

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
VISAKHAPATNAM | SUNDAY | 4 JULY 2021

## WEATHER



Max: 31.2°C  
Min: 25.6°C  
RH: 78%  
Rainfall: 001.6mm

Forecast: Mist.  
Max/Min temp.  
31/25 °C

## ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana  
Tithi: Jyeshtha Bahula Dasami till 7.56 pm  
Star: Ashwini till 9.05 am  
Variyam: 4.36 am to 6.24 am;  
7.55 pm to 9.44 pm  
Durmuhurtam: 5.07 pm to 5.59 pm  
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
HIJRI CALENDAR  
Zeeqad 22,1441 AH  
PRAYERS  
(ROYAL MOSQUE)  
Fajar: 5.05 am  
Zohar: 1.30 pm  
Asar: 5.00 pm  
Maghrib: 6.19 pm  
Isha: 8.30 pm  
SUNSET TODAY 6.36 PM  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.26 AM  
MOONSET TODAY 01.55 PM  
MOONRISE TOMORROW 01.06 AM

## COUNTER POINT



Now I can travel to any country... I took all companies' vaccines!

## SHORT TAKES

### 150 Maoists storm iron ore

**Raipur:** Around 150 armed Maoists on Saturday stormed an iron ore site allotted to a private firm in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Narayanpur where they attacked and took workers hostage, leaving one of them dead, police said. The Maoists also launched a grenade attack and opened indiscriminate fire on a police camp, about 1.5 km from the iron ore mine site. The attack lasted four hours.

### Brazil SC nod to Covaxin probe

**Rio de Janeiro:** A Brazilian Supreme Court justice has authorised a criminal investigation into President Jair Bolsonaro's response to allegations of potential corruption within his Health Ministry involving a vaccine deal. In Friday's decision, Supreme Court Justice Rosa Weber said the investigation is supported by recent testimony in a Senate committee investigating the government's handling of the pandemic.

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**Unvaccinated prone to Delta: Biden**



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**Italy dump World No.1 Belgium out of Euros**



## TABLOID

**Aamir-Kiran part ways**



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## BJP claims win in UP local polls, SP differs

**Lucknow, July 3:** The BJP on Saturday claimed to have swept the elections to the posts of the district panchayat chief even as the SP alleged that the ruling party "kidnapped" voters and used "force" to stop them from voting.

Samajwadi Party (SP) chief Akhilesh Yadav accused the BJP of making a mockery of the elections, saying it is strange that while most results in the polls for the district panchayat members were in favour of his outfit, the BJP gained in the contest for the district panchayat chief.

Though the panchayat polls in UP are not held on the party symbol and the state EC did not announce the party affiliation of the winning candidates, the BJP claimed that the candidate backed by it won on 67 of 75 posts, the elections for which were held on Saturday.

Claiming victory, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said in a tweet that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's popularity and welfare policies initiated by his government and the Centre are responsible for the party's good show. "This is the manifestation of public confidence in the good governance that has been established in UP.

## Pushkar Dhami is U'khand CM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JULY 3

Uttarakhand on Saturday got its third chief minister in less than four months after ruling the BJP's legislature party elected Pushkar Singh Dhami as its leader. He is likely to take oath of office on Sunday in the state where Assembly polls are scheduled early next year. Mr Dhami succeeded Tirath Singh Rawat, who resigned late Friday night due to a "constitutional crisis."

A two-time MLA from Udhampur Singh Nagar's Khatima, Mr Dhami, 45, was associated with the RSS' youth wing, ABVP, during his college days.



Pushkar Singh Dhami

Incidentally, Udhampur Singh Nagar is the only district in the poll-bound state which witnessed protests by farmers against the Centre's three land laws. The Terai district shares its border with UP and has a significant Sikh population and is part of Nainital-Udhampur Singh Nagar parliamentary seat.

Thanks to all people," he said. UP BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh too said, "The BJP+ (BJP and its allies) has won 67 out of 75 seats of zila panchayat chairpersons. For these unprecedented results, I thank people of the state." The victory march that

began in the 2014 Lok Sabha elections under the prime minister's leadership has continued till now and on the basis of the works done by PM Modi and Yogi, the BJP will form government with majority in the Assembly polls next year, Singh said. —PTI

## Rafale deal: France starts probe, Cong. seeks JPC

**New Delhi, July 3:** A French judge has been appointed to lead a "highly sensitive" judicial investigation into alleged "corruption and favouritism" in the ₹59,000 crore Rafale fighter jet deal with India, French investigative website Mediapart reported.

Following the development, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala on Saturday urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi to come forward and order a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the Rafale deal.

"Corruption in the Rafale deal has come out clearly now. The stand of the Congress Party and Rahul Gandhi has been vindicated today after the French government has ordered a probe," he told reporters at a press conference. The Mediapart said the probe into the inter-governmental deal signed in 2016 was formally opened on June 14.

"A probe was opened in France over the 7.8-billion Euro sale to India in 2016 of 36 Dassault-built Rafale fighter aircraft," the Mediapart reported on the latest development

## Rahul 'pawn' of rival firms: BJP

**New Delhi, July 3:** The BJP alleged on Saturday that Rahul Gandhi is acting as an agent of rival defence companies and being used as a "pawn", and also claimed he and the Congress keep raking up allegations of corruption in the Rafale deal in a bid to "weaken" India.

At a press conference, BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra also played down the appointment of a judge in France to lead a judicial investigation into the alleged corruption, saying the development was outcome of a complaint by an NGO and should not be seen as a matter of corruption.

This is akin to a compe-

on the controversial deal. The probe was initiated by the national financial prosecutors' office (PNF) following Mediapart's fresh reports of alleged wrongdoings in the deal and a complaint filed by

tent authority in India writing down in a file that "please act accordingly" when a matter is brought before him, Patra said and accused the Congress of spreading lies and misconceptions over the issue. The Congress has become synonymous with spreading lies and misconceptions, he said.

"The way Rahul Gandhi is behaving, it will not be an exaggeration to say that he is being used as a pawn by competing companies. He was lying right from the beginning on the issue. Probably, he is acting as an agent or some member of Gandhi family has been for a competing company," he alleged.

French NGO Sherpa that specialises in financial crime. Mediapart journalist Yann Philippin, who filed reports on the deal, said a first complaint was "buried" in 2019 by an ex-PNF chief.

## Mega housing mela gets good response on Day 2

Foundations laid for 2.56 lakh houses against 1.28 lakh target

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 3

The 'Mega Housing Grounding Mela' got an overwhelming response on the second day on Saturday as foundations were laid for 2.56 lakh houses against the target of 1.28 lakh and the cumulative number reached 5 lakhs on two days in 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh.

The grounding programme started in the early hours of Saturday where the beneficiaries in large numbers conducted the stone laying ceremonies due to availability of auspicious time. Ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and other public representatives, all

district collectors, joint collectors and other officials participated in the programme in their respective areas and laid foundations stones for the houses. The three-day mega grounding programme would be concluded on Sunday and the officials are expecting the same response from beneficiaries.

Minister for housing Ch. Sri Ranganatha Raju, participated in the event at Nidadavolu in West Godavari district.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister said houses to all was the prestigious programme of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy under which YSRC government was providing house

sites to 30.7 lakh beneficiaries free of cost. He said 15.6 lakh houses would be constructed under phase-I under which house groundings started in the auspicious three days.

He said the housing colonies would turn into mini towns in the coming days and added that the government was providing all basic amenities in these YSR-Jagananna Colonies.

Minister for transport Perni Venkataramiah alias Nani participated in the foundation laying ceremony at Gudlavalluru Layout in Krishna district. Addressing the gathering, Nani said Jagan Mohan Reddy never went back from his promises and ful-

filled the promise to provide houses to the poor as well.

He said AP was creating new records for the past two days by grounding more than two lakh houses per day and further a new record would be created on Sunday. Nani appealed to the housing beneficiaries to cooperate with the officials towards completion of house constructions in the scheduled time.

Minister for agriculture, Kurasala Kannababu participated in the housing grounding programme at Nemam Layout in East Godavari district.

■ **Page 2: Speaker takes part in meeting**

## BRIDGE TO EASE CONGESTION ON VIZAG-BHEEMILI BEACH ROAD

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 3

Traffic woes due to the narrow stretch of road on Vizag-Bheemili beach road will soon be resolved with Visakhapatnam Metropolitan Region Development Authority (VMRDA) constructing a bridge at a cost of ₹2.8 crore.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, VMRDA commissioner P. Koteswara Rao said, "We recently got permission for constructing the bridge from the state government. We will call tenders and complete the project in three months."

The narrow road is a bottleneck, particularly during rainy season. There is a stream crossing through a causeway at km 22/832 before merging in Bay of Bengal. It becomes a major traffic problem in the rainy season.

The 24-km-long Vizag-Bheemili beach road is an important state highway along the seashore. The original double lane road had been converted to four lanes by VMRDA up to 15 kilometres. The remaining part is being developed by Roads and Buildings Department, but the causeway has become a major issue.

VMRDA has come forward as the R&B could not complete construction of the bridge over the causeway.

● **THE 24-KM-LONG** Vizag-Bheemili beach road is an important state highway along the seashore. The original double lane road had been converted to four lanes by VMRDA

## Rain on horizon



Thick clouds hover over the sky on the Beach Road following a heavy downpour in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — K. MURALI KRISHNA

## Students demanding jobs before they write exams

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 3

With exams scheduled from the second week of July, students are urging the state government to take up Covid-19 vaccination for them.

Engineering fourth year exams are being held from July 12 to 25 and colleges are asking students to take the jobs to write the exams. Thousands of students are worried about getting the jobs in time and some are going to private hospitals to take vaccines which is putting extra financial burden on the parents during the Covid-19 crisis.

According to reports, as many as 11,79,687 students are studying undergradu-

ate courses in AP colleges and barring a few students, the majority of students have to get Covid-19 vaccine doses.

The state government is providing vaccines to people above 45 years of age and women having children below five years, but it is not providing vaccines to the age group of 18 to 45. Though the Centre had announced that administration of Corona vaccines to 18-45 years age groups would begin from June 21, the Andhra Pradesh government is yet to begin the drive.

The JNTU (Kakinada) primarily decided to conduct exams to final year engineering students from July 19 to 25 and JNTU

(Anantapur) from July 12 to 19 in their affiliated colleges.

The students were asked to choose examination centres near their houses as per their conveniences. Engineering colleges are asking their students to take Covid-19 vaccines before attending the exams and further prior to reopening of colleges as a precautionary measure.

Students P. Rajesh and Md. Shuja said the colleges were sending messages asking them to get the vaccine, hence they went to several government Covid-19 vaccination centres but in vain.

■ **Page 2: Students miffed at costly pvt hospitals vax**

**Farmers getting ready to raise paddy, red chillies in next 10 days as they must raise nurseries for 45 days**

## Huge loss if AP's farmers don't get timely water supply soon

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 3

Andhra Pradesh may suffer losses running to thousands of crores if farmers fail to get timely water supply to raise crops like paddy, red chillies, horticulture crops and vegetables in command areas falling under Srisaillam, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala irrigation projects. This is imminent as the Telangana state government has started drawing water from the three projects, thereby depleting the water in reservoirs.

From the Nagarjunasagar

right main canal (RMC), nearly 110 tmc ft of Krishna river water used to be supplied to its command area located in parts of Guntur and Prakasam districts from the dam.

Agriculture authorities say that red chilli used to be raised in about 74,000 hectares and paddy in 40,000 to 50,000 hectares, along with other crops including irrigated dry crops, in Guntur district. Farmers are getting ready to raise paddy and red chillies in the next 10 days as they have to raise nurseries for 45 days and later take up

transplantation during kharif. In the absence of a workable network of canals and water storage facilities in the district, farmers have to rely on water whenever it gets released. As red chillies are the main crop in the district, the farmers get an average yield of 60 quintals per hectare and a quintal of red chillies fetches them about ₹10,000-₹15,000 in the market. Any delay in getting water through Nagarjuna Sagar RMC will affect farmers as they may have to delay raising of crops or go in for raising irrigated dry crops like

pulses, which are not lucrative propositions, in comparative terms.

Guntur agriculture joint director M. Vijaya Bharathi said, "Unless farmers get Krishna water for raising crops like paddy and red chillies for kharif season in time, they may delay raising crops and if there is no guarantee of getting water, they may even opt for irrigated dry (ID) crops. This will have a major impact on farm production."

So is the case in parts of Krishna district too where farmers rely on Krishna water for raising paddy,

maize, groundnut, horticulture crops and vegetables. Though some farmers depend on borewells, especially in upland areas, any delay in supply of water will have a cascading effect.

In parts of Prakasam district, paddy, red chillies and pulses are mainly raised and farmers start raising nurseries from July 15 and take up transplantation by mid-August. They expect a huge water supply to raise crops toward the end of August.

■ **Page 2: Kurnool farmers more cautious**

## KCR wants July 9 KRMB meet cancelled, TS agenda on record

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 3

Chief Minister K. Chandrababhai Rao on Saturday demanded the cancellation of the tripartite meeting of Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) scheduled to be held on July 9 following the complaint lodged by the Andhra Pradesh govern-

ment against generation of hydel power by the Telangana state government.

