

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
NELLORE | MONDAY | 14 JUNE 2021

WEATHER



Max: 37.4°C
Min: 30.0°C
RH: 46%
Rainfall: Nil

Forecast: clear.
Max/Min
temp. 37/30 °C

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Netanyahu's 12-yr
rule ends in Israel

SPORTS | 8

Djokovic is new
king of clay

TABLOID

Bollywood's
age-defying divas



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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, Palavaram, 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

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.

ment," said 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 Kumar 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 to the negotiating table. The talks between the Centre and the protesting farmers hit a roadblock in January as even after 11 rounds of talks no solutions could be reached between the two sides.

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

Since January, no talks have been held between the two sides, though senior government sources now claim that some back-channel talks had started in a bid to break the deadlock. The sources said that even last year the home minister had a detailed meeting with the farmers, and even now his assessment is that the two sides should start talks again.

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

EX-TRS LEADER ETALA SET TO JOIN BJP TODAY

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 13

Former minister Etala Rajendar is all set to join the BJP in the presence of party president J.P. Nadda in Delhi on Monday.

Also joining the BJP with Rajendar will be former TRS MLA Enugu Ravinder Reddy from Yellareddy constituency, former Karimnagar zilla parishad chairperson Tula Uma, former TSRTC joint action committee leader Aswathama Reddy and a few others.

As per schedule, Rajendar will leave for Delhi from the Shamshabad airport at 6 am on Monday and will join the BJP at 11 am at the party headquarters.

With this, the BJP is hopeful in making a comeback in Telangana and emerging as a force to reckon with if it wins the Huzurabad bypoll necessitated by Rajendar's resignation from the Assembly on Saturday.

It may be yet another byelection for many, but for the BJP, it is a litmus test. The party central leadership is said to have laid special focus on the Huzurabad bypoll as it strongly believes a victory will change the course of state politics, dominated by the TRS since the formation of state.

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 Berliot, 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

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.

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 Majeen on the peripheries of Jammu city.

■ 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

SHORT TAKES

ADAMANCY OF TS
COPS LEADS TO
TRAFFIC CHAOSDC 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 also 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 8DC 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 APDC 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 todayDC 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.

“This would, in fact, help them develop antibodies faster,” he stated.

A senior health official at KGH here said shortage of blood has mainly affected treatment of serious Covid-19 cases, black fungus, road accidents, and general surgeries, where in blood is required. In addition, there are people suffering from anaemia, sickle-cell anaemia and thalassemia, who need transfusion of blood every month until they get cured. The official disclosed that such people are around 8,000 in the state. Srikakulam district itself has nearly 350 of them.

Speaking to *Deccan Chronicle*, relative of a patient admitted to VIMS in the city said, “I personally experienced the trauma of getting a single unit of blood during this phase of pandemic. Even my relatives and friends did not turn accept to my request for donating blood. I finally managed from other sources.”

Owner: Land seizure
flouts HC ordersDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

The special drive launched by the Visakhapatnam revenue officials on Sunday in which several structures were demolished on allegations of land encroachment is reportedly in violation of the High Court orders in the case of 5.46 acres of land owned by one Sanjay Kumar Parasmaka.

This property is located in Vadlapudi, Tunglam village, Autonagar on the way towards APIIC F-Block.

Sanjay Kumar told this correspondent that AP Transco technicians accompanied by police personnel descended on his property on Sunday morning and demolished the compound wall on the east side to an extent of 260 metres.

He said he purchased the property in the name of his wife Sunitha Devi Parasmaka and his younger brother Ajay Kumar from one Pitika Adi Raju and 49 other legal heirs and got it registered in Gajuwaka in 1993-94.

He said in 1994 he obtained permission from Gajuwaka municipality and 25 other departments including district indus-

tries centre to start fly ash unit.

