

Not talks on seat-sharing with JD-S so far for LS polls: Parameshwara

BENGALURU, JUNE 2 /-/- Karnataka deputy chief minister G Parameshwara said today that no talks have been held so far between his party and Janata Dal (Secular) over seat-sharing for the general elections, which both the parties have decided to contest as a pre-poll alliance.

Speaking to newsmen here prior to a meeting with the party workers to introduce the party's performance in the recent state Assembly elections, the senior Congress leader said the alliance with JD-S is aimed at keeping the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) out of power in 2019. "We have forged an alliance (with JDS) for the Lok Sabha elections too, to keep BJP

away from power. We have not discussed seat sharing (so far). Both parties will sit across the table to decide on the seats. "Myself and chief minister H D Kumaraswamy will sit together and decide the candidates, based on their strengths without leaving room for any confusion," Parameshwara, who is also the state Congress president, said.

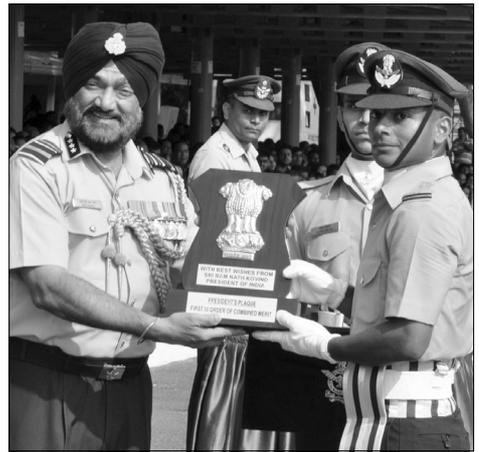
On the reported rift over allocation of portfolios, he said the Congress got 22 portfolios, which it would distribute without any hassle. It was binding on both parties to stick to the deal with the coalition government, he added. Asked about the issue of Congress MLAs demanding a

ministerial post, Parameshwara said there were suggestions that a person who had held the minister's post more than two times should not be given any portfolio.

"I have forwarded their suggestions to the party high command to take a call on that," the deputy chief minister said. To a query on raids carried out by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on those linked to Congress leader D K Shivakumar and his MP brother, D K Suresh, he said he was not aware of the agency pressurising those it questioned to the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in view of alleged illegal conversion of demonetised currency. He, however, denounced the attempt to frame a

person in the name of investigation and intimidation.

"It is a fact that the Centre is misusing the CBI," Parameshwara alleged. On the appointment of new party president of the state, Parameshwara said there are many aspirants for the post and many of them are more capable than him. Backing Kumaraswamy's decision to ban mobile phones during meetings chaired by him, Parameshwara said it would help carry out work without causing any embarrassment. K C Venugopal, the party's general secretary in charge of the state, had said yesterday the Congress and the JDS would fight the next Lok Sabha elections, due next year, as a pre-poll alliance. (PTT)



Air Marshal RKS Shera, Air Officer-in-charge Maintenance presenting prestigious 'President's Plaque' for the Best All Round Officer to Flying Officer Rakesh Kumar Gaula during Passing Out Parade of Permanent Commission and Short Service Commission Aeronautical Engineering Course at Air Force Technical College, Jalahalli, in Bengaluru on Saturday.

Kerala woman under observation for Nipah symptoms dies

Re-opening of schools, colleges in Kozhikode postponed to June 12

KOZHIKODE, JUNE 2 /-/- A 39-year-old woman, who was under observation for Nipah virus symptoms at Kozhikode, died today.

However, the samples of the woman were found to be negative. Kerala health minister K K Shailaja told newsmen. The cause of her death has to be ascertained, Shailaja said. A health department official said the woman had accompanied a patient to Kozhikode Medical College Hospital where a Nipah-affected person was being treated. After she fell ill, she was shifted from the Pariyaram Medical College to the Kozhikode Medical College hospital. She showed symptoms similar to that of the Nipah virus.

