

DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA
HYDERABAD | TUESDAY | 18 JUNE 2024



WEATHER

Max: 35.9°C
Min: 26.1°C
RH: 90%
Rainfall: 019.3 mm

Forecast: Generally cloudy sky. Max/Min temp. 34/24 °C

ASTROGUIDE

Krodhi; Uttarayana
Tithi: Jyeshtha Shukla Ekadasi till 6.24 am
Star: Swathi till 3.51 pm
Varjyam: 9.47 pm to 11.29 pm
Durmuhurtam: 8.22 am to 9.15 am; 11.11 pm to 11.55 pm
Rahukalam: 3 pm to 4.30 pm
HJRI CALENDAR
Zil Hijrah 11,1445 H
PRAYERS
Fajar: 4.32 am
Zohar: 12.27 pm
Asar: 4.54 pm
Maghrib: 6.58 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.42 AM
SUNSET TODAY 6.52 PM
MOONRISE 3.53 PM
MOONSET 2.25 AM

COUNTER POINT



I received a huge bonus. Should I buy gold or vegetables?

SHORT TAKE

MP KULASTE REFUSES TO BE MoS AGAIN

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 17

Former Union minister Faggan Singh Kulaste, considered the tribal face of the BJP in Madhya Pradesh, caused a stir within party circles by claiming that he refused an offer to become a junior member in the new ministry at the Centre.

Speaking to reporters on the sidelines of a thanksgiving programme in Niwas, under the Mandla Lok Sabha constituency in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, Kulaste, who did not secure a position in the new ministry led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, said he was not interested in holding the position of minister of state (MoS) at the Centre.

Page 9: Kulaste looks for Cabinet position



WORLD | 10

Putin to visit North Korea from today

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Previous govt could build just 1.54 L 2BHKs State to cancel 60K BRS-allotted BHKs

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The state government has decided to cancel 62,600 double bedroom houses (2BHKs) that were sanctioned but not constructed during the previous BRS government's nine-year tenure, official sources said.

Instead, the sources said, the Congress government has decided to provide Indiramma houses to the beneficiaries. The BRS government had sanctioned 2.92 lakh 2BHK houses, including one lakh under the GHMC limits. However, it could build just 1.54 lakh 2BHK houses in nine years by spending ₹12,500 crore. The condition of many of these completed units have deteriorated significantly, with issues ranging from structural damage due to water seepage to fundamental deficiencies

HOUSING SCAM

The BRS government had sanctioned 2.92 lakh 2BHK houses, including one lakh under the GHMC limits.

However, it could build just 1.54 lakh 2BHK houses in nine years by spending ₹12,500 crore.

The condition of many of these completed 2BHK units have deteriorated significantly, with issues ranging from structural damage due to water seepage during the rains.

such as missing doors and windows. Although a few houses were allotted through the draw of lots, they remain unoccupied due to their bad condition. In GHMC limits alone, out of the sanctioned one lakh 2BHK houses, a mere 69,000 were constructed. The haste with which some of these incomplete units were allotted just before the 2023 Assembly polls, without amenities led to widespread rejection.

Page 3: About 20K houses remain unoccupied
Full report on Page 3



SPORTS | 12

England off to winning start in Euro 2024

TABLOID

Shorter Skirts = Sound Economy

Goods train smashes into Exp. in WB; 10 die, 50 hurt

Driver jumps red signal, crashes into Kanchanjunga Exp.

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JUNE 17

At least 10 people died while 50 others were injured after a goods freight container train allegedly overshot a signal and rammed into the Sealdah-bound Kanchanjunga Express on the same track at Darjeeling in West Bengal on Monday.

The accident took place at around 8.55 am at Phansidewa between Rangapani and Chatterhat stations under Katihar division of the Northeast Frontier Railway, 10 km away from New Jalpaiguri station at Siliguri in North Bengal.

The impact of the collision was so heavy that the last four coaches of the passenger train, which was apparently stationary and five container wagons of the goods train were derailed, blocking movements of other trains on the up and down tracks.

The affected coaches of Kanchanjunga Express, which was coming from Agartala, were two parcel vans, a guard's compartment and a passenger compartment. The NDRF, SDRF, RPF and state police personnel began rescue operations with medical teams.

They took out the bodies from the damaged coaches and rescued the injured passengers. Several long-distance trains in the region were cancelled and diverted immediately.

The list of 10 deceased included two railway staffers—who were the driver of the goods train and a parcel van staffer of Kanchanjunga Express.



Rescue work underway after a collision between the Kanchanjunga express and a goods train, near Rangapani railway station, in West Bengal, on Monday. — PTI

WHAT IS KAVACH?

KAVACH, AN AUTOMATIC TRAIN PROTECTION SYSTEM DEVELOPED BY INDIAN RAILWAYS, AIMS TO ENHANCE THE SAFETY OF RUNNING TRAINS.

THE NDRF, SDRF, RPF and state police personnel began rescue operations with medical teams.

IT has also come to light that the automatic signals were not functioning from 5.50 am of the day between Ranipatra and Chatterhat.

THE IMPACT of the collision was so heavy that the last four coaches of the passenger train, which was apparently stationary and five container wagons of the goods train were derailed, blocking movements of other trains on the up and down tracks.

RLY BOARD SAYS ANTI-TRAIN COLLISION SYSTEM NOT IN PLACE ON MISHAP ROUTE

New Delhi/Kolkata, June 17: The Railways' Kavach or anti-train collision system was not in place along the Guwahati-Delhi route, where a goods train collided with the Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express in the rear on Monday, a top official said.

Chairperson of the Railway Board Jaya Varma Sinha said that Kavach, an automatic anti-collision

train protection system, is being planned for the route. "It is not there right now," she said. She asserted that safety is the first priority of the Railways.

"We are doing everything to ensure that train operations remain safe," she said. "Kavach is being done on a mission mode, it is already functional in 1,500 km of railway tracks, Sinha said. — PTI

MANIPUR CHAOS: SHAH HOLDS HIGH-LEVEL MEET

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Amid renewed violence in Imphal and Jiribam, Union home minister Amit Shah convened a high-level meeting on Monday to assess the security situation in Manipur. The meeting aimed at addressing the ethnic tensions between the Meitei and Kuki communities and find a resolution to the ongoing conflict.

Shah's review followed a meeting with Manipur Governor Anusuiya Uikey, who briefed him on the current law and order situation. Shah emphasised the need for a coordinated approach to resolve the conflict, ensuring that the Centre will engage with both groups to bridge the ethnic divide swiftly.

Page 8: Ensure proper health, educ. Shah to state CS

Priyanka goes to Wayanad, Rahul picks Rae Bareilly

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will make her electoral debut from Wayanad, a seat her brother Rahul Gandhi has decided to vacate.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge announced on Monday that Rahul Gandhi would retain Rae Bareilly seat in Uttar Pradesh.

Rahul Gandhi said it was a difficult choice but a win-win situation for the people of Wayanad, who can now consider they have two MPs — himself and Priyanka. This would be the first time that three members of the Gandhi family will be in Parliament if Priyanka Gandhi wins the bypoll. "The last five years



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra with the people of Wayanad have been fantastic. Its people have given me immense love regardless of their party. They gave me energy to fight in very difficult times. I will be grateful to them. Priyanka will contest from Wayanad and I am sure she will win, but I will periodically go there and we will fulfill all promises made to the people there," he said.

Page 7: Priyanka was key behind LS strategy



NADDA APPOINTS KISHAN AS J&K POLL INCHARGE

NEERAJ KUMAR | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

BJP president J.P. Nadda on Monday appointed Union coal and mines minister G. Kishan Reddy as poll incharge of the party for the Assembly polls in Jammu and Kashmir, with which he has had a long association.

The BJP won two seats from the Union Territory in the recent LS polls. The Supreme Court has directed the ECI to hold the polls in Jammu and Kashmir by September.

Page 9: Kishan hailed for surge in J&K tourism

BJP likely to retain Speaker's post

YOJNA GUSAI | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Senior BJP leader and Union minister Rajnath Singh has been assigned the task of building a consensus within the ruling NDA for the positions of Lok Sabha Speaker and Deputy Speaker. Speculation is rife within the alliance that the BJP might retain the Speaker's post, as it did during its previous two governments, while offering the Deputy Speaker's post to one of its allies.

With the JD(U) already holding the Deputy Chairman position in the Rajya Sabha, there is buzz that the TD could be offered the Deputy Speaker's post, which remained vacant during the Modi government's previous term.

However, sources indicate that the Opposition camp is also planning to contest the Speaker's post

if it is not given the Deputy Speaker's post. Buoyed by their performance in the recent LS polls, the Opposition aims to demonstrate their numbers by ensuring the ruling NDA's nominee does not go unchallenged. Despite this, the Opposition has yet to make a final decision. The NDA currently holds 293 MPs, while the Opposition has 236 MPs. The next LS Speaker will be elected on June 26, with BJP leaders D. Puran-

deswari, Radha Mohan Singh and Om Birla being considered for the position.

Parliament is set to commence on June 24 and will conclude on July 3. Amid reports that NDA ally TD is eyeing the Speaker's post, the Opposition has even claimed they might back the TD if it fields its nominee. While the JD(U) has maintained that it will support the BJP's choice, the TD seeks a consensus to be built within the NDA.

SIPRI | REPORT India, China begun process of mating their nuclear weapons with missiles

India's nuke stockpile overtakes Pak

PAWAN BALI | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

The number of nuclear weapons with India surpassed those with Pakistan in January 2024, said Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (Sipri) in its latest report on Monday. These refer to the nuclear triad of aircraft and land-based missiles and nuclear-powered ballistic missile submarines (SSBNs).

More significantly, while China has for the first time

ON INDIA, Sipri said that it had long been assumed that India stored its nuclear warheads separately from its deployed launchers.

CHINA might have started mating a small number of its warheads (possibly around 24, corresponding to one missile brigade and one fully loaded ballistic missile submarine) with their launchers, Sipri said.

an economic crisis, the count of nuclear warheads remained stagnant at 170.

China increased its nuclear warhead count to 500 from 410 last year. "China might have started mating a small number of its warheads (possibly around 24, corresponding to one missile brigade and one fully loaded ballistic missile submarine) with their launchers," the Sipri report said.

Hans M. Kristensen, associate senior fellow with Sipri's weapons of mass destruction programme. China could potentially have at least as many intercontinental ballistic missiles as either Russia or the USA by the turn of the decade.

On India, Sipri said that it had long been assumed that India stored its nuclear warheads separately from its deployed launchers.

Page 8: India emphasised on longer-range weapons: Sipri

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IN BRIEF

MLA in row over Bakrid greetings

Hyderabad: Congress MLA Kumbam Anil Kumar Reddy on Monday landed in a controversy after his Bakrid greetings on social media included a graphic image of a cow, drawing sharp response from the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Reddy later apologised for the "inadvertent error" and removed the post. The poster was supposed to have the image of a goat, he said. Reddy, in a video release later, said: "If anyone is hurt, we apologise for it. Because, I am a Ram Bhakt," he said. BJP MLA Raja Singh alleged that Hindus were insulted wherever the Congress forms government.

EVENTS TODAY



Cultural programmes by Nataraj Dance Academy
Time: 9 am
Venue: Ravindra Bharathi

Workshop on Sahaja Yoga Meditation
Time: 10 am
Venue: Dathrika Public School

Study Abroad expo
Time: 10 am
Venue: Vivanta By Taj

Tuesday open mic comedy
Time: 8 pm

Venue: Trailing Ivy Cafe
Prof Jayashankar Junior State Cricket Championship
Time: 10 am
Venue: Rajiv Gandhi International Cricket Stadium

Roll Your Sushi 2.0
Time: 1 pm
Venue: Makau Kitchen and Bar

NMDC Telangana Squash Open
Time: 10.30 am
Venue: Hyderabad Golf Club

Paradoxical Paradise: Art exhibition by Sweta Chandra
Time: 10 am
Venue: Telangana State Gallery Of Fine Art

REACH US AT
eventsatdc@gmail.com

More airports in TG yet to take off; BRS blamed

State boasts of RGIA alone; AP has 6, say aviation experts

PRATHYUSH NALLELLA | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

For the last 10 years, Telangana's aviation sector has remained largely underdeveloped, due to the previous BRS government's inability to harness the state's full potential. Despite having strategic locations like Nizamabad, Adilabad, Bhadradi Kothagudem and Peddapalli, the government has failed to tap into major developments and expand the state's air connectivity.

While Telangana has just one operational airport, Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) in Hyderabad, for the entire state, neighbouring Andhra Pradesh boasts of over six operational and one under-construction airports. As Telangana has emerged as a paragon of growth and development, transforming into one of India's most progressive states, it can progress into a key aviation hub of the country. It also hosts several aviation-related industries. An official from the Airports Authority of India (AAI) said the airport at Begumpet and existing airstrips at Warangal, and Ramagundam present a tremendous opportunity for the development.

FLIGHT PATH
ONCE A bustling hub, the Begumpet airport does not cater commercial flights and serves very limited operations, primarily for training and chartered flights due to an MoU between the central government and the GMR Group, which operates the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad.

THE MoU has prevented the development of Warangal's Mamnoon airstrip: It stipulates that no airport shall operate within a 150-kilometre radius of the RGIA, and Warangal's airstrip falls in the circle.

THE GOVERNMENT can, however, actively work towards the development of new airports. Districts like Bhadradi Kothagudem, Peddapalli, and Adilabad show great potential for development of new airports.



"Revitalising these airports could not only decentralise air traffic but also spur economic growth, improve accessibility and enhance overall connectivity within the region." "The first step in airspace development is the strategic utilisation of the existing runways. People from northern and eastern regions in Telangana are left with no choice but to travel to Hyderabad and then travel to their destination, increasing the pressure on RGIA," the official said.

Currently unserviceable, the existing airstrips possess the foundational infrastructure necessary for conversion into fully functional airports. The Ramagundam airstrip,

which in 2008 was contemplated to be developed into an airport but was scrapped, holds great scope to develop aviation in northern Telangana, and can facilitate passenger and cargo flights from the region.

Once a bustling hub, the Begumpet airport does not cater commercial flights and serves very limited operations, primarily for training and chartered flights due to an MoU between the central government and the GMR Group, which operates the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport at Shamshabad.

The MoU has prevented the development of Warangal's Mamnoon airstrip: It stipulates that

no airport shall operate within a 150-kilometre radius of the RGIA, and Warangal's airstrip falls in the circle.

The government can, however, actively work towards the development of new airports. Districts like Bhadradi Kothagudem, Peddapalli, and Adilabad show great potential for development of new airports.

But, most importantly, the projects will lead to enormous job creation avenues. Airport operations require a wide range of skills, from ground staff to pilots. Training programmes can equip the local workforce, reducing unemployment and fostering skill development.

FOOD SAFETY TEAM INSPECTS PGs, HOSTELS

SHRIMANSI KAUSHIK | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Inspections by the task force teams of the food safety commissioner found foodstuffs of questionable quality, cooking material stored in unhygienic conditions during checks at paying guest (PG) accommodations in Madhapur.

The health department has already specified that every establishment in the food business needs to hold a valid FSSAI license and must follow the food safety norms and standards. Paying guest accommodations and hostels are not exempted from food safety inspections by the food safety commissioner.

At Sri Lakshmi PG Hostel in Kavuri Hills, found operating without a FSSAI licence, vegetables were infested with pests. The work area was kept unclean. The food handlers were using a rusted dosa pan. The inspectors also spotted rice and dals being stored along with the mattresses.

While the inspectors picked up chilli powder and Bengal gram samples for analysis on suspicions of adulteration, they tested the water and tomato sauce on the spot in the 'Food Safety on Wheels' lab and found the parameters within acceptable range. VH Homestay, another accommodation service in Madhapur, was running without an FSSAI licence. Raw materials and vegetables were in an unsanitary condition. The refrigerator was also not kept clean. Workers were not wearing hairnets.

Besides a rusted dosa tawa, inspectors found food colours being used. Immediate tests were done on water, vinegar, chilli and tomato sauces and were found to be in an acceptable range. The inspectors also took samples of chilli powder to check for adulteration.

In the inspections held at Narayana Medical Academy, Madhapur, and it was found that the establishment did not have a FSSAI licence. There was no FOSTAC supervisor among the employees. The base of the water dispensers had rusted but was still being used. The serving area was found to be unclean.

Multiple hygiene issues in the kitchen area were found at Narayana Society, Madhapur. The grinding area was untidy and had a high chance of contamination, further compounded by open drainage and unhygienic washing and garbage areas.

While the inspectors picked up chilli powder and Bengal gram samples for analysis on suspicions of adulteration, they tested the water and tomato sauce on the spot in the 'Food Safety on Wheels' lab and found the parameters within acceptable range.

VH Homestay, another accommodation service in Madhapur, was running without an FSSAI licence.

CLASSIFIEDS

FOR SALE PROPERTY

COMMERCIAL
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REQUIRED SENIOR Lecturer Zoology for residential junior college at Vikarabad. Candidates with minimum 10 years of experience in IPE, EAMCE & NEET Competitive exam preferred. Candidate with proficiency in English communication & subject skills. Attractive salary & Perks offered. Mail CV: careers@hieschool.edu.in/ 9652699811. (W/2425/AT000215)

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CRPF PUBLIC School Wanted Boys Hostel Warden-01, Hostel Supervisor-01, & Occupational Therapist-01 for CWSN wing, for CRPF Public School. Interviews On: 20-06-2024 (Thursday) @ 09:30 AM; interested candidates Walk-in Interview along with Original Documents at CRPF Public School, GC CRPF, Jawahar Nagar, Secunderabad (S/2425/C00716)

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WANTED TUTOR for B.Tech-1 Maths, Computers at Shakinagar, R.K.Puram, Secunderabad. Experience, Interested Contact: 9849730661, 9515668102, zvtpld@gmail.com (S/2425/C00722)

CHANGE OF NAME

I IRENE Alva R/O E1104 My Home Bhooja Serilingampalli, R.R.Dist, T.S. hereby inform my mother's name is to be changed as follows From Joao Caetano D'Souza to Caetano Xavier De Souza in birth certificate From John D'Souza to Caetano Xavier De Souza in Passport (HYM/2425/C01447)

I IRENE Alva, R/O E1104 My Home Bhooja Serilingampalli, R.R.Dist, T.S. hereby inform my mother's name is to be changed as follows From Joao Caetano D'Souza to Caetano Xavier De Souza in birth certificate From John D'Souza to Caetano Xavier De Souza in Passport (HYM/2425/C01447)

RAO MALLIKA Parshi w/o B K Kiran kumar changed her name after marriage as Bhupasamudra Karaman Mallika (HYM/2425/C01405)

I, SYEDA Minal Father Name Syed Waheed, R/O: 3-2-146 Ahmed Nagar Colony, Zaheerabad Town Mandal, Dist. Sangareddy, T.G. Has changed my Name As Syeda Simra, for all records purpose. (S/2425/C00726)

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Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender held a meeting with the organisers.

KHAIRATABAD GANESHA IDOL WORK BEGINS

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

A 70-foot-tall 'eco-friendly' idol of Lord Ganesha would be installed this year at the famous pandal at Khairatabad here as part of Ganesh Chaturthi festivities, MLA Danam Nagender said on Monday.

Nagender, who represents Khairatabad in the Assembly, said the 11-day celebrations would be held on a large scale. "When I met Chief Minister on Wednesday, he said let's make arrangements on a larger scale compared to last year," Nagender, who recently quit the BRS and joined the Congress, said. He thanked various government departments, on behalf of the organising committee, for their work to make the festivities successful. He said 'prasadam' would be distributed to every devotee who visits the pandal.



CIVET CAT FOUND DEAD, 5 CUBS TAKEN TO ZOO

SAALINI LOKESH | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

An Asian palm civet was found dead near Domalapenta range of the Amrabad forest. Officials said that it died of a snake bite on its leg. Its five cubs have been transferred to the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad, where adequate care can be provided under the supervision of veterinarians. Amrabad does not have an in-house rehabilitation centre.

The Asian palm civet which lives in south and southeast Asia can be spotted in tropical jungles and rainforests.



Muslims offer Id-ul-Zuha prayers at the Chilkalguda Idgah in Secunderabad on Monday.

— S. SURENDER REDDY

Families reunite for Id under pleasant weather

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Muslims celebrated Id-ul-Zuha, the festival of prayers and sacrifices, on Thursday. People greeted each other and offered prayers at masjids and idgahs throughout the city.

The Macca Masjid witnessed a sizeable gathering for Id-ul-Zuha prayers at 9.30 am, led by Imam Lateef Ahmad. The congregation extended to Charminar, with around 6,000 participants joining in the prayers. At the Idgah Mir Alam tank, Hafeez Rizwan Qureshi, khatib of Macca Masjid, led the prayers, marking the largest gathering in the city.

All the mosques in

Hyderabad were filled with the faithful, who preferred offering prayers at idgahs, which are open-air and located on the outskirts of the city.

Hyderabad were filled with the faithful, who preferred offering prayers at idgahs, which are open-air and located on the outskirts of the city. Syed Mustafa Hussain who came from New York to celebrate, said, "Hyderabad is always the best place to celebrate Id. I offered my prayers at Masjid E Azizia in Mehdiatnam, and then performed the Qurbani at my place. The day was spent with friends and relatives."

Gulam Ali, a resident of Purani Haveli, said, "My family and I offered prayers at Masjid E Asifya near our home and performed the Qurbani. The weather was pleasant, and the prayers were peaceful. We prayed for prosperity and health for everyone."

Nawab Mir Nawab highlighted the significance of the festival for his family. "This Id was a family reunion as my daughter and her family came from abroad for the celebrations. We invited all our friends and relatives to join us in the festivities." The spirit of Id-ul-Zuha was evident across Hyderabad as families gathered to pray, perform sacrifices, and celebrate together, reinforcing the sense of community and faith.

STAR KIDS School group participating in US contest for 13 yrs

Sri Chaitanya School kids excel

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Academic director of Sri Chaitanya Schools Seema said on Friday that the school's students had won the United States' National Space Society's space settlement contests for the 11th consecutive time. The school put up 62 winning projects in which 639 of its students participated.

