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HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 15 JUNE 2021

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WEATHER

Max: 31.5°C
Min: 22.0°C
RH: 61%
Rain: 0.4 mm

Forecast: Cloudy sky.
Moderate rain. Max/Min temp. 32/22°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttaraayan
Tithi: Jyeshta Shuddha
Panchami till 10.53 pm
Star: Ashlesha till 9.38 pm
Varjyan: 9.55 am to 11.35 am
Durmuhuram: 8.21 am to 9.14 am; 11.10 pm to 11.54 am
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Zeeqad 3,1442 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 4:32 am
Zohar: 12:26 pm
Asar: 4:53 pm
Maghrab: 6:57 pm
Isha: 8:14 pm

SUNSET TODAY 6:51 PM

SUNRISE TOMORROW 5:41 AM

MOONRISE TODAY 9:42 AM

MOONSET TODAY 10:57 PM

COUNTER POINT



This is the record of undercounted Covid deaths...

SHORT TAKES

Active cases dip below 10 lakh

New Delhi: Daily cases of Covid-19 in India saw a big dip on Monday with 70,421 new detections. This was the lowest after 74 days. Though such low numbers are often due to reduced testing on Sundays, the Union health ministry said a total of 14.92 lakh tests were conducted in the last 24 hours in the country. Officials said India's active caseload has dropped below the 10 lakh-mark after 66 days and daily recoveries continue to outnumber the daily new Covid cases for more than a month now.

43% Indians skip China products

New Delhi: A half of Indian consumers surveyed said they did not buy made-in-China products in the past 12 months as an aftermath of the border tensions with China, a report by online firm LocalCircles on Monday said. The report is based on a survey, which was conducted during June 1-10 and covered 17,800 citizens. Imports from China, however, increased 42 per cent during January-May 2021, due to Covid cases.

RBI to regulate microfinance

Mumbai: The Reserve Bank on Monday proposed a uniform regulatory framework for the microfinance sector, wherein MFIs can provide collateral-free loans to households at board-determined interest rates.

Microfinance is a form of financial service which provides small loans and other financial services to poor and low-income households.

Full report on Page 10



India to restore 26m acres of degraded land, says PM

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 14

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday evening told the United Nations that India is "on track to achieve its national commitment of land degradation neutrality and ... working towards restoring 26 million hectares of degraded land by 2030".

This, he said, would "contribute to India's commitment to achieve an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 billion tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent".

He was delivering his keynote address in virtual format at the UN "High-Level Dialogue on Desertification, Land degradation and Drought", through video conferencing, in New Delhi on Monday.

We can do it. We can do it together."

Said Mr Modi: "It is mankind's collective responsibility to reverse the damage to land caused by human activity. It is our sacred duty to leave a healthy planet for our future generations."

The Prime Minister added: "Land degradation poses a special challenge to the developing world. In the spirit of South-South cooperation, India is assisting fellow developing countries to develop land restoration strategies. A centre of excellence is being set up in India to promote a scientific approach towards

land degradation issues."

He further said: "In India, we have always given importance to land and considered the sacred Earth as our mother. India has taken the lead to highlight land degradation issues at international forums. The Delhi Declaration of 2019 called for better access and stewardship over land, and emphasised gender-sensitive transformative projects. In India, over the last 10 years, around three million hectares of forest cover has been added. This has enhanced the combined forest cover to almost one-fourth of the country's total area."

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Rajendar left for Delhi with his followers in a special flight from Shamshabad along with former legislator Enugu Ravinder Reddy, former Karimnagar zilla parishad chairperson Tula Uma, former MP Ramesh Rathod,

TSRTC union leader Aswathama Reddy, TRS senior leader Gandra Nalini and several Osmania University student leaders.

The leaders first met BJP president J.P. Nadda and later reached the party office where Pradhan welcomed them into the BJP with the party kanduva.

Addressing the media on the occasion, Pradhan said the BJP has become stronger in Telangana state with the joining of Rajendar. Rajendar has a good image in politics, he said, adding that he was confident that the BJP would come to power in the 2023 Assembly elections.

Former health minister Rajendar, who quit his TRS membership and his

and expected that several important leaders would join the BJP soon. The former minister said his followers and associates would work hard to strengthen the party and defeat the TRS.

Sanjay said the BJP was the only party to challenge Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao and it would end his dictatorship in Telangana state.

Sanjay said Rajendar was a leader who played a key role in the fight for Telangana statehood. The BJP would win the

Huzurabad bypoll even if the TRS and Chief Minister Rao spent hundreds of crores of rupees, he said and appealed to the leaders who were dissatisfied but were continuing in the TRS to join the BJP and fight against Chandrashekhar Rao to relieve Telangana state from his despotic rule.

BJP MPs Dharmapuri Arvind, Soyam Bapu Rao, Dubbaka M. Raghuandan Rao and other important leaders also participated in the programme.

BJP president J.P. Nadda receives a bouquet from former minister Etala Rajendar, who later joined the party in New Delhi on Monday.

Etala joins BJP, predicts more leaders will follow

Sanjay recalls Etala's contribution to Telangana stir

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Former minister Etala Rajendar joined the BJP on Monday in the presence of Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan, minister of state G. Kishan Reddy, state party affairs in-charge Tarun Chugh, party state president Bandi Sanjay, and vice-president D.K. Aruna in Delhi.

Rajendar left for Delhi with his followers in a special flight from Shamshabad along with former legislator Enugu Ravinder Reddy, former Karimnagar zilla parishad chairperson Tula Uma, former MP Ramesh Rathod,

TSRTC union leader Aswathama Reddy, TRS senior leader Gandra Nalini and several Osmania University student leaders.

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— DC

● **ETALA RAJENDAR**
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BJP would be strength-
ened in Telangana and
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important leaders
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soon.

MLA post recently, said
that to realise the BJP's
expectation, he would
work with commitment
and in a dedicated man-
ner.

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STATE HEADING FAST TO FRBM DEBT CEILING

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The state government seems to be exhausting its borrowing limit much faster in the current fiscal 2021-22 over previous fiscal 2020-21. The government is looking to raise ₹3,000 crore more on Tuesday to meet Rythu Bandhu expenditure. It needs to credit ₹7,508 crore as Rythu Bandhu assistance in the bank accounts of 63.25 lakh farmers from June 15 to 25.

The government's earnings have taken a severe beating in both the fiscals due to the outbreak of the first and second waves of the Corona-virus.

With this, the government is heavily depending on loans to meet expenditure on welfare schemes, development programmes and administrative affairs.

The government has already borrowed ₹3,500 crore this month. The government pinned its hopes on raising funds through sale of lands from July in addition to loans that were recently put up for e-auction.

— AFP

Coup in LJP; Chirag gets ejected, uncle in saddle



A motorist sees ₹100 fetching less than a litre of petrol at fuel bunk in Hyderabad on Monday.

— DC

RETAIL INFLATION CROSSES RBI'S COMFORT LEVEL

New Delhi: Rising prices of edible oils and protein rich items pushed the retail inflation to a six-month high of 6.3 per cent in May, breaching the comfort level of Reserve Bank of India.

New Delhi, June 14: Five of the six Lok Janshakti Party MPs in Lok Sabha have joined hands against their leader Chirag Paswan and elected Pasupati Kumar Paras, the youngest brother of Paswan's late father and the party founder Ram Vilas Paswan, in his place, causing a big churn in Bihar politics.

The Lok Sabha Secretariat on Monday evening recognised Paras as the leader of the LJP in the House, a day after the five MPs informed Speaker Om Birla about their decision.

"I have not broken the party but saved it," Paras, the MP from Hajipur, told reporters.

He asserted that 99 per cent of LJP workers were unhappy with the turn of events in Bihar as Paswan led his party against the JD(U) and it fared poorly in the 2020 assembly polls.

Paras lauded Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as a good leader and "vikas purush" (development-oriented man), highlighting the deep fault lines within

the party as his nephew has been a strong critic of the supreme JD(U) leader.

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Paswan waited for over 20 minutes in his car before he was let into the house and then left after spending more than an hour inside.

— PTT

The LJP has been on the brink of collapse, he said in reference to its poor

show in the polls, and lashed out at "anti-social" elements in the party, an apparent pointer to a close aide of Paswan whose proximity to him has not gone down well with many party leaders.

Paras said his group will continue to be part of the BJP-led NDA, and added that Paswan can remain in the organisation.

There has been no comment from Paswan on the development in his party.

Soon after Paras spoke to reporters, Paswan drove to his uncle's residence in the national capital to meet him.

Paswan waited for over 20 minutes in his car before he was let into the house and then left after spending more than an hour inside.

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I. ALLA Sravya, D/o. Alla Durga Devi, Plot No.155, 6-39/85, Venkatesanagar, Lohukunta, Hyd, T.S. have changed my name as Sravya Alla Musunuru. (HYMM/2122/C01671)

I. PINKY Shekhawat, spouse of Tarun Shekhawat resident of P-17, Kalyan Gardens, Yarla, Secunderabad, Distt-Hyderabad, Telangana, Pin-500087. Have changed my Name from Pinky Shekhawat to Pinky Shekhawat vide Affidavit No.39464021 dated 14/06/2021. (HYMM/2122/C01667)

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Miyapur bus terminal plan being dusted off

5 locations to get ICBT for inter-city transportation

MADDY DEEKSHITH | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

HMDA OFFICIALS

said the municipal authority has been negotiating with the private agency either to withdraw the pending case or go ahead with the proposed project to meet the transportation needs of the city.

Once the ICBT is constructed, the authorities have also hinted that the HMDA would either lease the Imlibun land where the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station is located, or auction it for development of the city.

There exist problems, though. KRR Infra, the agency that bagged the project, did not submit the bank guarantee for ₹14.8 crore in the stipulated time. It approached court when HMDA decided to re-invite tenders.

Even though the tenders were finalised in May 2015, the private agency

Manoharabad on the Hyderabad-Nagpur Highway, another of 20 acres in Pedda Amberpet and another being the 60 acres in Shamshabad, while the idea is to pool land in other two locations. Surprisingly, the proposals did not move an inch forward since 2018.

An HMDA official said the municipal authority has been negotiating with the private agency either to withdraw the pending case or go ahead with the proposed project to meet the transportation needs of the city.

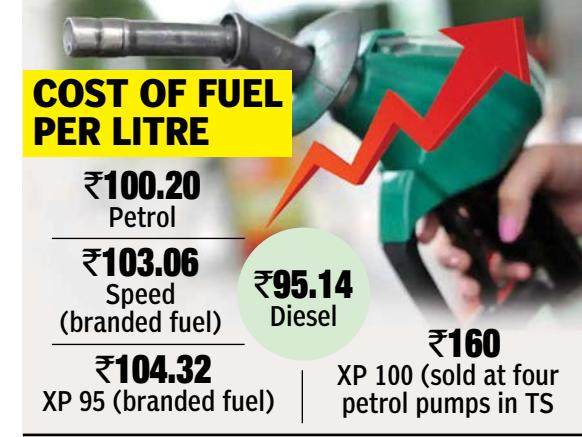
The MGBS at Imlibun has reached its saturation point. Meetings would be held with the private agency to either take up the project or withdraw the pending case so that the HMDA could re-invite tenders and go ahead with the project under pub-

lic-private partnership (PPP) mode.

As per the old proposal, ICBT was to be constructed over a 1-lakh sq ft built up area for the passenger terminal, with 200 bus bays and platform for outstation buses, bus parking for 1,000 buses, 30 bus bays for city buses, two fuel filling stations including CNG, four vehicle service centres, office space for administrative purposes and office spaces for bus operators.

However, keeping the ever-growing needs of the city, the proposal would be revised to have sophisticated facilities that cater to the transportation needs for at least 30 years.

"We have already re-inspected the proposed site and HMDA would use about 50 acres of land in Miyapur for ICBT and other related projects," the official said.



City motorists seek Centre's intervention

From Page 1

"The first was the oil company's refusal to lose any profits, the second and third were the state and

the Central governments' reluctance to forgo their profits," said Amaram.

"Petrol or any fuel is a compound tax collecting mechanism and it is a money-spinner for the government. Everyone is looking after their own wallets and are ultimately calling the rise a business

modality," he said.

However, motorists were unrelenting as they took to Twitter to ask the Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his intervention.

One user M. Harish, in his Tweet, asked if there was any discount for youth below 24 years. "We are depending on our parents, no notification on govt jobs by state and central govt no money in lockdown no work... kindly reduce tax (sic)," he said on Twitter.

SHORT TAKES

COPS ORGANISE BLOOD DONATION CAMP IN KEESSARA

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

On World Blood Donor Day on Monday, the Rachakonda police organised a camp at Nagaram in Keesara. The blood collected in the camp would be used for saving the lives of thalassemia patients as also emergency and accident victims across Telangana state.

Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said, "The lack of sufficient blood availability is a serious problem to the Thalassemia patients and others since very few donors are coming forward to donate blood during the pandemic season."

GOVERNOR URGES YOUTH TO DONATE BLOOD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Monday said there is a scarcity of blood because of the Covid-19 pandemic and urged youth to come forward to donate blood and save lives.

Become lifesavers by donating blood, the Governor said, adding "Availability of blood units is a critical factor in the healthcare system."

Speaking with Indian Red Cross Society's functionaries on the occasion of the World Blood Donor Day, the Governor saluted all blood donors and said: "Blood donation is a great gift of life."

The Red Cross, she said, should re-strategise its blood donation plans to motivate more people to donate blood. "It is our duty to create the best and safe blood donation facilities and ensure the best of the morale of the blood donors. Strengthening the Youth Red Cross units is vital in mobilising the required units of blood," the Governor, also the state president of the IRCS said.

