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Night safari project shelved

Singapore consultant warns of environ challenges, threat to birds, animals

MADHY DEEKSHITH | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Citing non-feasibility, the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has cancelled the proposal to build the city's first night safari project. Officials said that the Singapore-based consultant has opined that once executed, the project would not only pose greater challenges but also put the safety of several animals in peril.

Calling off the project, the authorities are now exploring options to set up an eco-park in about 120 acres at Kothwalguda.

Highly placed sources in

the HMDA said that the Kothwalguda site, which was earlier visited by Bernard Harrison, principal partner (creativity and design), and Alexander Stingal, general manager (business operation) of Bernard Harsson and Friends Ltd, Singapore, gave a positive report and claimed that it would be the ideal location for the night safari.

The team once again visited the site to submit rough estimates. However, after inspecting the site, the consultant informed HMDA that if executed they would have to reckon with several challenges to provide a sustainable envi-

ronment for over 150 species apart from constructing sophisticated structures. Sources said that the project cost would be equal to that spent on Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL).

A senior HMDA official on condition of anonymity told *Deccan Chronicle* that the Singapore experts had in 2018 given a positive response and had assured that they would be ready with the designs during their 2019 visit.

He said municipal authorities had also formed two teams comprising officials from Environment Protection Training & Research Institute (EPTRI) to con-

duct a baseline survey for impact assessment, to check groundwater levels and air quality, forest department officials, urban biodiversity officials, engineering officials, tourism officials and others.

He said that one team coordinated with the Singapore delegation to assist them in providing infrastructure and another checked on the budget requirements in order to tap financial institutions for funding the project.

This apart, the official said that the second team had also coordinated with the Union government for getting clearance to the

night safari proposal. However, after conducting a detailed study in 2020, the consultants felt that the topography of Kothwalguda would not be suitable for construction of night safari as it could raise environmental challenges, the officer said.

Considering the budget related issues among others, the HMDA official said that the municipal authority had decided to call-off the proposal.

He said that the government was actively considering the proposal to construct an eco-park on 120 acres and a meeting in this regard would be held shortly.

ETALA'S ENTRY
GIVES BJP
CONFIDENCE

FROM PAGE 1

The BJP was upbeat after its stupendous performance in Dubbak bypoll and the GHMC elections towards 2020-end and declared itself as the only alternative to the TRS, replacing the Congress. This did not last long as the BJP faced shocking defeats in successive polls in between March and May this year and the Congress emerged as the principal opposition to the TRS.

At this juncture, the Rajendar episode gave an unexpected opportunity to the BJP to prove that it is the only alternative to the TRS by winning Huzurabad bypoll and brace the party's rank and file for the 2023 December Assembly polls.

In Dubbak, the BJP had a strong local candidate in M. Raghunandan Rao, which helped the party trounce the TRS. The lack of such a candidate in Nagarjunasagar led to the BJP failing to retain its deposit.

The BJP was considered weak in Huzurabad as it lost deposit in 2018 Assembly polls. In fact, the BJP candidate P. Raghu polled fewer votes (1,683) than NOTA (2,867) but Rajendar's entry has changed the scenario altogether.

Rajendar has never lost an election from this seat since 2004. He was elected six times and the BJP is confident of defeating the TRS using Rajendar's popularity in the constituency.

SHAH TO PLAY
KEY ROLE TO
END IMPASSE

FROM PAGE 1

While the Centre agreed to suspend the three controversial agricultural reform laws for almost two years and even agreed to make all the amendments in the laws that the farmers objected to, the agitating farmer unions remained adamant on a complete repeal of the law.

Since January no talks have been held between the two sides, though senior government sources now claim that some back-channel talks had started in a bid to break the deadlock.

The sources said that even last year the home minister had a detailed meeting with the farmers, and even now his assessment is that the two sides should start talks again.

The farmers are continuing their protest at the three main Delhi borders — Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur — for more than six months now and have hardened their stand that they will not settle for anything less than the scrapping of the three contentious farms laws passed by the Centre.

The farmers agitation has an important political aspect to it as state elections to the crucial Uttar Pradesh and Punjab Assemblies are due in the next few months.



Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao inspecting the SUVs which were handed over to additional collectors at Pragathi Bhavan in Hyderabad on Sunday.

CM gives SUV surprise to officials

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Additional collectors of the 33 districts in Telangana state who attended Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao's review meeting at Pragathi Bhavan were in for a pleasant surprise on Sunday. After the meeting, the Chief Minister handed over brand new Kia Carnival SUVs to each of them.

Official sources said each SUV cost over ₹30 lakh and nearly ₹10 crore was spent to purchase 33 SUVs at one go. The transport department purchased the SUVs on the directions of the Chief Minister.

While the meeting was on at Pragathi Bhavan, the fleet of 33 SUVs arrived outside the Chief Minister's camp office and was parked on its sprawling premises.

The Chief Minister gave a small break to the meeting in between and examined the SUVs along with a few ministers and senior officials. He expressed satisfaction over the SUVs and asked the officials to hand over them to additional collectors after the meeting. Later, transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar flagged off the vehicles and formally handed them over to additional collectors.

A festive atmosphere

● **THE REASON** for their jubilation was that no one expected the Chief Minister to offer this high-end car in these difficult times when the state government is facing severe financial crisis due to Covid outbreak since March 2020.

prevailed at Pragathi Bhavan as additional collectors thanked the Chief Minister for giving them the unexpected and expensive gift.

The reason for their jubilation was that no one expected the Chief Minister to offer this high-end car in these difficult times when the state government is facing severe financial crisis due to Covid outbreak since March 2020.

In the meeting, the Chief Minister is learnt to have justified his decision saying additional collectors deserved high-end cars to travel the entire district and discharge their duties effectively. The government had earlier provided Toyota Fortuners to district collectors and joint collectors in 2015 at a cost of ₹5.25 crore. At that time, the state had just 10 districts, which were now reorganised to 33 districts. High-end cars were provided to collectors of new districts later.

COVID | PRECAUTION

GHMC reverts to spraying to keep the spread of Coronavirus in check

Disinfectant to be sprayed in city this monsoon

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

While the state government has been claiming a decline in Covid-19 second wave cases, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has decided to procure disinfectant liquid (sodium hypochlorite solution) to spray at all public places during monsoon.

Corporation authorities stated that spraying the disinfectant was to curtail the spread of Coronavirus in the city.

While the peak was in April and May, the corporation's Enforcement, Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVDMM) wing has now decided to procure 5.6 lakh kg of disinfectant at an estimated

cost of ₹1.96 crore. Authorities said that the disinfectant would be sprayed in public places for 30 days during the monsoon.

The all-purpose antiseptic solution will have 12.5 to 15 per cent of chlorine confirming IS-11673/1992 inclusive of packaging in containers. The successful bidders must deliver a minimum of 18,600 kg daily from the date the letter of authorisation (LOA) is issued. On their failure, the tender would be cancelled and earnest money deposit (EMD) will be forfeited. Officials said that the bids would be finalised on Tuesday.

This apart, the corporation has now floated tenders to procure four inflatable rescue boats for the

LB Nagar zone ignoring the other areas in the city that are prone to submerging. Each boat would carry eight to ten persons and would cost about ₹32 lakh. The design and construction of the boat would be suitable for an outboard motor (OBM) with maximum motor power of 25 HP.

When asked about the invitation of bids for spraying disinfectant liquid during monsoon and that the second wave, as claimed by the government, was declining, GHMC officials refused to comment.

Asked about the purchase of boats, a senior official said: "We are gearing up to fight urban flooding. And something is better than nothing."



A disaster rescue team of the GHMC sprays disinfectant in a colony near Mallepally in a bid to combat Covid-19.

— DEEPAK DESHPANDE

IN BRIEF

Lorry driver dies in accident

Hyderabad: A 45-year-old heavy vehicle driver died when his vehicle collided head-on with an unidentified vehicle. Keesara police said the victim, Nandigani Ram Reddy, 45, of Ranga Reddy district, was driving a lorry loaded with bricks from Autonagar to Karimnagar. Around 11.45 pm when he was near the toll plaza at Keesara on the Outer Ring road (ORR), he might have rammed into an unidentified vehicle. The front cabin was damaged and Ram Reddy got stuck inside and died on the spot, police said.

TRADER HELD SELLING BANNED TOBACCO GOODS

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

The Central Zone Task Force polcie conducted a raid at a shop in MJ market circle and seized ₹2.4 lakh worth banned tobacco products on Sunday. 'New Royal Chalia Store' situated at Abids, was selling prohibited tobacco and hookah products, police said.

Officials apprehended Anwar Ali, 60, who was illegally procuring and selling noxious products. The accused and the seized properties were handed over to Abid Road police for further action.

TALASANI GIVES PA'S NUMBER FOR GRIEVANCES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

In a move to prevent any untoward incident during the monsoon, minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav has provided his personal assistant Pavan Kumar's phone number 98480 21665 to address all nala-related issues in the city. The grievances reported to this number will be forwarded to officials to take required steps and resolve the issues.

This year, the state government sanctioned ₹45 crore to widen and repair stormwater drains in GHMC limits. To make sure these works are executed efficiently and in time-bound manner, elected representatives will also carry out inspections in their respective jurisdiction from June 14 to 19. Srinivas Yadav will also inspect the storm water drains works in Begumpet on June 14. According to a press release issued by the minister's office, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and municipal administration and urban development minister K.T. Rama Rao are constantly monitoring the works related to stormwater drains.

To address urban flooding, the state government accorded administrative sanction of ₹858 crore in April and the budget is to be used to strengthen the stormwater drain network in the city and its peripheries. After the fund was sanctioned, the Strategic Nala Development Plan (SNDP) wing, exclusively formed to develop and maintain the stormwater drain network in the city, is preparing proposals following which tenders will be floated.

● **THE** government has sanctioned ₹45 crore to widen and repair stormwater drains in GHMC limits this year. To make sure these works are executed efficiently and in time-bound manner, elected representatives, including minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, will also carry out inspections in their respective jurisdiction from June 14 to 19.

TS contract teachers in majority but paid poorly

Each varsity has 50-70% more contract lecturers

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

State universities in Telangana state are running on the shoulders of contract lecturers, albeit on far less salaries than regular lecturers get, according to the Telangana State Universities Contract Teachers Joint Action Committee.

As per the latest data shared by the TSUCT-JAC with this newspaper, there are 50-70 per cent more contract lecturers compared to regular teachers in each of the 11 state universities. For example, in Osmania University, there are 425 contract faculty apart from 325 regular staff on 1,230 total sanctioned posts till now, leaving 845 positions vacant.

In Kakatiya University, there are 90 regular staff members, compared to 250 contract faculty working with 298 vacant posts till date. Dr Dharma Teja, president of the steering committee of TSUCT, said most teaching responsibilities had hence fallen on the shoulders of contract faculty in all universities, while regular staff took care of administrative work.

"It has been over seven years since the last recruitment drive took place in the state in 2013 even as the government, in its latest notification, has permitted recruitment on 1,061 posts against 2,791 total sanctioned budget posts in

THE POSITION IN 11 STATE UNIVERSITIES

University	Sanctioned Faculty	Permanent posts	Contract Faculty	Vacancies at present
Osmania	1,280	325	425	845
Kakatiya	403	90	250	298
Telangana	150	75	51	73
Mahatma Gandhi	150	36	46	115
Palamuru	150	27	42	130
Satvahanana	120	24	37	100
Telugu	115	20	45	97
JNTU	410	155	252	232
JNFAU	115	28	52	31
RGUKT	125	-	120	128
BRAOU	86	38	21	48

JNTU: Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University; **JNFAU:** Jawaharlal Nehru Fine Arts University; **RGUKT:** Rajiv Gandhi University of Knowledge Technologies, Basar; **BRAOU:** Dr B.R. Ambedkar Open University

2020," Dr Teja said.

He also raised the issue of pay parity among contract and regular staff in state universities saying, "A contract lecturer with over 25 years of experience is now getting about ₹75,000 per month. Whereas, a regular lecturer is earning over ₹2 lakh per month at this point. There is no way for us to compete for a post through an exam to get permanent employment, though we have spent years in this profession, it is just not fair".

