

SHORT TAKES

YSRC LODGES
PLAINT ON SOCIAL
MEDIA GROUPSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 7

The YSR Congress lodged a complaint with Andhra Pradesh CID, seeking action against abusive/fake news being spread against CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on various social media groups.

YSRC General Secretary and MLA Lella Appi Reddy and others filed a complaint with P. V. Sunil Kumar, ADG, AP CID, here on Wednesday. They alleged that a few social media groups were indulging in spreading hatred and fake news, along with morphed content, targeting CM Jagan Mohan Reddy. They requested stringent action against the admins of such groups, noting that these groups/accounts were repeatedly and intentionally indulging in such behaviour. They also sought suspension of all such social media accounts, which were in violation of social media community guidelines on spreading fake/abusive content.

NAIDU ALLEGES
CM FAILED ON
FARMERS WLFAREDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 7

Former CM N. Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday said that the YSRC government had failed to ensure remunerative prices for crops at a time when the farmers were facing severe financial problems because of the Coronavirus pandemic crisis.

Naidu said that the state government threw farmers' interests to the winds without trying to purchase the farm produce. New burdens were being imposed by fixing meters on agricultural motors and by mortgaging the river water rights of AP, he added.

The TD Chief demanded that the government should purchase the farmers' crops to ensure better prices for them and that fixing of meters on motors should be withdrawn with immediate effect. Over 70 percent of farmers suffered losses because of negligence in the e-crop bookings, he further said.

16 IPS OFFICERS
TRANSFERRED
AFTER RESHUFFLEDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 7

As many as 16 IPS officers were transferred in Andhra Pradesh after the state government ordered a reshuffle late Tuesday. The transfer orders, notified with immediate effect, were issued by Aditya Nath Das, Chief Secretary to the state government.

While Vizianagaram SP B. Rajakumari was promoted as DIG, Disha and administration, M. Deepika, superintendent of police (SP), DISHA, was transferred to the post of superintendent of police, Vizianagaram. Krishna, Nellore and East Godavari also got new SPs under the reshuffle.

Vijaya Rao, superintendent of police, Railways, Vijayawada, was transferred and posted as SP, Nellore to fulfil the existing vacancy. Krishna district SP, M. Ravindranath Babu, was transferred as SP to East Godavari, while Adnan Naveem Asmi was transferred as group commander, Greyhounds.

Prakasam district SP Siddhartha Kaushal was posted as SP, Krishna district. Y. Rishanth Reddy, assistant superintendent of police (ASP), Special Enforcement Bureau, Chittoor, was transferred as ASP of Guntur Rural Admin. Additionally, S. Satish Kumar, special officer, Narsipatnam, and Chintapalli additional SP Vasana Vidhya Sagar Naidu were posted as ASPs, special enforcement.

Bindhu Madhav Garikapati, ASP, Rampachodavaram and Tuhin Sinha, ASP, Narsipatnam, were also posted as assistant SPs, special enforcement. Dr. V.B. Raj Kamal, deputy SP, was also moved from his current position.

Greyhounds assault commanders P. Jagadeesh and G. Krishnakanth were posted as ASP, Paderu, and ASP, Chintoor, East Godavari district, respectively.

Greyhounds assault commander V.M. Manikanta Chandolu was posted as ASP, Narsipatnam, while Krishna Kanth Patel was handed charge as ASP, Rampachodavaram. Tushar Dudi, Greyhounds' assault commander, was posted as ASP, Chintapalli. DSP S. Khader Basha was transferred as well.

Gift of Education Scheme



Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy and minister A. Suresh watch the dictionaries which will be given to children as part of Gift of Education scheme, at CM's camp office in Tadepalligudem on Wednesday. — By ARRANGEMENT

Jagan to open farm
lab at Rayadurgam

10,000 Rythu Bharosa Kendralu to be inaugurated in AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JULY 7

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will inaugurate a seed testing and agricultural lab at Rayadurgam in Anantapur district on Thursday.

This will be among a series of programmes the CM will be attending as part of Rythu Dinotsavam celebrations being organised by the state government to mark the birth anniversary of late Chief Minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy.

The formal opening of the lab in Rayadurgam will herald setting up of at least 100 seed testing and agricultural labs in the state. The Chief Minister will also inaugurate 10,000 Rythu Bharosa Kendralu in AP by formally opening one such centre at Udegolam village in

All set for CM's Kadapa tour

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JULY 7

All preparations have been made for the visit of Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to Kadapa district on Thursday and Friday.

As per the CM's itinerary, Jagan Mohan Reddy will participate in a YSR Rythu Dinotsavam in Anantapur district on Thursday morning. He will reach Pulivendula the same afternoon by a spe-

cial helicopter for attending various functions. Later he will reach Idupulapaya by helicopter and visit YSR Ghat in the evening and pay tributes to his father. He will stay the night at Idupulapaya.

The Chief Minister will fly by helicopter to Badvel on Friday morning for attending various functions and address a public meeting. Thereafter, he will reach Kadapa by helicopter and inaugurate development programmes

at the CP Brown Library. Later, he will address a public meeting.

On Friday evening, he will reach Y. S. Raja Reddy Cricket Stadium at RIMS and unveil the statues of Raja Reddy and Rajasekhara Reddy. He will also place the foundation stone for the flood lights to be installed at the stadium. He will then reach Kadapa Airport by helicopter and return to Vijayawada by a special flight.

Rayadurgam mandal. In addition, he will declare open a Grama Sachivalayam and YSR Health Clinic in the same village.

Anantapur SP Satya

Esubabu said all Covid-19 norms will be adhered to at the various functions being attended by the CM.

Meanwhile, Rural Development Trust (RDT) has been selected for the

YSR Award in the Lifetime Achievements category. Others selected for the award include writer Imam and former SKU professor Dr Rachapalem Chandrasekhara Reddy.

Jagan says TS is drawing extra water

From Page 1

“Even from the Pulichintala Project which is a balancing reservoir intended for stabilization of the existing Krishna Delta System, the state of Telangana unilaterally continues to draw water for power generation. This is done even without the indent raised by the competent authority — i.e., the superintendent engineer, IC, Vijayawada,” the Chief Minister said.

“Without taking any release orders from KRMB, this water is being wasted due to surplusing over Prakasam barrage to the Bay of Bengal.”

“As such, it was already requested that the KRMB may be directed to account for all these unauthorised draws by TS against the agreed allocations of 299 tmc to TS.”

The Chief Minister said, “AP has already complained to the Ministry of Jalashakti (MoJS) on a number of occasions

about TS violating all the established norms, principles and procedures in vogue on utilisation of river water and also brought TS's unauthorised projects to the notice of the ministry. TS started the construction of new projects of Palamuru Ranga Reddy LIS to lift 90 tmc at the rate of 1.5 tmc a day at 800-foot level and Dindi LIS to lift 30 tmc at the rate of 0.5 tmc a day at 800 feet level. It is further enhancing the scope of Kalwakurthy LIS from 25 to 40 tmc at the rate of 0.4tmc a day at 800 feet, SLBC from 30 to 40 tmc at the rate of 0.5tmc a day at the rate of 825 feet to utilise a total of 200 tmc at the rate of 3 tmc a day.”

“Apart from this, TS is drawing 4 tmc of water for power generation at 796 feet level itself,” the CM informed the Prime Minister in his letter.

“In spite of repeated complaints before the MoJS and KRMB to prevail on TS to stop execution of illegal projects and

unauthorised enhancements, without appraisal of the DPRs by KRMB, scrutiny by CWC for approvals of apex council, no effective step has been taken so far. Moreover, it has been observed that KRMB has not been effective in discharging its duties and is not acting in a manner which it is expected to when it comes to protecting the legitimate interests of AP.”

The CM said, “All projects in the AP territory are legitimate schemes having all approvals and allocation of waters by KWDI and mentioned in the 11th Schedule of the AP Reorganisation Act. It is to reiterate that AP is neither creating any new ayacut nor any new canal nor new storage under the Rayalaseema Lift Scheme.”

“It is only to draw water at a level of over 800ft connecting to the existing canal system to meet the drinking and irrigation needs of the chronically drought-prone areas of

Rayalaseema, SPSR Nellore and Prakasam districts well within their allocations of 512 TMC as Pothireddypadu Head Regulator cannot draw any water below reservoir level of +854ft and full drawal can only be achieved at a level of +881ft only.”

The CM requested the PM to stop TS from the indiscriminate drawal of water solely for power generation when there is no need for irrigation and to follow the established norms and protocols and directions of the KRMB.

He urged the PM that the jurisdiction of KRMB be notified immediately and all the off-takes that include water for irrigation, power and drinking water on common reservoirs of both the states be kept under the control of KRMB with CISF security for effective operation and maintenance in the interest of AP and TS in compliance with the provisions of the AP Reorganisation Act.

YSR Lifetime Achievement
Awards announcedDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 7

The Andhra Pradesh Government on Wednesday announced the YSR Lifetime Achievement Awards for individuals and institutions for excellence in their chosen fields and amplifying the Telugu idiom and culture besides social service.

The YSR Lifetime Achievement Award carries a cash prize of ₹10 lakh and a memento while the Lifetime Achievement Award comprises ₹5 lakh

and a memento and will be presented in the second week of August.

Announcing the awards on the eve of Dr YSR birth anniversary, government Adviser (communications) G. V. D. Krishna Mohan said, “It was a difficult task to select the names in tune with the ideals of Dr Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy and philosophy of Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

The rural backdrop and down-to-earth nature was prominently considered along with picking the

common man for the uncommon talent and exemplary contribution in their respective field of work ranging from agriculture, to literature, social work and medicare.

There were wide range discussions with officials and all concerned in finalizing the names and unsung heroes were also considered in the categories we have finalized for the year. The Awards, numbering 63 were to be given earlier, but was delayed due to the pandemic and it will be an annual feature, he said.

YSR LIFE-TIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARDS

INSTITUTIONS ● MSN Charities Trust (Kakinada), CP Brown Library (YSR Kadapa district), Saraswatha Nikethanam Library (Prakasam).

● Sri Sathya Sai Central Trust (Anantapur), RC Reddy Study Circle (YSR Kadapa).

● Rural Development Trust (Anantapur), Sri Gouthami Regional Library (East Godavari), Maharajas Government College of Music and Dance (Vizianagaram).

FARMERS:

● Palla Venkanna (phosthomus), founder of Kadiyam Nurseries.

● Mathota Farmer Producer Company (Srikakulam). MC Ramakrishna Reddy (Anantapur), Kotyada Srinivasa Rao (Vizianagaram), Vigneshwara Farmer Producer Organisation (Krishna),

M. Balarami Reddy (YSR Kadapa), S. Raghavendra (Chittoor), Segge Kondalrao (Visakhapatnam), Andhra Kashmir Tribal Farming and Marketing Producer Company Limited (Visakhapatnam), Valluru Ravikumar (Krishna) and Shiva Abhiramreddy - (Nellore).

ARTISTES:

● Ponduru Textiles - Andhra Fine Khadi Association (Srikakulam).

● Folk Song - Vangapandu Prasadarao (posthumous) (Vizianagaram).

● Bobbili Veena - Sri Bobbili Veena Centre (Achutha Narayana) (Vizianagaram).

● Dhimsa Dance - Killu Janakamma Dhimsa Dance Team (Visakhapatnam).

JOURNALISTS:

● Palagummi Sainath - (Chennai), ABK Prasad - (Krishna), Pothuri Venkateswara Rao - posthumous (Guntur),

● Sheikh Khaza Hussain (Devipriya) - posthumous (Guntur), K. Amarnath - posthumous West Godavari, ● Surendra - Cartoonist - (Kadapa), Telakapalli Ravi (Kurnool), Imam - Anantapur.

AUTHORS:

● Kalipatnam Rama Rao (Kara Master) posthumous (Srikakulam), Katti Padmarao - Abhyudaya Sahitya (Guntur), Rachapalem Chandrasekhara Reddy - Literature (YSR Kadapa), Bandi Narayanaswamy - Literature - (Anantapur), Kethu Viswanatha Reddy - Literature (YSR Kadapa),

● Konakaluri Enoch - Literature - (Guntur), Lalitha Kumari (Olga) - Literature (Guntur)

THEATRE ARTS:

● Ponnala Ramasubbareddy (Nellore).

● Surabhi Drama - Sri Vinayaka Natya Mandali (YSR Kadapa), Savara Paintings - Savara Raju (Srikakulam),

● Street Drama - Majji Srinivasa Rao - (Visakhapatnam),

● Disaster Management - Dharmadi Satyam (East Godavari), Harikatha - Sarvaraya Harikatha School (Women) - East Godavari.

● Burrakatha - Miriyala Apparao (West Godavari).

● Kondapalli crafts - Kurella Venkatachari (Krishna).

● Dappu Artist - Gochipata Galebu (Krishna),

● Venkatagiri Jamdani Sarees- G. Ramaiah (Nellore).

● Kalamkari Paintings - Sivaprasad Reddy (Kurnool).