HC: RELEASE 'ASHA ENCOUNTER' AFTER 15 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Film director Ramgopal Varma (RGV), no stranger to controversies, has changed his strategy in making 'Disha Encounter' that is based on the gruesome rape and murder of a 25-year-old old veterinary doctor on the outskirts of the city in 2019.

The Telangana High Court was told that Varma was not the director of the film but had only provided its storyline. Durga Prasad, counsel for the producers, on Monday explained to the court that Varma has no other role in making the film.

The court was dealing with a petition filed by the parents of Disha (name changed), who urged the court to stop the release of 'Disha Encounter', as a judicial inquiry by the Supreme Court-appointed commission was pending completion. Counsel for the producers submitted that the film was directed by Anand Chandra and it has obtained the Censor Board certificate on April 16 and would be released soon. He added that the name of the film has been changed to 'Ashा Encounter'.

As the censor certificate was issued, the court was not inclined to stop the release. However, Disha's parents were given two weeks time to challenge the censor certificate and stated that the film should not be released within 15 days.

VACCINATION | DRIVE

With 9 lakh vaccines in stock, the main objective of state government is to vaccinate maximum people

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The Telangana state government has decided to vaccinate one crore people by June end. Every day, two lakh people are being vaccinated, the Director of Health Dr Srinivas Rao stated here on Monday.

The state has a stock of nine lakh vaccines and arrangements are being made to procure more. The guidelines from the Central government for allotment of

vaccines to states and the private sector have not come, but it is providing sufficient stocks for vaccination, stated the officials.

With Covid-19 cases declining across the state, the main objective is to vaccinate maximum people.

At the same time, strict action will be taken against those spreading misinformation, holding unscientific views in debates and creating panic and anxiety among the people, he said. Dr Srinivas Rao said,

STRENGTHENING OF hospital infrastructure in terms of equipment, oxygen and other facilities is being done in urban and rural areas. ICUs are being kept in readiness in case children are reporting with multi-system inflammatory syndrome.

"False debates about a third wave on social media have led to a lot of mental health problems. The third wave will be handled effectively as we are going to get the

maximum people vaccinated and there is full preparedness. There is no need for worry and people must continue to follow the safety protocols after vaccination also."

Strengthening of hospital infrastructure in terms of equipment, oxygen and other facilities is being done in urban and rural areas. Intensive care units are being kept in readiness in case children are reporting with multi-system inflammatory syndrome. In both

the first and second waves, children with MIS (multi-system inflammatory syndrome) have been reported but their numbers formed less than one per cent. There is preparedness in the government to deal with these cases."

"Some 5,000 new oxygen beds were readied in government hospitals in the last one month. Some 2,000 beds are exclusively being set up at Niloufer Hospital," stated director of medical health and education.

With the advent of monsoon, seasonal diseases like dengue and malaria are a concern and people have been asked to follow the preventive measures. The state government has started the anti-fogging, anti-larvae activities in the state.

Friday will be 'dry day' with the advent of monsoon, seasonal diseases like dengue and malaria are a concern and people have been asked to follow the preventive measures. The state government has started the anti-fogging, anti-larvae activities in the state.

Friday will be 'dry day'



AIG: Single dose of Covishield produces more antibodies

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

A study conducted by the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology (AIG) during the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic found that higher antibody response was observed in healthcare workers who were given one dose of Covishield. The study was published in the International Journal of Infectious Diseases.

To understand the immune response of the vaccine and creation of antibodies, the study was conducted in 280 healthcare workers who were previously infected with Covid-19. Of them, 131 suffered from mild to moderate disease and 50 required hospitalisation.

All the 131 were seronegative prior to the first dose of vaccine. They got the jab between January 16 and February 5, 2021, and the study found that they were protected during the second wave.

Those infected and recovered were in the age group of 20 to 58 years in males and 19 to 53 years in females. Those who were not infected and took the vaccine were in the age group of 18 to 58 years in males and 18 to 60 years in females.

Comparing the antibodies in both the groups, the study found that there was a significantly higher response in antibodies in those who were already infected. This means that the immune memory in the human body to protect from the virus is high in recovered patients.

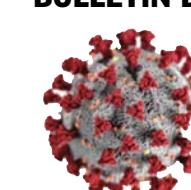
The study concluded that

the single dose of vaccine does offer protection and creates the immune memory required to fight the virus. Among those who were not infected, there is generation of antibodies but it is comparatively lesser when compared to those who were infected.

Commenting on the impact that this study can have on the overall vaccine administration strategy, Dr D. Nageshwar Reddy, chairman, AIG Hospitals and one of the co-authors in the study, said, "The results show that people who got infected with Covid-19 need not take two doses of vaccine yet as a single dose can develop robust antibody and memory cell response. This will significantly help at a time when there's a shortage of vaccines in the country and more people can be covered using the saved doses."

Dr Reddy says that once we have a large number of people vaccinated, we will be achieving herd immunity and at that time a second dose can be administered. He insists that at this point, the vaccine strategy must be directed at the distribution and inclusion of maximum people for a single dose.

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA



Update: Cases | Deaths

Fresh Cases	1,511
Deaths	12
Tests Done	1,10,681
Active Cases	20,461
Total Cases	6,04,880
Total Deaths	3,496

Most new cases

GHMC	173
Khammam	139
Nalgonda	113
Bhadradri Kothagudem	98
Peddapalli	88
Jogulamba Gadwal	13

Fewest new cases

Kamareddy	5
Adilabad, Nirmal	7
Komaram Bheem, Asifabad, Narayanpet	8
Medak	9
Jogulamba Gadwal	13

TEEN SLIPS OFF BUILDING, DIES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

A teenager allegedly slipped from a building and died in the Darulshifa area under the Mirchowk police station limits on Sunday night.

The deceased, Abdul Rahman, 17, was leaning against the balcony when he reportedly slipped, police said. "After sustaining severe injuries due to the fall, he was rushed to a private hospital by his relatives, where he succumbed while undergoing treatment," Mirchowk police said.

Markets and commercial areas are seeing crowds but many establishments complain that there are hardly any customers. Movement of people is restricted as there

are still many who are working from home. Due to this reason it is believed that the number of people stepping out is comparatively less.

Experts urge that caution would have to be maintained as the neighbouring states are still recording a higher number of cases. With the impending third wave, there is heavy crowding at vaccination centres and these areas need to be controlled as too many people are gathering.

Less than 200 cases are being recorded every day from June 8 while the active cases in the city are less than 8,000.

Covid cases drop in city

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

There are 20,461 active Covid-19 cases in the state following a gradual decline that has been noted after the lockdown was re-imposed.

The decline is expected to be slow and public health specialists state that the behaviour of people during the relaxation hours will determine the case load.

Markets and commercial areas are seeing crowds but many establishments complain that there are hardly any customers. Movement of people is restricted as there

TS to vaccinate 1cr people by June end; 2L vaccinations a day

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The Telangana state government has decided to vaccinate one crore people by June end. Every day, two lakh people are being vaccinated, the Director of Health Dr Srinivas Rao stated here on Monday.

The state has a stock of nine lakh vaccines and arrangements are being made to procure more. The guidelines from the Central government for allotment of

vaccines to states and the private sector have not come, but it is providing sufficient stocks for vaccination, stated the officials.

With Covid-19 cases declining across the state, the main objective is to vaccinate maximum people.

At the same time, strict

action will be taken against those spreading misinformation, holding unscientific views in debates and creating panic and anxiety among the people, he said. Dr Srinivas Rao said,

STRENGTHENING OF hospital infrastructure in terms of equipment, oxygen and other facilities is being done in urban and rural areas. ICUs are being kept in readiness in case children are reporting with multi-system inflammatory syndrome.

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Anti-mosquito drive in full swing

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The dry day concept is to ensure that the dengue mosquitoes do not survive and spread.

where all the water containers, bins, pot trays and others around homes must be dried. The dry day concept is to ensure that the dengue mosquitoes do not survive and spread.

Public health specialists have asked people to be alert and follow the methods of hygiene and sanitation with the early onset of monsoons.

rations and they are also testing the samples of the mosquitoes. With a view to eliminating the female aedes aegypti mosquitoes, they are carrying out combining operations.

Public health specialists have asked people to be alert and follow the methods of hygiene and sanitation with the early onset of monsoons.

SHORT TAKES

Raju denies allegations

Hyderabad: YSRC rebel MP Raghu Ramakrishna Raju filed a rejoinder petition on Monday to deny the allegations made against him by AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in the special court for CBI cases. The Chief Minister had filed a counter-affidavit to Raju's original petition seeking cancellation of bail in the quid pro quo cases. In his turn, Raju levelled a series of allegations against the Chief Minister.

KCR SACKED ETALA OUT OF FEAR: JEEVAN

DC CORRESPONDENT KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 14

TRS president and Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao was afraid that Etala Rajendar would usurp his post and that was why he sacked the Huzurabad MLA, said senior Congress leader and MLC T. Jeevan Reddy on Monday.

Speaking to press persons in Jagtial district, Jeevan Reddy asked the Chief Minister why he did not suspend ministers Ch. Mallu Reddy and Puvvada Ajay Kumar who constructed medical colleges by encroaching on public lands and his son K.T. Rama Rao who built a farmhouse on government land.

How much property did Rao and his family members have before the state formation and how much they gathered now, he asked, adding why the Chief Minister was not disclosing the details of his properties to the public, Jeevan Reddy said.

"It would have been better for Rajendar to remain in the TRS. People are not convinced as to why he joined the BJP. If he wished to be an MLA and wanted a minister post, he might have pleaded with the CM not to suspend him from the party, instead of joining the BJP," Jeevan Reddy said.

BHATTI SLAMS GOVT POOR FOR COVID SHOW

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Monday stated that both the Union and state governments had failed to make a scientific analysis of the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

He was participating in a webinar along with other leaders and medical experts on 'Covid effect and the economic situation in India'.

The CLP leader stated that the negligence of the governments had led to sufferings and the country into a debt-crisis, which was rightly pointed out by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi. He said it was unfortunate that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was criticising Rahul Gandhi's warnings.

He said that the Centre did not take any emergency measures until March when the Covid pandemic became rampant. He slammed the Centre for its biased distribution of oxygen and ventilators to states.

Former Union health secretary Sujatha Rao recalled that the first Coronavirus death happened on January 30 of last year and two more deaths in February. These were reasons enough to take up preventive measures but the Union government did not take any action.

Etala has joined a sinking ship: TRS

TRS intrigued over Shah, Nadda's absence at Etala fete

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Ministers and TRS leaders are intrigued by the absence of Union home minister Amit Shah and BJP national president J.P. Nadda at the BJP headquarters in Delhi when former TRS leader Etala Rajendar and some other leaders from the state joined the party on Monday. They termed the future of these leaders in the saffron party as "ominous."

They said Rajendar had dug his own grave with his decision to quit the TRS, even as Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhar Rao had accorded him highest priority in the party and the government. They exuded confidence that the TRS will retain Huzurabad Assembly seat with a record majority in the coming bypoll.

Ministers G. Jagadish Reddy, Gangula Kamalakar and TRS leaders Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, Vemula Prashant Reddy addressed separate press conferences on Monday to lash out at Rajendar. They were gleeful that top-level national BJP leaders ignored Rajendar and did not attend the Delhi event.

"Etala will soon fade away in the BJP and also from Telangana politics," they said. "Etala has joined a sinking ship. People

are furious at BJP for making petrol and diesel unaffordable. People are ready to bury BJP not only in Telangana state but across India whenever the next elections are held. Etala joined a party that failed on all

fronts. He will not get any high office in the BJP and this is clear from the lukewarm response he got in Delhi. Soon, he will fade away along with BJP," said Jagadish Reddy.

Minister Kamalakar

expected changes were taking place in the state politics. The parties were assessing the situations time-to-time to strengthen themselves from grass-root levels and were taking decisions accordingly, he said.

Belonging to the Backward Class community, Ramana strove hard right from the beginning to strengthen the TD. Chief Ministers of united Andhra Pradesh, late N.T. Rama Rao and N. Chandrababu Naidu gave him much needed encouragement.

Ramana was made a minister in the TD Cabinet and also the party provided him an opportunity to serve as an MP. Adhering to the principles of the party, he worked hard to increase the respect among the people for the TD, he said.

Decrying the propaganda on social

media that he had sought some lucrative posts from the BJP and the TRS, he said he never sent any such proposals to other parties. Both the TRS and the BJP invited him to join their respective parties, but they did not assure him of any higher posts, he pointed out.

Ramana said he never ran after posts. When he was working for the TD, the party, identifying his services, had given him some responsibilities which he handled perfectly.

He said his well-wishers asked him to make wise decisions so that he could serve the people better. So, after discussing not only with the TD workers, but also with the local leaders of both the TRS and the BJP, along with his followers, he may announce his decision later, he informed.



TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy heads to the Huzurabad municipality general body meeting on Monday.

— P. ANIL KUMAR

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

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Former Union health secretary Sujatha Rao recalled that the first Coronavirus death happened on January 30 of last year and two more deaths in February. These were reasons enough to take up preventive measures but the Union government did not take any action.

Act against spurious seeds: Uttam to govt

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

TPCC president and Lok Sabha member N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Monday criticised the state government for it was only indulging in blabbering but doing nothing to check sale of spurious seeds in the state.

Addressing the media after attending the general body meeting of the Huzurnagar municipality, he said though the Chief Minister has announced that Preventive Detention Act would be used against the sellers of spurious seeds, no

action has been taken against the accused.

He asserted that the Congress would launch agitations if the government did not take action against such racketeers within 24 hours. The Nalgonda MP said that the municipality was an autonomous body and it should not allow others to wield powers. He made it clear that all financial powers should be used only after they are cleared during the general body meeting.

He said that in view of prevailing Covid conditions, the meetings could be held in the function halls or online. He said that he has been striving for development of Huzurnagar town, all through his political career. He said that Huzurnagar gram panchayat was converted into a municipality with his efforts as an MLA.