Of these, seven projects bagged the world first prize, 11 won the second prize, 15 won the world third prize and 29 projects got honourable mentions, according to a statement from the school. The students also got to



Academic director of Sri Chaitanya Schools Seema with the prize-winning students.

meet the US' National Aeronautics and Space Administration astronauts Jose M. Hernandez and Bryan Versteeg, space-hubs.com and shared their

views. Thirtyfive students belonging to Sri Chaitanya School in the Telugu states participated in this student.

A tour from Sri Chaitanya was awarded \$500 in the artistic merit category and another in the literary merit category. The school group has been participating in the conference for a record 13 consecutive years.

SHORT TAKES

BJP SEEKS PROBE INTO 6-YR-OLD'S RAPE, MURDER

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The BJP demanded a comprehensive probe into the rape and murder of a six-year old child in a rice mill at Katnapalli in Sultanabad mandal of Peddapalli district on June 13. The party also demanded a compensation of ₹20 lakh and government job for a member of the victim's family.

Speaking to newsmen, party MLA Dr. Palvai Harish Babu said that breakdown of law and order and free availability of narcotics had led to the ghastly crime. The accused, hailing from Bihar, was under the influence of cannabis.

The victim's family from a remote village had migrated to the town in search of work as the condition in villages was pathetic.

Harish Babu blamed Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy for the rise in availability of narcotics even in remote areas of the state, which was also because there was no full-time home minister.



A screengrab of constable Suresh helping the UPSC aspirant on Sunday. — DC

CM HAILS COP FOR HELPING GIRL REACH EXAM HALL

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy here on Monday appreciated Rajendranagar traffic police station constable Suresh for dropping a girl near an UPSC examination centre at Palle Chervu in Mailardevally on Sunday on time thus enabling her to appear for the exam.

In a tweet, he appreciated the constable stating that the latter did not feel that regulating traffic was just a job but extending help to a person in need was his responsibility. "My heartfelt appreciation to the constable," Revanth Reddy said. He said he was confident that the girl who appeared for the UPSC exam after reaching the centre on time will be successful.

The girl was waiting near Mahavir Engineering College after alighting from a TSRTC bus at Palle Chervu bus stop in Mailardevally. On seeing the girl in a tense situation to reach the examination centre, which is far from the bus stop, Suresh approached and dropped her on his motorcycle. A video taken by locals when the constable was helping the girl went viral on social media platforms.

HARISH SLAMS CONGRESS OVER DELAYED SALARIES

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The BRS on Monday slammed the state government for failure on several fronts including the promise to provide jobs, delays in payment of salaries and wages to workers, and for not releasing CM Relief Fund (CMRF) cheques to the needy.

Addressing a press conference, Harish Rao said the Revanth Reddy government must add 2,000 posts to Group II and 3,000 posts to Group III as promised. "There must be a two-month gap between these exams but a District Selection Committee (DSC) test has been announced for July and Group II exam is scheduled for August 7 and 8," Rao said.

With respect to the DSC exams for teacher recruitment, he said it must be held for 25,000 vacant posts and questioned why recruitment has been announced only for 11,000. "For Group I, the ratio for selection for mains must be 1:100 instead of 1:50," he said.

He demanded that the government must implement the promised ₹4,000 pension per month and give two old-age Aasara pensions in each family as promised. Salaries to ASHA and Anganwadi workers were not being paid and the dues must be cleared immediately, he said. He said the two Union ministers from the state, G. Kishan Reddy, and Bandi Sanjay Kumar, must ensure that interests of students who appeared for the NEET from the state are protected.

TG suffers ₹6,000-cr loss after PPA with Chh'garh

BRS govt had signed deal to purchase power at ₹3.90 per unit

L. VENKAT RAM REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Telangana's power utilities have incurred staggering losses amounting to over ₹6,000 crore due to the hasty power purchase agreements (PPAs) entered into by the previous BRS government with the Chhattisgarh government for the supply of 1,000 MW in 2014, official sources said.

A move that was anticipated to be a cost-saving measure has turned out to be a financial nightmare for the state government, they said. The state government has decided to submit the evidence on the Chhattisgarh PPAs to the Justice L. Narasimha Reddy judicial commission.

Official sources said that the previous BRS government signed PPAs without inviting tenders, resulting in huge financial loss to the state exchequer. The BRS government had signed an agreement to purchase electricity at ₹3.90 per unit. However, the actual financial implications have far exceeded actual cost.

Since the commencement of the agreement in late 2017, Telangana has purchased 17,996 million units (MU) of electricity. The financial disbursements towards this purchase have amounted to ₹7,719 crore, with dues to Chhattisgarh reaching ₹1,081 crore.

Moreover, additional costs such as transmission

SHOCKING FACTS

BRS GOVERNMENT signed power purchase agreement with Chhattisgarh without inviting tenders.

The deal was for ₹3.90 per unit but effectively cost the state ₹5.64.

Additional costs resulting in an unexpected burden of ₹3,110 cr

TELANGANA claims it owes ₹1,081 crore, Chhattisgarh puts it at ₹1,715 crore.

CHHATTISGARH POWER supply was never smooth, Telangana had to purchase electricity from the open market for an additional ₹2,083 crore.

THE MOVE was anticipated to be a cost-saving measure.

BRS govt's hasty power purchase cost state ₹6,000 cr

TELANGANA DISCOMS had to contract a transmission corridor for the Chhattisgarh, costing ₹638 cr.

line charges of ₹1,362 crore have pushed the effective per-unit cost up to ₹5.64, resulting in an unexpected burden of ₹3,110 crore, which was beyond the initially projected expenses.

Apart from the additional costs incurred, Telangana and Chhattisgarh are locked in a dispute over outstanding payments. While Telangana claims that ₹1,081 crore is due, Chhattisgarh claims ₹1,715 crore. The matter was escalated to the Chhattisgarh Electricity Appellate Tribunal for arbitration.

About 20K houses remain unoccupied after allotment

FROM PAGE 1

Consequently, approximately 20,000 houses remain unoccupied and in disrepair even after allotment to beneficiaries. It was estimated that the state government is required to spend ₹300 crore to provide basic facilities in the GHMC limits alone.

Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy ordered a comprehensive field survey across all districts to assess the current status of the 2BHK projects. Officials from revenue, housing and municipal departments conducted a survey and found that a significant number of houses were deemed "unfit for living" due to inadequate infrastructure and shoddy construction works.

Surveys revealed that many contractors had abandoned their work midway due to non-payment of bills by the BRS government. They estimated that it would require more than ₹1,000 crore to repair and complete balance works in constructed houses.

The survey found that out of 2,92,938 2BHKs sanctioned by the BRS government across the state, 1,54,389 have been completed. While 41,925 houses have reached final stages of construction and the construction of 34,022 houses was stopped midway. The construction of 62,602 2BHKs did not begin at all.

The Congress government launched the Indiramma housing

Telangana's dependence on Chhattisgarh was compounded by logistical challenges. It never supplied 1,000 MW smoothly from 2017-end, when the agreement commenced.

In view of the lower than contracted supply from Chhattisgarh, Telangana discoms had to buy power in the open market to meet the demand. This resulted in the additional burden of ₹2,083 crore on the Telangana government between 2017 and 2022. Chhattisgarh stopped power supply in April 2022.

The cost of power from Chhattisgarh further increased because of

Telangana discoms contracting a transmission corridor for the supply of 1,000 MW of electricity from the Power Grid Corporation India Ltd (PGCIL).

According to the agreement, discoms have to pay transmission charges to PGCIL regardless of whether the electricity was supplied or not. Due to this, discoms incurred additional charges of ₹638 crore.

The Telangana government had also incurred an additional loss due to the hasty booking of additional power corridor that can transmit another 1,000 MW of power.

Though Telangana cancelled this booking after realising that there was no possibility of getting additional 1,000 MW from Chhattisgarh, PGCIL has issued notices to Telangana discoms to pay ₹261 crore as compensation for abrupt cancellation of additional corridor.

According to the sources, the Telangana Electricity Regulatory Commission (ERC) has not yet approved these power purchase agreements, raising questions about the legality and financial prudence of the agreement signed by the BRS government.

There are also arguments that thousands of crores of rupees paid to Chhattisgarh without the approval of the ERC should be treated as irregularities and indirect payments.



BRS chief and former CM K. Chandrashekar Rao hands over a letter to K.R. Suresh Reddy appointing him leader of the BRS Parliamentary Party, on Monday. — DC

SURESH IS BRS PARLIAMENTARY PARTY LEADER

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

BRS president K. Chandrashekar Rao on Monday announced that the party was appointing its Rajya Sabha member K.R. Suresh Reddy as its Parliamentary Party leader. Suresh Reddy will also be the floor leader of the party in the Rajya Sabha. The BRS does not have any representation in the Lok Sabha, losing from all the 17 seats it contested in the recent general elections.

According to a press release from the party, Rao on Monday wrote separate letters to the Rajya Sabha chairman and the Lok Sabha Speaker's office, appointing Suresh Reddy as the BRSP leader. The position was earlier held by K. Keshava Rao, who was the BRS secretary-general until recently, before quitting the party to join the Congress in March in the run up to the Lok Sabha elections.



Beneficiaries of 2BHK scheme stage a rasta roko at Amedbkar centre in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Monday. — DC

Beneficiaries stage dharna in Bhupalpally

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, JUNE 17

The beneficiaries of the double bedroom housing scheme (2BHK) on Monday organised a road blockade, demanding the state government to distribute the houses in Bhupalpally, which is the headquarters of Jayashankar Bhupalpally district. They alleged that the previous BRS government had constructed around 430 2BHK houses at Bhaskargadda and completed the selection of the beneficiaries under the supervision of the district collector. However, in view of the Assembly elec-

tions, the process of the distribution of the 2BHK houses was stopped. Even after more than eight months, they said officials are not taking any initiative to distribute the houses to the beneficiaries.

The road blockade, which was backed by Bhupalpally municipal chairperson Seggam Venkat Rani, Vice chairman Harish Reddy and some of the councillors, resulted in a huge traffic jam.

Though the police officials tried to convince the beneficiaries, the protestors did not relent which led to the arrest of some beneficiaries and their leaders.

Revanth Reddy, who

launched the scheme at Bhadrachalam, said that 4.5 lakh Indiramma houses will be constructed by spending ₹22,500 crore. He also announced that 3,500 Indiramma houses have been sanctioned for each Assembly constituency.

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Justice for NEET aspirants



MLC Balmuri Venkat, along with members of various students' unions, addresses a press meet against the alleged irregularities in the NEET 2024 exam, in Hyderabad on Monday. — S. SURENDER REDDY

TG to lift ban on general transfers of employees

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

MEMBERS FROM various employees associations called on CS A. Santhi Kumari and submitted a representation seeking lifting of the ban.

The state government is most likely to lift the ban on general transfer of employees by the month-end and undertake transfers in all departments next month. Lifting the ban on general transfers that was imposed by the BRS government has been a long-pending demand of the employees' unions.

Members from various employees associations such as TGOs, TNGOs and the Telangana Secretariat Employees Association (TSEA) met Chief Secretary A. Santhi Kumari and submitted a representation seeking lifting of the ban. Kumari conveyed the unions' requests to Chief Minister A. Revanth Reddy, who is learnt to have responded positively and had asked her to initiate steps for undertaking transfers at the earliest. If the ban is lifted, it will benefit around three lakh employees posted in various departments.

Meanwhile, the Telangana Tahsildars Association met in the city on Monday and made a similar demand. In undivided Andhra Pradesh, the governments used to undertake general transfers every year or once in two years, especially during

summer holidays for educational institutions. This was to ensure that children's education would not be affected by transfers.

After the formation of Telangana state in 2014, the BRS government imposed a ban on general transfers for several years. In its 10-year rule, the previous Chandrashekar Rao undertook the exercise only once in 2018, and that too a few months prior to the Assembly polls.

After the Congress came to power in December 2023, Revanth Reddy laid focus on general transfers. He held a meeting with representatives of all employees and teachers unions on March 10 to discuss the issue. De to enforcement of the election code from March 16 on account of the Lok Sabha elections, the process was halted. Once the Election Commission lifted the code on June 6, the issue of general transfers was back in the limelight with employees' unions stepping up pressure on the state government by holding meetings

and making a strong demand in this regard.

Speaking to this newspaper, TGOs president Eluri Sreenivasa Rao said that employees and teachers were facing severe hardships for the past ten years due to the ban. Even the general transfers undertaken by the BRS government in 2018 was 'incomplete' as a majority of the employees could not utilise the facility due to various restrictions imposed by them.

"General transfers will ensure that no employee works at the same place beyond five years. Newly-recruited employees, who complete two years of service, and senior employees, who complete five years at the same place, await general transfers to get postings in locations of their choice on a seniority basis," he said.

The BRS government had also imposed a ban on 'spouse transfers,' which affected nearly 83,000 couples posted in different districts. They said their children and dependent parents were facing several problems due to this.

A week back, the state government issued a schedule for transfers and promotions for teachers from June 8 to 24. Nearly 18,500 teachers are expected to get promotions.

TG slams reports of influx of AP staff

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

WITH THE bifurcation of AP having completed 10 years, the issue of mutual transfers is back in focus.

The state government has dismissed reports of allowing influx of Andhra Pradesh-native employees into Telangana.

Official sources said that the division of employees between AP and TG was completed in the first two years after bifurcation in 2014. Later several TG and AP employees applied for mutual transfers. They said that the BRS and YSRCP governments had sought applications from employees in their respective states keen on relocating mutually.

Following this, in September 2021, the Telangana government received applications from 1,369 TG employees who opted to permanently move to AP, while AP government received 1,808 applications from AP employees willing to relocate permanently to Telangana on grounds of medical needs, employed couples, children's education and own houses.

However, no decision was taken by either gov-

ernment and the applications remain pending. Source said that the then AP chief secretary Sameer Sharma had written a letter to his TG counterpart Somesh Kumar on September 23, 2022, urging the TG government to consider the mutual transfer requests of employees on compassionate grounds. Subsequently, there was regular correspondence between the two states but nothing materialised. With the bifurcation of AP having completed 10 years on June 2 and Hyderabad ceasing to be the joint capital, the issue of mutual transfers is back in focus. However, no decision has been taken on allowing such transfers, sources added. The Telangana government has cautioned against misleading claims regarding the influx of AP employees into Telangana in a section of the media.

KOMATIREDDY: GOVT FIRM ON MUSLIMS QUOTA

P. SRINIVAS | DC NALGONDA, JUNE 17

Minister for roads and buildings Komatireddy Venkat Reddy on Monday said that the Congress government was committed to providing quota to Muslims in education and employment opportunities. He was speaking after participating in social prayers at an idgah on the Munugode road on the occasion of Bakrid.

Speaking to the media later, he said that Nalgonda was acknowledged as a district that has been symbolising communal harmony for over three decades.

Stating that welfare of minorities would be accorded priority by the state government, he said that it would also provide reservations to Muslims in education and employment opportunities, including in outsourcing jobs.

Graduates MLC Teenmar Mallanna and superintendent of police Chandana Deepthi were also present.

Temple calling



Irrigation minister N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and his wife Kodad MLA N. Padmavathi Reddy visit the Lord Venkateswara temple at Tirumala to celebrate the latter's birthday, on Monday. — P. ANIL KUMAR

MEGA SHOW | BJP to organise 'Salute Telangana' rally to thank people of state

BJP plans grand fete for Kishan, Bandi

NEERAJ KUMAR | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana unit of the BJP will hold 'Salute Telangana rally' from Begumpet Airport to the party office in Nampally on June 20 to thank the people of the state for electing party candidates in eight Lok Sabha constituencies. The rally will also mark the first visit of two Union ministers G. Kishan Reddy and Bandi Sanjay to Hyderabad after taking the oath as Central ministers. A large number of party



G. Kishan Reddy



Bandi Sanjay

activists will take part in the rally, which will be attended by the BJP's eight newly-elected MPs and BJP Parliamentary Board member Dr K. Laxman. Earlier, the BJP planned to conduct the Salute

Telangana rally on June 19. However, in view of the Union Cabinet meeting on June 19, Kishan Reddy's return to Hyderabad had been postponed by one day to June 20.

While Kishan Reddy was asked to attend the June 20

Cabinet meeting, Bandi Sanjay will arrive in Karimnagar from Delhi on June 19.

Giving details about the revised programme, BJP general secretary Dr Kasam Venkateshwarlu said Union minister of state for home Bandi Sanjay will reach Karimnagar on June 19 and proceed to his residence to take blessings from his mother. He will visit several temples including Maha Shakti temple, Kondagattu temple, Sri Raja Rajeshwara Temple in Vemulawada and Markendeya temple in

Sircilla. He will meet party activists till afternoon of June 20.

Bandi Sanjay will come to Begumpet Airport on June 20, when Union minister for coal and mines G. Kishan Reddy will also arrive from Delhi. Both of them along with the newly-elected BJP MPs from the state will take part in the rally from Begumpet Airport to the party office at Nampally.

He also said that the Union ministers will proceed to Bhagyalakshmi temple near Charminar and offer special prayers.

IN BRIEF

Prisoner creates flutter in jail

Adilabad: A remand prisoner, Vijaya Laxmi, created a flutter in the district here on Monday, claiming that she had swallowed pieces of a blade. The prison staff rushed her to the RIMS at Adilabad, where the doctors found the claim to be false. Following this, the prison staff took her back to the district jail. Sources said that she was one of the accused in the murder of her husband Jadhav Gajender.

COPS DEPUTED IN MEDAK DURING BAKRID FESTIVAL

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Medak police deployed a large force in the town in view of the Bakrid festival on Monday, following Sunday's incidents. Medak superintendent of police B. Bala Swamy said the day passed off peacefully. "The police have arrested miscreants and shifted them to judicial remand. We asked the people not to believe rumours and not indulge in illegal activities. We have identified some more suspects in connection with the disturbances that took place in the town and will take stern action," the SP said.

WOMAN DIES OVER MARRIAGE PROPOSAL WOES

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, JUNE 17

A 23-year-old woman died by suicide, fearing that her parents may not perform her marriage with the person she was in love with, at Kotagadda village in Bayyaram mandal of Mahbubabad district on Monday. According to Bayyaram station house officer Uppendar of Pravalika had left her husband of two years as he was suffering from health issues and had returned to her parents' home in Kotagadda. There, she fell in love with one Ravinder. When their parents opposed the offer, they eloped from the village two months back. The police, after receiving a complaint, traced them to Srikakulam and handed them to their parents. Upon their return, Pravalika and Ravinder tried to end their lives in Ravinder's house, when their parents were away. Their neighbours tried to rescue them but were able to save Ravinder while Pravalika died.

GOVT TRANSFERS 28 IPS OFFICERS IN THE STATE

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The state government on Monday issued orders reshuffling 28 IPS officers on Thursday. Many officials were posted as superintendent of police in the districts. The transfers are as follows: Ashok Kumar: SP, Jagtial. Sunpreet Singh: SP, Suryapet. D.V. Srinivasa Rao: SP, Komaram Bheem Asifabad. T. Srinivasa Rao: SP, Jogulambada Gadwal. Janaki Dharavath: SP, Mahbubnagar. K. Narayana Reddy: SP, Vikarabad. Sharat Chandra Pawar: SP, Nalgonda. Ritiraj: Joint director, ACB. Harshvardhan: SP, Cyber Security Bureau. Viswajit Kampati: SP, CID. Nitika Pant: Commandant, 2nd Bn, TGSP. R o h i n i Priyadarshini: Commandant, 7th Bn, Dichpally, Nizamabad. P. Sai Chaitanya: SP, Telangana Anti Narcotic Bureau. G. Chandana Deepthi: SP, Railways, Secunderabad. Rahul Hedge B.K.: DCP, traffic, Hyderabad. K. Suresh Kumar: DCP, Balanagar. B. Rajesh: DCP, Shamshabad. N. Koti Reddy: Medchal. Sadhana Rashmi Perumal: DCP, north zone, Hyderabad. Shaik Saleema: DCP, central zone, Warangal. B. Raja Mahendra Naik: DCP, west zone, Jangaon, Warangal. A. Bhaskar: DCP, Mancheril, Ramagundam. L. Subbarayudu, M.A. Bari, Chatterjee, P. Seetaram and B. Ram Prakash, were directed to report to the DGP (HoPP) office. Dr Patil Sangram Singh Ganapatrao, waiting for posting, was placed at the disposal of GAD

Phone-tapping equipment seized from Kondapur firm

Gadgets sent to forensic analysis; Prabhakar seeks visa extension

SYED OMAR FAROOQ I DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Special Investigation Team (SIT) probing the phone-tapping operation of the BRS government last week seized three servers, hard disks and five mini devices intact from the premises of Converge Innovation Labs in Kondapur that were reportedly used in the illegal enterprise. Information about the devices that were used by the previous BRS government's Special Intelligence Bureau (SIB) was reportedly revealed by Paul Ravi Kumar, a director of a private spyware gadgets firm and a technical expert, during his questioning by the SIT. Sources said he had helped SIB officials dur-

POLICE SAY Paul Ravi Kumar of Converge Innovation Labs had told them about the gadgets during his questioning. He had provide tech expertise for phone-tapping.

