

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
VISAKHAPATNAM | SUNDAY | 11 JULY 2021

## WEATHER



Max: 35.0°C  
Min: 26.8°C  
RH: 76%  
Rainfall: Trace

Forecast: Mist.  
Max/Min temp.  
30/25 °C

## ASTROGUIDE

**Plava:** Uttarayana  
**Tithi:** Ashada Shuddha Padyami  
till 7.45 am  
**Star:** Pushyami till 2.19 am  
(Monday)  
**Variyam:** 9.26 am to 11.07 am  
**Durmuhurtam:** 5.06 pm to  
5.58 pm  
**Rahukalam:** 4.30 pm to 6 pm  
**HJRI CALENDAR**  
Zeeqad 29,1441 AH  
**PRAVERS**  
(ROYAL MOSQUE)  
Fajar: 5.05 am  
Zohar: 1.30 pm  
Asar: 5.00 pm  
Maghrib: 6.19 pm  
Isha: 8.30 pm  
**SUNSET TODAY 6.36 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.29 AM**  
**MOONSET TODAY 7.52 PM**  
**MOONRISE TOMORROW 6.21 AM**

## COUNTER POINT



**Happy population day...  
more population,  
more voters!**

## SHORT TAKES

### Eric Garcetti is US envoy to India

**Washington:** US President Joe Biden on Friday nominated Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti, to be ambassador to India. Garcetti, who has led country's second-largest city since 2013 with a focus on improving transportation and sustainability, declined to run for president last year but has been widely seen as seeking to burnish his credentials with a new job.

■ Report on Page 5

### 4 held with heroin worth ₹2,500 cr

**New Delhi:** The Delhi Police Special Cell has arrested four men, including an Afghan and recovered a record 354 kilograms of heroin worth over ₹2,500 crore from them, officials said. The accused have been identified as Rizwan Kashmiri, a resident of Ghitorni here and native of Anantnag in Jammu and Kashmir, Gurpreet Singh and Gurjot Singh, both residents of Jalandhar in Punjab and Hazrat Ali, from Afghanistan, they said.

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70% of adults**

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**Aussie Barty is  
Wimbledon champ**

## TABLOID

**A field day for  
Harleen**



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### Sky no limit for Sirisha Bandla



An artist paints a portrait of astronaut Sirisha Bandla in Mumbai on Saturday. Sirisha, the Indian-origin aeronautical engineer who was born in Guntur and brought up in Houston, Texas, will join Sir Richard Branson, Virgin Galactic's billionaire founder, and five others on board SpaceShip Two Unity to make a journey to the edge of space from New Mexico on Sunday.

— PTI

## TS stops N'sagar hydel power AP sees bid to avoid criticism as Pulichintala was filling fast

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10**

Telangana state government has stopped hydroelectric power generation from Nagarjunasagar dam main power house with a capacity of 810 mw at about 12 noon on Saturday. AP water resources authorities say that power generation has come down at Srisaillam project as water level in the reservoir dipped to 810.24 ft with the current storage of 34.39 tmc ft (15.94 per cent). With zero

inflow of water into the reservoir, outflow was recorded at 6,357 cusecs. At Nagarjunasagar dam, current water level was recorded at 530.81 ft with storage of water to the tune of 166.59 tmc ft (53.39%) against gross capacity at FRL of 312.05 tmc ft with inflow and outflow registering 1,000 cusecs each. At Pulichinthala project, current water level was recorded at 171.03 ft with current storage of water at 39.83 tmc ft (87.02%) against gross capacity at FRL of 45.77

tmc ft of water while inflow and outflow of water were recorded at 6,790 cusecs each. At Prakasam barrage, current level of water was recorded at 57.05 ft with current storage of 3.07 tmc ft of water (100%) against gross capacity at FRL of 3.07 tmc ft of water and inflow of water was recorded at 14,024 cusecs and outflow was at 12,646 cusecs of water. The AP water resources authorities maintain that as Pulichinthala is getting huge quantum of water and it may get filled

### J&K DISMISSES HIZBUL CHIEF'S SONS FROM JOB

**YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, JULY 10**

The Jammu and Kashmir authorities on Saturday sacked two sons of Hizb-ul-Mujahideen chief Muhammad Yusuf Shah alias Syed Salahuddin "in the interest of the nation", along with nine others. Pursuing a tough policy against what it sees as their anti-national activities, their being in government service posing a threat to the security and integrity of the country or their violating Government Servants Conduct Rules, the Jammu and Kashmir government has in the past two years dismissed a large number of its employees including teachers, revenue officials, engineers and policemen. Official sources said that in the latest spell Salahuddin's sons, and nine others were terminated "in the interest of the nation as per the Constitutional provision".

