

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | TUESDAY | 22 JUNE 2021

WEATHER

Max: 37.0°C
Min: 27.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: 1.6 mm

Forecast: Clear.
Max/Min temp.
37/27 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Shuddha Dwadasi
till 10.20 am
Star: Vishakha till 2.20 pm
Variyam: 5.54 pm to 7.20 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.23 am to
9.15 am; 11.12 pm to 11.56 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HJRI CALENDAR

Zeeqad 10,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.10 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.15 pm
Maghrib: 6.47 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.36 AM

SUNSET TODAY 6.42 PM

MOONRISE TODAY 16.14 PM

MOONSET TOMORROW 03.51 AM

COUNTER POINT



Don't be jubilant... it is for those leaders who have defected from other parties!

SHORT TAKES

India got fifth largest FDI inflow

United Nations: India received \$64 billion in Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) in 2020, the fifth largest recipient of inflows in the world, according to a UN report. The World Investment Report 2021 by the UN Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) said the Covid second wave in the country weighs heavily on the country's overall economic activities but its strong fundamentals provide optimism for the medium term.

CBSE tweaks evaluation plan

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday was told by both CBSE and CISC that they have amended their respective evaluation scheme to assess Class 12 students and incorporated a dispute resolution mechanism for the candidates who have any objections. The CBSE said it has incorporated a clause which said that the dispute with regard to computation of results will be referred to a Committee constituted by the board.

US tests warship with megablast

Miami: The United States Navy has started a series of tests on its newest and most advanced aircraft carrier by detonating powerful explosions to determine whether the ship is ready for war. The first of the tests, which are known as *Full Ship Shock Trials*, occurred on Friday when the US Navy set off a giant explosive event near the *USS Gerald R. Ford*, according to a statement issued by the US Navy.

Amarnath yatra cancelled again

Srinagar: The Amarnath Yatra has been cancelled for the second year in a row due to the Covid pandemic. Like last year, the pilgrimage will be only "symbolic", with all rituals to be performed quietly by a select number of priests at the cave-shrine in south Kashmir. Like last year, aarti will be telecast live, tweeted J&K's lieutenant-governor, Manoj Sinha.

Full report on Page 4

WORLD | 5

Iran Prez says no to Biden

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SPORTS | 6

New Zealand fields first transgender at Olympics

TABLOID

Single, satisfied and self-partnered



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CM: Govt hosps to match pvt hosps in service quality

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Government hospitals will shortly begin offering treatment with upgraded services that match corporate hospitals across specialisations.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy said that in the ongoing fight against Covid-19, AP has set an example by administering 13,72,481 vaccine doses in a single day. He said they could achieve such a feat only if provided with the required number of vaccines.

He directed officials to study corporate hospital protocols and to submit a detailed report towards betterment of services in state-run hospitals.

He was speaking at a review meeting on Covid-19, vaccination and progress of Nadu Nedu works in the health department. He said that the state has put in place an effective mechanism to carry out vaccination on a large scale. He congratulated the staff for administering a record 13 lakh doses of vaccine on a single day.

The Chief Minister directed officials to expedite works on construction of new medical colleges and complete them on a war-footing. He urged them to monitor the progress regularly.

Officials briefed about the details of the study regarding buildings, services and non-building services. Reddy said hospital premises should be kept extremely clean and added that strong SOPs

27 get mixed doses in Chittoor district

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 21

The mega Covid-19 vaccination programme at a remote village in the Chittoor district went amiss, as 27 villagers were administered with a mixed dose of vaccine due to an administrative oversight. There, however, was no adverse side-effects, claim officials.

People from Gudayana-nampalli village in Penu-mur mandal were given Covishield vaccine for their first jab in the first week of April. Without checking the details about their first dose, the staff administered them with Covaxin as the second dose on Sunday last.

Officials said this mistake happened due to technical glitches in the

dataentry software. This troubled the health staff in downloading the first dose data, due to which the ANM had to rely on physical records. Health officials said the villagers who received the different dose did not experience any negative side-effects.

"Those who are responsible for this will be punished," they said.

"Due to technical glitches, the nurse was unable to download the data. Without checking with the villagers, she administered vaccines to nearly 27 people before she was alerted by the villagers. Fortunately, no one has experienced adverse effects," district medical and health officer U. Srihari said.

Page 2: Villages back errant health staff

should be prepared for hospital management. He said that emergency plans should be effective in evacuating patients safely in the event of unforeseen accidents.

The Chief Minister pointed out the effective mechanism comprising Asha workers, ANMs, staff in village/ward secretariats and two PHCs in each mandal. He said they should be prepared to conduct another mega drive once vaccines are avail-

able. The officials informed that the state has the capacity and mechanism to administer 20-25 lakh vaccines in a single day.

The officials said the positivity rate has decreased in all the districts except East Godavari and active cases had come down to 63,068. The positivity rate is 5.65 per cent and recovery rate was 95.93 per cent, they said.

Page 2: CM asks officials to stay alert over Covid

Panel okays AP's Vamsadhara plan

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAHPATNAM, JUNE 21

The Vamsadhara Water Dispute Tribunal, headed by Dr Mukundakam Sharma on Monday permitted Andhra Pradesh to build the Neradi Barrage while the Odisha government has been advised to hand over 106 acres of land for the purpose.

The tribunal said the AP government shall pay to Odisha all costs including compensation, charges and expenses incurred by that state vis-a-vis the compulsory acquisition of lands as provided in the Detailed Project Report for Neradi Barrage.

It also ruled that the 115 TMC water of Vamsadhara river at Gotta Barrage shall be shared by Andhra Pradesh and Odisha on a 50:50 basis.

This had been agreed to by the AP and Odisha governments during a meeting held on September 30, 1962. The tribunal also allowed AP to build the Neradi barrage.

Since the inter-state

agreement between the two states envisaged sharing of water on a 50:50 basis, the same principle shall be followed in a year of distress, the tribunal ruled.

"In that event also, when there is a shortage of water in a particular year, sharing of water would be proportionately reduced."

"The distress sharing formula for Vamsadhara basin as specified herein will be applicable for the total utilization in the basin by each state," it said.

The tribunal permitted AP to construct the Side Weir along with ancillary structures as proposed and allowed withdrawal of water only up to eight TMC from June 1 to November 30 every year through the Side Weir.

The capacity of this Left Head Sluice will be intimated by Odisha to Andhra Pradesh within six months of the publication of this order in the official gazette.

Page 2: AP can use water for first crop, says panel

Modi: Yoga offers hope as world fights Covid-19

Says schools will begin online yoga classes for children

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

On the seventh International Yoga Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday said yoga remains a "ray of hope" as the world fights the Covid-19 pandemic while asserting that in these difficult times it has become a source of inner strength. The theme for this International Yoga Day was "Yoga for Wellness".