Instead, Rao demanded that the KRMB hold a full-fledged meeting after July 20 and incorporate the issues raised by Telangana state in the agenda of the meeting. The Chief Minister held a meeting with senior officials at Pragathi Bhavan to take

stock of the situation arising out of the ongoing Krishna water row with AP. The CM stated that the AP government's Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme and Poththiredypadu were 'illegal projects' which Telangana would never accept.

■ **Page 2: RLIS taken up without approvals: KCR**



## SHORT TAKES

COVAXIN IS  
77.8% EFFECTIVE:  
BHARAT BIOTECHDC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, JULY 3

Bharat Biotech, which manufactures Covaxin, the indigenously-developed Covid-19 vaccine, said that its vaccine was 77.8 per cent effective against Covid-19. The company, which released data from the final Phase-3 clinical trials of the vaccine, said Covaxin was also evaluated through neutralising antibody responses against several Covid-19 virus variants of concern, including B.1.617.2 (Delta), B.1.617.1 (Kappa), B.1.1.7 (Alpha), B.1.351 (Beta), P.2-B.1.1.28 (Gamma).

It said the vaccine was found to be 65.2 per cent efficient against the Delta variant, currently viewed as one of the more threatening variants of SARS-CoV-2 which causes Covid-19. It was found to be 93.4 per cent efficient against severe Covid-19 disease, reducing hospitalisations, and 63.6 per cent efficient against asymptomatic disease transmission, the company said.

The data from the third phase of the clinical trials by Bharat Biotech was published in the online *medrxiv.org* website and is yet to be peer reviewed.

The company said the Phase-3 clinical trials was an event driven analysis of 130 symptomatic Covid-19 cases, reported at least two weeks after the second dose, conducted at 25 sites across India.

According to a release from Bharat Biotech, Dr Balram Bhargava, secretary, department of health research, and Director General, Indian Council of Medical Research, said he was “delighted to note that Covaxin, developed by ICMR and BBIL, has demonstrated an overall efficacy of 77.8 per cent in India’s largest Covid Phase 3 clinical trial thus far.”

Bharat Biotech is currently undertaking additional trials for Covaxin to establish the safety of the vaccine and its efficacy in children between two and 18 years of age. “A clinical trial to determine the safety and immunogenicity of a booster dose is also in process,” the company said, adding that research was on to study variants of concern and to assess their suitability for follow up booster doses.

Covaxin, the company said, had received emergency use authorisations in India and 15 countries including Brazil, the Philippines, Iran and Mexico and its EUAs were under process in 50 other countries.

REPORTS AGAINST  
COUNTER TENDERS  
FALSE, SAYS TTDDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JULY 3

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) has maintained that tendering of its counters facilitating darshan of Lord Venkateswara has been carried out in the most transparent manner.

Addressing media persons on Saturday at Annamalah Bhavan in Tirumala, TTD additional executive officer (AEO) A. V. Dharma Reddy brushed aside reports in a section of media over KVM Info of Bangalore being given the contract for operating various counters that issue tokens for darshan, prasadam laddus and at Alipiri tollgate.

Dharma Reddy pointed out that in the tenders called for operating counters, KVM had quoted the lowest amount of ₹11,402 per shift per counter, as against the previous value of ₹12,345 (both excluding GST). “While TTD is taking decisions for the good of pilgrims, it is sad that a section of media is trying to malign image of the Devasthanams among devotees with baseless negative reports,” the AEO remarked. He explained that before March 2020, there had been altogether 176 counters in Tirumala for issuing tokens for laddus and darshans, including slotted sarva darshan (SSD) and special entry darshan (SED), apart from counters at tollgate in Alipiri.

Trilok operated 89 of these counters at Vaikuntam Queue Complex and for SSD in Tirupati. But it withdrew its services before March 2020. “Publicity that Trilok offered free services in the past is completely baseless,” Dharma Reddy maintained.

He said only 25 laddu counters had been maintained by banks paying very minimal salaries. But presently, only nine counters are being operated by two banks. Due to involvement of money transactions, even Laddu Sevaku withdrew from services.

## Ready to join the Army



Youngsters take part in fitness exercises as they prepare themselves for the upcoming Army Recruitment Rally at AU Engineering College Grounds in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. — P. NARASIMHA MURTHY

Handri Neeva has poor  
allocation from Krishna

People in tailend areas suffer from lack of drinking water

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 29

The Handri Neeva Sujala Shrawanthi (HNSS) project that was conceived to uplift the severely drought-hit Rayalaseema region decades ago is still faced with hurdles at various levels in its implementation.

Lack of required allocations of water from Krishna backwaters of the Srisaillam forced the tail end areas to suffer even for drinking water, let alone agricultural use. The objections raised by Telangana will have its impact on the backward region as the area is geographically located in the highest peak with no chances of a direct water flow from Srisaillam.

Though 40 TMC feet of water was allocated from Srisaillam to the Handri Neeva Sujala Shrawanthi (HNSS) project — that covers all four districts of

● **LACK OF** required allocations of water from Krishna backwaters of the Srisaillam forced the tail end areas to suffer even for drinking water, let alone agricultural use. The objections raised by Telangana will have its impact on the backward region as the area is geographically located in the highest peak with no chances of a direct water flow from Srisaillam.

region — Kurnool, Anantapur, Kadapa and Chittoor — this was not enough to meet even the drinking water requirements of the region.

“We need at least 60-TMC-ft of water to meet our drinking water requirements, which was a major aim of the project, while only a few parts can have irrigation facilities through lift systems,” a senior engineer from the project noted.

Experts say Anantapur areas are located at a geographically high surface while the historic Horsley Hills in Madanapalli area in Chittoor district are located on another peak.

These drought-hit areas were unable to get groundwater. “We need to drill at least 800 feet to get groundwater to save crops and meet our drinking water needs,” Thimmappa, a farmer from Rolla mandal in the district, said.

Filling of all irrigation tanks would help to improve groundwater sources to minimum levels in future years, he said. Even now, major parts of Madakasira municipality depends on groundwater from a bore well raised to a big tank near Akkamalli. Special grade municipality Hindupur is unable to meet the minimum needs of the

people.

“Most people pay and get drinking water from private tankers because of lack of ground water sources in Hindupur municipality even though it is located closer to Penna and the sub-rivers such as Jayamangali,” noted the former municipal chairman B.S. Vidayasagar. He stressed the need to allocate more water sources to meet the people’s requirements. Though Tungabhadra was a major source of water supply for Rayalaseema region, the siltation reduced more than 35mc-ft of its storage capacity. Dwarakanath, former engineer from TB dam, said there is the need for desilting of TB dam in addition to utilisation of the HNSS water.

A senior official from the irrigation wing said they faced pressures from politicians seeking modifications in — and additions to — the HNSS project.

KURNOOL  
FARMERS MORE  
CAUTIOUS

From Page 1

Prakasam agriculture joint director S. Srinivasa Rao said “Farmers start raising crops like paddy and red chillies from July 15. When confronted with water problems, they either delay or opt for ID crops.”

In Kurnool, the farmers are more cautious. They raise crops based on availability of water from Srisaillam reservoir.

It should be noted that farmers have appealed to both AP and TS governments to resolve the water dispute amicably and ensure supply of water as directed by KRMB.

At the three project areas, a tense atmosphere continues to prevail.

A huge posse of police personnel has been deployed by both state governments with Telangana State continuing its power generation by releasing two to three tmc ft of water daily downstream.

Meanwhile, nearly 8,500 cusecs of water is being discharged downstream into the sea from Prakasam barrage, while Pulichintala project is having inflows of 39,359 cusecs of water.

● **AT THE** three project areas, a tense atmosphere continues to prevail.

● **A HUGE** posse of police personnel has been deployed by both state governments with Telangana State continuing its power generation by releasing two to three tmc ft of water daily downstream.

RLIS taken up without  
approvals, says KCR

From page 1

He said RLIS was taken up without any approvals by concerned agencies and without a single drop of water allocations made.

The Chief Minister reiterated that the Telangana state government would continue hydel power generation at projects over Krishna till water levels permitted and no one including the KRMB had the power to ask the Telangana state government to stop it. He rejected the existing Krishna water sharing ratio of 66:34 between Telangana state and AP and demanded that it should be done in the ratio of 50:50. Out of total 811 tmc ft (thousand million cubic feet) in the Krishna river allotted to undivided AP, both the

● **KCR SAID** the Telangana state government would go to any extent to protect its justifiable share in the Krishna river.

states should share 405.5 tmc ft each till Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal delivered its verdict, he said. The Chief Minister rubbished AP’s claims that they were forced to release surplus water into the sea from Prakasam barrage due to Telangana state taking up hydel power generation upstream. He suggested that AP utilise the water to meet the needs in Krishna district and save power charges to be incurred for lifting Godavari water from the Pattiseema project.

TS had a large requirement of power for its lift

irrigation projects and Mission Bhagiratha. To meet this demand, generating hydel power was necessary to reduce financial burden as well as pollution since hydel power was considered 51 per cent clean energy. The CM said the Centre too was encouraging states to opt for hydel energy and Telangana state was following suit. He added that 40 per cent of hydel power consumption was for lift irrigation needs.

Chandrashekar Rao said the Telangana state government would go to any extent to protect its justifiable share in the Krishna river. He expressed anger over Bachawat Tribunal failing to deliver a final verdict on Krishna water allocations which was constituted 17 years ago.

## HEALTH | &amp; YOU

Popular edible oil brands are laced with palmolein, mustard  
Study finds groundnut oil adulteratedDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 29

Rampant adulteration and poor quality of edible oils are serious health issues. Though groundnut oil is among the healthiest cooking oils in western India, differences in prices and quality appear for various brands.

The Consumer Education and Research Centre recently tested 15 samples of loose groundnut oil stocks to ascertain quality based on the requirements of the Food Safety & Standards Act, 2006 (Rules & Regulations, 2011).

It was found that five samples were adulterated

with palmolein while seven samples were adulterated with cottonseed oil. Nine samples were found to be rancid and failed the test for freshness.

Ensuring purity is a serious concern since old times because of oil’s huge demand in national and international markets. Adulteration can affect the health of consumers adversely.

Mustard oil can be adulterated with argemone oil and such adulteration can cause gallbladder cancer. Similarly, use of argemone oil mixed with edible oils can lead to epidemic dropsy, glaucoma and loss of eyesight.

Resort to advanced techniques for adulteration detection can help reduce consumers’ health risks, said Praja Science Vedika president Dr Suresh Babu here on Tuesday.

Palmolein is high in saturated fat and should be used sparingly. Also, rancidity is more common with palmolein. “The regulatory authorities and manufacturers must ensure smaller pack sizes are available in the market to cater to the needs of the low-income groups. If shampoos and ketchup can come in small pouches, why not edible oil,” the Vedika asks.

“The mechanism of sur-

State airports see reduced  
services due to Covid-19DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM JULY 3

The numbers of the passengers travelled and aircraft operated at all four key airports — Vizag, Tirupati, Vijayawada and Rajahmundry — in Andhra Pradesh reduced by half since the beginning of the Covid-19 pandemic season last year.

There has been no improvement so far, the airport authorities said while hoping for restoration of normalcy by end of September this year. This, in view of the present relaxations and massive vaccination drive being carried by the governments.

Vizag International Airport director Raj Kishore said, “We were able to operate a maximum of 76 flights on both sides after the unlocking last year. Nearly 7,000 passengers travelled per day. Since the second wave, the number of aircraft in operations came down to 20 and they carried nearly 2000 passengers per day. We have been witnessing improvement from last month.”

In the first wave, international flights were oper-

## FLIGHT TRACK

% IN 2021 COMPARED WITH 2020  
TILL RECENTLY (SOURCE: APATA)AIRPORT - PASSENGERS TRAVELLED -  
AIRCRAFT MOVEMENT - CARGO  
MOVEMENT

Vizag	42%	51%	68%
Vijayawada	45%	49%	93%
Rajahmundry	50%	59%	0%
Tirupati	42%	48%	0%

ated under the Bubble scheme. In the second wave, no such operation was carried out and there has been no scheduling for international flights too.

“At present, we are having the operations of a limited number of domestic flights to some key destinations like Hyderabad. We have not resumed international flights,” Kishore told *Deccan Chronicle*. As for passenger traffic, the Vizag airport and the other three key airports had been completely shut till May 25, 2020, during the first wave due to the nationwide lockdown.

AP Air Travellers’ Association (APATA) vice president Naresh Kumar said airports played a key role in business transactions and speeded up the economic progress. “Recovery for the aviation sector has begun as vaccination is of help. We hope the impact of a third wave will be minimal due to the vaccination. Full normalcy can be expected in the next quarter ending by September,” he said.

SpiceJet announced daily flights between Vizag and Hyderabad from July 1. Cargo movement was affected only in part at two airports — Vizag and Vijayawada.

Kadapa gears up for  
CM tour on Aug. 8, 9DC CORRESPONDENT  
KADAPA, JULY 3

District collector Chevuru Hariharan directed officials to complete all arrangements for Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy’s visit to the district on August 8 and 9.

According to preliminary information, the Chief Minister will arrive at Kadapa airport on August 8 morning and leave for Idupulapaya in a helicopter where he will visit YSR Ghat to pay tributes to his father, Dr Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. From the Pulivendula Bhakarpuram helipad, he will go to Dr YSR Integrated Sports Complex to inaugurate various development projects, and address a public meeting.

