

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
KARIMNAGAR | SUNDAY | 27 JUNE 2021

WEATHER

Max: 33.8°C
Min: 24°C
RH: 60%
Rainfall: Nil
Forecast: Cloudy sky. A few spells of rain likely. Max/Min temp. 30/23°C

ASTROGUIDE

Plava: Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Bahula Tadiya till 3.59 pm
Star: Shravanam till 1.24 am (Monday)
Varjyam: 6.25 am to 7.56 am; 5.18 am to 6.52 am (Monday)
Durmuhurtam: 5.06 pm to 5.58 pm
Rahukalam: 4.30 pm to 6 pm
HIJRI CALENDAR
Zeeqad 15,1442 AH
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.34 am
Zohar: 12.29 pm
Asar: 4.56 pm
Maghrib: 7.00 pm
Isha: 8.16 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.54 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.44 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 8.44 PM
MOONSET TODAY 7.04 AM

COUNTER POINT



Actually it was a profit wave!

■ **STATE... PAGE 3**
Etala's BJP entry sets off revolt by loyalists



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Bangladesh enters tough lockdown



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Sindhu to carry flag, hopes at Olympics

TABLOID

Hire in style makes better sense



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Revanth made new PCC chief

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) on Saturday appointed Anumula Revanth Reddy, a doughty opponent of Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, president of the Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC), replacing N. Uttam Kumar Reddy.

The appointment ends more than two years of suspense over the TPCC



A. Revanth Reddy

chief after Uttam Kumar Reddy offered to step down following the party's debacle in the 2018 state elec-

tions. Soon after his appointment, Revanth Reddy, the party's Malkajgiri Lok Sabha member, thanked Congress president Sonia Gandhi and party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi. He also called on former CLP leader Kunduru Jana Reddy, senior leader Mohd/ Ali Shabbir and Vem Narendra Reddy. In other appointments, Sonia Gandhi retained former cricketer and former MP Mohd Azharuddin as working president. She

also appointed former minister J. Geetha Reddy, former MP M. Anjan Kumar Yadav, Sangareddy MLA T. Jayaprakash 'Jagga' Reddy and B. Mahesh Kumar Goud as working presidents.

Former deputy Chief Minister C. Damodar Rajanarasimha was named chairman of the election management committee.

■ **Page 2: Senior leaders opposed Revanth**

CENTRE DEFERS GREEN NOD FOR AP'S RLS PROJECT

DC CORRESPONDENT
KURNOOL, JUNE 26

The Union Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has deferred granting of environmental clearances to Rayalaseema Lift Scheme (RLS), which has become a bone of contention between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana states. It ministry sought a detailed impact assessment on six points. It also directed the AP government to address the objections raised by the National Green Tribunal (NGT).

NCP hints Oppn alliance not possible sans Cong.

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Days after the Rashta Manch met at the NCP supremo Sharad Pawar's house in New Delhi in a bid to explore the possibilities for a third front without the Congress, the NCP and Shiv Sena have made it clear that for any Opposition grouping to be a viable force against the BJP, the Congress will have to be a part of it.

Sources in the NCP said on Saturday that since the Congress is present in all states, it will have to be accommodated in the larg-

er anti-BJP alliance. After returning to Maharashtra, Mr Pawar also said that if any such coalition emerges, its leadership will have to be "collective".

On Saturday, the Shiv Sena too made it clear that no grand Opposition alliance can be possible without the Congress being part of it. Shiv Sena leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Raut on Saturday said that work is on to bring all Opposition parties together at the national level, and this alliance will be incomplete without the Congress.

Speaking with reporters,

Mr Raut said, "There is no need for the third front or any other front. Sharad Pawar has already made it clear. The Congress will play an important role. It will be a strong alternative to the present dispensation... Work is in progress to bring all the Opposition together, which will not be complete till the Congress is roped in." Maharashtra strongman and NCP chief Sharad Pawar had called a meeting of several Opposition parties under the aegis of Rashta Manch started by him and current TMC leader Yashwant Sinha.

Physical classes not from July 1

State govt. to issue guidelines in a few days

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

The state government is all set to defer commencement of physical classes in schools from July 1 owing to demands and requests made by parents and teachers.

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao gave an assurance to this effect after the Telangana PRTU (Progressive Recognised Teachers Union), a major teacher union, met him at Pragathi Bhavan on Saturday and submitted a representation seeking postponement of physical classes by a few weeks.

Education minister P. Sabitha Indra Reddy was present when PRTU leaders including MLC K. Janardhan Reddy, K. Raghotham Reddy, PRTU-TS state president P. Sripathy and general secretary B. Kamalakhar Rao submitted the representation to the Chief Minister. They cited the prevailing Covid-19 situation and sought continuation of online teaching for a few more weeks.

"The Chief Minister responded positively to our request and agreed to

CM reviews plan with top officials

DC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao has called upon public representatives and official machinery to treat rural and urban development as a continuous process and discharge their duties keeping in view that the needs of people should be top on agenda. He held a review meeting with ministers, collectors and additional collectors of all districts at Pragathi Bhavan on Saturday.

He directed them to participate actively in the 10-day Pallo and Pattana Pragathi programmes beginning July 1, create more awareness among the people and meet the targets.

The CM made it clear that after the 10-day programme, no work in village or urban areas should be left unsolved. He said there should be a review on why panchayat department was not able to complete the works despite the government extending all support.

■ **Page 2: CM advocates cleaning profile**

postpone physical classes from July 1. He assured that the government would issue guidelines in a day or two giving clarity on physical classes and online classes," said Sripathy.

The union leaders expressed concern over

the safety of teachers and students if physical classes commenced from July 1 as students were not vaccinated and a majority of teachers are yet to receive the vaccine.

■ **Page 2: Modalities for reopening not announced**

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IN BRIEF

SENIOR LEADERS
OPPOSED TPCC JOB
TO REVANTH

From page 1

Former MLA Alleti Maheshwar Reddy was appointed chairman of the AICC programme implementation committee. Senior leaders strongly opposed giving the post to Revanth Reddy, 51, who joined the Congress just before the 2018 polls from the Telugu Desam Party.

However, his image as a fire-brand leader, his relentless campaign against the TRS government, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and TRS working president K.T. Rama Rao are said to have worked in his favour. The TPCC also got 10 vice-presidents: Chandrashekar Sambhani, Damodhar Reddy, Ravi Mallu, Podem Veerajiah, Suresh Shetakar, Vem Narendar Reddy, Ramesh Mudiraj, Gopishetty Niranjan, T. Kumar Rao and Javeed Ameer.

CHIEF MINISTER
ADVOCATES
CLEANER PROFILE

From page 1

The Chief Minister declared that for the development of villages and urban areas, the government would keep ₹2 crore funds with the ministers and ₹1 crore with all district collectors. He suggested that MLAs and MLCs should spend their constituency development fund (CDF) after taking an approval from the district minister. He said collectors played a key role in the development of villages and urban areas and they should select an efficient working team and make them partners in the developmental programmes.

He said as per the Panchayat Raj and Municipal Acts, lands earmarked for public utilities in the layouts should be registered in the name of gram panchayats and municipalities. He wanted the officials to prepare a comprehensive report on the podu lands and to identify the boundaries of the 66 lakh acres of the forestlands in the state.

The Chief Minister instructed that a cleaning profile should be prepared as part of the Pattana Pragathi programme. He wanted the officials to prepare a list of retired employees and ex-servicemen and utilise their services. By the end of July, the dues to the departments should be settled through a book adjustment method. The Chief Minister instructed the officials' that henceforth all the bills should be paid immediately.

SENIOR TRS CADRE
EYE MLC AND
NOMINATED POSTSDC CORRESPONDENT
ADILABAD, JUNE 26

Many senior TRS leaders from old Adilabad district have pinned hopes on local body MLC and nominated posts after Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao started taking opinions of party seniors on various issues.

Rao is reportedly doing this as part of recognizing services of senior leaders, who actively worked for the party and also in the Telangana movement.

He wishes to send the message that the party would not neglect contributions of its senior leaders.

News doing the rounds in political circles is that Rao may fill up some nominated posts and local body MLC posts with marginalized sections in view of the by-elections in Huzurabad.

Among the aspirants are those who got the party ticket but lost elections. Apart from nominated posts, five local body MLC posts are also up for grabs. The contenders include former Union minister S. Venugopala Chary, V. Satyanarayana Goud and K. Srihari Rao, who all, incidentally, from Nirmal district, which is represented by minister Allola Indrakaran Reddy.

Other contenders include Goverdhan Reddy, who missed Adilabad DCCB chairman post, adivasi leader Godam Nagesh, who is also preparing the ground to contest as MLA from Boath Assembly constituency or the Adilabad Lok Sabha (ST reserved) seat.

Minority leader Mohd Imtiaz Khan, more popularly known as Lala, from Jainoor mandal has been waiting for a nominated post for seven years. He was in the forefront of Telangana agitation and had good relations with K.T. Rama Rao and T. Harish Rao.

Wakf Board razes 10
graves at Yousufain

Devotees shocked by demolition done during lockdown

ATHER MOIN I DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

Hundreds of devotees, who walked into the famed Dargah Yousufain for offering prayers for the first time after the lockdown was lifted, were in for a shock to see that graves inside the shrine were razed by Wakf Board officials.

More than 10 graves on the eastern side of the dargah were demolished during the lockdown to widen a pathway that irked the devotees. Devotees said when they paid a visit to the shrine on Friday, they noticed that century-old graves were levelled to the ground. When they tried



The graves were demolished to widen a pathway

to contact the custodian of the dargah, they were informed that on the instructions of the Wakf Board authorities they had razed the graves.