Mr Modi, who conceived the idea of International Yoga Day during his speech at the UN General Assembly in September 2014, said with the World Health Organisation India has taken another important step and now the world was going to get the power of M-Yoga application, having many videos of yoga training based on Common Yoga Protocol available in different languages of the world.

"At a time when the whole world is fighting the coronavirus pandemic, yoga remains a ray of hope," the PM said while adding that the app will help to make the "One World, One Health" motto successful.

Noting that there may not have been any major public events in most countries and in India for around a year and a half, but the enthusiasm for Yoga Day had not diminished. Mr Modi said for many nations across the world "Yoga Day is not their age-old cultural festival and in this difficult time, people could have forgotten about it and ignored it, but on the contrary, people's enthusiasm for yoga has increased".

"When the unseen Coronavirus knocked on the doors of the world, no country was prepared for it in terms of resources, capability and mental state. We all have seen that in such difficult times, yoga has become a great source of inner strength," the Prime Minister said adding that yoga shows the way from stress to



Indian Navy personnel perform Yoga asanas to mark the International Yoga Day on board *INS Airavat* deployed at Cam Ranh Bay off Vietnam on Monday.

Full report on Page 3

Over 80L get jab in one day, Modi for more vaccinations

New Delhi, June 21: With over 80 lakh doses of anti Covid vaccine administered on Monday, Prime Minister Narendra Modi lauded the feat as "gladdening" and asserted that vaccine remains the strongest weapon to fight the disease.

The PM had earlier appealed to people to get vaccinated to strengthen the fight against the pandemic as the Central government has made free

Covid vaccination available to all adults.

Over 82.7 lakh doses were administered till evening on the first day of the revised vaccination guidelines coming into force, under which all those above 18 years of age will be inoculated free of cost at government centres. Vaccines were so far free for people above 45 years of age.

Modi tweeted, "Today's record-breaking vaccina-

tion numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight Covid-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the front-line warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine. Well done India!"

The previous high was over 48 lakh doses on April 1. The poor, and middle class will be biggest beneficiary, the Prime Minister added. — PTI

strength and from negativity to creativity.

The Prime Minister also noted that medical science focuses as much on "healing" as on treatment, and yoga plays a role in healing.

Many schools now begin their online classes with yogic exercises like *pranayam*, the Prime Minister said, adding that this would prepare children physically to deal with Covid pandemic.

Pawar renews Third Front bid under Rashtra Manch

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

In a fresh attempt to set up a Third Front, Maharashtra strongman and NCP supremo Sharad Pawar has called a meeting of several Opposition parties on Tuesday under the aegis of the Rashtra Manch, which was started by him and Yashwant Sinha, a former BJP Union minister who is now in the Trinamul Congress.

According to sources, Mr Pawar, to start with, aims to bring together all the non-Congress Opposition parties.

The meeting is expected to be attended by, among others, the NCP's Majeed

Memon and Samajwadi Party's Ghanshyam Tiwari, who is also the convener of the Rashtra Manch, as well as AAP, RLD and RJD representatives.

It is likely to see discussions on possible strategies for the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. Besides this, the leaders may also explore plans to jointly take on the BJP in the 2022 Uttar Pradesh elections.

Invitations have gone to several parties on behalf of Mr Pawar and Mr Sinha, who joined Mamata Banerjee's TMC just before the West Bengal elections. "Sharad Pawar ji and Shri Yashwant Sinha ji are co-chairing a

discussion on the present national scenario. Yashwant Sinha has requested your kind presence and participation in the meeting," says the invitation sent out by the Rashtra Manch.

Interestingly, some Congress leaders who were also part of the Rashtra Manch have politely declined the invitations that were sent out. These include leaders like Shatrughan Sinha and MPs Vivek Tankha and Manish Tewari. The Rashtra Manch is a coalition of Opposition parties formed by former finance minister Yashwant Sinha in 2018 to take on the BJP-led Central government.

END OF ROAD FOR YOGI, MINISTER SAYS BJP U.P. CM PICK AFTER POLLS

Lucknow, June 21: Uttar Pradesh minister Swami Prasad Maurya has said the state's next chief minister will be decided by the BJP's central leadership after the Assembly polls, prompting the Samajwadi Party to suggest that the ruling party is divided on the leadership issue. The labour minister made the remark Sunday at the BJP's state headquarters here while replying to a question from reporters.

The Chief Minister will be finalised by the central leadership after the Assembly elections, Maurya said. The remark appeared to go against the statements made earlier by other party leaders who suggested earlier that Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be the party's CM face again in the Assembly elections early next year. Last week in Etah, BJP's state unit president Swatantra Dev Singh said the polls will be contested under Adityanath's leadership. "Corruption and hooliganism have ended and development is taking place. We will fight the 2022 elections under the hardworking and honest chief minister Yogi Adityanath," Singh had told reporters. But he had earlier said that the party's leadership will decide under whom the upcoming elections will be fought. — PTI

RELIEF | CASE

Government says its focus shifted from individual relief to larger issues

SC grills Centre on rejecting ₹4L compensation

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

The Supreme Court on Monday reserved its verdict on the ex gratia compensation of ₹4 lakh to the next of kins of those killed by Covid-19.

Taking a dim view of the Centre's position that complying with provision of Disaster Management Act (NDMA) on the payment of ex gratia would severely strain the government coffers, a vacation bench comprising Justice Ashok

Bhushan and Justice M.R. Shah asked if NDMA, headed by the Prime Minister, took a decision not to pay any ex gratia to the families of Covid-19 victims.

As Justice Shah said that it will have a wide ramification if the government says that it has no funds, Solicitor General Tushar Mehta appearing for the Centre said that it is not that government does not have money but the focus is on augmenting health infrastructure, food, medical care, oxygen, vaccination instead of a one-time

PETITIONERS highlighted a 2015 notification, that mandates the government to pay an ex gratia of ₹4 lakh each to victims' families under the Disaster Management Act. But the government claims it is recommendatory in nature

compensation of ₹4 lakh each.

Justice Shah asked if the Finance Commission fixes ₹15,000 crore for disaster management and Covid occurs and Centre needs

another ₹10,000 crore, can it say it will only spend ₹15,000 crore?

As Mehta sought to tell the court that in that case the government will have to go back to the parliament for increasing the allocation, Justice Shah said that a report and allocations made under the 15th Finance commissions can't override the statutory provisions.

