

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 14 JULY 2021

WEATHER



Max: 31.4°C
Min: 26.0°C
RH: 89%
Rainfall: 001.1

Forecast: Drizzle.
Max/Min temp.
31/26 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Ashada Shuddha
Chaviti till 8.01 am
Star: Purva Phalguni till 3.41 am
(Thursday)
Varjyam: 11.39 am to 1.16 pm
Durmuhurtam: 11.56 am to 12.47 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Zilhajj 3,1442 AH
PRAYERS
(ROYAL MOSQUE)
Fajar: 5.05 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.19 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.36 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.30 AM
MOONSET TODAY 10.00 PM
MOONRISE TOMORROW 9.08 AM

COUNTER POINT



He used to stand up and salute us when we were in the Cabinet!

SHORT TAKES

₹35,000cr GST detected in 1 yr

New Delhi: In the year-long crackdown on tax evasion, the GST authorities have unearthed over ₹35,000 crore of tax fraud committed by misuse of input tax credit provision under the GST regime. During the FY2020-21, the CGST zones and the DGGI booked about 8,000 cases involving fake ITC of over ₹35,000 crore, a CBIC statement said. Under this regi-me, at the time of paying tax on output, entities can reduce the tax they have already paid on inputs.

Deuba becomes Nepal premier

Kathmandu: Nepali Congress president Sher Bahadur Deuba on Tuesday became Nepal's Prime Minister for the fifth time after the Supreme Court's intervention. President Bidya Devi Bhandari appointed the Opposition leader as the prime minister in accordance with Article 76(5) of the Constitution. This is the fifth time that 75-year-old Deuba is returning to power as the Nepal PM. ■ Full report on Page 5

S&P keeps India rating unchanged

New Delhi: S&P Global Ratings on Tuesday kept India's sovereign rating unchanged at the lowest investment grade of 'BBB-' for the 14th year in a row, and said the government's ability to execute additional economic reforms that spur investment and create jobs will be crucial for recovery from the current slowdown. S&P projected a 9.5 per cent growth in the current fiscal that began in April. ■ Full report on Page 7

Monsoon covers entire country

New Delhi: After advancing over Delhi-NCR, the Southwest Monsoon covered the entire country on Tuesday after a delay of five days, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said. The Southwest Monsoon usually covers the entire country on July 8. The earlier normal date for the monsoon to cover the entire country was July 15. Last year, the IMD revised its onset date for several areas.

WORLD | 5

Pak schools plan anti-Malala drive

SPORTS | 8

Messi dedicates Copa title to Maradona

TABLOID

Are you a picky eater? It maybe ARFID

CM appoints 3 ministers to implement land protection scheme Panel to oversee land scheme

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 13

Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy has announced that a committee with three ministers would be appointed for the effective implementation of Jagananna Saswatha Bhuraksha scheme. He advised officials to form these panels with ministers of municipal administration, panchayat raj and revenue departments.

Jagan held a review meeting on Panchayat Raj and rural development in the CM camp office at Tadepalli on Tuesday. He asked officials to construct village Secretariats, village clinics and digital libraries by year-end and render good service to people. The CM also asked them to complete geo-tagging and review the progress of construction of those buildings. "Start the



works on infrastructure facilities in these colonies on apriority basis. Give importance to the cleanliness drive programme in the villages," he said. The chief minister accorded permission for launch of 14,000 tricycles in villages and 1034 autos in urban areas.

While 23,747 green ambassadors and 4,482 green guards were on duty for door-to-door collection

of garbage across the state, approval was given to recruit an additional 11,453 green ambassadors and 5,551 green guards.

It was decided to use heavy machinery for waste management. Some 9148 incinerators, 3,279 mist blowers, 3197 bush cutters, 3130 hypertension toilet cleaners, 165 portable thermal fogging machines and 157 shuddering machines were

arranged, officials said. Officials said PPE kits were distributed to all green ambassadors and green guards.

The CM asked officials to focus attention on maintenance of garbage collection vehicles and disposal of PPE kits. The solid and liquid waste management system in villages and towns should be implemented properly. A Clean Andhra Pradesh would be possible only if municipal and panchayat raj departments work hand-in-hand, he said.

Jagan asked officials to make arrangements for collection of wet wastage in rural areas and asked them to display a special number in villages for collection and shifting of garbage to treatment plants.

■ Page 2: YSR Jala Kala to lakhs of farmers: Jagan

SC to hear plea against HC verdict

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI JULY 13

The Supreme Court on Tuesday said it will hold the final hearing on July 22 on the Andhra Pradesh government's plea against the Andhra Pradesh High

Court's September 15, 2020 order against coercive action against former advocate general Damalapati Srinivas.

The state's plea was also against the High Court order against investigation and gagging of the

media from reporting the First Information Report (FIR), while it had "cold-shouldered" the state governments' plea to remand that matter back to high court.

The Supreme Court had on September 25, 2020, also

lifted the state's curbs on the media against reporting the FIR in the Amaravati land case allegedly involving Dammalapati Srinivas.

■ Page 2: No coercive steps will be taken

State strips Praveen off GAD in CMO

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JULY 13

The Andhra Pradesh government has finally stripped controversial bureaucrat Praveen Prakash, who was principal secretary to Chief Minister, of the additional charge of the General Administration Department (political).

Chief secretary Adityanath Das on Tuesday issued orders relieving Praveen Prakash and placing another CMO official Muthyala Raju in full additional charge of the department that handles matters relating to cabinet and All India Services officers.

Sources said the replacement of Praveen Prakash was done as part of Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy's decision to streamline the CMO functioning. The dual role of Praveen Prakash has led to some problems and the administrative process was derailed, a senior official said, adding that several orders were issued without knowledge of the chief secretary or of the departmental heads.

Praveen Prakash was said to have insisted on having the GAD (political) charge also, when he joined the CMO about two years ago.

■ Page 2: Praveen sought CM's permission to go back

FORMER INDIA CRICKETER YASHPAL DIES

New Delhi, July 13: India's 1983 World Cup hero Yashpal Sharma, who was admired for being a gutsy middle-order batsman at the peak of his prowess, died on Tuesday after suffering a massive cardiac arrest here.

He was 66 and is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son.

Yashpal collapsed at home after returning from his morning walk here.

The former cricketer was cremated at the Lodhi Road crematorium with his former teammate Kirti Azad among those in attendance.

■ Obit, tributes on Page 8

TTD may adopt Israeli tech for temple security

PATHRI
RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, JULY 13

The TTD Vigilance and Security Wing has been asked to examine the possibility of adopting Israeli technology for providing a foolproof security cover for Tirumala, both to the temple and the multitude of visiting pilgrims, since the technology is believed to be the best.

TD executive officer, Jawahar Reddy, said security in Tirumala shall be further strengthened with new technology. He, along with additional EO Dharma Reddy and chief vigilance and security officer Gopinath Jatti inspected the Common Command Control Centre at PAC (pilgrims amenity centre)-4 in Tirumala on Tuesday.

During the visit, the CVSO thoroughly explained the functioning of the centre with the help of power point presentation. He had explained to the EO with some video clips about how their personnel prevent wild animal intrusion in living

areas using automatic sirens and diverting them back to the woods.

Gopinath Jatti gave details on how thieves, dalaris and cheats are caught hold with the help of CCTV footages inside the temple, at the hundi, at PACs, the Akhilandam and laddu counters.

He also explained how missing children are reunited with their parents, how unauthorised hawkers are being identified etc.

The CVSO said efforts are on to transform Tirumala into a crime-free pilgrim centre. Of the 1,654 CC cameras installed in the hilltown, 1,530 were integrated with the command control a facility to alert mobile vehicle-bound security personnel on their tabs immediately if any crime is committed in their region.

A few more CC cameras will be linked to the C-Cube Centre to aid the functioning of the TTD vigilance staff, he said.

TTD EO said the TTD vigilance and security wing is setting an example to other places of worship

with its state-of-art hi-fi security apparatus.

Later, the TTD EO felicitated 30 vigilance personnel including a woman guard who had excelled in discharging their duties and presented them with cash awards as a token of appreciation of their services. Thereafter, the TTD EO also inspected the CC cameras in Vaikunta Queue Complex 2 and made some valuable suggestions to officials.

VGO Bali Reddy, AVSOs Veerababu, Gangaraju and Pawan were also present.

The TTD EO inspected the rooftop slab works of the Alipiri footpath on Tuesday, walking down the route from the Sri Lakshmi Narayana temple to the Seventh Mile Prasanna Anjaneya Swamy.

He urged CE Nageswara Rao to complete these works by this September as the annual Brahmotsavams are scheduled for October. He also inspected the works of the Alipiri footpath between Rajagopuram and Galigopuram.

PM warns people of 3rd Covid wave

Calls for staying alert, avoiding crowding

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JULY 13

Crowded marketplaces and hill stations may be good for the revival of the economy, but they are also a cause of worry and an invitation for a possible Covid-19 "third wave", Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday as he expressed concern over people crowding at hill stations and markets without wearing masks or observing the social distancing norms. He urged all citizens to guard against complacency to prevent a third wave of the coronavirus.

India on Tuesday recorded 32,906 fresh cases of Covid-19 and 2,020 deaths. The big jump in daily fatalities was because Madhya Pradesh revised its Covid-19 death data. MP is the third state after Maharashtra and Bihar to revise its Covid death figures.

"If we remain cautious and take precautions, we will be able to prevent the third wave... there should be no compromise in this," the PM said during an interaction with the

INDIA'S FIRST COVID PATIENT TESTS POSITIVE

Thrissur(Kerala), July 13: A woman medico, who was India's first Covid-19 case, has tested positive again for the virus, health authorities said here on Tuesday.

"She is reinfected with Covid-19. Her RT-PCR is positive, antigen is negative. She is asymptomatic," Thrissur DMO Dr K.J. Reena said.

Her samples were tested as she was prepared to go to New Delhi for study purposes. The woman is presently at home and "she is OK," the doctor said. It was on January 30, 2020 that the third year medical student from Wuhan university tested positive for Covid, becoming India's first Covid patient. —PTI

chief ministers of the northeastern states on the Covid-19 situation.

The interaction was attended by the chief min-

isters of Assam, Nagaland, Tripura, Sikkim, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur and Arunachal Pradesh.

The PM expressed his worry over the growing number of cases in some districts and stressed the need to detect these signals and take strict action at the micro level.

Noting the fast-mutating nature of the virus, the PM advised strict monitoring of the mutation and keeping track of all variants. He said the experts were studying the mutations and their impact, adding: "In such a scenario, prevention and treatment are critical."

Acknowledging the impact of the pandemic on business, he warned against crowding at hill stations without observing proper precautions.

Rejecting the argument that people want to enjoy life before the arrival of the "third wave", he said that it needs to be understood that the "third wave" will not come on its own.

The Prime Minister said that the main question in our minds should be how to prevent a "third Covid wave". —PTI

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Temple Street, Kakinada, Ph: 0884 666 6640 | Shyamala theater jn., Rajamahendravaram, Ph: 0883 660 1777

SHORT TAKES

YSR JALA KALA
TO LAKHS OF
FARMERS: JAGAN

From Page 1

The chief minister said six lakh women were benefited by sustainable livelihood efforts under YSR Cheyutha and YSR Aasara schemes this year. He directed the officials to ensure there are no marketing problems to them. Sign contract with only such companies that have a wide range of marketing capabilities, he told officials.

Jagan said the YSR Jala Kala project will be helpful to lakhs of farmers. Officials must focus on effective implementation of the project.

The CM said, "Construct check-dam type structures near bridges on small rivers across the state so that water can be stored upto 3-4 feet. These structures will help increase ground water level," he said and advised the officials to prepare an action plan.

The officials explained to the CM the progress of various works under the Rural Development department. While discussing on the Jagananna Pacha Thoranam, they said this was targeted to plant saplings in schools and hospitals as part of the Nadu Nedu scheme.

The officials also briefed the CM on the progress of YSR Bima, Jal Jeevan Mission and the progress of rural high-ways construction works.

Panchayat Raj and rural development minister PR Reddy, Panchayat Raj principal secretary Gopala Krishna Dwivedi, Panchayat Raj commissioner Girija Shankar, SERP CEO Raja Babu and Swacha Andhra Corporation MD Sampath Kumar were present. commissioner Girija Shankar, SERP CEO Raja Babu and Swacha Andhra Corporation MD Sampath Kumar were present.

PRAVEEN SOUGHT
CM'S PERMISSION
TO GO BACK

From page 1

He turned controversial with the unceremonious exit of then chief secretary L.V. Subrahmanyam.

Issue of several GOs by Praveen Prakash in his capacity as GAD principal secretary and memos fixing cabinet agenda also turned out to be the bone of contention between him and the subsequent chief secretaries.

At one stage, he sought permission of the CM to go back on central deputation, but the move was halted with the Centre denying him empanelment as joint secretary.

COMPLAINT LODGED
OVER CANCELLATION
OF CM'S BAILDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 13

The YSR Congress lodged a complaint with AP CID over the rumours spreading in various social media platforms about cancellation of bail of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on July 14 and predicting untoward incidents after delivering of the judgement.

YSRC state general secretary and MLC Lella Appi Reddy lodged the complaint Additional Director General, CID, P.V. Sunil Kumar on Tuesday. Mr Appi Reddy said that an article being circulated on WhatsApp and other social media platforms in which it was stated that the bail of CM Jagan would be cancelled by the Court in the petition filed in the CBI court by MP K. Raghurama Krishnam Raju.