He said that Huzurnagar was the first municipality to have a ring road after Hyderabad. He said that construction of 4,000 units of double bedroom houses are in progress. He demanded the government to complete them immediately.

A man from West Bengal was arrested by Hyderabad CCS police for unfreezing the bank account seized during the crackdown on micro-finance companies and transferring ₹1.18 crore to himself.

The accused was identified as Nallamothu Anil Kumar.

The police seized net cash of ₹2 lakh, eight debit cards, three cheque books, a passbook, three mobile phones and a laptop.

The arrest was made following a complaint lodged by the regional manager of ICICI Bank, Gachibowli branch, stating that unidentified person impersonating as the police official of the Kolkata police had misrepresented facts, prepared forged notices and submitted the same asking to unfreeze certain ICICI Bank accounts involved in the instant loan app case and transferred ₹1.18 crore to his accounts.

The accused was nabbed in West Bengal and brought to Hyderabad on transit warrant and is being produced before the court for judicial custody.

HOTEL BREAKS LOCKDOWN RULES, RAIDED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Alhamdullah Hotel at Mallepally was raided by Habeebnagar police late Sunday night as the place was found violating lockdown relaxation rules.

The raid was conducted following a tip-off that the place was kept open till late in the night.

"We noticed that they kept the shutter ajar and put a curtain over it to evade cops and patrolling vehicles. Following the tip-off, a watch was kept on the hotel and the place was raided," the police said, adding that a case has been booked against the management.

Modi govt hiding Covid cases: Owaisi

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

High Court raised the issue, the Bihar government revised the figures overnight and added 3,000 deaths to its list. Every epidemiological module and expert in the country has claimed that the toll is five to six times higher than the shown figure, he said.

"The government has no concern about the deaths. It is aloof. The number of insurance claims and death certificates issued during the second wave debunked the government's claim," Owaisi said.

"The government has not made preparations for the second wave, delayed in making the orders for the vaccines. The supply process for the vaccination was wrong. To hide its failures, the BJP government is not accepting these factual figures," the AIMIM leader said.

TRS govt selling land to fund welfare schemes for poor

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Finance minister T. Harish Rao came down heavily on the Congress and the BJP for 'politicising' sale of lands by the state government. He said sale of lands by governments was nothing new and was being witnessed in all the states irrespective of whichever party was in power.

Harish Rao reminded that even the Narendra Modi government at the Centre was selling public sector units (PSUs) in the name of divestment and encouraging states to sell their PSUs by offering incentives.

Don't politicise land sales: Harish

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

He said that selling government lands and assets was the tradition that was started by the Congress and the BJP governments in the country.

He said that the TRS government was selling land parcels for the benefit of people, to fund welfare schemes for the poor and for other development programmes. Revenue earnings of the state government took a drastic hit due to Covid since March 2020 and the Centre was not extending any financial assistance to states to overcome the Covid crisis.

"In these conditions, we are left with no option but to sell off lands to raise funds for welfare schemes

and development programmes. This is the only way out for the government to overcome the Covid financial crisis. The Congress and the BJP want the government to stop welfare schemes for poor and development programmes. That's why they are opposing land sale. We want welfare and development to continue as usual. The poor should not suffer and development of Telangana Congress leaders who are opposing land sale now to answer why they kept mum when Seemandhra Chief Ministers resorted to indiscriminate sale of lands in Hyderabad and neighbouring districts in Telangana.

He reminded that the previous Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy, K. Rosaiah and Kiran Kumar Reddy governments of the Congress in undivided AP had sold 85,000 acres between 2004 and 2014, mostly located in and around Hyderabad which commanded huge real estate value for cheaper rates and even diverted funds to Seemandhra. He questioned Telangana Congress leaders who are opposing land sale now to answer why they kept mum when Seemandhra Chief Ministers resorted to indiscriminate sale of lands in Hyderabad and neighbouring districts in Telangana.

Taking a dig at the BJL leaders, Harish said, "The TRS government has not burdened people by increasing taxes to raise revenues like the BJP government at the Centre increasing taxes on petrol and diesel. Fuel prices crossed ₹100 per litre making it unaffordable for the poor and middle class."

"We didn't stop a single welfare scheme like Rythu Bandhu, Asara pensions etc despite the Covid crisis. We are forced to sell lands that are not suitable for public purpose and prone to encroachments to continue welfare and development in Telangana state," the minister said.

8th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Mrs. MATURI VIMALA W/o M.N. Prakasha Rao

DOB: 29-6-1947 DOD: 15-06-2013

You are physically away from us for last 8 years. But your memories are with us forever.

Inserted by: Husband, Sons & Daughters-in-law, Grand Children and Great Grand Child. Cell: 9848159915

(S/2122/D0032)

Family Members & Loved Ones

(S/2122/D0032)

CENTENARY BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE

Mrs. LEELA KRISHNAMA

D.O.B: 15-06-1921 D.O.D: 15-03-2014

Your life was a blessing your memory a treasure, you are loved beyond words & missed beyond measure.

Inserted by: Family Members & Loved Ones

(S/2122/D0032)

Parupalli Uday Shankar, Subhadra & Kashyap.

REMENBRANCE

PARUPALLI SUSHUMNA

DOB: 02-12-1983 DOD: 15-06-2011

You have always kept the family tied with love, care and affection. We pray to almighty that he gives you eternal peace in return. Your place is in heaven. We love you Sushumna.

Inserted by:

Parupalli Uday Shankar, Subhadra & Kashyap.

(S/2122/D0032)

Family Members & Loved Ones

(S/2122/D0032)

SHORT TAKES

PHONE NOS. FOR NALA-RELATED GRIEVANCES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

City mayor Gadwal R. Vijayalakshmi on Monday provided her personal assistant Rajesh's phone number, 90300 66666, for people to register nala-related grievances, especially those relating to desilting of the drains. On Sunday animal husbandry minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav had provided the phone number of his PA, Pavan Kumar's phone number 98480 21665 to address nala-related issues.

The minister said on Monday that the GHMC had constituted a special committee headed by six superintendent engineers (SEs) in all the zones to address nala desilting and other related issues.

Apart from GHMC's official helpline number 040-21111111 and the MyGHMC application, citizens can register grievances related to drains on the following numbers: Secunderabad SE Anil Raj — 9989930374; Khairatabad SE Ratnakar — 9491642490; LB Nagar SE Ashok Reddy — 9849906733; Charminar SE Narsing Rao — 9704405314; Serilingampally SE Chinna Reddy — 9989930363 and; Kukatpally SE Shankar — 8978026758.

TECHIE BOOKED FOR SPREADING COVID FEAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

A chemical engineer was booked by Sultan Bazaar police for fear-mongering during a talk show on a channel. According to police, the case was booked based on a complaint filed by Director of Public Health Dr Srinivas Rao.

As per the complaint copy, the accused Paruchuri Mallik had participated in a television talk show and reportedly passed comments which were 'highly objectionable in nature' in terms of medical ethics.

"As his comments regarding the third wave might lead to panic among the general public and the man is not an expert to say that every house will see a death and the virus will destroy the body'. No institution/individual (globally) has any experience/scientific prediction regarding the impending third wave, its effects on families and children," he said in his complaint.

Sultan Bazaar police booked Mallik under Section 54 of Disaster Management Act and 505 (B) of the IPC.

MANY AP BORDER FUEL OUTLETS SHUT SHOP

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 14

Abnormal difference in diesel prices between AP and Karnataka/ Pondicherry is jolting fuel outlets in border areas as hundreds of outlets in AP are incurring huge losses. Many of them have closed shop following poor business due to a difference of Rs. six on a litre of diesel. Meanwhile, the vast difference in fuel price was directly benefiting mostly construction companies and other engineering sectors involved in government contract works.

This peculiar situation has been prevalent in the state for the past several years because of the difference of Value Added Taxes compared to neighbouring states.

Diesel price was ₹97.29 per litre in AP while ₹91.10 in Yanam of Puducherry and ₹92.97 in Karnataka on Monday. The fuel outlets in border areas of AP were unable to compete with Karnataka outlets while transporters and construction companies prefer to purchase from Karnataka outlets in Rayalseema region and Yanam outlets for ongoing projects in other parts of the state. The companies reportedly quote tenders about purchase of fuel from AP outlets but procure unofficially from other states and stand to benefit by more than 12 per cent.

Prasad, an analyst, observed that about 35 per cent of the budget should be spent on fuel in various forms, digging machinery, construction and transportation.

An outlet dealer from the borders of Madakasira area lamented that the business was not even to the level of petty shops in rural areas.

"We need to pay at least ₹15000 towards salaries of workers", he said.



Rainwater gets accumulated in trenches dug for the construction of flyover at Saidabad. However, the civic authorities have not fenced the area properly. — P. SURENDRA

Heavy rains for next four days likely: IMD

Highest rainfall in city was registered at Jeedimetla

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Parts of the state including its capital city witnessed light spells of rain on Monday. According to the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDPS), the highest rainfall in the state was witnessed at Urlugunda in Suryapet district, which received 34.8 mm of rainfall till 8 pm.

Similarly, in the city the highest rainfall was registered at Jeedimetla, with 13 mm of rainfall.

Owing to the low intensity of rainfall, no incident of inundation or road blockages was reported with the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's (GHMC) disaster management wing.

However, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) forecast heavy rains for the next four days. In its warning, the IMD stated, "Thunderstorms accompanied by lightning are very likely to occur at isolated places in many districts of Telangana state."

According to a report by Skymet (a private weather forecasting agency), "A low-pressure area earlier formed over the Bay of Bengal on June 11 now lies over coastal Odisha and adjoining parts of West Bengal and Jharkhand. Wind pattern in association with



Beneficiaries face difficulty in reaching the registration counter to get Covid vaccine as rainwater clogged the premises at the Musheerabad Government school in Hyderabad, on Monday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The government's initiative to vaccinate high-risk groups has successfully completed its 18-day drive against coronavirus in all the 31 centers in GHMC jurisdiction.

With 32, 150 persons

has its reach over several parts of Bihar, Chhattisgarh, and East Uttar Pradesh. Wind pattern in association with

getting vaccinated on Monday, the total number of people taking the jab stood at 5,46,071.

Those coming for the jab at Government High School in Musheerabad faced inconvenience, as rain water was stagnated in the premises.

One of those who turned up Hamsav-

iamma, said "this is how they arrange. What if we slip and fall. The authorities should not everything lightly."

Meanwhile, GHMC stated that on Monday, they had distributed 71,120 food packets, taking the overall tally from May 13 to June 14 to 21,93,695.

the low pressure is influencing weather as far as East Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Telangana state.

Southwest monsoon has made an early advance to all these states and is in the process of covering the remaining parts."

Raid at gambling den, 23 arrested

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD JUN 14

As many as 23 individuals were booked and their vehicles were also seized following a raid at a gambling house by the South Zone Task Force police on Sunday night. Police officials seized cash, 19 mobiles and playing cards from their possession.

According to the police,

the place was located near Asha Talkies, wherein the organisers, identified as Ajay and Jaweed, had called people and engaged them in illegal card games.

"The raid was conducted following a tip-off from a reliable source. The accused included those working for social media news channels," said the South Zone Task Force officials.

In a letter to the

Child rights panel seeks better medicare for kids

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The Telangana State Commission for Protection of Child Rights has urged the state health department to ensure availability of infrastructure and facilities for paediatric and neo-natal care, amid a speculation that a third wave of Covid-19 would badly affect children.

The state government is urged to ensure there is adherence to all protocols — in letter and spirit — by the departments of women and child, and juvenile wel-

fare, education, BC, SC, ST & minority, panchayat raj, and municipal administration in protecting children in the state.

The chairman of the commission urged the Telangana state government to formulate a responsive communication mechanism for tribal, rural, and urban areas to facilitate appropriate referral facilities for needy patients.

itself against any disease. Monoclonal antibody cocktail injection has come as a blessing in disguise to Covid19 patients, going by the marked improvement in their condition without any need for hospitalisation.

The antibody cocktail drug being administered to the patients now is a combination of two injections known as casirivimab and imdevimab, which are distributed by popular drug firm Cipla.

The antibody cocktail can be administered for

adult patients with mild to moderate symptoms if they are at high risk of developing severe Covid19 infection, said Dr MCS Reddy, consultant physician at Apollo Hospitals in Nellore, a designated Covid Hospital.

Dr Reddy said doctors gave the cocktail injection to 10 patients at their hospital in Nellore and all are doing fine sans complications.

One of the beneficiaries

is the mother of a senior official. The injection was administered to the 70-year-old woman with comorbidities on June 3, shortly after she was detected Covid-positive. She was tested negative by June 8.

all the 10 patients were treated on a daycare basis and no side-effect has been noticed.

Dr Reddy said the therapy would reduce chances of hospitalization by 70 per cent vis-a-vis patients

with mild to moderate Covid19 symptoms.

Patients who were given the cocktail antibody injections do not require hospitalization and symptomatic relief was noted in all patients within 48 hours.

The drug, which costs around ₹70,000, is recommended for all high-risk patients aged above 60 years and not in need of oxygen therapy. In addition, this can also be given to patients below 60

BIG RELIEF Monoclonal antibody cocktail injection works on Covid patients

Ray of hope for Covid-19 patients

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 14

The newly introduced monoclonal antibody cocktail injection has come as a blessing in disguise to Covid19 patients, going by the marked improvement in their condition without any need for hospitalisation.

Doctors administering the drug said antibodies are proteins that the body generates to defend

ISSUE GRADING

CRITERIA, INTER BOARD TOLD

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) was on Monday told to decide upon the criteria based on which results of the Intermediate second year students can be declared.

It was also directed by the state government to issue orders promoting all Intermediate first year students into the second year.

