

WILL PURSUE BOTH, MUSIC AND MEDICINE'

HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW

BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

BHUBANESWAR RANCHI **DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA**

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WEEKEND CURFEW IN DELHI; MALLS, GYMS SHUT. HOME DELIVERY FOR RESTAURANTS

elhi will shut down on weekends from Friday to "break the chain of transmission" as it tackles a steep rise in Covid cases, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal announced today. During the weekend curfew, essential activities like weddings planned already will be allowed with passes. Auditoriums, restaurants, malls, gyms and spas will be shut down and movie theatres will be allowed with a third of their capacity on weekdays. Eating out is banned and only home deliveries and takeaways are allowed. Weekly markets will continue but with restrictions - one market will be allowed on any day at a given zone.

VIRAT KOHLI REPRIMANDED FOR IPL CODE OF CONDUCT BREACH

oyal Challengers Bangalore (RCB) skipper RVirat Kohli has been "reprimanded" for breaching Indian Premier League's Code of Conduct during the IPL 2021 match against SunRisers Hyderabad at the MA Chidambaram Stadium in Chennai, the IPL said in a media statement. During the match on Wednesday, Kohli was dismissed for 33 off 29 balls by Jason Holder and while walking off the field, the RCB captain hit an advertising cushion on the boundary before whacking a chair in the team's dugout with his bat. Kohli admitted to the Level 1 offence 2.2 which relates to "Abuse of cricket equipment or clothing, ground

NEET POST-GRAD EXAM SCHEDULED ON SUNDAY DEFERRED AMID COVID SURGE

he NEET-PG medical entrance exams scheduled for Sunday - have been postponed "in light of the surge in NEET COVID-19 cases", Union Health Minister Dr Harsh Vardhan tweeted Thursday evening. Dr Vardhan said that a new date for the exam - which will decide the careers of an estimated 1.7 lakh medical aspirants - will be announced later. "In light of the surge in COVID-19 cases, the Government of India has decided to postpone NEET-PG 2021 exam, which was earlier scheduled to be held on April 18. Next date to be decided later" he said. "Decision has been taken keeping well-being of our young medical students in mind," the minister added.

WPI INFLATION SPIKES TO OVER 8-YEAR HIGH OF 7.39% IN MARCH

he wholesale price-based inflation shot up to over 8-year high of 7.39 per cent in March on rising crude oil and metal prices. Also, the low base of March last year, when the data was computed with a low response rate due to the nationwide lockdown, contributed to the spike in inflation in March 2021. The WPI inflation was 4.17 per cent in February 2021 and 0.42 per cent in March 2020. This is the third straight month of up-tick seen in the wholesale price index (WPI) based inflation. "The annual rate of inflation stood at 7.39 per cent (provisional) for the month of March 2021 over March 2020," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said.

WhatsApp messages and human psychology



Global cooperation must to end menace: **Delegates**



'Need to create room for quick scaling up of vax production'

TODAY

Month & Paksham:

Chaitra & Shukla Paksha Panchangam Tithi: Chaturthi: 06:05 pm Nakshatram: Rohini: 11:40 pm

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

Rahukalam: 10:42 am - 12:15 pm **Yamagandam :** 03:22 pm - 04:55 pm **Varjyam:** 02:37 pm - 04:26 pm, 12:00 am -

Gulika: 07:36 am - 09:09 am **Good Time:** (to start any important work) **Amritakalam**: 08:03 pm − 09:51 pm **Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:51 am - 12:40 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy **Temp:** 34/23 Humidity: 43% Sunrise: 05:59 am **Sunset:** 06:32 pm Current Weather Conditions Updated april 15, 2021 5:00 PM

Every 4th Covid +ve person in TS heading to pvt hospital

equipment or fixtures and fittings during a Match"

NAVEENA GHANATE

In spite of Health Minister Eatela Rajender's repeated appeals to people that Covid +ve patients should approach government facilities that he says are fully equipped and prop-erly supplied; amidst the alarmingly rising nationwide caseload, one in four TS corona patients is heading to private hospitals for treatment, notwithstanding their extortionate treatment charges

Hospitalisation has significantly increased in the second wave, with the number of cases crossing the previous peak witnessed in August during the first wave. Presently, one in 4 Covid-19 +ve person is getting admitted to private hospital in Telangana. As per the Telangana health bulletin, there are 29,649 active cases in the state.

