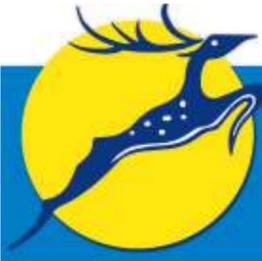


ANALYSIS 7 THE BIG TENT OF THE PPP DECODED

MONEY 8 FRANKLIN UNITHOLDERS TO GET RS 2,962 CR IN SECOND TRANCHE

SPORTS 12 RANA, TRIPATHI POWER KKR TO 187

HYDERABAD, MONDAY APRIL 12, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



PAWAN ISOLATES SELF AS PERSONAL STAFF TEST POSITIVE FOR COVID

Page 11

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TN CONG CANDIDATE MADHAVA RAO DIES OF COVID, BY-POLL IF HE WINS

Congress candidate from Tamil Nadu has died of COVID-19, a few days after he contested from the Srivilliputhur constituency in the state assembly elections. Congress candidate PSW Madhava Rao died of complications at a hospital today after being infected with coronavirus last month. As he died after elections, there won't be any re-polling. If he wins from his constituency in Virudhunagar district, a by-election will be held. All India Congress Committee (AICC) secretary in-charge of Tamil Nadu and Puducherry on Twitter said: "Deeply pained to learn about the sad demise of INC Tamil Nadu Leader and Srivilliputhur Assembly Congress candidate Shri Madhava Rao, due to Covid complications."



FOURTH COVID WAVE IN DELHI 'MUCH MORE DANGEROUS,' SAYS KEJRIWAL

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal today requested the centre to remove age restrictions on COVID-19 vaccination, even as his government flagged vaccine shortage and said that stocks for just seven to 10 days are left. He said that the surge in COVID-19 cases this time is 'worse' than what Delhi saw during the third peak. This is the fourth wave in Delhi which is "much more dangerous", he added. The chief minister also said that a full lockdown is not the solution to tackle the pandemic, a day after announcing several new restrictions amid an alarming rise in coronavirus cases in Delhi.



'CANCEL CLASS 10, 12 BOARD EXAMS': PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA TO CENTRE

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra has urged Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal to re-think holding board exams for Class 10 and 12 CBSE school students as the number of daily new Covid cases in the country - over 1.5 lakh were reported this morning - continues to climb. Ms Gandhi Vadra, who is self-isolating at her Delhi home after her husband, Robert Vadra, tested positive for coronavirus, wrote to Mr Pokhriyal to underline the "fears and apprehensions... of lakhs of children and parents from all over India", and pointed out the contradiction in warning adults against congregating in large numbers while children would have to do the same.



UAE SELECTS FIRST ARAB WOMAN FOR SPACE PROGRAMME

The United Arab Emirates has selected the first Arab woman to train as an astronaut, as the Gulf country rapidly expands into the space sector to diversify its economy. Emirati national Nora al-Matrooshi, a 27-year-old mechanical engineering graduate currently working at Abu Dhabi's National Petroleum Construction Company, will join NASA's 2021 Astronaut Candidate Class in the United States. The UAE is using its space programme to develop its scientific and technological capabilities and reduce its reliance on oil.



TSRTC cargo service wins appreciation from citizens

3



Maternal health should get priority during Covid: Experts

5



'India to manufacture containers, eyes Rs 1,000 crore investment'

8

PM says 'Tika Utsav' another major war

India's active cases breach 11 lakh-mark for first time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The active COVID-19 cases in India breached the 11 lakh-mark for the first time after a record high of 1.52 lakh new infections while a massive vaccination push, dubbed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the beginning of another major war against coronavirus, was launched on Sunday in a bid to abate the surge. The active caseload till now was at its lowest at 1,35,926 on February 12 and at its highest at 10,17,754 on September 18, 2020.

Amid an unprecedented burden on health infrastructure in 15 states and Delhi, which are witnessing an upward trajectory, authorities have started reserving more



COVID hospitals and taking steps to address any shortage of medical supplies, besides enhancing curbs on the movement of people.

3

Maharashtra reports over 63,000 Covid cases in biggest single-day surge

Delhi reports over 10,700 Covid cases

TS reports highest ever 3,187 new cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State registered its highest ever 3,187 fresh COVID-19 cases on Saturday, breaching the 3,000-mark, with the new infections pushing the overall tally to over 3.27 lakh. The death toll from coronavirus rose to 1,759, with seven more fatalities, the state government said on Sunday.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) accounted for the most number of cases at 551, followed by Medchal Malkajgiri (333) and Rangareddy (271), it said in a bulletin, providing details as April 10 at 8-00 pm. The total number of cases stood at 3,27,278; and, with 787 patients being cured, the total recoveries stood at 3,05,335. The state has 20,184 active cases.

3

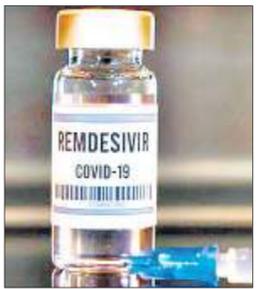
Government prohibits exports of remdesivir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In view of increased demand for remdesivir due to a surge in COVID-19 cases, the Centre on Sunday said the export of the antiviral injection and its Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) has been banned till the situation improves.

In addition, to ensure easy access of the drug, which is used in treatment of coronavirus, to hospitals and patients, all domestic manufacturers of remdesivir have been advised to display on their website details of their stockists and distributors, the Union Health Ministry said. Drugs inspectors and other officers have been directed to verify stocks, check malpractices and also take other effective actions to curb hoarding and black marketing. State health secretaries will review this along with drug inspectors of the respective states and UTs, it said.

"India is witnessing a recent



surge in COVID cases. As on April 11, there are 11.08 lakh active cases and they are steadily increasing. This has led to a sudden spike in demand for remdesivir injection used in treatment of COVID patients," the ministry said.

There is a potential for further increase in this demand in the coming days, it stated.

2

Central teams find faults in Covid measures of 3 states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Three Central teams deputed to Maharashtra, Punjab and Chhattisgarh earlier this week after a review of the Covid situation by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, have pointed out multiple flaws in the handling of the situation by the three state governments. Overall, the teams had visited 50 districts - 30 in Maharashtra, 11 in Chhattisgarh and nine in Punjab. Their reviews mentioned a multitude of issues ranging from lack of optimal use of health care facilities, lack of RT-PCR testing facilities, shortage of healthcare workers and in one place, even attacks on healthcare workers. In all three states, there was a marked lack of compliance to Covid-appropriate behaviour, the Central team noted.

2

TS to impose Rs 1,000 fine for not wearing masks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the aim of preventing the spread of COVID-19, now in its second wave, the Telangana govt on Sunday issued a government order about compulsory wearing of masks across the state. The authorities will impose a fine of Rs 1,000 on any citizen who fails to wear masks while stepping out. According to the GO, wearing of face masks has been made mandatory at all public places, work spaces and means of transport. Failure to wear a face mask as mandated shall attract a penalty of Rs1,000.

The state government has instructed all the Collectors & District Magistrates and Commissioners / Superintendents of Police in the state to strictly implement the same.

The GO Ms 82 reads, "It has also been mandated that any deviation in this regard shall attract prosecution



under section 51 to 60 of Disaster Management Act, 2005 and section 188, IPC as well as other applicable laws. In exercise of powers conferred under the Disaster Management Act 2005, State Executive Committee issues directions to all Collectors & District Magistrates and Commissioners / Superintendents of Police in the state to strictly implement the above instructions".

2

TS doctors to Govt: Suspend surgeries

ANUSHA PUPPALA ■ HYDERABAD

There's urgent need to suspend elective surgeries for at least the next two months in COVID-19 dedicated hospitals, say the Telangana Doctors Association and the Indian Medical Association.

According to the doctors' associations, premiere institutions across the country had already issued orders to suspend elective surgeries so as to avoid patient load and enable full utilization of the services of existing staff for Covid patients.

Premier institutes like the All India Institute Of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and the Jawaharlal Institute of Postgraduate Medical Education and Research (JIPMER) have decided to discontinue all elective admissions with effect from April



10, 2021, which will help in better utilisation of manpower and resources for the COVID block.

Both the institutions have decided to continue only urgent procedures/surgeries in various

operation theatres. JIPMER has decided to continue Elective OT services for a few days till patients already admitted are treated.

2

Govt to provide 25 kg rice, Rs 2K to private school bus drivers, ayahs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Close on the heels of the state government extending relief to private teachers as well as administrative, laboratory and a section of support staff such as sweepers, it has been decided to extend the aid of 25kg of rice and Rs 2,000 to bus drivers and ayahs of private schools.

Hitherto the facility was extended to private teachers, clerks, accountants, library staff, lab assistants, attendants and sweepers. Now bus drivers and ayahs would also be able to derive benefit under the scheme. The education

Hitherto the facility was extended to private teachers, clerks, accountants, library staff, lab assistants, attendants and sweepers

department officials have issued oral orders in this regard. Even those whose particulars are not recorded in UDISE can apply to derive benefit, provided they produce evidence of working in the school.

2

TRS, Congress busy with surveys in N'Sagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the date for polling in the Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly seat bye-election fast approaching, major political parties in TS have relied on their internal surveys to assert their own victories.

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) and Congress party are confident of their victory. Both parties cite surveys conducted by them to assert the victory of their candidates.

According to sources, the survey conducted by TRS revealed that in the Nagarjuna Sagar bye-election, the difference of vote share between TRS and Congress is around 12%. The survey says, as per TRS sources, the TRS candidate will get more than 50% vote share. The Congress will get around 39% and the BJP will get 4% to 8% votes.

Meanwhile, the survey conducted by Congress party reveals that its candidate K Janareddy will win with around 5,000 votes majority. The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy shared this with the media here. In the surveys conducted by Delhi-based organisation, and two Telugu electronic channels which are against TRS, also revealed that TRS candidate N Bhagat Kumar would win in the Nagarjuna Sagar bye-election.

2

Punters get going as IPL season starts; lakhs change hands

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

When IPL season begins, can punters be far behind. After elections, perhaps cricket is the most fertile area for betting and naturally punters are now busy as IPL matches have started.

The only difference if any this time is that punters are betting online and offline. Initially betting was more popular in the coastal districts of Andhra Pradesh than in Telangana. Over the years, the betting habit has pervaded Telangana areas also. There are

online sites specializing in 'guiding' punters for betting in the IPL matches.

Before the start of the match every day, these websites sites put out reviews of the performance of each team, apart from giving dope on every player's form. Besides, some of these sites are conducting betting. They are dealing with bets on Man of the Match, Man of the Series, apart from ball-to-ball bets. They also offer bets on runs scored per over. For example, while the match is in progress, they ask about each ball: will the batsman hit four or



six. Besides, there are individual bets, mostly between two persons. Individual bets are more promi-

nent in East Godavari and West Godavari. In these two districts, on every issue individual bets

2

Netizens butter up KTR: Ever tried Bollywood or Hollywood?

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development K.T. Rama Rao on Sunday evening went live with the hashtag #AskKTR on Twitter, urging his followers on the social media platform to shoot questions.

Within minutes, #AskKTR hashtag was trending in Hyderabad, as questions started pouring in from netizens in the hope of getting reply from KTR.

2

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Phalguna & Krishna Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Anavasya: 07:59 am

Nakshatram: Revathi: 11:29 am

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 07:38 am - 09:11 am

Yamagandam: 10:44 am - 12:16 pm

Variyam: NIL

Gulika: 01:49 pm - 03:22 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Anvrithakalam: 08:50 am - 10:36 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:52 am - 12:41 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 36/23

Humidity: 43%

Sunrise: 06:02 am

Sunset: 06:31 pm

Current Weather Conditions Updated on April 11, 2021 5:00 PM

Monday Mirchi

It's OK to be abroad for 17 yrs. Security of a govt job!

The Education Department in Telangana State does not bother Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao as long as its own purposes are served. It won't flinch from making an illegal reinstatement. As per rules, if any employee is removed from services only the Chief Minister has the power to reinstate him or her. In 1998 one junior lecturer, who had been selected through then AP Public Service Commission, was posted in a college in Karimnagar. But from 2003 she stopped attending duty. Under rules, if any government employee does not attend duty for more than one year without permission from proper authorities, the employee would be deemed to have resigned from his or her post. In such cases, only the Chief Minister has the power to reinstate them. However, in the case of the junior lecturer, after about 17 years, having stayed in foreign countries, she came back and approached the Education Department officials. The officials went beyond their call of duty to be generous to the junior lecturer. Without even sounding the Chief Minister, they chose to reinstate her. In 2011 the Education Department had removed more than 50 lecturers for not attending duty without taking permission. The junior lecturer's name figured in that list. Still, since the babus in question had big hearts, they reinstated her, setting aside all rules.

Laying sound foundation for building AP

A surprising development in AP's power circles is the elevation of 1987 batch IAS officer Neerabh Kumar Prasad. Neerabh, senior most bureaucrat serving as Chief Commissioner of Land Administration (CCLA -- the most coveted post after Chief Secretary) in the state, has been given full additional charge of the post of Mission Director, Mission Build Andhra Pradesh. All these days, 2006 batch IAS officer Pravin Kumar has been holding the post. Mission Build AP was in the news recently due to the legal tangles it got into, following the decision to auction most valuable government properties across the state to fund the government's flagship welfare programmes. Now, the land expert has to start building.

Lobbying begins amid talk of babudom shake-up

Amid the talk of an impending administrative shake-up in Andhra Pradesh, some IAS officers have begun lobbying for securing plum posts. The grapevine has it that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has decided to transfer at least six district collectors, apart from heads of some departments in the Secretariat. He is expected to recast the team upon completion of the ongoing process for ZPTC and MPPTC elections. Anxious babus are already after

Ministers, IAS officers and other leaders known to be close to the Chief Minister. A senior IAS officer conceded that almost all IAS and IPS officers want 'good' position in an 'important' department. Whether the CM can accommodate all babus by giving them this rare combination is a million-dollar question.

'Financial crunch' is for public consumption

Almost every government department in TS cites its own financial crunch when it comes to scaling up what it delivers to the public. What if it splurges on gadgets, furniture etc. for its officials, with least regard for austerity measures, whether mandated or voluntary? We know about babus going for fresh furniture every time there are transferred even if their new office has brand new items of furniture and furnishings. In Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation too, it is customary for the corporation to give mobile phones and other gadgets to its commissioners and other officers. The tech-savvy ones among these officials would settle for nothing short of latest iPhone, iPads, Apple MacBook Pro, Samsung Galaxy Notes et al. It doesn't matter (for them) if the gadgets are priced in the range of Rs.50,000 to Rs.90,000. The 'smarter' ones among these officials have managed to get more than one gadget. Barring present Commissioner Lokesh Kumar and former GHMC Commissioner Janardhan Reddy, most of the other 30-odd IAS/IPS officers who had served as GHMC Commissioners or Zonal Commissioners, including Dana Kishore, Harichandana, Heads of Planning, Engineering, Vigilance wings, apparently did not bother to surrender the gadgets given to them when they moved out on other assignments. The GHMC cannot help purchasing gadgets afresh for the new incumbents. All this happens when GHMC complains ad nauseum about its coffers being empty (with auditors looking the other way).

Power-hungry babu to keep tabs on performance

One babu's insatiable hunger for power seems to have triggered a new amendment to the AIS service rules pertaining to annual Performance Appraisal Reports. A section of the bureaucrats in AP strongly believe that it is the brainchild of this bureaucrat who already wields immense power in the CMO. This babu, they bemoan, wants to keep the entire administration under his thumb, virtually bypassing the Chief Secretary's office. Their point that a busy chief minister will anyhow fall back on select officials in CMO for a gist of the PARs sounds plausible. The upshot is that the CMO babu in question wants a button on everything and everyone, regardless of the negative impact it would have on the image of Jagan, who is otherwise known as a 'friendly' CM.

—Yours truly

Adilabad faces shortage of fire stations

PNS ■ ADILABAD

Loss due to fire mishaps is very high in undivided Adilabad district as there are only 13 fire stations for a population of 28 lakh in the district. There are at least 6,49,849 houses in the district's 70 odd mandals.

In fact, there are only four fire stations in the district. But the surrounding Nirmal district has three, Mancherial has four and Kumrambhim has two stations.

To douse flames in Boath mandal's Marpelli region, fire tenders have to be rushed there from Ichchoda, which is 40 km away. It takes at least one hour for the fire tenders to reach the place.

If fire mishap takes place in Bela mandal, which is 35 km



away from Adilabad, fire tenders need at least 40 minutes to reach there. If a fire mishap takes place at Bejjuru in Sirpur Kagaznagar constituency, people would have to lose their

homes. In Mancherial district, Nennela, Kasipet mandals are just 20-25 km away from Bellampalli. Generally hay stacks catch fire in the area. Fire

tenders take at least one-and-a-half-hour to reach there. The fire station is located in four rooms in Adilabad. Proposals have been sent for construction of fire stations at

a cost of Rs 1.80 crore last year. But they are not yet cleared.

In Chennur, the fire station is located in an ad hoc structure. In fact, the fire station is being run from a guest house. The fire brigade personnel of the station have been facing many difficulties because of lack of permanent station.

The fire station at Khanapur is being run from farmers rest house in the market yard there. The fire station has been understaffed. All the personnel working there have been posted there on deputation basis. There is no assured water facility there.

In Boath mandal, fire station has been sanctioned, site has been acquired. So far, fire tenders are not allotted. Funds for building the fire station are yet to be released.

Govt to provide...

Continued from page 1

The authorities set April 15 as the last date for them to apply. If there is no name in the attendance register, the seekers of benefit under this scheme should produce bank account statement.

With regard to cases where they are working in schools, but the school managements has not registered their names in the register, the education department has sought constitution of a complaints department in each district.

Left parties to support TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The left parties have decided to extend their support to the ruling TRS in ongoing Nagarjuna Sagar by-elections. Following the decisions of national parties - CPI and CPM, the state committees have announced that they will extend their support to the TRS. The national committees of CPI and CPM decided to not to support to Congress and BJP, it is learnt. It may be recalled here that the Congress sought the support of CPI and CPM for the elections.

TRS, Congress busy with surveys...

Continued from page 1

The Vigilance Department also in its report to government said the TRS victory in the Nagarjuna Sagar bye-election is certain. Majority of the surveys indicate victory of TRS.

The key players TRS and Congress have taken the bye-election as prestige issue and it has become a battle ground between these two parties.