● Wood Carvings - Balaji Wood Carving Mutually Aided Cooperative Societies (Chittoor), Leather Puppetry - Dalavai Chalapati - (Anantapur), Nadaswaram Dr. V. Satyanarayana - (Chittoor), Calligraphy - Poosapati Parameshwar Raju (Vizianagaram),

● Kuchipudi Dance - Siddhendra Yogi Kala Kshetra - Kuchipudi, (Krishna district).

COVID WARRIORS:

● Dr Nithichandra - Professor Pulmonology - Nellore.

● Dr. K. Krishna Kishore - Professor of ENT - Kakinada.

● Lakshmi - Staff Nurse - GGH. Vijayawada, K Jyotirmayi - Staff Nurse - Anantapur.

● Turubilli Tejaswi - Staff Nurse - (Visakhapatnam)

● M.Yobu - Male Nursing - (Nellore), Amma Charitable Trust - (Guntur), Aarti Homes - (YSR Kadapa).

HC issues notices on
civic bodies' mergerDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 7

Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday has served notices to three senior AP officials, including special chief secretary and commissioner, municipal administration and development, to file counters on a petition challenging merger of Mangalagiri and Tadepalli municipalities and forming of Mangalagiri-Tadepalli Municipal Corporation in capital city area of Amaravati.

Hearing the petition filed in this regard by social activist S. Lalchand

and others, a division bench comprising Chief Justice A. K. Goswami and Justice N. Jayasurya said it would hear all the petitions on the issue of merging municipalities at the same time. However, the bench refused to issue any interim order.

Petitioners' counsel Vasireddy Prabhunath maintained that after the High Court issued a stay order on G. O. dealing with merger of eight capital region villages into Tadepalli municipality earlier, the government issued an ordinance merging gram panchayats into Tadepalli municipality. He submitted that though

the ordinance has been challenged in the High Court and the matter is still pending, the state government has issued GO 19 dealing with constitution of Mangalagiri and Tadepalli municipalities.

Special pleader for gt K. Jaganmohan Reddy submitted that Mangalagiri and Tadepalli municipal corporations have been functioning from March onwards. As no interim order has been issued, the petitioners are seeking stay on G. O. 19.

After hearing both the parties, the HC said it would take up hearing of all petitions put together on the matter.

LEADERS | PRIMACY

Massive plantation of 50,000 saplings to take place in Kadapa on YSR's birth anniv.

Ministerial aspirants use event to prove their allegiance to Jagan

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL JULY 7

YSRC leaders are gearing up to celebrate the 72 birth anniversary of former chief minister Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy. A massive tree plantation programme is being organised with 50,000 saplings here.

Several MLAs have designed programmes for the day also as they are having an eye on minister posts when there is a cabinet expansion.

Nandyal MLA Silpa Ravichandra Kishore Reddy said, “Since Dr YSR strived hard for farmers’

welfare, we are taking up programmes befitting farmer interests. We have lined up events to inaugurate Rythu Bharosa Kendras and will be visiting Agri Clinics to initiate farmers into new-age agricultural technologies.”

S o f t - s p o k e n Ravichandra, a US-educated first-time MLA, has endeared himself to the people and is among the contenders for a berth in the state cabinet.

The district, which had returned all the 14 YSRC MLAs to the assembly and strengthened Jagan's hands now has two people in the cabinet — Finance

Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy from Dhone constituency and Gummanur Jayaram from Alur constituency. Buzz is that the reshuffle may have many surprises as the performance of the existing ministers was far from satisfactory.

While one minister courted controversy by running a gambling den, the other was also a problem in some respects. This has fuelled the aspirations of contenders for minister posts.

Six-time MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy representing Panyam constituency and Adoni MLA

Sai Prasad Reddy are also in the race.

The MLAs from reserved constituencies like Nandikotkur and Kodumur are also hopeful. Kurnool MLA Hafeez Khan, who is in the good looks of Jagan, was given a special task of procuring investment from Gulf countries and the Middle East.

When asked what programmes were lined up for YSR's birthday on Thursday, Adoni MLA Sai Prasad said his cadre was doing some services to the poor and caring for the sick and the disabled in hospitals.

Meanwhile, Kurnool

municipal corporation (KMC) has, for the first time, taken up a massive plantation programme by planting 50,000 saplings on a single day on Thursday.

The aim is to improve greenery and provide lung space in Kurnool city limits with a natural oxygen facility, said Kurnool mayor B. Y. Ramaiah.

He said the city has lost green cover during the previous rules but “we are now committed to improving it.”

All the 52 municipal council wards of KMC have been roped in to take up this programme. Every lane and bylane will have

plantations from a wide variety of plants including oxygen-supplying and medical spices like Neem, Ashoka, Subale, Kanuga, Arjuna, Peepul and Banyan tree.

The Mayor called up on the people to take up this programme as a mass movement and voluntarily plant trees. There is a need to have natural oxygen-giving plants in view of the recent Covid-19, he added.

B. Y. Ramaiah said that he had promised during the recent municipal local body elections to give priority to greenery. He might take up this programme

now. He sought the cooperation of citizens in protecting the plants and helping them grow.

KMC commissioner DK Balaji said all arrangements have been made to plant 50,000 saplings on Thursday, marking farmers' day. The digging and shifting of saplings to various areas have been done. There will be the involvement of a large number of citizens.

Special teams have been deployed to protect all plantations by providing regular watering, erecting tree guards etc for the sapling, the KMC commissioner said.

SHORT TAKES

LOW PRESSURE
LIKELY TO FORM
ON JULY 11DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 7

A low-pressure area is likely to form over west-central and adjoining northwest Bay of Bengal off north Andhra Pradesh-south Odisha coasts around July 11, the Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday.

Under the influence of the system, several parts of the state may receive light to heavy rains for nearly three days since the beginning of the system, IMD added.

Farmers have also been advised to take necessary precautions to safeguard Kharif crops from the abnormal weather conditions.

On Wednesday too, under the influence of the active monsoon clouds, light to heavy rains were registered at several places including Vizag, which recorded nearly

50mm of rainfall. Angaredigudem in West Godavari received the state's highest rainfall of 130mm.

URBAN PRIMARY
HEALTH CENTRES
ON THE ANVIL IN APDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 7

As many as 15 urban health centres are set to crop up in Nellore municipal corporation limits, as part of a megaproject to build 600 YSR urban primary health centres in all corporation areas across the state.

Water resources minister Dr P. Anilkumar Yadav made the announcement while laying the foundation stone for a YSR urban primary health centre at 9th division in Nellore city constituency on Wednesday. The facility will be built at an estimated cost of ₹80 lakhs.

The government has sanctioned 8 UPH centres in Nellore city segment and 15 in Nellore rural constituency, located in the limits of Nellore municipal corporation, he said.

According to Dr Anilkumar, the health centres will be equipped with all facilities to help address the minor ailments of the public and will be easily accessible as well.

He also expressed confidence in operating these centres, after completion of construction works by next year.

SECRETARIES
WARNED OF
STRINGENT ACTIONDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JULY 7

Tirupati Municipal Commissioner P.S. Girisha has issued show-cause notice to 18 ward secretaries for dereliction of duties and failing to provide services to the public.

The commissioner, while paying a surprise visit to ward secretariats near the fish market here on Wednesday, observed that the ward secretariat staff were negligent with regards to their duty. The commissioner then issued show-cause notices to 18 secretaries of 1st and 2nd wards under 44th division.

He warned of strict action upon failing to provide valid reasons, and added that those who show negligence towards their duties and fail to provide required services to the public will be suspended and strict action would be initiated against them as per law.

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Awareness rally



Volunteers and health workers take out an awareness rally on masks at Mutyalampadu area in Vijayawada on Wednesday. — C. NARAYANA RAO

Rythu bharosa centres,
agri labs to start soon

‘Fertilisers and essential seeds must be provided to the farmers’

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JULY 7

Panchayat Raj Minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy informed that the state government will launch the newly built 187 Rythu bharosa centres and 5 Agri labs after the completion of ‘Rythu Chaitanya Yatra’, scheduled to be conducted from 9th to the 22nd of this month.

The Minister, along with Dy. CM K. Narayana Swamy, Housing Minister C. Sri Ranganadha Raju and officials of the district administration reviewed the District Agricultural Advisory Council and the housing projects under Navaratnam, at the Srinivasa auditorium in Tirupati on Tuesday.

Speaking to media persons after the meeting, Peddireddy said that the ‘District Agricultural

● ● Dy. CM K. Narayana Swamy said that CM Jagan has not only created Jagananna layouts, he also transformed them into towns by providing all the facilities and infrastructure. “In the constituency I represent, as many as 10,600 houses were damaged due to poor construction. When I took this issue to the then Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu, he didn’t respond. But now, the situation has changed as Jagan has been building townships with all facilities,” he added.

Advisory Council’ has been set up for all the districts, and the board members, who are committed to create awareness on local crops, should constantly stand by the farmers.

“The council should ensure that fertilizers and essential seeds are provided to farmers and that they should get supported prices for their harvested crops,” he added.

Meanwhile, Housing Minister Ranganadha Raju described the 17,005 Jagananna colonies, coming up in the state

under the housing project, as new villages. “During his pada yatra, CM Jagan saw the plight of women and the poor, living on the banks of canals and ponds. Therefore, he decided to build houses for them. Fulfilling his promise, he sanctioned 35 lakh acres of land, in which 31 lakh houses will be built. As many as 17.60 lakh houses were sanctioned across the state in the first phase,” he added.

Maintaining that the CM has ordered that none of the sanctioned houses should be stopped

without completion of construction, Raju claimed that the construction of these houses brings a wealth of Rs. 4 lakh crores. Additionally, it has also created employment opportunities, through which the state will be financially strengthened, he said.

Dy. CM K. Narayana Swamy said that CM Jagan has not only created Jagananna layouts, he also transformed them into towns by providing all the facilities and infrastructure. “In the constituency I represent, as many as 10,600 houses were damaged due to poor construction. When I took this issue to the then Chief

Minister Chandrababu Naidu, he didn’t respond. But now, the situation has changed as Jagan has been building townships with all facilities,” he added.

Six-lane Vizag-Bhogapuram
highway road to pick up paceDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 7

The proposed six-lane road connecting Vizag port to the upcoming Bhogapuram international airport, along the Bay of Bengal, has once again come into the spotlight after a recent announcement sought the preparation of a detailed project report (DPR), by state government officials.

M.T. Krishna Babu, the road and buildings principal secretary, while recently reviewing the progress of various key projects related to Vishakapatnam virtually, instructed the officials of concerned departments — the Greater Vishakapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) and Vishakapatnam Metropolitan Urban Development Authority (VMRDA) — to speed up the progress of preparation of the DPR for the road project, which has

already received a green signal from Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

In the virtual review meet, GVMC commissioner G. Srijana is said to have explained the works related to the six-lane project, such as surveys, to principal secretary Krishna Babu, who instructed to prepare the project’s DPR. On the other hand, VMRDA sources said that Krishna Babu held a similar meeting earlier in January to discuss the Vizag port-

Bhogapuram six-lane road project.

The estimated cost of the project is said to be around ₹2000 crores. The project may include a bridge across the river Gosthani. The road may cover nearly 50 kms, according to preliminary estimates.

“Since the road can boost both industrial and tourism development in Vizag, which is projected as Executive Capital, the government is keen on completing the road project. It takes at least six months of time to complete pre-constructive works,” said a VMRDA source.

Speaking to Deccan Chronicle, state tourism minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said that they also reviewed the progress of the project recently, and would also conduct another review meeting in the next 10 days. The road is expected to significantly boost the tourism sector in the city.

AP REPORTS
3,166 COVID
CASES, 21 DEATHSDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 7

Andhra Pradesh registered 3,166 fresh Coronavirus infections and 21 deaths in the last 24 hours.

The state health authorities reported here on Wednesday that out of 83,885 samples tested, 3,166 persons were found infected with the virus. Out of a total of 2,26,08,072 samples tested so far, 19,11,231 persons were found infected with the virus. While 18,65,956 people have recovered, 32,356 are still undergoing treatment for the virus.

Among the daily tally of cases, East Godavari continues to register highest number of infections at 664, followed by 431 in West Godavari, 375 in Prakasam, 337 in Chittoor, 259 in Nellore, 239 in Guntur, 221 in Kadapa, 191 in Krishna, 144 in Visakhapatnam, 103 in Srikakulam, 102 in Anantapur, 55 in Vizianagaram and 45 in Kurnool.

With regard to cumulative Coronavirus active cases, East Godavari topped the state with 5,322 followed by 4,929 in Chittoor, 4,303 in Prakasam, 3,387 in West Godavari, 3,148 in Krishna, 2,973 in Nellore, 2,252 in Guntur, 1,819 in Srikakulam, 1,378 in Visakhapatnam, 1,107 in Kadapa, 635 in Anantapur and 544 in Vizianagaram.

Chittoor and East Godavari reported four cases of death of Coronavirus infected patients each, followed by three in Krishna, two each in Anantapur, Guntur, Kurnool and West Godavari and one each in Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam, raising the death

DEMAND TO CANCEL
PVT COLLEGES
VIOLATING RULESDC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JULY 7

The Andhra Pradesh Parents’ Association expressed their concern against private junior colleges for conducting classes in apartments and private buildings, without providing basic amenities to students, and with little safety protocols, and demanded the state government to act against such institutions.