Covid patients in the State. Although this represents 30.9% of the total cases admitted, the media bulletin states that only 19.2% of the cases are symptomatic. This raises eyebrows concerning the transparency with regard to cases and beds being reported by the Health Department.

Of these, while 6,549 have occupied beds in private hospitals, the remaining - 2,627 - have occupied beds in government hospitals. Nearly 50% of beds in private hospitals are occupied by Covid-19 patients. Nearly 2,585 persons are in ICU or 9% of the total cases. Nearly 60% of the available ICU beds and 64% of oxygen beds are occupied in private hospitals.

Nearly 49% of people hospitalised are in need of oxygen. Even in TIMS, established exclusively for Covid19 patients by the

More people are getting sick 1 in 3 Covid19 patients

35% of beds in TIMS occupied

hospitalised

28% of in-patients require ICU beds

53% ICU beds in Gandhi Hospital occupied Health department says

Government of Telangana, nearly 35% of the beds are occupied. According to official data, one in 3 persons is getting hospitalised in

only 19.2% are symptomatic



More children affected in 2nd wave in Hyd

ANUSHA PUPPALA

The second wave of Covid-19 seems to be spreading more rapidly and affecting people belonging to all age groups, including children, with March-April data shared by Neuberg Diagnostics Hyderabad suggesting that the percentage of children in the city who have here effected this time. who have been affected this time is significantly more than that registered for the corresponding period in the first wave. The trend is similar in various parts of the country too.

A significant feature of the second wave is the noticeable clusters of people infected, mainly in family clusters, apartment clusters etc., says city cicrobiologist Dr. Saranya Narayan. Despite testing positive, many of these children were asymptomatic.



According to an analysis of available data, in 2020, among children 38 per cent were positive in August, 28 per cent in September, 19 per cent in October month, 16 per cent were positive in December. In 2021, the positivity rate among 2021, the positivity rate among children increased from 6 per cent in January to 31 per cent in April 2021. In February 2021, 4 per cent children were positive and in March 21 per cent children were positive in Hyderabad city.



people and companies as it moved to hold the Kremlin accountable for interference in last year's presidential election and the hacking of federal agencies. The actions represent the first retaliatory measures announced against the Kremlin for the hack, familiarly known as the SolarWinds breach. In that intru-sion, Russian hackers are believed to have infected widely used soft-

US expels Russian

new sanctions

diplomats, imposes

ware with malicious code, enabling them to access the networks of at least nine agencies in what US officials believe was an intelligencegathering operation aimed at mining government secrets.



Telangana cancels SSC, postpones Inter exams

ML MELLY MAITREYI

The School Education Department has taken crucial decisions in view 19 cases in TS. It has cancelled the Secondary School Certificate examination scheduled to be held from May 17 and postponed all Intermediate Second Year examination scheduled to be held between May 1 and 19.

After the Central Board of Secondary Examinations (CBSE) took the decision to cancel Class 10 examination, State Education Minister Sabitha Reddy held a meeting with Education department officials on Thursday.

There have been requests from students and parents to the Chief Minister to cancel the examinations in view of the surge in Covid-19 cases. Some students even made online petitions.



There are over 5.4 lakh SSC students in the State and in view of the present serious pandemic situation and concerns expressed by parents and students, the Department felt that it would not be safe to conduct the examinations for such a large number of students. Students have been calling Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy directly appealing to her to cancel the examinations as hardly any physical classes were held throughout the academic



Hospitals overwhelmed by Covid surge as beds, oxygen fall short across country

PNS NEW DELHI

Many hospitals were scrambling for beds and oxygen as COVID-19 record on Thursday, with a second wave of infections centred on the rich western state of Maharashtra. Experts blamed everything from official complacency to aggressive variants. The government blamed a widespread failure to practise physical distancing and wear face

"The situation is horrible," said Avinash Gawande, an official at a government hospital in the industrial city of Nagpur that was battling a flood of patients, as were hospitals in neighbouring Gujarat state and New Delhi in the north.

