

SHORT TAKES

NRI STUDENT DONATES PPE KITS AND MEDICAL VAN

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

An Indian origin NRI student donated a medical service van and PPE kits through the Empower and Excel USA organization to Don Bosco Alumni Association to help Covid-19 patients at Yerrabalem on Sunday. The 16-year-old Indian origin Nihaar Charagulla lives in San Jose, California, USA raised 15,000 USD to help Covid-19 patients.

With Nihaar's donation, Empower, and Excel, the India chapter got a Covid-19 service vehicle for Don Bosco Alumni Association and PPE kits, and four oxygen concentrators for another facility to serve needy people suffering from Covid.

AP Madiga Finance Corporation Chairman, Kom-muri Kanaka Rao, inaugurated the service vehicle by flagging off programme on Sunday at the Don Bosco School premises in Yerrabalem of Mangalagiri Mandal in Guntur district. He hailed the services of Don Bosco Alumni Association with the collaboration of Empower and Excel, USA and the child philanthropist Nihar for his efforts to raise the donations for the service vehicle to serve Corona sufferers.

Don Bosco Alumni Association delegate Hyderabad Province Rev Fr G. Kishore Raju, Rev Fr Suresh, Rev Fr Marreddy, Rev Fr P.K. Josh, Teachers Rani, Jayaraj and delegates participated in the inauguration.

REVENUE ON LIQUOR REDUCED IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

Deputy Chief Minister K. Narayana Swamy said that the phase wise liquor ban is yielding good results in AP. He said that the VAT revenue on liquor decreased 41 per cent in the 2020-21 financial year as only ₹4,242.41 crores revenue registered against ₹10,403.84 crore of 2019-20 financial year. He stated that this revenue is reflecting the success of phase wise ban on liquor and fulfilling CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy promise about banning liquor.

Narayana Swamy said that the target of revenue collection for 2021-22 was ₹55,935.13 crore. He further said that ₹44,178.51 crore GST revenue has been collected for 2020-21 financial year.

He said that special drive was conducted for six months to collect pending tax which yielded good results as ₹1,772 crore was collected in that drive.

The Deputy CM said that AP Commercial Tax Department stood in fourth place in the country level and in the first place in South India for its performance. He praised the efforts of the officials and the employees for their dedicated work.

PALEM POLICE BUST CRICKET BETTING RACKET

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

The PM Palem police and the City Task Force have busted a 'Pakistan Super League T-20' cricket betting racket and arrested four persons from a flat in Celebrity Towers, Panorama Hills, at Rushikonda in Vizag city. The kingpin in the racket Chebolu Srinivas is absconding.

The four were K. Ravi Kumar, T. Dhanunjay and V. Rambabu, all residents of Vizag city and M. Sivaji, a native of Srikakulam. Inspector of PM Palem, A. Ravi Kumar said Chebolu Srinivas alias Cable Srinu employed four persons for organising the cricket betting operations from the Vizag flat.

The PSL-T-20 cricket matches commenced from June 9 and the gang has organised some betting operations. They collected bet amounts from the punters for the match between Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi teams on Saturday night through online by using the combination kit, mobile phones, cricket line guru app and by communicating with 30 punters.

The gang also used to cheat punters by announcing wrong ratings on the matches.

Srinu collected bets from punters through e-wallets with the help of his associates.

Following a tip-off, the police raided a house from where the gang was collecting bets for the match. Cops seized ₹1,590 in cash, some electronic devices and phones, TVs and a few other accessories.

FORUM DEMANDS GST WAIVER ON ALL COVID DRUGS

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 13

President of Praja Arogya Vedika Dr M.V. Ramanaiah has demanded the central government to drop GST on all the medicines and equipment used for treating Covid-19 patients.

He was reacting to the announcement of reduction on GST from 12 to five per cent on Covid-19 drugs, oxygen concentrators, ventilators, pulse oximeters and other such equipment apart from waiver of tax on medicines for black fungus for the next year.

The senior physician underlined the need to waive all taxes till Covid-19 is eradicated, while questioning the rationale behind time-bound relaxations even as lakhs of people succumbing to the dreaded virus.

In a statement on Sunday, he found fault with the centre for offering a concession on GST till September ignoring the reports over the possible outbreak of the third wave of Covid-19 from the same month.

He said complete removal of GST on all Covid-19 drugs and equipment will be a solace for the poor and middle class who are being ruined because of Covid-19. Dr Ramanaiah slammed the centre for imposing GST on vaccine even while claiming that it is the only weapon against Covid-19.

● **THE SENIOR** physician underlined the need to waive all taxes till Covid-19 is eradicated, while questioning the rationale behind timebound relaxations even as lakhs of people succumbing to the dreaded virus.

HPCL funds works in Simhachalam temple

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

The management of Lord Varaha Lakshmi Nrusimha Swamy temple at Simhachalam in the city on Sunday made a proposal with the representatives of HPCL Visakh Refinery to fund a few facilities for devotees at the temple.

The temple executive officer M.V. Suryakala made the proposal when the HPCL representatives visited the temple for darshan.

Water treatment plant at Gangadhara and repairs for existing water treat-



Contract labor sit compacted on a moving van neglecting the spread of Covid-19 among them while being shifted for construction works, near harbor road in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

60-yr-old Nurse dies by suicide in hospital

Relatives and other patients accuse authorities for negligence

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

In a tragic twist, a sixty-year-old nurse, who was first infected with Covid-19 and recovered but was later infected with black fungus, died by suicide. Jagadamma ended her life inside a bathroom at the medicine ward of Sri Padmavathi state Covid-19 hospital in Tirupati on Sunday, officials said.

According to the revenue divisional officer of Tirupati, Kanaka Narasa Reddy, the deceased nurse tested positive on May 4. After treatment, she recovered and got her negative report on May 13. On May 25, she was admitted to the state Covid-19 hospital at

● **THE DOCTORS** at the Covid-19 hospital conducted a surgery on Jayamma on June 10 and she was under observation. Her condition deteriorated. The hospital staff found her body at about 4 am.

SVIMS campus in Tirupati as she got infected with the black fungus disease.

The doctors at the Covid-19 hospital conducted a surgery on Jayamma on June 10 and she was under observation. Her condition deteriorated. The hospital staff found her body at about 4 am.

Jaamma's relatives, however, accused the hospital authorities of negligence in treatment which led to a deterioration of her health. Other patients' attendants also

and the police intervened and pacified them.

Responding to these incidents, health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, who sought details from the hospital management and the district medical officer Dr U. Srihari, advised the staff to ensure the best of medical care is available to patients at the state covid hospital.

The minister advised the RDO to pacify the protesters and provide necessary assistance to them. He also directed the hospital superintendent to pay special attention to the food being supplied to the patients and maintain a hygienic environment at the hospital.

Covid cases reduce in AP, 12,492 patients discharged

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

Andhra Pradesh continues to report less number of coronavirus infections. It reported 6,770 new Covid-19 cases and recoveries showed improvement with the discharge of 12,492 patients in the last 24 hours on Sunday. The total Covid-19 infections across 13 districts were 18,09,884 in which total recoveries was at 17,12,267 and the recovery rate increased to 94.61% giving a ray of hope towards swift

recovery from pandemic.

A total of 58 new deaths were registered, increasing the death toll to 11,940 and the death rate at 0.66%. Around 1,02,876 samples were tested in which 6,770 tested positive and the overall positive rate of total 2.045 crore tests is 8.85%.

East Godavari district is on top in daily new infections with 1,199 followed by Chittoor 968, West Godavari 765, Prakasam 530, Srikakulam 491, Kadapa 473 and Krishna report-

ed 440 new infections. Guntur district registered 433 new infections followed by Anantapur 367, Kurnool 299, Visakhapatnam 290, Nellore 267 and the lowest of 248 was reported in Vizianagaram district.

Chittoor district reported 12 new deaths, while it was seven each in East Godavari and West Godavari, Srikakulam reported six while four each reported in Anantapur and Visakhapatnam, three deaths each in Krishna, Prakasam, and Kadapa.

Union Min. Piyush Goyal visits Tirumala

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

Union Minister for Railways and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal accompanied by his family members offered prayers to Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala on Sunday morning.

On his arrival, the union minister was accorded a grand reception by the TTD additional executive officer A.V. Dharma Reddy and temple priests, who later

escorted him to the sanctum sanctorum. Later, he was rendered Vedasirvachanam by Vedic pundits and was presented Srivari theertha prasadam and a lamination of Lord Venkateswara.

After winding up his Tirumala temple visit, the union minister reached Tiruchanoor by road and offered prayers to Goddess Padmavathi Devi in the sanctum sanctorum of the TTD temple. Earlier, on his arrival at the main



Union Minister Piyush Goyal offers prayers at Dwajasthambham at Srivari temple in Tirumala on Sunday.

entrance of the temple, he was accorded a warm welcome in a traditional manner.

AP Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath

Reddy, MP M. Gurumurthy, TTD Board Member and MLA C. Bhaskar Reddy and others were present.

RACE | FOR POST

Sheer size of positions lying vacant closer to 1,000 posts includes chairpersons, directors

YSRC leaders lobby hard for plum posts

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 13

The second rung leaders of the ruling YSR Congress in Kurnool district are gung-ho about the prospects of being accommodated in nominated posts for around 90 corporations.

The number of positions lying vacant, as assessed by aspirants, may be closer to 1,000m which includes chairpersons and directors and co-opted members for certain categories. This has triggered a race among them to muster the support of

leaders. Many aspirants from Nandyal, Kurnool and Adoni divisions are said to be camping in Vijayawada for the past two weeks. Among them more hopefuls are those who missed out or sacrificed MLA tickets in the past.

Armed with impressive accounts of their candidatures in colourful spiral bounds and multiple copies, they are after district in-charge minister and other top leaders who wield clout in the party.

The buzz is that Byreddy Sidharth Reddy, a leader from Nandikotkur, is sure

of chairmanship of a good corporation. In their parlance, a good corporation is one which can turn a 'cash cow.' Malki Reddy Rajagopal Reddy, who sacrificed an MLA seat to the Silpa family, is in the race for a premium corporation. His added advantage is that he hails from Pulivendula, said a local leader.

Habibulla from Nandyal, who was arrested by the TD government in a sedition case, gave a lifeline to Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in the run-up to the 2019 elections and helped garner minority votes. He

aspires to be the chairman of minority welfare corporation. Kotla Hari, Harsha Vardhan Reddy, Gopireddy Gopinath Reddy, Fayaz, Ilyas, and Zeeland are the other names doing the rounds. Kurnool city leaders do not have any stature to seek positions, said a senior party leader. Adoni, Chagalamarri, Allagadda are other centers from where leaders are angling for positions.

All 14 Assembly seats in Kurnool district were won by the YSRC, leaving no space for TD. This has won two ministries to the

Docu on Gandhi gets top honours at NYC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

A documentary film 'Ahimsa- Gandhi: The Power of The Powerless,' produced by Uma Gajapati Raju, Sanchaita Gajapati Raju and Jean Luc Berlot, and written and directed by Ramesh Sharma (Emmy nominee), won the Best Documentary Award at the 21st New York Indian Film Festival on Sunday.

The film comes at a time when the world needs to be reminded of the Mahatma's teachings of peace and non-violence.

