

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | FRIDAY | 18 JUNE 2021

WEATHER

Max: 34.0°C
Min: 27.0°C
RH: 81%
Rainfall: 1.6 mm

Forecast: Clear.
Max/Min temp.
34/27 °C



Satya Nadella

SATYA NADELLA IS MICROSOFT CHAIRMAN

New York, June 17: Microsoft's India-born CEO Satya Nadella has been appointed as the technology giant's new chairman, an additional role in which he will lead the work to set the agenda for the board.

Microsoft Corp on Wednesday announced that the board's independent directors unanimously elected Nadella to the role of board chair, and unanimously elected John W. Thompson as the lead independent director, a role he held previously from 2012 to 2014.

In this role, Nadella will lead the work to set the agenda for the board, leveraging his deep understanding of the business to elevate the right strategic opportunities and identify key risks and mitigation approaches for the board's review, the company said in a statement. —PTI



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PIO to lead U.S. EPA's water agency

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Nadal pulls out of Wimbledon, Olympics

TABLOID

Rejecting brands on principle



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Ex-sarpanch, brother murdered in Kurnool

Gang of eight lay in wait to execute murder plan

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 17

Two Telugu Desam leaders were killed and three seriously injured by their political rivals at Pesaravai village in Gadivemula mandal of Kurnool district on Thursday. The deceased were former village sarpanch Nageswara Reddy and his brother, former KDCC bank director Pratap Reddy.

The two were close associates of TD Nandyal parliamentary constituency president Gauru Venkata Reddy.

The police said eight persons were involved in the attack.

Three persons were seriously injured and admitted to a Nandyal hospital. They

● **THE ASSAILANTS** used a sports utility vehicle (SUV) to attack the two victims. When they fell down, they were done to death with knives and other sharp objects, the police said.

were Vaddu Venkateshwar Reddy, Vaddu Subba Reddy, and Venkateshwar Reddy.

The assailants were suspected to be activists of the YSR Congress.

They used a sports utility vehicle (SUV) to hit the two victims. When they fell down, they were done to death with knives and other sharp objects, the police said.

It is learnt that the gang of eight lay in wait to exe-

cute their plan on the outskirts of the village. "The family came out of their home and walked by foot on their way to the burial ground to perform some rituals for a close relative. The four-wheel vehicle hit the two brothers. The gang got out of it and killed the two with their hunting knives," as per the police report.

The victims fell down and died on the spot. After killing the targeted two, the assailants fled the scene by vehicle.

Nandyal DSP Chidananda Reddy rushed to the spot and took charge of the situation. The villagers were in the grip of fear and a police squad has been deployed there to prevent further violence.

SC ACCEPTS CBSE, ICSE 40:30:30 EVALUATION PLAN

PARMOD KUMAR
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

The Supreme Court on Thursday ruled out revisiting its earlier decision to cancel Class XII Board exams and accepted the evaluation plan submitted by the CBSE and ICSE for awarding marks to students who are to appear for Class XII Board examination.

Based on results of Class XII, XI and X respectively, the CBSE has adopted a 40:30:30 formula to evaluate and mark students.

The Council for the Indian School Certificate Examination (ISCE) said that it will consider the performance of students for the last six classes in finalising the final board results.

According to the CBSE formula, the theory marks of each subject will be computed using 40 per cent from the marks they got in the subject pre-boards or mid-term exams held by their schools earlier this year, 30 per cent from their Class XI final exam marks, and 30 per cent from their Class X Board exam results. It will be added to the marks they got in Class XII internal assessments and practicals for that subject.

Page 2: CBSE schools to form result panel

AP to fully apply New Edu. Policy

None to be laid off during schools reshuffle

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated that the New Education Policy (NEP) would be very much useful to students and teachers and instructed officials to draft an action plan for its smooth implementation. He further ordered that one or two government junior colleges be set up in every mandal to impact good quality education.

The CM informed that the modernisation of schools under the Nadu-Nedu phase-2 would start on July 1 and asked officials to consider including sport dress and shoes in the Vidya Kanuka kits for the students from next year. He was holding a review meeting on the education department and Nadu-Nedu on Thursday.

Jagan Mohan Reddy insisted that no employee would be laid off from schools and Anganwadi centres, and no centre would be closed. Instead, changes were being made for synergy between them. He said there should be two types of schools. One should offer PP1, PP2,

● **THE CM** asked officials to consider including sport dress and shoes in the Vidya Kanuka kits for the students from next year while holding a review meeting on the education department and Nadu-Nedu

Preparatory Class, Class 1 and Class 2. It should be located within 1 km distance of the students. The other should offer education from Class 3 to Class 10, within 3km distance.

The CM explained that the main purpose of the new policy change is to keep the teacher-student ratio rational. For instance, he said it is not appropriate to have one teacher for four students or a single teacher for a large number of students. The approach of a single teacher teaching all subjects is also incorrect, he felt.

The CM stressed on the right student-teacher ratio in foundation courses as sound mental development is essential for the children below eight years and their skills need to be improved. He also said it is not appropriate to set up all class-

rooms at one place and added that no one should find fault with the move to bring schools within 3 km distance of students. He said the aim is to provide quality education, quality teaching and quality infrastructure as per the NEP and the state education policy should be in tune with it. The government is looking forward to teaching in the English medium, striving to provide quality education to the children. He called for creating awareness among teachers, public representatives and others on the NEP and the officials should clarify their doubts.

Reviewing the Nadu Nedu, he asked the officials to frame an action plan to complete Nadu Nedu works in Anganwadi centers within two years. He said the foundation schools concept was introduced by the Central government and everyone should follow it. He said there are 18 subjects till Class 5 and the SGT teacher can't handle them and a separate teacher is needed for each subject.

Page 2: CM: All schools must have playgrounds



THANK YOU
FOR THE
50 YEARS
GONE BY.

HERE'S TO THE NEXT 50.

Today, 18th of June, 2021 marks 50 years of **Sheela Foam** bringing **Healthy Comfort** to your lives. Your **Patronage** has helped us create brands like **Sleepwell**, with operations across **India, Australia and Spain**.

We **Thank You** for this **Privilege** and the **Trust** that you've placed in us.

Looking forward to contributing to your **Well Being** for generations to come.



SHORT TAKES

FORMER MLA
PHILIP TOCHER
JOINS YSRCDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Former MLA (Anglo Indian) Philip C. Tocher joined YSR Congress in the presence of Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the camp office in Tadepalli on Thursday. Tocher was accompanied by MLC Lella Appi Reddy, YSRC leaders Kathera Suresh and Katthera Henry Christina.

In a separate programme, Mandapeta YSRC coordinator Thota Trimurthulu paid a courtesy visit to Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy at the camp office. Accompanied by his son Thota Prudhvi Raj, he thanked the Chief Minister for selecting him for the MLC post.

NAIDU ASKS CM
TO CLEAR DUES
TO FARMERSDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

Former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday asked CM Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to clear the farmers' pending dues at the minimum support price for food grains the state.

In a letter to the CM on Thursday, Naidu said many farmers did not get their pending dues till date in spite of the Kharif season which began two weeks ago. The dues of ₹2,500 crore were pending in East Godavari district, he added.

WASTE-TO-ENERGY
PLANT TO GO ON
STREAM IN JULYDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Minister for municipal administration Botsa Satyanarayana stated that the Jindal Waste to Energy Plant with 15MW capacity in Guntur would start its operations by next month. Only 10 per cent of the works for the plant was completed during the term of the Telugu Desam government, but the YSRC gave top priority to the completion of the works, he said on Thursday.

Satyanarayana said two waste-to-energy plants were under construction, one in Guntur and the other in Visakhapatnam.

The minister inspected the Jindal plant at Obulanaidupalem on the outskirts of Guntur city and reviewed the progress of the works. Jindal urban waste management project president M. M. Chari explained about the features of the plant through a power-point presentation.

AP OKAYS LAND
FOR SINDHU'S
ACADEMY IN VIZAGDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

The AP government on Thursday issued orders alienating two acres of land at Chinagadili area in Vizag city to badminton star P. V. Sindhu for establishing an academy and sports schools free of cost. The allocation was assured by CM Jagan Mohan Reddy when Sindhu was crowned the women singles world champion in 2019. Though initially, the allotment was expected to be around five acres, only two acres has been allocated to start with, taking into consideration various factors.

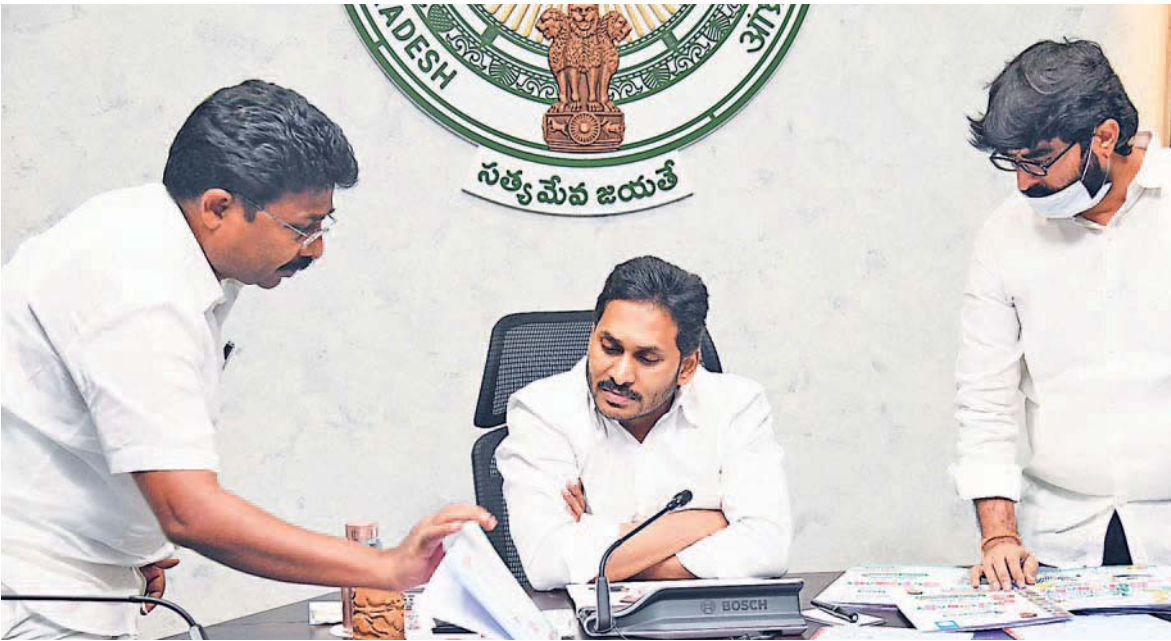
The Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) verified her application and said it would be registered soon after she completes registration of the trust. She has agreed to submit a detailed project report. The academy will be constructed in two phases at an expenditure of ₹5 crore in each phase.