Meanwhile, in a latest GO issued by the state government on the 7th PRC, the TSUCT members complained that the state government had not included

contract teachers for pay hike.

In a statement, the teachers' union said, "The Telangana state government has issued GO No. 51 on June 11 with a new pay revision for regular, contract and outsourcing employees working in the state. This will benefit about 9-10 lakh employees working in about 37 departments in the state. But for the contract faculty working in 11 universities in the state that provide higher education, no pay revision has been mentioned."

The state government approved the 7th PRC and issued the order of salary allowance in 2018 for regular faculty members work-

ing in 11 universities. The pay hike is being applied to them from January 2016. Even then the government ignored the pay hike for contract faculty of various universities in Telangana, it added.

Meanwhile, the Telangana State Council of Higher Education chairman, Prof. T. Papi Reddy clarified on the issue saying that the delay in recruitment so far had been due to pending court cases on the issue, as well as the absence of regular vice-chancellors for these universities. Now that these issues have been resolved, a raise in salaries as per eligibility and recruitment drive will take place soon, he said.



A family along with the bridegroom are all set for the wedding ceremony in the city on Sunday. The day being auspicious saw several weddings. — DC

Man booked for crowd at daughter's mehendi

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Habeebnagar police booked cases against a man for organising a mehendi ceremony ahead of his daughter's wedding by flouting lockdown norms. Officials said that more than 40 people had gathered for the ceremony.

According to police, Mohammed Zaffar had hired a group of trans persons to dance at the wedding and had organised a mehendi ceremony as well. The area locals gathered in huge numbers to watch the dance.

However, one of the guests captured the whole thing on his phone and shared it on social media. When the video went viral, police noticed the violation. Taking suo motu cognisance, police

60 BOOKED FOR ATTENDING B'DAY PARTY IGNORING LOCKDOWN RULES

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Nearly 60 persons, who participated in a birthday party late Saturday night were booked by the Kadthal police.

According to police, Bharath, Anvesh and Zeeshan Ali Khan organized the birthday party of Varun Goud. Around 60 guests, including 25 women, attended the party.

"Following credible information, along with a special operations team

(SOT), we raided a farmhouse in Kadthal village which belongs to K. Bharath at around 11.30 pm. We did not recover any narcotic drugs. All, except the four organisers, have been released on personal bond," said Kadthal police.

"We have booked them under Disaster Management Act and Excise Act," said an official while N. Prakash Reddy, DCP Shamshabad warned people against violation of the lockdown guidelines.

registered a case under the Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and violation of COVID-19 protocols. The

Habeebnagar police officials said a complaint has been registered and action will be taken against the violators.



THIS IS HOW WE ARE! PANDEMIC OR OTHERWISE

1. Even as the Covid-19 second wave appears to be ebbing, crowding is back in the Charminar area during the lockdown relaxation. This is a regular feature in all markets. Many ignore the board advising people to wear masks. — P. SURENDRA

2. Access is blocked and pedestrians have to make their way through a work site at Puppalguda. Note the women are wearing masks but the man is not doing so. — R. PAVAN

3. Dirt and garbage is strewn around oxygen cylinders stored at the district medical and health office at Koti. This when there are concerns that poor hygiene surrounding oxygen supply could be causing the black fungus disease. — S. SURENDER REDDY



Activist booked after YouTuber tries to end life

NAVEEN KUMAR | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Mild tension prevailed at the residence of a social activist in Hafeez Baba Nagar when police reached there after defamatory comments made by him led to a YouTuber attempting suicide.

Chandrayangutta police said Syed Saleem, a social activist from old city and president of an NGO, made defamatory comments against the woman YouTuber reporter who runs Khidmat-e-Khalq Charitable Trust on Facebook.

"During a live broadcast

on his Facebook page, Saleem had made defamatory and derogatory comments against the woman. Unable to bear the humiliation, the woman reportedly tried to end her life by consuming sleeping pills," said Chandrayangutta inspector Rudra Bhaskar.

Based on a complaint, police registered a case against Saleem under section 354 (outraging woman's modesty), 294 (singing, reciting or uttering an obscene song, ballad or words in or near any public place) of the Indian Penal Code, apart from sections of the Information Technology Act.

6 held for illegal sale of fungus drug

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

The North Zone Task Force officials held a gang of five men for illegally selling injections used for the treatment of black fungus. Nine vials were seized from them.

Working on a tip-off, the team first nabbed V Venugopal, a medical agent from SR Nagar and native of Krishna district, following which other accused, identified as G. Naveen of Banjara Hills, V. Ashok of

Kothapet, K. Prasad of Nizampet and B. Harish of Kukatpally, were taken into custody. "Realising the high demand for amphotericin injections used for treatment of black fungus, the gang procured it and planned to sell it at a higher price to relatives of patients without paperwork," said P. Radha Kishan Rao, DCP of commissioner's task force.

The five, along with the seized property, were handed over to SR Nagar police for further action.

DISEASE | STRIKES

More cases, high number of deaths recorded

Khammam under Covid-19 focus

DC CORRESPONDENT
KHAMMAM, JUNE 13

Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiah said Sattupalli Assembly constituency topped in Covid-19 cases in the state and Vemsoor mandal recorded the highest number of Covid deaths in the Assembly segment.

He said 80 persons died in Vemsoor mandal due to Covid-19 so far and it was highest in Sattupalli constituency. About 1,212 persons tested Covid-19 positive in the mandal during the second wave. Former sarpanch

of Venkatapuram in Vemsoor mandal P Appa Rao, 65, succumbed to the virus while undergoing treatment in a private hospital in Hyderabad on Sunday. Veeraiah said about 65,000 tests were done in Kallur division — Sattupalli, Vemsoor, Penuballi, Kallur, Tallada and Enkoor mandals — so far and 11,060 persons were tested positive.

"The people of Vemsoor are contracting the virus as they are going to the belt shops. I ask the excise officials not to give scope to belt shops. Attending functions in the pandemic situation is not

advisable and I did not attend the housewarming of my maternal uncle after his death. I did it not to trouble people approaching me for various reasons," he said.

The villages on Andhra Pradesh border are still in Covid-19 grip and everyone should take care of himself. Villages like Beerapalli, Kandukur and Kunchaparthy are still under Covid-19 danger. He said public representatives and people should work together to reduce the cases in Vemsoor by the end of next week.

People should conduct marriages and other functions

with lesser guests and pave the way for making Sattupalli free from viruses. The legislator said 295 patients out of 325 admitted in Covid-19 100-bedded hospital in Sattupalli had been recovered. The patients were served food and breakfast twice a day free of cost. He said about 21,000 persons were tested for the last one week in Sattupalli constituency.

Referring to sanctioning of a 100-bed hospital to Sattupalli, he said the present 50-bed area hospital would be used for treatment of children.

2 districts beat virus for a week

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Covid-19 cases appear to be slowly dropping, reflecting the reluctance of the Coronavirus to let go of the people, with an occasional increase, but two districts — Adilabad, and Kamareddy — have managed to hang in there with cases in the single digits for a week now.

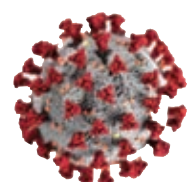
Between June 7 and June 13, the highest cases in the day reported from Adilabad was seven on June 12, while in the case of Kamareddy, the highest single day cases, seven, was reported on June 8 and 10. Meanwhile, the overall

trend in cases shows a reduction, with 1,771 reported on June 12, compared to 2,493 cases reported on June 1, according to the details released by the state health department.

However, on June 13, there was sharp fall in cases to 1,280 but there was little reason for any rejoicing as this drop corresponded to the weekend testing dip on Sunday.

If the current general trend continues, then Telangana may see by the end of the month daily cases in a few hundreds instead of the 1,500-plus as is being witnessed currently, health department officials said.

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA



Update: Cases | Deaths

Fresh Cases	1,280
Deaths	15
Tests Done	91,621
Active Cases	21,137
Total Cases	6,03,369
Total Deaths	3,484

Most new cases

GHMC (Hyderabad)	165
Khammam	156
Nalgonda	80
Ranga Reddy	76
Karimnagar	74

Fewest new cases

Kamareddy	1
Adilabad, Nirmal	4
Narayanpet, Asifabad	
Medak	5
Jangaon	8
Mulugu	12

SHORT TAKES

LAND TO BE ACQUIRED ALONG MANAIR

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 13

Backward classes welfare minister Gangula Kamalakara reiterated that Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu is striving hard for all round development of Karimnagar district.

"That is the reason why Manair riverfront is being developed into one of the best tourist attractions in the country," Kamalakara declared while inspecting the area along the river accompanied by district collector K. Shashanka on Sunday.

He said the government has decided to acquire 150 metres of land on either side of the riverfront, though after conducting a survey. "People must come forward voluntarily to hand over their lands for completion of this beautiful project," he maintained.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister pointed out that the state government has sanctioned ₹320 crore for construction of a protection wall on either side of Manair River up to a distance of five kilometres and for other works.

In addition, the government has also released ₹190 crore for the construction of a cable bridge and ₹80 crore for construction works of five check dams.

He said that there will be a central lighting system up to a distance of 14 kilometres. With 24 TMC of water, Lower Manair Dam will also be a wonderful water body adjacent to the Karimnagar city, unlike in any other city in the country, he said.

To add to the beauty, Manair riverfront project has been designed up to 10 kilometres distance until Chegurthi village from the city, Kamalakara explained. In this context, he said the IT Tower has already started functioning within the city.

AP TO HIRE 2K TEACHERS SELECTED IN '08

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 13

Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy would release a special government order in the next two days to appoint 2000 teachers who were found eligible by District Selection Committees (DSC) in 2008.

Education minister Adimulapu Suresh revealed this while stressing that this is a daring decision of the CM while also lauding Jagan for introducing English Medium and giving a facelift to all schools under the Nadu-Nedu scheme.

He was addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Jagannanna housing colony at Medapi village in Tripurantakam village in Prakasam district on Sunday.

Referring to the plea from the poor to increase financial assistance for the construction of houses, Suresh said he would take the matter to the notice of the CM. He said 'Jagananna' gave ₹5 lakh worth of house sites to his "sisters" in Medapi village. "We would supply sand free of cost and cement at 50 per cent concession to build their houses."

The education minister said 3,000 flats will be built on 35 layouts at his Yarragondapalem constituency. He expressed confidence in the release of funds towards bills pertaining to development works grounded in the villages after the ongoing probe by the vigilance department.

The minister said he made arrangements to distribute the Anandaiah herbal medicine for Covid prevention in all mandals of Yarragondapalem segment free of cost.

Ramana hints at switching parties

TRS aims to bring in state TD chief to replace Etala, placate BC votes

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 13

The plan of ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) to use Telugu Desam (TD) TS president L. Ramana as a counterweight to former minister Etala Rajendar among backward classes seems to be bearing fruit with Ramana throwing enough hints in this regard at a meeting he addressed in Jagtial on Sunday.

Ramana recalled that

he had faithfully carried out the responsibility given to him by TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu of holding reins of the party in Telangana since the past seven years. He had earlier been a minister in Naidu government and was even an MP.

The TS TD chief said had he desired any high posts, he could have crossed over to ruling TRS, as he is very close to over 70 per cent of the TRS leaders.

As he did not expect



L. Ramana

anything from any party, he had so far fulfilled his responsibility perfectly,

the TS TD president maintained.

However, Ramana expressed worry over the situation of TD in Telangana state. Ramana said despite striving hard for strengthening the party at grass-root levels, Telugu Desam is not in a position to "continue further in the region".

"Not for posts or any other higher position, but to provide services to people, there is a need to change the

party," Ramana told his supporters.

He asked his followers not to believe in speculations doing rounds about he being either made an MLC or given a minister's posts if he changes his loyalty from the TD to the TRS.

The TD state chief, sources said, is likely to announce his decision of joining the ruling TRS within a day or two.

"Have trust in me," Ramana told his supporters.

TRS LEADERS BEGIN LOBBYING FOR 2023 POLLS

PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS
| DC
ADILABAD, JUNE 13

Though the Assembly elections are more than two years away, TRS leaders in undivided Adilabad district seem to have begun the groundwork for getting party tickets for contesting the polls.