Accordingly, he built a barbed wire fencing and sheds. In 2014 he wanted to construct a compound wall but it was objected to it by Railways and APIIC that they needed to construct a road. Sanjay then approached the High Court making South Eastern Railways, APIIC, special Deputy Collector, Tahsildar of Gajuwaka and others as respondents.

The High Court on March 23, 2014, issuing a stay order, directed the respondents that the present owners should not be dispossessed of their 5 acres property in Tunglam.

After the court order, Sanjay Kumar built the compound wall and gave the land for lease to an agency last year which has been carrying out HPCL expansion fabrication work.

“Gajuwaka Tahsildar was in receipt of the High Court order and how can he come today to allege it was an encroachment of government land,” asked Sanjay Kumar. He also submitted a petition to the Commissioner of Police, giving details of the land ownership and a copy of the High Court order.

SIT final report on
land grabs soonDC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

Both the ruling and the opposition party leaders conveniently forgot the first special investigation team (SIT), constituted by the Chandrababu Naidu government, and the second SIT by the YSRC government.

It all began when the minister and TD politburo member Ch. Ayyanna Patrudu, addressing a public meeting, accused his ministerial colleague of helping his friends with land grabbing. This was followed by a series of allegations by former BJP MLA P. Vishnu Kumar Raju, who was the then floor leader of BJP in the Assembly. This forced Naidu to constitute a SIT to probe all encroachments, but the final report never saw the light of day.

The YSRC government formed the second SIT with former IAS officer T. Vijay Kumar as the chairman. He submitted an interim report and is yet to submit the final report. “So much heat is being generated during demolitions and seizure of government lands but no leader has spoken about the SITs which could have shown ways to prevent land encroachments,” said a senior revenue officer. Several leaders also opine that both TD and YSRC should demand publication of SIT, which could protect the lands -

● The YSRC government formed the second SIT with former IAS officer T. Vijay Kumar as the chairman.

both private and public. “I wanted to submit the report in April this year but the Chief Secretary was abroad and now due to Covid pandemic I held back. Maybe I will submit the report in a couple of days,” Vijay Kumar told *DC* on Sunday.

When asked, the minister for tourism, Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao, also said the SIT report would be submitted and made public soon. “SIT would help us identify more land grabbing in Visakhapatnam,” he felt. According to the SIT chairman, around 400 acres of government land was encroached by some individuals and key documents were tampered with. They also identified around 20 revenue officials who played a key role in the encroachments. The SIT will suggest to the government how to get back the land. It received a total of 1,380 petitions and of them 679 were referred to the tahsildars concerned who in turn returned 420 reports of which 342 were disposed of.

“The SIT report became handy for the YSRC leaders to indulge in land settlements. This report will also be shelved,” said the district vice-president of the TD, Pasarla Prasad.

Seers panel to resolve
B. Matham head issueDC 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 addresses the media on the Brahmamgari Matham issue in Vijayawada on Sunday.

— K. 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 Veerabrahmadra 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 peetadhipati 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 Srisailam temple during excavation

Medieval age copper plates unearthed

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 13

In a major historic significance to the temple development, Srisailam 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 Brahmaramba 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 Srisailam, 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 Srisailam, carried out by the temple authorities.

● Latest findings add to the historic significance of the Srisailam 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: MLADC 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 todayDC 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.

“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 Satyannarayana 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 withholding 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.

Rare discovery at Srisailam temple during excavation

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

SHORT TAKES

14-YEAR-OLD GIRL DIES OF SNAKE BITE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

In a tragic incident, a 14-year-old girl died after being bitten by a snake, while she was sleeping in front of her house in P.V. Puram village of S.R. Puram mandal in Chittoor district in the early hours of Sunday.

According to the reports, the 14-year-old victim identified as Spandana, studying in ninth standard at a government school started screaming in the middle of the night, wriggling in pain.

The parents woke up and found that her foot was bleeding. They immediately rushed her to a near-by hospital.

On the way to the hospital, she started frothing from the mouth and lost consciousness.

The doctors who examined the 14-year-old girl declared her as brought dead. The hospital staff has reported the incident to the local police who has started an investigation into the matter.

