

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VIJAYAWADA | MONDAY | 14 JUNE 2021



WORLD | 5

Netanyahu's 12-yr rule ends in Israel



SPORTS | 8

Djokovic is new king of clay

TABLOID

Bollywood's age-defying divas



WEATHER

Max: 31.0°C  
Min: 27.0°C  
RH: 81%  
Rainfall: 1.6 mm

Forecast: Cloudy/showers.  
Max/Min temp.  
31/27 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava; Uttarayana  
Tithi: Jyestha Shuddha  
Chaviti till 10.31 pm  
Star: Pushyami till 8.32 pm  
Varjyam: Nil  
Durmuhurtam: 12.42 pm to  
1.34 pm; 3.18 pm to 4.11 pm  
Rahukalam: 7.30 pm to 9 pm  
HILIRI CALENDAR  
Zeeqad 2,1442 AH  
PRAYERS  
Fajar: 5.10 am  
Zohar: 1.30 pm  
Asar: 5.15 pm  
Maghrib: 6.47 pm  
Isha: 8.30 pm  
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.34 AM  
SUNSET TODAY 6.41 PM  
MOONRISE TODAY 8.40 PM  
MOONSET TOMORROW 10.47 AM

COUNTER POINT



They should declare the cadre as frontline warriors and vaccinate them in poll bound states!

SHORT TAKES

Congress needs reforms: Sibal

**New Delhi:** The Congress must bring 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 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, he said.

Full report on Page 4

WB BJP divided over defections

**Kolkata:** A major policy clash has unfolded between two prominent leaders in the West Bengal BJP on how to tackle the threat of defection by its newly elected MLAs after their former national vice-president Mukul Roy, the sitting BJP MLA from Krishnanagar North, returned to the Trinamul Congress.

Full report on Page 4

Indian docu gets NYIFF best award

**Visakhapatnam:** 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 (NYIFF).

Full report on Page 3

## YSRC's sway to begin in Legislative Council soon

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

The era of the YSR Congress is going to start in the 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 Council 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 continua-

● The ruling party would get all 16 MLC seats, which are going for polls, and would give it a majority in the Council.

● During his recent visit to Delhi, the Chief Minister did not urge the Centre to cooperate for the Council abolition.

tion of the Council. His recent action also lends credence to this view.

The Chief Minister 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 the 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 Decentralization and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020 and APCRDA (Repeal) failed to pass due to severe opposition from the TD and both the bills were referred to the select committee by the 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.

Page 2: YSRC minority MLC may head Council

## WORK ON TTD'S BALAJI TEMPLE IN JAMMU BEGINS

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, JUNE 13

The work began for erecting a magnificent temple and allied infrastructure at the behest of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) in Jammu and Kashmir's winter capital, Jammu, on Sunday.

J&K's Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha unveiled the plaque marking the laying of foundation stone and attended the *bhumi puja* ceremony. The temple is expected to be completed in 18 months in two phases, at a cost of ₹33.22 crore.

Among those present at the ceremony included Union ministers Jitendra Singh and G. Kishan Reddy, chairman of TTD Board Y.V. Subba Reddy, and a member of the national executive of RSS, V. Ram Madhav.

"This is a historic and proud day for J&K," he said and asserted that the temple, besides being a centre of faith and spirituality, "will open up opportunities across sectors in Jammu, giving a major push to religious and pilgrimage tourism, boosting the economy of the region."

J&K's administrative council under Sinha had in April this year allotted 62 acres of land to the TTD for building the Sri Venkateshwara Swamy Temple at Majeon on the peripheries of Jammu city.

## Messenger is fall guy in AP tax dept

N. 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 government with no option but to pay the penalty.

Interestingly, a report submitted by the Visakhapatnam joint commissioner explaining the events that led to the loss of revenue and holding Sekhar responsible for the loss was ignored by the chief commissioner.

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

Page 2: Sekhar didn't clear Essar refund

## Pradhan asks Cong govts to cut fuel tax

**New Delhi, June 13:** With petrol and diesel prices climbing to record high, oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Sunday said the Congress governments in Rajasthan and Maharashtra should cut high sales tax if the party was concerned about fuel price burden on common man.

Petrol and diesel have risen to all-time high across the country after fuel rates rose by ₹5.72

per litre to ₹6.25 per litre in less than six weeks. This is due to a combination of rising international oil prices and record high central and state taxes.

"If Rahul Gandhi is concerned about the poor being hit by fuel prices, he should ask chief ministers of Congress-ruled states to cut taxes. He should ask Uddhav Thackeray to reduce taxes," he said. —PTI

## State acts on TD men's land grab

### Revenue officials free 49 acres of land

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Both the ruling YSRC and Opposition TD leaders traded charges over grab of government lands in Visakhapatnam district in the past, after revenue officials took back 49.1 acres of government land in Gajuwaka area, that was allegedly under the encroachment by the family of Palla Srinivasa Rao, ex-MLA.

Revenue officials said a special drive was launched last year to take back encroached lands. So far, 430 acres of government land worth Rs 4.291 crore was seized by the YSRC government. Srinivasa Rao said this was just a drama and he lost no land. Nor did he encroach any land, he claimed.

In the move on Sunday morning, revenue officials broke down a compound wall close to Palla Srinivasa Rao's land and removed some sheds. The total extent of 49.1 acres, worth ₹791 crore, was freed from encroachment, the officials said.

"Land grabbing began during the tenure of the Chandrababu Naidu-led Telugu Desam govern-

"If any politician indulged in land grab, the victims can go straight to the commissioner of police and launch a formal complaint," says tourism minister Muttamsetti (Avanti) Srinivasa Rao.

The minister told the media that the drive to take back the government land should not be seen as acts of vengeance against the Opposition leaders.

He said Chandrababu Naidu would not approve of the encroachments, he said, and added that the seized lands would be used for housing the poorer sections.

The minister said no one would be spared if they indulged in land grabbing. "If any politician indulged in land grab, the victims can go straight to the commissioner of police and launch a formal complaint," the minister said.

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," Srinivasa Rao told this newspaper on Sunday evening.

As per his information, the open land belonged to the Railways and some public and corporate sectors. The revenue officials should have conducted a survey, issued notice and then seized the land if it belonged to the government, he said.

"It is illegal to seize land on Sundays without following proper procedure," said Srinivasa Rao.

His family members said that after Srinivasa Rao turned down an offer to join YSRC, the official machinery was unleashed against him.