Komaram Bheem Asifabad ZP chairperson Kova Laxmi and MLA Atram Sakku are lobbying for the Asifabad constituency ticket while Adilabad ZP Chairman Janardhan Rathod and Khanapur MLA Ajmeera Rekha Naik are sweating it out for the Khanapur constituency ticket.

Ironically, the Asifabad ZP chairperson and MLA belong to the Adivasi community and in Adilabad ZP chairman and Khanapur MLA are from the Lambada community.

Laxmi lost the previous election by 171 votes to Sakku who contested on a Congress ticket but later joined the TRS.

Laxmi was made ZP chairman of the newly formed Komaram-Bheem Asifabad district in 2019. She is the daughter of former minister late Kotnak Bheem Rao.

It is quite visible that cadres and second-rung leaders are divided into two groups in Asifabad and Khanapur. In some cases, senior TRS second-rung leaders are caught in crossfire between the two leaders and are in a dilemma over extending support to either of the two.

Laxmi and Sakku organise programmes separately except on a few occasions, their followers in tow. These two leaders and their supporters separately visit the villages to help victims of a road accident or fire incident in case such a thing occurs.

On the other hand, Adilabad ZP chairman Rathod is focusing more on Utnoor and Indravelli mandals and some parts of Sirikonda. Indravelli and Utnoor are major towns and these mandals are having more voters in the Khanapur Assembly constituency.

News is making rounds in the political circles that, both Janardhan Rathod and Rekha Naik are selectively giving development works to their supporters in view of the next elections.

Clean, Green Hyderabad



As part of Clean and Green drive, the GHMC has taken up beautification of the Gun Park, where the Telangana Martyrs memorial is located, opposite the Assembly in Hyderabad.

— P. SURENDRA

2.81L more farmers get Rythu Bandhu

Beneficiaries to get ₹ 5,000 per acre under scheme

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

An additional 2.81 lakh farmers have gained eligibility for Rythu Bandhu for the kharif season over the recent rabi season taking the number of beneficiaries to 63.25 lakh, covering 1.5 crore acres.

The government has sanctioned ₹7,508 crore for the scheme, which will be credited to the bank accounts of farmers at ₹5,000 per acre from June 15 to June 25.

Agriculture minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy on Sunday released the final list of beneficiaries of Rythu Bandhu for kharif.

He said officials have resolved the problems of 2.81 lakh farmers owning 66,311 acres, who had failed to avail the benefit in the absence of land-holding details on Dharani portal. Those details have been uploaded making them eligible to claim the benefit. He asked the new beneficiaries to submit their details to EOs, AOs such as patadar passbook, Aadhaar and bank account.

Reddy asked farmers not to worry over change of IFSC codes due to merger of a few PSU banks and officials have gathered IFSC details on their own.

Nalgonda district tops the number of beneficiaries at 4.72 lakh owning 12.18 lakh acres who will get ₹698 crore while Medchal Malkajgiri dis-

State delays jowar MSP order, farmers lose out

DURGA PRASAD
SUNKU | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Although the government had issued orders for procurement of jowar it was too late as most of the farmers, in their despair, had sold their yield at less than the minimum support price (MSP).

Rythu Swarajya Vedika (RSV) is conducting a survey of farmers who sold their yields before the government order was issued to assess the losses for the farmers and demand the state to compensate them. Farmers have sold their yield for ₹1,100-₹1,300 while the MSP is ₹2,620.

Responding to Chief Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu's call, around 20,000 farmers, mostly from Sangareddy, Kamareddy and erstwhile Adilabad districts, took to cultivation of jowar.

The RSV estimated that around 50 per cent of them had sold their yield at low prices. In Kangutta village of

Boath mandal, the RSV collected names of 68 farmers, who sold their yield, along with the quantities and receipts.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, S. Boranna of Adilabad district, RSV state committee member, who filed a PIL in the High Court seeking MSP for jowar, said "We have protested and submitted representations to the agriculture department. Once I knocked on the doors of the court, the government took cognisance and issued an order regarding procurement of jowar. We have been conducting a survey on the farmers' losses."

Raju, who sold 35 quintals of jowar at ₹1,100 and incurred a loss of ₹50,000, said, "I usually cultivate maize but opted for jowar this time. I harvested the crop in mid-April, and stored the yield and waited for the government decision till June first week."

A few days back, Raju spoke to agriculture minister S. Niranjan

Reddy on a TV programme run by the department of information technology. Raju said, "I explained our issues and asked whether the government was planning to procure jowar. The minister said no. Under pressure to repay our debts, 50 per cent of the farmers in our village sold their yield at a low price. We demand that the government compensate us for our loss."

T. Sreeharsha, state coordinator of Kisan Mitra helpline, said, "Since May, the helpline has received calls from more than 75 jowar farmers, out of which majority was in distress. We are reaching out to check when the government will start procurement of jowar."

Kiran Kumar Vissa, state committee member of RSV, said "The jowar farmers' struggle in Telangana is an important part of the nationwide farmers' movement for remunerative prices and guarantee of MSP."

strict stands at the bottom with 39,762 farmers owning 77,000 acres getting ₹38 crore.

Seven districts will get

Rythu Bandhu of ₹300 crore to ₹400 crore, 11 districts ₹200 crore to ₹300 crore and 10 districts will get ₹100 crore

to ₹200 crore. Only Warangal urban, Mulugu and Medchal districts will get less than ₹100 crore each.



The Warangal Central Prison being demolished. — DC

From the 73 acres of land that is available, five acres are earmarked for Kalaji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences building with the remaining area marked for the multi-

speciality hospital. Meanwhile, the secrecy being maintained by officials with regard to the demolition is raising several questions in several quarters. Even the general

public is dismayed at inconvenience caused following closure of the important road.

Built in 1886, during the regime of the sixth Nizam Mir Mahbub Ali, the jail grew into a correctional facility where the inmates were made to find a livelihood within the confines of the jail walls.

The new central prison is expected to be built in the premises of the Telangana state special police 4th battalion campus. Officials have conducted a survey on the extent of land and its feasibility.

Docu on Gandhi wins at NYIFF

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

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

The chairperson of Simhachalam Temple Trust, Sanchaita Gajapati Raju, said the film speaks to the conscience of humanity as people globally grapple with intractable problems surrounding race, and as societies struggle to give the mar-


ginalised and underserved human dignity and restore fundamental human rights.

The film brings to the fore the impact of the Gandhian message of non-violence worldwide: how it inspired Martin Luther King Jr., John Lewis, Barack Obama, the US civil rights movement, Solidarity movement in Poland, the Velvet revolution in Czechoslovakia as well as Nelson Mandela.

The title song 'Ahimsa' was composed by A.R. Rahman and Bono of the rock band U2.


"At a time when the world is fraught with turbulence, the Mahatma's teachings and life are all the more relevant," Sanchaita Gajapati Raju said after winning the award.

OBITUARY
The Righteous Shall go into Eternal Life
Matthew 25:46




In Memory Of
MULEGERI DEVADAS
Rtd. Junior Telecom Officer (BSNL.)
S/o Balappa (Bidakanya) Zahneerabad
D.O.B : 13-08-1957
Received by God : 10-06-2021
Deeply Mourned by: Kamitha (Wife),
M. Robinson (Son), Australia,
G. Sunitha (Daughter-in-law),
M. Rebecca (Daughter) V. Arun
(Son-in-law), M. Rubeena (Daughter),
Grand Children-Misha, Julian & Kenneth

In Fond Remembrance
23rd DEATH ANNIVERSARY




Late Smt. B. Shakuntala
"We always Love you"
Inserted By:
Sons:
B. Ramesh Kumar, Dr. B. Rajeev Kumar
B. Vinod Kumar, B. Pramed Kumar
Daughter: Dr. Uma Ranga Sai
All grand children
H.No. 7/3 RT, Barkatpura, Hyderabad Phone: 27502903

OBITUARY
With Profound grief we inform you the sudden demise of our Beloved Father on 2nd June, 2021



Sri. T.V. DAMODAR
S/o Late T.G. Vishwanath
In view of the current pandemic situation we request privacy and Accept all your love and condolence
Inserted by loved Ones: Wife, Daughters, Grand Daughters and Son-in-law.
Contact: 9390234770
(S/2122/D00295)

SAD DEMISE
"I have fought the good fight... Now there is store for me the crown" II Timothy 4:7-8



VIMALA WANNAIAH
(Retd. Teacher - Stanley Girls High School)
Called to eternal glory and cremated at Kothagudem on 13th June 2021.
Inserted by: Mrs J. Pramila Samuel, Mrs Bessie Pankajam & Family Members.
Ph: 9849641956, 9297002203
(S/2122/D00322)

40th DAY CEREMONY
"I Will dwell in the House of the Lord forever"
Psalms 23:6




D. VINCENT (1 EME CENTER CHO)
D.O.B: 13-08-1959 D.O.D: 06-05-2021
We Miss you so much, A Faithful & loyal gentleman and true hero of our life.
Inserted by:
Wife, Children's & Sons-in-law.
(S/2122/D00299)

7th ANNIVERSARY
IN LOVING MEMORY OF



Mrs. SETHU LEKSHMI
W/o Mr. K.P.V. Pillai (Ex-ECIL)
D.O.B: 22-04-1953 D.O.D: 14-06-2014
Inserted by:
FAMILY MEMBERS
Ph: 040 27125123
(CA-3641)

7th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
The memory of the righteous is a blessing - Prov 10:7



KARLAPUDI DINAKAR PRAKASH
DOB: 9-7-1953 DOD: 14-6-2014
"Time flies past but your memories can never be forgotten or erased. You will always remain in our thoughts"
Fondly remembered by
Wife: K. Sundari Kumari & Family members

7th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
"Precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His saints." Psalms 116:15




K. Dinakar Prakash
We remember you always with joy & pride, your presence is with us like a blessing & we miss your love, affection & guidance.
Inserted by:
Wife: K. Sundari Kumari & Family Members
Ph: 9441437766

40th DAY MEMORIAL
O Lord my God lift up my soul to you. Good and upright is the Lord He is my light and salvation and hope to see His goodness in the land of the living. (Psalms)



JULIET JACOB
DOB: 22.10.1960 DOD: 06.05.2021
W/o Vernon Jacob
Holy Mass is offered for the repose of her soul at St Mary's basilica on Monday 14th June 2021 at 6 am
Requesting all the near & dear ones, friends and faithful to pray for her soul to rest in peace.
Inserted by: Husband, Daughter, Son-in-law, Son & Family Members

BIRTHDAY REMEMBRANCE
"And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God." Romans 8:28.




EDURI SAMUEL
Date of Birth: 14.06.1943
Promoted to Glory: 02.01.2021.
Inserted by:
Eduri Jane Vivekavathy (Wife)
Family Members, Near & Dear.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF
I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever. Ps 23:6



Late. NELAPATI SUVARNA KUMARI
Called to glory on: 12-06-2021
Deeply Mourned by
Mrs. Sarojini Nelapati (Sister)
Family Members, Relatives & Friends

11th DEATH ANNIVERSARY
IN LOVING MEMORY OF



C. VIJAY KUMAR
DOB: 04-08-1956 DOD: 14-06-2010
Although you sleep in heaven now, You're not that far away. Our hearts are full of memories, And you're with us everyday.
Inserted by: C. UMA MAHESHWARI & CHINTALA FAMILY
(S/2122/D00319)

2nd Death Anniversary
IN LOVING MEMORY OF



LATE SMT. B.A. STHOTHRAMMA
W/o Late Rev. B. L. Abhishekam
Retired Teacher Blue Bird High School
DOB: 17.10.1950 DOD: 14.06.2019
"Your sweet memories will remain in our hearts forever & ever. We miss u mummy."
Inserted by: Daughters & Sons-in-law, Sons & Daughters-in-law, Grand Children & Great Grand Daughter BUDIGAPAKA FAMILIES
Mob: 83319 70832, 6303 023 132

She always praised the Lord... 15th DEATH ANNIVERSARY



KATAKAM NIRMALA RANI
W/o. JAYANAND REDDY. K.
Slept in the Lord on 14-06-2006
You left us to Dwell in the House of the Lord Forever.
WE WILL ALWAYS LOVE U and MISS U
Years Ever Loving..... Jayanand Reddy K, Ranju, Akhila, Kyra, Rajiv and Pranathi.

