapatnam, Nagarjunasagar in Guntur district, Srisaillam in Kurnool district, and Beram Park in Krishna district.

■ Page 2: Polavaram has tourism potential: Min

COPS: ARRESTED L.E.T. TERRORISTS PLANNED BLASTS

NAVEEN KUMAR
HYDERABAD, JULY 1

Two LeT operatives, Imran Malik alias Imran Khan and his brother Mohammad Nasir Malik, arrested by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) in Hyderabad on Wednesday were part of a conspiracy to execute terror acts across India, according to police.

Imran Malik and Mohd Nasir Malik, hail from Kairana in Shamli of UP. "It was found an explosion in a parcel on platform 1 of Darbhanga railway station was booked in Secunderabad and arrived in Secunderabad-Darbhanga Express. On June 24, the NIA re-registered the case."

SHORT TAKES

PIL CHALLENGING AP DEVELOPMENT CORP ACT FILED IN HC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

A petition was filed in the High Court challenging the AP Development Corporation Act, 2020.

Visakhapatnam East MLA from Telugu Desam Velagapudi Ramkrishna Babu filed the public interest litigation in the AP High Court through his lawyer Y. Balaji.

The petitioner's contention was that mortgaging government assets in Visakhapatnam was unconstitutional and said that though the government's income was to be deposited in Consolidated Fund of the state as per articles 266 and 204 of Indian Constitution, sources of income like taxes, excise revenue and others were being diverted to the AP Development Corporation instead of depositing them in Consolidated Fund of the state.

HC: SUBMIT DETAILS ON BRAHMAMGARI MATAM HEAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

Kadapa-based Brahmamgari Matam late pontiff Veerabhoga Vasanta Venkateswara Swamy's second wife Maruti Mahalakshmi moved the AP High Court claiming that her son Govinda Swamy should be declared as legal successor to the matam.

Mahalakshmi filed the petition on behalf of her son, asking the High Court to issue directions to set aside proceedings issued by the endowments special commissioner handing over management of the matam to the assistant commissioner.

Petitioner's counsel submitted that that as per will of Mahalakshmi's late husband and also traditions of the matam, her elder son should be made as the legal successor of the matam and said that as her son was a minor, she should be made as head of the matam until her son became a major.

The petitioner's counsel argued that the state government was not having any authority to appoint a special officer to the matam as only Dharmika Parishad was empowered to take any decisions pertaining to management of the matam.

The court asked the state government whether matam's Dharmika Parishad permitted selection of matam's head and directed it to file an affidavit with all details and posted the next hearing to July 5.

AP TO SUPPLY RICE TO 59L NON-NFSA RICE CARD HOLDERS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

The Andhra Pradesh government to bear additional cost of ₹2,100 crore to distribute rice free of cost to 59 lakh non-NFSA rice card holders who are not being covered under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana-III and IV under National Food Security Act, 2013. The state government to supply sorTex rice under public distribution system from July onwards and will also supply non-sorTex rice under PMGKAY through Food Corporation of India.

However, following variation in quality of both sorTex and non-sorTex rice, the state government intends to distribute sorTex rice from July to November in two phases every month from then on first day through mobile vehicles along with sugar and toor dal.

AP'S FIRST SMART POLICING SYSTEM OPENED IN VIZAG

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 1

Visakhapatnam district superintendent of police B. Krishna Rao inaugurated E-Malkhana, a first of its kind smart-policing project in the state at Narsipatnam town model police station on Thursday.

The Narsipatnam additional SP Tuhin Sinha initiated a project for smooth interactive and easy to use by everyone. The digitalisation of all the case properties in the coding package and arrange in order in proper shelves.

After digitalisation, it would be easy to retrieve the case property and would also save valuable time and synchronisation of functioning of e-Malkhana in all police stations of the district, the SP said.

Jagan wants PM to restrain TS from “illegal” drawal of water

CM alleges Telangana state taking water without release orders from KRMB

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union minister for Jal-shakti, Gajendra Singh Shekawat, seeking a central notification on the jurisdiction of KRMB and a direction to Telangana to stop “illegal drawal” of water for power generation. The Chief Minister alleged that Telangana was doing this “without water release orders from KRMB”.

Jagan also sought central control of all off-takes of common reservoirs with CISF protection and safeguarding of the interests of AP.

The CM said the Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) that came into existence as per Section 85 of Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, is responsible for the administration, regulation, maintenance and operation of such projects as may be notified by the central government from time to time.

According to the water sharing pact, AP and Telangana agreed to share 811tmc of water allocated to the erstwhile state of AP by KWDT-1 at 75 per cent dependability, in the ratio of 512tmc and 299tmc respectively. The states of AP and Telangana are sharing water in the ratio of 66:34 on ad hoc basis by deducting minor irrigation utilizations, evaporation losses and Godavari diversions. The decision taken by KRMB shall be implemented as per the inflows observed into the reservoirs, available storages and pro-rata entitlements from time to time.

Jagan said, “Unauthorised actions of Telangana are putting AP into tremendous disadvantage. Srisaillam Reservoir having a gross storage capacity of 215.8tmc at FRL +885 ft and +834 ft is the Minimum Draw Down Level (MDDL) for power generation and +854 ft is the MDDL for irrigation needs. The status of the reservoir as on June 1 was +808.40 ft with a storage of 33.39tmc, which is well below the MDDL for power generation. Hence, power generation should not be done at this level.”

But Telangana started power generation “unilaterally through its power house located on the Left side without placing any indent before KRMB.”

The CM said, “Every day, 2 TMC is being drawn by Telangana for power generation, restraining AP from drawal of water through Pothireddypadu head regulator for drinking and irrigation as +854 ft level is required in the reservoir.” This regulator caters to the needs of chronically drought-prone areas of four Rayalaseema districts, SPSR Nellore district, Prakasam district and the drinking water supply for Chennai City.

He said: “The issue of unauthorised drawals by Telangana State was brought to the notice of KRMB by AP on June 10. In turn, the KRMB has, in its letter on June 17, requested the Telangana Genco Authorities to stop further release of water immediately through the Srisaillam left side power house and follow the water release orders issued by KRMB. As Telangana is



Guntur Rural SP Vishal Gunni takes stock of the situation as both officials from irrigation departments of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana reach Nagarjunasagar on Thursday. — TEJO ROY ELETI

TS officials refuse to meet AP counterparts

From page 1

Nagarjunasagar right main canal superintendent engineer Ch. Purushottama Ganga Raju said, “When we were stopped by the Telangana police as we were proceeding to meet TS Genco CE and irrigation SE near the Nagarjuna Sagar Dam, I requested TS Genco CE to allow us to meet him to submit a representation and also explain how AP's interests will be affected due to drawing of water by TS at three projects for power generation. The official refused to meet me and instead asked me to send messages on social media platforms. So was the case with irrigation SE from TS as he also refused to meet me and asked for sending messages when I spoke to them over phone. I have informed our senior officials on the issue.”

“Our concern is that the Telangana government is drawing water from three projects - Srisaillam, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichinthala - for power generation and a huge amount of water is getting drained into the sea. At present, water level at Nagarjunasagar dam is 534 ft with storage of 174.05 tmc ft of water in the reservoir against the dead storage of 131.66 tmc ft of water. If there is any forecast of floods to the Krishna resulting in huge inflow of water into proj-

KRMB OBJECTS TO TS USING MORE WATER

From page 1

The river board convened its decision to the TS government through a letter on late Thursday.

In its letter, the KRMB raised objections over the TS government utilising more water from Nagarjunasagar than its allotted share.

The KRMB also asked the TS government to deduct 9.9 tmc from its share that was used for power generation.

The river board has also directed the TS government to submit a report on water used for hydel power generation immediately.

ects, the TS government can draw water. But at present, there is no such situation,” he said.

“Under Nagarjunasagar RMC, there is nearly 12 lakh acres of command area located in parts of Krishna, Guntur and Prakasam districts and farmers are getting ready to raise paddy, chillies, cotton and other crops for the ensuing kharif season. People living in parts of these three districts also get drinking water from RMC. If the TS government drains out water, the

‘TD MUST CLARIFY STAND ON SEEMA PROJECTS’

Vijayawada: YSRC MLC Dokka Manikya Varaprasad Rao on Thursday hailed the welfare schemes taken up by the state government and flayed the TD for creating chaos in the state for the sake of political mileage.

He demanded that TD chief and former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu to speak on the Rayalaseema Projects and the TD stand on TS remarks.

Rao said that TD leaders are intentionally playing spoilsport with sheer jealousy after witnessing the good governance of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

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SHORT TAKES

POLICE SEIZES ₹10
CRORE WORTH RED
SANDERS LOGSDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUL. 1

In a huge haul, the Chittoor district police wing has seized red sanders logs and vehicles worth ₹10.25 crores from a location in Tamil Nadu and arrested seven persons in connection with this case.

With the instructions of SP S. Senthil Kumar and under the direction of SEB ASP Rishanth Reddy, the police have intensified vehicular checking in the district. As part of this, under the direct supervision of DSP N. Sudhakar Reddy, a police team led by Gudipala SI Prasad conducted vehicular check at Golla Madugu sand check post on the Chittoor-Vellore highway, when they arrested seven red sanders smugglers.

Presenting the seized booty before the media at the old district police office in Chittoor on Thursday, SP Mr Senthil Kumar said that the police team, acting on a tip-off, lay in wait near the check-post, when the seven accused was sighted ferrying six red sanders logs in a Tata Sumo. The police arrested them and seized the vehicle.

Further, based on the information provided by them, the police have learnt about the huge haul of red sanders logs dumped clandestinely at a retreat centre in Valarpuram in Sriperumbudur of Tamil Nadu. The SP immediately formed police teams led by Inspectors Srinivasulu Reddy, Vikram and Raja Sekhar and ordered them to conduct raids at the retreat centre.

RSASTF SEIZES 348
RED SANDER LOGS
IN SADASIVAKONADC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUL. 1

The AP Red Sanders Anti-Smuggling Task Force (RSASTF) personnel seized a huge quantity of red sanders logs, which were dumped at a location in Sadasivakona forest area, situated 35 km far from Tirupati, on Thursday.

Disclosing the case details to media persons at the task force office on Thursday, RSASTF DSP D. Muralidhar said that their personnel have conducted combing for the last two days in the forest area located between Vadamalapeta and Puttur, when they tripped on a dump of 348 red sanders logs.

"Acting on the instructions of DIG (Anantapur range) Kanthi Rana Tata, we have formed two teams led by RI Bhaskar and CI Venkat Ravi to comb the forest area. During the operation, which continued for almost two days, our teams tripped over the dump and found the logs. In all, 348 logs have been seized during this operation", he said.

The DSP suspected that smugglers could have dumped the logs at various locations in this forest area due to the travel restriction in the wake of Covid-19 and now they brought all the logs together and dumped them at one place and readied them for transportation to Chennai. He said that today's seizure of red sanders logs is the largest seizure in recent times. The RSASTF sleuths registered a case and launched a search to nab the smugglers.

Hotels, restaurants
up for sale in Vizag

Occupancy falls to 10 per most of workers refuse to return

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 1

After losing huge chunks of money due to the two spells of Covid-19, the hotel and restaurant business owners gave up hopes of revival and planned to dispose of their enterprise for a song. According to travel and tour operators, the hotels and restaurants sector was one sector which suffered heavy losses due to Covid-19 that put people at homes since the breakout in January 2020.

The industry which picked up business with the establishment of steel plant and other private sector undertakings in the mid 1980s never looked back and dreamt of making it bigger after the YSRC government announced Vizag would be executive capital.