## UP: No job, sops over 2-child law

**Lucknow, July 10:** According to a draft of the proposed population control Bill, anyone violating two-child policy in Uttar Pradesh will be debarred from contesting local bodies elections, from applying for or getting promotion in government jobs, and receiving any kind of government subsidy.

The UP State Law Commission (UPSLC) states that the provisions are part of the draft titled the Uttar Pradesh Population (Control, Stabilisation and Welfare) Bill, 2021. The UPSLC website says, "The State Law Commission, UP, is working on control, stabilisation and welfare of the population of the state and has prepared a draft Bill." Suggestions have been invited from the public to improve the Bill and July 19 is the last date. Listing incentives for public servants who adopt the two-child

norm, the Bill says, "Public servants who adopt the two-child norm will get two additional increments during their service, maternity or as the case may be, paternity leave of 12 months, with full salary and allowances and three per cent hike in the employer's contribution fund under national pension scheme." A State Population Fund will be constituted for the purpose of implementation of the Act. Listing the government's duties, the draft Bill says that maternity centres will be established at all primary health centres. The Centres and NGOs will distribute contraceptive pills, condoms, etc, spread awareness about family planning through community health workers and ensure registration of pregnancies, deliveries, births and deaths across the state.

— PTI

### AP'S IRON ORE TENDER: K'TAKA SAYS BORDER NOT DEMARCATED

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JULY 9**

A controversy has erupted over the mining department inviting tenders for mining of iron ore in D Hirehal mandal, in the western boundary region of the state, as the Karnataka government says a survey to demarcate the boundary line remains unfinished. The Andhra Pradesh Mineral Development Corporation (APMDC), fully owned by the state government, invited e-tenders from experienced and competent bidders for exploration, development and operations of 25 hectares of the iron ore deposit area at H Siddapuram village in D Hirehal mandal of the district a week ago. The mining operations will be on a raising-cum-sale-contract basis.

■ Page 2: Bidders asked to register on AP portal

## Cabinet reshuffle rumours get loud

### Several YSRC aspirants hoping to get berths

**MD ILYAS | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10**

Speculation is rife about a Cabinet reshuffle and many aspirants including firebrand YSRC leaders are pinning hopes on getting berths. The YSRC came into power with a mammoth majority and there was huge competition for Cabinet berths during that time. Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy decided to reshuffle the Cabinet after two-and-a-half years to give chance to others. Recently, the BJP-led Central government was reshuffled as per equations to face the elections. Similarly, the YSRC will rejig the state Cabinet for the next general elections to strengthen the party. Jagan Mohan Reddy, under social engineering

concept, kept five deputy Chief Ministers' posts and priority to all sections in his Cabinet. There was no representation of minorities in the earlier Telugu Desam (TD) government but Jagan gave deputy Chief Minister's post to Amzath Basha who belongs to a minority community. The YSRC legislators who had played active roles when the party was in Opposition were hoping to be placed in the Cabinet but missed and now, they are expecting ministries in the Cabinet reshuffle. According to the sources, the CM is considering the performance of ministers to continue them further in the Cabinet but only a few countable ministers were on the safe side. According to the sources, the Cabinet is expected to make another

reshuffle in the next three months or in December this year. The sources informed that the Chief Minister was unhappy with the performance of some ministers and they would be sacked from the Cabinet. Jagan Mohan Reddy, in a major development, stripped two of his ministers of important portfolios by their subjects from revenue to finance department. Registrations and stamps being looked after by deputy CM Dharmana Krishna Das and commercial taxes department being looked after by Deputy CM K. Narayana Swamy were transferred to finance under the charge of finance minister Buggana Rajendranth Reddy.

■ Page 2: Wide debate about new Cabinet ministers

## Shah to empower all coops

**New Delhi, July 10:** The government is determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered, Union minister Amit Shah, who met some leading figures of the country's cooperative sector on Saturday, said.

The meeting came three days after Prime Minister Narendra Modi reallocated the portfolios of his ministers in which Shah was given the charge of the newly-created Ministry of Cooperation. Those who met the Union home minister include chairman of the National Cooperative Union of India Dileep Sanghani, the chairman and the managing director of the Indian

Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Limited (IFFCO) B.S. Nakai and U.S. Awasthi respectively and chairman of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd (NAFED) Bijender Singh. "Today met @ncuicoop chairman Dileep Sanghani ji, @IFFCO\_PR chairman B.S. Nakai ji, managing director U.S. Awasthi ji and @nafedindia chairman Dr Bijender Singh ji. Officials said even though Shah has not yet assumed the charge of the ministry of cooperation, he has begun to meet people. In the meeting, the minister asked cooperatives like IFFCO and KRIBHCO to

work in the field of seed production using vacant land of 38,000 hectares as well as in organic farming, the NCUI said in a separate statement. Shah also assured the delegation that the same benefits given to Farmer Producer Organisations will be provided to primary agriculture cooperatives in the country for strengthening them, it added. In the meeting, the minister desired that a conference with representatives of state-level cooperatives should be organised by NCUI, IFFCO and other cooperatives for discussing issues confronting the cooperative movement.