He said that the article stated that on the day of bail revocation, Telugu Desam party chiefs and activists should take precautions as well as a section of the people in Anantapur, Kadapa, Krishna, Guntur and Prakasam districts. He said that recalling the untoward incidents of 1988 and 1991, the article predicted repeating the same type of untoward incidents which is creating a lot of fears among masses.

Mr Appi Reddy the article caused panic among the people of the state, provoking a section of the people and deliberately mocking the personality of the CM despite knowing that it is sub-judicial to talk about cases in the courts.

He alleged that the media has fabricated this article in a way that creates conflicts between castes and religions with false allegations.

Heavy rains badly damage
Polavaram approach roads

Cofferdam construction work completed only up to 39 meters: Official

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JULY 13

The approach roads to Polavaram project site are badly damaged due to rains for the past few days and vehicles are not able to move at normal speed to carry materials. Therefore, the project work is getting slow and it is getting delayed. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy was scheduled to visit the project site on Wednesday, but the programme was cancelled. At present, the cofferdam construction work has been completed up to 39 meters.

Polavaram irrigation project superintendent engineer K. Narasimha Murthy said the cofferdam work in the upstream of the project could be completed up to 42.5 meters by the end of July and the downstream work could be completed from 24-26 to 30 meters simultaneously. He said in spite of the adverse conditions, cofferdam works both upstream and downstream - are going on. But due to the damage of roads, work has become slightly slow.

Construction of the world's largest spillway bridge slab has been completed and concrete work and grouting works in the gallery are going fast. Twelve more cylinders have to come from Germany and it is also equipped with 24 power pack sets required to operate the gates.

With these, 48 gates can be lifted at once and two gates can be operated with the help of one power pack. Already 42 gates have been raised and floodwaters have been released to the bottom. The installation of 10 river sluice gates at Polavaram spillway and 20 hydraulic cylinders installed on them and already 10 river sluice gates are being raised and water is being released to the bottom. The Mega Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd is carrying out the project work.

Meanwhile, backwaters are flooding villages and already people of five villages have been evacuated and people of many villages are moving to safer places and nearby hillock areas. The backwaters in-



Flood water discharge from Polavaram project on Tuesday.

Bad weather puts CM's
visit to Polavaram on holdDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 13

The proposed visit of Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to Polavaram national project has been cancelled due to rainy weather conditions. The Chief Minister was scheduled to visit Polavaram on Wednesday to review the progress of works. According to officials, Jagan would visit Polavaram project next week and inspect the ongoing works. The Polavaram project works picked up speed despite the Coronavirus crisis and heavy floods. The construction of the world's largest spillway bridge slab has been completed. Concrete work and grouting works in the gallery are going on at a fast pace.

According to officials, Jagan's supervision, continuous works of officials and the speed with which Megha Engineering & Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) carried out the works have brought

undated Kothuru-Polavaram Road and cut off the transportation to 19 villages of Polavaram mandal in West Godavari district. The officials arranged a boat for the people to come to Polavaram for their daily needs like buying

essential commodities and other official works. People said backwaters engulfed the villages and there was no chance to live in their villages. Some people moved to rented houses. Jangareddy RDO Y.V. Prasanna Lakshmi said

gallery is going fast. In addition to the government's intention, MEIL has so far done 2,98,034 cubic meters of concrete work on the spillway with the project. Of the 48 gates to be set up for the spillway bridge, 42 gates have been set up. These gates are to be fitted with 96 hydraulic cylinders while 84 hydraulic cylinders are already fitted and the rest of 12 cylinders have to come from Germany. The excavation work on Polavaram approach channel has been completed at a record level by diverting Godavari flow into the spill channel under which about 6.6 km of the Godavari River was diverted from left to right, creating an engineering marvel.

The construction of the upper cofferdam and lower cofferdam is in full swing. Jagan would review the Polavaram works during his visit.

due to inundation of Kothuru road with backwaters, 19 villages had been affected out of which residents of five villages had been totally moved to rehabilitation colonies nearby. She said there was no flood in the River Godavari at present.

CM clears canal to Madakasira

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JULY 13

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has planned a ₹212 crore exclusive project to fill all irrigation tanks in Madakasira assembly segment by constructing a separate parallel canal from Handri Neeva Sujala Shrawanthi (HNSS) project.

This canal is being designed to reach all five mandals of Madakasira without getting into the jurisdiction of neighbouring Karnataka state. Sources told *Deccan Chronicle* that the separate parallel canal from Gollapalli reservoir in Penukonda mandal will reach Kallummarri tank in Madakasira mandal.

There is, in fact, no direct access to

Madakasira from Penukonda without passing through 10 km of Pavagada taluka in Tumkur district of Karnataka.

Geographically, Madakasira is located at the south west end of state at the highest point from the sea level. Tanks can be filled only by lifting water by pumping from other areas.

Groundwater resources in Madakasira area are poor. It is difficult to get water even at depths of 800 ft. In all, 334 villages, including Madakasira municipality and four mandal headquarters frequently face drinking water crises even during rainy season.

This is despite Sri Ramireddy Drinking Water Project pipeline

BJP DOUBTS
GOVT'S SINCERITY
IN R&R PACKAGESDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JULY 13

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state president Somu Veerajulu said there should not be any cut-off date for implementing the rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R) packages and all those who crossed 18 years should be made eligible for the benefits.

He, along with his team visited, R&R colonies at Peda Bhimpalli-2 and Indukuru-1 in Devipatnam mandal and Krishnuniapalem in Gokavaram mandal of East Godavari district on Tuesday. He questioned the sincerity of the state government in implementing the R&R package.

He said the BJP would exert pressure on the state government to implement R&R packages and other assistance to the Polavaram victims and also it would take all issues related to Polavaram irrigation project to the notice of the Union government. He said the Union government had sanctioned ₹11,000 crore for the project for the past four years out of which ₹4,000 crore was spent for R&R issues. He advised the state government to release ₹3,000 crore immediately for R&R to the victims in a war-footing manner as many of the villages were facing backwaters threat.

He said it was not enough that the state government focused on constructing the dam, but equal importance should be given to implementation of the R & R package to the victims. Veerajulu said the infrastructure in R&R colonies, already built, was in a bad shape and the state government should address all these problems.

He visited the relay fast camp where victims like T. Veerababu and others are taking up agitation for achieving R&R package and rendered his support. He advised the government to take steps to address the issue of victims.

He visited the relay fast camp where victims like T. Veerababu and others are taking up agitation for achieving R&R package and rendered his support. He advised the government to take steps to address the issue of victims.

This led to MLA M. Thippeswamy convincing CM Jagan into helping this most drought-hit part of Rayalaseema region.

The parallel canal running for about 27 km from Gollapalli reservoir towards Kallummarri will help in filling more tanks in the area. In addition, the CM has also agreed to sanction ₹80 crore for filling about 200 tanks, including ponds, in Madakasira area.

YSRC leader M.Y. Rajesh from Madakasira has thanked MLA Thippeswamy for getting clearance from Jagan Mohan Reddy for the exclusive project.

PRICE | RISE

Outlets sell liquor at rates 25-30 per cent higher than MRP

Bars charge a bomb, tipplers make merry

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JULY 13

The abnormal prices of Indian Made Liquor (IML) and beer in bars have neither deterred the spirit of tipplers nor has it stopped them from visiting the dimly-lit liquor dens.

Almost all bars across the State, especially in Tirupati, were seen fully crowded during normal days, more so late into the evenings.

However, a section of the public, especially from the middle-class or lower middle-class community, are feeling the pinch as bars

charge them over and above MRP.

In Tirupati, IML brands are priced 25-30 per cent higher than MRP while it is 33-35 per cent higher when it comes to beer.

Excise officials state that there are no restrictions on bars and restaurants to sell liquor at MRP. They pointed out that the government sells liquor to bars at 50 per cent higher prices compared to government-run liquor outlets and hence the high cost in bars.

"Bars incur maintenance costs and have to

pay salaries to their employees. It is because of this that bar managements jack up the prices. Moreover, there are no restrictions on bars to follow the MRP rule, we will take action against them when they charge abnormally", Excise Inspector Tirupataiah told *DC*.

Meanwhile, when *Deccan*

‘No coercive steps
will be taken’

From Page 1

A bench comprising Justice Vineet Saran and Justice Dinesh Maheshwari directed that the matter be listed for final hearing on July 22. Senior counsel Rajeev Dhavan made a vain effort to persuade the court that the matter be remanded back to the high court and the state will withdraw its plea against the interim order of the high court.

Dhavan said no coercive steps will be taken against advocate general Srinivas but the investigations may be allowed to proceed.

Reiterating his earlier argument of an act of "regime revenge" against Srinivas, senior lawyer Harish Salve said the matter could be sent back to the high court provided the plea by the state government against the interim order of the high court is dismissed.

The argument of "regime revenge" was first used by Dhavan in a case against late Tamil Nadu chief minister Jayalalithaa. Dhavan said on Tuesday that he appreciated Salve using a phrase coined by him against him (Dhavan) in the matter before the

court.

During the September hearing, Salve had told the court that the entire action of the state government against former AG Srinivas was mala fide and it was a case of "regime revenge", as the former advocate general had appeared against the chief minister Jagan in several criminal matters. The court was informed that Jagan is facing 25 such cases.

On September 25, 2020, while lifting the gag order against the media, a top court bench comprising Justice Ashok Bhushan (since retired), Justice Subhash Reddy and Justice MR Shah, had however not interfered with the high court order against any coercive action against Damalapati Srinivasan, and putting on hold the investigation into the FIR.

While not issuing notice to chief minister Jagan as the high court too had not issued any notice to him in September last year, the top court, by its September 25, 2020 order had issued notice to the head of the state police, director general, the anti-corruption Bureau and the head of the State intelligence department.

TD lying about
loans, says YSRCDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 13

YSRC Congress government refuted the allegations of Telugu Desam Party leaders and PAC chairman Payyavula Keshav regarding ₹41,000 crore transactions and alleged that opposition parties were trying to create among people about debts of the State. Brushing aside the allegations made by PAC Chairman Payyavula Keshav, Minister for Finance Buggana Rajendranath Reddy clarified that there are complete details regarding the transactions of ₹41,000 crore and said it is one another false propaganda by the opposition TDP leaders.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, responding to the allegations that Andhra Pradesh is taking debt on Telangana State, minister Rajendranath Reddy clar-

ified that the two states have been paying back the debt incurred in joint Andhra Pradesh and there is no such provision of getting loan in the name of another state. He said that over 1.31 crore people have received welfare initiatives from the state government during the Covid-19 pandemic and there is no problem in paying salaries for the employees.

Minister Rajendranath Reddy said that the allegations made by PAC Chairman are completely baseless, which are more like creating misunderstanding over the State finances among the people. He said that the opposition has been making unnecessary politics based on CAG letters and stated that PAC should have discussed the issue with the government instead of writing letters to the Governor and conducting press conferences.

MINISTER REFUTES ALLEGATIONS OF
HUGE INCREASE IN PROPERTY TAXDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 13

Minister for endowment Vellampalli Srinivas Rao refuted allegations of opposition parties about putting huge financial burden on people through the new tax system and stated that the new property tax system is transparent and affordable. He alleged that Telugu Desam Party MP Kesineni Srinivas alias Nani, TDP MLA, Gadde Rammohan and other political parties misled people on the new capital value based tax system which is totally false.

Minister Srinivas Rao

toured the quarry center (Kummaripalem Road Ravindra Bharathi Public School), Sanjay Gandhi Colony, Kamakotinagar with Vijayawada city Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi and other Vijayawada Municipal Corporation officials. Public health and city officials have been instructed to address the drainage problem in the area.

The 22 divisions in the West will be developed as model divisions. The Minister distributed three types of dust bins to women as part of Swachh Bharat towards segregations of waste in three categories.

MRP printed on them. Incidentally, the manufacturing date on the bottle was May 29 of this year", he said. A reputed bar on Karakambadi road has been selling beer at ₹80 above its MRP.

"A beer of the Kingfisher brand with the MRP of ₹240 is being sold at ₹320 at this bar. They didn't even put up a price list. For fear of being branded as tipplers, we didn't dare to complain against them," said a denizen at a bar near Srikrishna Devaraya circle.

SHORT TAKES

DISCOM ASST
ENGINEER IN
ACB NETDC CORRESPONDENT
SRIKAKULAM, JULY 13

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) sleuths arrested K. Laxmanarao, an assistant engineer working for APEPD-CL at Rajam in Srikakulam district while accepting a bribe of ₹80,000 from a farmer who had sought new power connection to his agriculture borewell on Monday.

According to DSP of ACB B.V.S.S. Ramanamurthy, T. Dileep Kumar of Saradhi village of Rajam mandal dug a borewell for agriculture purpose and applied for electrical connection. He approached assistant engineer K. Laxmanarao, who demanded ₹1 lakh from him to provide the connection. After negotiations, the AE agreed to do the favour for ₹80,000.

However, later Dileep Kumar approached ACB and informed them about the bribe demand. After verifying facts, the DSP along with his team laid a trap and caught him red-handed while accepting the cash of ₹80,000 at his office in Rajam on Monday night.

“The AE was arrested and being produced before ACB Judge Court in Visakhapatnam soon,” the DSP told reporters.

DRONE ORIGIN NOT
YET IDENTIFIED IN
SRISAILAMDC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JULY 13

Even after two weeks of noticing drones moving suspiciously around Srisailem temple and other important structures, the police are unable to find out the reason for the drone which moved over them.