"The virus dashed all our hopes and most of us

Among the 1,000 odd hotels and lodges, the present occupancy was going at ten per cent for the reputed establishments in Vizag city. With such low occupancy, it would be difficult to run the show, he said.

are now planning to shift to other businesses for self sustenance," said Visakhapatnam Hotel Owners Welfare Association president K. Satyanarayana.

Talking to *Deccan Chronicle* on Thursday, he said with the third wave looming large over the horizon, the owners felt the industry would have to be shut for some more time. He said many entrepreneurs unable to manage the loan liabilities have decided to dispose of the establishments for less than half the price. The sale notifications are being circulated among the hotel and restaurant entrepreneurs through social

media.

"Not single sale has been reported so far and we are waiting to see who are the takers of this sick business," Satyanarayana said.

He said there were around 600 stand alone restaurants, food parlors and mobile food vans spread across from Gajuwaka to Madhurawada. Only those selling take away parcels were surviving and others have shut down their shops.

Among the 1,000 odd hotels and lodges, the present occupancy was going at ten per cent for the reputed establishments in Vizag city. With such low occupancy, it

would be difficult to run the show, he said.

Satyanarayana said he owned a hotel in the heart of the city having 51 rooms and only ten were occupied on Thursday.

"During shutdown I paid the power bill-80 percent of the load which comes to ₹1.5 lakh per month," Satyanarayana said.

Another hotelier said people stopped eating outside on the advice of medical professionals and conducting all the meetings online and stopped visiting Vizag for business meets.

He said that the pandemic also caused huge unemployment in the industry in the region. It employed over 30,000 people and most of them have gone to their native villages and settled for good. They are refusing to come back since they see no hope of revival of the industry.

AP records 3,841 Covid
cases, 38 deathsDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 1

Andhra Pradesh has reported 3,841 fresh Covid-19 infections and 38 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state has been registering slight dip in fresh infections in the last three days as it reported 3,797 on June 30, 3,620 on June 29 and 2,224 on June 28 unlike earlier days of reporting more than 4,000 cases daily on an average.

The state health authorities reported on Thursday that out of 90,574 samples tested, 3,841 persons were found infected with confirmed Coronavirus. Out of a total number of 2,20,84,192 samples tested so far in the state, 18,93,354 persons were

found infected with the virus and of them, 18,42,432 were recovered in the course of treatment while 38,178 are still active with the virus.

East Godavari continue to lead the state with highest number of 760 daily fresh infections followed by 616 in Chittoor, 504 in West Godavari, 350 in Krishna, 313 in Guntur, 296 in Prakasam, 261 in Nellore, 171 in Kadapa, 163 in Visakhapatnam, 141 in Anantapur, 113 in Srikakulam, 108 in Vizianagarm and 45 in Kurnool.

Among the cumulative active cases, East Godavari reported 6,666 followed by 5,756 in Chittoor, 4,745 in Visakhapatnam, 4,435 in

Prakasam, 3,609 in Krishna, 3,224 in Nellore, 2,358 in Guntur, 2,193 in Srikakulam, 1,757 in Visakhapatnam, 1,486 in Kadapa, 719 in Kurnool, 695 in Vizianagaram and 535 in Anantapur.

With regard to deaths, Krishna reported the highest at eight followed by five each in East Godavari and Guntur, three each in Srikakulam and West Godavari, two each in Anantapur, Kadapa and Vizianagaram and one each in Kurnool, Nellore and Visakhapatnam. With this death toll has gone up to 12,744.

The state health authorities discharged 3,963 patients after recovery in the last 24 hours in the state.

PILGRIM INTERFACE
TO BE MANAGED
PROFESSIONALLYDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUL. 1

To offer more transparent services to visiting pilgrims, Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has begun to operate counters, which have a pilgrim interface in Tirumala, in a more professional way. TTD Additional EO A.V. Dharma Reddy opened gates for the new counters management system at Srivari laddu counters, beside Tirumala temple on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Additional EO said that the TTD called for tenders towards the supply of manpower for the operation of counters in a professional way and KVM Info from Bengaluru has come forward quoting the lowest price.

He said, henceforth all the 164 counters which have the pilgrim interface in Tirumala will also be operated by this agency.

Beneficiaries ask for hike in funding

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 1

Some beneficiaries of houses under Jagananna colonies scheme requested the officials to increase the amount being sanctioned for the houses under the plea that ₹1.8 lakh given for each dwelling is insufficient.

They expressed their opinions during the mega ground-breaking ceremony held at Venkateswarapuram here on Thursday.

Incidentally, Jagananna colonies will have CC roads, pipelines for sewage and even fibernet facility among

other infrastructure on par with urban areas.

As many as 54,000 houses have been sanctioned for Nellore district under the Jagananna colonies scheme and around 10,000 beneficiaries performed ground-breaking ceremonies on Thursday across the district.

District Collector K.V.N. Chakradhar Babu, Municipal Commissioner K. Dinesh Kumar, and Joint Collector (Housing) Videh Khare participated in Mega Grounding Mela held at Venkateswara Puram on Thursday.

Collector directed the officials to begin the construction of 54,000 houses granted for the district at any cost on July 3, and 4.

He informed the beneficiaries that the officials would provide cement, steel and sand for speeding up construction activity.

Joint Collector (Housing) Videh Khare said they would provide water, and power facilities apart from drainage and cement roads besides fibernet at all Jagananna Colonies.

He said they are sanctioning Rs 1.8 lakh for each house but the total cost of the infrastructure including houses would be around Rs 6 lakh.

Youth kills his lover
after a breakupDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 1

In a ghastly incident, a jilted lover killed a 21-year-old woman when she was alone at home and attempted to project the murder as a suicide. He too attempted suicide by hanging and he has been fighting for his life in a hospital at Nellore.

The woman identified as P. Tejeswini is a final year student of B Tech and the accused Venkateswarlu has been working in a software firm in Bangalore.

While Venkateswarlu belongs to Chennuru near Gudur, Tejeswini hails from Gudur and her parents are teachers.

The duo was in love for four years and there was

Police rushed to the spot after the brother of Tejeswini alerted everyone when he noticed the incident. They rushed Venkateswarlu to the government hospital in Gudur and later to Nellore. He is fighting for his life in the ICU of a hospital in Nellore, the police said. Police rushed Gudur Two Town SI D. Audilakshmi said that they have registered a murder case against Venkateswarlu.

a breakup one year back reportedly after the parents of Tejeswini opposed their marriage.

Venkateswarlu, who was nursing a grudge against Tejeswini, came to her house in Gudur two town police station limits and stabbed her with a knife in the neck.

After confirming that she is dead, he hanged her with a rope and hanged himself with a towel.

The police rushed to the spot after the brother of Tejeswini alerted

everyone when he noticed the incident. They rushed Venkateswarlu to the government hospital in Gudur and later to Nellore. He is fighting for his life in the ICU of a hospital in Nellore, the police said.

Gudur Two Town SI D. Audilakshmi said that they have registered a murder case against Venkateswarlu based on a complaint from Tejeswini parents and investigating the case further.

New drinking water
supply scheme readyDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 1

Five years after commencing the ₹512 crore estimated drinking water supply improvement scheme, municipal officials started giving tap connections to the households from the new scheme.

In order to supply equitable and potable distribution of water to people, "Comprehensive Water Supply Improvement Scheme" was designed with Sangam Anicut on Penna River as the source for Nellore Municipal Corporation.

"This is a unique water supply scheme sanctioned by the Government to cover the entire area of the city to supply water on a 24/7 basis and no other city in India has got this type of sanctioned infrastructural facilities" claimed a senior official.

According to the officer, the government had sanctioned ₹556.77 crores vide G.O.Ms. No. 272 MA&UD on

December 18, 2015 under HUDCO Loan Assistance and work was awarded to M/s Megha Engineering Infrastructure Ltd on 16 February 2016 with a tender contract value of ₹512.76 crores.

As of now, 99 per cent of the works of the scheme, which was designed to quench the thirst of Nellorians, have been completed. The design was based on the prospective population of 9,08,357 by the year 2032 in the city.

The 650 km long water distribution network includes a 33 km long MS pipeline from the water treatment plant at Mohamadapuram in Podalakur mandal to Nellore.

Incidentally, the water comes to Nellore through gravity from the 122 MLD (Million Litres per Day) capacity water treatment plant and flows into the 72 water reservoirs in the city including 31 new reservoirs and 41 old ones, again through gravity.

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2nd July, 1949

SHORT TAKES

MP MINISTER FALLS FROM DAIS DURING EVENT

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, JULY 1

Madhya Pradesh energy minister Pradyumna Singh Tomar on Thursday fell from the dais during a programme in Gwalior in MP and twisted his ankle.

The incident happened when the minister was going to address the function organised on the occasion of inauguration of National Horticulture Board's office in Gwalior.

He accidentally hit a flower base kept on the dais and fell down, police said.

He was in a state of shock for some time following the incident. He, however, recovered and was rushed to the local government hospital.

He twisted his ankle, but his condition was normal, doctors said.

Gwalior district superintendent of police Amit Sanghi said the minister underwent a check-up in the hospital and he was normal now.

The minister left for Bhopal to attend an important meeting after he was discharged from the hospital, police said.

HC: JOURNALISTS NOT EXPECTED TO DRAMATISE NEWS

Lucknow, July 1: The Allahabad High Court has rejected the bail plea of a reporter accused of abetting a suicide, saying a journalist is not expected to dramatise sensational incidents and create news by putting a person's life in danger.

A Lucknow bench of Justice Vikas Kunvar Srivastav made the observation while rejecting the plea of city journalist Shamim Ahmad, co-accused of abetting a man's suicide and filming it outside the Uttar Pradesh assembly complex last year.

In an order, the judge said, "A journalist is not expected to dramatise a sensational and horrifying incident and make news by putting his actor in pitiable condition and in danger of death."

The journalist keeps an eye on anticipated or sudden events happening in society and brings them to the information of all people through various news media without any tampering. This is his business, the judge observed on June 21. The order in the case was uploaded on the court's website on Thursday.

Journalists Shamim and co-accused Naushad Ahmad had allegedly contacted a man who was facing eviction from his house and induced him to set himself ablaze in front of the state assembly so that they could film the incident and telecast it on television as it could save him from being thrown out of the premises where he was staying.

ACB RAIDS SR. IPS OFFICER'S PROPERTIES

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
RAIPUR, JULY 1

The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Chhattisgarh police on Thursday conducted raids on at least ten premises linked to ADG-rank IPS officer G.P. Singh in the state.

This was the first time an IPS officer was raided by the anti-graft wing of Chhattisgarh police for allegedly amassing assets disproportionate to his known sources of income.

Incidentally, the 1994 batch IPS officer headed the ACB and the Economic Offences Wing of Chhattisgarh police a year ago before being shifted as director of state police academy in June last year.

Sources in the ACB said the raids were conducted following complaints that the police officer had amassed disproportionate assets at several places and also unaccounted money.

"The raids started simultaneously at ten places at around six in the morning. The raids are still continuing", sources said. The IPS officer had served as inspector general of police in Raipur, Bilaspur and Durg, considered covered postings for an IPS officer in Chhattisgarh.

Ten teams of ACB conducted raids in different premises linked to the cop.

Sources said his computer system was seized on suspicion of his alleged involvement in recording the phones of some influential people.

Sources said the ACB sleuths were looking into complaints that the IPS officer has made investments in the mining sector.

