

SHORT BRIEF

NEED EXPLANATION ON OBJECTIONS TO LOANS: PAC TO CM

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 10

Payyavula Keshav, Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) of AP Legislative Assembly, on Saturday demanded the YSRC government to explain whether or not the Union Finance Ministry had taken strong objection to loans of ₹17,923 crore taken by the state in excess of the ceiling imposed.

In a statement, the PAC Chairman asserted that the objections of the Centre were enough to understand how the AP finances and economy were crumbling under the Jagan Mohan Reddy misrule.

“It was high time that the Chief Minister, Finance Minister and the AP Finance Department should give an explanation to the public on the Centre’s letters,” Keshav said.

3 SPECIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED FOR HOUSING WORKS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Three special officers were appointed to coordinate the construction of houses under YSR Congress government’s flagship Navaratnalu Pedalandariki Illu to complete the targets. M. Kamalakara Babu, OSD, appointed as incharge of housing programme for Srikakulam, Vizianagaram, Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari Districts. M. Siva Prasad, OSD appointed as incharge of housing programme for Krishna, Guntur, Prakasam and Nellore Districts. P. Sree Ramulu Chief Engineer appointed incharge of housing programmes for Anantapur, Kadapa, Kurnool and Chittoor districts. These officers would supervise the housing programme with coordination of concerned District Officials and reports will be submitted to the Special CS and Managing Director housing department.

Special Chief Secretary to Government for housing, Ajay Jain said that instructions were given to all the Joint Collectors (Housing), Project Directors Housing to concentrate on completing the construction of Houses within stipulated time. He said that the offline grounded houses are being updated in the Website and the task would be completed soon. He said that 9.95 lakh houses had been grounded during a three day mega housing grounding programme and now the details of 7,39,613 grounded houses were updated on the website.

MEDICOS TO MOVE HC TO PROMOTE THEM TO 2ND YEAR

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

First year medical students of the 2019 batch who failed to get promoted to the second year due to backlogs are to move the AP High Court seeking entry to the second year.

T. Srinivas Vishwanath, AP Medical Students Parents Association state convener, said here on Saturday that 450 students were affected. He said the students and their parents would file a petition in the HC on Monday.

He said that a delegation comprising association members met the Dr Aruna V. Vanikar, president of the National Medical Commission’s UG Medical Education Board, and adviser Saxena in New Delhi recently and explained to them about the difficulties that students face while taking online classes, failure to get support from their faculty members.

He said that they also informed the NMC that the NTR University and the college managements failed to bring about awareness among the students on new pattern of exam resulting in some students lost 20 marks in each paper as they failed to answer the questions in allotted time and added that the university also made some mistakes in setting question papers. He said that some students failed to appear for the exams as they were infected with Covid-19. He stated that the affected students and their parents met the NTR university registrar and vice chancellor and sought their intervention to allow them to appear to attend second year classes. They also took the issue to the notice of Health Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas and others to take their issue to the notice of the CM for his intervention.

Neta’s Natter

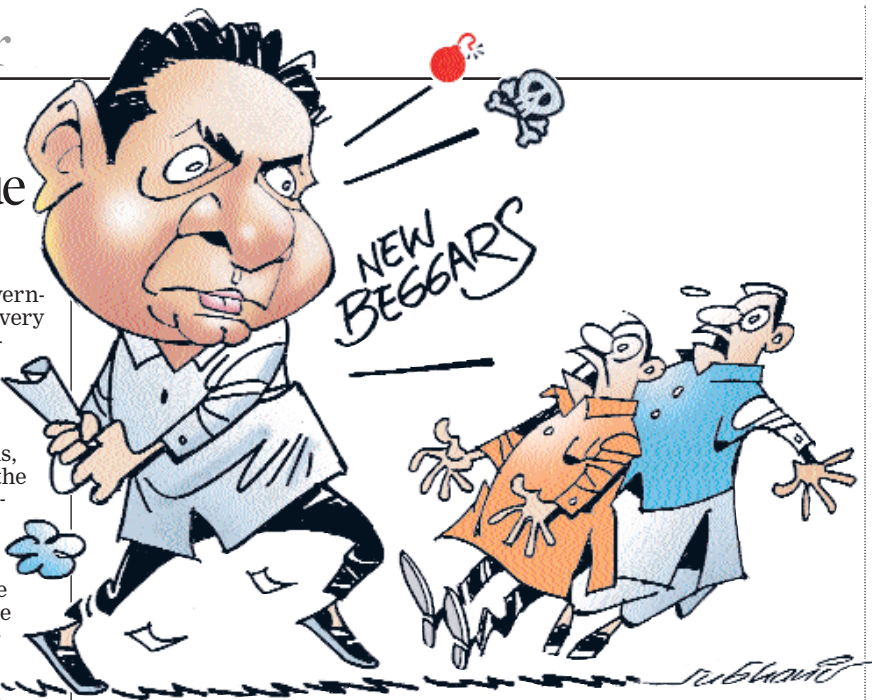
AP’s move to increase revenue boomerangs!

The Andhra Pradesh government has been trying every trick to meet its mounting expenses. However, all those efforts seem to be of no use, and, making matters worse, they also create utter confusion among the officials, resulting in further loss to the exchequer. The latest experiment is to bring the taxes and registration departments into the fold of the finance department, a practice unheard in the state administration for decades. The task has been entrusted to a secretary-level officer, N. Gulzar, which came as a shock to many officials. They are said to be wondering how such a change can improve the state finances. They feel that the move will certainly increase red-tapism as the finance department is already loaded with pending files and anything more will only add to further delays.

Babus propose, but the big boss disposes

A new trend has emerged in Andhra Pradesh babudom. Officers themselves have been deciding on what posts they want to handle or at least propagating their choices of the posts. Senior bureaucrat Sameer Sharma, who is currently on Central deputation, requested Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to allow him to join the state cadre before retirement. Coming back to the state will help the officer make some monetary gains in the form of post-retirement benefits. The Chief Minister immediately agreed and a request was sent to the Centre to relieve him. The order of his repatriation was drafted in such a manner that it appeared that the officer was being sent back on the request of the state government and it coincided with the end of term of chief secretary Adityanath Das. Rumours started just a night before Das’ retirement that Sameer Sharma will be the new chief secretary, only to subside the next day when the Centre extended the former’s tenure by three months. Then came the illusory transfer of Gandham Chandrudu as Visakhapatnam collector. He was shunted out of Anantapur recently and put in charge of the village secretariat administration. The WhatsApp group of babus received a forward message of someone congratulating him on being appointed as Visakhapatnam collector from Chandrudu himself. Some media publications even uploaded to their web editions the news of his appointment which later turned out to be fake.

● **RUMOURS STARTED** just a night before Das’ retirement that Sameer Sharma will be the new chief secretary, only to subside the next day when the Centre extended the former’s tenure



KTR joins foul-mouthed club

TRS working president and IT minister K.T. Rama Rao, may be unwillingly, has joined the race of ranters, apparently to survive among aggressive leaders of Opposition parties. Rama Rao had carved a place for himself during the Telangana agitation and subsequently in the government led by his father K. Chandrashekar Rao. Smart, sophisticated and a go-getter, Rama Rao won the hearts of many, particularly the urban middle class and the elite. Active on social media, the minister used them to convey his views, ideas and highlight his efforts besides lending a helping hand to the needy. He has also been credited with success in developing the capital city and attracting investments. But changes in the political arena following the appointment of Congress MP A. Revanth Reddy as Pradesh Congress Committee chief and his BJP counterpart Bandi Sanjay preparing himself for a walkathon, seem to have made the minister rethink. Moreover, his father himself becoming hyperactive in the recent past turned the arc lights slightly away from the son. The two opposition leaders succeeded in drawing media and thereby public attention for, what the political analysts say, speaking to the Chief Minister in his own language. Neither the Chief Minister nor his two adversaries think for a moment to use language that puts the sophisticated lot ill at ease. Now comes Rama Rao with a verbal attack on his political adversaries whom he described as “new beggars on the street”. Welcome to the club!