Condemning Sunday's seizure, Telugu Desam state president K. Atchannaidu said the revenue officials found all the records were proper and were unable to do anything. So, they demolished the two-foot boundary wall adjoining the Yadava Jaggarajupeta pond and Srinivasa Rao's lands.

## SHAH TO FOCUS ON TALKS WITH FARMER UNIONS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

In a bid to break the deadlock with protesting farmers from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh who have been camping at Delhi's borders for over six months, home minister Amit Shah may take the initiative to enable the resumption of dialogue between the Centre and the farmer unions.

Sources said, however, that while the home minister may not directly hold talks with the farmers himself, this could largely be done by agriculture minister Narendra Tomar and railway and commerce minister Piyush Goyal, Mr Shah could hold back-channel talks with the farmers to end the deadlock and bring the two sides once again to the negotiating table.

The talks between the Centre and the protesting farmers hit a roadblock in January this year as even after 11 rounds of negotiations no solutions could be reached between the two sides. While the Centre agreed to suspend the three farm reform laws for almost two years and amend the laws, the farmer unions remained adamant on a complete repeal of the law.

STUDY | BIZ Parents seeking to help kids settle will be denied entry

## US resumes visas for students

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, JUNE 13

Indian students who have taken admission in American universities in the 2021-22 academic year can book appointments for visas from Monday at the United States embassy in New Delhi and US consulates in other Indian cities.

The US embassy has decided to start an intensive two months of interviews starting July 1. Embassy officials said "tens of thousands of interview slots" would be available from Monday. However, parents who want to go to

● The embassy added that students need not carry the original hard copy of I-20 forms (certificate of eligibility) given by the institutions. Instead the electronic I-20 provided by schools is accepted by the embassy

the US to "help their children settle" cannot accompany them at this time as the US government has still not opened B1/B2 visas for tourists.

The US stopped the entry of Indians after President Joe Biden signed Presidential Proclamation 10199 suspending most non-immi-

grant travel from India on April 30 due to the intense Covid-19 second wave that saw a huge number of Indians infected with the contagious "Delta" variant.

Now, with the wave abating and fresh cases largely under control, the US government has decided to open its borders for Indian students who will be joining classes in the fall semester.

"Student visas remain a top priority for the US Mission to India and we are making every attempt to facilitate student travel in time for the fall semester. As such, on June 14, 2021, we will open limited July

and August student visa appointments at posts across India," the embassy said.

The embassy added that students need not carry the original hard copy of I-20 forms (certificate of eligibility for non-immigrant student status) given by the institutions. Instead, the electronic I-20 provided by schools is accepted by the embassy. Students need to get it printed and carry it with them. Also, fully funded students do not need to show proof for financial support during the visa interview if it is mentioned in the I-20 form.

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## SHORT TAKES

## ADAMANCY OF TS COPS LEADS TO TRAFFIC CHAOS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

Vehicular traffic came to a virtual standstill on the Vijayawada-Hyderabad national highway at Ramapuram Crossroads 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 daytime 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.

According to reports, Telangana police had allowed 700 vehicles into Telangana with valid e-passes and denied entry to nearly 1,500 vehicles for travelling without e-passes.

## YSRC MINORITY MLC MAY HEAD COUNCIL CHIEF

FROM PAGE 1

The YSRC allocated the Assembly Speaker post to BCs. As such, it may now consider Council Chairman post for minorities or SC community as part of social engineering concept which gave big success to the YSRC during elections by way of preference to BCs, SC, minorities and other backward castes. Earlier the TD gave the Chairman post to M.A. Sharif before elections to appease minorities, but they supported the YSRC. So, the ruling party may appoint retired IPS officer and MLC Shaik Mohammed Iqbal as the Council Chairman.

There is another speculation. SCs are also die-hard supporters of the YSRC hence they too stand a good chance. If Jagan Mohan Reddy wants to give the post to SCs, then MLC Dokka Manikavaramprasad Rao or Moshen Raju would be chosen. Sources also informed that as Kapus are hugely supported the YSRC, even neglecting Jana Sena, there are bright chances of re-electing Ummareddy Venkateswarlu belong to the Kapu community as an MLC and further offering the Deputy Chairman of the Council post for Kapus as part of social engineering.

## CM TO LAUNCH 61 AGRI LABS ON JULY 8

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KAKINADA, JUNE 13

Agriculture and food processing minister Kurasala Kannababu said that integrated agricultural labs would be established in every Assembly constituency in the state. In first phase, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy will inaugurate 61 labs on July 8, the birth anniversary of late chief minister Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy. Kannababu along with MLC Pandula Ravindrababu and Kakinada MP Vanga Gita inaugurated an integrated agriculture lab set up at a cost of ₹82 lakh at Vakalapudi village in Kakinada rural mandal on Sunday. He said Rythu Bharosa Kendras, custom hiring centres and others would also be launched on July 8.

## CLOUDY WEATHER CONDITIONS TO CONTINUE IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Cloudy weather conditions associated with light to moderate rains at isolated places will continue to prevail across the state for next two days. The condition will prevail under the influence of the existing low pressure system over the Bay of Bengal, according to India Meteorological Department (IMD).

Under the influence of favourable weather, thunderstorms and lightning with heavy rainfall would be very likely to occur at isolated places over north coastal Andhra Pradesh and south coastal districts until June 17.

An IMD official release on Sunday stated that the low pressure system over north-west Bay of Bengal and the adjoining coastal areas of West Bengal and North Odisha with the associated cyclonic circulation was tilting south-westwards. It is likely to move west-northwest wards across Odisha during next two to three days.

## Blood banks in AP drying up

People are not coming forward to donate blood due to fear of Coronavirus

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Shortage of blood has hit all blood banks across 13 districts of the state, triggering panic among medical professionals and patients. The state has nearly 100 blood banks, including 18 branches of Indian Red Cross Society (IRCS), 20 of government institutions like Visakha Institute of Medical Sciences, KGH, RIMS, Srikakulam, and Guntur Government Hospital.

Each blood bank must maintain at least 4,000-5,000 units of blood belonging to various types every day. Currently, hardly 200 units of blood are available at almost each blood bank within the state.

Confirming this to DC, IRCS Andhra Pradesh vice-chairman P. Jaganmohana Rao attributed the shortage to second wave of Covid-19 pandemic and on-going vaccine drive across the state.

## Vizag mayor to felicitate blood donors today

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Coinciding with World Blood Donors Day being celebrated on Monday, various private and government institutions are conducting blood donation camps in the Port City on the day.

Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) mayor Golagani Hari Venkata Kumari sent a circular to all the corporators for identifying active blood donors in

“People are not coming forward to donate blood due to fear of Coronavirus and ongoing vaccinations. A vaccinated person must wait for at least two months

their respective wards so that they can be honoured.

“We have identified 20 regular blood donors in the city. I will facilitate them on Monday to mark World Blood Donors Day,” the mayor told *Deccan Chronicle*.

RINL-Vizag Steel Plant workers are also conducting a mega blood donation camp on Monday with the slogan “Save Vizag Steel Plant”.

Vizag Steel Plant’s recognised union president J. Ayodhyaram said the

before donating blood. Since the government has announced vaccination for those above 18 years from June 21, shortage of blood will be more acutely felt in

camp will be part of the union’s on-going protest against the Centre’s decision to privatise the steel plant.

Visakhapatnam Rotary Blood Bank secretary G. Rambabu said, “We need at least 1,000 units of blood per month to distribute among the needy. We are currently getting only 20 per cent of the requirement.”

He hoped the blood donation camp on Monday will bridge the gap to an extent.

the coming days,” Jaganmohana Rao warned. In this context, he asked people, particularly youth, to donate blood before they go in for their vaccination.

## Seers panel to resolve B. Matham head issue

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

The endowment department has decided to appoint a committee with seers to resolve the contentious issue of Brahmamgari 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



Minister for endowments Velampalli Srinivas addressing the media on the Brahmamgari Matham issue in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— C. NARAYANA RAO

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 Veerabrahma-mendra Swamy attained Jeeva Samadhi in 1693 and till today the Peetham was held by eleven successors. It was being contended that the last peetadhipathi wrote his will before his demise and since he had two wives, the children of both the wives are vying to be peetadhipathi.

Minister Srinivas Rao said that as per the Endowment Act, the details and the copy of the will should be submitted to the Dharmika Parishad within 90 days after the demise of the peetadhipathi and so far, either the department or the Dharmika Parishad received any communication in this respect.

Meanwhile, Sivaswami, the president of Vishwa Dharma Parirakshana Samithi, said in Brahmamgari Matham that under the auspices of the committee of temple, the chairperson will be selected and the coronation ceremony would be held. He said it was unfortunate to hear allegations of corruption, irregularities at the Matham.

## No social distancing



People in large numbers gather on the road without maintaining physical distance to offer special prayers at Mutyalamma temple which was in the middle of the BRTS road near Gyanapuram in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

## HISTORIC | TREASURE

## Rare discovery at Srisaillam temple during excavation

## Medieval age copper plates unearthed

DC 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 Brahmarama 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 Gana-maham at Srisaillam, carried out by the temple authorities.

● Latest findings add to the historic significance of the Srisaillam temple as it was patronised by Reddy Kings, Kakatiyas, and the Vijayanagara empire

Out of 6 copper plate sets, 4 sets are written in Sanskrit language and Nandi-Nagari script and other 2 plates are in Telugu language and script. All the plates can be assigned between 14th-16th century C.E.”

## State govt always ready to help Anandaiah: MLA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JUNE 13

Sarvepalli legislator Kakani Govardhan Reddy refuted the allegations that the government is not extending support to the efforts of Bonigi Anandaiah to supply his herbal preparation to other parts of the state. Speaking to media at YSR Congress district office here on Sunday, he said the government was extending all cooperation to Anandaiah to prepare the herbal concoction and also asked him to seek any help from the district collector and other officials for any of his requirements. Govardhan Reddy found

fault with the social media posts that Anandaiah was supplying his concoction only to those funding its preparation and was ignoring the poor people coming for it. The MLA reminded that the concoction was free of cost distributed to 1,80,000 families in Sarvepalli constituency besides officials, bank staff, police, and migrants from various states working at Krishnapatnam Port and other industries.

Govardhan Reddy further said they would arrange a meeting with officials shortly to enable Anandaiah to express his views and seek necessary assistance.

## Fishermen to take to high seas today

DC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Nearly 20,000 fishermen of 2,430 odd mechanised boats across the coastal districts will resume the deep sea fishing operations from the evening on Monday, June 14.

Activities had halted after the Centre imposed a two-month-long ban on deep sea fishing, as is done every year this season. This year, the 61-day ban began on April 14 and ends on June 14, said P.V. Srinivasa Rao, joint director with the department of fisheries in Srikakulam district.

● Fisherman Vasupalli Sureedu at Jalaripeta in the city said women specially offer rituals to “Gangamma Thalli” before the fishing operations are resumed.

“The state government paid ₹10,000 to eligible fisherman families as compensation for their loss of livelihood during the ban period. Nearly 78 per cent of the fishermen got the compensation in the district,” Srinivasa Rao told *DC*.

According to Arjili Dasu, Visakhapatnam district Fishermen’s youth welfare association, the fishermen got ready for resumption of the fishing operations from Monday midnight. They kept the boats ready by loading ice, ration, diesel and water at the Visakhapatnam fishing harbour.

Dasu said the state has 2,430 mechanised fishing boats set on four fishing harbours —Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Machilipatnam and Nizampatnam. Nearly 19,400 boat workers would be engaged in the operations from Monday.

This apart, nearly 2.13 lakh traditional fishermen also take part in the

fishing close to the coast along the Bay of Bengal.

Fisherman Vasupalli Sureedu at Jalaripeta in the city said women specially offer rituals to “Gangamma Thalli” before the fishing operations are resumed.

The Dolphin boats association president Satyanarayana Murthy said the fishermen and fish traders incurred heavy losses in the last two years due to Covid-19. This time, the second wave added to the financial burden of the boat operators and owners, and hence had difficulty taking up the maintenance of the boats and trading.

“The government is urged to consider the pleas of the boat owners apart from the fishermen in terms of giving relaxation on certain taxes and power bills etc to tide over the crisis,” said a boat owner at Vizag fishing harbour.

## SEKHAR DIDN’T CLEAR ESSAR REFUND

FROM PAGE 1

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.

“Had the orders with-holding the refund been issued in view of the appeal, the trader would not have any base to approach the court. The trader got advantage because of the inaction,” said K.R. Suryanarayana, president, AP Government Employees Association.

He urged the government against punishing the messenger.