NIA COURT ACQUITS AKHIL GOGOI, OTHERS IN SEDITION CASE

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, JULY 1

In what led to release of noted RTI activist turned MLA Akhil Gogoi languishing in judicial custody for the last 18 months, the NIA court on Thursday acquitted him and three others in a sedition case along with other charges.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Tuesday had filed an additional chargesheet against Gogoi who has been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, 1967, (UAPA) for his alleged role in violent anti-CAA protests and possible links with the Maoist elements.

The NIA court judge, however, in its judgment observed that it is necessary for the NIA to note that the "ambit of sedition does not get stretched beyond permissible limits."

The 120-page judgment of the NIA judge Pranjal Das had some observations on sedition too.

Under the sub-title 'Some General Observations' the court stated, "Though the law of sedition continues in our statute book, its colony (colonial) legacy cannot be overlooked."

He made reference to a 1950 case, Tara Singh v/s State where it was stated, "India is now a sovereign democratic State. Governments may go and be caused to go without the foundations of the State being impaired. A law of sedition thought necessary during a period of foreign rule has become inappropriate by the very nature of the change which has come about."

He also observed, "Nevertheless, as long as it remains on the statute book in the present form, for enforcing the law on sedition, it is desirable for the investigating authorities to be continually trained to conform to the parameters of the law of sedition laid down by the Supreme Court in Kedar Nath Singh (Supra). This is to ensure that while enforcing this penal law by police and other investigating agencies, the ambit of sedition does not get stretched beyond permissible limits imposed by the Supreme Court."

Gogoi, newly elected from the Sivasagar constituency, had been in jail for the last 18 months. More than 12 cases were slapped on him by Assam police following protests led by Gogoi and his organisation, the Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti, against the Citizenship Amendment Act in 2019.

Two of these cases were taken over by the NIA which accused him of having 'Maoist' links and being involved in 'seditious activities'.

Gogoi who was released from judicial custody, soon after the order of the court on Thursday said that the judgement of the NIA court has reaffirmed public faith in the judiciary.

● **THE NIA court judge, in its judgment observed that it is necessary for the NIA to note that the "ambit of sedition does not get stretched beyond permissible limits."**

PANDEMIC | DEATHS

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 1

Faced with criticism over alleged underreporting of Covid-19 deaths, Kerala health minister Veena George on Thursday said the government was willing to review Covid death toll in the state.

The health minister said her government's top priority was to ensure that families of Covid victims get the compensation announced by the SC. "We will take a stand that helps people to get any compensation that the government decides," she said.



Doctors celebrate National Doctors Day at Masina Hospital in Mumbai on Thursday.

— PTI

Modi urges IMA to undertake studies on benefits of Yoga

Prime Minister hails contribution of doctors in saving lives from Corona

New Delhi, July 1: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hailed the contribution of doctors in saving lives from Coronavirus and said his government has given maximum thrust on augmenting the healthcare infrastructure in the country.

Losing even one life is saddening, Modi said in his address at an Indian Medical Association event on National Doctors' Day and then emphasised that India saved lives of lakhs of its people and has fared better than more developed and prosperous countries in terms of the Covid infection and mortality per lakh population.

A big credit for that goes to doctors, healthcare and frontline workers, he said.

On the occasion, he also urged the IMA to undertake evidence-based studies on the benefits of yoga in "mission-mode" and

commended the medical fraternity for spreading awareness about its helpful role in dealing with post-Covid complications.

The Prime Minister said work for its propagation that should have been done in the last century is being done now.

He also suggested that studies on yoga could be published in international journals.

Noting that there is not much documentation available about the last century's pandemic, he urged doctors to undertake research and studies in their dealing with Covid and its various aspects, including benefits of vaccines, early diagnosis and various treatments.

Highlighting "limitations" of the medical infrastructure that was created in the country over several decades and

how it was neglected in earlier times, he added, "In our country, population pressure makes this challenge even more difficult. But despite this, India's per lakh population rate of infection and death rate has still been manageable compared with more developed countries."

"Losing the life of even one person is very saddening but India has also saved the lives of lakhs of its people from coronavirus. A big credit for it goes to our hard working doctors, healthcare workers and front line workers," he said.

Noting that the virus is new and is mutating, the prime minister said India's doctors, with their knowledge and experience, are fighting the challenges posed by the virus.

"Our government has given maximum priority

to healthcare. Last year, during the 1st wave, we had allotted ₹15,000 crore to improve our health infrastructure. This year, allocation of budget for healthcare is over ₹2 lakh crore," he said.

Till 2014, where there were only six AIIMS in the country, work on 15 new AIIMS has already started in the last seven years, he pointed out.

The number of medical colleges has also increased by about one and a half times, he said.

Now, the government has come up with a Credit Guarantee Scheme of ₹50,000 crore to strengthen the health infrastructure in such areas where there is a lack of health facilities, Modi said.

"Our government is committed to safeguarding our doctors. Last year, we brought in several provisions against crimes

against doctors," he said.

We are also providing free insurance cover to our Covid warriors, Modi added.

The way our doctors have served the country is an inspiration in itself, he said and expressed gratitude to all doctors on behalf of 130 crore Indians.

Today, when the country is fighting such a big war against Coronavirus, doctors have saved millions of lives by working hard day and night, he said.

Modi also paid tributes to doctors who lost their lives while combating the Covid pandemic and expressed condolences to their families.

Doctors' Day is observed in the honour of noted doctor and former West Bengal chief minister Bidhan Chandra Roy, whose birth and death anniversaries fall on July 1.

North India has to wait longer for rains

New Delhi, July 1: The unending wait for rains and respite from searing heat in north India, including Delhi, is likely to stretch a bit longer as there are no favourable conditions for advancement of the Southwest Monsoon till July 7, the IMD said on Thursday, forecasting an overall normal precipitation in the country for July.

The IMD has also cautioned that the break in the monsoon could impact agricultural operations like sowing and transplantation of crops, irrigation scheduling, power requirement.

Although the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said the coun-

try as a whole will receive normal rainfall in July, it has a forecast of below normal to normal rainfall probability over many areas of northwest India and some parts of south peninsula, central, east and northeast India.

Normal to above normal rainfall is most likely to be experienced over parts of central India and adjacent areas of peninsular India and Gangetic plains, it said.

IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said rainfall is not expected to be good in the first week of July and the precipitation activity is likely to pick up in the second half of the second week of the month.

— PTI

K'TAKA TO BUILD MEMORIAL FOR COVID WARRIORS

Bengaluru, July 1: A first-of-its-kind grand Covid Warrior Memorial in honour of doctors and paramedical staff who 'martyred' themselves in the fight against Coronavirus would be built in Bengaluru, Karnataka health minister Dr. K. Sudhakar said on Thursday.

"We will build a memorial to pay homage to those doctors who laid down their lives due to Covid while rendering their services on our Arogya Soudha premises. I believe this is the first memorial in the country," Sudhakar said during a function to celebrate National Doctors' Day.

The minister said his department has decided to build it in a unique way in memory of doctors and paramedics, which will be on par with the War Memorial in New Delhi where anyone can go and pay their respects.

The memorial will be a place where everyone can come and pay tribute, he added.

IIT-M PROFESSOR ALLEGES CASTE DISCRIMINATION

O.P. ARULN | DC
CHENNAI, JULY 1

An accomplished faculty member in the country's premier Indian Institute of Technology-Madras cited caste discrimination in the Department of Humanities and Social Science at the institute. A letter sent by him to his faculty members went viral in the social media and kicked up a storm.

In the letter, Assistant Professor Vipin P. Veetil stated that "One of the primary reasons for my leaving the IIT-M is the caste discrimination I have faced at Department of Humanities and Social Science since joining in March 2019"

The discrimination came from individuals in position of power irrespective of their claimed political affiliations and gender. There were multiple specific instances of discrimination and I shall be pursuing appropriate actions to address the matter."

One of the curious phenomena I have observed at the Institute is that the Bayesian prior among many is that caste-discrimination is a rare occurrence. However, my own experience, and conversations with members of SC and OBC communities, suggests that the Bayesian prior is far from true".

Suggesting to set up a committee to study the experiences of the SC and OBC faculty members he said that such a committee should have members of the SC/ ST Commission, OBC Commission, and psychologists. "Furthermore, I do believe people who face the discrimination may benefit by filing complaints with the grievance committee at the Institute and with courts. Societies progress one small step at a time, or do they?". He wrote while saying that he is leaving for another institution.

Minister says govt's top priority is to ensure that kin of Covid victims get compensation

Covid toll underreported, says Kerala Opposition

Covid mortality data in Odisha has been fudged: BJD leader

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JULY 1

BJD vice-president Soumya Ranjan Patnaik on Thursday kicked off a storm in Odisha politics after he raised some serious questions over the number of Covid-19 related deaths in the state.

Patnaik, son-in-law of former chief minister

Janaki Ballav Patnaik, said that the data regarding the Covid mortality in the state has been fudged and concealed.

The senior BJD leader said that desperate race to be on the top and the attempt to cling onto past glory seem to have resulted in such factual death data manipulation

Patnaik said that due to administrative failure and

negligence, a controversy has erupted over the Covid-19 toll in the state which is further affecting the image of the Odisha government.

Had the actual number of deaths been revealed, there would not have been much loss of face. The ill-attempt of hiding the data is ruining the sanctity of the administrative machinery, he said.

SHORT TAKES

BILL COSBY
RELEASED FROM
PRISON

New York, June 30: US comedian Bill Cosby was freed from prison Wednesday, in a blow to the #MeToo movement after a US court overturned his conviction for drugging and sexually assaulting a woman 17 years ago. The 83-year-old flashed the V sign outside his home near Philadelphia after leaving jail following a Pennsylvania Supreme Court ruling that he had been denied a fair trial. He did not answer reporters' questions. Cosby, who shattered racial barriers with his Emmy-winning role on "I Spy" in the 1960s, was convicted in 2018 of assaulting Andrea Constand at his Philadelphia mansion in 2004. But the judges wrote in a 79-page decision that a non-prosecution agreement between a former district attorney and Cosby over evidence he gave in a civil case meant the actor should not have been charged. "Cosby's convictions and judgment of sentence are vacated, and he is discharged," they wrote. Cosby left SCI Phoenix, a state jail 35 miles northeast of Philadelphia, just before 2:30 pm (1830 GMT).

F-16 COLLIDES
WITH BUILDING AT
DUTCH AIR BASE

The Hague, July 1: A Belgian F-16 fighter jet collided with a building at a Dutch airbase Thursday morning as it prepared to take off, injuring two people, Dutch and Belgian authorities said. Belgium's defence ministry said in a statement that the incident happened at the start of an F-16 mission and the pilot had to use his ejector seat. There was no fire or explosion following the incident at Leeuwarden military airbase, the Dutch air force said. The air force said the cause of the incident was unclear and was being investigated. Further details were not immediately available.

PAK INDUCTS
CHINA-MADE VT-4
BATTLE TANKS

Islamabad, July 1: The Pakistan Army has formally inducted the first batch of the China-made VT-4 battle tanks into its armoury. Produced by Chinese state-owned armoured vehicle manufacturer, Norinco, the delivery of VT-4 tanks from the manufacturer began in April last year. Pakistan is the third country to have bought these tanks from China after Thailand and Nigeria. The Army's media affairs wing in a statement said that Commander Mangla Corps, Lieutenant General Shaheen Mehmood, on Wednesday visited the Armoured Division and inspected the first batch of VT-4 tanks. Major General Rashid Mahmood briefed the commander about ongoing post shipment inspections of the first batch of tanks.