M o h a m m e d Naseeruddin, one of the devotees, said it was unfortunate that the Wakf

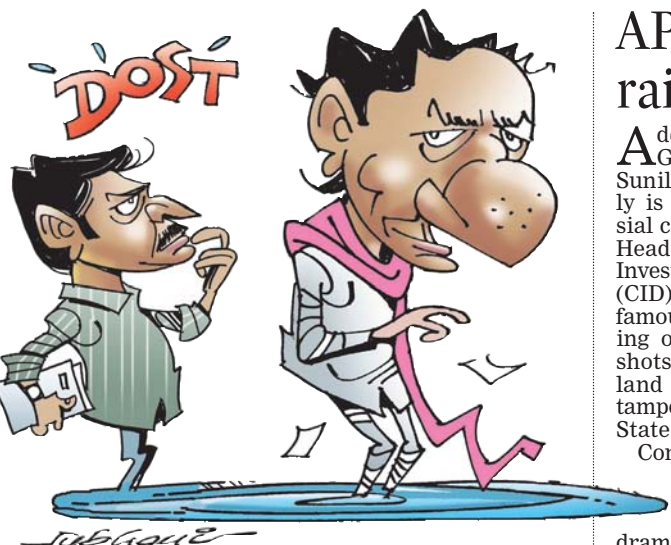
Board had demolished the graves when the shrine was closed during the lockdown. "This is a serious act of hurting religious feelings. Every Muslim has to respect the graves and Islam doesn't permit to make pathways on graves. If the Wakf

Board indulges in such acts, then who will respect the sacred places," he asserted.

Another devotee, Syed Sadiq Ali, alleged that encroachments on the premises of the dargah increased after the Wakf Board took up the administration. Within two years, more than 70 shops appeared inside the dargah, mostly on the graves without prior permission of the board.

The officials deputed there were making money by allowing people to start business inside the dargah without prior permission of the board. The board authorities were focusing only on income, he said.

Neta's Natter

Telangana, Andhra Pradesh
boil over Krishna waters

It was supposed to be a sangam to drown all other 'sangams' when the Telangana state and Andhra Pradesh Chief Ministers met in 2019 to discuss, among other things, the sharing of Godavari and Krishna waters. The Krishna has always been the contentious one, with a series of dams and power projects along its course. The CMs had made the right noises when they met, about working together, how every drop of water should be used judiciously and, despite being in two states, all Telugu speaking people were one, and so on.

Fast forward to 2021, and the tune in Telangana has changed. TRS leaders and ministers have taken to, and are crooning, the 'Dost dost n raha' line, about the sangam of the

two states on matters related to the Krishna. "We will oppose AP's projects, particularly the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme and the Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme's right canal project," is the refrain adopted by TRS ministers. Being friends is one thing, theft of water is another thing altogether, is what the TRS leaders say. Incidentally, this is not the first time politicians have sought to bring to a boil the waters in the Krishna. And it certainly won't be the last either. Meanwhile, the river continues to run through AP and Telangana and may continue to do so, but only if Maharashtra gets copious rains, lets water down into Karnataka, and then Karnataka does the same for TS and AP.

AP top cop's sermon
raises eyebrows

Additional Director General of Police P.V. Sunil Kumar undoubtedly is the most controversial cop in AP these days. Heading the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), Sunil became famous following clamping of cases against big shots in the Amaravati land scam and alleged tampering of records in State Election Commission during the tenure of N. Ramesh Kumar.

The latest is the dramatic arrest of rebel YSR Congress MP Raghu Ramakrishna Raju. While in all the cases, the allegations against the accused, prima facie, are serious and the political direction to file cases is not merely out of vendetta, the handling of the investigation, arrest of the accused and

the way they were treated in custody drew flak. Apparently sensing trouble, the CID chief recently held a virtual conference with his officers and gave sermons on protecting individual liberty which he said was the pinnacle of all laws. He went on to explain that arrest would mean suspending one's individual liberty for a brief period of time. Arrest shall not be a matter of routine, he said and asked officers not to apply law as they interpreted but follow the Supreme Court and High Court guidelines.

Well, if officers are faulted for murmuring under their breath that charity should always begin at home, it is, for sure, tantamount to curtail their individual liberty.

Caste war mars NRI
group acquisition plans?

All is not going well with the 'mega' plans of acquiring the NRI Group of Educational Institutions by an agglomeration of companies based out of Hyderabad but spreading its tentacles across the country. The proposed acquisition has turned into a caste war, with the financially strong Kammas of the coastal districts, some of whom owned the NRI group, making every effort to retain ownership and prevent what they called bulldozing by the mega agglomeration owned by Reddys. A once-politically powerful leader stepped into the arena and assured the original promoters of protecting their interests by taking legal support. The mega entrepreneur is rumoured to have met the leader and tried to convince him on the acquisition and even requested him not to put spokes in the move. The leader did not budge and won the hearts of his fellowmen. It is not his fault if they compare him with Chandrababu Naidu and blame the latter for remaining silent on what they describe as a forced acquisition.

What's up Chiru's
sleeve?

Megastar Chiranjeevi's tweet appreciating AP Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's efforts to ensure vaccination for all has kept analysts busy at guessing the intent behind the tweet. As Chiranjeevi is not just a film star, the tweet led to a lot of political speculation. Founder of Praja Rajyam Party, the matinee idol merged his party with the Congress and went on to become a Union minister as part of the compromise formula designed by the Congress high command for creation of Telangana state. This was followed by the actor shunning politics and going back to films where he is best at.

Some drew the inference that another compromise was being worked out between him and Jagan to win over the Kapu community to which the hero belongs. The tweet angered hardcore fans of Pawan Kalyan, his brother, film actor and politician. While the ruling and opposition party leaders are busy making calculations, top guns from the film industry who know Chiranjeevi do not rule out the possibility of the tweet being a simple goodwill gesture in advance of Chiranjeevi's and his son's big budget movies lining up for release. Producers and distributors of Pawan's latest flick 'Vakeel Saab' suffered as Jagan restricted the number of shows and scrapped benefit shows which otherwise are money spinners. Who knows, a simple tweet might turn the fortunes for the elder brother.

KTR hands over 2BHK
flats to 330 beneficiariesDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

Minister K.T. Rama Rao on Saturday handed over 330 double bedroom houses to beneficiaries residing in Ambedkarnagar near the Hussainsagar in Secunderabad. The houses have been built under the state government's dignity housing scheme.

Expressing his delight at the project, Rama Rao said that the market rate of each flat in Ambedkarnagar would sum up to ₹1.5 crore. He said that no other state has taken up a housing programme of this magnitude. The minister pointed out that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao was standing by the people and helping them realise their dreams like having an own house and performing marriages of daughters through the



Minister K.T. Rama Rao hands over keys of a 2BHK flat to an old woman at Ambedkarnagar, beside Hussainsagar, on Saturday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

Kalyana Laxmi and Shadi Mubarak schemes. He appealed to the beneficiaries to not dump waste in the Hussainsagar Lake. He asked them to plant saplings and make the area green.

Each dwelling unit would cost ₹8.65 lakh, including infrastructure. Apart from a lift, the projects have overhead tanks, sumps, streetlights, and shops, which would be leased out, within the premises.

MODALITIES FOR REOPENING NOT ANNOUNCED

From Page 1

While lifting the lockdown completely in Telangana from June 20, the state government had last week announced reopening of all educational institutions and commencement of physical classes from July 1 without listing out the modalities over how

this would be launched — whether in a phased manner or for all students at one go. This created a furore among students, parents and teachers who were worried about their safety in the absence of vaccination.

Some petitions were filed in the High Court challenging the govern-

ment's decision. The government informed the High Court on Wednesday last that it was not mandatory for the children to attend classes in person and that they could continue with online classes. Parents interested in sending their children to schools should submit their consent letter.

Special Covid vaccination
drive draws huge crowdsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

A major vaccination drive was carried out in different parts of the city and on the outskirts on Saturday as camps were held by local elected representatives, resident welfare associations and different clubs.

The free walk-ins and spot registrations saw a lot of senior citizens, physically challenged and those on wheelchairs opting for vaccination in their localities.

It was also a show of strength as elected representatives, along with their party workers, were at the function halls, community centres, school premises and public health centres assisting people for vaccination.

The vaccination drive is also being seen as a social and political move as many party workers are going door to door in their areas to ensure that people avail the facility.

Pavan Kumar, a TRS worker at Alwal, said, "We have organised a weekend camp in the area and there are online and offline methods used to convey to people to avail the vaccine. Those who are very old and do not have a proper transport system are being brought to the nearest centre by us." The camps started from 8 am and there were long queues at the centres. People were advised to follow social distancing and wear masks properly during this exercise.

There were challenges in spot registrations but after taking photocopies of Aadhaar cards, details were uploaded accordingly. The free vaccination drives for the 18-year-old and above in different localities also got a good response.

But experts say that there are still people who are not coming forward due to misinformation and they will be identified only after the rush of vol-

DAILY COVID BULLETIN DATA		Update: Cases Deaths
		Fresh Cases 1,028
		Deaths 9
		Tests Done 1,18,427
		Active Cases 15,054
		Total Cases 6,19,865
		Total Deaths 3,627
Highest New Cases		Lowest New Cases
GHMC (Hyderabad)	132	Kamareddy 1
Khammam	76	Nirmal 2
Nalgonda	66	Narayanpet, Medak, Jogulamba Gadwal, Asifabad 5
Suryapet	65	Komarambheem, Asifabad 7
Ranga Reddy	64	Nizamabad and Jangaon 8

Covid cases rise
in some districtsDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

Districts which saw cases declining on June 20 have seen a spike in the last six days. Mahbubabad, Mancherial, Pedapalli, Jayashankar Bhupally and Jagtial have all seen the numbers increase slowly. While the number of cases in these districts are less than 50, sporadic spikes are being witnessed from 20 cases on June 20 to 40 to 50 on June 26. This is being attributed to the unlocking and lifting of restrictions.

Dr Kishan Rao, senior general physician in Medak, said, "The Coronavirus Delta variant

is still active as we have 15,000 active cases in the state. There are also unreported cases. Given this situation there will be transmission of the Coronavirus. As each district is recording Covid-19 cases, spikes are expected. There must not be large super spreader events."

Despite constant warnings and awareness campaigns, function halls and other public spaces are continuing to see large crowds. Indoor weekend parties and small gatherings are also going on.