The chairperson of Simhachalam Temple Trust and MANASSAS, Sanchaita Gajapati Raju, said the film speaks to the conscience of humanity as people globally grapple with intractable problems surrounding race, and as societies struggle to give the marginalised and underserved human dignity and restore fundamental

human rights.

The film brings to the fore the impact of the Gandhian message of non-violence worldwide: how it inspired Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, Barack Obama and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States; the Solidarity Movement in Poland; the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia as well as Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

The title song 'Ahimsa' was composed by A.R. Rahman and Bono. "Am overwhelmed that our film, which is a labour of love and has been a long time in the making, has won this prestigious award. At a time when the world is fraught with turbulence, the Mahatma's teachings and life are all the more relevant. Thank you to our French Co-Producer Jean Luc Berlot." Sanchaita Gajapati Raju said.

Overcrowding in malls despite 2nd wave

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 13

Even as the second wave of Covid19 is playing havoc with the lives of people and taking a heavy toll, people in general seem to be taking things easy. Shopping malls are crowded even as governmental regulations on pandemic control have continued.

While the fear of a third wave existed, women, children and others are unmindful of this and are present in large numbers in shopping areas. This, though officials are on a massive campaign urging people to maintain social distance, remain at home, and wear masks properly.

Crowding is heavy at malls, garment shops and other public places due to the marriage season and for other seasonal programmes. Women are bringing along

with them their children without facemasks.

Sundays bring out larger crowds. The main road at Rajamahendravaram and the main markets at Kakinada and meat shops all see people crowding around.

Long queues were seen at shopping malls near Godarigunta and the municipal corporation office at Kakinada and Bommuru-Vemagiri Road and near Godavari bund at Rajamahendravaram on Sunday.

The father of one-year-old child P Venkata Narayana Rao arriving at a shopping mall in Kakinada with his kid said they came for shopping from Yanam. He stood in the long queue with his child while his wife sat under the shade of a tree with another kid. He said they had to do purchases of some essential commodities, this being a holiday.

Black fungus cases rose to 213 in EG

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 13:

Black fungus cases have increased day by day and for the last 24 hours, nine cases were admitted in Government General Hospital in Kakinada and the number of cases rose to 213. The Government General Hospital Superintendent Dr R. Mahalakshmi said that one person died and the death toll rose to 24 in East Godavari and as many as

130 persons have received treatment for black fungus in the last 24 hours in the hospital and three patients discharged from the hospital. She said that 44 patients were performed surgeries and a total of 63 patients were discharged so far from the hospital.

She said that 14 patients were given L-Amphotericin B injection, 55 patients were given Posaconazole injection, 61 patients have been given Posaconazole tablets so far.

Ghutka, Khaini packets seized

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 13

Tadepalligudem police of West Godavari District, led by the Circle Inspector Akula Raghu arrested three persons and seized 170 Ghutka and Khaini packets worth Rs 1,700 and also illicit liquor from them. Tadepalligudem Sub-Inspector GJ Prasad and other police personnel conducted the raids.

The police personnel of Bhimavaram-I and II led by

CCS DSP G.V.S. Peddeswara Rao have made inspections at check-posts and imposed fines on the people who have roamed on the bikes and vehicles without having proper reason during the curfew period and booked cases against them under National Disaster Management Act. The Eluru Two Town Circle Inspector Adi Prasad distributed food packets and drinking water to deserted and begging people in the city.

SHORT TAKES

NCB BUSTS RACKET SELLING DRUGS INSIDE CAKES

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 13

After conducting raids on a bakery in Malad area in suburban Mumbai, the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) has found out a new modus operandi adopted by drug dealers. The NCB has claimed that the drugs were supplied in high profile areas by putting them inside cakes and pastries.

According to NCB sources, the raid was conducted late Saturday night after the probe agency got a tip off about the same. The NCB officers were informed that the narcotic substances were being delivered by placing them inside the cakes and pastries to avoid any obvious suspicion.

The bakery products were then delivered to high-profile people in high profile parties and areas.

After the action, the agency found suspicious activities in the Bakery and also claimed to have seized 830 grams of edible weed brownie and 160gm of marijuana (ganja). The police have arrested three persons in the case so far.

One of the arrested persons has been identified as Jagat Chaurasia, who is said to be the supplier. Chaurasia was arrested in Bandra on the same night and found to be in possession of 125 grams of marijuana.

During the raid, NCB officials found a box that contained cakes and drugs. Now the team is probing the matter to find out for how long has this operation been going on, who is the mastermind behind the same and also the clients of this bakery who are receiving drugs in this manner.

MP CONG. DIVIDED OVER DIGVIJAY'S ART. 370 REMARKS

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 13

Congress veteran Digvijay Singh's purported opposition to abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir has divided his party in Madhya Pradesh.

While a section of the party defended him on the issue, albeit reluctantly, his brother and senior Congress leader Laxman Singh, however, countered him saying that "It is not possible to restore Article 370 in J&K now".

Media wing chief of Congress in Madhya Pradesh Narendra Singh Saluja on Sunday defended him saying that there was nothing wrong in the suggestion made by the veteran leader to review the abrogation of Article 370 in J&K by taking views of the local people on the issue (if Congress returned to power at the Centre).

"Digvijay Singh has rightly said that Congress should consider reviewing abrogation of Article 370 in J&K if the party returns to power at the Centre. In democracy, people's views are taken on many issues. There is nothing wrong with it. BJP was unnecessarily making it an issue to divert public attention from the Centre's failure to deal with the Coronavirus in the country", he said.

He, however, hastened to add that "It was his personal view. The issue has never been discussed at the party forum". Congress spokesman K.K. Mishra said the party should discuss the issue.

India is natural ally of G7: Modi

PM highlights revolutionary impact of digital tech

Proposal by India on vaccine patents gets support at G7

New Delhi, June 13: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India is a natural ally for the G7 and its partners in defending democracy, freedom of thought and liberty from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism, violent extremism and economic coercion.

The Prime Minister made the remarks in a virtual address at an outreach session of a summit of the Group of Seven (G7) richest democracies which was held in the British seaside resort of Cornwall.

The ministry of external affairs (MEA) said that Modi, as the lead speaker at the session titled 'open societies and economies', highlighted India's civilisational commitment to democracy, freedom of thought and liberty.

"As the world's largest democracy, India is a natural ally for the G7 and guest countries to defend these shared values from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism and violent extremism, disinformation and infodemics and economic coercion," he said.

The Prime Minister also highlighted the revolutionary impact of digital technologies on social inclusion and empowerment in India through applications such as Aadhaar, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity.

While underscoring the vulnerabilities inherent in open societies, the prime minister called on tech companies and social

New Delhi, June 13: A proposal by India and South Africa to temporarily waive patents on Covid-19 vaccines to ensure their equitable access received widespread support at the G7 summit in the UK, the ministry of external affairs said on Sunday.

In a virtual address at an inaugural outreach session of the summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi sought the support of the grouping to lift patent protections for Covid-19 vaccines.

The MEA said Modi's call was supported by South African President Cyril Ramaphosa, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, WTO Director-General

Okonjo Iweala and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

"I can confirm that there was widespread support in deliberations for text-based negotiations on the India-South Africa proposal for TRIPS waiver at the World Trade Organisation (WTO)," P Harish, additional secretary (economic relations) in the MEA, said at a press conference. The TRIPS (Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) council of the WTO is likely to start text-based negotiations on the proposal.

Calling on the G7 to demonstrate leadership, Modi sought the grouping's strong support for the proposal for a TRIPS waiver at the WTO." — PTI

media platforms to ensure a safe cyber environment for their users, additional secretary (economic relations) in the MEA P Harish said at a press conference. "The Prime Minister's views were appreciated by other leaders in the gathering," he said.

Harish said the G7 leaders underlined their commitment to a free, open and a rules-based Indo-Pacific and resolved to collaborate with partners in the region.

The Group of Seven (G7)

comprises the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States. As chair of G7, the UK invited India, Australia, South Korea and South Africa to the summit as Guest countries "Was happy to address the @G7 Session on Open Societies as a Lead Speaker. Democracy and freedom are part of India's civilisational ethos, and find expression in the vibrancy and diversity of India's society," Modi tweeted. — PTI

Congress needs widespread reforms: Sibal

New Delhi, June 13: The Congress must bring widespread reforms across all levels of the organisation to show it is no longer in a state of inertia and to present itself as a viable political alternative to the BJP, party veteran Kapil Sibal said on Sunday.

India needs a resurgent Congress. But for that, the party needs to show that it is active, present, aware and is in the mood to engage meaningfully," the former union minister said.

"For this to happen, we will need to have widespread reforms at the organisational hierarchy both at the central and state levels to show that the party is still a force to reckon with and is no longer in a state of inertia, he said.

Sibal, who was among the G-23 leaders whose letter to Congress President Sonia Gandhi last year demanding a meaningful overhaul of the party had triggered a

storm, acknowledged that at present there is no strong political alternative to the BJP but said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has lost the moral authority to rule and the Congress can gain from the current mood in the country.

The former union minister voiced hope that organisational elections, recently postponed in the wake of the Covid-19 pandemic, will happen sooner than later.

He also noted that while forming committees to review election losses is good, it will have no impact unless remedies suggested are implemented.

Noting that the party's alliances with the All India United Democratic Front (AIUDF) in Assam and Indian Secular Front (ISF) in West Bengal were not thought through, Sibal said the Congress has failed to drive home the point that minority and majority communalism are equally dangerous for the country. — PTI



Lt Governor Manoj Sinha performs rituals during bhoomi puja ceremony of Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple by Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) at Majeen in Jammu. — PTI

Balaji temple gets land on 40-yr lease Militancy, infiltration in J&K largely controlled: Kishan

From Page 1

J&K's administrative council under Sinha had in April this year allotted 496 kanals and 17 marlas (62 acres) of land to the TTD for building the Sri Venkateswara Swamy Temple at Majeen on the peripheries of Jammu city.

Article 35A had empowered J&K Assembly to define a J&K resident and guaranteed special rights and privileges to them and thereby prohibited non-permanent residents from permanent settlement and from acquiring immovable properties, government jobs and scholarships in the state. However, those willing to supplement the erstwhile state's development and economic growth would be provided with land and other immovable possessions on temporary or lease basis under strict regulations.

The TTD has been allotted this land on lease for a period of 40 years. "TTD, a board established by the government under the TTD Act, 1932, is a charitable organization of international repute with a proven track record in the spiritual, cultural, social and educational sphere," a statement issued by the J&K government said.

Sinha said the TTD board will establish a Gurukul and Veda

Union minister of state for home G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday claimed that post-abrogation of Article 370 not only has militancy been controlled to a great extent in Jammu and Kashmir but the government has through a concerted effort put in by the security forces also curbed infiltration of terrorists and other undesirable elements from across the border.

He asserted, while speaking to reports at Jammu, "We've managed to curb infiltration and militancy and terrorism stand controlled in J&K. Not more than a couple of incidents of violence were reported in India including J&K in

● KISHAN REDDY said that it is because of the pandemic that the process of development has slowed down in J&K.

● KISHAN REDDY was with J&K's Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at Jammu Raj Bhavan to discuss 'a range of issues pertaining to the internal security, law and order management and public welfare in the Union Territory.'

the past two years."