TS political leaders, high officials immune to rules, even for Covid

Has the Covid-19 called it a day in Telangana state? Or may be gone on a vacation? It certainly appears so if one were to see various ministers, MLAs, MLCs, Opposition leaders and anyone and everyone, waltzing around the city and the rest of the state without wearing the mandatory face mask. Even the state’s top bureaucrats do not seem to care much for the orders issued by the Chief Secretary for not wearing a face mask while in a public space, punishable by a fine of Rs 1,000. Such events can be seen every day in every news bulletin on television news channels, in videos forwarded by the PROs of the ministers and MLAs and Opposition leaders, and anywhere and everywhere. The other day, a minister

and a former minister held a press conference about the upcoming Bonalu festival and spoke about how Covid-19 safety guidelines would be strictly followed to ensure safety of all those who might participate in the festivities in temples across the city. Only, neither the current minister, nor the former one, was wearing a face mask while promising citizens that safety of the people was paramount for the Telangana state government. Meanwhile, the police are yet to make a single announcement of slapping a ₹1,000 fine on any minister, and the rest of the political class members. Clearly, two sets of rules are in operation in the state, one for the elite ruling class, and another for the common folk.

Boat owners want tourism to restart

Operators had been jobless due to the pandemic

SAMPAT G.
SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Private boat operators appealed to the state government to permit them to ply boats on the Godavari river to popular tourist destinations like Papikondalu and others during the ensuing festive season beginning from October.

As the state government recently launched operations of AP Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) boats from Pochamma Gandhi to Papikondalu carrying tourists, private boat operators too want to operate their boats as they have been unable to operate their boats for nearly two years following the tragic boat mishap at Katchuluru in East Godavari in September 2019, depriving their source of livelihood. Nearly 4,000 families directly or indirectly depend upon boat operations to make their living.

Nearly 60 boats and launches used to ply on the Godavari river transporting tourists and of them, about 25 boats underwent overhaul to comply with safety norms while the plying of the launches is uncertain once the Polavaram dam gets completed.

As private boat operators got registration and licence to operate them on the Godavari river from port authorities after complying with all safety norms, they want APTDC to issue no objection certificate and water resources authorities to issue route maps based on

● **NEARLY 4,000** families directly or indirectly depend upon boat operations to make their living. Nearly 60 boats and launches used to ply on the Godavari river transporting tourists.

bathymetric survey. They also want the state government to come up with modalities to operate the boats, especially dealing with the price of tickets.

At present, the APTDC is charging ₹750 per head for an adult and ₹650 for a child, including road transport, food including breakfast, lunch, tea and snacks from Rajahmundry to Pochamma Gandhi by road and from there to Papikondalu on the river and return to the place of origin, between 9 am to 5 pm in a day in their AC boat. However, private boat operators want the ticket price to be fixed at nearly ₹1,200 per head assuring quality transport and food in their AC boats, given the huge burden of maintaining four crew persons with each to be paid ₹15,000 per month and other maintenance and operation costs. They allege that APTDC’s big AC boat incurred nearly ₹10,000 loss for its Papikondalu trip as the ticket price is very low and they cannot afford to operate their boats by incurring loss.

They want the state government to take the initiative to promote tourism on the Godavari river especially to the Papikondalu by giving good publicity and also to

release modalities to operate the boats in the context of safety. They also want the government to come up with Covid-19 protocol to be complied with, in case the virus still prevails during October with regard to occupancy of seats and other norms.

A private boat owner Raja Viswanath Kumar said, “We appeal to the state government to permit private boat operators to operate their boats on the Godavari river carrying tourists once the flood season is over and during the commencement of festive season in October as we have been unable to operate boats for nearly two years and are facing severe financial hardships. We want the APTDC and private operators to enter into an MoU and operate boats together by fixing reasonable rates for tickets with quality service and food.”

Another boat owner, P. V. Ramakrishna Rao said, “We want clarity on what level of water the boats to be permitted to ply on the Godavari at Sir Arthur Cotton barrage, how much to be paid for maintenance of control rooms, food to be served packed or open and fate of launches to ply on river as they are not registered with port authorities for want of overhaul for safety.”

The state government also has to decide on plying of boats from Singanapalli in West Godavari to Papikondalu as tourists from Hyderabad arrive to take darshan at Bhadrachalam temple and sail on Godavari to Papikondalu.

TS violated KRMB orders, says Sajjala

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

YSR Congress alleged that the Telangana government was indulging in politics on Krishna water sharing even as there were crystal clear norms.

Advisor to the government (public affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy alleged that Telangana government has violated KRMB orders and its construction of projects illegally would deprive Andhra Pradesh from getting water from Krishna River.

The YSRC conducted a virtual meeting on Saturday on AP’s water rights issues and consumption of Krishna waters by the two states. The meeting was attended by Ramakrishna Reddy, minister for water resources, P. Anil Kumar Yadav and other leaders. Speaking on the occasion, Ramakrishna Reddy recalled that Telangana Chief Minister K

Chandrasekhar Rao assured to cooperate in helping quench the thirst of Rayalaseema region but he was now creating obstacles to the Rayalaseema lift irrigation scheme.

Reddy claimed that Telangana constructed illegal irrigation projects during Telugu Desam government but the then CM N. Chandrababu Naidu did not raise any objections despite deeksha protest by Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy. He recalled that AP and Telangana governments had agreed to the allotment of water but now the Telangana government is violating the norms by starting power generation using Krishna waters. He said that they would fight against the injustice meted out to AP.

Anil Kumar said that Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) came into existence under provisions in Section 85 of AP Reorganisation Act, 2014.

TUNGABHADRA DAM RECEIVES 34 TMC FT WATER FROM HEAVY RAINS

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JULY 10

In view of constant inflows from upstream parts of Western Ghats, the Tungabhadra Reservoir received constant inflows and TB dam reported 35.786 TMC ft capacity on Saturday. As against 1633 ft capacity,

the dam reported storage level of 1610.28 ft.

Dam authorities hoped the TB reservoir would get full storage capacity of water around August 15. A senior official from TB dam hoped to release water into the river by lifting all gates as part of 1-Day celebrations, which is a tradition here.

Wide debate about new Cabinet

From Page 1

There is widespread debate over who will replace the current ministers in the forthcoming cabinet expansion. According to sources, the positions of Ch. Venugopalakrishna and Sidiri Appalaraju, who became ministers in the middle after Pilli Subhash Chandra Bose and Mopidevi Venkataramana became MPs after the first Cabinet expansion, are safe for now. Apart from them, senior ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Peddireddy Ramachandra

Reddy, Mekapati Gautham Reddy, P. Anil Kumar Yadav, Kursala Kannababu, Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao alias Nani, Mutamsetti Srinivas, Mekathoti Sucharita and Buggana Rajendranath Reddy are on the safe side.

The present situation in districts would also be considered to give chance to legislators in the Cabinet reshuffle. Opposition TD is continuously campaigning against YSRCP government from the beginning on every issue for the past 25 months, halted many

government programmes and schemes taking advantage of technical snags and but only a few ministers strongly retaliated opposition attacks hence political activeness also would be considered in view of coming elections in performance evaluation.

This time the list of leaders hoping for ministerial posts is big. According to sources, senior leader and Jagan Mohan Reddy’s relative Y. V. Subba Reddy who worked as TTD chairman is seeking a minister post but the chances seem to be very low. Assembly

Speaker Tammineni Sitaram is also said to be vying for a minister post. Sources further informed that Ambati Rambabu, Samineni Udaya Bhanu, Shilpa Chakrapanireddy, Granthi Srinivas, Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Talari Venkat Rao, Kalavati, Ushashree Charan, Kiliveti Sanjeevaiah, Kolagatla Veerabhadraswamy, Peedika Rajanna Dora, KP Parthasarathy, Jogi Ramesh, Alla Ramakrishna Reddy and others are putting a lot of hopes to get Cabinet berths.

Bidders asked to register on AP portal

From page 1

In the e-auction, the intending bidders were asked to register themselves with the AP e-procurement e-auction portal using valid digital signer certificate. The tender document for the e-tender can be viewed on APMDC website www.apmdc.ap.gov.in or on <https://konugolu.ap.gov.in> from 02-07-2021.

The bidder shall upload receipt / transaction acknowledgment along with prequalification doc-

uments in the online portal. The last date for submission of technical bid by online is July 23. The H. Siddapuram mining area has rich iron deposits in the D. Hirehal mandal located closer to Bellary district’s forest area of Karnataka.

A dispute between AP and Karnataka states over demarcation of boundary is ongoing. In view of the illicit mining activities and also because of the damage thereof to the state’s boundary caused by mining companies, the

● **TAPALA GANESH**, mining owner from Ballari, observed in his representation to the authorities that the Survey of India has demarcated Karnataka and AP interstate boundary without considering the original landmark. The original boundary was displaced for about 400 metres.