— PTI

## MONSOON | ERRANT

## Deficit rain slows down cultivation

**DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10**

Deficit rainfall in coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh has slowed down cultivation activity this kharif season. The north and coastal AP districts received deficit rainfall and Rayalaseema districts received excess rainfall in June month which is considered as the beginning of kharif sowings. Chittoor, Anantapur, Kadapa and Kurnool districts had received an average of 103.8 mm rainfall in June which was 43.6 mm

excess to normal rainfall of 72.3 mm. The targeted cultivation area in 13 districts of AP for kharif-2021 is 38,13,859 hectares and sowing activity has been started in only 5,75,884 hectares. According to the Directorate of Economics and Statistics (DES) on Rainfall in Andhra Pradesh, the Rayalaseema districts - Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Kurnool - received an average of 103.8 mm of rainfall in June that was 43.6 mm excess compared to normal rainfall of 72.3 mm. Chittoor district received 98.5 mm against

● **THE TARGETED** cultivation area in 13 districts of AP for kharif-2021 is 38,13,859 hectares and sowing activity has been started in only 5,75,884 hectares.

normal rainfall of 78.7 mm, Kadapa 109.3 mm against 89.2 mm, Anantapur 102.9 mm against 63.9 mm and Kurnool 104.3 mm against 77.2 mm rainfall during June month. South coastal district received normal rainfall of 61.1 mm against 74.7 mm

normal rainfall in June. Krishna district received 100 mm rainfall against 97.8 mm, Guntur 81.7 mm against 88.3 mm, Prakasam 42.3 mm against 58 mm and Nellore 20.4 mm against 56.8 mm rainfall in June. The north coastal districts received deficit rainfall of 85.5 mm rainfall against 126.1 mm. Srikakulam district received 82 mm rainfall against 134.9 mm, Vizianagaram 83.4 mm against 128.4 mm, Visakhapatnam 102.7 mm against 128.8 mm, East Godavari received 88.0 mm

against 123.7 mm and West Godavari district received 71.5 mm rainfall against normal rainfall of 114.7 mm during June. Farmers Seetharamaiah and K Brahmaiah said irrigation water was must but the deficit rain slowed down the sowing activity. They said the sowing activity would pick up in the second half of July with the release of irrigation water in the canals and due to seasonal rains.

■ Page 2: Deficit rain only in north coastal districts

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## SHORT BRIEF

## NEED EXPLANATION ON OBJECTIONS TO LOANS: PAC TO CM

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 10

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

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

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

## 3 SPECIAL OFFICERS APPOINTED FOR HOUSING WORKS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

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

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

## MEDICOS TO MOVE HC TO PROMOTE THEM TO 2ND YEAR

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

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

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

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

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

## Neta's Natter

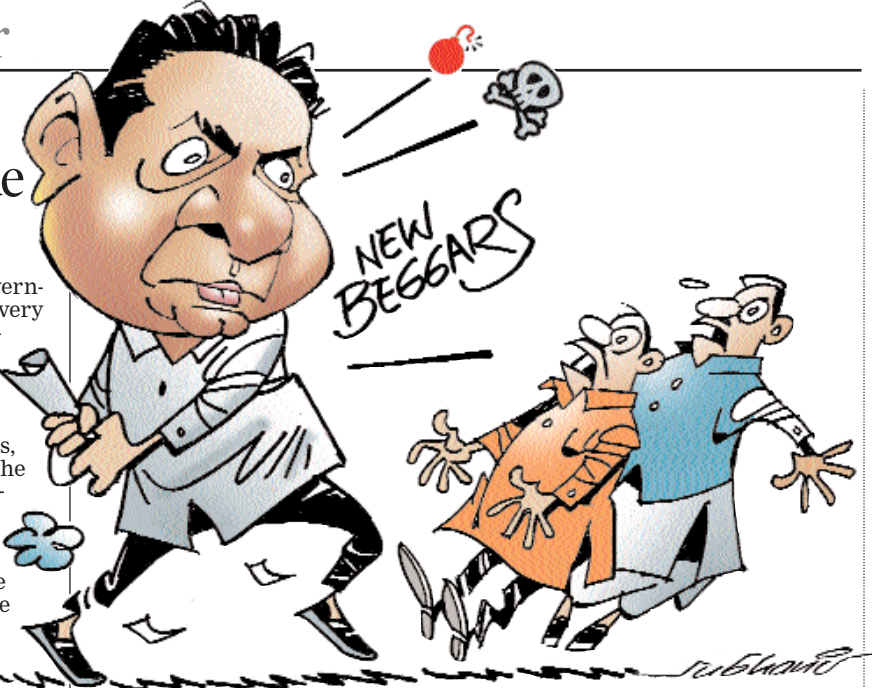
## AP's move to increase revenue boomerangs!