Sindhu has also assured that the land will only be used for development of the badminton academy and sports school.

After careful examination of the proposals, the state government has issued orders for alienation of land, albeit with some norms. The government laid a condition that the academy should have separate access from the main road and should not be used for any other alternative purposes.

The academy shall also serve talented but poor without commercial outlook and complete the project within the time-frame stipulated by youth advancement, tourism and culture department.

CM reviews books



Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy is all ears as minister for education A. Suresh explains a point at a review meet on education, Anganwadis and Nadu-Nedu at his camp office in Tadepalli on Thursday.

— By ARRANGEMENT

‘TD evaded ₹960cr
arrears to farmers’

Our govt cleared it, also helped tenant farmers: YSRC

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

YSR Congress has criticised that the opposition Telugu Desam is showing false love towards farmers, in wake of a missive shot by TD chief Chandrababu Naidu to Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy who is dedicatedly working for the welfare of farmers.

Advisor to government (public affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy, speaking to the media here on Thursday, refuted Naidu's allegations and depicted them as a false campaign to mislead the people. He recalled that the YSRC cleared the dues to farmers, which were left behind by the previous government.

Rubbishing the letter of Naidu, Ramakrishna Reddy said it was full of false and baseless allegations. He said the TD leaders had no moral right to speak on the farmers' issues, as they left a debt of ₹960 crore towards crop procurement. He stated that the letter written by Chandrababu about the pending arrears to farm-

● **SAJJALA SAYS** even in crop procurement, the Jagan govt far outperformed the previous regime. He slams Naidu for his letter to CM on farmers' issues.

ers is false propaganda by the TD leaders.

He said the opposition was showing false concern for the farmers and the agriculture sector, but in reality, it was the TD government that gave empty promises and had left huge pending dues of ₹960 crore.

Ramakrishna Reddy stated that it was Jagan Mohan Reddy who took the initiative of clearing all the pending arrears left by Naidu. He said Naidu should be ashamed of writing a letter saying that the farmers were paid within 48 hours of procuring the crops in his rule. He said that people had not yet forgotten the dark days of TD rule and stated that Jagan Mohan Reddy's governance instilled confidence among the farmers.

Comparing TD and YSRC governments' crop procurement schemes, Ramakrishna Reddy said that hardly 18 lakh tonnes were procured during 2014-15 and by the end of TD term in 2018-19, only

20.5 lakh tonnes of crop was procured at a cost of ₹4,800 crore, without clearing arrears of ₹1,000 crore.

In contrast, in 2019-20 nearly 34.74 lakh tonnes of crop was procured at a cost of ₹6,331 crore and in 2020-21, so far over 25 lakh tonnes were procured by paying ₹4,728 crore to the farmers. The government would complete the targeted procurement of 45 lakh tonnes this year. He said this showed YSRC's true commitment to farmer welfare.

On the minimum support price (MSP), the government advisor said that the MSP would prevent the farmers from not falling into losses by selling their produce at non-profitable price. He clarified that it is not mandatory for the farmers to sell their produce to the government – they can sell to whoever is paying higher price.

Ramakrishna Reddy pointed out that the YSRC government included

under the e-crop system even tenant farmers who were not given any support during the TD regime. Currently, procurement is taking place right at the farm gate. The government will stand by the farmers from seed to sale.

In regard to property tax, Ramakrishna Reddy said that the TD was unnecessarily levelling charges against the government. He explained that under the FRBM Act, the state was implementing the recommendations of the Central government as per the 15th Finance Commission, which is already being implemented in BJP-ruled states. He further explained the additional revenue to the government due to the upgraded property tax policy is only ₹186 crore.

He added that none of the property owners was making a fuss, except TD and BJP leaders. Speaking on the arrears to be cleared by the Centre, he said the BJP can take a credit by providing ₹3,300 crore towards clearing them.

TS soon to implement
Nadu-Nedu programmeDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

The Government of Telangana has embarked on a school infrastructure development project similar to that of the Andhra Pradesh government's flagship scheme, Nadu Nedu.

After learning that the Andhra Pradesh government has developed an end-to-end encrypted software with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for the ongoing school revamp project, the Telangana government sought out TCS to provide software and services to it.

TS principal secretary (education) Sandeep Kumar Sultanania wrote a

● **AFTER LEARNING** that the Andhra Pradesh government has developed an end-to-end encrypted software with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for the ongoing school revamp project, the Telangana government sought out TCS to provide software and services to it.

● **THE TS** wrote to the AP education department seeking its consent, to which AP responded positively.

letter to principal secretary (school education) B. Rajasekhara, seeking information about the Nadu Nedu programme for a similar project in Telangana.

The officials informed the CM of this at review meeting on the Nadu-Nedu progress on Thursday.

TCS had informed TS that a formal 'no objection' was required from

the AP government to design a project on the lines of Nadu-Nedu, using the same software. Hence, the TS wrote to the AP education department seeking its consent, to which AP responded positively.

The Chief Minister said, "if this is for the benefit of our Telugu people, we should provide them all the support they need."

CM: ALL SCHOOLS
MUST HAVE
PLAYGROUNDS

From page 1

The CM made it clear that all schools shall have playgrounds and ordered land acquisition wherever necessary. He said to strengthen laboratories and libraries in schools and added to provide better internet facilities in school libraries.

Education minister Adimulapu Suresh, women and Child welfare minister Thaneti Vanitha, school education principal secretary Buditi Rajasekar, women and child welfare principal secretary A. R. Anuradha, women and child welfare director Kritika Shukla, education commissioner Chinaveerabhadhrudu, Sarva Shiksha Abhiyan state project director Vetri Selvi, finance secretary Gulzar and other officials were present.

Jagan stresses on
quality housesDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy on Thursday interacted with newly-appointed Joint Collectors (Housing) across the State to ensure effective implementation of Pedalanderiki Illu scheme.

During the meeting, the CM said that 'Pedalanderiki Illu' initiative is a massive housing project taken up by the State government, the first in the country. He stated that over 28 lakh houses are being constructed in 17,000 layouts, where some of the layouts are of the size of municipalities. He directed officials to complete them within the time-frame.

Besides these, the CM told the officials to focus on providing house-sites to all eligible persons within 90 days of apply-

ing on a saturation basis, by maintaining complete transparency and zero corruption. He spoke against a situation where only 10 per cent of eligible people get benefitted. He said that officials should take the responsibility of constructing houses for all those receiving house-sites.

Reddy said that colonies should not become slums and they all must boast of good infrastructure facilities, which is a top priority, as the government is spending over ₹84,000 crore on it with infrastructure alone getting ₹34,000 crore of the amount.

He instructed the officials to maintain transparency and ensure quality in every work. If quality is compromised, problems will arise and therefore it was essential to proceed with an effective plan of action, he added.

CM to unveil job calendar today

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will release on Friday a calendar schedule to fill vacant posts in various government departments.

For the first time in the history of the state, the state government under the leadership of Jagan Mohan Reddy fulfilled the dreams of unemployed in the state by providing jobs to 6,03,755 people in last

two years. Out of 6,03,755 jobs, regular posts were 1,84,264, jobs on contract basis were 19,701 and jobs provided through outsourcing were 3,99,791.

The Chief Minister will release the job calendar 2021-22, through which 10,143 vacant posts in various departments would be filled. The notification to fill 1,238 backlog SC, ST and DA posts would be released in July, 36 posts in APPSC Group 1&2 category in August,

450 police jobs in September, 451 posts in health (doctors and assistant professors) in October, 5,251 jobs in health (paramedical, lab technicians and pharmacists) in November, 441 nurse jobs in December, 240 posts as lecturers in degree colleges in January 2022, 2,000 posts as assistant professors in universities in February 2022, and 36 posts in other departments will be filled in March 2022.

Factional fights, murders
back after lull in KurnoolD. SIVA RAMI REDDI | DC
KURNOOL, JUNE 17

Kurnool woke up on Thursday to the deafening news of double-murder of Vaddu Nageshwar Reddy and his brother Prathap Reddy at Pesaravai village in Gadivumeula mandal, which spread like a wild fire in the district.

Family members of the deceased were insoluble. Santhi, the daughter of Prathap Reddy, hugged the blood-soaked bodies and screamed violently. "Now there is no male member in the family. But I will avenge the deaths."

"What wrong did my dad do? Is it wrong to work for a party he believes in," she asked.

Gouru Charitha Reddy, former Panyam MLA and TD leader, said as the panchayat elections were over, the YSRC had stepped up pressure on TD activists to join them or face the consequences. Prathap Reddy had been beaten up during the recent elections by the followers of rival Katasani Rambhupal Reddy, the Panyam MLA.

Alleging that Banaganapalle's murder politics has badly affected life in Panyam constituency, she blamed Rambhupal Reddy for this heinous turn. "The ruling party MLAs are turning restless and targeting those who take a different line. There is no peace in the district," Charitha Reddy alleged.

The faction-ridden villages in the district have been seething in anger

THE KURNOOL DISTRICT WITNESSED
"BRUTAL POLITICAL MURDERS"
IN THE PAST TEN YEARS.

Here is The timeline :

2011: Congress leader Dalvai Ramaiah was killed in faction attacks at Mantralayam of Kurnool district.