The authorities and staff of Sri Bramaramba Mallikarjuna Swamy temple of Srisailem were found flying of drone lightings over the Srisailem temple and surrounding areas during night times since from July 1 and it was spotted again for at least three four times. The lighting object had rounds on the sky near temple tops, executive officer quarter, outer ring road, Mallamma Kanneeru, Uttara Park, Viswamitra Matam, Reservoir and some other sites. It is said that at least three drones were flying several times to capture the pictures of temple and other sites, it said. However the temple official K.S. Rama Rao complained to the police in this matter on July 4. After receiving complaint, the Srisailem police led by circle inspector P.V. Ramana started search operations to trace this suspicious flying of drone.

When contacted Atmakur DSP Y. Shruthi said the appearance of the drone as was seen by temple authorities and some local people was questionable and can't be believed as there was no evidence to prove the same. She, however, said there is a possibility that a flight might have moved over the sky. In any case Srisailem police are investigating the complaint with help of technical teams.

CHANGE OF NAME AND DATE OF BIRTH

I, **TARA ASIRITHALLI** spouse of **Ex. No. 15209125P**, Sepoy, **SANTA RAO TARA** residing at Vomaravalli Village & Post, Gara - Mandalam, Srikakulam District (A.P.), PIN - 532 406 have changed my Name from **TARA ASIRITHALLI** to **TARA ASIRITHALLI** and date of birth from **14/06/1991** to **14/06/1990** vide Affidavit dated 09/07/2021 before Notary, Srikakulam - 532001 (A.P.)

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Residents suspicious
of Vizag slum survey

Corporator says people worried areas will be denotified

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 13

The poor and marginal population living in the slums are suspecting that the GVMC has taken up the high speed survey of the slums with an ulterior motive of demolishing them. The city has a slum population of 6.7 lakh, the highest in India after Mumbai. The corporation has recognised 793 slums as per Slum Development Act of 1956 where more 3.5 lakh people live under adverse conditions.

“The kind of information and documents the survey officials are seeking makes us suspicious of their moves,” said a daily wage earner living in Indiranagar slum in New Colony, close to Vizag railway station. He said the officials were seeking Aadhaar, bank account details, power bill, water bill, gas book and voter ID card.

City committee secre-

● The corporation has recognised 793 slums as per Slum Development Act of 1956 where more 3.5 lakh people live

● Residents would be located in temporary dwellings till the housing projects were completed, says Mayor

tary and corporator Dr B. Ganga Rao said the corporation has taken up the survey without announcing any development plans and the survey has been worrying the residents.

“The residents are suspecting that notified slums will be denotified in a bid to make the city slum-free. The officials have been announcing frequently that the city will be free from slums,” Ganga Rao said.

Minister for tourism Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao also announced last month that the survey

would be completed by the end of July. He also said beautiful parks would be developed without stating any alternative homes for the displaced persons.

Ganga Rao said the GVMC identified 793 slums and assured development. However, on the other hand announced that since Vizag has the distinction of having the highest number of slums after Mumbai, they would be denotified.

He said the Mayor and commissioner need to explain why the survey was not listed in the June 23 general council meeting and what was the urgency in the survey.

He said the slums were demolished in the past and not alternative accommodation was provided to the poor residents. As per GO, 40 per cent of the GVMC budget should be spent on slums but not a rupee has been spent so far, he said.

Most of the slums are

located in the lands belonging to Visakhapatnam port, Railways and other public sector undertakings. Around 156 slums are in private lands and the owners went to court seeking eviction. The GVMC is not providing any amenities to these dwellings yielding to the influence of land mafias, Ganga Rao alleged.

However, Mayor G. Hari Venkata Kumari assured that the pucca housing would be built for all the slum dwellers and the residents need not fear eviction.

“Survey is being conducted to collect comprehensive information of the residents to provide them housing and other facilities,” she said. She also added that alternative sites would be located where the slums were small in area. Residents would be located in temporary dwellings till the housing projects were completed, she said.

GVMC looks for funds
for 4 flyovers in VizagDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 13

The Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) is looking for funds from various sources to fund its ambitious flyover projects that were being proposed at four different points on the denotified National Highway-16 that cuts through the heart of the Visakhapatnam City.

“I had a discussion with the GVMC commissioner Dr G. Srijana on the resources to fund the four flyovers that became necessary to ease the ever growing traffic in Visakhapatnam,” said Mayor G. Hari Venkata Kumari while interacting with *Deccan Chronicle* on Tuesday.

She said the corporation on its own cannot fund the project as the resources became scant and expenditure was growing.

International or national financial institutions and related government departments might be roped into financing the project, she said.

Explaining about the present status of the project, she said that the GVMC technical experts were going through the draft DPR and suggesting changes to suit the present needs.

“The final DPR is likely to be submitted by the consultant by the end of this month,” she said, adding that the initial estimates put the cost at ₹1,200 crore.

The four flyovers with multi-level grade separators would come up in Gajuwaka, Satyam Junction, Hanumanthawaka junction and Car Shed Junction connecting Kommadi junction in the north to Kurmannapalem in the south close to Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

The Mayor said the

first flyover would be taken up at Hanumanthawaka, the busiest traffic junction in Visakhapatnam city. Vehicular flow from Simhachalam, Pendurthi and Sabbavaram and the frequent visitors to the Health City, where the top class corporate hospitals are located are choking the junction in the peak hours. She said the proposed ₹100 crore park at Mudasarlova Reservoir would also add to the congestion.

There has been a multi-fold increase in traffic which grew from a mere 3 lakh vehicles in 2005 to about 14 lakh vehicles as on date.

Superintendent Engineer of GVMC Ganesh Babu said the flyovers designs would be synchronised with the alignments of the proposed metro rail project from Anakapalle to Bhogapuram. The flyover pillars would also be supporting the metro rail, he said.

TRIBUTES PAID
TO DILEEP
KUMARDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 13

Members of Vizag Film Society paid rich tributes to legendary actor Dileep Kumar at a meeting held in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday. The veteran actor died in Mumbai recently at the age of 98.

In a brief condolence meeting organised by the Society at AU HRD Centre Hall, Prof. N.A.D. Pal, president, Narava Prakasa Rao secretary and Prof. O.S.R.U. Bhanu Kumar, director Yoga and Consciousness, Andhra University were present. Prof. Bhanu Kumar was the chief guest and garlanded the portrait.

New SP assumes charge

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 13

New SP of Krishna district Siddharth Kaushal, said that maintenance of law and order and safety of women are the top priorities. He assumed charge as the superintendent of police, Krishna district in Machilipatnam on Tuesday. As part of the statewide transfers of

IPS officers in the State, Siddharth Kaushal was transferred from Prakasam district to Krishna. He said welfare of the police department staff and making Krishna district free from crime are some of the priorities for him. He said justice will be done to the weaker sections, grievances of the individuals will be addressed and special

care will be taken to check the peddling of ganja, liquor from other states, sand smuggling. Additional superintendent of police Malika Garg, special enforcement bureau additional superintendent of police Vakul Jindal, additional superintendent of police Armed Reserve Satyanarayana, DSPs, circle inspectors and other staff greeted him.

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3	Eshararao Gundala	AHIPG8660R	Address 1: Flat No. 405, Bandaru Layout Seeligala, Nizampet Hyderabad - 500 090. Address 2: 8-3-1013/1, Plot No.28 Sunil Towers, Srinagar Colony, Yellareddy Guda, Flat No. 405 Hyderabad - 500 090; Address 3: S/o. Sanyasi Naidu D. No. 13-574/9/3 Sundarayya Nagar, Arilova Chinnagadili Visakhapatnam - 530040 Andhra Pradesh.	1187 of 2017 Dated : 31/05/2017
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Date: 02.07.2021 Place: Chennai Davp 15204/11/0126/2122				T. Vinay Rajneesh (Recovery Officer)

SHORT TAKES

INDIAN NAVY RECEIVES 10TH P-8I AIRCRAFT

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 13

Amidst it being used to keep an eye on Chinese in Ladakh, Indian Navy on Tuesday received its 10th long-range maritime reconnaissance anti-submarine warfare capable P-8I aircraft from Boeing.

The Indian Navy was the first international customer for the P-8 and today operates the largest non-US fleet.

This is the second aircraft to be delivered under an option contract for four additional aircraft that the defence ministry awarded in 2016.

Though P-8I are meant for sea operations, India had deployed them in Ladakh for reconnaissance and surveillance purposes amidst the ongoing stand-off with China.

It was first during the 73-day-long standoff at Doklam in 2017 with Chinese that India had deployed P-8I for surveillance purposes and were surprised with its capability even on land.

"I came to know about the capabilities of the P-8I anti-submarine warfare planes after they were deployed in Doklam for surveillance," CDS General Bipin Rawat, had said last year.

ONLINE CLASSES RESUME IN MADHYA PRADESH

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JULY 13

Private schools association in Madhya Pradesh called off its indefinite strike and resumed online classes on Tuesday.

Around 47,000 private schools affiliated to Madhya Pradesh higher secondary education board and Central board of secondary education had suspended online classes on Monday demanding waiving of annual recognition fee and resumption of physical classes at least for standard nine to standard 12 students.

The association, however, met here late on Monday night till early hours of Tuesday and decided to call off their strike in the interest of the students, the association said.

The association decided to continue to mount pressure on the state government to accept to their demands.

A rift in the association over the decision to suspend online classes indefinitely had caused the association to end the strike, sources said.

VIJAY TOLD TO PAY TAX ON HIS IMPORTED CAR

J. STALIN | DC
CHENNAI, JULY 13

The Madras high court on Tuesday criticised actor Vijay for his attempts to avoid paying entry tax as per the statute for the luxury car he imported saying people who paid their taxes properly are the real heroes. The court dismissed the actor's petition with a cost of ₹ 1 lakh and directed him to pay the tax in two weeks.

Vijay had approached the court seeking a restraint on the authorities from demanding or collecting entry tax on the new Rolls Royce Ghost car he imported in 2012.

"In the absence of payment of entry tax by the petitioner within two weeks, the authorities are directed to initiate all further actions by following the procedures as contemplated under the statutes for recovery of the entry tax from the petitioner as well as the consequential liability if any, as per the provisions of the act and rules," Justice S.M. Subramaniam said in his order.

The petitioner/actor has large scale fan groups and those fans are seeing him as real hero, the court noted. Cine heroes have become rulers in the state, the judge said, adding that they are not expected to behave like reel heroes.

Vijay had contended that he had paid import duty to the customs department. However, the regional transport officer, Chennai South, refused to register his vehicle without a certificate issued by the Customs saying no entry tax was payable for the vehicle. The Customs, however, took the stand that entry tax should be paid for the vehicle. Vijay contended that the Customs was imposing an extraordinary entry tax and that his vehicle was lying idle as it could not be operated on public roads without registration.

Security matters



Army soldier trains youths aspiring to join armed forces near Line of Control (LoC) between India and Pakistan border in Kausalian village of Poonch on Tuesday.

— PTI

Up in arms, West Bengal BJP MLAs quit House panel posts

Adhikari, BJP MLAs meet Guv over Roy's appointment as PAC chief

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, JULY 13

Eight West Bengal BJP MLAs jointly resigned as chairmen of various Assembly standing committees on Tuesday in protest of Mukul Roy's appointment as the public accounts committee (PAC) chairman even after his defection to the Trinamul Congress from their party.

They are Manoj Tigga, BJP legislative party chief whip, Anandamoy Burman, Ashok Kirtaniya, Nikhil Ranjan Dey, Bishnupada Sharma, Dipak Burman, Mihir Goswami and Krishna Kalyani.

They tendered their resignations to Assembly Speaker Biman Banerjee who appointed Mr Roy as the PAC head last week. The move is bound to affect the legislative work of the panels.

Led by leader of the

opposition Suwendu Adhikari, the BJP MLAs later met governor Jagdeep Dhankhar at Raj Bhavan and complained to him against Mr Banerjee's role in awarding the post of PAC head to Mr Roy against whom they already moved a disqualification petition under the anti-defection law.

Mr Adhikari said, "Eight of our party MLAs resigned from their posts as chairmen of the Assembly standing committees for the politicisation of the PAC post. The governor is the constitutional custodian of the Assembly. We sought his interference about the deprivation to us by the ruling TMC in the House. We, as the main opposition party, should have got the PAC post as per the norms but we did not. This is also the first time the rule was broken."

He added, "We have enough evidence against Mr Roy for his present political status. From the video footage of his entry to the TMC to his tweets, everything proves that he is very much in the TMC. Besides, his name for the PAC post was proposed by a TMC MLA. Still the speaker found him in the BJP and gave the post to him. It shows that the ruling party does not want it's financial corruption to be revealed. Next week, we will submit the copies of deputation to President Ram Nath Kovind and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla against the Assembly Speaker for his decision."

Lashing out at the Nandigram BJP MLA, TMC MP Sougata Roy however alleged, "Mr Adhikari has no knowledge of the Assembly rules in the appointment of PAC chairman. The post can go to any member of the House."

enough evidence against Mr Roy for his present political status. From the video footage of his entry to the TMC to his tweets, everything proves that he is very much in the TMC. Besides, his name for the PAC post was proposed by a TMC MLA. Still the speaker found him in the BJP and gave the post to him. It shows that the ruling party does not want it's financial corruption to be revealed. Next week, we will submit the copies of deputation to President Ram Nath Kovind and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla against the Assembly Speaker for his decision."

Lashing out at the Nandigram BJP MLA, TMC MP Sougata Roy however alleged, "Mr Adhikari has no knowledge of the Assembly rules in the appointment of PAC chairman. The post can go to any member of the House."