Both parties have roped in thousands of their supporters for election campaigns at the grassroots level.

According to tentative programme, on 14th April Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is likely to address a public meeting in support of party candidate N Bhagat Kumar. TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy has already addressed public meetings in the constituency.

Central teams...

Continued from page 1

In Maharashtra -- which alone accounts for 48.57 per cent of the total active case-load of the country -- containment operations were found to be sub-optimal in several districts. The testing capacity in several districts in the state is overwhelmed, resulting in delay in reporting of test results.

Surveillance and contact tracing were found to be minimum in Buldhana, Satara, Aurangabad and Nanded, mostly due to limited manpower.

TS doctors to Govt: Suspend surgeries

Continued from page 1

Patients are reportedly turning positive after elective surgeries due to which doctors are demanding that elective surgeries be kept on hold for the next two months, particularly with regard to senior citizens and others with comorbidities.

Dr K Mahesh, President-Health Care Reforms Doctors Association (HRDA) said, "As there is possibility and we already heard what happened in few cases that patients are

turning positive after surgery it's better to stop electives for time being keeping in view of rapidly progressing second wave. As even Health Care Workers (HCWs) may get infected due to normal visit to these patients. Its better to use the HCWs to treat explosive COVID19 cases and emergencies only".

Dr G Srinivas, Senior Resident Doctor at Osmani General Hospital, said, "There's a need to stop elective surgeries for next two months at least in

COVID19 hospitals in Telangana state. Already premiere institutions gave orders to stop the elective surgeries; so there's a need to stop elective surgeries even in Telangana State".

Dr Ravi Shankar, spokesperson-Telangana Unit of Indian Medical Association (IMA), said, "Electives need to be postponed for some time in the interests of patients and medical staff as well, as there is surge in the Covid cases. Covid surge is expected to reach its peak up

to June and will decline after that as per the experts".

Dr Sanjeev Yadav, Vice President- Indian Medical Association Telangana said, "All patients must have RT-PCR tests and if in doubt chest scan should be done before surgery as it helps the staff of OT, Post OP and others to know the status to keep safety measures. All possible electives can be postponed if found positive and rescheduled for safe period both for hospital and patient safety.

Netizens butter up KTR: Ever...

Continued from page 1

While sharing old pictures of KTR, one of the users posed an interesting question as to whether the Minister had ever tried getting into Bollywood and Hollywood movies, considering that he "looks like a hero". KTR replied, "Bollywood and Hollywood. Maree pedda chettu ekkistunnava? (You are flattering me)".

Another user asked, "If any chances to postpone class 10th and Intermediate exams" (sic). The IT minister replied, "You have to ask state Education Minister Sabita Indira Reddy".

One of the users even asked about the Telangana Fiber Grid. The user asked, "When will it be completed completely. Does this project really benefit 23 million people in the state?" (sic) KTR replied, "Initially all 12,751 villages will be covered by August this year. All urban areas are also now being taken up".

Another netizen asked about the status of Pharma City. The user tweeted, "What's the status of Hyderabad Pharma city? I understand pandemic showed its impact on it. KTR replied, "Land acquisition is almost complete. We should start allotment of lands to investors soon".

Share markets become highly vulnerable

Considering the prevailing geo-political uncertainty, coupled with rapidly spreading second strain of corona virus pandemic, the movements of the precious metals globally during the week ended Saturday, has been on the expected lines. Undoubtedly, the share market is the most vulnerable place where impact of every event, positive or negative, is felt almost instantaneously.

Consequently, New York gold closed at US \$ 1,744.50 (per ounce) while silver followed suit and closed at \$ 25.25 (per ounce). Platinum and palladium closed at \$ 1,195 (per ounce) and \$ 2,550 (per ounce) respectively.

Other economic param-

eters remained moderate. Brent closed at US \$ 62.95 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs.4,432 (per barrel). While Gold MCX stood at Rs.46,610 (per 10 gms), MCX Silver closed at Rs.66,916 (per kg) and Copper M C X closed at Rs.689.90 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 49,591.32 and 14,834.85 points.

Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates, on the closing day were: US \$: Rs.74.73, British Pound: Rs.102.44, Euro: Rs.88.93, Singapore \$: Rs.55.69, Swiss

Franc: Rs.80.84, Australian \$: Rs.56.97, Saudi Riyal: Rs.19.93, New Zealand Dollar: Rs.52.55, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs.247.59, Omani Rial: Rs.194.16, UAE Dirham: Rs.20.35, Japanese Yen: Rs.0.68 and Hong Kong Dollar: Rs.9.61.

In local markets, due to the traditional marriage season demand standard gold (24 carats) appreciated consecutively for the second week by Rs.770 and closed at Rs.47,350 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too, followed the suit and was quoted in the range of Rs.43,300 - 43,400 on the closing day.

Silver (0.999) also appreciated by Rs.1,900 and closed at Rs.71,600 (per kg).

COMMODITIES The sentiment in the principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities remained moderate. Rythu Bazar and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthiyargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir AlamMandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally and General Bazar recorded moderate trading.

During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, masoor dal, moong dal and urad dal and commodities like chillies and garlic recorded a marginal decline or

remained unchanged at their respective last week's closing levels, while staple food grains and common edible oils, turmeric, garlic and ginger recorded a small appreciation.

Common vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, ribbed gourd, snake gourd, lady's finger, cucumber, potatoes, onions, tomatoes, French and leafy vegetables remained unchanged at their respective levels in the last week.

The NECC wholesale price of egg in Hyderabad appreciated by Rs.58 and closed at Rs.409 (per 100). The highest price of Rs.475 was recorded at Kolkata, while Ludhiana recorded the lowest of Rs.392.

Punters get going as IPL season...

Continued from page 1

Betting organisers appoint their agents in important cities like Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Delhi, among others. They are in regular touch with the punters. Punters are busy mining websites for material to place reviews of teams' performances every day. Some of these websites are giving ranks to teams, depending on their past performance.

One website, while giving tips to fresh punters on how to bet for IPL matches, says: "If you don't know how to bet on IPL, we have you covered. We have done a full-fledged comparison of the best IPL to

help you decide where to place your best cricket bets".

The betting organisations operate from star hotels, apartments, gated communities and from individual residences. They take all 'precautions' to avoid problems from the police and other departments over their activity.

One person with deep knowledge of the goings-on said: "The betting organisers operate their activities from unknown places, for example the betting activities in Hyderabad operate from Goa. He said some sites operate from Dubai. The betting rates are decided at Mumbai and according to that the agents in other cities collect amounts.

Go Rohingyas, Go: SC flags green light for deportation!

HC UPADHYAY

Much to the relief of all nationalist forces within the country, the Supreme Court once again upheld that illegal migrants from Myanmar were neither citizens of India nor the refugees; and therefore, can be deported back to Myanmar albeit after following the due process of law. The much-awaited judgment on Rohingyas' deportation was delivered by on April 8 by a three-judge bench comprising Chief Justice of India S.A. Bobde, Justice A.S. Bopanna and Justice V. Ramasubramanian in a case titled, Mohammad Salimullah and another Vs. Union of India and Others.

The case filed after suppressing the factum of dismissal of a case filed earlier in I.A No. 142725 of 2018 for similar relief in respect of illegal migrants detained in Assam, had caught nation-wide atten-

tion because its outcome was bound to affect the interests of every Indian citizen. The high-profile case was dismissed by the apex court with the following observations:

"It is also true that the rights guaranteed under Articles 14 and 21 are available to all persons who may or may not be citizens. But the right not to be deported, is ancillary or concomitant to the right to reside in any part of the territory of India guaranteed under Article 19(1)(e)."

The Court also noted that India was not a party to the Refugee Convention.

The judgment has reinforced the government's stand that India cannot be allowed to become the capital of illegal migrants from all over the world. According to the informed sources, there are

more than five crore or about 4 per cent of India's population as illegal migrants. Over the past several years, such illegal migrants have been pouring into the country, mostly from the borders of Bangladesh, Myanmar and Pakistan. Some anti-national and fanatical elements extend necessary support to such illegal migrants by providing shelter, food, clothing, employment and Indian citizenship by creating fake IDs. Obviously, these 'Astin ke saap' within our country indulge in harbouring of illegal migrants not just for the sake of money, but to build up their political vote banks.

Now that the legal hurdles are all over, it is high time the government deported not only Rohingyas but other illegal immigrants also locking, stock and barrel without losing a single moment. But before doing so, the government would do well to put behind the bars all the friends, well-wishers and political personalities, irrespective of their stature who, are responsible for the infiltration and settlement of such illegal migrants. Though this is a major task, it can be fulfilled with the political will of the elected nationalist representatives, government machinery, and above all, goodwill of people.

In fact, the time has come now to call a spade a spade. With the Supreme Court's green light, the nation-wide crack down on illegal migrants and their 'Mai-Baap' within the country, including jihadi and extremist groups and supporting political parties should be dealt with an iron hand. If this is not done now, the problem will aggravate beyond manageable limits in near future. Thereafter, whatever happens, only the government of present

dispensation will be held responsible.

Arnab gets relief on technical grounds

Republic TV's Editor-in-Chief Arnab Goswami, his wife Samyabrata Ray Goswami and M/s. ARG Outlier Media Pvt.Ltd, got reprieve from a Sessions Court when a complaint filed by the Deputy Commissioner of Police of Mumbai, Abhishek Trimukh, against them was dismissed as not maintainable on technical grounds.

The said complaint was filed by the DCP in his personal name under Section 199 (2) of the Cr.PC against some statements made by Arnab with regard to the role of the said DCP in course of investigation into the death of the actor Sushant Singh Rajput. Explaining the technical flaw in the complaint, the Judge Uday M. Padwad said: "Section 199(2) of the Cr.P.C requires that the complaint has to be in

writing and has to be made by the public prosecutor. This, in other words, means that no other person against whom the offence is alleged to have been committed, can make such a complaint. "Adverting to the status of the aggrieved party, the Court said that he will be only a witness in the case.

The Court observed that in the instant case, the complaint was not made by the public prosecutor but was made by the DCP while the public prosecutor had just put his signature as is the practice while preferring an appeal or revision.

Unfit as Minister: Karnataka on Lok Ayukta A bench of Karnataka Lok Ayukta, Justice Cyriac Joseph (former Supreme Court judge) and Harun-al-Rashid (former High Court judge) has held that K.T. Jaleel, Minister for Higher Education and Minority Welfare, is guilty of nepotism, abuse of power, and favouritism and that he has vio-

lated the oath of office. Jaleel, took a decision as the Minister to change the qualifications for the post of General Manager in the Kerala State Minorities Development Finance Corporation by adding, "B.Tech with PGDBA" as a necessary qualification to make his cousin KT Adeb el-eligible for the post.

The declaration made under Section 12(3) of the Kerala Lok Ayukta Act now has to be accepted by the Chief Minister under Section 14 of the said Act. On acceptance by the Chief Minister, the Minister has to resign from the office as per Section 14(2)(i) of the Act.

Bombay HC decries VIP culture The Bombay High Court came down heavily on some political leaders in Maharashtra who were getting vaccinated against Covid-19 virus at homes. "When even the President and the Prime Minister of the country were going to the designat-

ed centres for vaccination, how some political leaders could get vaccinated at their homes", asked the Court, and added that it sends out a wrong message.

These observations came from the bench in the course of hearing of a PIL plea filed by advocates Dhruvi Kapadia and Kunal Tiwari seeking a direction to the Centre and the Maharashtra government to provide door-to-door vaccination facility for senior citizens above the age of 75, bedridden persons and specially-abled persons. **16 States defer National Lok Adalats** Due to the sudden rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in the country, 16 State Legal Services Authorities have decided to postpone the scheduled National Lok Adalats to future dates. Accordingly, in Andhra Pradesh the National Lok Adalat will be organized on May 8, it is learnt.

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SRDP set to end to traffic woes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There were days when reaching Durgam Cheruvu from the Banjara Hills side was a tedious drive. Not anymore. The Strategic Road Development Programme (SRDP) of the State government has changed the way people in the city commute.

The strategic road development programme (SRDP) implemented in Hyderabad at a cost of Rs 1,010 crore has been saving precious time and fuel of the people and ensuring smooth travel to various destinations across the city without having to endure traffic snarls at important cross-sections.

Apart from facilitating smooth flow of traffic, these structures have triggered major metamorphosis in the respective areas. The SRDP - the State government's long-term initiative for easing traffic congestion in different areas of the city, is already yielding results. "I have been travelling on this road for over two years, and I never thought that I could reach Biodiversity Junction from Jubilee Hills in 10 minutes.

Earlier, traffic snarls were frequent. Not anymore," says



Mohammed Younus, now a regular user of the flyover from Jubilee Hills Road No 45.

Underpasses and flyovers were constructed in different areas of the city and the GHMC is ensuring there is no dearth of funds and that the works are being executed as per schedule.

As part of the SRDP, 20 projects have been conceived like construction of Road over Bridges (RoB) and Road under Bridges (RuB). Out of them, 18

have been successfully executed and brought to use.

The chronic and most complex traffic problem has been resolved. Widening of narrow roads under road under bridges and construction of RoBs and RuBs made the movement of traffic on city roads smoother.

Earlier, the people used to have a harrowing experience waiting a maze of traffic signals losing one's patience. Even ambulances have no option to

wait at the signals. Therefore, the government of Telangana took measures on a war-footing to end such harrowing experiences by making the city signal-free city and global city.

With several more projects under progress, Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao has been directing the officials of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to expedite the SRDP projects. The

Minister wanted the officials and agencies to execute different works simultaneously at the sites to ensure early completion of the projects.

Officials have been instructed to ensure that the works are taken up in coordination with the departments concerned, including shifting of utilities, and to avoid delays and slow pace of land acquisition.

The progress of the SRDP projects is being closely followed by the State government.

The projects executed as part of the SRDP include Hitec City-MMTS Road under Bridge, Ayyappa Society Junction underpass, Mindspace junction fly-over, Chintalankunta check-post underpass, Kamineni Junction fly-over, LB Nagar fly-over, Rajiv Gandhi statue fly-over, Bio-Diversity Grade-1 separator, Bio-Diversity Grade-2 separator, LB Nagar underpass, Kamineni right side flyover, Punjagutta steel bridge near Chutneys, Uppuguda Road under Bridge, Byramalguda right side fly-over, Durgam Cheruvu four-lane elevated corridor, Durgam Cheruvu cable bridge, Lalapel RUB restoration and Uttam Nagar Road under Bridge.

TSRTC cargo service wins appreciation from citizens

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Though the outbreak of Covid has had a telling effect on all sectors, pushing the economy to the brink, it seems as if the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has managed to somehow stand on its feet, thanks to the cargo services it has launched. According to sources, the parcel and cargo services have been receiving good response from the people all over Telangana, ever since its commencement.

With the launching of new service, the RTC became closer to the people. It has been forging ahead with the resolve to provide better services to people.

In fact, the RTC delivers any goods in 12 hours to any part of the state.

The state government has permitted the RTC to launch courier, parcel and cargo service to wriggle the RTC out of the red. During the lockdown period last year, the service was launched.

A higher official in the



TSRTC said that parcels from other states like Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka are reaching here in 24 hours.

The private transporters used to take 4-5 days to transport anything from one place to another. The private transporters used to wait for days till adequate number of business is generated to transport the goods to the destination. But the RTC waits for none and transports the goods to the

destination immediately.

As per the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu to devise strategies on expanding parcel, courier and cargo services, RTC has been working on improving these services. It would also be expanding services in parcel booking by contacting government departments, non-governmental organisations and private companies.

CITY LIGHTS

Dept of Horticulture offers a training for Hyd youngsters

The Department of Horticulture is offering a training programme for the urban youth, both male and female, residing in locations under the limits of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA). According to a press release, the candidates should have minimum education qualifications or be able to read and write, and aged between 18 years and 25 years. The training will be provided in the field of urban horticulture for 15 days and will include imparting skilled techniques such as landscape works, cultivation of kitchen garden etc. The training to be offered in the last week of April at Telangana Horticulture Training Institute, Red Hills, Nampally, the press release said. The course is free and for application forms and other details, interested candidates can contact the office of Deputy Director, Government Gardens, Horticulture department, inside Public Gardens (Ph. 7997724934 / 8125304636).



Hyd-based doctor helps differently-abled people

With a zeal to help the differently-abled people, a Hyderabad based doctor helps the poor and needy disabled people to give them a second life, through his 'Disabled Foundation Trust'. Inspired by the work of Former President of India late APJ Abdul Kalam, this Hyderabad based doctor provides free treatment to the needy differently-abled people. He helps the differently-abled people right from treatment, medication and further to find a job. Dr Vijay Bhaskar, a Hyderabad based professional orthopaedic surgeon, has been serving the differently-abled people since 1997 who are in need of treatment, by providing them free treatment and medication under 'Disabled Foundation Trust'. "While I was working at Nizam Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) in Hyderabad, the late APJ Abdul Kalam once visited the NIMS and from his words to help the needy and differently-abled people. I have drawn my inspiration from him and started working for differently-abled people. DrKalam enlightened us with the problems that differently-abled people face and explained about the fabrication of artificial limbs," he said. Since the inception of the foundation, DrBhaskar has been able to conduct over 7.5 lakh disability screening camps in various districts.



Media Entrepreneur Sunil Dhavala honoured with Excellency Award

Srujana Cultural and Literary Organisation honored the CEO of The Third Empire Media and Analytics Sunil Dhavala with Excellency Award at Sri ThyagarayaGana Sabha in Chikkadpally as part of its annual Life Time Achievement and Excellency Awards. The award was presented by Justice of High Court of TelanganaSridevi and others. There were also two categories of awards - Lifetime Achievement Award and Excellency awards. TV producer Sithadevi received the Life Time Achievement Award, while the others who received the Excellency Awards include Ramadevi, T Venkataratnam, Narmada, Vanajakshi, DrVasumathi, Manjulanaidu, DhanaLaxmi, J Anuradha. While some prominent persons including GokarajuRanga Raju, GVK Reddy, GN Rao, Krishna and SonuSood others were also elected for the award.



PLANS AFOOT

Desilting works in drains underway in Kukatpally zone. Efforts are afoot by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) to complete the naladesilting works by May end. The works are being taken up at a cost of Rs 45 or covering a total of 870 kms. According to officials, the GHMC is focusing on the desilting of nalas to avert the inundation during the monsoon season. The desilting works if completed prior to the monsoon would ensure free flow of the waters in these storm water drains. GHMC has picked up 356 nalas and drains for desilting in all of the Zones.