POLICE ARE awaiting the arrival of former SIB chief T. Prabhakar Rao from the US, as well as Shrayan Kumar of I-News. Prabhakar Rao has reportedly sought an extension of his US visa on medical grounds.

ing the BRS government tenure to procure sophisticated technical devices worth crores that were used in the phone-tapping operation. Sources claimed that the SIT collected technical evidence related to phone tapping from Ravi Kumar's house and company office in the city and Bengaluru. The SIT has sent the gadgets to the Forensic Science Laboratory and the spe-

cial cybercrime unit set up at Jubilee Hills as part of the investigation, sources disclosed. The SIT also recorded the statement of senior manager Ragi Anantha Chari and software engineer Oleti Sitaram Srinivas and a woman official working in Ravi Kumar's company. Apart from this, sources disclosed that a chargesheet was filed against four senior

police officials who were posted in twin cities. Sources said the police had rejected a suggestion to hand over the investigation, currently being supervised by senior IPS officer S.M. Vijay Kumar, the west zone DCP, to the CBI. Meanwhile, the SIT is awaiting developments with regard to the return of former SIB chief T. Prabhakar Rao, who is in the US reportedly for treatment of cancer, and Shrayan Kumar, MD of I-News, who is absconding. Police are making an attempt to get the two to surrender, having filed the chargesheet on the phone-tapping operation and a court rejecting the bail petitions of officers involved with it. Shrayan Kumar's

alleged request for anticipatory bail was reportedly dismissed, sources said. Prabhakar Rao is reportedly has been under pressure to return from the US, from the family members of Radha Kishan Rao, Bhujanga Rao, D. Praneeth Rao and Thirupattana from the day of their arrest. They believe that the accused would be freed on bail after the return of the duo. Reports said that Prabhakar Rao was trying for an extension of his visa but would find it difficult in view of the look-out notice against him, sources said. "Prabhakar Rao and Shrayan Kumar are buying time but they cannot escape for long," sources said.

349 caught in ops on drunk driving

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Cyberabad police caught 349 offenders, including three women, during an operation against drunk driving on Saturday. Among them, 253 were two-wheeler drivers, 16 three-wheeler drivers, 74 four-wheeler drivers, and six were heavy vehicle drivers. Most offenders were aged between 21 and 30 years. Their blood alcohol content (BAC) ranged widely, with 56

cases below 50 and 11 above 301, against the norm of 30 mg per 100 ml of blood. The highest number of cases was recorded in Shadnagar (152) Madhapur (74) and Gachibowli (58), a statement by the Cyberabad police said. The operation as carried out in Madhapur, Raidurgam, Gachibowli, Rajendranagar, Chevella, Miyapur, Shadnagar, Kukatpally, Balanagar, Jeedimetla, Alwal, Medchal, RC Puram and Shamshabad.

Stampede-like situation at Saraswathi Temple

M. SRINIVAS I DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

For the staff of Sri Gnana Saraswathi Temple at Basara in the erstwhile Adilabad district, money appears to be more important than the lives of hundreds of devotees, who experienced stampede-like situation in the temple on Sunday. With a long weekend, having a public holiday on Monday on account of Bakrid, a large number of devotees from Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and other states came to the temple to perform 'Aksharabhyasam' as Dashami and Ekadashi, which fell on Sunday and Monday respectively, are considered auspicious.



MONEY APPEARED to be more important than the lives of hundreds of devotees, who experienced stampede-like situation at the temple.

As devotees jostled each other to enter the premises, the temple staff refused to open the iron door saying that only those who had purchased the ₹1,000 ticket for 'Aksharabhyasam' would be allowed inside the hall. When irate devotees questioned the temple staff, and told them of the plight of the children in the crowded queue, the staffers

hardly showed any empathy. "You can lodge a complaint with anyone," was the reaction from the temple authorities. While the crowding made the situation completely chaotic, the staff did not step in to help regulate the queue or ensuring a hassle-free darshan of Goddess Saraswathi. Only temple executive officer Vijaya Kumar was assisting a lone woman constable near the sanctum sanctorum. A devotee holding his son on his shoulder showed the temple staff his ₹1,000 ticket but he was not allowed to enter through the iron gate. Left with no other option, the devotee's family left the temple without performing the 'Aksharabhyasam', after taking darshan of the Goddess. A pregnant woman had a harrowing time because of the crowd. Other devotees came to

her rescue to ensure she was at a safe place. "We visited the temple to complete the 'Aksharabhyasam' ritual of our two kids on Sunday. We are disappointed with the apathetic attitude of the staff," said Y. Akash Yadav from Langer Houz. Sources blamed the sorry state of affairs on the alleged monopoly of two senior employees, Narayan Patel and T. Vikas, who have been working at the temple for years with the support of local politicians. The duo, along with some staff, allegedly ignored instructions given by senior officials, leading to the lack of coordination between employees and resulting in problems for devotees, sources added. When contacted, Vijaya Kumar did not respond as he was inside the temple, monitoring the queue.

Cops save woman from suicide bid

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Quick action by Madhapur police saved a woman who was attempting to die by suicide at the Durgam Cheruvu cable bridge on Monday. She was facing financial issues, police said. Constable Prashanth noticed Sunitha crying on the bridge. When she

refused to budge, he called his seniors who rescued her. She was unable to speak clearly and was taken to a hospital, Madhapur traffic inspector G. Narsaiah said. Elsewhere, Sai, who had written his civil service prelims on Sunday, died by suicide at a hotel in Ayyappa Society of Madhapur.

Father drowns saving two kids

PULI SHARATH KUMAR I DC KARIMNAGAR, JUNE 17

A man died while saving his two children who fell into the water while attempting to take a selfie in the Lower Manair Dam (LMD) reservoir, at Alugunuru of Karimnagar city on Monday. According to the police, the father was identified as Bonala Vijay, 47, superintendent at the pay and accounts department at Asifabad district and a resident of Ramnagar in Karimnagar. The family had gone went to the Lord Shiva

temple situated in Potlapalli of Husnabad constituency to have darshan on the Bakrid holiday. They stopped at the reservoir on their way back. Police said that his daughter slipped into the water while attempting to take a selfie. To save her, her brother jumped into the water. Vijay who noticed his children struggling in the water jumped in and rescued them. A local fisherman, Shankar, joined to rescue the two children. But Vijay, who did not know swimming, drowned before help could reach.

Tireless traffic cop



A mannequin dressed as a traffic cop serves as a warning to motorists about the divider in the middle of the Begumpet flyover, a location that had in the past seen many vehicles slamming into the structure. — S. SURENDER REDDY

HC: Give horizontal quota to PwDs

L. RAVICHANDER HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Justice Pulla Karthik of the Telangana High Court directed the Telangana Public Service Commission and other departments to follow the rule of horizontal reservation in respect of persons with disabilities (PwD). The petitioners Masanipally Arjun and Arun Reddy Kukunoori, aspirants of Group-I services, had applied for different positions. In their writ plea, they alleged that the PSC and other departments issued a notification in February and arbitrarily treated persons with disabilities by giving vertical reservation instead of horizontal reservation.

The petitioners alleged that the PSC notification was against the Constitution and in violation of Supreme Court decisions. The judge passed an interim order directing the respondents to follow horizontal reservation in respect of persons with disabilities by treating them on par with women and meritorious sports persons and posting the matter for further adjudication.

DALIT ALLEGES IMPROPER PROBE

Justice B. Vijaysen Reddy of the Telangana High Court reserved verdict in a writ plea with regard to an honour killing case. The judge



LEGAL STORIES

was dealing with a writ petition filed by M. Suguna alleging that the action of the Bheemgal station house officer of Nizamabad in not conducting a fair and effective investigation in a case under the SCs/STs Prevention of Atrocities (PoA) Act. Senior counsel V. Raghunath, appearing for the petitioner, argued that the victim was a Dalit and in love with a woman from the upper caste. It was for this reason that the peti-

tioner's son was killed brutally. He alleged that the police made it appear like a suicide. The petitioner sought a direction to the ACP Armoor to conduct further or reinvestigation by arraying unofficial respondents as accused. The government pleader argued that as per the FSL report, there were no injuries on the body of the deceased, and 200 gm of black colour poison was found with the deceased. After hearing both parties, the judge posted the matter for orders for a later date.

DATE OF BIRTH TO BE CORRECTED

Justice C.V. Bhaskar Reddy directed the Regional Passport

Officer (RPO) to renew a passport by correcting the date of birth that was entered when the applicant was just three years old. The petitioner sought correction in the passport according to the Secondary School Certificate (SSC) record. The judge was dealing with a writ plea filed by Y.S. Amulya. Counsel for the petitioner argued that the inaction of the RPO in renewing the passport with the corrected date of birth was illegal, and arbitrary. The court, allowing the writ petition, concluded that the date of birth on the SSC certificate should be considered as accurate. Full report on deccanchronicle.com

14 held for bid to steal non-existent ₹950-cr

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

In a peculiar incident, police arrested 14 men who attempted to enter a chocolate factory owner's home in Adibatla to steal "₹950 crore" of black money. According to the police, the gang received a tip-off that the factory owner had kept the massive amount of "black money" in his house, and broke into the residence on June 10. A resident of the house alerted the police about a break-in, and the thieves escaped when they heard police sirens. Police arrested 14 persons

for the theft attempt, while one of them is still absconding. They said that black money theory at the victim's home was not true, and they were desperate to make easy money. Police also retrieved material used to print fake currency, which the thieves wanted to plant in the victim's house in an attempt to frame the factory owner. CCTV footage showed the gang scaling the high compound wall surrounding the house, damaging the CCTV cameras, assaulted watchmen guarding the house and entering the building. All the 14 persons were sent to judicial remand.

YOUTH AND HIS MOTHER ATTACKED BY LOVER'S FAMILY

DC CORRESPONDENT WARANGAL, JUNE 17

A 24-year-old youth, Adnan Ali and his mother were attacked by the family members of the woman he was in love with. The incident took place in the late hours on Sunday at Keerthinagar in Warangal city. According to the police, Ali was in love with a woman who resided in the same colony. The family members of the girl who opposed their relationship told Ali to stay away. When they continued to meet, the family members of the girl attacked Ali and his mother with knives. On hearing the screams of the son and the mother, neighbours came to their rescue. Seeing them, the assailants ran away. Later, Ali and his mother Sameena were shifted to MGM Hospital where they are undergoing treatment. police said.

MAN ATTACKS BOREWELL RIG DRIVER, BOOKED

DC CORRESPONDENT HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Madhuranagar police on Monday booked one Anil of Rahmatnagar, who attacked a borewell rig driver and his owner on Sunday night, claiming that the vehicle had damaged his house. The victims were rushed to a local hospital. Police said arrested Anil and sent him to judicial remand.

"I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

Mr. Vijjeswarapu Atchuta Ananda Jaya Kumar
DOB: 16.08.1944 DOD: 16.06.2024
The mortal remains will be brought to Gilgal Church at Chaitanyapuri for viewing. **Funeral Service** will be held on 18.06.2024 at 04:00PM at Christian Cemetery, Malapur, Balapur. Contact: 9704084121, 8121007486, 9848648854
Inserted by: Family Members and Loved Ones (CA-4241)

SLEPT IN THE LORD
"He who believes in me will live, even though he dies yet shall he live." John 11:25

Rev. MANKA ESHWARAIAH
Senior Pastor, Ramanthapur (HRC-MCI) DOB: 25-07-1954 DOD: 17-06-2024
Funeral Service is to be held Today at 1pm in Dhosada (Sirramnagar) Moinabad Mandal, Rangareddy District.
Inserted by: Mrs. Prameela & Family Members For details Please Contact: 9100039814, 8977035770 (S/2425/D00271)

1st Anniversary IN LOVING MEMORY OF

VALERIE MARION CAPPS
DOB: 29-04-1939 DOD: 18-06-2023
Dear Valerie, your legacy of strength and compassion lives on in the lessons you taught. Today, our hearts are filled with gratitude as we remember you. Mass at 6:00 PM, St. Anthony's Shrine, Mettuguda. Followed by Dinner.
From: Son: Dean, Grand Daughters: Daryn, Aubrie, Family & Loved Ones. (S/2425/D00270)

1st Death Anniversary
"I have fought the good fight, I have kept the race, I have kept the faith." 2 Timothy 4:7

Herald Uday Kumar Bandari
Sunrise: 22/9/1950 Sunset: 18/6/2023
We miss you every moment in our life, your presence continues to surround us, in our hearts, you are always there.
Inserted by loving wife Swarna Mukhy Bandari Daughter: Ri Briscoe Son-in-Law: Troy Briscoe Grand daughter: Brittany Mc Clinton (S/2425/D00269)

IN LOVING MEMORY
"And whoever lives and believes in me, shall never die" John 11:26

Lt. Col. O. PAPPACHEN (Retd.)
DOB: 11-02-1934 DOD: 18-06-2018
5 years since you left us Always loved, never forgotten, Forever missed.
Fondly Remembered by: Family, Near & Dear (S/2425/D00269)

5th Death Anniversary
The memory of the righteous is blessed - Prov. 10:7

Mr. T. E. BETHEL RAJU
DOB: 05.08.1945 DOD: 18.06.2019
Your sweet memories will remain in our hearts forever and ever.
Inserted by: Wife, Children and Grand Children

In Fond Remembrance 6th DEATH ANNIVERSARY

Late: Shri B. Venkata Rathnam
DoB: 16/10/1920 DoD: 18/06/2018
You have gone from our sight, but never from our memories. Gone from our touch, but never from our hearts. You are part of our lives and always will be.
Inserted by: B. Ramesh Kumar, Dr. B. Uma Dr. B. Rajeev Kumar, B. Vinod Kumar B. Pramod Kumar & Families Padmarao Nagar, Secunderabad, P. 2750 2503 (S/2425/D00269)

1st Death Anniversary

Dr. Mysore Hanumantha Rao M.D.
(Reltd. Supdt. Osmania, Gandhi & MGM Hospital) DOB: 09.04.1932 DOD: 18.06.2023
Though you left us one year back, the memories still linger on. Your benevolence has touched innumerable hearts.
Inserted by: Sons: Dr. M. Jayanth, Dr. M. Sudhir Daughters-in-Law: Dr. M. Shobha, Smt. M.V. Sallaja Grand Children: Ajay Mysore, Dr. Arunja Mysore, Dr. Sujay Mysore, Ashi Mysore & Great Grand Children Mob: 9440894007, 9848330356

38th ANNIVERSARY
The memory of the righteous is blessed Proverbs 10:7
Let your lights so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your father in heaven. ...Matthew 5:16
In Everlasting Memory of

Late Dr. Nancy Divaker
Inserted by: Family Members

SHORT TAKES

WATER LEVEL RISES AT SRISAILAM

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, JUNE 17

Heavy rain lashing Karnataka and Kurnool district in AP has led to a surge in water levels at the Srisaillam and Sunkesula reservoirs. According to the latest reports, the Srisaillam reservoir has accumulated 35.98 tmc ft of flood water against its total capacity of 215 tmc ft. The water level stood at 812.80 feet, against its full level of 885 feet.

The Srisaillam dam received 6,560 cusecs on Monday and the Sunkesula barrage received 6,700 cusecs primarily from the Tungabhadra River and local sources. Officials released 6,563 cusecs of water from the Sunkesula dam into the Tungabhadra, which joins the Srisaillam reservoir. The Sunkesula reservoir currently 1.068 tmc ft of flood water against its total capacity of 1.2 tmc ft.

● **THE SRISAILAM dam received 6,560 cusecs on Monday and the Sunkesula barrage received 6,700 cusecs**

Prices of veg to normalise soon

Prices gone up due to intense summer

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL I DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Here is some good news for people who are paying exorbitant amounts for buying vegetables.

According to experts from the state agriculture marketing department, there will be near normalcy of vegetable prices in the next two to three weeks.

They pointed that one of the main factors for the steep prices was the particularly severe summer this year.

Apart from the general public, even those running eateries, canteens and hostels are so hit by the prices of vegetables that they have reduced their procurements and orders by almost half.

Salman, who sells vegetables on a bike, explained, "I move in



People buy vegetables in a market in Hyderabad on Monday. — K. DURGA RAO

residential localities, where almost every family makes a bill of anything between ₹50 and 100. Now each vegetable is costing around ₹100 per kg. If we hike prices, they don't buy. We have hardly earned anything in the last few days." Gaddam Ravi of Sri Manikanta vegetable supplies, Monda Market, said, "prices of leafy vegetables have

more than doubled". Joint director of TS Agricultural marketing department, K. Rajashekar Reddy said, "we usually come across such situations during the end of summers. This year as the temperatures were high, prices of vegetables took a beating. Prices should come down by July first or second week."

MED COUNCIL TEAMS FIND VETS USING DISCARDED SYRINGES ON ANIMALS

DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, JUNE 17

Teams of the Telangana Medical Council (TGMC) officials found a huge number of used syringes and injections in a clinic of a RMP at Khammam and questioned him. The officials were shocked when the RMP told them that used syringes and injections would be used for cattle and sheep. There were chances for transmission of dangerous diseases.

RMPs in Khammam in violation of rules. The TGMC officials found a huge number of used syringes and injections in a clinic of a RMP at Khammam and questioned him. The officials were shocked when the RMP told them that used syringes and injections would be used for cattle and sheep. There were chances for transmission of dangerous diseases.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA IRRIGATION AND CAD DEPARTMENT

Tenders are invited for the work "Annual Maintenance for Maintenance of Civil works, Supply of House Keeping and Toilet cleaning materials, Rodent Control Treatments and Sanitization at Jalasoudha Building Complex, Errum Manzil, Hyderabad for the year 2023-24" vide Tender Notice No. 01/2024-25, Dt: 14.06.2024 with ECV: Rs. 72,70,359/-. Last date & time for receipt of Bids is Dt: 24.06.2024 upto 3:00 P.M. Note: For further details visit www.tender.telangana.gov.in

Sd/- Hyder Khan, Superintending Engineer, I&CAD, Irrigation Circle, Hyderabad.

RO No.: 716-PP/CL/Adv/1/2024-25

SICOM LIMITED Registered Office: Solitaire Corporate Park, Building No. 4, Guru Hargovindji Road, Chakala, Andheri (East), Mumbai 400093. Tel.: 022-66572700. Website: www.sicomindia.com

CANCELLATION OF PUBLIC E-AUCTION SCHEDULED ON JULY 5, 2024 BETWEEN 11.30 A.M. TO 2.00 P.M.

Please be informed that the public E-auction of the mortgaged property of Jupiter Bioscience Ltd (borrower) scheduled on 5th July 2024 between 11.30 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. in terms of public e-auction notice dated May 30, 2024 published in Deccan Chronicle (Hyderabad Edition) has been cancelled.

Place: Mumbai Date: June 18, 2024

Sd/- Authorised Officer, SICOM Ltd.

डी एन ए फिंगरप्रिंटिंग एवं निदान केन्द्र
(जैव प्रौद्योगिकी विभाग, विज्ञान एवं प्रौद्योगिकी मंत्रालय, भारत सरकार का स्वायत्त संस्थान) इनर रिंग रोड, उप्पाल, हैदराबाद-500039, तेलंगाना, भारत

CENTRE FOR DNA FINGERPRINTING AND DIAGNOSTICS
(an autonomous institute of the Dept. of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science & Technology, Govt. of India) Inner Ring Road, Uppal, Hyderabad - 500 039, Telangana, India

दूरभाष / Tel: +91-40-2721 6093 फैक्स / Fax: +91-40-2721 6006
वेबसाइट / Website: <http://www.cdfdi.org.in>

ADVERTISEMENT NO. 03/2024
RECRUITMENT OF MEDICAL CONSULTANT ON TEMPORARY BASIS
The Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics (CDFD), Hyderabad is a premier autonomous R & D Institute under Department of Biotechnology, Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, that has been established to provide services in DNA fingerprinting and diagnosis of genetic disorders, and to undertake high quality basic research in frontier areas of modern biology.

CDFD wishes to recruit
MEDICAL CONSULTANT - (01 POST) ON TEMPORARY BASIS
Please visit CDFD website www.cdfdi.org.in for further details. Sd/- प्रमुख - प्रशासन
Head - Administration

BUREAU OF ENERGY EFFICIENCY
(A Statutory body under Ministry of Power, Government of India)
4th Floor, Sewa Bhawan, P.K. Puram, New Delhi - 110066
Website: www.beeindia.gov.in
Ph: 011-26766700

24th NATIONAL CERTIFICATION EXAMINATION FOR ENERGY MANAGERS AND ENERGY AUDITORS 28th & 29th September, 2024

Bureau of Energy Efficiency will hold the 24th National Certification Examination for Energy Managers and Energy Auditors on 28th & 29th September, 2024 (Saturday and Sunday).

Prospectus can be downloaded from www.aipnpc.org as per the instructions given in the website. Link to the above website are also available at www.beeindia.gov.in

Commencement of Online Registration: 1st July, 2024 at 17:00 hrs.

Closure of Online Registration: 31st July, 2024 at 23:59 hrs.
CBC-34106/12/0004/2425 (Secretary)

GHMC attendance system turns a flop

NABINDER BOMMALA I DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

GHMC's recently introduced AI-driven mobile-based facial recognition biometric system to mark the attendance of sweepers has turned out to be a flop due to technical glitches.

Through this system, attendance can be marked by using a photograph of the employee, which in turn is reported to the corporation's IT wing by its vigilance wing. This system was introduced recently after scrapping the old Aadhaar-enabled biometric-based hand-held device following complaints of its misuse by sanitation wing workers, including sanitary field assistants (SFAs), who are responsible for marking the attendance of sweepers.

There were instances where synthetic fingerprints were used to mark proxy attendance and salaries being drawn of absent workers, with the help of SFAs. "The facial recognition system was introduced to ensure the physical presence of sweepers. However, in

● **THERE WERE instances where synthetic fingerprints were used to mark proxy attendance and salaries being drawn of absent workers, with the help of SFAs.**

Musheerabad circle, the machine marked attendance of two sweepers when a photograph of the staff was scanned even though the person was not present," said a GHMC official.

The issue came to light when a staffer reported the issue to the vigilance wing. The complaint was also that SFAs were marking proxy attendance. Following the complaint, the vigilance wing seized the equipment and mobile phones of SFAs working in Musheerabad circle. They found out that there were loopholes in the new attendance system.

A vigilance official told *Deccan Chronicle* "We have not found any irregularities like proxy attendance but there is a technical glitch. We were able to mark attendance of two staffers using a photograph. The same has been reported to the IT wing of the corporation," he said.

NCLT dismisses BHEL plea against Hinduja power co.

L. RAVICHANDER HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The National Company Law Tribunal rejected an application under the IBC Code against Hinduja National Power Corporation at the instance of Bharat Heavy Electrical Limited (BHEL).

The panel of Rajeev Bharadwaj, the judicial member, and Sanjay Puri, the technical member, dismissed the corporate insolvency petition of BHEL alleging default of ₹271 crore payment by the Hinduja.