TMC TO ASK ELECTION COMMISSION FOR EARLY ASSEMBLY BYPOLLS

RAJIB CHOWDHURI
KOLKATA, JULY 13

West Bengal's ruling Trinamul Congress has decided to raise its demand to the Election Commission for early Assembly bypolls in the seven seats of the state following a significant drop in the Covid-19 infection rate.

It is likely to send a parliamentary delegation with the demand to the poll panel in New Delhi on July 15. It may suggest a seven-day campaign period from 10 am and 7 pm daily.

Sources said the TMC, which suspects the EC is working under the top BJP leadership's influence, fears that if there is a

delay in the Assembly bypolls in the event of a Covid-19 "third wave" by October-November, it may prevent its supremo Mamata Banerjee continuing as chief minister.

Ms Banerjee, who is a non-elected member of the Assembly due to her defeat to Suwendu Adhikari of the BJP at Nandigram, needs to win a seat in the bypolls and become an MLA within six months to retain her Chief Minister's chair.

She is all set to contest from her home turf, Bhowanipore, in the bypolls. The seat was recently vacated by state minister Sovande Chatterjee, who is expected fight from Khardah in North 24 Parganas.

AAP always recognised my vision: Sidhu

Chandigarh, July 13: Amid attempts by the Congress high command to resolve the infighting in the party's Punjab unit, party leader Navjot Singh Sidhu on Tuesday said the opposition Aam Aadmi Party has always recognised his vision and work for Punjab.

His remarks came a day after AAP Punjab unit chief Bhagwant Mann took a dig at the cricketer-turned-politician and asked him to tweet about the "funds" allegedly accepted by the ruling Congress from private power companies in the state.

"Our opposition AAP has always recognised my vision & work for Punjab. Be it Before 2017- Beadbi, Drugs, Farmers Issues, Corruption & Power Crisis faced by People of Punjab raised by me or today as I present 'Punjab Model', it is clear they know - who is really fighting for Punjab," Sidhu said in a series of tweets.

He said, "If the Opposition dares to question me, yet they can't escape my Pro-People Agenda ... This means they have resigned to their fate!"

Sidhu also shared old videos of AAP leaders praising him for raising his voice on several issues including the drug mafia and corruption during the previous SAD-



BJP regime.

On Monday, AAP leader Mann had alleged that the Punjab government was not scrapping the power purchase agreements (PPAs) signed by the erstwhile SAD-BJP government as the ruling Congress had accepted "funds" from the three private companies that have set up thermal plants in the state.

He asked Sidhu to tweet on this issue. "@sherryontopp Saab, If not anything else, we hope you could bother to at least tweet on the issue as you are used to," he said in a tweet.

Sidhu, who has been raising power supply-related issues through social media, had demanded that a white paper on PPAs signed during the previous SAD-BJP regime be released to make the Badals "accountable" to the people for these "corrupt agreements".

— PTI

'I am trying to avoid Dharmyuddha'

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC
MUMBAI, JULY 13

While senior BJP leader Pankaja Munde from Maharashtra has denied she was using pressure tactics against the party, she has also issued a veiled warning that she might take a drastic step in future.

"I am trying to avoid *Dharmyuddha*, but when I realise that there is no worth working here, I will see what to do," she said while addressing her supporters who came to Mumbai to meet her on Tuesday.

Pankaja was reportedly upset over the non-inclusion of her sister and MP Pritam Munde in the recent expansion of the union cabinet. Her several followers have resigned

from the BJP to protest the party's decision. Following this, Pankaja on Sunday attended a meeting of BJP national secretaries in Delhi convened by BJP president JP Nadda and also met Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

In her address to party supporters, the BJP leader indicated that she has been 'sidelined' by the party.

"I was told by the BJP to fill the form for Vidhan Parishad polls, but later was not selected. I accepted the party's decision. Pritam Munde's name was there in the reckoning for the union cabinet expansion, but instead Bhagwat Karad was made the minister. I welcomed that decision too," she said.

India's first Covid patient tests +ve again

Thrissur, July 13: A woman medico, who was India's first Covid-19 case, has tested positive again for the virus, health authorities said here on Tuesday.

"She is reinfected with Covid-19. Her RT-PCR is positive, antigen is negative. She is asymptomatic," Thrissur DMO Dr K J Reena said.

Her samples were tested as she was prepared to go to New Delhi for study purposes.

Then the RT-PCR result turned out to be positive, she said.

The woman is presently at home and "she is OK," the doctor said.

It was on January 30, 2020 that the third year medical student from Wuhan university tested positive for coronavirus, becoming the country's first Covid-19 patient, days after she had returned home following semester holidays. After nearly three weeks of treatment at the Thrissur Medical College Hospital, she had tested negative twice for the virus, confirming her recovery, and was discharged on February 20, 2020.

Meanwhile, two more persons, including a woman, tested positive for Zika virus in Kerala on Tuesday, taking the total number of infections in the state to 21.



Joined PM @narendramodis interaction with CMs of North Eastern states on the #Covid-19 situation earlier today. PM emphasised on #Test-#Track-#Treat-#Vaccine strategy to prevent the spread of #Covid-19. During the meeting PM stressed on debunking the myths against vaccination and on how important it is for the North-East to ensure 'Vaccination for All-Free for All' (sic)

— G. KISHAN REDDY
Minister of development of North Eastern region

A 35-year-old man, hailing from nearby Poonthura and a 41-year-old woman, native of Sash-tamangalam here, were found infected with the virus, state Health Minister Veena George said. She urged people to be vigilant as the number of those testing positive for Zika virus has increased in the state.

— PTI

AICC member urges Sonia to restrain Digvijaya

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JULY 13

All India Congress Committee (AICC) member Vishwabandhu Rai has written to Congress president Sonia Gandhi asking her to control Digvijaya Singh as he is angering the Hindu voters in order to please "a particular community's voters".

In his letter addressed to Mrs Gandhi, the AICC member said that Digvijaya Singh has angered the Hindu voters by raising the issue of reimposition of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir. Mr. Rai also sent a cartoon along with the letter. In the Cartoon, Mr.

Singh was portrayed as burying a coffin of the Congress party.

With the Subject line, "There is a dire need to rein in Digvijaya Singh's tongue", Mr.Rai, who was former Mumbai General Secretary and close aide of Sanjay Nirupam, said, "Digvijaya Singh has been continuously angering the Hindu voters of the party since 2003 when he was ousted from power in Madhya Pradesh. He is constantly trying to hurt the sentiments of Hindus to please only a particular section of the country's voters."

The letter has also gone viral and is being retweeted by the BJP leaders including Madhya

● ALL INDIA CONGRESS Committee (AICC) member Vishwabandhu Rai also sent a cartoon along with the letter.

Pradesh Home Minister Dr. Narottam Mishra.

"...Now it needs to be seen whether Mrs Gandhi takes action against Mr. Singh or supports his anti-Hindu statements," the senior BJP leader tweeted in Hindi. Mr Rai also claimed that the country's majority Hindu population considers the irresponsible statement of Digvijaya Singh as the official thinking of the Congress party. Due to this, the Hindu voter is continuously moving

away from the party. On the other hand, even his appeasement politics is not increasing his follower base. The former Mumbai Congress General Secretary claimed that Mr. Singh's rhetoric is also one of the reasons for the defeat of the Congress party in the assembly elections in Delhi after he termed the Batla House encounter as fake.

He also alleged that it was a well thought out strategy of Mr. Singh to name the world's deadliest terrorist Osama bin Laden with respectful words as 'Osama Ji'. The party has also suffered a lot due to this statement.

Cautioning the party high command about Mr.

Singh's role in upcoming assembly elections, Mr. Rai said, "His role (Digvijaya Singh's role) in the politics of Uttar Pradesh should be reviewed. The beginning of the disintegration of the Congress party in UP has started due to his unchecked statements from time to time."

The letter also said that the people have started viewing the Congress party as an anti-Hindu party.

"Please take my words seriously and start the process of locking Digvijaya Singh's tongue so that the Hindu population of the country is not hurt again and again," the letter mentioned.

CRUCIAL | POLICY

Two Private Member Bills on the issue likely to come up

Population Bill issue to echo in Parl

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JULY 13

With the BJP-ruled states of Uttar Pradesh and Assam taking the lead in initiating the process of population control measures - an issue which is hotting up in the political discourse - the coming Monsoon Session of Parliament can also expect to see heated exchanges between the treasury and Opposition benches as at least two private members' bills are likely to come up on the same issue.

While Lok Sabha MP

from Gorakhpur Ravi Kisen's private member's bill could come up in the first week of the session, Rajya Sabha MP Rakesh Sinha's bill is also waiting to get a date for introduction.

Mr Sinha asserts that a balance between resources and population is inevitable and population control "should not become a victim of the communal discourse".

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, during his Independence Day speech in 2019, had expressed concern over the population explosion

● While Lok Sabha MP from Gorakhpur Ravi Kisen's private member's bill could come up in the first week of the session, Rakesh Sinha's bill is also waiting to get a date.

in the country.

The proposed legislation on population control lays emphasis on disincentivising couples having more than two children, by making them ineligible for government jobs and subsidies on various facilities and goods given by the government.

After Assam and Uttar

Pradesh, the demand for a similar population control policy in another BJP-ruled state, Karnataka, has been raised by BJP national general secretary and MLA C.T. Ravi, who tweeted: "With the limited natural resources available, it will be difficult to meet the needs of every citizen if there is a population explosion."

Karnataka law minister Basavaraj Bommai has said that a decision will be taken after discussion and deliberation.

A Public Interest Litigation has been filed in the Supreme Court by

BJP leader Ashwini Upadhyaya seeking the introduction of a two-child norm or framing a new law to control births.

Meanwhile, slamming the government on the issue of price rise, the Congress on Tuesday said there is no respite from its "economic mess" and demanded that fuel prices and GST rates on mass-consumed goods be reduced to provide relief to the common people.

It also hoped that a joint strategy would be evolved by various parties to raise the issue in the upcoming session of Parliament.

SHORT TAKES

HERZOG, ERDOGAN TALK IN SIGN OF THAW

Jerusalem, July 13: Israel's newly inaugurated president spoke Monday with his Turkish counterpart, Recep Tayyip Erdogan, in a sign of a possible thaw after years of frosty relations between the two former allies.

President Isaac Herzog's office said in a statement that the two leaders emphasised "that Israel-Turkey relations are of great significance for security and stability in the eastern Mediterranean" and that cooperation had great potential for both countries. Israel and Turkey were once close regional partners, but relations between the two countries soured in the past decade. The Turkish government frequently criticises Israel's policies toward the Palestinians.

According to the Israeli President's Office statement, Herzog and Erdogan said that "ongoing dialogue despite all the differences of opinion" was important, particularly for advancing steps toward a two-state solution between Israel and the Palestinians.

Herzog took office last week after he was elected by the Knesset, Israel's parliament, in a June vote. He spoke Saturday with neighbouring Jordan's King Abdullah II after Israel and Jordan agreed to initiate negotiations for the sale of water to the Hashemite kingdom.

SCRIBE ATTACK: GEORGIA OPPN ASKS PM TO QUIT

Tbilisi, July 13: Opposition lawmakers in Georgia on Monday disrupted parliament to demand the prime minister's resignation after a TV cameraman died, blaming the ruling party for attacks on journalists. Alexander Lashkarava, who worked for independent TV news channel *Pirveli*, died on Sunday — days after he was beaten by far-right activists during a protest against an LGBTQ Pride march.

Lashkarava's death spurred demonstrations on Sunday outside parliament, drawing about 8,000 people.

On Monday, several opposition lawmakers occupied the parliament speaker's seat and demanded Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili stand down.

They claimed he and the ruling Georgian Dream party had allowed violence against media workers.

Footage aired by the independent Mtavari TV station showed chaotic scenes in the plenary chamber where opposition parliamentarians scuffled with ruling party MPs.

The session resumed after four MPs who had occupied the speaker's chair were forcibly removed from the room.

Later in the evening, some 2,000 people — including hundreds of journalists and rights activists — staged a protest outside parliament, vowing permanent demonstrations until Garibashvili resigns.

U.S. WILDFIRES THREATEN HOMES IN 10 STATES

Los Angeles, July 13: Wildfires that torched homes and forced thousands to evacuate burned across 10 parched Western states on Tuesday, and the largest, in Oregon, threatened California's power supply. Nearly 60 wildfires tore through bone-dry timber and brush from Alaska to Wyoming, according to the National Interagency Fire Center.

Arizona, Idaho and Montana accounted for more than half of the large active fires. The fires erupted as the West was in the grip of the second bout of dangerously high temperatures in just a few weeks. A climate change-fuelled megadrought also is contributing to conditions that make fires even more dangerous, scientists say.

The National Weather Service says the heat wave appeared to have peaked in many areas, and excessive-heat warnings were largely expected to expire by Tuesday. However, they continued into Tuesday night in some California deserts, and many areas were still expected to see high in the 80s and 90s.

In Northern California, a combined pair of lightning-ignited blazes dubbed the Beckwourth Complex was less than 25% surrounded after days of battling flames fuelled by winds, hot weather and low humidity that sapped the moisture from vegetation. Evacuation orders were in place for more than 3,000 residents of remote northern areas and neighbouring Nevada. There were reports of burned homes, but damage was still being tallied. The blaze had consumed 140 square miles (362 square kilometres) of land, including in Plumas National Forest.