Later from his

Pulivendula house he will head for Rayadurgam in Anantapur district where he will participate in a Farmers’ Day programme.

After an overnight stay in Idupulapaya, he will visit Badvel the next morning to unveil plaques related to various development projects and address a public meeting. Later, he will visit CP Brown Research Centre and unveil a plaque.

At the Mahaveer Circle near the Collector Bungalow, he will officially unveil the two recently developed roads and the plaques of the development programmes and address a public meeting.

Afterwards at the Y.S. Rajareddy cricket stadium, he will start floodlights.

POLAVARAM PROJECT HAS RUINED  
FUTURE OF 60,000 SCs, SAYS AIFBDC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, JULY 3

All India Forward Bloc (AIFB) has charged that lives of nearly 60,000 schedule caste (SC) people have been ruined due to Polavaram Project, as the state government has not provided them any alternative livelihood or lands. AIFB state secretary I. Suryanarayana said when Polavaram

Project Authority conducted meetings at Vijayawada in July 2019, Relief and Rehabilitation commissioner had submitted a report that 58,858 SC families in East and West Godavari districts have been displaced due to Polavaram Project.

Suryanarayana said as per Rule 24 of New Land Amendment Act, one acre land should be given to each landless SC person.

## SPEAKER TAKES PART IN MEETING

From Page 1

Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker, Tammineni Sitharam took part in the event at Sarubujilli in Srikakulam district. Deputy Chief Minister and minister for revenue Dharmana Krishnadas in Srikakulam district, minister for panchayat raj and rural development

Peddireddi Ramachandra Reddy and Deputy Chief Minister Narayana Swamy participated in SR Puram mandal in Chittoor district.

Special chief secretary to the government for housing department Ajay Jain interacted with people’s representatives, all district joint collectors, project directors, beneficiaries and other officials.

RAYALASEEMA JAC  
BURNS PHOTOS  
OF TS MINISTERSDC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL JULY 3

Rayalaseema students JAC on Saturday burnt pictures of Telangana ministers Prashant Reddy, Jagadeeswar Reddy and Srinivas Goud in front of Mahatma Gandhi statue for speaking against the interests of Rayalaseema on Krishna waters. The agitators in an act of provocation slapped the printed images of Telangana ministers with chappals.

Demanding immediate stop of power production at Srisaillam left bank Genco powerhouse, the JAC said it is an illegal and provocative act by the Telangana state. Calling the bluff of BJP for playing a dual role with a mutually exclusive political agenda, the JAC challenged them to convince the Karnataka government, which is run by BJP to accede to the demands of Rayalaseema for constructing projects on the Tungabhadra river.

The BJP state leadership is holding a meeting with 50 of its senior leaders on Sunday to assess the situation panning out over the Krishna waters between TS and AP and would submit a report to the high command, said Kapil Eswarayya.



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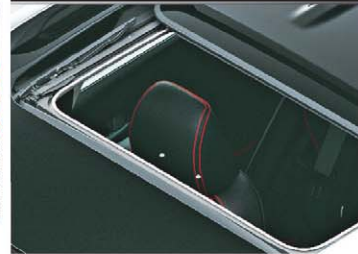
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INNOCEAN-104/21



# Ganja smuggling thrives in Agency

## Smugglers take road routes after RPF checks

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 3

The smugglers doubled the ganja trade in the agency taking advantage of the two spells of Covid-19 and slowing down in the winter when the caseload came down, increasing the human activity.

Sources said in the first spell from January till August end, the weed was carried through trucks and other goods carriers as there were no trains.

This year too they skipped the railways and concentrated on the roads.

The weed was brought to a certain point in the Agency on foot and later loaded into autorickshaws and other modes of transport to the storage points in Visakhapatnam city.

From the city, it was being sent to different locations with main focus on Mumbai and New Delhi, the sources said.

"The fear of the virus infection prevented police and excise personnel from frisking and checking the passengers at various points," said a police source.

Railway sources said since February this year, the smugglers stopped using the rail routes.

"Special teams were formed with sniffer dogs and we are checking every northbound and Mumbai trains deploying at least 10 RPF personnel on board superfast trains. We are also checking the important railway stations like Visakhapatnam, Kothavalasa and Vizianagaram," said a senior official.

Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) SP for Visakhapatnam district Rahul Dev Singh also admitted that the smugglers were taking mostly road routes after a special drive was launched by the RPF of Waltair Division.

"It is not true that the smuggling activity has increased. We stepped up our vigilance and more and

## AP RECORDS DIP IN COVID CASES AT 2,930, 36 DEATHS REPORTED

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 3

Andhra Pradesh has registered a dip in daily Covid-19 infections at 2,930, in the last four days as on an average 3,500 cases used to be reported from June 29 to July 2.

The state health authorities reported here on Saturday that out of 90,532 samples tested, 2,930 persons were found infected with Covid-19, while 36 persons died of the virus in 24 hours.

Out of a total number of 2,22,68,483 samples tested so far in the state, 18,99,748 persons were found infected with Covid-19, while 36 persons died of the virus in 24 hours.

Among the daily cases, East Godavari reported the highest at 591 followed by 443 in Chittoor; 338 in West Godavari, 363 in Prakasam, 236 in Guntur, 204 in Krishna, 185 in Nellore, 119 in Kurnool, 117 in Kadapa,

● The illegal ganja trade is pegged at ₹8,000 crore per annum in Andhra Pradesh region and the crop is cultivated in over 10,000 acres in Vizag, East Godavari Agency and parts of Odisha close to Andhra border.

more seizures were being reported from the Agency, rural areas and Visakhapatnam city. The seizures do not indicate increase in the trade," the SP said.

Sources said the trade had spread all over the country due to the quality of weed being harvested in the Vizag Agency.

"The seizures are the tip of the iceberg. Smugglers take the Maoist sensitive

105 in Srikakulam, 100 in Anantapur, 70 in Visakhapatnam and 59 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari topped the state by reporting highest number of total active cases at 5,871 followed by 5,808 in Chittoor, 4,388 in Prakasam, 4,146 in West Godavari, 3,495 in Krishna, 3,177 in Nellore, 2,283 in Guntur, 2,047 in Srikakulam, 1,513 in Visakhapatnam, 1,194 in Kadapa, 744 in Kurnool, 634 in Vizianagaram and 571 in Anantapur.

Chittoor reported six deaths, followed by five in East Godavari, four each in Guntur and Kurnool, three each in Kadapa, Prakasam and Srikakulam, two each in Anantapur, Krishna and Visakhapatnam and one each in Nellore and Vizianagaram, raising the death toll to 12,815.

The state health authorities discharged 4,346 Coronavirus infected persons after recovery in the last 24 hours in the state.

routes where no law enforcement dares to tread. At some places, the police and excise personnel conclude with the smugglers who also get good local support," said an activist from the agency.

Another local leader said the police abandoned sniffer dogs and drones to keep track of the smugglers.

According to official data, Vizag rural police seized 31, 648 kgs of ganja in 2018, around 16,000 kg in 2018, 23,172 kg in 2019 and 42,434 kg in 2020.

The illegal ganja trade is pegged at ₹8,000 crore per annum in Andhra Pradesh region and the crop is cultivated in over 10,000 acres in Vizag, East Godavari Agency and parts of Odisha close to Andhra border.

## Now, a 'Vizag Limb' from Med-tech Zone

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 3

Vizag-based Andhra Pradesh Medtech Zone (AMTZ) has started manufacturing bionic limbs with advanced technology, calling them "Vizag Limb".

On an experimental basis, the AMTZ had made a bionic hand and donated it to Pitta Naidu, a 24-year-old electrician from S. Kota in Vizianagaram district. "I don't feel any difference between my two arms now. I

am able to do all types of work like typing on computer keyboards," said Naidu.

After evaluating the results from the experiment, AMTZ is now developing the bionic in a large quantity to replace legs and arms.

The AMTZ recently signed MoUs with different stakeholders including Sri Gurudeva Charitable Trust (SGCT) for manufacturing the limbs that are affordable for differently-abled persons.

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DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 3

A team of Andhra police, led by Vizianagaram district superintendent of police B. Raja Kumari, took up "Community Policing" in six tribal hamlets including Tadiputti, located 950 metres above mean sea level in Makkuva mandal.

The other hamlets included Upper Mandangi, Dohiwarra, Siriwarra, Poimala, and Belugonda.

The IPS officer interacted with the tribals, had lunch with them, and even explained the importance of the state government's digital initiative, the Disha App, for safeguarding the welfare of women fraternity.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, the IPS officer Raja Kumari said that a total of 1,500 population in all those tribal pockets, which were once upon a time Maoist-affected hamlets and even now also no

accessibility to basic facilities commonly one should afford.

"In order to create confidence on police, the government and divert them from Maoist ideologies, we selected these hamlets for our Community Policing," Raja Kumari said.

Raja Kumari said that since the areas are well connected with telephone and internet signals, the Disha app was explained to girl students.

## CLASSIFIEDS

### FOR SALE PROPERTY COMMERCIAL

**BANJARAHILLS 600, 900 yards** New Commercial Building, JubileeHills Road no.45, 1,000, Road No.36 1200 yards & Ground Floor 3200 sft, Madhapur Main Road kavurihills 900 sq yards & Ground Floor 3040 sft, Kondapur main road 1400, Jayabheri 934 N/E & Rental Income Properties 5 to 50 cr 9966991449, 9394022449 (W/2122/AT000278)

**COMMERCIAL COMPLEX/ Space for Sale on Main Road, Mehdiptanm Ring Road near Aramghar, PVNR Express Highway, each floor 13500 Sft, 6 floors plus two cellars for parking, total area 81000 Sft, Suitable for Commercial Rental Income, Hospital, Hotel, Restaurant, School, Colleges, Marriage A/C halls, Car/ Bike Showrooms, etc. Contact: 9900087652, (B/2122/C00023)**

**COMMERCIAL PLOT** in Shadnagar Highway facing, 500 sq.yds, two side roads, LRS full paid & 400 sq.yds. semi-commercial. Three side road, fully developed clear title, spot registration. Best invest purpose. Contact: 9177943563, 9700826085. (S/2122/C00033)

### FLATS

**A) JUBILEEHILLS** brand new 4 BHK (3050 sft) flat, B) BanjaraHills near GVK Mall 3 BHK flat (2462 sft), C) Madhapur Kakatiyahills brand new 3 BHK flats (1650 & 3000 sft), D) Madhapur 1300 sft 3 BHK & Gachibowli 1200 sft 3 BHK flats immediately for sale. Contact Consultant: 9000021615. (A/2122/C00184)

**BANJARAHILLS, NEWLY** refurbished builder 3 BHK Deluxe flat at Strategic location near City Centre. 1700 sft, Single car parking. Ph:8790253157. (A/2122/C00016)

**3BHK 1589SQ.FEET** North facing Flat with wardrobes, AC, semi-furnished covered car parking 5th Floor Sai Silver Homes Opp Arbor International School Kondapur, Ph:967954360 (HYMM/2122/C01918)

### INDEPENDENT HOUSE

**HOUSE FOR Sale** Jawahar Nagar, Chikkadapally. 200 SqYards, North: 60ft Road, Contact: 775554661 (HYMM/2122/C02304)

**PRAKASHAM NAGAR** Begumpet- Independent House 175 Square Yards, Opp To Airport 3Floors With 2Side Road. 5200Sft Builtup Area. 300 Meters From Main Road. Good Rental Income. Can Also Be Used For Commercial Purpose. 2.5Cr. Contact: 9949339415 (HYMM/2122/C02182)

**NEAR DIAMOND** point, SBI Colony, Tadbund, 304 sq.yds, 400 sq.yds & 1640 sq.yds. Plots & Houses available. Brokers excuse. Ph:830902544, 8790057533, 9618825892. (S/2122/C00601)

**GATED COMMUNITY villas** Jubileehills Whisper valley 400 yards, Aparna Elxir 400 yards, Poulami Artists 380 yards, 510 yards, Eden Gardens 530 yards, Vessella Meadows 360yards, Gachibowli IVR Hill Ridge 490 yards, Financial District & kokapet surroundings areas, Aditya casa grande, River edge, more villas in Gandipet, kollar. Ph:8884872389, 995868511. (W/2122/AT000328)

**KOMPALLY VILLAS, Chabbras Oak Woods** beside Nuziveed Seeds, in gated community. Built-up area 3076 sft. 4 BHK with lift facility. All modern amenities. Ph:9550155023, 9481260314. (S/2122/C00037)

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**LAND** FROM FINANCIAL District 60 Kilometres, 29Acres, Agricultural Land, Red Soil, Square Bit, Prime Location, 4 Feet Road, Chance Property (Land), Clear Title With Legal Opinion. No Brokers. Ph:8374399578/ 6303107421. (HYMM/2122/C00274)

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**BEST DEAL** consultancy 536 yards E/F Independent house for sale at Dwarakapuri colony Pan-jagutta and open plot 506 yards N/F Dandamudi Enclave near Suchitra circle and 1000 yards W/F Independent house for sale at Janakpuri colony Karkhana, Secunderabad & 400 yards S/F Independent house for sale at west marredpally. Contact: 9177200441. (S/2122/C00609)

### PLOTS

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**PLOT NO.24**, east facing, 505 Sq.yds Swamy layout, VUDA approved, Chepalupadda, Bheemili beach road, VSP, cell: 9989666552, 9849568582. (HYMM/2122/C02276)