In its orders, the higher education department directed the BIE secretary to "prepare and submit pre-determined objective criteria for declaration of Class XII results after due consultations, for approval of the government."

After cancelling the exams for both first and second year Intermediate students because of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government had said that grades that need to be issued to these students will have to take into consideration their academic performance over the past year.

The orders from the higher education department, however, did not set any time frame for BIE to follow these instructions.

MANUU TO HOLD ONLINE URDU SCIENCE CONG

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

The School of Sciences of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) has invited papers for 5th National Urdu Science Congress which will be held online on July 14 and 15.

The theme of the Urdu Science Congress is 'Impact of Technology on Multidisciplinary Scientific Research'. According to Prof. Syed Najamul Hasan of the department of mathematics and convener of the congress, those intending to present their papers are required to submit a structured abstract of not more than 300 words in Urdu through the email to nscu2021.manuu@gmail.com latest by June 25. Information of acceptance will be communicated by June 30.

The sub themes include health, agricultural and environmental sciences, pure and applied chemistry, physics and Mathematics, ICT in sciences and communicating sciences.

6 who stole 272 rental cars held, 13 cars missing

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 14

Explaining the modus operandi, Cyberabad police commissioner VC Sajjanar said, "Naresh takes cars on rental basis from travel agencies. He used to pay rent for 2-3 months. Later he used to sell or mortgage those cars. He would tell potential buyers that he had bought them from government agencies and banks, which had seized them due to non-payment of loans, and sometimes through auctions."

Sajjanar added that of 272 cars, 205 were forcefully taken away by the original owners. Of the remaining, one was recovered by Tappachabutra police station and 50 by RC Puram Police and 13 cars are yet to be recovered.

AP HIGH COURT CANCELS APPOINTMENT OF GAJAPATI RAJU AS MANSAS HEAD

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 14

Andhra Pradesh High Court has struck down appointment of Sanchaita Gajapati Raju as chairperson of Maharaja Alak Narayan Society of Arts and Science (Mansas) and Simhachalam temple trusts.

Further, the high court rejected former minister

and TD politburo member P. Ashok Gajapati Raju as chairman of both these trusts.

While cancelling GO No. 74 issued in March 2020 appointing Sanchaita Gajapati Raju, High Court judge Justice N. Venkataramana upheld the appointment of Ashok Gajapati Raju made in 2016.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA PANCHAYAT RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT E-Procurement Short Tender Notice NIT No: 22 to 26/2021-22 Dt: 10-06-2021. No. of works (05). Name of the Work: Construction of HLBs under MGSY-III Batch-II (2020-21) in Kamareddy & Nizamabad Districts. Total FCV: 1401.08 lakhs Tenders 2nd call invited undersigned. Tenders can download the tender schedules from 14-06-2021 10.30 a.m. to 21-06-2021 and last date of tender submission is (7) working days from date of publishing of each NIT in online. All further details can be seen on the online e-procurement market place i.e. www.tender.telangana.gov.in . Sd/- Regional Officer, PRED, Nizamabad	
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Public Notice	
This is for information that over an extent 15.783 Ha (39.0 Acres) Road metal Mine of Situated Survey No.121 of Yacharam Village and Mandal, Ranga Reddy District being developed by M/s.Telangana State Mineral Development Corporation Limited, has been accorded Environmental Clearance by State Level Environment Impact Assessment Authority (SEIAA) vide EIA notification S.O.1533 dated 14th September, 2006.	
Copy of the said environmental clearance is available with Telangana State Pollution Control board and may also be seen in the website of SEIAA website: tspcb.cgg.gov.in .	
Sd/- Dr. G. Malsur R.O. No.: 1853-PP/CL/AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22 Date: 14-06-2021 Vice-Chairman and Managing Director	

NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF DESIGN ANDHRA PRADESH (An autonomous institute of National Importance under the DPTI, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India) E& ECE Building, Ground Floor, ANU Campus, Guntur - 522510 web: www.nid.ac.in	

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SHORT TAKES

BADAL SEEKS NEW DATE TO APPEAR BEFORE SIT

Chandigarh, June 14: Former Punjab chief minister Parkash Singh Badal on Monday asked the SIT, probing the 2015 Kotkapura police firing incident, to reschedule the date of his appearance before it, saying he is not keeping good health.

Reiterating his intent and commitment to fully cooperate with the law and "complete faith" in the judiciary, Badal, in his communication to the SIT chairman, said that he has been advised complete bed rest for ten days by doctors.

The SIT had summoned the Shiromani Akali Dal stalwart to appear before it with "relevant records" on Wednesday at a rest house in Mohali on June 16.

Earlier in the day, a SAD spokesperson had said Badal would not appear before the special investigation team (SIT) on June 16 due to health reasons.

In his two-page response to the summons from the SIT, Badal said, "as soon as my health gets better I will be available to join the investigation as per law, at my current place of residence (MLA flat in Chandigarh)."

TOOLKIT CASE: COURT STAYS FIR AGAINST PATRA

RABINDRA NATH CHOWDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 14

The Chhattisgarh high court on Monday stayed the FIR filed against BJP national vice-president and former chief minister Raman Singh and party spokesperson Sambit Patra in a police station in Raipur last month in connection with the alleged 'fake' toolkit of Congress.

In his interim order, Justice Narendra Kumar Vyas stayed the investigation into the case by the police and sought a reply from the Chhattisgarh government.

The FIR was registered based on a complaint lodged by Akash Sharma, Chhattisgarh unit president of National Students Union of India (NSUI) in Raipur on May 19.

Singh had tagged the purported toolkit of Congress in a Twitter post. The toolkit was denied by Congress.

An FIR was also registered against Patra in the same case. Singh and Patra had earlier moved the Chhattisgarh high court seeking to quash the FIR.

Filing the petition in the Chhattisgarh high court, the counselor of the petitioners Vivek Sharma argued that "The basis on which the cases were registered in the toolkit issue is already in the public domain and the petitioners only commented on the existing digital records. So there does not remain any reason against them any probe or legal proceedings."

MAHA ASSURES NOT TO ARREST PARAM BIR

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC MUMBAI, JUNE 14

The government of Maharashtra on Monday once again assured the Bombay High Court that it will not take any coercive action against former Mumbai police chief Param Bir Singh till June 22, in the case registered against him under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act.

Senior counsel Darius Khambata, representing the Maharashtra government, told the high court that his previous statement on protecting the senior IPS officer from any "coercive action" in the case will be extended till June 22. He told the court that the police will not arrest Singh till this date.

Following Khambata's statement, a bench of Justices PB Varale and S.P. Tavade adjourned the hearing till June 22 on the pleas filed by Singh seeking quashing of an FIR registered against him by the Thane Police under the Atrocities Act and challenging preliminary inquiries initiated against him by the state government.

Police inspector Bhimrao Ghadge has filed a complaint against Singh under the Atrocities Act, in April this year when he was attached to the Akola police station. The Akola police had registered a Zero FIR (mode of lodging FIR in any police station irrespective of the offence committed in that area or any other area) and it was later transferred to the Thane police for investigation.



Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal offers prayers at Lord Krishna temple during his visit ahead of the Gujarat 2022 Assembly elections, in Ahmedabad on Monday.

— PTI

AAP will contest all seats in 2022 Gujarat elections

● KEJRIWAL BLAMED The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) will contest all seats in Gujarat in the 2022 Assembly polls, the party's national convener and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said here on Monday as he visited a Vaishnavite temple in the city and blamed the ruling BJP and opposition Congress for the "plight" of people but avoided a direct attack on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union home minister Amit Shah on their home turf.

rent situation" of Gujarat, Kejriwal said the common people were left to fend for themselves during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Irrespective of tall claims, farmers in Gujarat are committing suicide, government-run schools and hospitals are in shambles and traders are living under fear, he alleged.

"People want to know why the electricity costs are so high in Gujarat when it's free in Delhi? If government-run schools and hospitals are top-class in Delhi then why are they in a bad shape here? Now, the time has come to change Gujarat," the AAP leader said.

When asked if he was proposing to implement the "Delhi model" in Gujarat, Kejriwal said the model of development will be decided by the six crore people of Gujarat.

Queried about his strategy to take on Modi and Amit Shah on their home turf of Gujarat, Kejriwal said the AAP will fight for the people of Gujarat and bring a change "instead of fighting against any party or an individual".

After the presser, Kejriwal formally inaugurated the AAP's office also located on Ashram Road.

This was the second visit of Kejriwal to Gujarat. He had last visited Surat in February after his party emerged as the main opposition after the civic body elections in its maiden fight. The AAP had made inroads into Gujarat politics recently by winning 27 seats in the 120-member Surat Municipal Corporation where it is the main opposition party.

The AAP will contest each and every seat in the 2022 Gujarat Assembly elections. The AAP is a credible alternative to the BJP and Congress. Gujarat will change soon," he said.

The Gujarat House has 182 seats. "Gujarat is suffering because of this friendship and alliance between the BJP and the Congress. The BJP ruled this state for the last 27 years. I heard people saying that Congress is in the pocket of the BJP. Both the BJP and Congress are the same. This must stop," he said.

Kejriwal said the Congress and the BJP have been in power for most of the period after Independence but "people are witness to what they have done. Farmers are committing suicide even after 75 years". During the press conference, the former head of a Gujarati news channel, Isudan Gadhvi, joined the AAP in the presence of Kejriwal.

Blaming the BJP and the Congress for the "cur-

Roy likely to get key post in Trinamul & RS seat too

May soon be appointed as the national vice president of the Trinamul

RAJIB CHOWDHURY | DC KOLKATA, JUNE 14

dent of the TMC, a post he held in the BJP till four days ago, in view of his nationwide network and the party's ambition to expand in other states and become a formidable player in the national politics ahead of the Lok Sabha elections in 2024.

On June 11, when Roy rejoined the TMC, Banerjee indicated that he would be given an equivalent post to what he had in his political acumen.

According to sources, Roy, who has not got any post since his comeback, is expected to be appointed as the national vice presi-

then.

TMC insiders revealed that Roy, who held a one-to-one meeting with the CM's MP nephew and newly appointed national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee on Sunday, would start working at the national level once his appointment to the new post is done.

Later, the former railway minister is likely to be fielded by the TMC as its candidate in one of the two Rajya Sabha seats which fell vacant after Dinesh Trivedi's resignation as an Upper House

MP in February and switch to the BJP and election of Manas Bhuniya as an MLA in the West Bengal Assembly polls.

In that case, Roy, who earlier served as a Rajya Sabha MP also, would have to resign as an MLA which he has become for the first time. The BJP is however planning to target him legally over his defection to the TMC as a legislator. Roy said that his party would take a decision about making him a candidate for the Rajya Sabha.

A senior TMC leader pointed out on anonymity that the double promotion to Roy would also send a signal to the BJP about how much importance it gives to an efficient functionary like him with rewards.

When Roy was in the BJP, he apparently desired to be a Rajya Sabha member and get a cabinet berth also apart from holding a party post. But his wish was ignored then. For the second Rajya Sabha seat, the TMC has plans to make Yashwant Sinha its candidate, sources claimed.

NITI REPORT ON GENDER EQUALITY PUTS C'GARH ON TOP

New Delhi, June 14: Chhattisgarh has been declared the top-performing state in India on the gender equality parameter of the Sustainable Development Goals, according to the NITI Aayog's SDG India Index report 2021.

The index, developed in collaboration with the UN in India, measures the progress at the national and sub-national level.

It tracks the progress of all states and Union Territories on 115 indicators aligned with the National Indicator Framework (NIF) of the Ministry of Statistics and Programme Implementation.

Last year, Chhattisgarh scored 43 points on the gender quality parameter and was ranked seventh in India. This year, it scored 61 and topped the chart.

The report said the improvement in Chhattisgarh ranking was seen due to a balanced sex ratio at birth, improvement in equal gender pay over the years which has helped it surpass past records, lower crime rate against women, lower domestic violence against, among others.

Other SDG parameters where Chhattisgarh ranked in the top 10 (2020-21) are Clean water and Sanitation, Decent work and Economic Growth and Reduced Inequality.

The Index for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evaluates progress of states and union territories on social, economic and environmental parameters.

Overall, Kerala retained the top rank in NITI Aayog's Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) evaluation of 2020-21, while Bihar was adjudged the worst-performer.

Scribe who took on liquor mafia 'killed in accident'

Pratapgarh (UP), June 14: The Uttar Pradesh Police on Monday registered a case of murder after a journalist of a private news channel, who had recently reported on the liquor mafia, died here in what appeared to be a road accident.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav demanded a high-level inquiry into the death, terming it "mysterious", while West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC leader Mamata Banerjee expressed shock over the demise of the ABP journalist, saying "we are unable to save lives who are working tirelessly towards unfolding the truth".

"Sulabh Srivastava had gone for news coverage to the Kotwali Lalganj area on Sunday and was returning home late in the night. He was found seriously injured near the Sukhpal Nagar brick kiln and was taken to the district hospital, where doctors declared him dead," Superintendent of Police

Akash Tomar told reporters.

His motorcycle rammed into a pole near the brick kiln under the Kotwali police station area in Pratapgarh district, police said.

The 42-year-old reporter had recently run a news story against the liquor mafia, and had on June 12 written a letter to the Prayagraj additional director general of police seeking security.

His wife, Renuka Srivastava, in her police complaint said her husband was being threatened for doing a story against the liquor mafia and the Prayagraj additional director general of police

police was informed about it in writing but no effective action was taken.

"Because of this, unknown mafia elements murdered my husband on Sunday night while he was returning from Lalganj after news coverage," she said in her complaint.

The murder case, registered on the basis of the complaint, is against unknown persons and investigations have started, the superintendent of police said, adding that the last rites were performed in Allahabad after postmortem.

Samajwadi Party president Yadav in a tweet in Hindi said, "The mysterious death of a TV reporter in an alleged accident is extremely sad."