With people not following safety norms, experts say there will be faster and quicker movement of the virus.

untary groups subside. There are more than 1,000 centres operating in the state for the vaccination process. Till June 25, 1,00,79,222 vaccinations were completed in the state of which 86,30,091 completed the first dose and 14,49,131 completed the second dose.

The number of people

who completed two doses is less but as the vaccine availability improves, it is expected that the number of two dose vaccinated population will increase. Experts state that even after two doses of vaccine, the safety protocols of hand washing, masks and social distancing cannot be given up.

FRESH | START

Teachers of several city schools are upbeat and are excited to take the physical classes

SANJAY SAMUEL
PAUL | DC
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

After a long wait, finally, schools in the city are gearing up to open their gates for students for physical classes. Due to corona pandemic lockdowns, students were restricted to online classes, and now with the government's announcement of reopening schools, management and staff members of var-

ious schools are busy cleaning up and making their premises ready to welcome back students on July 1. Teachers are happily taking part in the process, and most of them said they were excited to take the physical classes.

Andhra Vidyalaya High School, Kattal Mandi, which was established before Independence, is one of the hundreds of schools that are making preparations to reopen.

Its headmaster, Challa Srinivas Reddy, said, "We are getting ready to make our school ready for physical classes. Our staff have been cleaning up the school premises for the past two days and the classrooms will be neat and clean by Monday. Students show a lot of interest in attending the school. We are hoping to get new admissions once the school is open."

P. Manjula, Telugu

teacher in the school, said, "All our staff are waiting for the opening of the school. After 15 months, we will have physical classes. With all excitement, we are cleaning our school, looking forward to meeting students, hoping this pandemic will end and we will continue the classes as usual."

General secretary of Vivek Vardhini Institutions, a group of seven schools, Prabhakar

Budhale, said, "We have instructed all teachers and staff to make the school premises and classrooms clean by July 1, and also all Covid precautions will be followed when the schools are open."

Renuka Reddy, a teacher of Vivek Vardhini School, said, "For the past two days, we are cleaning the whole school, all teachers are happy to work together, and making the school ready for students."



School staff engaged in cleaning the AV High School at Kattelamandi in Nampally on Saturday. — P. SURENDRA

SHORT TAKES

ABVP PROTESTS
HIGH FEES AT
PVT EDU BODIES

Karimnagar: Against the government regulations, some of the private educational institutions were charging high fees from students and were looting their innocent parents, alleged the activists of the ABVP on Saturday. They staged a dharna in front of a private school demanding that the management of the school to stop collecting high fees from students. District convener of ABVP, Naitham Mahesh said the outbreak of Covid pandemic either affected several thousands of people. In these situations, corporate educational institutions, in the name of online classes, were collecting high fees from students. He demanded the officials of the education department to take immediate actions against the institutions who are charging high fees.

ADILABAD SP MEETS
MAOIST KIN WITH
FRIENDLY GESTURE

Adilabad: Adilabad superintendent of police M. Rajesh Chandra on Saturday visited once Maoist affected interior Dedra village in Bajarath-noor and interacted with family members of Dasarwad Sumana, who is now working as a Maoist area committee member.

A team of police led by SP Rajesh Chandra donated a pack of essential commodities to the mother of the Maoist and also donated a 32-inch TV to the villages so that villagers including children watch the programmes to get education and knowledge of the outer world and some entertainment. SP explained the covid situation and how even Maoist affected with it and some of them lost lives a few days ago to Anjana Bai, mother of underground Maoist Sumana. He said they will extend all possible help to the Sumana if she surrendered before the police. He said Suman went into the underground, 20 years ago, who is now 38 years old. Mother Anjana Bai said it would be good if Sumana joined the mainstream. The police team led by SP Rajesh Chandra traveled nearly 20 km on vehicles and on bikes through the forest area to reach interior Dedra village.

Etala's BJP entry sets
off revolt by loyalists

200 BJP men in Huzurabad constituency quit party

DC CORRESPONDENT
KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 26

Former minister Etala Rajendar joined the BJP not to strengthen the party nor get support but to safeguard his wealth and properties which he earned illegally and to escape from the cases which were lodged against him, alleged BJP Ellanthakunda mandal president Ravi Yadav on Saturday.

At a meeting at Malial village, Ravi Yadav and around 200 BJP workers of Ellanthakunda mandal under Huzurabad constituency left the party. Others included local party general secretary Todeti Jitendra Goud, local OBC Morcha president Udattha Rathnakar, official spokesperson of BJYM district unit Thirupathi Yadav and mandal president of Yuva Morcha Guthikonda Pavan. Ravi Yadav said they would announce their plans very soon.

Ravi Yadav alleged that for the past 18 years, as MLA and minister, Rajendar had "gathered much of wealth and properties illegally by threatening people, by cutting trees and clearing forests and by grabbing assigned lands."

"If you are right and want to prove that you are fair

ETALA BETRAYED KCR WHO SAW A
BROTHER IN HIM: MLA SUNKE RAVI

Karimnagar: Choppadandi MLA Sunke Ravi Shankar on Saturday said even though Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao treated Etala Rajendar like his own brother and gave him many high posts, Rajendar has tried to split the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS).

The MLA was speaking to media persons in Ellanthakunda mandal of Huzurabad constituency, along with zilla parishad chairperson Kanumalla Vijaya, SUDA chairman G. V. Rama Krishna and legislator Ravi Shankar.

The Choppadandi MLA said even though there had been a heavy competition in TRS for contesting the assembly elections in 2004, CM KCR had given the party ticket to Rajendar, as he was educated and belonged to backward class community.

Under the circumstances, Rajendar should explain to people why he has resigned from TRS and joined BJP. "What are the issues people of Huzurabad are facing? He must divulge the issue that forced him to submit his resignation," Ravi Shankar maintained.

enough, then first hand over the six acres of endowment lands which were occupied by you to the government," he demanded.

When people of weaker sections approached Rajendar when he was a minister and requested him for help, he insulted them. He gave priority to people who belonged to the upper caste, Ravi Yadav pointed out.

By encroaching the lands which belonged to people of

weaker sections and supporting the people of upper caste, Rajendar was now trying to gain sympathy from people who belonged to the backward section and Mudiraj community, he alleged.

"People are well aware of Rajendar and are not going to fall prey to his political tactics. They are going to teach him a fitting lesson in the coming Huzurabad by-elections," he warned.

ARVIND SLAMS MIN.
OVER FUNDS FOR
ROAD OVER BRIDGE

Nizamabad: MP Dharmapuri Arvind slammed roads minister V. Prashant Reddy for 'delaying' the construction of railway over bridge (ROB) at Madhavanagar on the Nizamabad-Hyderabad highway. He and party leaders will stage a protest against the minister for alleged negligence in releasing funds for the ROB on Monday.

Surprisingly, he called upon Nizamabad Rural and Urban TRS MLAs Bajireddy Govardhan and Bigala Ganesh Gupta to participate in the protest seeking early sanction of funds. Once completed, it will ease traffic snarls on the highway, he said. Railway level crossing at Madhavanagar is a major hurdle for traffic flow from Nizamabad to Hyderabad. Even vehicular traffic from Maharashtra passes through this route. Around 55 trains run on the Mamad-Secunderabad route, resulting in frequent closure of the gate at Madhavanagar, which is causing problems from locals and more importantly ambulances.

There has been a demand for ROB for the last three decades and it was sanctioned last October. Of the ₹93.12 crore estimated cost, South Central Railway will share ₹30.05 crore and the state government will bear the remaining amount.

BJP leaders alleged that despite knowing its importance, the minister has been neglecting the ROB issue. Efforts by this correspondent to contact Arvind proved futile on Saturday.

MLA LAUNCHES
BOATING FACILITY AT
MADANNAPET LAKE

Warangal: One more attraction along side Pakhal Lake has been added to Narsampet. Nature lovers can now visit Madannapet Lake and avail the boating facility.

Local MLA Peddi Sudarshan Reddy launched the boating services at the lake on Saturday. Speaking on the occasion, he said the promise to develop the lake as a mini tank bund, along with bringing Godavari water has been fulfilled.

TPCC stir over atrocities
against Dalits across stateDC CORRESPONDENT
HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhara Rao has continuously cheated Dalits, who strongly believed him as he had promised to make a Dalit the state's first Chief Minister.

"Why is the largest community in Telangana, the Madiga community, not represented in the Cabinet? Telangana society is shocked at the brutal torture of a poor Dalit woman Mariamma and her son Uday Kiran in police custody," he said.

He was speaking at the Dalit Avedana Deeksha organized in protest against atrocities on SCs by TPCC SC Cell, headed by N. Preetam, at Gandhi Bhavan here on Saturday.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that though the Madiga community forms 12 per cent of the population, no one from the community was made a minister. He said that, in a striking contrast, a commu-

CONG. IS SAVIOUR OF DALITS: JAGGA

Hyderabad: Congress MLA T. Jayaprakash 'Jagga' Reddy said that Congress party is the only saviour of Dalits in India, especially in Telangana state. Congress had always been supporting the Dalits in their wellbeing, he added. Sangareddy MLA took part in Dalit Avedana

Deeksha. He accused attacks on Dalits have alarmingly increased after K. Chandrasekhara Rao became Chief Minister of state. BJP is known as anti-Dalit party and its leadership had thrown out Dalit leader Bangaru Laxman from BJP national president post, he said.

nity which forms just 0.5 per cent of the state's population has more than two ministers. He claimed that when Congress leaders met the Chief Minister to submit a memorandum about the death of Mariamma, Chandrasekhara Rao told them that he was not aware of the incident. This was a blatant lie as the High Court had ordered a judicial probe into the matter, he said.

He took exception to Chandrasekhara Rao's meeting with Dalit representatives of political parties on Sunday on 'Empowerment of Dalits' after having

gone back on his promises to them.

AICC SC Cell chairman Nitin Rawat called upon the people to bring down the TRS government while CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said that attacks on the Dalits have increased alarmingly after TRS assumed power.