92 Iraqi Covid patients die in fire

Blaze in the Nasiriyah's Al-Hussein Hospital was fuelled by explosion of oxygen canisters

Baghdad, July 13: The death toll from a fire that swept through a hospital Coronavirus ward in Iraq has climbed to at least 92, the Iraqi state news agency reported on Tuesday. The announcement came as anguished family members buried their loved ones and lashed out at the government over the tragedy. The blaze that erupted Monday in the city of Nasiriyah was the second catastrophic fire in less than three months to kill hospitalised Covid-19 patients in Iraq, where the health care system has been crippled by decades of war and sanctions.

Two health officials said more than 100 people were also injured in the fire that torched the Coronavirus ward of al-Hussein Teaching Hospital in the city of Nasiriyah on Monday. Anguished relatives were still looking for traces of their loved ones. Many cried openly, their tears tinged with anger, blaming both the provincial government of Dhi Qar, where Nasiriyah is located, and the federal government in Baghdad for years of mismanagement and neglect.

"The whole state system has collapsed, and who paid the price? The people inside here. These people have paid the price," said Haidar al-Askari, who was at the scene of the blaze. Overnight, firefighters and rescuers — many with just flashlights and using blankets to extinguish small fires still smoldering in places — had frantically worked searching through the ward in the darkness.

As dawn broke, bodies covered with sheets were laid on the ground outside the hospital. Earlier, officials had said the fire was caused by an electric short circuit, but provided no more details. Another official said the blaze erupted when an oxygen cylinder exploded. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to speak to journalists. The new ward, opened just three months ago, contained 70 beds. Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi chaired an emergency meeting in the wake of the fire and ordered the suspension and arrest of the health director in Dhi Qar, as well as the director of the hospital and the city's director of civil defence. A government investigation was also launched.

In the nearby Shiite holy city of Najaf, mourners prepared to bury some of the victims. It was the second time a large fire killed Coronavirus patients in an Iraqi hospital this year. At least 82 people died at Ibn al-Khateeb hospital in Baghdad in April, when an oxygen tank exploded, sparking the blaze. That incident brought to light widespread negligence and systemic mismanagement in Iraq's hospitals.

Doctors have decried lax safety rules, especially around the oxygen cylinders. On Monday, Ammar al-Zamili, spokesman for the Dhi Qar health department, said that there were at least 63 patients inside the ward when the fire began.

Maj. Gen. Khalid Bohan, head of Iraq's civil defence, said the building was constructed from flammable materials and prone to fire.

● **PRIME MINISTER Mustafa al-Kadhimi ordered the suspension and arrest of the health director in Dhi Qar, as well as the director of the hospital and the city's director of civil defence.**



Rescuers and civilians look for bodies after a catastrophic blaze erupted Monday at a Coronavirus hospital ward in the al-Hussein Teaching Hospital, in Nasiriyah, Iraq, on Tuesday. — AP

Macron orders all health workers to get vaccinated

Paris, July 13: French President Emmanuel Macron on Monday ordered all French health care workers to get virus vaccine shots by Sept. 15 and urged all of his compatriots to get vaccinated as soon as possible, to fight resurgent infections that are threatening the country's economic recovery. In a televised address, Macron also mandated special Covid-19 passes for anyone who wants to go to a restaurant, shopping mall or several other public places.

To get a pass, people must be fully vaccinated, have a fresh negative virus test or have proof they recently recovered from the

● **THE DELTA variant is driving France's virus infections back up again, just as the country kicked off summer vacation season after a long-awaited reopening process.**

virus. The Delta variant is driving France's virus infections back up again, just as the country kicked off summer vacation season after a long-awaited reopening process. Some 40 per cent of France's population is fully vaccinated.

"The country is facing a strong resumption of the epidemic touching all our territory," Macron said,

speaking against the backdrop of the Eiffel Tower. He stopped short of any new lockdown-like measures, saying "we have to live with the virus".

He said his centrist French government would declare a medical state of emergency Tuesday, which allows more freedom to impose curbs. Most European governments have shied away from mandating vaccinations. But after deaths in nursing homes, Macron said vaccination is essential for all health care workers, nursing home workers, and workers or volunteers who care for the elderly or ailing at home.

— AP

SYDNEY CURBS ON, OZ VOWS FINANCIAL AID

Canberra, July 13: Australian government officials on Tuesday announced added financial support for businesses and households as Sydney appeared increasingly likely to enter a fourth week of lockdown due to Coronavirus clusters. New South Wales state Premier Gladys Berejiklian said she would announce on Wednesday whether Sydney's five million residents would remain locked down beyond the three-week mark on Friday. She had said the 24-hour record of 122 new cases recorded on Sunday made lifting the lockdown on Friday "almost impossible". No one knew how long the lockdown would last, Berejiklian said.

"What we do know is that we have the financial support there so that individuals and families and businesses don't have to stress and they know that for the duration of the lockdown, the support will be there," she said.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison said the presence in Sydney of the Delta variant, which is thought to be more contagious, had escalated the pandemic danger.

"The New South Wales outbreak has proved to be more severe, more dangerous, and it's in the national interest that we now put in place an upgraded set of arrangements for cooperation with the states and territories," Morrison said of the disaster funding deal.

— AP

Thailand defends Covid mix-and-match vaccine

Bangkok, July 13: Thailand on Tuesday defended mixing two different Covid-19 vaccines to battle a surge in infections, after the WHO's top scientist warned it was a "dangerous trend" not backed by evidence.

The kingdom is struggling to contain its latest outbreak fuelled by the highly contagious Delta variant, with cases and deaths skyrocketing and the health-care system stretched thin. Authorities said they will mix a first dose of the

Chinese-made Sinovac jab with a second dose of AstraZeneca to try and achieve a "boost" effect in six weeks instead of 12.

Thailand's chief virologist Yong Poovorawan said this would be possible by combining an inactivated virus vaccine — Sinovac — with a viral vector vaccine such as AstraZeneca.

"We can't wait 12 weeks (for a booster effect) in this outbreak where the disease is spreading fast," he said. "But in the future, if there are better, improved

vaccines... we will find a better way to manage the situation."

His comments come a day after the World Health Organisation's chief scientist Soumya Swaminathan called the strategy a "dangerous trend".

"We are in a bit of a data-free, evidence-free zone as far as 'mix-and-match'", she said.

Thailand has reported more than 353,700 coronavirus cases and 2,847 deaths.

— AFP

Booster shots possible, says US Surgeon General

J&J vax increases risk of rare nerve disorder, warns FDA

Washington, July 13: The US Food and Drug Administration updated its warning labels Monday for the Johnson & Johnson Covid-19 vaccine to include information about an observed "increased risk"

of a rare neurological disorder called Guillain-Barre Syndrome (GBS).

The news is a further blow for the company, which was granted an emergency use authorisation for its shot in February but

has played a minor role in America's Coronavirus immunisation campaign.

Officials have identified 100 preliminary reports of GBS after approximately 12.5 million doses administered.

— AFP

CONTROVERSIAL | VIEWS

Lectures, seminars are held to expose 2014 Nobel Prize winner's western agenda

Pak pvt schools' assn launches anti-Malala documentary

Lahore, July 13: Pakistan's private schools' association launched a documentary on Pakistani education activist Malala Yousafzai for her controversial views on Islam, marriage and her pursuit of the Western agenda. Malala, who turned 24 on Monday, was the co-recipient of the 2014 Nobel Peace Prize for her struggle against the suppression of children and young people

and for the right of all children to education.

Having received the prize at the age of 17, Malala is the youngest Nobel laureate. She shared the prize with Kailash Satyarthi, a children's rights activist from India. Addressing a press conference at his office in Gulberg here the All-Pakistan Private Schools Federation president Kashif Mirza said: "Through this documen-

tary film — I am not Malala — we will tell 20 million students in 200,000 private schools across the country about her controversial views on Islam, marriage, pursuing of Western agenda."

"The idea behind this is we want to expose Malala among the youth as it does not get impressed by her so-called story of struggle for women rights," Mirza said. He said Malala had

advocated "partnership" that is adultery in Islam. "Marriage is a sunnah of the Prophet (pbuh) and partnership is adultery," he said. 'I am not Malala's Day' is also observed on July 12 in private schools as lectures and seminars are held to expose her western agenda to students. Mirza said Malala has categorically rejected the institution of marriage and suggested that

'partnership' is better than getting married.

"Malala has attacked the institution of marriage and family structure by advocating that people should live in sin...No one can justify Muslims living together without marriage as it is strongly condemned in Islam," he said.

Similarly, Mirza said in her book "I am Malala", the Nobel Peace winner book has highly controver-

sial material in it which is contrary to the teachings of Islam, Quranic injunctions, ideology of Islam and Pakistan's founder Mohammad Ali Jinnah and the Pakistan Army.

"This book is written at the behest of western forces that used Malala for their ulterior motives. Malala has declared Islam and Pak army as 'militant' in her controversial book. She also criticised

Quranic verses about two women's testimony to be equal to that of a man and also about the four witnesses in rape case," he said. Mirza said a group photo with writer Taslema Nasreen and strong ties with an Indian for Nobel award are enough to explain Malala's designs. Mirza alleged her blog in BBC under the name "Gul Makai" was written by someone else.

— PTI

DECCAN Chronicle

14 JULY 2021

Pushing two-child policy: Can it ramp up growth?

Not since the dark days of the Emergency, when the late Sanjay Gandhi became an extra-constitutional authority and ordered a mass sterilisation drive in which the poor were mostly caught up, have we heard of coercive population control policies. The Himanta Biswa Sarma government in Assam kicked off with blatant public announcements last month, asking the Muslim minorities to be “decent” and adopt a two-child norm, the implication being that Muslim couples alone have more than two children.

The Yogi Adityanath government in UP has hardly lagged behind and has made proposals of a similar nature. Fundamentally, in both Assam and UP, the idea is to deprive families with more than two children of government benefits and subsidies, and to accord benefits to families with no more than two offspring.

While this is not spelt out, the unspoken assumption seems to be to get at the minorities, although it is not yet clear how the issue would pan out in the case of non-Muslim families which have two children or more. So, there is turmoil on the horizon if the policies under consideration are sought to be implemented.

As far as the Hindu Right goes, the idea of population control for Muslims goes back a long way. It is interesting to recall that the Jana Sangh, the precursor of the BJP, tore into Indira Gandhi for the Emergency, but not Sanjay Gandhi — the architect of the sterilisation drive — whose widow afterward found a place of honour in the saffron party.

Before the Assam and UP government plans were put on the table in recent weeks, some BJP MPs had moved private member Bills in Parliament

Indeed, before the Assam and UP state government plans were put on the table in recent weeks, some BJP MPs had moved private member Bills in Parliament along similar lines. One of them, Ajay Bhatt of Uttarakhand, was recently made a minister. Rakesh Sinha, a nominated Member close to BJP,

moved a similar Bill, as did Ravi Kishan, a UP MP. Mr Sinha appears to be keen on reviving his Bill in the upcoming Monsoon Session of Parliament.

The idea that large populations dragged down economic growth, and hence practically wiped out prospects of rapid economic development in developing societies, once had a measure of acceptance even in academic literature. But the very fast rise of China has doused enthusiasm for that view. The forcibly implemented one-child policy has had to be abandoned. It led to serious economic consequences with shrinking of the labour force and the rise of older people demanding state support.

Standard economic development theory shows that more children are associated with poor societies as more children translate to more earning members in conditions of poverty. According to the last population census (2011), the rate of growth of population among Muslims was higher than the Hindus. This is consistent with the official finding that Muslims in India are poorer than even the scheduled caste population on average, and have a literacy rate that is well below the national average.

However, it is important to note that, according to the National Family Health Survey-3, fertility is declining at a faster rate among Muslims than among Hindus. This aspect is wholly lost in popular — especially political — discourse as communal agendas are sharpened on the basis of faster (although declining) population growth data. The poverty angle is wholly discounted as higher populations are spuriously co-related to religious teachings, fuelling majoritarian anxieties.

When a comprehensive national effort is needed to fight the pandemic, the present dispensation is expected to have squelched population-related communalism. It has done no such thing.

Soccer’s race hurdle

It seems they were the best of times when the universal sport of football ruled the airwaves from Europe and South America. Poetry in motion, which flowing soccer is, may have come like a balm when the coronavirus pandemic raged in many parts of the world. But they also seemed like the worst of times as the game brought with it all its attendant evils like false nationalism, hooliganism and outright racism.

An absorbing final of the Euro 2020 competition in which the England team, which had whipped up overwhelming enthusiasm, came up short in the penalty shootout was followed by the worst kind of on-site as well as online behaviour. Thousands of brutes of fans had already invaded the Wembley Stadium in London before kick-off and created bedlam inside for paying spectators. Scenes of weekend drunkenness gave way to violence as English soccer hooligans began beating up Italian supporters as they were exiting the arena after Italy’s triumph.

In its excess, demonstrative loyalty to the national team can be an embarrassing jingoistic phenomenon, with politicians themselves not loath to climbing the bandwagon and appropriating popular sentiment. The beautiful game is to be enjoyed, not to be used for berating its players like many did on the social media, particularly roasting the three hapless players of colour who missed penalty kicks for England in a nerve-shredding shootout.

The social media is a modern phenomenon that lends itself too easily to toxic content in hate mongering and several evils as common people use them as platforms to display their biases. Big Tech exacerbates the problem as it does little to filter out the obvious, even when there are giveaway symptoms as in the use of icons such as bananas, monkeys and gorillas to deride people of certain races.