Ghanta Matham yielded many priceless treasures and the works were going on. The latest find of 21 copper plates would add to the historic links the temple had with the Vijayanagara Empire, he said. He said the copper plates would be sent to labs to decipher the script and preserve the same for posterity.

Meanwhile, Srisaillam temple extended darshan timings due to relaxations given in the curfew hours.



## SHORT TAKES

NRI STUDENT  
DONATES PPE KITS  
AND MEDICAL VANDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

An Indian origin NRI student donated a medical service van and PPE kits through the Empower and Excel USA organization to Don Bosco Alumni Association to help Covid-19 patients at Yerrabalem on Sunday. The 16-year-old Indian origin Nihaar Charagulla lives in San Jose, California, USA raised 15,000 USD to help Covid-19 patients.

With Nihaar's donation, Empower, and Excel, the India chapter got a Covid-19 service vehicle for Don Bosco Alumni Association and PPE kits, and four oxygen concentrators for another facility to serve needy people suffering from Covid.

AP Madiga Finance Corporation Chairman, Kommuri Kanaka Rao, inaugurated the service vehicle by flagging off programme on Sunday at the Don Bosco School premises in Yerrabalem of Mangalagiri Mandal in Guntur district. He hailed the services of Don Bosco Alumni Association with the collaboration of Empower and Excel, USA and the child philanthropist Nihaar for his efforts to raise the donations for the service vehicle to serve Corona sufferers.

REVENUE FROM  
LIQUOR SALES  
DROPS IN STATEDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

Deputy Chief Minister K. Narayana Swamy said that the phase wise liquor ban is yielding good results in AP. He said that the VAT revenue on liquor decreased 41 per cent in the 2020-21 financial year as only ₹4,242.41 crores revenue registered against ₹10,403.84 crore of 2019-20 financial year. He stated that this revenue is reflecting the success of phase wise ban on liquor and fulfilling CM Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy promise about banning liquor.

Narayana Swamy said that the target of revenue collection for 2021-22 was ₹55,935.13 crore. He further said that ₹44,178.51 crore GST revenue has been collected for 2020-21 financial year.

PALEM POLICE  
BUST CRICKET  
BETTING RACKETDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

The PM Palem police and the City Task Force have busted a 'Pakistan Super League T-20' cricket betting racket and arrested four persons from a flat in Celebrity Towers, Panorama Hills, at Rushikonda in Vizag city. The kingpin in the racket Chebolu Srinivas is absconding.

The four were K. Ravi Kumar, T. Dhanunjay and V. Rambabu, all residents of Vizag city and M. Sivaji, a native of Srikakulam. Inspector of PM Palem, A. Ravi Kumar said Chebolu Srinivas alias Cable Srinu employed four persons for organising the cricket betting operations from the Vizag flat.

The PSL T-20 cricket matches commenced from June 9 and the gang has organised some betting operations. They collected bet amounts from the punters for the match between Quetta Gladiators and Peshawar Zalmi teams on Saturday night through online by using the combination kit, mobile phones, cricket line guru app and by communicating with 30 punters.

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FORUM DEMANDS  
GST WAIVER ON  
ALL COVID DRUGSDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JUNE 13

President of Praja Arogya Vedika Dr M.V. Ramanaiah has demanded the central government to drop GST on all the medicines and equipment used for treating Covid-19 patients.

He was reacting to the announcement of reduction on GST from 12 to five per cent on Covid-19 drugs, oxygen concentrators, ventilators, pulse oximeters and other such equipment apart from waiver of tax on medicines for black fungus for the next year.

The senior physician underlined the need to waive all taxes till Covid-19 is eradicated, while questioning the rationale behind time-bound relaxations even as lakhs of people succumbing to the dreaded virus.

In a statement on Sunday, he found fault with the centre for offering a concession on GST till September ignoring the reports over the possible outbreak of the third wave of Covid-19 from the same month.

He said complete removal of GST on all Covid-19 drugs and equipment will be a solace for the poor and middle class who are being ruined because of Covid-19. Dr Ramanaiah slammed the centre for imposing GST on vaccine even while claiming that it is the only weapon against Covid-19.

● **THE SENIOR physician underlined the need to waive all taxes till Covid-19 is eradicated, while questioning the rationale behind timebound relaxations even as lakhs of people succumbing to the dreaded virus.**

HPCL funds for works  
in Simhachalam templeDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

The management of Lord Varaha Lakshmi Nrusimha Swamy temple at Simhachalam in the city on Sunday made a proposal with the representatives of HPCL Visakh Refinery to fund a few facilities for devotees at the temple.

The temple executive officer M.V. Suryakala made the proposal when the HPCL representatives visited the temple for darshan.

Water treatment plant at Gangadhara and repairs for existing water treat-

TEMPLE REVAMPS  
COTTAGES INTO  
HILL RESORTSDC CORRESPONDENT  
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

The endowment department of Simhachalam temple will soon start renovation of 21 cottages that have been lying idle in a dilapidated condition for many years and convert them into hill resorts. These single room dwellings were built for Adivasi farmers whose land was acquired for temple development. The farmers refused to live in these houses citing they were far from their workplace.

It is a single room with a small lounge and a bathroom. The construction is weak and air conditioned machines cannot be mounted on the walls as their structure will not hold them, said executive officer of the temple M.V. Suryakala.

The EO launched several innovative measures to beautify the temple and make it a place worth visiting. "We want to spend ₹10 lakh on each dwelling to make it liveable. Instead of making it a one night stop, we want people to stay for a few days and enjoy the scenic greenery," the EO said.



Contract labourers in a cramped space being ferried in a van to the worksite, throwing Covid caution to the wind and exposing them to the danger of infections, on the Harbour Road in Visakhapatnam on Sunday.

— K. MURALIKRISHNA

Nurse, 60, ends life by  
hanging at hospital

Both relatives and patients lambast authorities for the tragedy

DC 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-19 hospital at

● **THE DOCTORS at the Covid-19 hospital conducted a surgery on Jayamma on June 10 and she was kept under observation. But, her condition was said to have deteriorated. They found her body at 4 am.**

SVIMS campus in Tirupati as she got infected with the black fungus disease.

The doctors at the Covid-19 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-19 hospital. They alleged that negligence of medical staff led to the death of their family member. The RDO

and the police intervened and pacified them.

Responding to these incidents, health minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, who sought details from the hospital management and the district medical officer Dr U. Srihari, advised the staff to ensure the best of medical care is available to patients at the state covid hospital.