Association leaders alleged that most of these corporate educational institutions were in violation of the conditions set by the government for the safety of the students. They noted that such spaces had no adequate ventilation, playgrounds, labs, libraries, fire safety material or parking space among others. Such colleges and hostels are maintained in congested structures, where there is little room for escaping in case of fire or other such calamities, they added.

They further alleged that while these institutions were obtaining permission from the Board of Intermediate with an address of a campus providing all facilities to students, they were conducting classes in other spaces, with little regard for students’ safety or comfort.

Trust board to TTD
to be appointed soonDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JULY 7

State endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas said the government of Andhra Pradesh will soon appoint a full-fledged trust board to the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which manages the affairs of world-renowned Tirumala temple, and 50 other odd temples in the country.

Speaking to media persons after offering prayers to Lord Venkateswara at the Tirumala temple on Wednesday, the minister complimented the temple management for providing darshan of the Lord to nearly 18000 devotees every day, while strictly adhering to Covid-19 guidelines issued by the Centre.

“Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is on a mission to build permanent houses for nearly 31 lakh homeless poor, though there are many financial chal-

lenges before the government. I have prayed to Lord Venkateswara to bestow his blessing on the chief minister to be successful in his efforts to serve the State,” he said.

Earlier, the Minister said that the State government will reconstruct all the temples which are in dilapidated condition in the State, by spending funds in a big way.

The government will take up the temple reconstruction works with the financial assistance provided by TTD, he added.

It may be recalled that the state government had appointed a specified authority in place of the full-fledged trust board to manage the affairs of TTD on June 23rd.

This was done after the tenure of the previous trust board of TTD, led by former MP Y.V. Subba Reddy, who is also the maternal uncle of CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, ended.

BHAKTI CHANNEL IS USEFUL TOOL TO
PROPAGATE SANATANA DHARMA: TTD EODC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JULY 7

TTD executive officer Dr K.S. Jawahar Reddy described the Sri Venkateswara Bhakti Channel (SVBC) as a chief tool to take forward Hindu Sanatana Dharma in an effective manner among the masses, adding that more spiritual programs were on offer on this spiritual channel.

Taking part in the 13th

Anniversary of SVBC in Tirupati on Wednesday, the EO said the role played by this spiritual channel in the last 12 years in Bhakti Prachara is noteworthy.

In the past 1.5 years, numerous programmes were live telecasted by SVBC, which helped boost confidence of millions of devotees across the globe, who were otherwise gripped in fear due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

No headway in drone
mystery at SrisailemDC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL JULY 7

The identity of a drone, which was spotted over Srisailem temple, continues to remain a mystery as police officials have been unable to make any headway in the case.

While several leads were being pursued by them, one among them was seeking technical help from the Director General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) and Shamshabad airport, said Atmakur DSP Y. Shruthi.

“As it was seen by people consistently for a few days, there are apprehensions that it could have been a low-flying aircraft. We are yet to establish whether

Srisailem was on the flight path of any aircraft from nearest airports such as Shamshabad, or even from an airstrip at Nagarjunasagar,” the DSP said.

The curious residents of Srisailem did not find any flickering object in the sky on Tuesday night.

Srisailem temple executive officer K.S. Rama Rao said he was awaiting a response as he had already lodged a complaint with police.

Meanwhile, the Circle Inspector was carrying on the duties without any assistance from subordinates or others as the Srisailem police station is understaffed and has been without a Sub-inspector for the past two weeks.

శ్రీ గోపీనాథస్వామి దేవాలయము, పురుషోత్తమపట్నం (గ్రా).
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VIJAYAWADA MUNICIPAL CORPORATION (VMC)			
'e' Procurement Notice No.CE-03/VMC/AE/2021-22, Dt.07-07-2021.			
S.No	Name of the work	No. of call	Estimate Amount Rs. in Lakhs
1	Construction of Bridge Connecting to Madhyakatta (Budamerukatta) to Madhura Nagar on Eluru Canal, Vijayawada. with Reverse Tendering Process.	2nd call	500.00
2	Renewal of BT road with Hot Mix process to cross roads and Drains connecting Bandar Road & Eluru Road Ali Baig street, Museum Road, Nakkala Road, Dornakal Road, Goodavalli Street, Rajagopalachari Street and other Roads in Governor peta & Surya Rao peta area 21st Division.	1st Call	712.00
3	Providing BT Roads, Drains & Paver Blocks at Swathi Press Road, Karnataka Rammohana Rao School Road, Gangaraju Kalyanamadampam Street, Purna Hospital Road, Boyapati vari Street Balaji Street, Vemuri Vari Street, Jadagam Vari Street and Govindarajulu Naidu Street in Suryarao Peta 19th division.	1st Call	250.00
4	Providing CC Pavement & Footing from Chittinagar junction to Ganapathi Rao road junction (Nehru Statue) in Division Nos 32, 34, 35, 37.	1st Call	350.00
Total (4 works)			1812.00
Contact: Superintending Engineer (W), VMC, Vijayawada - 99639 95283. Further details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ www.apecprocurement.gov.in Download of bid documents starts from (S.No.1) - 08-07-2021 from 03.30 P.M. Download of bid documents starts from (S.No.2 to 4) - 09-07-2021 from 03.30 P.M. Last date / time for receipt of tenders (S.No.1) - 22-07-2021 upto 4.00 P.M. Last date / time for receipt of tenders (S.No.2 to 4) - 23-07-2021 upto 4.00 P.M. Sd/- CHIEF ENGINEER			

SHORT TAKES

BOLLYWOOD'S FIRST KHAN FOUND AT AGE OF 19

From page 1

The first Khan of Bollywood was “discovered” at the age of 19 in Nainital by Devika Rani of Bombay Talkies while he was looking to buy fruits for his father’s business.

Though he dreamt of being a Test cricketer, he went to meet her in Bombay and was presented with three names to pick from — Jehangir, Vasudev and Dilip Kumar. He learnt later, from the posters of his first film, *Jwar Bhata*, what had been chosen on his behalf.

The film didn’t do well, but it launched a career that has served as the guiding spirit for the best and biggest stars since.

Kumar, who had impeccable Urdu and Hindi diction, remains a daunting, revered presence in the Indian film industry not just because of the awards and accolades he received for his acting, but because with almost every role he played, he created a template for that character.

From prince Salim defying his father for a kaneez (in K. Asif’s *Mughal-e-Azam*) to the dacoit Ganga (*Ganga Jamuna*, which he wrote), from the despairing, alcoholic lover Devdas to the trade union leader Sagina (*Sagina Mahato*), from the principled cop in *Shakti* to the role of separated-at-birth twin brothers *Ram Aur Shyam*, there is little left in that he hasn’t covered.

Kumar used silences, pauses and whispers to deliver his dialogue with such impact that they have become idioms for a state of being. After Kumar, there can only be amusing imitations of his perfect delivery of these immortal lines from Devdas: “*Kaun kambakht bardasht karne ke liye peeta hai? Main toh peeta hoon ki bus, saans le sakon.*”

A perfectionist who took his craft to heart and home, he was known to prepare intensely and for days for roles, and his finicky nature was on display even in his colour-coordinated wardrobe where the rule was, “White is white and off white is off white.”

But what he poured into his tragic roles seemed to come from a sadness within that had begun to cast a shadow. So Kumar consulted psychiatrists and made a conscious and very successful transition to lighter roles. His comic timing and crackling laugh were as joyous as his inimitable, inebriated sorrow was romantic.

Kumar, who worked with the stalwarts of Indian cinema — from Mehboob Khan and Bimal Roy to B.R. Chopra and K. Asif, giving Indian cinema its stunning magnum opus (*Mughal-e-Azam*) that remains unrivalled to date in its grandeur, scale and perfection — ended his acting career playing angry old men disappointed over crime passing without punishment.

A devout Muslim, and amongst those who chose to stay in India after Partition, Dilip Kumar was well-read, eloquent, played chess and bridge, played the sitar, the violin and took active part in the building of Nehru’s India.

Along with Raj Kapoor and Dev Anand, he would participate in fundraising drives for war widows and flood relief where, often, along with money, fans would hand him a comb to tame his incorrigible *zulfain*.

He was also called upon to campaign for V.K. Krishna Menon in the 1962 Lok Sabha elections, and was later appointed the Sheriff of Mumbai, a stint marred by his long absences from Mumbai. Amul went to town with “The Sheriff is out shootin’” posters.

On and off screen Kumar carried the idea and ideals of Nehru’s modern, secular India with impeccable grace and candour, and that’s why the news of his secret second marriage to Asma Rehman was shattering for many. What was even more shocking was that when the story broke in 1981, his wife Saira, 22 years his junior, was clueless, though Asma had been living with Kumar’s sisters across the road from his and Saira Bano’s house on Pali Hill.

This, however, was not the first time his personal life had made it to the gossip columns. Kumar’s affair with a married Kamini Kaushal was much talked about, as was his romance with Madhubala that began with her presenting a rose to him on the sets of *Mughal-e-Azam* and ended in a courtroom drama where he declared his love for her.

But all these scandals faded from public memory and Kumar’s demigod stature was resurrected, in some part because of his wife’s unstinting support, but mostly because of the love of fans for the thespian.



President Ram Nath Kovind, First Lady Savita Kovind, Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla in a group photograph with the newly sworn-in Council of Ministers, at the Rashtrapati Bhavan, in New Delhi on Wednesday.

— PTI

Newly set up Cooperation ministry for Amit Shah

NDA has 27 OBC ministers, 12 SCs, 8 STs, 11 women, 5 minorities, 21 other castes

From page 1

While senior Cabinet ministers Rajnath Singh, Nitin Gadkari, Nirmala Sitaraman, S. Jaishankar and Narendra Singh Tomar continued holding their portfolio, home minister Amit Shah got the additional charge of the new cooperation ministry.

The reshuffle, which was preceded by 12 resignations, including of three heavy weights — Union health minister Dr Harsh Vardhan, information technology minister Ravi Shankar Prasad and information & broadcasting minister Prakash Javdekar — was also seen as weeding out ministers who may have turned into liabilities at a time when the Modi government has been under attack from the Opposition over mismanagement of the second wave of Covid-19 that led to an unprecedented number of deaths and devastated the economy. Some departures seemed to be an attempt by Prime

Minister Modi to end battles on a thousand fronts that were leading to more criticism than serving any purpose.

The overhaul also ushers in a generational shift in the ruling BJP, as the average age of the Union Council of Ministers has dropped to 58 years with 14 ministers now below 50 years of age.

Of the 43 leaders who were administered oath of office, from Uttar Pradesh — where the BJP is already in battle mode for coming Assembly polls — seven new members were inducted in Team Modi, while from West Bengal, where the Mamata Banerjee-led TMC retained power in the recently concluded Assembly polls, four new BJP leaders have been accommodated in the Council of Ministers.

Ally Apna Dal’s Anupriya Patel, who was an MoS in the last government and whose meeting with the Congress leaders, including Priyanka Gandhi ahead of last Lok Sabha polls is

said to be the reason for keeping her party out of the NDA government till now, also made it to Team Modi as an MoS. But her inclusion has left another ally from UP, Nishad Party, agitated. Another significant induction is that of Udupi-Chikmagalur MP, Shobha Karandlaje, who is considered close to Karnataka Chief Minister and Lingayat strongman B.S. Yeddiurappa. The Karnataka BJP is abuzz with rumours of a leadership change as voices of dissent are growing against the 78-year-old CM.

With Nishank resigning, Uttarakhand, another state that’s going to have polls soon, has been represented by Nainital-Udhamsingh Nagar MP, Ajay Bhatt in Team Modi. In the current Council of Ministers, defense minister Rajnath Singh and minority affairs minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi are the only two who had also served in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government.

Five representatives fr-

om Northeast, including Sarbanand Sonowal from Assam, Kiren Rijiju from Arunachal Pradesh, Rammeswar Teli from Assam, Pratima Bhoumik from Tripura and Rajkumar Ranjan Singh from Manipur are now part of the NDA government.

After the reshuffle and expansion, the NDA government has 27 OBC ministers, 12 SCs, eight STs, 11 women, five minorities and 21 belonging to other castes.

Ahead of the expansion, 12 ministers resigned from their portfolios, including education minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank, who is recuperating from post-Covid complications, his deputy Sanjay Dhotre who is also unwell, health minister Dr Harsha Vardhan, law and IT minister Ravi Shankar Prasad, environment and information broadcasting minister Prakash Javdekar, Sadanand Gowda, Santosh Gangwar, Babul Supriyo, Rattan Lal Katariya, Pratap Sarangi and Debashree Chaudhuri.

While speculation is rife that non-performance was the reason why some of these ministers — excluding those who had asked to be kept out of the Union Council due to health reasons — were asked to resign, the ruling BJP was abuzz that some of the ministers including, Ravi Shankar Prasad and Prakash Javdekar, will now be the voice of the party and guide the party’s spokespersons ahead of Assembly and Lok Sabha polls. Prasad had been in the news lately for an escalating standoff between the Indian government and Twitter.