Referring to the petitioner's argument for framing uniform guidelines on disaster compensation, Justice Shah said that the

disaster and pandemics vary in their magnitude and impact and one set of relief can't fit all.

However, senior lawyer S.B. Upadhyay, appearing for one of the PIL petitioner advocates, contended that the government can't cite financial constraints to escape complying with Section 12 of the Disasters Management Act, 2005. He said that there were several top court judgments backing his position.

However, pointing out that section 12 of Disaster Management Act was "rec-

ommendatory" in nature, Solicitor General Mehta told the court that the focus of the Disaster Management Act has shifted from one-time cash relief to larger issues of preparedness, risk management, mitigation, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

However, advocate Gaurav Kumar Bansal who is also one of the petitioners in the case argued that the ex gratia amount can be small or big, but some held must reach the families who have lost their sole bread earner.

SHORT TAKES

VILLAGES BACK
ERRANT HEALTH
STAFF

From Page 1

The DM&HO said an inquiry was held into the matter. The medical and health department will seek an explanation from those who did this and action would be taken if guilt is established, he said.

He said the villagers are supporting the ANM, who administered the different doses. "The villagers say this ANM has been extending great service to them for the past many months. They are requesting us to not take any action on the ANM," the official said.

The official also maintained that they checked with those who got the different doses and found they remained healthy. "Our medical teams are camping at the village and closely observing their health conditions," he said.

However, the villagers alleged that no health official visited them. They told the media that the mistake was noticed when one of the victims of this oversight saw the vaccine vial and questioned the health officials. The villagers said they are scared about the outcome.

APSRTC TO
RESUME SERVICES
TO TELANGANADC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

The APSRTC resumed services to Telangana in different RTC zones in the state on Monday.

According to the RTC sources, nearly 100-odd buses were operated from the Andhra to Telangana mainly to Hyderabad.

"Nearly 35 buses were started from Vijayawada main bus station to Hyderabad," said an RTC official.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, the Vizianagaram zone executive director C. Ravi Kumar said that they could not operate the buses from Vizag to Hyderabad due to the curfew restrictions. They then decided to operate the buses from East Godavari's Ravulapalem and Rajahmundry to Hyderabad. Both the locations are closer to the border points at Telangana, where the curfew was lifted from Monday.

The zone incurred huge loss in the second wave, Ravi Kumar said while adding that they were currently earning ₹10 lakh per day against the average ₹3 crore by operating buses in all four districts from Srikakulam to East Godavari.

RAPE VICTIM GETS
₹5L COMPENSATION,
ASSURED JUSTICEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Home minister Mekathoti Sucharita and minister for women welfare Taneti Vanitha on Monday visited the gang-rape victim who is undergoing treatment at GGH in Guntur and assured justice to the victim. They stated that CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has announced ₹5 lakh compensation to the victim. The ministers affirmed that the police had launched searches to nab the culprits and subject them to severe punishment.

The young woman, who was working as a nurse in a private hospital in Vijayawada, had gone to Pushkar Ghat at Seethanagar on Saturday night along with her fiancé, who works in a petrol pump at Gandhinagar. The couple's wedding was stalled because of Covid-19 lockdown.

According to police, two unknown culprits had attacked them and tied her fiancé with a rope and allegedly sexually assaulted her. They fled from the spot in a boat, after stealing their phones.

The injured couple somehow managed to reach Prakasam Barrage around midnight and informed the police on duty about the heinous incident.

Led by Additional SP Eswara Rao, Mangalagiri DSP Durga Prasad and Tadepalli CI Seshagiri Rao, police swung into action and first shifted the victim to GGH in Guntur. The couple lodged a formal complaint with Tadepalli police on Sunday.

Later, Sucharita said that the incident on the banks of the Krishna River was a dastardly act. She stated that four police teams have been deployed to locate them. She said that the government is setting up forensic labs in three places and recruiting sufficient staff for these labs. She further said that they are setting up surveillance systems.

Unemployed take to the streets



Unemployed youth display placards in protest against the government demanding jobs for them near GVMC Gandhi Statue junction in Visakhapatnam on Monday.

— P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

MSMEs proposal from
Chennai still in limbo

Change of govt delays KAIPA's ₹2,000 cr project at Kosalanagar

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, JUNE 21

A proposal by 250 and odd Chennai-based MSME entrepreneurs to expand their manufacturing capacity by taking advantage of availability of land, abundance of power, water, and labour force available in Andhra Pradesh has been lying in cold storage for the last five years.

As the entrepreneurs, who are members of AIEMA (Ambattur Estate Manufacturers Association) were keen to have land close to Chennai, the AP government identified land at Kosalanagar in Chittoor district.

Buoyed by the allocation, the industrialists formed an SPV - KAIPA (Kosalanagar AIEMA Industrial Park Association) in 2016 and signed a MoU during the Industrial Conclave at Visakhapatnam during the TD regime four and half years back, according to A. Ramesh, Director of SPV.

After discussions, APIIC earmarked an area of 1500 acres situated at Kosalanagar for the park. A Detailed Project

KAIPA SUGGESTS ALTERNATIVE SITE

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 21

Kosalanagar AIEMA Industrial Park (KAIPA) representatives have been urging the state government to develop a large extent of DKT land close to Tamil Nadu border at Nindra and Pichatur villages in Chittoor district.

They claim that the location has immediate Road access besides a steady availability of water while pointing to Araniar reservoir situated across the land.

"It can be developed within six months unlike Kosalanagar, which is a hilly terrain and there are quite a few challenges like approach road permission from Tamil Nadu government and water to be sourced from

Report and feasibility study has already been completed. APIIC has also obtained clearance for the project from National Green Tribunal (NGT), Delhi.

As per the proposal submitted by KAIPA promoters, they would propel MSMEs with an investment of ₹2,000 crore and

Telugu Ganga. It will take anywhere between 18 to 24 months to complete the works in Kosalanagar," said chairman of KAIPA, A. S. Hari prasad and Director Ramesh Aruvella.

Reminding that Chennai entrepreneurs are losing interest because of a long wait for land, they underlined the need to consider Pichatur proposal to prevent them from looking for alternative land in Tamil Nadu. They have sought that the park be named as 'Srivari Industrial Park'.

Stressing that Industries minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy is keen on encouraging Tamil Nadu MSME industry culture in Andhra Pradesh, Ramesh appealed to him to expedite their proposals.

The units would generate more than 10,000 jobs, thereby changing the face of Vijayanagar mandal in Chittoor district.

However, further progress of the project came to a grinding halt after change of government in the state.

KAIPA representatives said that they had met

minister for Industries, Mekapati Goutham Reddy and APIIC chairperson Roja several time to discuss the proposal. Incidentally, Kosalanagar is part of Nagari Assembly constituency, which is represented by Roja.