DEADLY HEAT
WAVE SLAMS
CANADA, U.S.

Vancouver, July 1: Millions of people in western Canada and the northwestern United States were under heat alerts Wednesday as the region baked in record-breaking temperatures and police reported scores of deaths likely linked to the scorching conditions. The heat wave has stretched emergency services, with at least 134 people dying suddenly since Friday in the Vancouver area and hundreds more across British Columbia, according to Canadian police and the local coroner. "The temperatures recorded this week are unprecedented — lives have been lost and the risk of wildfires is at a dangerously high level," said Canadian PM Justin Trudeau.

TRUMP's CFO
SURRENDERS TO
FACE CHARGES

New York, July 1: The chief financial officer of Donald Trump's company surrendered Thursday to New York authorities planning to indict him, possibly with tax-related offences, US media reported. The indictment of Allen Weisselberg, Trump's long serving and loyal CFO, has been expected for days as part of an almost three-year investigation by the Manhattan district attorney into alleged fraud at the Trump Organisation. Weisselberg, 73, could be charged with evasion of taxes on fringe benefits, according to sources quoted by The New York Times and Wall Street Journal. The district attorney's office did not immediately confirm these reports.

No foreign force can bully China: Xi

Ruling Communist Party celebrates centenary with show of strength at Tiananmen Square

Beijing, July 1: Any "foreign force" trying to "bully" China will encounter a "great wall of steel" erected by over 1.4 billion Chinese people and its powerful military, President Xi Jinping warned on Thursday, as the ruling Communist Party celebrated its centenary with a massive show of strength at the historic Tiananmen Square here. In his keynote address at a highly-choreographed ceremony from the balcony of Tiananmen Gate, which also adorns a giant size photo of 'Chairman' Mao Zedong, the founding father of the People's Republic of China, Xi also underlined that the "reunification" of Taiwan with the Chinese mainland is a "historic mission" and an "unshakable commitment" of the Communist Party of China (CPC). Xi, who is also the General Secretary of the CPC and Chairman of the Cen-

● **CHINA HAS** repeatedly accused the US of trying to curb its "peaceful rise", amidst concern in the neighbourhood about the growing assertiveness of the Chinese military in the strategic Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere.

tral Military Commission, warned that any foreign force will be allowed to bully China, an apparent reference to the US. China has repeatedly accused the US of trying to curb its "peaceful rise", amidst concern in the neighbourhood about the growing assertiveness of the Chinese military in the strategic Indo-Pacific region and elsewhere. Both former US president Donald Trump and his successor Joe Biden have pursued a hardline policy towards China, targeting it on several fronts including trade, human

rights and the origins of the Covid-19, which first emerged in the central Chinese city of Wuhan before becoming a pandemic. "We Chinese are a people who uphold justice and are not intimidated by threats of force. We have never bullied, oppressed, or subjugated the people of any other country, and we never will," Xi said. "By the same token, we will never allow any foreign force to bully, oppress, or subjugate us," the 68-year old leader said. "Anyone who would attempt to do so will find themselves on a collision course with a great wall of steel forged by over 1.4 billion Chinese people," he said. Over 70,000 carefully vetted party workers and schoolchildren who took part in the event cheered Xi's over an hour-long speech which was telecast live. About 71 aircraft participated in the flypast.

— PTI



Balloons fly during the celebration marking the 100th anniversary of the founding of the Communist Party of China in Beijing on Thursday. — AFP

Delta shadow over EU Covid travel pass

Double Covid jab seems to control Delta variant: EMA

Study: Viral load less in re-infected

Brussels, July 1: An EU-wide Covid certificate for easier travel came into force on Thursday, just in time for Europe's busy summer vacation period — but the highly infectious Delta variant is already threatening to curtail its use. The EU document — essentially a QR code available on smartphones or on paper — shows whether the bearer is vaccinated with one of the EU's approved jabs (from BioNTech/Pfizer, AstraZeneca, Moderna or Johnson & Johnson), or whether they have recovered from an infection or recently tested negative.

Under EU law, the certificate is meant to do away with the need for quarantines or further testing when travelling between the EU's 27 countries or four associated European nations (Iceland, Norway, Switzerland and Liechtenstein). All EU member states were connected to the digital certificate system on Thursday except Ireland, which was hit by a cyber-attack targeting its health service in May and plans to have it operational on July 19.

But a surge in the Delta variant, first detected in India and now quickly gaining ground elsewhere, could trigger an "emergency brake" provision suspending the certificate's acceptance. Already Germany has a ban on incoming travellers from Portugal, where the Delta variant has become dominant. Only its own citizens or residents are allowed in from Portugal, and they must quarantine for two weeks upon arrival. Berlin's decision has raised Brussels' ire, with EU Justice Commissioner Didier Reynders saying on Wednesday that "we should avoid travel bans" within the EU and stressing that Germany should have consulted with its partners first.

The startling rise in Delta cases in former EU member Britain, with a rolling two-week infection rate more than seven times that of the bloc, is generating deep concern on the continent. This week, Portugal, Spain and Malta all abruptly increased restrictions for travellers from the UK, although the three said they would accept fully vaccinated Britons. The World Health Organisation added to the une-

The Hague, July 1: Two doses of Covid vaccine appear to provide protection against the rapidly spreading Delta variant of the coronavirus, the European Medicines Agency said on Thursday. The upbeat assessment came as the World Health Organization warned that the variant first spotted in India could fuel a new wave of cases in Europe.

The EMA's head of vaccine strategy, Marco Cavaleri, said the Amsterdam-based watchdog was "aw-

● **RIGHT NOW** it seems the four vaccines approved in the European Union are protecting against all the strains circulating in Europe, including the Delta variant

MARCO CAVALERI, Head, European Medicines Agency

are of concerns caused by the rapid spread of the Delta variant."

● **We should avoid travel bans**" within the European Union. — DIDIER REYNDERS EU Justice Commissioner

ase by warning Thursday that Covid case numbers in Europe were on the rise once again, up 10 percent after two months of decline, because of a loosening of social restrictions and increased travel. The darkening context could limit the effects of the EU certificate. "There is no doubt that the tourist industry could do with a boost in time for the summer season," economic research consultancy Capital Economics said in a note.

But it forecast the EU certificate "will have very little impact on European tourism this year", observing that "most adults are not fully vaccinated and the Delta variant is making people and governments more cautious".

Airlines grouped together in an umbrella lobby group, A4E, have expressed worries that an "inconsistent approach" among EU countries in vetting the EU Covid certificate could create lengthy lines in airports with the potential to "create new health hazards". They called for the certificates to be checked online before travellers even arrived at the airport. There were scenes of problems at Brussels' airport early Thursday as the first day of school summer vacation in Belgium, an airport strike in neighbouring France.

— AFP

"Right now it seems the four vaccines approved in the European Union are protecting against all the strains circulating in Europe, including the Delta variant," he said. "Emerging data from real world evidence are showing that two doses of vaccines are protective against the Delta variant." Four vaccines are currently approved for use in the EU: Pfizer/BioNTech, Moderna, AstraZeneca and Johnson & Johnson.

— AFP

W.H.O.: VACCINATE AT LEAST 10% OF POPULATION IN EACH COUNTRY

London, July 1: Voicing concern over many countries failing to vaccinate their people, WHO chief Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus on Thursday called for vaccinating at least 10 per cent of the population of every country by September, at least 40 per cent by the end of the year, and at least 70 per cent by the middle of next year. "Vaccine equity is not just the right thing to do. It's the best way to control the pandemic and reboot the global economy," the WHO chief said as he warned that "until we end the pandemic everywhere, we will not end it anywhere". "Vast inequities in the access to vaccines are fueling a two-track pandemic. While some countries have reached a high level of coverage, many others don't have enough to vaccinate health workers, older people & other at-risk groups," the World Health Organisation Director General said at the virtual India Global Forum. Asserting that when some countries cannot

vaccinate, it's a threat to all countries, Ghebreyesus called for a global effort to vaccinate at least 10 per cent of the population of every country by September, at least 40 per cent by the end of the year, and at least 70 per cent by the middle of next year. "Vaccine equity is not just the right thing to do. It's the best way to control the pandemic and reboot the global economy," the WHO chief said as he warned that "until we end the pandemic everywhere, we will not end it anywhere". Globally, the Coronavirus has infected over 18.2 crore people and killed nearly 40 lakh, according to Johns Hopkins University. India has recorded more than 3 crore cases and registered 400,000 deaths.

— PTI

Washington, July 1: People who contract Covid-19 even after vaccination are likely to have a lower viral load or quantity, experience a shorter infection time and have milder symptoms than unvaccinated individuals, according to a study of mRNA preventives in the US.

Researchers noted that while Covid-19 vaccines are proving to be highly effective in preventing infection, no vaccine is 100 per cent effective, and breakthrough infections — infections after immunisation — do occur.

"If you get vaccinated, about 90 per cent of the time you're not going to get Covid-19," said Jeff Burgess, a professor at the University of Arizona Health Sciences in the US. "Even if you do get it, there will be less of the virus in you and your illness is likely to be much milder," Burgess said.

The study, published in the *New England Journal of Medicine* on June 30, involved 3,975 health care personnel, first responders, and other essential and frontline workers in the US. From December 14, 2020, to April 10, 2021, the participants completed weekly SARS-CoV-2 testing by providing nasal swabs for qualitative and quantitative RT-PCR analysis, the gold standard for testing for Covid-19.

Among the participants, SARS-CoV-2 infections were identified in five participants who were fully vaccinated and 11 who

TREATMENT FOR
BLOOD CLOTS DUE
TO VAX FOUND

Toronto, July 1: Scientists in Canada have found a new lifesaving treatment for people suffering from rare blood clots associated with Covid-19 vaccination. The researchers at the McMaster University recommend a combination of anti-clotting drugs and high doses of intravenous immunoglobulin to combat vaccine-induced immune thrombotic thrombocytopenia (VITT).

VITT is a rare side effect of adenoviral vector vaccines against Covid-19. It occurs when antibodies attack a blood protein, which results in activation of platelets in the blood, causing them to clump together and form clots.

The treatment, described in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, has proven effective in three Canadian patients.

— PTI

were partially vaccinated, as well as in 156 unvaccinated participants. The research found that participants who were partially or fully vaccinated with the Pfizer and Moderna messenger RNA vaccines at the time of infection had a viral load that was 40 per cent less than that of unvaccinated participants.

— PTI

Russia booster shots amid spike

Moscow, July 1: Russian health authorities on Thursday launched booster vaccination for those who had been sick with Covid-19 or immunised more than six months ago, an effort that comes amid a surge in new infections and deaths. Moscow Mayor Sergei Sobyanin said he had received a booster shot and urged city residents to follow suit. "In view of the difficult epidemiological situation today, doctors

recommend having booster shots six months after vaccination," Sobyanin said on his blog. "I'm pleading with you not to miss a chance to get additional protection from the virus, which is particularly important amid the spread of a more aggressive delta variant."

Moscow health authorities on Thursday started offering booster shots with the domestically produced, two-shot Sputnik V vaccine and its one-shot

Sputnik Light version.

Other Russian regions are also starting to offer booster shots. Health Minister Mikhail Murashko told a government meeting Tuesday that the ministry has issued guidelines allowing those who contracted Covid-19 to get vaccinated six months after they recovered, and those who have been immunised to get booster shots six months after their first vaccination. Health authorities said that the more conta-

gious Delta variant of the virus has accounted for the bulk of recent new infections in Moscow and some other regions. The nation's chief sanitary doctor, Anna Popova, confirmed Tuesday that the authorities also registered the first contagion with the Delta Plus variant. The new guidelines come as infections in Russia soar and vaccination rates lag behind many other nations.