The FA and UK government have stood up to the racism of Internet ruffians. But fans were also guilty of booing when teams “took the knee” to condemn just the kind of racism that gives football, with its historical hooliganism, such a bad name. There is much to be done towards stamping it out from public spheres like sport.

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Subhani



Managing expectations after Modi’s big shuffle

Shikha Mukerjee

The bigger the organisation the more complex and stumble-prone the process of recalibrating it to deliver on the manifest destiny of being the unsailable champion is what the meticulous exercise in expansion, face-saving resignations and reappointments looks like from a distance.

Seen through the lens of a state that delivered an electoral verdict which was as much an evaluation of 10 years of Mamata Banerjee’s government in West Bengal as it was of the seven years of Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s rule at the Centre and the BJP’s communally divisive Hindutva agenda and plans for domination on the basis of “one nation-one party”, the 43 new additions (including seven promoted to the Cabinet from junior ministries) in the Union government have stirred up more trouble than cheer. The inclusions, ostensibly of the marginalised, but in fact of a section of problematic claimants, have compelled the BJP to issue orders that no one should violate the party line.

In plain terms, two new ministers of state, both political mavericks, John Barla from Alipurduar and Nishit Pramanik from Cooch Behar in North Bengal, have been clearly told that reiterating the demand for breaking up West Bengal by creating a new Union territory for the north districts is not the BJP’s officially approved objective and that they should watch what they say. The inclusion of Shantanu Thakur from Bongaon in North 24 Parganas as a representative of the politically divided refugee settlers from the Scheduled Caste Matua community and “namashudras” from across the border who ostensibly fled religious

persecution, the West Bengal BJP leadership, namely its chief Dilip Ghosh, felt it necessary to issue a caveat. The appointment of Subhash Sarkar is a nod to the fact that there were old-timers in the BJP before the wave of defectors arrived and seized the limelight.

Basically, the BJP, at least in West Bengal, has temporised. It has included and given representation to the marginalised, which in an electoral democracy is a big positive as it works as an inclusion mechanism for people who had not been given a share in power. It has boosted the image of never represented or seriously powerless communities as it seems to have done painstakingly and methodically across the Hindi speaking heartland and in its stronghold of Karnataka and in the other states from where it has drawn its new ministers.

Looked at from the BJP’s local leadership’s rush to douse expectations in West Bengal, it does seem that the party hasn’t worked out how the raised status in terms of a place in the Modi ministry is to be converted into substantive action or policy or legislated action. BJP state president Dilip Ghosh equivocated on a key political issue, the inclusion of Hindu refugees and identification and exclusion of illegal Muslim migrants from across the border, by saying it was all up to Mamata Banerjee to implement the Citizenship Amendment Act and the National Register of Citizens. Given her emphatic refusal to do any such thing, it seems that the BJP has pushed the CAA-NRC to the back of the list of deliverables. It’s equally significant that Assam’s chief minister Himanta Biswa Sarma has modified his initial position on the CAA-NRC and Muslims; he has declared that old Muslim

settlers were with him on identifying new illegals.

“Mainstreaming” the marginalised, converting one individual into an elite representative: is that enough? The question is fundamental to meeting expectations, where such expectations exist that the BJP is aware of and has a strategic position on. The question is equally important to policymaking over the next three years.

What, if anything, are the 27 new Other Backward Caste, 11 women, 12 new Scheduled Caste and eight new Scheduled Tribe ministers in the Modi Cabinet going to deliver for their specific constituencies? Having raised the status and stoked aspirations, the Modi government must have a plan to convert the newly bestowed prominence and the desires that go with it into something tangible that would then work to firmly bind the community’s loyalties to the BJP, in the state elections between now and 2024, and of course in 2024.

The Cabinet’s overhaul and its vast expansion is a tacit acknowledgment that the government was treading water and going nowhere in managing the crises that continue to overwhelm India’s population: containing the killer virus, providing health services, offering relief to the brutally affected poor as a consequence of the economy’s standstill or slowdown and cranking up the economy even as inflation threatens to spiral out of control.

The rejig focused on health, labour employment, education and petrol prices. The followup announcements on increased financial allocations for key problems, including farmers’ demands raised by the seven-month protest, the world’s longest ever such anti-gov-

The visuals of super-spreader crowds at Kemptly Falls in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand is incontrovertible evidence of a failure of governance

ernment demonstration, was a concrete step at reassuring the sceptical and angry voter that the Narendra Modi government has shaken off its inertia.

The next step must be to revise the BJP’s narrative of being a civilising political force and protector of India’s glorious and ancient culture. The reality of political violence and the deliberate exercise of building up pressure that erupts in such violence is not limited to West Bengal, regardless of the BJP’s campaign that such violence had been tamed everywhere else.

The West Bengal election verdict was a clear sign that the voters in this state, and voters in Uttar Pradesh’s panchayat elections, that coincided with the West Bengal elections, was not well disposed towards the Modi government’s inaction. Voters in Uttar Pradesh, which goes for Assembly elections in 2022, will not be convinced that political violence is a West Bengal monopoly. In 12 districts of Yogi Adityanath’s state, scenes of murderous clashes unfolded as India watched, including a video that went viral of a woman leader from Lakhimpur Kheri whose sari was pulled off for which the entire contingent of a police station have been shunted out.

The gap between lived experience and rhetoric has caught up with the BJP after West Bengal and Kerala. The visuals of super-spreader crowds at Kemptly Falls in BJP-ruled Uttarakhand is incontrovertible evidence of a failure of governance. The gaps must be closed with better governance and Prime Minister Modi has to do it, not with optics of meetings to manage oxygen supplies but by nudging Union ministries to effectively administer and certainly not by blaming state governments or specific individuals for their misdemeanours. The bottomline is that in a game of big stakes, the principal player has to know how to think big.

Shikha Mukerjee is a senior journalist in Kolkata

LETTERS

SIRISHA’S FEAT

A historic event has unfolded on the main skies thanks to the success of the Virgin Galactic space flight. The six-member Branson team efficaciously completed the space mission and returned in the stipulated 90 minutes. Bandla Sirisha set foot on the space in her maiden attempt. Leading space agency Virgin Galactic on Sunday lifted the manned spacecraft VSS Unity-22 with a special aircraft VMS Eve at an altitude of 15,000 metres above ground. From there, the Unity-22 took off with a rocket blast. Sirisha became the fourth Indian origin astronaut to fly into space from India.

Kolluru Raju
Kakinada

THIRD WAVE

At a time when the third wave of Covid-19 is in the wind, the decision to impose a fine of ₹100 on those who are not adhering to the Coronavirus mask by the AP government is prudent and welcome (*Pay Rs.100 fine for not wearing a mask, DC, July 13*). Initiating and creating a Whatsapp number by powers that be for sending the photos of violators is trailblazing and the authorities need to zero in on implementing it and eliminating the virus downright in the state.

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

‘Padma’ not carrying US arms to Pak

BALTIMORE, July 13. The manager of shipping agency in charge of loading a Pakistani ship, reportedly carrying military hardware to that country, has offered to give peace demonstrators “any military cargo” they might find being loaded on the vessel.

East-West shipping agencies manager Walter Spieker told representatives of the protesters yesterday that “there is no military cargo scheduled to go on board the ‘Padma’ here”.

The only cargo on board the ship Mr. Spieker said was 1,800 tonnes of general cargo including steel, flour, glassware and so on.

Rod Liddle



How language gets mangled: ‘Myselfitis’ on the rampage?

I thought that this week I would share with you a bunch of words and phrases which are currently overused and I find thoroughly annoying. The idea came to me after hearing a woman with the IQ of a soap dispenser speaking on Radio 4 about the programme Love Island. In the course of her peroration she continually referred to myself. Not to me, but to herself as “myself”. Such as: “I would say so far as myself is concerned...” No, dear. The word is “I”.

She is far from the only culprit. “Myselfitis” is spreading rather more rapidly than the Delta variant. So too is its kind of antithesis. Twice recently I have been asked by phone-callers if “yourself” is happy with the service being provided, etc. Why do they do this? Do they think that addressing me as “you” is too blunt? Or is it an attempt to make their grammar more pretentious so that I might afford them greater respect? I have to say, if this is the case, it doesn’t work. It makes me want to smash their spectacles and spit on their shoes.

One suggestion I’ve heard is that

“myself” gets misused (it’s a reflexive pronoun) because the speaker is worried about the egotism inherent in the word “me”. So it’s a kind of false modesty. Whatever, it gets my goat. So does the wholly unnecessary use of the word “today” – again, usually deployed by people in the service sector. Such as “How can I help you today?” or, upon my entering a restaurant – one I’ve never been in – “And where would you like to sit today?”

I can’t for the life of me work out what “today” in this context signifies. Is it something taught at some hospitality finishing school? “Always add the word ‘today’ when talking to a customer. It will let them know how alert you are.” Or do they think that I am not wholly aware that it is today – that it might, instead, be yesterday, or several weeks ago, or tomorrow?

These infractions are not politically offensive, of course, and not really something to get worked up about. They are just another tiny little reason why I will not necessarily rage against the dying of the light, when the dying of the light finally arrives,

but instead greet it warmly, shaking it by the hand.

Equally minor is the verbal tic I hear more and more often when people are about to state an opinion. The ubiquitous prefix: “You know what...?” One supposes that this is intended to let the listener know he or she is about to be granted an audience to a hidden truth of great meaning and import. Whereas in fact the speaker is just about to tell you that he intends to wear a face mask after July 19, or something similarly humdrum and boring and stupid. These words and phrases are kind of prosthetic limbs for the intellectually amputated. But sure, they are not something about which one should get too overwrought.

The remaining annoyances, though, all have political or cultural baggage draped over their shoulders. The word “vile”, for example, is overused to such an extent that it has almost lost its meaning. It is always deployed when a charge of racism has been made, as if the writer or speaker is bound by law not merely to distance themselves from whatever transgression had been made, but

to eviscerate that transgression with the most severe word they can find in their stunted lexicon. The various “racist” social media posts made by the “disgraced” cricketer Ollie Robinson were described across the national press as being “vile”. They were nothing of the sort. They were daft, at the very most. And this mangling of language matters, because I will bet that very few people bothered to check exactly what Robinson had said. They will have been content to believe simply that they were “vile”.

Likewise, the word “toxic”. In my world, no words are toxic. Stuff which is toxic includes Strontium-90, blue asbestos and nerve gas: not words. But “toxic” these days is used simply to describe comments which run counter to the opinion of the person passing comment, or perhaps counter to the prevailing orthodoxy. This may make those words problematic or controversial, but it does not make them “toxic”.

Which brings me to “survivor”. I speak as a survivor of measles, chickenpox, pneumonia and, following a riotous holiday in Thailand many years ago, peculiarly resilient public

lice. But me? I’m OK. I’ll get by. I survived. Whereas once you were a survivor if you had managed to get into one of the Titanic’s lifeboats or had fought and been wounded on the Somme, it is now used to describe people – usually women – who were touched inappropriately on the top of the leg by an unpleasantly sweating middle-aged bloke. They are “survivors”. The word is deployed (by the Left) because to use the word “victim” is disempowering. And yet “survivor” is in a sense even more disempowering because it implies that their entire lives have been defined by that rogue accosting. Never has a word been more devalued than “survivor”.

Then there are the phrases used by the Left to deny reality. Such as “lived experience” and “my truth”, which these days easily trump objective fact: if you think you experienced it, you must be right, despite all the evidence to the contrary. And best of all – social justice. There is no such thing as social justice.

By arrangement with the Spectator

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52769.73	0.76
Nifty 50	15812.40	0.76
S&P 500*	4,388.57	0.09
Dollar (₹)	74.49	0.13
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.20	0.15
Euro (₹)	88.21	0.20
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,856.90	0.19
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	76.38	1.62
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.103	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.356	-0.007

* As of 8:30 PM IST

S&P keeps India rating at BBB- for 14th year

S&P Global Ratings affirmed India's sovereign rating at the lowest investment grade of 'BBB-' for the 14th year in a row with a stable outlook, and said the country's strong external settings will act as a buffer against financial strains despite elevated government funding needs over the next 24 months. The ratings reflect the economy's above-average long-term real GDP growth and sound external profile, it said.

DGH cuts down paperwork in oilfield approval



In a major overhaul, the DGH has made it easier for firms to explore and produce oil and gas by limiting the requirement of statutory approvals to only extension of contracts, sale of stake and annual accounts while allowing self-certification and deemed approval for the rest. The Directorate General of Hydrocarbons said processes for oil and gas blocks awarded under nine bids round of NELP are being simplified.

Hotels' body approaches Niti Aayog for help

The Federation of Hotel and Restaurant Associations of India has submitted a representation to Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, alleging Oyo's business model has caused "irreparable damage" to the hospitality ecosystem. It urged the Aayog to devise a system or policy to safeguard the interests of hotel and lodge-owners. "Oyo operates its business under a maze of more than a dozen subsidiary entities," it said.

Mahindra prices Bolero Neo at ₹8.48 lakh

Mahindra and Mahindra introduced the Bolero Neo SUV at an introductory price of Rs 8.48 lakh across India. The Mahindra Bolero Neo is a TUV300 repositioned as a more upmarket variant of the Bolero range, and gets a 100hp, 1.5-litre diesel engine. In an attempt to change the fortune of the slow selling TUV300, Mahindra has now repositioned the sub-four-meter SUV as the new Mahindra Bolero Neo.