BHEL had floated a tender for setting up a 1040-megawatt coal-based thermal power project at Vizag in two units. The tender was awarded for supply erection and commissioning in favour of the Hinduja. Various purchase orders were issued by Hinduja to the operation creditor namely, BHEL.

According to BHEL, the corporate debtor failed to repay outstanding invoices. The petitioner contended that as despite a legal notice, payments were not made, they moved the tribunal.

The Hinduja opposed the petition successfully. They contended that there were pre-existing disputes between the parties on account of defects and deficiencies of BHEL and in fact BHEL was liable to pay liquidated damages and various other facts relating to delays in milestones and failure of service obligations. The plea of limitation was also raised. The panel faulted the filing of the petition through its

● **THE PLEA of limitation was also raised. The panel faulted the filing of the petition through its officer; it recorded that neither a board resolution was passed nor a power of attorney executed and in the absence of the same the mere delegation of power by the executive director is invalid and not maintainable.**

● **OUT OF the total amount that was claimed, the tribunal found a mismatch between the dates on the invoices and the claims. It calculated that the total amount due within the period of limitation was only ₹3.54 lakh.**

officer; it recorded that neither a board resolution was passed nor a power of attorney executed and in the absence of the same the mere delegation of power by the executive director is invalid and not maintainable.

Out of the total amount that was claimed, the tribunal found a mismatch between the dates on the invoices and the claims. It calculated that the total amount due within the period of limitation was only ₹3.54 lakh.

It also recorded that there were also disputes between the parties concerning quality of services and goods, reconciliation of accounts and various other disputes. The panel accordingly refused to admit the claim and dismissed the petition.

Government of India

The new government's first task... Honouring India's farmers

Prime Minister Narendra Modi to release 17th installment of PM Kisan Samman Nidhi through direct transfer of more than ₹20 thousand crores to the accounts of more than 9.26 crore beneficiary farmers and grant Certification of Krishi Sakhis as Agriculture Para-extension Workers

18th June, 2024 at 5:00 pm Venue: Varanasi, Uttar Pradesh

PM-Kisan Samman Nidhi **Krishi Sakhi Programme**

Till now, more than **₹ 3.03 lakh crores** have been transferred directly to the bank accounts of more than **11 crore farmers**

To become a **Krishi Sakhi**, women of Self Help Groups are trained in various aspects of agriculture

Beneficiary farmers receive **₹ 6,000 per year** in three equal installments

Till now **34,000** Krishi Sakhis have been certified as Para-extension workers

A comprehensive grievance redressal mechanism and centralized helpdesk to resolve the problems of the beneficiaries

Krishi Sakhi programme is a part of the 'Lakshpati Didi' campaign

Watch Programme Live on DD News or DD Kisan Channel | AgriGol | PM-Kisan Helpline No. 155261 | PM-Kisan Helpdesk <https://pmkisan.gov.in/Grievance.aspx> | For more information on this Scheme Scan QR code

CBC 01102/13/0001/2425

DECCAN Chronicle

18 JUNE 2024

Thorough probe vital on NEET; overhaul if needed

The skeletons various state police teams which investigate irregularities related to the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions in the country discover in the cupboards call for a comprehensive nation-wide criminal investigation into the whole affair. They also force rethinking on the conduct of the examination by the National Testing Agency (NTA), which must pertain not only to the process but also of the very idea, given the opposition by several states on valid grounds.

The Bihar and Gujarat police have unearthed clues that point to the possibility of a fraud having been performed in the conduct of NEET this time around. These revelations add to the doubts the stakeholders, mainly students, have about the test after the very arbitrary decision of the NTA to award grace marks which helped a set of candidates make it to the top of the rank list. That the NTA decided to scrap decision based on the recommendations of an expert academic committee and ordered retest for them does not wash away the suspicions about the process.

It is unfortunate that the government is in denial mode: Education minister Dharmendra Pradhan would contend that there has been no evidence of a leakage of question papers though reports in public domain suggest to the contrary. In fact, the Supreme Court had said in so many words that the sanctity of the examination has already been compromised.

This would necessitate immediate and urgent action by the Union government. One of it is the takeover of the investigation which need not be limited to one or two states; it must be conducted in such a manner that it will restore people's faith in the government-run system. Several people have approached the apex court for a court-monitored investigation, which is another option. Whichever be the investigation, it should be able to unearth foul play, if any, and bring the perpetrators before the law.

Indian institutions have been conducting nation-wide competitive examinations for decades without a hitch: the IIT joint entrance examinations and the entrance tests for admissions in All India Institute of Medical Sciences are two prime examples. Despite the expertise available on call, the NTA has put itself under the cloud of suspicion not only because of the allegations of question paper leak but also its decision to grant grace marks in a stealthy way. The government must put in place mechanisms so that none dare take such decisions.

It must be remembered that several states have raised objections to the national level test saying it gives undue advantage to students from privileged class. The Tamil Nadu government had recently released the report of a judicial commission, which after a study, found that rural and Tamil-medium students and those from lower income and socially disadvantaged families are discriminated against in medical admissions, thanks to NEET. It is important that there must be a transparent system to make medical admissions but it cannot be at the cost of social justice.

It is time the government took every stakeholder into confidence and initiated a process that will culminate in a transparent, non-discriminatory and fair process for medical admissions in the country.

No Ukraine talks sans Russia

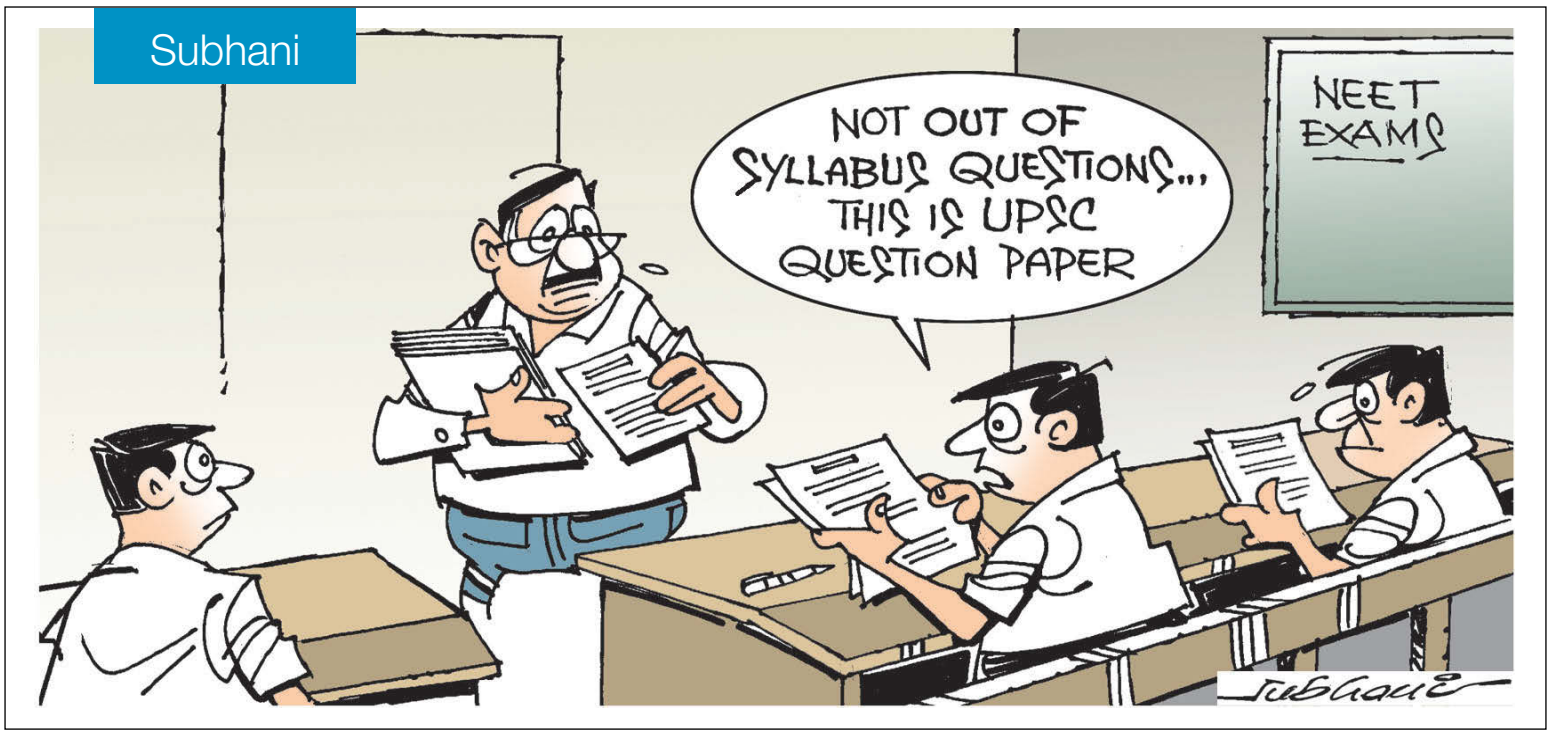
India, Indonesia, Mexico, Saudi Arabia and South Africa refused to sign the Ukraine peace communique that western powers and most of their allies attending the two-day summit in Burgenstock, Switzerland put out. Holding such a summit with 90 countries attending it was a genuine attempt to get the issue of Russia's invasion of Ukraine and the relentless war waged there since February 24, 2022 talked about and a possible path to peace found.

India and other abstainers had, however, the right to point out that the very idea of peace talks without one of the two parties in the conflict — in this case, the aggressor Russia — was never going to be a credible process. It is a bit like staging Macbeth without Banquo's ghost in it.

The fact that Ukraine President Volodymyr Zelenskyy had mooted the idea to have a global powers gathering at a summit may have backfired with Russia denouncing the idea and one of the leaders of the Global South in China, now the country with the most influence on how Russia may respond to world issues, not attending. Joe Biden, President of the US, Ukraine's staunchest ally and backer with arms, ammunition and finance, could not be present as he had to rush to the presidential election campaign trail, instead he sent his vice president Kamala Harris. But the pointlessness of the summit without Russia in it was already clear.

As if to take on the summiters, including the heads of state of France and Germany, even before they got there, Russia's President Vladimir Putin put out what he termed a peace proposal but was, in fact, an ultimatum for Ukraine to withdraw fully from the four provinces that Moscow claims to have annexed. Also, Putin would like a guarantee that Ukraine would not join Nato ever.

Putin's offer was more akin to holding a gun to Ukraine's head than a serious peace move and hence the war will go on. Kyiv's take away from the Alpine resort town conclave was reiteration of western support for the defence of Ukraine even as Zelenskyy shows the world that his country is prepared to look for a peaceful settlement after having suffered an invasion.



Ensure Indians forced to work abroad remain safe



Sunanda K. Datta-Ray

Reflections

The law seeking "contractual assurances of decent conditions of life, work, pay and residence" for Indian workers abroad, that Shashi Tharoor demanded after the horrendous Kuwait fire would certainly avoid considerable human suffering. But it would be even more effective in terms of national self-respect if India ends a form of servitude that broadcasts our government's colossal failure to the whole world.

Compulsory incarceration at home would solve nothing. What we need are realistic economic policies that go beyond slogans like "Viksit Bharat" and "Swachh Bharat" and create full employment so that Indians don't need to wander the world with a begging bowl. However, I realised when Prime Minister Manmohan Singh appointed me to a committee involved in the living conditions of the nine million Indians in the Persian Gulf that given their acute awareness of caste and class, my high-powered colleagues on the committee were more interested in placating Indian diplomats in the region than helping the labourers there.

The latter's living conditions in Singapore and the Gulf are often abysmal. The bitter joke in the Gulf was that no temperature gauge ever rose above 40 degrees because that was when air-conditioning became mandatory.

Those labourers would have stayed on in the scorching desert heat if the law allowed them to do so. Sadly, even exile and neglect were preferable to unemployment at home.

Demotisation and the Goods and Services Tax have aggravated hardship. Unscrupulous agents promise fabulous salaries and generous accommodation so that illiterate peasants sell or mortgage the wife's jewellery and whatever little land they might have to pay the fare and

grease palms for their journey to nowhere. Their passports are taken away and their labour rewarded with a pittance.

The G-7 leaders with whom Prime Minister Narendra Modi recently hobnobbed in Italy courted him mainly because they need an Asian counter to China. It was big news in Singapore but shameful for us when a Tamil lawyer said he earned more as a "karunguni" man (*bikri-wallah*) there than he had at the Bar in Chennai.

Singapore once arrested nearly 9,000 young Indian illegals. Some could not afford a return ticket; others refused to leave jail where life was more comfortable than the struggle outside. Some destroyed their passports and, being Tamil, Telugu or Malayali, pretended they were Singaporean. Ultimately, 1,750 Indians were repatriated.

India's political establishment wasn't too pleased when Inder Kumar Gujral, as external affairs minister, flew to Kuwait in 1990 in response to appeals from Indian workers dislocated by Iraq's invasion, and returned in a blaze of publicity with mounds of mail and 250 passengers, including children, a pregnant woman and several sick persons. The operation invited comparison with the 1961 Berlin airlift.

Indian migrant workers are victims of all manner of hazards. More than 63,000 have died in the six Gulf nations in the past decade, 29,000 of them in the last four years, explaining Tharoor's call for a bill to ensure decent conditions of work and security. "More than five years ago when I chaired the parliamentary standing committee on external affairs, I requested the government to prepare an updated Emigration Bill to ensure decent conditions of work and security for our migrant workers", he was quoted as saying, "I am shocked that five years later

there is still no bill." As it happens, India and Saudi Arabia have signed several agreements on various categories of workers. But they either don't go far enough or enforcement is subject to human frailty on both sides. Put bluntly, no one cares.

Reports of outrages forced New Delhi to appoint Shashank, who was foreign secretary in 2003-04, to investigate the emigration racket. Indian software engineers in Malaysia complained of harassment. The destruction of Hindu temples there prompted the Hindu Rights Action Force to sue Britain for \$4 trillion (\$1 million for every Malaysian Indian) for leaving Indians "unprotected and at the mercy of a majority Malay-Muslim government".

Shashank found that collusion between officials and shadow syndicates meant doctored passports, forged work permits. Even in the late 1980s, many simple Tamils believed you could go to the bus stand or railway station, buy a ticket, travel to some port and board a ship bound for Singapore from where one walked across the causeway or took a bus to Johor Baru in Malaysia. Intermediaries exploited their innocence.

India has always been more concerned about diplomatic repercussions than human suffering. This was confirmed again in 2013 when long-suppressed passions exploded in riots after a bus ran over a 33-year-old Tamil worker in Singapore's Little India. "Cane these hooligans and let them rot in jail", was one online comment. India's high commissioner sounded almost as uncaring: India's "strategic partnership" with Singapore took precedence over the well-being of workers or Shashank's reminder that

these simple folk had helped to build the miracle that is Singapore. Thousands of Indians slaving for a living in the Gulf, Malaysia and Singapore send home more money home than the pampered white-collar businessmen who organise jamborees in London's Wembley Stadium and New York's Madison Square Garden. The "Overseas Citizen of India" status is meaningless for citizens of another country. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas to commemorate Mahatma Gandhi's return from South Africa and the Pravasi Bharatiya Samman Awards are for high dignitaries. Plans for a separate passport for labourers will further rub in their lowly status.

An active cell in Indian missions abroad to scrutinise employment contracts, watch over execution and inspect residential and recreational facilities in cooperation with local workers' centres would be more useful even if the bill that Tharoor wants is ever enacted. No one expects Modi to echo Thailand's Prime Minister who, when asked to send ships to repatriate illegal Thai workers, retorted: "Instead of sending ships, we should send warships to Singapore". But P.V. Narasimha Rao did warn of "severe repercussions on bilateral ties" when Singapore began whipping offenders, and South Block did summon Singapore's first secretary and told him of India's concern. K. Natwar Singh called whipping "barbaric". Dr Manmohan Singh offended Malaysia by speaking sympathetically in Parliament of the grievances that underlay the Hindu Rights Action Force's campaign.

The only permanent solution lies not in words but in economic growth and a full employment society. Gloating over Indian investment creating jobs in the United States — 1,13,423 according to one estimate, 50,000 according to another — only exposes the inferiority complex of people who care more for a white hand's pat on the back than for national self-respect or the welfare of Indians.

The writer is a senior journalist, columnist and author

LETTERS

RAHUL, EVMS

I fail to understand how the I.N.D.I.A. bloc is creating a ruckus over EVMS (Rahul agrees with Musk that EVMS must be eliminated, June 17). It has won elections in Karnataka and Telangana. In the Lok Sabha elections they got considerable seats.

Rangachary Prativadi
Hyderabad

IAS OFFICER SHUNTED

The news about the transfer of GHMC's zonal commissioner is as disgraceful (*Action near Jagan home: GHMC officer shunted, June 17*). The officer rightly ordered demolition of two temporary sheds built on the pavement abutting Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's compound wall and that too in response to complaints filed by residents. But it was approved by the city planner. No parent would encourage their children to pursue civil services.

B.T. Kumar
Hyderabad

NEET AGAIN

The NEET UG results have been controversial (Minister vows action against guilty, June 17). The NTA chairman should resign owning moral responsibility for the fiasco. Retest for 1,563 students and a revised merit list will be gross injustice to meritorious students.

Parimala G. Tadas
Hyderabad

HYDERABAD RRR

There is already Sardar Patel Road in Secunderabad and in many other cities too (*Name RRR after Sardar Patel, says BJP leader, DC, June 17*). The name Regional Ring Road is appropriate as it connects several regions.

Dr O. Prasada Rao
Hyderabad

Email your letters to
info@deccanmail.com,
editor@deccanmail.com.

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

U.S. to give nuclear aid to Israel

JERUSALEM, June 17. U.S. President Richard Nixon today pledged that the United States would negotiate nuclear energy aid to Israel. The pledge was made in a joint communiqué, which also reaffirmed long-term US arms shipments to the Jewish State.

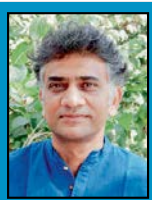
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Aakar Patel

Modi 3.0 govt looks much like Modi 2.0: Just like old wine put in a new bottle...

India's new government has a new Cabinet which is pretty much like the old Cabinet. The ministers for home, finance, external affairs and defence will be the same. These four are considered the most important by the government, which classifies them as comprising the Cabinet Committee on Security. And so, once again, it will be Amit Shah, Nirmala Sitharaman, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh. Roads and highways will again be managed by Nitin Gadkari, the railways will be run again by Ashwini Vaishnav, commerce and industry again by Piyush Goyal, law again by Arjun Ram Meghwal.

Even where the portfolios have been shifted, the ministers have been retained and readers will not be unfamiliar with names like Kiren Rijiju, Jyotiraditya Scindia, Giriraj Singh and so on. Some famous names are gone, like Smriti Irani and Rajiv Chandrashekar, at least for now, but this is because they lost in high-profile electoral contests.

No reason has been given for moving around those ministers who have been retained but shifted, but presumably this has been done to accommodate allies like the Telugu Desam (civil aviation), Janata Dal Secular (steel), Janata Dal United (micro, medium, small industries), LJP (food processing), Shiv Sena (ayurveda and yoga). Or

done to bring in former BJP chief ministers like Shivraj Singh Chouhan of Madhya Pradesh (agriculture) and Manohar Khattar of Haryana (housing).

Overall, it resembles not so much a new Cabinet as one that has undergone a minor reshuffle. In the old days, when most newspapers reported news, this would have been reported "below the fold", as it were, meaning not on the top half of the newspaper.

The question is: why does 3.0 look like 2.0? The obvious reason is that there is nothing to change because everything is going well. Change is necessary only if there is a need to correct course, and because the BJP won the election, there is no such need.

But defeat, meaning sitting in the Opposition, would have meant no BJP Cabinet at all, so perhaps it is unclear what the middle ground would be in such a line of thinking and what conditions would trigger change. It is unlikely then that "all is well" is the reason. What else could it be? One possibility is that there is weak bench strength, that there are not enough talented individuals in the party to be given the important jobs and the Prime Minister is stuck with the small set that he has.

This is not the likely reason because under this Prime Minister, the PMO functions as a mini-Cabinet and intervenes on critical issues as the defence, finance and external

affairs ministries well know.

There is a third possibility — and that is the reluctance or inability to concede that something has in fact gone wrong. The Prime Minister made a speech in the Lok Sabha on February 5 that has been uploaded on his YouTube channel. As he concludes it, he says the following:

"Mr Speaker, normally I don't get into the issue of numbers. But I have observed the mindset of the nation. It will certainly take the NDA beyond 400, but it will also definitely (*avashya*) give the BJP 370 seats." At this point, the treasury benches are thumped and the chant of "Modi! Modi!" rises. The Prime Minister repeats: "370 seats for the BJP and beyond 400 for the NDA". The thumping and chanting goes on.

As we now know, this did not happen. The BJP did not get 370, and it did not even get 270. For the first time in his career, the Prime Minister is leading a minority government.

Is this a defeat? If you look at the Opposition and its voters, they are behaving as if they have won. The fact that the new government is shaky and dependent on external support is not lost on them. As Yogendra Yadav has said, the acceptability and prestige that was there in the last decade is gone. The invincibility is gone, and gone forever.

For this very reason, many of the BJP's supporters and especially the Prime Minister's

following remain despondent. Externally, things have changed. The Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh is again expressing itself on issues concerning the government's functioning after a decade of silence. The NDA partners are asserting themselves.

It is possible to be blind to this and pretend to carry on as if nothing has happened, but that will not change the reality. The voter has told the Prime Minister that he is less popular than he was in 2019 and less popular than in 2014. The voter has also told him that it is okay with an NDA government but not a BJP one.

To pretend we are still in February is to lie to oneself. There is no question that the performances of key ministries, including finance and perhaps even home, were the reason for the defeat. Carrying on without change is to continue with the damage. But who in the party can tell him that? Not those who are returning to their positions surrounding him. Not those who know they will be punished for speaking the truth.