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

## Babus propose, but the big boss disposes

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

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



## KTR joins foul-mouthed club

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



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

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

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

## Wide debate about new Cabinet

From Page 1

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Bidders asked to register on AP portal

From page 1

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

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

uments in the online portal. The last date for submission of technical bid by online is July 23.

The H. Siddapuram mining area has rich iron deposits in the D. Hirehal mandal located closer to Bellary district's forest area of Karnataka.

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

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

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

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

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

## Boat owners want tourism to restart

## Operators had been jobless due to the pandemic

SAMPAT G.  
SAMRITAN | DC  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## TS violated KRMB orders, says Sajjala

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JULY 10

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

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

The YSRC conducted a virtual meeting on Saturday on AP's water rights issues and consumption of Krishna waters by the two states. The meeting was attended by Ramakrishna Reddy, minister for water resources, P. Anil Kumar Yadav and other leaders.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramakrishna Reddy recalled that Telangana Chief Minister K

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

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

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

## TUNGABHADRA DAM RECEIVES 34 TMC FT WATER FROM HEAVY RAINS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JULY 10

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

the dam reported storage level of 1610.28 ft.

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

## DEFICIT RAIN RECORDED ONLY IN THE NORTH COASTAL DISTRICTS

From page 1

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

IMD Amaravati director S. Stella said from July 8

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

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







## SHORT TAKES

### NIA RELEASES LIST OF 20 WANTED NAXALS

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC**  
RAIPUR, JULY 10

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

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

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

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

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

### AYURVEDA DOYEN DR P.K. WARRIER DIES AGED 100

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JULY 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

### D.K. SHIVAKUMAR SLAPS MAN FOR EMBRACING HIM

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

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

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

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

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

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

# LA Mayor is US envoy to India

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

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
with agency inputs  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

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

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

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

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

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



Eric M. Garcetti

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

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

He currently chairs LA

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

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

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

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

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

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

## People's plight



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

### ANANTNAG GUNFIGHT: 3 LeT MILITANTS KILLED

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
SRINAGAR JULY 10

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

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

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

The J&K police and Army officials said that when the joint teams zeroed in on the suspect hideout of the militants they opened fire, triggering the gun battle.

# BJP claims win in UP local polls

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# AIKSCC: Maha govt betrayed farmers

**SONU SHRIVASTAVA | DC**  
MUMBAI, JULY 10

Farmers' union All India Kisan Sangharsh Coordination Committee (AIKSCC) of Maharashtra on Saturday alleged that the MVA government has betrayed the farmers by bringing three amendment bills in connection with the central farm laws. Despite giving assurance of passing a resolution in connection with revocation of all the farm laws, the MVA government has acted under pressure from the corporate lobby and the Union government, the AIKSCC said.

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

the Delhi protests.

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

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

proposed bills," the minister said.

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

The bills have provisions for higher than MSP rate for produce in farming agreement with traders, timely payment of dues and three-year jail term or Rs 5 lakh fine or both for harassment of farmers. It has also provisions to give power to the state government to regulate and prohibit production, supply, distribution and impose stock limits on essential commodities.

# WHO to decide on Covaxin inclusion within 4-6 weeks

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

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

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

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

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

At present, the WHO has approved vaccines by

### INDIA RECORDS 42,766 NEW COVID-19 CASES

**DC CORRESPONDENT**  
NEW DELHI JULY 10

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

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

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

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

# India, Georgia to work jointly

**SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

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

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

Russia.

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

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

### SHIVRAJ, NATH RIVALRY SPILLS TO RAJ BHAVAN

**RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC**  
BHOPAL, JULY 10

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

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

## DRUG | PEDDLING

### Afghan national among four arrested, 354 kg of drugs recovered

# Delhi cops seize heroin worth over ₹ 2,500 cr

**BHASKAR HARI SHARMA | DC**  
NEW DELHI, JULY 10

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

UKRAINIAN  
SOLDIER KILLED,  
THREE WOUNDED

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

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

TAJIKISTAN  
QUAKE CLAIMS  
FIVE LIVES

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

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

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

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

Tajik President Emomali Rakhmon has ordered a commission of inquiry.