Shareholders to get equal share in NMDC Steel NMDC to spin off steel unit

Ravi Ranjan Prasad Mumbai, July 13

The NMDC board has approved the demerger of its subsidiary, NMDC Steel, into a separate company after regulatory approvals. NMDC Steel owns a 3 million tonne per annum greenfield integrated steel plant coming up in Chhattisgarh State.

Hyderabad-based NMDC Limited is a state-owned iron ore producer and exporter.

"As a part of the demerger process fully paid-up equity shares of Rs 10 each of NMDC Steel will be issued and allotted to the equity shareholders of NMDC against over 293.06 crore fully paid up equity shares of Re 1 each held by them in NMDC," NMDC said in a disclosure to the stock exchanges.

"The new shares of NMDC Steel to be issued



In October, the CCEA had approved strategic disinvestment of NMDC Steel by selling the entire Government of India stake

and allotted to the shareholders of NMDC as consideration under the scheme would be applied for listing on all the stock exchanges where the existing equity shares of NMDC are currently listed," marking the birth of a new PSU company.

The NMDC stock gained 3.80 per cent on the BSE, closing at Rs 172.05.

"The Board of Directors of NMDC at its meeting held today, July 13, 2021, has approved the Scheme

of Arrangement for Demerger between NMDC and NMDC Steel," NMDC said.

NMDC is considering adding more value to the company's stakeholders by subsequently inviting an investor, it said.

To this effect, in October 2020, the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs gave its 'in-principle' approval to the demerger of NISP from NMDC and strategic disinvestment of NMDC Steel

by selling the entire Government of India stake in NMDC Steel to a strategic buyer.

NMDC is engaged in the exploration and mining of a wide range of minerals including iron ore, copper, rock phosphate, limestone, dolomite, gypsum, bentonite, magnesite, diamond, tin, tungsten, graphite, and beach sands.

"As part of expansion, value addition and forward integration programme, NMDC is setting up a 3 MTPA capacity greenfield integrated steel plant i.e. NISP (NMDC Iron & Steel Plant) at Nagamar, located 16 km from Jagdalpur in Chhattisgarh state," NMDC said.

"The decision to construct the NISP was taken keeping in view the linkage with iron ore reserves and availability of investible surplus," NMDC said.

BoE sees threat to banks from cloud computing setup

Huw Jones & David Milliken London, July 13

Cloud computing providers to the financial sector can be "secretive", and regulators need to act to avoid banks' reliance on a handful of outside firms becoming a threat to financial stability, the Bank of England said on Tuesday.

Banks and other financial firms are outsourcing key services to cloud computing companies such as Amazon, Microsoft and Google to improve efficiency and cut costs, with the trend accelerating last

year as the Covid-19 pandemic unfolded.

The BoE said cloud computing could sometimes be more reliable than banks hosting all their servers themselves. But big providers could dictate terms and conditions-- as well as prices--to key financial firms.

"That concentrated power on terms can manifest itself in the form of secrecy, opacity, not providing customers with the sort of information they need to monitor the risk in the service," BoE governor Andrew Bailey told a news conference. "We have seen

some of that going on."

Bailey did not name specific firms he had concerns about.

Earlier the BoE's financial policy committee said additional policy measures were needed to mitigate financial stability risks in cloud computing.

"In terms of the standards of resilience and the testing of those standards of resilience, frankly we will have to roll some of that back, that secrecy that goes with it. It's not consistent with our objectives," Bailey said.

Bailey said the BoE understood cloud

providers' desire not to reveal too much publicly about their operations, in case it opened the door to cyber-attacks, but that the firms needed to give more information to regulators and customers.

"We have got to strike a balance here," Bailey said.

The BoE said it welcomed the engagement of the finance ministry and Financial Conduct Authority on how to tackle risks from cloud computing, but that a broader approach may be needed, including other regulators and overseas partners.

—Reuters

France fines Google 500 mn euros over news copyright row

PARIS, July 13: France's antitrust watchdog slapped a 500 million euro (\$593 million) fine on Alphabet's Google on Tuesday for failing to comply with the regulator's orders on how to conduct talks with the country's news publishers in a row over copyright.

The fine comes amid increasing international pressure on online platforms such as Google and Facebook to share more revenue with news outlets.

The US tech group must now come up with proposals within the next two months on how it would compensate news agencies and other publishers for the use of their news. If it does not do that, the company would face additional fines of up to 900,000 euros per day.

Google said it was very disappointed with the decision but would comply.

"Our objective remains the same: we want to turn the page with a definitive agreement. We will take the French Competition Authority's feedback into

consideration and adapt our offers," the US tech giant said.

A Google spokesperson added: "We have acted in good faith throughout the entire process. The fine ignores our efforts to reach an agreement, and the reality of how news works on our platforms."

News publishers APIG, SEPM and AFP accuse the tech company of having failed to hold talks in good faith with them to find common ground for the remuneration of news content online, under a recent European Union directive that creates so-called "neighbouring rights".

The case itself focused on whether Google breached temporary orders issued by the antitrust authority, which demanded such talks take place within three months with any news publishers that ask for them.

"When the authority decrees an obligation for a company, it must comply scrupulously, the antitrust body's chief, Isabelle de Silva, said.

—Reuters

Shruti Srivastava & Thomas Buckley July 13

The government is inspecting the account books of the local unit of Carlsberg A/S, according to people with knowledge of the matter, following allegations of potential fraud.

The Registrar of Companies has issued a notice to Carlsberg India seeking its response and is preparing to summon the board of directors soon, the people said. Pricewaterhouse-

Coopers LLP—which quit as auditor of Carlsberg India in November after a boardroom dispute at the brewery spilled into its book-keeping—had subsequently complained to the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the people said.

Carlsberg's joint venture partner—Nepal-based Khetan Group—had in 2019 written to the Indian ministries of Corporate Affairs and Commerce alleging that Carlsberg India was offering illegal trade discounts and engaging in

Opec+ impasse means tight oil market: IEA

Noah Browning London, July 13

The oil market will see tighter supply for now amid a dispute inside Opec+ about how to ease production curbs but it still faces the risk of a dash for market share if disagreement persists, the International Energy Agency (IEA) said on Tuesday.

The Paris-based agency said oil prices would be volatile until differences were resolved among members of Opec+, which

groups the Organization of the Petroleum Exporting Countries, Russia and other oil producers.

"The Opec+ stalemate means that until a compromise can be reached, production quotas will remain at July's levels. In that case, oil markets will tighten significantly as demand rebounds from last year's Covid-induced plunge," an IEA report said.

Opec+ has been slowly unwinding record output curbs agreed last year to cope with the pandemic. But a dispute over policy between Saudi Arabia and

potentially fraudulent practices for sales promotion, the people said.

They added that the board hasn't resolved the dispute, prompting the PwC complaint and the government's examination.

Divergent views among the Carlsberg India board are the main reason for disclaimers of opinion by the auditor, a representative for Carlsberg said by email.

It added that complaints made in 2019 and 2020 by its joint venture partner were closed last year without

any sanctions against Carlsberg India.

"We continue to be in a difficult dispute with the JV partner in India," Carlsberg said. "A dispute which is expected to escalate for some time, as the partner still owes Carlsberg \$43 million and still wants to sell his share of the business ahead of time and at a completely unreasonable price."

A representative for Khetan Group declined to comment.

Carlsberg in its Sustain-

age a fragile economic recovery," the IEA said in its monthly report.

"Oil markets are likely to remain volatile until there is clarity on Opec+ production policy. And volatility does not help ensure orderly and secure energy transitions--nor is it in the interest of either producers or consumers," the IEA said.

The IEA said in a report in May that investors should not fund new oil, gas or coal projects if the world wanted to reach net zero emissions by mid-century.

—Reuters

Temple food, prasad to get FSSAI certification



New Delhi, July 13: Religious places in Delhi are being encouraged to go for 'Bhog' certification of their 'prasad' and 'langar' by the food safety department, which guides them and tests for quality and hygiene, especially in light of the Covid-19 pandemic, officials said.

The department recently issued Bhog certificates to Akshardham temple and Sai Baba temple after a training and audit exercise, Delhi's food safety commissioner Neha Bansal said.

Project BHOG (Blissful Hygienic Offering to God) is an initiative by the Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) to encourage religious places to maintain and adopt best practices in the manufacturing and handling of 'prasad' and other food items.

"We are in touch with several religious places like temples and gurdwaras in the city, including Iskcon temple, for their participation in the project and to ensure the best quality of prasad and hygiene practices are there," she said.

The department officials have been approaching office bearers and managers of the religious places to encourage them to obtain Bhog certificate and get the food safety registration and licence. "It's basically an awareness initiative in which we encourage management of religious places to adopt best practices of preparing prasad and food and its handling by the cooks and workers."

"The food safety registration and licence serve as a mark of quality," said Saurabh Sharma, the designated officer of the department.

The department identifies religious places and, after discussion with its management, undertakes the Bhog certification process, he said.

The cooks and food handlers at the identified religious place are imparted a one-day training about various aspects of hygienic practices of manufacturing and handling of food items including 'prasad' through FSSAI-empowered trainers.

The training module includes instructions in general cleanliness, the use of aprons and gloves by cooks and food handlers, and regular medical examination of the workers, he said.

—PTI

SPACE | ECONOMY Moon to be integrated into Earth's economic sphere

Companies urge Japan to tap moon

Pavel Alpeyev July 13

Japan needs to take commercial development of the moon more seriously if the country is to remain competitive in the budding space economy. That's the message to the government from a group of Japanese companies ranging from Sony Corp to an instant noodle maker.

The Lunar Industry Vision Council on Tuesday submitted a white paper to Shinji Inoue, Japan's minister in charge of space policy, urging closer cooperation between the state and the private sector. The docu-

ment calls for incentives to boost investment in space ventures, detailed regulations for exploitation of off-planet resources and greater access for companies to lunar missions.

Japan is among a handful of countries along with the US, the UAE and Luxembourg that have established a legal framework for commercial activity in space. The Japanese parliament last month passed legislation allowing the nation's companies to extract and use space resources, given government's permission. It is also part of the Artemis Accords, an international agreement among the US



and its allies allowing countries and companies to establish exclusive zones on the moon.

"There will be a paradigm shift in which the moon will be integrated into the Earth's sphere of economic activity, forming into one ecosystem for space activities," the council said in the report.

The 33-page document titled "Lunar Industry

Vision" is the first public statement by the advocacy group since it was formed in April. The council comprises representatives from two top universities and about 30 companies, including Sony's research lab, advertising giant Dentsu Group and cup ramen brand Nissin.

More than 50 years after the Apollo 11 mission, the moon is once again a subject of geopolitical ambitions. NASA is targeting a return this decade with the Artemis programme. Russia and China are also in the game. India plans another uncrewed moon landing after an attempt failed in 2019.—Bloomberg

Healthcare firms should explore Africa: Exim Bank

Sangeetha G Chennai, July 13

The Exim Bank has identified healthcare as one of the most prospective sectors for investment in Africa and suggested Indian companies to explore opportunities to set up pharma units and hospitals in the continent.

India is a leading drugs supplier and health services provider to Africa. Business opportunities in healthcare in Africa are estimated to reach \$259 billion in 2030, finds a study by Exim Bank.

India was the largest exporter of pharma products to Africa between

2015 and 2019. India's exports stood at \$3.2 billion, or 19.1 per cent of Africa's pharma imports in 2019. Also, over 50,000 African patients come to India for treatment.

"If a fund could be set up, like the India-Africa Health Fund, for financing tertiary hospitals across Africa in at least five regions with a capacity 100 beds each, these patients along with several others who are unable to bear the travel costs could be offered treatment," said the study.

The global investment in Africa's healthcare sector during 2015-19 was \$1.1 billion.

MARGINS OF MED DEVICES CAPPED, VACCINE INPUTS MADE DUTY-FREE

Sangeetha G Chennai, July 13

The government on Tuesday capped the trade margins of five critical medical devices, like oximeter and digital thermometer, used in the treatment and prevention of Covid-19, at 70 per cent to bring down prices.

The National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) has invoked extraordinary powers to put a cap on trade margin of oximeter, glucometer, BP monitor, nebulizer and digital thermometer with effect from July 20.

"Existing margins range from 3% to 709% across five categories," the NPPA tweeted.

The government has also exempted six adjuvants and emulsifiers used in the production of Covid vaccines and black fungus drugs as well as raw materials used for Covid test kits from customs duty.

The customs duty has been exempted for DMPC, DMPG, HSPC DSPG, egg lecithin, cholesterol HP and raw materials for manufacturing Covid test kits.

"The exemption will be beneficial for the industry," said P.V. Appaji, former director general of Pharmexcil.

SHORT TAKES

Kabra 1st Indian gym judge at Oly

New Delhi: Deepak Kabra has become the first Indian to be selected for judging the gymnastics competition of the Olympic Games, a life goal achieved for the man who knew he wouldn't have made it there as an active gymnast because of his not-so-strong fundamentals. Kabra will be seen officiating the men's artistic gymnasts at the Tokyo Games, which gets underway on July 23.

"I had got the invitation in March last year but then the Olympics got postponed and what followed was a nervous wait for more than a year," Kabra said.

"I got confirmation again in April but with the Covid-19 pandemic still raging there was still uncertainty whether Olympics will actually happen. But I am happy that at last, I will be able to live my Olympic dream."

— PTI

Andreescu to skip Tokyo Olympics

Los Angeles, US: Canadian world number five Bianca Andreescu said on Monday she will skip the Tokyo Olympics, citing concerns over the Covid-19 pandemic. The 21-year-old 2019 US Open champion announced her decision in a statement on social media.