**OPEN PLOT** For Sale 270Sq.yds, Two Side Roads Aparna Palm Grove, Kompally, Hyderabad Walkable Distance Medchal Highway, Rs:65,000/-Per Sq.yds., Agents Excuse Mobile: 9951382650 (HYMM/2122/C01562)

**MAHINDRAHILLS, DHANALAXMI** Society, 585 Sq.Yds corner Plot with 40ft Road on East and South sides. Call: 9440710974. (S/2122/C00026)

**NALLAGANDLA HUDA** Plot 269 sq.yards for sale, Clear title, North Facing Second plot from main road good for development contact: 9000049111 (HYMM/2122/C02180)

**SHAMSHABAD CORNER** plots with three side roads, 480Sqyards, North facing 60feet road, located in Maxima Estate-2 Near Tondpally check post. Contact: 9701762207 (HYMM/2122/C02305)

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### REAL ESTATE PLOT REQUIRED

**HYDARABAD: JANAHARSHA**, ocean prestige, chalapathi estates maheswaram, Hayathnagar, Ibrahimpatnam plots sale and purchase cnt:9951516030. (HYMM/2122/C02332)

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**PLOTS REQUIRED:** Hayathnagar, Ibrahimpatnam, Abdullapurmet, Amberpet, Munuganur, Turkayamaji, Ragnanaguda, Mangalpally, Torru, Koheda, Batsinagar, Brahmanapally, Injapur, Nadergul, Shamipet, Pasumamula, Ramdasapally, Ph:966660371 (HYCL/2122/C0009)

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### CASTE NO BAR

**BHAVASAR KSHATRIYA** 45 Years 5"9" BDS practicing Dentist very fair 5 Cr, Prop-

**erty caste No bar** Good looking fair and White Bride below 40 years Wanted. Contact: 9441476268, 9492426415. (S/2122/C00598)

### HINDU

**LOOKING FOR** an unmarried girl for a Reddy boy aged 38years, fair, height 5'9MS from USA, Well placed in a Managerial position in an IT firm in Hyderabad. Boy is from a well established and educated family settled in Hyderabad. Alliance from a Reddy community girl with similar background. chrr.6879@gmail.com (HYMM/2122/C02338)

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SHORT TAKES

3 OFFICIALS OF SHIPPING FIRM ARRESTED

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JULY 3

Mumbai Police, probing the sinking of ill-fated barge P305 during the cyclone Tautkae arrested three employees of the shipping firm including its director.

Prasad Ganpat Rane (43), Nitinkumar Singh (32) and Akhileshwar Tiwari (49) of Papa Shipping Pvt Ltd were arrested on Friday. While Mr Rane is a manager, Mr Singh is a director and Tiwari works as a technical superintendent, said police officials of the Yellow Gate police station.

Barge P-305, which housed personnel engaged in maintenance work of an offshore oil drilling platform of the Oil and Natural Gas Commission (ONGC), had sank on May 17 during the cyclone. As many as 261 crew members were onboard when the barge began sinking. While most of them were rescued by the Indian Navy warships INS Kochi and INS Kolkata, 71 died after the barge drowned.

On a complaint filed by Mustafizur Rahman Husain Shaikh, chief engineer of the barge, a case under IPC sections 304 (2) (culpable homicide not amounting to murder) and 338 (causing grievous hurt by act endangering life or personal safety of others) was registered at Yellow Gate police station against its captain Rajeshkumar Ballav (52), who himself died in the tragedy.

MAOISTS ATTACK IRON ORE MINE IN BASTAR

DC CORRESPONDENT RAIPUR, JULY 3

Maoists on Saturday stormed an iron ore site allotted to a private firm in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Narayanpur and attacked the workers engaged in development of a road in the area, leaving a supervisor of the construction company dead, police said.

Around 150 armed Naxals attacked the Aamdei iron ore mine site under Chhote Dangar police station at around 10 in the morning, beating the workers engaged in development of a road in the area and torching the vehicles used for construction works, a senior police officer posted in Bastar said.

"They later held hostage over 10 labourers. However, the ultras later released them with a warning not to work in the mines, allotted to Jayaswal Neco Industries Limited. The Naxals also abducted two workers including a supervisor. They beat the supervisor, identified as Pradeep Sheel of Bhilai to death. The rebels however set the other worker free. Later, the Maoists launched a grenade attack and opened indiscriminate fire on the Dangar Hills police camp, nearly 1.5 km from the iron ore mine site, damaging the security camp extensively.

GOVT TO UNVEIL CYBER SECURITY STRATEGY SOON

New Delhi, July 3: The government will release a new cybersecurity strategy this year, National Cyber Security Coordinator Rajesh Pant said at an event organised by Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI).

He said the strategy would holistically cover the entire ecosystem of cyber space in India.

The government is expected to release a new cybersecurity strategy this year, he said speaking at the PAFI event on Friday. "The vision of this strategy is to ensure safe, secure, resilient, vibrant, and trusted cyber space," Pant said.

The new strategy would serve as a guideline to tackle various aspects, be it data as a national resource, building indigenous capabilities or cyber audit. "There are about 80 odd deliverables coming out of this new strategy," the PAFI statement quoted Pant as saying. The theme of the PAFI Dialogue was 'Cyber Security in the New Normal.'

On the national security narrative for the telecom sector, Pant said, "While other nations have created a black-list of companies that cannot operate in the country, India is the only nation to create a white-list of telecom companies that are allowed to operate in India".

Pandharpur pilgrims head defies ban, held

BHAGWAN PARAB | DC MUMBAI, JULY 3

The Pandharpur wari (pilgrimage) is likely to snowball into a controversy this year as the police arrested Bandatatya Karadkar, one of the pilgrim heads, for defying the government ban due to Covid pandemic.

The State government has prohibited the annual palkhi procession on foot for the second consecutive year due to Covid. Despite the government ban, some pilgrim outfits have vowed to continue with the walking tradition of the pilgrimage.

Mr Karadkar, who had started the wari on foot along with this supporters, was detained by Pimpri-Chinchwad police in the wee hours of Saturday.

His arrest led to a tense situation with his supporters staging a sit-in agitation on the spot.

The BJP has reacted strongly on Mr Karadkar's arrest with former chief minister Devendra Fadnis condemning the act. He tweeted, "Wari is an integral part of Maharashtra's culture and the relation between Vitthal and warkaris is beyond description. The importance of belief and tradition cannot be ignored. What did the government achieve by arresting Bandatatya Karadkar? Was there no

solution to avoid it? It's a sheer insult of warkaris. The arrest was totally wrong."

Adhyatmik Aghadi, the BJP's religious front, has threatened the State Government with dire consequences if it does not allow warkaris to undertake their pilgrimage to Pandharpur on foot.

Last year, due to the Covid outbreak, the historic wari (pilgrimage) tradition in Maharashtra was not carried out. This year, in the wake of the second wave of the pandemic, the State Government has ruled out any procession by foot, while permitting only 50 devotees to convey the padukas in a Maharashtra State Road Transport Corporation (MSRTC) bus towards Pandharpur.

Every year, more than three to four lakh warkaris join in several dindis with the Sant Dnyaneshwar and Sant Tukaram Maharaj palkhis (palanquins) - bearing the 'padukas' or footprints of the renowned saints - that starts from Alandi and Dehu village respectively. There are around 250 registered dindis which follow the palkhis and lakhs of warkaris walk in the wari to converge on the temple town of Pandharpur in Solapur district to take the darshan of Lord Vitthal.

BSY requests TN CM not to oppose Mekedatu project

Bengaluru, Jul 3: Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa has written to his Tamil Nadu counterpart M.K. Stalin requesting him not to oppose the Mekedatu balancing reservoir-cum-drinking water project and offered a bilateral meeting between the two states to clear all apprehensions.

Making a fresh bid to resolve the issue around the Mekedatu project, which has been pending for many years, Yediyurappa said the project would immensely benefit both the states and in no way affect the interests of the farming communities of Tamil Nadu.

He wrote, "It would be in the interest of all concerned and to have a better relationship between the state of Karnataka and state of Tamil Nadu, if the Tamil Nadu government in the right spirit would not oppose the implementation of the project."

"In order to address issues, if any, it is suggested that a bilateral meeting could also be held in the presence of concerned officials to clear all apprehensions," Yediyurappa wrote in his missive to Stalin seeking

his cooperation and strengthened relations between the two states.

The Chief Minister reminded Stalin that the water project has been contemplated with an objective to regulate the flow of water to Tamil Nadu as stipulated in the final orders of Cauvery Water Disputes Tribunal (CWDT) and thereafter modified by the Supreme Court to generate 400 MegaWatt of power.

The project also aimed to additionally utilise 4.75 TMC of water for meeting drinking and domestic water needs of Karnataka including the whole of Bengaluru, "as awarded by the Supreme Court in its judgment dated February 16, 2018".

While Tamil Nadu has filed a Miscellaneous Application before the apex court against the project, Karnataka has sought approval from the Centre for Terms of Reference to conduct Environmental Impact Assessment Studies (EIAS), Yediyurappa pointed out.

The Chief Minister reminded Stalin of various projects planned by Tamil Nadu including two hydropower projects, Sillahalla project and several projects on the main river below Mettur.

HC EXTENDS STAN SWAMY'S STAY AT PRIVATE HOSPITAL IN MUMBAI

Mumbai, July 3: The Bombay High Court on Saturday extended the stay of Jesuit priest and activist Stan Swamy, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoists links case, at a private hospital in Mumbai till July 6.

Senior counsel Mihir Desai told a bench of Justices SS Shinde and NJ Jamadar that the 84-year-old was still undergoing treatment at the intensive care unit of the Holy Family Hospital, where he was shifted from the Taloja prison in Navi Mumbai following the HC's order on May 28 this year.

Swamy, 84, who claims to be suffering from several ailments, including the Parkinson's disease, had moved the high court earlier this year through advocate Desai, seeking medical treatment and interim bail on health grounds.

He had tested positive for coronavirus at a private hospital last month and was subsequently shifted to the Intensive Care Unit.

His plea for medical bail and bail on merits was listed for hearing in the high court on Friday but could not be taken up due to the paucity of time.

The bench adjourned the hearing to Tuesday and extended his hospital stay till then.

"Till the next hearing, out interim order on his (Swamy's) treatment at the private hospital will continue," the bench said.

Swamy also filed a fresh plea in the High Court on Friday challenging section 43D(5) of the Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) that imposes stringent restrictions on the grant of bail to those booked under the Act.

- PTI

TMC PLANS TO TAKE SOLICITOR GENERAL ISSUE TO PRESIDENT

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JULY 3

A day after indicting solicitor general Tushar Mehta of meeting Narada sting bribery accused and Saradha chit fund scam suspect, Suwendu Adhikari, and seeking Prime Minister Narendra Modi to sack him from his post, Trinamul Congress is now planning to knock the doors of President Ram Nath Kovind next week and raise the same demand with him as well.

A delegation of TMC MPs, according to party insiders, is expected to visit the Rashtrapati Bhavan on Monday and submit a petition to Mr Kovind for Mr Mehta's removal as the S-G over his "direct conflict of interest."

Mr Mehta has been representing the CBI and ED in both the high-profile cases in which Mr Adhikari also is allegedly linked to.

The TMC appears to be confident that Mr Mehta met when the Nandigram BJP MLA visited his New Delhi residence on July 1 though Mr Mehta on Friday termed Mr Adhikari's visit "unannounced" and denied of meeting him due to his preoccupation.

Dissatisfied with Mr Mehta's arguments, chief minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew Abhishek Banerjee however sought proof from him. He tweeted, "Mr Mehta's efforts to dismiss speculations regarding his clandestine meeting with @SuwenduWB can only be valuable if he makes all CCTV footage public until Mr Adhikari was in his residence.

Moreover, was Mr Adhikari present in the SG's residence without prior appointment?" The TMC MP added, "Reports state that Mr Adhikari entered Hon'ble SG's residence in the presence of a cavalcade of officers and stayed there for nearly 30 minutes. Does that imply that a meeting was indeed due? As the episode gets murkier, one can only hope that the truth shall surface."

The Intelligence Bureau in a specific advisory sent to security agencies in Punjab has cautioned that close on the heels of twin drone attacks on defence installation in Jammu a week ago, a "major attack" involving drones could happen in border areas of Punjab.

Following the intelligence alert, Punjab Police chief Dinkar Gupta chaired a high-level security review meeting two days ago where border districts like Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Gurdaspur and other have been put on high alert.

Patrolling has been intensified by the Border

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JULY 3

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Patrolling has been intensified by the Border

VITAL | STEP

Study will help spot possible structural damage

ASI plans laser scanning of Lord Jagannath's Ratna Singhasan

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JULY 3

The Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) will carry out 3D laser scanning of the 'Ratna Singhasan' at Srimandir in Puri during the upcoming Rath Yatra to check for structural damages, if any.

Ratna Singhasan is the sanctum sanctorum of Srimandir which is more famously known as the Jagannath Temple.

According to Sri

For a plastic-free world



Disha Volunteer Organisation members during Plastic Waste Awareness campaign to motivate the general public and shopkeepers to use cloth/jute bags on the occasion of International Plastic Bag Free Day in Jammu on Saturday.