Kishan Reddy said that it is because of the pandemic that the process of development has slowed down in J&K.

"Earlier as many as 36 Union ministers visited J&K as part of the government's effort to boost its

economy and development but Covid-19 has played a spoilsport", he said, adding that due to the pandemic the developmental projects got a hit yet he promised that once the situation eases "we will take J&K to new heights on the development front."

Later in the evening, Kishan Reddy was with J&K's Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha at Jammu Raj Bhavan to discuss "a range of issues pertaining to the internal security, law and order management and public welfare in the Union Territory."

An official spokesman said that the discussion between the two was also on the functioning of DRDO's Covid hospitals in twin capitals of Jammu and Srinagar.

Pathshala within the complex to promote Sanskrit language and ancient culture of Vedic teachings and learning. "The board has also agreed to set up centres of excellence in the field of healthcare on the lines of its excellence centres in Andhra

Pradesh," he said. He thanked the TTD board and the central government "for fulfilling the long-pending wish of the people of J&K and North India for establishing the temple of Lord Balaji on the land of Shri Mata Vaishno Devi".

BJP's UP leaders meet in Vrindavan, discuss poll plans

Mathura, June 13: The BJP held a meeting of its western Uttar Pradesh office bearers to devise ways to improve its electoral prospects in the state's Assembly elections next year.

The meeting was held at Keshav Dham in Vrindavan near here and was chaired by state BJP general secretary (organisation) Sunil Bansal.

In the meeting, it was decided to fill all vacant organisational posts of the party to help it gear up for the 2022 Assembly elections.

During the meeting, Bansal sought to impress

● IN THE meeting, chaired by state BJP general secretary (organisation) Sunil Bansal, it was decided to fill all vacant organisational posts of BJP to help it gear up for 2022 Assembly polls.

upon party workers to create a conducive environment up to booth level.

Sources said during the meeting, the party leaders decided to take active steps to assuage the alleged resentments among people over some perceived lapses of the government in tackling the pandemic.

They also said the BJP leaders also asked workers to encourage and facilitate the activists and workers of other parties if they express interest in joining their rank.

After the party meeting, Bansal also had an interaction with UP's former power minister and prominent BSP leader Ramvir Upadhyay and his wife Seema Upadhyay, a former MP, who recently joined the BJP.

Seema Upadhyaya is also a contender for the post of Hathras Zila Panchayat chairperson. The couple met Bansal for over 20 minutes. — PTI

AAP MP ALLEGES GRAFT IN LAND PURCHASE FOR AYODHYA TEMPLE

Lucknow/Ayodhya, June 13: Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai was on Sunday accused by two opposition leaders of buying a piece of land worth ₹2 crore at an inflated price of ₹18.5 crore for the Ram temple premises with help from Trust's member Anil Mishra.

The allegation, strongly refuted by Rai, was made by two opposition leaders — AAP's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh and a former minister in the Samajwadi government, Pawan Pandey.

Terming it a case of money laundering, Singh and Pandey both sought a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate into the land purchase for the temple premises.

Both the leaders alleged that Rai purchased the land, measuring 1,208 hectares and located in Bag Bjaasi village under Sadar tehsil of Ayodhya district for a price of ₹18.5 crore from the first purchaser, who had bought it minutes earlier on March 18 this year from its original owners for a sum of ₹2 crore.

"Champat Rai, the general secretary of Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust with the help of Trust's member Anil Mishra bought the land worth ₹2 crore at ₹18.5 crore. This is a case of money laundering and the government should get it probed by the ED and CBI," Singh told reporters in Lucknow. — PTI

Parked car sinks as concrete floor caves in

Mumbai, June 13: A video of a car disappearing into a pool of water in a Mumbai housing complex after the spot where it was parked caved in went viral on social media on Sunday.

Responding to the viral video, the BrihanMumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) said the spot where the car sank used to be a well but was partially covered with cement concrete by the housing society.

The incident took place at the Ram Nivas society located at Kama lane in Ghatkopar West area on Sunday morning, police said, adding no one was injured.

The housing society had covered a well with reinforced concrete cement and residents were using the area to park their cars. A police team reached the spot and brought the car out of the water body. The spot has been cordoned for the safety of residents," an official said. — PTI



A screenshot of the viral video showing a car sinking into water as concrete floor caves in Mumbai. — PTI

DIRE | CONDITIONS

Suvendu talks of anti-defection law, Ghosh of sacrifice

WB BJP divided over defectors

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JUNE 13

A major policy clash has unfolded between two prominent functionaries in the West Bengal BJP on how to tackle the threat of defection of its newly elected MLAs to the ruling Trinamul Congress. This, after the return of BJP's national vice-president Mukul Roy to the TMC.

Leader of the Opposition Suvendu Adhikari has warned Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that he would raise provisions of the anti-defection law in the Assembly if defection of legislators from the BJP took place. This is also seen as a veiled warning to BJP MLAs so as to hold them back.

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh lamented the

DC CORRESPONDENT KOLKATA, JUNE 13

Senior Trinamul MP Kalyan Banerjee objected to the move of BJP leader Rajib Banerjee to return to the party of Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee in the footsteps of Krishnanagar North MLA Mukul Roy.

"habit on the part of many to leave the party," and said the party itself would drive out those "who only want to enjoy power."

Replying to questions on Roy's alleged bid to poach on at least 10 BJP MLAs and a Lok Sabha MP, Adhikari said, "There

were instances of MLAs of Congress and CPI(M) being present in the TMC. Mamata Banerjee now started it again with Mukul Roy. It is my responsibility as a leader of opposition to establish that Banerjee and the West Bengal Assembly are

not above the law."

The Nandigram BJP MLA added, "Who will go where and with whom is not a big issue. But the CM must keep in mind that the anti-defection law had not been enforced in West Bengal because of the control the CM exercised on

workers. During the elections, he prompted the arrests of TMC workers at Domjur in Howrah, where he contested but lost." The MP asked, "Didn't he unleash atrocities on the ruling party workers with the help of the CISF? Does it mean that he has come clean just because he met Kunal Ghosh?"



SHORT TAKES

BOLSONARO FINED FOR MASKLESS MOTORCYCLE RALLY

Sao Paulo, June 13: Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro was fined \$100 Saturday for violating Covid-19 containment measures in Sao Paulo by failing to wear a mask and provoking huge crowds at a motorcycle rally for supporters.

Thousands of motorcycles took part in the “Accelerate for Christ” rally, led by the far-right president, who wore an open-faced helmet and no mask, in violation of health regulations. Bolsonaro, who has been holding such rallies across Brazil as he gears up to seek re-election next year, defied a prior warning from Sao Paulo Governor Joao Doria, a political rival, who had said the president would be fined if he failed to observe regulations.

CHINA CITY’S DRONES TO KEEP PEOPLE INSIDE

Beijing, June 13: A fleet of 60 drones has been deployed in the southern Chinese city of Guangzhou to keep people indoors and remind those going out to wear masks.

China has locally stamped out cases of local Covid-19 transmission, but Guangzhou has seen a flare-up of the more infectious delta variant of the virus, initially discovered in India. Six new cases were reported in Guangzhou over the previous 24 hours, raising the number in the outbreak to more than 100.

The police-operated drones carry cameras and broadcast messages to people venturing outdoors that they and others are best protected by staying inside.

POLICE ARREST 1 OF 2 IN AUSTIN MASS SHOOTING

Austin (US) June 13: Police have arrested one suspect and are searching for another after a mass shooting on a crowded downtown Austin street left 14 people wounded, two of them critically.

The Austin Police Department said in a news release that the US Marshals Lone Star Fugitive Task Force assisted in making the arrest on Saturday but it provided no other details other than to say it is continuing to follow up on leads for the suspect still at large. Interim Police Chief Joseph Chacon said the shooting happened around 1:30 am on a street packed with bars and barricaded off from vehicle traffic. He said investigators believe it began as a dispute.

SHELLING KILLS 18 IN SYRIA’S REBEL-HELD AFRIN

Beirut, June 13: Shelling of the rebel-held city of Afrin in northern Syria killed at least 18 people on Saturday, many of them when a hospital was hit, a war monitor said.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights said a doctor, three hospital staff, two women and two children died at Al-Shifaa hospital in the city which is held by Turkish-backed rebels. A rebel commander also died at the hospital, the Observatory said, adding that 23 people were injured.

An AFP correspondent shot footage of white-helmeted aid workers in the hospital courtyard strewn with bodies.

“The shelling targeted several areas of the town and hit the hospital”, Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahmane said.

“Most of the victims died in shelling on the hospital,” the monitoring group said in a statement.

12 KILLED, OVER 100 HURT IN GAS BLAST IN CHINA

Beijing, June 13: At least 12 people were killed and more than 100 others injured after a gas explosion tore through a residential community in central China on Sunday, official media reported. The blast took place at about 6:30 am local time in the Zhangwan district of Shiyan city in Hubei province, trapping a large number of people. The explosion left 12 people dead.

Authorities have rescued nearly 150 people from the area, including 39 with serious injuries, and rushed them to hospitals, the state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported. Images and video footages circulating on social media platform *Weibo* show showed rescue workers working through the wreckage of flattened houses. The exact number of casualties is still being verified as the search and rescue is underway, the report said.

New Israeli govt to be sworn in

Will end Netanyahu’s 12-yr premiership

WILL RETURN TO POWER, SAYS BIBI

Jerusalem, June 13: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is vowing to lead his Likud Party back to power. In a speech to parliament, Netanyahu made clear he has no plans on giving up leadership of the Likud Party. He vowed to “continue the great mission of my life, ensuring the security of Israel.” —AP

being the longest-serving Prime Minister in the country’s history. Having served in the position earlier between 1996 and 1999, Netanyahu last year surpassed the record held by one of the Jewish state’s founding leaders, David Ben-Gurion. The formation of the new government would end the political impasse in the country that saw four elections in less than two years leading to inconclusive results.

But opinion polls suggest that majority of the Israelis do not look too hopeful regarding the longevity of the coalition of eight disparate parties who do not see eye-to-eye on most of the critical issues facing the country.

Bennett, 49, has entered into a power-sharing agreement with Centrist leader Yair Lapid, the head of the Yesh Atid party, under which the latter would take over Premiership in September 2023, serving for two years till the end of the term. Lapid, the leader of the second-largest faction in the Knesset with 17 seats was invited by President Reuven Rivlin to form a coalition after Netanyahu, leading the Likud party with 30 seats, expressed his inability to put together a government.

The unstable coalition that Lapid has managed to put together faces severe challenges and the glue that seems to hold them together is the ‘unity of purpose’ created by the agenda of ousting Netanyahu. It wouldn’t be an exaggeration to say that Netanyahu, seen by many as Israel’s ‘divider in chief’, also in a strange way has proved to be a unifier, bringing in together unthinkable allies to form a government of national unity.

Analysts feel that two factors likely to determine the tenure of the new coalition are the fear of Netanyahu’s return and a political demise of some of the right-wing factions that have gone against the wishes of their voting constituency. —PTI

Nato set to bid symbolic farewell to Afghanistan

AFGHAN I.S. GROUP CLAIMS KABUL ATTACKS

Kabul, June 13: The Islamic State group has claimed responsibility for bombing two minivans in a mostly Shiite neighbourhood in the Afghan capital that killed seven people. Among the dead were two employees of Afghanistan’s state-run film company, a colleague said Sunday.