LOST | HERITAGE

CM may lay foundation stone for new hospital on June 20

Secrecy marks Warangal jail demolition

DC CORRESPONDENT
WARANGAL, JUNE 13

As part of the state government's decision to build a multi-speciality hospital in place of Warangal Central Prison, demolition of the 135-year-old structure is progressing amid high security.

Not even the media is being allowed near the premises. In fact, the main road between Kakatiya Medical College and MGM hospital has been completely cordoned off with heavy deployment of police personnel.

Ever since Chief

Minister K. Chandrababu Naidu visited the jail on May 22, works to shift it have been taken up on a war-footing. The inmates were shifted to various jails and the land was handed over to the medical and health department, paving the way for its demolition.

Rao, who is likely to inaugurate Warangal Integrated Collectorate on June 20, is also expected to lay foundation stone for the proposed hospital. It will provide medical services to people in the 12 eastern and north-eastern districts.

From the 73 acres of land that is available, five acres are earmarked for Kalaji Narayana Rao University of Health Sciences building with the remaining area marked for the multi-

speciality hospital. Meanwhile, the secrecy being maintained by officials with regard to the demolition is raising several questions in several quarters. Even the general

SHORT TAKES

NURSE GETS
BLACK FUNGUS,
ENDS LIFEDC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

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

According to the revenue divisional officer of Tirupati, Kanaka Narasa Reddy, the deceased nurse tested positive on May 4. After treatment, she recovered and got her negative report on May 13. On May 25, she was admitted to the state Covid hospital at SVIMS campus in Tirupati as she got infected with the black fungus disease.

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

Jaamma's relatives, however, accused the hospital authorities of negligence in treatment which led to a deterioration of her health. Other patients' attendants also accused the hospital of negligence in treating the patients. They say the hospital does not have the sufficient number of doctors and nurses to treat black fungus patients.

Meanwhile, in another incident, relatives of deceased Covid-19 patient Vinod Kumar (27) from Thanikiri village in Vayalpadu mandal staged a protest at the state covid hospital. They alleged that negligence of medical staff led to the death of their family member.

SEERS PANEL
TO RESOLVE
MUTT ROWDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

The endowment department has decided to appoint a committee with seers to resolve the contentious issue of Brahmamangari Matham Peetadhipathi appointment in Kadapa district. Minister for endowments Vellampalli Srinivas Rao said the issue remains unresolved as both heirs are staking claim to the position.

Addressing a press meet here on Sunday, the minister said that there are 128 recognised Mathams and Peethams in the state and the Peetadhipathi would be appointed as per the decision of the majority members of the Peetham or Matham. Hence, anybody can forward their suggestions and advice to the endowment department. He hoped the problem would be solved in due course after considering the suggestions of all. A regional joint commissioner would be entrusted with the responsibility of consulting the heads of all Hindu associations to take a final decision. The minister said that the confusion would be cleared as per the endowment rules and traditions. He asserted that it was the responsibility of everyone to protect the honour of the Veerendra Brahmam Peetham in Kadapa district.

Srinivas Rao announced the appointment of assistant commissioner Sankar to report on the state of affairs and manage day-to-day affairs of the Peetham.

He appealed to one and all not to make any controversial comments on the Peetham. Referring to the history of Peetham, he said that Veerabrahmendra Swamy attained Jeeva Samadhi in 1693 and till today the Peetham was held by eleven successors.

Nizam Club record
room gutted in fire

Servers, computers, furniture destroyed in the blaze

T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

A fire broke out at the prestigious Nizam Club at Saifabad in the city on Sunday morning. While there was no loss of life, some furniture and papers were damaged in the fire. The cause of the fire is said to be a short-circuit.

Speaking to this newspaper, Rajendar Kumar, secretary, Nizam Club said, "The fire broke out early in the morning, and passers-by spotted the smoke and called the fire department. The fire broke out in the office room, and it had engulfed servers, computers, and furniture. Fortunately, the files were in the strong room, so they weren't damaged."

According to officials of the TS Disaster Response and Fire Services department (TSDRFS), fire tenders were pressed into service after they had received a complaint. "When our personnel reached the spot, they extinguished the fire in 15-20 minutes. Owing to the lockdown, there was no one in the office. We think the cause of the fire was of electrical origin."



The record room of the Nizam Club in Hyderabad was gutted in a fire on Sunday. (Below) A policeman watches the blaze in the building.

But, as the rains continue to lash the city and state, more such fires — of electrical origin — are to be expected, say officials of the fire department.

In 2020, there were 1,992 fires of electrical origin. "Fires of electrical origin are high for the last few years. There are four reasons why this is happening, overloading, poor insulation, improper earthing and use of substandard electrical wiring. There are circuit breakers avail-

able in the markets which can aid in avoiding such fires. These circuit breakers suspend power supply if there is a disruption or overdose of power," C. Lakshmi Prasad, director, TSDRFS, told this correspondent.

These fires can be avoided by ensuring electrical wiring is checked regularly, he added. "Maintenance of these wires is paramount. A check on wires should be taken up once in every six months," he said.

TD ex-MLA Srinivasa's
₹791cr illegal land seizedDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Both the ruling YSRC and opposition leaders traded charges over the grabbing of government lands in Visakhapatnam district as revenue officials with the help of a huge posse of police freed 49.1 acres of the government land in Gajuwaka area which is said to be under the encroachment of ex-MLA Palla Srinivasa Rao's family members.

The officials said a special drive was launched last year and so far 430 acres worth ₹4,291 crore was seized by the government. In the fresh move on Sunday morning, the revenue officials demolished a compound wall adjoining Palla Srinivasa Rao's land and removed some sheds. A total extent of 49.1 acres worth ₹791 crore was freed from encroachment, the officials said.

"Land grabbing began during the tenure of Chandrababu Naidu government," said the minister for tourism, Muttamsetti (Avanti) Srinivasa Rao.

● **THE OFFICIALS** said a special drive was launched last year and so far 430 acres worth ₹4,291 crore was seized by the government.

Addressing a press conference after the land seizure, the minister said the drive to take back government was no vengeance against the opposition leaders. He said the seized lands would be used for housing for poorer sections. He asserted that none would be spared if they indulged in land grabbing. "If ruling party leaders indulged in grabbing, the victims can go straight to the Commissioner of Police and launch a formal complaint," he urged the public.

Palla Srinivasa Rao said his private land was not touched and the revenue officials just demolished a compound wall which divided his land and a pond. "Not an inch of my land was touched, and I did not encroach any government land located next to my land," he told *Deccan*

Chronicle on Sunday evening.

He said as per his information, the open land belonged to the Railways and some public and corporate sectors. The five-acre land which the revenue claimed to have seized was under legal dispute pending in High Court between one Marvari family and railways. The revenue officials should have conducted a survey, issued notice, and then seized the land if it belonged to the government. "It is illegal to seize land on Sundays without following proper procedure," he said. His family members said after Srinivasa Rao turned down the offer to join YSRC, the official machinery was unleashed against him.

Reacting to the incident, TD state president K. Atchannaidu said the attack on Srinivasa Rao was an attack on the weaker sections in the state.

He said the Chief Minister, Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, began a new chapter by attacking the opposition leaders-owned lands on holidays.

SLOTH BEAR
VENTURES CLOSE
TO TS VILLAGEDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

A sloth bear strayed into the fringes of Potharam in Husnabad mandal on Sunday morning. Fortunately, the animal did not enter the village, said district forest officer Sridhar Rao. "The fringe areas are right next to the forest, so sighting an animal like a sloth bear is very common. We received a complaint from the residents and by the time our team went to the location the animal had left," he said. The animal was sighted at around 5.30 am and the officials did not find it though they searched for it till 6.30 am.

ANCIENT COPPER
PLATES FOUND AT
SRISAILAM TEMPLEDC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 13

In a major historic significance to the temple development, Srisaillam authorities have unearthed 21 copper plates dating back to the 16th century or earlier, during excavations at Ghanta Matham on Sunday. K.S. Rama Rao, the executive officer of Sri Brhamaramaba Mallikarjuna Swami Temple, said the plates were found containing Nandi Nagari script in Sanskrit and a few were also in Telugu/Kannada languages.

Chenna Reddy, Dean of Archeology at Telugu University campus in Srisaillam, who was also Director of Archeology and Museums, said, "Just found 6 sets of copper plates (18 leaves) during the course of renovation work in Ganā'-amaa'-ham at Ūrūallam, carried out by the temple authorities. Out of 6 copper plate sets, 4 sets are written in Sanskrit language and Nandi-Nāgari script and other 2 plates are in Telugu language and script.

Courtesy call



Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar greets Chief Justice of India N.V. Ramana on Sunday. (Right) Dr Vivek Venkatswamy, former MP and BJP core committee member, and his wife Saroja call on Chief Justice Ramana at Raj Bhavan in Hyderabad.

TS COPS ACTION
LEADS TO TRAFFIC
CHAOS AT BORDERDC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

Vehicular traffic came to a virtual standstill on the Vijayawada national highway at Ramapuram crossroad check-post on Sunday. Telangana police did not allow vehicles without a valid e-pass and sent back nearly 1,500 vehicles because of lack of permissions.

After the Telangana government gave day-time lockdown relaxation, many from AP started for their respective TS destinations. Their plans were shattered at Ramapuram check-post as Telangana police made e-pass mandatory for entering the state even during the relaxation time.

Telangana police had allowed 700 vehicles into Telangana with valid e-passes and denied entry to 1,500 vehicles.

Messenger punished,
culprit saved tax deptN. VAMSI SRINIVAS
| DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Shooting the messenger, the top brass of Andhra Pradesh tax department have penalised an assistant commissioner, who did his best to prevent loss of revenue to the government, while sparing his senior who actually caused the loss.

The messenger, G. Prabhakar Murthy, is due for retirement on June 30 and Piyush Kumar, chief commissioner of state tax, recommended to the government to recover ₹50 lakh paid to Essar Steel, Visakhapatnam, as a penalty, from his retirement benefits and a cut in pension. The chief commissioner, by implicating Murthy in this case, rescued additional commissioner S. Sekhar, whose inaction left the

● **A REPORT** by Visakhapatnam joint commissioner explained the events that led to loss of revenue.

government with no option but to pay the penalty.

Interestingly, a crucial report submitted by the Visakhapatnam joint commissioner explaining in detail the events that led to the loss of revenue to the exchequer and holding Sekhar responsible for the loss was ignored by the chief commissioner for reasons best known to him.

"The inaction of then deputy commissioner (Sekhar) resulted in the loss and there is nothing to be attributed to the then commercial tax officer (Murthy) who acted in good faith and as per provisions of the Act," says the report.

Inquiries by *Deccan Chronicle* revealed that Essar Steel claimed a refund of a certain tax amount. Murthy's predecessor neither rejected nor approved the refund for eight months. When Murthy took charge, he immediately sought a direction from Sekhar on Essar's request.

Initially, Sekhar tried to send the ball back to Murthy's court but the latter, quoting the provisions of the Act, recommended to his senior to withhold the amount as the government had appealed against the refund. Sekhar did not pass any order and Murthy was transferred to another place. Later, Essar approached the AP High Court against the delay in refund and the court directed the government to refund the amount along with an interest of ₹50 lakh.

BIG | BOOST

YSR Congress, which once wanted to abolish Council, will over take Desam

YSRC all set to wrest control of Council

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

The era of YSR Congress is going to start in AP Legislative Council for the first time. As it is set to grab majority in the 58-member Council soon, the party seems to have given up its insistence on its abolition.

Faced with humiliation in the TD-dominated House in respect of the passage of various bills, the government had sought its abolition through a unanimous resolution in the Assembly on January 27, 2020. Chief

Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy would remind the Centre of the issue during his visits to Delhi.