From West Bengal, which earlier had two ministers — Debashree Chaudhuri and Babul Supriyo — now four members (Nishith Pramanik, Shantanu Thakur, John Barla and Subhash Sarkar) are part of the NDA government. While Shantanu Thakur is from the Matua community, Mr Pramanik is from the Rajbangshi community.

Former ministers change Twitter bio

From page 1

In all, six Cabinet Ministers, one Minister of State (Independent Charge) and five Ministers of State have resigned.

After resigning, some of them changed their social media profile to reflect the change in status with Prasad’s Twitter bio, saying ‘Member of Parliament from Patna Sahib Lok Sabha, Bihar’ and ‘BJP worker’, while Javdekar’s profile stated ‘Member of Parliament, Rajya Sabha’.

Law and IT minister Prasad’s resignation comes amid a row between micro-blogging platform Twitter and the government over various issues, including compliance with the new IT rules.

The resignations come after Prasad and I&B minister Javdekar announced sweeping regulations for social media firms like Facebook and Twitter, OTT

players as well as digital media.

Health Minister Vardhan, whose handling of the Covid-19 crisis had drawn flak from the opposition parties, resigned from the Union Council of Ministers, official sources said.

Vardhan, a doctor himself, had been in charge of the health ministry as well as the science and technology ministry as the Covid pandemic broke and then India worked to develop vaccines.

However, his various comments in the middle of the crisis were slammed by many as insensitive and ignorant of the ground reality, even as he strongly defended the government’s handling of the situation.

Vardhan had also hit out at the Opposition for its criticism of the government on the handling of the pandemic, often accusing former Congress chief Rahul Gandhi of politicising the pandemic crisis.

HC judge imposes ₹5L cost on Didi

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JULY 7

Slapping a fine of ₹5 lakhs on West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee for defaming him as a “BJP man”, Justice Kausik Chanda of the Calcutta high court on Wednesday recused himself from hearing the Trinamul Congress supreme’s election petition challenging her defeat to Suwendu Adhikari in the Nandigram Assembly election.

With his stinging remarks, Justice Chanda, from whom Ms Banerjee on June 18 sought her plea be transferred by acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal over bias to another judge, stated in his order: “The aforesaid chronology of the events... clearly suggests that a deliberate and conscious attempt was made to influence my decision before the recusal application was placed before me for judicial consideration on June 24.”

He observed: “The calculated psychological offensive and vilification adopted to seek recusal need to be firmly repulsed, and a cost of ₹5 lakhs is imposed upon the petitioner. Such cost should be deposited with the Bar Council of West Bengal

within two weeks from date, and upon such deposit, the Bar Council shall set aside the amount for the families of the advocates who had succumbed to the Covid-19.”

The judge noted: “I have no personal inclination to hear out the case of the petitioner. I had no hesitation in taking up the case either. It is my constitutional obligation and duty to hear out a case assigned to me by the Chief Justice neutrally and dispassionately. I have, however, decided to recuse myself from this case for a different reason. The imbroglio stemmed from the inception of the litigation was due to the assignment of this case before this bench.”

He elaborated: “Since the two persons involved in this case belong to the highest echelon of state politics, in the name of saving the judiciary, some opportunists have already emerged. These trouble-mongers will try to keep the controversy alive and create newer controversies. The trial of the case before this bench will be a tool to aggrandise themselves. It would be contrary to the interest of justice if such unwarranted squabble continues along with the trial of the case.”

Vax crisis hit Vardhan hard

from page 1

The vaccine crisis in the early phases of the second wave also hit Dr Vardhan hard. If the devastating Covid-19 second wave cost Dr Vardhan his job, the Twitter controversy over the new information technology rules sealed Mr Prasad’s fate.

Sources also said that the attempts to regulate the OTT platforms boomeranged for Mr Javdekar. While Dr Harsh Vardhan was reportedly told to put in his papers a day before the reshuffle, the move to drop him caught Ravi Shankar Prasad by complete surprise. The sources said Mr Prasad was sitting with some people in his office when he received “the call” at around 12 noon today. The mood in the room immediately changed and Mr Prasad swiftly “left for home”.

Armed with the new IT guidelines, Mr Prasad had set out to discipline the social media, particularly Twitter.

Following the farmers’ movement and the alleged “misuse” of the so-called toolkit, the Indian government had virtually locked horns with Twitter. The situation with the micro-blogging platform led to Mr Prasad’s account being temporarily blocked for a few hours, allegedly over complaints of a violation of the US Digital

● WHILE DR HARSH Vardhan was reportedly told to put in his papers a day before the reshuffle, the move to drop him caught Ravi Shankar Prasad by complete surprise.

Millennium Copyright Act.

Speculations is rife that information and broadcasting minister Prakash Javdekar had to go as complaints from the film industry poured in after he tried to regulate OTT platforms. Mr Javdekar had claimed that he received complaints that two Amazon Prime shows — Tandav and Mirzapur — had “hurt religious sentiments”. However, sources close to Mr Javdekar denied that this was the reason for his removal but did not give any further details.

As the Covid-19 situation worsened in India, the health ministry kept getting embroiled in controversies one after another. Dr Harsh Vardhan came under severe criticism from within the party and outside when he went after former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh.

On April 18, the former PM had written a letter to Prime Minister Modi suggesting a few changes to the country’s vaccination strategy.

Remembering Stan Swamy



People hold candles to pay homage to human rights activist & Jesuit priest Father Stan Swamy during a condolence prayer meet in Bengaluru on Wednesday.

SHOCKING | CASE Kitty Kumaramangalam was 67 years old and a lawyer

Wife of late Union minister murdered

New Delhi, Jul 7: Kitty Kumaramangalam, the wife of the late Union minister P. Rangarajan Kumaramangalam, was smothered to death during an attempted robbery at her home in southwest Delhi’s Vasant Vihar, police said on Wednesday.

Kitty Kumaramangalam was 67 years old and a lawyer. She had been living alone since the demise of her husband a few years ago, they said.

The police said they suspected attempted robbery to be the motive behind the killing and have arrested a 24-year-old washerman of the area, identified as Raju, and his 34-year-old associate Rakesh Raj, a resident of Munirka and a driver working in the Ministry of External

Affairs on contract basis.

The accused entered the house without any resistance as Raju has been known to the family.

Raju has been visiting the house for over five years now and was aware where valuables, including cash, jewellery and essential bank documents, were kept.

So, he hatched the conspiracy and roped in his two associates Rakesh and Suraj to execute the robbery, according to the police.

Based on preliminary investigation, it is suspected that the washerman had come to the house around 9 pm on Tuesday night, and when the house help opened the door, he overpowered her, dragged her to a room and restrained her.

He also tried to loot her ring. During the process, she was also beaten up while trying to restrain and sustained bruises on her neck, knees and face, they said. Rakesh and Suraj entered the house in the meantime and smothered Kumaramangalam with a pillow, the police said.

The house help, Mithila, later managed to raise an alarm. She immediately called her husband and brother-in-law and informed about the incident.

They reached the spot and took Mithila to Safdarjung Hospital. Her brother-in-law then made a PCR call, a senior police officer said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Southwest) Ingit Pratap Singh said, “We

received a PCR call at around 11 pm on Tuesday. Teams were formed and the washerman was arrested from his residence. Based on his disclosure, one of his associates, Rakesh Raj, has also been arrested while our teams are working to nab the third accused in the case.

Police said they also found opened briefcases at the scene of the crime which suggest that the motive was attempted robbery. In her statement, Mithila said the accused took away valuables in two-three bags.

One of the bags stuffed with clothes was recovered from Raju, the officer said, adding that ₹60,000 in cash was seized from Rakesh.

The body has been handed over to the family.

6 MIGRANTS FROM PAK GET INDIAN CITIZENSHIP

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JULY 7

Six Pakistani migrants, who have been living in Madhya Pradesh for decades, were on Wednesday granted Indian citizenship under Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA), passed in the parliament in December 2019.

All the six people had migrated to India from Sindh province of Pakistan more than three decades back and have been living in Madhya Pradesh since then, an official spokesman of the state government said.

While two of them, Nand Lal and Hemant Kumar, have settled in Bhopal, four others, Arjundas Manchandani, Jai Ram Das, Narayan Das and Saushalya Bai, have been living in Mandsaur in MP for decades.

“The six Hindu migrants who fled Pakistan to India due to religious persecution in the neighbouring country were granted Indian citizenship. The MP government has completed the process and granted them Indian citizenship in MP under the Citizenship Amendment Act. They came to MP between 1988 and 2005”, state home minister Narottam Mishra said.

This was the first case of grant of citizenship to Pakistani migrants in Madhya Pradesh under Citizenship Amendment Act.

SHORT TAKES

ROCKETS TARGET BASE HOSTING US TROOPS IN IRAQ

■ **Baghdad, July 7:** Fourteen rockets were fired Wednesday at the Ain al-Assad air base which hosts American troops in western Iraq, a spokesman for the US-led coalition said.

■ The base was attacked by 14 rockets that “landed on the base & perimeter.. At this time initial reports indicate 3 minor injuries. Damage is being assessed,” Colonel Wayne Marotto wrote on Twitter.

■ It was the latest in a spate of attacks targeting US military and diplomatic facilities in Iraq that have been blamed on pro-Iranian armed groups within a state-sponsored paramilitary force.

POPE HAD SEVERE NARROWING OF HIS COLON

■ **Rome, July 7:** Pope Francis’ recovery from intestinal surgery continues to be regular and satisfactory, the Vatican said Wednesday, as it revealed that final examinations showed he had a suffered a severe narrowing of his colon.

■ The Vatican spokesman, Matteo Bruni, said the 84-year-old Pope was continuing to eat regularly following his Sunday surgery to remove the left side of his colon, and that intravenous therapy had been suspended. Bruni said final examination of the affected tissue confirmed a severe diverticular stenosis with signs of sclerosing diverticulitis.

■ Francis underwent three hours of planned surgery Sunday. He is expected to stay in Rome’s Gemelli Polyclinic, which has a special suite reserved for popes.

27 KILLED IN PROTESTS, SAYS ESWATINI MIN

■ **Johannesburg, July 7:** Twenty-seven people died last week during pro-democracy protests in the southern African kingdom of Eswatini, a minister said on Wednesday.

■ “Unfortunately, yes, 27 people lost their lives,” Commerce Minister Manqoba Khumalo said in a phone interview, expressing regret that force had to be used to break up the protests. “It was not intended, but... the nature of the attacks that were happening was such that in some instances force had to be used, and in some instances gunfire had to be exchanged, and there were casualties,” he said.

■ “But in some cases people were trapped in buildings when those buildings were burned... This is very unfortunate.”

11 HARASSED TEEN WHO DAMNED ISLAM, CONVICTED

■ **Paris, July 7:** A French court on Wednesday convicted 11 of 13 people charged with harassing and threatening a teenager who harshly criticised Islam in online posts and ended up changing schools and receiving police protection to preserve her safety.

■ The verdict came in a trial in Paris that was the first of its kind since France created a new court in January to prosecute online crimes, including harassment and discrimination. The court sentenced the defendants to suspended prison terms of four to six months and fined them about \$1,770 each.

■ Social networks are the street. When you pass someone in the street, you don’t insult them, threaten them, make fun of them, the presiding judge, Michel Humbert, said.

DWARF COW IN BANGLADESH A BIG DRAW

■ **Charigram, Bangladesh, July 7:** Thousands of people are defying a nationwide Coronavirus lockdown in Bangladesh to see Rani, a 51-centimetre (20-inch) tall cow whose owners claim it is the world’s smallest. The 23-month-old dwarf cow has become a media star with scores of newspapers and television stations throwing the spotlight on the tiny bovine at a farm near Dhaka.

■ Pictures of Rani on social media platforms have set off a tourist frenzy.

■ Despite a nationwide transport shutdown because of record Coronavirus infections and deaths, people are flocking in rickshaws to the farm in Charigram, 30 kilometres southwest of Dhaka.

■ Rani weighs only 26 kilograms (57 pounds) but the owners say it is 10 centimetres shorter than the smallest cow in Guinness World Records.

Europe decries Iran nuke move

Says Tehran violating commitments under the ’15 deal with world powers

Return to Vienna for talks, says US

■ **Berlin, July 7:** Germany, France and Britain are voicing “grave concern” over a further move by Iran that they say is a serious violation of its commitments under the 2015 nuclear deal with world powers, warning that it threatens the outcome of talks aimed at bringing the US back into the agreement.

■ The three European powers’ foreign ministers issued a joint statement on Tuesday over a report by the International Atomic Energy Agency the UN nuclear watchdog, “confirming that Iran has taken steps in the production of enriched uranium metal”.

■ Since then-president Donald Trump pulled out of the agreement in 2018, Iran has gradually been violating its restrictions to put pressures on the remaining parties — the three European nations, Russia and China — to come up with economic incentives to offset crippling American sanctions.

■ Among other things, Tehran has started enriching uranium to well above the purity allowed under the agreement. It has also been spinning advanced centrifuges, producing uranium metal and stockpiling more uranium than allowed.