- PTI

Big pressure on Twitter as FB, Google file report IT minister pats websites for filing compliance reports

New Delhi, Jul 3: IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Saturday lauded major social media platforms such as Google, Facebook and Instagram for publishing their first compliance report on voluntary removal of offensive posts as per new IT rules, terming it a big step towards transparency.

Under the new IT rules, large digital platforms that have over 5 million users are required to publish periodic compliance reports every month, mentioning the details of complaints.

"Nice to see significant social media platforms like Google, Facebook and Instagram following the new IT Rules. First compliance report on voluntary removal of offensive posts published by them as per IT Rules is a big step towards transparency," Prasad tweeted.

The publishing of compliance reports by Google, Facebook and Instagram is bound to turn up the heat on Twitter, which has been engaged in a tussle with the Indian govern-

ment over the new social media rules. The government has confronted Twitter for deliberate defiance and failure to comply with the country's new IT rules, and not appointing the requisite officers, leading to it losing the 'safe harbour' immunity.

Facebook said it "actioned" over 30 million content pieces across 10 violation categories during May 15-June 15 in the country, as the social media giant brought out its maiden monthly compliance report as mandated by the IT rules.

It actioned content related to spam (25 million), violent and graphic content (2.5 million), adult nudity and sexual activity (1.8 million), and hate speech (311,000). Other categories under

which content was actioned include bullying and harassment (1.18,000), suicide and self-injury (.589,000), dangerous organisations and individuals: terrorist propaganda (1,06,000) and dangerous organisations and individuals: organised hate (75,000).

Instagram took action against about two million pieces across nine categories during the same period.

'Actioned' content refers to the number of pieces of content (such as posts, photos, videos or comments) where action has been taken for violation of standards. Taking action could include removing a piece of content from Facebook or Instagram or covering photos or videos that may be disturbing to some audiences with a warning.

Google had stated that 27,762 complaints were received by Google and YouTube in April this year from individual users in India over alleged violation of local laws or personal rights, which resulted in removal of 59,350

pieces of content.

Koo, in its report, said it has proactively moderated 54,235 content pieces, while 5,502 posts were reported by its users during June.

Apart from publishing periodic compliance reports every month, the rules also require disclosure on the number of specific communication links or parts of information that the intermediary has removed or disabled access to in pursuance of any proactive monitoring conducted by using automated tools.

According to the IT rules that aim to curb blatant abuse and misuse of platforms, the significant social media intermediaries are required to appoint a chief compliance officer, a nodal officer and a grievance officer and these officials have to be resident in India.

Non-compliance with the IT rules would result in these platforms losing their intermediary status that provides them immunity from liabilities over any third-party data hosted by them.

-PTI

'GRASS EATING TIGER' SPOTTED IN MP FOREST

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JULY 3

A tiger never eats grass even when it grows old. The adage has, however, been defied, at least in appearance, by a tiger in the famed Satpura wildlife sanctuary in Madhya Pradesh a couple of days ago.

Field director of Satpura Tiger Reserve (STR) L Krishna Murthi spotted a full grown tiger 'eating' green grass in a forest inside the STR on July 1 and shot the video on his mobile phone.

"I have posted the video showing the tiger in STR feasting on the green grass in our FB site", Mr Murthi told this newspaper on Saturday.

He however said that a tiger consuming green grass was not an unusual phenomenon.

"There is a difference between eating for survival and consuming something as medicine. The tigers usually chew grass to suck its juice for digestion purpose and to heal various stomach ailments. It is not that they eat grass for survival", he added.

He said all the carnivorous animals often chew grass to drink its juice for digestion purposes. But, for the wildlife photographers, tiger eating grass is a rare shoot, environmentalist and wildlife photographer, Sanjay Sharma said. Spread over an area of 2,133.307 sq km in Hoshangabad district in MP, STR is home to around 50 tigers and known for its rich biodiversity.

a position to estimate the cost of the required repair work," said the ASI assistant superintendent Mr Das.

Besides, a private farm has been given the contract of around ₹1.5 crore for the illumination of Srimandir.

"We have conducted a primary survey of Srimandir for the illumination work and identified various places for faced illumination," said Santosh Kumar, an employee with the private farm.

for future use and reference," said a SJTA official. ASI official Chitta Ranjan Das said laser scanning is safe and it will cause no harm to the ancient structures of the temple. "The technology is effective enough to collect data for the conservation of the monument," said Das.

"The 3D technology is effective enough to collect data on the damage and extent of for the conservation of the monument. Once the damage assessment is done, we will be in



## DECCAN Chronicle

4 JULY 2021



Shailaja Khanna

Off the beaten track

## What kept the maestros going during pandemic

Four regions, four musicians, four questions, four perspectives — yet a common thread of positivity and introspection running through them all. Regardless of their ages (Abhishek Raghuram is in his 30s, while Pandit Ajoy Chakrabarty is touching 70), all the musicians have made the best of the pandemic, taken the restrictions imposed on them in their stride, dealing with the huge changes in their world with grace. One is left struck and impressed by their spirit of philosophical acceptance.

### BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THE PANDEMIC

It is not to take life for granted. That was the message that this writer walked away with after interacting with the four musicians. But for each individual, the lens through which they viewed their experience and reached this conclusion was different. If it was friendship for one, it was the body and its changing dynamics for another, and nature's wisdom and the spirit of humanity that binds us for the remaining interviewees. As Pt Ajoy Chakrabarty, vocal maestro from Kolkata, reflected: "For me, foremost, is the realisation of how ephemeral life is. So many great musicians have been snatched before their time. I have to admit, the amount of time I spent at home has been a huge blessing; it's something I have never done before. Also, there is increased awareness of the need to help others, preserve Nature, respect others."

"Foremost, the pandemic has taught [me]," Ustad Wasifuddin Dagar, dhrupad maestro from Delhi, "about how precious good health, hygiene and, indeed, life is". "My first reaction to the pandemic was that it's a very useful and wonderful time to spend with your Art. But, gradually I realised how important it is to have interaction with others, to have that human touch. Not through the screen but from a body reaction," Wasifuddin said. "In one way, it is absolutely right that you do your art for yourself, but it is very important to get the audience feedback spontaneously, rather than only reading the applause on the screen," he explained.

Pt Yogesh Samsi, the famous tabla maestro from Mumbai, warned: "It's high time we realise we have to respect Nature, respect what we have got in terms of resources on this planet and learn to look after it, to respect and value it. The amount of abuse Mother Earth has gone through due to the onslaught by humanity — be it social, economic, political or through technology. It has led to such an imbalance that probably it has led to a situation where Mother Earth is trying to heal itself. Across the globe, we have all been taught a huge lesson."

Vidwan Abhishek Raghuram, the Carnatic vocalist who happens to be based out of Chennai, offered, "The pandemic has brought in all of us a strong reassertion of the faith that humanity comes together in support of each other, for the larger cause, when the need arises. I also feel the pandemic has taught us to pick our real needs from what we have assumed them to be so far, almost irrationally!"

### MOST PRODUCTIVE ACTIVITY

Riyaaz and retrospection emerged as common themes. "My music. I spent 10-12 hours on my music, something I have never been able to do," was Chakrabarty's reply. It coincided with Wasifuddin Dagar's view and he said: "Definitely, doing my own riyaz, and what I had never done before, teaching online. Also learning to handle these modern gadgets of communication, like laptops and mobiles; I am still learning." For Samsi, "it was having all the time in the world to think of my music — almost like a rewind of my life. All the aspects I had difficulty in doing earlier, reviewing all I had learnt from *abbaji* (Ustad Alla Rakha Khan) these last few decades. Then pondering on it — *chintan*, *mannan karna*, *aur riyaz karna*. *Apne khud ki sadhana*, be it yoga or meditation... I got to give a lot of time to myself, something that I had never done in the last 25 years, due to my professional travels". Abhishek Raghuram, too, spent a lot of time introspecting into his art and his career trajectory. "With the changed routines, I have a lot more opportunity to retrospect clearly and deeply to my journey so far and my course ahead. This, I feel, has been very beneficial to me as an artiste," Raghuram said.

### THINGS MOST MISSED DURING THE PANDEMIC

This time, the answers were very varied. Ajoy Chakrabarty "really felt bereft at the loss of so many good friends from the world of the arts". "Great musicians from the Hindustani and Carnatic music world have left us," he lamented. Wasifuddin Dagar was more situated in the present. He missed "live concerts, panel discussions, normal human interaction other than with my family, travelling and, most of all, driving! "It's therapy for me," he added, referring to this hobby. Yogesh Samsi longed for "getting together with my students, teaching sessions, and meeting with intellectuals; *satsang* with like-minded people". Abhishek Raghuram rued the loss of "the ability to meet and interact with co-artists, friends and the larger family".

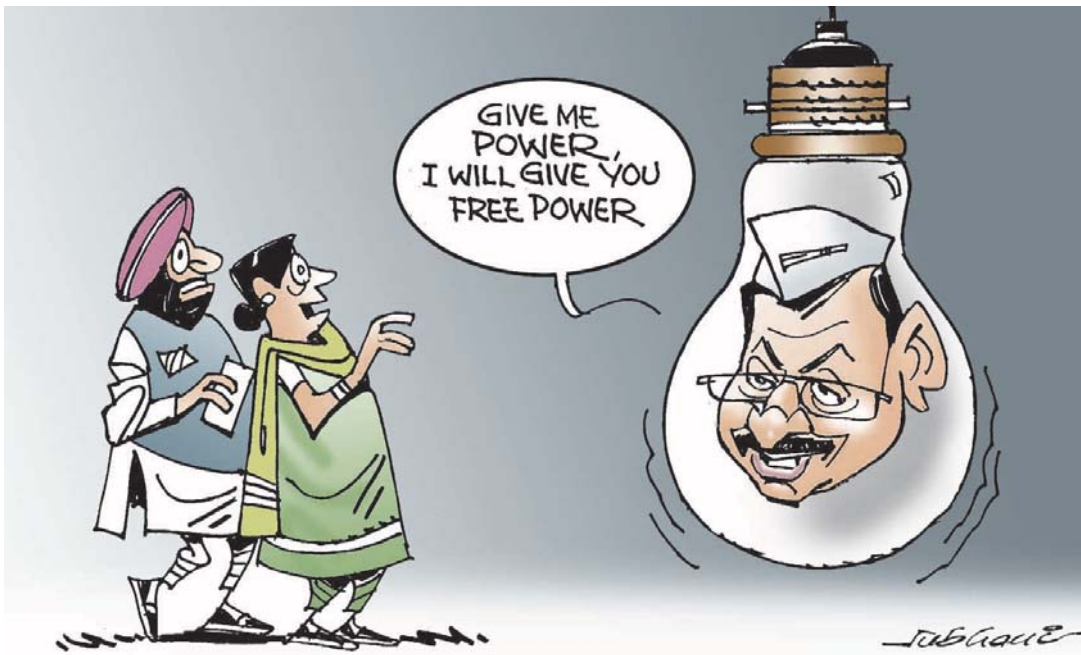
### DO YOU BELIEVE THE MUSIC WORLD WILL RETURN TO WHAT IT WAS?

No investment in the new normal, for these musicians, who were almost unanimous in rejecting the much-tooted idea. All four artistes replied to this question in the affirmative, although Ajoy Chakrabarty qualified his response with conditions. He said, "Yes, though there will be changes; for one, I think the online stage will remain for good. Teaching online will remain too, though as far as I am concerned, I had always taught online, in fact have been doing so for the last 11 years, so that's not been new for me." Wasifuddin Dagar sounded more emphatic. He said, "I am an optimist, what has become the 'new normal' will again be replaced by the old 'normal', *Insha allah*, but don't quite know when. I pray, soon!" Yogesh Samsi felt "the process will be slower, but eventually concerts will happen". "We need to be patient, and not try to hurry things up," he said. "In fact, my faith is that it will resume in a fashion larger and stronger than before. The world is as anxious as we are about the gap the pandemic has brought upon us," was Raghuram's confident observation.

**Bonus responses:** Lockdown or no, did the masters stoop to perform domestic chores? Wasifuddin shared candidly that the chore he has most hated doing was tidying his room! Abhishek endearingly said every chore he has had to do has been a pleasure, which he will miss once he again has less time!

Shailaja Khanna writes on music, musicians and matters of music

Subhani



## Break the Chinese puzzle by studying CPC's game



Manish Tewari

State of the Union

This July, I complete a four-decade-long association with the Indian National Congress (INC) founded in 1885. An involvement that commenced when I joined the National Students Union of India (NSUI) way back in 1981.

As a grassroots political activist, the philosophy, structure and organisation of other political parties has always been an area of academic interest for me. A curiosity that got further buoyed when I was elected president of the International Students Union (IUS) in the early 1990s. The IUS was then a Prague-based syndical organisation of 155 student organisations across 112 countries and territories. One political party that I have continuously studied and observed is the Communist Party of China (CPC).

The current commentary is about this distinctive organisation that lies at the heart of an emerging system of global dominance. The Communist Party of China (CPC) celebrated a hundred years of its existence on the 1st of July. Ironically, all empirical evidence puts its foundation date as July 23, 1921. July 1 was arbitrarily chosen by party apparatchiks when they were hunkering down in the grottoes of Yan'an in 1941.

The CPC was born during what the Chinese call the century of humiliation 1839-1949. China was back then an impoverished and a pastoral society dominated by imperialist powers through ignominious treaty arrangements.