— AP

SOARING | PRICES

Berlin to vote on bid to combat housing crisis

Berlin, July 1: Berliners are to vote on a referendum to force major property companies to sell thousands of their flats to the city, officials said Thursday as the election-year issue of high rents grows more charged.

A grassroots petition campaign fuelled by anger over surging housing costs submitted 183,711 valid signatures, "more than the total required" of around 172,000 to put the question to a general ballot, the Be-

rlin election supervisor said. Local officials must now set a date for the vote, which is widely expected to be held on September 26, the same day as elections for a new federal parliament and Berlin government. The "Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co." initiative, named after Berlin's biggest property group, targets companies with more than 3,000 apartments in their portfolios.

The movement would like to see more than 240,000 homes placed under a public agency to be administered "democratically, transparently and in the public interest". In a city of 3.7 million residents where more than 80 percent rent their homes, the capital's attractiveness to investors and structural lack of housing sent prices soaring by nearly 85 percent between 2007 and 2019.

Berlin's city-state government already moved to freeze rents for five years

from 2020 in a bid to halt runaway gentrification, but the federal constitutional court ruled that policy to be illegal in April.

"Expropriate Deutsche Wohnen & Co." bases its claims on Article 15 of the German constitution, which stipulates that "land, natural resources and means of production may.. be transferred to public ownership" in the public interest in return for compensation. Adopted in 1949 with the founding of the

West German state, the article was long forgotten during the Cold War with its tensions between capitalist West and communist East.

Deutsche Wohnen owns around 111,000 of an estimated two million rental apartments in Berlin and in May announced plans to merge with fellow real estate giant Vonovia.

It sharply criticised the initiative's aims as counterproductive "because it doesn't create a single

square metre of additional living space".

"We need more housing built to ease the market pressure, that is why we will be stepping up building in the coming years in Berlin," a company spokesman said.

The city's Social Democratic mayor Michael Mueller has also rejected the referendum, arguing that he would prefer "partnerships with the private sector" to develop more housing.

— AFP

DECCAN Chronicle

2 JULY 2021

SC nudge on Covid ex gratia exposes govt sloth, red tape

The Supreme Court's directives to the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) to frame guidelines for paying ex gratia compensation to victims of Covid-19 and to the governments to simplify the process of certification of deaths due to the pandemic have come as a big relief for a large number of people. The directives also expose the sloth that has become part of the character of the government even in the face of a national crisis and the love for red tape while dealing with the lives of worst-affected people in a given point of time.

The court's decision has come against the government's position that it did have the money but its focus is on providing food, medical care, oxygen, vaccination and on supporting the economy and not to pay compensation to the kin of four lakh odd people who have lost their lives due to the pandemic. The court, however, did not buy the argument and told the government that the relevant section of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005, says that the NDMA shall recommend guidelines for the minimum standards of relief to be provided to persons affected by disaster, which shall include ex gratia assistance on account of loss of life. The government cannot run away from its responsibility, the court reminded it.

The court's decision has come against the government's position that it did have the money but its focus is not on helping the kin of the four lakh people who have lost their lives

The government's argument not only sounded specious but also revealed its disdain for the legal responsibilities when it comes to bringing succour to the most vulnerable sections of people during a national disaster. The government conveniently forgot the fact that it had invoked the appropriate sections of the Act while dealing with the pandemic but chose to ignore those that talked of compensation. The court refused to accept the government interpretation of the law dealing with compensation as "recommendatory"; it is instead mandatory and statutory, the court said.

The judges who chastised the NDMA, the statutory body headed by the Prime Minister and vested with the power and responsibility to form a national strategy to face disasters, saying it failed to perform its duty but refrained from fixing the quantum of the compensation and instead left it to the wisdom of the executive. The court, in fact, limited itself to interpreting the law and reminding the government of its duty; it did not transgress the boundaries that separate the two branches of government.

The court's direction to streamline the process of certifying Covid deaths has not come a day earlier. Several state governments have been following a pattern that did not count a death as a Covid death if it comes after the victim tested negative for the virus. This is in fact not in conformity with the international practice and has two inimical impacts. One is that several deaths, which had indeed been caused by the virus, would not be counted, resulting in the denial of compensation to the relatives. The second is that it would deny the decision-makers the advantage of reliable and accurate data to analyse and take decisions on the ways to resist the pandemic. A simplified and transparent death certification process would hopefully reverse the practice.

Fuel price paradox

A minister remarked facetiously in relation to rising fuel prices that cycling is good for health. The middle and lower classes may wish to send him by bullock cart to a school of economics so that he may understand what damage high fuel taxes can inflict on the economy that is just about to emerge from the depths of a Covid-hit slump. While petrol is selling at above ₹100 a litre and diesel is inching to those heights in multiple regions, the price of cooking gas is hitting the roof too, raised as it was by ₹25 per cylinder on Thursday.

The cascading effect of the fuel price rise is reflected in price escalation in goods as milk to cement prices spiral and services. The effect was visible in retail inflation ruling at six per cent, which helps explain somewhat the sharp rise in cost of living. For governments, at the Centre and in the states, fuel is a weapon to raise revenues at a time of a sluggish economy as lockdowns are technically still in force in many parts of India. In the last 12 months, the government's take from fuel tax was a phenomenal ₹5.6 lakh crores, with the Centre taking a lion's share as most recent increases were in the form of cess and surcharge among many other levies.

A study showed how the Centre could easily cut fuel price by ₹4 to ₹5 per litre and not suffer a dip in revenues as demand would climb when the economy takes off again with post-Covid consumption. However, low hanging fruits like liquor and fuel sales, with very few hazards for the treasury to mop up the money, are too tempting. Paradoxically, India raised taxes on fuel, of which it imports about ₹8 lakh crore worth annually, when international prices were hitting the bottom at \$30 per barrel last year but are now ruling at \$70. Consumption is being taxed whereas corporate taxes have been reduced. This is not an economic riddle so much as a disaster in waiting that will put our economic recovery in jeopardy.

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Subhani



Covid's impact, WFH has hit India's women harder



Patralekha Chatterjee

Dev 360

What does being a homemaker and a mother really mean for the vast majority of Indian women? In an essay in *The Atlantic* last year, Helen Lewis, journalist and author of *Difficult Women: A History of Feminism in 11 Fights*, pointed out some home truths which resonate with millions of women across the world. "When people try to be cheerful about social distancing and working from home, noting that William Shakespeare and Isaac Newton did some of their best work while England was ravaged by the plague, there is an obvious response: Neither of them had child-care responsibilities."

For millions of people in many parts of the world, things have not changed that much.

In India, the situation is particularly stark as a new analysis from the Centre for Global Development reconfirms. The Global Childcare Workload from School and Preschool Closures During the Covid-19 Pandemic, by Charles Kenny and George Yang of the US-based think tank, estimates that women around the world each provided as much as an additional 173 hours in childcare for free during the pandemic. This is about three times more than men (59 hours). The figures from India are even more extreme.

According to the study, which draws on published data from multiple sources including Unesco and OECD, the estimated additional unpaid childcare burden per woman because of pandemic-related care burdens between January and October 2020 in India was 360 hours. The corresponding figure for men was 33 hours. The unpaid childcare burden per woman in India in a "normal" year is estimated to be 2,380 hours. None of this should

come as a huge surprise to anyone in India not totally removed from ground realities.

Everyone, including Bollywood, pays tribute to motherhood. Think of Shashi Kapoor's iconic line from that 1975 blockbuster *Deewar* — "Mere paas Ma Hain". A noble sentiment. But pedestalising mothers can lead to motherhood being rarely unpacked in terms of the extra hours of unpaid work in the popular discourse.

Women's unpaid care work has emerged as a big issue among progressive economists in recent years. But millions of women in India, as in many other countries, are still socialised into accepting the notion that it is "natural" for women to be tasked with unpaid domestic work. And they should not complain.

But when we talk about women's "natural" role in the context of unpaid work, what is traded off, and at what cost?

The first-of-its-kind pan-India time use survey (TUS), released by the ministry of statistics and programme implementation last year, tossed up some telling data. The survey, that covered 4.5 lakh persons aged six years and above, across 1.4 lakh households in India, offers valuable information about the activities performed by every individual and the time spent in each of these activities during January-December 2019. The respondents were asked to recall what they did during the last 24 hours of the day of the survey.

Unsurprisingly, Indian men were found to have spent a lot more time in remunerated work. Their participation in paid employment was found to be around 57.3 per cent, compared to women, whose participation rate was only 18.4 per cent.

However, when it came to unpaid work such as cooking, cleaning or unpaid caregiving, looking

after children or adults, women were way ahead. Every day, women spent nearly five hours in unpaid domestic work; for men, the corresponding figure was one hour and 37 minutes.

Sona Mitra, a feminist economist, associated with the Initiative for What Works to Advance Women and Girls in the Economy (IWWAGE), has drawn attention to related troubling issues in her public presentations: according to OECD (2014) data, women in India spent an average of 5.6 hours a day in unpaid work, compared to 52 minutes a day for men (same source); ILO 2018 shows on an average women in India spent 297 minutes per day on unpaid care work, as against 31 minutes by men (in paid work, women spend only 160 minutes, compared to 360 minutes by men).

Ms Mitra points out the multiple implications of unpaid care work for women — it means increased stress and less time for many other things which women may want to do; it means reduced income earning potential, missed opportunities for upgrading skills, education, socialisation, and also leisure and entertainment.

Most important, it means entrenching the sexual division of labour, furthering gender inequalities and creating an intergenerational cycle of "unpaid work" for girls and women. The bottomline — it leaves women with fewer options and choices in life, with all attendant consequences.

While working from home may open up more opportunities for a small section of middle class and upper middle class women, for millions of others, including large numbers of not-so-poor women, the closure of schools and childcare

Unpaid care work means entrenching the sexual division of labour, furthering gender inequalities and creating an intergenerational cycle, with all attendant consequences

centres, etc., during the pandemic has made things much tougher.

In an article in the *Economic and Political Weekly* in May 2020, Ashwini Deshpande, professor of economics at Ashoka University, presciently flagged these issues. "South Asia, India and Pakistan in particular, have among the most unequal norms of sharing domestic chores and housework. Will the WFH (work from home) regime, where middle class families have to manage without helpers, propel men to share the domestic work burden more equitably than they have done in the past? Will the pandemic shift the social norms of sharing of domestic work? Only time will tell."

"Going forward", wrote Prof. Deshpande, "we should use this crisis to overhaul the current system that prevents women from entering the workforce and when they do, by not rewarding them enough".

We can do this, she added, "by recognising the myriad facets of women's work, the need for adequate compensation, putting support structures in place that allow for an equitable sharing of domestic chores and care work, and most important, creating favourable opportunities for work and livelihoods within a conscious anti-discriminatory policy framework".

In India, less than a quarter of women are a part of the labour force. Globally, India has amongst the lowest rates of female labour force participation, with only parts of the Arab world lagging behind us. Worryingly, this trend shows scant signs of reversal. India's workforce continues to rapidly masculinise.

This must change, so that not only Indian women, but India realises its true potential. We must have an honest discussion about what being a mother and homemaker really mean in the India of 2021.

The writer focuses on development issues in India and emerging economies. She can be reached at patralekha.chatterjee@gmail.com

LETTERS

TRACTOR SCHEME

As most of our state population is dependent on agriculture, the state government is providing so many sops to farmers. It is highly appreciable that the government purchased nearly 16,000 tractors for each village to plough for free as small farmers end up paying approximately ₹1,000 every single time to private persons. Farmer need to plough a minimum of four times a year. If this scheme starts, the government can provide employment to 16,000 drivers.