"The BJP government in this case should constitute a high-level probe, and tell the family members and the public that despite the apprehension of murder by the liquor mafia expressed by the reporter, why he was not provided security."

— PTI

Akhilesh Yadav

police was informed about it in writing but no effective action was taken.

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Samajwadi Party president Yadav in a tweet in Hindi said, "The mysterious death of a TV reporter in an alleged accident is extremely sad."

— PTI

Cattle smuggling: One killed in Raj.

Jaipur, June 14: A man was lynched while another

injury was suffered by a group of people who attacked them on suspicion of smuggling cattle in Rajasthan's Chittorgarh district, police said on Monday.

The local men alleged that they were smuggling cows and attacked them. However, the animals were oxen.

The injured man has stated that he and Babu purchased the oxen from Begun town of Chittorgarh and were taking them to their village for farming work, he said.

The officer said that Pintu could not produce any document pertaining to the purchase and the animal trader has been called for verification of his claim.

A case of murder has been registered and stern action will be taken, Additional Director General, Crime, Ravi Meherda said in Jaipur.

Inspector General of Police, Udaipur range has also reached Chittorgarh, he added.

— PTI

BJYM LEADER LET OFF WITH FINE FOR FLOUTING COVID NORMS

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JUNE 14

A Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) leader in a Madhya Pradesh town was let off with a mere fine of ₹10,000 without being booked under Epidemic Diseases Act for flouting Covid norms by the local administration, inviting criticism from Congress.

Katni district BJYM president Mridul Dwivedi was penalised ₹10,000 by the local tehsildar for celebrating his birthday in public by throwing Covid norms to wind.

The local administration swung into action when a video showing him celebrating his birthday near a temple in intervening night of June 13-14.

"Babu Bhil and Pintu Bhil, both hailing from Jhabua district of Madhya Pradesh, were critically injured in the attack and were rushed to a hospital where Babu Bhil succumbed to injuries," Superintendent of Police Deepak Bhargav said.

He said that 7-8 persons have been detained in

connection with the incident.

Circle Officer Begun Rajendra Singh said the victims were taking three oxen in a van.

The local men alleged that they were smuggling cows and attacked them. However, the animals were oxen.

The injured man has stated that he and Babu purchased the oxen from Begun town of Chittorgarh and were taking them to their village for farming work, he said.

His supporters who attended the birthday bash were sent to home quarantine for a week.

In the video clip, the BJYM leader was seen cutting the birthday cake and celebrating the occasion along with his supporters who were seen without masks.

The BJYM leader has escaped provisions of Epidemic Diseases Act, violation of which is a punishable offence, for being leader of ruling BJP, MP Prakash Congress Committee vice-president and former minister Raja Pateria alleged.

Such leniency by the local administration on the ruling party leader would hit the ongoing battle against the pandemic, he said.

"A person can be booked under section 188 IPC for causing danger to human beings, under Epidemic Diseases Act and is liable for six months in jail and a fine of ₹1000", noted lawyer in Gwalior bench of MP high court Pawan Raghuvaran said.

KERALA | NEWSLETTER Reports of huge loot of forest wealth along Western Ghats surface**Trouble mounts for new Pinarayi govt**

PREM CHANDRAN KOCHI, JUNE 14

The shine of the highly trumpeted "second coming" of the Pinarayi Vijayan-led Left Democratic Front (LDF) government in Kerala is lost within weeks of its assumption of power, following exposé of a massive loot of forest and other governmental wealth along the fabled Western Ghats and beyond.

The Kerala high court is seized of the matter though there is pessimism as to how this case will be taken to its logical conclusion.

The loot was facilitated by a state government order issued last year in the backdrop of the Covid-induced paralysis of life. Months later, the GO was withdrawn. The suspected plan was to provide a win-

towd of opportunity to facilitate the loot with strong political backing. Communist parties, the CPI and the CPI, are largely infested with corrupt elements as they handled power in the state for long years, meaning half of the past 70 years.

The CPI ministers handled the revenue and forest departments when the massive felling of prized trees from forest and parambooke lands took place.

The perceived weak organisational strength of the Congress, its ageing leadership that has now been changed, as also substantial support from Muslim and Christian</p

SHORT TAKES
**MAN, 25, DIES
 AFTER DOWNTOWN
 AUSTIN SHOOTING**

Austin (US), June 14: A man has died from his injuries following a mass shooting on a crowded downtown Austin street that left more than a dozen people injured, police said Sunday.

Douglas John Kantor, 25, who was hospitalised with critical gunshot wounds following the early Saturday morning shooting, died Sunday at 12:01 pm, the Austin Police Department said in a news release that also was confirmed by Lt Brian Moon. Interim Police Chief Joseph Chacon said the shooting happened around 1:30 am Saturday on a street packed with bars and barricaded off from vehicle traffic. He said investigators believe the shooting began as a dispute between two parties.

**PAK COPS DENIED
 FREE BURGERS.
 DETAIN 19 STAFF**

Lahore, June 14: A group of police officers in Pakistan flipped over when a takeaway joint refused to hand over free burgers, detaining all 19 staff at the branch.

Workers at the trendy chain Johnny & Jugnu in the eastern city of Lahore were rounded up and held for seven hours overnight on Saturday, leaving behind unattended kitchens and hungry customers.

"This is not the first time something like this has happened with our kitchen teams at our restaurant, but we want to make sure this is the last," the fast food chain said in a statement published on social media. It started when staff at the restaurant refused a "request from a very high profile special guest".

Restaurant staff said that most of those arrested were young people.

**B'DESH ACTRESS
 CRIES RAPE, ASKS
 PM FOR JUSTICE**

Dhaka, June 14: Prominent Bangladeshi film actress Shamsunnahar Smriti, popularly known as Pori Moni, has sought justice from Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina in a Facebook post alleging that a businessman attempted to rape and murder her at a club here.

After making the allegations in a Facebook post without naming the suspect on Sunday, she held a media briefing later in the night and accused businessman Nasir U. Mahmood, entertainment and cultural affairs secretary of Dhaka Boat Club, of assaulting her, *bdnews24* reported.

The 28-year-old actress alleged that Nasir assaulted her at the club in Dhaka's Uttara four days ago. The businessman could not be reached immediately for comments, the news website said. A founding member of the Dhaka Boat Club, Nasir is involved with real estate business.

**TWO AMERICANS
 STAND TRIAL IN
 GHOSN'S ESCAPE**

Tokyo, June 14: Two Americans suspected of helping former Nissan chairman Carlos Ghosn flee Japan while he was out on bail go on trial Monday in Tokyo.

Michael Taylor, a former Green Beret, and his son Peter Taylor are suspected in the Houdini-like operation where Ghosn hid in a box for music equipment that was loaded onto a private jet that flew him to Lebanon, via Turkey in December 2019. Unlike the US, Lebanon has no extradition treaty with Japan.

Ghosn has French, Lebanese and Brazilian citizenship. The Taylors were arrested in Massachusetts in May last year and extradited in March on charges of helping a criminal. The authorities say Ghosn hired the Taylors for at least \$1.3 million. Ghosn led Japanese automaker Nissan Motor Co. for two decades before his arrest in November 2018. He was charged with falsifying securities reports in under-reporting his compensation and of breach of trust in using Nissan money for personal gain.

Ghosn says he is innocent. At Monday's court session, the Tokyo District Prosecutors will outline the allegations against the Taylors before Presiding Judge Hideo Nirei and two other judges. The Taylors will also likely make statements. They have been held in a Tokyo detention centre since arriving in Japan and were not available for comment.

Peter Taylor said in a statement to a Massachusetts court in January that he met Ghosn in 2019 in Japan to pitch his digital marketing company to repair Ghosn's tarnished reputation.

Will better India ties, says Bennett

Israeli foreign minister Yair Lapid says he hopes to welcome PM Modi to Israel soon



Naftali Bennett

upgradation of diplomatic ties next year:

"Thank you Mr. Prime Minister @narendramodi, I look forward to working with you to further develop the unique and warm relations" between the two democracies, Bennett, the 49-year-old leader of the right-wing Yamina party who on Sunday became the new premier ending Benjamin Netanyahu's 12-year hold on power, said this while responding to Prime Minister Modi's congratulatory tweet.

Prime Minister Modi earlier congratulated Bennett on being sworn in as Israel's new prime minister and said he looked forward to meeting him and deepening the strategic partnership between the two countries as they celebrate 30 years of the

Alternate Prime Minister and foreign minister Yair Lapid also said that Israel's new government will work to "advance strategic relations" with India. "I look forward to working together to advance the strategic relations between our countries and hope to welcome you to Israel soon," Lapid tweeted on Monday in response to a congratulatory message from External Affairs Minister S. Jaishankar.

Jaishankar earlier in a tweet congratulated his new Israeli counterpart, "Congratulate APM & FM @yairlapid of Israel on his appointment. Look forward to working closely together to further advance our multifaceted strategic partnership," Jaishankar wrote. Lapid, the head of the Yesh Atid party, would take over premiership in September 2023 under a

power-sharing deal with Bennett, serving for two years till the end of the term. In his tweets, Modi also conveyed his "profound gratitude" to Netanyahu, whose long tenure as Israeli prime minister ended on Sunday.

Modi thanked Netanyahu for his "personal attention" to India-Israel strategic partnership. "As you complete your successful tenure as the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, I convey my profound gratitude for your leadership and personal attention to India-Israel strategic partnership," Netanyahu, "Modi tweeted.

The personal chemistry between the two leaders has often been talked about in the Israeli media and Prime Minister Modi got a royal welcome during his historic trip to the Jewish state in July 2017. — PTI

Ramallah, June 14: Benjamin Netanyahu's ousting as prime minister of Israel closes the chapter on one of the "worst periods" of Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Palestinian prime minister Mohammed Shtayeh said on Monday.

"The departure of the Israeli ex-prime minister Benjamin Netanyahu after 12 years in power marks the end of one of the worst periods in the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," Shtayeh said ahead of the Palestinian Authority's weekly cabinet meeting.

But Shtayeh also said he was under no illusions about the new government

or its likelihood of advancing a peace agreement with the Palestinians.

"We do not see this new government as any less bad than the previous one, and we condemn the announcements of the new Prime Minister Naftali Bennett in support of Israeli settlements," the Palestinian premier said, referring to Israeli construction activity in the occupied West Bank.

"The new government has no future if it does not take into consideration the future of the Palestinian people and their legitimate rights," Shtayeh added.

— AFP

PAK SC STOPS DEMOLITION OF DHARAMSHALA

Islamabad, June 14: Pakistan's Supreme Court has ordered the Karachi administration to stop the demolition of a Hindu dharamshala and leasing out the heritage property located in the heart of the city.

A three-judge bench led by Chief Justice of Pakistan Gulzar Ahmed issued the order on Friday while hearing a case regarding the implementation of a 2014 judgment on minorities' rights. During the hearing, Dr Ramesh Kumar a co-opted member of a one-man commission on minorities stated that the property at Saddar Town-I in Karachi measuring about 716 square yards was a dharamshala, *The Express Tribune* reported on Sunday.

Kumar also placed before the court photographs of the building. He said the Evacuee Trust Property Board (ETPB) leased out the property to some private person, who was demolishing the dharamshala to construct a commercial plaza. Kumar said the ETPB chairman contended that the Sindh High Court (SHC) has allowed the ETPB to lease the place out, have it demolished and raise a new building there.

— PTI

BIDEN-PUTIN MEET UNNERVE SOME US ALLIES

Kyiv, June 14: Central and Eastern European nations are anxious about the coming summit meeting between US President Joe Biden and Russian President Vladimir Putin, wary of what they see as hostile intentions from the Kremlin.

Some in the countries that once were part of the Soviet Union or the Moscow-led Warsaw Pact during the Cold War worry that Washington could scale down support for its allies in the region in a bid to secure a more stable and predictable relationship with Russia.

"I think there have been doubts as to the resoluteness of the present administration to face Russian aggressive actions in a decisive manner," said Witold Rodkiewicz, chief specialist on Russian politics at Warsaw's Center of Eastern Studies, a state-funded think tank that advises the Polish government. Both Russia and the US have sought to moderate expectations about Wednesday's summit in Geneva, ruling out any breakthroughs amid the worst tensions between the two powers.



Joe Biden

AT NATO, BIDEN READY TO TALK CHINA, RUSSIA

Brussels, June 14: President Joe Biden makes his entrance at a Nato summit aiming to consult European allies on efforts to counter provocative actions by China and Russia while highlighting the US commitment to the 30-country alliance that was frequently maligned by predecessor Donald Trump.

The summit Monday comes as Biden tries to rally allies for greater coordination in checking China and Russia, two adversaries whose actions on economic and national security fronts have become the chief foreign policy concerns in the early going of the Biden presidency.

Biden will use his time at the summit to underscore the US commitment to Article 5 of the alliance charter, which spells out that an attack on one member is an attack on all.

— AP

Suu Kyi on trial but critics say charges bogus

Bangkok, June 14: Myanmar's ousted leader Aung San Suu Kyi was set to go on trial Monday on charges that many observers have criticised as attempt by the military junta that deposed her to delegitimise her democratic election and cripple her political future.

Suu Kyi's prosecution poses the greatest challenge for the 75-year-old and her National League for Democracy party since February's military coup, which prevented them from taking office for a second five-year term following last year's landslide election victory.

The army seized power on Feb. 1 before the new lawmakers could be seated, and arrested Suu Kyi, who held the post of special counsellor, and President Win Myint, along with other members of her government and ruling party. The coup reversed years of slow progress toward more democracy for Myanmar.

Human Rights Watch charged that the allegations being heard in a special court in the capital, Naypyitaw, are "bogus and politically motivated" with the intention of nullifying the victory and preventing Suu Kyi from running for office again.