But, during his just-concluded visit to Delhi, the CM did not urge the Centre to cooperate for the Council abolition. Barring this, he pleaded for Centre's help in all key issues such as the three capitals, Polavaram, special category status. It appears the CM has decided on the continuation of the Council. His recent action also lends credence to this view. He selected Moshen Raju, Lella Appi

Reddy, R.V. Ramesh Yadav and Thota Trimurthulu for the recently vacated four MLC posts under the Governor's quota. The ruling party leaders take it as a clear sign towards the continuation of the Council.

The total MLC seats in the AP Legislative Council is 58 in which opposition TD has 22 MLCs, YSRC 13, PDF 4, BJP 1, independents 4 and nominated 8. There are six vacant MLC posts that would be grabbed by YSRC and another 10 MLCs are going to retire on June 18. Among them, nine

belong to TD and the other is Ummareddy Venkateswarlu of YSRC. The ruling party would get all 16 MLC seats which would give it a majority in the Council. TD would be limited to a dozen seats.

Earlier in January 2020, the Jagan government faced humiliation in the AP Legislative Council when the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020 and APCRDA (Repeal) failed to pass due to severe opposition from TD and both the bills were referred to the

select committee by TD. The ruling party which had only nine MLCs was greatly upset. The CM decided to abolish the Council and AP Assembly on January 27, 2020, unanimously passed a resolution, requesting the Centre for abolition of the Council. YSRC allocated the Assembly Speaker post to BCs. As such, it may now consider Council Chairman post for either minorities or SC community as part of social engineering concept which gave big success to YSRC during elections.

CURRENT COMPOSITION	
Total No. of Seats	58
TD	22
YSRC	13
PDF	4
BJP	1
IND	4
(At present there are six vacancies in the House. Ten more MLCs are going to retire on June 18. All will go the YSRC way)	

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DECCAN Chronicle

14 JUNE 2021

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

GST cut is welcome relief

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

The Council, which comprises state and Union finance ministers, has also decided to levy a five per cent tax on any drug that the health ministry recommends for the treatment of coronavirus infection. The reduction in the tax rate, however, would be applicable only till September. The tax on vaccines, however, would continue to be five per cent. Though several state governments had demanded exempting vaccines from GST, the Council went with the opinion of the central government which opposed any such move. The state governments, however, did not insist on its demand after the Centre agreed to buy 75 per cent of the vaccines for public immunisation. The focus on healthcare should continue even after the Covid pandemic. It is high time that the Central and state governments take lessons from the pandemic and take steps to improve public health infrastructure which is woefully inadequate. Apart from building more hospitals and training more healthcare professionals, the government should focus on preventative healthcare. It is believed that preventative healthcare could add billions of dollars to the economy by way of saving the cost of hospitalisation and by enhancing people's productivity. Preventative healthcare could be promoted by reducing the cost of diagnosis by encouraging local manufacturing of medical equipment. Though the Narendra Modi government has already announced incentives for boosting the manufacturing of medical equipment, it should be pursued with renewed vigour.

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

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

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Subhani



India's Great Helmsman: Salute to Narasimha Rao



Sanjaya Baru

Sanjayovacha

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

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

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

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

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

In remembering P.V. Narasimha Rao this month, when the nation commemorates his birth centenary, many will recall his leadership during a period of economic crisis. Narasimha Rao lent his prime ministerial imprimatur to the sweeping industrial and trade policy reforms that set India on a new growth path. It is useful to recall the role of the political leadership in economic policy change and management at a time when its absence is being acutely felt.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS

ETHICS IN PARTIES

BJP leaders call its national vice-president Mukul Roy "Mir Jaffer, an opportunist" for changing his party in West Bengal and joining the Trinamul Congress. One must appreciate this strict stand if it is taken by the BJP against all defectors, but when Etala Rajendar, who was allegedly involved in grabbing of assigned lands, joins the party it welcomes him.

M. Mohan Rao
Hyderabad

ENCROACHMENTS

Many encroachers are in nexus with sub-registrars (*Grabbed land being taken back, says Wakf, DC June 13*). Officials in the registration department are ignoring the aggrieved persons' complaints and keeping mum without taking any action against the errant sub-registrar. By invoking the registration rule unilateral cancellation of sale deed must be done after sending notice to the encroachers.

John Samuel
Secunderabad

COVID-19 GST

The government is reactive, not proactive as it should be (*GST lowered on Covid essentials, DC, June 13*). Like announcing new vaccination policy assuming full responsibility, the reduction in GST on Covid-19 essentials is a knee jerk reaction forced on the government to fulfil the persisting demand of people and the judiciary.

Dr O. Prasada Rao
Hyderabad

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

'Salyut' crew relaxing

MOSCOW, JUNE 13.

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

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

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

A.G. Noorani



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

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

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

disowned the Constitution.

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

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

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

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

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

internal affairs".

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

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

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

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

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

By arrangement with Dawn

SHORT TAKES

NCB BUSTS RACKET
SELLING DRUGS
INSIDE CAKES

SHAHAB ANSARI | DC
MUMBAI, JUNE 13

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
BHOPAL, JUNE 13

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

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

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

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

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

India is natural ally of G7: Modi

PM highlights revolutionary impact of digital tech

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

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

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

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

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

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

Proposal by India on vaccine patents gets support at G7

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

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

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

Okonjo Iweala and UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres.

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

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

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

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

The Group of Seven (G7)

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

Congress needs widespread reforms: Sibal

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Balaji temple gets land on 40-yr lease

From Page 1

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

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

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

Sinha said the TTD board will establish a Gurukul and Veda

Militancy, infiltration in J&K largely controlled: Kishan

DC CORRESPONDENT
SRINAGAR, JUNE 13

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

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

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

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

the past two years."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

During the meeting, Bansal sought to impress

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

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

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

Pradesh," he said.

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

He promised that except for the main pujaris of the temple and the core supervision team, it will also have a large number of local people for the management, thus providing direct and indirect job opportunities to the people of the region.

AAP MP ALLEGES GRAFT IN LAND PURCHASE FOR AYODHYA TEMPLE

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

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

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

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

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

Parked car sinks as concrete floor caves in

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

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

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

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



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

DIRE | CONDITIONS

Suvendu talks of anti-defection law, Ghosh of sacrifice

WB BJP divided over defectors

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC
KOLKATA, JUNE 13

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

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

State BJP president Dilip Ghosh lamented the

Trinamul leader blocks ghar wapsi

DC CORRESPONDENT
KOLKATA, JUNE 13

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

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

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

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

not above the law."

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

workers. During the elections, he prompted the arrests of TMC workers at Domjur in Howrah, where he contested but lost."

The MP asked, "Didn't he unleash atrocities on the ruling party workers with the help of the CISF? Does it mean that he has come clean just because he met Kunal Ghosh?"



SHORT TAKES

J'KHAND REGISTERS
'O' COVID FATALITY
FOR FIRST TIME

Ranchi, June 13: Jharkhand on Sunday did not report any fresh Coronavirus death for the first time during the ongoing second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic, but 239 new cases pushed the state's tally to 3,43,304, a health bulletin said.

East Singhbhum district registered the highest number of new cases at 51, followed by 27 in Ranchi and 23 in Hazaribag, it said.

The state now has 3,966 active cases, while the Coronavirus death toll remained unchanged at 5,082.

A total of 3,34,256 people have recovered from the disease thus far, including 493 in the last 24 hours, the bulletin said.

The recovery rate among the Coronavirus patients in the state has improved to 97.36 per cent.

The state has tested over 90.6 lakh samples for Covid-19 to date, including 43,653 in the last 24 hours, it said.

In a bid to combat the surge of cases, the state government has imposed lockdown-like restrictions till June 17.

K'TAKA: MENTALLY
ILL MAN BEATEN
TO DEATH BY COPS

Madikeri, June 13: A 50-year-old mentally unstable man in this city was beaten to death, allegedly by policemen, for violating lockdown norms last week, following which eight of them have been suspended, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

The policemen were booked on a complaint by the man's brother Robin D'Souza, based on which a case was registered against them, Inspector General of Police, Karnataka Southern Range, Praveen Madhukar Pawar, told reporters here.

He said the deputy superintendent of police of Virajpet had furnished a report against eight policemen, based on which they have been suspended.

"An inquiry is being conducted by the Sub-Divisional Magistrate. As per the National Human Rights Commission guidelines, we are handing over the case to the CID," Pawar added.

Family members said that Roy D'Souza, who was mentally unstable, was living with his mother, while his brother Robin was in Bengaluru.

Roy ran away from his house late at night on June 8. The policemen found him wandering about, questioned him for violating the lockdown norms and thrashed him, they said.

Early on June 9, his mother was summoned to the police station, where she found Roy lying unconscious, the family said. He was rushed to a local private hospital and from there to the district hospital, where he succumbed to his injuries.

WOMAN ACCUSES
HOSP. STAFF OF
RAPING MOTHER

Amethi (UP), June 13: A woman here has alleged that her 40-year-old mother was beaten up and raped by doctors and medical staff at a Lucknow hospital from where she was discharged a day before her death.

Family members of the deceased said she died on the night of June 12 while being taken to another hospital in the state capital.

The daughter alleged she approached Union minister Smriti Irani, who was on a visit to Amethi, on Saturday as the police refused to pay any heed to her.

Amethi District Magistrate Arun Kumar has constituted a team on Irani's instructions to probe the allegations.

The woman said her mother was admitted to the Amethi Joint District Hospital, Gauriganj, on June 6 as she was unwell, but her condition deteriorated, and she was referred to the Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences in Lucknow the next day.

She alleged that her mother was initially kept in the emergency ward of the Lucknow hospital and then shifted to a bed on the fourth floor but no family members were allowed to visit her.

The daughter claimed that when she finally was allowed to meet her mother after repeated requests, she found out her condition was critical.

She alleged that her mother told her she was beaten up and raped by doctors and staff.

A spokesperson of the Dr Ram Manohar Lohia Sansthan, however, refuted the allegations.

INDIA RECORDS
80,834 CASES,
LOWEST DAILY
RISE IN 71 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
with agency inputs
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

With 80,834 fresh Covid-19 cases in the past 24 hours, India on Sunday recorded its lowest daily rise in new cases after 71 days (since April 2). The number of deaths in the past 24 hours was 3,303, while 1.32 lakh people recovered, taking the country's recovery rate to 95.26 per cent.

Major cities like New Delhi and Mumbai are contributing heavily to the reducing daily numbers. Once an epicentre of cases, Mumbai's Dharaavi on Sunday had only two fresh Covid-19 cases. Delhi recorded 255 new Covid-19 cases and the city's positivity rate has dropped to 0.35 per cent.

Meanwhile, Reuters reported that head of the EU drug regulator's Covid-19 task force was quoted as saying that countries should also avoid giving the AstraZeneca vaccine to people over 60 amid fears over rare blood clotting and as more vaccines become available. It said the European Medicines Agency (EMA) considers the AstraZeneca shot safe for all age groups. However, several European Union member states have stopped administering it to people below a certain age, usually ranging from 50 to 65, restricting its use to the older population, due to the rare cases of blood clotting, mainly among young people.

"In a pandemic context, our position was and is that the risk-benefit ratio remains favourable for all age groups," Covid-19 task force chief Marco Cavaleri told the Italian newspaper *La Stampa*. However, as the number of cases is falling and taking into account the fact that younger population is less exposed to Covid-related risks, Cavaleri said it would be better to use on them vaccines based on messenger RNA (mRNA) technology, such as the Moderna and Pfizer-BioNTech vaccines.

Assam: Vaccinated
staff can join office

Guwahati, June 13: The Assam government on Sunday asked all its employees who have received two doses of Covid-19 vaccine to join offices from Monday even as a partial lockdown across the state will be in force.

The general administration department commissioner and secretary M.S. Manivannan issued an order and said the decision has been taken for the smooth functioning of the government offices.

"In order to ensure smooth functioning of government offices, all the employees of Government of Assam who have received both the doses of Covid-19 vaccine are hereby directed to attend office from June 14, 2021 regularly," he added.



Beneficiaries wait to receive a dose of Covid-19 vaccine during a special three-day vaccination camp, at Khadayata Bhavan Hall, Vile Parle East, in Mumbai on Sunday.