"We are a 900-bed hospital, but there are about 60 patients waiting and we don't have space for them. Maharashtra, home to the finan-



Covid positive patients sharing a bed in Delhi, reflecting severe scarcity of beds in capital

cial capital of Mumbai, began a lockdown at midnight, a move that spurred a rush to stockpile essential items in advance.

At Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan (LNJP) Hospital in New Delhi, the country's largest facility

a Reuters witness said.

treating Covid patients, two or three patients were seen sharing single beds in some wards as overworked doctors attended to them,



One patient is now infecting up to nine in 10 contacts

The second surge of Covid cases in India has swamped hospitals much faster than the first because mutations in the virus mean each patient is infecting many more people than before, epidemiologists and doctors say.

India's daily infections skyrocketed more than 20-fold to more than 200,000 on Thursday since a multi-month-low in early February, though the government has played down the role of mutants in the latest rise, the worst anywhere this month.



→ NAGARJUNA SAGAR BY-POLL ⊢

High-pitched campaign ends; all political parties exude confidence

TRS sure of retaining seat with good margin, Cong confident of wresting seat

PNS HYDERABAD

Winning a bye-election in an Assembly constituency ought to have been a breeze for the ruling party, considering that its sitting legislator had earned much goodwill. Going by the way the Telangana Rashtra Samithi went all-out to campaign for the Nagarjuna Sagar

bye-election, pressing several of its ministers to camp in the constituency, it is apparent that the pink party not only focused on the win but also the victory margin.

Determined to challenge the TRS after the recent set-back in the Graduate MLC election, the Congress and BJP too adopted their respective strategies as the highpitched campaign drew to a close on Thursday.

Like the recently held Graduate MLC election, the campaign for the bye-election too was aggressive, with sporadic clashes and political parties trading charges against one another about the free flow of liquor and cash.



Manickam says new TPCC chief after by-poll

K VENKATESHWARLU

Telangana Congress Party Affairs in-charge Manickam Tagore reiterated on Thursday that the Congress High Command will appoint the new TPCC chief only after the Nagarjuna Sagar by-elections.

It may be recalled that, three months ago the party's candidate for the Nagarjuna Sagar by-election K Jana Reddy and others requested the High Command to keep on hold the announcement until after the Nagarjuna Sagar by-elections.



Poll notification issued for 7 Urban local bodies

PNS HYDERABAD

The State administration as well as political parties will get into campaign mode once again, following the issue of notification for elections to seven urban local bodies even as campaigning for the Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly bye-election ended on Thursday.

The State Election Commission on Thursday issued the schedule for elections to the Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation, Khammam Municipal Corporation and Atchampet, Siddipet, Nakrekal, Jadcherla and Kothur municipalities to be held on April 30.

There are a total of 248 divisions/wards in the above urban local bodies. Elections will also be held to nine casual vacancies, including Lingojiguda ward in Greater Hvderabad Municipal Corporation. The Model Code of Conduct will come into force with immediate effect in all the ULBs where elections will be held.

Nominations will be accepted from Friday between 10.30 a.m and 5 p.m and the ward-wise electoral rolls of urban local bodies will be displayed by the Returning Officer

Warangal, Khammam corporations and five municipalities go to polls on April 30



for filing nominations, followed by scrutiny on April 19. One can appeal against rejection of nominations on April 20 and such appeals will be disposed on April 21. The last date for withdrawal of nominations is April 22 and the final list of contestants will be published after 3 pm the same day. Polling will be held on April 30 and re-poll if any will be held on May 2. Counting of votes will be taken up on May 3 from 8 a.m. onwards and the results will be declared after the completion of counting of votes.