■ Uranium metal can also be used for a nuclear bomb, and research on its production is specifically prohibited under the nuclear deal. The IAEA already said in February that its inspectors had confirmed that Iran has begun the production of uranium metal.

■ The European foreign ministers said of Tehran’s latest step that “Iran has no credible civilian need for uranium metal (research and development) and production, which are a key step in the development of a nuclear weapon”.

■ **Washington, July 7:** The United States on Tuesday warned Iran to stop nuclear “brinksmanship,” saying the West Asian country’s latest efforts to enrich uranium could complicate its return to talks aimed at restarting the 2015 nuclear accord.

■ “We continue to urge Iran to stop this brinksmanship, to return to Vienna prepared for real talks, and to be in a position to be prepared to finish the work that jump-started in April,” State Department spokesman Ned Price told reporters.

— AFP

■ They said it was all the more concerning given that no date has been set for the resumption of negotiations in Vienna aimed at bringing the US back into the nuclear deal and Iran back into full compliance, and that Iran has “significantly curtailed” IAEA access.

■ “We have repeatedly stressed that time is on no one’s side, the statement said. “With its latest steps, Iran is threatening a successful outcome to the Vienna talks despite the progress achieved in six rounds of negotiations to date.

— AP

Afghan govt team meets Taliban in Tehran: Iran

Taliban attacks provincial capital

■ **Tehr, July 7:** An Afghan government delegation met with Taliban representatives in Tehran Wednesday, the Iranian foreign ministry said, as the Islamist militia pressed a lightning advance amid the pullout of US troops.

■ Opening the talks, Iran’s Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif welcomed the departure of its US foe from its eastern borders but warned: “Today the people and political leaders of Afghanistan must make difficult decisions for the future of their country.” Deputy chief negotiator Sher Mohammad Abbas Stanikzai headed the Taliban delegation while former vice president Yunus Qanooni represented the government, the Iranian ministry said.

■ Taliban spokesman Zabihullah Mujahid confirmed Stanikzai’s visit to Tehran to “discuss issues of mutual interest”.

■ But he made no reference to any Afghan government delegation, saying only that Stanikzai was holding talks with “some Afghan personalities”. “They will discuss

■ **Herat, July 7:** The Taliban launched a major assault on a provincial capital in Afghanistan on Wednesday, the first since the United States military began its final drawdown of troops from the country, as insurgents press on with a blistering offensive.

■ Pierce fighting erupted in the western city of Qala-i-Naw, the capital of Badghis, with the militants seizing police headquarters and offices of the

■ country’s spy agency.

■ As news of the morning assault spread, social media was flooded with videos of clashes — with some showing armed Taliban fighters on motorbikes entering the city as onlookers cheered.

■ Afghanistan’s Defence Minister Bismillah Mohammad said government forces were in a “very sensitive military situation”, adding that “the war is raging” with the Taliban.

— AFP

Lanka gold coin on China party century

■ **Colombo, July 7:** Sri Lanka on Wednesday issued its most expensive gold coin ever to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Chinese Communist Party, underscoring the close ties between the countries. The commemorative 1,000-rupee (\$5) coin will be sold for 222,000 rupees from Monday, the Central Bank of Sri Lanka said.

■ “The coins have been issued at the request of the government of Sri Lanka as an accolade for long-standing friendship and mutual trust between the two countries,” the

■ bank said. Sri Lanka has increasingly turned to China for financing and diplomatic support in recent years, prompting India and the United States to express concern.

■ One side of the 12-gram (0.42 ounces) coin marks the Chinese party’s anniversary while the other celebrates 65 years of diplomatic ties between the two nations and depicts a Colombo theatre built with Chinese financing.

■ Sri Lanka released its last gold coin to mark 50 years of independence from Britain in 1998.

— AFP

Ever Given cruises Suez Canal



The Panama-flagged MV Ever Given container ship sails along Egypt’s Suez Canal near the canal’s central city of Ismailia. The 200,000-tonne container vessel was stuck in the Suez Canal during a sandstorm on March 23, causing major disruption to world shipping and the loss of millions in revenue for Egypt. The ship weighed anchor on Wednesday after Egyptian authorities and the Japanese owner agreed a compensation deal.

— AFP

Haiti Prez Moïse assassinated

■ **Port-au-Prince, July 7:** Gunmen assassinated Haitian President Jovenel Moïse and wounded his wife in their home early Wednesday, inflicting more chaos on the unstable Caribbean country that was already enduring an escalation of gang violence, anti-government protests and a recent surge in Coronavirus infections.

■ Claude Joseph, the interim prime minister, confirmed the killing and said the police and military were in control of security in Haiti, where a history of dictatorship and political upheaval have long stymied the consolidation of democratic rule. While the streets of the Haitian capital, Port-au-Prince, were quiet Wednesday morning, some people ransacked businesses in one area. The country appeared to be heading for fresh uncertainty ahead of planned general elections later this year.

■ Moïse, 53, had been ruling by decree for more than a year after the country failed to hold elections and the opposition demanded he step down in recent months. Former President Michel Martelly, whom Moïse succeeded, said he was praying for first lady Martine Moïse, calling the assassination “a hard blow for our country and for Haitian democracy, which is struggling to find its way.”

■ Joseph said Martine Moïse, 47, was shot and in a hospital. He condemned the president’s killing as a “hateful, inhumane and barbaric act.” “The country’s security situation is under the control of the National Police of Haiti and the Armed Forces of Haiti,” Joseph said in a statement from his office.

■ “Democracy and the republic will win.” In the statement, Joseph said some of the attackers spoke in Spanish but offered no further explanation. He later said in a radio address



Jovenel Moïse

■ that they spoke Spanish or English. A resident who lives near the president’s home said she heard the attack. “I thought there was an earthquake, there was so much shooting,” said the woman who spoke on condition of anonymity because she fears for her life.

■ “The president had problems with many people, but this is not how we expected him to die. This is something I wouldn’t

■ wish on any Haitian.” The US Embassy in Haiti said it was restricting US staff to its compounds and that the embassy would be closed Wednesday because of ‘an ongoing security situation’. The White House described the attack as “horrific” and “tragic” and said it was still gathering information on what happened. US President Joe Biden will be briefed later Wednesday by his national security team, spokesperson Jen Psaki said during an interview.

■ “The message to the people of Haiti is this is a tragic tragedy,” she during a previously scheduled interview on CNN. “And we stand ready and stand by them to provide any assistance that’s needed.” Haiti’s economic, political and social woes have deepened recently, with gang violence spiking heavily in Port-au-Prince, inflation spiralling and food and fuel becoming scarcer at times.

— AP

Study: Pfizer, Moderna vax cut 91% virus risk

CDC says Delta is dominant variant

■ **Washington, July 7:** People who receive Covid-19 vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna are up to 91 per cent less likely to develop the disease, according to a US study which also suggests that the preventives reduce the severity of symptoms and duration in those who still get an infection. The research, published in the New England Journal of Medicine on June 30, is among the first to show the benefits of mRNA vaccines even among those who experience breakthrough infections — testing positive after immunisation.

■ The mRNA vaccines by Pfizer and Moderna contain genetic instructions for our cells to make the spike protein of the SARS-CoV-2, which the virus uses to infect and enter the human cells.

■ Our immune system then builds an immune response against the spike protein, and learns how to fight off the Coronavirus if we encounter it in future.

■ “One of the unique things about this study is that it measured the secondary benefits of the vaccines,” said study co-author Sarang Yoon, an assistant professor at the University of Utah, US. The study was

■ **Houston, July 7:** The highly contagious Delta variant has become the dominant Coronavirus strain in the US, accounting for more than 51 per cent of Covid infections in the country, according to new data released by the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention.

■ The variant, also known as B.1.617.2, was first detected in India in December and is spreading quickly across the globe. In some parts of America, the Delta strain accounts for more than 80 per cent of new infections, including some Midwestern states like Missouri, Kansas and Iowa. It is already causing 74.3 per cent of infections in Western states, including

■ **NEW COVID infections with the Delta variant now account for 51.7 per cent of the infections. The B.1.1.7 or Alpha variant makes up for 28.7 per cent cases.**

■ ing Utah and Colorado, and 58.8 per cent of infections in Southern states like Texas, Louisiana, Arkansas and Oklahoma, according to CDC estimates.

■ New Covid infections with the Delta variant now account for 51.7 per cent of the infections. The B.1.1.7 or Alpha variant makes up for 28.7 per cent cases after remaining a dominant variant for months, the data said.

— PTI

■ designed to measure the risks and rates of infection among those on the front lines of the pandemic — doctors, nurses, and first responders.

■ “These are the people who are getting exposure to the virus day in and day

■ out, and the vaccine protected them against getting the disease. Those who unfortunately got COVID-19 despite being vaccinated were still better off than those who didn’t,” he added.

— PTI

Attack on our values of democracy, says EU chief Charles Michel

WIDESPREAD | CONDEMNATION

Dutch scribe fighting for his life after shooting

■ **Amsterdam, July 7:** Prominent Dutch crime reporter Peter R. de Vries was fighting for his life in a Dutch hospital on Wednesday after being shot multiple times, including in the head, in what the EU chief described as “an attack on our values”.

■ Amsterdam police chief Frank Paauw said three people had been arrested, among them the suspected shooter, but gave no details on the possible reasons for the attack.

■ De Vries, who first won fame for his inside reporting on the kidnapping of millionaire Freddy Heineken in 1983, was shot up to five times in front of shocked bystanders as he left a television studio in a busy Amsterdam street on Tuesday.

■ The attack sparked widespread condemnations, with Europe’s top official Charles Michel calling it a “crime against journalism and an attack on our values of democracy and rule

■ of law.” De Vries — a celebrity journalist in the Netherlands known for speaking on behalf of crime victims — was “fighting for his life”, Amsterdam mayor Femke Halsema told a news conference late on Tuesday.

■ Eyewitnesses told local media that the 64-year-old journalist and TV presenter was shot up to five times, including once in the head.

■ Dutch media reported Wednesday that De Vries,

■ known for his hard-hitting reporting, has been threatened several times in the past. Since last year, he has been acting as an advisor and confidante of the main prosecution witness in the case against Ridouan Taghi, described as the Netherlands’ most wanted criminal, whose organisation was described as a “well-oiled killing machine by prosecutors.”

■ Prime Minister Mark Rutte told a press conference in The Hague the

■ attack was “shocking and inconceivable”.

■ “It’s an attack on a courageous journalist and by extension an attack on the freedom of the press, which is so essential for our democracy and rule of law,” he said.

■ De Vries was shot at around 7:30 pm local time (1730 GMT) — still daylight at this time of year in Amsterdam — as he left a television studio after appearing on a talk show. Het Parool daily newspa-

■ per quoted a resident as saying she heard five shots and went out to see what had happened.

■ She said she saw de Vries lying on the ground with a lot of blood on his face.

■ She told the paper that he couldn’t speak but was still alive, and that she held his hand as they waited for emergency services.

■ At the scene of the shooting Thursday, shocked residents were laying flowers and lighting candles.

— AFP



DECCAN Chronicle

8 JULY 2021

Huge relief, reset by CBSE may help students reboot

Two heads are better than one is a common saying but it is moot whether it applies to examinations too. Using an opportunity of a pause in Board exams caused by the pandemic, the CBSE has used the reset button to come up with a revolutionary two-exam mode in different formats for Class 10 and 12 that seeks to change the basic concept of holding a single exam that used to determine everything, from the students' careers to shaping their lives. In a takeoff on the two-semester system that colleges use for engineering studies, the academic session will be bifurcated into two terms with the first term exams of 90 minutes' duration to be held in November-December 2021 and second term exams in March-April 2022 at exam centres.

The idea may be to distribute the stress of exams and to get the students accustomed to taking exams in their stride while also splitting the syllabus to bring down the burden. The continuous recording of internal assessment scores rather than just one annual score is likely to help students get over the vagaries of an academic year. Any number of unknown factors may crop up in a sweeping reform, particularly about the authenticity of exam results if they are to be held in online mode with students taking the exam at home in case the pandemic forces the postponement of operating exam centres. The semester system might also allow students some time to take on additional study for entrance tests to professional courses.

The elimination of rote learning that used to dominate student methods in taking the single big exam as a determinant of their marks would be the greatest contribution to the Indian system of assessing student merits in exams. The system is burdened right now with ratifying the marks that schools will be giving their students for the previous academic year. Tackling the anomalies likely to crop up is going to be a challenge, as schools would certainly try to favour their students in internal assessment marks. What the reform promises is a vision that will take everyone beyond last academic year's fiasco in which the exams could not be held at all. All students have suffered from the inadequacies of online teaching and learning for a whole academic year now when the inequities of India's patchy Internet coverage were most evident across the urban-rural divide.

The uncertainty over how long the pandemic will last before the virus becomes just endemic. It would take a brave nation to declare the second wave has subsided and consider the situation to be safe enough to put students and teachers back in classroom mode. While learning outcomes will be far better, there is no knowing if such congregations of students will not help the virus spread more easily. The UK experience of putting all students classified as contacts to a stray positive case has been bitter with lakhs of students forced to spend time in cruel self-isolation. A lot depends on when schools can be reopened but the CBSE has used the time well to think of alternatives.