2015: TDP activist Nagesh was killed at Uppalur village near Kolimigundla, a follower of BC Janardhan Reddy

2017: YSR congress party key leader Cherukulapadu Narayana Reddy and his aide Sambasivudu were done to death at Veldurti of Kurnool district.

2019: TDP activist Subba Rao was brutally killed by his political rivalries at Belum caves of Kolimigundla Mandal in Kurnool district.

YSRC KILLED 30 TELUGU DESAM
LEADERS IN 2 YEARS, SAYS NAIDUDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

Condemning the daylight killing of two TD leaders at Panyam assembly segment in Kurnool, former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said over 30 TD activists were killed ever since the YCP came to power two years ago and nearly 1,500 attacks were made on the TD leaders and activists and their properties all over the state.

Naidu said the two brutal murders triggered doubts whether the police were in existence or not

in the state.

Former sarpanch Vaddi Nageswara Reddy and cooperative society former president Vaddi Pratapa Reddy were killed by rivals when they were returning from the crematorium ground after attending the funeral rites of a relative.

TD Chief said that the miscreants came in a vehicle and crashed into the car of the two TD leaders before attacking with sickles.

He alleged YSRC MLA Katasani Rambhupal Reddy's role in the murders.

tary constituency president.

Telugu Desam general secretary Nara Lokesh would visit Pesaravai village to console the bereaved family, said Venkat Reddy.

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ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Shuddha Ashtami till 8.34 pm
Star: Uttaraphalguni till 9.32 pm
Variyam: 5.10 am to 6.43 am; 5.32 am to 7.04 am (Saturday)
Durmuhurtam: 8.22 am to 9.15 am; 12.43 pm to 1.35 pm
Rahukalam: 10.30 am to 12 noon
PRAYERS (ROYAL MOSQUE)
Fajar: 5.25 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.00 pm
Maghrib: 6.26 pm
Isha: 8.30 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.29 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.37 PM
MOONRISE TODAY 8.34 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 22.43 AM

COUNTER POINT



This is the list of malls, restaurants and parks to visit... once the lockdown is lifted!

Beach time!



Children and elders making a splash in the waters at the seashore at Ramakrishna Beach in Visakhapatnam on Thursday. —DC

Hopes high on Cabinet berth for Trimurthulu

The former MLA is likely to be sworn in as MLC today

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 17

YSRC leaders and cadre in Ramachandrapuram and Mandapeta Assembly constituencies are very hopeful that former MLA Thota Trimurthulu, who is now an MLC under Governor's quota, would be inducted into Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's cabinet.

Trimurthulu is reported to be sworn-in as MLC on Friday. He was under the good looks of the Chief Minister as he ensured YSRC triumph in Mandapeta municipality from the clutches of Telugu Desam, which enjoyed a stranglehold. Reddy gave the Mandapeta Assembly seat nomination to Kapu leader Girijala Venkata Swamy Naidu in the 2014 elections and Pilli Subhashchandra Bose in 2019 elections. However, both lost to TD candidate Vegulla Jogeswara Rao.

In the 2014 elections, Trimurthulu contested on Telugu Desam ticket from Ramachandrapuram constituency and was defeated by Ch. Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister accommodated Bose in the cabinet as Deputy Chief Minister and Revenue Minister

ANGER OVER MLC POST FOR THOTA, TONSURING CASE HEARING ON JUNE 25

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

Several Dalit organisations on Thursday staged a dharna at Gandhi statue near RTC Complex here, protesting against the government move to nominate Thota Trimurthulu to the legislative council. They said he was accused of tonsuring two Dalits and the case was still being tried by a SC/ST special court.

Recalling the incident, one of the victims, who was present at the agitation, said that after winning as an independent candidate, Trimurthulu tonsured two Dalit youths Koti Chinnaraja and Dandala Venkataratnam on December 29, 1996. Another youth Pattabhi was beaten up but not tonsured.

After a hue and cry was raised by the Dalit organisations, an FIR was filed in Draksharamam police station on January 4, 1997. He was sent to Rajahmundry central

before sending him to Rajya Sabha. Later, Venu Gopalakrishna was given

jail where he spent 86 days. The case came up for trial in the special SC/ST court in Visakhapatnam four years ago, 21 years after the incident.

In 2017, Trimurthulu challenged that the youths were Christians and not Dalits. On June 25, 2019, the revenue department of East Godavari issued certificates that they were Dalits. The very next day on June 26, he obtained an interim stay on the court proceedings stating that the procedure of issuance of certificates was not proper. The court would hear the case on June 25 and a public prosecutor would seek recall of the stay and ask for resumption of further arguments in the case. "Instead of expediting the case, the Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, honoured him with an MLC post offending the entire Dalit community," the victims told this correspondent on Thursday.

a cabinet berth and Trimurthulu was made MLC.

● IT IS learnt that Kannababu is in a safe zone in state Cabinet as he has been playing a key role in implementation of the decisions taken by the CM.

"Trimurthulu has tremendous leadership qualities. Considering his abilities, Jagan entrusted responsibility to Trimurthulu, who ensured a YSRC win in Mandapeta municipality by breaking the domination of 'one social group'" said K. Paparayudu. However, there are some doubts whether two leaders-Venu and Trimurthulu, from the same area would get cabinet berths.

Kakinada Rural MLA Kurasala Kannababu, the incumbent agriculture and food processing minister, not only belongs to the same community of Trimurthulu but also is native of the same district. It is learnt that Kannababu is in a safe zone in Reddy's cabinet as he has been playing a key role in implementation of the decisions taken by the Chief Minister. Leaders and political observers feel that in which way political equations could change remains a matter of speculation.

Endowment lands in Vizag to be reviewed: Vellampalli

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

Minister for Endowments Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao has said that all lands under the endowment department will be reviewed afresh to ensure their better utilisation.

Talking to reporters after a meeting along with his cabinet colleagues K. Kannababu and Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, he said that in order to enhance income from these lands, the government would lease them in a most-transparent manner.

"The lands which were grabbed or encroached would be taken back and

fenced in order to prevent any further irregularity," Vellampalli said.

He said the lands in the city limits would be protected with Common Good Fund or under PPP mode. He said that the management of MANSAS was not transparent and the government would soon conduct an audit into its accounts.

The minister earlier visited Simhachalam temple and told the media there that Ashok Gajapati Raju could not digest when his own niece became the chairperson of both MANSAS and Simhachalam. He has been unnecessarily blaming the

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy over affairs concerning the temple, he said.

"Raju has to spell his stand on the Panchagrama lands, a contentious issue pending for decades," the minister said.

He said that the temple priests have told him that the income of the temple would increase fourfold if the land issue was solved. He condemned the TD leader for spreading rumours that the temple earnings were used for Vahana Mitra scheme.

"Gone are the days of princely states. He is still thinking that he is a king," Vellampalli said.

THUNDERSHOWERS LIKELY IN COASTAL AREAS TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 17

Strong surface winds reaching 30-40 kmph are likely to prevail over west-central Bay of Bengal along and off Andhra Pradesh coast on June 18, according to an IMD official release here on Thursday.

Many areas in Visakhapatnam already received light to moderate rainfall under the influence of the active monsoon. Salapuvaniapalem in Paravada mandal in the district received the state's highest rainfall of 17mm while Visakhapatnam city received 16.25mm of rainfall on Thursday evening.

Speaking to DC, IMD Amaravati Centre director S. Stella said light to moderate thundershowers would occur at one or two places along the north and south coastal Andhra Pradesh in the next two days till June 19. Rayalaseema region would receive light to moderate rains during the period.

SLIGHT DECLINE IN COVID-19 CASES IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

The Covid-19 new infections slightly decreased on Thursday in AP, with 6,151 new cases being recorded as against 6,617 on Wednesday.

The recovery per cent touched 95.5 per cent following total recoveries of 17,50,904 and the positivity rate is 5.9 per cent.

As many as 1,02,712 samples were tested in the past 24 hours in which 6,151 were found infected. AP conducted a total 2,08,39,147 Corona tests in the 13 districts.

The total Covid-19 infections in the state reached 1,83,2902 of which total recoveries were 17,50,904. A total of 58 new deaths were registered, increasing the death toll to 12,167.

East Godavari district is on the top in highest daily new infections with 1,244 new infections, followed by Chittoor district with 937 new infections, West Godavari 647, Prakasam 554, Kadapa 478 and 424 new infections were reported in Krishna district. Anantapur district registered 359 new infections, Guntur 331, Nellore 274, Srikakulam 264, Visakhapatnam 237, Kurnool 203 and the least number of 199 infections was reported in Vizianagaram district. A dozen Covid deaths were witnessed in Chittoor district, seven in Prakasam district, six in Guntur, four each in Krishna and West Godavari districts, three each in Nellore, Srikakulam and Visakhapatnam districts and two each in Kurnool and Vizianagaram districts. East Godavari continues to register the highest number of total cases at 2,51,938.

Clean city drive to begin shortly

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) has appealed to the people to cooperate for transforming Vijayawada into a 100% clean city as part of the Clean Andhra Pradesh programme.

Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh visited various divisions in the city which are selected as model divisions and said VMC will carry out a mass campaign to educate the public on the segregation of wet and dry waste.

Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh visited various divisions in the city which are selected as model divisions and said VMC will carry out a mass campaign to educate the public on the segregation of wet and dry waste.

He said six divisions have been selected as model divisions under the special sanitation drive under the Clean AP programme. He said they would use green bins for wet waste, blue bins

● COMMISSIONER PRASANNA Venkatesh visited various divisions in the city which are selected as model divisions and said VMC will carry out a mass campaign to educate the public on the segregation of wet and dry waste.

for dry waste and red bins for hazardous waste collection from every house. He said ward volunteers, secretariat staff and NGOs would spread awareness about segregation of waste into dry, and wet and hazardous waste. Auto-rickshaws fitted with CC cameras and GPS tracking facilities would be used for the collection of segregated waste in the city and the officials would virtually monitor the transportation.