The health authorities had drawn up a list of 1,949 people who had come in contact with the Nipah-affected persons to monitor their health condition. The woman also figured on the list and had tested negative for Nipah virus earlier as well. Shailaja chaired a high-level meeting here this morning, which was attended by top health officials.

Two patients, who tested positive for the virus, are undergoing treatment at the Kozhikode Medical College Hospital and their condition is stable. The newly emerging zoonosis has so far claimed 16 lives in Kozhikode and Malappuram districts. The state government has postponed all meetings scheduled to be held in the two districts this month till further notice. As a precautionary measure, several staffers, including nurses and four doctors, of the Balussery taluk hospital were asked on Friday to go on leave. These doctors and nurses had come in contact with two Nipah virus patients who died. The Public Service Commission (PSC) has postponed all its written and online exams scheduled to be held till June 16. New dates will be announced later.

Gang makes futile bid to rob bank in TN

COIMBATORE, JUNE 2 /-/- A gang of burglars made a futile attempt to rob a nationalised bank in the district early today, police said. The gang members managed to gain entry into the Kemmanackalpalayam branch of State Bank of India near Amur, by breaking open the locks, but fled the scene after the alarm attached to the locker went off, they said. On receiving information, a team of police rushed to the spot and secured the CCTV footage from the camera installed in the bank to identify the robbers. There was cash Rs 18 lakh and nearly 800 grams of gold ornaments in the strong room, police said quoting bank officials. Further investigations are on, they said.

Punjab CM sees farmers' protest as a sign of desperation against Centre

CHANDIGARH, JUNE 2 /-/- Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh today described the ongoing protest by farmers as a sign of their desperation in the face of the wrongs being perpetrated on them by the Central government.

Singh made the remarks during a media interaction at the Haryana Raj Bhawan here after the swearing-in of Krishna Murari as the new Chief Justice of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Murari said the farming community in the country was in the grip of a serious crisis due to the "indifferent"

attitude of the BJP-led Central government. The government had "failed" to provide any succor to the beleaguered farmers, who were unable to make both ends meet due to its "antagonistic policies," the chief minister said, adding that despite repeated pleas by Punjab and other states, the Centre had failed to come to the rescue of the farming community.

Farmers were committing suicide due to their mounting debt burdens as agriculture was no longer financially viable for them in view of the

inadequate MSP he pointed out, reiterating that in toto implementation of the Swaminathan Commission report was the only immediate and long-term solution to the agrarian crisis in the country. On the possibility of a poll alliance between the Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) in view of the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, Singh said the decision rests with the Congress high command, which will consider the matter as and when the need arises. "The Punjab Congress leadership would give its opinion in the matter to the

Pondy CM wants Rajinikanth to withdraw his comments on anti-Sterlite agitation

PUDUCHERRY, JUNE 2 /-/- Puducherry chief minister V Narayanasamy today took exception to the remarks made by actor Rajinikanth that 'anti-social elements' had 'infiltrated' the anti-Sterlite protests in Tuticorin recently.

Addressing newsmen here today Narayanasamy said Rajinikanth should come out with proof in support of his allegation that anti-social elements had crept into the anti-Sterlite stir held last month. "Without showing any proof he should not make such off the cuff comments as it would only hurt the sentiments of the people and others who had protested against the copper smelter plant in Tuticorin, posing threat to the environment," the chief minister said. He suspected that the 67-year-old actor could have been acting as per the guidance of 'some persons'. When the entire nation was jolted by the police firing on anti-Sterlite protesters in that district, which left 13 dead, Rajinikanth should not have made such comments, he said. "The actor should withdraw his views if he is magnanimous. None would accept the superstar's views on the stir," the chief minister added.

The actor-turned politician had on May 30 visited Tuticorin and met some of the persons injured in the violence during the protest demanding closure of Sterlite factory there. "Some anti-social elements infiltrated... (the protesting locals) is their head work," he had said and expressed grief that "this noble protest had ended on a bloody note. The residents of Tuticorin were protesting for the closure of the factory for 99 days. Agitators turned violent on May 22, the 100th day of their protest against the copper unit, and 13 people were killed in police action on May 22 and 23.