The minister advised the RDO to pacify the protesters and provide necessary assistance to them. He also directed the hospital superintendent to pay special attention to the food being supplied to the patients and maintain a hygienic environment at the hospital.

Covid cases reduce in AP,  
12,492 patients dischargedDC CORRESPONDENT  
VIJAYAWADA, JUNE 13

Andhra Pradesh continues to report less number of coronavirus infections. It reported 6,770 new Covid-19 cases and recoveries showed improvement with the discharge of 12,492 patients in the last 24 hours on Sunday. The total Covid-19 infections across 13 districts were 18,09,884 in which total recoveries was at 17,12,267 and the recovery rate increased to 94.61 per cent giving a ray of hope towards swift

recovery from pandemic.

A total of 58 new deaths were registered, increasing the death toll to 11,940 and the death rate at 0.66 per cent. Around 1,02,876 samples were tested in which 6,770 tested positive and the overall positive rate of total 2.045 crore tests is 8.85 per cent.

East Godavari district is on top in daily new infections with 1,199 followed by Chittoor 968, West Godavari 765, Prakasam 530, Srikakulam 491, Kadapa 473 and Krishna report-

ed 440 new infections. Guntur district registered 433 new infections followed by Anantapur 367, Kurnool 299, Visakhapatnam 290, Nellore 267 and the lowest of 248 was reported in Vizianagaram district.

Chittoor district reported 12 new deaths, while it was seven each in East Godavari and West Godavari. Srikakulam reported six while four each reported in Anantapur and Visakhapatnam, three deaths each in Krishna, Prakasam, and Kadapa.

## Union Min. Piyush Goyal visits Tirumala

DC CORRESPONDENT  
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

Union Minister for Railways and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal accompanied by his family members offered prayers to Lord Venkateswara in Tirumala on Sunday.

On his arrival, the union minister was accorded a grand reception by the TTD additional executive officer A.V. Dharma Reddy and temple priests, who later escorted him to the sanctum sanctorum. Later, he was rendered Vedasirvachanam by Vedic pundits and was presented Srivari theertha prasadam and a lamination of Lord Venkateswara.

After winding up his Tirumala temple visit, the union minister reached Tiruchanoor by road and offered prayers to Goddess Padmavathi Devi in the sanctum sanctorum of the TTD temple. Earlier, on his arrival at the main entrance of the temple,



Union Minister for Railways and Minister of Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal offers prayers at Dwajasthambham at Srivari temple in Tirumala on Sunday.

he was accorded a warm welcome in a traditional manner.

AP Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath

Reddy, MP M. Gurumurthy, TTD Board Member and MLA C. Bhaskar Reddy and others were present.

## RACE | FOR POST Competition hots up for around 1,000 vacant posts including chairpersons and directors

## YSRC leaders lobby hard for plum posts

DC CORRESPONDENT  
KURNOOL, JUNE 13

The second rung leaders of the ruling YSR Congress in Kurnool district are gun-gu about the prospects of being accommodated in nominated posts for around 90 corporations.

The number of positions lying vacant, as assessed by aspirants, may be closer to 1,000m which includes chairpersons and directors and co-opted members for certain categories. This has triggered a race among them to muster the support of

leaders.

Many aspirants from Nandyal, Kurnool and Adoni divisions are said to be camping in Vijayawada for the past two weeks. Among them more hopefuls are those who missed out or sacrificed MLA tickets in the past.

Armed with impressive accounts of their candidatures in colourful spiral bounds and multiple copies, they are after district in-charge minister and other top leaders who wield clout in the party.

The buzz is that Byreddy Sidharth Reddy, a leader from Nandikotkur, is sure

of chairmanship of a good corporation. In their parlance, a good corporation is one which can turn a 'cash cow.'

Malki Reddy Rajagopal Reddy, who sacrificed an MLA seat to the Silpa family, is in the race for a premium corporation. His added advantage is that he hails from Pulivendula, said a local leader.

Habibulla from Nandyal, who was arrested by the TD government in a sedition case, gave a lifeline to Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy in the run-up to the 2019 elections and helped garner minority votes. He

aspires to be the chairman of minority welfare corporation.

Kotla Hari, Harsha Vardhan Reddy, Gopireddy Gopinath Reddy, Fayaz, Ilyas, and Zeeland are the other names doing the rounds. Kurnool city leaders do not have any stature to seek positions, said a senior party leader. Adoni, Chagalamarri, Allagadda are other centers from where leaders are angling for positions.

All 14 Assembly seats in Kurnool district were won by the YSRC, leaving no space for TD. This has won two ministries to the

Docu on Gandhi gets  
top honours in NYCDC 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 Berliot, 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 film comes at a time when the world needs to be reminded of the Mahatma's teachings of peace and non-violence.

The chairperson of Simhachalam Temple Trust and MANASSAS, 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 marginalised 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 and the Civil Rights Movement in the United States; the Solidarity Movement in Poland, the Velvet Revolution in Czechoslovakia as well as Nelson Mandela and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa.

The title song 'Ahimsa' was composed by A.R. Rahman and Bono. "Am overwhelmed that our film, which is a labour of love and has been a long time in the making, has won this prestigious award. At a time when the world is fraught with turbulence, the Mahatma's teachings and life are all the more relevant. Thank you to our French Co-Producer Jean Luc Berliot," Sanchaita Gajapati Raju said.

Thalli Bidda vehicles  
lying idle in hospitalsDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 13

A large number of Talli Bidda Express vehicles are lying unused in Anantapur even as hundreds of children are being delivered at various government general hospitals in the district.

These Omni vehicles had been started in entire Andhra Pradesh by the Telugu Desam government to provide free transport to pregnant women for delivering their children at various government hospitals. The intention of the government was to reduce infant and maternal mortality ratios.

Currently, these Talli Bidda vehicles are lying unused in Anantapur district. As these vehicles are unavailable, people are arranging vehicles by themselves whether to reach the hospital or return home

after delivery.

AGS Trust secretary A. G. Anil Kumar Reddy pointed out that many of these vehicles have remained unused even during the Covid-19 pandemic situation. "Already black fungus cases are on the rise in hospitals. Labour wards are unable to discharge mothers and new born babies immediately after deliveries as transportation is unavailable. This increases the risk of Coronavirus among both mothers and children," Anil Kumar lamented.

He demanded that the District Medical and Health Department put to use these vehicles in the interests of mothers and newborns at government hospitals.

Sources, however, maintain that these vehicles are lying in a state of disuse because they require some repair or the other.