Delhi: Markets to open daily,
restaurants with 50% capacity

Kejriwal warns that if cases spike after 'unlock', curbs will be reimposed

BHASKAR HARI
SHARMA | DC
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

All shops in malls and market complexes will be allowed to open on all days from 10 am to 8 pm, while restaurants can reopen with 50 per cent capacity in Delhi from Monday, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced on Sunday, saying the Covid-19 situation had significantly come under control in the national capital.

In addition, salons, beauty parlours and barber shops, which have been closed since the lockdown was imposed April 19, will also reopen from Monday, officials said. "All activities, except certain prohib-

ited ones, will be allowed from 5 am on Monday. There are also certain restricted or partly allowed activities announced last week that will continue," Kejriwal said in an online briefing. One weekly market in every zone can also reopen from June 14.

Kejriwal warned, however, that if cases increase after the unlocking, the restrictions have to be reimposed. The relaxations have been allowed on a trial basis for a week, till 5 am on June 21. "We will watch the relaxation allowed to reopen markets/restaurants during next week. If Covid cases do not increase, we will continue the relaxation, but if cases increase, we will

have to bring back the restrictions," the CM said, adding, "I appeal to all market associations and others to prevent crowding and ensure social distancing and other precautions."

So far, shops in markets and malls had to follow the "odd-even" formula, opening only on alternate days. This meant only half the shops in a mall or market could open on a given day. That restriction has been removed under the latest rules. The shops can stay open only between 10 am and 8 pm. Standalone shops and colony shops dealing with essential services like groceries and milk booths can remain open beyond 8 pm. There will be

no specific restrictions on shops dealing with non-essential goods and services such as liquor vendors.

There will be no curbs on the inter-state movement of people and goods. This means one can freely move between Delhi and places like Noida, Gurgaon, Ghaziabad, Faridabad and other NCR towns.

Certain activities and services like schools, colleges, educational and coaching institutes, political, social, cultural, religious and festival gatherings, cinemas, multiplexes, swimming pools, spas, gyms, and public parks and gardens will continue to remain closed, he said. Religious places in the city will also reopen, but no

visitors will be allowed.

Delhi began a stringent lockdown from late evening April 19. The Delhi Metro operations came to a halt on May 10 as case/deaths continued to spiral. Early this month, construction activities and some factories were allowed to reopen, while markets, malls and the Metro reopened partially on June 7.

In its latest order, the Delhi Disaster Management Authority observed that the number of patients and the positivity rate has declined considerably and the overall situation has improved, "but due caution and care has to be maintained for consolidating the whole process of Covid-19 management".

Covid under control in MP: Shivraj

RABINDRA NATH
CHOUDHURY | DC
with agency inputs
BHOPAL, JUNE 13

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Sunday announced that "Coronavirus pandemic is almost under control in MP" and indicated further relaxation on curbs from June 15 in view of 'vast improvement' in the situation.

He was reviewing the situation with the crisis management committees of all the 52 districts in the state.

"MP reported the lowest number of new cases in the country on Sunday. The pandemic is almost under control in the state", he said.

MP reported 274 new cases on Sunday taking the tally of cases to 7,88,183. The state has recorded 18 deaths in the last 24 hours taking the



Guest workers arrive to board a train to return to their workplaces, at a railway station in Jabalpur of Madhya Pradesh on Sunday.

death toll to 8,552.

The positivity rate in the state on Sunday also dropped to 0.3 per cent.

Chouhan dropped hints at further relaxations on curbs from June 15.

He, however, said night curfew would remain in force till further orders.

Chouhan said the state government would not lower its guard in the wake of sharp decline in

Coronavirus positive cases in the state.

"The district crisis management committees will continue to function to stop the third wave in the state. The Covid care Centres will not be wound up. We have set a target to conduct 80,000 tests daily till the last person is screened", he said.

The Chief Minister said the state government

would take a lesson from foreign countries which experienced the third wave after the waning of the second wave and draw a plan to ensure that the state dodged the third wave.

Meanwhile, the Chief Minister also said that the Madhya Pradesh government was fully committed to taking care of children who had lost their earning parent or had been orphaned due to Coronavirus pandemic.

He had recently announced a scheme under which such children would get several benefits, including financial assistance of ₹5,000 per month.

"The state government, along with civil society, will provide education, refuge, food and other needs to orphaned kids. A scheme on this is going to come up shortly. We can't leave such children in the lurch," Chouhan said.

PANDEMIC | HORRORS According to NCPCR, 3,621 kids were orphaned, over 26,000 kids have lost one parent

Orphaned kids stare at uncertain future, scramble for aid

New Delhi, June 13: Losing a loved one is never easy but if one were to compare, there would not be a loss that could quite match the severity of losing one's parents, especially for dependent children.

The death of a parent strips away the child of not just the emotional blanket of comfort, but also in several cases takes away the financial support, leaving their futures in a lurch.

According to the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR), 3,621 children have been orphaned during the pandemic, and over 26,000 children have lost one parent.

Ten-year-old Deepika is one of them. She lost her

father to Covid-19 less than a month back and is trying to get her life back to normal, but her mother Kalpana said "nothing will ever be normal again", and who could argue?

The sole breadwinner of the family, her 57-year-old husband — an editor at a Hindi publishing house — was gone almost in a night's span, without even getting a chance at proper treatment, and now she is at a loss for ideas to secure her daughter's future.

"He had low grade fever and a slight cough, which actually got better in a few days, but one morning he suddenly collapsed. Although we managed to revive him then after scrambling for an ambulance and a bed for hours,

by the time we reached the hospital, we had lost him," Kalpana said.

"I remember my little daughter running after the ambulance, pleading with me to take her along," she added, barely managing to keep it together.

"I have always been a housewife. How am I suddenly supposed to start working? Honestly, I don't even know what I can do. And even if I do find a job, where will I keep my daughter while I am away. We live in times where no one can be trusted," Kalpana said.

However, she has filled in a form seeking free education at her daughter's school under the Delhi government's scheme instructing schools to

waive the fees for children who have lost their parents to Covid-19, but she hasn't heard anything yet.

The story of Gaurav (13) and Rohan (6), who live in Uttam Nagar, is not very different. Their father, again the only earning member in the family, was an e-rickshaw driver making a living one day at a time, but his death has pushed the family to the depths of hopelessness.

Life was already a challenge with dipping incomes due to the lockdown. The boys' parents had decided to take the younger son out of school, and shift the older one to a government one to make managing finances a little easier, but before anything could happen, tragedy struck.

"My younger son keeps asking about his father, and I do not have an answer. The little one was really close to him... the elder boy has become indifferent. "I don't know what to take care of. My children, their futures, or myself. I am so clueless and scared," said Madhu, mother.

In another tale of the cruel twist of fate, three siblings — aged nine, 11 and 13 — lost both their parents to Covid-19 in the first week of May.

To make things worse, their landlord refused to let their tenancy continue unless they paid rent. Thankfully, their uncle, a welder, came to their rescue and took the three children in. "They are my sister's children and I love



A combo photo shows photographs of families and children orphaned due to Covid-19.

them. I want to ensure they get an education and have a bright future, but there is only so much that I can do." "I do not earn enough to fend for three

children. I want the best for them, but I will need help," said Mohammad Asif, who also has to take care of his seven-month pregnant wife.

— PTI

SHORT TAKES

BOLSONARO FINED FOR MASKLESS MOTORCYCLE RALLY

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

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

CHINA CITY’S DRONES TO KEEP PEOPLE INSIDE

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

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

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

POLICE ARREST 1 OF 2 IN AUSTIN MASS SHOOTING

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

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

SHELLING KILLS 18 IN SYRIA’S REBEL-HELD AFRIN

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

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

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

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

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

12 KILLED, OVER 100 HURT IN GAS BLAST IN CHINA

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

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

New Israeli govt to be sworn in

Will end Netanyahu’s 12-yr premiership

WILL RETURN TO POWER, SAYS BIBI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Nato set to bid symbolic farewell to Afghanistan

AFGHAN I.S. GROUP CLAIMS KABUL ATTACKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Man jumps into lake for 365th straight day

Chicago, June 13: A Chicago bus driver looking for a way to relieve stress during the Coronavirus pandemic jumped into Lake Michigan for a 365th straight day on Saturday.

Dan O’Conor said he started jumping into the lake at Montrose Harbour on the city’s North Side last year to relieve stress. “It was during the pandemic, it was during the protest, it was during an election year. ... So it was somewhere where I could come down here and block all that noise out and kind of be totally present with me in the lake, and find some moments of Zen,” said the father of three.

He continued jumping into the lake through the fall before the hard part:

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

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

Flash mob demo in Myanmar



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

G7 leaders agree on vaccines, China and taxing corporations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—PTI

important those values are,” he told reporters after the 3-day meeting on the Cornwall coast. “And this isn’t about imposing our values on the rest of

the world. What we as the G-7 need to do is demonstrate the benefits of democracy and freedom and human rights to the rest of the world.” —AP

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BIDENS ATTEND SUNDAY SERVICE, AMAZE LOCALS

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

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

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

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

Proof in Mexico serial killer’s home suggests 17 victims

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

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

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

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

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



quick BITES

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

* As of 8:30 PM IST

FPIs invest ₹15,520 cr in equities in June

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

Trading in DHFL shares suspended from today



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

CG Power lines up ₹135 cr capex in current year

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

Nitco to launch new range of products in US

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

G-7 drops 2030 target to shift to green cars

JOSH WINGROVE & ALBERTO NARDELLI JUNE 13

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



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

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

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

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

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

MFs need fully independent board of trustees: Quantum

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Thinking up creative ways to fight inflation

TRACY ALLOWAY JUNE 13

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Income inequalities point to 'uneven' recovery: Subbarao

BIJAY KUMAR SINGH NEW DELHI, JUNE 13:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

AMAZON RAISES MINIMUM PAY IN GERMANY TO 12 EUROS/HOUR



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

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

The pay increase is effective from July.

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

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

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

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

UNSEEN | COST

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

Out-of-control shipping costs fire up prices

ALEX LONGLEY, CATHERINE BOSLEY & DEIRDRE HIPWELL JUNE 13

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

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

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

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



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

A confluence of factors—soaring demand,

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

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

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

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

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

SHORT TAKES

Milkha's wife dies due to Covid-19

Chandigarh: Former Indian women volleyball team captain Nirmal Kaur, who is the wife of sprint legend Milkha Singh, died at a Mohali hospital due to complications related to Covid-19 infection she had contracted last month. She was 85 and is survived by her husband, one son and three daughters. "We are deeply saddened to inform you that Mrs Nirmal Milkha Singh passed away after a valiant battle against Covid at 4 PM today," a statement from the spokesperson of the Milkha family said. "A back bone of the Milkha Family, she was 85 years old. It is tragic that the Flying Sikh Milkha Singh ji could not attend the cremation which was conducted this evening itself as he is still in the ICU (of PGIMER in Chandigarh) himself." — *PTI*

Du Plessis suffers concussion in PSL

Abu Dhabi: South African star Faf du Plessis has suffered a concussion after a nasty collision with his Quetta Gladiators teammate Mohammad Hasnain while fielding during their Pakistan Super League match against Peshawar Zalmi here. Following the freak accident, the former South Africa captain lay prone on the ground for a few minutes while the team physio attended to him. Du Plessis eventually got on his feet and walked back to the team dugout before being taken to hospital for scans. Ruled out of the game, the seasoned 36-year-old Protea was replaced in the Gladiators XI by Saim Ayub. It was the second case of concussion in two days for the Gladiators. — *PTI*

Hasan Ali to miss remainder of PSL

Abu Dhabi: Islamabad United fast bowler Hasan Ali will miss the remainder of the Pakistan Super League because of family commitments. "I want to say to all Islamabad United fans, unfortunately due to personal reasons I have to pull out of the remaining PSL matches," Hasan was quoted as saying in Islamabad's statement. "Some things are more important than cricket and nothing is more important than family. I am thankful to Islamabad United for their support and understanding. This team truly is a family that stands with you through thick and thin. I wish the team very best of luck for the remaining PSL matches." Hasan has been the key bowler for Islamabad this season, grabbing 10 wickets in six games at an impressive average of 14. Islamabad captain Shadab Khan said absence of Hasan will be a huge loss. — *AP*