MEDICAL GOODS REDUCED TO ASHES IN FIRE MISHAP

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 13

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

Flames spread in the godown and were about to spread to the surrounding buildings as the location is situated in heart of the town very near to Sathagiri circle.

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

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

OVER 20 SHEEP, SHEPHERD DIE IN ROAD MISHAP

DC CORRESPONDENT
ANANTAPUR, JUNE 13

A Tata Sumo vehicle caused a horrific situation near Kothapalli village in Ramagiri mandal in the district on Sunday. The vehicle rrammed into a herd of sheep on the main road in Ramagiri mandal where more than twenty sheep along with the shepherd died on the spot.

Police sources said that a Tata Sumo vehicle was going towards Ramagiri as the driver was unable to control the steering and the speedy vehicle rrammed into the herd being taken by shepherd to graze. At least twenty sheep were crushed and died while a few more sustained injuries and one of the shepherd B. Pothanna was also hit by the vehicle, and killed on the road. The Ramagiri police rushed to the spot and cleared traffic after removing dead bodies and debris from the spot. The Ramagiri police registered a case against the Tata Sumo driver.

FOUNDATION LAID FOR TIPPU SULTAN STATUE

DC CORRESPONDENT
KADAPA, JUNE 13

Legislator Rachamalla Sivaprasad Reddy on Sunday laid the foundation stone for the Tipu Sultan statue in Proddutur. He promised in a meeting that the statue of Tipu Sultan would be unveiled here in a few months. To this end, MLA Rachamalla Prasad Reddy on Sunday unveiled a statue at Proddutur Jinnah Road of Proddutur. He said that the junction would be renamed as Tipu Sultan Circle after the statue was erected. He said the program was carried out with the consent of all, irrespective of caste, and that the idol would be unveiled soon. The event was attended by several municipal chairperson Lakshmidevi, Muslim minority leaders and ward councillors.

TALLI BIDDA VEHICLES FOR NEWBORNS, MOTHERS LYING IDLE

DC 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 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.

COVID VACCINE WASTAGE HIGH IN AP, ALLEGES TD

DC 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 front-line warriors are yet to receive their shots and the overall percentage of vaccination is a mere 39.84 in AP.

"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 of them have been used.

In January, for instance, only 1.90 lakh doses had been used out of 10.5 lakh doses supplied by the union government.

Similarly, 4.80 lakh doses were utilised out of 24.60 lakh doses provided in February. In March, the state received more than 30 lakh doses but only 19.40 lakh doses had been injected, he said.

VACANT POSTS

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 13

The second rung leaders of the ruling YSR Congress in Kurnool district are gung-ho 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

Closer to Covid



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

AP to hire 2,000 DSC qualifiers

CM to release a special GO to appoint 2k teachers

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, JUNE 13

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

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

He was addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Jagananna housing colony at Medapi village in Tripurantakam village in Prakasam

● ADIMULAPU SURESH revealed this while stressing that this is a daring decision of the CM while also lauding Jagan for introducing English Medium and giving a facelift to all schools under the Nadu-Nedu scheme. He was addressing a gathering after laying the foundation stone for the Jagananna housing colony at Medapi village in Tripurantakam village in Prakasam district on Sunday.

Referring to the plea from the poor to increase financial assistance for the construction of houses, Suresh said he would take the matter to the notice of the CM. He said 'Jagananna' gave ₹5 lakh worth of house sites to his "sisters" in Medapi village. "We would supply sand free of cost and cement at 50 per cent concession to build their houses. The education minister said 3000 flats will be built on 35 layouts at his

Yarragondapalem constituency." He expressed confidence in the release of funds towards bills pertaining to development works grounded in the villages after the ongoing probe by the vigilance department.

The minister said he made arrangements to distribute the Anandaiah herbal medicine for Covid prevention in all mandals of Yarragondapalem segment free of cost and urged the people to make good use of this.