Medical items gutted in  
fire mishap in agencyDC CORRESPONDENT  
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 13

Medical goods left to ashes after fire mishap occurred at a medical agency godown of Pallavi towers at Suryanagar in heart of Anantapur head quarters on Sunday. The fire gutted in the godown where huge quantity of medical goods as the godown was locked in the wee hours following short circuit.

Flames were spread in the godown and about to spread

surrounding buildings as the location situated in heart of the town very near to Sapthagiri circle.

The people in the surrounding areas averted the fire teams. Two fire engines and teams rushed the spot put off flames from speeding to near by shopping complexes of pallavi towers.

The One Town police also rushed the spot towards assist measures to fire crews. The police said the fire mishap probably occurred due to short circuit.

Covid vax wastage  
high in state: TDDC CORRESPONDENT  
NELLORE, JUNE 13

TD district unit president and former MLC Beeda Ravichandra on Sunday took the state government to task for its failure in expediting vaccination drive in Andhra Pradesh even as the threat of Coronavirus third wave is looming large over AP.

Addressing media here on Sunday, he alleged that 20

percent of frontline warriors are yet to receive their shots and the overall percentage of vaccination is a mere 39.84 per cent.

"Not just this, AP is in the forefront with respect to wastage of vaccines in the country," Ravichandra alleged. He pointed out that while the centre has so far provided 65.50 lakh doses of vaccines to the state from January 16 to March, only 26.10 lakh have been used.

who represent Banaganapalle and Panyam, are serious contenders.

The Silpa family including Chakrapani Reddy who represents Srisailem constituency, and his nephew Silpa Ravichandrasekhareddy are strategically moving their pawns. Silpa Mohan Reddy was a minister in the YSR Cabinet. Adoni MLA Sai Prasad Reddy and his brother and Mantralayam MLA Balanagi Reddy are also strongly aspiring to become ministers.



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 sub-urban 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. DIVDED 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

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 Baisi village under Sadar tehsil of Ayodhya district for a price of ₹18.50 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

Trinamul leader blocks ghar wapsi

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

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

Kalyan made his stand clear a day after Banerjee met TMC general secretary Kunal Ghosh. Days ago, he had slammed the BJP leadership for threatening President's Rule in West Bengal. The three-time Serampore MP alleged, "Rajib spoke against the CM. He also abused the booth-level

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?"

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

the Speaker. As leader of opposition, I know the steps. I will show how to ensure this law is implemented here. It will take two or three months. One can change party but must abide by law. I have already discussed this with Union law minister Ravi Shankar Prasad. The process will start soon."

Known for his acrimony with Adhikari, Ghosh, posted on Facebook: "It has become a habit for many to leave party. BJP depends on those very people who raised the party by bleeding and sweating themselves. Sacrifice and austerity have to be the principles for one to stay in the BJP. Those who only want to enjoy power will not be able to continue in the BJP. It is us who will not keep them."



## 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-Shifa 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

**Jerusalem, June 13:** Israel’s parliament is set to vote on Sunday on a new government led by Yamina head Naftali Bennett, ousting Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu from power after an uninterrupted 12 years at the helm of affairs.

The prospective government — an unprecedented coalition of ideologically divergent political parties drawn from the Right, the Left and the Centre, along with an Arab party — has a razor-thin majority of one seat. The Knesset (Israeli parliament) is scheduled to meet at 4 PM local time and sans last-minute grand surprises, Bennett, an old-time associate of Netanyahu and leader of the right-wing Yamina party, would take over the mantle from his one time mentor leading a fragile government with a razor-thin majority of 61 lawmakers in a 120 member house. Ahead of the vote in Parliament, heads of the eight factions constituting the new coalition met to confirm the government.

Informed sources said that “they all re-affirmed their commitment and it was all set to go ahead”. The approval by the Knesset would bring to an end 12 years of uninterrupted rule by Netanyahu, 71, who holds the record of

## 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

**Brussels, June 13:** US President Joe Biden and his Nato counterparts will bid a symbolic farewell to Afghanistan on Monday in their last summit before America winds up its longest “forever war” and the US military pulls out for good. The meeting is bound to renew questions about whether Nato’s most ambitious operation ever was worth it.

The 18-year effort cost the United States alone \$2.26 trillion, and the price in lives includes 2,442 American troops and 1,144 personnel among US allies, according to figures from Brown University.

Nato does not keep a record of those who die in its operations. Those casualty figures dwarf Afghan losses, which include more than 47,000 civilians, up to 69,000 members of the national armed forces and police, and over 51,000 opposition fighters. The military effort followed the 2001 arrival of a US-led coalition that ousted the Taliban for harbouring al-Qaeda leader Osama bin Laden.

Few experts argue that it brought long-term stability, meaningful democracy or security. “At this point, you get the impression

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 pan-

demic, 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

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

**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

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*

## GORILLA | TACTICS

## Colleague fired without warning after coming late for shift

# Berlin delivery riders take on \$1B start-up

**Berlin, June 13:** Dozens of workers gathered outside of one of Berlin’s most-celebrated start-ups, the grocery delivery company Gorillas, to protest the firing hours earlier of a colleague. “We want Santiago back!” the young riders chanted last week, threatening to blockade one of the company’s inner-city warehouses with their bikes unless he was reinstated.

The wildcat strike on a balmy June evening was unusual even by Germ-

any’s strong tradition of labour rights, highlighting growing tensions in the capital’s freewheeling start-up scene.

“We came here to show our solidarity, to support our friend,” said Zeynep, a Gorillas rider who declined to give her last name for fear of facing repercussions from the company. “We want this decision to be reversed as soon as possible.” The riders said their colleague had been fired without warning after turning up late for his shift.

In a statement, the company said he his contract was terminated for “serious misconduct” but declined to provide details, citing confidentiality. Founded just last year, Gorillas has benefited from quick grocery deliveries during the pandemic. In March, the company raised about \$290 million from investors, becoming Germany’s fastest “unicorn” — a start-up with a total valuation of \$1 billion or more.

Gorillas now operates in

dozens of cities across Germany, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Britain, and has already set its sights on New York, where it faces US incumbents such as Gopuff. But strikes like those in Berlin show trouble is brewing in its home market. The rowdy but peaceful protest late Wednesday drew support from employees of rival delivery services, some of whom downed their colourful courier bags to join the picket. Eventually Gorillas agreed to close the depot for

the night, drawing cheers from the protesters.