'Prioritise app-based workers for free vax'

ANUSHA PUPPALA ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union, IFAT demanded to prioritise free vaccination for app-based transport workers and staffers at petrol bunks.

The Association stated that these frontline warriors played a vital and unappreciated role during the Covid pandemic as they provided all necessities like food, water, gas, petrol, diesel and others to each and every corner of the nation without any delay while risking their lives.

Taxi drivers and other app-based workers in the cargo, food delivery and passenger transportation sector are also frontline warriors as they provided their services even during lockdown amid Covidpandemic. Despite the indispensable role that commercial drivers play in distributing vaccines, they have not been recommended for vaccine allocation on priority, alleged the Telangana Taxi Associations.

The Taxi Associations and IFAT has appealed the government to include the taxi driver, passenger transport operators and other workers in the transportation space in the priority list and ensure they get vaccinated early.

ShaikSalauddin, founder and state president of Telangana Gig and Platform Workers Union said, "Road transport sector is one of the critical sectors of the economy is supposedly the backbone of the economy as it provides essential services to the common man 365 days. The strategic importance of the road transport sector cannot be under-estimated, which was amply demonstrated during Covid-induced lockdowns. While maintaining the continuity of the supply chain of essential commodities and ensuring that communities have access to food, medical care and other essential commodities, this sector provided services to police, doctors, paramedics and other recognised frontline workers."

HCA will develop stadiums in dists with 20% funds, says Azharuddin

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The president of Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA) Mohammed Azharuddin has warned of a show-cause notice to its board members if they create ruckus in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) intentionally.

Warning that necessary action would be taken against the board members, Azharuddin said that Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is serious on the issues taking place in HCA.

Speaking to the media after general body meeting held at Uppal Stadium on Sunday, the HCA president said that his aim is to develop the game of cricket in the state. The HCA has allocated 20 percent funds for the development of cricket in districts, he informed stating that the association will develop cricket stadiums in all the districts similar to Pondicherry and Andhra Pradesh states.

HMDA initiates measures to check stinking smell from Hussain Sagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has been initiating measures to arrest the stink emanating from the Hussain Sagar Lake by adopting modern methods, including the bio-remediation technique.

The HMDA authorities, who woke up rather early, are going to involve several reputable national and international agencies to bring the stink from the lake under control.

They have been holding negotiations with the Pollution Control Board and Environmental Protection, Training and Research Organisation officials for the purpose. They will invite global bids for the purpose and utilise services of international consultants to prevent the stink from the lake. During summer, the Hussain Sagar Lake emits rotten egg smell in a radius of one kilometre around the lake. The unbearable smell poses problems to



the tourists. Anaerobic bacteria grows in the polluted waters of the lake reducing the availability of bio-oxygen demand (BOD). According to standard rules, the extent of BOD in a litre of polluted water should be 6 to 7 mg. However, the BOD in the waters of the lake has come down to 4 to 5 mg per litre. Because of summer heat, water level reduces in the lake, further reducing the availability of oxygen.

The anaerobic bacteria production in the lake goes down further. The Pollution Control Board scientists said that the bacteria multiplies in lakhs in several hours. The bacteria thrives on the sulphate molecules present in polluted waters and releases hydrogen sulphide gas, which smells like rotten eggs.

With the help of the bacteria, the HMDA authorities have been taking steps to arrest the stinking smell using bio-remediation methods.

PM says 'Tika Utsav' another major war

Continued from page 1

The Centre announced a ban on export of Remdesivir, used in coronavirus treatment and its Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients, and asked all domestic manufacturers to display on their website details of their stockists and distributors.

There were some reports of shortage of drugs from a few states.

India's COVID-19 tally of cases climbed to 1,33,58,805, and the death toll increased to 1,69,275 with 839 daily new fatalities, the highest since October 18, 2020, the data updated by Health Ministry on Sunday morning showed.

While the cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine

doses administered in the country has crossed 10 crore after 85 days, the 'Tika Utsav' or a special 'vaccination festival' was started till April 14.

"Anyone eligible for the vaccine should get the jab, and for this the society and administration have to make full efforts," Prime Minister Modi said pitching for "zero vaccine waste" and urging the people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour.

"This festival is, in a way, the beginning of another major war against corona. We have to lay special emphasis on personal hygiene as well as social hygiene," he said.

Five states -- Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala -- cumu-

lately account for 70.82 percent of India's active COVID-19 cases, while Maharashtra alone accounts for 48.57 percent, the Union Health Ministry said.

Besides these states, Delhi, Tamil Nadu, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Telangana, Uttarakhand, Andhra Pradesh and West Bengal are displaying an upward graph in daily new cases.

Most of these states have reimposed restrictions, including the closure of schools, night curfew, weekend and local shutdowns, while ruling out a total lockdown, but as the latest wave of patients continues to flood hospitals, there are some signs of a rethink.

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and his Delhi counterpart Arvind Kejriwal have said that a lockdown will be the only option if the infections don't abate and the health system shows signs of collapsing.

Kejriwal on Sunday said the COVID-19 situation in the national capital is "very serious".

The city recorded 10,774 fresh COVID-19 cases on Sunday, the highest single-day spike so far, with 48 more fatalities.

The fourth wave is more dangerous than the previous wave, he told a press conference, and urged the people not to step out unless there is urgent work.

TS reports highest ever 3,187 cases

Continued from page 1

Over 1.15 lakh samples were tested on Saturday. Cumulatively, over 1.09 crore samples have been tested till date. The samples tested per million population was over 2.95 lakh, the bulletin said.

The case fatality rate in the state was 0.54 per cent, while it was 1.3 per cent at the national level. The recovery rate in Telangana was 93.29 per cent, while it was 90.4 per cent in the country.

Over 17.61 lakh people in the state have received their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine.

Government prohibits exports of Remdesivir

Continued from page 1

Seven Indian companies are producing the injection under voluntary licensing agreement with M/s. Gilead Sciences, USA. They have an installed capacity of about 38.80 lakh units per month, the ministry said. "In light of the above, Government of India has prohibited the exports of remdesivir injection and remdesivir Active Pharmaceutical Ingredients (API) till the situation improves," it said.

The Department of Pharmaceuticals has been in contact with the domestic manufacturers to ramp up the

drug's production, it added.

Government of India has also advised states that the extant 'National Clinical Management Protocol for COVID-19', which is based on evidence, has been developed after many interactions by committee of experts and it is the guiding document for treatment of COVID-19 patients.

In the protocol, remdesivir is listed as an investigational therapy, i.e. where informed and shared decision making is essential, besides taking note of contra indications mentioned in the detailed guidelines, the ministry said.

Man kills wife, mother-in-law

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man allegedly killed his wife and mother-in-law here at Gandhinagar of IDA Bollaram on Sunday.

The accused is said to have attacked his wife and mother-in-law with a sickle killing them on the spot. The cause behind his action is yet to be known by the police, said Circle Inspector G Prashanth. However, it was alleged that the accused suspected his wife of infidelity which ensued to the incident. The police said that the accused, Narasimha, an electrician was residing with his wife and mother-in-law in Gandhinagar.

Cheat arrested

PNS ■ PATANCHERU



A fraudster, who languished in prison for some time, yet again went to jail when he did not stop deceiving the people in the name of providing jobs and opportunities in films.

The incident took place in the Ramachandrapuram police station limits. According to Ramachandrapuram CI Jagadish, the accused was identified as Konduru Rajesh of Anantapur district. He had collected Rs 5.5 lakh in installments for providing a job to one Tejaswini of Kandukur in Prakasam district in BHEL. Whenever he was asked about the job, he escaped and started turning around.

He duped four more persons promising jobs in the BHEL and collected money to the tune of Rs 1.10 crore. The victims lodged a complaint with the Ramachandrapuram police after realising that they had been deceived by the fraudster.

Based on complaints lodged by the victims, police launched a man-hunt and traced Rajesh in Chandigarh and took him into their custody on April 9.

The accused had earlier gone to jail in a case of cheating to provide jobs in BHEL in a similar manner under various police stations limits in Hyderabad and Cyberabad Commissionerates.

BATTLE OF BALLOT IN N'SAGAR

In politics, age is just a number

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Age does matter in politics? No, there is no age limit as Prime Minister Narendra Modi crossed 70 years while Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is 67-year-old. In fact, the leaders will get pivotal posts when their age increases and the young leaders would follow the footsteps of veteran leaders. However, TRS leaders are raising the age factor in Nagarjunasagar by-elections.

Particularly, 69-year-old Home Minister Mohammed Mahamood Ali has been attacking 74-year-old and seven-time MLA and Congress candidate K Jana Reddy, who was in the fray in the Nagarjunasagar by-elections, as an 'outdated' one and did nothing to the constituency.

The TRS leaders are most succeeding in getting an upper hand in the ongoing Nagarjunasagar campaign criticising Jana Reddy in this manner. Countering the TRS leaders, the Congress leaders are alleging that the TRS leaders have no status to criticise spotless politician K Jana Reddy. With the date for elections nearing, the intensity of the allegations and counter



allegations is on the rise. The Congress leaders are stating that experienced leader like Jana Reddy's presence in the Assembly is a must to question the ruling party.

However, there are five MLAs, including Speaker Pocharam Srinivas Reddy and Forest Minister A Indrakaran Reddy, who crossed 70 years mark, along with MIM MLA Mumtaz Ahmed Khan (72 years), Vanama Venkateshwar Rao (75 years), VM Abraham (74 years).

Meanwhile, Kothagudem MLA Vanama Venkateshwar Rao, who was elected on the Congress ticket, joined the TRS, is the oldest MLA in the Assembly. If Jana Reddy wins, the number will reach six. If not, the other (the 30s or 40s) the number will increase by one as TRS candidate Nomula Bhagat is in his 30s whereas BJP candidate is in 40s.

Interestingly, there are 29

MLAs, including Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and Ministers Koppula Eshwar, Chamakura Malla Reddy, Errabelli Dayakar Rao and former Ministers T Padma Rao and T Rajaiah, DS Redya Naik and others are in their sweet 60s.

However, there are 53 MLAs, who crossed the half-century mark in the present Assembly, including Ministers Eatala Rajender, Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Sabitha Indra Reddy, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, V Srinivas Goud, G Jagdeesh Reddy, Gangula Kamalakar. The CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka is also in the 50s group.

In the 40s club, there are 26 MLAs, including Ministers T Harish Rao, KT Rama Rao. In the 30s group, there are five members, including Balka, P Rohith Reddy 36, Guvvala Balaramu, Gadari Kishore Kumar and Haripriya Banoth.

Injured Maoist arrested

PNS ■ JAYASHANKER BHUPALAPALLY

Gadchiroli police on Sunday arrested a Maoist Party Division Committee member, who was injured in a recent crossfire in Kobramenda forest area of Kurukheda taluka in Maharashtra's Gadchiroli district. Gadchiroli District Superintendent of Police Ankit Goyal said that Kishore Kaudo alias Gongulu (38), a member of the Tippagad Dal DVC in the district, was arrested.

Kishore was injured when a bullet hit him in the leg during a recent encounter between the police and Maoists in the Kobramenda forest area.

Police received information that Kishore Kaudo was hiding in Raman Tolo in Atapally taluka and took him into their custody, but was rushed to a hospital for treatment.

Ganpati Kohli, who had collaborated with Kishore, was also arrested. Gadchiroli SP told the media that there were several cases registered against him.



Maoist Kishore Kaudo, who was arrested by the Gadchiroli police, is undergoing treatment at a hospital in Maharashtra

NAGARJUNASAGAR BYPOLL

Jana Reddy, Nomula Bharat bank on sympathy wave

MARTH SUBRAHMANYAM ■ NAGARJUNASAGAR

Contestants for Nagarjunasagar bypoll K Jana Reddy of Congress, who unsuccessfully contested last time, and TRS nominee Nomula Bharat, son of the late MLA Nomula Narsimhaiah, have banked heavily on a sympathy wave.

The BJP's impact is apparently not significant in the polls.

The TRS and BJP targeted Jana Reddy as their main rival. The polls will help the BJP to increase its vote bank. As Jana Reddy won all polls except two so far is under tremendous pressure.

It may be recalled that Jana Reddy was defeated by Rammurthy Yadav and Nomula Narsimhaiah. Earlier, the people of the constituency had remorse for having defeated Jana Reddy as many projects in the constituency were sanctioned during his regime. Jana Reddy is well aware of mandals except for the newly added ones.

He earned the image of Good Samaritan among the party leaders and people.

Even if he hides the local leaders, he has the habit of getting their job done. People have a soft corner towards Jana Reddy as he lost the polls twice because of his own mistakes. Currently, he is on his third leg of the campaign. As was done earlier, Jana's



son Ravhuveer Reddy is taking care of constituency affairs, including finalising strategy, reviewing progress with party leaders behind the screen.

Besides the Reddys, Andhra settlers support Jana Reddy. The Congress, which has a good grip in thandas, is also banking on SC and ST votes for success.

As the BJP is fielding tribal candidate, the political equation will change, say analysts. Senior leaders Revanth

Reddy, N Uttam Kumar Reddy, Bhatti Vikramarka, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Shabbir Ali have been campaigning for Jana Reddy.

Nomula Bharat of TRS has been exploiting the sympathy wave. In urban areas, there is sympathy for Bharat, who recently lost his father. He is also actively involved in service-oriented programmes. During the lifetime of his father, he gained a good grip over the constituency.

Moreover, the Yadavas are numerically strong hereafter the SCs and STs. It is going to benefit him. Moreover, the criticism against the late MLA Nomula Narsimhaiah was that he benefited Yadavas more than any other community.

Therefore, the BCs distanced themselves from the TRS forcing the TRS to deploy BC leaders to campaign. Besides Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav and MLAs in the district took it as a matter of prestige to get Bharat elected.

The BJP fielded a Dalit Dr Ravi Kumar. The Congress and TRS are worried over whose votes the BJP is going to split. The BJP campaign picked up after a weak start.

Ministers Kishan Reddy, DK Aruna, former MP Garikapati Mohan Rao, along with their followers, have been camping in Nagarjunasagar.

SHORT TAKES

Karate useful in boosting confidence of girls: Collector

PEDDAPALLI : District Collector Dr Sangeeta Satyanarayana has called upon students to shine their best not only in academics but also in sports. Participating in a programme to demonstrate skills of Karate students here on Sunday, he said that the sport would be useful in improving discipline, confidence and provides entertainment to students. Karate is useful, especially for girls, in boosting their confidence. It is beneficial for students to learn gymnastics and Karate from young age and they would help in securing jobs. Additional collector local bodies Kumar Deepak, Karate students parents' association president Kamal and others were present on the occasion.

Officials urged to gather details of private school staff

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI : District Collector Sweta Mohanty has directed district authorities to gather details of teaching and non-teaching staff working in private schools in recognised schools of the district by April 15 and upload them into online by April 28. There are over 1,286 recognised schools in the district which employed 19,711 employees. Orders have been issued on policy guidelines and action plan. She said that more details would be gathered till Monday. Later, steps to extend them government benefit would be taken, she added. As schools remained closed now, the teaching staff and non-teaching staff would receive 25 kg of rice and Rs 2000 each from April, she said.

Centre to sterilise street dogs inaugurated

SIDDIPET : Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday night inaugurated a animal birth control centre, set up at a cost of Rs 60 lakh, at the Government veterinary hospital here. He said that the government solved the problem posed to the public health due to pigs, solved the monkey menace and now set up a centre to sterilise street dogs. He said that the street dogs would be caught with the help of the trained dog catchers and brought to the centre to sterilise them before leaving them back on streets. The dogs would be given anti-rabies drugs to rule out people upon dog bite suffering from rabies. Daily 40 dogs would be caught and four of them would be sterilised. Municipal chairman Raja Nars, SUDA chairman Ravinder Reddy, municipal commissioner Ramanachari and others were present on the occasion.

Cases filed against TRS, BJP nominees for not wearing masks

HYDERABAD : The Nalgonda police seized Rs 46.79 lakh cash and liquor worth Rs 35 lakh in the Nagarjunasagar constituency on Sunday. Police registered six cases for violating convoy rules. They said that they filed 68 cases for violating Corona protocol during the campaign. They filed cases against TRS candidate Nomula Bhagat Kumar and BJP candidate Dr Ravi Naik for not wearing masks during their campaign in the constituency. It may be recalled that the by-election will be held on April 17 and counting on May 2. K Jana Reddy is contesting on the Congress ticket, Nomula Bhagat Kumar on the TRS and Dr Ravi Naik on the BJP ticket. The campaign will end on April 15.

Jeevan Reddy asks KCR to cancel meeting at Haliya

HYDERABAD : The Congress demanded that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao cancel the public meeting to be conducted by the party on April 14 at Haliya keeping the surge in Corona cases. Congress MLC T Jeevan Reddy said that the cases are increasing and suggested to Nalgonda Collector and SP not to accord permission to the proposed public meeting. He reminded that the neighbouring state Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had cancelled his Tirupati meeting because of increasing Corona cases. He asked K Chandrasekhar Rao to cancel the proposed public meeting keeping public health in view.

Tenders invited to run police staff canteen

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI : Applications have been invited from contractors to run a staff canteen at the Rachakonda CAR police headquarters who have three years of experience in running hotel or canteen. The tender documents can be had from B-Section of Rachakonda police commissioner's office in Neramedy by paying Rs 500 during office timings of 11 am and 4 pm on working days. The last date for submission of the tenders is 3 pm on April 20. The bids would be opened at 4 pm on the same day. For further details contact 7901151653.

Harish recalls Phule's services to society

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Recalling the services of social reformer and humanist Mahatma Jyothirao Phule, Minister for Finance T Harish Rao heaped praises on him for striving for the betterment of downtrodden and weaker sections after paying tributes to him by garlanding his statue at the Old Bus Stand here on Sunday.

Taking part in the 195th birth anniversary celebrations of Phule at the Old Bus Stand here, the Minister for Finance lauded the services of Phule and termed him as a great man, who fought against child marriage.

He was a great pragmatist, who first educated his wife Savitribai, believing that inequalities would be eliminated if women were educated. His contribution to the community reconstruction was memorable, he recalled and said the government was providing quality education to students from weaker sections in line with his aspirations.



Harish Rao paying tributes to Phule by garlanding his statue to mark his 195th birth anniversary in Siddipet on Sunday

He said that many development and welfare schemes are being implemented for the weaker sections. He said the real tribute to Phule was providing more opportunities for underprivileged and weaker sections to see their development in education and employment. MLC Raghothama Reddy, municipal chairman Rajanarsu, public representatives and others were present.