Lahiri tied 45th after third round

Ridgeland: Indian golfer Anirban Lahiri endured another roller-coaster round but maintained his position with a one-under 70 to lie tied 45 at the Palmetto Championship here. Rain affected the third round, too, and it could not be completed but Lahiri managed to finish his 18 holes with four birdies against three bogeys, which gave him a one-under total for 54 holes. He was one place below his second round position. Chesson Hadley moved a step closer to his first PGA Tour victory in seven years since his 2014 Puerto Rico Open win. He opened a four-stroke lead over Harris English and six over Dustin Johnson. Hadley came into the event after five consecutive missed cuts and 10 missed cuts in last 12 starts. — *PTI*

Mickelson chases elusive Open title

La Jolla, United States: After becoming golf's oldest major champion, Phil Mickelson takes aim at the greatest prize he has never won, a trophy that has slipped agonizingly from his grasp — a US Open title. The American left-hander, a record six-time US Open runner-up, will be an emotional favourite when the 121st US Open tees off Thursday at Torrey Pines, only minutes from his San Diego home. Mickelson delivered a shocking win for the ages by capturing his sixth major title last month at the PGA Championship, defeating Brooks Koepka and Louis Oosthuizen by two strokes at Kiawah Island to become the oldest major champion in history at age 50. "That's a win I'll cherish forever," Mickelson said. "It was a very special week." — *AFP*

DJOKER IS KING

Djokovic fights back from 2 sets down to win French title

Paris, June 13: Novak Djokovic claimed a 19th Grand Slam title and became the first man in 52 years to win all four majors twice when he came from two sets down to beat Stefanos Tsitsipas in a gripping French Open final on Sunday. The world number one triumphed 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 over the Greek 22-year-old who was playing in his first Slam final. Djokovic is now just one major away from equalling the all-time record of 20, jointly held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

It was a second French Open crown for Djokovic after his 2016 victory and adds to his nine Australian Opens, five Wimbledon titles and three at the US Open. The 34-year-old is the first man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win all four Slams on multiple occasions and just the third in history.

He is also the first man ever to win a Slam title by twice coming back from two sets down in same the tournament.

Djokovic now has 84 career titles in total while Sunday's win pushed him to the brink of \$150 million in prize money.

"It was an electric atmosphere," said Djokovic after the four-hour 11-minute final. "It's a dream. It's difficult to win the title against a great player. It was a difficult three days physically and mentally."

Djokovic had also spent more than four hours on court on Friday to knock out defending champion Rafael Nadal.

Tsitsipas survived a nervy opening service game, having to save two break points.

Djokovic, by contrast, didn't concede a point in his first three service games. But suddenly he faced a set point in the 10th game courtesy of an ugly shank but saved it after a 26-shot rally.

Fired up by a time violation, Djokovic broke for the first time for a 6-5 lead but was unable to serve out the opener as a series of razor-sharp returns put Tsitsipas back on level terms. — *AFP*

THE RESULTS

Men's singles final: Novak Djokovic (SRB x1) bt Stefanos Tsitsipas (GRE x5) 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4.

Women's doubles final: Barbora Krejickova/Katerina Siniakova (CZE/CZE x2) bt Bethanie Mattek-Sands/Iga Swiatek (USA/POL x14) 6-4, 6-2.



Novak Djokovic of Serbia celebrates his win over Stefanos Tsitsipas French Open men's final in Paris Sunday.

— *AFP*

TREATED OSAKA WITH RESPECT: FRENCH OPEN

Paris, June 13: French Open organisers said they took a "pragmatic" approach in their dealings with four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka earlier in the tournament, insisting they tried to engage with her several times before she decided to withdraw from the clay-court Grand Slam.

Osaka withdrew from Roland Garros after she was fined \$15,000 for skipping the postmatch news conference after her first-round victory at the French Open.

She said she experienced anxiety before speaking to the media and revealed she suffered bouts of depression. "We really tried to engage with Naomi several times, several ways, including on the practice courts, including in writing," said Amelie Oudea-Castera, the French tennis federation director general.

Oudea-Castera said organisers had also written to Osaka before all four Grand Slam tournaments threatened her with possible extra punishment including disqualification or suspension to explain to her the possible consequences of her intention of not speaking with journalists. — *AP*

Double delight for Krejickova

Paris, June 13: French Open champion Barbora Krejickova completed a rare sweep of titles at Roland Garros as she won a third women's doubles major trophy with fellow Czech teammate Katerina Siniakova on Sunday.

Less than 24 hours after she claimed her maiden singles slam title, Krejickova became the first woman since Mary Pierce in 2000 to lift both trophies at the clay-court major.

Only seven women have completed the titles sweep at Roland Garros.

"Right now after all of this happened, this last two weeks, last two days, I feel really relieved and relaxed," Krejickova said. "I just know from now on I can really enjoy because I have pretty much



Barbora Krejickova (right) and compatriot Katerina Siniakova jump while holding the cup after winning the French Open women's doubles title.

— *AP*

● Krejickova became the first woman since Mary Pierce in 2000 to lift both trophies at the clay-court major.

achieved everything I really wanted. Now I can just improve, that's the only thing I can do, just improving."

In addition to her pair of trophies, Krejickova will reclaim the No. 1 spot in the doubles rankings next week.

Krejickova, who defeated Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova for the women's singles title on Saturday, also became the first player to sweep both titles at any Grand Slam tournament since Serena Williams at Wimbledon in 2016. — *AP*

MEN'S | FOOTBALL

Covid-19 effect: No post-match rituals

Doha, June 13: The Covid-19 pandemic has come in the way of Indian footballers' routine post-match and post-training ice-baths inside the stadium itself.

The senior national team is currently in Qatar's capital city for the joint preliminary 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifying campaign.

"To prevent any chance of cross-infection, we have been doing the ice-baths at the respective hotel rooms, and in the respective bath-tubs," team doctor Shervin Sheriff was quoted as saying by AIFF.

Sheriff is among the many individuals who are playing a key role from behind, even as the likes of Sunil Chhetri and Gurpreet Singh Sandhu deliver in the field of play.

"They are invaluable to the team — the support staff. They are the real players. Without their expertise, no football team can ever thrive," said head coach Igor Stimac.

The team's medical unit is handled by Gigy George, the senior physiotherapist, who stresses on recovery after a hard day in the field. "Recovery is paramount for the players. In the morning screening session, we check the range of the hamstring and the ankles and also the adductors. The wellness is also measured the sleep, their soreness which allows us to gauge their readiness, and plan the treatment.

"Prevention is better than cure," said Gigy, one of the best sports physios

● **The senior national team is currently in Qatar's capital city for the joint preliminary 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup Qualifying campaign.**

in the country.

During the morning screening process, the major lower limb structures are monitored every day — like the range of hamstrings and ankles as well as the strength of groin.

"The records are compared, and as and when the alarm bells ring, we plan accordingly," Shervin said.

"The players may have acute exacerbation of a chronic injury which they may have suffered long back. The treatment, hence, is designed accordingly and it gives us a proper idea about a player's return to resume training at full intensity, and then being match-fit," he added.

The monitoring of the players is not confined to the camp alone.

"In modern football you need to track every player for every single minute. Hence, when the players are not in the camp, it's our responsibility to enquire at every single step and provide tailor-made programmes to everyone in our quest to help them stay in proper conditioning.

"Not to forget, that they are also contracted with their respective clubs," Gigy pointed out. — *PTI*

PAUL SURPRISED TO BE IN BAYERN U-19 WORLD TEAM

New Delhi, June 13: Selected in FC Bayern's world squad (U-19), Sudeva FC captain Shubho Paul was a bit surprised but the young Indian footballer is determined to make the country proud when he goes to Germany for training.

The 17-year-old forward was selected from around U-19 players from around the world through video footage analysis by FC Bayern legend and 1990 World Cup winner Klaus Augenthaler.

"I was surprised to see my name there. But it's really an amazing feeling. I need to make my nation proud, once I go there (in Germany)," Paul told the official AIFF website.

"I want to play in such a manner that they should look at my game and think that a good player has come out of India. Ultimately, I would love to make it to both the



Shubho Paul

Bayern and India senior teams."

Paul will now travel to Mexico, where the squad of 15 will train for 13 days, before flying off to Germany. The world squad (U-19) will play matches against local teams, including the FC Bayern U-19 side.

Paul said the German giants had insisted on full match footages in order to get a better analysis. At first, 100 players from around the world were selected and the list was narrowed down to 64, to 35 and finally to 15. — *PTI*

PROTEAS ROUT WEST INDIES IN OPENING TEST

Grost Islet (St. Lucia), June 13: South Africa beat the West Indies by an innings and 63 runs on Saturday as the Proteas fast bowlers proved decisive in the first Test.

South Africa bowled the West Indies out for 162 in their second innings in an extended first session on the third day, with fast bowler Anrich Nortje fittingly finishing it off when Jayden Seales edged to Wiaan Mulder in the slips.

South Africa's fast men were at the fore straight away as they blew West Indies away for just 97 on the first day in St. Lucia. The Proteas took control from there, with Quinton de Kock's 141 not out driving South Africa to 322 all out and a big first innings lead.

West Indies continued on the third day on 82-4 in their second innings and didn't make it to lunch, although the break was delayed as South Africa closed in on victory.

Kagiso Rabada finished with 5/34 for South Africa in the second innings, while Roston Chase provided lone resistance for West Indies with 62. — *AP*

Brief scores (Day 3): West Indies 97 & 162 (Chase 62, Rabada 5/34) lost to South Africa 322 (de Kock 141 n.o, Holder 4-75).



New Zealand players celebrate winning the series against England at Edgbaston in Birmingham on Sunday. New Zealand won the second Test to take the series 1-0. — *AP*

Kiwis seal series in style

Birmingham, June 13: New Zealand overpowered England by eight wickets in the second Test at Edgbaston on Sunday as they sealed a 1-0 series win with more than a day to spare. Set a target of just 38 after England tailender Olly Stone was out to the very first ball of the fourth day, the Blackcaps finished on 41-2.

Tom Latham, captaining the team in place of the injured Kane Williamson, hit the winning boundary to be 23 not out after the first Test of a two-match series at Lord's last week ended in a draw.

Victory gave New Zealand just a third win in 18 Test series in England, and a first this century after their 1986 and 1999 triumphs.

And it means they will head into next week's inaugural World Test Championship final against India at Southampton in confident mood.

NZ DISLodge INDIA FROM TOP SPOT IN TEST RANKS

Dubai, June 13: New Zealand on Sunday dislodged India from the top spot in the ICC Test team rankings after their series-clinching win over England in Birmingham. New Zealand, who were second behind India in the previous ICC team rankings update, jumped to top spot by gaining three rating points.

The Kane Williamson-led side now have 123 rating points against India's 121 in the latest rankings. New Zealand, however, have lesser overall points of 2,593 from 21 matches as compared to India's 2,914 from 24 matches. Australia are third with 108 rating points while England (107) and Pakistan (94) are fourth and fifth respectively. — *PTI*

"It's great to get an extra day of rest before India but we'll celebrate as well — we've not won here since 1999 so it's important to celebrate those achievements," said Latham.

By contrast, this was England's first series loss at home since a 2014 defeat by Sri Lanka.

"It hasn't been our best week, has it?" England captain Joe Root told BBC Radio after his side came into this match missing Ollie Robinson. — *AFP*

Brief scores (Day 4): England 303 & 122 (Wood 29, Wagner 3/18, Henry 3/36) lost to New Zealand 388 & 41/2 (Latham 23 n.o).

Quick passes



Denmark's goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel (right) and defender Simon Kjær (centre) comfort Sabrina Kvist Jensen, partner of their teammate Christian Eriksen, after he collapsed on the pitch during the match against Finland at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen, Denmark, on Saturday.