The next day, riders blocked another warehouse, making clear their gripes go beyond the firing of a single colleague. “In the last six months, that I’ve been here I’ve noticed so many ways that the company is doing things in an unjustified way,” said rider Huseyin Camalan.

“We’re here to stand against that. It’s part of a larger thing.” Camalan said many riders suffer from back pain. — *AP*



# 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 chink 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.

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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

#### GST AND COVID-19

That the GST council reducing tax rates of scores of Covid-19 related material from 12 per cent to five per cent is too little and too late. The taxes on all drugs and material used in Covid-19 treatment, including vaccines could have been made zero, in view of their life-saving nature in the pandemic. It could have been a noble gesture of the council, had there been a discussion on relentless hike of fuel prices with an attempt to bring them under the GST basket. The people do need more relaxations from taxes in their most trying times in history.

**Dr D.V.G. Sankararao**  
*Vizianagaram*

#### SEERS, SHOWROOMS

It is amusing to note that seers/peetadhipathi are coming to open cloth showrooms. It may be noted that seers/peetadhipathi should be away from personal publicity and devoid of worldly pleasures. They should live a detached life. It may be noted that there is no apex body to direct swamijis. Only moral command is required.

**P. Ramakrishna**  
*Rajahmundry*

### 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.

The short TV communications session this afternoon showed the troika gathered around Salyut's central control panel as commander Dobrovolsky read off their votes.

—UNI.

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*



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 Murgappa 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.



■ Paytm, Aadhar Housing, Policy Bazaar eye mega IPOs

Financial services firms line up ₹55,000-cr float



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

(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

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.

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 bullish, 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

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

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

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, news-print, 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

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

Mankad inducted into Hall of Fame

**Dubai:** The ICC on Sunday inducted 10 icons of the game, including India's Vinoo Mankad, into its illustrious Hall of Fame with two players each from five eras, dating back to cricket's early days, making it to the list. The inductees are Aubrey Faulkner of South Africa and Monty Noble of Australia (pre-1918), Sir Learie Constantine of West Indies and Stan McCabe of Australia (1918-1945), Ted Dexter of England and Vinoo Mankad of India (1946-1970). Desmond Haynes of the West Indies and Bob Willis of England were inducted from the ODI era (1971-1995) while Andy Flower of Zimbabwe and Kumar Sangakkara were from the modern era. — *PTI*

India up for WTC challenge: Pujara

**Southampton:** Batsman Cheteshwar Pujara says New Zealand will have the advantage going into the WTC final after playing a Test series against England but India will utilise the available time to prepare well for the title clash, starting here on June 18. "They will obviously have advantage having played two Test matches before the final but when it comes to final we will give our best and we know that our team has the potential to do well and win the championship," Pujara told *bcci.tv*. "So we are not worried about that, we will try and focus on these 10 to 12 days which we have for preparation." — *PTI*

Milkha's wife dies of 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. "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," a statement from the family spokesperson said. — *PTI*

Faf recovering after concussion

**Abu Dhabi:** Much to the cricket community's relief, South African star Faf du Plessis on Sunday said he was back from the hospital and "recovering", after suffering a concussion during his team Quetta Gladiators' PSL match against Peshawar Zalmi here. In trying to save a boundary, Du Plessis collided with teammate Mohammad Hasnain during their Pakistan Super League match on Saturday night. 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. — *AFP*

Rabada helps SA clinch innings win

**Saint Lucia:** Kagiso Rabada completed a five-wicket haul as South Africa formalised their demolition of the West Indies by an innings and 63 runs just before the lunch interval on the third day of the first Test on Saturday. Having taken just one wicket in the first innings on day one when the home side were routed for 97 after choosing to bat first, Rabada led the way for the Proteas with figures of five for 34. — *AFP*  
**Brief scores:** West Indies 97 & 162 (Chase 62); Rabada 5/34 lost to South Africa 322 by an innings & 63 runs.

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

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Editor: Kaushik Mitter

Sterling start

Raheem's clinical strike fires England to a 1-0 win over Croatia

England	1
(Raheem Sterling 57)	
Croatia	0

**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. England host neighbours Scotland in their second Group 'D' match on Friday before taking on the Czech Republic. — *AFP*



England's Raheem Sterling celebrates after scoring a goal against Croatia in the Euro match at Wembley on Sunday. — AP

Finland	1
(Joel Pohjanpalo 60)	
Denmark	0

JOEL HEADER HELPS FINLAND SECURE 1ST WIN

**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 of five minutes the second half of the match continued with Denmark pressing Finland back but failing to find a way past the opposition defence and Finnish 'keeper Lukas Hradecky. Pohjanpalo stunned the crowd into silence when he headed home Jere Uronen's cross, capitalising on Finland's one true chance of the game. — *AFP*



Denmark's Christian Eriksen (centre) is evacuated after collapsing on the pitch during the Euro match at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen on Saturday. — AFP

We got Eriksen back: Team Doc

**Milan, 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 Euro 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. 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. — *AFP*



Denmark's goalkeeper Kasper Schmeichel (right) and defender Simon Kjær (centre) comfort Sabrina Kvist Jensen, partner of Christian Eriksen. — AFP

CHRISTIAN HOPES TO BE BACK SOON

Inter CEO Giuseppe Marotta said that Eriksen had sent a message on the team chat reassuring them: "I'm fine, I hope to be back soon." "Those harsh images foreshadowed dramatic things, but luckily it wasn't so thanks to the doctors," said Marotta. "He never had Covid and he has never been vaccinated, we don't want to be intrusive because it's right for the player to be calm." — *Agencies*

LUKAKU DEDICATES GOALS TO ERIKSEN

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 team-mate. "I am really happy with the win, but it was hard for me to play because my thoughts were with him," said Lukaku. — *Agencies*

Belgium get off to a flyer

**St. Petersburg, June 13:** Romelu Lukaku struck twice as Belgium confirmed their status as one of the favourites for Euro 2020 with a confident 3-0 victory over Russia on Saturday. Despite being without key performer Kevin De Bruyne, world number one ranked Belgium were rarely in trouble against a Russian side that struggled to impose themselves. Roberto Martinez's Belgium top Group B on three points, ahead on goal difference of Finland who beat Denmark in the

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

group's other game in Copenhagen. The Red Devils are unbeaten in 10 games in all competitions and have suffered just one defeat in their last 24 outings. The visitor's grabbed the lead in the 10th minute when Andrei Semyonov failed to deal with a ball into the box from Leander