CBI had filed cases. Thereon, mining activities were stopped for a decade now in D Hirehal mandal. With the APMDC is

inviting e-tenders for mining activities in H. Siddapuram area, more than four lakh million tonnes of rich iron ore, including a major part of it having 65 grade ore, is available.

While Karnataka mining companies have reportedly demanded that the state government stop mining activities because a boundary dispute existed, the central survey teams have not considered village contours for demarcating the boundary.

DEFICIT RAIN RECORDED ONLY IN THE NORTH COASTAL DISTRICTS

From page 1

AP State Agriculture Mission vice-chairman M.V.S. Nagi Reddy said cultivation and sowing works began in the second week of July and would continue till the end of July. He said there was deficit rainfall only in the north coastal districts and the rest of the state received good rainfall and Rayalaseema received excess rainfall which was a good sign.

IMD Amaravati director S. Stella said from July 8

● **IMD AMARAVATI** director S. Stella said from July 8 there would be seasonal rainfall in almost all districts.

there would be seasonal rainfall in almost all districts and a low pressure would be formed in the West Central Bay which would give good rainfall for north coastal Andhra. She added that there would be normal rainfall in all the districts according to weather reports in the coming days.

IN BRIEF

TRAINS TO ARAKU,
TIRUPATI TO RUN
FROM JULY 15DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 10

The railways has, on Saturday, decided to restart the operations of key trains including Vizag-Araku and Vizag-Tirupati keeping in view the demand from the passengers, from July 15.

The trains include 08528/27 Vizag-Raipur daily-Vizag will be operated from July 15, while the train 08516/15 Vizag-Araku-Kirandul-Vizag, 08561/62 Vizag-Kacheguda-Vizag, 07488/87 Vizag-Kadapa-Vizag, and 02831/32 Vizag-Lingampalli-Vizag will be operated from July 15.

MARTYR JAWAN'S
LAST RITES
PERFORMEDDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Last rites of martyred Army Jawan Maruprolu Jaswanth Reddy have been performed with full military honours at his native Dariwada Kothapalem village in Bapatla mandal of Guntur district on Saturday.

Jawan Jaswanth was killed in cross firing between militants and Army at Rajouri in Jammu. Locals and ex-service-men gathered in large numbers at Dariwada Kothapalem on Saturday. They joined the funeral procession should slogans, "Jai Jawan, Jaswanth Reddy Amar Rahe". Army personnel gave the deceased Jawan a gun salute as mark of respect before family members performed the last rites amid tears and sorrow.

Earlier AP home minister Mekatothi Sucharita and AP Legislative Assembly deputy speaker Kona Raghupathi handed over a cheque of ₹50 lakh ex-gratia announced by state government to the jawan's parents.

Sucharita and Raghupathi, apart from Guntur collector Vivek Yadav and district SP Vishal Gunni, were among those who paid floral tributes to the Jawan.

FILM CRITIC
KATHI MAHESH
PASSES AWAYDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Film critic and actor Kathi Mahesh, 43, passed away while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Chennai on Saturday evening.

Mahesh met with an accident while travelling in a car, with his friend at the wheel, suffering injuries to his head and eyes. He was on his way to his native place in Chittoor district on June 26 when the accident occurred. His friend escaped with minor injuries. Mahesh was admitted in a local hospital and later shifted to a private hospital in Chennai for better medical care.

Mahesh gained popularity in the last few years for his sharp reviews of Telugu films and at times, he faced online spat from fans of actors. He acted in films like Hrudaya Kaleyam, Kobburi Matta, Krack and others. He also appeared as a contestant on season one of popular show Bigg Boss Telugu hosted by actor Junior NTR.

He found himself in controversies frequently. He faced trouble for his remarks on Lord Rama and Sita from religious institutions and the police had to exile him from Hyderabad in July, 2018 as his remarks could cause social unrest. Though he received flak for his remarks from several people and religious heads, he got support from those who believed that freedom of expression of the citizens should not be breached.

The Andhra Pradesh government released ₹17 lakh to provide medical treatment to Mahesh recently from the Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

Mahesh had openly appreciated various programmes of YSRC government and even took part in the campaign in support of party nominee Dr. Gurumoorthy in Tirupati Lok Sabha bypoll. He also took part in a dharna organised by YSRC at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi with a demand for according special category status to AP.

Mahesh was a popular Dalit activist and a staunch critic of Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan.

Fish aplenty



Birds flock to the overflowing Prakasam Barrage which is filled with fish from the upstream, in Vijayawada on Saturday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

Sudden slump in oil palm
prices shocks farmers

Rate of fresh fruit bunches fall from ₹19,100 per tonne to ₹16,300

VADREVV SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, JULY 10

Oil palm farmers in West Godavari expressed concern over the sudden slump in the rate of fresh fruit bunches (FFB) from roughly ₹19,100 per tonne to ₹16,300 per tonne within a month due to the fall in international prices. The rate of oil palm bunches is fixed on the formula based on the international prices by the governments.

Oil palm farmers in West Godavari district alleged that the companies had deceived them by not giving minimum support price (MSP). The farmers under the purview of the processing unit at Jangareddygudem complained that the company was deceiving them and they were paid ₹19,100 per tonne in June, but now they were only getting ₹13,500 per tonne after reduction of 'ad hoc advance'.

CREDAI WELCOMES
POSTPONING OF
REVISION IN LAND
VALUESDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Confederation of Real Estate Developers Associations of India (CREDAI) has welcomed AP government's decision to postpone revision of land values in the state.

However, CREDAI AP chairman S. Venkataramaiah, president A. Raja Srinivas and general secretary K. S. C. Bose reiterated that AP government must also reduce stamp duty because construction sector is in a slump due to Coronavirus pandemic, which started in the beginning of 2020.

They said it will take quite some time to recover from the effect Covid-19-induced lockdown has had on the construction industry. Reduction in stamp duty fee will help not only the construction sector but people of entire Andhra Pradesh.

They recalled that on June 29, CREDAI had submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and revenue minister Dharmana Krishnadas seeking cancellation of market value revision, which takes place in August every year.

They thanked the CM and revenue minister for postponing the revision in land values. However, they asked the state government to reduce stamp duty too. They pointed out that reduced stamp duty will increase revenue to the state government by boosting realty activities and construction industry in the state which, in turn, will lead to more property registrations.

● **THEY THANKED** the CM and revenue minister for postponing the revision in land values.

● **THE FARMERS** under the purview of the processing unit at Jangareddygudem complained that the company was deceiving them and they were paid ₹19,100 per tonne in June, but now they were only getting ₹13,500 per tonne after reduction of 'ad hoc advance'.

They were not even getting the harvesting cost, the farmers complained. They also alleged that the company representatives were rejecting many fresh fruit bunches as unripe and not fit for extraction.

Andhra Pradesh Rythu Sangham District Secretary K. Srinivas said the prices of FFB were ₹19,100 in June, and in July, the prices had been reduced to ₹16,300. He said that further the company had given training to labourers on the fruit which they should cut after ripening. But now, the company employees were rejecting most of the FFBs and it was a great loss to the farmers.

When asked about these allegations, the company

representatives gave clarification that the prices were fixed by the government and in June, the farmers were paid on the basis of May prices.

"The government will announce the present month prices next month. We will make payments as ad hoc advance to the farmers to their crop. In this case, the farmers have been paid in June based on the May month prices. But the government announced ₹16,300 and so in July for June month prices. If there had been an increase, they would have paid the balance to the farmers. If any slump in the prices, the balance will be deducted during the payment to the farmers," said Navabharat

Company Deputy General Manager Y. Rajagopal.

About the unripe fruits, he said that the company had provided training to labourers by giving stipends to them so that the farmers should not incur losses, he said.

If the farmers encouraged the cutting of unripe-fruit, it would not be made use of either the company or the farmer. Not only that, the farmer should bear additional expenses. If he cut the ripening fruit, the weighing can be increased and it would profit them, he said and added that the government had increased the 'oil extraction rate' to 18.68 per cent from 16 per cent. The farmers will get 75 per cent of participation rate on 18.68 per cent rate.

Nearly 20 lakh tonnes of palm oil fruit is being purchased from nearly 1.52 lakh palm oil gardens in West Godavari district.

Disha court in every
district, says DGPDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 10

Director general of police Gautam Sawang said Disha courts would be established in every district of the State as the government has been giving top priority to women security.