Excise dept on search for absconding bidders

SNCN ACHARYULU

questions about the sobriety of those who had taken part in the recent bidding for fresh licences to operate bar-cum-restaurants in TS, the Telangana Excise Department is now hunting for about 40 applicants who are incommunicado after having secured fresh licences for opersuccessful bidding. The absconding applicants are mainly from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) limits.

The state government had decidstate. Accordingly, in February the state government issued tender notification calling applications for obtaining licences to start new bar and restaurants in the state.

and restaurants will increase to 5,790 (5,631 at present).

Of the new bars, 55 will be in a bar and restaurant to select the final bidder.

For excise tax, there are four slabs. Those in areas within 50,000 opulation area will have to pay Rs 30 lakh, those in areas with popu-

lation between 50,000 and 5 lakh will pay a fee of Rs 42 lakh, while those in areas with a population of 5 lakh to 20 lakh will have to pay Rs 44 lakh in fee. The highest fees, at Rs 49 lakh, are for areas with more than 20 lakh population. The application fee is Rs 1 lakh, which is not refundable. For 159 new barcum-restaurants 8,464 applications were received.

the same day. April 18 is the last date

With this, the total number of bar $\,$ ating bar-cum-restaurants through

In a strange case that also raises GHMC limits, while 19 will be in the peripheral areas. The usual practice is to go for draw of lots if ed to issue licences afresh to start more than one applicant applies for new bar-cum-restaurants in the



ThatsApp is these days one of the most popular social media tools used for multiple ways of communication. According to the developer, WhatApp messages and calls are end-to-end encrypted. No one outside the parties engaged, not even WhatsApp, can read or listen to such conversations.

This free and encrypted way of secured communication has further added to the utilitarian value of WhatsApp. Encrypted it may be, however, there are ways and means to break into any code and to penetrate so-called secured conversations.

The users of WhatsApp know the versatility of the application that can be used for making one-to-one as well as one-to-many multi-media communications. As for its special features, such as group and broadcast, up to 256 participants can share text mes-

WhatsApp messages and human psychology

saging, make audio and video calls, and transfer media files. Recently, WhatsApp was in the news for their intention

to change the privacy norms that led to massive migration from WhatsApp to Signal, Instagram and other plat-Despite migration to other

apps, majority of people continued to use WhatsApp. The popular perception was that Instagram is like a presti-gious gymnasium that everybody loves to be a member of, but hates to use it. This explains the massive popularity of WhatsApp in comparison to its contemporaries and competitors. Rattled by the migration, WhatsApp, in a swift response, resorted to a cam-

paign suggesting it would

This free and encrypted way of secured communication has further added to the utilitarian value of WhatsApp. Encrypted it may be, however, there are ways and means to break into any code and to penetrate so-called secured conversations.

maintain the status quo.

Those using WhatsApp can peep into the workings of human psychology from time to time.

There are users who even before reading the message themselves and even without verifying the veracity of received information, as an intuitive response, forward it to their contacts. Like everywhere else, there are genuine

App.

The most dangerous cateaf rabble gory is those of rabble rousers, who create and disseminate inflammatory and potentially libellous contents. Several steps have been taken to control this menace such as by putting restrictions on the numbers of individuals and groups to whom a message could be sent at a time. This to some extent has controlled the problem, though not fully.



DR SHAILENDRA JOSHI, Advisor of Telangana govt and forme

This uniform treatment, restricting circulating useful and harmful messages across the board, needs to be corrected. May be at a later date, we can find a solution to this problem by segregating the

through artificial intelligence. Another interesting aspect is receiving messages sent to various people in bulk thanking them for participation in a function/program/event etc; even one has not ventured out and did not attend any such

If membership of someone spans a reasonable number of WhatApp groups, chances of receiving the same/similar message within a limited span of time is very high.

All of us are used to receiv-

ing a barrage of messages triggered by a single message. One is also instinctively forced to acknowledge the event and act to convey the similar message. Only one message is sufficient to initiate an avalanche of messages.