Bollywood's first Khan

A thespian, a legend, an actor par excellence... Dilip Kumar, the actor and the man, can only be described with adjectives and grand tags because his colossal impact and the overwhelming admiration he commands in the subcontinent remain unparalleled.

Born Mohammed Yusuf Khan in Peshawar, Dilip Saab was a devout Muslim, a steadfast secularist and a method actor who died in Mumbai on Wednesday after a prolonged illness.

Though his last film was released 23 years ago, in 1998, Dilip Kumar remains a daunting, revered presence in the Indian film industry not just because of the awards and accolades he received for his acting, but because with almost every role he played, he created a template for that character.

And because he embodied the idea of Nehru's secular India, both on screen and off it, he was also regularly called upon to assist in politics and fund raising and was recognised in his lifetime not just for his contribution to cinema, but also social causes in India and across the LoC.

At home he was awarded the Padma Vibhushan, given a Rajya Sabha nomination, and in Pakistan he was accorded a state welcome

and graced with the highest civilian award, Nishan-e-Imtiaz, in 1998 that he accepted after consulting the then Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Dilip Kumar's passing is truly the end of an era. It's a day to bid a mouthful goodbye to that black and white world of young men on bicycles, railway stations with tongas parked outside, a modern India under construction that held the pledge to remain secular, but also a world where a Muslim man was known by a Hindu name.

It was apt then, that on Wednesday, Mohammed Yusuf Khan was wrapped in the Tricolour and given a state send-off to the Santacruz Kabrastan. Dilip Kumar, 98, now lies there, with Nehru's idea of India that died before him.

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Subhani



India-China peace: Who will take the first step?

Sunanda K. Datta-Ray
Reflections

The only reference amidst Beijing's centennial celebrations to Sino-Indian differences — posthumous awards for four Chinese soldiers out of more than 40 believed to have fallen in the Galwan Valley clash in June 2020 — gives no glimpse of the unsmiling President Xi Jinping's "dream" of "the great rejuvenation of the Chinese nation". For that one must go back 228 years to Emperor Qianlong's haughty rebuff to England's King George III.

Official India is sometimes equally enigmatic. Indians were completely taken aback when Gen. V.K. Singh, who soldiers on in politician's garb, announced that "if China had transgressed (the Line of Actual Control) 10 times, we must have done it at least 50 times". Was it the eternal soldier's boast that no one can beat our jawans in deriding-do? Or flaunting loyalty to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who astonished everyone back in June 2020 by exonerating the Chinese of any incursion or encroachment?

Imitation being the best form of flattery, no one was surprised either when, while visiting Ladakh, defence minister Rajnath Singh would not even mention China. He spoke only about our "neighbours" and the "neighbourhood".

Reportedly, the Prime Minister had done so earlier, which was rather like the ancient Greeks, who were as superstitious as today's Hindu stalwarts, calling the Furies the Eumenides or good-humoured ladies to flatter them into being less furious.

China's disdain for verbal gymnastics recalls Deng Xiaoping's advice to hide your strength and bide your

time. Unlike Indian politicians, Deng abjured any hankering for superpower status. So do his successors. What they assert instead is that although they have suffered oppression and exploitation by European nations and their colonial lackeys (India?) for a century, they will overtake the United States economically in 10 years. Mr Xi called this "xiaokang", "basically well-off", the term Deng used in a display of humility that was as ostentatious as Mahatma Gandhi's poverty. China knows that the gun out of whose barrel power grows rests on a booming economy.

Although Deng was the unaggressive architect of China's modernisation, there really isn't much fundamental contradiction between his legacy and that of Mao Zedong. The difference is mainly of style. Deng ousted Mao's designated successor, Hua Guofeng, launched and guided the *Boluan Fanzheng* (literally "eliminating chaos and returning to normal") and the Four Modernisations movements, and suppressed the Democracy Wall and the Beijing Spring.

His only designation may have been "Most Honorary President of the Chinese Bridge Association", but his word was law. The quaintly named "June Fourth Incident" — when tanks and troops massacred thousands of unarmed young democracy supporters — bore his imprimatur. He could obfuscate his purpose with aphorisms like "A market economy is not necessarily capitalist, and a planned economy is not necessarily socialist".

Chairman Mao's singular ability was to draw on the past even while dismantling its legacy. Thus, he told his commanders on the eve

of the 1962 war that India and China had fought "one and a half" wars in ancient times. The first was during the Tang dynasty (618-907), when Chinese troops helped an Indian monarch suppress a pretender. The "half" was Timur's sacking of Delhi seven centuries later, which Mao included because the Mongol Yuan dynasty, founded by Kublai Khan, ruled China at the time. Had Mao known that Emperor Babur was Timur's great-great-grandson, he would undoubtedly have laid claim to the Delhi *masnad*; perhaps the ambition did stir in his subconscious as he ordered his commanders to be "restrained and principled", unlike Timur who massacred more than 100,000 Indian prisoners.

Mao must have enjoyed the 2,893-word letter in which Qianlong projected himself as the Son of Heaven, the whole world his vassal. He regarded envoys as supplicants, gifts as tribute, politeness as submission, and diplomatic relations as a plea for protection. Asked for trading ties, he ordered King George III to "tremblingly obey and show no negligence!"

The Great Helmsman, who swam in the Yangtse river at 62 to demonstrate his fitness, was blamed for the miseries of the Great Leap Forward when millions of people died, the anarchic violence of the Cultural Revolution, and the depredations of the Gang of Four. But millions of Chinese truly believe that it was only because of Mao that they could stand up. All Under Heaven acknowledge that Deng could not have built what he did if the feared, reviled and worshipped Mao hadn't

As Mao rides again, his successor should not forget that the point of his tale about the one-and-a-half wars was that India and China are not doomed to perpetual enmity

laid the foundations. Even Deng admitted that Mao was seven parts good and only three parts bad.

On July 1 Mr Xi, whose own Mandate of Heaven will soon be renewed for yet another five-year term, announced from the same balcony where Mao had proclaimed the born-again Middle Kingdom in 1949 that 1.4 billion Chinese were "marching in confident strides" toward the "goal of building China into a 'great modern socialist country' in all respects". As Mao rides again, his successor should not forget that the point of his tale about the one-and-a-half wars was that India and China are not doomed to perpetual enmity.

It was a point that had been made eight years earlier during Mao's last conversation with Jawaharlal Nehru. Discussing their "differences", Mao referred to the old Chinese saying, "to seize somebody's pig-tail". He and Nehru agreed that India and China would not do that. "Sometimes we have differences, but we do not quarrel", Nehru responded. That is something for Mr Xi to remember, no matter how deeply he might resent the new map of the now downgraded Jammu and Kashmir state that New Delhi belatedly released last November.

Unless he does, India and China will stand like two goats with locked horns on a narrow bridge, as Liu Shuqing, a former Chinese vice-foreign minister, warned Bhutan's Dawa Tsering. Prime Minister Modi gave a new twist to the stalemate with the slogan "Inch towards Miles" on the eve of Mr Xi's first visit to India in 2014. If the Prime Minister has forgotten what he said, Beijing can jog his memory by reiterating the old Chinese saying: "A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step".

Someone has to take that first step.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

HUMAN CONCERNS

The truth will never be out. But one wonders if the cases booked against an 83-year-old man had any merit. (*Stan Swamy passes away awaiting bail; DC, July 6*). What if he was innocent and genuinely concerned about the plight of the downtrodden?

K. Sarath Chandra Babu
Visakhapatnam

RAFALE PROBE

How can the Centre say that there is no chance of corruption in between two governmental agreements? The Centre must initiate an inquiry to balance France's move and to evaluate the truth and prove India is a clean country.

B.V. Ramana Rao
Vijayawada

PM'S CABINET

Mohan Guruswamy's suggestion to the PM to rejig his Cabinet by focusing on competence is timely. He did try this in the present ministries. But by now, he must have seen their caliber and acumen for a pragmatic approach and delivering strategies.

K. Nehru Patnaik
Visakhapatnam

POWER GAMES

Once again it is proved that party ideologies, and loyalty will not help secure positions and power in politics (*BJP leader likely to be inducted into new Modi Cabinet, July 7, 2021*). Jyotiraditya Scindia is being rewarded for backstabbing the Congress.

P.J. David
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

Kissinger, PM talk on 'US arms to Pakistan'

NEW DELHI, JULY 7.

India's serious concern about the continued arms supply by the United States to Pakistan, even after the revolt in Bangla Desh, was conveyed by Prime Minister Indira Gandhi to President Nixon's Adviser on National Security affairs, Dr. Henry Kissinger when he called on her today.

Mrs. Gandhi reportedly pointed out that any argument that "the impact of these supplies will be militarily marginal" was fallacious. She said "the political weight" of any such arms deliveries would be much more than its military significance.

ing 15 years with the IB. The 1988-batch IPS officer has apparently written to additional chief secretary (home) Rajeev Arora seeking repatriation to IB and resume his old post of additional director.

While the move took some by surprise, those in the know believe that Mr Yadava's inability to get along with his boss, the state home minister Anil Vij, may have been the last straw for the top cop. Earlier this year when chief minister Manohar Khattar had given Mr Yadava a year's extension as DGP, the home minister had vehemently objected but Mr Khattar stuck to his guns and had his way.

It's no secret that Mr Khattar and his home minister do not see eye to eye on several issues. Mr Yadava may be about to pay the price of their political rivalry if his request for repatriation is accepted.

Share a babu experience! Follow diliptherian@Twitter.com. Let's multiply the effect.

Dilip Cherian
Dilli Ka Babu



Groups of babus play smoke and mirrors ahead of 2022 polls in UP

Sensing the current popular mood against the UP government due to the Covid crisis, the party and the Narendra Modi sarkar are keen to ensure the party's success in the upcoming Assembly elections. A lot of that worry has to do with the perceptions about Yogi running the government with handpicked but clearly inadequate babu support.

When the trusted PMO aide Arvind Kumar Sharma was air-dropped in Lucknow, he was a regular Gujarat cadre babu or just another BJP vice-president in Uttar Pradesh (after taking voluntary retirement). He was reportedly sent to rein in Yogi who has caused considerable discontent within the state unit of the party, and he remains the PMO's eyes and ears within the Yogi Adityanath government.

Yogi too has gathered around his own trusted band of babus. It is this team that steered Yogi's Covid management. Hovering over these

exercises like Banquo's ghost is a familiar presence, Navneet Sehgal. This consistently powerful 1988-batch IAS officer is once again chief firefighter, in-charge of the state information department as additional chief secretary and leading the perception battle against Covid failure. His dominant presence in the state government, over the last six months has not enthused too many other babus in UP. Yet, it is this larger cohort of babus who will matter more, going ahead and how they manage their last lap briefs, that will be crucial in the months ahead.

CBDT APPOINTMENT RAISES MORE QUESTIONS

The spate of appointments in the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) seem to have raised more questions than answers among babu-watchers. After the end of CBDT chairman P.C. Mody's extended tenure, the finance min-

istry has given additional charge of the post to J.B. Mohapatra, a 1985-batch Indian Revenue Service (IRS) officer. With Mr Mohapatra as ad hoc chairman, the CBDT now has three 1985-batch board members, the other two being Anu J. Singh and Anuja Sarangi.

Sources say that there is also much speculation about why Mr Mohapatra was named the interim chairperson of CBDT and why the government chose to ignore the claim of K.M. Prasad, the senior-most board member. Mr Prasad who has about three months to go before retirement could easily have been given additional charge of interim chairman.

Besides his ad hoc position, Mr Mohapatra is the first regular member for investigation since 2019. The post of member, investigations, now seems to lead to the top post at CBDT, given that the current CEC Sushil Chandra held the same post before he was elevated to CBDT chairperson.

Interestingly, the CBDT board is likely to see more changes in the days ahead. Of the three new members, S.K. Gupta will complete his tenure in July while Anu Singh will retire in August this year as will K.M. Prasad. Will the government draft new members on the board or give extension to the current ones? Let's wait and watch.

CAUGHT BETWEEN CM AND HM, DGP WANTS OUT

Walking a tightrope can get tiresome after a while. Haryana's director general of police Manoj Yadava has sought repatriation to the Intelligence Bureau (IB) for "personal reasons", in a bid to end the war of words between chief minister Manohar Khattar and home minister Anil Vij over his tenure extension.

Mr Yadava was sent to Haryana on the recommendation by a UPSC committee for appointment as the state police chief. He had returned to his home state cadre after spend-

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	53054.76	0.37
Nifty 50	15879.70	0.39
S&P 500*	4,353.03	0.22
Dollar (₹)	74.62	-0.08
Pound Sterling (₹)	103.04	0.16
Euro (₹)	88.26	0.002
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	46,903▼29	0.06
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	72.92	-2.16
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.164	0.00
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	1.331	-0.039

* As of 8:30 PM IST

RBI notifies retail inclusion in MSME category

The Reserve Bank notified the inclusion of retail and wholesale trade under the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSME) category. This will help retail and wholesale trade benefit from priority sector lending under the RBI guidelines. Earlier on July 2, the Ministry of Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises had decided to include retail and wholesale trade under MSMEs for the limited purpose of priority sector lending.