The minister assured the entrepreneurs that he would provide developed land with plug and play facility of international standards at subsidised cost by getting a special grant from the Chief Minister.

In spite of all the efforts and positive encouragement given by the minister and APIIC, things have not moved at a fast phase, KAIPA members said. They added that the Covid-19 pandemic has further dampened their spirits. However, they entrepreneurs said that they have not given up on the proposal while expressing interest to pursue with the government to help the project take shape.

When contacted, Goutham Reddy said he was keen on grounding the project while attributing the delay to Covid-19 situation. He said he would talk to the Chennai entrepreneurs to expedite the project.

Women to get
₹4,339.39cr under
Cheyutha schemeDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

As part of his government's move towards women empowerment, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will, for the second consecutive year, credit on Tuesday ₹4,339.39 crore into accounts of 23,14,342 women beneficiaries under YSR Cheyutha.

Cheyutha is primarily aimed at helping women contribute to economic progress, with government assisting them in marketing and other technical aspects of the business.

Under the scheme, women from BC, SC, ST and Minority communities aged between 45-60 years will be directly paid a total amount of ₹75,000 in four years at the rate of ₹18,750 per annum. The total expenditure of the government on this will be around ₹19,000 crore. So far, on YSR Cheyutha alone, the state government has spent ₹8,943.52 crore during the last two years.

Besides, the government has signed memorandums of understanding (MoUs) with banks and multinational companies, such as Amul, ITC, HUL, P&G and Reliance, to support women's entrepreneurs in establishing grocery stores, dairy farms and such business enterprises. About six lakh widows, single



Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

women and especially ailed in the said age group are reaping the benefits of YSR Cheyutha.

All beneficiaries have complete freedom in using money provided under the scheme for any other livelihood activities.

As on date, 78,000 women have established grocery stores. 1,90,517 women are rearing cattle, including cows, buffaloes, sheep and goats to raise their family income. The government has set up a YSR Cheyutha Call Centre with numbers 0866-2468899 and 9392917899 to connect beneficiaries with corporate companies and banks. A Command Control Centre has also been put in place to monitor and provide training and assistance to women.

The MoU with Amul is such that an additional price of ₹5-15 will be provided on each litre of milk.

Nothing illegal in
e-bus tenders: Min.DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Andhra Pradesh has set a new record by vaccinating 13,72,481 people during a mega vaccination drive held on Sunday, said I&PR minister Perni Venkataramaiah, alias Nani, who also refuted false charges on e-bus tenders.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, the minister said that 47 per cent of vaccinations across the country on June 20, were administered in Andhra Pradesh. Of the total 13.72 lakh vaccinations, the first dose was given to 12,85,394 persons and second dose to 87,087, emerging as a role-model to other States. The state has crossed the milestone of one crore vaccinations. The first dose was inoculated on 1,10,09,820 persons and 27,32,596 given the second dose.

Nani stated that so far Andhra Pradesh had received 1,11,61,380 doses from Centre and had purchased 21,05,630 doses on its own by paying ₹300 for Covishield and ₹400 for Covaxin. In the mega vaccination drive, West Godavari district stood first with the highest number of inoculations, followed by East Godavari.

The drive focused on people above 45 years and mothers with children less than five years old. Almost thousands of ANMs, Asha workers, volunteers and secretariat staff took part in the drive.

The minister appealed to the Centre to provide more doses to Andhra

● NANI STATED that a section of the media has been falsely propagating that the government is awarding a single tender, which is completely untrue, as every tender is subject to judicial review.

Pradesh, as the State is efficiently vaccinating people and has the capacity to administer more than 13 lakh doses a day.

Meanwhile, refuting the false allegations by a section of media on the tenders of electric buses, Nani clarified that the tender conditions were set as per rules. He said that the State government decided to purchase electric buses in 2020 itself but as the buses cost over ₹2.5 crore, the government withdrew the proposal, as it could end up burdening people despite Centre providing subsidy. However, as the cost of the buses have come down to ₹1.5 to 1.7 crore, the State government decided to call for tenders to ply 350 electric buses in the first phase.

Nani stated that a section of the media has been falsely propagating that the government is awarding a single tender, which is completely untrue, as every tender is subject to judicial review. APSRTC has planned to procure 100 buses for the Tirupati-Tirumala ghat route, 100 for Visakhapatnam and 50 each in Vijayawada, Kakinada and Amaravati.

The minister appealed to the Centre to provide more doses to Andhra

CM ASKS OFFICIALS
TO STAY ALERT
OVER COVID

From Page 1

The Chief Minister told the officials to be on alert as lockdown imposed in neighbouring states is being relaxed. The officials said 2,655 ICU beds and 13,824 oxygen beds are available at present and added that 91.48 per cent beds were occupied by patients who were being treated under Arogyasri. They said that 7,056 beds were occupied in Covid-19 care centres.

The state has registered 2,772 black fungus active cases till date and of them 922 patients underwent surgeries, 1,232 were discharged, 212 died while the remaining are undergoing treatment, they said.

Around 1,37,42,417 doses of Covid vaccine were administered of which the first dose was given to 82,77,225 people and two doses were completed on 27,32,596 persons. Vaccine was administered to 10,29,266 mothers of children below five years of age and the first dose of vaccination has been completed on 11,158 persons going abroad. 13,72,481 people were vaccinated in a single day during a mega vaccination drive on June 20, they said.

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, Chief Secretary Adityanath Das, DGP Goutam Sawang, Covid command control chairman Dr K. S. Jawahar Reddy, Health

Principal Secretary Anil Kumar Singhal, Covid-19 task force committee chairman M. T. Krishna Babu, Health Secretary M. Ravi Chandra, Health Commissioner Katamaneni Bhaskar, 104 call center in-charge A. Babu, APMSIDC boss Vijayarama Raju and other officials were present.

IRREGULARITIES IN
GROUP-1 EXAMS,
SAYS LOKESHDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

Nara Lokesh on Monday alleged that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government committed irregularities in the Group-1 exam along the lines of the Vyapam scam in Madhya Pradesh.

Lokesh demanded the government to immediately conduct a manual evaluation of the Group-1 mains answer sheets so as to ensure justice to the deserving candidates. It was unfortunate that there was no change in the attitude of the CM despite repeated strictures being passed by the courts against his regime's decisions. The Group-1 legal fight will continue till full and final justice was done to the genuine aspirants.

Addressing a meeting with the aspirants on 'irregularities in APPSC Group-1 and impact of a court order', Lokesh asked the job aspirants not to lose heart but continue their united struggle.