A clandestine get-together of a handful of people took place in the French concession of Shanghai at 106 Rue Wantz. One of the attendees was Mao Zedong who remained a leading light of this fledgling party for over 54 years. In addition to him,

two foreign commissars from the Communist International, a Soviet sponsored structure created for the global spread of Communism, were also present.

These furtive conversations were the precursor to the formal launch of the Chinese Communist Party (CPC). A century later not only does it control China with an iron fist, hitherto considered unmovable for centuries together, but moreover, after the dissolution of the Soviet Union on the 26th of December, 1991, it is the only political system that presents a successful alternative politico-economic model to the Western neo-liberal democratic order.

In the early 1920s, all kinds of congregations and individuals called themselves Communists in China. It was a fashionable nom de guerre. This new outfit was bedraggled and thinly resourced. They had no arsenal worth the name.

Even in their wildest imagination no keen observer of China back then could have prophesied that this motley collection of virtual nobodies would ignite a successful Communist insurgency that then spread across the countryside like a wildfire consuming everything in its path.

In a short span of 28 years, this human dynamo not only vanquished a Nationalist Army of more than four million strong kitted out by the Allied forces to fight the Japanese during World War-II but established and consolidated a Communist state in 1949 that no one believed would survive more than a few years.

For the longest time, the CPC and the Red Army was led by Mao Zedong who, ironically, had never intellectually devoured Marxism. He was tempered in the fury of the May 4, 1919, struggle. A movement

triggered by the pronouncement of Western powers to transfer Chinese colonial territory in the possession of Germany to Japan post World War I. That effort stimulated both anti-Western nationalism as well as a Chinese desire to reclaim the glory of its yesteryears — a la Middle Kingdom syndrome. It also established a distinctive ideological basis that fused Chinese nationalism with Marxism.

The skill of the CPC and the reason for its longevity has been its ability to navigate the winds of change with nimbleness, without giving up on its core ideological values. Over a century, it has morphed from being a revolutionary army to a party of governance surviving the vicissitudes of not only domestic turmoil but also international intrigue coupled with the idiosyncratic impulses of its own leadership.

Two of those whims were the Great Leap Forward from 1958 to 1962 and the Cultural Revolution from 1966 to 1976. The former resulted in the deaths of over 20 million people mainly due to starvation. The latter was a vicious socio-political housecleaning predicated upon the purging the vestiges of capitalist and traditional elements from the mainstream of China's thought leadership. Mobs of pupils and Red Guards assaulted people wearing "bourgeois clothes" on the thoroughfares, "imperialist" signage were desecrated, and intellectuals and party officials were either murdered or driven to suicide. Over two million lost their lives as a consequence of these depredations.

Mao Zedong's ruinous tenure ended with his demise in 1976 leaving China in a state of econom-

**It is not only fear that binds the Chinese society to the CPC. The impulses include rigorous ideological indoctrination coupled with a village to national capital structure that runs smoothly.**

ic morass and social stratification. However, despite the misery and pain Mao had heaped on the Chinese people, the hold of the CPC on the country remained intact. It did not get undermined even after the Tiananmen Square massacre of protesting students in 1989 that convulsed Chinese society to its very being. The point being that it is not only fear, terror and intimidation that binds the Chinese society to the CPC. The impulses are much more profound and include rigorous ideological indoctrination coupled with a village to national capital structure that functions like a well-oiled machine.

The CPC moved seamlessly from Mao's tyranny to the model of totalitarian capitalism institutionalised by Deng Xiaoping and his successors that held the field for close to three-and-a-half decades from 1979 to 2012. One of the essential attributes of those years was the cultivated reticence of both the Chinese state and the CPC as it put its shoulder to the wheel of internal consolidation. It once again morphed into an aggressive wolf warrior mode as Xi Jinping took centrestage in 2012.

The beauty of these transitions does not lie in the abrupt U-turns that the CPC took but the fact that they were able to carry the Chinese nation along with them during all these transfigurations.

That is wherein lies the challenge for Indian policymakers as they seek to understand Chinese motivations and behaviour in the 21st century. Till the time they do not understand the functioning of the CPC they will never be able to discern the minds and methods of the Chinese leadership. For, unlike India and other democracies around the world, where political parties and governance systems are distinct, in the case of China, it is a merged mass of dissimulating narratives.

The author is a lawyer, Member of Parliament and former Union information and broadcasting minister. The views expressed are personal. Twitter handle @manishtewari.

LETTERS

### WATER ROW

The two Telugu-speaking states seem to be engaged in avoidable politics over the sharing of Krishna river waters. After the bifurcation, both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana state took up projects on river Krishna allegedly without permissions from the concerned authorities. The flashpoint appears to be Andhra Pradesh grounding the works on Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS). The Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) remained a mute spectator to the goings on while the Centre was otherwise 'busy'. But TS drawing water for hydel from all four projects (Jurala, Srisailem, Nagarjunasagar and Pulichintala) without permission should be treated as open 'challenge' to authorities at the Centre. It is strange the Centre is silent in this regard.

Govardhana Myneedu  
Vijayawada

### VACCINATION

It is encouraging to read that on the basis of the recommendations of NTAGI and with the nod from Union health ministry, pregnant women are eligible to get vaccinated against Covid-19 (*Covid vaccine for pregnant women now, DC, July 3*). In fact, they are the vulnerable section of the society, who silently suffered and succumbed to the devastating pandemic. The onus is now on authorities to campaign about benefits of vaccine and start a drive widely for expectant mothers.

Dr C. Ghanshyam  
Visakhapatnam

### LITMUS TEST

It will be litmus test for Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to enforce Covid-19 appropriate behaviour among the crowd on July 8 at Rayadurgam being celebrated as Farmers' Day (*CM to take part in mega event after long gap of Covid-19, DC, July 3*). It is also Jagan's father's birthday. If the protocol is ensured on the ground, it will add to Jagan's acumen in inculcating discipline amongst the people when required.

K. Nehru Patnaik  
Visakhapatnam

Email your letters to [info@deccanmail.com](mailto:info@deccanmail.com), [editor@deccanmail.com](mailto:editor@deccanmail.com). You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### 'Refugee influx is bound to affect economic progress'

LUCKNOW, July 3

The Prime Minister, Mrs. Indira Gandhi, said here today that the mass upsurge in Bangla Desh had proved that no country could be ruled bayonets.

There was no democracy in Pakistan and the military government there had no link with the common man.

The upsurge was not an isolated incident: in the past there was some turmoil in Baluchistan and elsewhere.

By arrangement with the Spectator

Taki



## The art of sports commentary is really dying now

Wimbledon is here at last, after its absence in 2020. What struck me watching the French Open on television a couple of weeks before was just how much rubbish I had to listen to if I kept the sound on. There are now too many matches broadcast, which means more and more commentators are spouting off about the game in the middle of rallies. I don't know why viewers don't raise hell with the networks about these non-stop blabbermouths who interrupt our viewing. We've become a nation of sheep, accepting everything so-called experts throw at us.

Televised sport needs commentators only before and after the event. Although the Wimbledon lot spout off a lot less than the French Open blabbermouths, I think back fondly to the impeccable Dan Maskell, whose "Oh my word" was as far as he went after witnessing an extraordinary shot. After Maskell came the great South African doubles expert Frew McMillan, who handles the microphone as deftly

as he handled his racquet while winning the Wimbledon doubles title numerous times. Frew was a buddy of mine during our playing days and he's one of the few nowadays who allow the viewer to enjoy the action without being told non-stop what they are watching.

The televised sporting event that allows the viewer to make up their mind no longer exists. There is an epidemic of excess on the part of the speakers, sorry, commentators, that is just a way of giving themselves a bit more gravitas. They explain the obvious — that is to say what we have just seen, and then some. Television's primary mission seems to be to show us something, then to verbalise what we've just seen to death. Never mind, perhaps it's only me who likes to watch tennis without someone explaining to me what I'm watching.

My nerves were tried and fried by watching the French Open recently, where the rallies can be very long, and the blabbermouths very, very wordy.

The latter are mostly adulatory towards the players, as it's normal for them to be. But when Serena Williams or Novak Djokovic are on the court they really surprise themselves. After losing an important point during a match in Paris, the Serb bounced the ball 23 times before serving. Usually, he bounces it 13 times. If that's not gamesmanship my name is Coco Chanel. Again, perhaps it's only me, but American female commentators' voices, some high-pitched and shrill, particularly get on my nerves. Not Chrissie Evert's, however. Chrissie was beautifully behaved on court and always looked pretty and feminine while winning. She and John McEnroe should be the only Americans employed by the European TV networks though Mac is no longer what he was. He was very good when he started broadcasting and told it like it was. But now he's joined the rest in being more of a cheerleader than a critic.

One of those American females commenting in Paris remarked how

empowering it was to watch a woman taking control of her body. What was that again? If we're going to have this kind of psychobabble while commenting on a tennis match, I think I'll start watching wrestling, the pro-kind that involves masked bad guys and screaming women in the audience. If we follow the American way, we'll soon be using the F-word to express sincerity and enthusiasm, not to mention conviction. But let's get back to the game of tennis.

The reason tennis was once referred to as an elite game (played only by country club types) is easy to explain. Wooden rackets and animal-gut strings made it among the most difficult games to master, if not the most difficult. If one failed to make contact with the ball in the racket's sweet spot — a diameter of about eight inches — the ball flew out or didn't go anywhere. If one didn't step into the ball's path and take it on the rise, the return just died. If one didn't meet the ball sideways, ditto.

All of the above are now no-nos. Strings grip and slingshot the ball;

graphite, titanium and all sorts of rocket material-made rackets have turned everyone into a champ. Open-stance forehands, swing volleys, and from-the-baseline drop-shot attempts are now obligatory.

I remember an article about the fastest server in the game, Pancho Gonzales, serving close to 113 mph. Today a 15-year-old's second serve tops that speed. See what I mean about tennis being a different sport than the one I grew up competing in? Touch and guile were equal to power, so don't compare the greats of today with those of yesteryear. Rod Laver, Lew Hoad and Roy Emerson were as good if not better than today's great troika, and they didn't have the entourages — no dermatologists, cosmetologists, electrolysis, masseurs, coaches, trainers, dieticians, strategists and cheerleaders.

Enjoy Wimbledon with or without the sound and take it from Taki — tennis is a totally different game now.



SHORT TAKES

38 KILLED, 51 HURT IN RAIN-TRIGGERED NEPAL LANDSLIDES

**Kathmandu, July 3:** Flash floods and landslides triggered by torrential rains across Nepal have left at least 38 people dead, including seven children, and wounded over 50 others in the last 20 days, the Home Ministry said on Saturday.

The ministry said 51 people sustained injuries and 24 people, including three children, have gone missing in the incidents of floods and landslides in different parts of the country. Similarly, 1,250 people have been evacuated from different parts of the country that were hit by the natural disaster, it said.

A total of 790 houses have been inundated, 519 homes, 90 cowsheds and 19 bridges were destroyed due to the floods and landslides, it said.

MIGRATION FROM BELARUS LEADS TO CRISIS IN LITHUANIA

**Helsinki (Finland):** Lithuania has declared a state of emergency due to an influx of migrants in the last few days from neighbouring Belarus, as tensions between the European Union and Belarus escalate.

Lithuania's Interior Minister Agle Bilotaite said late Friday that the decision, proposed by the State Border Guard Service, was necessary not because of an increased threat to the country of 2.8 million people but to put a more robust system into place to handle migrants coming in.

It's very important to have a legal system and instruments ... to be able to swiftly make decisions in response to arising challenges, Bilotaite said during a government meeting Friday evening, according to the Baltic News Service.

SYRIAN GOVT SHELLING KILLS 8, MOSTLY CHILDREN

**Beirut:** Artillery fire from government-controlled territory and airstrikes on Saturday killed at least eight civilians in Syria's last rebel enclave, most of them children, and destroyed a civil defence center and a water station, rescue workers and a war monitor said.

The shelling in Ibleen, a village in southern Idlib province, hit the home of Subhi al-Assi, killing him, his wife and three of his children in their sleep, according to the rescue service known as the White Helmets and Idlib's health directorate. Al-Assi was an administrator in a local health center.

Shelling also struck the home of a volunteer for the White Helmets, also known as the Syria Civil Defence, killing his two children.

The volunteer, Omar al-Omar, and his wife were wounded, according to the White Helmets. In a nearby village, another child was killed and four others from the same family were wounded, according to the White Helmets

MAJOR SWEDISH SUPERMARKET HIT BY CYBERATTACK

**Stockholm:** One of Sweden's biggest supermarket chains said on Saturday it had to temporarily close around 800 stores nationwide after a cyber attack blocked access to its checkouts.

"One of our subcontractors was hit by a digital attack, and that's why our checkouts aren't working any more," Coop Sweden, which accounts for around 20 per cent of the sector, said in a statement.

"We regret the situation and will do all we can to reopen swiftly," the cooperative added.

Coop Sweden did not name the subcontractor or reveal the hacking method used against it beginning on Friday evening.

But the Swedish subsidiary of the Visma software group said the problem was linked to a major cyber attack on US IT company Kaseya on Friday.

Kaseya has urged customers to shut down servers running its VSA platform after dozens were hit with ransomware attacks.

A wave of ransomware attacks has struck worldwide recently, especially in the United States.

Ransomware attacks typically involve locking away data in systems using encryption, making companies pay to regain access.