For those who are opposed to the BJP, this being in denial is not a bad thing because nothing good will come of it as the coming months will show. The world does not change itself to align with one's delusions.

The writer is the chair of Amnesty International India. Twitter: @aakar_patel

SHORT TAKES

TGPSC CHALLENGES COURT ORDER ON LOCALS CRITERIA

VUJJINI VAMSHIDHAR | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

The Telangana Public Service Commission has challenged the orders of the single judge, which directed the commission to consider the selected candidates for various posts as local candidates.

TGPSC filed a batch of appeals before the division bench against the single judge orders in a separate case.

In a few cases, the single judge directed the commission to consider the selected candidates for the posts like junior assistant as local candidates of that district, even if they did not study for four consecutive years up to seventh standard, in that district. Challenging the orders of the single judge, TGPSC filed appeals and the division bench posted the cases along with the batch of petitions, which challenged the related GO 124, and adjourned the cases for final hearing on June 26.

COTTON FARMERS START SOWING SEEDS IN MONSOON

DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, JUNE 17

The majority of farmers have sowed cotton seeds with the onset of monsoon while some are still waiting for good rains for taking up sowing in the erstwhile Adilabad district.

On the other hand, Advivasis farmers in the area observed their traditional Mohatur festival (seed-sowing festival) at the beginning of the kharif season. Starting the sowing of seeds has been the conventional practice among the farming community here on the day of 'Mirugu' without much moisture in the soil at the start of the monsoon. The farmers strongly believe the germination percentage will be high if they sow seeds on Mirugu on June 7. It is learnt that 60 per cent of farmers had sown cotton seeds on Mirugu.

Sheep sellers face brunt of heavy rains

100-yr-old tree uprooted, lamp posts fall on road in Tolichowki, Ponnam urges officials to check waterlogging

SANJAY SAMUEL PAUL | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Heavy rains lashed Hyderabad on Monday, bringing relief from the scorching temperatures but causing inconvenience to sheep sellers who were anticipating a Bakrid jackpot. The rains, which began early in the morning, particularly affected makeshift markets in Jiyaguda, Karwan, and Mehdiapatnam.

The downpour resumed in the afternoon and continued until late in the evening across several parts of the city. Golconda recorded 58 mm of rainfall, Mehdiapatnam and Asifnagar both registered 57 mm, Khairatabad saw 52.5 mm, and Shaikpet had 46.8 mm. In Tolichowki, a 100-year-old tree was uprooted, and lamp posts fell on the roads.

Rajendranagar, Attapur, Upparpally, Mehdiapatnam, and Masab Tank, which started receiving rain from 3.30 pm, were among the worst hit. Prakashnagar, near Hyderabad's old airport, and Madhurannagar faced knee-high water and heavy stagnation.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation's (GHMC) disaster response force teams received 51 complaints related to the rain. While 15 of these were resolved, others were being addressed on a priority basis, according to the corporation's EV&DM data.

In response to Monday's downpour, transport minister Ponnam Prabhakar, who is also the in-charge minister for Hyderabad District, instructed officials from GHMC, the Disaster Response Force (DRF) teams, and the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWS&SB) to remain alert and attend to emer-



Motorists are caught unawares in the heavy rain near Hussainsagar lake in Hyderabad on Monday. — S. SURENDER REDDY



Motorists stop under the Metro Rail station in Secunderabad as it started to rain heavily on Monday. — K. DURGA RAO



The Musi river is inundated with flood water at Moosarambagh bridge where a new bridge work is in progress. The flood water is almost reaching the level of old bridge on Monday after city witnessed heavy downpour. — P. SURENDRA



Two-wheelers are submerged in water in Baghdad Colony, Langer Houz. — Style

● The GHMC disaster response force teams got 51 complaints related to the rain. While 15 of these were resolved, others were being addressed on a priority basis.

gencies promptly. During a teleconference with officials from various departments, the minister insisted on special measures at 141 major waterlogging points identified across the city. He also instructed them to clear fallen tree branches from roads quickly to ensure smooth traffic flow.



GHMC staff clearing manholes at a perennial waterlogging point at Golnaka near Ambepur after heavy rains on Monday. — DC



Traffic moves at snail's pace in the IT corridor near Biodiversity flyover after a heavy downpour on Monday. — R. PAVAN

Waterlogging dents vendor biz in IT area

SAALINI LOKESH | DC HYDERABAD, JUNE 17

Waterlogging in the IT corridor is not only irking commuters but also denting business prospects of stalls and street vendors located in the vicinity.

According to traffic police personnel, Hitec City main road, Shilparamam and the road near RTA office in Kondapur bear the brunt of water logging even if there is a moderate rainfall. When it pours cats and dogs, the situation turns alarmingly risky, they said.

A woman, who sells fruit juice on a pushcart near the RTA office, said that they are forced to move to safer locations during rains.

"Alas, although we relocate to safer options, hardly any customers turn up due to the heavy traffic and space crunch," she

lamented. A police personnel deployed at Shilparamam said that as the roads are waterlogged, regulating traffic becomes very difficult. "Sometimes it takes around two to three hours to clear the traffic," he said.

Speaking about monsoon-related works, K. Raju, executive engineer, GHMC Chandanagar circle, said that their monsoon teams are deployed immediately so that normalcy could be restored on a priority basis.

"We also collaborate with the police department when there is water stagnation," he said.

A GHMC official said, "The Strategic Nala Development Programme has not been proposed in these particular areas."

Meanwhile, social media is flooded with people's woes during rains.

SOUTH

SHORT TAKES

CAR HITS ANIMAL, SUSPECTED TO BE TIGER, IN AP

DC CORRESPONDENT TIRUPATI, JUNE 17

A speeding car hit a wild animal, suspected to be a tiger, and dragged for about half a kilometre in a forest in Nellore district on Monday. District forest officers have set out to track down the animal and provide it medical aid.

The car was driven by one Srinivasulu. All five occupants of the car, heading from Badvel to Nellore were safe. Officials are yet to confirm that the animal involved in the accident is a tiger.

The incident occurred when the animal was attempting to cross the national highway passing through the forest close to Kadirinadupalli, Marripadu mandal. Passengers reported that the big cat sustained injuries and went into the nearby forest after the collision. Upon receiving information about the incident, forest officials arrived at the scene to investigate.

CRPF TO TAKE CARE OF SLAIN JAWAN'S KIDS

Chennai, June 17: The CRPF is helping the children of its personnel killed in action or decorated with gallantry medals secure seats in technical streams like artificial intelligence, computer science and electronics through special MoUs with prominent institutions. The country's largest paramilitary force has inked such memorandums with 31 universities till now, out of which 22 are located in Tamil Nadu, officials said.

The initiative was launched last year and results are visible now, they said. As part of this scheme, the tuition fee for the entire course of a candidate is waived off and the families of such personnel have to only bear the hostel and mess charges, they said. There are a total seven categories created as part of this welfare initiative, with the children of personnel killed in action being the top-most priority.

Priyanka to alter Kerala politics

After Rae Bareilly, Amethi, Wayanad third constituency attached to Gandhis

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 17

The Congress leadership's decision to field Priyanka Gandhi from Wayanad constituency, after her brother Rahul Gandhi opted to retain Rae Bareilly, is likely to impact Kerala's political landscape significantly.

Priyanka Gandhi's first reaction — "I will not let the people of Wayanad feel my brother's absence" — clearly indicated the importance that the family attaches to the constituency. After Rae Bareilly and Amethi, Wayanad has become the third constituency attached to the Gandhi family.

Rahul Gandhi has a special relationship with the people of Wayanad. He has often stated that his disqualification from Lok Sabha had deepened the relationship with the people of Wayanad which elected him with a record margin of over four lakh votes in 2019 and by over 3.6 lakh in the last elections. "I am saying my relationship with you is not going to change for the entire lifetime," he said at the thanksgiving meeting held last week.

Priyanka Gandhi is not new to Wayanad. She was one of the main star campaigners for Rahul Gandhi in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls and accompanied her brother to Wayanad sever-



Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge with party leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra addresses a press conference after a meeting at his residence, in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

al times. During Rahul Gandhi's visit to Wayanad after his disqualification, Priyanka Gandhi joined him and participated in a the massive "Satyamev Jayate" road show.

She campaigned extensively for Rahul Gandhi and other candidates of the UDF in Kerala in the recent Lok Sabha polls.

Reacting to Congress' decision to field Priyanka Gandhi from Wayanad, CPI leader and Rahul Gandhi's rival Annie Raja said, "In a parliamentary democracy, we have to fight elections. The LDF will have a candidate against Priyanka Gandhi. The issue will be discussed in the CPI and LDF and we will decide on the candidate."

The CPI leader said she stood by her earlier stand that Rahul Gandhi should

have made it clear before the Wayanad people that he would be vacating the constituency.

CPI state secretary Binoy Viswam said his party will contest the Wayanad byelection. "If we don't contest the poll it will only strengthen the BJP," he said. BJP state president K. Surendran said Rahul Gandhi has ditched the people of Wayanad.

"Welcome to Kerala, Priyanka Gandhi ji" reacted Kerala's Congress leader V.D. Satheshan.

Muslim League supremo Sadiq Ali Shihab Thangal hailed the Congress decision to field Priyanka Gandhi from Wayanad. "Priyanka's arrival in Kerala will strengthen the UDF India Alliance and Secularism. We had requested the Congress

Priyanka was key behind LS strategy

FROM PAGE 1

Priyanka Gandhi, who has so far been the backstage force of the Congress, has taken much bigger strides in the 2024 Lok Sabha elections. She played a larger role in strategising election plans, deciding candidates, and campaigning aggressively across the country. Though she has managed her brother Rahul's Amethi constituency and her mother's Rae Bareilly constituency in the past, she has gradually taken on a more active role since 2019 when she was expected to contest from Uttar Pradesh. This year, she was also speculated to be a candidate from Amethi but supported the family's old loyalist K.L. Sharma instead. Wayanad is considered a

safe seat, as Rahul Gandhi won with a huge margin from here in both 2019 and 2024. Priyanka is married to businessman Robert Vadra. The 52-year-old Priyanka, whose name was considered for the Congress candidacy in Amethi, Rae Bareilly, and Varanasi parliamentary seats, will finally make her debut in electoral politics from the secure environs of Wayanad in Kerala.

"I am happy to be able to represent Wayanad. I won't let them feel his absence. I will work hard as a representative of Wayanad. I also have a very old relationship with Rae Bareilly and have worked for 20 years in Amethi and Rae Bareilly. I will continue to assist Rahul in Rae Bareilly too," said Priyanka Gandhi.

Political observers believe that Priyanka's presence in Kerala will strengthen the Congress and UDF. With the local bodies and crucial Assembly elections due in Kerala in less than two years, Priyanka's maiden electoral battle will certainly galvanise the Congress and the UDF cadres in Kerala.

that Priyanka should replace Rahul should he decide to vacate Wayanad. We are confident that she will win by a huge margin," he said. AICC general secretary (organisation) K.C. Venugopal said Rahul and Priyanka would visit Wayanad together in the coming days.



Senior BJP leader and former Karnataka chief minister B.S. Yediyurappa leaves after appearing before the CID in connection with a Pocco case in Bengaluru on Monday. — PTI

CID grills BSY for 3 hrs in Pocco case

Bengaluru, June 17: The Criminal Investigation Department (CID) questioned former chief minister and BJP stalwart B.S. Yediyurappa for three hours on Monday in connection with a Pocco case registered against him.

Yediyurappa appeared before a team of CID, which had summoned him for an inquiry in connection with the case. "He was questioned for three hours," a CID officer said.

The Karnataka High Court on Friday restrained the CID from arresting the veteran BJP leader in connection with the March 14 case.

According to police, Yediyurappa has been booked under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (Pocco) Act, 2012, and Section 354 A (Sexual harassment) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) based on a complaint by the mother of a 17-year-old girl who

alleged that he molested her daughter during a meeting on February 2 this year, at his residence in Dollars Colony here.

Yediyurappa has denied the charge, and said "people would teach a lesson to those indulging in conspiracies against" him. The victim's brother had filed a petition in the court last week alleging that though the case was registered nearly three months ago, no progress has been made in the investigation. The petitioner prayed that Yediyurappa should be arrested and interrogated.

After the police registered the case in March, Karnataka Director-General of Police Alok Mohan had issued an order transferring it to the CID for further investigation.

The 54-year-old woman, who had leveled the charge against Yediyurappa, died at a private hospital here last month, due to lung cancer. — PTI

SOARING | RATES Farmers bring 600-750 tonnes of produce daily; demand at Madanapalle market sees a rise

Tomato prices soar to ₹80 per kg at Asia's largest hub

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, JUNE 17

The Madanapalle market, Asia's largest tomato trading hub, witnessed a spike in the commodity's prices on Monday — the highest rate reaching ₹80 per kg.

The surge was caused by a combination of factors, including the Bakrid festival and a significant decline in tomatoo supply

from other mandals and neighbouring states.

According to market officials, the demand for tomatoes at Madanapalle market has been steadily increasing, with farmers bringing between 600 and 750 tonnes of produce daily. However, on Monday, the market received only 396 tonne tomatoes from surrounding villages, substantially lower than the quantity required for export.

WHY THE SURGE?

● THE SURGE was caused by a combination of factors, including the Bakrid festival and a significant decline in tomatoo supply from other mandals and neighbouring states.

While Grade A tomatoes were sold between ₹69-₹80 per kg.



"The Madanapalle market serves as a crucial hub for tomato trade, catering to the demand from various regions. The shortage of supply, coupled with sp-

oradic rainfall across the country, has led to a decline in tomato production in various regions," explained a market official. "As a result, the high-quality produce is not reaching the market, driving up the prices," official added.

The soaring prices have hurt both consumers and traders. While Grade A tomatoes were sold between ₹69 and ₹80 per kg, Grade B tomatoes fetched

prices ranging from ₹50 to ₹68 per kg. Traders purchased an average of 25 kg crates from farmers at prices between ₹1,600 and ₹1,900, subsequently exporting the produce to external markets.

Consumers have expressed concerns over the hike in prices, which is likely to impact kitchen budgets. Looking at the current trends, traders say the prices will soon touch

₹90-100 for a kg if the arrivals in Madanapalle and other markets decline in the coming days. The marketing authorities are exploring ways to stabilise the prices and ensure a steady supply of tomatoes. As one of Asia's largest tomato markets, the fluctuations in Madanapalle have far-reaching implications for both consumers and agricultural sector across the region.

SHORT TAKES
ENSURE PROPER HEALTH, EDU: SHAH TO STATE CS
FROM PAGE 1

During the comprehensive review, Shah instructed officials to prevent further incidents of violence and assured an increase in Central force deployment if necessary. He also directed strategic deployment of forces to restore peace and called for strict legal action against those responsible for the violence.

The home minister highlighted the government's commitment to the safety and security of all citizens in Manipur. He reviewed conditions in relief camps, and pointed to the need for adequate food, water, medicines, and other basic amenities. Shah directed the state's Chief Secretary to ensure proper health and education facilities for the displaced and their rehabilitation.

Top security officials provided a detailed briefing on the situation, while representatives from the Manipur government assured Shah that adequate forces were deployed in areas affected by the recent violence. Notably, Chief Minister N. Biren Singh was absent from the meeting, while Security Adviser Kuldip Singh, DGP Rajiv Singh, and Chief Secretary Vineet Joshi represented the state.

Union home secretary Ajay Bhalla, Director of Intelligence Bureau Tapan Deka, Army Chief Gen. Manoj Pande, Army Chief-designate Lt Gen. Upendra Dwivedi, and other senior officials were present at the hour-long meeting.

NCERT: Bharat, India to be used in all textbooks

Opposition targets Centre, NCERT for over revision of books

DC CORRESPONDENT WITH AGENCY INPUTS NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

"Bharat" and "India" will be used interchangeably in NCERT textbooks as is the case in the country's Constitution, National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) director Dinesh Prasad Saklani has said.

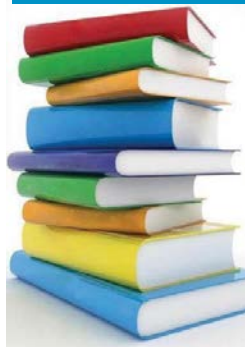
The NCERT chief said both the words will be used in the books and the council has no aversion to either "Bharat" or "India".

He said, "It is interchangeable ... our position is what our Constitution says and we uphold that. We can use Bharat, we can use India, what is the problem? We are not in that debate. Wherever it suits we will use India, wherever it suits we will use Bharat. We have no aversion to either India or Bharat."

"You can see both being used in our textbooks already and that will continue in new textbooks. This is a useless debate," Saklani said.

A high-level committee for social sciences, constituted by the NCERT to revise the school curriculum, had last year recommended that "India"

NAME DEBATE



NCERT HAD said that no decision has been taken on panel's recommendations.

THE NAME BHARAT first appeared officially last year when the government sent out G20 invitations where "President of Bharat", instead of "President of India".

should be replaced with "Bharat" in the textbooks for all classes. Committee chairperson C.I. Isaac, who was heading the panel, had said that they have suggested replacing the name "India" with "Bharat" in the textbooks.

The NCERT had then said that no decision has been taken on panel's recommendations.

The name Bharat first appeared officially last year when the government sent out G20 invites in the name of "President of Bharat", instead of "President of India".

Later, the nameplate of Prime Minister Narendra Modi during the summit in New Delhi also read "Bharat", instead of

India. The Opposition, particularly Congress and TMC on Monday targeted the Centre and the NCERT following "over-revision" of the textbooks.

While Congress leader Jairam Ramesh alleged that the institution has been functioning as an RSS affiliate since 2014 and was mounting an assault on the Constitution, Trinamool Congress leader Saket Gokhale lashed out, saying, "Shameless NDA 1.0 Government" is hiding "inconvenient facts" from students.

"By this logic, why teach kids about other 'violent depressing things' like the World War?" he said.

KERALA MINISTER SLAMS BJP OVER TEXTBOOK ROW

Thiruvananthapuram, Jun 17: A day after the NCERT defended its modifying references to Babri Masjid demolition in school textbooks, Kerala Minister M. B. Rajesh on Monday termed it as a move to communalise all systems of the government and said there was a need to continue the collective fight against such attempts.

Rajesh, a CPM leader, said the BJP-led union government had done similar things in the past 10 years, also claiming that there was no agenda behind their actions. The present move by the NCERT has proved that despite the BJP's decreased number of seats in the Lok Sabha and the party losing the majority to rule independently, the Sangh Parivar was not ready to withdraw from its extreme communal agendas, the minister for Local Self-Government Department alleged. "This is a warning to everyone." -PTI

Bliss of innocence



Children celebrate the Id ul-Zuha celebrations, at Jama Masjid in New Delhi on Monday. - PTI

Sipri: India emphasised on longer-range weapons

FROM PAGE 1

"However, the country's recent moves towards placing missiles in canisters and conducting sea-based deterrence patrols suggest that India could be shifting in the direction of mating some of its warheads with their launchers in peacetime," it said.

Sipri said that both India and Pakistan continued to develop new types of nuclear delivery systems in 2023. While Pakistan remained the main focus of India's nuclear deterrent, India appeared to be placing growing emphasis on longer-range weapons, including those capable of reaching targets throughout China. It said that nine nuclear-armed states — the US, Russia, the UK, France, China, India, Pakistan, North Korea and Israel — continued to modernise their nuclear arsenals and several

deployed new nuclear-armed or nuclear-capable weapon systems in 2023. "Of the total global inventory of an estimated 12,121 warheads in January 2024, about 9,585 were in military stockpiles for potential use," it said. An estimated 3,904 of those warheads were deployed with missiles and aircraft - 60 more than in January 2023 - and the rest were in central storage, it said.