The court has stayed interviews for a month. Like never before, over 300 petitions were filed in the court against the manner in which the Group-1 exam was conducted.

State employees body
gets govt recognitionDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Andhra Pradesh Government Employees Association (APGEA) president K.R. Suryanarayana said that the government accorded recognition to them to enable its members to make representations regarding their conditions of service and matters pertaining to their redressal besides being accorded permanent membership on AP Civil Services Joint Staff Council (State Level). He said that principal secretary to the government Shashi Bhusan Kumar issued GO: 1062 on



K. Suryanarayana

Monday regarding the recognition.

Suryanarayana said that the government in order to review implementation of Employees Health Scheme (EHS), from time to time and make appropriate recommendations for improving the effectiveness and efficiency of

the scheme, has decided to constitute a steering committee under the chairmanship of the Chief Secretary with 40% members from employee and pensioners associations and 60% members from the government side.

He said that the government has revised the ratio of 40:60 to 50:50 ratio in respect of members of employees/ pensioners associations and government in the composition of the steering committee to accommodate APGEA. He said that they were thankful to Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and his top officials for the recognition of APGEA.

CLASH | OF WORDS

Anil Kumar Yadav says irrigation projects in AP were there for decades

AP slams TS charges of 'illegal dam projects'

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Minister for water resources P. Anil Kumar Yadav has refuted allegations of Telangana state that Andhra Pradesh was constructing irrigation projects illegally. He claimed that Andhra Pradesh was using was allocated for the projects. He alleged that Telangana was constructing irrigation projects without any permissions and this would damage water allocations to Andhra

Pradesh. Yadav clarified that the construction of irrigation projects in the State are subject to water allocations by tribunals and ridiculed the objections of Telangana State.

Speaking to the media here on Monday, he alleged that Telangana state had been constructing new projects without any permission and has increased the capacity of Kalwakurthy and Nettempadu projects.

Asserting that the state government is not going

● TELANGANA STATE officials are falsely accusing the State, despite all the projects being administered as per allocations, says, the Minister. The CM wanted the 2 states to be on friendly terms, he adds.

beyond its allocations, the minister said that for the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project, the state cannot draw the allocated water of 44,000 cusecs from Srisaillam through Pothireddypadu if

the level drops below 848 feet. He further said that to provide water for Rayalaseema and Nellore districts, water could be drawn only at 881 ft level, which could suffice for 15-20 days during floods. He wanted to know from where else could Telangana state can withdraw over six thousand million cubic feet (tmc ft) of water, even when the water level is below 800 ft besides taking up projects like Palamuru-Ranga Reddy Lift Irrigation Project.

Yadav questioned on what basis it would be wrong for Andhra Pradesh to construct lift irrigation just to ease the process of withdrawing the allocated share of water, while the same is being done by Telangana state. The minister said that the Rajolibanda project has an allocation of 4 tmc ft and Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will go to any extent to protect the interests of the state. Telangana state officials are falsely accusing the State, despite all the proj-

ects being administered as per allocations, he added.

The minister said that the Chief Minister wanted the two states to be on friendly terms and took a step forward in that regard. He claimed that all these projects have been there for decades and the State government is only trying to increase their capacity. The minister stated that the Vamsadhara Tribunal has given clearance to construct the Neredi project and its construction would start soon.

SHORT TAKES

PARTS OF AP
TO GET LIGHT TO
MODERATE RAINSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

Light to moderate rains in most parts of the state, and moderate to heavy at one or two places in north coastal Andhra Pradesh will occur on June 22, an IMD alert stated on Monday.

Under the influence of cumulonimbus clouds and normal southwest monsoon winds over the state, the parts of Srikakulam, Anantapuram, Nellore and Prakasam received light rains on Monday, and would continue to pour across parts of the south coastal AP and Rayalaseema in the next 24 hours, the IMD officials said.

Since the maximum temperatures continued to prevail in some parts of the state on Monday, there would be heavy thunderstorms associated with lightening under the influence of the cumulonimbus clouds for the next few days.

TESTS FOR DRIVING
LICENCES RESUME
IN THE STATEDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 21

The AP Road Transport Authority (RTA) resumed the tests for the issuance of driving license at seven districts - Vizianagaram, West Godavari, Prakasam, Nellore, Ananthapuram, Kadapa, and Kurnool on Monday.

The services will be available in the remaining districts from July 1. Speaking to *DC*, the RTC Visakhapatnam deputy transport commissioner G.C. Raja Ratnam said that hundreds of applications were pending for the driving license tests due to the Covid-19 induced curfew from May, and also the pandemic fear among the applicants to attend the tests manually from March to April.

"Since the tests are mandatory for issuing the driving licenses to the eligible applicants, we will resume the services in Visakhapatnam from July 1. We have already made all arrangements with proper Covid-19 protocols to conduct the tests at our test center at Gambheeram on the city outskirts," Raja Ratnam added.

SI SUSPENDED FOR
DERELICTION OF
DUTY IN TIRUPATIDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 21

Tirupati urban district SP Ch. Venkata Appala Naidu placed one Sub-Inspector attached to the Muthyala Reddy Palli police station under suspension for dereliction of duty in connection with a case, booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act.

According to a statement, the SP on Monday released an order suspending the M.R. Palli SI S. Giri Babu for his negligence in handling a POCSO case. When a victim of sexual harassment went to the police station last week, the Sub-Inspector did not register her complaint and reportedly behaved negligently towards her. Having learnt about the incident, SP Venkata Appala Naidu ordered a departmental inquiry which revealed that SI Giri Babu failed to discharge his duties diligently.

POLAVARAM
PROJECT-HIT PEOPLE
SEEK HELPDC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 21

The Polavaram project-affected people have staged an agitation and formed a human chain at the Ambekar Centre in Velerupadu village, in the merged mandal in the agency area, pleading that the government provide all promised facilities to them as per law.

An all-party team of leaders like the Congress, the Telugu Desam, the YSRC, the CPI, the CPM, the Jana Sena and the BJP as also farmers, businessmen and the people of the village participated in the agitation. The leaders stressed that the government provide proper compensation, create infrastructure facilities in the rehabilitation colonies, speedy completion of colonies and give compensation and R&R package to those who have completed the age 18 by considering the date of shifting the Polavaram project-affected families to the rehabilitation colonies.

More Covid tests



Medical staff collects swabs from a woman for Covid-19 testing at MVP Ward Secretariat in Visakhapatnam on Monday. — K. MURALI KRISHNA

Closure hits mental
health of students

Psychiatrists notice disorders among youngsters

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 21

Lockdowns and closure of educational institutions had an adverse impact on students of all ages and these are causing psychiatric problems.