In a statement issued late Saturday, Afghanistan’s IS affiliate said its operatives blew up two minivans carrying “disbeliever Shiites” using sticky bombs. Sticky bombs slapped onto cars trapped in Kabul’s chaotic traffic are the newest weapons terrorising Afghans in the increasingly lawless nation. —AP

that Nato leaders almost want to downplay and leave quietly, rather than making too big a deal of it, and going on to focus on other business,” said Erik Brattberg, director of the Europe Programme at

the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. With the US leading the withdrawal, European allies and Canada want to hear Biden’s thinking about how security will be assured at their embassies, along major transport routes and above all at Kabul’s airport.

Many wonder whether the Afghan government can survive a resurgent Taliban. Some think Kabul’s capitulation is only a matter of time. “We are currently in intense discussions with our member states, the United States, Nato and the United Nations on the absence of essential security conditions for our continued diplomatic presence. It will be difficult to keep it” in place, European Union foreign policy chief Josep Borrell said.

For now, Nato plans to leave civilian advisers to help build up government institutions. It’s unclear who will protect them. The 30-nation alliance is also weighing whether to train Afghan special forces outside the country. As an organisation, Nato will not provide sanctuary for Afghans who worked alongside its forces. —AP

Man jumps into lake for 365th straight day

Chicago, June 13: A Chicago bus driver looking for a way to relieve stress during the Coronavirus pandemic jumped into Lake Michigan for a 365th straight day on Saturday. Dan O’Conor said he started jumping into the lake at Montrose Harbour on the city’s North Side last year to relieve stress. “It was during the pan-

dem, it was during the protest, it was during an election year. ... So it was somewhere where I could come down here and block all that noise out and kind of be totally present with me in the lake, and find some moments of Zen,” said the father of three. He continued jumping into the lake through the fall before the hard part:

● **SATURDAY WAS special because it was the culmination of doing it for a full year.**

Hacking a hole in the ice on the frozen lake that was big enough for him to jump through during the winter. He said when he got home after one such jump, he found about 20

Flash mob demo in Myanmar



Protesters make the three-finger salute as they take part in a flash mob demonstration against the military coup in Yangon on Sunday. —AFP

G7 leaders agree on vaccines, China and taxing corporations

Carbis Bay, June 13: Leaders of the Group of Seven wealthy nations staked their claim Sunday to leading the world out of the Coronavirus pandemic and crisis, pledging more than 1 billion Coronavirus vaccine doses to poorer nations, vowing to help developing countries grow while fighting climate change and backing a minimum tax on multinational firms.

At the group’s first face-to-face meeting in two years, the leaders dangled promises of support for global health, green energy, infrastructure and education. The leaders wanted to show that international cooperation is back after the upheavals caused by the pandemic and the unpredictability of former US President Donald Trump.

And they wanted to convey that the club of wealthy democracies — Cana-

da, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States — is a better friend to poorer nations than authoritarian rivals such as China. Speaking at the end of the three-day summit in southwest England, US President Joe Biden, who was making his first foreign trip as leader, said it was an “extraordinary, collaborative and productive meeting.” British Prime Minister Boris Johnson, the summit’s host, praised the “fantastic degree of harmony” among the group. Johnson said the G-7 would demonstrate the value of democracy and human rights to the rest of the world and help “the world’s poorest countries to develop themselves in a way that is clean and green and sustainable.”

“It’s not good enough for us to just rest on our laurels and talk about how

BEIJING: DAYS OF ‘SMALL’ NATIONS DICTATING GLOBAL DECISIONS GONE

Beijing, June 13: China on Sunday asserted that the days when global decisions were dictated by a “small group” of countries are long gone, hitting back at the G-7 summit where Beijing was at the centre of severe criticism over the Covid-19 origins, human rights violations, Belt and Road Initiative.

Answering a question on issues covered by the G-7 Summit on pandemic response, economy, trade and global supply chains and US efforts to “seizing”

the opportunity to bond with other Western countries to safeguard the “rules-based international system”, the Chinese embassy in London said there is only one system, the international system, which is led by the UN. “We always believe that countries, big or small, strong or weak, poor or rich, are equals, and that world affairs should be handled through consultation by all countries,” it said. —PTI

A custom-made bicycle is Biden’s G7 gift for Boris

London, June 13: US President Joe Biden chose a custom-made, hand-built bicycle as his gift for British Prime Minister Boris Johnson for their first in-person meeting ahead of the G7 Summit in Cornwall this weekend.

The bike is made by a small company in the American city of Philadelphia that was reportedly given just a few days to build a red, white and blue bike that normally takes months to construct.

Johnson is a keen cyclist and is often pictured cycling on the streets of London, with his security detail in pursuit. Biden is also known as a regular cyclist and was revealed

to be a fan of indoor cycling with Peloton. The bike gifted by Biden was made by Bilenky Cycle Works, a business with a staff of four who usually take up to 18 months to make a machine. The owner, Stephen Bilenky, was contacted by the US State Department on May 23 about designing the bike and a matching helmet, the *Philadelphia Inquirer* reported. It says the budget was just \$1,500, a third of the minimum price the firm charges.

Bilenky told the newspaper that he had accepted the order to raise the firm’s profile and that “controlled chaos” followed. “It is a very modern ver-

sion of an upright British roadster with a custom paint scheme with the Union Jack flag and a matching helmet,” he was quoted as saying.

Johnson’s gift for the US President was a framed picture of a mural showing the American anti-slavery campaigner Frederick Douglass. The image of the former slave, who became a leading figure in the 19th century slavery abolitionist movement, is part of Edinburgh’s mural trail. US First Lady Jill Biden was given a first edition of *The Apple Tree* by Daphne du Maurier, the English author who lived in Cornwall. —PTI

BIDENS ATTEND SUNDAY SERVICE, AMAZE LOCALS

Falmouth (England), June 13: Churchgoers in a seaside resort in England say they have been left “gobsmacked” when US President Joe Biden and the first lady Jill Biden dropped in for a Sunday service.

The Bidens are in Cornwall, southwest England, to attend a Group of Seven wealthy democracies summit.

On Sunday morning, ahead of the summit’s conclusion, they were seen attending mass at the Sacred Heart Catholic Church in St. Ives.

“I think gobsmacked is probably a very true word,” said Annie Fitzpatrick, 58. —AP

Proof in Mexico serial killer’s home suggests 17 victims

Mexico City, June 13: Investigators digging under the house of a suspected serial killer on the outskirts of Mexico City have said they have found 3,787 bone fragments so far, apparently belonging to 17 different victims.

Prosecutors in the State of Mexico, which borders Mexico City, suggested the grisly finds may not end there. In excavations carried out since May 17, authorities have dug up the floors of the house where the suspect lived. They now plan to extend the search to the soil beneath several other rooms he rented out on the same property. ID cards and other possessions from people who disappeared years ago were found at the junk-filled home, suggesting the trail of killings may go back years.

The number of bone fragments found underneath concrete floors at the suspect’s home would imply the corpses may have

been hacked into tiny pieces. That could make sense. The suspect, identified by prosecutors only as “Andrés”, was formerly a butcher and in fact sectioned and filleted his last victim. “The bones fragments are being subjected to lateralisation studies, which include carefully cleaning each one, identifying what part of the body they are and then placing them in their anatomical position, providing a method for determining the approximate number of victims,” the office said in a statement.

“This analysis indicates that, up to now, the bone fragments found may possibly be those of 17 people,” the statement said. Authorities have not released the full name of the 72-year-old suspect under Mexican laws protecting a suspect’s identity. He has been ordered to stand trial in the killing of his last victim, a 34-year-old woman. —AP

GORILLA | TACTICS**Colleague fired without warning after coming late for shift**

Berlin delivery riders take on \$1B start-up

Berlin, June 13: Dozens of workers gathered outside of one of Berlin’s most-celebrated start-ups, the grocery delivery company Gorillas, to protest the firing hours earlier of a colleague. “We want Santiago back!” the young riders chanted last week, threatening to block one of the company’s inner-city warehouses with their bikes unless he was reinstated.

The wildcat strike on a balmy June evening was unusual even by Germ-

any’s strong tradition of labour rights, highlighting growing tensions in the capital’s freewheeling start-up scene.

“We came here to show our solidarity, to support our friend,” said Zeynep, a Gorillas rider who declined to give her last name for fear of facing repercussions from the company. “We want this decision to be reversed as soon as possible.” The riders said their colleague had been fired without warning after turning up late for his shift.

In a statement, the company said he his contract was terminated for “serious misconduct” but declined to provide details, citing confidentiality. Founded just last year, Gorillas has benefited from surging demand for quick grocery deliveries during the pandemic. In March, the company raised about \$290 million from investors, becoming Germany’s fastest ‘unicorn’ — a start-up with a total valuation of \$1 billion or more.

Gorillas now operates in

dozens of cities across Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Britain, and has already set its sights on New York, where it faces US incumbents such as Gopuff. But strikes like those in Berlin show trouble is brewing in its home market. The rowdy but peaceful protest late Wednesday drew support from employees of rival delivery services, some of whom downed their colourful courier bags to join the picket. Eventually Gorillas agreed to close the depot for

the night, drawing cheers from the protesters.

The next day, riders blockaded another warehouse, making clear their gripes go beyond the firing of a single colleague. “In the last six months, that I’ve been here I’ve noticed so many ways that the company is doing things in an unjustified way,” said rider Huseyin Camalan.

“We’re here to stand against that. It’s part of a larger thing.” Camalan said many riders suffer from back pain. —AP

DECCAN Chronicle

14 JUNE 2021

Test ahead for BJP in UP: Will it blink or tame Yogi?

UP chief minister Yogi Adityanath was in the national capital last week to discuss political, governance and administrative issues with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union health minister Amit Shah and BJP president J.P. Nadda, to tighten loopholes and raise the BJP's prospects in the Assembly election due early, 2022. Earlier, complaints were being voiced by BJP leaders in UP, and there were even murmurs that the PM and the CM might not be on the same page.

In this backdrop senior BJP and RSS leaders visited Lucknow to take stock and held confabulations in the national capital afterward. There was fevered speculation that the CM may have to be changed. Given all the excitement, the CM's visit to New Delhi was followed closely, not least because he had very lengthy talks with Mr Modi, Mr Shah and Mr Nadda.

It would have become clear to all concerned that the UP CM is not a BJP leader in the normal sense and the usual rules of party discipline do not apply to him. He is the head of a centuries old religious establishment. Politically he is aligned to the Hindu Mahasabha. Hindu Vahini, the outfit he created, is a more extreme practitioner of Hindutva than any other outfit. Nevertheless, he has BJP connections because this party has sent him to Parliament several times and elected him to be its leader in the UP Assembly in 2017, catapulting him to the position of CM.

Adityanath is not collegial in his ways. He is a religious right-wing maverick. His administrative actions have been widely perceived as dictatorial. He has no party factions or party favourites and relies on a clutch of bureaucrats, a trait he shares with many chief ministers, including Mr Modi

when he was the Gujarat CM. He goofed up on pandemic management big time. The BJP naturally feared he might lose the party the state polls, if allowed to run unchecked.