BLOCK BUSTER HIT
మహారాజు
SAPTHAGIRI 70MM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM
RAJADHANI DELUXE-DSNR
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM
MALLIKARJUNA 70-KUKATPALLY
11.15, 2.30, 6.15, 9.30PM
JAGADAMBA 70MM
11.30, 6.30PM (2 SHOWS)
RAMAKRISHNA 70MM-11.30, 6.00
VENKATARAMANA/PADMAYATHI
11.15, 6.15PM (2 SHOWS)
AMB-10.30, 1.20, 7.15, 10.20PM
AAA-10.15, 4.15, 10.15PM
PRASAD'S-11.20, 5.55, 10.30PM
ASIAN CINEMART-1.35, 7.30, 10.30PM
LAKSHMIKALA-11.30, 2.45, 6.30, 9.35PM
GVK MALL-10.45, 4.40, 7.45PM
NECKLACE-10.30, 7.35, 10.40PM
MP MALL-4.40, 10.20PM
ASHOKA ONE-10.20, 7.25, 10.30PM
DILSUKNAGAR-10.30, 1.50, 8.00PM
MALKAJIRI-10.30, 5.00, 10.30PM
CHANDANAGAR-11.0, 7.30, 10.30PM
MIYAPUR-10.30, 5.00, 10.30PM
BALANAGAR-11.0, 5.20, 7.30, 10.30PM
JP CINEMAS-1.35, 4.30, 7.45, 10.45PM
RADHIKA-1.40, 7.30PM
MUR SQUARE-1.40, 4.50, 7.20PM
MCUBE MALL-1.50, 7.40PM
SHASHAHENSHA-6.30, 9.45PM
SVAGANGA-11.15, 2.15, 6.00, 9.15PM
CINESQUARE-10.45, 4.35, 7.25, 10.20PM
CINEPLANET-4.40, 10.15PM
NEXUS MALL-10.50, 7.45, 10.50PM
MUSARAMBAGH-11.20, 4.00, 10.50PM
MALLAPUR-11.00, 7.40, 10.45PM
IRRUMMANZIL-10.15, 7.40, 10.45PM
INORBIT MALL-11.00, 4.15, 10.50PM
CENTRAL MALL-10.15, 7.45, 10.50PM
RK-5.25, 10.50PM | PRESTONE-11.05, 4.55, 10.50PM
ATRIUM MALL-10.50, 4.40, 10.30PM
ICON HITECH-10.05, 5.10, 10.30PM
L&T GALLERIA-10.35, 4.25, 10.50PM
SUDHA MALL-11.00, 1.35, 10.45PM
MANTRA MALL-11.00, 2.00, 7.20, 10.20PM
LULU MALL-10.00, 1.20, 7.50PM
CCPL-10.30, 1.30, 10.45PM | DSL VIRTUE-10.50, 1.45, 10.45PM
BVK 1.30, 7.30, 10.40
AMR MALL 10.15, 4.15, 10.15
11.00, 1.50, 7.40, 10.40PM
GPR MALL 10.30, 7.30, 10.30PM
GACHIBOWLI-9.15, 3.00, 8.15PM
AMEERPET-2.00, 7.30, 10.15PM
INDRA/NAGENDRA 70
11.15, 2.30, 6.15, 9.15
ASIAN SENSATION
2.30, 9.15PM
GOKUL 70MM
11.15, 2.30, 6.15, 9.30
SAIPOOJA 70MM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00
SUSHMA 70MM
11.15, 2.15, 6.15, 9.15PM
VYJAYANTHI 70MM
11.00, 6.00PM
SANTOSH 70MM
IBPATNAM-11.00, 6.00PM
SRIRAMANA 70MM
11.00, 6.00PM
SUPER 70MM
11.15, 6.15PM
SVC SIVASAKTHI 70
11.30, 6.30PM
ASIAN SWAPNA 70
11.15, 6.00PM
BR HITECH 70MM
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SAIRANGA 70MM
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SRISAIRAM 70MM
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VLS SRIDEVI 70MM
11.15, 2.30, 6.00, 9.15PM
ASIAN JYOTHI 70
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ALANKAR 70MM
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RAJYALAKSHMI
11.15, 2.15, 6.00, 9.00
SRISAIRAM 70MM
2.30, 9.45PM
TALLURI 70MM
11.00, 2.00, 6.00, 9.00PM

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Moosarambagh | Irrummanzil
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GVK Mall | Necklace Sattva
MP Mall | GSM Mall | Ashoka
ASIAN CINEMAS
Cinesquare | MCUBE | Radhika
JP Cinemas | MJR Square
Cinepolis
CCPL | MANTRA MALL | SUDHA
LULU MALL | DSL MALL
BVK LB NAGAR AMR MALL
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AMEERPET
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VIJAYALAXMILB NAGAR
Cinesquare | MCUBE
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INOX
Inorbit Mall | Prestone
Forum Mall | RK Plex | Central
Icon | Next gallery | Atrium Mall
INOX
GVK Mall | Necklace Sattva
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Icon | Next gallery | Atrium Mall
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GVK Mall | Necklace Sattva
MP Mall | GSM Mall
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CCPL | MANTRA MALL | SUDHA MALL
LULU MALL | DSL MALL
CHANDU ENTERTAINMENTS-9912499933

మహారాజు
21st JUNE
LAXMIKALA-11.30AM
APARNA CINEMAS-NALLAGANDLA
AMB CINEMAS
ASIAN CINEMAS
Cinesquare | MCUBE
JP Cinemas | MJR Square
INOX
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Forum Mall | RK Plex | Central
Icon | Next gallery | Atrium Mall
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GVK Mall | Necklace Sattva
MP Mall | GSM Mall
Cinepolis
CCPL | MANTRA MALL | SUDHA MALL
LULU MALL | DSL MALL
PARAMJYOTHI FILMS-9848028739

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WRITTEN & DIRECTED BY BALAJI RAJASEKHARUNI
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VIJAYALAXMILB NAGAR
APARNA CINEMAS-NALLAGANDLA
Cinesquare | Mube | Sivaganga
JP Cinemas | MJR Square | Sha
Cineplanet-Kompally
INOX
Inorbit Mall | Prestone
Forum Mall | RK Plex | Central
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INOX
GVK Mall | Necklace Sattva
MP Mall | GSM Mall
Cinepolis
CCPL | MANTRA MALL | SUDHA MALL
LULU MALL | DSL MALL
OCEAN FILM ENTERTAINMENT thru
VR KOLLI-9849761038/9966973749

21st RELEASE
JUNE 21
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LAXMIKALACINEPRIDE
AMB CINEMAS
AAA
APARNA CINEMAS-NALLAGANDLA
Cinesquare | Mube | Sivaganga
JP Cinemas | MJR Square | Sha
Cineplanet-Kompally
INOX
Inorbit Mall | Prestone
Forum Mall | RK Plex | Central
Icon | Next gallery | Atrium Mall
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Cinepolis
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SHORT TAKES

BJP ANNOUNCES WB ASSEMBLY POLL CANDIDATES

RAJIB CHOWDHURI | DC KOLKATA, JUNE 17

BJP on Monday announced the names of its candidates for the Assembly bypoll at four seats in West Bengal, days after ruling Trinamul Congress and the Left Front fielded its choices. Three of them are new faces.

At Raiganj in North Dinajpur, Manas Kumar Ghosh has been made BJP candidate while Manoj Kumar Biswas has got a ticket to fight at Ranaghat South in Nadia. At Bagda in North 24 Parganas, Binay Kumar Biswas will fight against Madhuparna Thakur of TMC.

All the three seats went to the BJP last time. In Maniktala of North Kolkata, BJP once again fielded former footballer Kalyan Choubey, who is the AIFP chief and had lost to late TMC minister Sadhan Pande in the 2021 Assembly Election.

Interestingly, Choubey had moved the Calcutta High Court challenging his defeat to the TMC heavyweight but withdrew his petition almost after three years leading to the schedule of the bypoll.

This time, the former goal-keeper however added another surname, Bhattacharya, which belongs to his mother Sandhya, to his name to fight TMC candidate Supri Pande, also the wife of the late minister.

MADHYA PRADESH NOT HYD, MOHAN REMINDS OWAIISI

DC CORRESPONDENT BHOPAL, JUNE 17

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Mohan Yadav on Monday hit out at AMIM leader Asaduddin Owaisi for the latter's criticism of bulldozer actions against 11 houses in a MP village in which beef was found, reminding him that "Madhya Pradesh is not Hyderabad".

Taking exception to Owaisi's recent statement on the issue, Yadav, in a post in X, said "Please tell him (Mr Owaisi) that he should not mistake Madhya Pradesh for Hyderabad. This is Madhya Pradesh and there is a BJP government in Madhya Pradesh, and the BJP government is capable of dealing with all mischievous elements and goons".

Yadav said his government would deal with cattle smugglers strongly. The local administration demolished 11 houses in the village of Bhainwahi in Mandla district on Saturday after beef, animal hides and skeletons were found in these houses, according to Mandla district SP Rajat Saklecha. Eleven people were booked under Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act and the Cow Slaughter Prohibition Act in connection with the incident.

One of them was arrested. In X, Owaisi accused the Madhya Pradesh government of targeting Muslims by accusing them of possessing beef and demolishing their houses.

CONG. SEEKS FULL ROLLBACK OF AGNIPATH SCHEME

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Keeping up the pressure on the NDA government on the Army recruitment process, the Congress on Monday demanded a complete rollback of the Agnipath scheme saying it was neither in the interest of the country nor the defence forces. The party said the scheme was not acceptable even in any amended form also.

Addressing media, Congress Working Committee member and Rohtak MP, Deepender Singh Hooda, while referring to certain reports that the government was considering making some amends in the scheme, said the Congress wants its complete withdrawal and restoration of the old system of recruitment prior to 2022.

The Congress spokesperson quoted certain reports in public domain that the government was considering to increase the service tenure of the Agniveers from four to seven years besides increasing the retention from 25 to 60-70 per cent. He said, these changes were not acceptable to the Congress party and it will continue to oppose the Agnipath scheme in totality. The government, however, denied such news. Hooda said the youth were feeling demoralised and there was complete loss of interest among them to join the defence services after the introduction of the Agnipath scheme.

Direction change tragic for some, lucky for rest

Affected coaches were in the front till Lumding, Assam

Jalpaiguri (WB), June 17: A scheduled operational procedure at Lumding, which involves a direction reversal for trains passing through the station, turned into a life-altering event for passengers in the front and last coaches of the 13174 Agartala-Sealdah Kanchanjunga Express on Monday.

The express train was struck from behind by a goods train at Rangapani, near New Jalpaiguri in West Bengal. The direction reversal at Lumding in Assam meant that the coaches which were initially at the front became the rear end of the train.

A passenger in a sleeper coach located in the middle of the rake said, "The affected coaches were in the front till Lumding."

He explained that after the direction reversal, the affected four coaches a general seating coach, two parcel vans, and a guard van were at the rear end. The general seating coach was the most affected, being thrown onto adjacent tracks, he added.

"Our train was moving very slowly when it reached Rangapani, a few kilometers from New Jalpaiguri," the passenger recounted, standing beside one of the mangled coaches.

Another passenger described a sudden, sharp jerk accompanied by a loud sound, and the train stopped abruptly. Upon disembarking, he saw that the goods train had hit their rake from behind.

"We were having tea when the train stopped suddenly with a jerk," he said. A pregnant woman, traveling with her family, said she fell off her seat upon impact.

"It felt like an earthquake. It took us some time to collect ourselves and understand what happened," she said, sitting with her family in one of the air-conditioned sleeper coaches.

A local man, who was among the first to start rescue operations, mentioned that the express train was moving slowly when the faster-moving goods train rammed into it from behind.

Visiting the accident site, Darjeeling MP Raju Bista said rescue work was carried out despite inclement weather. "Our primary concern is to help the affected passengers," he said.

Siliguri mayor Goutam Deb, who also visited the accident site, emphasized the need for anti-collision devices in trains to ensure passenger safety.

"Instead of spending huge amounts on bullet trains, the priority should be installing safety devices in trains," he said. — PTI



Rescue work underway after a collision between the Kanchanjunga Express and a goods train, near Rangapani railway station on Monday. — PTI

Rlys have become parentless: Mamata

FROM PAGE 1

The automatic signals were not functioning from 5.50 am of the day between Ranipatra and Chatterhat for which the driver of the Kanchanjunga Express was issued a paper memo, advising him to go slow and not to cross the speed limit of 15 km per hour.

Since the region has been witnessing rainfall, the maximum speed limit was reduced to 10 km per hour, according to sources. The passenger train passed through Rangapani at 8.27 am. The goods train left the same station at 8.42 am, sources revealed.

Mourning the loss of lives, Prime Minister Narendra Modi posted on X: "Spoke to officials and took stock of the situation. Rescue operations are underway to assist the affected." Minister Vaishnaw said

enhanced ex gratia compensation will be provided to the victims; ₹10 lakh in case of death, ₹2.5 lakh towards grievous and ₹50,000 for minor injuries. West Bengal Governor C.V. Ananda Bose and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee rushed to North Bengal.

Lashing out at the Centre over frequent train accidents, Banerjee claimed that the railway ministry, which she had earlier headed twice, has become orphaned. She alleged: "I had introduced anti-collision device. The place where this accident happened is a black spot."

She added: "Railway had a beauty. It has dropped passenger amenities now. Seats and toilets don't get cleaned. Food quality has become bad also. The department is not there anymore. The Railway Budget has also been abolished. It has become parentless."

COMPENSATION

RAILWAY MINISTER ASHWINI VAISHNAW announced an ex-gratia of ₹10 lakh each to the next of kin of those killed in the train accident in West Bengal's Darjeeling district. **THE MINISTER** also announced a sum of ₹2.5 lakh for those grievously injured and ₹50,000 for those with minor injuries. — PTI

The increase in railway accidents in the last 10 years is a direct result of the mismanagement and negligence of the Modi government, which has resulted in loss of lives and property of passengers on a daily basis. — RAHUL GANDHI, Congress leader



Goods train driver not at fault: Docs

New Delhi, June 17: The goods train that rammed into the Kanchanjunga Express between Ranipatra Railway Station and Chatter Hat Junction in West Bengal on Monday was allowed to cross all red signals as the automatic signalling had "failed", internal documents show. The document, a written authority called TA 912, was issued to the driver of the goods train by the station master of Ranipatra,

authorising him to cross all red signals, a railway source said. "Automatic Signalling has failed and you are hereby authorized to pass all automatic signals between RNI (Ranipatra Railway Station) and CAT (Chatter Hat Junction)," says the authority letter.

It also mentions that there are nine signals between RNI and CAT and authorises the goods train driver to cross all in speed, ignoring whether they are showing red or caution (yellow or double yellow). "The TA 912 is issued when there is no obstruction or any train on the line in the section, and it authorises the driver to cross red or caution signals. It is a matter of investigation why the station master did that. He might have been under the impression that the previous train crossed the station section and entered

into another section," the railway source explained. According to the source, the automatic signalling system between RNI and CAT was defective since 5.50 am Monday.

"Train No. 13174 (Sealdah-Kanchanjunga Express) departed Rangapani station at 8:27 am and stopped between RNI and CAT. The reason for the stopping of the train is unknown" the source said. — PTI

Gupta extradited to US amid NSA talks

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

Nikhil Gupta, the Indian national accused by the US of being involved in a plot to kill pro-Khalistan extremist Gurbhag Singh Pannun, has been extradited from the Czech Republic to the United States. This development coincides with US National Security Adviser (NSA) Jake Sullivan's two-day visit to New Delhi, where he is expected to discuss the issue with Indian officials.

The primary focus of Sullivan's visit, however, is to strengthen the technological partnership between the two countries. On Monday, Sullivan met external affairs minister S. Jaishankar for discussions on a wide range of bilateral, regional, and global issues. Jaishankar expressed confidence in the continued advancement of the India-US Strategic Partnership.

Sullivan also met Indian NSA Ajit Doval and is scheduled to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The visit aims to bolster the "United States-India



National Security Adviser Ajit Doval and US NSA Jake Sullivan greet each other during a meeting, in New Delhi on Monday. — PTI

Comprehensive and Global Strategic Partnership" and advance a shared vision for a free, open, and prosperous Indo-Pacific region, particularly in light of growing Chinese military assertiveness. Discussions are expected to include the India-Middle East-Europe Economic Corridor and current geopolitical issues such as the Israel-Gaza conflict, Iran-Israel tensions, and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Sullivan is accompanied by a delegation of senior US government officials and industry leaders.

In the backdrop of these talks, the US has been urging India to act on the alleged plot to kill Pannun, which reportedly involved two Indian nationals, including an Indian government employee identified as Vikram Yadav from the Research and Analysis Wing (RAW). Gupta, who was arrested by Czech authorities in June last year, was extradited following the completion of the judicial process earlier this month. The NSAs will review the India-US partnership on regional and global issues.

Kulaste looks for Cabinet position

FROM PAGE 1

He flatly refused the offer when approached by a senior BJP leader.

A video of Kulaste making the claim surfaced on social media on Monday, creating a buzz in party circles. In the video clip, Kulaste, who previously served as MoS for health and family welfare during Modi's first term and as MoS for rural development in the previous NDA government, expressed his preference to join the Union ministry either as a Cabinet minister or as a minister of state with independent charge.

Kulaste emphasised in the video that he has already served as MoS in previous Central governments. The 65-year-old tribal leader also held the positions of MoS for tribal affairs and parliamentary affairs during



Faggan Singh Kulaste

Atal Behari Vajpayee's regime from 1999 to 2004.

When asked if he would become the next chief of the Madhya Pradesh unit of the party, Kulaste responded that "the party takes a call on the matter."

The BJP has downplayed the development, suggesting that the former Union minister might have made the statement as a face-saving measure after not being included in the Union ministry.

KISHAN HAILED FOR SURGE IN J&K TOURISM

FROM PAGE 1

After the delimitation and voter list revision work, seats in the Jammu and Kashmir Assembly have increased from 107 to 114, including 24 in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK). The J&K Assembly 43 seats from the Jammu region and 47 in the Kashmir Valley. Of these, nine seats reserved for SCs and seven for the ST communities.

Kishan Reddy is credited with the record surge in tourism in the Union Territory, with the number of arrivals crossing the two-crore mark last year. Besides taking several measures to promote tourism in the valley, he hosted the third G20 tourism meeting in the Valley for three days and attracted global attention.

As a Union minister of state for home previously, Kishan Reddy took up outreach programmes in the trouble-torn Ganderbal and other regions of the UT. His ministry took measures to remove policy bottlenecks and speeded up execution of projects languishing for decades.

In the past, as a Yuva Morcha leader, Kishan Reddy had conducted a "Seema Suraksha Jagaran Yatra" to express solidarity with the people living in the hostile border areas.

Majhi to hold first public meet today

AKSHAYA KUMAR SAHOO | DC BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 17

Odisha's new chief minister Mohan Charan Majhi will hold his first public meeting at Bargarh on Tuesday. The meeting will be attended by farmers of Bargarh and its adjoining districts such as Bolangir, Sambalpur, Jharsuguda and Sonepur.

The CM's Bargarh trip coincides with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public meeting at Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh where the PM will release the 17th installment of PM Kisan Nidhi Samman Yojana to 9.30 crore farmers.

"We are going to Bargarh where the CM will address the farmers of Western Odisha. Bargarh is the rice bowl of our

NEW MLAs TO TAKE OATH AT SPECIAL SESSION

DC CORRESPONDENT BHUBANESWAR, JUNE 17

The Odisha Legislative Assembly has been put under a three-tier security system ahead of the three-day oath-taking ceremony of the newly elected MLAs scheduled to begin on Tuesday, June 18. All the newly elected MLAs will take oath between June 18 and 19, 2024. Later, the election for the Speaker will be held on June 20.

state" said Deputy CM Kanak Vardhan Singdeo.

NIA TO PROBE REASI TERROR ATTACK IN BUS

AMRESH SRIVASTAVA | DC NEW DELHI, JUNE 17

The Union home ministry on Monday handed over the probe into the recent Reasi terror attack on a bus in Jammu and Kashmir to the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The attack, which occurred on June 9, resulted in the deaths of nine people.

The terrorists opened fire at a 53-seater bus en route from the Shiv Khori temple to the Mata Vaishno Devi shrine in Katra, causing it to plunge into a deep gorge. Among the victims were nine individuals, including three women, while 41 others were injured. The bus was carrying pilgrims from Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Delhi.

Officials stated that NIA sleuths had been assisting the Jammu & Kashmir (J&K) police from the beginning, but it has now been decided to transfer the investigation entirely to the central anti-terror agency.

GREEN | WIN Environmentalists protested citing project involved felling of around 29,000 trees

MP shelve bungalows project to save trees

RABINDRA NATH CHOUDHURY | DC BHOPAL, JUNE 17

Buckling under pressure from the pro-green activists as well as the politicians cutting across party lines, Madhya Pradesh government on Monday decided to 'shelve' the re-densification project envisaging redevelopment of a part of Bhopal under the Smart City Plan in the 'interest of environment'. The ₹3,437 crore-project, conceived in 2015, proposed redevelopment of a

359-acre area in a posh locality in the capital city to build modern facilities including bungalows and flats for ministers, MLAs and officers of the Madhya Pradesh government and commercial complexes.

The pro-green activists including politicians of both ruling BJP and Opposition Congress have been protesting against the project since its inception since it involved felling of around 29,000 trees in the project area. A section of people in the city, mostly women, reviv-



Women hug trees during the Chipko movement in protest against the housing project in Bhopal.

ed the protest here in the line of 'Chipko movement' on June 12 demanding the state government to shift the project to other areas to protect the green cover in the capital city. The notable MLAs who

voiced their protests against the project included former chief minister and senior Congress leader Kamal Nath and former minister and veteran BJP leader Gopal Bhargav.

Taking to X, state urban development minister Kailash Vijayvargiya announced that the re-densification project has been shelved for the protection of environment and the trees in the project site.

It has been directed (to the authorities concerned) to explore alternative sites for the project, the post

said. The people and elected representatives would be taken into confidence when the new project would be designed, Vijayvargiya said.

Under the 'shelved' project, it was proposed to demolish 2,267 government bungalows and official quarters and commercial complexes in the project site.

It was proposed to construct 30 bungalows and flats for ministers, flats for all the 230 MLAs and 3,480 quarters for the officers of the state government.

SHORT TAKES

ALBANIA'S EX-PM LOSES ENTERING UK BAN PLEA

London, June 17: Albanian opposition leader Sali Berisha, the country's former president and prime minister, on Monday lost his appeal against a ban on entering Britain over alleged criminal links.

Berisha, head of Albania's main opposition Democratic Party, was excluded from the United Kingdom in 2022 for his alleged links to organised crime and corruption, which Berisha denies.

He appealed against the decision at the Special Immigration Appeals Commission in London in March.

PIO WOMAN DIES AFTER BEING SHOT AT IN U.S.

New York, June 17: An Indian-origin woman was killed and another critically injured after they were shot in New Jersey, allegedly by a 19-year-old Indian-origin man.

The shooting occurred on June 12 in Middlesex County. Responding to the shooting report, officers located two victims with gunshot wounds and airlifted them to the hospital. Jasvir Kaur, 29, of Carteret, was pronounced dead at the hospital, while the other victim, a 20-year-old woman and Kaur's cousin, was in critical condition, it said.

GOV. PARDON FOR 1.75L MARIJUANA CONVICTIONS

Washington, June 17: Maryland's governor will issue a mass pardon of drug offences, US media reported on Sunday, in a far-reaching move forgiving 1.75,000 low-level marijuana convictions across multiple decades.

The Washington Post, which reported the story, called it one of the country's most sweeping acts of clemency involving a drug that is now in broad recreational use, and noted the action is aimed at addressing social and economic injustice disproportionately impacting Black people.

MEDITERRANEAN SHIPWRECKS KILL 11 MIGRANTS

Rome, June 17: Eleven migrants died and dozens were reported missing on Monday following two shipwrecks off the southern coasts of Italy.

German aid group RESQ-SHIP, which operates the Nadir rescue ship, said it picked up 51 people from a sinking wooden boat, including two who were unconscious, and found 10 bodies trapped in the lower deck of the vessel.

"Our thoughts are with their families. We are angry and sad," it wrote on X. RESQSHIP gave no details about where or when the rescue operation took place.

BIDEN'S \$50-MN AD CAMPAIGN TARGETS TRUMP

Washington, June 17: President Joe Biden's reelection campaign said on Monday it will spend \$50 million through the end of June on a new ad campaign that includes efforts to spotlight Republican Donald Trump's felony conviction.