Psychiatrists notice disorders and health problems among the youngsters due to lack of self-control and timely sleep as they are addicted to use of mobile phones day and night. Sleepless nights have become a common problem and this is leading to other disorders and hormonal imbalances.

Educational institutions were mostly closed for the past one year. Students were being taught through online

methods in the wake of the lockdown.

Lack of minimum physical exercise caused obesity and mental issues among several students. High school students faced obesity problems and are unable to wear their old dresses. Rajesh, school uniform supplier from Anantapur, noted that high school students — boys and girls — are facing obesity issues and their formal dresses as also the uniforms can no more be worn.

Watching mobile phones throughout the day led to complications in life. A study found untimely sleep and food intake led to disturbance of peace and harmony in families. A majority of students were attracted

● **EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS** were mostly closed for the past one year. Students were being taught through online methods in the wake of the lockdown.

to online games via mobile phone and spending time on this till late at night.

A study revealed that children were taking an extra diet with rich fats and dramatically increased their consumption of junk foods in addition to routine traditional foods. "During school and college hours, students had to follow menu and timings in the hostels and even at schools, but a peculiar situation prevailed for

the past one year during the Covid pandemic," teacher Satyanarayana observed.

A lack of minimum discipline is causing a disturbed situation among students and this is impacting on parents and other family members.

Dr Yendluri Prabhkar, head of the psychiatry ward at Anantapur government general hospital said untimely food and sleep is seen as a common disorder among students seeking counseling for disorders. "Students are advised to switch off their mobile phones after 7 pm. This will help them overcome mental disorders instead of depending on doctors for medication", he told *DC*.

International Yoga Day
celebrated with gustoYOGA IS LIKE A DIVINE MEDICINE
SAYS DR M. RAMACHANDRA REDDYDC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 21

International yoga day was celebrated by Vivekananda Yoga Kendra through virtual mode, which was hosted by BEST Innovation University here on Monday.

Registrar of the university Shazil Ahmed observed that the negative energies flowing due to Covid-19 and International Yoga Day can bring people together on a positive note.

Dr P Chowdappa, vice-chancellor of BEST University briefed about the importance of the day that is celebrated across the globe.

Themed 'Yoga for well-being', the event featured international yoga protocol demonstrations and saw the participation of a sizeable crowd.

Chancellor Dr Rupa Vasudevan highlighted the teachings of Swamy Vivekananda, who propagated yoga and the richness of Indian culture. She said people can overcome Covid

immunity.

Kadapa district revenue officer Malola said that youth can increase their concentration levels by practicing yoga. Yoga instructors Mahesh and Suman performed asanas. District tourism officer Rajasekhara Reddy, chief coach Basha Mohiddin, several gymnasts, coaches and students were present.

Meanwhile, a Class V student, Karri Karthik Ramachandra Reddy, bagged an appreciation certificate in the state-level yoga competition, conducted by Ayush department.

Rajasekhara Reddy were present on the occasion.

Meanwhile, the day was celebrated at Central University with vice-chancellor Prof. A. Kori calling upon students to take to yoga on a daily basis to keep away from mental stress.

SAD | PLIGHT

180 employees paid ₹4,030 to ₹6,110 for last two decades

Contract staff at Kakinada Hosp are the least paid

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 21

The plight of 180 outsourcing employees in the Government General Hospital at Kakinada is steadily getting worse. They have been working for nearly two decades in the hospital but their present salaries are no more than ₹4,030 to ₹6,110 per month.

Though these employees have submitted several representations to the government, they could not get a minimum salary of ₹15,000 to ₹24,000 as per the GO. In 2001, when the perma-

nent staff at the GGH retired from service, the then government opted not to fill the vacancies. The existing employees took the additional burden and patient services were affected.

Identifying the problem, former district collector Satishchandra had obtained permission to recruit lab technicians in different categories, as also ANMs, operators and others on an outsourcing basis. After introducing the Aarogya Sri in the GGH, more employees have been recruited for these posts. A total of 274 out-

sourcing employees have been merged with Vikasa" outsourcing agency, a government sponsored organisation, in 2011.

In 2016, a GO was issued for increasing the minimum salaries of outsourcing employees from ₹15,000 to ₹24,000. The GO has helped all outsourcing employees in the state except for those of them at the GGH.

At last, in 2020, the employees have been merged with Andhra Pradesh Corporation of Outsourcing (APCOS) to give them the salaries as per the GO.

Their employee IDs have also been registered with the Finance Department.

"After registering them with the finance department, the government has cancelled their white ration cards and hence could not apply for the Ammavodi house sites given to the poor and for other schemes. They have not been paid even the meagre salaries from September 2020. "Their living conditions have become worse. They are struggling for their lives," said GGH outsourcing employees leader Manikumar.

AP sees huge drop in
Covid-19 positive casesDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

New Coronavirus infections in AP have witnessed a major fall on Monday with the number of cases registered during the last 24 hours being 2,620 and 7,504 patients being discharged following their recovery throughout the state.

The new daily infections registered on Monday have been the lowest in two-and-a-half months. But this could be attributed to fewer tests, as only 55,002 samples had been tested in the past 24 hours, as against nearly one lakh samples tested daily.

The total Covid-19 tests conducted so far in AP have reached 2,12,05,849, with

positivity rate being 4.8 percent and recovery rate 96.2 percent. Total infections in 13 districts of the state have reached 1,85,3183 of which total recoveries are 17,82,680.

Chittoor district is on top in daily new infections, recording 531 cases, followed by East Godavari district 335, Krishna 213, West Godavari 211, Nellore 201, Kurnool 162, Kadapa 162, Visakhapatnam 160, Guntur 158, Srikakulam 144, Anantapur 128, Prakasam 127 and Vizianagaram registering the least number of 88 new infections.

AP has registered 44 new deaths, increasing the death toll to 12,363. Ten new deaths have been recorded

in Chittoor district, five each in Guntur and Srikakulam, four in East Godavari, three each in Anantapur, Kurnool, Prakasam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari, two in Krishna district and one each death in Kadapa, Nellore and Vizianagaram districts.

East Godavari is on top in total Coronavirus cases, registering 2,55,686 infections, followed by Chittoor 2,14,719, Guntur 1,59,820, West Godavari 1,56,887, Anantapur 1,52,161, Visakhapatnam 1,47,015, Nellore 1,25,360, Kurnool 1,20,981, Prakasam 1,18,246, Srikakulam 1,16,951, Kadapa 1,04,444, Krishna 98,697 and Vizianagaram 79,321 cases.