K. Murali Mohan
Visakhapatnam

COVAXIN DEAL

Ever since Covaxin got emergency use authorisation before completing the mandatory three phase testing, it has attracted controversy within the country and abroad (*Brazil suspends Covaxin deal, DC, July 1*). Yet a lot of people all over the country are administered this vaccine without any significant side effects. However, by suspending the deal, Brazil did the right thing under the circumstances. The probe should throw light on all aspects of the deal and either prove or disprove the allegations.

Govardhana Myneedu
Vijayawada

WATER DISPUTE

It is disconcerting and unsettling to read the water dispute between Telangana state and Andhra Pradesh. Water issues have always been sensitive and give rise to strong emotions. Instead of resorting to blame games, the Chief Ministers or their representatives must sit together and make an earnest effort to resolve the issue amicably. Putting the ball in Centre's court will lead to rigmarole and zilch.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

China can make 40 N-bombs

NEW DELHI, JULY 1. China is now capable of producing about 40 nuclear bombs of 20 kilo ton capacity annually, according to "an estimate" the Defence Ministry said today in its annual report for 1970-71.

The report did not disclose the origin of the estimate.

It said China may now have stock-piled about 150 nuclear bombs and a small number of thermo-nuclear bombs.

Zahid Hussain



Civil war looms: Taliban to take Afghans back to mess of 1990s

With the revival of armed regional militias to stop the Afghan Taliban offensive, Afghanistan is edging towards a new civil war. Headed by old mujahideen warlords, these armed bands are fighting along the Afghan government forces in some areas, but in many cases they are defending their own regional fiefdoms.

It appears that we are returning to the 1990s following the downfall of the Najibullah government when several mujahideen groups fought each other, plunging Afghanistan into a devastating civil war and killing thousands of Afghans. Those events saw the rise of the Taliban movement, which swept away warlord rule and established the so-called Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. But the warlords returned to power after the American invasion. The withdrawal of the foreign forces and the looming threat of a Taliban takeover compelled them to raise their

own forces. They don't seem to have much faith in government security forces to protect them. Some three decades later, the same former mujahideen commanders are again arrayed against their old nemesis.

Most prominent among them are Abdul Rashid Dostum, Ismail Khan and Ata Muhammad — the same old faces that symbolise four decades of conflict in Afghanistan. The Taliban offensive in northern Afghanistan in recent weeks has been a major reason behind the revival of the militias representing different ethnic groups, particularly the Tajik and Uzbeks.

Over the past weeks, the insurgents have achieved some spectacular successes in the region that has never been considered their stronghold. The Taliban are generally seen as a Pakhtun-dominated movement, with eastern and southern Afghanistan as their main support base.

The Taliban have overrun many

northern districts and have besieged some major towns. They now control major roads leading to Mazar-i-Sharif. In many areas, Afghan government soldiers have abandoned their posts without any fight. In some cases, the soldiers have joined the insurgents. The Taliban now control the main border crossing with Tajikistan, a main trade route. While these militia movements have helped reinforce the government forces fighting the Taliban in many northern districts, they have also strengthened the warlord fiefdoms, thus weakening the authority of the government in Kabul.

Some analysts, however, contend that these militias may eventually serve as the last line of defence, with the security forces unable to counter the Taliban onslaught. But there is also the question of whether these ragtag armed groups can stand their ground against a more committed enemy.

The Taliban's success in the north

has not come as a surprise. While consolidating their military and diplomatic gains, the Taliban have also sought to secure the support of communities it had fought in the past in order to present themselves as a national movement. The Taliban had traditionally relied on ethnic Pakhtuns, but made a clear shift to recruit members of other ethnic groups with a view to expanding their area of influence.

Over the years, the insurgent group made significant inroads into the non-Pakhtun belt in northern Afghanistan and inducted several Tajik and Uzbek commanders in its ranks, giving them more operational autonomy. The non-Pakhtuns assumed important positions in the Taliban leadership and held key posts in the provinces.

The changing ethnic profile of the group was evident in the fact that non-Pakhtuns now constituted a quarter of the Taliban leadership council and its various commissions. Members of eth-

nic minorities were also handed out senior positions as provincial and district shadow governors and zonal commanders. By inducting Shia Hazaras, the Taliban wanted to make themselves more acceptable by presenting themselves as a multiethnic, multi-sect force. As an example, the Taliban appointed a Shia ethnic Hazara as its shadow district chief before the intra-Afghan peace talks. The hard-line Sunni Taliban had been previously blamed for persecuting the minority group during its stint in power. The Hazaras largely inhabit the central Afghan provinces.

The Taliban also leveraged the peace deal with the US to their advantage in order to woo regional ethnic groups. With the withdrawal of US forces, joining the Taliban had once again become a serious option for many people and groups in Afghanistan.

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52,318.60	-0.31
Nifty 50	15,680.00	-0.26
S&P 500*	4,308.61	0.26
Dollar (₹)	4,305.76	0.19
Pound Sterling (₹)	1.466	0.022
Euro (₹)	88.38	0.004
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,310	526 1.13
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	75.76	1.53
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.039	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.456	0.012

* As of 8:30 PM IST

QR code printing on B2C invoices deferred till Oct.

The government has extended the implementation of printing dynamic QR codes on B2C (business-to-consumer) invoices generated by businesses by three months till October 1. QR code printing on B2C invoices by large businesses having an aggregate turnover of over Rs 500 crore was originally envisaged to be rolled out from October 1, 2020. However, the CBIC has been deferring its implementation.

Special drive on to promote govt crop insurance



In a major outreach, the Centre has launched a special drive to enrol more farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). A week-long drive, starting July 1, will cover all notified areas under the kharif 2021 season with a special focus on 75 aspirational districts where crop insurance penetration is low. PMFBY, launched on Jan. 13, 2016, aims to give a comprehensive risk cover to farmers at low premium.

Srei Infra board okays ₹2,500-cr fundraising

Srei Infrastructure Finance's board has approved a plan to raise up to ₹2,500 crore through various means, including public offer and QIP. Earlier, its subsidiary Srei Equipment Finance Ltd (SEFL) attracted investment proposals of ₹4,200 crore from foreign investors. Singapore-based Makara Capital Partners offered a term sheet for an investment of ₹2,200 crore by way of infusion of capital.

Biocon official barred from mkt for 3 months

The Sebi has restrained a Biocon's senior VP Shreehas P. Tambe from the securities market for three months and levied monetary penalty for insider trading. Biocon had announced collaboration with Sandoz and the period of unpublished price sensitive information was from Dec. 20, 2017 to Jan. 18, 2018. Tambe, being an insider, traded in the shares of the firm during Dec. 19-27, 2017, in violation of market norms, Sebi said.



All sellers in the network have to register with DPIIT Registration must for direct selling players

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JULY 1

Direct selling entities like Amway, Avon, Herbalife and Modicare as well as millions of sellers operating in their networks will now have to register with the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), as per the new rules proposed by the government. The entity should also have one physical location as a registered office in India.

The draft rules also says direct selling entities cannot charge entry or registration fee or the cost of equipment/ materials for sales demonstration from their agents.

As per the proposed Consumer Protection (Direct Selling) Rules, 2021, notified by the Ministry of Consumer Affairs late



Wednesday, every direct selling entity which intends to operate in India and every direct seller operating in the network will need a registration number from the DPIIT.

The rules define direct selling entity as an entity which sells or offers to sell goods or services through direct sellers but does not engages in a pyramid scheme or money circulation scheme. A direct seller is a person appointed or authorised by a direct selling entity.

In India there are more

than 450 registered direct selling companies and several others which are not registered. As per the new rules, not just the entity, but the individual sellers who are part of the network also will have to register with the DPIIT. According to the World Federation of Direct Selling Associations, India had 5.7 million direct sellers in 2018-19.

Rajat Banerjee, vice chairman, Indian Direct Selling Association (Idsa), welcomed the government's move. "However,

there are a few areas, Idsa needs to engage in discussion with the government," he said.

Aseem Sood, MD, Proveda Marketing India, said, "Registering with the DPIIT will increase the trust customers have with the company and individual participants."

No direct selling entity or direct seller should promote a Pyramid Scheme or Money Circulation Scheme in the garb of doing direct selling business. In such schemes there is transaction of money without sales of goods and services. The entity shall appoint a grievance officer as well as a chief compliance officer as a nodal contact person.

Also, anyone offers to sell any product of a direct selling entity on an e-commerce platform must have prior consent of the entity.

Cadila applies for Covid vaccine approval

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, JULY 1

Zydus Cadila has applied for emergency use authorisation to the DCGI for its three-dose Covid vaccine, which has achieved primary efficacy of 66.6 per cent. Once approved by the Drug Controller General of India, it will be the second home-grown Covid vaccine and the fifth to be cleared for use in the country.

The company plans to manufacture 10-12 crore doses annually.

ZyCoV-D is a three-dose Plasmid DNA vaccine, which produces the spike protein of the Sars-CoV-2 virus when injected. Primary efficacy of 66.6 per cent has been attained for symptomatic RT-PCR positive cases in the interim analysis and 100 per cent accuracy for the third dose on moderate disease.

The company conducted the clinical trial for its vaccine in India in over 50 centres and has tested in adolescent population in the 12-18 years age group.

Around 1,000 subjects were enrolled in this age group and the vaccine was found to be safe and very well tolerated.

"As the first ever plasmid DNA vaccine for human use, ZyCoV-D has proven its safety and efficacy profile in our fight against Covid-19. The vaccine when approved will help not only adults but also adolescents in the 12 to 18 years age group," said managing director of the company Sharvil Patel.

"We expect to produce 1

crore vaccine doses per month from August onwards and 5 crore doses by December this year. Our target is to produce 10-12 crore vaccine doses in a year," Patel said. Once the vaccine gets approval, the company plans to launch ZyCoV-D in 45-60 days.

The vaccine has to be stored at 2 to 8 degrees Celsius but has shown good stability at temperatures of 25 degrees for at least three months, says the company. This makes it easier to transport and store.

MANUFACTURING PMI DIPS IN JUNE

MADHUSUDAN SAHOO NEW DELHI, JULY 1

India's manufacturing industry contracted in June for the first time since July last year, as the Covid second wave forced containment measures that impacted demand. As a result, renewed contractions were witnessed across all the sectors in factory orders, production, exports and quantities of purchases, a private survey showed on Thursday.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers Index, or PMI, showed that the index declined to 48.1 in June against 50.8 in May. "The latest reading pointed to a renewed deterioration in the health of the sector that was, however, moderate. The PMI averaged 51.5 in the opening quarter of fiscal year 2021-22, the lowest three-month figure since the same period one year ago," the survey showed.

Pollyanna De Lima, economics associate director at IHS Markit, said, "Companies became increasingly worried about when the pandemic will end, which resulted in downward revisions to output growth projections.

June car sales in high gear; demand rises

MICHAEL GONSALVES PUNE, JULY 1

Car manufacturers have driven a swift turnaround in wholesales in June and hope to continue the trend as they replenish low stocks with dealers even as orders pile up for popular models, fuelled by pent-up demand and consumers switching from public to personal transport.

In fact, reopening of dealerships and a low base of

VODA IDEA SEEKS MORATORIUM ON ₹8,200 CRORE SPECTRUM FEE

MOUMITA BAKSHI CHATTERJEE NEW DELHI, JULY 1

Cash-strapped Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) has approached the government to seek a one-year moratorium on payment of spectrum instalment of over Rs 8,200 crore, due in April 2022.