On the by-election results for four Lok Sabha and 10 Assembly seats in the country, Narayanasamy said it showed that the parties coming under the secular front had gotten away and added if they unite "it would be easy to defeat the BJP in the 2019 Parliamentary polls." Reacting to the NDA government's policy in fixing fuel prices, the senior Congress leader said this policy alone would be enough for the BJP to suffer a crushing defeat in the next general elections.

party high-command as and when the same was sought by the latter," the chief minister said.

He welcomed the appointment of Krishna Murari as the new CJ, saying that as an eminent jurist, he would bring the wealth of his experience to the judicial systems of both Punjab and Haryana. Murari was earlier sworn in by Haryana Governor Kaptan Singh Solanki in the presence of Punjab Governor V P Singh Badnore and chief minister Singh, as well as Haryana chief minister Manohar Lal Khattar.

It also urged the All India Congress Committee (AICC) to take over the responsibility of bringing changes in the state unit and make it ready for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. The party mouthpiece's criticism came a day after senior leader V M Sudehnan blamed factionalism in the state unit for the poor showing in the Chengannur by-election. During his stint as KPC chief, Sudehnan had faced friction opposition from the two major factions - one led by senior leader Oommen Chandy and other by Leader of Opposition in the state assembly Ramesh Chennithala. Meanwhile, Chennithala rejected the charges and said the United Democratic Front (UDF) led by the Congress had fought the bypoll unitedly cutting across groupism. However, he admitted that the party has some organisational weaknesses.

Chengannur by-poll: Cong mouthpiece calls for leadership change

THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, JUNE 2 /-/- In further embarrassment to the Congress in Kerala, which faced debacle in the recent Chengannur by-poll, 'Veeekshanam', its mouthpiece, today came out against factionalism in the party and called for a 'leadership change' in the state.

The daily, in its editorial, rained harsh criticism against the state leadership, saying it "spoiled a good opportunity" to take revenge on the LDF government led by Pinarayi Vijayan, which is a 'total failure' in all fronts. It was the duty of the Opposition to expose the "most unpopular" chief minister like Vijayan but it "failed" in its attempt, the daily said. Listing out the weaknesses of the party, the editorial said the leaders are only interested in revamping the organisation at the state and district levels. But, the 'mandamam' and 'booth committees, the spinal code of the

party's grassroots level structure, were in a weak position, it claimed. The Congress was facing setbacks in the state as leaders with less capabilities came to the forefront of the party in the name of groupism, the 'Veeekshanam' said.

"The front line of the party is filled with those who are ready to please the leaders. The party will not progress in the state until it replaces efficient leaders and followers from the booth level itself," it said. It is high time to handover the leadership of the party to a generation with political commitment and spirit, the daily said adding the present leaders should quit their present positions and become the advisors and guiding forces of the newcomers. Apparently referring to the alleged religious appeasement by the party, the mouthpiece wanted to end the practice of visiting markaz (Islamic outfit), mutts and 'aramanas

(bishop houses).

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Dust storm claims 17 lives in UP

LUCKNOW, JUNE 2 /-/- Uttar Pradesh was hit by another deadly dust storm that claimed 17 lives and left 11 persons injured on Friday evening.

A UP government spokesperson today said that the deaths were caused due to falling of trees and house collapse. Moradabad bore the maximum brunt of the storm, with as many as seven deaths being reported from three districts from Sambhal, the state government spokesperson said. Two deaths were reported each from Badaun, Muzaffarnagar and Meerut, while one death was reported from Amroha, he said.

Five persons were injured in Amroha, three in Moradabad, two in Badaun. The state government has directed all district magistrates to distribute relief materials within 24 hours. The state was swept by three major dust storms last month that left over 130 people dead.