Mayor assures to develop colonies

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 17

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Mayor Rayana Bhagyalakshmi assured people to resolve their issues and provide all basic amenities in colonies.

The Mayor along with 37th division corporator Mandepudi Chatterji visited various areas on Thursday and interacted with the public.

Bhagyalakshmi instructed VMC officials to shift the sanitary division office into a commercial complex opposite to Chitturi Complex and construct extra floors at VMC shopping complexes in Park Street and Bhavanarayana Street. The locals took the issue of hanging electric wires and telephone and internet cables in

● LOCALS TOOK the issue of hanging electric wires and telephone and internet cables in Pulipativari Street to her notice. She directed the town planning officials and the electricity department to initiate action to remove the hanging wires.

Pulipativari Street to her notice. She directed the town planning officials and the electricity department to initiate action to remove the hanging wires and cables.

After inspecting the VMC elementary school building which is in a dilapidated condition at Rajakapeta, she directed the officials to shift the school into DS High School and construct a new commercial complex by demolishing the structure.

SC, BC FAMILIES HIT BY COVID-19 TO GET LOANS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KAKINADA, JUNE 17

The Central government is offering financial support to the families of those who died of Covid-19 from Schedule Castes and Backward Class families by way of loans with a subsidy component for self-employment initiatives.

The money will be paid through the National Backward Classes Finance and Development Corporation (NBCFDC) and the National Schedule Caste Finance and Development Corporation (NSFDC), said the executive director of the Schedule Castes Cooperative Society D.S. Sunitha. She said that if the family belongs to the Schedule Castes, earns 13 lakh per annum and an earning member in the age group 18-60 died of Covid-19, a loan up to ₹5 lakh with ₹1 lakh subsidy will be provided to the family. One eligible family mem-

ber can apply for this. The remaining ₹4 lakh will be given with 4 per cent of interest.

The ED advised the family members to apply for the self-employment scheme with a copy of the death certificate, mentioning the person died of Covid-19, to the village or ward secretariat welfare assistant or mandal parishad development officer (MPDO) or the municipal commissioner concerned on or before June 20.

BC Corporation executive director S.V.S. Subba Lakshmi said if the family members belong to the BC community with an earning of ₹5 lakh per annum and the main person in the age-group of 18-60 years died due to Covid-19, one family member will be given a loan up to ₹5 lakh with a 20 per cent subsidy. Those interested can apply for it to the village or ward secretariat office on or before June 22.

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Political storm over Anandaiah's concoction

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 17

With the leaders of YSRC and opposition parties locking horns over the distribution of Bonigi Anandaiah's herbal Covid-19 mix at a few places in Chittoor district, the miracle drug is once again embroiled in political controversies.

Opposition party leaders and even YSRC rebels, who managed to bring the

Krishnapatnam medicine and distributed it to people in their respective regions, were allegedly facing obstacles from ruling party leaders and the police at every step. Badi Sudha Yadav, sarpanch of Pudipatla village, alleged that he had a bitter experience when police obstructed him while distributing the herbal mix to people in Pudipatla panchayat, which is a part of Chandragiri constituency represented by YSRC Legislator and TUDA chairman, Chevireddy Bhaskar Reddy.

One Ganesh Yadav, a leader from Janasena, also alleged that he too had a bitter experience when ruling party leaders created obstacles for him in Palamaner. Apart from them, quite a few opposition leaders in the district are also alleging that they were facing hardships despite the

best of their intentions. It may be recalled that Bhaskar Reddy has taken up the making of Anandaiah's herbal mix, but he confined its distribution to just his constituency.

Now, the concoction is officially being distributed to every household in his constituency. The MLA assured that the herbal mix will be distributed to over 1.60 lakh families in his constituency.

Need solution to jumbo menace: Chittoor collector

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 17

Expressing concerns over frequent trespassing by wild elephants in villages across Chittoor, Kuppam and Palamaner under Koundinya wildlife division, district collector Hari Narayanan on Thursday advised forest officials to chalk out an action plan to both protect the wildlife and save human life.

The collector held a review meeting with forest officials on matters like elephant deaths, loss of human lives and crop damage in the district.

DFO Ravi Shankar said the Koundinya elephant zone spread across 6,000 hectares on the western part of the district had only eight elephants in 2012, but the count has risen to 70-90 by now.

According to the DFO, since 2013, nine elephants have died due to various reasons. Also, 10 people

● ACCORDING TO the DFO, since 2013, 9 elephants have died due to various reasons. 10 people and 37 cows were killed and 9 persons were injured in elephant attacks. Of the 4,610 hectares of forest area in Palamaner region, fencing has been done for 3,426.8 hectares. Elephants have been entering human habitations due to lack of fencing.

and 37 cows were killed and 9 persons were injured in elephant attacks. Of the 4,610 hectares of forest area in Palamaner region, fencing has been done for 3,426.8 hectares.

Elephants have been entering human habitations from forests due to lack of fencing and trenches.

The DFO also said that despite having abundant water bodies and elephant

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SHORT TAKES

PASHUPATI KUMAR ELECTED AS LJP PRESIDENT

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, JUNE 17

Hajipur MP Pashupati Kumar Paras, younger brother of late union minister Ram Vilas Paswan was elected as Lok Janshakti Party (LJP) national president on Thursday amid an ongoing rift with his nephew Chirag Paswan.

The decision was taken during the party's national council meeting in Patna which was chaired by former LJP MP Surajbhan Singh. Chirag's cousin Prince Raj who is in the soup over allegations of sexual harassment did not attend the meeting, party leaders said. The development comes after Paras along with four other MPs of the party staged a political coup against Chirag Paswan and deposed him as LJP president.

On Sunday four LJP MPs — Veena Devi, Chandan Singh, Chaudhary Mahboob Ali Kaiser and Prince Raj had backed Pashupati Paras as their leader. Pashupati Paras had reached Patna on Wednesday and filed a nomination on Thursday, party insiders told this newspaper that he was elected unopposed.

"I assure you that there is no dispute within the party. I have been given a big responsibility to carry forward the work started by my elder brother Ram Vilas Paswan. Therefore, it's my duty to work for the backward and downtrodden people," Pashupati Kumar Paras told reporters after he was elected as LJP's national president on Thursday.

RAUT JUSTIFIES ATTACK ON BJP WORKERS

SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC
MUMBAI, JUNE 17

A day after the clash between the Shiv Sena and the BJP workers, the Shiv Sena said that the Sena Bhavan in Mumbai is not just a head-quarter of a political party but pride of Maharashtra. The Sena spokesperson Sanjay Raut said that those who try to attack the Sena Bhavan will be rebuffed in the same manner.

The Sena and BJP workers had clashed on Wednesday outside the Sena Bhavan after the BJP youth wing held a protest march against "offensive" remarks in Sena mouth-piece *Saamana* about a land deal controversy in Ayodhya. Accusing the Sena workers of hooliganism, the opposition party BJP in Maharashtra had also alleged that they had assaulted a woman member of the party.

The Sena leader defended his party activists for their behaviors and actions saying that they are certified goons as far as Maharashtra's identity and Hindutva are concerned. "We do not need anyone's certificate to prove that we are goons. We are certified goons. Mumbai is in Maharashtra because of *goondagiri* of *Marathi mannos* (Marathi speaking people). As we do *goondagiri*, therefore, the voice of *Marathi Mannos* is at a high level in Maharashtra. If anyone tries to suppress our voice, we will have to do *goondagiri*," he added.

2-DAY ARMY COMMANDERS MEET STARTS

PAWAN BALI | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Amidst stand off with China, Indian Army's crucial two days Army Commanders Conference began on Thursday at the Army Headquarters in the national capital to review the operational situation on Northern (China) and Western Fronts (Pakistan).

The conference is being attended by all top commanders of the Army in the county and is being chaired by Army chief Gen M.M. Naravane. Typically Army Commanders Conference besides, operational situation also discuss administrative issues, modernisation, and HR among other issues.

However, this time focus of the conference is only on operational situation at the borders.

The conference is being held on the eve of the first anniversary of the Galwan Valley clash on June 15 when 20 Indian soldiers were killed in brutal hand to hand fight with the Chinese troops.

India has deployed 50,000 soldiers at Ladakh as there are no signs of de-escalation by China in near future at the LAC.



People crowd at Chandni Chowk market in New Delhi that reopened after state government eased some restrictions on Thursday.

— PTI

Twitter India MD questioned over 'Covid-19 toolkit' case

Maheshwari was questioned on May 31; Cops did not divulge further details

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Twitter India MD Manish Maheshwari was questioned by the Delhi Police in connection with the alleged 'Covid toolkit' matter, officials said.

A team of Delhi Police's Special Cell which is probing the matter was sent to Bengaluru where the Twitter India MD was questioned on May 31 in connection with the alleged 'Covid toolkit' matter, a senior police officer said.

The police, however, did

● **DELHI POLICE** had also issued an official statement earlier saying the statements by Twitter on the ongoing probe in the 'toolkit' case were 'mendacious', and designed to impede lawful enquiry & seek 'dubious sympathy'.

The strongly-worded statement, which also termed Twitter's conduct 'obfuscatory, diversionary and tendentious', came after the social media firm Thursday called the recent 'visit' by a Delhi police team to its offices a form of 'intimidation'. Twitter also said it was concerned about its employees and the potential threat to freedom of expression.

The Delhi Police had also issued an official statement earlier saying the

statements by Twitter on the ongoing probe in the 'toolkit' case were 'mendacious', and designed to impede the lawful enquiry and seek 'dubious sympathy'.

The police action drew sharp criticism from the opposition Congress and Left which accused the government of trying to stifle free speech and indulge in intimidation.

Last month, Twitter was labelled as "manipulated media" a tweet by Patra on the alleged 'toolkit'. Twitter says it "may label Tweets that include media (videos, audio, and images) that have been deceptively altered or fabricated".

The row over the purported 'Covid toolkit' escalated after the Delhi Police's Special Cell visited two Twitter India offices on May 24 and served a notice, asking it to share information based on which it had classified a related tweet by Sambit Patra as "manipulated media".