But can he be checked? If he were to break away, it is not unlikely that he can cut into a section of the saffron party's vote bank that is emphatically communal. The BJP can ill afford this specially when there is said to be considerable disenchantment, flagged by Covid mishandling.

In light of this it is possible that the ideas produced in the CM's consultations in New Delhi will lead to organisational changes in the state BJP and in the council of ministers in the state. However, any comment on these will be premature since the Yogi is his own man and not quite subject to BJP discipline. Changes that may follow in the wake of the CM's meetings in the national capital will naturally be watched by all — not just the BJP. The Opposition parties too will wait to see if there emerges a think that they can exploit. Evidently, the situation is not as conducive for the BJP as it was before the pandemic.

With all preparations now moving toward the election, it will be interesting to see if the CM has a significant hand in the selection of the BJP's candidates for the upcoming state poll. That may provide a clue to the state of the power balance between the CM and the traditional BJP power structure.

GST cut is welcome relief

The GST Council's decision to reduce tax on goods and services used for the treatment of Covid-19 disease brings a welcome relief to people fighting one of the most infectious diseases of recent times.

The Council, which comprises state and Union finance ministers, has also decided to levy a five per cent tax on any drug that the health ministry recommends for the treatment of coronavirus infection. The reduction in the tax rate, however, would be applicable only till September. The tax on vaccines, however, would continue to be five per cent. Though several state governments had demanded exempting vaccines from GST, the Council went with the opinion of the central

Apart from building more hospitals and training more healthcare professionals, the government should focus on preventative healthcare.

government which opposed any such move. The state governments, however, did not insist on its demand after the Centre agreed to buy 75 per cent of the vaccines for public immunisation. The focus on healthcare should continue even after the Covid pandemic. It is high time that the Central and state governments take lessons from the pandemic and take steps to improve public health infrastructure which is woefully inadequate. Apart from building more hospitals and training more healthcare professionals, the government should focus on preventative healthcare. It is believed that preventative healthcare could add billions of dollars to the

economy by way of saving the cost of hospitalisation and by enhancing people's productivity. Preventative healthcare could be promoted by reducing the cost of diagnosis by encouraging local manufacturing of medical equipment. Though the Narendra Modi government has already announced incentives for boosting the manufacturing of medical equipment, it should be pursued with renewed vigour.

Another step that would greatly help in the delivery of healthcare is the standardisation of medical records and the national storage of health records, which would allow people to avail medical care anywhere in India as records could be accessed by a click of the mouse, obviously after due authorisation of the patient.

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Subhani



India's Great Helmsman: Salute to Narasimha Rao



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

It was interesting that the day after Congressman Jitin Prasada joined the BJP, the political future of Rajasthan's Sachin Pilot has become the subject of renewed media speculation. The two have one political antecedent in common.

Both their fathers were regarded as being close to Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao. The Congress Party apparatus, the late Devendra Nath Dwivedi, would often lament that many Congressmen, including himself, had to pay a political price for their loyalty to the late Prime Minister. Perhaps the Prasadas and the Pilots continue to pay that price.

Those who imagine that the decline of the Congress Party began in 2014, attributing this to Narendra Modi's campaign for a "Congress mukt Bharat", are unaware of the roots of the party's decline. It began the day the party ceased to be a party, as Narasimha Rao famously put it in his book *The Insider*, and became a "proprietorship". When I suggested to late President Pranab Mukherjee that a book on the decline of the Congress Party was waiting to be written, he asked me when I thought the decline had begun. I said to him that the turning point was the 1989 election. Mukherjee sat back in his chair, thought for a while and said: "The analysis should begin from 1969."

While Manmohan Singh was the head of a coalition called the United Progressive Alliance that was in office thanks first to the Communists and then to the Lohia socialists, it was Narasimha Rao's tenure that marks the party's last hurrah.

The way in which Narasimha Rao stabilised his party and government at a time when it was shattered by two successive assassinations of its top leaders, Indira and Rajiv Gandhi, was a stellar example of political leadership on a national and historic scale.

In remembering P.V. Narasimha Rao this month, when the nation commemorates his birth centenary, many will recall his leadership during a period of economic crisis.

Narasimha Rao lent his prime ministerial imprimatur to the sweeping industrial and trade policy reforms that set India on a new growth path. It is useful to recall the role of the political leadership in economic policy change and management at a time when its absence is being acutely felt.

A second set of policy initiatives that many will credit Narasimha Rao with, as they recall his leadership, will be the shifts in India's foreign and strategic policy. He steered the country through the turbulent years of the end of the Cold War, the implosion of the Soviet Union, at that time India's closest ally, and the changes in the global balance of power. Prime Minister Rao authorised the testing of nuclear weapons that his successor, Atal Behari Vajpayee, finally sanctioned and declared India a nuclear weapons power. Narasimha Rao also launched the "Look East Policy", making India reconnect to the Rising Asia to her east.

India came close to the nations of Southeast Asia and East Asia, including South Korea and Japan.

Narasimha Rao also took important initiatives to improve India's ties with both China and

the United States. While these two aspects — economic and foreign policy — of Prime Minister Rao's leadership will be much commented upon, few are willing to give him any credit for his leadership of the Congress Party. His critics point to the aborted attempt at internal democracy at the Tirupati session of the All-India Congress Committee in April 1992, where organisational elections were held for the first time in two decades, and to the political fallout of the handling of the Babri Masjid demolition as evidence of failed political leadership. The Congress also yielded space to the BJP during Narasimha Rao's tenure, enabling the BJP to make its first attempt at forming a government in 1996.

While some of this criticism is justified, the political importance of Narasimha Rao lies in his demonstrating to the Congress Party that someone from outside the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty can in fact run the party and the government quite successfully. He was not only the first Congress leader after the Nehru-Gandhis to remain in office for a full term but was also the first South Indian Prime Minister. The political significance of this cannot be underestimated, as it continues to be.

The loyalists of the Nehru-Gandhi family continue to chant the mantra that without the family at the helm, the party would disintegrate. Of course, at one time it also used to be said that without a Nehru-Gandhi at the helm the country would disintegrate. Narasimha Rao proved the loyalists wrong and earned their

If Narendra Modi promised more and has delivered less, P.V. Narasimha Rao promised much less and delivered much more

enduring dislike. Narasimha Rao's success in New Delhi emboldened several Congress leaders at the state level to strike out on their own. From G.K. Moopanar to Sharad Pawar to Mamata Banerjee, many Congress leaders have demonstrated that the party did not need a Nehru-Gandhi to secure electoral success at the state level. It is now clear that the Nehru-Gandhis cannot deliver power even at the national level.

Narasimha Rao's political legacy as Prime Minister deserves a more objective analysis than is so far available. Interestingly, the growing disappointment across the country with the assertive and domineering political leadership of Narendra Modi has sparked off renewed interest in the quiet and low-brow leadership of a man who in fact altered India's destiny.

If Narendra Modi promised more and has delivered less, P.V. Narasimha Rao promised much less and delivered much more.

Grappling economic and strategic challenges in a period of political uncertainty and, at the same time, calming communal tensions aroused by the BJP's aggressive Hindutva project, Narasimha Rao pushed India on to a new trajectory of growth. No one viewed India as an "emerging economy" till 1990. By the end of the 1990s the world began to view India not only as a country catching up with the "Asian tigers", but also as a "rising power". Three consensual leaders — Narasimha Rao, Atal Behari Vajpayee and Manmohan Singh — set India on a new path. For the first time in three decades the world is now wondering whether India would return to that rising path or return to its Third World status.

Sanjaya Baru is the author of 1991: How P.V. Narasimha Rao Made History (2016)

LETTERS

GST AND COVID-19

That the GST council reducing tax rates of scores of Covid-19 related material from 12 per cent to five per cent is too little and too late. The taxes on all drugs and material used in Covid-19 treatment, including vaccines could have been made zero, in view of their life-saving nature in the pandemic. It could have been a noble gesture of the council, had there been a discussion on relentless hike of fuel prices with an attempt to bring them under the GST basket. The people do need more relaxations from taxes in their most trying times in history.

Dr D.V.G. Sankararao
Vizianagaram

SEERS, SHOWROOMS

It is amusing to note that seers/peetadhipathi are coming to open cloth showrooms. It may be noted that seers/peetadhipathi should be away from personal publicity and devoid of worldly pleasures. They should live a detached life. It may be noted that there is no apex body to direct swamijis. Only moral command is required.

P. Ramakrishna
Rajahmundry

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

'Salyut' crew relaxing

MOSCOW, JUNE 13.

The Soviet Union's three orbiting cosmonauts took the day off today to relax and cast their votes in the nationwide Supreme Soviet elections.

Official reports said the Salyut space station crew was in "top spirits" and enjoying a "well-earned rest".

After their regular morning exercises an a few necessary flight control talks, three cosmonauts — Georgy Dobrovolsky, Vladislav Volkoy and Viktor Patsayev — went on the air again for television viewers and messaged their votes to Soviet ground control.

The short TV communications session this afternoon showed the troika gathered around Salyut's central control panel as commander Dobrovolsky read off their votes.

—UNI.

A.G. Noorani



The fault in our federalism: Parties in India have a unitary structure

One of the main architects of India's constitution, Dr B.R. Ambedkar was always at pains to assert that the Constitution over which he had toiled was essentially federal in nature. Moving that the Draft Constitution be taken into consideration, on November 4, 1948, he said: "The Draft Constitution is a federal constitution inasmuch as it establishes what may be called a dual polity. This dual polity under the proposed Constitution will consist of the Union at the centre and the states at the periphery each endowed with sovereign powers to be exercised in the field assigned to them respectively by the Constitution."

These dicta are advisedly quoted at length to demonstrate how a Constitution can be deformed and perverted despite the intentions of its framers. Some perversions began early when Jawaharlal Nehru was Prime Minister. Dr Ambedkar was almost in tears a few years later when he told the Rajya Sabha that he was a hack and

disowned the Constitution.

In this he was being utterly unfair to himself and, indeed, to the text of the Constitution. A British scholar on constitutional law opined early enough that India's was a unitary Constitution with federal features rather than a federal Constitution with unitary features.

Right now, under Prime Minister Narendra Modi, assaults on the few federal features have increased. Truth to tell, the Hindutva parties, the Jan Sangh and its successor, the BJP, were never happy with federalism. For at the core of the concept of federalism is sharing of power.

Debate in India reckons with the Union's amassment of power but not with the refreshingly new insights into the concept of "cooperative federalism". This implies that all the three tiers of the country's government — Union, provincial or state and municipal — cooperate in the national undertaking; each sticking to its own sphere delineated in the Constitution. States which resent central domi-

nance cheerfully tread on the domain of the municipalities and local boards, the law regardless. As Jyoti Basu, chief minister of West Bengal, discovered, memoranda demanding greater powers for states are one thing. But it is the Union which controls the flows of funds to the states.

The concept of cooperative federalism implies obligation by all to cooperate in the nation-building exercise. As explained previously, "Rather than pitting state's rights against central power, the trend in the US, Canada, Australia and Europe has been towards sharing and cooperation in services and planning. While the federal governments without a doubt have increased their power at the expense of the state level, the state governments have also gained new functions." And "states and local agencies, in particular, have developed ways of participating in the planning and administration of many of the federal activities which at first glance appear to intervene so drastically in their

internal affairs".