Piyush Goyal urged for rly works in Chittoor district

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

YSRC MP Dr M. Gurumoorthy and Chandragiri MLA C. Bhaskar Reddy submitted petitions to the Union Railway Minister Piyush Goyal, regarding railway developmental activities in Tirupati, Renigunta and Chandragiri, here on Sunday.

Stressing on the need for world-class amenities at Tirupati Railway station, which was being used by lakhs of visitors who come every year for pilgrimage to the Tirumala temple, MP Mr Gurumoorthy requested the railway minister to take steps for realising the long-pending Tirupati railway station redevelopment project.

He sought the union minister's attention on the works related to the development of southern side of Tirupati station and also Tiruchanoor station works. He underlined the need to launch new trains to various destinations from Tirupati on par with daily trains to Shirdi, New Delhi, and Mumbai.

UNION MINISTER FOR RAILWAYS OFFERS PRAYERS TO LORD BALAJI AT 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 morning.

On his arrival, the union minister was accorded a grand reception by the TTD additional executive officer A.V. Dharmar 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.

He asked the minister for additional daily trains to Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam and new passenger trains between Nellore and Chittoor via Tirupati for the benefit of people from the two districts.

Meanwhile, MLA Bhaskar Reddy appealed to the union minister of Railways to develop Chandragiri Railway station. Explaining the importance of

Chandragiri station to the minister, the MLA said that the station, if developed, will become an alternative to the busy Tirupati railway station and it would be helpful for the pilgrims, who wish to use Srivari Mettu pedestrian route to reach Tirumala shrine. He also urged the minister to restore the railway stoppings in between Damalacheruvu - Pulicherla stations.

MAN FILES CHEATING CASE AGAINST WIFE

DC CORRESPONDENT
TIRUPATI, JUNE 13

A 29-year-old man has approached the police in Tirupati with a complaint against his wife, alleging that she had cheated and robbed him in the name of marriage, though she had already married another person. The incident came to light after he lodged the complaint with Alipiri police on Saturday night.

According to the police, the complainant Sunil Kumar, a native of Vijayapuram mandal, has been working in marketing field and living at Sathanarayanapuram in Tirupati for the past five years.

In his complaint, he stated that a woman identified as M. Suhasini had cheated in the name of marriage. He found that she was already married to another person. He met her when she was working in a finance company in Tirupati and fell in love with her.

"Suhasini claimed that she was an orphan. We both got married in December last year. At the time of marriage, my parents gifted 20 grams of gold jewellery to her. A few months later, she told me that she had to repay the debts she incurred before the marriage for the treatment of people who raised her. She took ₹4 lakh from me and also ₹2 lakh from my father," Kumar stated in his complaint.

The complainant alleged that his wife disappeared on June 7 after he questioned her about the money she took from him and his father. "We tried to reach her on phone but she was untraceable. On suspicion, we checked her Aadhaar card and were shocked to find out that she was already married to a person from Konetirajupalem in Nellore district and they have two children," he said. The Alipiri police registered a case and are investigating the matter.

● A 29-YEAR-OLD man has approached the police in Tirupati with a complaint against his wife, alleging that she had cheated and robbed him in the name of marriage, though she had already married another person.

Black fungus infected nurse ends her life

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

The doctors at the Covid hospital conducted a surgery on Jagadamma on

June 10 and she was under observation. Her condition deteriorated. The hospital staff found her body at about 4 am.

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

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

Hopes rise as Covid cases decline in AP

DC 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 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% giving a ray of hope towards swift recovery from the pandemic.

A total of 58 new deaths were registered, increasing the death toll to 11,940 and the death rate at 0.66%. Around 1,02,876 samples were tested in which 6,770 tested positive and the overall positive rate of total 2,045 crore tests stand at 8.85%.