Chinese nationals step down from Paytm board



All Chinese nationals on the board of Paytm have been replaced by US and Indian citizens, the firm said. Alipay representative Jing Xiandong, Ant Financial's Guoming Cheng, and Alibaba representatives Michael Yuen Jen Yao (US citizen) and Ting Hong Kenny Ho have ceased to be directors. US citizen Douglas Feagin has joined the Paytm board on behalf of Ant Group. It now has no Chinese nationals on its board.

Piramal Capital's NCDs to offer 8-9% interest

Piramal Capital & Housing Finance, a wholly owned subsidiary of Piramal Enterprises, announced a Rs 1,000-crore public issue of secured non-convertible debentures (NCDs) opening on July 12. The NCDs of Rs 1,000 face value carry coupon rates of 8.10-9 per cent for 26 month to 10-year tenures. The public issue will allocate 40 per cent of the NCDs to HNIs, 40 per cent to retail investors and 10 per cent to QIBs.

Nucleus Software to hire over 500 engineers this yr

Nucleus Software, which provides lending and transaction banking solutions, said it is planning to hire 500 engineers by the end of the year. Nucleus has set a target to hire 500 fresh young engineers from non-metro cities and towns across India till December, a statement said. This will be undertaken through tie-ups with engineering colleges across various states and through direct hiring, it said.



■ Pre-quarterly updates cheer market

Sensex closes above 53K pts

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JULY 7

The Sensex closed above the 53000-mark for the first time in history on Wednesday. The benchmark index gained 193.58 points, or 0.37 per cent, to close at 53,054.76 after touching a high of 53,105.41, but below an all-time intra-day high of 53,129.37.

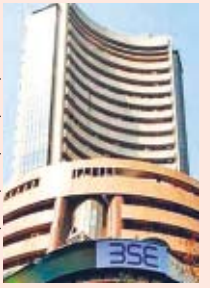
Foreign portfolio investors turned net buyers after recent selling by Rs 532.94 crore, which seemed to have triggered buying, though domestic institutions remained net sellers by Rs 231.80 crore.

"Sentiments were positive on account of receding fresh Covid cases, vaccination progress, strong May core sector data, improved traction in overall economic momentum in June indicating healthy

SENSEX TRENDS IN 2021

Jan. 21	Touches 50000-mark intra-day
Feb. 3	Closes above 50000 points
Feb. 5	Crosses 51000-mark intra-day
Feb. 8	Ends above 51000 points
Feb. 15	Rallies above 52000-mark
May 24	M-cap of BSE-listed companies touches \$3 trillion
June 22	Touches 53000-mark in intra-day trade
July 7	Closes above the 53000-mark for the first time; M-cap of BSE-listed firms at record ₹ 2,32,21,148.16 crore (over \$3 trillion).

GAINS 5303.43 POINTS, OR 11.10 PER CENT, SO FAR THIS YEAR



corporate earnings for Q1," said Siddhartha Khemka, head-retail research, Moti-lal Oswal Financial Services. "Robust pre-quarterly updates from Sobha, Titan, RBL Bank, Equitas among others also

cheered the market. Fresh buying was seen in metals... Realty stocks too surged led by signs of recovery for demand in residential real estate as unsold inventory declined further in Q2 of calendar year 2021," Khemka said.

Property sales, supply pick up in June

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JULY 7

Despite a slump in the April-June quarter (Q1 FY22), the real estate sector saw signs of recovery in June, with sales and supply rising.

About half the sales in Q1 took place in the month of June, as states started opening up after the localised lockdowns, says a report by PropTiger.com.

"Both demand and supply were hit during the first two months (of Q1)

when most states put in place various restrictions and lockdowns to curb the spread of the virus. However, some ground on both the numbers was covered during the month of June, when states started to open up," said Dhruv Agarwala, group CEO, Housing.com, Makaan.com and PropTiger.com.

Anarock Property Consultants says residential sales, during the quarter, dropped by 58 per cent. Around 24,570 units across the top 7 cities were sold in

the June quarter against 58,290 units in the preceding quarter.

"We anticipate residential demand to see steady growth in the upcoming quarter. The previously-noted structural shift in housing demand continues—many current homeowners seek to upgrade to larger homes and the previously purchase-averse millennials remain very active property buyers," said Anuj Puri, chairman, Anarock Property Consultants.

The shift of DPE to the finance ministry will help in efficient monitoring of the capital expenditure, asset monetisation and financial health of the Central Public Sector Enterprises, the government said.

Hitherto, the finance ministry had, under it, the departments of: economic affairs; revenue; expenditure; investment and public asset management (Dipam) and financial services.

With the addition, the ministry will get its sixth department.

DEPT. OF PUBLIC ENTERPRISES MOVES TO FINANCE MINISTRY

FC BUREAU
NEW DELHI, JULY 7

The government has merged the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE) with the Ministry of Finance to give it greater control over state-owned companies and facilitate the privatisation programme.

With the DPE taken away from its fold, the Ministry of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises will now be called the Ministry of Heavy Industries.

The finance ministry will now have six departments.

The Disinvestment Ministry, created under the Atal Bihari Vajpayee government, was earlier merged with the finance ministry and is made a department under it.

Also, Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) was abolished and administration of foreign investments was given to the finance ministry.

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Buyers seek full Saudi oil supply despite price hike

SHARON CHO
JULY 7

Some Asian oil refiners are planning to ask for full contractual crude volumes from Saudi Arabia, despite the kingdom jacking up prices for August, as there are few cheaper alternative sources of supply.

Saudi Aramco raised the official selling price for its key Arab Light crude to Asia next month by the most since January after the breakdown of Opec+ talks to boost output. Alternative grades from the US or the North Sea are currently more expensive, leaving refiners without many options to curb rising costs.

At least five processors are requesting normal contractual volumes for August-loading cargoes, according to refinery officials who asked not to



be identified. One will seek more of the lighter Saudi grade to replace spot purchases from the Atlantic Basin, they said. Buyers are asked to submit so-called nominations by Wednesday, and will be informed of allocated amounts by early next week.

The collapse of the Opec+ talks means that the group's output limits will remain in place for August, depriving buyers of extra barrels as the demand rebound from the pandemic accelerated.

ates. The physical oil market is showing signs of strength, with the prompt Dubai time-spread at the widest backwardation since January 2020.

The premium of Oman crude to Dubai swaps has also widened, signalling a bullish outlook for Middle Eastern oil in the Asian spot market. Light-sweet crude from the US that can be delivered to Asia in October is now about \$2 a barrel more expensive than similar Middle Eastern cargoes, meaning the arbitrage trade is shut, according to traders.

Other official selling prices from major Middle Eastern producers such as Kuwait, Qatar and Iraq will be released in the coming days. Those suppliers typically follow Saudi Arabia in their pricing strategy.

— Bloomberg

Goyal pitches for Indo-Pacific services pact

New Delhi, July 7: Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Wednesday called for a services trade agreement among friendly nations of the Indo-Pacific region as it can help liberalise domestic regulations and build capacity in sectors like e-commerce and IT.

Speaking at special plenary with the trade ministers of the Indo-Pacific region, Goyal said India's trade with select Indo-Pacific economies increased to \$262 billion in 2020 from \$33 billion in 2001.

However, he said, non-tariff measures act as a major barrier in the region.

"Given the prospects of services trade, an Indo-Pacific wide services trade agreement should also be considered amongst friendly nations. It can help liberalise domestic regulations and build capacity on e-commerce and IT-enabled services and other areas



Piyush Goyal

such as artificial intelligence," he said.

Indo-Pacific region countries include Sri Lanka, Australia, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Fiji, India, Japan, Malaysia, Maldives, New Zealand and Singapore.

Goyal also invited businesses of the region to avail incentives under India's production-linked investment schemes, which cover 13 sectors and aim at creating global manufacturing champions.

He said trade facilitation can ease the cross-border movement of goods. — PTI

Covid claims 22 million jobs in major economies

LIBBY CHERRY
JULY 7

Labour markets in developed nations have recovered only half of the loss of employment they suffered in the pandemic, with the young and low-skilled hurt the most.

That's the conclusion of a 400-page study by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, which found that about 22 million jobs disap-

peared by the end of 2020 in industrial nations. The Paris-based institution said a full recovery to pre-pandemic levels of employment won't come until the end of next year.

The findings indicate that the coronavirus crisis accelerated a number of trends that started over the past decade, including growing income inequality, a shift toward more technically demanding jobs and fewer secure employment

opportunities for lower-skilled workers.

"Failing to address inequality and exclusion now is likely to result not only in deeper social divisions," said Stefano Scarpetta, the OECD's director for employment, labour and social affairs.

The OECD found a "rapid buildup" of long-term unemployment, with each wave of pandemic restrictions making it increasingly difficult for people to

find their way back into the workforce.

"There could be a growing mismatch between the skills and competence of the workers who have lost their jobs, and actually the skills which are in demand in the jobs which are being created," said Scarpetta at a press conference.

It warned about a "particularly worrisome" increase in inactivity among young people in most countries.

— Bloomberg

UpGrad earmarks \$250 mn for deals

SARITHA RAI
JULY 7

Online education provider UpGrad is allocating \$250 million for acquisitions in the coming months to speed up global expansion, one among a slew of India-born edtech startups setting their sights on international markets.

The company will target digital learning providers with mentors and coaches as well as immersive short-form learning startups in markets like Indonesia and Vietnam and across Africa, it said on Wednesday in a release. Two acquisitions will be announced in the next 60 days.

UpGrad, which specialises in higher education and upskilling courses, is near-

ing \$4 billion in valuation, Indian newspapers have reported. That would be a jump of nearly seven times from April, when it first got external funds, raising \$160 million from Singapore-based Temasek Holdings Pte and IFC Corp.

UpGrad representatives declined to comment on its valuation or fundraising plans.

India's edtech firms are expanding to new markets as the pandemic led to a boom in online learning from regular school classes to specialised professional courses. Mumbai-based UpGrad said it has over two-thirds of the online higher-education market in India for working professionals.

UpGrad was founded in

2015 by serial entrepreneur Ronnie Screwvala, who pioneered cable television in India in the 1980s and then built a unicorn acquired by Walt Disney Company.

Screwvala, 64, and his founding team own more than two-thirds of UpGrad. The startup is aiming for "an integrated, connected model in higher education across multiple geographies," Screwvala said in the release.

The company said its target customers are the world's more than one billion knowledge workers and 250 million higher education enrollees. It offers more than 100 courses, including some in collaboration with foreign universities.

— Bloomberg

RELIEF FOR OYO AS NCLAT CLOSES INSOLVENCY CASE AGAINST ARM



SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JULY 7

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal has closed the insolvency case against Oyo's subsidiary. The inclusion of other parties, including hotels' body has not been permitted.

The NCLAT closed proceedings for insolvency of Oyo's subsidiary Oyo Hotels and Homes Private Limited (OHHPL) after the creditor Rakesh K. Yadav, who had dragged the hospitality chain to court, withdrew the case. Oyo has resolved the issue with the Gurugram-based hotelier in an out-of-court settlement.

The Federation of Hotel & Restaurant Associations of India (FHRAI) had sought intervention on behalf of its affected members in May. NCLAT had allowed the hotels' body to intervene in the insolvency case then. A few other individual hotel owners also had joined the insolvency case. However, after the withdrawal of the original case, NCLAT has not permitted intervention of FHRAI and others.

"We welcome the decision of NCLAT and that the matter has finally been laid to rest. We had already settled with the original claimant but subsequent interveners with vested interests who were not a party to the case had delayed its closure," said Rohit Kapoor, CEO-Oyo Insea.

The FHRAI said it will continue to find a resolution to the payment issue. According to the association, the insolvency case revealed that around Rs 150 crore worth payments are pending to various hotels. "We had intervened in the interest of our members. We will keep our efforts on," he said.

EVER | RICH

Ex-spouse gets in a day more than the \$2.7 bn she gave away in a year

Jeff Bezos hits wealth record of \$211 bn

SCOTT CARPENTER & SOPHIE ALEXANDER
JULY 7

Jeff Bezos is leaving the rest of the world behind when it comes to wealth accumulation.

The world's richest man reached a record \$211 billion net worth on Tuesday after Amazon.com Inc shares rose 4.7 per cent after the Pentagon announced it was cancelling a cloud-computing contract with rival Microsoft Corp. The rally raised Bezos's fortune by \$8.4 billion, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index.

The last time anyone in the Bloomberg ranking neared this amount was in January, when Tesla Inc's Elon Musk briefly hit \$210 billion. The two men spent the first part of the year trading the top spot as the world's richest person, but Bezos has cemented his hold on No. 1 since mid-March as Amazon shares climbed almost 20 per cent during that time.

Soaring stock prices in recent months have boosted the fortunes of a group of tech titans, including Musk. He remains in second place behind Bezos with a \$180.8 billion net



Jeff Bezos

worth even as Tesla shares fell on Tuesday. French luxury goods magnate Bernard Arnault is third at \$168.5

billion.