Addressing a seminar on awareness on the Disha App held in Visakhapatnam on Saturday, the DGP said Mahila Mitra committee would also be set up in every police station to widen the network.

WOMEN PRAISED FOR GIVING VALUE
ADDITION TO RANGOLISDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 10

Women AS Peta town in Atmakur constituency received accolades from Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy for Rangolis before the newly built village secretariat and Rythu Bharsa Kendram in the town on Saturday.

For a change, the women have used vegetables for the Rangolis, much to the awe of the people including the minister who gathered for

the opening ceremony of the new buildings.

The minister interacted with the women and lauded them for giving value addition to the Rangoli's with vegetables. He received a rousing reception from the party men when he reached AS Peta.

Later, Goutham Reddy shared information on the implementation of development and welfare programmes from the officials and party local leaders during a review.

MINES OFFICIAL RULES OUT ILLEGAL
MINING OF BAUXITE IN VIZAGDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Mines principal secretary Gopala Krishna Dwivedi ruled out any illegal mining of bauxite in Visakhapatnam district and said that mining for laterite was permitted at Nathavaram mandal in the district.

He told the media on Saturday that out of six areas leased out for mining for only laterite in the district, the lease period was over for one leaseholder and no mineral was found. No mining

was taken up by two leaseholders.

In two leased out areas in the names of Singam Bhavani and Lovaraju, illegal mining of 2.3 lakh tonnes of laterite was found during the inspection and Rs 19 lakh penalty was imposed on two leaseholders and the illegal mining was stopped. No mining was taken up in two more areas leased out areas for want of road connectivity. He said that out of six leased out areas for mining of laterite, no mining took place in five areas.

Jagan offers 100 p.c. rebate
in tax to boost EV businessDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 10

The state government supports eclectic vehicles (EVs) by offering 100 per cent road tax exemption while the Union government offers nearly 30 per cent of the subsidy on the purchase of EVs, said Raveet Singh Phokela, the chief business officer of Ather Energy.

Speaking to *DC* on the sidelines of launching Ather's 12th outlet in the city on Saturday, Phokela said that electric motor scooters contribute nearly 40 per cent share in the country's motorcycles by the next five years.

They would open a second outlet in Vijayawada in the

● **PHOKELA SAID** that electric motor scooters contribute nearly 40 per cent share in the country's motorcycles by the next five years. They would open a second outlet in Vijayawada in the state. The vehicle's manufacturing unit is based in Tamil Nadu, their company can open manufacturing units in Andhra Pradesh too.

age faster adoption and manufacturing of electric vehicles in the state. The state government offers various subsidies for customers like a 100 per cent road tax exemption for newly-purchased EVs. Andhra Pradesh's EV policy supports every aspect of electric mobility and is focused on accelerating the adoption of EVs," Phokela said.

The next generation will have to depend on electric vehicles since the rising cost of fuel prices and other reasons force the people to adopt electric vehicles as an alternative and best option for mobility on the public roads, SN Auto managing director Sudhakar Nagalapati.

TIRUPATI MP STUDIED
DIFFERENTLY-ABLED
DURING CAMPAIGNDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 10

Tirupati MP Dr M. Gurumurthy had conducted an in-depth study on the problems of differently-abled at the instance of Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy and submitted a report to him before he was chosen as a candidate for Tirupati Lok Sabha.

Dr Gurumurthy himself has disclosed this during a programme held at Tirupati to distribute ₹96.98 lakh worth of battery-operated tricycles and other essentials to the differently-abled at the Youth Hostel premises in Tirupati on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP hailed the Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy for addressing the problems of differently-abled through the unique voluntary system he introduced in the state.

Commissioner of Tirupati Municipal Corporation PS Girisha, Srikalahasti and Sathyavedu MLAs Biyyapu Madhusudan Reddy and Adimulam and MLC Kalyan Chakravarty were also present with Dr Gurumurthy.

They distributed the materials which were procured with the funds of State and Central governments, MP Local Area Development Fund apart from a Kanpur-based private firm.

AP marks 2,925 new
Covid cases, 26 deathsDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

Andhra Pradesh registered 2,925 new Covid-19 cases with 26 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities reported on Saturday that out of 95,366 samples tested, 2,925 people were infected with Coronavirus. Out of 2,28,94,611 samples tested so far, 19,20178 persons were infected with the virus and of them, 18,77,930 were recovered while 29,262 are still active with the infection. Among the daily cases, East Godavari reported the highest at 611 followed by 414 in Chittoor, 361

in West Godavari, 260 in Prakasam, 250 in Krishna, 211 in Guntur, 199 in Nellore, 180 in Kadapa, 139 in Visakhapatnam, 117 in Kurnool, 84 in Anantapur, 67 in Srikakulam and 32 in Vizianagaram.

East Godavari topped the state with highest number of cumulative active cases at 4,771 followed by 4,396 in Chittoor, 3,273 in West Godavari, 3,341 in Prakasam, 2,819 in Krishna, 2,599 in Nellore, 2,230 in Guntur, 1,802 in Srikakulam, 1,265 in Visakhapatnam, 1,090 in Kadapa, 652 in Anantapur, 546 in Kurnool and 478 in Vizianagaram.



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1	Start of online submission of Application	12 th July 2021@ 1700 Hrs.
2	Last date for closing of online Application	25 th August 2021
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PUTTUR BRANCH:
Door No: 3-260, Kapu Street, K.N. Road,
Puttur -517583, Dist: Chittoor, Andhra Pradesh
Tel:08577-261658, 262211 e-mail:
Puttur.andhrapradesh@bankofindia.co.in

APPENDIX IV [See rule-8(1)]
POSSESSION NOTICE (For Immovable property)

Whereas The undersigned being the authorized officer of the BANK OF INDIA (name of the Institution) under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of powers conferred under section 13(12)read with rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued a demand notice dated **05-04-2021**calling upon the borrower **Shri Bandi Balaji s/o B Doraswamy** to repay the amount mentioned in the notice being **Rs.43,09,581.85 (Rupees Forty Three lakhs Nine Thousand Five Hundred Eighty One and PaiseEighty Five)** plus interest from within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

The borrower having failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him under sub- section (4) of section 13 of Act read with rule 8 of the Security Interest Enforcement) Rules, 2002 on this **Sixth day of July, 2021.**

The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of the **BANK OF INDIA, Puttur Branch** for an amount of **Rs. 43,09,581.85** and interest thereon.

The borrower's attention is invited to provisions of sub-section (8) of section 13 of the Act, in respect of time available, to redeem the secured assets.

Description of the Immovable Property

The following Commercial properties are standing in the name of Guarantor **Mr. J Jagadeeswaran.**

Item No: 1: (Covered under Reg Sale Deed dt 09-06-2014, vide Doc No 278/2014 of SRO, Pichatur) Chittoor District - Sri Balaji Registration District, Tirupathi - Pichatur Sub District, Nagalapuram Mandal - No 334 Nagalapuram village accounts - within the Residential area limits of Nagalapuram - in this A vacant site AC 0.03 cents out of AC 0.50 Cents comprised in Wet S No 213-A Situated near Puttur Raod in Nagalapuram measuring 146 Sq Yards or AC 0.03 Cents East to West: Northern Side: 8½ Feet= 2.584 Mts, Southern Side: 8½ Feet = 2.584 Mts North to South, Eastern Side: 160 Feet = 48.640 Mts, Western Side: 150 Feet = 45.600 Mts, Within the following Boundaries: **North:** Land of Bhaskar Chetty, **South:** Puttur Road, **East:** Land of G. Lakshmiipathi Naidu, **West:** Site belonged to Jagadeeswaran sold by D. Lakshmi and others

Item No: 2: (Covered under Reg Sale Deed dt 09-06-2014, vide Doc No 277/2014 of SRO, Pichatur) Chittoor District - Sri Balaji Registration District, Tirupathi - Pichatur Sub District, Nagalapuram Mandal - No 334 Nagalapuram village accounts - within the Residential area limits of Nagalapuram - in this A vacant site AC 0.05½ cents out of AC 0.50 Cents comprised in Wet S No 213-A Situated near Puttur Raod in Nagalapuram measuring 266.2 Sq Yards or AC 0.05½ Cents East to West Northern Side: 16½ Feet = 5.016 Mts, Southern Side: 16½ Feet= 5.016 Mts, North to South Eastern Side: 150 Feet = 45.600 Mts, Western Side: 136 Feet = 41.344 Mts, Within the following Boundaries: **North:** Land of Bhaskar Chetty, **South:** Puttur Road, **East:** Site belonged to Jagadeeswaran sold by Gajendran, **West:** Land retained by D. Lakshmi and others

Place: Puttur
Date: 06-07-2021

Sd/- Authorized Officer, Bank of India

SHORT TAKES

NIA RELEASES
LIST OF 20
WANTED NAXALSRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
RAIPUR, JULY 10

The National Investigation Agency (NIA), probing the killing of the local BJP MLA Bheema Mandavi in Chhattisgarh's south Bastar district of Dantewada in April, 2019 by Maoists, on Saturday released a list of 20 wanted Naxals in the case.