HARISH AT RATHOSTAVAM



Minister for Finance T Harish Rao, MLC Sheri Subash Reddy, MLA Madhusudhan Reddy and others taking part in Rathostavam organised as part of ongoing Brahmotsavams of Nacharam Lakshmi Narsimha Swamy in Medak on Sunday

Seethakka takes up cudgels against Gandra

PNS ■ MULUGU

Taking up cudgels against TRS MLA from Bhupalapally Assembly constituency Gandra Venkataramana Reddy, Congress MLA from Mulugu Seethakka found fault with him for violating the protocol by not inviting her to the programme organised in her constituency. Speaking to the media here on Sunday, she pointed out that without giving information to her, Bhupalapally MLA had released water from the Ramappa lake feeder channel on Saturday.

She alleged that the TRS MLA



Congress MLA G Seethakka addressing the media in Mulugu on Sunday

did not inform her about the trial run of feeder channel from Ramappa lake to Mulugu Ghanpur tank and Vangapalli tank in Ghanpur mandal of Bhupalapally district.

Bhupalapally MLA Gandra Venkataramana Reddy on

with Gandra and demanded that he should not release the water without the presence of the local MLA Seethakka. But, the TRS MLA went ahead and directed the Bhupalapally irrigation EE to release the water. She alleged that the TRS government has been ignoring the protocols ever it came to power.

Sithakka said that she would report the issue to the authorities concerned and submit a petition against the Irrigation department engineers. DCC president Kumar Swami, Kisan Morcha district president Rajendra Goud and others were present.

Saturday reached feeder channel, along with his party workers, and released water from the feeder channel saying it is a trial run. After learning about it, Congress leaders from Mulugu and Venkatapur mandals rushed to the spot had a heated argument

Alumni meeting turn tragic as man dies in bee attack

PNS ■ WARANGAL

An alumni meeting in the Warangal district turned tragic when one of the alumni died in a bee attack shocking his batch mates, who gathered to reminisce their memories, by interacting with their school friends.

According to details, programme was organised at the Zilla Parishad Secondary School (ZPSS) in Mannoor village of Warangal Urban district on Sunday. A 34-year-old man died in a bee attack while the seven others, who sustained serious injuries, were shifted to the MGM hospital.

'Swachhbadi': School with a difference

P VENKATESHWARLU ■ SIDDIPET

This is a school with a difference as even elders, too, can attend it, along with their wards. Are you puzzled hoe come parents and kids can attend the same school? But, it is true, 'Swachhbadi' was launched in Siddipet here on Saturday.

'Swachhbadi' will teach lessons on waste management rather than curriculum. "This 'badi' will tell us how dangerous garbage can be if it is not disposed of properly. We have started the first of its kind school in south India here," said Minister for Finance T Harish Rao.

He said that this clean school was set up to keep the urban people healthy and happy.



A volunteer explaining to the Minister on how to protect the environment (Right) Minister for Finance T Harish Rao taking a selfie on the 'Swachhbadi' premises after the launch in Siddipet on Sunday

"Thank you to Dr Shanthi, leaders, activists and the people of Siddipet for giving a new impetus to Siddipet," the Minister stated. He was happy to start this school as it is different from other schools.

"Over 40 tonnes of garbage was being generated in Siddipet

municipality per day." However, he said the municipality had come up with a good idea as the piling up of garbage would harm the health of the urban people. Compost yards can be set up in the municipality wards to sort out the garbage into three types and use the garbage

in many ways. Underscoring the need for good health, the Minister said, "We must give our children good health, but not an illness." "We must protect our town and our home. If the gully is not clean, good air and good food cannot be provided," he said.

Sravan demands increase in age limit for government jobs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao should increase the upper age limit of youth by 10 years to enable them to apply for all the job recruitment notifications issued in Telangana, demanded AICC National Spokesperson Sravan Dasaju.

According to the Congress leader, the upper age limit should be fixed at 44 years, as done in the past, from the existing 34 years that is eliminating millions of beleaguered unemployed and qualified Telangana youth from applying for new jobs in the state.

He dashed out a letter to the Chief Minister in which he urged to consider the rising unemployment in Telangana as a social emergency and appealed to him to constitute a special Task Force to address the sensitive issue with top priority to make sure youth are protected from the desperate and frustrated conditions.

While setting aside politics, Sravan requested an all-party meeting to discuss the unemployment issue to find out a way forward to provide them adequate job opportunities in the public and private sectors.

"As you may be aware that the recent job notification No. 3/2021 issued on March 31, 2021 by TSPSC has reduced the candidates' upper age limit to 34 years, thereby eliminating lakhs of unemployed youth, who have aggressively participated in the Telangana movement since 2009. The unemployment problem in Telangana and also the prevailing conditions of the pandemic Covid-19 outbreak crippled



AICC National Spokesperson Sravan Dasaju dashed out a letter to the Chief Minister in which he urged to consider the rising unemployment in Telangana as a social emergency and appealed to him to constitute a special Task Force to address the sensitive issue

the normal life, including the unemployed youth. In this context, where most of them are still eagerly waiting for their turn for a government job and to have better livelihood, reducing the upper age limit to 34 years is a shock to them," he explained.

He pointed out that the government of Telangana had relaxed the upper age ceiling by 10 years through various GOs previously between 2015 and 2017 with which the candidates' eligibility has gone up from 34 years to 44 years and that rational act certainly benefited some candidates in the past. But, due to lack of recruitments in the last seven years, the youth got frustrated and left without any option other than to wait for a fresh notification.

"We will provide training to schoolchildren, Dwera women here. We will conduct digital classes and a PowerPoint presentation was conducted on the occasion."

He called upon the denizens to grow vegetables on their rooftops with compost fertilizers as they are good for health.

He opined that people facing many health problems due to excessive use of chemicals and fertilizers.

The minister called upon the people of the town to attend the school to learn how to turn garbage into fertilizer. The taste of vegetables is gone due to the overuse of fertilizers. Municipal Commissioner Ramanachari, chairman Rajanarsu, public representatives, officials and others were present.

Covid surge due to mutants, carelessness: Scientists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Why are India's COVID-19 cases flaring up so sharply? There are no clear answers but top scientists say the complex interplay of mutant strains, a hugely susceptible population made more vulnerable by elections and other public events and the lowering of guard are primarily to blame.

India's COVID tally has climbed to 1,33,58,805 (1.33 crore, 13.3 million) with a record spike of 1,52,879 daily cases, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday, in what many say is a second wave that is surging more powerfully than the first. As Delhi alone reported 10,732 fresh cases, far exceeding its earlier peak of 8,593 on November 11, 2020, the number of active cases in the country breached the 11 lakh mark for the first time since the outbreak of the pandemic.



answers to why there was a slide earlier this year, there is no clarity on why the numbers are rising so sharply.

While there are many imponderables and many

things unknown, virologists Shahid Jameel and T Jacob John are agreed that not following COVID-19 protocol, including informing people they must continue with pre-

cautions even after being vaccinated, and a sluggish vaccination drive are responsible. Jameel said the interplay of mutants and vaccines over the next couple of months will

decide the future of Covid in India and the world.

"The intensity of the surge also suggests that there were a huge number of susceptible people after the first wave," the director of the Trivedi School of Biosciences at Ashoka University in Haryana told PTI.

The Centre warned earlier this week that the next four weeks are critical and people's participation in helping control the second wave of the contagion is pivotal. NITI Aayog Member (Health) V K Paul said the pandemic situation has worsened with a sharp rise in cases and a large part of the population still susceptible to the virus, without giving any clear explanation on why this is happening.

The fact that people lowered the guard and didn't follow Covid protocols after the first wave was over is "certainly one valid explanation" for the surge, Jameel said.

Make 'Tika Utsav' a success, Nadda tells BJP members

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP president J P Nadda asked party members on Sunday to work to make the 'Tika Utsav', which aims to inoculate maximum number of eligible people against coronavirus, successful and help keep the society healthy.

He urged BJP members to follow Prime Minister Narendra Modi's suggestions fully to make the drive a success.

Asserting that the vaccination drive between April 11 and 14 marks the beginning of the second big war on COVID-19, Modi on Sunday made several suggestions to people on tackling the virus



and urged them to focus on personal and social hygiene. Elderly people or those who may not be much educated should be helped in getting the vaccine, he said, and also asked people to help

those COVID-19 patients in getting treatment who may lack resources or information.

By wearing masks, people can save themselves and others, Modi added.

INDIA CORNER

Mahamandaleshwar Bharti Babu dies at 93

Revered Gujarat seer Mahamandaleshwar Bharti Babu died on Sunday morning at Bharti Ashram in Sarkhej area of Ahmedabad. He was 93 and died due to age related complications, a disciple said, adding that the last rites will be performed at the Ashram's main centre in Junagadh city. Condoling the death, Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted. "The teachings of Mahamandaleshwar Vishwambhar Bharti Ji Maharaj of Junagadh Bharti Ashram will always guide us. I offer my condolences to millions of his followers. May god give peace to his soul. Aum Shanti." "I am deeply pained by the passing away of 1008 Mahamandaleshwar Bharti Babu. We can never forget his contribution of starting a nationwide movement against addictions. May god grant peace to his soul and give strength to his followers to endure the pain," Union Home Minister Amit Shah



Cong candidate in TN polls Madhava Rao dies of Covid

Congress party's Srivilliputhur constituency candidate in the April 6 Tamil Nadu Assembly polls, P S W Madhava Rao died on Sunday due to COVID-19 complications, his family said. Rao was 63 years old and is survived by his only daughter. He died at a private hospital in Madurai this morning where he was admitted on March 20 for treatment, Rao's son-in-law, K Rajiv told P T I. Congress party secretary and Tamil Nadu incharge Sanjay Dutt tweeted saying he was deeply pained to learn about the demise of Rao due to COVID-19 complications. "Our heartfelt condolences to his family. We stand with them in this hour of grief & pray may his soul rest in peace," Dutt said. AIADMK top leader O Panneerselvam and DMK president M K Stalin expressed shock and grief over Rao's death. Deputy Chief Minister Panneerselvam conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family and the Congress party.



MP doctor withdraws resignation after Minister assures action

The senior doctor in a government hospital in Madhya Pradesh who had resigned after Congress MLA PC Sharma allegedly misbehaved with him following the death of a patient, withdrew his decision on Sunday, a minister said. Madhya Pradesh Health Minister Prabhuram Choudhary said Dr Yogendra Shrivastava has agreed to take back his resignation on the assurance that action will be taken into the "unfortunate" incident. Dr Shrivastava had resigned after some politicians misbehaved with him, following the death of a patient who was critically ill. Government JP hospital civil surgeon Dr Rakesh Shrivastava had said on Saturday. A video of the incident, which went viral on social media, showed former minister PC Sharma and former Congress corporator Yogendra Chouhan reportedly shouting at Dr Yogendra Shrivastava. "I talked with Dr Yogendra Shrivastava and told him that the state desperately needs doctors during this difficult time of coronavirus outbreak. I requested him to withdraw his resignation and assured him of action in the unfortunate



Maharashtra crosses one crore vaccination mark

Maharashtra has administered COVID-19 vaccine doses to over one crore people so far, a senior health official said on Sunday. The vaccination drive began on January 16 this year across the country and is currently underway for front-line and health care workers, and people aged 45 years and above. "We have crossed one crore doses today. Till today noon, we have administered 1,00,38,421 doses," Maharashtra's principal secretary (health) Pradeep Vyas said in a statement. Amid reports of Maharashtra facing an acute shortage of the doses, hampering its immunisation drive. Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Saturday said the state has received 1.10 crore doses of the anti-COVID-19 vaccines so far. Apart from Maharashtra, Gujarat and Rajasthan are the two other states that have received more than one crore doses. Javadekar had said. On the blame game between the Centre and the state government over the availability of vaccine doses, the BJP leader had said this was not the right time to do politics.



Amid Mumbai lockdown talk, migrant movement seen on MP route

PNS ■ INDORE

A severe spike in COVID-19 cases in Mumbai and persistent talk of a "complete lockdown" there to tackle it has, like last year, made the national highway number 3 skirting past Madhya Pradesh's commercial hub Indore a prime route for wary migrants returning home to states like Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

The number of motorcycles, black-and-yellow mini trucks and autorickshaws, teeming with migrants, have been on the rise over the past few days on a bypass road connected to this route, popularly known as Mumbai-Agra road, eye-witnesses said on Sunday.

"The virus outbreak has once again got very severe in Mumbai. There might be a



lockdown and it may, like last year, render us jobless. So we have decided to return home," said Ramsharan Singh (40), making his way back to Ballia in Uttar Pradesh in an autorickshaw. Similar is the case with Mohammad Shadab, going back

to his hometown in Bihar's Bhojpur district.

"I work in a restaurant in Mumbai. I will think of returning there if the situation improves. Or else, I plan to stay back in Bihar and look for work," he said.

Waze's aide held

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The NIA on Sunday arrested police officer Riyaz Kazi, an associate of suspended cop Sachin Waze, in connection with the case of an explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence, a police official said.

Assistant police inspector (API) Kazi was called for questioning again by the National Investigation Agency (NIA) on Sunday and later placed under arrest, he said.

He was previously also questioned multiple times by the NIA in connection with the case of the SUV with explosives found near Ambani's residence in south Mumbai on February 25 and the subsequent death of Thane business-



man Mansukh Hiran. After his arrest on Sunday, Kazi was produced before a holiday court here which remanded him in the NIA's custody till April 16 for further probe into the case. Kazi was shunted out of the Mumbai Crime Branch last month, the official said. Earlier, in a CCTV footage, Kazi was seen entering a number plates shop in suburban Vikhroli and having a conversation with the outlet's owner.

Four terrorists killed in J&K encounters

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Four militants from Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and al-Badr outfits, including those involved in the killing of an off-duty Territorial Army soldier in Anantnag on Friday, were gunned down on Sunday in two encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir, police said.

With this, the death toll in the encounters that began on Saturday in Anantnag and Shopian has climbed to five as one militant was killed in the initial exchange of fire.

Towseef Ahmad Bhat and Aamir Hussain Ganie, both from Bijbehara and linked to the LeT, were killed at village Semthan in the Bijbehara area



of south Kashmir's Anantnag district after they refused to surrender and fired indiscriminately on a search party, the police said.

"Both of them were wanted in many terror crimes including the killing of an off-duty

Territorial Army soldier Mohammad Saleem Akhoun near his home in Goriwan Bijbehara on Friday. They were also wanted in the case of an attack on a CRPF party in which a CRPF jawan was killed," an official said.

Four militants killed in encounters in J-K

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Four militants, including those responsible for the killing of an Army man in Anantnag district, were killed in two overnight encounters with security forces in Jammu and Kashmir on Sunday, police said.

The total number of militants killed in the twin encounters - which began on Saturday - in Shopian and Anantnag districts - has risen to five as an unidentified militant was killed late on Saturday.

"Two militants were killed in the encounter at Semthan in Bijbehara area of Anantnag district of south Kashmir," a police official said.

He said the encounter began on Saturday after security forces launched a cordon and search operation in the area following inputs about the presence of militants there. The exchange of fire went on till late evening and the security forces maintained a tight cordon of the area during the night to stop the ultras from fleeing.

Deshmukh's PAs called for questioning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Sunday called personal assistants of former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh for questioning in connection with allegations of corruption levelled against him by ex-

Mumbai police commissioner Param Bir Singh, officials said.

Sanjeev Palande and Kundan have been asked to appear before the CBI team for questioning in connection with the preliminary enquiry registered by the agency on

the directives of the Bombay High Court, they said.

In a letter, Singh had alleged that Palande was present when Deshmukh allegedly asked suspended cop Sachin Waze, facing NIA probe in the case of explosive laden SUV found near indus-

trialist Mukesh Ambani's house, to allegedly extort over Rs 100 crore a month from bars and restaurants of Mumbai, they said.

Waze, in his statement, had reportedly claimed that Kundan was present during one such conversation

Maternal health should get priority during Covid: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On the occasion of National Safe Motherhood Day on Sunday, experts said maternal health and family planning services should not be compromised and given due priority even in emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic. National Safe Motherhood Day is observed every year on April 11 on the birth anniversary of Kasturba Gandhi, wife of Mahatma Gandhi.

The experts also called for strengthening the country's health system.

"We have witnessed a steep rise in maternal deaths during the COVID-19 pandemic. The nationwide lockdown disrupted maternal health services, which resulted in a decline in

institutional deliveries as well as women's access to prenatal and antenatal services," said Poonam Muttreja, Executive Director of Population Foundation of India and a public health expert.

She said the fear of getting infected as well as limited access to health services has led to depression and anxiety among young mothers which is expected to impact health outcomes for both women and infants in the long run.

"Going forward, health system strengthening is vital to ensure maternal health and family planning services are given due priority and aren't compromised even in emergency situations like the COVID-19 pandemic," Muttreja told PTI.

Ekta Kapoor's ALTBalaji apologises for alleged poster plagiarism

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Producer Ekta Kapoor's streaming platform ALTBalaji on Sunday apologised and removed the poster of show 'His Story' from its social media pages after filmmaker Sudhanshu Saria alleged it was copied from the artwork of his film 'Loev'. Saria, who bagged the National Award for best direction last month for his feature 'Knock Knock Knock', took to Twitter over the weekend and shared the poster of his acclaimed 2015

same-sex romantic-drama, which featured the film's two leads lying in an embrace. The poster of 'His Story', shared by ALTBalaji on its social media pages, also showed the central characters in a strikingly similar position. Saria called out the streamer for "blatantly copying his poster and wrote the culture of plagiarising an artwork 'must end.' In a statement posted on Twitter, ALTBalaji said the resemblance between the two posters cannot be passed off as 'mere coincidence.'

'Take uniform decision on Class 10, 12 exams'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The ruling Shiv Sena in Maharashtra has appealed to the Centre to take a uniform decision on the board exams of Classes 10 and 12 across the country in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

A unilateral decision by any state would lead to students of that state being at a disadvantage in terms of career and opportunities, Shiv Sena's chief spokesperson Arvind Sawant said in a letter, dated April 10, addressed to Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank'.

"Your intervention would mean national consensus, instead of a unilateral decision by any particular state," Sawant said in his letter.