VIL, in a letter to the telecom secretary on June 25, has said it will be "unable to pay the instalment of Rs 8,292 crore due on April 9, 2022" due to "cash being used for payment of AGR (adjusted gross revenue) dues and the inability of the operations to generate the required cash in a predatory pricing situation".

As per the letter, seen by PTI, the company has requested the Department of Telecom to grant it another year of the moratorium to pay this instalment in April 2023 and has made it clear that "it is almost inevitable" that the firm will not be able to pay the amount in April 2022.

VIL has also said that while it is working on raising new funding for the last six months, "investors are not willing to invest in the company because they believe that unless there is a significant improvement in consumer tariffs, the health of the industry will not recover and they will incur a loss on their investment". —PTI

RBI Guv flags rising cyber-attacks as risk

Mumbai, July 1: The second wave of the pandemic took a "grievous toll" on India, but the dented economic activity has started recovering from late-May, Reserve Bank Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday.

In a first, Das flagged the rising data breaches and cyber attacks as a risk facing the economy, along with other risks like firming global commodity prices.

"The recovery that had commenced in the second half of 2020-21 was dented in April-May 2021, but with the wave of infections abating as rapidly as it had set in, economic activity has started to look up in late May and early June," Das wrote in his foreword to the bi-annual Financial Stability Report prepared by the RBI.

The report said the gross non-performing assets of banks have been stable at 7.5 per cent in March 2021—the same level as six months ago—but are expected to go up to 9.8 per cent in March 2022, as per its baseline scenario.

Das said the dent on balance sheets and performance of financial institutions in India have been much less than what was projected earlier, but was quick to add that a clearer picture will emerge as the effects of regulatory reforms fully work their way through.

He said capital and liquidity buffers at financial institutions are "reasonably resilient" to

BANKS TOLD TO TRACK RETAIL, MSME LOANS

Mumbai, July 1: The RBI on Thursday asked banks to monitor their exposures to the retail and small businesses, saying both the segments are witnessing high stress.

In its bi-annual financial stability report (FSR), the RBI also asked banks to shore up capital positions while favourable market conditions prevail, improve governance and remain vigilant in the context of global spillovers.

"The banking sector will be required to specifically guard against adverse selection bias while being alive to the credit demand from productive and viable sectors," the FSR said. —PTI

withstand future shocks.

The financial system is on the front foot to aid recovery, but the priority is to maintain and preserve financial stability, he said.

Domestic financial markets are also boosted by the strengthening signs of the pandemic's abatement, the growing pace and breadth of the vaccination drive and renewed hopes of the economy clawing back lost ground as it unlocks, he said.

Jet Airways creditors to recoup just 5% money

RAGINI SAXENA JULY 1

Lenders to Jet Airways Ltd stand to receive just about 5 per cent of what they're owed, another blow to banks in the nation that are growing increasingly accustomed to paltry recoveries.

The new owners of Jet Airways -- Dubai-based businessman Murari Lal Jalan and Kalrock Capital Management Ltd in London -- have proposed paying Rs 380 crore (\$51 million) of the Rs 7,810 crore they owe to financial creditors, according to a bankruptcy tribunal order tabled late Wednesday.

Some Rs 190 crore will be paid upfront within six months while the rest will come from the proceeds of issuing zero-coupon bonds. The new owners have also offered the lenders a 9.5 per cent stake in Jet Airways and a 7.5 per cent interest in Jet Privilege, the carrier's loyalty and rewards management company.

In India, recoveries for financiers from resolved

insolvency cases dropped to 39 per cent of dues as of March from 46 per cent a year earlier, Macquarie Capital data show. If the top nine cases by recovery are excluded, lenders received just 24 per cent of dues.

Jet Airways was India's biggest private carrier before it went belly up in 2019 under mounting debts.

Even though Jet Airways is closer to flying again now that its rescue plan has been approved, there are many challenges ahead for the grounded carrier. Jet Airways was planning to operate all its historic domestic slots, which went to other airlines in the time it wasn't flying, but the bankruptcy court didn't agree to restore them.

"The allotment of slots and their usage is like a constantly changing jigsaw puzzle," the order said. "A single slot therefore could not be left or kept idle. Besides, other airlines have utilised those slots for all these years." —Bloomberg

DROPS | THAT COUNT Many businesses are going to customers for money and offering great yields How crowdfunding can revive small businesses

TINA OREM NEW YORK, JULY 1

A pandemic-fuelled boom in crowdfunding has small businesses flocking to capital-raising platforms that experts say could help many companies get back to normal as long as small-business owners are able to launch effective campaigns.

Regulation on crowdfunding, in which companies raise capital from investors via government-monitored online platforms, has mushroomed in the last two years, going from about 100 million in 2019 to over 200 million in 2020, according to Chris Lustrino, founder and CEO of crowdfunding analytics and ratings firm

KingsCrowd. It's already exceeded the 200-million mark year to date in 2021, he adds.

Covid has been a massive boon to this market, Lustrino says.

When the pandemic disrupted traditional financing options, more small-business owners began looking for alternative funding sources; that made them more open to the ideas of crowdfunding and of capital as a commodity, he says. More investors got comfortable with crowdfunding during the pandemic, too.

There are so many angel investors and investors in general out there who had a lot of skepticism about putting money into private companies online,



Lustrino says. But suddenly that was the only way they could do these deals. And so almost overnight there was this total buy-in from the retail investor market.

Although crowdfunding is often associated with raising capital for new businesses, months of lockdowns have many small businesses exploring crowdfunding as a way

to get back to normal operations, according to Sherwood Neiss, a principal at Crowdfund Capital Advisors.

"What we're seeing is a lot of these small restaurants, local parlours, beauty salons, that type of thing, that were struggling during the pandemic are now going up to the customers and saying, 'Hey, I need 25,000, 50,000 to reopen, get us up and running,'" he says. And the businesses are offering great yields, if you think about it. Many of them are

7 per cent, 8 per cent, 9 per cent, which is a healthy yield for a short-term loan, and people don't have to pony up 25,000. The average investment is about \$700, he says.

Keys to an effective crowdfunding campaign: Crowdfunding may not be a good fit for small-business owners who are strapped for time or energy. Small businesses launching recovery-oriented crowdfunding campaigns should keep three things in mind, according to the experts.

Find a good fit: A small business may have more success on a platform that aligns with its mission and goals. Some crowdfunding platforms cater to businesses in certain industries; others focus on geography or businesses of certain sizes. Look at how much money their companies have raised or are raising right now so you can start to get a sense

of how big their investor base might be. **Don't skip the legal work:** This isn't people just giving money to support someone...you have to file disclosures for investors. Templates and boilerplate language can go a long way, but have a lawyer review the final documents, says Neiss.

Promote your campaign: Campaigns that just go up there without any marketing behind them get zero, Neiss says. Targeted social media efforts, email outreach and in-store promotions such as QR codes with campaign information are popular. "I've seen people do really creative things like have an ice cream social," Lustrino says. —AP

PANDEMIC-HIT CAFE COFFEE DAY TAKES VENDING MACHINES BACK, JUNKS CABINS



New Delhi, July 1: As the Covid pandemic forces work-from-home and travel restrictions, Coffee Day Global Ltd, which operates the coffee chain Cafe Coffee Day (CCD), discarded about 30,000 custom-made cabinets used for vending machines at its customers' places.

According to a regulatory filing by Coffee Day Global Ltd (CDGL), parent firm Coffee Day Enterprises Ltd, a lot of vending machines installed by the company has been withdrawn from customers' locations in view of the pandemic situation.

CDGL on Wednesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 306.54 crore for the financial year ended March 31, 2021 and its revenue from operation was down 73.4 per cent Rs 400.81 crore.

According to CDGL, in the earlier year, to attract new customers, vending division of the company used to install custom-made cabinets at customers' locations. Custom-built cabinets are fixtures and cannot be removed and do not have any salvage value. "In this situation, 29,996 cabinets are discarded," it said. —PTI

SHORT TAKES

Dunkley dazzles in England's win

Taunton: Skipper Mithali Raj's second successive fifty went in vain as Sophie Dunkley produced a fighting half-century after Kate Cross' five-wicket haul to help England Women register a five-wicket win over India Women and grab an unsailable 2-0 lead in the three-match series here on Wednesday. Chasing 222 for a win, England batswomen couldn't capitalise on their starts to lose five wickets for 133 in 28.5 overs but Dunkley and Katherine Brunt produced a 92-run partnership for the unconquered sixth wicket to take the team home with 15 balls to spare. — *PTI*
Brief Scores: India 221 (Mithali Raj 59, Shafali Verma 44; Kate Cross 5/34) lost to England 225/5 (Lauren Winfield-Hill 42, Sophia Dunkley 73 (not out), Katherine Brunt 33 (not out); Poonam Yadav2/63).

12-yr-old Mishra is youngest GM

New Delhi: Indian-American prodigy Abhimanyu Mishra on Wednesday became the youngest ever chess Grandmaster after he scored his third GM norm in Budapest, Hungary, according to a report. The 12-year-old from New Jersey in United States became a GM from International Master, having crossed the required 2500 Elo rating barrier, chess.com website said. Mishra broke GM Sergey Karjakin's record that has stood for 19 years. On August 12, 2002, Karjakin, a world championship challenger in 2016, secured the Grandmaster title at the age of 12 years and seven months. Mishra, born on February 5, 2009, took 12 years, four months, and 25 days to obtain the highest title in chess, the website said. — *PTI*

Jhajharia rewrites own world record

New Delhi: India's greatest Paralympian, javelin thrower Devendra Jhajharia, rewrote his own world record once again as he punched his ticket for the Tokyo Paralympics during a national selection trial here. The 40-year-old, who has won two gold medals in the men's F-46 category at the Paralympics, sent the spear to a distance of 65.71m during the trial here on Wednesday. With that effort, he not only sealed a spot for the Tokyo Paralympics but also bettered his own world record of 63.97m, set at the Rio Games in 2016. "Today at the Jawaharlal Nehru Stadium in Delhi, I qualified for the Tokyo Paralympics by setting a new world record of 65.71, breaking my older record of 63.97 in a qualifying event," Jhajharia tweeted in hindi. — *PTI*

Fifteen athletes qualify for Tokyo

New Delhi: Star sprinter Dutee Chand, javelin thrower Annu Rani and 400m hurdler M. P. Jabir qualified for the Tokyo Olympics through world rankings as 15 Indian athletes and two relay teams were confirmed for the Games by the sport's world governing body on Thursday. Twelve individual athletes, including star javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra, booked automatic quota for the Olympics by breaching the qualification mark, while the trio of Dutee, Rani and Jabir, as well as the men's 4x400m relay team made it to the Games through rankings. Dutee was 41st and 50th respectively in the list of 56 athletes to compete in both the 100m and 200m events, while Rani was at 18th (out of 32) and Jabir at 32nd (out of 40). Long jumper M. Sreeshankar, shot putter Tajinder Pal Singh Touda, discus throwers Kamalpreet Kaur and Seema Punia qualified for the Olympics this year. — *PTI*

Live on TV

EURO

Quarterfinals: Spain vs Switzerland from 9.30 pm; Belgium vs Italy from 12.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2

COPA AMERICA

Quarterfinals: Peru vs Paraguay from 2.30 am (Saturday); Brazil vs Chile from 5.30 am (Saturday) on Sony Ten 2

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BELGIAN BAFFLE

Mystery remains over Belgian duo's fitness as Italy tie looms

Munich, July 1: Belgium are anxiously waiting on the fitness of stars Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard for their Euro 2020 quarter-final showdown against Italy on Friday. Thorgan Hazard fired Belgium into the last eight with the goal that knocked out holders Portugal, but the fitness of his brother Eden and De Bruyne is Belgium's main concern before facing the Azzurri in Munich.