The premier probe agency has issued a list of 20 Maoists including Nambala Keshav Rao alias Gaganna alias Basavraj, Kottam Sudarshan alias Anand alias Mohan and Madvi Hidma, the commander of battalion number one of CPI (Maoist), declaring different bounties on them.

NIA has declared a reward of ₹10 lakh each on Basavraj and Mohan, while a bounty of ₹7 lakh has been announced on Hidma.

Barring Basavraj and Mohan, all the Naxals figured in the wanted list of NIA in the killing of the Dantewada MLA, have been active in insurgency-hit Bastar.

The NIA filed a chargesheet in the case in the NIA court in Jagdalpur in Bastar in March, 2020, naming 33 people as accused. Six of them have so far been arrested.

AYURVEDA DOYEN
DR P.K. WARRIER
DIES AGED 100DC CORRESPONDENT
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 10

Doyen of ayurveda medicine Dr P. K. Warriar died at his residence in Kottakkal in Malappuram district on Saturday. He was 100.

Warrior who popularised ayurveda globally, had celebrated his 100th birthday on June 8. He was also honoured by the nation with Padma Bhushan in 2010 and Padma Shri in 1999.

He became the trustee of the Aryavaidya Sala, one of the leading Ayurveda Healthcare chains in the country, at the age of 24 and remained its managing trustee till death.

Dr Warriar made huge contribution to ayurveda sector and initiated several measures to make the alternative system of medicine accessible to the common masses. He also focused on extensive research and drug standardisation.

Prime Minister Mr Narendra Modi expressed deep condolences over Warriar's death. "Saddened by the passing away of Dr P. K. Warriar. His contributions to popularise ayurveda will always be remembered. Condolences to his family and friends," Mr Modi tweeted.

Chief Minister Mr Pinarayi Vijayan said Warriar brought principles of ayurveda to the grassroots level. He was known for his secular and progressive ideas.

D.K SHIVAKUMAR
SLAPS MAN FOR
EMBRACING HIM

Bengaluru: Karnataka Congress President D. K. Shivakumar on Saturday allegedly slapped a man who attempted to put his arms around him, drawing criticism from the BJP and on social media.

In the video that has since gone viral, Shivakumar can be seen getting irritated by the action of the man, who tried to get close to him and pace along with him.

The Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee Chief, who appeared to lose cool, can then be heard telling the man, said to be a party worker: "...you should be responsible....", before asking cameramen present there to delete the footage.

The incident took place during his visit to the district headquarters town of Mandya to inquire about the health of ailing veteran leader, former Minister and MP G Made Gowda.

Tweeting the video of the incident, BJP national General Secretary C. T. Ravi, asked Congress national leader Rahul Gandhi whether he had given "licence for violence" to Shivakumar, whom he referred to as a follower of Kotwal Ramachandra, one of the underworld dons of Bengaluru in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Karnataka Congress President @DKShivakumar Slaps his party worker in full public view. If this is how the 'former shishya' of Kotwal Ramachandra treats his party worker, one can imagine what he would do with Others. Have you given DKS the 'licence for violence'?", @RahulGandhi?" he asked.

LA Mayor is US envoy to India

Los Angeles Mayor nominated by Biden to replace Kenneth Juster if confirmed

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

United States President Joe Biden has nominated Los Angeles city mayor Eric M. Garcetti as the next US ambassador to India. If confirmed by the Senate, Mr Garcetti, 50, would replace Kenneth Juster, who served as the US ambassador to India during the Trump administration.

Mr Juster's term had ended a few months ago. In between, after his departure, the US had appointed Daniel Smith as Chargé d'Affaires (CdA) to head the US embassy in

New Delhi and after his retirement had recently appointed senior career diplomat Atul Keshap — who is of Indian origin — as the CdA to head the US embassy in India.

Announcing the nomination along with several other ambassadors, the White House said Eric M. Garcetti has been the mayor of the City of Los Angeles since 2013, following 12 years as a member of the City Council, including six as Council President.

As Mayor, Garcetti oversees the busiest container port in the Western Hemisphere, the largest municipal utility in the



Eric M. Garcetti

country, and one of the busiest airports in the world.

He led LA's successful bid to return the summer Olympic Games to American soil for the first time in three decades.

He currently chairs LA

Metro, the country's second-busiest transit agency, which is building or extending 15 new transit lines, and shifting to an all-electric fleet.

Mr Garcetti, a Rhodes Scholar, had earlier spent 12 years as an intelligence officer in the US Navy Reserve Component and had served under the US Defence Intelligence Agency.

Mr Garcetti co-founded Climate Mayors and led more than 400 US mayors to adopt the Paris Climate Agreement.

He is the current Chair of C40 Cities a network of 97 of the world's biggest cities taking bold climate action and has led the

organisation's engagement and expansion in India as well as C40's global response to the Covid-19 pandemic through the sharing of best practices and resources.

A Rhodes Scholar, he studied at Queen's College, Oxford and the London School of Economics and Political Science. Garcetti was selected as an inaugural Asia 21 Fellow of the Asia Society, and taught at Occidental College's Department of Diplomacy and World Affairs, as well as at the University of Southern California's School of International Relations.

People's plight



Police personnel detain Youth Congress activists during their agitation outside Governor House to protest against hike in the fuel and LPG prices in Kolkata, on Saturday. —PTI

ANANTNAG
GUNFIGHT: 3 LeT
MILITANTS KILLEDDC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR JULY 10

The Jammu and Kashmir police on Saturday said that it along with the Army and Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) killed three Lashkar-e-Tayyaba (LeT) militants in a fire fight that broke out in southern Anantnag district earlier during the day.

The police claimed that one of the slain militants was involved in the murder of a Territorial Army (TA) soldier in June 2019.

It said that the fighting broke out in Kwarigam village of Anantnag's Achabal area following a cordon-and-search operation was launched jointly by its counterinsurgency Special Operations Group (SOG), the Army's 19 Rashtriya Rifles and the CRPF to flush out militants.

The J&K police and Army officials said that when the joint teams zeroed in on the suspect "...you should be responsible....", before asking cameramen present there to delete the footage.

The incident took place during his visit to the district headquarters town of Mandya to inquire about the health of ailing veteran leader, former Minister and MP G Made Gowda.

Tweeting the video of the incident, BJP national General Secretary C. T. Ravi, asked Congress national leader Rahul Gandhi whether he had given "licence for violence" to Shivakumar, whom he referred to as a follower of Kotwal Ramachandra, one of the underworld dons of Bengaluru in the 1970s and 1980s.

"Karnataka Congress President @DKShivakumar Slaps his party worker in full public view. If this is how the 'former shishya' of Kotwal Ramachandra treats his party worker, one can imagine what he would do with Others. Have you given DKS the 'licence for violence'?", @RahulGandhi?" he asked.

BJP claims win in UP local polls

Lucknow, July 10: Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Saturday claimed victory in the polls for the posts of the block panchayat chief, amid allegations of violence by the opposition parties.

The Opposition has slammed the state government over incidents of violence in the run-up to the polls. Reports of clashes had surfaced from several areas of the state with allegations that candidates backed by opposition parties were not allowed to file nomination papers.

However, claiming an outstanding show by the

BJP in the polls to the posts of block and district panchayat chiefs, Adityanath said almost 85 per cent seats went in favour of the ruling party.

Terming the success an outcome of the team work, the chief minister said the BJP and its allies bagged 635 of 825 seats of block panchayat chief on Saturday.

Meanwhile, lauding the BJP's win in the elections, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted that the "big victory" is a reflection of the benefits people have received due to the Yogi Adityanath government's policies and pro-

people schemes.

All party workers deserve congratulations for this win, he said.

The CM also praised the state Election Commission for the peaceful and fair polls.