Dendoncker, and Lukaku turned and fired into the bottom corner. Lukaku celebrated his goal by running to the television camera and shouting "Chris, Chris, I love you" in tribute to Christian Eriksen, the Danish midfielder and his club team-mate at Inter Milan, who had been rushed to hospital after collapsing during the earlier game in the group. Belgium were calm in possession against a Russian side who struggled to get a firm grip on the game. — *AFP*

Swedish challenge for Spain

**Madrid, June 13:** After a week without training and three years of upheaval, Spain head into their Euro 2020 opener against Sweden on Monday determined to leave the past behind but unsure about what comes next. Luis Enrique was appointed to ring the changes in the aftermath of the 2018 World Cup, when going out on penalties to Russia had made it three consecutive failures to reach the quarter-finals of a major tournament. At La Cartuja in Seville on Monday, only Jordi

Alba will remain from the Euro success nine years ago, with Sergio Ramos cut and Sergio Busquets self-isolating after testing positive for Covid last weekend. And yet while the names bear almost no resemblance to what went before, Spain's fresh mix of promising youngsters and high-end performers arrive without any real sense of what now fills the void.

BAD BLOOD BETWEEN CZECH & SCOTLAND

Scotland's first match at a major tournament for 23 years is laced with acrimony

for the Czech Republic, who travel to Hampden on Monday having been forced into a last-minute change of training camp and without suspended defender Ondrej Kudela. Kudela was hit with a 10-match ban for racially abusing Rangers midfielder Glen Kamara when Slavia Prague visited Scotland in the Europa League last 16 in March. The widespread condemnation of Kudela in Britain has not been reflected in his homeland, where Slavia and many of his club and international teammates have stood

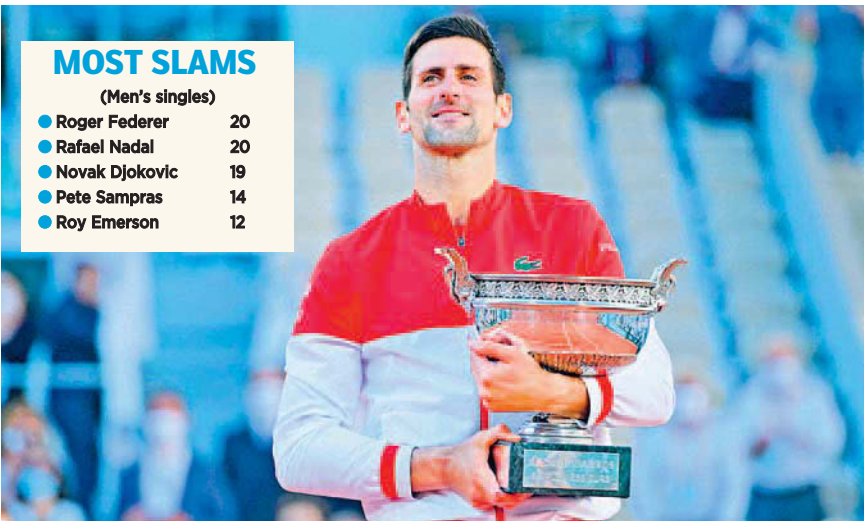
by the 34-year-old and claimed there was a lack of evidence against him. **LEWANDOWSKI OUT TO IMPROVE RECORD** Robert Lewandowski's standing as one of the greatest ever strikers at club level is surely undisputed after a record-breaking season with Bayern Munich. With 66 goals in 119 games for Poland, his status in the international game is well-established, too. Except, maybe, in one respect. Lewandowski has yet to turn it on at a major tournament. — *Agencies*

<b>HEAD-TO-HEAD</b>	
<b>SCOTLAND-CZECH REPUBLIC</b>	
● Matches: 9. Scotland: 4. Czech Republic: 4. Drawn: 1.	
<b>EURO MEETINGS</b>	
1999: Czech won 2-1 in Glasgow.	
1998: Czech won 3-2 in Prague.	
2010: Czech won 1-0 in Prague.	
2016: 2-2 in Glasgow.	
<b>SLOVAKIA-POLAND</b>	
● Matches: 8. Slovakia: 4. Poland: 3. Drawn: 1.	
<b>EURO MEETINGS</b>	
1995: Poland won 5-0 in Zabrze.	
1995: Slovakia won 4-1 in Bratislava.	
<b>SPAIN-SWEDEN</b>	
● Matches: 14. Spain: 6. Sweden: 3. Drawn: 5.	
2006: Sweden won 2-0 in Solna.	
2007: Spain won 3-0 in Madrid.	
2008: Spain won 2-1 in Innsbruck.	
2019: Spain won 3-0 in Madrid.	
2019: 1-1 in Stockholm.	
— S. PERVEZ KAISER	

DJOKER IS KING

Djokovic rallies to beat Tsitsipas in French final, wins his 19th major

**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



Serbia's Novak Djokovic holds the French Open trophy after defeating Stefanos Tsitsipas in the final on Sunday. — Roland Garros

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. In a dramatic tiebreaker, Tsitsipas saw a 4/0 and 5/2 lead disappear. He had to save a set point before claiming the opener after 70 minutes when Djokovic fired a forehand wide. Dropping the opening set at this year's Roland Garros was familiar territory for Djokovic.

He had to recover from two sets down to beat Lorenzo Musetti in the last 16 and lost the opener against Nadal on Friday. Tsitsipas, 12 years the world number one's junior, broke again in the first game of the second set as the 2016 champion looked increasingly weary in the 30-degree afternoon heat. The Greek edged ahead 5-2 and pocketed the second set with his eighth ace of the contest. But the top seed wasn't finished, breaking in the fourth game of the third set to cut the deficit. **BARBARA COMPLETES GRAND DOUBLE** 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. — *Agencies*



New Zealand's Tom Latham (centre) holds the trophy as his teammates celebrate winning the Test series against England in Birmingham on Sunday. — AFP

Kiwis seal rare away series win

**Birmingham (UK), 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 tri-

umphs. And it means they will head into next week's inaugural World Test Championship final against India at Southampton in confident mood. "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 at the presentation ceremony. By contrast, this was England's first series loss at home since a 2014 defeat by Sri Lanka. — *AFP*

BRIEF SCORES

England 303 & 122 (Wood 29; Wagner 3/18, Henry 3/36) lost to New Zealand 388 & 41/2 (Latham 23 (not out)) by eight wickets.