In Australia, for instance, since 1982, states are to be consulted in advance before the Commonwealth of Australia concludes a treaty with a foreign government which impinges on their interests, although under the Constitution foreign affairs is exclusively a Union subject.

In Canada, the provinces successfully united to secure greater powers without amending the Constitution. It is politics which shapes the working of a Constitution. The All-India Services are another tool of central control. Deputation of an officer belonging to this service is controlled by the Centre. Recently, the Modi government sought to punish the chief secretary of West Bengal for being late, by five minutes for a meeting with Prime Minister Modi. Kashmir has bitterly complained of central control over the so-called All-India Services. They include the Indian Police Service also.

It is, however, in the intellectual realm that the backwardness is

more harmful. There exists an international body charged with the study of federalism. The progress which its journals record are unknown in India. We need to think anew. A federal Constitution cannot be worked by political parties organised as unitary bodies.

All the political parties are run by their party bosses at the very centre. They award tickets for election to party candidates whom they select. The party members have no voice in the selection. It is the boss who will decide who will be the chief minister and even the composition of the cabinet. In short, a so-called democratic constitution is run by outrageously undemocratic political parties. This is the direct opposite of the situation in Britain, Germany, the United States and other democratic countries. This has an impact on the working of the Constitution, especially on the functioning of the governor and the President.

By arrangement with Dawn

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	52474.76	0.33
Nifty 50	15799.40	0.39
S&P 500*	4,247.44	0.19
Dollar (₹)	73.06	0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.38	-0.36
Euro (₹)	88.81	0.07
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	48,530▲441	0.90
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	72.91	0.54
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.006	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.464	0.005

* As of 8:30 PM IST

FPIs invest ₹15,520 cr in equities in June

Foreign portfolio investors pumped in a net Rs 13,424 crore so far in June as risk-on sentiment improved with declining Covid-19 cases. Depositories data showed FPIs invested Rs 15,520 crore in equities during June 1-11. At the same time, they withdrew Rs 2,096 crore from the debt segment, taking the total net inflow to Rs 13,424 crore. This comes after a net withdrawal of Rs 2,666 crore in May and Rs 9,435 crore in April.

Trading in DHFL shares suspended from today



BSE and NSE will suspend trading in the shares of DHFL from Monday, June 14. The move, aimed at avoiding "market complications", comes against the backdrop of the NCLT approving Piramal Group's resolution plan for DHFL. The resolution plan provides for delisting the DHFL shares. DHFL on June 9 said no value was attributable to the equity shares as per the liquidation value of the company estimated by the valuers.

CG Power lines up ₹135 cr capex in current year

CG Power and Industrial Solutions, acquired last year by Tube Investments of India of Murugappa Group last year, has chalked out capital expenditure plans of Rs 135 crore during the current financial year. The capex will be spent in balancing, debottlenecking and modernising facilities at the plants to improve production and productivity", CG Power and Industrial Solutions said in a statement.

Nitco to launch new range of products in US

Mumbai-based tile and natural stone surface designer Nitco will participate in the US exhibition "Coverings 21" scheduled from July 7 to July 9 in Orlando, Florida. Nitco's export business is spread across more than 40 countries. "Nitco will launch its new range of wall tiles and mosaics for the first time in the US," the firm said. "There is immense opportunity for Nitco to expand its presence in USA & Latin American markets", it said.



■ Paytm, Aadhar Housing, Policy Bazaar eye mega IPOs
Financial services firms line up ₹55,000-cr float

Mumbai, June 13: With payments major Paytm's board reportedly approving a bumper share sale plan running north of Rs 22,000 crore, the IPO market is set for a big day, as over a dozen financial services players, including fintechs, are set to mop up over Rs 55,000 crore this fiscal from the market, according to investment bankers.

With more than a dozen insurance, asset management, commercial banking, non-banks, microfinance, housing finance and payment bank players already filing draft documents with the market regulator Sebi for public offerings, the financial services sector is set to dominate the primary issues or initial public offerings (IPOs) over the coming months.

Some of those who have already filed the draft red herring prospectus (DRHPs) with the Sebi include Aadhar Housing Finance (Rs 7,500 crore), Policy Bazaar (Rs 4,000 crore), Aptus Housing Finance (Rs 3,000 crore), Star Health Insurance (Rs 2,000 crore), Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC (Rs 1,500-2,000 crore) Arohan Financial Services (Rs 1,800 crore), Fusion Microfinance (Rs 1,700 crore), Fincare Small Finance Bank (Rs 1,330 crore), Tamilnad Mercantile Bank (Rs 1,000-1,300 crore), Medi Assist (Rs 840 crore) and Jana Small Finance Bank (Rs 700 crore). The board of the biggest payments bank Paytm has reportedly cleared a more



RAMDEV'S RUCHI SOYA FILES FPO PAPERS TO RAISE ₹4,300 CRORE

New Delhi, June 13: Edible oil firm Ruchi Soya, which is owned by Baba Ramdev-led Patanjali Ayurveda, has filed draft document with the Sebi to launch a follow-on public offer (FPO) for raising up to Rs 4,300 crore.

The FPO is being launched to meet the Sebi norm of minimum public shareholding of 25 per cent in a listed entity. Ruchi Soya filed the draft red herring prospectus

(DRHP) with the market regulator on Saturday, sources said.

They said that the promoters have to dilute a minimum 9 per cent stake in this round of the FPO. The FPO is likely to hit the capital market next month after getting Sebi approval. Promoters group held 98.90 per cent stake in the company.

Ruchi Soya closed at Rs 1,242.35 apiece on the BSE on Friday. —PTI

than Rs 22,000-crore IPO. Together, these financial services companies are set to garner around Rs 55,000 crore from the public.

If materialised, the Paytm issue will be the largest IPO ever in the country, eclipsing the hitherto largest issue—the Rs 15,000-crore share sale by the government in national miner Coal India in October 2010, says investment bankers, who wished not to be quoted.

Investment bankers and analysts consider the IPO boom to be reflective of the ongoing bull run and advice retail investors to be cautious while parking their money in new firms.

V. K. Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services in Kochi, said the performance of the IPO market usually has a strong correlation to the performance of the secondary market. "If the stock market is bull-

ish, it attracts a large number of investors into IPOs.

Particularly, new investors lured by high potential profits, get attracted to new offers and the IPO market has always done well during market booms, Vijayakumar said.

Rupen Rajguru, head of equity investments and strategy at global wealth management firm Julius Baer in Mumbai, concurs and cautions retail investors to study the valuations carefully before investing as the market is a bit over-heated now.

"The current IPO market buoyancy is expected to continue into the next few quarters. IPOs are in fact playing on the financialisation of savings theme, which is a big structural shift in the country," Rajguru said.

Apart from Paytm, Policy Bazaar is looking to float a Rs 4,000-crore offering, industry sources said.

Two small finance banks — Jana SFB and Fincare SFB— have filed their draft papers with the Sebi.

Aditya Birla Sun Life AMC is looking to go public with Rs 1,500-2,000 crore offering. From the insurance sector, there are two IPOs: Westbridge Capital and Rakesh Jhunjhunwala-backed Star Health & Allied Insurance, and the largest health benefits administrator Bengaluru-based Medi Assist TPA.

Microfinance players Arohan Financial Services, Fusion Microfinance and digital debt platform Northern Arc are also eyeing the IPO market. —PTI

G-7 drops 2030 target to shift to green cars

JOSH WINGROVE & ALBERTO NARDELLI
JUNE 13

The Group of Seven nations backed away from plans to set a target for making



sure most new cars sold are greener vehicles, instead pledging only speed up efforts to move away from combustion engines.

In the final communique Sunday, the bloc include an autos section that was far more modest than earlier versions being discussed. It pledged to do more to electrify the transport sector but didn't set firm target dates.

"We recognize that this will require dramatically increasing the pace of the global decarbonization of the road transport sector throughout the 2020s, and beyond," the leaders wrote.

"We commit to accelerate the transition away from new sales of diesel and petrol cars to promote the uptake of zero emission vehicles."

The language is an apparent compromise between the nations, several of whom are major automakers. Earlier drafts of the communique suggested that the G-7 "strive" to ensure that the majority of all new passenger car sales are not petrol or diesel-powered "by 2030 or sooner." —Bloomberg

MFs need fully independent board of trustees: Quantum

New Delhi, June 13: There is a need for a fully independent board of trustees that will ensure that markets regulator Sebi's rules are complied with and the interests of the small investors are protected, said Quantum AMC founder Ajit Dayal. He said it should act as another check and balance that will further strengthen the mutual fund industry.

This could be a significant step after Franklin Templeton AMC has been found guilty of violating regulatory norms in the winding up of six debt schemes.

In a telephonic conversation with PTI, Dayal said that if one person of an asset management company (AMC) is sitting on the board of trustees then we are compromising the interest of investors. "The presence of that one member will make the board of trustees less independent."

"If you want to ensure that investors are well-looked after then you should have 100 per cent independent trustees," he said.

He further said the board of trustees is the most underutilised body.

In his opinion, Sebi should make a regulation that only independent trustees should be on the trustees board, not anyone from AMC, or anyone linked to the management.

"I think this is an oversight from Sebi that they have not put this rule. This should have been



done from 1993 but they haven't done it so far," he added.

The trustees job is to ensure that the funds are actually managed in the interests of the shareholders.

Quantum MF is probably the only fund house where the board of trustees is totally independent.

When asked whether Franklin Templeton-like episode could have been avoided if such a measure was in place, Dayal said "it is difficult to say whether we could have avoided such a situation but in theory, yes".

"In theory, yes, because if the trustees have the right information, if the trustees keep on comparing the information they have with what is stated in the prospectus or offer document then possibly if there is a mismatch, they can immediately correct it," he said.

Dayal said a lot of that also depends on the way the trustees take their job. He said they should take their job seriously as representative of investors, not as friends of the AMCs. —PTI

Thinking up creative ways to fight inflation

TRACY ALLOWAY
JUNE 13

As the cost of everything now from steel to sugar surges, it's worth pausing to consider some more unusual ways to bring down prices. In China, for instance, Bloomberg reports that the Department of Price has been charged with working out the finer details of the country's recently announced crackdown on rising commodities costs. The effort to bring down prices includes higher transaction fees for commodity trades, new tax rules, encouraging producers to sell down inventories, and much more.

Last month, for instance, the Tangshan steel hub banned steelmakers from spreading price-hike information, while Shanghai has urged steel mills not to raise prices if production costs haven't changed.