Ekta Kapoor's ALTBalaji apologises for alleged poster plagiarism





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PAPER WITH PASSION

Shot shortage

Amid a plethora of issues, from safety to availability, the second wave of pandemic has hit India hard

India seems to be back to square one where fighting the pandemic is concerned, with more than 70 vaccination centres in Mumbai having shut down after running out of the COVID doses. Other parts of the country, too, like Punjab, Rajasthan, Delhi and Uttar Pradesh, are facing a shortage of the coveted shots. And this shortage is being faced despite there being major vaccine hesitancy in the country and the inoculation drive still not open to all. How massive the shortage would become if the Government decides to vaccinate all citizens is anybody's guess. When the pandemic began over a year ago, India was faced with the harsh reality of a poor healthcare infrastructure, shortage of hospital beds, ventilators, healthcare professionals, sanitisers, drugs and the know-how regarding the handling of the contagion. However, to the Government's and India Inc's credit, our "jugaadu" spirit kicked in and we overcame all these shortages by manufacturing everything in India and even reached a point where we began exporting PPEs, sanitisers and so on. Even where the vaccine was concerned, we surprised the world by coming out with two vaccines; in fact, India began gifting or selling vaccines to countries around the world. All this was done parallel to our own ambitious countrywide vaccination drive. As the first wave of the outbreak seemed to subside, it gave the Centre's vaccine diplomacy a shot in the arm. It looked like we had it all under control, till the second wave hit.

Now, it seems that we have not learnt any lessons from the first wave and prepared ourselves better to handle the inevitable second wave, which empirical evidence suggests is always worse than the first one. So not only are we again facing a bed and oxygen shortage, we are beginning to fall short of the vaccines as well. A political slugfest has broken out over the issue with Maharashtra alleging that the Centre was "discriminating" against the non-BJP ruled States and the Government, for its part, accusing the States of having a lackadaisical attitude. A hectic debate is also on within the country whether charity should begin at home and the Government should have ensured that all of its citizens were covered first before exporting the shots. After all, even the US, the leader of the free world, has banned all exports until it vaccinates its own citizens. Be that as it may, the fact that we were not prepared to handle the inevitable second wave is a collective failure: Of the healthcare system, the policy planners, the bureaucracy, the Centre, States and the people as a whole. To make matters worse, some European regulators are talking about a possible link between the AstraZeneca vaccine (available in India under the brand name Covishield) and some rare occurrences of blood clots. Though the Indian panel on 'adverse event following immunisation' is studying the safety of Covishield, it will be some time before it gives its verdict. So, for now, it remains to be seen how our ingenuity gets us out of this jam.

PICTALK



A 3,000-year-old lost city in Luxor, Egypt, which was unearthed recently

AP/PTI

Deliverance

Uttarakhand has decided to free 51 shrines from the Govt's control and hand these back to the priests

In a politically sensitive development ahead of the Uttarakhand Assembly elections in February 2022, Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat-led BJP Government has overturned his predecessor Trivendra Singh Rawat's decision enabling the Government to take over the management of 51 prominent temples and shrines. Trivendra's argument had been that the new Act would help in the professional management of these shrines. The Act paved the way for setting up the Devasthanam Board, which was chaired by the Chief Minister. The Board was meant to control the management of renowned temples such as Badrinath, Kedarnath, Gangotri and Yamunotri; the annual pilgrimage to these temples is popularly called the Char Dham Yatra and is a money-spinner not only for the temples but also for allied businesses like the travel, hotel and tourism industries. In 2019, over three million people visited the four shrines, though 2020 was a damp squib owing to the COVID outbreak. Most worryingly for the seers, the Act had the provision to sack a priest found involved in any "wrongdoing". It had been a long-pending demand of these *teerth purohiths* (pilgrimage priests) that the Government roll back its decision as, they pointed out, they have been managing for generations the affairs of these temples, which were set up by their ancestors.

Now, though it can't be truthfully claimed that everything was hunky-dory at these religious establishments when their affairs were being managed by the respective *teerth purohiths*, there's also no denying the fact that the State Government's move must not have spawned from any idea of piousness or welfare for the pilgrims, who descend on the hill State from across the length and breadth of the country. It is true that the infrastructure at the halting places leading to these places of worship is in a dilapidated condition and excessive commercialisation there has massively added to the nature's burden, the result of which we all saw in the tragic Kedarnath flash floods of 2013. However, the Government didn't stir all along to ameliorate the pathetic conditions. We would suggest that rather than taking extreme positions, let the temple management remain with the *teerth purohiths* but, at the same time, the Government should keep an eye on them and the way they run the temple affairs and oversee the upkeep, facilities and amenities there.



Of Sri Lanka and the Andamans

The issues between Sri Lankan Tamils and the Sinhalas may be resolved if India concurs to transfer the former to the Andamans



PRAFULL GORADIA

Two communities not being able to coexist is a perennial problem in the Indian subcontinent. An old saying goes, "Ek myaan mein do talwarein nahi reh sakti", meaning two swords cannot fit into one scabbard. The problem began by being underscored in our own India, which was divided into Pakistan for Muslims and Hindustan for the rest. MA Jinnah argued that Hindus and Muslims were two separate nations and could not coexist. The first leader to push this two-nation thesis was Sir Syed Ahmad Khan of Aligarh fame.

Some UP Muslims believed their new country, Pakistan, was a new Medina. Muslims in the western wing despised eastern Bengal as inferior, short and dark. Their economy was exploited from day one. Jinnah visited Dacca early in 1948 and peremptorily told university students that Urdu alone would be Pakistan's national language. Bengali, which they are proud of, was not in the reckoning. The two wings were daggers drawn from 1948; the clash came in 1971, in less than 24 years of the new Medina's birth. In December that year, they separated; Bangladesh was born.

Thus, India was divided into three. Now we hear that the people of Sindh wish to separate. This separatist movement is called "Jio Sindh". They are unable to exist under the yoke of the dominant Punjabis. Baluchistan is another unhappy province which was partly British India and partly the princely State of Kalat. It had an Embassy in Karachi until 1948 when Pakistan forcibly took it over. The Pathans of the North-West Frontier Province (NWFP) with their main city, Peshawar, have always wished to unite with all Pathans in Afghanistan, though this demand is dormant now.

With Sri Lanka, it is an old problem. I visited my in-laws-to-be in Colombo in 1964 as they wanted to introduce me to their society in the city where they had lived and worked for 32 years. In the course of my four-day stay,



there arose the question of who would be the next managing director of the British Ceylon Corporation, a British firm similar to the one we had in Kanpur, the British India Corporation, until the early 1960s. My father-in-law said that one Ramaswamy, a local Tamil, was the ablest choice but was unlikely to get the promotion. The prize was likely to go to DM Pereira as he was a Sinhala. The existing Board of directors was largely British, headed by a distinguished gentleman called Singleton-Salmon. There was no partiality in the company but the emerging milieu in Colombo was such. Ramaswamy was likely to emigrate to Australia.

My father-in-law explained that the Sinhalas were an overwhelming majority, an easy-going, fun-loving Buddhist people. They were jealous of the Tamils who were serious at work, and more efficient. There had developed a wedge between the two groups as far back as then. Their differences were bound to explode sooner or later. The fact that the people of Tamil Nadu have a soft corner in their hearts for their Sri Lankan brethren is natural but



IF WE CAN OFFER A TRANSFER OF WILLING SRI LANKAN TAMILS TO THE ANDAMANS, INDIA'S ADVANTAGE WOULD BE POPULATING THE ANDAMAN ISLANDS, WHICH MAKES TAMILS' SURVIVAL SAFER, TAMIL NADU HAPPIER AND THE INDO-SRI LANKAN RELATIONS PERMANENTLY SUSPICION-FREE

that makes the Sinhalas suspect Indian intentions from time to time. When Rajiv Gandhi was India's Prime Minister and President JR Jayewardene headed Sri Lanka, we sent the IPKF military to help the Tamils. Instead of helping them, we only killed them and left the Sinhalas alone. This indicates that our Governments have mostly not understood Sri Lankan affairs.

Colombo's rulers smile at New Delhi and pretend to be friendly although they feel that the faraway yellow giant is less dangerous than the Indian giant, only 40 km to the north. They did appreciate the IPKF's help for some time; thereafter it became a distant memory. Lanka appears to have erred in owing China all the money for upgrading the Hambantota port as well as a highway from Colombo to Galle and further south. If Sri Lanka cannot repay the loan in time, these may be taken over as Chinese property. Yet Colombo would rather deal with Beijing than New Delhi. This mentality is likely to continue indefinitely until India takes a drastic step to relieve the Sinhalas of their Tamil

suspensions. From the Indian point of view, there is the fear, however remote, that one day the Chinese may convert Sri Lanka into a yellow colony.

What should New Delhi do? Consider whether we can offer a transfer of willing Sri Lankan Tamils to the Andaman Islands. They are a community of four million people, mainly in the Jaffna area in the northeast of Sri Lanka and some scattered across the east of the island. The Andamans occupy about 9,000 sq km with only about four lakh people. Not all Sri Lankan Tamils are likely to accept the transfer. For those willing, Sri Lanka should pay a total ₹2 lakh per head towards resettlement, convenience costs and compensation. This means several billion rupees for Sri Lanka to borrow or somehow fork out, but a small cost for solving their greatest problem. India's advantage would be populating the Andaman Islands, which makes Tamils' survival safer, Tamil Nadu happier and the Indo-Sri Lankan relations permanently suspicion-free.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an author. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMP UP VACCINE PRODUCTION

Sir — In a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has rightly questioned the Centre's decision to export COVID-19 vaccines. It seems that the export was also an oversight, like many other decisions of the NDA Government. It also cannot be denied that it was an effort to garner publicity at the cost of our own citizens.

The Government, before launching the world's largest vaccination drive should have calculated the domestic demand and supply. As several States are now alleging shortage of vaccines, it is time for the Centre to completely stop their export. India played the vaccine diplomacy card thinking that it was close to developing herd immunity. New Delhi wasn't granting or exporting vaccines to only the poor nations but also to the UK, Saudi Arabia and Canada. Despite India's stupendous efforts to vaccinate at a large scale, majority of the people are outside its purview. This is a situation when there exists an age criteria to get vaccinated. It's not hard to imagine the situation if this age bar is removed and everybody is allowed to get vaccinated.

The current situation might lead to an increase in the prices of vaccines or, if the pharmaceutical companies ramp up production without increasing the prices, the quality will definitely get compromised. The Centre and State Governments must give up politics and find an amicable solution to this problem which will likely aggravate in the coming days if viable answers are not explored and worked upon.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

NEED TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

Sir — It should be a cause of worry for New Delhi that the US Navy recently carried out a Freedom of Navigation Operation (FONOP) in India's Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ) without its prior consent to challenge India's "excessive" maritime claims. According to the statement issued by the Commander of the US' Seventh

Nix the corruption in Maharashtra



It refers to the editorial 'Tightening the screws' (April 10). I fully concur with the editorial view that the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) should work in tandem to unravel the Anil Deshmukh and Sachin Vaze maze. If tainted police officials and politicians can work hand-in-glove, then why not our sleuths? The revelations made by arrested police officer Vaze are disturbing. It shows

how rotten our whole system is and there is an open loot of public money. It seems that things like extortion, killings, transfer of honest officials, nepotism or using political influence to get Government contracts have become the order of the day in Maharashtra. Not only this, it can also not be denied that the links of corrupt police officials like Vaze and politicians like Deshmukh must be with Maoists or terrorists, else from where the gelatin sticks used in Antilia bomb scare case came?

Both the agencies must also focus their investigation on these lines. Corrupt politicians when in power at the State or the Centre give patronage to criminals and anti-social elements in a *quid pro quo* so that they may use them as and when required. Nothing could be more shameful for the Maharashtra Government than the recent happenings and the alleged involvement of Deshmukh in grave corruption. It must be investigated properly and the accused should not be spared.

Abhishek Singh | Varanasi

The Corona virus cases as we have lowered our guard and are not following the guidelines. People must understand that it is necessary to break the chain of transmissions to curb the spread of the Corona virus.

The vaccines are no panacea. Not following the appropriate COVID-19 behaviour is not just laxity but is a criminal act as it is a major reason for the surge. After the vaccination programme kickstarted, people felt they should not wear masks. Many people hang their masks around their neck, some keep it in their pocket and some do not use it at all. It is only after such gross negligence and laxity on the part of people that Corona virus cases have started increasing.

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

NO REASON TO LOWER GUARD

Sir — We are responsible for the rise in

SOUND BITE

COVID is surging and it is our responsibility to push the Government to move away from PR tactics and act in the interest of the people.



Congress interim president — Sonia Gandhi

Iran proposes the logical path to full Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action compliance. The US, which caused this crisis, should return to full compliance first.



Iranian Foreign Minister — Mohammad Javad Zarif

My parents organised a celebration on the eve of my birthday in advance as a surprise! I'm the luckiest person in the world to have such parents.



Actor — Swara Bhasker

The Opposition gets nervous about AB de Villiers. We have depth in batting which we want to utilise. AB is probably the only one in the team who is so versatile.



Cricketer — Virat Kohli

Lockdown is not an option. However, we will be putting some restrictions in place to contain the spread of the virus.



Delhi CM — Arvind Kejriwal

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com





FIRST COLUMN

BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

This can give the impetus to meet climate commitments while making contributions to post-COVID recovery



RIYA RAHIMAN

Countries have been grappling with the impact of climate change and extreme events as they pose various risks to people, infrastructure, economies and future development. A significant proportion of the economic losses due to extreme events is attributed to the loss and damage to infrastructure systems, thereby stressing the need for integrating disaster and climate resilience for infrastructure development. In the case of the COVID-19 pandemic, we have witnessed an unprecedented impact on infrastructure sectors worldwide. Even though it has not led to direct damages to physical infrastructure, it led to interruptions in infrastructure services, with significant implications on economies. The outbreak is the latest reminder of the need to invest in resilient infrastructure. It exposed systemic risks across various sectors and underlying drivers such as poverty, poor health systems and limited social welfare schemes that perpetuated them. The risks cut across different sectors and strongly brought out the imperative to understand and address systemic and cascading dangers and fragilities.



As part of global recovery, infrastructure investments are being looked at as an indispensable part of stimulus packages aimed at restarting economic activities. Countries are expected to invest heavily in infrastructure sectors as an attempt to mitigate the impacts of the economic fallout as well as create employment and improve competitiveness simultaneously. While the health and economic implications take centre stage when planning for COVID-19 recovery, the urgency of the climate emergency cannot be ignored. The pandemic has clearly brought out the need to focus on managing systems risks for strengthening resilience, a lesson one must heed, to make headway against climate change as well. With countries submitting their national climate action plans as part of the Paris Agreement, this is a crucial year for climate action as well. It is vital that the post-COVID recovery and climate action plans complement each other.

Studies show that infrastructure construction and operations account for 70 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions and the provision of quality infrastructure underpins the achievement of 92 per cent of targets across all Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction (SFDRR) also highlights the role of resilient infrastructure as a cornerstone for sustainable development. The four specific targets relate to loss reduction in SFDRR, focus on cutting global disaster mortality, the number of affected people, economic loss and damage to infrastructure. However, the SFDRR target on reducing damage to critical infrastructure is an important prerequisite for achieving the three other targets on loss reduction. In view of this, infrastructure investments and policies to bolster economies should be leveraged as an opportunity to deliver on global commitments such as the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, SDGs and the SFDRR targets. Though some progress has been made on the SDGs and the SFDRR target, the overall action to meet them has not advanced at the required pace. The pandemic has further pushed back their progress. The COVID-19 recovery can be utilised as an opportunity to progress on these global goals and build a healthy, inclusive and climate-friendly future. Investing in disaster and climate-resilient infrastructure can provide the much-needed impetus in meeting global commitments while also making contributions to post-COVID recovery.

(The writer is Senior Specialist for Infrastructure Resilience, Coalition for Disaster Resilient Infrastructure. The views expressed are personal.)

The big tent of the PPP decoded

Pragmatic centrism and the need to remain a bridge between Sindh's electorate and the political fruits of federalism may help explain why the PPP made a grab for the Senate



NADEEM PARACHA

The nutshell identity of the Pakistan Peoples Party (PPP) is still slotted on the left side of the conventional political divide. But over the decades and, especially after the end of the Cold War in 1991, the nature of this divide has continued to transform. According to Richard Gunther and Larry Diamond in the 2003 issue of the *Journal of Political Parties*, by the 1990s, the mainstream Right and Left of electoral politics had become the *status quo*, which began being challenged by new "anti-*status quo*" groups. Gunther and Diamond write that the roots of large electoral Right/Centre-Right parties can be found in the 19th century, when they emerged as a reaction to monarchism or parties entirely driven by the aristocratic elite.

Ironically, this means that what evolved to become mainstream Right parties in the 20th century were originally on the Left in the 19th century because they represented the interests of the emerging middle classes that advocated capitalism, individualism and religious freedom and/or "classical liberalism."

Once such parties succeeded in becoming part of the new *status quo*, they began to be challenged by parties stressing the need to regulate capitalism through various variations of socialism. Therefore, the latter came to be understood as electoral outfits that were on the left of the established classical liberal parties, which were now slotted on the right side of the divide.

In his book *Sociologie Politique*, French sociologist M Duverger writes that, because of the challenges posed by socialist parties, some classical liberal parties appropriated religion to expand their appeal but remained rooted in the post-19th century secular political paradigm. The Conservative Party in Britain, the Republican Party in the US and the Christian Democratic parties in Europe can be seen as examples of this. The mainstream Left parties were quick to adopt the same. Eventually, large parties on both sides of the divide became what are called the "big tent" or "catch-all" parties.

These parties retain an ideological core, which can be Left or Right, but they position themselves toward the Centre of the spectrum, appearing moderate in their policy preferences. "Big tent" parties become platforms for varied political players as long as they have even a semblance of recognition of the party's core ideological purpose. However, it is pragmatism that becomes the overriding nature of "catch-all" parties.

The PPP was formed in 1967. It was initially conceived by the Marxist intellectual JA Rahim as a vehicle for the charismatic politician ZA Bhutto. The 39-year-old Bhutto had been part of the Ayub Khan dictatorship but was ousted from the Cabinet in 1966. Bhutto positioned himself as the man who had "stood up to a dictator." This gained him traction with university and college students.

According to Rahim's analysis, the Ayub regime's economic policies had accelerated the radicalisation of Pakistan's bourgeoisie, widened the gap between the rich and the poor, and an organised socialist party was not only the need of the hour, but would also be able to fill the vacuum created after Ayub's inevitable departure.