MOGADISHU  
BLAST: UNKNOWN  
CASUALTIES

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

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

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

Nobody immediately claimed responsibility for the bombing.

ZELDA GAME  
CARTRIDGE SELLS  
FOR \$870,000

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

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

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

REMOVAL OF  
U.S. CAPITOL  
FENCING BEGINS

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

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

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

EU hits goal of delivering  
vaccines for 70% of adults

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

All but the J&J jab require two doses to achieve full efficacy, and the EU is home to an estimated 366 million adults. "This weekend, we delivered enough vaccine to member states to fully vaccinate at least 70 percent of the adult population this month. By tomorrow, some 500 million doses will have been distributed to all regions of Europe," she said.

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



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

— AFP

Delta variant cases mark  
32% weekly surge in UK

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

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

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

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

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

Kabul rushes  
troops to border

## Afghans try to retake Taliaban-held crossing

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Haiti asks US, UN for troops

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

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

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

Cyberattack hits  
Iranian ministry

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

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

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

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

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

NO CASUALTIES  
FROM TEHRAN  
BLAST: OFFICIALS

**Tehran, July 10:** Iranian police said a reported explosion early Saturday at a public park near state TV headquarters in the capital Tehran caused no casualties or damage, the official IRNA news agency reported.

Tehran deputy police chief Gen. Hamid Hodavand said the case was under investigation and details would be provided later. He accused foreign media outlets of exaggerating the reported blast. — AP

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

B'desh factory  
owner nabbed

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

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

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

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

"It was a deliberate murder," the police chief said.

All eight people detained face murder charges.

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

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

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## SHORT TAKES

India-Lanka series  
now from July 18

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

Sciver shines as  
England beat India

**Northampton:** England all-rounder Nat Sciver smashed a record-equalling half century before the bowlers put the struggling Indian batters under pressure to ensure an 18 run-win for the hosts via DLS method in the rain-curtailed first T20I against here. Put in to bat, England rode on Sciver's 27-ball 55 and wicket-keeper Amy Jones' 43 off 27 balls to reach 177/7 in 20 overs. Sciver's sensational fifty was England's joint fastest in the format. In reply, India failed to keep up with the required run-rate despite vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's quickfire 29 off 17 balls before rain fell with the visitors at 54/3 in 8.4 overs, 18 runs behind England via the DLS method. — P/T

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

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IT'S BARTY TIME!  
Aussie Ashleigh wins emotional Wimbledon title

**London, July 10:** Ashleigh Barty won her first Wimbledon title on the 50th anniversary of fellow indigenous Australian Evonne Goolagong Cawley's maiden crown, beating Karolina Pliskova 6-3, 6-7 (4/7), 6-3 in the final on Saturday.

The 25-year-old Australian — who wore a specially-designed dress in tribute to Cawley's iconic scallop one she sported in 1971 — adds the Wimbledon crown to her 2019 French Open title.

"It took me a long time to verbalise, to dare to dream it and say it," said Barty. "I didn't sleep a lot last night, I was thinking of all the what-ifs. I hope I made Evonne proud," she added.

It was the first women's Wimbledon final to go to three sets since 2012 when Serena Williams beat Poland's Agnieszka Radwanska.

Barty had looked like cruising to victory after soaring into a 4-0 lead over her opponent — the Australian's start so blistering that she won the first 14 points.

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

Barty got the break for 2-0 in the final set and despite one or two wobbles she got herself over the line sinking to her knees, her hands over her face in disbelief. She wiped a couple of tears away before climbing up to the player's box, just like her compatriot Pat Cash did when he won the Wimbledon men's title in 1987.

— AFP



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

## Djokovic into 30th Slam final

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

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

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

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

set and was probably the better player.

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

Victory on Sunday will not only take Djokovic level with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal on 20 Slam wins. He will also just need the

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

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

THE FINAL  
COUNTDOWN  
England, Italy gear  
up for one big kick

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

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

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

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

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

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

Both teams have been transformed since then.

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

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

## Live on TV

EURO

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

## NUMBERS GAME

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

## HEAD TO HEAD

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

## LAST FIVE MATCHES

**Italy won:** 2  
**England won:** 1  
**Drawn:** 2

## MEETINGS IN EUROPEAN CHAMPIONSHIP

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

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