"I would like to inform you that I have made the very difficult decision to not play in the Tokyo Olympics later this month," Andreescu said.

Meanwhile, David Goffin, the Belgian number one who is 20th in the ATP rankings, also announced that he would not play at the Olympics because he has not recovered from an ankle injury. — AFP

Mithali loses top spot to Taylor

Dubai: India captain and star batter Mithali Raj was on Tuesday dethroned from the top spot by West Indies skipper Stafanie Taylor in the latest ICC ODI rankings.

Taylor recaptured the number one position in batting as well as in the list of all-rounders after a superb effort in the first ODI in Coolidge that helped the West Indies win by five wickets against Pakistan.

Taylor's Player of the Match effort of three for 29 and an unbeaten 105 have helped her ascend all three lists. She has gained four positions and displaced Mithali from the top of the batters' list.

She also gained three places to reach 16th position among bowlers and is up two places to first among all-rounders, replacing Ellyse Perry of Australia. — PTI

India to host 2026 Badminton Worlds

New Delhi: India will host the World Badminton Championships in 2026, the sport's global governing body, BWF, said on Tuesday.

India were scheduled to organise the Sudirman Cup in 2023 but the Badminton World Federation decided to award the hosting rights of the world mixed team championships to China. The BWF was forced to shift this year's Sudirman Cup from Suzhou, China to Vantaa, Finland due to the Covid-19 situation in the Asian country.

"Suzhou will now stage the 2023 edition of the BWF World Mixed Team Championships, with original 2023 hosts India accepting the opportunity to host the BWF World Championships in 2026," the BWF said in a media release.

This will only be the second time that India will be hosting the world championship, with Hyderabad having played hosts to the prestigious event in 2009. — PTI

Pakistan's hockey ace Naved dies

Karachi: Pakistan's well-known hockey World Cup winner, Naved Alam, died on Tuesday in Lahore, barely few days after being diagnosed with blood cancer. He was 47.

Alam, a key member of the Pakistan team that last won the World Cup in 1994, was diagnosed with blood cancer only a few days back when he checked into a hospital after feeling unwell. "It is with sadness that we announce that Naved Alam has passed away today after a battle with cancer," his family announced.

Naved, a strong fullback had just started his chemotherapy in Lahore on Monday, after which his condition deteriorated. Naved also served as Pakistan's hockey team manager at the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008. — PTI

BIGGER, BETTER

India to send largest ever contingent of athletes at Olympics

New Delhi, July 13: India will be sending a 228-strong contingent to the Tokyo Olympics, including 119 athletes, IOA President Narinder Batra said on Tuesday.

Out of the 119 athletes, 67 are male and 52 female participants, Batra said during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's interaction with Olympic-bound athletes.

"The total Indian contingent for Tokyo Olympics will be 228. There will be 67 male athletes and 52 female athletes. We are fighting for 85 medal events," Batra said in the virtual interaction.

This will be India's largest ever contingent of athletes at the Olympics.

"The first contingent will leave for Tokyo on July 17. It will have 90 athletes and officials in total."

Back stories of struggle, sacrifices and grit dominated Modi's interaction with India's Olympic-bound sportspersons during which he urged them to forget expectations and focus only on giving their best in Tokyo.

Among others, the PM spoke to iconic boxer M. C. Mary Kom, badminton ace P.V. Sindhu, talented shooters Saurabh Chaudhary, Elavenil Valarivan and veteran table tennis player A. Sharath Kamal during a virtual interactive session.

Well aware of their preparations and formative years, Modi's conversations touched upon the making of their success stories and also some fun queries like the one posed to world champion

INDIAN SAILING TEAM LANDS IN TOKYO

The Indian sailing team on Tuesday became the first from the country's contingent to arrive here for the Olympics.

The pictures of the Indian sailing team comprising Varun Thakkar, Ganapathy Chengappa, Vishnu Saravanan and Nethra Kumanan and their coaches arriving at the Haneda airport were put up by Sports Authority of India.

Nethra Kumanan will compete in the laser radial event, Vishnu Saravanan in laser standard class and the pair of Varun Thakkar and Ganapathy Chengappa in 49er class. — PTI



Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacts with the Olympic-bound sportspersons via video conferencing in New Delhi on Tuesday.

— PTI

IOC prez quickly corrects slip up in Tokyo pep talk

Tokyo, July 13: IOC President Thomas Bach appeared in public on Tuesday for the first time since arriving in Tokyo last week with the pandemic-postponed Olympics opening in just 10 days.

Bach spent his first three days in isolation at the International Olympic Committee's five-star hotel in central Tokyo, and his movements in Tokyo are limited like almost everyone entering for the Olympics for the first 14 days.

His first stop was the headquarters of the organising committee to deliver a pep talk with the beleaguered games set to go ahead without fans in almost all venues.

Organisers and the IOC decided last week to ban fans from all but a handful of outlying venues, a move that came after the Japanese government instituted a state of emergency in Tokyo forced by rising coronavirus cases.

"You have managed to make Tokyo the best-ever prepared city for the Olympic Games," Bach said in his opening remarks to organising committee president Seiko Hashimoto and CEO Toshiro Muto.

"This is even more remarkable under the difficult circumstances we all have to face."

Bach also pointed out the urgency of getting ready with deadlines looming. "Now it's 10 days to go to the opening ceremony. That also means there's still a lot of work to do."

Bach tripped over his words while addressing his Japanese hosts, referring to the Chinese people rather than



IOC President Thomas Bach gestures on his arrival at a meeting with Tokyo 2020 President Seiko Hashimoto in Tokyo, Japan, on Tuesday.

— AP

Japanese people as he spoke. "Our common target is safe and secure games for everybody; for the athletes, for all the delegations, and most importantly also for the Chinese people — Japanese people," Bach said, catching his mistake quickly.

Bach's comments in the briefing were interpreted from English to Japanese, but the slip was not included in the interpretations. Still, much of the Japanese media quickly reported it and there was backlash on social media.

— AP

VILLAGE OPENS DESPITE STATE OF EMERGENCY

Tokyo, July 13: The Olympics Village opened on Tuesday under a state of emergency just ahead of the start of the Olympics on July 23.

Athletes will be tested daily in the village, after being tested at least twice before leaving home, and again upon arrival. They will also be required to wear masks in the village — even if they are vaccinated — and be reminded constantly with signage about social distancing, washing hands and ventilating room areas.

About 11,000 athletes are expected for the Olympics and 4,400 for the Paralympics, which commences on August 24.

JILL BIDEN TO ATTEND OPENING CEREMONY

First lady Jill Biden will attend the opening ceremony of the Olympics in Tokyo, the White House announced Tuesday, even as the city has entered a new state of emergency over a rise in coronavirus cases. Biden will attend the opening ceremony on July 23 without President Joe Biden. It will be her first solo trip abroad as first lady.

— AP

Messi dedicates title to Maradona

Buenos Aires (Argentina), July 13: Lionel Messi has dedicated Argentina's Copa America triumph over Brazil to his family, his country and also late idol Diego Maradona.

"I want to dedicate this success to my family, who have always given me the strength to continue, to my friends whom I love so much, to all the people who support us and above all to 45 millions Argentinians who have suffered so with this dreadful virus," Barcelona megastar Messi wrote on Instagram.

Argentina is approaching a 100,000 Covid-19 death toll and weeks before the start of the Copa tournament Buenos Aires refused to co-stage the event with Colombia owing to the surge in pandemic cases.

South American confederation CONMEBOL ultimately transferred hosting rights to Brazil at the last minute despite that country having seen more than half a million virus deaths, the second highest global tally after the United States. Messi, 34, also paid tribute to the memory of Maradona, who died aged 60 last November, saying that "Diego was surely urging us on wherever he is".

Argentina's success over

● **Messi had been desperate to lead the side to glory after a series of disappointments both at World Cups and the Copa.**

the Brazilians in Rio was not just Messi's first major trophy for the Albiceleste but his country's first continental honour in 28 years.

Messi had been desperate to lead the side to glory after a series of disappointments both at World Cups and the Copa.

Given its battle against the further spread of the virus, Argentina has not organised celebrations to mark their title win.

After arriving back in the country on Sunday, the squad were briefly received at the country's football federation headquarters and then dispersed for a pre-season break. Despite the low-key welcome, thousands of fans took to the streets despite tight virus restrictions. "To continue to party we must continue to take care of each other — let's not forget we have a long way to go to get back to normal," Messi warned.

— AFP



Players of Italy's national football team parade with the Euro 2020 trophy on a double-decker bus in Rome on Monday. Italy beat England 3-2 in a penalty shootout after a 1-1 draw.

— AP

Never apologise for who I am: Rashford

London, July 13: England's Marcus Rashford said he will "never apologise for who I am" in an emotional statement after receiving racist abuse following the side's Euro 2020 final defeat. The Manchester United forward was one of three players, along with Jadon Sancho and Bukayo Saka, who were attacked by racist trolls after missing penalties in Sunday's 3-2 shoot-out defeat by Italy.

Rashford's England teammate Tyrone Mings criticised British Home Secretary Priti Patel, saying she had "stoked the fire" by defending those who booed players taking the knee.

Rashford has become a hero to many outside football by lobbying the British government to provide free school meals for underprivileged children during the coronavirus pandemic.

"I'm Marcus Rashford, 23-year-old black man from Withington and Wythenshawe, South Manchester. If I have nothing else I have that," Rashford wrote in a statement on Twitter.

Rashford, who came on late in the second period of extra time, apologised for his penalty miss and said "something didn't feel quite right" when he came to take the kick.



Street artist repairs the mural of Marcus Rashford in Withington, Manchester, on Tuesday. The mural was defaced with graffiti in the wake of England losing the Euro final to Italy.

— AP

"It's been playing in my head over and over since I struck the ball and there's probably not a word to quite describe how it feels. Final. 55 years. 1 penalty. History. All I can say is sorry. I wish it had gone differently," he wrote.

"I can take critique of my performance all day long, my penalty was not good enough, it should have gone in but I will never apologise for who I am and where I came from," Rashford wrote. — AFP

SHARMA: AN EPITOME OF GUTS, GLORY

New Delhi, July 13: "I shared a strange relationship with Malcolm Marshall. The moment I would come in, he would at least hit me twice on the chest," the late Yashpal Sharma would narrate with a straight face while sipping tea at the Feroz Shah Kotla ground.

On Tuesday, as Indian cricket lost one of its gutsiest soldiers to a massive cardiac arrest, one couldn't help but remember what a nice easy-going person Yashpal was, someone who was great at having a laugh or two even if it was at his own expense.

Yashpal was like that bridge between India being a horrible ODI outfit (he was part of the 1979 World Cup where they even lost to Sri Lanka) to their transformation into world champions and the ODI revolution that happened after that in the country.

He didn't have Sunil Gavaskar's flair or Dilip Vengsarkar's elegance but anyone who knew "Yash paaji" would vouch that he was



guts personified.

Born in Ludhiana, Yashpal was one of those quintessential domestic workhorses who rose up the ranks right from his days as a school boy cricketer (National Schools) when he scored 260.

He was Punjab batting's superstar in 1970s, a wicket that Delhi or Mumbai were always desperate to get.

The 173 in the Duleep Trophy final for North Zone against South Zone, which had Erapalli Prasanna, B.S. Chadrasekhar and S. Venkataraman

brought him into national reckoning.

A batting average of close to 34 in 37 Tests, with two hundreds, and less than 30 in 42 ODIs perhaps won't give an idea about the impact he had between 1980 to 1983, his golden years as an automatic choice in middle order.

The World Cup belonged to Yashpal as much as it belonged to Kapil Dev, Mohinder Amarnath or Roger Binny, whose performances are often highlighted more.

Kapil's 175 not out at Tunbridge Wells is a part of sporting folklore, more so because the BBC didn't deem that game to be good enough to be covered live or even record highlights.

Pakistan's encounter on that very day (June 18, 1983) was duly covered. But very few people remember that it was Yashpal Sharma's 89 in India's opening World Cup game at Old Trafford against the West Indies, which the team won by 32 runs, that set the tone for things to come. — PTI

Yashpal was also part of the selection panel that picked the triumphant 2011 World Cup squad under Dhoni's leadership.

So, from being a part of a World Cup winning to picking one that also won the trophy, Yashpal had seen it all. — PTI

WHAT THEY SAID



Shri Yashpal Sharma Ji was a much beloved member of the Indian cricket team, including the legendary 1983 squad. He was an inspiration for teammates, fans as well as budding cricketers. Anguished by his passing away.

— NARENDRA MODI
Prime Minister

Shocked and deeply pained by the demise of Yashpal Sharma ji. Have fond memories of watching him bat during the 1983 World Cup. His contribution to Indian cricket shall always be remembered. My sincere condolences to the entire Sharma family.

— SACHIN TENDULKAR
cricket legend

It is unbelievable. He was the fittest among all of us. He was a vegetarian, teetotaler, used to have soup for his dinner and very particular about his morning walks. I am just shocked.

— DILIP VENGSAKAR
former India captain

Shocking, this is the worst news that I have received. It is like ... 83 team is like a family, one of our family members is no more, it is so shocking.

— BALWINDER SINGH SANDHU
former India pacer

Saddened by the passing away of ace cricketer & 1983 World Cup winning member Sh Yashpal Sharma. His contribution won't be forgotten.

— ANURAG THAKUR
sports minister

I am deeply saddened by the demise of Yashpal Sharma. We have lost one of our cricketing heroes. His contribution to Indian cricket shall always be remembered. I extend my condolences to his family.

— SOURAV GANGULY
BCCI president

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