Rajasthan HC to hear case on July 12 on bungalows for former CMs

JAIPUR, JUNE 2 /-/- The Rajasthan High Court will hear a case on July 12 that challenges provisions of a law that entitles former chief ministers to free housing and other perks. The development comes as former Uttar Pradesh chief ministers have started vacating their bungalows in Lucknow following a Supreme Court order last month. The Bill for this was passed in the Assembly in April last year by voice vote, with only rebel BJP leader Ghanshyam Tiwari dissenting. It added a new section to the Rajasthan Ministers' Salaries Act, 1956. Tiwari has been demanding that chief minister Vasundhara Raje should vacate a plush bungalow at 13, Civil Lines which was allotted to her as a former chief minister and shift to the chief minister's official residence at 8, Civil Lines.

Jaipur-based journalist Milap Chand Dandia had filed a public interest litigation against the new section in the Rajasthan law, notified in May last year. The apex court has already decided on the issue and I am hopeful that the High Court will also quash the new section, which is unconstitutional and invalid, Dandia said. Former chief minister and Congress MLA from Jodhpur Ashok Gehlot indicated his willingness to give up the bungalow, as soon the Supreme Court pronounced its verdict on the Uttar Pradesh law. We had written to the general administration department on May 7 itself seeking appropriate direction pertaining to the residence, Gehlot's private secretary Devaram Saini said.



Former Kerala Chief Minister and Senior CPI(M) leader V S Achuthanandan receiving V Sambasivan award at Kaudia House in Thiruvananthapuram on Saturday.

Docs remove 9-kg tumour from Iraqi patient's chest

GURGAON, JUNE 2 /-/- Doctors at a city hospital removed a tumour weighing nine kilograms from the chest of a 41-year-old Iraqi patient, giving him a new lease of life.

The tumour was lodged in the man's mediastinum (a membranous partition between the lungs), pushing his lungs and heart. This had caused his arteries to constrict, his breathing to become laboured and shallow and sharp pains to shoot up and down his chest. "Patient Dhiver Saleem had been consistently feeling breathless. He was unable to walk or talk without

gasping for air. He had consulted several doctors and had undergone numerous tests. However, none of these yielded any concrete results," said Dr Udit Dhir, director and head of department, cardiac surgery, Fortis Memorial Research Institute.

Saleem was getting tired easily and was not able to do his daily work. His condition was deteriorating steadily when he approached the Fortis Hospital. A thorough evaluation revealed that there was a huge lump of mass pressing on the right side of the heart invading the blood vessels,

thus restricting the blood flow from the right ventricle to the left ventricle which had led to low supply of oxygen further leading to breathlessness in the patient. Dhir said. Post the diagnosis, the patient was prepped for surgery which lasted for four hours.

The surgery took place on April 21. The patient recovered in three days, post which he was discharged and is leading a healthy life now, he said. It is very rare to come across such cases.

This was a person who was living for several months with a nine kg

tumour. It was a challenging case as the tumour was compressing the right ventricular outflow tract, other adjoining structures and great vessels. It had made the expansion of lungs difficult. Employing surgical techniques helped in the successful removal of the tumour," Dr Dhir said.

Atypical carcinoids are tumours which have a very fast growth rate and tend to spread to the other organs. They are much less common than typical carcinoids, said Dr Ritu Garg, Zonal Director, Fortis Memorial Research Institute.

Cong writes to Gujarat CM, calls for special Assembly session

AHMEDABAD, JUNE 2 /-/- The Opposition Congress has written a letter to Gujarat chief minister Vijay Rupani, calling for a special session of the Assembly to discuss a host of issues, including the government's failure to withdraw police cases against Patidar quota agitation leaders. Leader of Opposition Parshad Dhani, who has written the letter, said the BJP government has "failed to fulfill promises made in the run up to the 2017 Assembly elections and this issue should be discussed in the House. In a statement, Dhani said he has written to Rupani demanding a special session of the Assembly to discuss, among other things, the issue of "the government's failure to withdraw police cases against Patidar quota agitation leaders. Leader of Opposition Parshad Dhani, who has written the letter, said the BJP government has "failed to fulfill promises made in the run up to the 2017 Assembly elections and this issue should be discussed in the House. In a statement, Dhani said he has written to Rupani demanding a