Conducting such a massive election process peacefully, in a state where democracy was mortgaged before professional criminals and mafia on the basis of caste religion and sect, is praiseworthy, he told reporters at the BJP headquarters here.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Saturday congratulated Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister

Yogi Adityanath and other BJP leaders for the party's victory in the elections to posts of block and district panchayat chiefs and said it happened due to people's faith in the state government's welfare programmes.

Adityanath said almost 85 per cent seats in the polls went in favour of the ruling BJP. "This grand victory of @BJP4UP in the Uttar Pradesh block chief election is a result of the public's faith in the welfare policies of the Yogi government under the guidance of Prime Minister @narendramodiji," Shah said on Twitter. —PTI

AIKSCC: Maha govt betrayed farmers

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JULY 10

Farmers' union All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) of Maharashtra on Saturday alleged that the MVA government has betrayed the farmers by bringing three amendment bills in connection with the central farm laws. Despite giving assurance of passing a resolu-

tion in connection with revocation of all the farm laws, the MVA government has acted under pressure from the corporate lobby and the Union government, the AIKSCC said.

Dr. Ajit Nawale of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) said that if the state government did not stop from implementing the proposed three bills, the farmers would protest in Mumbai on the lines of

the Delhi protests.

Meanwhile, Maharashtra agriculture minister Dada Bhuse denied the allegation that the state government is working under anyone's pressure.

The bills were drafted after several rounds of discussion and deliberations, he said. "Accordingly, the bills were tabled in the state Assembly. The farmers' body can give their suggestions to the

proposed bills," the minister said.

Earlier in this week, the MVA government in Maharashtra had introduced three amendment bills in the assembly in connection with agriculture, co-operation and food and civil supplies, in a move to counter contentious farm laws enacted by the Union Government that are facing stiff opposition from farmers in the Country.

WHO to decide on
Covaxin inclusion
within 4-6 weeks

New Delhi, July 10: The World Health Organisation (WHO) is likely to take a decision on including Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin in the emergency use list (EUL) within four to six weeks, Soumya Swaminathan, the global health body's chief scientist has said.

Speaking at a webinar organised by the Centre for Science and Environment (CSE) on Friday, Ms Swaminathan said the WHO is reviewing Covaxin as its manufacturer Bharat Biotech is now uploading its entire data on the health body's portal.

According to WHO guidelines, EUL is a procedure to streamline the process by which new or unlicensed products can be used during public health emergencies.

"There is a process to be followed for EUL and pre-qualification of vaccines under which a company has to complete phase 3 trials and submit the whole data to the regulatory department of WHO which is examined by an expert advisory group," Ms Swaminathan said.

"The completeness of the data, which includes safety and efficacy and also the manufacturing quality, standard is provided. So, I expect that Bharat Biotech has already submitted data and in four to six weeks there will be a decision on its inclusion," Ms Swaminathan added.

At present, the WHO has approved vaccines by

INDIA RECORDS
42,766 NEW
COVID-19 CASESDC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI JULY 10

India on Saturday recorded 42,766 fresh cases and 1,206 fatalities, taking the total Covid-19 death toll to 407,145. With 455,033 active Coronavirus cases, India's share of global active cases now stands at 3.82 per cent (one in 26) and it is the fourth most affected country in the world.

Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla on Saturday sounded a note of caution against the blatant disregard of Covid-appropriate behaviour at hill stations and other tourist locations, stressing that the second wave of the pandemic is not yet over.

Amid the huge influx of tourists in Uttarakhand, newly-appointed chief minister of the state, Pushkar Singh Dhami, on Saturday said that the state government has issued an order restricting occupancy of hotels in Nainital and Dehradun, the two most visited tourist places in the state.

Pfizer/BioNTech, AstraZeneca-SK Bio/Serum Institute of India, AstraZeneca EU, Janssen, Moderna and Sinopharm for emergency use. —PTI

India, Georgia
to work jointlySRIDHAR
KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

Becoming the first Indian Foreign Minister to visit the strategically-located Caucasus nation of Georgia after its independence three decades ago, External Affairs Minister (EAM) S. Jaishankar held talks with the Georgian leadership, even as India made a major goodwill gesture by permanently handing over a part of the Holy Relics of the revered 17th century martyred Georgian Queen St. Ketevan that had been preserved in Goa for centuries.

The move, on the directions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has generated enormous goodwill for India in the Caucasus nation that borders Pakistan's friend Turkey, estranged neighbours Armenia and Azerbaijan as well as India's time-tested friend

Russia.

But it is Georgia's troubled relations with Russia that has been viewed with a lot of interest by foreign policy watchers. Georgia claims that 20 percent of its territory comprising the regions of Abkhazia and South Ossetia has been illegally occupied by Russia. It is an issue on which India is expected to tread carefully, given New Delhi's close ties with Moscow, even though Georgia is understood to have thanked India for "strong and steadfast support" for Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity. Georgia was part of the erstwhile Soviet Union that broke up in 1991.

After talks on Saturday with both Georgian Prime Minister Irakli Garibashvili and Deputy PM and Foreign Minister David Zalkaliani, EAM Jaishankar said, "I come here in a sense with a sacred purpose".

SHIVRAJ, NATH
RIVALRY SPILLS
TO RAJ BHAVANRABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPLAL, JULY 10

A day after Leader of Opposition (LOP) Kamal Nath met governor Mangubhai Chaganbhai Patel here to draw his attention to 'deteriorating' law and order situation in Madhya Pradesh, chief minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Saturday invited the latter for dinner at his official residence, taking his political rivalry with the Congress veteran to the Raj Bhavan.

Mr Chouhan visited the governor at the Raj Bhavan in the morning to extend his invitation for dinner at his official residence in Shyamla Hills here. Although, the dinner hosted for the governor is termed as a 'gesture of courtesy' and 'purely apolitical', sources said the chief minister was likely to apprise the governor of achievements of his government. The governor may be apprised of the law and order situation in the state on the sidelines of the occasion, sources said.

DRUG | PEDDLING

Afghan national among four arrested, 354 kg of drugs recovered

Delhi cops seize heroin worth over ₹ 2,500 cr

BHASKAR HARI
SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

The Delhi Police's Special Cell has arrested four persons, including an Afghan national, and recovered a record quantity of 354 kg Afghan heroin worth over ₹2,500 crore in international markets, officials said on Saturday.

The accused have been identified as Rizwan Kashmiri, a resident of Ghitorni and native of Anantnag in J&K, Gurpreet Singh and

Gurjot Singh, both residents of Jalandhar in Punjab, and Hazrat Ali, a native of Kandahar in Afghanistan, they said.

Police said that recently it came to notice that Rizwan Kashmiri was involved in drug peddling in Delhi and other states like Punjab, Madhya Pradesh and Haryana.

"On Monday, information was received that Kashmiri was going to deliver contraband in south Delhi's Ghitorni area. Thereafter, a trap was laid and the accused

was arrested when he was going to deliver a packet of one kilogram of heroin," deputy commissioner of police (Special Cell) Pramod Singh Kushwah said.

Kashmiri revealed that he works under the command of an Afghan national Isha Khan who recently left India for Afghanistan. Khan directed him to contact Gurpreet and Gurjot who were currently operating a drug racket from Faridabad Sector-65 in Haryana, the DCP said.

At the instance of Kashmiri, Gurpreet and Gurjot were arrested, he said.

Police recovered 166 kg and 115 kg heroin from two cars which were parked in the society. Later, 70 kg heroin was also recovered from the rented accommodation of the accused persons, police said.

Gurpreet and Gurjot revealed that they were operating the drug racket on the instructions of Navpreet Singh, presently based in Portugal. Gurpreet met Navpreet in

Kapurthala Jail, Punjab, when they were in judicial custody in different NDPS cases, the DCP said.

At the instance of Kashmiri, Ali was also arrested from Gurgaon in Haryana and two kg heroin was recovered from his possession. Around 100 kg of different chemicals used for preparation of heroin was also recovered, Mr Kushwah said.

Police said that opium grown in parts of Afghanistan is concealed in different legitimate exports, i.e., talc stone, gypsum

powder, basil seeds, and in packaging material like gunny bags, cartons etc. Then it is transported in containers to Chabahar port of Iran and from there the consignments containing the contraband are shipped to Jawahar Lal Nehru Port Trust Mumbai, they said. Thereafter, the material is separated from the legitimate exports and sent to the makeshift factories based in Shivpur, MP, for its further extraction and processing to get the final product heroin, police said.