The police action drew sharp criticism from the opposition Congress and Left which accused the government of trying to stifle free speech and indulge in intimidation.

Last month, Twitter was labelled as "manipulated

media" a tweet by Patra on the alleged 'toolkit'. Twitter says it "may label Tweets that include media (videos, audio, and images) that have been deceptively altered or fabricated".

The Congress had claimed it was a vindication of its stand.

But the government had asked Twitter to remove the 'manipulated media' tag as the matter is pending before the law enforcement agency, and made it clear that the social media platform cannot pass judgment when the issue is under investigation.

It was found that in resettlement colonies in South Delhi urban areas, which have a very con-

SII to begin Novavax trials on kids from July 15

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

There was a slight rise in the daily Covid-19 infections in India, with 67,208 cases reported in the last 24 hours, along with 2,330 deaths. There is, however, a continuous fall in the country's active caseload, that stood at 8,26,740 on Thursday. This is the lowest decline in active cases after 71 days.

The health ministry said a net decline of 38,692 cases was seen in the last 24 hours, and active cases are now only 2.78 per cent of the country's total positive cases.

Delhi reported 158 new cases and 10 deaths, as its positivity rate dipped to 0.20 per cent. However, after a brief respite, Mumbai's Dharavi has started reporting fresh cases again.

While it may be too early to predict another wave now, health experts say that crowding and not using masks at public places after the unlocking can prove to be disastrous.

However, the next wave is unlikely to disproportionately affect children than adults, a sero-prevalence study by the World Health Organisation and All India Institute of Medical Sciences has revealed.

The SARS-CoV-2 seropositivity rate among children was high and was comparable to the adult population in the survey, that was held in five states with a total sample size of 10,000.

The data of 4,500 participants were taken for the results of the time of the mid-term analysis from four states of India and more results are likely to come in the next two-three months.

It was found that in resettlement colonies in South Delhi urban areas, which have a very con-

MP REPORTS 1ST DELTA PLUS CASE

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JUNE 17

Madhya Pradesh has reported the first case of Delta Plus, a new variant of coronavirus.

The advanced Delta variant was detected in a 65-year-old woman in Bhopal during the genome sequencing of samples sent from Madhya Pradesh to National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), a senior health department officer said here on Thursday.

State medical education minister Vishwas Sarang has confirmed the report.

"A new variant of coronavirus has been detected in Bhopal", Mr Sarang said, citing a report of NCDC. This was the first case of Delta Plus in Madhya Pradesh and seventh in India detected till June 7, the health department officer said.

Madhya Pradesh on Thursday reported 145 new cases taking the tally of cases to 7,88,954.

gested population, there was a very high (highest reported yet in any sero-assessment) seroprevalence of 74.7 per cent, said Dr Puneet Misra, professor of community medicine at AIIMS, who led the survey.

The Serum Institute of India says it will begin Novavax trials on children from July 15 and hopes to introduce its Indian version — Covavax — by September.

Sputnik V has said it will soon offer a booster shot, adjusted to work against the Delta Covid variant, to other vaccine manufacturers.

IN ODISHA TOWN, 'NO JABS MEAN, NO BUSINESS FOR TRADERS'

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC
BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 17

Odisha's Sundargarh Municipality authorities have come out with an idea to create mass awareness regarding Covid-19 vaccination.

In order to motivate more and more people to take jabs to defeat Coronavirus, the district administration has announced that owners of businesses houses and shops of the town who have not taken vaccines shall not be allowed to open their establishments.

"Shopkeepers will be made aware that those who have not received jabs and also not ensured vaccination to the sales executive working under them will not be allowed to open their businesses," Sundargarh Sub-Collector Abhimanyu Behera said on Thursday.

"The first norm of the Covid management protocol is that it is executed for the welfare of the public, so people need to be aware and cooperate with the authorities be it for enforcement of guidelines or vaccination. The initiative is aimed at motivating people to align with the norms of the government, especially some sections of people who are hesitant to the inoculation drive," he said.

A few days ago, in one such step to shake off reluctance among the general masses to take the vaccine and create greater awareness about the importance of vaccination, some shopkeepers in Hinjili area in Ganjam district were seen offering a discount of at least 5 per cent to fully vaccinated people upon purchase of grocery items.

India slams Pak's Bill on Jadhav

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Slamming Pakistan's Review and Reconsideration Bill 2020 passed recently by the Pakistani National Assembly as violating the judgement of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) in the case pertaining to imprisoned former Indian naval officer Kulbhushan Jadhav, India on Thursday said the Bill "does not create a machinery to facilitate effective review and reconsideration" of the Jadhav case, "as mandated by the judgement of the ICJ". According to reports, the Bill was passed in the Pakistani Parliament last week to provide a right to appeal to Jadhav who was sentenced in 2017 by a Pakistani military Court to death on charges of "espionage and sabotage".

India called upon Pakistan to take appropriate steps to address the shortcomings in the Bill and to comply with the judgement of the ICJ "in letter and spirit". Explaining its position, New Delhi said the "Bill

invites the municipal courts in Pakistan to decide whether or not any prejudice has been caused to Jadhav on account of the failure to provide consular access". This, the MEA said, was "clearly a breach of the basic tenet that municipal courts cannot be the arbiter of whether a State has fulfilled its obligations in international law". New Delhi took strong objection to the fact that the Pakistani Bill "further invites the municipal court to sit in appeal, as it were, over the judgement of the ICJ".

It may be recalled that in a major victory for India two years ago, the ICJ at The Hague in the Netherlands had on July 17, 2019, held Pakistan guilty of violation of the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations for its failure to give India consular access to Jadhav while directing Pakistan to provide "effective review and reconsideration" (of death penalty) awarded earlier by a Pakistani military court to Jadhav.

Student-activists walk out of Tihar, thank Delhi High Court

SHWETA SINGH & SANJAY KAW | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Two days after being granted bail by the Delhi high court, student activists Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita and Asif Iqbal Tanha walked out of Tihar jail in Delhi on Thursday, but only after a sessions court ordered their immediate release, ignoring Delhi Police's plea for more time to verify their permanent addresses.

Pinjra Tod activists Natasha Narwal and Devangana Kalita, and Students' Islamic Organisation activist Asif Iqbal Tanha had been booked under the UAPA anti-terror law for their alleged role in the Delhi riots last year. They were arrested in May 2020.

While granting bail to the student activists on Tuesday, the high court had observed that "in the anxiety to suppress dissent, the state has blurred the line between right to protest and terrorist activity" and if such a mindset gains traction, it would be a "sad day for democracy".

The Delhi Police, which is the investigating agency



Student activists Natasha Narwal, Devangana Kalita and Asif Iqbal Tanha outside Tihar prison in New Delhi on Thursday.

— PTI

in the case, has challenged the high court bail order in the Supreme Court, which is expected to come up for hearing today.

"This shows the desperation of the government... We are women who are not scared of them... We survived because we received tremendous support from friends, from well-wishers. I thank them all," Kalita said soon after she came out of the prison.

Refusing to comment on the case, Kalita said, "We would like to thank the

Delhi High Court for upholding what we believe in. Any such protest that we have done is not terrorism. It was a democratic protest, led by women."

"They won't be able to threaten us with jail. If they threaten to incarcerate us, that will only strengthen our resolve to carry on our fight," said Narwal, whose father died of Covid in May this year while she was in jail. Her brother, who came to receive her, said they miss their father, who if alive

would have come to greet her on walking out of jail.

In the Karkardooma court, additional sessions Judge Revinder Bedi pulled up the Delhi Police for delay in verification of addresses and sureties of the students. On the police's application seeking more time before releasing them on bail, the judge said, "I would say that this by itself cannot be a plausible reason for the accused to be kept imprisoned till the time such reports are filed."

VACCINE | HESITANCY

Campaign poster reads vaccination is a religious, human obligation to save lives

Kashmir clergy launch drive to end 'jab fears'

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, JUNE 17

Islamic religious leadership of Kashmir is formally launching a Valley-wide campaign on Friday to end the Covid-19 vaccination timidity and encourage people to get vaccinated to protect themselves against the deadly virus.

The campaign under the banner of 'Mutahida Majlis-e-Ulema' (MMU), an amalgam of religious organisations and leaders, will begin with special sermons to be delivered by

the imams and preachers before congregational Friday prayers to highlight the importance and urgency of the vaccination.

"At each masjid (mosque) and other places of worship the aim of the faithful the wellbeing and safety of human lives is a religious and human obligation. In fact, Shariat (Islamic canonical law based on the teachings of the Qur'an and the traditions of the Prophet Muhammad often referred to as Hadith and

Sunna) lays special emphasis on it," said Kashmir's chief Muslim cleric Mirwaiz Umar Farooq who is also the head of the MMU. He added that the Friday prayers would be offered strictly under the Covid guidelines and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

The amalgam has also issued a poster carrying a passionate appeal to the people to shun 'vaccine hesitancy'. Mirwaiz Umar said this is being done as many people are reluctant to take vaccines

apparently because of some false illusions or hearsay.

The poster written in Urdu says that in view of the surge in the number of deaths due to Covid-19 and positive cases and in order to defeat the virus it is imperative to get vaccinated by one and sundry. It also says vaccination is neither us-Islamic nor is there any baseness in it under the Sharia law but, in fact, it is a religious and human obligation to save human lives.

Referring to official sta-

tistics, it says that less than 50 per cent of the population of Srinagar district has got vaccinated against Covid-19, so far. It points out that about one thousand people have died of Covid-19 in Srinagar city alone and 98 per cent of them had not been vaccinated.

Expressing serious concern over the reluctance of the majority of people in Srinagar to get vaccinated against Covid-19, the MMU has stressed upon the masses to "shun vaccine hesitancy and get

administered for the shots to save themselves, their fellows and society from the deadly virus".

It said that the amalgam has, on the directions of Mirwaiz Umar Farooq who remains under house detention since August 5, 2019, in order to spread awareness regarding the importance of vaccination started a campaign through posters and social media "so that the people realise the seriousness of the issue and not exhibit any kind of carelessness in this regard".