East Godavari district is on top in daily new infections with 1,199 cases followed by Chittoor 968, West

Godavari 765, Prakasam 530, Srikakulam 491, Kadapa 473 and Krishna reported 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 were registered in Anantapur and Visakhapatnam, three deaths each in Krishna, Prakasam, Kadapa and Vizianagaram districts. Two deaths each were registered in Nellore, Kurnool and Guntur districts.

East Godavari is on the top in total Coronavirus cases with a total of 2,47,847 infections followed by Chittoor 2,08,118, Guntur 1,57,241, West Godavari 1,51,658, Anantapur 1,49,594, Visakhapatnam 1,45,023, and Nellore at 1,23,330.

DOCU ON GANDHI GETS TOP HONOURS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, JUNE 13

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

The 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 Berlot," Sanchaita Gajapati Raju said.

FORUM DEMANDS GST WAIVER ON ALL COVID DRUGS

DC 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.

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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. DIVIDED OVER DIGVJAY'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 marias (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 (organization) 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".

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 Bjaais 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?"

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

SHORT TAKES

BOLSONARO FINED FOR MASKLESS MOTORCYCLE RALLY

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

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

CHINA CITY’S DRONES TO KEEP PEOPLE INSIDE

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

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

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

POLICE ARREST 1 OF 2 IN AUSTIN MASS SHOOTING

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

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

SHELLING KILLS 18 IN SYRIA’S REBEL-HELD AFRIN

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

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

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

“The shelling targeted several areas of the town and hit the hospital”, Observatory director Rami Abdel Rahmane said. “Most of the victims died in shelling on the hospital,” the monitoring group said in a statement.

12 KILLED, OVER 100 HURT IN GAS BLAST IN CHINA

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

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

New Israeli govt to be sworn in

Will end Netanyahu’s 12-yr premiership

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

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

AFGHAN I.S. GROUP CLAIMS KABUL ATTACKS

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

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

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

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

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

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

Man jumps into lake for 365th straight day

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

Dan O’Conor said he started jumping into the lake at Montrose Harbour on the city’s North Side last year to relieve stress. “It was during the 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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Johnson’s gift for the US President was a framed picture of a mural showing the American anti-slavery campaigner Fredrick 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

Proof in Mexico serial killer’s home suggests 17 victims

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

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

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

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

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

quick BITES

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

* As of 8:30 PM IST

FPIs invest ₹15,520 cr in equities in June

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

Trading in DHFL shares suspended from today



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

CG Power lines up ₹135 cr capex in current year

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

Nitco to launch new range of products in US

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



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

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

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

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

The board of the biggest payments bank Paytm has reportedly cleared a more



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

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

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

(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 communiqué 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 communiqué suggested that the G-7 "strive" to ensure that the majority of all new passenger car sales are not petrol or diesel-powered "by 2030 or sooner." — Bloomberg



MFs need fully independent board of trustees: Quantum

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Thinking up creative ways to fight inflation

TRACY ALLOWAY
JUNE 13

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

Last month, for instance, the Tangshan steel hub banned steelmakers from spreading price-hike information, while Shanghai has urged steel mills not to raise prices if production costs haven't changed. And while China's renewed interest in price controls does raise some questions about its continued commitment to freer markets, it's certainly not the only country to have experimented with more creative types of inflation

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

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

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

RCA's David Sarnoff [RCA was then a major TV manufacturer] to hold them down. Domestic lamb prices rose. LBJ directed [defence secretary Robert] McNamara to buy cheaper lamb from New Zealand for the troops in Vietnam. The president told CEA [Council of Economic Advisers] and me to move on household appliances, paper cartons, 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

Out-of-control shipping costs fire up prices

ALEX LONGLEY, CATHERINE BOSLEY & DEIRDRE HIPWELL
JUNE 13

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

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

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

"In 40 years in toy retailing I have never known such challenging conditions from the point of view of pricing," Gary Grant, the founder and executive chairman of the UK toy shop The Entertainer, said in a 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 Haseeb 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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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 anticracism 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*