MLAs T. Jayaprakash 'Jagga' Reddy, D. Sridhar Babu, former PCC president Ponnala Laxmaiah, AICC official spokesperson D. Shrivani, former minister J. Geetha Reddy, AICC secretary Sampath and several others participated in the programme.

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5.	Date, Time and Venue of opening	26.07.2021 Monday - 3.30 pm at Vellore Corporation Office	
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DISTANCE EDUCATION

DECCAN Chronicle

27 JUNE 2021



Shreya Sen-Handley

Off the beaten track

The wonder years start at dauntless 50

Watching *The Masked Dancer UK* with my children last weekend, I was struck by the age, élan, and agility of two of the three finalists, both in their mid-fifties. When I grow up, I said to myself, that's how I want to be. But if growing up is getting to fifty then it isn't miles away, and with my two left feet, dancing's not on my bucket list.

Of course it's not about dancing at all, which is clearly just an extension of these fifty-somethings' love for life and who-gives-an-eff-about-convention stance. It's a metaphor for the verve with which they've waltzed into aging.

Convention, you see, would want us to age in a particular way. When they talk about aging gracefully, they don't mean you should enter a televised dance contest with competitors half your age. Or wear body-hugging outfits, or get in society's face. They mean you should disappear.

Disappear in a manner however, that suits society; hovering obsequiously on its periphery. You still need to turn up and be counted at funerals. At family functions that are any fun, you are lumped with children to look after; eliminating you from the action. In fact, wherever there's a thankless job, without recognition or reward, you're the one it's pegged for. Because, after all, as the scriptures confirm, you're at that stage of life — Sanyas — when you must renounce it all. Even far-sighted Shakespeare wrote about the “spectacles on nose and pouch on side (colostomy bag?), shrunk shank, and childish treble” of the post-fifty brigade. But he died at 52, without ever having experienced this stage, so what did he know?

I know that if I'm to toddle back to my childhood again, I will cherry pick, like a child might, the bits I want to swallow, spitting the rest out like unpalatable pips. Like the youngest kids, we are undoubtedly more vulnerable to diseases (as this pandemic has proved). Like them as well, we are not at the peak of our physical strength; not as robust as folks in their teens, twenties, or early thirties. We've been there, got the t-shirt, fallen over inelegantly onto the other, twilight side, and got it badly besmirched. But there are oh-so-many advantages to being weather-beaten and worldly-wise.

I know this *before* I've got to fifty because this locked-down pandemic has been an enforced aging. My stay-at-home-cooking-baking-pottering-in-the-garden avatar has descended on me ten years ahead of time. So have the array of diseases it has accelerated, which, had I been allowed to remain active and less anxiety-ridden, I may have side-stepped nimbly for another decade. But you could also look at this imposed maturation as early acquisition of wisdom; a bringing into sharp focus of all that really matters in life.

Yet, because growing old is so reviled by popular culture, and strikes such terror in the human heart, I too was a bit iffy about entering my thirties, but it turned out infinitely better than the decade before that. Arguably, my forties have been even more rewarding (though it does help to have a failing memory; lifting each decade I'm living through to the top). The fifties might be the best yet. Limering up for it as I have been through this speed-aging pandemic, I feel ready. I feel almost Zen.

Isn't that a lot like Sanyas? Disappearing with 'dignity' aka. not making a fuss? No, because vanishing only as much as *we* want to, from society's bleeping radar, is a whole other trip called freedom.

I've never known more liberty than now; a couple of years, plus a couple of months, away from my half-century. As we grow, conventions bind us and social expectations pin us down, till one day we discover we've been put out to pasture. With society's gaze irrevocably averted in this so-called second childhood, we can be ourselves again like carefree kids.

For example:

Not one for superficial chatter, lockdown's one boon has been its cessation, and I'll never again feel compelled. Yet, I'm deeply interested in the welfare of those I love, as well as the world at large. But both these concerns require in-depth conversation and not trivial natter.

Nor will I wear anything ever again that makes me squirm. Not high heels, except when in the mood. And even less often — bras! Both socially imposed, they're uncomfortable, if not injurious to health. And do they really make us more presentable? To whom exactly? Those who care will want us to be comfy, and to everyone else I have this to say: go find something sensible to rant about instead!

Strenuously discouraged from dyeing my hair purple recently, on the grounds that it was unbecoming for my age, I went ahead. It caused a few jaws to drop undoubtedly, but well-wishers and my mirror loved it.

So, come and see me by all means, wild-haired in my flats and ganjee, looking more like my Dadu than ever, and as unwilling to indulge in frivolities.

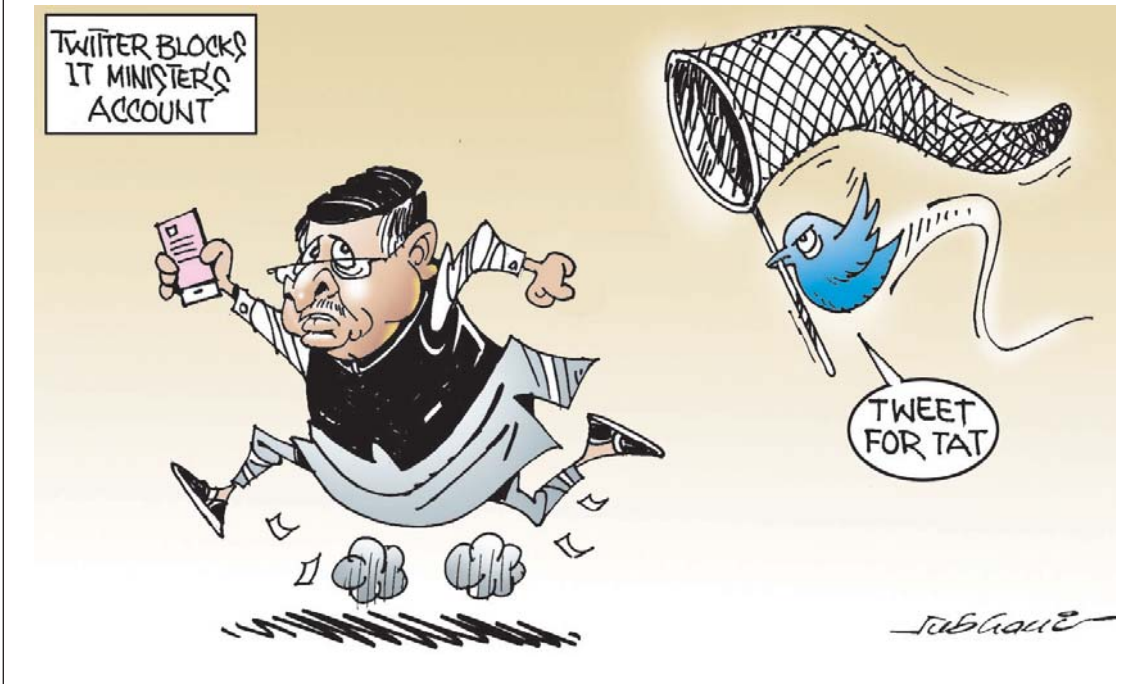
This freedom goes way beyond the trappings of course, though not having to toe the line with even these are considerable victories. Age is then an invisibility cloak, but one that confers a powerful forcefield, allowing us to be ourselves, even as it embargoes the narrow-minded and the nasty.

Growing older and less decorous, like children but in reverse, because we know better now and our bodies won't conform anymore anyhow; society begins to give us a wide berth, not just from disinterest but fear! No longer hounded to deliver on this hide-bound expectation or that, there's peace at last.

Age is indeed more than just a number; it's a wondrous new world.

Shreya Sen-Handley is the author of the recently published *Strange: Stories, the award-winning Memoirs of My Body, and a forthcoming book of travel misadventures*. Her Twitter and Insta handle is @shreyasenhana.

Subhani



With trust as weapon, forge a Naya Kashmir



Pavan K. Varma

Chanakya's View

Chanakya had a basic dictum: you cannot rule a people against their will. Perpetual intimidation of an unwilling populace is a tempting but unworkable solution. You have to win the trust of those you govern. It is good that this principle is at last being followed by the BJP government at the Centre where Kashmir is concerned. The importance of Prime Minister Modi's meeting with 14 leaders from Kashmir on June 24 has to be understood in this context.

Since August 5, 2019, when Article 370 was revoked, the people of Kashmir have literally been incarcerated in their own homes. Landline, mobile and Internet connections were cut; as many as 3,800 political leaders and activists were jailed or put under house arrest, curfews and lockdowns were imposed; and an army of troops and police personnel converted the Valley into occupied barracks.

The time to break through this impasse was long overdue. The PM himself acknowledged that he would have had the meeting earlier, where he could meet leaders face to face instead of virtually, but for Covid.

The most important takeaway from the meeting was that the principal Opposition parties in Kashmir, the People's Democratic Party (PDP) and the National Conference (NC), attended. Both Farooq Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti were present. The second takeaway was that, in spite of the strong feelings in both these parties against the abrogation of Article 370 — on which the Centre would not yield — there was no veto on discussions, and other

issues of great import could be discussed.

The discussion on Article 370 was deflected by the simple fact that the question of its constitutionality was before the Supreme Court (SC) and, therefore, sub judice. There is, indeed, a good case for the reservations of the Kashmiri parties on the manner in which Article was revoked. According to the Constitution, while 370 is a temporary measure and can be done away with, this step requires a recommendation from the J&K Assembly. This was not obtained. The Assembly had been suspended. There was President's rule. The powers of the Assembly were being exercised by the Centre directly through the governor. The government thus obtained the recommendation from the governor, their own nominee. That was tantamount to seeking concurrence from itself. The decision is under challenge, and rightly so, in the SC, and we would respectfully urge the highest court to expedite a decision.

Two other issues were on the table: the restoration of full statehood to J&K, and the holding of democratic elections. There is understandable resentment in Kashmir that their state has been converted into a Union Territory (UT). The Centre wisely gave in to this demand. The PM reiterated his resolve to restore statehood, and Amit Shah said that he had given this assurance on the floor of the House. The holding of democratic elections were made conditional on the completion of the delimitation exercise in J&K.