And while China's renewed interest in price controls does raise some questions about its continued commitment to freer markets, it's certainly not the only country to have experimented with more creative types of inflation

When egg prices rose in the spring of 1966 US President Johnson had the Surgeon General issue alerts as to the hazards of cholesterol in eggs... A surprising number of people still think eggs are unhealthy

targeting. In fact, one of my all-time favourite financial anecdotes comes courtesy of Robert Samuelson's *The Great Inflation and its Aftermath*, which describes Lyndon B. Johnson's own struggles to bring down inflation in the 1960s. As recounted by one of Johnson's former aides:

"Shoe prices went up, so [President Lyndon B Johnson] slapped export controls on hides to increase the supply of leather. Reports that colour television sets would sell at high prices came across the wire. Johnson told me to ask

RCA's David Sarnoff [RCA was then a major TV manufacturer] to hold them down. Domestic lamb prices rose. LBJ directed [defence secretary Robert] McNamara to buy cheaper lamb from New Zealand for the troops in Vietnam. The president told CEA [Council of Economic Advisers] and me to move on household appliances, paper cartons, newsprint, men's underwear, women's hosiery, glass containers, cellulose, [and] air conditioners ... When egg prices rose in the spring of 1966 and agriculture secretary Orville Freeman told him that not much could be done, Johnson had the Surgeon General issue alerts as to the hazards of cholesterol in eggs."

Unfortunately, as Samuelson put it, "all this was for naught" and the president's customised inflation-fighting was too small to offset the overwhelming inflationary impulse from the economic boom of the time. A surprising number of people still think eggs are unhealthy though. —Bloomberg

Income inequalities point to 'uneven' recovery: Subbarao

BIJAY KUMAR SINGH
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13:

Former RBI governor D. Subbarao has expressed concerns over "extreme unevenness" in economic recovery and "sharpening inequalities" between upper income segments and lower income households in the country, cautioning that the trend will hit growth prospects, going forward.

He said liquidity in the domestic market and foreign fund inflows are leading to soaring prices of stocks and other assets despite disruptions due to the Covid pandemic.

The earlier expectations of a sharp economic recovery this year have been dashed by the new pandemic wave, he said.

"The economy contracted last year, for the first time in four decades, by as much as 7.3 per cent. That was less deep than we had first feared but still deep enough to have caused distress to millions of families in the informal sector. There was expectation of a sharp recovery this year

but those expectations are now tempered by the impact of the second wave," Subbarao told PTI.

The RBI too reduced its growth forecast for the current fiscal by one percentage point, from 10.5 per cent to 9.5 per cent, he said adding that even 9.5 per cent growth might seem impressive but note that this is coming on a very low base of last year. "Even if we clock this growth rate, the output during this fiscal 2021/22 will still be less than the output two years ago."

Subbarao said that while the majority of people have lost jobs and saw reduction in their income, the wealth of some rich individuals have increased during the pandemic period. "The positive wealth effect of the upper income segments juxtaposed with the negative income effects of the lower income households tells a story of a very uneven recovery and sharpening inequalities. This is morally wrong and politically corrosive," he said. —PTI

AMAZON RAISES MINIMUM PAY IN GERMANY TO 12 EUROS/HOUR



June 13: Amazon will guarantee an entry-level wage at its German warehouses of 12 euros (\$15 or Rs 1,100) an hour, the company said on Friday in the face of a long-running battle with a top labour union.

Germany is Amazon's biggest market after the United States, and the Verdi union has been organising strikes at Amazon since 2013 to protest low pay and poor conditions.

The pay increase is effective from July.

Amazon's wages exceed Germany's current minimum wage of 9.50 euros per hour. But workers have regularly gone on strike, such as last year to coincide with the \$1.6 trillion company's global "Prime Day" promotion event. They were disgruntled that a coronavirus bonus had been scrapped.

A Verdi official said that the increase was the least that the company could do after "earning a pretty penny in recent months" and that pay still fell short of its demands for many employees.

Amazon—which saw net profit rise to \$8.1 billion in the first quarter, more than tripling from \$2.5 billion the year earlier—has faced similar criticism over conditions and pay throughout the globe.

A spokesperson for Amazon in Germany said all employees would be getting a raise, and Amazon said in a statement that further increases were scheduled for the future. —Reuters

UNSEEN | COST

A Shanghai-Rotterdam cargo costs \$10,522, or 547% of 5-year seasonal average

Out-of-control shipping costs fire up prices

ALEX LONGLEY, CATHERINE BOSLEY & DEIRDRE HIPWELL
JUNE 13

The skyrocketing price of shipping goods across the globe may hit your pocket sooner than you think—from that cup of coffee you get each morning to the toys you were thinking of buying your kids.

Transporting a 40-foot steel container of cargo by sea from Shanghai to Rotterdam now costs a record \$10,522, a whopping 547 per cent higher than the seasonal average over the last five years, according to Drewry Shipping.

With upwards of 80 per cent of all goods trade transported by sea, freight-cost surges are threatening to boost the price of everything from toys, furniture and car parts to coffee, sugar and anchovies, compounding concerns in global markets already bracing for accelerating inflation.

"In 40 years in toy retailing I have never known such challenging conditions from the point of view of pricing," Gary Grant, the founder and executive chairman of the UK toy shop The Entertainer, said in an interview. He has had to



stop importing giant teddy bears from China because their retail price would have had to double to add in higher freight costs. "Will this have an impact on retail prices? My answer has to be yes."

A confluence of factors—soaring demand,

a shortage of containers, saturated ports and too few ships and dock workers—have contributed to the squeeze on transportation capacity on every freight path. Recent Covid outbreaks in Asian export hubs like China have made matters worse. The

pain is most acutely felt on longer-distance routes, making shipping from Shanghai to Rotterdam 67 per cent more expensive than to the US West Coast, for instance.

Often dismissed as having an insignificant impact on inflation because they were a tiny part of the overall expense, rising shipping costs are now forcing some economists to pay them a bit more attention. Although still seen as a relatively minor input, HSBC Holdings Plc estimates that a 205 per cent increase in container shipping costs over the past

year could raise euro-area producer prices by as much as 2 per cent.

At the retail level, vendors are faced with three choices: halt trade, raise prices or absorb the cost to pass it on later, all of which would effectively mean more expensive goods, said Jordi Espin, strategic relations manager at the European Shippers' Council, a Brussels-based trade group that represents about 100,000 retailers, wholesalers and manufacturers. "These costs are already being passed to consumers," he said. —Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Mankad inducted into Hall of Fame

Dubai: The ICC on Sunday inducted 10 icons of the game, including India's Vinoo Mankad, into its illustrious Hall of Fame with two players each from five eras, dating back to cricket's early days, making it to the list. The inductees are Aubrey Faulkner of South Africa and Monty Noble of Australia (pre-1918), Sir Learie Constantine of West Indies and Stan McCabe of Australia (1918-1945), Ted Dexter of England and Vinoo Mankad of India (1946-1970). Desmond Haynes of the West Indies and Bob Willis of England were inducted from the ODI era (1971-1995) while Andy Flower of Zimbabwe and Kumar Sangakkara were from the modern era. — PTI

India up for WTC challenge: Pujara

Southampton: Batsman Cheteshwar Pujara says New Zealand will have the advantage going into the WTC final after playing a Test series against England but India will utilise the available time to prepare well for the title clash, starting here on June 18. "They will obviously have advantage having played two Test matches before the final but when it comes to final we will give our best and we know that our team has the potential to do well and win the championship," Pujara told *bcci.tv*. "So we are not worried about that, we will try and focus on these 10 to 12 days which we have for preparation." — PTI

Milkha's wife dies of Covid-19

Chandigarh: Former Indian women volleyball team captain Nirmal Kaur, who is the wife of sprint legend Milkha Singh, died at a Mohali hospital due to complications related to Covid-19 infection she had contracted last month. She was 85 and is survived by her husband, one son and three daughters. "A back bone of the Milkha Family, she was 85 years old, it is tragic that the Flying Sikh Milkha Singh ji could not attend the cremation which was conducted this evening itself as he is still in the ICU (of PGIMER in Chandigarh) himself," a statement from the family spokesperson said. — PTI

Faf recovering after concussion

Abu Dhabi: Much to the cricket community's relief, South African star Faf du Plessis on Sunday said he was back from the hospital and "recovering", after suffering a concussion during his team Quetta Gladiators' PSL match against Peshawar Zalmi here. In trying to save a boundary, Du Plessis collided with teammate Mohammad Hasnain during their Pakistan Super League match on Saturday night. Following the freak accident, the former South Africa captain lay prone on the ground for a few minutes while the team physio attended to him. — AFP

Rabada helps SA clinch innings win

Saint Lucia: Kagiso Rabada completed a five-wicket haul as South Africa formalised their demolition of the West Indies by an innings and 63 runs just before the lunch interval on the third day of the first Test on Saturday. Having taken just one wicket in the first innings on day one when the home side were routed for 97 after choosing to bat first, Rabada led the way for the Proteas with figures of five for 34. — AFP

Brief scores: West Indies 97 & 162 (Chase 62; Rabada 5/34) lost to South Africa 322 by an innings & 63 runs.

Live on TV

EURO

Group Stage: Scotland vs Czech Republic from 6.30 pm; Poland vs Slovakia from 9.30 pm; Spain vs Sweden from 12.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

COPA AMERICA

Group Stage: Argentina vs Chile from 2.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 1, 2; Paraguay vs Bolivia from 5.30 am (Tuesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

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Sterling start

Raheem's clinical strike fires England to a 1-0 win over Croatia

England	1
(Raheem Sterling 57)	
Croatia	0

London, June 13: Raheem Sterling ignited England's Euro 2020 campaign as the Manchester City forward's clinical finish sealed a 1-0 win against Croatia in their Group D opener on Sunday. Gareth Southgate's side were struggling to break down Croatia until Sterling struck in the second half at sun-baked Wembley. The 26-year-old's first goal at a major tournament — in his 13th game — was the perfect riposte to critics who questioned Southgate's decision to select him instead of Jack Grealish. Sterling has endured a chequered relationship with England fans after being hounded following his tame performances at Euro 2016. He also struggled to hold down a place with Premier League champions City this term, culminating in his lacklustre display in their Champions League final defeat against Chelsea. But, days after he was given an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his anti-racism campaigning, Sterling enjoyed a perfectly-timed moment of redemption. In a rematch of the 2018 World Cup semi-final won by Croatia, England were hampered by a lack of cutting edge until Sterling came to the rescue. England host neighbours Scotland in their second Group 'D' match on Friday before taking on the Czech Republic. — AFP

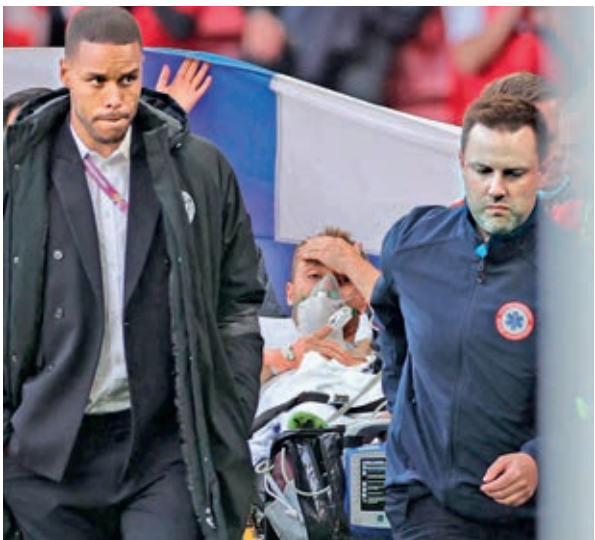


England's Raheem Sterling celebrates after scoring a goal against Croatia in the Euro match at Wembley on Sunday.