SHORT TAKES

CHINA CREWED
SPACESHIP DOCKS
WITH SPACE STN

Jiuquan (China), June 17: State media say a Chinese spaceship carrying a three-person crew has docked with the country's new space station at the start of three-month mission.

The Shenzhou-12 craft connected with the Tianhe space station module about six hours after takeoff Thursday. The crew will carry out experiments, test equipment, conduct maintenance and prepare the station for receiving two laboratory modules next year. The mission brings to 14 the number of astronauts China has launched into space since 2003.

SHIP SINKS,
PROMPTS LANKA
POLLUTION FEAR

Colombo, June 17: A container ship carrying chemicals sank off Sri Lanka's capital on Thursday nearly a month after catching fire, raising concerns about a possible environmental disaster, officials said.

The ship's operator said the wreck of the Singapore-flagged X-Press Pearl "is now wholly sitting on the seabed at a depth of 21 metres (70 feet)". A salvage crew was at the site to deal with any debris and report any spill, X-Press Feeders said.

The head of Sri Lanka's Marine Environment Protection Authority, Darshini Lahandapura, also confirmed that the ship had sunk.

She said it was currently unsafe to remove the wreck because of rough monsoon seas. "The sea is very violent. In the rough season, we can't do anything," she said.

DOZEN KILLED IN
BHUTAN, NEPAL
MONSOON RAINS

Thimpu, June 17: At least a dozen people have been killed in Bhutan and Nepal and several others are missing as torrential monsoon rains hit the region, triggering landslides and inundating homes, officials said Thursday.

The annual monsoon season is crucial to replenish water supplies across South Asia, but it also causes death and destruction. Ten collectors of cordyceps — a fungus valued for its alleged aphrodisiac properties — died when their remote mountain camp north of Bhutan's capital Thimpu was washed away early Wednesday. Five others were injured and were in a stable condition in hospital, officials said.

Bhutan's Prime Minister Lotay Tshering offered his prayers and condolences and said a rescue team had been sent to the site.

ONE LIFE LOST
IN BALTIMORE
SHOOTING

Baltimore (US), June 17: One person was killed and five others were wounded when gunmen walked up a street and opened fire on a Baltimore block from an intersection, the city's police commissioner said.

Commissioner Michael Harrison said the shooting on Wednesday erupted in a west Baltimore neighbourhood and the conditions of the five wounded ranged from serious to critical. He declined to release the identities of those who were shot.

Officers responded to reports of gunshots after 2 pm Wednesday and found two people shot, Harrison said. Those two were taken to hospitals, and the four others arrived separately in private vehicles, he said. So far investigators have learned that the six people were together on the tree-lined block of rowhouses when at least two or three people began firing.

13 WORKERS DIE
IN CHINA IRON
MINE ACCIDENT

Beijing, June 17: All 13 workers, who were trapped in an iron mine in north China's Shanxi Province, have been confirmed dead, according to the local authorities. The bodies of the workers were lifted out of the well that flooded the Dahongcui iron mine in Daixian County on June 10. A rescue team comprising 1,084 people worked for six straight days.

The DNA confirmation has been completed, according to the local rescue headquarters. Police have detained 13 suspects. An investigation into the cause of the accident is underway, the state-run *Xinhua* news agency reported on late Wednesday night.

Chinese coal mines are one of the deadliest in the world. In 2009, China had the most mining accident fatalities in the world, with a total of 2,631 coal miners dying in accidents.



People have dinner in Tokyo's Shinjuku area on Thursday, after Japan announced that a virus state of emergency in Tokyo and several other regions will be lifted on June 20.

Delta variant infections in
England doubling in 11 days

London, June 17: The number of people infected with the Coronavirus is increasing rapidly in England, doubling every 11 days, which coincides with the Delta variant of Covid-19 becoming dominant in the country, a new study reports on Thursday. The Imperial College London led Real-time Assessment of Community Transmission (REACT-1) analysis, based on over 100,000 home swab tests taken between May 20 and June 7, estimates that 0.15 per cent of people have the deadly virus, or roughly 1 in 670.

It found that the link between infections, hospitalisations and deaths had been weakening since February, but since late April, the trend has been reversing for hospitalisations. "We found strong evidence for exponential growth in infection from

W.H.O. WARNS OF FRESH INDONESIA
SPIKE FED BY CORONAVIRUS STRAINS

Jakarta, June 17: Indonesia's president ordered authorities to speed up the country's vaccination campaign as the World Health Organisation warned Thursday of the need to increase social restrictions in the country amid a fresh surge of Coronavirus infections caused by worrisome variants.

We need vaccination acceleration in order to achieve communal immunity, which we hope can

late May to early June in the REACT-1 study, with a doubling time of 11 days on average for England," said Professor Paul Elliott, director of the REACT programme from Imperial's School of Public Heal-

th. "These data coincide with the Delta variant becoming dominant and show the importance of continuing to monitor infection rates and variants of concern in the community," he said.

Widodo said he ordered his cabinet ministers and local governments to increase the number of people vaccinated each day to 1 million by next month. He said Indonesia is currently vaccinating half a million people a day.

The findings come days after UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson announced a month-long delay to an end to lockdown restrictions, citing the rising number of cases of the Delta variant — first identified in India. "These findings highlight the stark context in which we took the difficult decision to delay Step 4 of the roadmap out of lockdown," said UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock. "Cases are now rising, but thanks to our incredible vaccination programme and enhanced response package, including surge testing, we have the tools to curb the spread of this virus. We all must hold our nerve that little bit longer as our vaccine rollout continues and I urge everyone to keep observing hands, face, space and fresh air, and make sure you receive both doses," he said.

— *PTI*

S'PORE TO SACK
LECTURER OVER
RACIST REMARKS

Singapore, June 17: A lecturer at a polytechnic in Singapore is being sacked for serious misconduct for allegedly making racist remarks against China and Hong Kong, in response to a crackdown on civil liberties in the semi-autonomous Chinese city.

Apple Daily has often criticised the Chinese and Hong Kong governments for tightening control over the city and walking back on promises by Beijing that the territory could retain its freedoms when it was handed over from Britain in 1997.

Apple Daily founder Jimmy Lai is currently serving a 20-month prison sentence for his role in unauthorised assemblies in 2019, during a period when Hong Kong saw massive anti-government protest calling for universal suffrage and democratic freedoms. Police also froze \$18 million Hong Kong dollars (\$ 2.3 million) worth of assets belonging to three compa-



Radhika Fox

nnings over two decades, working on water issues at the local, state and federal level," Senator Tom Carper, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, said. "We have the oppor-

Net outages hit
websites, apps

As most services come online, probe on

Hong Kong, June 17: A wave of brief internet outages hit the websites and apps of dozens of financial institutions, airlines and other companies across the globe Thursday.

The Hong Kong Stock Exchange said in a post on Twitter Thursday afternoon Hong Kong time that its site was facing technical issues and that it was investigating. It said in another post 17 minutes later that its websites were back to normal.

Internet monitoring websites including ThousandEyes, Downtetector.com and fmg.com showed dozens of disruptions, including to US-based airlines. Many of the outages were reported by people in Australia trying to do banking, book flights and access postal services. Australia Post, the country's postal service, said on Twitter that an "external outage" had impacted a number of its services.

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further problems.

Banking services were severely disrupted, with Westpac, the Commonwealth, ANZ and St George all down, along with the website of the Reserve Bank of Australia.

Services have mostly been restored. Virgin Australia said flights were largely operating as scheduled after it restored

access to its website and guest contact centre. "Virgin Australia was one of many organisations to experience an outage with the Akamai content delivery system today," it said.

"We are working with them to ensure that necessary measures are taken to prevent these outages from reoccurring." Akamai counts some of the world's biggest companies and banks as customers. Calls to Akamai, which is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts, but has global services, went unanswered. The disruptions came just days after many of the world's top websites went offline briefly due to a problem with software at Fastly, another major web services company.

The company blamed the problem on a software bug that was triggered when a customer changed a setting. Brief internet service outages are not uncommon and are only rarely the result of hacking or other mischief. But the outages have underscored how vital a small number of behind-the-scenes companies have become to running the internet.

U.S. CONGRESS
NOD TO MAKE
JUNETEENTH A
FED. HOLIDAY

Washington, June 17: The United States will soon have a new federal holiday commemorating the end of slavery. The House voted 415-14 on Wednesday to make Juneteenth, or June 19th, the 12th federal holiday.

The bill now goes to President Joe Biden's desk, and he is expected to sign it into law. Juneteenth commemorates June 19, 1865, when Union soldiers brought the news of freedom to enslaved PoC people in Galveston, Texas — two months after the Confederacy had surrendered. That was also about 2 1/2 years after the Emancipation Proclamation freed slaves in the Southern states.

It's the first new federal holiday since Martin Luther King Jr. Day was created in 1983.

"Our federal holidays are purposely few in number and recognise the most important milestones," said Rep. Carolyn Maloney, D-N.Y. "I cannot think of a more important milestone to commemorate than the end of slavery in the United States."

Rep. Sheila Jackson Lee, D-Texas, speaking next to a large poster of a PoC man whose back bore massive scarring from being whipped, said she would be in Galveston this Saturday to celebrate along with Republican Sen. John Cornyn of Texas.

"Can you imagine?" said the rather short Jackson Lee.

SC DISMISSES
CHALLENGE TO
OBAMACARE

Washington, June 17: The Supreme Court has dismissed a challenge to the Obama era health care law, preserving insurance coverage for millions of Americans.

The justices, by a 7-2 vote, left the entire law intact Thursday in ruling that Texas, other Republican-led states and two individuals had no right to bring their lawsuit in federal court. The Biden administration says 31 million people have health insurance because of the law known as "Obamacare."

Major provisions include protections for people with pre-existing health conditions, a range of no-cost preventive services and the expansion of the Medicaid programme.