Delimitation is the act of redrawing boundaries of the Assembly seats to represent changes in the popula-

tion over time. Although delimitation for the rest of India is scheduled for 2026, there is no doubt that delimitation is overdue in J&K. Earlier, delimitation exercises were done in 1963, 1975 and 1995. Since no census was carried out in the state in 1991, there has been no delimitation since 2001. Delimitation will have an impact on the number of seats currently divided between Jammu and Kashmir. Currently, Kashmir has 46 seats, and Jammu 37. It is expected that after delimitation the number of seats in Jammu would go up, thereby upsetting the current numerical domination of Kashmir representatives.

The Delimitation Commission for J&K was set up on March 6, 2020, under the chairpersonship of retired SC judge, Ranjana Prakash Desai, with the mandate to finish the exercise in one year. The other members of the Commission were Union minister Jitendra Singh, Jugal Kishore Sharma of the BJP, and Farooq Abdullah, Akbar Lone and Hasnain Masoodi of the NC. The Commission did not hold a single meeting until February 2021, ostensibly due to the pandemic. In the first meeting, only the BJP representatives attended. The NC leaders boycotted the meeting to protest against the J&K Reorganisation Act, 2019.

The key question is whether the representatives of the NC, and, indeed, other key Opposition parties like the PDP, will now cooperate with the delimitation process. Not having com-

pleted its work in the one-year deadline, the Commission has been given a year's extension that lapses in March 2022. It is very important to keep to this deadline since the holding of democratic elections is conditional on it. Ultimately, the return of democracy in the troubled state is the best antidote to the existing resentment and anger. Democracy — if genuine — gives people the ventilation valve to express their feelings, and feel that they are stakeholders in unfolding events.

The way forward will be hugely dependent on the creation of trust, ending the *dil ki doori*. The Centre will have to walk the extra mile to ensure this. Its past actions have militated directly against it. Apart from incarcerating an entire state, BJP leaders have till recently reviled the grouping of the Opposition parties in Kashmir as the Gupkar gang. The Centre must take necessary steps to rectify the memories of the past, release political detainees wherever feasible, and carry out the delimitation exercise with utmost transparency and sincerity. An onus also rests on political parties in Kashmir. They must desist from taking extreme positions dictated by a sense of catering to the anger among the Kashmiris. They must work, as Ghulam Nabi Azad said, for the rehabilitation of the Kashmiri Pandits. And, they must desist from making — as Mehbooba Mufti seemed to suggest — Pakistan a stakeholder in what is entirely an internal matter of India. The Central government would also have to retain its full vigilance against terrorism emanating from Pakistan, which would do its best to derail a peace and reconciliation process. With trust as a weapon, the entire country hopes that normalcy would soon be restored, and we would have a *Naya Kashmir*.

The writer, an author and a former diplomat, is in politics

LETTERS

PANDEMIC RISK

During the pandemic, it is inappropriate for the government to force students to physically attend schools and colleges. The government can appoint new doctors who have just got their MBBS after fully vaccinating them. There is no point in playing with lives of both the groups. Every life is precious. Why did government take such risk and increase the anxiety of worried parents?

Malati Tangirala

Hyderabad

FIGHTING COVID

The ferocity of the pandemic seems limitless (*City hosps see small hike in cases after unlock, DC, June 25*). So many hearts have been broken. We have all lost something, large or small, directly or indirectly, in the second wave. In the current crisis, let each one of us behave like a responsible global citizen and fight for a world with good health for all. The number of Covid-19 cases could continue to rise in the weeks and months ahead, which is why action must be taken now. As individuals, we can contribute to controlling Covid by staying home if one is unwell and work from home if possible. We are safe only when everyone around is safe

Swetha Rekala

Hyderabad

J&K STATEHOOD

We could only hope that the meeting of Gupkar alliance with Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lead to early Assembly elections so that Kashmiri people can have an elected government (*J&K: Delimitation, polls on; statehood is carrot, DC, June 26*). However, the pain of Kashmiris deprived of freedom, internet and prison time being deprived of livelihood after the Constitutional autonomy of the state was taken away needs introspection.

P.J. David

Hyderabad

The cooperation shown by political parties in discussing the J&K issues should be extended to fighting the pandemic in the wake of fears of a third wave powered by Delta plus variants. In these difficult times, following Covid-19 protocols is important. Therefore, elections, rallies, meetings and other events must be postponed.

Kshirasagara Balaji Rao

Hyderabad

Email your letters to info@deccanmail.com, editor@deccanmail.com. You can also send them to Editor, Deccan Chronicle, 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad-500 003.

50 YEARS AGO IN

DECCAN Chronicle

Indian Navy enters missile era

JAMNAGAR, June 26. The Indian Navy has entered the missile era with the acquisition of a few rocket boats, Chief of the Naval Staff S.M. Nanda said here today. Addressing officers and sailors of *INS Valsura*, the electrical training establishment of the Navy, at a ceremonial parade, Admiral Nanda said that the navy had developed into a balanced force. The equipment on board the ships were of a sophisticated nature.

Anita Katyal
Political
Gup-Shup



Ayodhya leak radar on Yogi; Cong ready to forgive senior

The recent charges of corruption in the purchase of land for the construction of the Ram Temple complex at Ayodhya has led to animated discussions in Lucknow about how Opposition leader, AAP's Uttar Pradesh in-charge Sanjay Singh, managed to lay his hands on the documents about the deals. People in Uttar Pradesh were surprised how the Opposition managed to get hold of these papers because chief minister Yogi Adityanath has a vice-like grip on the administration and anyone suspected of leaking such information or even talking about it publicly would normally be handed out stringent punishment. There is also all-round agreement that the Opposition in Uttar Pradesh is incapable of unearthing such exposures as it is virtually defunct. It is, therefore, surmised that the documents were leaked with Yogi Adityanath's permission. According to the grapevine, the chief minister wanted to get back at the BJP leadership after he was pulled up by the party top brass for flying solo and marginalising his party colleagues. The temple con-

struction committee of the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust is headed by Nripendra Misra, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's former principal secretary, while Champat Rai, also known to be close to Modi, is the Trust general secretary. It is for the Trust office-bearers to defend these allegations while Yogi is out of the picture.

When he was replaced as leader of Opposition in the Kerala Assembly last month, senior Congress leader Ramesh Chennithala shot off a letter to party president Sonia Gandhi to complain about the insulting manner in which he had been eased out. He has since been making amends by posting his old photographs with Indira and Rajiv Gandhi on his Twitter handle to underline his special bond with the Congress and the Gandhi family. For instance, one post shows a photograph of Indira Gandhi campaigning in Chennithala's constituency while another tweet mentions how she signed a letter appointing him as NSUI president chief at the airport before boarding a flight to Russia.

Similarly, there are several pictures of Chennithala with Rajiv Gandhi while on tour and one of Gandhi attending the Kerala leader's wedding reception where he told him about his appointment as Youth Congress president. Chennithala's efforts in getting back into the good books of the Gandhis may well pay off, as there are reports he has been promised a slot as Congress general secretary in Delhi.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's assurance at an all-party meeting last week that holding elections in Jammu and Kashmir is a priority, is in line with the BJP's eagerness to test the electoral waters in the newly-carved Union territory. Though the BJP did not fare well in last year's local elections, the party has not given up on its ambition to install a Hindu chief minister in Jammu and Kashmir as it believes the redrawing of the constituencies by the Delimitation Commission will work to its advantage. Failing this, the BJP is also extending an olive branch to National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah in the belief he will

be amenable to an understanding with the saffron camp. The National Conference has aligned with the BJP in the past and it could well do so in the future. There are unconfirmed reports that back-channel discussions with Abdullah have already been initiated.

The Congress leadership has reason to worry as its party units in several poll-bound states are in turmoil. While the never-ending battle between Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh and his bete noire Navjot Singh Sidhu can only be described as a soap opera, the situation is no better in Uttarakhand. The post of legislative party leader in Uttarakhand fell vacant recently after senior leader Indira Hridayesh's death but the party is struggling to find her replacement. State unit president Pritam Singh is being persuaded to take over this post but he has declined and threatened to resign if the Central Leadership insists on giving him Hridayesh's job. Former chief minister Harish Rawat is keen that his rival Pritam Singh accept this post because then

the latter will not be directly involved in the distribution of tickets for the Assembly polls, giving the former chief minister a free hand in picking his own candidates.

There is a strong buzz in Madhya Pradesh political circles that newly-minted BJP member Jyotiraditya Scindia is eyeing Indore as his next Lok Sabha constituency. This speculation has gathered momentum as the frequency of Mr Scindia's trips to Indore has increased in recent months. Ideally, Mr Scindia would like to return to the Gwalior Parliamentary seat. But he is being given a hard time in his old pocket boroughs of Gwalior and Guna by the sitting MPs Vivek Narayan Shejwalkar and Krishna Pal Singh Yadav. Both the BJP leaders have the distinction of defeating Mr Scindia in his stronghold and they are clearly in no hurry to cede ground to him again. Meanwhile, there is no end to their turf war as all three are quick to take credit for any development work undertaken in the region.

Anita Katyal is a Delhi-based journalist

SHORT TAKES

AYODHYA SHOULD MANIFEST OUR TRADITIONS: PM

New Delhi, June 26: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday reviewed the development plan for Ayodhya and asserted that the temple town in Uttar Pradesh should manifest the “the finest of our traditions and the best of our developmental transformations”.

Speaking at a virtual meeting, which was also attended by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Modi described Ayodhya as a city that is etched in the cultural consciousness of every Indian and said the human ethos of this city must be matched by futuristic infrastructure.

A Prime Minister's Office (PMO) statement on the meeting said Ayodhya's development is being envisaged as a spiritual centre, global tourism hub and a sustainable smart city.

At the meeting, Uttar Pradesh government officials made a presentation which encompassed various aspects of Ayodhya's development.