SHORT TAKES

UKRAINIAN
SOLDIER KILLED,
THREE WOUNDED

Kiev, July 10: The Ukrainian army said on Saturday that a soldier had been killed and three others wounded in the country's pro-Russian separatist east, amid rising tensions in the conflict-torn region.

It was the fourth Ukrainian soldier killed in the past week.

The wounded were being treated in hospital and their injuries not life-threatening. Ukrainian positions on the frontline had been targeted by artillery, mortars, grenade launchers and machine gun fire. The war, which has left more than 13,000 people dead, broke out in 2014 shortly after Russia annexed the Crimean peninsula.

TAJIKISTAN
QUAKE CLAIMS
FIVE LIVES

Dushanbe, July 10: An earthquake struck eastern Tajikistan on Saturday morning, killing at least five people, according to authorities in the mountainous Central Asian country. Tremors from the 5.9 magnitude quake could be felt in the capital of Dushanbe, 165 kilometres (100 miles) southwest of the epicentre.

"Dozens of houses were destroyed," the Tajik committee for emergency situations said.

"Power lines were also partly damaged" in three villages in the district of Tajikabad, where all the victims lived.

The quake struck at 7:14 am (0214 GMT) and at a depth of 10 kilometres, according to the committee and state news agency Khovar.

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon has ordered a commission of inquiry.

MOGADISHU
BLAST: UNKNOWN
CASUALTIES

Mogadishu, July 10: A car bomb targeting a top police chief exploded in Somalia's capital Mogadishu on Saturday, causing an unknown number of casualties, police and witnesses said. "The commissioner is unharmed but there are other casualties the attack inflicted," said Somali police spokesman Sadiq Dudishe.

He said the bomber, using an explosive-laden vehicle, struck the convoy of Benadir region police commissioner Farhan Mohamud at a busy intersection in the capital.

"It caused huge devastation and casualties of both police and civilians," said Mire Adan, who was a few metres from the scene, adding that he counted six bodies.

Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

ZELDA GAME
CARTRIDGE SELLS
FOR \$870,000

New York, July 10: A sealed cartridge of "The Legend of Zelda" for the old Nintendo NES console has sold for a world record sum of \$870,000, auction house Heritage Auctions said in a statement Friday.

The cartridge, dated to 1987, is still in its original packaging and trumps the previous world record sale of a video game — \$660,000 for a 1986 "Super Mario Bros" cartridge sold in April — according to the auction house. The game was the "masterpiece" in a sale of 443 lots that runs until Sunday, Eric Bradley, spokesperson for the Dallas-based company, said. The auction house has not revealed buyer's identity.

Blending adventure, action and exploration in a magical universe, Zelda is one of the most significant titles in the history of video games.

REMOVAL OF
U.S. CAPITOL
FENCING BEGINS

Washington, July 10: More than six months after the deadly US Capitol insurrection, authorities on Friday began the process of dismantling fencing and barricades surrounding the iconic Washington building, although some access restrictions will remain in place.

Personnel were seen removing bars connecting sections of the eight-foot (2.4-metre) black metal fencing that had been erected in the days following the violent unrest at the citadel of American democracy.

Removal of the fence itself was to begin early Saturday, workers on the site said, with the operation expected to last through the weekend. Thousands of National Guard troops were stationed there following the attack, and a wide security boundary complete with razor wire turned the Capitol into a fortress for months.

EU hits goal of delivering
vaccines for 70% of adults

Brussels, July 10: The European Union has hit its target of delivering enough Coronavirus vaccine to cover 70 percent of the adult population, EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen said Saturday. The 27 EU member state governments are responsible for administering the vaccines to citizens — and some are working much faster than others — but von der Leyen stressed that: "The EU has kept its word." The EU joint vaccine purchasing scheme, run by von der Leyen's European Commission, has delivered 330 million BioNTech-Pfizer shots, 100 million AstraZeneca, 50 million from Moderna and 20 million Johnson & Johnson.

All but the J&J jab require two doses to achieve full efficacy, and the EU is home to an estimated 366 million adults. "This weekend, we delivered enough vaccine to member states to fully vaccinate at least 70 percent of the adult population this month. By tomorrow, some 50 million doses will have been distributed to all regions of Europe," she said.

"Covid-19 is not yet defeated. But we are prepared to continue supplying vaccines — also against new variants. Now the member states must do everything they can to ensure that vaccinations move forward. Only then will we all be safe." When the epidemic hit Europe last year, the European Commission stepped in to coordinate a joint buying programme for members. — AFP



People wait in a queue to register for the Sinovac Covid-19 vaccine at a convention hall building in Banda Aceh on Saturday. — AFP

Delta variant cases mark
32% weekly surge in UK

London, July 10: UK health officials said the Delta variant of Covid-19 continues as the dominant strain of Coronavirus and marked a sharp increase in the UK with 54,268 more cases logged on Friday, which marks a 32 per cent increase over the previous week. Public Health England (PHE) said its weekly

analysis shows the continued rise in infections is not followed by a similar increase in hospitalisations and deaths, which reflects a high protection offered by both doses of a Coronavirus vaccine.

In a separate study, PHE also found that all the vaccines being administered are as effective at prevent-

ing symptomatic disease in the majority of people with underlying health conditions as the rest of the population.

The data continues to show that the sharp increase in cases that we are seeing is not being followed by a similar increase in hospitalisation and death. — PTI

Cyberattack hits
Iranian ministryNO CASUALTIES
FROM TEHRAN
BLAST: OFFICIALS

Tehran, July 10: Iran's transportation ministry said Saturday a "cyber disruption" had affected its computer systems and website, while the country's national railway company denied reports of being hit by a cyber attack. The disruption started before noon (0730 GMT), taking down the body's website and links associated with it, the ministry said in a statement reported by state news agency IRNA.

It said "technical experts" were investigating the issue and will announce when they are back up, without elaborating further. The body's website was still inaccessible around 5 PM (1230 GMT).

The railway company's announcement came a day after *Fars* news agency reported "unprecedented chaos" at stations with hundreds of trains delayed or cancelled.

In the now-deleted report, it said the incident followed "a widespread disruption in... computer systems that is probably due to a cyber attack."

Sadegh Sekri, a spokesman for Islamic Republic of Iran Railways, said on Saturday that

"there has been no disruption or cyber attack for passenger, cargo or intercity trains." The company had said in a statement late Friday that trains were arriving and departing on schedule with "no problems". This followed the *Fars* report, which had included a picture of a station's departures and arrivals board showing rows of cancelled trips. — AFP

B'desh factory
owner nabbed

Dhaka, July 10: The owner of a factory where 52 people died in a fire was arrested for murder Saturday along with seven others, as it emerged that children as young as 11 had been working there.

Police said Abul Hashem and four of his sons were among eight people detained over the fire, which broke out Thursday and raged for more than a day.

A separate inquiry has been launched into the use of child labour at the food factory.

Jayedul Alam, police chief for Narayanganj district where the factory is located, said the entrance had been padlocked at the time of the blaze and the factory breached multiple safety regulations. — AFP

"It was a deliberate murder," the police chief said. All eight people detained face murder charges.

Before his arrest, Hashem told the *Daily Star* newspaper the fire "may have been a result of workers' carelessness", suggesting a discarded cigarette could have sparked the carnage. Emergency services found 48 of the bodies on the third floor of the Hashem Food and Beverage factory in Ruggan, an industrial town outside Dhaka.

The fire department said the exit door to the main staircase had been padlocked and highly flammable chemicals and plastics had been stored in the building. — AFP

Kabul rushes
troops to border

Afghans try to retake Taliaban-held crossing

Kabul, July 10: Afghan authorities prepared Saturday to try to retake a key border crossing seized by the Taliban in a sweeping offensive that the insurgents claim has helped capture a vast swath of the violence-ravaged nation.

As US troops continued their withdrawal, the Taliban said its fighters had seized two crossings in western Afghanistan — completing an arc of territory from the Iranian border to the frontier with China. It now held 85 percent of the country, a Taliban official said Friday, controlling about 250 of Afghanistan's nearly 400 districts — a claim impossible to verify, and disputed by the government. Beijing, meanwhile, which has criticised Washington for its hasty withdrawal, urged its citizens to leave the country "as soon as possible" after evacuating 210 nationals.

The "complex and severe domestic security situation" prompted the evacuation warning, the foreign

ministry said, adding that 22 of those flown out tested positive for Coronavirus on arrival in China.