Oli defends dissolution,
says courts can't name PM

Kathmandu, June 17: Nepal's embattled Prime Minister K.P. Sharma Oli on Thursday defended his government's controversial decision to dissolve the House of Representatives and told the Supreme Court that it is not up to the judiciary to appoint a premier as it cannot undertake the legislative and the executive functions of the state.

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

Prime Minister Oli is

● **ON JUNE 9**, the apex court issued a show-cause notice to the Office of the Prime Minister and the President's Office to furnish a written response within 15 days.

heading a minority government after losing a trust vote in the House.

On June 9, the apex court issued a show-cause notice to the Office of the Prime Minister and the President's Office to furnish a written response within 15 days.

Furnishing a written reply to the Supreme Court on Thursday as demanded by the Constitutional Bench, Oli said the

court cannot appoint a Prime Minister as it cannot undertake the legislative and the executive functions of the state.

The apex court received Oli's response via the Office of the Attorney General. "The Court's duty is to interpret the Constitution and the existing laws, it cannot play the role of the legislative or the executive bodies," 69-year-old Oli said in his response.

"Forming governments on the basis of parties is the fundamental characteristic of the parliamentary system and the Constitution does not imagine party-less practices," he added.

— *PTI*

India's \$100 mn aid
for Lanka projects

Colombo, June 17: India has extended a \$100 million Line of Credit to Sri Lanka to help the island nation finance various projects in the solar energy sector and ensure that the country's 70 per cent power requirements are fulfilled by renewable energy sources by 2030.

An agreement signed between the Sri Lankan government and the Export-Import Bank of India was exchanged by High Commissioner of India to

Sri Lanka Gopal Baglay and Secretary to the Treasury S.R. Attygalle in the presence of Sri Lankan President Gotabaya Rajapaksa on Wednesday.

It will help finance various projects in the solar energy sector, including those announced during the Founding Conference of the International Solar Alliance held in March 2018, such as rooftop solar photo-voltaic systems for households and government buildings.

— *PTI*

PIO to lead US EPA's water office

Washington, June 17: The US Senate has confirmed Indian-American water issues expert Radhika Fox as head of the Environmental Protection Agency's Office of Water. The Senate, bitterly divided on party lines, confirmed Fox's nomination on Wednesday by 55 to 43 votes after seven Republican Senators supported her candidature. Two Democratic Senators did not cast their votes. "Ms Fox brings with her an impressive professional record of service and accomplishment, spa-

tunity today to confirm a truly gifted leader and put her to work serving our country right away," he added. On April 14, President Joe Biden nominated Fox for the post of Assistant Administrator for Water, Environmental Protection Agency. Fox currently serves as the Acting Assistant Administrator for Water. The EPA's Office of Water works to ensure that drinking water is safe, waste water is safely returned to the environment, and surface waters are properly managed and protected.

Prior to joining EPA, Fox served as the Chief Executive Officer for the US Water Alliance, where she established herself as a widely recognised national thought leader on complex water issues, from equitable water management to investing in the nation's water infrastructure. Her work has helped address the most salient water issues facing the US, including climate change, affordability, equity, governance, innovative finance and the evolution of the One Water movement.

— *PTI*

DUTCH | CONTROVERSY

The carriage underwent extensive restoration in September 2015

Golden Coach exhibition revives racism debate

Amsterdam, June 17: On a blustery autumn day in 2015 Dutch King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima for the last time stepped out of the golden coach which traditionally transported them to the opening of parliament.

Nearly six years later, the monarch was back on Thursday to unveil a newly restored carriage — but this time as the centrepiece of an exhibition at the Amst-

erdam Museum exploring the Netherlands' troubled relationship with its colonial past.

The horse-drawn carriage called the "De Gouden Koets" has been embroiled in a racism controversy over a picture on the left-side panel of the opulent coach, which has undergone an extensive refit.

Called "Tribute to the Colonies", the image depicts kneeling PoC people

handing over produce like cocoa and sugarcane to their white masters — including to a young white woman on a throne representing the Netherlands.

Next to her, a young white man is seen giving a young PoC boy a book as he is presented by his subservient father, an image which painter Nicolaas van der Waay in 1896 said was meant to portray "civilisation."

Margriet Schavemaker, artistic director of the Amsterdam Museum, said the carriage used by the Dutch royals for baptisms, marriages and other occasions "has also become an object of controversy."

"In ongoing debates it has become known that one of the panels depicting the Dutch colonial past is making a large group in the Netherlands uncomfortable," Schavemaker said.

The carriage underwent extensive restoration in September 2015 shortly after its last parliament trip, in a day marked by pomp and ceremony when the Dutch royals are traditionally driven through the streets of The Hague.

Last year the government announced that, amid the controversy, its return to ceremonial duties would be postponed following the refit and it would go on

show at the museum instead. The Amsterdam Museum show also comes as the Netherlands faces a reckoning with its history as a colonial and slave-trading power in Asia, the Caribbean and South America.

Several other Dutch museums have launched similar projects, including the famed Rijksmuseum which recently opened an exhibit entitled "Slavery".

— *AFP*

SHORT TAKES

Eight new girls in India hockey team

Bengaluru: India on Thursday named eight Olympic debutants and as many veterans in its 16-member women's hockey squad for the Tokyo Games to be held from July 23 to August 8. The squad is a perfect mix of youth and experience and includes as many as eight players who had represented India in the 2016 Rio Olympics. The team will be captained by star striker Rani Rampal in the quadrennial Games. The eight Olympic debutants include drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur, Uditia, Nisha, Neha, Navneet Kaur, Sharmila Devi, Lalremisiami, the first player hailing from Mizoram in the team, and Salima Tete. Tete had led the Indian team at the 2018 Youth Olympic Games at Buenos Aires to a silver medal performance. — PTI

Nurse says docs 'killed Maradona'

San Isidro: A lawyer for a nurse under investigation in the death of Argentine football great Diego Maradona said on Wednesday that doctors killed him through negligence. "They killed Diego," attorney Rodolfo Baque told reporters after his client, nurse Dahiana Gisela Madrid, was questioned by prosecutors. Maradona died of a heart attack last November at the age of 60, weeks after undergoing brain surgery for a blood clot. Madrid, 36, is one of seven people under investigation for manslaughter after a board of experts looking into Maradona's death found he had received inadequate care and was abandoned to his fate for a "prolonged, agonising period." Baque insisted it was the doctors treating Maradona while he recovered from the brain operation, not his client, who were to blame for the football legend's death. — AFP

Ledecky locks up two Games spots

Omaha, United States: Katie Ledecky powered through a punishing and unprecedented double at the US Olympic swimming trials Wednesday, winning the 200m and 1,500m freestyles to keep building her Tokyo programme. Little more than an hour after winning the 200m free, Ledecky returned to win the 1,500m in 15min 40.50sec, shaving five-hundredths of a second off her previous best this year. Ledecky launched her night by adding the 200 metres to the 400 metres freestyle victory she claimed on Monday, giving herself a chance to defend two of the four titles she won in Rio de Janeiro in 2016. — AFP

Skipper Ramos to leave Real Madrid

Madrid: Sergio Ramos broke down in tears, saying leaving Real Madrid was one of the most difficult moments of his life as he bid farewell on Thursday after 16 years at the club. He played 671 games for Real Madrid and will be remembered as one of the club's greatest ever players, having won five La Liga titles and four Champions Leagues. The 35-year-old was unable to agree an extension to his contract and will become a free agent on July 1. Ramos and Real Madrid president Florentino Perez delivered short speeches in a presentation room at the club's training ground, with Ramos' family in the audience. "The moment has come, one of the most difficult in my life, because you are never ready to leave Real Madrid," Ramos said. — AFP

Live on TV

CRICKET

World Test championship final: India vs New Zealand, Day 1, from 3pm on Star Sports 1, HD1

EURO

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

COPA AMERICA

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

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ULTIMATE TEST

India, NZ in battle for legacy as WTC final begins today

Southampton, June 17: Virat Kohli carries the expectations of a billion while cricket romantics will pin their hopes on Kane Williamson when India and New Zealand engage in a battle to create a lasting legacy in pristine whites in the inaugural World Test Championship final starting here on Friday.

For the connoisseurs of the glorious game, Test cricket is the ultimate format and despite its aura, the 144-year-old history needed a facelift along with a context which the World Test Championship provided despite various bottlenecks, including the Covid-19 pandemic.

For Kohli, India's most successful Test captain, a trophy-less cabinet doesn't do justice to the champion performer that he has been for a decade.

Lest one forgets, he has been a fine leader in his own right even though Mahendra Singh Dhoni may forever remain a sentimental favourite. Kohli needs a global triumph. Every captain needs it but perhaps the Indian captain wants it more.

It's how history will remember him just like it remembers Dhoni with a lot of respect and utmost fondness for those heroic World title wins.

Williamson stands in his way with a bunch of fine cricketers and the most amiable set of players that one would come across in international cricket.

They are India's rivals but when Williamson hits those cover drives, Devon Conway teases a Ashwin or Jadeja, Boulton gets one banana inswinger aimed at Rohit Sharma's bootlaces, the crazy fans of a cricket-mad nation wouldn't possibly be able to hate them. — PTI

INDIA'S PLAYING XI

Rohit Sharma
Shubman Gill
Cheteshwar Pujara
Virat Kohli (captain)
Ajinkya Rahane (VC)
Rishabh Pant
Ravindra Jadeja
R. Ashwin
Mohammad Shami
Ishant Sharma
Jasprit Bumrah

FOR THE RECORD

Devon Conway has scored 306 runs at an average of 76.50 in four innings since his debut.



R. Ashwin who has taken 48 wickets at an average of 16.97 in 11 innings of six Tests needs just two wickets to become the fourth Indian bowler to complete a half century of wickets against New Zealand.



India skipper Virat Kohli (right) and his New Zealand counterpart Kane Williamson pose with the ICC mace that is to be awarded to the World Test champions. — ICC

Just another game: Virat

Southampton, June 17: India captain Virat Kohli on Thursday asserted that one Test match is not a "true reflection" of his team even if it happens to be the World Test Championship final against New Zealand here and he is treating it as "just another" game.