The prime minister was informed about various upcoming and proposed infrastructure projects to improve connectivity with Ayodhya and various projects like airport, expansion of railway station, bus station, roads and highways were discussed, the PMO said. An upcoming greenfield township was discussed which includes lodging facilities for devotees, space for ashrams, maths, hotels, bhavans of various states. A tourist facilitation centre and a world class museum will also be built, it said.

Modi said that the coming generations should feel the desire to visit Ayodhya at least once in their lifetime

CJI SEEKS STEPS TO RESOLVE POOR CONNECTIVITY

New Delhi, June 26: Chief Justice of India N. V. Ramana has written to Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad seeking steps to resolve poor digital connectivity in rural, tribal and hilly areas, saying this is “adversely impacting the pace of justice delivery”.

In his letter to Prasad, who is also the minister for law and communications, Justice Ramana also referred to the “digital divide” and said “a whole generation of lawyers is being pushed out of the system” due to technological inequality. The Chief Justice of India (CJI) informed about the letter, written on June 8, while speaking on Saturday at the virtual release of a book “Anomalies in Law and Justice” authored by former Supreme Court Judge Justice R. V. Raveendran.

During the course of a panel discussion that followed the book launch, Justice Ramana said that the issue of connectivity figured prominently at a two-day conference of chief justices of high courts that he had held recently.

“Poor connectivity in rural, tribal, remote and hilly areas is adversely impacting the pace of justice delivery and is also depriving thousands of young lawyers across the country of their livelihood. A whole generation of lawyers is being pushed out of the system due to digital divide,” the CJI said.

Ramana said he recently wrote to the law, communications and IT minister, highlighting these issues, and requested him to initiate steps on priority to bridge the digital divide and evolve a mechanism. — PTI

Tikait: Rallies if Centre doesn't resume talks

Farmers mark 7 months of their agitation at Delhi borders

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS CHANDIGARH/NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

Marking the completion of seven months of agitation at Delhi's borders against the three farm laws passed by the Centre, scores of farmers from Punjab and Haryana on Saturday took out protest marches while farmers camping at Delhi's Singhu, Tikri and Ghazipur observed July 26 as “Save Agriculture, Save Democracy Day”.

Bharatiya Kisan Union (BKU) leader Rakesh Tikait said at least four lakh tractors and 25 lakh farmers are ready to march towards Delhi. However, if talks with the Centre resume, then



Farmers shout slogans during a protest against three farm reform laws, and over other issues at the Golden Gate in Amritsar, on Saturday. Farmers are observing June 26 as Save Agriculture, Save Democracy Day to mark seven months of their agitation. — PTI

the march will not be taken forward, he said.

Mr Tikait announced two rallies in Delhi next month to intensify the protest against the Centre's three new farm laws. Mr Tikait, who held

a meeting with farmers at Delhi's Ghazipur border, said two decisions were made at the meeting. First, a batch of farmers will leave on tractors for the Singhu border from Uttar Pradesh's

Shamli district on July 9. And another such rally will start from Bijnor on July 24 and will head towards Ghazipur border via Meerut, he said.

Even as farmers in several states tried to march to governors' residence to submit a memorandum to mark the completion of seven months of their agitation, Union agriculture minister Narendra Singh Tomar on Saturday appealed to them to end their stir and offered to resume talks on the provisions of the three legislations.

“I want to tell all the farmers union people that they should end their agitation. The Government of India is also ready to discuss and redress any provision of law,” he said.

Star TMC MP ill after fake vaccine

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JUNE 26

Four days after taking a dose of what is purported to be Covishield at a fake vaccination camp, and getting the racket behind it busted with the help of the Kolkata police, Mimi Chakraborty, Tollywood actor and Trinamul Congress Jadavpur MP, fell ill at home on Saturday.

Meanwhile, to mount pressure on the Mamata Banerjee government over the racket run by a bogus IAS officer, allegedly linked to several TMC leaders, Leader of the Opposition Suwendu Adhikari urged the Centre to order a probe by its agencies. At around 4 am, the

MP complained of illness which included severe dehydration, low blood pressure and acute stomach pain.

A doctor treated her and advised her rest with medication but suspected the symptoms as panic syndrome over the fake Covishield dose she got on June 22 rather than its side-effects.

While the Kolkata Municipal Corporation and state health department have launched a drive to check the health of those who along with Mimi Chakraborty got the ‘vaccine’, the Kolkata Police slapped attempt to murder charge on three arrested accused including racketeer Debanjan Deb.

On Friday Adhikari wrote Union health minister Harsh Vardhan, “...several incriminating photos suggestive of the accused's influence in the ruling party of West Bengal have come to the fore. Kolkata Mayor Firhad Hakim, West Bengal minister Subrata Mukherjee, TMC MP Santanu Sen, TMC MLAs Debasish Kumar and Lovely Maitra, KMC councillor Baiswanor Chatterjee and others are seen directly or indirectly endorsing the activities of Debanjan...”

He claimed Debanjan has previously been seen posing with government of West Bengal files or hosting Duare Sarkar

campus of West Bengal government in Ward 66 of KMC. In such a situation with so many influential ruling party leaders and government representatives being seen in close proximity to the accused, we have serious doubts about an impartial investigation from Kolkata Police that follows the instructions of the same government.”

Suwendu added, “Public health frauds like this in midst of a raging global pandemic are making common people skeptic to the authenticity of the vaccination process, thereby adding to vaccine hesitancy which is detrimental to the interests of the human race”.

WORLD

SHORT TAKES

UAE's GOLDEN VISA TO 2 INDIAN AYURVEDIC DOCS

Dubai, June 26: Two Indian Ayurvedic doctors have received the UAE's coveted Golden Visa, according to a media report on Saturday. Dr Shyam Vishwanathan Pillai and Dr Jasna Jamal, both from Kerala, were granted Golden Visas by the UAE's Federal Authority for Identity and Citizenship.

Pillai, CEO of Vaidyashala at the Burjeel Day Surgery Centre in Abu Dhabi, was granted the Golden Visa under the medical professionals and doctors category on June 17. A resident of Al Mamzar in Dubai, Dr Jasna Jamal was given the Golden Visa on June 24.

AQUINO, WHO CHALLENGED CHINA, BURIED

Manila, June 26: Former Philippine President Benigno Aquino III was buried in austere state rites during the pandemic Saturday with many remembering him for standing up to China over territorial disputes, striking a peace deal with Muslim guerrillas and defending democracy in a nation where his parents helped topple a dictator. Aquino died Thursday at age 61 of kidney disease arising from diabetes following a long public absence, after his single, six-year term ended in 2016. Family and friends sang a patriotic song after a silver urn with Aquino's remains was placed beside the tomb of his mother.

REPORT SHOWS DAMAGE BEFORE CONDO COLLAPSE

Surfside (US), June 26: The oceanfront condominium building that collapsed near Miami had “major structural damage” to a concrete structural slab below its pool deck that needed to be extensively repaired, according to a 2018 engineering report on the building.

The report was among a series of documents released by the city of Surfside as rescuers continued to dig Saturday through the rubble of the building in an effort to find any of the 159 people who remain unaccounted for after its collapse.

22 1/2 years in jail for Chauvin

Ex-cop sentenced for George Floyd murder

Minneapolis, June 26: Former Minneapolis police Officer Derek Chauvin was sentenced Friday to 22 1/2 years in prison for the murder of George Floyd, whose dying gasps under Chauvin's knee led to the biggest outcry against racial injustice in the US in generations.

The punishment — which came after Chauvin broke his yearlong silence to offer condolences to the Floyd family and express hope that they eventually have “some peace of mind” — is one of the longest prison terms ever imposed on a US police officer in the killing of a Black person.

Still, Floyd family members and others were disappointed. “The sentence fell short of the 30 years prosecutors had requested. And with good behavior, Chauvin, 45, could get out on parole after serving two-thirds of his sentence, or about 15 years. “Just because it's the most time doesn't mean it's enough time,” said Nekima Levy Armstrong, a Minneapolis leader.

Judge Peter Cahill went beyond the 12 1/2-year se-



Derek Chauvin

ntence prescribed under state guidelines, citing Chauvin's “abuse of a position of trust and authority and also the particular cruelty” shown to Floyd. Floyd family attorney Ben Crump said the family had gotten “some measure of accountability” but is hoping Chauvin gets the maximum at his upcoming federal civil rights trial.

Crump said this was the longest sentence a police officer has ever received in Minnesota. But he added: “Real justice in America will be PoC men and PoC women and people of colour who will not have to fear being killed by the police just because the colour of their skin. That

would be real justice.”

Outside the courthouse, a crowd of about 50 people clasped hands or placed them on each other's shoulders. The reaction was subdued as people debated whether the sentence was long enough.

Some cursed in disgust. At George Floyd Square, as the intersection where Floyd was pinned to the pavement is now known, members of the crowd broke into applause, and several said, “We'll take it.”

Chauvin was immediately led back to prison. He showed little emotion when the judge pronounced the sentence. His eyes moved rapidly around the courtroom, his Covid-19 mask obscuring much of his face.

The fired white officer was convicted in April of second-degree unintentional murder, third-degree murder and second-degree manslaughter for pressing his knee against Floyd's neck for up to 9 1/2 minutes as the 46-year-old man gasped that he couldn't breathe and went limp on May 25, 2020. — AP

B'desh shuts over virus spike

Dhaka, June 26: Bangladesh has announced it will impose a tough new lockdown starting Monday, after a “dangerous and alarming” surge in Delta variant cases of Coronavirus. All government and private offices will be shut for a week and only medical-related transport will be allowed, the government said late Friday.

“No one can step out of their homes except in emergency cases,” a statement added. Health department spokesman Robed Amin said police and border guards would be deployed to enforce the lockdown and the army may be involved if needed. “It is a

dangerous and alarming situation. If we don't contain it now, we will face an India-like situation,” he said, referring to a surge in cases in neighbouring India in April and May.