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*

Finland	1
(Joel Pohjanpalo 60)	
Denmark	0

JOEL HEADER HELPS FINLAND SECURE 1ST WIN

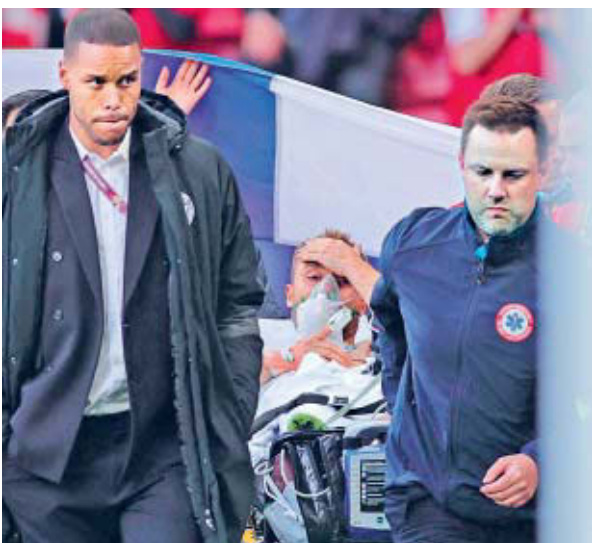
Copenhagen, June 13: Finland beat Denmark 1-0 in their opening match of Euro 2020 which was overshadowed by Christian Eriksen collapsing and having to be revived on the field by medics.

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.



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."

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*

HEAD-TO-HEAD

SCOTLAND-CZECH REPUBLIC

● **Matches:** 9. Scotland: 4. Czech Republic: 4. Drawn: 1.

● **EURO MEETINGS**

1999: Czech won 2-1 in Glasgow.
1999: Czech won 3-2 in Prague.
2010: Czech won 1-0 in Prague.
2016: 2-2 in Glasgow.

SLOVAKIA-POLAND

● **Matches:** 4. Slovakia: 4. Poland: 3. Drawn: 1.

● **EURO MEETINGS**

1995: Poland won 5-0 in Zabrze.
1995: Slovakia won 4-1 in Bratislava.

SPAIN-SWEDEN

● **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 GAISER*

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*

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.

BARBORA 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*

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.

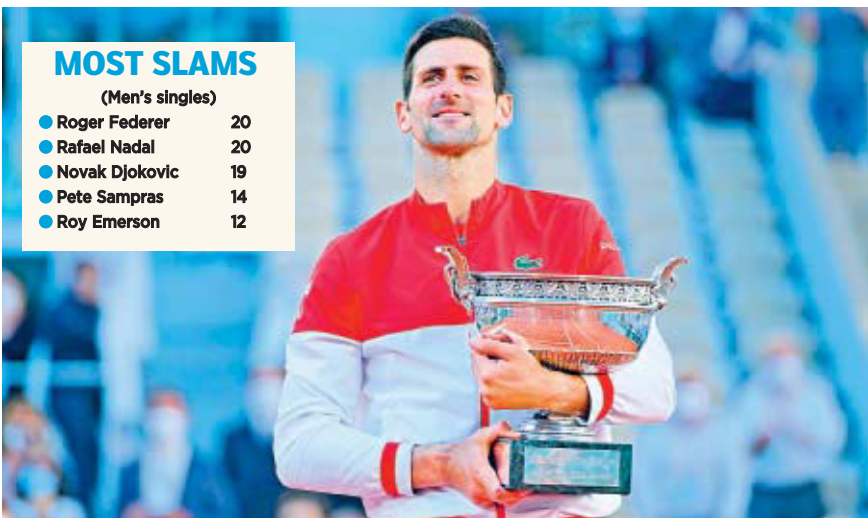
Djokovic is now just one major away from equalling the all-time record of 20, jointly held by Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal.

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*

MOST SLAMS

(Men's singles)

● Roger Federer 20
● Rafael Nadal 20
● Novak Djokovic 19
● Pete Sampras 14
● Roy Emerson 12

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

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.



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.