Finland	1
(Joel Pohjanpalo 60)	
Denmark	0

JOEL HEADER HELPS FINLAND SECURE 1ST WIN

Copenhagen, June 13: Finland beat Denmark 1-0 in their opening match of Euro 2020 which was overshadowed by Christian Eriksen collapsing and having to be revived on the field by medics. Joel Pohjanpalo scored the only goal on the hour mark of a Group 'B' match which was stopped for nearly two hours after Danish playmaker Eriksen slumped to the turf towards the end of the first half. Chants of "Christian" and "Eriksen" from both sets of supporters rang around the stadium as news of his status began to filter through to supporters. The two teams played out an uneventful final few minutes of the first half after both sets of players returned to the pitch with several Danish players in tears. After a short break of five minutes the second half of the match continued with Denmark pressing Finland back but failing to find a way past the opposition defence and Finnish 'keeper Lukas Hradecky. Pohjanpalo stunned the crowd into silence when he headed home Jere Uronen's cross, capitalising on Finland's one true chance of the game. — AFP



Denmark's Christian Eriksen (centre) is evacuated after collapsing on the pitch during the Euro match at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen on Saturday. — AFP

We got Eriksen back: Team Doc

Milan, June 13: Denmark's team doctor said on Sunday that Christian Eriksen's heart stopped and that "he was gone" before being resuscitated with a defibrillator at the Euro Championship. Eriksen collapsed during Denmark's opening Euro 2020 group game against Finland on Saturday and was given lengthy medical treatment before regaining consciousness. "He was gone. And we did cardiac resuscitation. And it was cardiac arrest," said team doctor Morten Boesen, who led the work in giving Eriksen treatment on the field. "How close were we? I don't know. We got him back after one defib. That's quite fast." Boesen said it was still unclear what caused the midfielder's collapse. "I'm not cardiologist, so the details about why it happened and further, I will leave to the experts," he said. **HE HAD NO HEALTH ISSUES: INTER DOCTOR** Eriksen showed no hint of any underlying health condition, Inter Milan's team doctor said on Sunday. "We had a bad time, not just me, but the whole family of our club," Piero Volpi told *Gazzetta Dello Sport*. "In the next few days he will be subjected to in-depth examinations. "The important thing is that he is well, but there had never been any episode that even remotely hinted at a problem when he was at Tottenham nor at Inter. In Italy there are very strict controls."



Denmark's goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel (right) and defender Simon Kjær (centre) comfort Sabrina Kvist Jensen, partner of Christian Eriksen. — AFP

CHRISTIAN HOPES TO BE BACK SOON

Inter CEO Giuseppe Marotta said that Eriksen had sent a message on the team chat reassuring them: "I'm fine, I hope to be back soon." "Those harsh images foreshadowed dramatic things, but luckily it wasn't so thanks to the doctors," said Marotta. "He never had Covid and he has never been vaccinated, we don't want to be intrusive because it's right for the player to be calm."

LUKAKU DEDICATES GOALS TO ERIKSEN

Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku said he shed tears for Christian Eriksen before dedicating his two-goal haul in Saturday's 3-0 win over Russia at Euro 2020 to his stricken Inter Milan team-mate. "I am really happy with the win, but it was hard for me to play because my thoughts were with him," said Lukaku. — Agencies

Belgium get off to a flyer

Belgium	3
(Romelu Lukaku 10, 88, Thomas Meunier 34)	
Russia	0

St. Petersburg, June 13: Romelu Lukaku struck twice as Belgium confirmed their status as one of the favourites for Euro 2020 with a confident 3-0 victory over Russia on Saturday. Despite being without key performer Kevin De Bruyne, world number one ranked Belgium were rarely in trouble against a Russian side that struggled to impose themselves. Roberto Martinez's Belgium top Group B on three points, ahead on goal difference of Finland who beat Denmark in the

group's other game in Copenhagen. The Red Devils are unbeaten in 10 games in all competitions and have suffered just one defeat in their last 24 outings. The visitor's grabbed the lead in the 10th minute when Andrei Semyonov failed to deal with a ball into the box from Leander

Dendoncker, and Lukaku turned and fired into the bottom corner. Lukaku celebrated his goal by running to the television camera and shouting "Chris, Chris, I love you" in tribute to Christian Eriksen, the Danish midfielder and his club team-mate at Inter Milan, who had been rushed to hospital after collapsing during the earlier game in the group. Belgium were calm in possession against a Russian side who struggled to get a firm grip on the game. — AFP

Swedish challenge for Spain

Madrid, June 13: After a week without training and three years of upheaval, Spain head into their Euro 2020 opener against Sweden on Monday determined to leave the past behind but unsure about what comes next. Luis Enrique was appointed to ring the changes in the aftermath of the 2018 World Cup, when going out on penalties to Russia had made it three consecutive failures to reach the quarter-finals of a major tournament. At La Cartuja in Seville on Monday, only Jordi

Alba will remain from the Euro success nine years ago, with Sergio Ramos cut and Sergio Busquets self-isolating after testing positive for Covid last weekend. And yet while the names bear almost no resemblance to what went before, Spain's fresh mix of promising youngsters and high-end performers arrive without any real sense of what now fills the void. **BAD BLOOD BETWEEN CZECH & SCOTLAND** Scotland's first match at a major tournament for 23 years is laced with acrimony for the Czech Republic, who travel to Hampden on Monday having been forced into a last-minute change of training camp and without suspended defender Ondrej Kudela. Kudela was hit with a 10-match ban for racially abusing Rangers midfielder Glen Kamara when Slavia Prague visited Scotland in the Europa League last 16 in March. The widespread condemnation of Kudela in Britain has not been reflected in his homeland, where Slavia and many of his club and international teammates have stood

by the 34-year-old and claimed there was a lack of evidence against him. **LEWANDOWSKI OUT TO IMPROVE RECORD** Robert Lewandowski's standing as one of the greatest ever strikers at club level is surely undisputed after a record-breaking season with Bayern Munich. With 66 goals in 119 games for Poland, his status in the international game is well-established, too. Except, maybe, in one respect. Lewandowski has yet to turn it on at a major tournament. — Agencies

HEAD-TO-HEAD

SCOTLAND-CZECH REPUBLIC

- Matches: 9. Scotland: 4, Czech Republic: 4, Drawn: 1.
- **EURO MEETINGS**
- 1999: Czech won 2-1 in Glasgow.
- 1999: Czech won 3-2 in Prague.
- 2010: Czech won 3-0 in Prague.
- 2011: 2-2 in Glasgow.

SLOVAKIA-POLAND

- Matches: 8. Slovakia: 4, Poland: 3, Drawn: 1.
- **EURO MEETINGS**
- 1995: Poland won 5-0 in Zabrze.
- 1995: Slovakia won 4-1 in Bratislava.

SPAIN-SWEDEN

- Matches: 14. Spain: 6, Sweden: 3, Drawn: 5.
- 2006: Sweden won 2-0 in Solna.
- 2007: Spain won 3-0 in Madrid.
- 2008: Spain won 2-1 in Innsbruck.
- 2019: Spain won 3-0 in Madrid.
- 2019: 1-1 in Stockholm.
- S. PERVEZ QAISER

DJOKER IS KING

Djokovic rallies to beat Tsitsipas in French final, wins his 19th major

Paris, June 13: Novak Djokovic claimed a 19th Grand Slam title and became the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice when he came from two sets down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in a gripping French Open final on Sunday. The world number one triumphed 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 over the Greek 22-year-old who was playing in his first Slam final. Djokovic is now just one major away from equalling the all-time record of 20, jointly held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. It was a second French Open crown for Djokovic after his 2016 victory and adds to his nine Australian Opens, five Wimbledon titles and three at the US Open. The 34-year-old is the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four Slams on multiple occasions and just the third in history. He is also the first man ever to win a Slam title by twice coming back from two sets down in same the tournament. Djokovic now has 84 career titles in total while Sunday's win pushed him

MOST SLAMS

(Men's singles)

- Roger Federer 20
- Rafael Nadal 20
- Novak Djokovic 19
- Pete Sampras 14
- Roy Emerson 12

Serbia's Novak Djokovic holds the French Open trophy after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final on Sunday.

to the brink of \$150 million in prize money. "It was an electric atmosphere," said Djokovic after the four-hour 11-minute final. "It's a dream. It's difficult to win the title against a great player. It was a difficult three days physically and mentally." Djokovic had also spent more than four hours on court on Friday to knock out defending champion Rafael Nadal.

Tsitsipas survived a nervy opening service game, having to save two break points. Djokovic, by contrast, didn't concede a point in his first three service games. But suddenly he faced a set point in the 10th game courtesy of an ugly shank but saved it after a 26-shot rally. Fired up by a time violation, Djokovic broke for the first time for a 6-5 lead but was unable to serve

out the opener as a series of razor-sharp returns put Tsitsipas back on level terms. In a dramatic tiebreaker, Tsitsipas saw a 4/0 and 5/2 lead disappear. He had to save a set point before claiming the opener after 70 minutes when Djokovic fired a forehand wide. Dropping the opening set at this year's Roland Garros was familiar territory for Djokovic.

He had to recover from two sets down to beat Lorenzo Musetti in the last 16 and lost the opener against Nadal on Friday. Tsitsipas, 12 years the world number one's junior, broke again in the first game of the second set as the 2016 champion looked increasingly weary in the 30-degree afternoon heat. The Greek edged ahead 5-2 and pocketed the second set with his eighth ace of the contest. But the top seed wasn't finished, breaking in the fourth game of the third set to cut the deficit. **BARBORA COMPLETES GRAND DOUBLE** French Open champion Barbora Krejickova completed a rare sweep of titles at Roland Garros as she won a third women's doubles major trophy with fellow Czech teammate Katerina Siniakova on Sunday. Less than 24 hours after she claimed her maiden singles slam title, Krejickova became the first woman since Mary Pierce in 2000 to lift both trophies at the clay-court major. Only seven women have completed the titles sweep at Roland Garros. — Agencies



New Zealand's Tom Latham (centre) holds the trophy as his teammates celebrate winning the Test series against England in Birmingham on Sunday. — AFP

Kiwis seal rare away series win

Birmingham (UK), June 13: New Zealand overpowered England by eight wickets in the second Test at Edgbaston on Sunday as they sealed a 1-0 series win with more than a day to spare. Set a target of just 38 after England tailender Olly Stone was out to the very first ball of the fourth day the Blackcaps finished on 41-2. Tom Latham, captaining the team in place of the injured Kane Williamson, hit the winning boundary to be 23 not out after the first Test of a two-match series at Lord's last week ended in a draw. Victory gave New Zealand just a third win in 18 Test series in England, and a first this century after their 1986 and 1999 triumphs. And it means they will head into next week's inaugural World Test Championship final against India at Southampton in confident mood. "It's great to get an extra day of rest before India but we'll celebrate as well — we've not won here since 1999 so it's important to celebrate those achievements," said Latham at the presentation ceremony. By contrast, this was England's first series loss at home since a 2014 defeat by Sri Lanka. — AFP

BRIEF SCORES

England 303 & 122 (Wood 29; Wagner 3/18, Henry 3/36) lost to New Zealand 388 & 41/2 (Latham 23 (not out)) by eight wickets.