Over 300 Taliban fighters killed

Afghan forces intensify predawn air strikes, Taliban rejects claims

**Kabul, July 3:** Hundreds of Taliban fighters were killed in fierce battles with government forces across several provinces of Afghanistan, officials said Saturday, as Washington announced it would finish withdrawing its troops from the country by the end of August.

Washington's announcement came after all US and Nato troops vacated their main Bagram Air Base, from where the coalition forces led operations for two decades against the Taliban and their Al-Qaeda allies.

Over the past 24 hours, more than 300 Taliban fighters were killed in fighting with government forces, the Ministry of Defence said on Saturday.

Scores were killed in air strikes, including a predawn assault on Saturday, in the southern province of Helmand, where the insurgents and government troops have regularly clashed. There have been fears that Afghan forces would struggle without the air support that the United States has provided.

"In recent days, the Afghan air force has intensified its air strikes against the Taliban hide-outs and the insurgents have suffered casualties," Attaullah Afghan, a member of Helmand provincial council, said.

The Taliban rejected the government's claims.

Both sides often exaggerate each other's casualties and their claims are difficult to independently verify.

But since May 1 when the US military began its final withdrawal of about 2,500 troops, the two warring sides have clashed fiercely across the rugged countryside as peace talks between them have faltered.

As a result, the Taliban have seized dozens of districts in blistering assaults targeting government forces. The insurgents have encircled almost all major cities across the country, and on Saturday claimed seizing seven more districts in the northeastern province of Badakhshan.

Top US envoy to Kabul, Ross Wilson, lashed out at the insurgents. "The Taliban is using violent propaganda and hate speech to intimidate, threaten & attack Afghans on social media," Wilson said on Twitter on Saturday. "Violence and terror cannot create peace."

The Pentagon pressed on with its withdrawal to end America's longest war.

On Friday, all US and Nato troops left Bagram Air Base, signalling that the military involvement for coalition forces was finally nearing its end.

Over the years, the mini-city north of Kabul has been visited by hundreds of thousands of US and Nato service members and contractors.

It has great military and symbolic significance.

"For many Afghans, Bagram is remembered as the hub for more than one foreign intervention, as it was the main air base for the Soviets throughout their occupation of the country as well," said Andrew Watkins, an Afghanistan expert at the International Crisis Group.

"Not only has it been the entry point of most foreign troops that have passed through the country since 2001, it has been home to many of the in-country air assets that have lent the Afghan security forces such a vital advantage on the battlefield." The exit of foreign troops from Bagram has further fuelled concerns the country might slide into new civil war, as in the 1990s after the Soviets left.

— AFP

Unvaccinated vulnerable to Delta: Biden

DELTA VARIANT IS DANGEROUS: W.H.O. CHIEF

**Washington, July 2:** Joe Biden has warned that although America has Covid-19 "on the run" the latest variant is of particular concern among those who remain unvaccinated – as the president's goal of 70 per cent of US adults receiving at least one shot of vaccine by the Fourth of July holiday was set to fall short.

New US cases of Coronavirus jumped by 10 per cent in the past week as the highly contagious Delta variant spreads, especially where vaccination rates are low.

"I am concerned that people who have not gotten vaccinated have the capacity to catch the variant and spread the variant to other people who haven't been vaccinated," Biden said on Friday.

"I'm not concerned there's going to be a major outbreak ... another epidemic nationwide. But I am concerned lives will be lost," he added.

Celebrating strong data on jobs on Friday, Biden said: "Our economy is on the move, and we have Covid-19 on the run."

But the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) director, Rochelle Walensky, said areas with low vaccination rates were becoming hotspots for new infections, even while the situation in the country as a whole was improving.

Nearly 25% of new US infections have been linked to the "hyper-transmissible" Delta variant, first identified in India, up from 6% in June. As of 1 July, 66.8% of US adults have received at least one dose of vaccine. A total of 54.6% of all Americans have received one or more shot.

— PTI

IRAN FEARS 'FIFTH WAVE' OF DELTA VARIANT

**Tehran, July 3:** President Hassan Rouhani expressed fears on Saturday that Iran will be hit by a new wave of Covid-19 due to an outbreak of the Delta variant in the Middle East's hardest-hit country.

"It is feared that we are on the way to a fifth wave throughout the country," Rouhani told a meeting of Iran's anti-virus taskforce, warning the public to be careful as "the Delta variant" had entered the country from the south and southeast.

— AFP

based on their pure convictions or how they understand the evidence and science." — Agencies

Italian health staff dare vax obligation

**Rome, July 3:** Three hundred healthcare workers in Italy have lodged a legal challenge against the requirement that they get vaccinated against coronavirus, according to media reports on Saturday. The case, brought by professionals throughout northern Italy, will be heard on July 14.

"This isn't a battle by anti-vaxxers but a democratic battle," constitutional lawyer Daniele Granara, who helped build up the case, was cited as saying in the *Giornale di Brescia* newspaper.

"We force people to take a risk under threat of no longer being allowed to exercise their profession," he added.

Granara is also defending dozens of caregivers who have been suspended from work for refusing to be vaccinated.

Italy passed a law in April obliging anyone working in public or private social health positions, including in pharmacies and doctors' offices, to get vaccinated against Covid-19 or be suspended without pay, unless their employer can reassign them to a less sensitive position.

After the elderly and vulnerable, caregivers including teachers were the first to be vaccinated in Italy.

— AFP



A general view shows mud and debris at the scene of a landslide following days of heavy rain in Atami in Shizuoka Prefecture on Saturday.

2 dead, 20 missing after homes swept away in Japan landslide

**Tokyo, July 3:** Two people died and around 20 others remained missing on Saturday after a huge landslide at a resort town in central Japan swept away homes following days of heavy rain, officials said.

Television footage showed a torrent of mud obliterating buildings as it crashed down a hillside in Atami, southwest of Tokyo, sending people fleeing as it buried part of a road.

"I heard a horrible sound and saw a mudslide flowing downwards as rescuers were urging people to evacuate. So I ran to higher ground," the head of a temple near the disaster told public broadcaster NHK.

"When I returned, houses and cars that were in front of the temple were gone."

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga said emergency services and the military had launched rescue and evacuation missions, warning that more downpours were forecast.

"There is a possibility of heavy rain due to the rain front, so we still need to be alert at the maximum level," he said at an emergency disaster meeting.

Atami saw rainfall of 313 millimetres in just 48 hours to Saturday—higher than the average monthly total for July of 242.5 millimetres, according to NHK.

Two women discovered by the coastguard at a port without showing vital signs were later confirmed dead, the municipal government of Atami said.

"Because of the heavy rain, the ground loosened and the mudslide occurred ... it picked up speed and swept away houses together with people," Shizuoka Governor Heita Kawakatsu told reporters.

He said "around 20" people were still missing after being swept away by the landslide.

The disaster began at around 10.30am at a river near the city, which is around 90km from Tokyo and is famous as a hot spring resort.

A video posted on TikTok from the scene showed a huge slurry of mud and debris sliding slowly down a steep road and nearly engulfing a white car, which drove away before a faster and more violent torrent arrived.

In other clips on social media, the landslide was seen toppling electricity poles, with large areas left inundated by several waves of earth.

— AFP

Nepal gears for polls despite uncertainty

**sKathmandu, July 3:** Nepal's election commission is preparing for the mid-term elections in November despite the uncertainty over polls due to the pending petitions in the Supreme Court against the dissolution of the House of Representatives, according to reports.

At the recommendation of Prime Minister K. P. Sharma Oli, President Bidya Devi Bhandari dissolved the lower house for the second time in five months on May 22 and announced snap elections on November 12 and November 19.

Prime Minister Oli is currently heading a minority government after losing a trust vote in the 275-member House.

The constitutionality of the President's move is being heard at the Supreme Court, raising the question if the elections would be held on set dates. But the Election Commission of Nepal said that it would start to procure materials required for holding the polls next week after the Finance Ministry approved 7.72

Nepalese Rupees billion for holding the elections, The Kathmandu Post reported.

The ministry said it approved the budget for the commission to procure election materials and election management. This budget, however, does not cover the expenses for security arrangements for the polls.

— PTI

"This isn't a battle by anti-vaxxers but a democratic battle," constitutional lawyer Daniele Granara, who helped build up the case, was cited as saying in the *Giornale di Brescia* newspaper.

"We force people to take a risk under threat of no longer being allowed to exercise their profession," he added.

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After the elderly and vulnerable, caregivers including teachers were the first to be vaccinated in Italy.

— AFP

BREAKING | POINT Choice of footwear leads to accusations that women soldiers being sexualised

Ukrainian women march in heels, spark row

**Kiev, July 3:** Ukrainian authorities found themselves buried in controversy on Friday after official pictures showed women soldiers practising for a parade in heels.

Ukraine is preparing to stage a military parade next month to mark 30 years of independence following the Soviet Union's breakup, and the defence ministry released photographs of fatigue-clad women soldiers marching in mid-heel black pumps. Today, for the first time, training takes place in heeled shoes," cadet Ivanna Medvid was quoted as saying by the defence ministry's information site Armiainform.

"It is slightly harder than in army boots but we are trying," Ms Medvid added in comments released on Thursday.

The choice of footwear sparked a torrent of criticism on social media and in parliament, and led to accusations that women soldiers had been sexualised.

"The story of a parade in heels is a real disgrace," commentator Vitaly Portnikov said on Facebook, arguing that some Ukrainian officials had a "medieval" mindset.

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"The story of a parade in heels is a real disgrace," commentator Vitaly Portnikov said on Facebook, arguing that some Ukrainian officials had a "medieval" mindset.

Several Ukrainian lawmakers close to Ukraine's former president Petro Poroshenko showed up in parliament with pairs of shoes and encouraged the defence minister to wear high heels to the parade.

"It is hard to imagine a more idiotic, harmful idea," said Inna Sovsun, a member of the Golos party, pointing to health risks.

She also said that Ukraine's women soldiers — like men — were risking their lives and "do not deserve to be mocked".

Ukraine has been battling Russian-backed separatists in the country's industrial east, in a conflict that has killed more than 13,000 people since 2014. Olena Kondratyuk, deputy speaker of the legislature said authorities should publicly apologise for "humiliating" women and conduct an enquiry.

Ms Kondratyuk said that more than 13,500 women had fought in the current conflict.

More than 31,000 women now serve in the Ukrainian armed forces, including more than 4,000 of whom are officers.

— AFP



A handout photograph taken and released by the Ukrainian Defence ministry press-service shows the Ukrainian female soldiers wearing heels while taking part in the the military parade rehearsal in Kyiv.



## SHORT TAKES

## Smith may skip T20 World Cup

**Melbourne:** Recuperating from an elbow injury, star Australia batsman Steve Smith says Test cricket remains his top priority and he is ready to skip the T20 World Cup to be in the best shape for the Ashes series against England. The 32-year-old had withdrawn from the ongoing white-ball tour of the West Indies due to the elbow injury. "There's still a bit of time between now and (the World Cup), and I'm tracking okay at the moment — it's slow, but I'm going okay," Smith told *crick-et.com.au* on Friday. The T20 World Cup was shifted from India due to the Covid-19 pandemic and will be held in the United Arab Emirates and Oman from October 17 to November 14, while the Ashes is schedule to begin on December 8 in Brisbane. — *PTI*

## Spinners keep India in the hunt

**Worcester:** India spinners took wickets at regular intervals to nullify a promising start by England as the tourists bumbled out the hosts for 219 in the rain-curtailed third and final Women's ODI on Saturday. Looking for a consolation win, India invited England to bat under overcast conditions after the contest became a 47-overs per side affair but as has been the case in the series, the hosts largely remained untroubled. They were placed comfortably at 110 for two but their strategy to attack Indian spinners resulted in wickets falling in clutches with a middle-order collapse. Indian enjoyed early success when Shikha Pandey trapped opener Tammy Beaumont. **Brief scores:** England Women 219 in 47 overs (Nat Sciver 49, Heather Knight 46; Deepti Sharma 3/43) vs India.

## 2 Windies women collapse on field

**Antigua:** Two West Indies women cricketers — Chinelle Henry and Chedean Nation — collapsed briefly on the field in two separate incidents during the second T20 International against Pakistan here and taken to hospital where they were "stable", according to reports. Both the incidents happened during Pakistan's run chase, which also saw rain interruptions on Friday. "(Seam bowler) Chinelle Henry and (batter) Chedean Nation were taken to hospital for medical attention. Both Henry and Nation are conscious and stable at hospital and are being assessed," CWI said in a statement. West Indies brought on two substitutes and the game continued, with the home side eventually declared winners by seven runs on Duckworth-Lewis-Stern after another interruption. — *PTI*

## Ollie cleared, will play India series

**London:** England pacer Ollie Robinson was on Saturday cleared to play cricket again immediately after being deemed to have served his suspension following an investigation into his discriminatory tweets, thus making him eligible for selection for the five-Test series against India. "As regards the three matches which are the subject of immediate suspension, the Panel has taken into account the suspension imposed by the England Team from the second Test against New Zealand, together with two of the Vitality Blast T20 matches from which Robinson voluntarily withdrew himself from selection for Sussex CCC due to the impact of these proceedings. Robinson is therefore free to play cricket immediately," the ECB said in a statement. — *AFP*

## Verstappen takes pole in Austria

**Spielberg:** Relentless Max Verstappen clinched his third straight pole position with a commanding drive for Red Bull at the Austrian Grand Prix on Saturday, while Lewis Hamilton could only manage fourth place for flagging Mercedes. Lando Norris almost caught Verstappen placing just 0.05 seconds behind him. Max leads Hamilton 5-2 in poles this season and the pressure is on Hamilton now. — *AP*

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## ITALIAN MARBLE

Rock-solid Azzurri prove too hard to crack for World No.1 Belgium

Italy	2
(Nicolò Barella 31, Lorenzo Insigne 44)	
Belgium	1
(Romelu Lukaku 45+2-p)	

**Munich, July 3:** A stunning strike by Lorenzo Insigne fired Italy into the semi-finals of Euro 2020 on Friday as a 2-1 win over Belgium sent them through to a last-four meeting with Spain.