Infection rates have been rising sharply since mid-May in Bangladesh, home to around 170 million people. On Friday the government recorded almost 6,000 new cases and 108 fatalities, the second-highest death toll yet in the pandemic. Authorities say the situation in districts near the Indian border is catastrophic, with hospitals in the cities of Khulna and Rajshahi overwhelmed. — AFP

NZ suspends travel bubble with Oz

Wellington, June 26: New Zealand announced a three-day suspension of its quarantine-free travel arrangement with Australia on Saturday with Wellington citing “multiple” outbreaks of Covid-19 in the neighbouring country. The announcement comes as a two-week lockdown begins in Sydney to contain a rapidly spreading outbreak of the Delta Coronavirus variant. More than 80 cases have been reported

in Australia's largest city, while a handful of cases have been recorded in the Northern Territory, Victoria and Queensland. “But given the high level of transmissibility of what appears to be the Delta variant, and the fact that there are now multiple community clusters, it is the right thing to keep Covid-19 out of New Zealand,” said NZ's Covid-19 Response Minister Chris Hipkins. — AFP

Down with drugs



A member of security forces loyal to Yemen's Huthi rebels stands near a bonfire incinerating seized narcotic substances, in the Huthi-held capital on Saturday, the United Nations designated “International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking”. — AFP

3 more held for Pak blast

Lahore, June 26: Pakistani security agencies have identified the key person behind the car bomb blast outside the house of the 2008 Mumbai terror attack mastermind and chief of the banned Jamat-ud-Dawa (JuD) Hafiz Saeed here and arrested three more persons in connection with the case, officials said on Saturday.

Three teams of the Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) have been sent to Karachi, Peshawar and Sheikhupura for gleaming more information about those involved in the blast, an official said.

According to Punjab Law Minister Basharat Raja, so far eight suspects have been taken into cus-

tody in connection with Wednesday's blast that left three people dead and 21 others injured.

“Three more suspects have been arrested from Lahore, Sheikhupura and Peshawar in connection with the Lahore blast on the information of the main suspect — Peter Paul David,” an official of the CTD said. — PTI

‘Delhi O2 claim not exaggerated’

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, JUNE 26

A day after Delhi's AAP government and the BJP were locked in a battle over the national capital's oxygen crisis during the second wave of Coronavirus in April-May, three of the five members of the Supreme Court appointed team have distanced themselves from the report, with AIMS director Randeep Guleria saying that it's not correct to say the Arvind Kejriwal government exaggerated the city's requirement.

Dr Guleria, who heads the subgroup, said, “It would not be correct to say that. Delhi oxygen audit is an interim report. We should wait for the final report.” Two other members, B.S. Bhalla, Delhi government's principal home secretary, home, and Max Healthcare's Sandeep Budhiraja, have also questioned the reported conclusions of the report and said that they had raised objections against several claims that are being made.

“The manner in which the proceedings of the subgroup were conducted suggested that the purpose of proceedings was to satisfy a preconceived and predetermined conclusion and narrative to recommend a lower quantity of oxygen to Delhi. It was also aimed at further portraying an impression that the assessment by the GNCTD (Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi) before the high court and the Supreme Court was exaggerated or not genuine,” Mr Bhalla had noted in a communication sent to the panel on May 31.

Max Hospital's director Sandeep Budhiraja said in his comments, included in annexure of the report, that a decision was taken in the panel's first meeting itself to get actual details of oxy-

gen consumption from all the hospitals of NCT Delhi.

“After repeated corrections (as hospital medical superintendent used a different format), the total calculation of oxygen consumption (based on actual consumption data of 214 hospitals) came to around 490 MT. This did not take into account oxygen cylinder refilling and non-Covid requirements of hospitals,” Mr Budhiraja said.

Relieved at the clarifications, chief minister Arvind Kejriwal said the acute shortage of oxygen during Covid's second wave was real and appealed for an end to political bickering and for everyone to work together so that no one suffers in the third wave. “May we work now if your fight over oxygen is finished? Let us together make a system so no one faces shortage of oxygen in the third wave. There was an acute shortage of oxygen in the second wave. It should not be so in the third wave. Corona will win if we fight with each other. The nation will win if we fight together,” Mr Kejriwal tweeted.

On Friday, several BJP leaders circulated a report in the media, claiming that the Delhi government had “exaggerated” the city's medical oxygen needs at the peak of the second wave of the pandemic. The Centre, based on that report, remarked that the Delhi government had used a wrong formula to calculate its oxygen requirements and “excess supply” to the capital “affected other states.” It accused the Delhi government of “criminal negligence”.

“The matter is in the Supreme Court. We need to wait and see what the top court says about it. Under counting of active cases and other factors need to be considered,” Dr Guleria said on Saturday.

TESLA TO RECALL 2.85L CARS OVER FAULTY SOFTWARE

Beijing, June 26: Electric car giant Tesla will “recall” over 285,000 cars from the Chinese market after an investigation found issues with its assisted driving software that could cause road collisions, a government regulator announced late Friday. Tesla would contact affected users to upgrade their vehicle's software remotely for free, a State Administration of Market Regulation (SAMR) notice said, adding that it affects some imported and domestically manufactured Model 3 and Model Y vehicles.

“The recall plan was filed with the State Administration of Market Regulation, and it was decided to recall the following vehicles from today,” SAMR said.

The order is the latest blow to the American self-driving car pioneer, which has come under growing regulatory scrutiny in China due to several deadly collisions involving Tesla vehicles in recent months.

“Due to issues with the cruise control system... the driver can easily activate the cruise control function by mistake,” the Chinese government agency said in the notice. — AFP

US won't dump Kabul: Biden

Washington, June 26: President Joe Biden has told his Afghan counterpart Ashraf Ghani that the people of Afghanistan “are going to have to decide their future” but assured him that the US is going to “stick with you” even after the American troops leave the war-torn nation by September.

Biden, who had his first face-to-face meeting with Ashraf Ghani at the White House on Friday said America's partnership with the South Asian nation is going to be sustained. The partnership between Afghanistan and the United States is not ending. It's going to be sustained, Biden told reporters in the Oval Office of the

White House in a joint media appearance with President Ghani and the CEO Abdullah Abdullah. American troops may be leaving, but support for Afghanistan is not ending in terms of helping maintain their military as well as economic and political support, Biden said.

“Afghans are going to have to decide their future of what they want they want. What they want. But it won't be for lack of us being a help. “But we're going to stick with you. And we're going to do our best to see to it you have the tools you need,” he assured the top Afghan leaders ahead of the US troop withdrawal before September 11. — PTI

THOUSANDS FLEE KUNDUZ OVER FIGHTING

Kunduz, Afghanistan, June 26: About 5,000 Afghan families have fled their homes in Kunduz after days of fighting between the Taliban and government forces, officials said Saturday, with the insurgents continuing to surround the key northern city. The Taliban briefly seized the city twice in recent years but have now captured the surrounding districts and a nearby border crossing with Tajikistan. — AFP

SHORT TAKES

Injury scare for sprinter Hima

Patiala: Star sprinter Hima Das on Saturday suffered a hamstring injury during the 100m heats at the ongoing National Inter-State Athletics Championships here, leaving her on the verge of missing out on the upcoming Tokyo Olympics. Hima, who has had a lower back injury problem for a long time, did not start in the 100m final due to the injury though she qualified for it. She did complete her heat race and finished third with a timing of 12.01 seconds during the morning session. It is learnt that the Assam athlete is highly unlikely to run the 200m race scheduled on Sunday as well as the women's 4x100m relay final on June 29. Hima's injury is also a big blow to 4x100m women's relay team's qualification. — PTI

Verstappen takes Styrian GP pole

Spielberg: World Championship leader Max Verstappen of Red Bull produced the quickest lap in qualifying on Saturday to claim pole position for the Styrian Grand Prix. Mercedes' Valtteri Bottas was second quickest but drops to fifth on the grid because of a three-place penalty imposed on Friday, leaving teammate Lewis Hamilton to start on the front row with Verstappen. McLaren's Lando Norris produced the performance of the day, pushing the front runners all the way and finishing fourth. — AFP

Saurabh and Manu clinch silver medal

Osijek (Croatia): Continuing their impressive run, the Indian duo of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker clinched the silver medal in the 10m air pistol mixed team event at the ISSF Shooting World Cup here on Saturday. Already assured of a silver, the Indian duo was on par with Russia's Vitalina Batsarashkina and Artem Chernousov at 12-12 before losing the last two series to go down 12-16. Representing the other Indian team, Yashaswini Singh Deswal and Abhishek Verma missed out on a bronze medal. Deswal and Verma, who qualified in the third place, were completely outplayed by Iran's Golnoush Sebgatollahi and Javad Foroughi. — PTI

Champ Farah fails to qualify for Tokyo

London: Four-time Olympic champion Mo Farah's hopes of ending his track career at the Tokyo Games ended as he fell short of the qualifying mark for the 10,000 metres in Manchester on Friday. The 38-year-old won a specially-arranged race to give him a final chance to qualify at the British Championships, but his time of 27 minutes 47 seconds was nearly 20 seconds off the time required to qualify. Farah won the 5,000m-10,000m double at the London Olympics in 2012 and repeated the feat four years later in Rio de Janeiro. — AFP

Archer Verma wins gold in World Cup

Paris: Star compound archer Abhishek Verma stunned American heavyweight Kris Schaff in a shoot-off to bag a gold medal at the Archery World Cup Stage 3 here on Saturday. Verma's effort has come two months after he along with the Indian team was stopped from board the flight for the first stage of the meet in Guatemala City following their coach's false positive Covid-19 test report. India archers are also in the fray for three more medals in the women's recurve individual, team and mixed pair. — PTI

Live on TV

EURO

Round of 16: Netherlands vs Czech Republic from 9.30 pm; Belgium vs Portugal from 12.30 am (Monday) on Sony Ten 2, HD

COPA AMERICA

Brazil vs Ecuador from 2:30am on Sony Ten 1, HD; Venezuela vs Peru from 2:30am on Sony Ten 2, HD

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DANES PARTY

Denmark decimate Wales to enter Euro quarters

Denmark 4

(Kasper Dolberg 27, 48, Joakim Maehle 88, Martin Braithwaite 90+4)

Wales 0

Amsterdam, June 26: Denmark marked the 29th anniversary of their greatest triumph by marching on to the quarter-finals of Euro 2020 on Saturday as Kasper Dolberg scored twice in an emphatic 4-0 win over Wales before an exultant travelling support in Amsterdam.