On Friday Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid said their fighters had routed the border town of Islam Qala on the Iranian frontier and the Torgundi crossing with Turkmenistan. Herat governor spokesman Jilani Farhad said Saturday the authorities were deploying fresh troops to retake Islam Qala post, the biggest trade crossing between Iran and Afghanistan.

"They will be sent there soon," he said.

The Afghan government has repeatedly dismissed the Taliban's gains as having little strategic value, but the seizure of multiple border crossings and the taxes they generate will likely fill the group's coffers with new revenue.

In a clear sign fighting was getting closer to major urban centres, an official at one hospital in Kandahar — the country's second-largest city and

the birthplace of the Taliban — said Saturday dozens of wounded had been admitted in the past 24 hours, including at least 15 service members.

With the Taliban having routed much of northern Afghanistan in recent weeks, the government holds little more than a constellation of provincial capitals that must largely be reinforced and resupplied by air.

The air force was under severe strain even before the Taliban's lightning offensive overwhelmed the government's northern and western positions, putting further pressure on the country's limited aircraft and pilots.

On Thursday President Joe Biden said the US military mission would end on August 31 — nearly 20 years after it began — but he admitted it was "highly unlikely" Kabul would be able to control the entire country. "The status quo is not an option," Biden said of staying in the country. — AFP

Haiti asks US, UN for troops

Port-Au-Prince, July 10: Haiti's interim government has asked the U.S. and U.N. to deploy troops to protect key infrastructure as it tries to stabilize the country and prepare for elections in the aftermath of President Jovenel Moïse's assassination.

Amid the confusion, hundreds of Haitians gathered outside the US Embassy in Port-au-Prince pleading for a way out of the country. Women carried babies and young men waved passports and ID cards as they cried out, "Refuge!" and "Help!"

"We definitely need assistance and we've asked our international partners for help," Interim Prime Minister Claude Joseph said Friday. "We believe our partners can assist the national police in resolving the situation." — AP

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SHORT TAKES

India-Lanka series now from July 18

New Delhi: The Indian team's six-match limited-overs series in Sri Lanka will now start from July 18, BCCI secretary Jay Shah said on Saturday, a day after a Covid-19 outbreak in the home team camp forced the postponement. The series, which was originally scheduled to start with the three ODIs on July 13, had to be rescheduled after Sri Lanka's batting coach Grant Flower and data analyst G.T. Niroshan tested positive for the dreaded virus on their return from the UK tour. It also meant an extended quarantine period for the squad members. While the tentative date that was originally being discussed was July 17, but Shah confirmed that it will start from July 18. — *PTI*

Sciver shines as England beat India

Northampton: England all-rounder Nat Sciver smashed a record-equalling half century before the bowlers put the struggling Indian batters under pressure to ensure an 18-run win for the hosts via DLS method in the rain-curtailed first T20I against here. Put in to bat, England rode on Sciver's 27-ball 55 and wicket-keeper Amy Jones' 43 off 27 balls to reach 177/7 in 20 overs. Sciver's sensational fifty was England's joint fastest in the format. In reply, India failed to keep up with the required run-rate despite vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's quickfire 29 off 17 balls before rain fell with the visitors at 54/3 in 8.4 overs, 18 runs behind England via the DLS method. — *PTI*

Brief scores: England 177/7 (Sciver 55, Jones 43, Pandey 3-22) bt India 54/3 (Mandhana 29, Deol 17*, Glenn 1-6) by 18 runs (DLS method)

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IT'S BARTY TIME!

Aussie Ashleigh wins emotional Wimbledon title

London, July 10: Ashleigh Barty won her first Wimbledon title on the 50th anniversary of fellow indigenous Australian Evonne Goolagong Cawley's maiden crown, beating Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in the final on Saturday. The 25-year-old Australian — who wore a specially-designed dress in tribute to Cawley's iconic scallop one she sported in 1971 — adds the Wimbledon crown to her 2019 French Open title. “It took me a long time to verbalise, to dare to dream it and say it,” said Barty. “I didn't sleep a lot last night, I was thinking of all the what-ifs. I hope I made Evonne proud,” she added.

It was the first women's Wimbledon final to go to three sets since 2012 when Serena Williams beat Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska. Barty had looked like cruising to victory after soaring into a 4-0 lead over her opponent — the Australian's start so blistering that she won the first 14 points.

However, 29-year-old Pliskova steadied herself while Barty faltered when she served for the match at 6-5 in the second set. The Czech broke and then swept the tiebreaker to take the final into a decider.

Barty got the break for 2-0 in the final set and despite one or two wobbles she got herself over the line sinking to her knees, her hands over her face in disbelief.

She wiped a couple of tears away before climbing up to the player's box, just like her compatriot Pat Cash did when he won the Wimbledon men's title in 1987.

— *AFP*



Ashleigh Barty of Australia holds the Wimbledon trophy after winning the womens singles final against Karolina Pliskova of the Czech Republic at the All England Tennis Club in London on Saturday. — *AP*

Djokovic into 30th Slam final

London, July 10: Novak Djokovic reached his 30th Grand Slam final on Friday with a straight sets win over Canada's Denis Shapovalov to move one victory away from a sixth Wimbledon title and record-equalling 20th major.

The world number one triumphed 7-6 (7/3), 7-5, 7-5 in a tense semi-final in which he crucially saved 10 of 11 break points. Shapovalov was so dis-

traught that he left Centre Court in tears. In his seventh Wimbledon final, Djokovic will face Matteo Berrettini after the world number nine became the first Italian to reach a Wimbledon singles final by beating Hubert Hurkacz 6-3, 6-0, 6-7 (3/7), 6-4.

“I don't think the scoreline says enough about the performance or the match. He (Shapovalov) was serving for the first

set and was probably the better player.

“I would like to give him a big round of applause for everything he has done today and also this two weeks. We are going to see a lot of him in the future, he is a great player,” said Djokovic.

Victory on Sunday will not only take Djokovic level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Slam wins.

He will also just need the

US Open to become only the third man in history, and first since 1969, to complete the calendar Grand Slam. “I am trying to make the maximum of my own abilities each match and see what happens,” said 34-year-old Djokovic.

“At this stage of my career, Grand Slams are everything and I have been very privileged to make history in the sport I truly love.” — *AFP*

THE FINAL COUNTDOWN

England, Italy gear up for one big kick

London, July 10: England and Italy are holding their collective breath as the clock counts down to Sunday's Euro 2020 final showdown which will be watched by around 65,000 fans at Wembley and millions more on television.

The anticipation is great in England, as the hosts sense that this is their time to end a 55-year wait to add a second major trophy to their 1966 World Cup.

Wembley was the venue for that final and will be again on Sunday as Gareth Southgate's England seek to complete the job after edging out Denmark 2-1 in extra time in front of 64,950 supporters in Wednesday's semi-final.

England began the tournament as one of several contenders to lift the trophy but have taken advantage of playing most of their games at home. The final will be their sixth at Wembley out of seven.

England have never beaten Italy at a major tournament, although meetings between the nations have been few and far between.

Italy triumphed in a penalty shoot-out in the quarter-finals of Euro 2012 in Ukraine and won 2-1 when they met in the group stage of the 2014 World Cup, although both sides ended up being eliminated in the first round.

Both teams have been transformed since then.

The Azzurri have lit up Euro 2020 ever since beating Turkey 3-0 in the opening game a month ago.

They are on a national record 33-match unbeaten run under coach Roberto Mancini, who has spent time in England both as a player and as a manager. — *AFP*

Live on TV

EURO

Final: England vs Italy from 12.30 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

NUMBERS GAME

- Prior to this, Italy had reached the European Championship final in 1968, 2000 and 2012. And Italy's only title win in the European Cup came in 1968, when they beat Yugoslavia over two matches.
- England, on other hand, beat Denmark 2-1 after extra time to qualify for the final for the first time. England have to wait for 55 years to enter the final of a major tournament. Since winning the World Cup in 1966, England have reached the knockout stages of official tournaments 14 times out of a possible 28 — a 50 per cent success rate.
- This is Italy's 10th major final (six World Cups and four European Cup). Only Germany (14) having played in more among European nations.

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches: 27
Italy won: 11
England won: 8
Drawn: 8

LAST FIVE MATCHES

Italy won: 2
England won: 1
Drawn: 2

MEETINGS IN EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

1980: In Turin, Italy beat England 1-0
2012: In Kyiv, Italy drew with England 0-0 (Italy won 4-2 on penalties)

— *S. PERVEZ KAISER*

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