The costly advertising push comes with Election Day still more than four and a half months away. But Biden's campaign says it wants to more clearly define the choice between the two candidates ahead of the first debate between them in Atlanta on June 27.

A central part of Biden's campaign strategy is highlighting Trump's far-reaching policy proposals for a second term and firing up disaffected Democrats and independent voters. The campaign producing an ad that leans heavily into Trump's conviction, and including it in such a large advertising buy, indicates a renewed effort to make Trump's legal problems a poll issue in ways Biden's team previously resisted.

The new ad campaign includes more than \$1 million geared toward media reaching Black, Hispanic and Asian American voters, and an ad highlighting Trump's conviction in a New York hush money case. That spot will air on general market television and connected TV on streaming devices and cell phones in battleground states. The ad, titled "Character Matters," notes the former president also was found liable for sexual assault and financial fraud.

Passenger plane lands safely in NZ after engine afire

Wellington, June 17: A passenger plane landed safely at a New Zealand airport on Monday after a fire shut down one of its engines, the nation's fire service said.

The Virgin Australia Boeing 737-800 jet bound for Melbourne, Australia, with 67 passengers and six crew members on board landed in the New Zealand city of Invercargill after the fire forced a diversion. The incident may have resulted from a possible bird strike, the airline's chief operations officer, Stuart Aggs, said in an emailed statement.

Flames were seen shortly after the plane took off from Queenstown Airport. No further information about what happened at the time of the incident was known, said Catherine Nind, an airport spokesperson.

"At this time, we are not aware of any physical injuries to guests or crew," Aggs said. "Passengers will be accommodated in Invercargill overnight and new flights would be arranged," he said.

Queenstown, with a population of 53,000, is popular tourist destination on New Zealand's South Island, famous for skiing, adventure tourism and alpine vistas.

The rate of birds striking planes at New Zealand's airports is about four in every 10,000 aircraft

TOKYO BOUND, NZ PM'S PLANE BREAKS DOWN

Wellington, June 17: The New Zealand defence force plane flying New Zealand's Prime Minister Christopher Luxon to Japan broke down on Sunday, forcing the Prime Minister to take a commercial flight, his office confirmed on Monday.

Luxon is spending four days in Japan, where he is expected to meet with Japan's PM Fumio Kishida and spend time promoting New Zealand business. New Zealand media reported that the Boeing 757 broke down during a refuelling stop in Papua New Guinea, leaving the business delegation and journalists stranded in Port Moresby, while Luxon flew commercial to Japan. The New Zealand defence force's two 757s are more than 30 years old and their age has made them increasingly unreliable. — Reuters

movements, the country's aviation regulator says on its website. The consequences vary in severity depending on where the aircraft is hit, the size of the birds and the pilot's reaction, the Civil Aviation Authority says. — AP

Study: Low snow in Himalayas may cause water woes

Kathmandu, June 17: Millions of people dependent on Himalayan snowmelt for water face a "very serious" risk of shortages this year after one of the lowest rates of snowfall, scientists warned on Monday.

Snowmelt is the source of about a quarter of the total water flow of 12 major river basins that originate high in the region, the report said.

"This is a wake-up call for researchers, policymakers, and downstream communities," said report author Sher Muhammad, from the Nepal-based International Centre for Integrated Mountain Development (ICIMOD).

"Lower accumulation of snow and fluctuating levels of snow pose a very serious increased risk of water shortages, particularly this year."

Snow and ice on the Himalayas are a crucial water source for around 240 million people in the

mountainous regions, as well as for another 1.65 billion people in the river valleys below, according to ICIMOD.

While snow levels fluctuate each year, scientists say climate change is driving erratic rainfall and shifting weather patterns all over the world.

The report measured "snow persistence" — the time snow remains on the ground — with levels dropping almost a fifth below normal this year across the Hindu Kush and Himalaya region.

"This year's snow persistence (18.5 per cent below normal) is the second-lowest in the past 22 years, narrowly trailing the record low of 19 per cent set in 2018," Muhammad told AFP.

As well as Nepal, the inter-governmental ICIMOD organisation includes member countries Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, China, India, Myanmar and Pakistan. — AFP

EU nations approve landmark nature law

Brussels, June 17: European Union countries approved a flagship policy to restore damaged nature on Monday, after months of delay, making it the first green law to pass since European Parliament elections this month.

The nature restoration law is among the EU's biggest environmental policies, requiring member states to introduce

measures restoring nature on a fifth of their land and sea by 2030.

EU countries' environment ministers backed the policy at a meeting in Luxembourg, meaning it can now pass into law.

The policy aims to reverse the decline of Europe's natural habitats to restore peat lands so they can absorb CO₂ emissions. — Reuters

MENTAL HEALTH

No proof to show online platforms safe for kids, teens: Surgeon general Top US doc for warning label on social media

Washington, June 17: The US surgeon general has called on Congress to require warning labels on social media platforms similar to those now mandatory on cigarette boxes.

In a Monday opinion piece in the *The New York Times*, Dr Vivek Murthy said that social media is a contributing factor in the mental health crisis among young people.

"It is time to require a surgeon general's warning label on social media platforms, stating that social media is associated

with significant mental health harms for adolescents. A surgeon general's warning label, which requires congressional action, would regularly remind parents and adolescents that social media has not been proved safe," Murthy said.

"Evidence from tobacco studies show that warning labels can increase awareness and change behaviour," he said.

Murthy said that the use of just a warning label wouldn't make social media safe for young people,

China-Philippine naval ships collide in SCS for first time

Incident after Beijing's rules to act against foreigners in area is enforced

Beijing/Manila, June 17: The China-Philippines confrontation to assert their claims in the disputed South China Sea took a violent turn on Monday as their naval ships collided in the first such incident after Beijing issued new rules to act against foreign vessels and detain foreigners suspected of violating regulations in the Chinese waters. China claims most of the South China Sea (SCS), which is hotly disputed by the Philippines, Malaysia, Vietnam, Brunei and Taiwan.

A Philippines ship and a Chinese vessel collided after the former illegally entered the waters near the Second Thomas Shoal and dangerously approached the Chinese ship, China Coast Guard (CCG) said.

The navies and the coast guards of the two countries were having face-offs in the last few months as the Philippines made a strong bid to assert its claims over the Second Thomas Shoal in the SCS claimed by China.

China alleges that the Philippines deliberately ran a naval ship aground in 1999 at the Second Thomas Shoal, which it calls Ren'ai Jiao, and converted the damaged ship into a permanent installation manned by naval personnel. According to the CCG, the Chinese vessel collided with the Philippines ship on Monday morning in a bid to prevent it from delivering construction materials.

The CCG statement said its vessel has taken regula-

tory measures to respond to an illegal intrusion by a Philippine vessel into waters near Ren'ai Jiao on Monday morning.

A Philippine supply vessel, in disregard of repeated stern warnings from the Chinese side, deliberately and dangerously approached Chinese vessels navigating normally in adjacent waters of Ren'ai Jiao, it said.

This violated the International Regulations for the Prevention of Collisions at Sea. The act led to a slight collision, for which the responsibility lies entirely with the Philippine side, the statement added.

However, the statement did not mention any damage or injuries on either side. Also, the Chinese Navy has for the first time deployed an amphibious assault ship in Nansha Islands (or Spratly Islands) in the SCS, a move experts said on Sunday is a preparation for any emergency response amid repeated provocations by the Philippines, the state-run *Global Times* reported.

China's Type 075 landing helicopter dock, an amphibious assault ship, was spotted near Zhubi Jiao (or Zhubi Reef) on Friday, marking its first deployment to the Nansha Qundao in the South China Sea, the report said.

Defending the CCG's action, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Lin Jian said: China Coast Guard only took necessary control measures against the Philippine vessels in accordance with the law,



In this video file image of April 30, 2024, Philippine Coast Guard vessel, BRP BAGACAY is water cannoned by Chinese Coast Guards as it tried to approach the waters near Scarborough Shoal, in the South China Sea. — AP

TERRITORIAL DISPUTES IN THE SCS

90% of the South China Sea claimed by China, but is opposed by Southeast Asian nations and Taiwan.

\$3trillion of trade transits annually as it has rich fishing stocks, likely oil and gas deposits.

Philippines is standing up for its sovereign rights under international law. — LLOYD AUSTIN, US defence secretary

1970s China began asserting its vast territorial claims after discovering potential oil and gas reserves in the sea.

1974 China seized the Paracel Islands from South Vietnam; more than 65 Vietnamese soldiers were killed.

1988 China took possession of Johnson Reef (part of the Spratly Islands) from Vietnam.

1994 China took Mischief Reef (also part of the Spratlys), claimed by the Philippines.

China uses the so-called nine-dash line that takes in about 90% of the South China Sea to assert its claim to sovereignty over the Scarborough Shoal and the Second Thomas Shoal, home to a small contingent of Filipino sailors.

2016: The Permanent Court of Arbitration in the Hague ruled that Beijing's expansive claims via its nine-dash line had no basis under international law.

China's Coastguard has stepped up use of water cannon, collision, ramming tactics and military-grade laser to try to stop the Philippine resupply and patrol missions.

and the on-site operation was conducted in a professional, restrained, reasonable and lawful manner.

He said a Philippine supply and replenishment ship and two speedboats had attempted to deliver

materials, including construction supplies, to troops stationed at Second Thomas Shoal. — PTI



Benjamin Netanyahu

NETANYAHU DISBANDS INNER WAR CABINET

Jerusalem, June 17: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu has dissolved the six-member war Cabinet, an Israeli official said on Monday, in a widely expected move that came after the departure of government of the centrist former general Benny Gantz.

Netanyahu is now expected to hold consultations about the Gaza war with a small group of ministers, including defence minister Yoav Gallant and strategic affairs minister Ron Dermer who had been in the war Cabinet.

The prime minister had faced demands from the nationalist-religious partners in his coalition, finance minister Bezalel Smotrich and national security minister Itamar Ben-Gvir, to be included in the war Cabinet, a move which would have intensified strains with global partners, including the United States.

The forum was formed after Gantz joined Netanyahu in a unity government at the start of the war in Oct, and included Gantz's partner Gadi Eisenkot and Aryeh Deri, head of the party Shas, as observers. — Reuters

Putin in N. Korea from today

Moscow/Seoul, June 17: Russian President Vladimir Putin will visit North Korea this week for the first time in 24 years, the two countries said, a rare trip that underscores Moscow's burgeoning partnership with the nuclear-armed state.

North Korea leader Kim Jong Un extended an invitation to Putin during a visit to Russia's Far East last September. Putin last visited Pyongyang in July 2000. "At the invitation of the Chairman of State Affairs of the DPRK, Kim Jong Un, Vladimir Putin will pay a friendly state visit to the Democratic People's Republic of Korea on June 18-19," the Kremlin said.

North Korea's state news agency KCNA also announced the visit but offered no details. Putin will then visit Vietnam on June 19-20. Both visits had been expected, although the dates had not previously been announced.

Russia has gone out of its way to publicise the re-

Rare food poisoning hospitalises dozens

Moscow, June 17: A suspected outbreak of a rare and extremely dangerous food poisoning in Moscow left more than 120 people seeking medical help and at least 30 in intensive care, health officials said on Monday.

The patients were admitted to hospital with sus-

pected food-borne botulism, a life-threatening condition that attacks the nervous system and can cause respiratory failure and paralysis.

Russian authorities said the toxic outbreak came from salads distributed by a popular online delivery service. — AFP

U.S. REPORTER'S TRIAL BEGINS IN RUSSIA ON JUNE 26

Moscow, June 17: US journalist Evan Gershkovich will go on trial on espionage charges in Russia's Ural city of Yekaterinburg behind closed doors on June 26, the court overseeing the process said on Monday.

The reporter was arrested in March 2023. — AFP

naissance of its relationship with North Korea since the start of the war in Ukraine, causing alarm among the US and its allies in Europe and Asia.

Washington says North Korea has supplied weapons to Russia to help it fight in Ukraine, though Pyongyang has repeatedly denied this.

For Putin, who says Russia is locked in an existential battle with the West over Ukraine, courting

Kim allows him to needle Washington and its Asian allies. UN monitors concluded that at least one ballistic missile fired from Russia at a city in Ukraine in January was made in North Korea. Ukrainian officials say they have counted about 50 such missiles delivered to Russia.

"The list of countries willing to welcome Putin is shorter than ever, but for Kim Jong Un, this visit is a victory," said Leif-Eric

Easley, a professor at Ewha University in Seoul. "Not only does the summit upgrade North Korea's status among countries standing against the US-led international order, it also helps bolster Kim's domestic legitimacy."

South Korea's vice foreign minister, Kim Hong-kyun, discussed Putin's planned visit in a phone call with US deputy secretary of state Kurt Campbell on Friday. — Reuters

Haj finishes in deadly heat

Mina, June 17: Muslim pilgrims used the early morning hours on Monday to perform the second day of the symbolic stoning of the devil, as noon-time summer heat caused heatstroke among thousands wrapping up the Haj pilgrimage.

The final days of the Haj coincide with Muslims around the world celebrating the Id ul-Adha holiday. The stoning of the pillars representing the devil

takes place in Mina, a desert plain just outside the city of Mecca in Saudi Arabia. A third stoning is scheduled for Tuesday, before the Farewell Tawaf, or circling the cube-shaped Kaaba in Mecca.

The Haj pilgrimage is one of the Five Pillars of Islam. All Muslims are required to make the five-day Haj at least once in their lives if they are physically and financially able to do so.

More than 1.83 million Muslims performed Haj in 2024, slightly less than last year's figure of 1.84 million, according to Saudi officials. The Haj rites largely commemorate the Quran's accounts of Prophet Ibrahim, his son Prophet Ismail and Ismail's mother Hajar or Abraham and Ismael as they are named in the Bible.

The rites have taken place under the soaring summer heat. — AP

FIGHTING TRAPS THOUSANDS OF ROHINGYA

Naypyidaw, June 17: Tens of thousands of Muslim minority Rohingya are feared to be caught in fighting in western Myanmar, as a powerful armed ethnic group bears down on junta positions in a coastal town on the border with Bangladesh, which is reluctant to accept them.

The Arakan Army (AA), which is fighting for autonomy for Myanmar's Rakhine region, said late on Sunday that residents of Maungdaw town, inhabited primarily by the Rohingya, should leave by 1430 GMT ahead of a planned offensive on the settlement.

The AA's attack on Maungdaw is the latest in a months-long rebel onslaught against the Myanmar junta, which took power in a February 2021 coup, and now finds itself in an increasingly weakened position across large parts of the country.

"Due to concerns for the safety of the residents of Maungdaw, the United League of Arakan/Arakan Army urgently advises all residents to evacuate Maungdaw immediately." — Reuters



US surgeon general Vivek Murthy (R) said that social media is behind youths' mental health crisis. — Agencies

but would be a part of the steps needed.

Last year Murthy warned that there wasn't eno-

ugh evidence to show that social media is safe for children and teens. He said at the time that

policy makers needed to address the harms of social media the same way they regulate things like car seats, baby formula, medication and other products children use.

To comply with federal regulation, social media companies already ban kids under 13 from signing up for their platforms.

However, children have been shown to easily get around the bans, both with and without their parents' consent. Other measures social platforms have taken to address concerns

about children's mental health can also be easily circumvented.

For instance, TikTok introduced a default 60-minute time limit for users under 18. But once the limit is reached, minors can simply enter a passcode to keep watching.

Murthy said on Monday that Congress needs to implement legislation that will protect young people from online harassment, abuse and exploitation and from exposure to extreme violence and sexual content. — AP

quick BITES

INDICATORS	%
Sensex	76,992.77 0.24
Nifty 50	23,465.60 0.29
S&P 500*	5,432.28 0.01
Dollar (₹)	83.56 0.00
Pound Sterling (₹)	105.97 0.18
Euro (₹)	89.30 0.00
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	71,629*336 0.47
Brent crude (\$/bbl)*	83.23 0.74
IN 10-Yr bond yield	6.984 -0.002
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	4.261 0.049

* As of 8:30 PM IST

Suzlon VC Girish elected as chair of industry body

Suzlon vice chairman Girish Tanti has been elected as the chair of Global Wind Energy Council India. The position plays a key role in driving GWEC (GWEC) India's work with national and state governments. Tanti's leadership will catalyse momentum. "India has enormous potential for onshore wind, offshore wind and as a global supply chain hub," said Ben Backwell, chief executive of GWEC.



Alembic gets FDA approval for allergy drug

Alembic Pharmaceuticals Ltd on Monday said it has received final approval from the US health regulator US FDA for its generic Icatibant injection indicated for the treatment of acute attacks of hereditary angioedema in adults. It is a disorder characterised by recurrent episodes of severe swelling of different body parts. The injection has a market size of about \$112 mn for 12 months ended March 2024.

Jewels by Preeti plans to open 15 retail stores

Diamond manufacturer Jewels by Preeti on Monday said the company is planning to open 15 retail stores across major cities this year. This expansion aims to capture offline market by providing last-mile connectivity and cater to the growing demand for trendy diamonds in India, the company said. It will first set up in Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai, Kolkata, and Ahmedabad.

Lupin appoints chief executive to new subsidiary

Lupin announced the appointment of Abdelaziz Toumi as chief executive officer of its newly formed subsidiary, Lupin Manufacturing Solutions. The new arm is engaged in the development, manufacture and sale of active pharmaceutical ingredients and is starting to build its contract development and manufacturing operations business. He will be instrumental in establishing LMS as a partner for global customers.

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About 33 main board IPOs raised ₹49,000 cr this year Hyundai's mega IPO to mirror reviving market

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, JUNE 17

Hyundai Motor India, the Indian arm of South Korea-based Hyundai Motor Group, plans to go public with the largest ever initial public offering surpassing LIC and Paytm fundraise through their IPOs in the past.

Hyundai Motor IPO will be of roughly \$2.5 billion to \$3 billion (₹20,000 to ₹25,000 crore) and thus could surpass the fund raise by LIC and Paytm IPOs in the past, as per merchant banker's estimates.

The primary market is seeing revival after the new government formation. This year, about 33 main board IPOs have raised about ₹49,000 crore so far while three more IPOs are in the process of raising another ₹1,000 cr.

Much awaited details of the largest initial public offering by Hyundai



● COMPANY HAS been India's largest exporter of passenger vehicles from fiscal 2005 to the first 11 months of fiscal 2024. The portfolio includes 13 passenger vehicles.

Motor India became public as the company filed its draft red herring prospectus with market regulator Sebi on Saturday.

The offer would constitute 17.5 per cent of the post-offer paid-up equity share capital of the company-Hyundai Motor India. It will be an offer for sale by the promoters Hyundai Motor Company who own 100 per cent shares in the company.

Hyundai Motor Group is the third largest auto OEM (original equipment manufacturer) in the world based on passenger vehicles.

Hyundai Motor's manufacturing plant is located at Sriperumbudur in Tamil Nadu. It is Hyundai's first global integrated manufacturing plant outside Korea. The Chennai plant has a production capacity of 8,24,000 units as of March 31, 2024.

Hyundai's current vehicle portfolio includes 13 passenger vehicle models across sedans, hatchbacks, SUVs and battery EVs. Since 1998 and up to March 31, 2024, the company has cumulatively sold around 12 million passenger vehicles in India and

through exports.

"Our company will not receive any proceeds from the offer. The objects of the offer are to carry out the offer for sale of up to 14.21 crore equity shares of face value of ₹10 each by the promoter selling shareholder," the DRHP said.

Hyundai Motor India's revenue for the past 9 months ended December 31, 2023 amounted to ₹52,157.9 crore and profit for the period was ₹4,382.8 crore. In FY 22-23, it reported revenue of ₹60,307.5 crore and profit of ₹4,709.02 cr. It is India's largest exporter of passenger vehicles.

"We have been India's largest exporter of passenger vehicles from fiscal 2005 to the first 11 months of fiscal 2024, having exported the highest cumulative number of passenger vehicles for the same period," the offer document said.

India has options to impose retaliatory duties

New Delhi, June 17: India has the option to propose the imposition of retaliatory customs duties under the World Trade Organisation (WTO) norms on goods imported of a certain value from the EU, as the two sides have failed to reach a consensus on the European Union's safeguard measures on some steel products, an official has said.

The EU has extended

safeguard duties on certain steel imports, scheduled to expire this month, by another two years till 2026. This is the second extension of the safeguards that take the form of the Tariff Rate Quota (TRQ), first imposed in 2018.

India is one of the countries affected by this measure as it has a substantial interest in steel exports to the EU.

In 2023-24, India's iron and steel and their products exports to the EU rose to \$6.64 billion from \$6.1 billion in 2022-23.

India, along with other countries, has earlier raised concerns at the WTO over the EU's move to extend safeguard duty on the import of certain steel products till 2026. It submitted its concerns to the EU regarding the manner in which safeguard

measures have been extended.

"India has substantial interest as an exporter of the products concerned. The EU's measure is inconsistent with global trade rules. India has the option to propose imposition of retaliatory customs duties under the WTO norms on certain value of goods imported from the EU," the official said. —PTI

Focus on exploration of crude to cut import bill

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, JUNE 17

India has to provide renewed focus on crude oil exploration and improving production capacity, technology and logistics facilities of Coal India will help the country lower its energy imports, which accounts 32 per cent of its total imports.

India's rising energy imports bill is a significant challenge, with energy imports making up 32.4 per cent of the country's total merchandise imports, amounting to \$219.7 billion for FY 2024, finds GTRI.

India imported crude oil, LNG, and LPG of value \$177.3 billion for FY2024. In the 1980s, India met 85 per cent of its crude oil needs from ONGC's Bombay High offshore field, but now it imports more than 85 per cent of its requirement. The country will have to expand its strategic petroleum reserves to ensure energy security during supply disruptions.

A renewed focus on exploration of its 26 sedimentary basins, many of which have not been fully explored, will help production.