— AFP

Florenzi injury scare for Italy

Defender Alessandro Florenzi has suffered a calf muscle injury which could rule him out of Italy's Euro 2020 game against Switzerland.

“(Florenzi) underwent tests this morning which revealed an inflammatory muscle injury to the right calf,” the Italian Football Federation confirmed on Saturday.

The Paris Saint-Germain player pulled-up and was replaced at half-time by Napoli's Giovanni Di Lorenzo in Friday's opening 3-0 win over Turkey in Rome.

Florenzi's PSG teammate Marco Verratti has returned to training after a knee problem as the midfielder fights for fitness for the final Group A games against the Swiss on Wednesday and Wales four days later.

— AFP

Lewandowski & Co clash with Slovakia

Poland's opening Group 'E' game at the continent-wide tournament is on Monday against Slovakia, a nation seemingly on the slide after making its debut appearance at both a World Cup and the European Championship since 2010.

It's exactly the type of team Lewandowski should be targeting to improve his underwhelming scoring numbers at major tournaments. But, of course, Poland are not Bayern Munich. Lewandowski hasn't got the supply line he has for his club. And there will be an even greater reliance on Lewandowski at Euro 2020 with strikers Krzysztof Piatek and Arkadiusz Milik ruled out of the tournament because of injury.

Slovakia are another team with one standout, but Marek Hamsik isn't the player of old.

This will be Slovakia's third appearance at a major tournament since becoming an independent country in 1993, and the class of 2021 will do well to follow its predecessors in advancing from the group stage.

— AP

Venezuela make 15 changes to squad

Venezuela summoned 15 new players for its Copa America squad after eight tested positive for Covid-19 a day before they face host Brazil. Three members of the coaching staff were also infected.

The Venezuelan Football Association said in a statement the 15 “are ready to join our group in Brazil later today.”

None of the infected were named.

Brazil health minister Marcelo Queiroga said Venezuelan players who have the virus will return only after they test negative. He said there's no reason for the Brazil match not to take place on Sunday. “There will be no going and coming of players. Players who tested positive will quarantine. If we had no possibility of positive cases we wouldn't need rigorous protocols. Venezuela is lucky that they will bring other athletes,” Queiroga said.

— AP

Live on TV

EURO

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

COPA AMERICA

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

Saint Petersburg, June 13: Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku's double helped the Red Devils open their Euro 2020 campaign with a 3-0 win over Russia on Saturday.

Lukaku gave Belgium an early lead in Saint Petersburg. Substitute Thomas Meunier doubled Belgium's lead on 34 minutes before Lukaku put the result beyond doubt with a late second goal.

Belgium are under pressure to deliver at the European Championship as some pundits claim this is Roberto Martinez's last chance to win a title with an ageing squad.

Yet even with Manchester City playmaker Kevin De Bruyne and Borussia Dortmund midfielder Axel Witsel sidelined by injury, Belgium were too strong for Russia.

The hosts got off to a bad start when Andrei Semenov failed to deal with a cross by Dries Mertens in the build-up to the opening goal. The ball

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

fell to Lukaku, who span away and drove his shot into the bottom far corner on 10 minutes.

Belgium's Timothy Castagne and Russia's Daler Kuzyaev had to be helped off following a nasty clash of heads which saw both players substituted.

Meunier grabbed Belgium's second by slotting home the rebound after Thorgan Hazard swung in a cross which Anton Shunin failed to hold. It stayed 2-0 at the break, but Russia raised the tempo in the second half as Roman Zobnin fired over the Belgian goal.

Real Madrid star Eden Hazard replaced Mertens for the final 18 minutes to lift the Belgian attack.

With two minutes left, Lukaku swept Meunier's pass into the Russian net to claim his 20th goal in his last 15 international games.

Before kick-off, the Belgium team were booed for taking a knee to highlight racial injustice, while their Russian opponents stood. Jeers echoed around the Krestovsky Stadium as the entire Belgian team, as well as Spanish referee Antonio Mateu Lahoz, knelt, while Lukaku raised his right fist.

— AFP

Finnish finesse to the fore vs Danes

Copenhagen, June 13: Finland beat Denmark 1-0 in their opening match of Euro 2020 which was overshadowed by Christian Eriksen collapsing and having to be revived on the field by medics.

Joel Pohjanpalo scored the only goal on the hour mark of a Group 'B' match which was stopped for nearly two hours after Danish playmaker Eriksen slumped to the turf towards the end of the first half.

Chants of “Christian” and “Eriksen” from both sets of supporters rang around the stadium as news of his status began to filter through to supporters. The two teams played out an uneventful final few minutes of the first half after both sets of players returned to the pitch with several Danish players in tears. After a short break

TREBEL!

Belgium pump three past Russia



Belgium's Romelu Lukaku speaks into the camera after scoring a goal against Russia in St Petersburg as he sends a message of support to Denmark's Christian Eriksen who is recovering in hospital in Copenhagen after collapsing on the pitch during an earlier game against Finland on Saturday. Lukaku shouted “Chris, Chris, stay strong — I love you” into a pitchside camera during the celebration for his opening goal.

— AP

Eriksen brought back from the dead

Copenhagen, June 13: Denmark's team doctor said on Sunday that Christian Eriksen's heart stopped and that “he was gone” before being resuscitated with a defibrillator at the European Championship.

Eriksen collapsed during Denmark's opening Euro 2020 group game against Finland on Saturday and was given lengthy medical treatment before regaining consciousness.

“He was gone. And we

did cardiac resuscitation. And it was cardiac arrest,” said team doctor Morten Boesen, who led the work in giving Eriksen treatment on the field.

“How close were we? I don't know. We got him back after one defib. That's quite fast,” he added.

Eriksen was in stable condition at a Copenhagen hospital and had spoken to teammates via video link on Sunday, team officials said.

Boesen said it was still

unclear what caused the midfielder's collapse.

“I'm not cardiologist, so the details about why it happened and further, I will leave to the experts,” he said.

He also said the 29-year-old Eriksen may not have survived had the game not been played at a major football tournament with top-class medical equipment at hand.

“That was completely decisive, I think,” Boesen said.

LUKAKU DEDICATES HIS GOALS TO ERIKSEN

Saint Petersburg, June 13: Belgium striker Romelu Lukaku said he shed tears for Christian Eriksen before dedicating his two-goal haul in Saturday's 3-0 win over Russia at Euro 2020 to his stricken Inter Milan teammate.

“I am really happy with the win, but it was hard for me to play because my thoughts were with Christian Eriksen — I dedicate this to him,” said Lukaku, the man-of-the-match in Saint Petersburg.

Lukaku gave Belgium an early lead, then shouted “Chris, Chris, stay strong — I love you” into a pitchside camera during the celebration for his opening goal.

Eriksen is recovering in hospital in Copenhagen after collapsing on the pitch during extraordinary scenes which overshadowed Denmark's 1-0 home defeat by Finland in Saturday's earlier Group 'B' game.

“I cried a few tears before the game,” Lukaku revealed after the final whistle.

“I spent a lot of time with him,” Lukaku said of Eriksen after the pair won the Italian league title with Inter last season.

“My thoughts go to his wife and kids,” the Belgian star footballer further added.

Lukaku has now scored 20 goals in his last 15 international games.

— AFP



Sime Vrsaljko of Croatia heads the ball over Raheem Sterling of England during their Euro Group 'D' match at Wembley stadium in London on Sunday.

— AP

England off to a Sterling start

London, June 13: Raheem Sterling ignited England's Euro 2020 campaign as the Manchester City forward's clinical finish sealed a 1-0 win against Croatia in their Group 'D' opener on Sunday.

Gareth Southgate's side were struggling to break down Croatia until Sterling struck in the second half at sun-baked Wembley.

The 26-year-old's first goal at a major tournament — in his 13th game — was the perfect riposte to critics who questioned Southgate's decision to select him instead of Jack Grealish.

Sterling has endured a chequered relationship with England fans after being hounded following his tame performances at Euro 2016.

He also struggled to hold down a place with Premier League champions City this term, culminating in his lacklustre display in their Champions League final defeat against Chelsea.

But, days after he was given an MBE in the Queen's Birthday Honours List for his anti-racism campaigning, Sterling enjoyed a perfectly-timed moment of redemption.

In a rematch of the 2018 World Cup semi-final won by Croatia, England were hampered by a lack of cutting edge until Sterling came to the rescue.

Sterling's winner eased the tension at Wembley and got fans bellowing ‘Football's coming home’ in the hope England can emulate their run to the semi-finals when they hosted Euro 96, and maybe even win a major tournament for the first time since the 1966 World Cup.

In truth, this was a far from convincing performance, but Southgate will take heart from the way his team kept their nerve on a pressure-packed occasion.

England host neighbours Scotland in their second Group 'D' match on Friday before taking on the Czech Republic in their final game of the first stage on June 22.

After England were booed for taking the knee in support of the Black Lives Matter movement before their friendlies against Austria and Romania in Middlesbrough, there were fears fans at Wembley would turn on the team as well.

There were a smattering of boos from sections of the 22,500 crowd, but the majority cheered the gesture this time.

— AFP

Scotland prepare for Czech mates

Glasgow, June 13: Scotland's nearly quarter-century wait is about to end.

The Scots haven't competed in a major men's football tournament since the 1998 World Cup in France, but that will change on Monday when the team take on the Czech Republic at the European Championship.

It's been a long time coming for the Tartan Army. And although there isn't much expectation for a serious run at Euro 2020, the Scottish fans are happy to be here.

That was evident on Saturday night with Glasgow in full party mode just a week after the city's restaurants and pubs were allowed to reopen indoor seating areas.

Dozens of fans sang near the main George Square, and street stalls sold “No Scotland, No Party” flags. There was no sign of the sectarianism that has blighted club football in this city.

The main objective for Scotland coach Steve Clarke will be to get at least a draw against the Czech Republic, and hope they can advance to the next round from Group 'D'.

“The Czech Republic give us different problems to England and Croatia, so that can have a bearing on selection, but I am pretty settled (on the team),” Clarke said.

One of the biggest headaches for Scotland ahead of the tournament was that two of their best players, captain Andy Robertson and Kieran Tierney, normally play in the same position at left back. But Clarke has found a way to make it work, with both playing on the left — Tierney in a back three and Robertson in a more advanced role at left wing-back.

— AP



Joel Pohjanpalo (centre) of Finland scores during the Euro Group 'B' match against Denmark at the Parken stadium in Copenhagen on Saturday. The match was halted and then resumed after Denmark's Christian Eriksen collapsed on the field.

— AP

Shaky Spain begin quest against Sweden

Seville, June 13: It was only a week ago that Spain received some bad news that could have jeopardised their participation in the European Championship.

Captain Sergio Busquets tested positive for the Coronavirus and the national team suddenly faced the possibility of a Covid-19 outbreak.

Busquets left the team's training camp and the rest of the squad had to go into isolation. Everyone had to

be tested and retested. Spain coach Luis Enrique had to hastily put together a parallel squad in case more players were infected. Personalised training routines were put into place. The team's final warm-up match had to be played with an under-21 squad.

Fears increased when a second player, defender Diego Llorente, tested positive a few days later, and Spanish football federation president Luis

Rubiales said more positive results were likely. More players were pulled away from their vacations to join the parallel training bubble.

But normalcy was somehow restored for Spain ahead of their Group 'E' opener against Sweden on Monday in Seville.

Llorente's test result turned out to be a false-positive. The government rushed in to vaccinate the entire squad. Players were allowed to practice togeth-

er again after tests kept coming back negative.

Spain will be much closer to full strength when they take on the Swedes at La Cartuja Stadium.

Sweden also had to deal with setbacks because of the coronavirus. Dejan Kulusevski and Mattias Svanberg tested positive last week and had to go into isolation.

They won't be available to play on Monday, and neither will Busquets.

Sweden will be without

their own veteran star, Zlatan Ibrahimovic.

The Swedish attack will likely be led by 21-year-old Alexander Isak, who plays for Real Sociedad in the Spanish league.

Meanwhile, Spain's squad had their first full practice only on Saturday, when Luis Enrique began deciding who will replace Busquets, the only player remaining in the squad that was in Spain's World Cup-winning team in 2010.

— AP