Bezos's record haul is even greater than during a 2020 Amazon stock surge, when his net worth topped out at \$206.9 billion as the pandemic turbocharged the company's price. Bezos, 57, officially stepped down as Amazon's chief executive officer this week after a 27-year run. He still owns about 11 per cent of the company and serves as the firm's executive chairman.

The Pentagon said on Tuesday it was scrapping a \$10 billion cloud-computing contract awarded in 2019 to Microsoft Corp

after several years of wrangling between the government and some of the biggest US tech companies over the deal. The decision indicates it planned to split the work between Microsoft and rival Amazon.

MacKenzie Scott, Bezos's ex-wife and the 15th-richest person in the world, saw her wealth jump \$2.9 billion on Tuesday, eclipsing the \$2.7 billion she's given away so far this year. It's just a reminder that some billionaires can't give their money away faster than they make it.

— Bloomberg

SHORT TAKES

Hockey icon Datt passes away at 95

New Delhi: A man of many talents but one passion. Keshav Datt was the last of connects to the golden era of Indian hockey which has attained mythical status over the years. A two-time Olympic gold-medallist (1948, London and 1952, Helsinki), the 95-year-old Datt died after battling age-related ailments in Kolkata on Wednesday, survived by his wife, two sons and a daughter, all of whom are based outside India. Aside from being excellent with a hockey stick in his hands, Datt was also a badminton player of credible ability and a professional tea taster in his time away from sports. Datt played alongside greats like the late trio of Balbir Singh Sr, Leslie Claudius, and Jaswant Singh Rajput among others. His demise marked the end of a glorious era in Indian hockey's history. — P/TI

Shafali and Sneha in race for ICC award

Dubai: India's teen batting sensation Shafali Verma and all-rounder Sneha Rana were on Wednesday nominated for ICC women's 'Player of the Month' award for June following their standout performances in the ongoing series against England. Besides the Indian duo, England's left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone has also been nominated for the honour in the women's category. The nominees among the men are New Zealand batsman Devon Conway and pacer Kyle Jamieson along with South Africa wicketkeeper Quinton de Kock. The 17-year-old Shafali, who had already impressed everyone in the shortest format of the game, made a stunning Test debut against England and was named Player of the Match in the Bristol match. — P/TI

KL climbs to 6th position in ranking

Dubai: Indian skipper Virat Kohli retained his fifth position while wicketkeeper-batsman KL Rahul gained one spot to be in sixth place in the latest ICC T20I rankings. With 762 points, Kohli is behind England's David Malan (888 points), Australia white-ball skipper Aaron Finch (830), Pakistan captain Babar Azam (828) and New Zealand opener Devon Conway (774). Rahul, who has 743 points, and Australia all-rounder Glenn Maxwell have climbed a rung each to be placed sixth and seventh respectively. Rahul and Kohli are the only two Indians to feature in the top-10 among batsmen. No Indian features in the top-10 among bowlers and all-rounders in the latest T20I rankings. — P/TI

Test Mace to go on tour in N. Zealand

Auckland: The victorious Black Caps squad will carry their ICC World Test Championship Mace on a week-long, nationwide tour of the country, starting July 26, New Zealand Cricket (NZC) said on Wednesday. Kane Williamson and company won the inaugural WTC final, beating India by eight wickets in Southampton in a thrilling contest last month. The tour is set to start in Whangarei on July 26 and will cover Auckland, Tauranga, Hamilton, New Plymouth, Palmerston North, Wellington, Christchurch, Dunedin and Invercargill throughout the week. "It's quickly become apparent that Kiwis want an opportunity to be part of, and to share in this historic achievement," NZC chief executive David White said. — P/TI

Paul powers Suns to lead in finals

Phoenix: Chris Paul waited 16 years to get to the NBA Finals, bringing with him a team starving for their first championship. The setting was entirely new. The performance was same of Chris Paul. "Just knew he's ready," Phoenix forward Mikal Bridges said. "He's prepared his whole life for this moment and it shows out there on the court." Paul had 32 points and nine assists in an NBA Finals debut that was well worth the wait, Devin Booker scored 27 points and the Suns beat the returning Giannis Antetokounmpo and his Milwaukee Bucks 118-105 on Tuesday night in Game 1. Paul scored 16 points during a sensational third quarter that had Phoenix fans who waited 28 years to see the NBA Finals again screaming in delight. — AFP



Italian players celebrate after beating Spain on penalties in the Euro semifinal at Wembley Stadium on Tuesday.

—UEFA

THIS IS ITALY

Azzurri in final; slow Spain finally pay penalty

London, July 6: Italy beat Spain 4-2 on penalties after a 1-1 draw in a magnificent Euro 2020 semi-final at Wembley on Tuesday, as Jorginho converted the decisive kick to take the Azzurri through to the final where they will face either England or Denmark.

Italy were not always on top though, with Spain the better side for long spells of an epic contest before Federico Chiesa, the Juventus forward, gave Italy the lead with a fabulous finish an hour into a match watched by a crowd of almost 58,000.

The much-maligned Alvaro Morata, who was dropped from the starting line-up, came off the bench to equalise with 10 minutes of normal time

left.

No further scoring in extra time meant penalties again for Spain, who had beaten Switzerland in a shoot-out in the quarter-finals.

They had also beaten Italy on penalties at Euro 2008, but this time misses from Dani Olmo and then Morata saw Spain give up the advantage they had been handed when Manuel Locatelli failed with the first kick in the shoot-out.

The Italians celebrated at the end with a large contingent of their UK-based supporters, and a team that has been rejuvenated under Roberto Mancini continues to dream of winning a first European Championship since 1968.

Italy 1

(Federico Chiesa 60)

Spain 1

(Alvaro Morata 80)
(Italy won 4-2 in shootout)

Now unbeaten in 33 games, they go through to Sunday's final to face either England or Denmark, who meet in Wednesday's second last-four tie.

"I have to thank the players because they believed right from day one that we could do something incredible," said Mancini. "We haven't yet done everything we need to though, there is still one step to go."

It is nine years since

Spain mauled Italy 4-0 in the Euro 2012 final in Kiev to win a third consecutive major tournament, and this was the fourth successive Euro in which these powerhouses had met.

Spain won the first two of those meetings, but the last two have gone to Italy.

"It is not a sad night for me by any means," said Spain coach Luis Enrique. "We can go home knowing we competed and were among the best teams."

WE'LL BE BACK, SAYS BUSQUETS

Spain captain Sergio Busquets said the team will return stronger after gaining vital experience during their run to the Euro 2020 semi-finals.

"It's a shame, we

would've have liked for our tournament not to end today but that's football," Busquets told Radio Marca.

"The team was very good, we were the better team for almost the whole match. We can be proud, I feel pride for my teammates. Everyone was making Italy favourites, but we showed we're better."

Alvaro Morata came off the bench to equalise late on for Spain at Wembley and cancel out Federico Chiesa's opening goal on the hour.

But Morata and Dani Olmo missed in the shoot-out after the match finished 1-1 following extra time, with Italy advancing to the final 4-2 on penalties.

—AFP

COPA | AMERICA

Argentina set up Brazil showdown

Brasilia, July 7: Goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez was the hero as Argentina defeated Colombia on penalties on Tuesday to set up a dream Copa America final against Brazil.

Argentina stopper Martinez saved three penalties in the shoot-out after a bruising 1-1 draw in Brasilia.

Hosts Brazil beat Peru 1-0 in Monday's first semi-final meaning their star forward Neymar will line up against Lionel Messi's Argentina on Saturday at Rio de Janeiro's iconic Maracana stadium.

Two years ago a Brazil team missing the injured Neymar knocked out Argentina in the semi-finals before winning their ninth Copa title on home soil. For Messi, 34, time is running out to win a first major international title with his national team, having previously lost in three Copa finals and the 2014 World Cup final.

For once he wasn't his country's main hero, although he did create the opening goal for Lautaro Martinez on seven minutes, before Luis Diaz equalized just after the hour mark.

In the shoot-out, goalkeeper Martinez three times dived to his left to save penalties from center-backs Davinson Sanchez and Yerry Mina, as well as midfielder Edwin Cardona. And although Rodrigo De

Argentina 1

(Lautaro Martinez 7)

Colombia 1

(Luis Diaz 61)
(Argentina won 3-2 in shootout)

Paul skied his penalty for Argentina, Messi — who finished with blood seeping visibly from his left ankle — was amongst the scorers to give them a 3-2 victory on spot-kicks.

Saving penalties "is a question of luck and today it was my turn to be the glorious one," said Martinez.

"We said it the first day, we want to play the final and what better than playing Brazil on their pitch."

Despite the defeat, Colombia coach Reinaldo Rueda was feeling positive, saying their performance "invites us to dream, to think we're on the right path."

"We should lift our heads, look each other in the eyes and know we have nothing to reproach ourselves about," he added.

Messi produced some early magic to beat three players and cross for Martinez to head wide.

Colombia didn't heed the warning and on seven minutes, Giovanni Lo Celso found Messi in the box, the diminutive star held off the giant Mina and picked out Martinez to fire into the far corner. — AFP

Sreenidhi in football league



K. Rama Mohana Rao, IAS, chairman of Visakhapatnam Port Trust releases the team jersey during the launch of Sreenidhi Football Deccan Club (SDFC) flanked by SFC executive director K. Abhijit Rao (left) and Dr K. T. Mahhe, chairman of Sreenidhi Educational Group, in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. SDFC will represent Vizag in the All India Football Federation's I-league.

Roger: Over and out?
Federer crashes out to cast doubt on future

London, July 7: Roger Federer crashed out of Wimbledon in the quarter-finals at the hands of Poland's Hubert Hurkacz on Wednesday, potentially bringing down the curtain on the Swiss legend's All England Club career.

Federer, the 20-time Grand Slam title winner who turns 40 next month, lost 6-3, 7-6 (7/4), 6-0 to a player 15 years his junior. It was only the eighth-time Wimbledon champion's 14th defeat at the tournament in 119 matches and his first straight sets loss since an opening round exit against Mario Ancic in 2002.

Federer turns 40 next month and never was able to summon the serving and shot-making that have carried him to 20 Grand Slam titles overall. Hurkacz is a 24-year-old from Poland who had not made it past the third round at any major tournament until this one.

World number one and five-time champion Novak Djokovic reached his 10th Wimbledon semi-final and 41st at the Grand Slams.

Djokovic, chasing a record-equalling 20th major, defeated Hungary's Marton Fucsovics 6-3, 6-4, 6-4.

He will face Canada's 10th seed Denis Shapovalov, who beat Russia's Karen Khachanov 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-4, for a place in Sunday's final.

It was 34-year-old Djokovic's 100th career grass court victory.

Djokovic became only the third man to capture all four majors more than once with his second French Open victory last month. Now he is halfway to becoming the first man in the Open Era and only the third in history to complete a calendar Grand Slam of all four majors.

"I'm aware of certain stats, I love this sport



Poland's Hubert Hurkacz celebrates after winning a game against Roger Federer in the Wimbledon quarterfinal on Wednesday.

— Wimbledon

with all my heart, body and soul and have been devoted to it since I was four," he said.

"Sometimes things do look surreal for me but I try to live in the moment and take every opportunity I have on the court."

"Going for history is a huge inspiration for me, let's keep it going."

Djokovic raced into a 5-0 lead in the first set before 29-year-old Fucsovics got on the board.

The world number 48, bidding to become the first Hungarian man since 1948 to make the semi-finals at Wimbledon, saved five set points. However, the rear-guard action was too late to prevent the champion edging ahead.

The top seed broke for the only time in the second set in the ninth game which was enough for a two sets lead.

Djokovic had spent three hours fewer than the muscular Fucsovics in getting to the last-eight and his freshness showed when he crucially broke in the first game of the third set and then fought off two break points in the sixth.

Shapovalov fired 17 aces and 59 winners past Russia's Khachanov to reach his first Grand Slam semi-final.

The Canadian will be a huge underdog against Djokovic having lost all six matches against the world number one.

SANIA-BOPANNA KNOCKED OUT

Rohan Bopanna stayed solid with his service games and net play but Sania Mirza's serve was consistently put under pressure as the Indian team was ousted from the Wimbledon following a

three-set defeat in the stop-start mixed doubles third round. The contest resumed with the 14th seed pair of Jean Julien-Roger and Andreja Klepac having a one-set lead and they finished on the right side of the result with a 6-3, 3-6, 11-9 scoreline.

Mirza has not played much competitive tennis post her comeback and is struggling to get her serve right. Serving to stay in the match at 5-6 in the decider, Mirza managed to hold after a few anxious moments.

— Agencies

Results: Men: Quarter-finals: Hubert Hurkacz (Pol x 14) bt Roger Federer (Sui, x6) 6-3, 7-6(7/4), 6-0; Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Marton Fucsovics (HUN) 6-3, 6-4, 6-4; Denis Shapovalov (CAN x10) bt Karen Khachanov (RUS x25) 6-4, 3-6, 5-7, 6-1, 6-4.

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