"This trial is clearly the opening salvo in an overall strategy to neuter Suu Kyi and the National



Luxury yachts are moored at the Dubai Marina Beach in the Gulf emirate. Charter companies said they have seen an increased interest in yachting after Coronavirus measures eased, especially among those who want to spend time with friends and family.

— AFP

UK curbs may lift by July 19 over Delta variant case spike

Novavax shot 90% effective

London, June 14: UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson is expected to announce a four-week delay to an end to all legal lockdown restrictions in the country when he makes a statement later on Monday in relation to so-called "Freedom Day," which was set for June 21.

The last and fourth stage of the lockdown roadmap is now expected around July 19 instead amid a worrying spike in cases of the Delta variant, which experts fear will result in greater hospitalisations in the coming weeks. On Sunday, the UK recorded 7,490 new cases of Covid-19 and eight deaths, with the seven-day average for cases up 49 per cent compared with the seven days before.

Scientists and health officials have called for a delay in lifting all social distance norms in order to allow the vaccination programme to gain further ground, with second doses for the older age groups and first doses for the younger population cohorts of over-25s now eligible for jabs.

However, concern was significant enough that the US National Security Council held multiple meetings to discuss the situation, it said. The Biden administration has discussed the situation with the French government and their own experts at the Department of Energy. There is no reaction yet in Beijing by the Chinese government or officials on this report, it said. The media report said despite the alarming notification from Framatome, the French company, the Biden administration believes the facility is not yet at a "crisis level".

The scenario could put the US in a complicated situation should the leak continue or become more severe without being fixed, the report said.

While US officials have deemed the situation does not currently pose a severe safety threat to workers at the plant or Chinese public, it is unusual that a foreign company would unilaterally reach out to the American government for help when its Chinese state-owned partner is yet to acknowledge a problem exists.

The scenario could put

the UK Prime Minister is also likely to announce a drive to accelerate the vaccination programme. The extension will be put to a House of Commons vote this month and could trigger a backbench rebellion from Johnson's own Conservative Party MPs.

NEPAL PLANT TO CUT DOWN INDIA OXYGEN IMPORT

Kathmandu, June 14: Nepal's Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Monday virtually laid the foundation stone of Nepal's first-ever liquefied oxygen plant in the Lumbini Province which will help cater to growing domestic demand and reduce oxygen imported from India, amidst the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic.

The plant is being set up at Simrjhawa of Rupandehi district in the province. The country has been facing a shortage of oxygen and oxygen cylinders as the second wave of Covid-19 hit Nepal. Prime Minister Oli noted while laying the foundation stone from his official residence Baluwatar. It was an unprecedented event of happiness at a time when the country had been reeling under an acute crisis of oxygen, he noted.

The government was compelled to import oxygen and other essential medical equipment, he said. "Later, the government thought that it would be appropriate to set up an oxygen plant on its own," he added.

— PTI

expected to blame the delay on the third wave of Covid-19 infections and say it will allow millions of more people to be vaccinated and more to receive a second jab by the end of July. As well as a delay in lifting restrictions to allow scientists more time to monitor the Delta variant,

away, however. The company says it plans to seek authorisation for the shots in the US, Europe and elsewhere by the end of September and be able to produce up to 100 million doses a month by then. "Many of our first doses will go to ... low- and middle-income countries, and that was the goal to begin with," Novavax Chief Executive Stanley Erck told *The Associated Press*. While more than half of the US population has had at least one Covid-19 vaccine dose, less than one percent of people in the developing world have had one shot, according to Our World In Data.

— AP

US checking leak at China N-plant

Beijing, June 14: The US government is assessing a report of a leak at a Chinese nuclear power plant, after a French company that partly owns and helps to operate it warned of an "imminent radiological threat", a media report said on Monday.

The warning included an accusation that the Chinese safety authority was raising the acceptability limits for radiation detection outside the Taishan Nuclear Power Plant in Guangdong province in order to avoid having to shut it down, the CNN quoted a letter from the French company to the US Department of Energy.

There is no reaction yet in Beijing by the Chinese government or officials on this report, it said. The media report said despite the alarming notification from Framatome, the French company, the Biden administration believes the facility is not yet at a "crisis level".

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quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	52,551.53
Nifty 50	15,811.90
S&P 500*	4,237.13
Dollar (₹)	73.27
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.25
Euro (₹)	88.76
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	47,705 ▼464
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	73.18
IN 10-Yr bond yield*	6.004
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.484
* As of 8:30 PM IST	0.022

Government clips powers of cashew council

The government suspended the power of the Cashew Export Promotion Council to issue or renew RCMCs (registration-cum-membership certificate) for cashew kernels, cashewnut shell liquid and kardanol and authorised the Acpda for the same. However, RCMCs already issued by the council would remain valid for the rest of their validity period, the DGFT said in a public notice.

IOB Q4 profit rises more than 2-fold to ₹350 cr



Indian Overseas Bank reported a more than two-fold jump in net profit at Rs 349.77 crore in Q4 against Rs 143.79 crore in the year-ago quarter. Total income in Q4FY21 rose to Rs 6,073.80 crore against Rs 5,484.06 crore in Q4FY20. Provisions for bad loans and contingencies rose to Rs 1,380.46 crore from Rs 1,060.38 crore. For the full year, IOB reported a net profit of Rs 831.47 crore against a net loss of Rs 8,527.40 crore in 2019-20.

Palm oil imports jump 48% at 7.69 LT in May

India's import of palm oils rose by 48 per cent to 7,69,602 tonne in May this year against 4,00,506 tonne a year ago on higher shipments of crude palm oil, industry body Solvent Extractors Association (SEA) said. Total vegetable oil imports rose by 68 per cent to Rs 12,49 lakh tonne in May this year compared to 7,43 lakh tonne in May 2020. The share of palm oil is over 60 per cent in India's vegetable oil imports.

CAI cuts cotton output estimate to 356 L bales

The Cotton Association of India (CAI) reduced its cotton crop estimate for 2020-21 by 4 lakh bales to 356 lakh bales, due to lower output expected in southern and central zones. The crop estimate for the southern zone has been reduced by 3 lakh bales to 91.50 lakh bales. In Telangana, the estimates are lower by 3 lakh bales based on the data provided by the Telangana Cotton Millers and Traders Welfare Association.

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Shares tumble up to 25% intraday Hot Adani stocks turn freezing cold

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD with agency inputs MUMBAI, JUNE 14

Adani Group companies shares fell between 5 per cent and 25 per cent intraday on news that the National Securities Depository Ltd (NSDL) has frozen accounts of three foreign portfolio investors' (FPIs), which own over Rs 43,500 crore worth of shares in four of the group's firms.

According to reports, the market-cap of Adani Group Companies took a \$6-billion hit after media reports emerged about the suspension.

Group flagship Adani Enterprises lost 25 per cent as shares plunged to a low of Rs 1,201.10 on the BSE compared to the previous close at Rs 1,601.45. Later the stock recovered most of the day's losses to close at Rs 1,501.25, still down 6.26 per cent.

Adani Ports & Special Economic Zone ended the day with a loss of 8.3 per cent at Rs 768.70, after plunging 18.75 per cent to a low of Rs 881.50, compared to the previous close at Rs 838.80.

Adani Power and Adani Transmission closed 4.99 per cent and 5 per cent lower, respectively, as both stocks hit the 5 per cent lower circuit and remained locked till the close of the market.

Adani Green Energy, which has risen sharply since August last year and commands a higher market cap than even Adani



Enterprises at Rs 1,83,920 crore, fell 4.13 per cent.

Adani Total Gas fell 5 per cent and hit the lower circuit and was locked in the lower circuit till day's end. It has also risen sharply since mid-October and commands a market cap of Rs 1,69,871.17 crore.

Reports said that NSDL has frozen the accounts of Albulia Investment Fund, Cresta Fund and APMS Investment Fund due to insufficient disclosure of information regarding beneficial ownership.

The funds are based out of Mauritius and registered at the same address in Port Louis and the frozen accounts, as of May 31, won't be able to sell or buy new securities, reports said.

However, the Adani Group said it has written confirmation that accounts of three foreign funds that are among its top shareholders are not frozen and reports to the contrary are "blatantly erroneous and misleading". In identical filings to the stock exchange, some group companies said, "This is causing irreparable

loss of economic value to the investors at large and reputation of the group."

A sharp rally in the shares of Adani Group companies had added over \$40 billion to the wealth of Gautam Adani this year.

The quick surge in these stocks, largely held by overseas funds and with very little public float, had also led some analysts to flag the risks involved.

The group's stocks, especially Adani Total Gas, Adani Enterprises and Adani Transmission, "look extended," Bloomberg Intelligence analysts Gaurav Patankar and Nitin Chandra wrote in a June 10 note after analyzing technical indicators.

"Among the biggest foreign investors are a few Mauritius-based funds holding over 95% of assets in these companies," the analysts wrote. "Such concentrated positions, along with negligible onshore ownership, create asymmetric risk-reward as large investors conspicuously avoid Adani," they said.

SEBI SLAPS ₹15 CR FINES ON FRANKLIN BOSSSES, TRUSTEE

New Delhi, June 14: The Sebi on Monday imposed a penalty totalling Rs 15 crore on senior officials of Franklin Templeton AMC and its trustee for violating regulatory norms in the case of winding up six debt schemes in 2020.

A fine of Rs 3 crore has been levied on Franklin Templeton Trustee Services Pvt Ltd and Rs 2 crore each on Franklin Asset Management (India) Pvt Ltd president Sanjay Sapre and its chief investment officer Santosh Kamat, according to a Sebi order.

In addition, the regulator imposed a penalty of Rs 1.5 crore each on Kunal Agarwal, Sumit Gupta, Pallab Roy, Sachin Padwal Desai and Umesh Sharma, who were the fund managers at the time of violation, and Rs 50 lakh on Saurabh Gangrade, who was the chief compliance officer at that time.

They have been directed to pay the penalty within 45 days.

Sebi noted that the trustees of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund (MF) are thorough professionals and these officials are experts in their respective domain, and yet they failed to avert certain lapses in the functioning of a mutual fund.

"The acts and deeds committed by them while discharging their duties are not in the interest of the unitholders in specific and the investors in general," the Sebi said.

—PTI

Rising prices of edible oils and protein-rich items pushed the retail inflation to a six-month high of 6.3 per cent in May, breaching the RBI's comfort level and thus rendering reduction in interest rates a difficult proposition in the near-term.

The government has asked the Reserve Bank to keep the retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

CPI inflation has breached the upper band of

microfinance loans for all regulated entities, capping the outflow on account of repayment of loan obligations of a household to a percentage of the household income and a board approved policy for household income assessment.

The paper has proposed to align the pricing guidelines for NBFC-MFIs with guidelines for NBFCs, introduce a standard simplified fact sheet on pricing of microfinance loans for better transparency, besides displaying the minimum, maximum and average interest rates charged on microfinance loans on the websites of regulated entities.

The current regulations are applicable only to 30 per cent of the microfinance loan portfolio NBFC-MFIs whereas other lenders, which comprise around 70 per cent share in the microfinance portfolio, are not subjected to similar regulatory conditions. The emerging dynamics in the microfinance sector as well as the concerns of customer protection call for a review of the regulations, it said.

RBI set to lift pricing cap on micro loans

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, JUNE 14

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) on Monday proposed to do away with pre-payment penalty, requirement of collateral and provide greater flexibility in repayment frequency for all microfinance loans. For the lenders, the central bank proposed removing the pricing caps on micro loans introduced after the 2010 microfinance crisis.

The proposals are part of a consultative document on uniform regulation for companies engaged in microfinance business released by the central bank. The proposed recommendations aim to ensure a level-playing field between banks, non-banks and microfinance firms, all of which do micro lending but have different regulations.

The suggestions include a common definition of

The average base rate of the five largest commercial banks by assets multiplied by 2.75. The average base rate of the five largest commercial banks is announced by RBI at the end of each quarter, which determines the interest rate for the ensuing quarter. These pricing restrictions were introduced in 2014 by the regulator in line with the Y.H. Malegam committee recommendations.

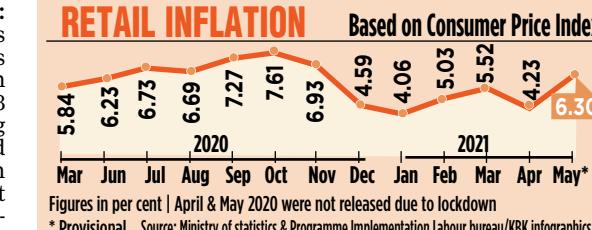
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Inflation spikes above comfort zone in May

New Delhi, June 14: Rising prices of edible oils and protein-rich items pushed the retail inflation to a six-month high of 6.3 per cent in May, breaching the RBI's comfort level and thus rendering reduction in interest rates a difficult proposition in the near-term.

The government has asked the Reserve Bank to keep the retail inflation at 4 per cent with a margin of 2 per cent on either side.

Wholesale price-based inflation too accelerated to



a record 12.94 per cent in May on account of rising prices of crude oil, manufactured goods and the low base of last year due to the Covid-19 lockdown. —PTI

Rishi Sunak drawn into tax query on Murthy-funded Cloudtail

London, June 14: Cloudtail India Pvt Ltd—the online retailing joint venture of Infosys co-founder N. R. Narayana Murthy's firm and Amazon.com—faced a 5.5 million pounds demand, including interest and penalties, from tax authorities after it paid "meagre" taxes over the past four years, a media report said on Monday.

Amazon reportedly developed independent sellers such as Cloudtail, as 'special merchant' which enjoyed over 35 per cent of total sales on the platform until 2019.