IN PAKISTAN, BECAUSE OF CERTAIN OVERARCHING INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC SHIFTS, THE MOOD WAS CLEARLY SHIFTING TO THE RIGHT. IN THE SECOND HALF OF BHUTTO'S TENURE, THE REGIME TRIED TO APPROPRIATE THIS MOOD AND, BY THE TIME THE GOVERNMENT FELL IN 1977, THE PARTY BELIEVED IT HAD UPSTAGED THE FAR-RIGHT ISLAMIST GROUPS THAT WERE OPPOSING IT

The writer is a senior journalist and columnist. The views expressed are personal. Courtesy: Dawn



A reading of the PPP's Foundation Papers makes it clear that, right from the onset, its founders saw the PPP as a "big tent" party modelled on established Social Democratic parties of Europe. Rahim believed that the country's bourgeoisie had begun their march towards a revolutionary phase, just as the European middle classes had done in the 19th century. Yet, at the time, a majority of Pakistanis lived in rural areas and the process of industrialisation, though rapid during the Ayub era, was still concentrated in just a few urban centres.

When the party was launched, it exhibited three main groupings: On the Left were Marxist student leaders, socialist intellectuals, trade unionists and peasant leaders. On the Right were "progressive" landed elite and in the Centre were what became to be known as "Islamic socialists", or those who appropriated Islam as a welfarist and socialist doctrine, as opposed to a theological expression of politics (*à la Jamaat-i-Islami*).

During the 1970 elections, the party's "big tent" tactics were a success, aiding it to attract the majority of middle and lower-middle class votes, and the votes of small farmers and peasants in (West) Pakistan's two largest provinces,

Punjab and Sindh.

In December 1971, the party suddenly found itself in power after the acrimonious departure of East Pakistan. The party's Left wing was more assertive during Bhutto's first year in power. But this assertion was stalled when Bhutto began perceiving the party's radical Left as agents of anarchy with a juvenile understanding of Marxism.

According to Gunther and Diamond, in an effort to expand their electoral appeal to a wide variety of groups, the policy orientations of "big tent" parties were eclectic and shifted with the public mood. In Pakistan, because of certain overarching international economic shifts, the mood was clearly shifting to the Right. In the second half of Bhutto's tenure, the regime tried to appropriate this mood and, by the time the Government fell in 1977, the party believed it had upstaged the far-Right Islamist groups that were opposing it.

But it seems that the party did not go far enough and was toppled by an Islamist General. With its leader hanged in 1979, and its other major players either in exile or in prison, the reins of the party fell in the hands of its lower-tier leadership. Bhutto's daughter Benazir was at the helm, but she

was under arrest. This was also when the party's leftist militant tendencies, which had been subdued by Bhutto, resurfaced. In 1986, however, fearing that the US would stall the party's return to power for being "too Left-wing", Benazir began to gradually push the party back towards the Centre.

This push continued through the 1990s, especially with the appearance of the Pakistani Muslim League-Nawaz (PML-N) as the "big tent" party of the Right. Under Asif Ali Zardari, the PPP has dug its heels deep in pragmatist centrism. Its electoral appeal in Punjab was neutralised by the PML-N and then the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI). This has blocked its path to Islamabad as a ruling party.

The PPP continues to enjoy power and electoral traction in Sindh. But this traction is largely based on the fact that the Sindhi speakers perceive the PPP as a bridge between them and the economic and political fruits of federalism. For this, the PPP needs to continue having a strong presence in federal institutions.

This is why it was important for Zardari to recently bag a majority in the Senate, even if he ended up upsetting his allies in the anti-Government Pakistan Democratic Movement.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE CRPF HAS SHOT FOUR PEOPLE IN COOCH BEHAR. THERE'S A CONSPIRACY UNDER THE HOME MINISTER'S ORDER AND THIS INCIDENT IS PROOF. —WEST BENGAL CM MAMATA BANERJEE



DIDI AND HER GOONS ARE PERTURBED, SEEING THE PEOPLE'S SUPPORT FOR THE B.J.P. SHE HAS STOOPED TO THIS LEVEL AS SHE CAN SEE HERSELF LOSING. —PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI

Quaking over Iran's phantom nuclear weapons

There are many countries that already had nukes when they signed the nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. They have obligations, too. How are they doing?

First, the good news. The US and Iran had talks in Vienna on Tuesday, and the nuclear deal they and all the other great powers signed in 2015, is coming back.

It's not exactly back yet. After then US President Donald Trump unilaterally pulled out of the treaty in 2018 and re-imposed harsh sanctions on Iran, the Iranians retaliated by slowly deviating from their own commitments under the deal one baby step at a time. So now there has to be an agreement on a timetable for unwinding those steps as well as cancelling the US sanctions.

On a better run planet, the US special envoy for Iran, Rob Malloy, would just declare that all the US sanctions on Iran wrongly put in place by the discredited Trump Administration are



GWYNNE DYER

Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy (and Work)'. The views expressed are personal.

cancelled as of today. The Iranian delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, a veteran of the 2015 talks, would reply that Iran will immediately return to compliance with all the terms of the treaty and invite UN inspectors to verify that all its temporary deviations from treaty obligations over the past three years have been reversed. And we would all live happily ever after.

However, in the real world it is not so. The negotiators in Vienna are not even in the same hotel. All the countries that are still observing the treaty (China, France, Germany, Iran, Russia and the UK) are in one hotel, and the American mission is in another, with messages going back and forth between the two parties. Porcupines mate with less difficulty, but there

has already been some progress.

"The United States knows that, in order to get back into compliance, it's going to have to lift those sanctions that are inconsistent with the deal that was reached with Iran," said Rob Malloy. The Iranian Government's spokesman Ali Rabiee replied that he "saluted" Malloy's remarks. "We find this position realistic and promising," he added.

Two working groups have been set up that include American representatives, with the task of choreographing reciprocal moves by the US and Iran to return to the treaty and a target of full compliance by both sides within two months. Just in time for Iranian moderates to claim credit for ending the US sanctions a week or so before the June election.

So that's probably sorted,



but what about all the countries that actually do have nuclear weapons? Iran originally got into trouble because it signed the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty (NPT) in 1970 and later tried to get nuclear weapons anyway, but the countries that already had nukes when they signed the NPT have obligations, too. How are they doing?

The NPT states that "nuclear-weapons States agree to...pursue nuclear disarmament aimed at the ultimate elimination of their nuclear arsenals." But it has been a long pursuit and 50 years later not one of them has actually managed to catch the damn thing.

The US has got turned around somehow and is pursuing in the wrong direction. It's in the midst of a trillion-dollar-plus "upgrade" of its nuclear forces, including a new generation of land-based intercontinental ballistic missiles (ICBMs) and new submarine-launched cruise missiles.

According to President Vladimir Putin, Russia has developed nuclear-powered cruise missiles and torpedos with unlimited range, a hypersonic vehicle called Avangard to deliver nuclear weapons at a low level and ultra-high speed, and a new ultra-heavy ICBM called

'Sarmat' that is able to carry even more and bigger warheads (10-15) over a longer range (18,000 km.) There have also been reports of a new nuclear-powered drone torpedo that is capable of delivering a 100-megaton warhead (biggest ever tested was 50 megatons) over a range of 10,000 km. Then it would explode off an enemy's coast to create a tsunami wave 500 metres tall to inundate the coastal regions with highly radioactive water. But maybe this one is fiction.

Then there's Little Britain with its four submarines that carry nuclear-tipped missiles. Prime Minister Boris Johnson recently announced that he was increasing the number of warheads they carry from 180 to 240, but it doesn't really make much of a difference.

Traditionally the UK's strategy is "no first use", which

means Britain's retaliation would be on cities, not on empty silos. So you're just bouncing the rubble after the first few dozen warheads explode. That's probably why Johnson broke with tradition and said that Britain might use nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear attacks, including even cyber attacks. One way to compensate for not really being very dangerous is to sound very reckless.

Then there's France (mostly harmless, despite some 280 nuclear weapons) and China (320 but still talking about expansion). Plus India (150), Israel (90), North Korea (30-40) and Pakistan (160), all countries that "unsigned" or never signed the NPT. But at least we're safe from Iran's nuclear weapons, which never existed and still don't.

Second wave puts off reopening of firms; transition to be slow

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The second COVID-19 wave has postponed corporate India's reopening plans for now, and distributed workforces or hybrid working will be the new normal as businesses seek to reduce risk and benefit from remote working, experts said.

Corporate India's return to office plan is likely to be staggered as the pandemic will continue to provide challenges. In a bid to ensure continuity and productive output, companies will have to provide convenient locations, latest technology and allow flexibility in tandem with evolving circumstances, they said.

"Our return to office plan will be a phased approach with not everyone returning at the same time," said Priyanka Anand, Vice President and Head of HR, South East Asia, Oceania & India, Ericsson.

Anand further noted that "in my view we will see our offices evolve to a more hybrid mode of working where we will wit-



ness a build-up of an efficient home-office infrastructure as well as policies that flexibility & balance to the workforce".

Earlier, offices were all set to reopen but with the resurgence of COVID-19 cases those plans are likely to change.

"There is no official communication on this yet but probably work from home will continue. The new wave has postponed corporate India's reopening plans for now," said Lohit Prasad, Head HR - APAC region, Skillsoft.

Experts believe a flexi-working model is likely to be the

new norm, which would mean alternate work-from-home days or shrunken workforce from offices for the next 2-3 months.

"There was reopening all across, however, depending on the nature of the work, companies may have adopted a lesser or more percentage of workforce from office or WFH. It seems that the hybrid working arrangements might continue up to June 2021 at least," said Lohit Bhatia, President, Indian Staffing Federation.

Bhatia further said, "We would request that among the

working staff, the government may allow everyone above 25 years of age to be vaccinated rather than only those above 45 years."

This time around companies and employers are better prepared than 2020, when it was a sudden event. Companies are now ready with SOPs, guidelines, testing protocols, leaves in case of testing positive or support towards, medical assistance etc, to employees.

"As the second wave is coming in, we are also seeing organisations better prepared to respond to the situation both for their customers as well as workforce," said Nitin Sethi, CEO, India and South Asia - Performance, Rewards & Organization Effectiveness, Aon.

In the new future of work, hybrid is a new reality that is now strongly embedded and here to stay, Sethi noted.

"Along with bringing in better workplace collaboration while working remotely, the safety of the people has become a priority and every organisa-

tion is willing to stay flexible as they are regularly tracking the evolving government guidelines and the vaccine rollout," said Vishal Agrawal, MD, India & SAARC, Avaya.

According to Avaya's latest study on Life and Work Beyond 2020, 77 per cent of the Indian employees have agreed to Hybrid work model as they feel it will be better for their mental wellbeing and 74 per cent of the employees have mentioned that they would support government policies to embrace hybrid working, e.g. working from anywhere, office, home or other location.

"The transition back to office will be slow and not exactly how we left it. The surge in cases has made us rethink the back-to-work plans," said Harsh Lambah, Country Manager India, Vice President Sales - South Asia, IWG plc.

A lot of companies are investing in COVID-19 safety training for employees to bring out the necessary behavioural changes related to health and safety.

Partial lockdown could impact movement of labour and goods

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Partial lockdown measures could impact the movement of labour and goods which would affect industrial production significantly, according to a CEO's survey.

Covid curfew and micro containment strategies along with Covid-appropriate behaviour are effective to contain the spread of the second wave of infections, the survey by industry body CII suggested.

A majority of the CEOs participated in the survey indicated they expect that "partial lockdown measures could impact the movement of labour as well as movement of goods which would affect industrial production significantly," it said.

More than half of the CEOs polled have stated that their production could be affected if there are restrictions on movement of labour during these partial lockdowns.

"Similarly, 56 per cent of the CEOs expressed their concern over loss of production of up to 50% if there were restrictions on the ecosystem that supports movement of goods," it added.

Stringent enforcement measures to promote strict adherence to health and safety protocols are essential and any measures to restrict social gath-



Industrialists fear another exodus of migrant workers

Coimbatore: With the second wave of Covid sweeping across various parts of Tamil Nadu, some of the industrialists in the State are apprehensive of migrant workers leaving for their hometowns considering the health conditions. The industries recovered from the jolt of the first wave of coronavirus when over one lakh migrant workers from both Coimbatore and Tirupur industries rushed back to their home towns in Bihar, Uttar Pradesh and Odisha by

special trains. The 30% increase in the raw materials has affected the industries, sources from different industrial associations said. A few workers reportedly left for their natives early last week as they feared the availability of transport like trains to reach their towns. However, there was no major exodus from the industries as the workers working on weekly payment basis had taken their wages Saturday last, the sources said.

erings should not be extended to regular functioning of industry and commerce, T V Narendran, President-designate, CII, said.

Further to mitigate the impact

of the restrictions, about 67 per cent of those polled expressed their desire to work with the government for mass vaccination of eligible workforce who are 45 years and above.

MONEY MATTERS

Anarock's FY'21 revenue up 18 per cent to Rs 302 crore



Property consultant Anarock has clocked an 18 per cent growth in its revenue at Rs 302 crore during the last fiscal despite the COVID-19 pandemic, its chairman Anuj Puri said on Sunday. In an interview with PTI, Puri said the company sold 14,700

units worth Rs 16,240 crore on behalf of the developers in the full 2020-21 financial year. The numbers are higher than the 2019-20 fiscal year, when Anarock sold 12,710 units worth over Rs 11,000 crore. Puri pointed out that housing sales in the first four months of the 2019-20 were badly impacted due to the nationwide lockdown, which was imposed to control the spread of coronavirus disease. However, he said demand for residential properties improved significantly thereafter. "We have achieved a revenue of Rs 302 crore during the last fiscal," Puri said.

Sterling Resorts to have 5K rooms in its inventory by '25



Sterling Holiday Resorts is looking to take the total number of rooms in its inventory to 5,000 by 2025 as part of robust growth plans going forward, a top company official said. The company currently has over 2,400

rooms in over 35 resorts across India, including Sterling Nature Trails. "Sterling has aggressive expansion plans and aims to double its inventory from the current 2,400-plus rooms to 5,000 rooms by 2025. "In line with this, over the last one year, Sterling has opened resorts in Gurusvayur, Thekkady and Rishikesh," Sterling Holiday Resorts Chairman and MD Ramesh Ramanathan told PTI. For the upcoming resorts, several locations are on active search including Mysore, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Varanasi, Coorg and Kumarakom.

Fitday.in, a nutraceutical start-up, to open 50 stores



Fitday, a nutraceutical start-up, on Sunday said it plans to set up 50 brick-and-mortar stores across the country with an investment of about Rs 60 crore. The company's parent firm, Genomelabs, focuses mainly on product

research, formulation, manufacturing and product sales. "Fitday plans to set up 50 brick-and-mortar stores pan-India by 2023 with an approximate investment of Rs 600 million while simultaneously ramping up their online presence," according to a statement. The company will fund the expansion through internal accruals. Fitday founder Suresh Raju cited reports to state that the food systems in many countries do not offer adequate nutrient outputs to fulfill health and nutritional needs. "Nearly half of the world's population is malnourished. Apparently, 840 million have insufficient intakes of protein/energy, and more than two billion people consume diets that are less diverse than 30 years ago, leading to deficiencies in micronutrients.

DoT likely to issue guidelines for telecom PLI within week



The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is likely to issue guidelines on implementation of production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for manufacturers in the sector and start inviting applications for the same in about a week, according to government officials.

Telecom gear makers firms such as Ericsson and Nokia are keen to expand their operations in India, and global companies like Samsung, Cisco, Ciena and Foxconn have "shown interest" to set up manufacturing bases in the country for telecom and networking products for domestic and export markets. Telecom PLI has already been approved by the government. The DoT is ready with guidelines to implement it, application format, incentive allocation, etc. It should be published on the DoT website within a week," the official, who did not wish to be named, said.

Franklin unitholders to get Rs 2,962 cr in second tranche

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

SBI Funds Management (SBI MF) will distribute the next tranche of Rs 2,962 crore to unitholders of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund's six shuttered schemes during the coming week.

SBI MF has already distributed Rs 9,122 crore to investors as directed by the Supreme Court earlier.

"SBI MF would be distributing the next tranche of Rs 2,962 crore to unitholders across all six schemes.

"The payment to all investors whose accounts are KYC compliant with all details available will be made during the week of April 12, 2021," a Franklin Templeton MF spokesperson said on Sunday.

The amount to be paid to unitholders will be paid by extinguishing proportionate units at the net asset value dated April 9, he added.

The payment will be made electronically to all eligible unitholders by SBI MF, which



has been appointed as the liquidator for the schemes under winding up by the Supreme Court.

In case the unitholders' bank account is not eligible for an electronic payment, a cheque or demand draft will be issued and sent to their registered address by SBI MF.

In March, the Supreme Court accepted the standard operating procedure (SOP) finalised by SBI MF to monetise assets and distribute the proceeds to unitholders of the six debt schemes of Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund.

Franklin Templeton MF shut its six debt mutual fund schemes in April 2020 citing redemption pressures and lack of liquidity in the bond market.

The schemes were Franklin India Low Duration Fund, Franklin India Dynamic Accrual Fund, Franklin India Credit Risk Fund, Franklin India Short Term Income Plan, Franklin India Ultra Short Bond Fund, and Franklin India Income Opportunities Fund. They together had an estimated Rs 25,000 crore as assets under management (AUM).

Power consumption grows 47% in April

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power consumption in the country grew nearly 47 per cent in the first week of April to 28.34 billion units (BU) over the corresponding period a year ago, showing robust recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to power ministry data.

Power consumption in April last year had dropped to 84.55 BU from 110.11 BU in same month in 2019. This happened mainly because of fewer economic activities following imposition of lockdown by the government.

Similarly, peak power demand met also slumped to 132.20 GW in April last year from 176.81GW in the same month in 2019, showing the impact of lockdown on economic activities.

During the first week this month, peak power demand touched the highest level of 181.05 GW on April 7, 2021, and recorded a growth of 27 per cent over 132.20 GW recorded in the entire month of April last year.

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'India to manufacture containers, eyes Rs 1,000 crore investment'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eyeing indigenous production of containers amid a global surge in demand, the Centre is looking to develop Bhavnagar in Gujarat as a container hub and has set up pilot projects for its manufacturing, Union Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said.

The initiative aimed at attaining self-reliance in container production eyes Rs 1,000 crore investment from private players and looks to create one lakh jobs.