Nicolò Barella struck the opening goal of the quarter-final in Munich before Insigne curled in Italy's second in an action-packed first half.

Belgium grabbed a lifeline just before the break when Romelu Lukaku converted a penalty, but Roberto Martinez's side ultimately fell short against a disciplined Italian defence.

"We scored two and we could have scored more," said Italy coach Roberto Mancini.

"I think the victory is fully deserved. Spain are next but the more you go forward the most difficult it becomes."

While Italy face Spain at Wembley on Tuesday, defeat means more European Championship quarter-final heartbreak for Belgium, who exited at the same stage in 2016 after defeat by Wales.

Belgium sorely missed their captain Eden Hazard, ruled out by a hamstring injury, even as Kevin De Bruyne won his race to shake off an ankle injury.

The Manchester City playmaker showed why the medical staff worked around the clock to get him fit by regularly causing Italy problems, but Romelu Lukaku twice was denied by Gianluigi Donnarumma.

"It was a miracle that I played, because there was definitely damage to my ankle," said De Bruyne. "We tried everything to win that match."

"Getting eliminated is always a disappointment. Too bad I couldn't do more."



Italian players celebrate after defeating Belgium 2-1 in the Euro quarterfinal on Friday.

— Twitter

## SPINAZZOLA INJURED

Italy's win came at a cost, with left-back Leonardo Spinazzola out of the tournament with a leg injury. "Leonardo had a great European championship. Now whoever replaces him will do the same," said Italy defender Leonardo Bonucci.

Italy had the ball in the net on 13 minutes when Bonucci chested it past Thibaut Courtois from a free-kick, but the goal was disallowed by VAR for an offside against captain Giorgio Chiellini.

Marco Verratti and Youri Tielemans both earned yellow cards for midfield tussles involving the pair. Verratti was booked for holding Tielemans in a tackle, while the Belgian picked up a yellow card moments later.

— *AFP*

## Danish the menace as minnows stun Czechs

Denmark	2
(Thomas Delaney 5, Kasper Dolberg 42)	
Czech	1
(Patrick Schick 49)	

**Baku, July 3:** Denmark's fairytale run at Euro 2020 will continue into the semi-finals after they beat the Czech Republic 2-1 in Baku on Saturday to move into a last-four meeting with England or Ukraine at Wembley.

First-half goals from Thomas Delaney and Kasper Dolberg were enough to see Kasper Hjulmand's men through despite a second-half rally from the Czechs inspired by Patrik Schick's fifth goal of the tournament.

The Danes have now scored 10 goals in winning

Denmark	2
(Thomas Delaney 5, Kasper Dolberg 42)	
Czech	1
(Patrick Schick 49)	

their last three matches after starting the tournament with two defeats, the first amid shocking circumstances when Christian Eriksen suffered a cardiac arrest on the pitch.

Three weeks on, they are dreaming of a repeat of 1992 when Denmark won

the European Championship despite not even qualifying.

Celebrations started within five minutes as Delaney was left completely unmarked to head home Jens Stryger Larsen's corner. Tomas Vaclik then had to deny Mikkel Damsgaard to prevent the Danes doubling their lead in a blistering start.

Denmark were always a threat on the break, though, and Vaclik had to stand up to parry another powerful drive by Damsgaard.

— *AFP*

## SHAW SHOULD TAKE PLACE OF PUJARA: HOGG

**Sydney, July 3:** Former Australia spinner Brad Hogg feels young Prithvi Shaw is more suited for the number three spot in Test cricket and is the top candidate to step in place of Cheteshwar Pujara if India think of replacing the veteran India batsman in the series against England. "If anyone was going to replace Pujara it would be Prithvi Shaw. Feel he is more suited there than opening. Has a lot of talent and long future. He is not in the tour group but a wild card choice," Hogg tweeted.

Shaw is part of the national squad for the limited-overs series against Sri Lanka. — *PTI*

## COPA AMERICA

## 10-man Brazil ward off Chile

**Rio De Janeiro, July 3:** Lucas Paqueta's second-half strike was enough for defending champions Brazil to hold off determined Chile 1-0 on Friday and book a Copa America semi-final showdown with Peru.

Second-half substitute Paqueta made an instant impact, finding a gap in Chile's defense and firing into the back of the net in the 47th minute to put Brazil up 1-0.

Less than two minutes later, however, Brazil were reduced to 10 men when Gabriel Jesus's reckless high kick caught Eugenio Mena in the face and drew a straight red card.

Chile couldn't capitalise on the man advantage, no matter they how hard they tried.

Eduardo Vargas thought he'd grabbed the equalizer in the 62nd with a close-range shot, but VAR confirmed the offside call was correct.

In the 69th, Mena's cross from the left found Ben Brereton, whose looping header had Brazilian goalkeeper Ederson wrong-footed but caromed off the crossbar.

RESULTS	
Brazil	1
(Lucas Paqueta 46)	
Chile	0
Peru	3
(Gianluca Lapadula 21, 40, Yoshimar Yotún 80)	
Paraguay	3
(Gustavo Gómez 11, Júnior Alonso 54, Gabriel Avalos 90)	
(Peru won 4-3 in shoot-out)	

## PERU MOVE INTO SEMIS

Peru beat Paraguay 4-3 on penalties to punch their ticket to the Copa America semi-finals after the teams played to a 3-3 draw after an action-packed 90 minutes. Miguel Trauco scored the decisive penalty for Peru in a shoot-out that echoed the drama match with two shots over the crossbar and three saves.

Peruvian keeper Pedro Gallese set the stage for Trauco with his diving save of Alberto Espinola's attempt.

Paraguay captain Gustavo Gomez had opened the scoring in the 11th minute, but Gianluca Lapadula scored in the 21st and 40th to give Peru the lead.

— *AFP*

Brazil's Luis Paqueta (left) and Neymar celebrate after defeating Chile in the Copa America quarterfinal in Rio De Janeiro on Saturday.

— Twitter

## SPECIAL FLIGHT | TO TOKYO

## Team India to leave on July 14

NEHA SURANA | DC  
CHENNAI, JULY 3

Indian Olympic Association secretary Rajeev Mehta on Saturday said the first batch of the country's Olympic contingent will leave for Tokyo in an Air India chartered flight on July 14.

Mehta confirmed that they will undergo a four-day quarantine upon arrival in Japan. "As many as 115 athletes and some officials will leave on July 14. After the quarantine, we can move around in Tokyo," said Mehta during an online felicitation ceremony organised by Chennai-based Sunshine Senior Secondary School and Youththink Foundation.

Mehta expects a minimum of 10 medals from Indian athletes in Tokyo.

## SHARATH LOOKS TO PULL OFF SURPRISE

Indian table tennis star Achanta Sharath Kamal said the Tokyo Olympics will spread the much-needed positivity across the world when the sporting spectacle begins on July 23

amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

"It is quite a difficult situation for all of us. There is uncertainty and a lot of negativity. I think sport is something which can bring out positivity and it is one of the most important reasons why the Olympics should happen. It's really good that they haven't cancelled the Olympics," said Sharath.

Along with the TT veteran, a host of Olympic-bound athletes such as G. Sathiyam, C.A. Bhavani Devi, Dutee Chand, Varun Thakkar, K.C. Ganapathy and Sajan Prakash were also honoured.

Sharath, who will be competing in his fourth Games, has set his sights on surprising a few top-ranked players in Tokyo.

"There are a lot of good players out there to beat. But one team whom the world wants to defeat is China. Table tennis is completely dominated by them. Hopefully, this time I will be able to surprise a few top-seeded players. And, for that we have been training quite hard," he said.



Tokyo Olympics bound Handball Federation of India president Arishanapally Jagannathan Rao (centre) poses alongside athletes and coaches at the Olympic selfie point set up at the Gachibowli Athletics Stadium. The selfie point was installed as per the guidelines issued by the Union Sports Ministry and Sports Authority of India which launched the 'Cheer for India' campaign ahead of the Olympics to be held from July 23 to August 8. Also seen are Sports Authority of Telangana State coaches Nanda Gokul Yadav, Sudhakar, Chari and Srinivas.

## Ranji back after a year break

**New Delhi, July 3:** The BCCI will conduct all its domestic tournaments across age-groups with the coveted Ranji Trophy, starting on November 16, being the marquee event among the 2127 matches scheduled for 2021-22 season.

Last season, the BCCI couldn't conduct any age-group tournament and was forced to cancel the Ranji Trophy due to Covid-19 pandemic.

However, a full-fledged domestic season will take place this year with Syed Mushtaq Ali T20 to begin from October 20 and the National One-Day Championship for Vijay Hazare Trophy being scheduled from February 23 next year.

"The season will com-

DOMESTIC CALENDAR	
Syed Mushtaq Ali T20	October 20 to November 12
Ranji Trophy 2021	November 16 to February 19
Vijay Hazare 2021	February 23 to March 26
Women's one-day	September 21 to October 22
Women's Challenger	October 27 to October 31
Women's T20	March 19 to April 11

mence on September 21, 2021, with the Senior Women's One Day League and will be followed by the Senior Women's One Day Challenger Trophy, which will take place from October 27, 2021.

"The BCCI is confident of hosting the domestic season with health and safety of players and all people involved being paramount," the statement further read.

The Ranji Trophy will

be played in a three-month window from November 16, 2021 to February 19, 2022.

The Vijay Hazare Trophy final will take place on March 26, 2022.

"The BCCI is confident of hosting the domestic season with health and safety of players and all people involved being paramount," the statement further read.

The Ranji Trophy will

## Federer glides into Last 16

**London, July 3:** Roger Federer moved into the fourth round of a Grand Slam tournament for the 69th time on Saturday, overcoming a raucous home crowd and the last British man in the draw Cameron Norrie in an entertaining 6-4, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4 win at Wimbledon.

Federer kept his dream alive of a record-extending ninth singles title.

Federer said this Wimbledon held special significance for him.

"I hope there is a little bit more left in me as this one is special for it is the last slam before I hit the big 40," said Federer, the third oldest man to reach the Last 16 in the Open era.

Zverev ended big-serving Taylor Fritz's impressive campaign — 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4) — given he exited the French Open in a wheelchair due to a knee injury. The match of the day on the men's side was



Coco Gauff of the US celebrates after defeating Kaja Juvan of Slovenia in the third round on Saturday.

— *AP*

a damp squib as fiery Aussie entertainer Nick Kyrgios retired with an abdominal injury tied at one set all with stylish Canadian 16th seed Felix Auger-Aliassime.

The maverick that is Kyrgios did not have the

best of starts as he had left his shoes in the locker room.

Coco Gauff and Angelique Kerber will meet in the last 16 after the American teenager breezed past Slovenian Kaja Juvan while the

THE RESULTS	
<b>Men's singles: Third round:</b>	
Roger Federer (SUI x6) bt Cameron Norrie (GBR) 6-4, 6-4, 5-7, 6-4;	Alexander Zverev (GER x4) bt Taylor Fritz (USA x31) 6-7 (3/7), 6-4, 6-3, 7-6 (7/4);
Felix Auger-Aliassime (CAN x16) bt Nick Kyrgios (AUS) 2-6, 6-1 (retired);	Lorenzo Sonego (ITA x23) bt James Duckworth (AUS) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.
<b>Women's singles: Third round:</b>	
Coco Gauff (USA x20) bt Kaja Juvan (SLO) 6-3, 6-3;	Angelique Kerber (GER x25) bt Aliaksandra Sasnovich (BLR) 2-6, 6-0, 6-1;
Barbora Krejickova (CZE x14) bt Anastasija Sevastova (LAT) 7-6 (7/1), 3-6, 7-5.	

German had a tough three-setter against Aliaksandra Sasnovich of Belarus.

Gauff is not the only teenager making her mark at Wimbledon this year. Britain's Canada-born 18-year-old Emma

Raducanu, who moved with her Romanian father and Chinese mother to England aged two, produced a brilliant display to beat the experienced Sorana Cirstea of Romania 6-3, 7-5.

## SANIA-BETHANIE BOW OUT

Indian star Sania Mirza and her American partner Bethanie Mattek-Sands on Saturday bowed out of the women's doubles event at the Wimbledon Championships following a straight-set defeat.

Mirza, who has returned to grass court Grand Slam after three years, and Mattek-Sands lost 4-6 3-6 to the Russian pair of Elena Vesnina and Veronika Kudermetova in one hour and 28 minutes.

Mirza is still alive in the tournament as she will play in the mixed doubles second round with compatriot Rohan Bopanna.

— *Agencies*