While Murthy's Catajan Ventures indirectly holds 76 per cent in Cloudtail and Amazon the remaining 24 per cent, the firm's two top posts—chief executive and finance director—were with the US retailer Cloudtail's holding company Prione. Prione is also run by a former Amazon manager, the report in The Guardian newspaper said.

The report said it is not known precisely what the tax dispute is about and the company said that it was contesting the bill, adding that since the "matter is

sub judice, we are unable to comment any further.

Following the report, the office of UK chancellor of the exchequer Rishi Sunak, who is son-in-law of Murthy, was forced to comment.

"The revelations come just days after Sunak led the G7 finance ministers' charge to agree to a global deal designed to make tech companies pay more tax."

"Reaching an international agreement on how large digital companies are taxed has been a priority for the chancellor since he took office," said a spokesperson for his UK Treasury office.

"The chancellor's consistent position has been that it matters where tax is paid, and any agreement must ensure digital businesses pay tax in the UK

that reflects their economic activities. That is what our taxpayers would expect and is the right thing," the spokesperson said.

Sunak has been dubbed the UK's richest minister, largely as a result of his wife Akshata Murty's family wealth. The latest *Guardian* report claims that an analysis of Cloudtail's accounts and activities shows that it is one of the largest sellers on Amazon.in, as part of a 76-24 per cent joint venture with Amazon.

"The company has received a show cause notice in the current year from Directorate General of Goods and Service Tax Intelligence amounting to Rs 5,455 lakh (5.5 mn pound) along with interest and penalties for service tax-related matters, it quotes Cloudtail's most recent accounts as saying.

It claims that the annual report further reveals that Cloudtail which only sells via the Amazon platform paid Amazon fees of 95 million pounds last year, almost 10 times more than the Indian business reported in profit.

—PTI

Sovereign wealth fund also keen on warehouses, tech hubs

Abu Dhabi's Adia eyes affordable housing



said.

Its investments in logistics sites in China through a partnership with industrial real estate investor Prologis Inc are among those that performed well through the downturn, the person said. Adia bet on the UK affordable housing market in 2014 through an investment in Fizzy Living Ltd.

The fund has also been putting more resources into private equity investments, which have outperformed during the pandemic, the people said. The review is ongoing, and Adia hasn't made any final decisions on the changes it will make, the people said.

A representative for Adia declined to comment.

Adia remains in search of new in-house expertise, including a global head of real estate, following a wave of senior departures.

Last year Tom Arnold, a former Cerberus Capital Management executive, left after more than a decade with the sovereign wealth fund.

Pascal Duhamel, the head of European real estate investments, and Anthony Bertoldi, acting head of real estate in Asia, also left the firm in the second half of 2020. Travel restrictions have slowed Adia's efforts to recruit replacements for some positions, according to the people.

Pandemic shutdowns have hurt investors in the commercial real estate market since early 2020. Stay-at-home orders left shops empty and hit the payment of rents to owners of such properties. Offices have also lain dormant, with many companies now reassessing their real estate requirements in the light of work-from-home trend.

—Bloomberg

PHILIPS RECALLS VENTILATORS OVER CANCER RISK

WILLIAM WILKES JUNE 14

Royal Philips NV recalled ventilation devices used to treat sleep apnea and increased its cost estimate for addressing a defect that may potentially cause cancer.

The company said on Monday it's made millions of ventilator devices using sound-abatement foam that may degrade into particles that could be ingested or inhaled and potentially have toxic and carcinogenic effects. Philips doubled its provision for expected costs related to the issue to 500 million euros (\$605 million).

The recall is a setback for Philips as it shifts to focus entirely on health-care products.

—Bloomberg

NEW | STRATEGY

SHORT TAKES
Oly gold medallist shuttle Kid dead

New Delhi: Former Olympic gold medallist Markis Kido of Indonesia has died after suffering a heart attack, the game's governing body BWF said on Monday. He was 36. The Indonesian doubles player had won the 2008 Olympic gold medal, 2006 World Cup and 2007 World Championships titles with Hendra Setiawan. Indian shuttlers reacted with shock at his sudden demise. "Hard to Digest Broken heartGrownup watching you play. Was lucky to be a part of your team in @PBLIndiaLive. Gone too soon legend Rest In peace Markis Kido," tweeted Satwiksairaj Rankireddy. Indian men's singles player H S Prannoy wrote: "Such a terrible news !! RIP Markis kido." — PTI

Malvika clinches Lithuanian crown

Kaunas, Lithuania: India's Malvika Bansod defeated Rachael Darragh of Ireland in straight games to clinch the women's singles crown at the RSL Lithuanian International badminton tournament here. The third seeded Indian got the better of fourth seed Darragh 21-14, 21-11 in the summit clash on Sunday night that lasted just 29 minutes.

Malvika had earlier defeated France's Anna Tatanova 21-13, 21-10 to enter the women's singles final. — PTI

Masters Games are postponed

Hyderabad: The 4th National Masters Games, scheduled to be held from June 22 to 27, have been postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The National Masters Games Federation announced after their virtual executive committee meeting.

"The new dates will be announced once the situation comes back to normal," informed M. Prabhakara Rao, MGF vice president and general secretary of Telangana Masters Games Association.

G-7 lends support to Tokyo Games

Tokyo: Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga has won the support from the other leaders of the Group of Seven for his country hosting the Olympics and Paralympics in Tokyo this summer. Speaking after talks in Carbis Bay on Sunday, he told reporters he had explained how "thorough infection control" would be in place to safeguard the Games.

In a communique following their summit, the G-7 leaders reiterated their support for holding the Games in a safe and secure manner "as a symbol of global unity in overcoming Covid-19".

Suga said he had been "reassured" by this support and promised to renew his determination "to properly open" the Games and make them a success. — AP

Mo eyes Oly berth at British meet

London: Two-time Olympic 10,000m champion Mo Farah will make a last-gasp attempt to qualify for the Tokyo Games at the British Athletics Championships in Manchester on June 25. The British runner, 38, is yet to hit the qualifying standard for the distance after a failed attempt earlier this month. He needs to beat a time of 27 minutes, 28 seconds to stand a chance of defending his crown at the Olympics, which start in Japan next month. Farah clocked 27:50.64 at the British 10,000m Championships on June 5 to come eighth in his first race over that distance since quitting the track to focus on the marathon in 2017. — AFP

Phoenix complete sweep of Denver

Los Angeles: Chris Paul and Devin Booker combined for 71 points as the Phoenix Suns completed a four-game sweep of the Denver Nuggets on Sunday to reach the NBA semi-finals for the first time in 11 years. Paul scored 37 points and Booker finished with 34 points and 11 rebounds as the Suns beat the Nuggets 125-118 to capture the Western Conference second round series 4-0. "I have been waiting for this for a very long time," said Booker. "A lot of people say I haven't played meaningful basketball. This is my time to prove it." — AFP

MISSION POSSIBLE

After French Open title Djokovic targets Golden Grand Slam



Novak Djokovic poses with the 2021 French Open trophy in front of the Eiffel tower in Paris on Monday. — AFP

Everything is possible, and I did put myself in a good position to go for the Golden Slam...

— NOVAK DJOKOVIC
after winning the French Open crown

FEDERER ENTERS SECOND ROUND AT HALLE EVENT

Halle Westfalen (Germany), June 14: Roger Federer eased into the second round of the ATP grass court tournament in Halle on Monday with a straight sets win over qualifier Ilya Ivashka.

Federer, who turns 40 in August, had few problems in his first match this season on grass to seal a 7-6 (7/4), 7-5 first-round win over Belarusian Iwashka, ranked 90th in the world.

"There is room for improvement, but I am happy with my first game here on grass. I feel good," said Federer, currently ranked eighth in the world, who is bidding to win the Halle tournament for the 11th time.

Having had two surgeries on his right knee in 2020, Federer, who has won 20 Grand Slam titles, withdrew from the fourth round of the French Open last week to give himself more rest. — AFP

KREJCIKOVA BREAKS INTO WTA TOP 15

Paris, June 14: Newly crowned French Open champion Barbora Krejciкова jumped 18 places into the top 15 in the latest WTA rankings released on Monday.

Australian Ashleigh Barty remains atop the rankings, less than 1,000 points ahead of Japan's Naomi Osaka.

Meanwhile, losing French Open finalist Stefanos Tsitsipas

jumped up one place to fourth in the latest ATP rankings released Monday. — AFP

WTA Rankings: 1. Ashleigh Barty (AUS) 8,245 pts, 2. Naomi Osaka (JPN) 7,401, 3. Simona Halep (ROM) 6,330, 4. Aryna Sabalenka (BLR) 6,195, 5. Sofia Kenin (USA) 5,865.

ATP Rankings: 1. Novak Djokovic (SRB) 12,113 points, 2. Daniil Medvedev (RUS) 10,143, 3. Rafael Nadal (ESP) 8,630, 4. Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE) 7,980 (+1), 5. Dominic Thiem (AUT) 7,425 (-1).

SEXUAL ABUSE | INQUIRY

World basketball head steps down

Mies (Switzerland), June 14: The president of basketball's world governing body has stepped aside during its investigation into alleged systemic sexual abuse of women players at his home federation.

Hamane Niang "strongly denies the allegations" that he ignored abuse by coaches and officials in Mali when he led the national federation there from 1999 to 2007, the International Basketball Federation (FIBA) said Monday in a statement.

The *New York Times* published allegations implicating around 12 coaches and officials in sexual abuse that involved around 100 women players. Niang was not accused of abusing women.

Three men — coach Amadou Bamba, coach Oumar Sissoko and official Hario Maiga — have been suspended from all FIBA activities during an investigation ordered by the Switzerland-based governing body.

Niang "offered his full collaboration" to the investigation, said FIBA, which has told officials in Mali also to cooperate.

"FIBA has zero tolerance for all forms of harassment and abuse and extends its heartfelt compassion for victims of such conduct," it said.

— AP

HACKETT SAYS ABUSIVE SWIM COACHES MUST BE SUSPENDED

Adelaide (Australia), June 14: Australian swimming great Grant Hackett demanded on Monday that abusive coaches be banned after complaints about "misogynistic perverts" and as new claims of "degrading" conduct emerged.

The former Olympic champion called the allegations shocking and said the sooner those at fault were "weeded out" the better.

"We need to be supporting young girls, we need to be supporting young boys that are in the sport and progressing," Hackett, considered one



Members of the Indian team at a practice session in Doha on Monday, ahead of their match against Afghanistan.

Chhetri in focus as India play Afghans

Doha, Jun 14: Goal-machine Sunil Chhetri will look to add to his tally and enter the all-time top 10 scorers' list as a buoyant India meet Afghanistan in the joint 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup qualifiers here on Tuesday.

While the Indian team needs just a draw from their final game against Afghanistan to secure a place in the third round of AFC Asian Cup qualifiers after Oman defeated Afghanistan 2-1 on Friday, a hat-trick for Chhetri will see him equal the iconic Pele in terms of numbers of goals scored in the international arena.

Chhetri is also just one goal off entering the all-time top-10 list of goal-scorers, something he can easily achieve against Afghanistan.

ing the legendary Lionel Messi as international football's second highest scorer among active players.

A veteran in top-flight at 36, Chhetri played down the comparisons with the Argentine global superstar, but he will certainly look to put his best foot forward and come to his tally of 74 goals.

If the Blue Tigers can avoid defeat in the upcoming match, they will finish third in their group, an improvement over the fifth-place result during the last campaign.

India are already out of contention to progress further in the World Cup qualifying campaign, and is now looking to secure a berth in 2023 Asian Cup, scheduled to be held in China.

MASTER BLASTER DONATES BLOOD FOR AWARENESS

Mumbai, June 14: Former India captain Sachin Tendulkar on Monday donated blood to mark the 'World Blood Donor Day'.

The legendary former batsman also urged citizens to come forward and take part in voluntary blood donation. "We all have the power to save a life. Let's use it," he tweeted.

Tendulkar also highlighted the value of blood in treating many medical conditions. In a video posted on his social media handles, Tendulkar also spoke about his experience of a close relative in need of blood few months back.

"He told the batters that it should be like first 15 runs and then another 25 and another 30 runs. He also spoke that in England, there would be inevitable rain-breaks."

— PTI



India's Jhulan Goswami trains ahead of their one-off Test against England.

drive too much during the initial part of the innings as the ball moves around a lot in the UK. He told the batters to concentrate on playing as close to the body as possible.

"He believes that with late swing, there would always be the lure to play the cover drive but its best to avoid the stroke initially with Dukes ball beguised," the source said.

Rahane believes that the foundation of a Test innings should be based on short targets and not on the ultimate goal.

"He told the batters that it should be like first 15 runs and then another 25 and another 30 runs. He also spoke that in England, there would be inevitable rain-breaks."

— PTI

Rahane offers tips to Mithali & Co.

New Delhi, June 14: Playing close to the body, working on mindset and setting small targets are some of tips that Indian men's Test team vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane gave to Mithali Raj & Co ahead of their first red-ball game in seven years against England.

According to sources in the know of developments, Rahane, a Test specialist with 73 games and over 4500 runs under his belt, was requested by women's team head coach Ramesh Powar for a session, primarily with the batters before they left for England.

"Ramesh and Ajinkya have been teammates. Since our girls are playing Test match after seven years, the coach thought that it would be a

good idea to have a session where one of the best in the business will talk about Test match batting.

"It was a 50-minute zoom session that was arranged when both teams were in quarantine in Mumbai," a senior official privy to the development said on the condition of anonymity.

The match is starting on Wednesday. It is learnt that skipper Mithali, her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and all the batters, along with senior pacer Shikha Pandey, spoke to Rahane about the long-form batting.

In India also, there has only been 50 and T20 national competitions for the past few years.