For the Indian captain and his team, the WTC final is like their Test debuts as young players trying to come up the ranks.

"One game over five days. It's not going to reflect anything and those who understand the game know and also what has gone over the period of last four to five years," Kohli said on the eve of the big final against the Black Caps.

"If we win, cricket will

not stop and if we lose also, cricket won't stop. We are playing in quest of excellence and understand who we are as a team," he added.

He was not forthcoming when a question on team combination was posed based on a previous answer that the team would select a composition "with all bases covered" regardless of the weather forecast of rain on opening day.

"... A team with enough batting depth and bowling resources," he said when asked if he would factor in the rain and overcast conditions.

He was also dismissive when asked if this was the biggest cricketing event of his illustrious career.

"This is just another

Test match. All these things (WTC final) look good from the outside. One game can't become a do-or-die game."

KANE PLAYS DOWN FAVOURITES TAG

New Zealand skipper Kane Williamson on Thursday said a place in the final against India is a testament to the team's growth over the past two years but he is not reading too much into the favourites tag given to his side.

"Firstly, we are really looking forward to the match, it's been quite a long time coming. In terms of favourites, these tags that come about. We are much more concerned with the cricket that we want to play," Williamson said. — PTI

TRACK RECORD

HIGHEST TOTALS

- ▶ **India** 583-7 decl. at Ahmedabad in 1999-00.
- ▶ **NZ** 680-8 decl. at Wellington in 2013-14.

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS

- ▶ **India** 81 at Wellington in 1975-76.
- ▶ **NZ** 94 at Hamilton in 2002-03.

HIGHEST INDIVIDUAL SCORES

- ▶ **India** 231 Vinoo Mankad at Chennai in 1955-56.
- ▶ **NZ** 302 Brendon McCullum at Wellington 2013-14.

BEST BOWLING IN AN INNINGS

- ▶ **India** 8-72 S. Venkatraghavan at Delhi in 1964-65.
- ▶ **NZ** 7-23 Richard Hadlee at Wellington in 1975-76.

— S. PERVEZ QAISER

WOMEN'S | ONE-OFF TEST

Debutant Shafali falls short of ton

Bristol, June 17: Debutant Shafali Verma fell agonisingly short of what would have been a sensational Test hundred against England in the one-off Test on Thursday. Shafali was dismissed for 96 after she put on a brilliant opening stand of 167 runs with Smriti Mandhana.

In pursuit of England's mammoth 396 for nine in their first innings, India were 167 for one in 50 overs when Shafali walked back to the pavilion. India still trail by 229 runs. Mandhana was unbeaten on 66.

Shafali and Mandhana had provided India a confident start but the visitors still have a mountain to climb.

England's total of 396 was the highest-ever total scored by a team against India in Test.

Verma was at her usual aggressive self as she cut and pulled in her own imitable style. The 17-year-old not only presented the straight bat for defence with grace, she also hit a six off Nat Sciver with remarkable ease.

It was only the second six hit by an Indian woman in Test cricket. Mandhana was cautious yet fluent. She got her first boundary when she punched one off Sciver in the cover region. When she got the opportunity, Mandhana did not hesitate to pull. Her elegant drives were a delight to watch.

She raised the team's fifty with one such well-

BRIEF SCORES

England 396/9 decl. (Beaumont 66, Heather 95, Sophia 74 (not out); Sneha 4/131, Deepti 3/65) vs **India** 167/1 in 50 overs (Smriti 66 (batting), Shafali 96).

timed shot off Kate Cross. Cross missed a chance to dismiss Mandhana (when on 23) when she dropped the left-hander in her follow-through.

This was after Indian bowlers were made to put in some hard yards for the second consecutive day.

Debutant Sophia Dunkley (74 not out) led the charge with a resolute unbeaten half-century and two crucial partnerships with tail-enders after England resumed at the overnight score of 269 for six.

Dunkley first added 56 runs for the eighth wicket with Sophie Ecclestone (17) and then forged a 70-run stand with Anya Shrubsole, who punished the Indian bowlers in her career-best 47.

England declared their innings when Shrubsole was bowled by Sneha Rana, who ended up as India's best bowler with a four-wicket haul.

Shrubsole was aggressive in the post-lunch session, punishing spinner Rana for two hours and a six. She also creamed off boundaries off pacer Shikha Pandey.

— Agencies



Shafali Verma en route to her brilliant 96 against England in the one-off Test at Bristol on Thursday. — BCCI

Nadal out of Oly and Wimbledon

Paris, June 17: Rafael Nadal said on Thursday he was withdrawing from Wimbledon and the Tokyo Olympics in a bid "to prolong my career".

The 35-year-old Spaniard, who won Olympic gold and Wimbledon in 2008, triumphing again at the All England Club two years later, revealed his decision on Twitter. "I have decided not to participate at this year's Championships at Wimbledon and the Olympic Games in Tokyo," he tweeted.

"It's never an easy decision to take but after listening to my body and discussing it with my team I understand that it is the right decision."

World number one Novak Djokovic last week ended Nadal's four-year reign as French Open champion

and went on to seal his 19th Grand Slam.

"The goal is to prolong my career and continue to do what makes me happy, that is to compete at the highest level and keep fighting for those professional and personal goals at the maximum level of competition," said Nadal.

SUPERSTAR NEYMAR TO MISS GAMES

Paris Saint Germain striker Neymar, the world's most expensive footballer, will not play for Brazil at the Tokyo Olympics, but veteran Daniel Alves did make the squad announced Thursday. Neymar's PSG teammate Marquinhos, who also landed a gold medal in Rio five years ago, is another name not on coach Andre Jardine's list. — AFP

ERIKSEN TO BE FITTED WITH ICD HEART-STARTER DEVICE

Copenhagen, June 17: Christian Eriksen will be fitted with an implantable device to monitor his heart rhythm, the Danish football federation said on Thursday.

Eriksen is recovering in a Copenhagen hospital after suffering cardiac arrest during Denmark's game against Finland at the European Championship.

The Danish federation said doctors have determined that Eriksen needs to have an ICD implantable cardioverter-defibrillator. "This device is necessary after a cardiac attack due to rhythm disturbances," the federation said in a statement.

"Christian has accepted the solution and the plan has moreover been confirmed by specialists nationally and internationally who all recommend the same treatment. We encourage everybody to give Christian and his family peace and privacy the following time," it said.

An ICD monitors a person's heartbeat and can send electrical pulses to restore a normal rhythm if necessary. — AP

Locatelli blow for Swiss

Rome, June 17: Manuel Locatelli scored a brace and Ciro Immobile added a late third as Italy sealed their place in the Euro 2020 last 16 on Wednesday with a game to spare after a 3-0 win over Switzerland in Rome.

Sassuolo midfielder Locatelli put the Azzurri ahead after 26 minutes in the Group A clash, adding a second just after the break with Immobile scoring for the second consecutive game a minute from time.

Roberto Mancini's side are top of Group A with six points from two games, with six goals scored and none conceded, two points clear of Wales who beat Turkey 2-0 earlier.

Italy will advance as Group A winners if they avoid defeat against surprise Euro 2016 semi-finalists Wales at the Stadio Olimpico on Sunday.

The only bad news for the Italians in a game they dominated was the loss of captain Giorgio Chiellini who hobbled off the pitch with a muscle injury in the first half.

The 36-year-old Juventus defender had a 20th-minute goal ruled out for handball by VAR and four minutes later asked to be replaced, holding his thigh.

Lazio defender Francesco Acerbi took his place, making his debut in a major international tournament at the



Italy's Manuel Locatelli celebrates after scoring a goal against Switzerland in Euro on Wednesday. — AP

age of 33, with the captain's armband handed to Juventus teammate Leonardo Bonucci.

WALES CLOSE IN ON KNOCKOUTS

Aaron Ramsey and Connor Roberts scored as Wales took a huge step towards reaching the last

16 with a 2-0 win over Turkey in Baku.

Wales, semi-finalists five years ago, moved top of Group A before Italy host Switzerland later in the day in Rome.

Captain Gareth Bale missed a penalty before setting up Roberts for his goal during injury time.

THE RESULTS

Ukraine (Yarmolenko 29, Yaremchuk 34)	2
North Macedonia (Alioski 57)	1
Italy (Locatelli 26, 52, Immobile 89)	3
Switzerland	0
Turkey Wales	0 2
<i>(Ramsey 42, Roberts 90+5)</i>	

"We've given ourselves a brilliant opportunity tonight," Ramsey said.

"It (the penalty) was a big moment in the game but we dug in, to a man we left everything out there. That's what we've built our success on."

NERVY WIN FOR UKRAINE

Andriy Yarmolenko scored one goal and set up Roman Yaremchuk for another as Ukraine defeated North Macedonia 2-1 to boost their last-16 hopes. The West Ham forward grabbed the opener on 29 minutes in Bucharest and then teed up Yaremchuk with a brilliant first-time pass to double the lead five minutes later.

Ezgjian Alioski pulled a goal back for North Macedonia just before the hour as he converted the rebound from his missed penalty.

— AFP

MISFIRING CROATIA AIM TO IMPROVE

Glasgow, June 17: Croatia's chances of advancing in the European Championship hinge on two things — firing up a struggling front line and containing Czech Republic forward Patrik Schick. Under pressure to deliver after reaching the World Cup final three years ago, Croatia were stifled against England in the first group match and lost 1-0.

Croatia assistant coach Vedran Corlika called on the team to be "more dangerous" and "attack-minded" in the Group D game against Czech Republic at Hampden Park on Friday.

RASHFORD HOPES TO START VS SCOTS

Marcus Rashford's status as a national figurehead couldn't earn a starting spot in the opening win against Croatia but he did come off the bench and finish wearing the captain's armband after Harry Kane was substituted. It's a sign of the depth of options available to England coach Gareth Southgate that Rashford is a backup despite his 21 goals in 57 appearances for Manchester United last season. "You have to be professional about it," Rashford said at England's St. George's Park training base. — AP