Further, the country will have to reduce coal



imports. India's coke and coal imports crossed \$42.4 billion in FY2024. Coking coal is used for steel production and thermal coal for electricity generation. While reducing coking coal imports is challenging due to the low quality of domestic reserves, thermal coal imports can be managed.

The increase in coal imports is driven by the demand from new power plants that require high-grade imported coal as India has low quality with 30-40 per cent ash content. Coal India's limited production capacity and technological constraints, and domestic transport restrictions has been one of the challenges.

India will also have to improve its power grid performance. Industries such as steel, cement, textiles, and chemicals install their own captive power plants to ensure an uninterrupted power supply due to frequent power outages.

India can be defence manufacturing hub

New Delhi, June 17: Factors like streamlining foreign direct investment (FDI) as well as augmenting research and development and manufacturing capabilities can help the country realise its \$5 billion defence export target by 2024-25, said a stud by Nexgen Exhibitions, organisers of International Police Expo, one of Asia's premier homeland security and

defence expos. According to the statement, this initiative aims to propel India towards its ambitious \$5 billion defence exports target by 2024-25. The survey saw participation from over 130 national and international arms, ammunition, and security equipment manufacturers, exporters, and startups.

The key highlights of

● STREAMLINED FDI inflows, technology integration with AI and a robust skill development ecosystem key to create a large pool of industry-ready professionals.

the survey, underscored the need for streamlined FDI inflows, elevated technology integration with

AI and other futuristic technologies, and a robust skill development ecosystem to create a large pool of industry-ready professionals.

India's homeland security and defence sector is poised to emerge as a global manufacturing hub, it stated.

Additionally, it stated that increasing procurement categories is a significant step towards boost-

ing domestic defence manufacturing. Currently, India exports defence equipment to over 75 countries, demonstrating its growing footprint in the global defence market.

The homeland security sector is crucial for maintaining internal stability and protecting national interests. Integrating data analytics is paramount for effective threat detection, and surveillance. —PTI

IFC commits \$105 million to Bikaner solar power project

New Delhi, June 17: International Finance Corporation (IFC), the private sector financing arm of the World Bank Group, on Monday committed \$105 million (about ₹870 crore) to Brookfield's Bikaner Solar Power project through long-term non-convertible debentures.

These debentures have been allocated to the project's special purpose vehicles, IFC said in a statement.

The 550MW solar power project in Bikaner, Rajasthan, will help boost India's renewable energy capacity and support climate goals, IFC said in a

statement.

Brookfield will provide solar power to commercial and industrial consumers across India at competitive tariffs through long-term power purchase agreements (PPAs), it said.

This is IFC's first investment in Asia and the Pacific using a hybrid off-take structure, where the project sells the power generated to consumers under long-term corporate PPAs and merchant market via exchange, it said.

The project will be connected to the inter-state transmission system section of India's green ener-

gy corridor.

India is at the forefront of a green transition in the energy sector, having pledged to increase its non-fossil fuel capacity to 500 GW by 2030.

The country's renewable energy sector has already attracted about \$10 billion annual investments between 2017 and 2022 and is expected to generate annual investments of \$25 billion through 2030.

"IFC aims to facilitate the uptake of clean energy by demonstrating the viability of large-scale renewable energy generation," IFC's regional director for South Asia Imad N Fakhoury said. —PTI



DRONE COMPANY SKYE AIR SECURES \$4-MN FUNDING

New Delhi, June 17: Skye Air, a drone logistics solution provider, on Monday said it has secured \$4 million (about ₹34 crore) funding, which will be used to expand the company's operations for healthcare, and quick-commerce deliveries.

"The fresh capital will help the company expand its last-mile network across Gurugram and other cities for healthcare, e-commerce, and quick-commerce deliveries," said Ankit Kumar, founder and chief executive officer of Skye Air.

Skye Air said it is also the creator of Skye UTM, an advanced Unmanned Traffic Management system, which manages drone traffic, ensures safety, and facilitates efficient communication between drones and air traffic controls.

Skye Air is a SaaS-based autonomous logistics solution provider, which focuses on integrating drone deliveries as a mainstream logistics solution for various industries, including healthcare, e-commerce, and agri-commodity. It envisages growth coming in the Indian drone sector. —PTI

GRUNER PLANS TO INVEST ₹220 CR TO SET UP BIOGAS PLANT IN GUJARAT

New Delhi, June 17: Gruner Renewable Energy on Monday said it will set up a compressed biogas (CBG) plant in Gujarat at an estimated cost of ₹220 crore.

The CBG plant in Navsari is expected to produce 44 tonnes of biogas per day (TPD) using cost-effective feedstocks such as paddy, pressmud, canetrash and of municipal solid waste (MSW). This equates to an annual production of over 16,000 tonnes of biogas, Gruner Renewable Energy said in a statement.

"Gruner Renewable Energy in collaboration with a leading business conglomerate, is all set to establish Asia's largest compressed biogas plant in Navsari, Gujarat. The estimated cost of this plant is approximately ₹220 crore," it said.

As India works towards decreasing reliance on fossil fuels, opening of plants like Navsari is going to play a critical role in meeting our goals of championing sustainable energy solutions, Gruner Renewable Energy founder and chief executive officer Utkarsh Gupta said.

The establishment of CBG plants will significantly reduce the country's crude oil import bill, he added. The establishment of compressed biogas (CBG) plants will significantly reduce the country's crude oil import bill, he added. —PTI

PULL FACTOR Established clients are loath to give up trademark Ferrari roar

Internal combustion engines to stay: Ferrari

Maranello, June 17: Ferrari NV won't be giving up on internal combustion anytime in the coming years, the supercar maker's chief executive officer said, as the company remains committed to a full range of powertrains for a wide range of buyers.

Even as Ferrari races to unveil its first fully electric model late next year, chief executive officer Benedetto Vigna will push ahead with his strategy to innovate with new technologies while remaining open to an array of solutions, he said in an inter-

view. It's a delicate balance for the carmaker, as younger buyers skew electric but many established clients are loath to give up Ferrari's trademark roar.

"Some would-be customers tell me that they'd only join the Ferrari community if they could buy an electric," the CEO said. Others say "they would never purchase an electric Ferrari."

Vigna's comments come during a challenging moment for the high-end automotive sector, as manufacturers wrestle to lower emissions at a time when demand for electric



● EVEN AS company races to unveil its first fully electric model late next year, chief executive officer Benedetto Vigna will push ahead with his strategy to innovate new technologies.

vehicles is slowing and governments are scaling back subsidies.

Mercedes-Benz Group AG has stopped development of separate underpinnings for electric sedans to save money and

plans to sell gasoline-powered cars well into the 2030s. Lamborghini's CEO has said he believes it's still too early for the firm to make its signature high-performance sports cars fully electric. —Bloomberg

CRICKHIT



ICC MEN'S T20 WORLD CUP

SHORT SINGLES

Kirsten slams Pak's lack of unity

In a scathing criticism of the beleaguered Pakistan cricket team, head coach Gary Kirsten has said that there is "no unity" in the side and he has "never seen such a situation" in his long coaching career. Kirsten's criticism follows the Pakistan team's group stage exit from the ongoing T20 World Cup in the USA and West Indies.

Entering the tournament as runners-up from the previous edition, the Pakistan team produced one of its worst performances in recent years and ended the event with a consolation win over Ireland, having suffered a shock loss to newcomers USA before biting the dust against traditional rivals India.

According to media reports in Pakistan, Kirsten, who guided India to ODI World Cup triumph in 2011, pulled no punches in his assessment of the team after being eliminated from the ongoing T20 showpiece.

"There's no unity in Pakistan's team. They call it a team, but it isn't a team. They aren't supporting each other; everyone is separated, left and right. I've worked with many teams, but I've never seen such a situation," Kirsten said as per reports quoting a senior scribe.

Geosuper.tv 4 quoted sources as saying that Kirsten had expressed his displeasure over the fitness level of the players. The former South Africa opener also said the team is far behind in terms of skill level as compared to the rest of the world. After Pakistan's defeat to India, Kirsten put the team's loss down to poor decision-making.

"Disappointing loss, that's for sure," Kirsten had said.

"I knew T20 was not going to be an easy target. If India got only 120, it was always going to be not the easiest. But I think we had the game at 72 for 2 with six or seven overs left. Disappointing not to get across the line from the position we got ourselves into."

Made mistakes vs India, USA: Babar

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam rued the mistakes his side made against India and the USA in its earlier Group 'A' matches, even as the former champions bid adieu to the T20 World Cup with a consolation three-wicket win over Ireland in Lauderhill, USA, on Sunday.

"I think with the bowling, conditions suited our bowlers. But in batting we made few mistakes in the matches against the USA and India. When you lose wickets, the pressure is on you," said Babar in the post-match presentation ceremony.

"We couldn't finish off close games, and as a team we weren't good," he admitted.

Pakistan lost their first two Group A matches against India and the USA before beating Canada and Ireland.

However, Babar was happy that his team ended the tournament with a victory.

"Yes we finished well. We took early wickets with the ball. But with the bat, we didn't finish well. We lost back-to-back wickets, but got over the line in the end."

Babar said Pakistan will have to regroup quickly, though did not give any definite answer to his future as the captain.

"Let's see, what team needs, I'll be okay with it. We have a good bunch of players, we've to go home, chat and see where we lacked, and then come back," he added.

CARIBBEAN CRUISE

India shift gear as Cup enters Super 8 stage

MOSES KONDETY | DC BRIDGETOWN (BARBADOS), JUNE 17

Group grapples are over; it's time for serious stuff. The Super Eight stage of the T20 World Cup, which will decide the four semifinalists, gets underway in the Caribbean on Wednesday. Welcome to the West Indies, of which Barbados is the Big Daddy.

Team India landed here on Sunday as toppers of Group 'A' in the first round and will be bunched with Australia, Afghanistan and Bangladesh in Group-1. The top two of these four will qualify for the Last Four stage. The other

group comprises hosts West Indies, USA, England and South Africa.

The grind here gets grueling. Far from the gaps during the American leg (it will be a week since India last played at this Cup, against USA on June 12), matches here will be held on alternate days, in different countries. The Blues will take on Afghanistan in Barbados on Thursday, followed by Bangladesh in Antigua before the final Super 8 clash against Australia in St Lucia.

It's these three games that are crucial and ones that will be played at high intensity, given the wick-

ets in the West Indies, which are far superior to the ones witnessed in the USA. Batting coach Vikram Rathour is gung-ho about it. "We look forward to having a couple of good practice days in Barbados and getting into the games, which will be played every other day. However, we are used to

these kinds of schedules and are ready. We have done it in the past and I am sure we will do it really well this time as well," he said.

He felt the games on New York's difficult wickets should stand the batsmen in good stead. "We have the skills to play in all types of conditions and do well. Hopefully, we will get

good wickets, and if we get turning or low-scoring ones, our side is equipped to deal with them. I think our team balance is very good at this time — batsmen, bowlers, four spin options and enough fast bowlers," the 55-year-old asserted.

Asked about the four-all-rounder theory in the team, the former Indian opener said it could change as the tournament progresses. "As a team, we are going to be really flexible. We need to look at the conditions and be ready to deal with those. We have enough resources in the team to deal with any kind of conditions," he said.



Indian cricketers play volleyball at a beach in Barbados on Monday.

— PTI

Tanzim, Mustafizur star in Bangladesh's Super 8 entry

Kingstown (Saint Vincent), June 17: Pacer Tanzim Hasan Sakib's career-best figures of 4/7 with an astounding 21 dot balls headed Bangladesh's dominant bowling performance as they entered the Super Eights of the T20 World Cup with a 21-run win against Nepal in their final group league game.

Having nearly shocked South Africa in their previous game, Nepal bowlers were again on target, bowling out Bangladesh for 106 but Tanzim along with seasoned Shakib al Hasan (2/9) and Mustafizur Rahman (3/7) bowled out Nepal for 85 in 19.2 overs.

Nepal were on course at 78 for 5 at one stage before losing their last five wickets for seven runs as a determined Bangladesh team used all its reservoir of experience after a disappointing batting show.

Bangladesh should have won the match when Nepal were reduced to 26 for 5 after seven overs courtesy the right arm outswinger specialist Tanzim but Kushal Malla (27) and world record holder Dipendra Singh Airee (25) added 52 runs to raise visions of a first big win for the country against a major Test playing nation. But as it happens with ICC's Associate Member nations, the bat-

ters with little exposure of facing quality bowling didn't know what to do with an experienced player like Mustafizur.

Needing 22 off 12 balls, 'The Fizz' was an artist at work as he bowled his customary slow off-cutters, which would pitch on middle stump and cut across the right hander.

Airee, who holds the world record of fastest T20I fifty off 9 balls and only third cricketer after Yuvraj Singh and Kieron Pollard to hit six sixes in an over, understood the difference of facing a world class operator to plundering runs against Mongolia and Qatar.

— PTI

SCOREBOARD

Bangladesh: Tanzim Hasan c and b Sompal Kami 0, Litton Das c Asif Sheikh b Sompal Kami 10, Najmul Hossain Shanto b Airee 4, Shakib Al Hasan lbw b Paudel 17, Towhid Hridoy c Lamichhane b Paudel 9, Mahmudullah run out (Gulsan Jha/Lamichhane) 13, Jaker Ali b Lamichhane 12, Tanzim Hasan Sakib b Lamichhane 3, Rishad Hossain c Sah b Airee 13, Taskin Ahmed not out 12, Taskin Ahmed not out 12. Extras (b-3, lb-2, w-5) 10. **Total (all out in 19.3 Overs) 106.**

Fall of wickets: 1-0, 2-7, 3-21, 4-30, 5-52, 6-61, 7-69, 8-75, 9-88.

Bowling: Sompal Kami 3-0-10-2, Dipendra Singh Airee 3.3-0-22-2, Rohit Paudel 4-0-20-2, Sandeep Lamichhane 4-1-17-2, Kushal Bhurtel 4-0-22-0, Abinash Bohara 1-0-10-0.

Nepal: Kushal Bhurtel b Tanzim Hasan Sakib 4, Asif Sheikh c Shakib b Mustafizur Rahman 17, Anil Sah c Najmul Hossain Shanto b Tanzim Hasan Sakib 0, Rohit Paudel c Rishad Hossain b Tanzim Hasan Sakib 1, Sundeep Jora c Rishad Hossain b Tanzim Hasan Sakib 1, Kushal Malla c Najmul Hossain Shanto b Mustafizur Rahman 27, Dipendra Singh Airee c Litton Das b Mustafizur Rahman 25, Gulsan Jha c Towhid Hridoy b Taskin Ahmed 0, Sompal Kami st Litton Das b Shakib Al Hasan 0, Sandeep Lamichhane not out 0, Abinash Bohara lbw b Shakib Al Hasan 0. Extras (b-2, lb-1, w-7) 10. **Total (all out in 19.2 Overs) 85.**

Fall of wickets: 1-9, 2-9, 3-20, 4-24, 5-26, 6-78, 7-85, 8-85, 9-85, 10-85.

Bowling: Tanzim Hasan Sakib 4-2-7-4, Taskin Ahmed 4-0-29-1, Mustafizur Rahman 4-1-7-3, Rishad Hossain 3-0-15-0, Shakib Al Hasan 2-2-0-9-2, Mahmudullah 2-0-15-0.

T20 World Cup 2024 Super 8 Schedule			
Group 1: India ■ Australia ■ Afghanistan ■ Bangladesh			
Group 2: England ■ USA ■ South Africa ■ West Indies			
June 19	8:00 pm	USA vs South Africa	Antigua
June 20	6:00 am	England vs West Indies	St Lucia
	8:00 pm	India vs Afghanistan	Barbados
June 21	6:00 am	Australia vs Bangladesh	Antigua
	8:00 pm	England vs South Africa	St Lucia
June 22	6:00 am	USA vs West Indies	Barbados
	8:00 pm	India vs Bangladesh	Antigua
June 23	6:00 am	Afghanistan vs Australia	St Vincent
	8:00 pm	USA vs England	Barbados
June 24	6:00 am	West Indies vs South Africa	Antigua
	8:00 pm	India vs Australia	St Lucia
June 25	6:00 am	Afghanistan vs Bangladesh	St Vincent
The top two teams of each group will enter the semi-finals			
June 27	6:00 am	First Semi-final	June 29
		Trinidad & Tobago	8:00 pm
June 27	8:00 pm	Second Semi-final	FINAL
		Guyana	Barbados
Schedule as per Indian Standard Time			

Sri Lankans save their best for last

Gros Islet (Saint Lucia), June 17: Sri Lanka finally found their mojo as they clinically disposed off the Netherlands by a whopping 83 runs in an inconsequential final Group 'D' league game of the T20 World Cup here. With Bangladesh beating Nepal by 21 runs in the other group league game, the faint outside chance that the Netherlands had despite a way inferior net run-rate was up in smoke as they were bowled out for 118 in pursuit of an improbable target of 202 set by Wanindu Hasaranga's men.

The Sri Lankans left it too late while bringing their A game to the fore as all three units fired in unison but the horse has already bolted as they were out of reckoning for the Super Eights.

The Sri Lankan middle order were brilliant with veteran Angelo Mathews (30 off 15 balls) and skip-

per Hasaranga (20 off 10 balls) shored up the scoring rate but it was left-hander Charith Asalanka's 21-ball-46 that was the real difference in their innings. Asalanka smashed five sixes as Sri Lanka crossed the 200-run mark.

Asalanka, smoked the Netherlands bowlers with minimal footwork and maximum power, keeping a stable base that allowed him to go for the jugular.

During the chase, the Netherlands openers Michael Levitt (31) and Max O'Dowd (11) added 45 in just 4.2 overs but once Maheesh Theekshana got the former stumped, there was virtually no resistance from the other batters.

— PTI
Brief scores: Sri Lanka 201/6 in 20 overs (Kusal Mendis 46, Charith Asalanka 46; Logan van Beek 2/45) beat Netherlands 118 all out in 16.4 overs (Michael Levitt 31, Scott Edwards 31; Nuwan Thushara 3/24).

WI face Afghans in battle for supremacy

Gros Islet (Saint Lucia), June 17: Hosts West Indies and much-improved Afghanistan will indulge in a battle of one upmanship and strive to gain momentum for the Super Eight stage when they take on each other in their final group stage game of the T20 World Cup here. After starting off with a scrappy win over Papua New Guinea, West Indies are slowly but steadily finding their rhythm. They brushed aside Uganda and New Zealand.

Afghanistan, on the other hand, have had a flawless campaign so far. Rashid Khan and Co. are enjoying the conditions that the Caribbean pitches are offering.

Gaining momentum is the only thing at stake in the final Group 'C' clash with both teams having qualified for the Super Eights. "Momentum is a very important word for us it's important for us to keep playing good cricket and consistent cricket," West Indies skipper Rovman Powell said.

"After this game the Super 8 is important so you want players going into the Super 8 with good performances, you want to go in as a team winning."

— PTI

NAGAL ATTAINS CAREER-HIGH ATP RANKING OF 71

New Delhi, June 17: India's Sumit Nagal continued his ascent in the ATP singles chart, climbing to a career-high ranking of 71 on Monday. His previous best was 77 last week. The Olympic-bound Nagal jumped six places following his runner-up finish at the Perugia ATP Challenger tournament on Sunday.

The 26-year-old, who will be the sole Indian in the men's singles event at the Paris Olympics, has so far logged 777 ATP points.

A string of impressive results in recent times has not only helped Nagal improve his ranking but also make the cut for singles event at the Paris Games.

The year began with a historic second round outing at the Australian Open. While he bowed out of the French Open in the first round, Nagal is set to compete at in the main draw of Wimbledon followed by the Paris Olympics at Roland Garros.

— PTI

England begin Euro 2024 quest with win

Gelsenkirchen (Germany), June 17: England got their quest for a first major tournament title in 58 years off to a winning start as Jude Bellingham's header was enough to beat Serbia 1-0, while the Netherlands grabbed a late 2-1 win over Poland on Sunday.

Christian Eriksen enjoyed a fairytale return to the European Championship, three years after suffering a cardiac arrest on the pitch, by scoring the opening goal, but Denmark were held 1-1 by Slovenia.

England had been hyped as one of the favourites for the tournament as Gareth Southgate aims to finally steer a richly-talented generation to glory.

However, they left plenty of room for improvement in a flat tournament debut in Gelsenkirchen. Bellingham was the



England's Jude Bellingham (right) scores against Serbia during their Group 'C' match at the Euro 2024 tournament in Gelsenkirchen, Germany, on Sunday.

— AP

exception as the Real Madrid midfielder confirmed his status as one of the world's rising stars with a man-of-the-match display.

The 20-year-old became the first European player to grace three major tournaments before turning 21. And he capped a brilliant

individual display with the only goal when he headed in Bukayo Saka's deflected cross on 13 minutes. Harry Kane saw a late

header turned onto the bar by Serbia goalkeeper Predrag Rajkovic.

But England were forced to see out a nervy finale as Jordan Pickford turned over Dusan Vlahovic's dipping drive before Kane headed away Veljko Birmancevic's goalbound shot.

The match had been declared as "high risk" by German police and there were minor clashes between rival fans before kick-off which saw seven Serbian fans taken into custody.

SUPER SUB WEGHORST

For the Netherlands, Wout Weghorst struck in the 83rd minute, just two minutes after coming on as a substitute, to secure an opening Group 'D' victory against Poland, who were without the injured Robert Lewandowski.

— AFP

AIFF sacks head coach Igor Stimac

New Delhi, June 17: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Monday sacked Igor Stimac as the head coach of the country's senior men's team following a disappointing campaign in the 2026 FIFA World Cup Qualifiers.

Stimac, who was appointed as the head coach in 2019, was given an extension last year by the sport's apex body.

India could not make the third round of the Fifa World Cup qualifier following a 1-2 defeat against Qatar in their

final second round match in Qatar.

"Noting the disappointing outcome of the Senior Men's National Team's FIFA World Cup 2026 qualification campaign, the members unanimously agreed that a new Head Coach would be best placed to take the team forward," the AIFF said in a statement.

"A notice of termination has been issued to Mr. Stimac by the AIFF Secretariat, and he stands relieved of his obligations with immediate effect."

— PTI

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