In the city where Christian Eriksen made his name, it was Dolberg — another former Ajax player — who opened the scoring with a fizzing strike in the 27th minute.

That came after Wales had started so well but Denmark never looked back and Dolberg struck again just after the restart before Joakim Maehle and Martin Braithwaite added more goals late on.

Carried by a wave of emotion, Danish dreams are still intact in a tournament that began in such traumatic circumstances for them with Eriksen's collapse in their opening match against Finland in Copenhagen.

They now go on to a last-eight tie in Baku against the Netherlands or the Czech Republic.

Eriksen, still recovering at home after his cardiac arrest, was present in



Denmark's Kasper Dolberg celebrates after scoring his first goal against Wales in the Euro Round of 16 match in Amsterdam on Saturday. — UEFA

everyone's minds at the home of Ajax, and that combined with a vast Danish support inside the one-third full Johan Cruyff Arena made this occasion really like a home game for them.

European champions against all odds when they beat Germany in the final on this day in 1992, Denmark finally have their first win in the knockout phase of a Euro since then and it would be a truly extraordinary story if they could repeat the feat this time.

Nobody in Denmark will want to get ahead of themselves but Wales -- who fin-

ished with 10 men after Harry Wilson's late red card — could certainly have no complaints about the outcome and there will be no repeat of their run to the semi-finals at Euro 2016.

They needed a moment of magic from captain Gareth Bale or Aaron Ramsey which never came, but in truth they were up against it from the outset.

Aside from the universal goodwill towards Denmark following Eriksen's collapse, a ban on travellers from the United Kingdom entering the Netherlands meant

there were very few Welsh supporters inside the stadium.

Danes, in contrast, descended in their droves on Amsterdam, creating an atmosphere not far off that seen at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen when they beat Russia to qualify for the last 16 — even the Danish Prime Minister, Mette Frederiksen, was in attendance. To their credit

Wales started well, with the probing Bale leading by example in the early stages. He crashed a shot just wide in the 10th minute. — AFP

WELSH PRINT 'ERIKSEN' ON THEIR JERSEY

Amsterdam, June 26: A framed Wales national team shirt with Christian Eriksen's name on it was given to Denmark captain Simon Kjaer before the teams played in the Round of 16 at the European Championship.

Eriksen collapsed on the field during Denmark's opening match at Euro 2002 and had to be resuscitated with a defibrillator.

The Wales jersey had "CHRISTIAN" written on top of Eriksen's No. 10 and BRYISA WELLA underneath. Bryisa wella means get well soon in Welsh.

Kjaer, Wales captain Gareth Bale and the three match officials in Amsterdam then posed for a photo with the framed jersey moments before kickoff.

The vast majority of fans at the Johan Cruyff Arena were supporting Denmark in the team's European Championship match against Wales.

Only a handful of Welsh dragon flags were visible among a sea of Danish flags. Wales fans were warned not to travel to the Netherlands because of coronavirus restrictions in that country. — AP

Belgium & Portugal in clash of heavyweights

Madrid, June 26: Portugal felt the full range of emotions during the Euro 2020 group stage and with Cristiano Ronaldo in the groove again, they can really begin to believe.

After scoring three late goals to beat Hungary, Portugal were shaken by a 4-2 loss to Germany, only for a 2-2 draw against France to restore morale and ensure they snuck out of Group F in third place.

The result is a last-16 clash with Belgium in Seville on Sunday, when one of the tournament favourites will bow out in what is surely the blockbuster tie of the round.

One of the frontrunners for the Golden Boot will fall too, with Ronaldo and Belgium's Romelu Lukaku both in contention. Ronaldo leads the scoring charts on five goals with Lukaku not far behind on three.

Portugal may have taken only a point from a sweaty contest with France at the Puskas Arena in Budapest but the belief and confidence gained from going toe-to-toe with the world champions could be pivotal for the rest of their tournament.

After chaos against Germany came concentration against the French, a committed, organised and aggressive performance which was a reminder of what carried Portugal to success at Euro 2016 and in the Nations League three years later.

"We were strong and consistent. The players helped each other, we had posses-



Belgian footballer Eden Hazard during a training session. — Twitter

sion, we attacked well. We improved a lot from the game against Germany," said Portugal's coach Fernando Santos afterwards.

Santos had responded too, reacting to criticism by reverting to his traditional 4-3-3 system of the past two years and making some bold changes to his starting line-up.

CZECH FAVOURITES AGAINST DUTCH

The Czech Republic will enter Sunday's last-16 game against the Netherlands at Euro 2020 as the odds-on favourites, at least when it comes to the history of their head-to-head encounters.

Since the Czech Republic

emerged as an independent state in 1993, their national team have won five games and lost three against the Dutch, on top of three draws.

Before that, Czechoslovakia memorably beat the Netherlands on the way to their only European Championship title in Belgrade in 1976, having edged Johan Cruyff and company 3-1 after extra time in the semi-final.

Czechoslovakia were not there to stop the Dutch when they won the 1988 title in West Germany.

But Czech fans cherish above all the memory of an epic battle at Euro 2004 in Portugal, won by the Czechs 3-2. — AFP

TOKYO | OLYMPICS



A file photo of P.V. Sindhu carrying the Indian flag at the 2018 Commonwealth Games in Gold Coast, Australia.

Sindhu carries flag and hopes

MOSES KONDETY | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 26

P. V. Sindhu can't wait for the Olympics to begin. The badminton ace will have the rare honour of leading the country at the world's biggest sporting spectacle when the Games begin in Tokyo next month. The Hyderabad girl will carry the tri-colour as she heads the Indian contingent at the Opening Ceremony.

"Being the flag-bearer is such a proud moment altogether," a chuffed Sindhu said.

"To think that you would be carrying the national flag and leading the Indian contingent at the opening ceremony is staggering. I am thrilled and excited because that sort of opportunity is rare... it's a huge honour," the 25-year-old said during an interaction post her talk at TEDxYouth@SuchitraAcademy organised by Suchitra Academy International School in Hyderabad on Saturday.

The Covid pandemic may have pulled everyone back a bit but the gritty girl is gung-ho. "I am emotionally attached since the entire country is showing support and wanting me to get the medal. I am really looking forward to doing that," the Khel Ratna awardee said.

Preparations are in full swing. "Since February I have been practicing at the Gachibowli Stadium, which is the same as the

one in Tokyo where the badminton events will be held. The venue has come in handy to get myself used to the air-conditioning and flight of the shuttle. I am thankful to the government, the Sports Authority and the badminton association for the facility. Whenever I asked for permission to practice, they readily granted my request," Sindhu said.

"In the evenings, I go to the Suchitra Academy, which is like a second home to me, for my recovery sessions — pool, ice-bath, gym and running — that are very much needed as there is not much time left for the Games," Sindhu added.

Suchitra Academy also provides her with sparring partners of different styles and skills — left, right-handed, aggressive, defensive, et al. Everyday there are different players and Sindhu has been up against two, sometimes three, opponents at a time as she gears up to take on the world.

The pressure is intense though. "This Olympics will definitely be different compared to Rio 2016 (where she won silver). Now, everyone wants me to get a medal wherever I play, so yes, there is pressure and we have to deal with it. At the end of the day, Olympics are Olympics — right up there. We have to be prepared for everything and anything," Sindhu said.

SAJAN CREATES HISTORY, MAKES OLYMPIC 'A' CUT

New Delhi, June 26: Sajjan Prakash on Saturday became the first-ever Indian swimmer to qualify for the Olympic Games by breaching the 'A' standard time, clocking 1:56:38 seconds in the men's 200m butterfly event at the Sette Colli Trophy in Rome, Italy. The Games 'A' standard was set at 1:56:48 seconds and the 27-year-old Prakash completed the run 0.10 seconds faster at the Fina-accredited Olympic qualifier.

Prakash also rewrote his own national record



Sajan Prakash

of 1:56.96s that he had set last week at the Belgrade Trophy swimming competition. This will be Prakash's second successive Olympics, having represented India in the 2016 Rio Games. — PTI

Sachin bills Jamieson as top all-rounder

New Delhi, June 26: Kyle Jamieson has the ability to become one of the leading all-rounders in world cricket in days to come, reckons legendary Sachin Tendulkar after watching the giant Black Cap torment India's best batsmen in the recently concluded World Test Championship Final.

In New Zealand's emphatic title triumph, Jamieson played a major role with match figures of 7 for 61 in 44 overs along with 21 valuable runs in his team's first essay.

"Kyle Jamieson is a fantastic all-rounder. He is going to go on and become one of the leading all-



rounders in world cricket," Tendulkar said on his YouTube channel.

"When I had seen him last year in NZ, he impressed me," the maestro said.

He then elaborated on why playing Jamieson in

English conditions made him even more lethal.

"If you see his bowling, he is very tall and more than swinging, he likes to bowl seaming deliveries. He is a different bowler compared to Tim Southee, Trent Boult and Neil

Wagner.

"Jamieson hits the deck hard and whatever he does, is off the seam. There were variations which he used where he angled is wrists and bowled big inswingers. There was reasonable variation in his bowling and what I liked was consistency," Tendulkar said.

Tendulkar also liked how Jamieson used his height to play the big shots.

"His partnership with Williamson was critical one for New Zealand. He chose to attack from ball one and used his height beautifully. A tall batter, who can get on to the

front-foot and makes a big statement.

"That kind of unsettles bowler and they have to pull back their lengths because batter is using his height. When the ball has to come chin high, then length has to be short and that gives batter chance to play horizontal bat shots and that's what Jamieson exactly did. Anything off length, he used his height beautifully, stood tall and played most of them."

On the Indian front, Tendulkar felt that Virat Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara's dismissal in the first hour on sixth day became decisive. — PTI