"Apparently, Ajinkya told them not to play the

Quick passes



Dutch Queen Maxima and King Willem-Alexander (top) wait for the Euro match between the Netherlands and Ukraine at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam, Netherlands, on Sunday. — AP

Danes were not in a frame to play game

Denmark's goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel and striker Martin Braithwaite on Monday lamented that they had to choose whether to restart the Denmark-Finland Euro match while they were reeling from Christian Eriksen's mid-game collapse.

"We were put in a position, that I personally feel that we shouldn't have been put in," Schmeichel told Danish media at a press event.

"We had two options," Schmeichel explained. "Either come back the day after (Sunday) at noon or continue the game," he added.

The Leicester City goalkeeper said he wished someone more senior would've said "that it wasn't the time to take that decision, and that we should maybe wait until the day after to decide".

"What has happened has happened, and hopefully they'll learn from this," Schmeichel said. — AFP

Dutch Blind gutted by Eriksen collapse

Netherlands defender Daley Blind had to overcome a "mental hurdle" to play in the European Championship match against Ukraine after watching television images of former teammate Christian Eriksen collapse a day earlier.

Blind was clearly emotional when he was substituted in the second half of the Netherlands' 3-2 victory at the Johan Cruyff Arena on Sunday. He was hugged by Netherlands coach Frank de Boer and other team staff before sitting down.

"Today I had to overcome a mental hurdle for myself to play," said Blind, who had an implantable cardioverter defibrillator fitted after being diagnosed with an inflamed heart muscle in 2019.

"For me it was recognisable. That's what made it so heavy for me and my family," Blind told Dutch broadcaster NOS after the match in Amsterdam. — AP

Mbappe disturbed by Giroud criticism

Kylian Mbappe admitted he was "affected" by public comments perceived as criticism from fellow forward Olivier Giroud following a friendly against Bulgaria, but insisted he did not want it to become a distraction for France at Euro 2020.

Tensions surfaced between the two players after Chelsea striker Giroud complained about not receiving the ball often enough during Tuesday's 3-0 win over Bulgaria, in which he scored twice.

"I was a bit affected by that but we're not going to make a big story about it," Mbappe told reporters Sunday at the national training centre at Clairefontaine.

"We're here to represent France and the national team represents the most important thing. We have a big competition and these trivial things aren't going to disrupt our preparation," he further added. — AFP

FLYING DUTCHMEN

Netherlands overcome rough seas to sail past Ukraine

Amsterdam, June 14: Denzel Dumfries scored a dramatic late winner as the Netherlands marked their long-awaited return to a major tournament with a 3-2 victory over Ukraine in a remarkable Euro 2020 game in Amsterdam on Sunday.

Dumfries, the PSV Eindhoven full-back, headed in a cross from substitute Nathan Ake to complete a madcap second half after the home side eased into a two-goal lead and then threw it away.

Netherlands 3
(Georginio Wijnaldum 52, Wout Weghorst 58, Denzel Dumfries 85)

Ukraine 2
(Andriy Yarmolenko 75, Roman Yaremchuk 79)

Captain Georginio Wijnaldum and Wout Weghorst both scored before the hour mark in front of a raucous crowd at the Johan Cruyff Arena, only for Ukraine to silence the home supporters as Andriy Yarmolenko and Roman Yaremchuk netted a brief restore parity.

Frank de Boer's side got there in the end and the victory will provide a major lift to the Netherlands after what was their first game at a major competition in seven years.

They will now hope to build on it on Thursday against Austria, who beat North Macedonia earlier in Bucharest in the same Group 'C'.

It was a brilliant game, and a crowd of around 16,000 created an atmosphere fit for the occasion at the home of Ajax, where supporters held up banners with messages of support for Christian Eriksen following the Denmark



Marten de Roon (right) of the Netherlands clears the ball during their Euro Group 'C' match against Ukraine at the Johan Cruyff Arena in Amsterdam on Sunday. — AFP

star's cardiac arrest on Saturday. Eriksen made his name at Ajax before moving to Tottenham Hotspur in 2013.

After failing to qualify for Euro 2016 or the 2018 World Cup in Russia, the Netherlands were playing their first game at a major competition since beating hosts Brazil 3-0 to claim third place at the 2014 World Cup. They had not

won a game at a Euro in almost exactly 13 years, since Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Robin van Persie netted in a 2-0 win over Romania at Euro 2008.

The emergence of the likes of Frenkie de Jong and Matthijs de Ligt has given supporters of the Oranje new hope for the future. Those supporters were in fine spirits ahead of the game, bedecked in

orange as they filled the bars around the ground in the blazing sunshine, thoughts of the pandemic appearing far away.

Yet Dutch optimism has been tempered by selection problems facing coach De Boer.

Juventus defender De Ligt watched this game from the stand as he recovers from a groin injury, his absence added to that of

fellow centre-back star Virgil van Dijk who is absent from the tournament with the serious knee injury that cut short his season with Liverpool.

Manchester United's Donny van de Beek withdrew from the squad because of injury and first-choice goalkeeper Jasper Cillessen was left out altogether after contracting Covid-19. — AFP

SCHICK ROCKS AS CZECHS OFF TO NEAT START

Glasgow, June 14: Scotland's long-awaited return to a major international tournament was ruined by Patrik Schick's slick finishing as the Czech Republic won 2-0 at Hampden on Monday to move top of Euro 2020 Group 'D'.

Schick's header just before half-time opened the scoring, but it was his

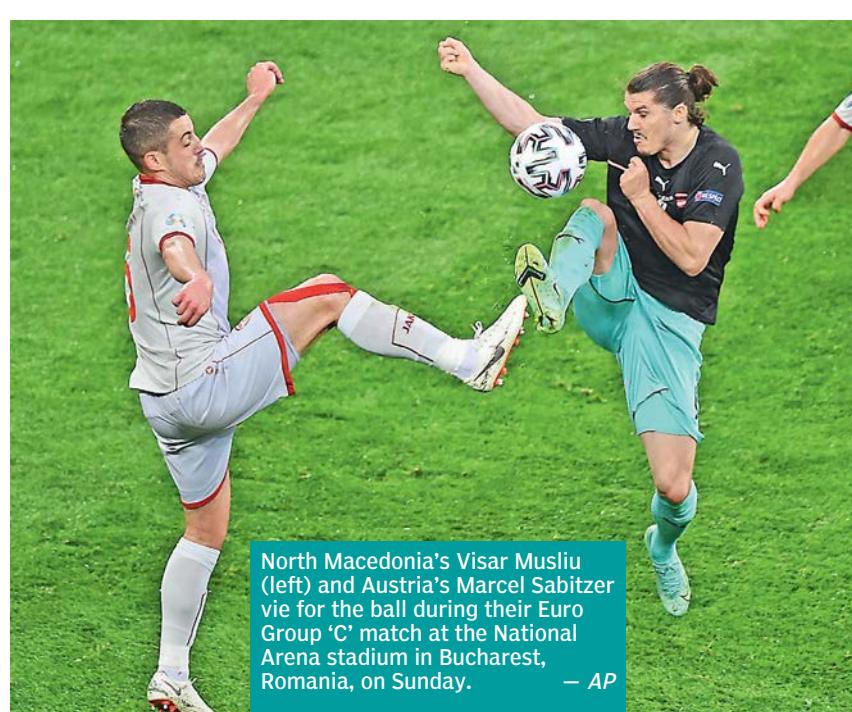
Czech 2
(Patrik Schick 42, 52)

Scotland 0

stunning strike from just inside the Scotland half after the break that will live in the memory as one of the all-time great European Championship goals.

After a 23-year wait to qualify for a major tournament, Scotland's hopes of making more history by getting out of the group for the first time now look slim.

Steve Clarke's men face England next on Friday at Wembley before hosting World Cup finalists Croatia at Hampden on June 22. The hosts were desperately missing the driving runs and poise on the ball normally provided by Kieran Tierney on the left side of a back three. — AFP



North Macedonia's Visar Musliu (left) and Austria's Marcel Sabitzer vie for the ball during their Euro Group 'C' match at the National Arena stadium in Bucharest, Romania, on Sunday. — AP

Austria sink N. Macedonia

Bucharest, June 14: Substitutes Michael Gregoritsch and Marko Arnautovic scored late goals as Austria sealed a 3-1 victory over major tournament debutants North Macedonia in their Group 'C' opener at Euro 2020 on Sunday.

Stefan Lainer put the Austrians ahead early on in Bucharest, but 37-year-old captain Goran Pandev levelled before the half-hour mark to become the second-oldest scorer in Euro history and delight the vocal Macedonian

group also containing the Netherlands and Ukraine, who meet in Amsterdam later in the day.

"Above all, the substitutions really paid off," said Austria coach Franco Foda.

"Gregoritsch and Arnautovic gave the team a new impulse. Overall I think it was a deserved win," Franco further added.

Austria next visit the Dutch on Thursday, while North Macedonia stay in the Romanian capital to face Ukraine. — AFP

fans. But Gregoritsch diverted home the deciding goal 12 minutes from time and Arnautovic added a third to ensure Austria claimed their first-ever European Championship win and struck first blood in a

remarkably, no player in Germany's current squad has ever scored in a European Championship match. Thomas Müller, who has played 11 tournament games, missed a penalty in the 2016 quarterfinal shoot-out win over Italy.

Germany hope this time are pinned on a good start in Munich to set the team up for success in Joachim Löw's last tournament as coach after 15 years in charge.

Germany will also face European champion Portugal on June 19, four days before their last game in Group 'F' against Hungary.

France will play Hungary on June 19 in Budapest, and stay in the city to face Portugal on June 23.

France's fearsome front

three of Griezmann, Kylian Mbappe and Karim Benzema, the latter recalled by Deschamps after an almost six-year absence will be far more likely to capitalise on any German lapses in defense.

The 33-year-old Benzema has recovered from an injury picked up in France's 3-0 warm-up win over Bulgaria on June 8. — AP

The teams will meet in the group stage of a European Championship or World Cup for the first time on Tuesday when they open their Euro 2020 campaigns in Munich. Their last match at a

Big guns Brazil begin with bang

Sao Paulo, June 14: Brazil kicked off a Copa America tournament that has been opposed by some members of their own team with a 3-0 win over Venezuela here.

Marquinhos, Neymar and Gabriel Barbosa scored in the opener at Mane Garrincha stadium in Brasilia on Sunday, less than a day after several Venezuelan players tested positive for Covid-19.

South American football's governing body CONMEBOL, chose Brazil as host less than two weeks ago, despite their alarming Covid-19 figures, after Argentina and Colombia were dropped as co-hosts.

Despite their opposition to staging the tournament in their home country, Brazil captain Casemiro said the defending champions intended to retain their trophy.

"It could be a friendly, Copa America, World Cup qualifiers, we play it to win," he said.

"Venezuela had the idea of defending, they wanted a draw. But we were focused and we were aggressive in the last third of the pitch," he added.

Venezuela summoned 15 new players at short notice after eight squad members tested positive for Covid-19 on Saturday, and the disruption showed on the field. Brazil opened the scoring in the 23rd minute after a corner kick ended with Marquinhos striking from close range.

Brazil coach Tite, who

Brazil 3
(Marquinhos 23, Neymar 64, Gabriel Barbosa 89)

Venezuela 0

also opposed holding the tournament, took Lucas Paquet off at half-time, but kept Roberto Firmino on the bench. Instead, Everton Ribeiro went on and provided more dynamism on the right flank.

Ribeiro found Daniilo on the right edge of the box, and the Brazilian was pushed to the ground. Neymar calmly scored from the spot in the 63rd to make it 2-0. He looked to the right of Venezuelan goalkeeper Joel Graterol, but took his shot to the left.

Neymar dribbled past Graterol and crossed for Barbosa to chest the ball into the empty net in the 89th. A flop at Inter Milan and Benfica, Barbosa is a hero at Brazilian club Flamengo, which want him on the national team more often.

Tite said he's experimenting with combinations, thinking ahead to the World Cup in Qatar next year.

Brazil and Venezuela are in Group 'B' with Colombia, Ecuador and Peru. Brazil and Colombia lead with three points each, but the defending champions are ahead by goal difference after Colombia's 1-0 win against Ecuador. — AP



Brazil's Gabriel Barbosa (top) celebrates with teammate Neymar after scoring against Venezuela during their Copa America match at the Mane Garrincha Stadium in Brasilia on Sunday. — AFP

Cardona scores in Colombia victory

Cuiaba (Brazil), June 14: A surprising choreographed move gave Colombia a 1-0 win against Ecuador in their first match of Copa America.

Edwin Cardona scored the winner at the Arena Pantanal in Cuiaba in the 42nd minute of a tense game on Sunday.

The decisive moment started when midfielder Cardona took a free kick close to the edge of the Ecuadorian penalty box. Instead of shooting, he exchanged three short passes with Juan Guillermo Cuadrado, who moved the ball forward to where Miguel Borja was waiting.

Borja headed the ball back to Cardona, who had run toward goalkeeper Pedro Ortiz and who scored with a right-foot shot as the Ecuadorian defenders watched on. The move had to be validated by video review.

"The play of our goal has been worked on by our players since the ... World Cup qualifiers,"

Colombia 1
(Edwin Cardona 42)

Ecuador 0

Colombia's coach Reinaldo Rueda said.

The previous encounter between these teams ended 6-1 to Ecuador seven months ago in a World Cup qualifying game. Carlos Queiroz was fired as head coach after that heavy defeat. Sunday's win was the second in three matches for Rueda, who replaced Queiroz.

The win against Ecuador was a further boost for Rueda, who has made some contentious decisions early in his tenure, including the call to leave star midfielder James Rodriguez out of the Copa America squad.

The result also eased some of the tension in the squad after Colombia's football federation on Sunday said two members of the coaching staff had tested positive for Coronavirus. — AP

Live on TV

Euro
Group Stage: Hungary vs Portugal from 9.30 pm; France vs Germany from 12.30 pm (Wednesday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