AP CID TO
SCREEN MOVIES
ON CYBERCRIMESDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

AP CID Department will screen for its officials Jamtara web series and Operation Java as part of a training programme at its headquarters here. Addressing trainees on Monday, CID additional DGP P. V. Sunil Kumar pointed out that cybercrimes are at a totally different level, as these are committed misusing technologies and luring gullible through innovative methods.

He said police officials should learn how cyber criminals use their intelligence for exploiting vulnerabilities of victims and committing crimes. Their psychology, social background and living environment have to be understood for cracking these mysteries. The additional DG pointed out that Jamtara is a sleepy little district in Jharkhand but has emerged as a hub of cybercrimes in India. There are even training centres in Jamtara that teach aspirants on how to successfully commit these crimes.

KANAKA DURGA
TEMPLE TO BE
OPEN TILL 5.30 PMDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Following relaxation of curfew during the day, darshan timings at the Kanaka Durga Temple have been increased from 6.30 am to 5.30 pm. The Durga temple governing committee took a decision to this effect at a meeting it held on Monday.

Committee chairman Paila Somi Naidu announced that Nitya Annadanam service will be restarted in July. He pointed out that Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has already announced ₹70 crore for development of the temple. The temple is preparing a detailed report of various works that are to be taken up.

Somi Naidu said it has, however, been decided to start certain development works at the temple, so that more services could be provided to devotees during the Dasara festivities.

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Pucca houses would be allocated to all displaced persons from Kanaka Durga Varadhi to Koti Nagar areas on the banks of Krishna River in Vijayawada city. Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner V. Prasanna Venkatesh inspected the ongoing construction works of flood protection retaining wall to the river on Monday. He stated that the government allotted ₹120 crore for the retaining wall construction as a protection to locals from Krishna river floods. He said that the construction was picking

up momentum and hence VMC started allocation of houses to displaced persons. Venkatesh said that VMC allotted pucca houses to 93 displaced persons who lost their houses for the wall construction. He said that they have sanctioned pucca houses to 168 displaced persons and houses would be allotted to them through a lottery system.


The commissioner said that the lottery programme would be held in Kshetraraya Kalakshetram on Tuesday. He asked the eligible displaced persons to attend the programme along with their ration card, Aadhar card and medical certificates.


WATER TANKS START FUNCTIONING TO
QUENCH THIRST AT BHAVANIPURAMDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 21

Vijayawada mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi assured to resolve all issues of the city on a priority basis. Along with VMC commissioner V. Prasanna Venkatesh and MLC Sk

Karimunnisa, she inaugurated a newly-constructed water tank at a ₹4 crore expenditure at Bhavanipuram HB Colony.

Bhagyalakshmi said that the corporation was giving priority to resolving drinking water problems.

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SHORT TAKES

ODISHA STARTS CLASSES ON YOUTUBE

AKSHAYA KUMAR
SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 21

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

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

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

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

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

LENS ON MISHAP THAT CLAIMED FIVE LIVES

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,
JUNE 21

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

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

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

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

CRUCIAL MEET ON SECURITY THIS WEEK

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

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

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

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

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

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

Health is wealth



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

— PTI

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

— D. KAMRAJ



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

Amarnath yatra cancelled for second year in a row

YUSUF JAMEEL
SRINAGAR, JUNE 21

The Amarnath Yatra has been cancelled for the second year in a row due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Like last year, the pilgrimage will be only "symbolic", with all rituals to be performed quietly by a select number of priests and hermits at the revered cave-shrine at a height of 13,000 feet (3,982 metres) in the lower Himalayas in south Kashmir. Like last year, the morning and evening aarti will be telecast live.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

corona still looms large."

Though bus operations have come as a relief to office-goers and others who depend on them for commuting, they plying in lesser numbers and with 50 per cent capacity is causing chaos at bus stands in several places of the city, with higher number of people wanting to avail its service. Similar reports are emerging from other places.

While the Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation had said it is deploying 3,000 initially for local and inter-district long route bus operations,



2ND LAPSE IN SCINDIA'S COVER IN 10 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
BHOPAL, JUNE 21

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

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

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

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

82.7L jabs given in single day

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
WITH AGENCY INPUTS
NEW DELHI, JUNE 21

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

India's cumulative Covid-19 vaccination coverage was recorded at over 28.33 crore since January 16, according to the data from the CoWIN portal.

"Today's record-breaking vaccination numbers are gladdening. The vaccine remains our strongest weapon to fight COVID-19. Congratulations to those who got vaccinated and kudos to all the front-line warriors working hard to ensure so many citizens got the vaccine. Well done India!" Prime Minister Narendra Modi said.

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

The average single-day vaccinations fell to as low as around 16 lakh in the first week of May when the country was at the peak of the second wave. Madhya Pradesh saw the maximum vaccinations on Monday followed by Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh.

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

The overall fresh cases of Covid-19 fell to 53,000 in India after 88 days while the figure in Delhi came down to two digits (89). With cases coming down, the Bihar government announced an easing of the restrictions. From June 23 to July 6, all government and private offices can function at 100 per cent capacity, shops can remain open till 7 pm,

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

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

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

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

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

It said that as part of the nationwide vaccination

MP VACCINATES 14.71 LAKH PEOPLE IN A DAY

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY
BHOPAL, JUNE 21

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MAHA TEEN ENDS LIFE OVER ONLINE CLASSES

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

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

— PTI

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

NINE CATALAN SEPARATISTS TO BE PARDONED

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

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

DESPITE VISA ISSUES, TAIWAN TO KEEP HK OFFICE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ARMENIA PM's PARTY WINS SNAP PARL ELECTION

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

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

PHOTO SHOWS DUBAI PRINCESS IN SPAIN

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

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

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

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

Taliban take key Afghan district

Insurgents add to string of recent victories

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

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

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

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

● **DOZENS OF districts have fallen to the Taliban since May 1, when United States and Nato troops began their final departure from Afghanistan. Like Imam Sahib district in northern Kunduz, their significance often lies in their proximity to roads and major cities.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— AP