The move assumes significance amid reports of global shortages of containers with Indian containerised trade taking a hit owing to the staggered



supply and demand shocks across geographies as per logistics majors.

"India requires about 3.5 lakh containers every year. ...There is no container production in India and we have to depend mainly on China which is a global producer. Now we want to develop Bhavnagar in Gujarat as a

container hub and we have selected 10 places there for its production on a pilot basis," Ports, Shipping and Waterways Minister Mansukh Mandaviya told PTI.

The pilot project has been successful, he said.

Mandaviya said the Ministry of shipping during the last six months has taken several initiatives to encourage container production at Bhavnagar with the help of re-rolling and furnace makers who are being encouraged to diversify in the space.

"We expect private players to invest about Rs 1,000 crore in this space. We also expect creation of one lakh local jobs," the minister said.



EV policy needs to be rejigged to make it more effective: Hero

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's electric vehicle (EV) policy needs to be "rejigged" and requires "course correction" in order to make it more effective to achieve envisaged sales targets, according to the country's leading electric two-wheeler maker Hero Electric.

Under the FAME-II scheme, which was launched in April 2019, the plan was to put at least 10 lakh high-speed electric two-wheelers on the road by March 2022.

"We are now two years down in the policy and there is only one year to go. But if you look at the number of vehicles which have benefited, it is just around 60,000 units. It should have been six lakh plus by now. So something is not working. So that is where the policy now needs to be kind of rejigged," Hero Electric Managing Director Naveen Munjal told PTI.

Under the second phase of the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India (FAME-II) scheme, 10 lakh registered electric two-wheelers with a maximum ex-factory price are eligible to avail incentive of Rs 20,000 each.

Currently, only high-speed electric two-wheelers qualify for incentives under the FAME-II scheme.

Pension sector: Govt may hike FDI limit to 74%

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The government may hike foreign direct investment (FDI) limit in the pension sector to 74 per cent and a Bill in this regard is expected to come in the next Parliament session, according to sources.

Last month, Parliament approved a Bill to increase FDI limit in the insurance sector from 49 per cent to 74 per cent. The Insurance Act, 1938 was last amended in 2015 which raised FDI limit to 49 per cent, resulting in foreign capital inflow of Rs 26,000 crore in the last 5 years.

Amendment to Pension Fund Regulatory and Development Authority (PFRDA) Act, 2013 seeking to raise FDI limit in the pension sector may come in the mon-



soon session or winter session depending on various approvals, sources said.

Currently, the FDI in the pension fund is capped at 49 per cent.

Besides, sources said, the amendment Bill may contain separation of NPS Trust from the PFRDA.

The powers, functions and duties of the NPS Trust, which

are currently laid down under the PFRDA (National Pension System Trust) Regulations 2015, may come under a charitable trust or the Companies Act, they said.

The intent behind this is to keep NPS Trust separate from the pension regulator and managed competent board of 15 members. Out of this, the majority of members are likely to be from the government as they, including states, are the biggest contributor to the corpus.

The PFRDA was established for promoting and ensuring the orderly growth of the pension sector with sufficient powers over pension funds, the central recordkeeping agency and other intermediaries. It also safeguards the interest of members.

The National Pension System (NPS) was introduced by the Government of India to replace the defined benefit pension system. NPS was made mandatory for all new recruits to the central government service from January 1, 2004, (except the armed forces in the first stage) and has also been rolled out for all citizens with effect from May 1, 2009, on voluntary basis.

The government had made a conscious move to shift from the defined benefit, pay-as-you-go pension scheme to defined contribution pension scheme, NPS, due to rising and unsustainable pension bill. The transition aimed at freeing the limited resources of the government for more productive and socio-economic sectoral development.

We know the British loved our spices centuries ago, but today, we have people from across the globe who are looking forward to fusing their dishes with Indian kitchen ingredients. Meet British national Sarah Todd, a celebrated chef, who talks to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL about her obsession with south Indian curries, her dream project, the restaurants she wishes to start, and more.



THE FRENCH-INDIAN LOVE AFFAIR!

When Sarah Todd was growing up, she found her love for food and found that food was love! This Brit is so crazy about south Indian curry, that it regularly gets voted within the top five most popular meals of hers.

"I admire chefs who can satiate a diner's appetite whilst also inspiring the home cook to feel that they can make enticing meals at home on a budget. Not everyone can afford a Michelin star meal, so I believe that creating something yourself at home is just as important. Food is an integral part of everyone's life. In saying this, Gordon Ramsay inspires me! His success is unparalleled, his passion and love for the hospitality industry are undeniable. His broad appeal across all sectors of the industry inspires us to be better cooks. I aspire to reach his level, however, minus the expletives," adds the Australian chef who first appeared on the Australian food scene in 2014 as one of that season's most popular MasterChef Australia contestants.

She became curious about what she calls 'Indian-flavoured food with aromatic spices' and in anticipation of the same, ushers on a book called 'My Indian Kitchen' taking you beyond the well-known restaurant favourites of butter chicken, chicken tandoori, and dal with classical French techniques!

She says, "When I say inspired with a touch of Asian, I mean that Indian touch. So, there are a lot of spices and marinades that we can make use of using Australian techniques such as grilling and barbecuing as well as classical French techniques. This is a style of cooking that I developed over time. It showcases produce while loading it with the incredible flavours of India. My spiced lamb rack with a fresh fenel salad can be considered my signature dish as family celebra-

tions in Australia always involve a barbecue so I use this technique in some of my recipes. The smoky goodness of grilled food over charcoal is familiar to both Australia and India but the flavours are all inspired by India."

With a rustic, simple, and homestyle bursting with flavours, the model-turned-chef's go-to

meal is south Indian curry! This rich curry is one of her favourites, and you will often smell the aroma wafting from her kitchen. Its creamy, coconut flavour resonates with everyone's palate. It goes with almost everything from prawns and fish to roast pumpkin. Sarah bringing the old and the new, the tradi-

tional and the modern learning to live side by side carrying the aroma of her land serving a mix of classic French fare — she epitomises her belief that eating well and looking your best are possible when you use loads of fresh herbs, aromatic spices, and beautiful ingredients to create food that is healthy, yet bursting with flavour. "I was trained in classical French cuisine which taught me the techniques of cooking but in India, I learnt how to add the heart and soul to a dish! I know that sounds cliché but cooking from the heart really is the key to making incredible food. My new book is inspired by my experiences across India which completely changed my perception of Indian cuisine. The Indian dishes we are familiar with in Australia such as 'butter chicken' and 'dal makhani' are not designed to be eaten on a regular basis. I was overwhelmed by the diverse and wholesome food cooked every day in Indian homes. The recipes in my cookbook, although not authentic, are a representation of how fresh and light Indian cuisine can be," she ushers.

With new arrivals, it's time to welcome a novel drift across the F&B landscape!

Indian culinary scene is extremely vibrant at present with a lot of innovations and fusions

coming into play. With Indians settled abroad in various parts of the world, Indian cuisine has really gone global and is well accepted too, but who could have wondered that somebody permanently situated abroad will pick up on food trends happening in India! Sarah further gives details and tells us, "Through inclusion and diversity, the food scene is evolving. We are seeing Indian chefs preparing French food, Australian chefs mastering Indian food, and everything in between. We are borrowing techniques and flavours. An individual's cooking style is inspired by appreciating and respecting different cultures and cuisines. Having said that, I have started working on the concept for my next restaurant and feel that it would be perfectly placed in the thriving, bustling metropolis of Delhi! I have not had a lot of time over the last twelve months to take the first step, but the vision is very clear. So, watch this space! My goal with this cookbook is to take Indian cuisine around the world; I'd also like to do the same through restaurants."

This is Indian-French fusion cooking, a highly personal expression that at first sniffs, seems very exotic and beyond the ken of home cooks, but it's the aroma that gets you hooked!



Working long hours? Keep your body, mind active



Whether working from home or office, toiling away for long hours without breaks and physical activity can begin to damage your body, vitality and even without tell-tale signs.

"It is important to achieve a healthy work-life balance in order to live a fulfilled life. But there are moments in life when you have to finish certain deadlines and cannot avoid spending a lot of time on your desk," says Beenu Rajpoot, noted filmmaker and a Fit India Champion.

The fitness expert lists a few suggestions for those busy hours that will not only nourish your body and mind, but also increase overall productivity. Keep the following in mind:

- ❖ Between emails, meetings and calls, try to take a stroll even for a few minutes to reset your body and brain. A little bit of movement during those long sitting hours will go a long way to ensure that your body and joints do not become too stiff by sitting.

- ❖ Check your breath during intervals. Take a few long breaths engaging your abdominals to ensure that your body is getting enough oxygen. Learn some *pranayama* techniques to recreate yourself quickly so that you can maintain a constant energy level throughout the long span of desk sitting.

- ❖ Remember to do a few neck and shoulder stretches while on your desk to avoid neck pain or back pain later. It will also help in keeping your posture upright. Add useful stretches from your yoga class to these intervals.

- ❖ Choose the appropriate ergonomic chair and table in order to maintain a good posture while sitting for long

hours. Some of the important factors to be considered are -- shape of the chair, height of the chair, height of the table, lumbar support in the chair, among others. Ensure that your chair has some kind of lumbar support. Lumbar support will protect your lumbar spine from pressures of excessive flexion during long sitting hours. It is also important to choose a chair where you can adjust the height of the chair so that you can adjust its height vis-a-vis your table. It will be good for your mid-upper back and shoulders. Often people who ignore this advice can develop health conditions like scoliosis and rounded shoulders.

- ❖ Keep drinking water during a long shift. It's quite common that people under pressure keep suppressing their thirst subconsciously that makes them dehydrated. Remember to keep sipping the water every hour or so to keep your body rich in fluids that will improve the circulation and will keep your blood pressure in check, apart from many other benefits of drinking water.

- ❖ Ensure that you are getting some sun during the day. It will not only enrich your Vitamin D levels but also give a big boost to your immune system. It is very common among the big cities in India that people don't get enough Vitamin D as they are not exposed to the sunlight often. Lack of exposure to the sunlight leads to Vitamin D deficiency that is often linked to other health issues.

- ❖ Give your eyes some rest in between after every half an hour or so by doing a simple yoga technique of palming. Rub your palms together and just cover your eyes with your warm palms. Your eyes will feel energised immediately.

Filmmaker and series producer of *Age of Nature*, Verity White, talks to *The Pioneer* about a fresh look at our relationship with Nature, our impact on it, how it works and how we can begin to restore the balance of life on earth.

There is hope

a deeper understanding of nature and our place within it, Sony BCC Earth brings the *Age of Nature*. The show is a fresh look at our relationship with nature and how we are beginning to restore the balance of life on earth. Excerpts:

What does the show *Age of Nature* try to convey to the audience?

Well, we wanted people to understand a few fundamental things about nature. One is that we're utterly dependent on it, whether you live in the countryside of your farm or in a city, and you drink water, breathe air, we're all as a human species utterly dependent on it. And that nature is in a bit of trouble at the moment. I think that's not new for anybody. But we're almost at a tipping point where if we don't start to pay more attention and look after nature better, we're going to find ourselves living on a very uncomfortable planet. The most important thing is it's not that difficult to help nature heal itself. The power of it is extraordinary. All we need to do is give it a little bit of space, make sure it has what it needs and nature will heal itself quickly.

What are some of the ways we can restore our planet?

I think giving space to nature is the most important thing we can do. It will balance itself and take care of itself. Nature changes all the time and that's fine. But we just need to sort of leave it to get on with it. So if you give it an empty field, it will very quickly reseed that field with plants and then the pollinators will come and the birds will come in and very quickly that empty field will be full of life again. So I think just to give it some space, take away our chemicals, our intensive farming practices, unsustainable building practices, and let nature do what it wants to do.

How are the concepts of awakening, understanding and changing explained in the show?

For us as filmmakers, we needed to go back in time to explain how we've got to the point where we are today. And it hasn't taken very long in the great history of the world where humans have only been distressing nature for relatively a couple of 100 years in an intensive way. So you can see the journey of what's happened there, what

we've been doing and the effect. But also what we can see is that we do already treat nature in some ways, much better than we did 50 years ago. And that's because our understanding of nature is so much better now. And that's what you can see in Episode Two. The science that we can do now is incredible. We understand how ocean currents work, how the atmosphere protects our planet, how biodiversity is, so it's sort of complicated and interconnected. We didn't know these things 50 years ago, but we know them now. That means that we can know better how to look after them. Going forward into the future with climate change, this is obviously the greatest challenge that humanity has ever faced. But nature can be a huge part of helping us cope with that because nature sequesters carbon. It's the cheapest, easiest, most obvious way to help us reduce some of the carbon in the atmosphere, which is something we need to do urgently.

Can you explain the importance of balance of nature, and how humans impact it?

Balance of nature is quite an interesting term. I think

nature is far from balance. It is wild, dynamic, moving and changing all the time. It's natural to have fires and floods. It adapts quickly to all the changes that happen across the planet. And if you're looking over a larger timescale and a larger space, then it all balances out. But we're not expecting nature to be still and to be calm. What nature needs to have is the ability to make these changes because that's what it's always done. And that's what it needs more space for. So I think, to get us to get the balance with nature right we just need to give nature more space.

What are some of the incredible things you learned about nature during the making of the show?

Well, I learned the term. For me, the biggest revelation was the term 'nature's ability to store carbon forests'. It stores that carbon with the strength of its biodiversity. So it's not just planting trees, which as you know, a useful technical pump to pump the carbon down. But the storage needs to happen in the soil, it needs to happen under the water in the oceans. That can only happen if ecosystems



are healthy and biodiversity — rich and strong. When we destroy nature, when we trawl the ocean floor without huge fishing trawlers, when we burn forests, when we carbon as burning fossil fuels. That was something that I didn't know earlier. The other, probably the most interesting shoot I did was going to film the ranches live with wolves around the Yellowstone National Park over in North America, and how they've learned to cope living with wolves, how they're learning to accept predators back into the ecosystem and how we could learn from their journey and apply it to other places in the world where wolves are being tolerated, once again, across

Europe, for example. **What really drove you to this profession — wildlife filmmaking?**

Well, I've been into nature since I was a child. I've always spent a lot of time observing, collecting bugs, bringing them home, much to my mother's horror. It must be genetic because it's been with me for a very long time. Also, I really enjoy storytelling — the technical aspect of filmmaking doesn't interest me so much, it's simply telling of stories. So to bring those two passions together, I entered into the world of wildlife filmmaking. And I feel, one cannot make wildlife or nature-inspired films without realising that there's a bigger story to tell,

and that our nature is in a bit of trouble. We simply need to pay more attention to it, especially now.

Any message you have for the Indian audience?

Yes, I think there's a lot of hope out there, and the narrative of climate change is frightening. It's depressing. But there's hope in nature and everybody can play their part, be it a small window box in a city or a back garden in a rural area or when you're farming. Nature will be grateful for everything, even if you do your minutest bit. It will surely repay you one day by making a healthy planet for us to live on.

(The show premieres today at 9 pm on Sony BBC Earth.)

what's brewing?



● Priya



● Prashanti



● Manasa



● Vyshnavi



● Renuka



● Niharika Reddy



● B Sumathi



● Nikita

PARTY

SILK SMITTEN

Fashion designer Niharika Reddy's new venture, Shree Vaidiki Silks was inaugurated by Women Safety Wing DIG B.Sumathi. Music director Dr Devi Shree Guruji, Actor Raghu Kunche, Film artist Josh Ravi, and film critic Mahesh Kathi were present at the glittery event at Road no 71, Film Nagar, Hyderabad.

Photos by SV Chary

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

6	4	9	2	5	8	7	1	3
3	8	7	6	9	1	2	5	4
5	1	2	7	3	4	9	8	6
4	6	8	3	2	5	1	9	7
2	9	1	4	6	7	8	3	5
7	5	3	8	1	9	4	6	2
1	7	4	5	8	6	3	2	9
8	2	5	9	7	3	6	4	1
9	3	6	1	4	2	5	7	8

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- 1 Cold floating chunks in the sea
- 6 Peas grow in these
- 7 A type of bird
- 9 Of greater age
- 11 A long narrow piece
- 12 Opposite of outer
- 13 Seven plus five minus nine
- 16 Keep a car in here
- 18 A hired car
- 19 A prickly animal
- 5 A passenger vehicle
- 8 Occurring
- 10 A hair near your eye
- 14 Get to
- 15 A heavy metal
- 17 Enquire

DOWN

- 1 Getting better
- 2 Came to a finish
- 3 Animals like large mice
- 4 Make longer by pulling



GINGER MEGGS





SALMAN, MAHESH, PRITHVIRAJ'S BOOST TO MAJOR

The much-awaited teaser of Adivi Sesh-starrer *Major* will be launched today. Bollywood, Tollywood and Malayalam superstars — Salman Khan, Mahesh Babu and Prithviraj Sukumaran — will launch the teaser in Hindi, Telugu, and Malayalam respectively. *Major* is a biopic based on the life of Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan, who lost his life in the 26/11 terrorist

attacks in Mumbai. Directed by Sashi Kiran Tikka, the film is to release on July 2. The teaser is expected to offer insight into the different phases of Major's life. Earlier, the teaser of *Major* was supposed to be released in Mumbai on March 28. However, due to the rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in the city and the passing away of director Sashi Kiran Tikka's father Suryanarayana, the teaser launch in Mumbai had to be

postponed. "Wanted to do a national event for this national film in Mumbai in a big way. Slight change of plans :) Will keep you updated. *Eppudu oochaam anadhi kaadhu annaya...Bullet....(well you get the idea)* Reporting soon! #MajorTheFilm (sic)," Adivi Sesh and team *Major* issued the statement on social media. *Major* stars Saiee Manjrekar, Sobhita Dhulipala, Prakash Raj,

Revathi and Murli Sharma. The film is produced by Sony Pictures Films India in association with Mahesh Babu's GMB Entertainment and A+S movies. Recently, a new poster of the film *Major* was launched. Adivi Sesh introduced Sobhita Dhulipala's character with the new poster. Adivi Sesh took to his social media handles to introduce the character of Sobhita Dhulipala in the film - Pramoda. Taking to Twitter,

he wrote, "Introducing a new dimension in the #PeopleOfMajor. The Terrorists came into the hotel. Then they came for her. She fought back. @sobhitaD IS. PRAMODA (sic)." Sobhita Dhulipala also shared her look from the film. She summed up her character with this short note, "I am Pramoda in #MajorTheFilm. I think of her as a lion-hearted lullaby (sic)."