De Bruyne came off early in the second half against Portugal with an ankle knock, while Belgian captain Hazard injured a hamstring late in the game. Neither trained on Wednesday with the Belgium's medical staff working around the clock to get them fit to face Italy. Coach Roberto Martinez admits neither player will probably be 100 percent in Munich, "but we will use every day to get them as fit as possible".

Manchester City midfielder De Bruyne is central to Belgium's hopes of reaching the semi-finals, where Spain or Switzerland would await next Tuesday.

Martinez is assessing his alternative options in attacking midfield. Atletico Madrid's Yannick Carrasco could replace Hazard, while Napoli forward Dries Mertens may step in for De Bruyne.

Martinez expects Italy to "attack from the very first second, they will be very structured", underlining the need for De Bruyne's presence to guide Belgium's counter-attacks.

Chelsea midfielder Jorginho, who faced De Bruyne's City in last month's Champions League final, has warned his Italy team-mates.

"De Bruyne is a player who makes the difference. We have to stop him because he always finds space. He can be really dangerous," said Jorginho.

With four dominant victories and three clean sheets so far at the Euro, the Belgians are living up to their billing as the world's top-ranked team. — *AFP*



Italy's Francesco Acerbi during a training session with his teammates ahead of the Euro 2020 quarterfinal against Belgium. — *Twitter*

Swiss eye another big scalp

St. Petersburg, July 1: Switzerland will try to follow up their shock elimination of world champions France at Euro 2020 against Spain on Friday against much-fancied quarter-finals of a major tournament for the first time in 67 years.

Vladimir Petkovic's side recovered from two goals down to force extra time against much-fancied France and prevailed on penalties as 2018 World Cup hero Kylian Mbappe missed the decisive spot-kick.

Now the Swiss hope to spring another surprise against a Spain team that has scored 10 times in two

games after a slow start to the group stage.

Alvaro Morata's redemptive strike helped secure a 5-3 extra-time win over Croatia, but Spain will need to cut out the errors if they are to contend for a record fourth European Championship.

The Juventus forward and his family had been subjected to abuse by fans in Seville after he missed a series of chances in the group stage.

History is on Spain's side against Switzerland, having lost just once in 22 meetings, a 1-0 defeat in South Africa that sparked their run to the 2010 World Cup title.

Sergio Busquets, the Spain captain, is the lone survivor from that team, while the Barcelona midfielder and Jordi Alba are the only two players in the squad left from their Euro 2012 triumph.

The win over Croatia was Spain's first in a knockout fixture since they beat Italy 4-0 to claim the second of back-to-back European crowns.

"The quarter-final depends on us not our rival. It wouldn't matter if it were France, the Swiss, Ukraine — we are here to win so we have to face and beat the best," said goalkeeper Unai Simon.

The Athletic Bilbao

50-50 CHANCE FOR KDB AND EDEN: COACH

Brussels, July 1: Kevin De Bruyne and Eden Hazard on Thursday were both absent from Belgium's final training session before their Euro 2020 quarter-final against Italy.

Coach Roberto Martinez said both players were "50/50" to feature against Italy in Munich on Friday.

"Italy will attack from the very first second; they will be very structured and dynamic. Every player knows his role. The game against Portugal was a game that could have been played a lot further down the line; usually players don't play these physical and intense games at this stage of the tournament," added Martinez.

Midfielder Thorgan Hazard said: "Italy will be the toughest opponent. They've had a good run of wins and it will be a nice challenge for us to end that sequence. Their style may suit us more than Portugal. They are enterprising so we may be able to profit from the open spaces." — *Agencies*

COPA | AMERICA



Brazilian star Neymar during a training session ahead of the Copa America quarterfinal. — *Twitter*

Neymar back for Chile clash

Rio de Janeiro, July 1: Defending champion Brazil and Chile will have their star players back in action when they meet in the Copa America quarter-finals on Friday.

Neymar will return for Brazil and Alexis Sánchez has recovered from a calf muscle injury ahead of the encounter at the Nilton Santos Stadium in Rio de Janeiro.

The Seleção spared a group of regular starters in the 1-1 draw with Ecuador on Sunday, resting Neymar, defender Thiago Silva and strikers Gabriel Jesus. Others, including Casemiro, entered as substitutes in that game.

Brazil, with three wins in four Copa America matches, are the clear favourites to win. Chile's only win in the group stage was against Bolivia and they are lacking the kind of form that inspired their back-to-back championship wins in 2015 and 2016.

The last memorable match between Brazil and Chile was in the Round of 16 at the 2014 World Cup. Regular time ended 1-1,

with goals by David Luiz and Sánchez. The Chileans almost beat the hosts in extra time, with a strike by Mauricio Pinilla hitting the bar in the last minute.

But Brazil won on penalties, 3-2 — Pinilla also missed his from the spot. Thiago Silva, who could start on Friday, was marked by that match for his tears of tension during the shootout.

"I didn't programme myself to get emotional. It just happened," Silva told a news conference on Wednesday. "I was labelled negatively for that moment against Chile. It was very sad for me for a long time, but it was also a learning experience so I could prepare myself for other objectives, decisive matches."

Sánchez missed Chile's group-stage matches and his absence affected the team's production; La Roja only tallied three goals, with Eduardo Vargas scoring twice and Ben Brereton once.

Coach Martin Lasarte is yet to decide whether 32-year-old Sánchez will start against Brazil or come off the bench. — *AP*

HUMPY, PRANEETH JOIN RATNA NOMINEES LIST

New Delhi, July 1: Olympic-bound shuttler B. Sai Praneeth and Kidambi Srikanth have been nominated for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna award by the Badminton Association of India, which has also recommended three players for the Arjuna award.

Praneeth, who won a bronze medal at the 2019 World Championship, is the only men's singles shuttler to have qualified for the Tokyo Games.

Srikanth has been struggling of late but won four titles in 2017.

The Badminton Association of India (BAI) nominated HS Prannoy, Pranav Jerry Chopra and Sameer Verma for the Arjuna honour. The federation also sent

applications of S Muralidharan and PU Bhaskar Babu for the Dronacharya award.

Leroy D'sa and PVV Lakshmi have been nominated for the Dhyanchand award.

Reigning women's world rapid chess champion Koneru Humpy has been nominated for the prestigious Khel Ratna award by the All India Chess Federation (AICF).

Humpy is already a recipient of the Arjuna award and Padma Shri.

Also, seven other players — Vidit S Gujrathi, B Adhiban, S.P. Sethuraman, M R Lalith Babu, Bhakti Kulkarni and Padmini Rout have been nominated for the Arjuna award, AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan said. — *PTI*

SANIA-BETHANIE UPSET 6TH SEEDS IN FIRST ROUND

London, July 1: Sania Mirza and her American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands knocked out sixth seeds Desirae Krawczyk and Alexa Guarachi to move to the second round of the women's doubles event at the Wimbledon Championships, here on Thursday.

Sania and Mattek-Sands were a bit rusty at the start but once they got their rhythm they dominated the match and won 7-5 6-3 against the American-Chilean combination in one hour and 27 minutes. Pressure was put on the pair early in the match when Mattek-Sands served the third game that featured seven deuce points. — *PTI*

NOVAK, ROGER, NAOMI ON ENTRY LISTS FOR TOKYO

Wimbledon, July 1: Serbia's Novak Djokovic, Switzerland's Roger Federer, Japan's Naomi Osaka and Australia's Ash Barty are on the entry lists for the Tokyo Olympics that were announced on Thursday by the International Tennis Federation.

As the ITF noted, though: "The entry lists are still subject to change." Federer, for one, said last weekend he would wait until after Wimbledon ends on July 11 to decide whether he will head to Japan.

Djokovic would like to pursue a Golden Slam, something only Steffi Graf has done: winning all major tennis tournaments and an Olympic singles gold medal in the same year. — *AP*



Poland's Magda Linette plays a shot against Ukraine's Elina Svitolina during their second round match at the Wimbledon Championships on Thursday. — *AP*

THE RESULTS

Men's singles: Second round: Christian Garin (CHI x17) bt Marc Polmans (AUS) 7-6 (7/3), 6-2, 2-6, 7-6 (7/5); Roberto Bautista Agut (ESP x8) bt Miomir Kecmanovic (SRB) 6-3, 6-3, 6-7 (3/7), 3-6, 6-3; Aljaz Bedene (SLO) bt Yoshihito Nishioka (JPN) 6-1, 6-0, 6-2; Alexander Zverev (GER x4) bt Tenny Sandgren (USA) 7-5, 6-2, 6-3; Cameron Norrie (GBR x29) bt Alex Bolt (AUS) 6-3, 6-1, 6-2
Women's singles: Second round: Katerina Siniakova (CZE) bt Coco Vandeweghe (USA) 4-6, 6-2, 6-2; Anastasiya Sevastova (LAT) bt Marta Kostyuk (UKR) 1-6, 6-4, 6-3; Barbora Krejickova (CZE x14) bt Andrea Petkovic (GER) 7-5, 6-4; Magda Linette (POL) bt Elina Svitolina (UKR x3) 6-3, 6-4; Paula Badosa (ESP x30) bt Yulia Putintseva (KAZ) 6-4, 6-1; Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (RUS x16) bt Kristyna Pliskova (CZE) 6-3, 6-3; Karolina Muchova (CZE x19) bt Camila Giorgi (ITA) 6-3, 5-7, 6-3; Shelby Rogers (USA) bt Maria Sakkari (GRE x15) 7-5, 6-4.

bly hard," said Barty.

COCO MAKES ANOTHER RUN

Back on Centre Court, Coco Gauff beat an opponent twice her age to reach the third round at Wimbledon.

The 17-year-old American defeated 34-year-old Russian veteran Elena Vesnina 6-4, 6-3 to keep her on track for making another run into the second week at the All England Club. — *Agencies*

2 UAE cricketers banned for fixing

Dubai, July 1: The ICC on Thursday banned two UAE players Amir Hayat and Ashfaq Ahmed for eight years after they were found guilty of trying to fix T20 World Cup qualifying round matches in their country, colluding with an Indian bookie.

While the ICC's Anti-Corruption Tribunal had charged both the Pakistan-born cricketers back on September 13, 2020, the backdated quantum of sentence was passed on the day.

"The bans are backdated to 13 September 2020, when they were provisionally suspended for corrupt conduct in relation to the ICC Men's T20 World Cup Qualifier 2019 in the UAE," the ICC release stated.

Both cricketers had taken 15,000 AED (United Arab Emirates Dirham totalling USD 4083 approx) from an Indian bookie, identified as Mr 'Y' in the ICC charge-

Both cricketers had taken 15,000 AED (United Arab Emirates Dirham totalling \$4,083 approx) from an Indian bookie.

sheet for fixing the qualifying round games. Hayat is a medium pacer while Ahmed is a batsman.

As per ICC's anti-corruption code, the duo has been charged on five counts which includes failure to disclose a corrupt approach, trying to improperly influence the outcome of a match, and accepting gifts worth more than \$750.

"In October 2019, the ICC ACU commenced an investigation into allegations that members of the UAE senior international team may have had dealings with a known corruption network controlled by an Indian man named," the release said. — *PTI*