Israeli FM in UAE next week

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

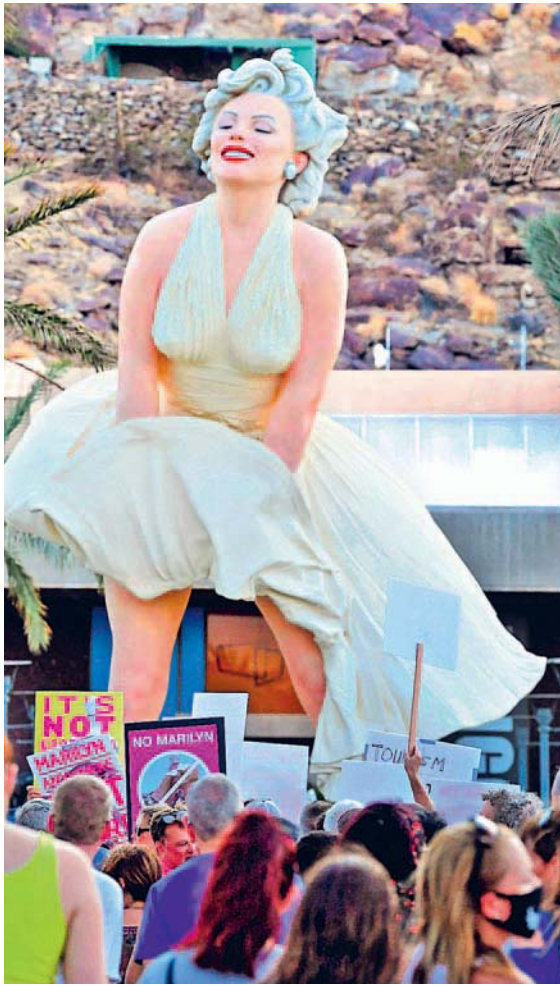
UAE, which would make it only the second country in the Middle East, after Israel, to acquire them.

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

The Palestinians strongly criticised the normalisation agreements.

— AP

Tumult over statue



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

— Photo by Frederic J. Brown/AFP

Sweden's PM loses confidence vote over realty

● **AT THE centre of a controversy that sparked the Left Party to lose confidence and vote against Lofven are plans to deregulate Sweden's housing market because of accelerating price increases that took place during the pandemic.**

Stockholm, June 21:

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

Lofven said last week he would wait for the vote and then "think through what is best for Sweden." The prime minister has one week to decide whether to call an early election. Over the weekend, Lofven held last-minute meetings seeking to secure a majority in parliament for his proposed rent reforms.

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

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

— AP

Raisi says no Biden meet, missiles non-negotiable

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

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

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

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

Tehran's fleet of attack

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

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

— AP

EU curbs to hurt Belarus economy

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

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

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

Diplomats have said that a number of those targeted are linked to an in-

cident last month in which a Ryanair flight travelling from Greece to Lithuania was diverted to Minsk, where authorities arrested Raman Pratasevich, a dissident journalist who was on board the airliner. The EU has already banned Belarus airline companies from flying over the bloc's territory or using its airports.

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

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

— AP

Oz official: Stick with AZ for 2nd dose 92 Indian factory workers in Lanka Covid positive

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

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

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

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

Colombo, June 21: Ninety two Indian workers at an iron works factory in Sri Lanka tested positive for Covid-19 on Monday, health officials said.

The Indians were among the 128 workers at the factory in Colombo north suburb of Wattala who were found to have contracted the virus. They have been put under quarantine. The factory, which has a total of 194 workers, has been closed temporarily, a report in the Newscenter.lk said. Those who have tested negative have been put under quarantine in the factory premises, the report said.

Meanwhile, Sri Lanka on Monday ended its

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

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

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

died in April. Pfizer is currently the only alternative to AstraZeneca in Australia, although Moderna is expected to be registered

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

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

— PTI

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

— AP

PAK'S DEATH TOLL CROSSES MARK OF 22K

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

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

— PTI

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

Museum on WWII-expelled Germans raises Nazi crimes

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

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

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

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

"heated arguments about priorities and contextualisation."

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

European Jews?"

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

"Without the Nazi policies of expulsion and annihilation, 14 million Ger-

mans wouldn't have lost their homes as a result of flight and expulsion," she added. "But that doesn't change the fact that their expulsion by the Allies and the eastern and central European states in the aftermath of World War II was also an injustice."

In its efforts to provide context, the exhibition explores "forced migration as a phenomenon of modern

Europe," including displacements during World War I, the arrival of Vietnamese "boat people" in West Germany in the 1970s, the fallout from the disintegration of Yugoslavia in 1990s and the European migration crisis of recent years.

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

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

— AP

SHORT TAKES

Maharaj hat-trick puts SA on course

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

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

Rahm wins first US Open crown

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

Chhetri extends stay with BFC

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

Elina into top five in WTA rankings

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

Hawks upset top seeded Sixers

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

Live on TV

CRICKET

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

EURO

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

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DRAW LOOMS

Weather plays havoc as another day washed out

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Jamieson relishes Kohli wicket

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

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

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

they have said, Jamieson answered in affirmative.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FINAL SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN HELD IN UK: KP

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

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

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

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

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

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

Lack of practice hurt India: Doull

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Jasprit Bumrah

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

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

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

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

THUNDER & SAINT



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

Olympic briefs

Shot-putter Toor qualifies

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

Trailblazing transgender

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

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



Laurel Hubbard

Local fans limited to 10K

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

England look to get back on track against Czech

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

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

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

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



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

SCOTLAND ON BRINK OF QUALIFYING

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

A hard-earned 0-0 draw against England at

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

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

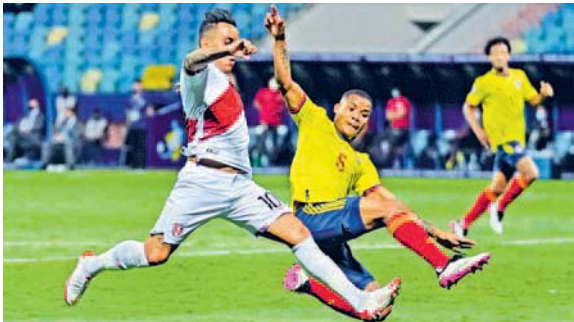
Peru pip Colombia, keep hopes alive

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

VENEZUELA, ECUADOR SHARE SPOILS

Ronald Hernandez scored an injury time equaliser

COPA RESULTS

Peru (Sergio Pena 17', Yerry Mina 64-og)
Colombia (Miguel Borja 53)

Venezuela (Edson Castillo 51, Ronald Hernandez 91)
Ecuador (Ayrton Preciado 39, Gonzalo Plata 71)

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

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

Castillo.

It was a remarkable achievement for a team still missing 12 players due to testing positive for Covid-19 or injury.

"I have no words to describe my admiration for these lads," said Venezuela's coach Jose Peseiro.

"The way they played for the first time in the professional team, they're here showing an ability to sacrifice, to fight, to defend the Burgundy (jersey), which excites me."

The point left Ecuador bottom of the five team group on one point, with Venezuela a place and a point above them after having played a game more. Hosts Brazil lead the group with a perfect two wins from two ahead of Colombia. — **Agencies**