Vishal Mishra is on board *RRR*

Singer and composer Vishal Mishra of *Kaise Hua* and *Aaj Bhi* fame, was a law student when he just decided to give it all away and pursue his dreams of becoming a singer. He is known for his work in few Hindi movies such as *Munna Michael*, *Saand Ki Aankh*, *Pranaam*, *Qarib Qarib Singgle*, *Kabir Singh*, *Jabariya Jodi*, *Notebook*, and *Race 3* etc. Now Vishal Mishra is on the board for SS Rajamouli's upcoming much hyped big budget drama *RRR*. The young Bollywood musician, singer and songwriter took to Twitter and shared a picture of himself posing with SS Rajamouli and music composer Keeravani and wrote, "We made magic today at the studio. *RRR* coming soon." With the post, Vishal Mishra confirmed that the music sessions of *RRR* are underway and in full swing. The period drama *RRR* narrates a fictitious tale based on the life of Telugu freedom fighters, Alluri Seetharama Raju and Komaram Bheem. It has Jr NTR and Ram Charan in the lead roles and it is being produced at an estimated budget of Rs 450 crore by DVV Danayya. *RRR* is slated to arrive at the theaters on October 13 worldwide.



THANK YOU TEAM TO FLY TO ITALY

The upcoming film *Thank You* marks the second collaboration between Akkineni Naga Chaitanya and Vikram Kumar after *Manam*. Currently, the shoot of *Thank You* is going on in Hyderabad at brisk pace.

The latest we hear is that, later in April, Naga Chaitanya and the team of *Thank You* will be flying to Italy to complete its last leg of shooting. In the film, Chay will be seen as a Mahesh Babu fan, which also is said to have a sports backdrop, a la his previous film *Majili*.

Naga Chaitanya-starrer *Thank You* has three actresses, while Raashi Khanna is playing the female lead, Malavika Nair and Avika Gor have pivotal roles.

Vikram Kumar's directorial venture *Thank You* is being backed by Dil Raju and it is slated to hit the theaters by the end of this year. On the other side, Naga Chaitanya will also be seen playing the lead role in *Love Story*, helmed by Sekhar Kammula, that has Sai Pallavi of *Fida* fame paired opposite him.

Pawan Kalyan isolates self as personal staff test positive for Covid

In the wake of Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan's personal staff confirming news of contracting coronavirus, the actor-turned-politician went into isolation. Jana Sena party has issued a statement saying that Pawan went into home isolation on the advice of doctors as some of the personal staff were diagnosed with Covid.

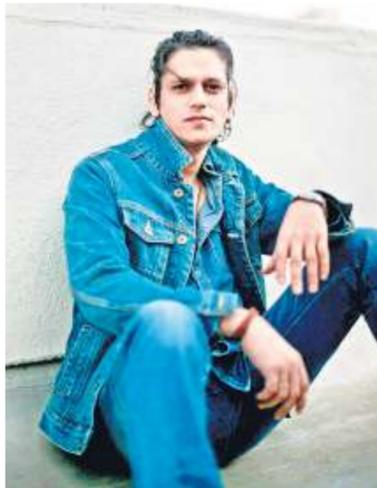
"Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan's chief executive, security personnel and most of the personal staff have been affected by corona. As a precautionary measure he went into the home quarantine with a doctor's prescription," the statement reads.

It is reported that over the past week, many in his

entourage, who perform duties very close to him, have been suffering from Covid. As a precautionary measure, he went into home quarantine as part of a Corona dilatation prevention. Meanwhile, Pawan Kalyan campaigned for the BJP candidate in Tirupati last week. Pawan participated in a public meeting there. Many people from BJP and Jana Sena participated in this meeting. They are all concerned ever since news of Pawan's staff contracting the virus has come out.

On the other hand, Dil Raju, the producer of the film *Vakeel Saab*, the actor's recent film, said that Pawan had strongly suggested that the audience coming to watch the actor's film, wear masks, maintain social distance and sanitise themselves.

City star Vijay does not want to stop



long career in Bollywood.

The actor of *Middle Class Abbayi* fame, ventured into Bollywood in 2012 with *Chittagong*, and his first big break was in 2016, where he shared screen space with Amitabh Bachchan in *Pink*. He was then seen in films such as *Gully Boy*, *Yaara* and *Bamfaad*. He was a talking point with his performance in the web-series *Mirzapur 2* as well as his recent released show *OK Computer*.

Talking about Bollywood being a brutal place that defines success through hits and misses, Vijay says his fears are different.

"I don't know. I know that the audience suddenly starts to lose interest in certain actors and I could never figure out what could be the reason, but it is one of the deepest fears — One of the fears I would have is not to be accepted by the audience," Vijay told a news agency.

That's not his only fear, though. "The second biggest fear will be to lose your capability as an actor. You're no longer able to do something surprising or invent a character or to do something that fascinates people. These are the fears every artiste lives with, and they therefore try to push themselves harder and reinvent themselves time and again," he said.

The 37-year-old does not want to stop early. "I would want to have a long career. Would want to tell a lot many stories through a lot many characters... Best way to go about this is by keeping my head on the shoulder and feet on the ground and working hard, smart and taking risks," he signed off.

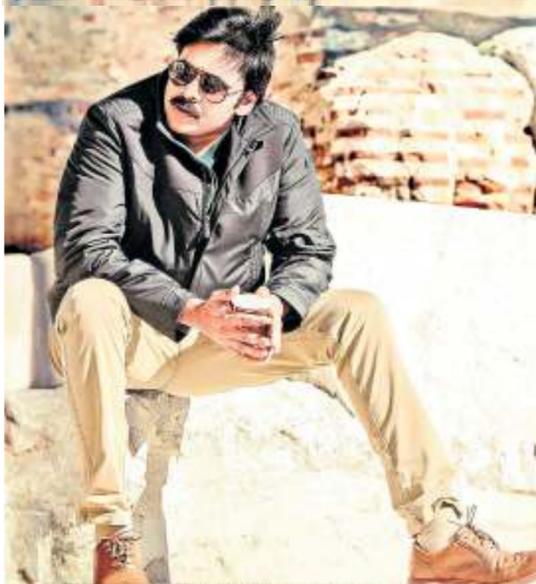
He was born and brought up in Hyderabad and dreamt of seeing himself on the big screens some day. He has been around in the industry for nine years now, but it was only in 2019 that he became a familiar face with his performance as Moen in *Gully Boy*. The spotlight has never left Vijay Varma since then, and the actor now asserts he wants to have a

Ravi Teja's next with Tamil director?

Of the ongoing buzz in the media and the film industry are to be believed, Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja is all set to work with Tamil director Sarath Mandava of *Ko 2* fame, for a project. Idiot fame actor Ravi Teja seems to be on a signing spree. He is currently working on *Khiladi* and he will soon be shifting his focus onto *RT68* which will be directed by Trinadha Rao Nakkina of *Nenu Local* and

Cinema Choopistha Maava fame. The upcoming film is touted to be an action thriller and is bankrolled by Sudhakar Chelukuri. Ravi Teja and Sarath Mandava's film is expected to go on the floors very soon. Sarath Mandava, who'd made the 2016 film, *Ko 2*, in Tamil, had apparently come up with an authentic story that demands high octane action sequences that suit Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, given the latter's

apparent love for working in action movies. Reports have been coming in that Ravi Teja, who was very impressed, has given his green signal to Sarath. On the other side, Ravi Teja was last seen playing the role of a powerful police officer in action drama *Krack* in which he shared the screen space with *Gabbar Singh* and *Vakeel Saab* fame Shruti Haasan. Currently he is playing a dual role in *Khiladi*.



Rana, Tripathi power KKR to 187



Picture credits: IPLT20.com



Picture credits: IPLT20.com

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Opener Nitish Rana (80) and Rahul Tripathi (53) hit fluent half-centuries to propel Kolkata Knight Riders to a challenging 187 for six against Sunrisers Hyderabad in their Indian Premier League match, here on Sunday.

SRH's Rashid Khan (2/24) was yet again at his best, asking tough questions to the batsmen but most of his bowling colleagues proved ineffective on a batting-friendly wicket.

Dinesh Karthik (22 not out off 9 balls) provided a late flourish to KKR innings but they could gather only 42 runs in the last five overs.

Left-handed opener Rana struck the ball hard and clean to provide his side a confident start after they were asked to take first strike.

His strokes on the off-side —

NITISH RANA LAST SIX INNINGS IN IPL

Runs	Balls	Opposition team
0	1	RR
81	53	DC
0	1	KXIP
87	61	CSK
0	1	RCB
80	56	SRH

the drives and cuts - were of highest quality and a treat to the eye.

Neither Bhuvneshwar Kumar nor T Natarajan could stop Rana from hitting boundaries even as Subhan Gill was quiet initially. Sandeep Sharma was hit for three boundaries in a row by him.

Gill opened up his arms to hit a massive straight six off Natarajan to make it even better for KKR.

However, the run-flow was affected when ever-reliable Rashid got the ball in his hands. He also

provided the breakthrough when he deceived Gill with a wrong'un to find the stumps.

Rana though kept going strong, completing his half-century with a six off Vijay Shankar after surviving an LBW appeal off Rashid. He got the decision overturned, taking the DRS call. Rana's six-hitting continued after getting his fifty as he punished Natarajan and Sandeep again.

His colleague at the other end Rahul Tripathi also stroked confidently and fluently. He smashed a massive six off Bhuvneshwar and then followed it up with a cheeky four in the third-man region.

He completed his fifty with another boundary off Bhuvneshwar but was dismissed by Natarajan soon after when he top-edged a ball. Rashid too sent back dangerous Andre Russell (5) back.

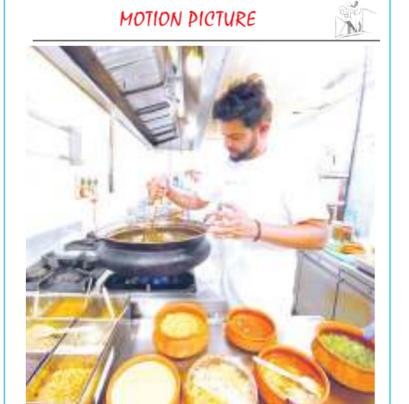
Mohammed Nabi (2/32) got rid of Rana and Eoin Morgan (2) off successive balls in the 18th

PLAYER	RUNS
1. Shikhar Dhawan (DC)	85
2. Nitish Rana (KKR)	80
3. Prithvi Shaw (DC)	72

PLAYER	WKTS
1. Harshal Patel (RCB)	5
2. Avesh Khan (DC)	2
3. Chris Woakes (DC)	2

MOST SIXES	NO.
1. Nitish Rana (KKR)	4
2. Suresh Raina (CSK)	4
3. Chris Lynn (MI)	3

SUMMER SLAM



Chennai Super Kings' Suresh Raina spends time in kitchen @chennaiIPL



David Warner's daughters Indi Rae, Isla Rose and Ivy Mae get ready to cheer for Sunrisers Hyderabad @davidwarner31

Big-hitters galore

RR, Punjab Kings aim for winning start to IPL campaign

KEY PLAYERS

BEN STOKES
English all-rounder will have an extra responsibility with the ball this time in absence of Archer.

CHRIS GAYLE
He will be the X-factor in Kings line-up. Gayle's power hitting can take PBKS to big total.

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Another battle of big-hitters is on the cards when KL Rahul's Punjab Kings take on the Sanju Samson-led Rajasthan Royals, two line-ups dotted with expansive stroke-makers and in pursuit of a winning start to their IPL campaigns here on Monday.

Rajasthan will be banking heavily on their swashbuckling all-rounder Ben Stokes. Stokes will be keen to get some runs under his belt and so will be the likes of Englishman Jos Buttler and newly-appointed skipper Samson, who is a mine-field of talent.

The Royals could opt to open with the highly-rated Yashasvi Jaiswal and Buttler. While Samson, who would be itching to prove a point, and Stokes would then form strong middle-order.

If the four fire on all cylinders, they can pummel any attack into submission and Punjab would be no exception on the Wankhede track, which is usually batting-friendly.

Royals also have an several other options at their disposal, including all-rounders Shivam Dube, Shreyas Gopal, Rahul Tewatia, Riyan Parag and Liam Livingstone.

Gopal, Tewatia and Parag, all bowl leg-spin, so it would be interesting to see whether the Royals opt to go in with two leg-spinners. Tewatia and Dube have the ability to whack the ball outside the park

VENUE: WANKHEDE STADIUM, MUMBAI

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	21
Rajasthan Royals	12
Punjab Kings	9

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

- Rajasthan Royals defeated Punjab Kings by 4 wickets at Sharjah
- Rajasthan Royals beat Punjab Kings by 7 wickets at Abu Dhabi

1922

Punjab Kings Skipper Lokesh Rahul who scored 1922 runs at an average of 54.91 in 42 innings of as many matches, needs 78 runs to become only second batsman after Shaun Marsh (2477 runs) to score over 2000 runs for Punjab Kings in IPL.

and look to be certainties in the playing XI.

With star pacer Jofra Archer missing due to injury, the pace attack will have to be led by Rajasthan's newest recruit — South African all-rounder Chris Morris, who will be eager to justify his huge price tag of Rs 16.25 crore.

RR will have to get their combination right as only four foreigners can make the playing XI.

So, it will be interesting to see whether Royals opt for left-arm pacer Mustafizur Rahman or go in with either Jaydev Unadkat, Kartik Tyagi or Chetan Sakariya.

Unadkat, with his experience, might get the nod.

On the other hand, Punjab boast of some hard-hitters like Rahul (670 runs in 2020 season), Mayank Agarwal (424 runs) and Chris Gayle.

Rahul and Agarwal formed a lethal opening combination in 2020 and would continue to open.

They also have the likes of Englishman Dawid Malan, one of the finest T20 batsmen currently, hard-hitting Tamil Nadu batsman M Shikhar Khan, and West Indian Nicholas Pooran.

For them too, it would be all about getting the combination right.

Shahrukh could get the nod ahead of others like Deepak Hooda and Sarfaraz Khan, and could play the role of a finisher.

Dhawan impressed by Pant's calmness on captaincy debut

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Delhi Capitals experienced opener Shikhar Dhawan was mighty impressed with Rishabh Pant's leadership qualities, saying the youngster led the team in a calm and composed manner in his first match as captain and will only get better with time.

Pant was thrust into captaincy after regular skipper Shreyas Iyer sustained a shoulder injury during the recent ODI series against England and was ruled out of the tournament.

The 23-year-old wicketkeeper-batsman made a memorable start to his captaincy stint as he led DC to a convincing seven-wicket win over three-time champions Chennai Super Kings in their opening match of the IPL 2021 here on Saturday.

"He (Rishabh Pant) did quite well. First of all, glad that he won the toss. It was a bit of a sticky wicket, so it was good for us to bat second.



Picture credits: IPLT20.com

He kept his calm and kept on motivating the boys," Dhawan said during the post-match press conference.

"He made good changes as well. It was his first match (as captain), so I am sure it is only going to get refined from here. He has just

started and with experience, I am sure, he is only going to get better.

"The best thing about Rishabh Pant is that he stays calm. His presence of mind is quite there, which is very very good."

Asked if he gives his advice to Pant as a senior player, Dhawan said: "...Of course, I give my advice to him. The youngsters, whenever they come to me to ask for batting tips or mindset things, I always share my knowledge with them."

Dhawan smashed a 54-ball 85 studded with 10 fours and two maximums and alongwith Prithvi Shaw (72) shared a 138-run opening stand as Delhi chased down 189 with eight balls to spare.

Asked about his sweep shots against the pacers, Dhawan said: "I started practising it at the nets and then introduced it in the game. We have to play according to the field set. I knew Chennai keeps square leg and fine leg inside the 30-yard circle and keep covers behind for me.

Missing Jofra is big blow: Sangakkara

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Star pacer Jofra Archer's absence because of injury is a "big blow" to Rajasthan Royals but their new Director of Cricket Kumar Sangakkara is confident that the team's young Indian fast bowlers will rise to the challenge in this year's Indian Premier League.

Archer, who played with a hand injury during the India series, is currently recuperating from a surgery and the duration of his availability during the later part is still not clear.

"Sanju and I will both agree that it's a big blow for us. Jofra is a very vital part of our make-up and not to have him is unfortunately the reality of it. We have to work around it and plan contingencies," Sangakkara told PTI during a virtual press conference on Sunday ahead of the clash against Punjab Kings here on Monday.

The former Sri Lankan captain is, however, hopeful that Archer will be available at some point and "play his part in the IPL."



Picture credits: @rajasthanroyals

The weak link for Royals, over the years, has been their Indian pace attack where the most experienced name Jaydev Unadkat hasn't exactly set the stage on fire.

Apart from Unadkat, they have his left-arm back-up

Chetan Sakariya and the immensely talented Kartik Tyagi.

"Inexperience can probably work for you and it could mean that opposition hasn't seen you either. Fast bowling in IPL is not an easy task and we saw that yes-

terday (Delhi Capitals vs Chennai Super Kings) as well," said Sangakkara, who has played a number of seasons in the IPL.

"Most of the wickets are good for batting. So, you have to be quite skilful. We have Kartik Tyagi, who did pretty well last season in patches and this year we have new additions (pacer) Kuldeep Yadav (Jr) and Chetan Sakariya," he stated.

For Sangakkara, it is imperative that these youngsters are prepared to understand match situations and bowl accordingly.

"It's about keeping them focussed on what their job is and get them trained and prepared to execute different deliveries, scenarios and match plans for the opposition but at the same time, giving them confidence about their own strengths."

The Royals skipper Sanju Samson has gone slightly off the radar as far as the national team is concerned after having failed to grab even a single opportunity. However, Sangakkara believes that both the captain and Rahul Tewatia, who recently was in

India squad for the T20 series against England, could be national team regulars if they can trust their abilities a bit more.

"Pressure is always there. Whether it is Sanju or Rahul, reality is they will tell you that expectations and pressures will always be there. Everyone has various coping mechanisms to deal with it, focus is to stay in the moment," he said.

"It is very important to have those grand ambitions of playing regular international cricket, and both Sanju and Rahul are very capable of not just being regulars but great, outstanding performers at the international stage."

The eloquent former glovesman wants each of his 11 players to be "problem solvers," who can think on their feet and help the skipper.

"...That really helps the skipper Sanju a lot on the field when people are thinking themselves as to what's going on (match situation), and it also builds a lot of trust within the unit," he added.