Such messages are sometimes communicated to the person even if she is not a member of the group.

Dissemination of so-called knowledge and information sharing on various subjects through WhatApp is mind-

boggling.
There is a WhatsApp remedy for every illness, disease or a problem. If the same trend continues, there may be genuine demands to bestow status of a University or at least a deemed University on WhatsApp.

There is another category of people daily wishing good morning, good evening and good night or some similar repetitive messages to all their acquaintances. While we wish and mean well to all our contacts, I will share one

example of hospitalisation of one of my friends. The moment a news is broken, everyone has to wish the patient get well soon and remembering her in their prayers. It is perhaps, social pressure that compels this mass reaction even knowing that the person or his family are not in a position to receive or read such mes-

The intention seems to show off to other members of the group how caring they are. It is always good to convey directly to the person concerned, instead of responding in a group. One can cite any number of instances depicting various aspects of human psychology while using social media.

To conclude, there is a need to develop and follows:

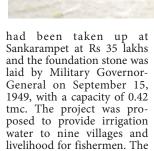
need to develop and follow a protocol of etiquette for using social media, including ascertaining correctness of the

Sarala Sagar dam - now a testimony for negligence

MALLEPALLI GOVERDHAN

Sarala Sagar Project, which was the second biggest dam in Asia built with siphon technology was now left as a testimony for negligence by the rulers. The farmers were in deep concern over the cracks through which water was going waste.

It was the oldest irrigation project in India after independence as second Raja of Wanaparty Raja Rameshwara Rao founded by the Sarala Sagar Dam Project that has incorporated siphon technology from California in the United States. He had built the project in the name of his queen Sarala Devi. He had deputed a team of engineers to visit California to study the siphon technology. The project



Narasinga Rao had inaugurated the project. When the project bund was

then PWD Minister JV



breached in 1964 with heavy rains and it was reconstructed with boulders. The project was abandoned with drought conditions. To ensure full tank level, a balancing reservoir was built at Rs 12 crore at a distance of 10 km from the project. The project had provided irrigation water for 12 years continuously and the farmers incurred a huge loss due to a breach of the bund on the left

siphon which was in the shape of an elephant trunk will release 3.444 cusecs of water. If all the hood-siphons opened, about 58,500 cusecs of water will be released downwards. From each prime siphon will allow 500 cusecs of water. If all the four siphons opened, about 2000 cusecs of water will be released. The Full Storage Level (FSL) was 1089 feet. The speciality of the project was that if the water levels reached 1089.25 feet, the hood siphons will automatically open and release water. Based on the inflows of water, the hood siphons will open for every 0.25 feet of water. About 27 hood siphons and four prime siphons were arranged for the project. The 530-feet stone structure and 3357 mud structure were part of the project.

Excise dept on search for absconding...

Continued from page 1

As usual even non-serious players entered the competition with a view to sell their licences for additional money after the draw of

lots.

They were prepared to lose Rs 1 lakh application fee in the process. Such players, should they get bar and restaurant, will ask interested parties to shell out more money, depending on the

area and demand. The goodwill amount may around Rs 10 lakh to Rs 25 lakh. Such applicants do not give their original address, but mention some other

In the normal situation, the demand for bar-cumrestaurants is more, but due to Covid this time the overall demand has been some-

More children affected in 2nd wave in Hyderabad

Continued from page 1

Dr. Saranya Narayan, said, "Children were affected in the first wave also, but more gradually, indicates data of tested children from both first and second wave. In the second wave, which became obvious in March 2021, children are getting affected more rapidly because of reasons like easing of the lockdown restrictions late last year, complacency leading to lack of Covid- appropriate behaviour, travel, schools reopening and emergence of the mutant strains"

These children can more easily spread the virus like adults as children can't be kept indoors all the time. When they play with other children, there is a greater likelihood of spread. In addition, the younger children

may not follow the safety norms prescribed. Also, the entire small cluster families are testing positive. In these families also children are testing positive", she further

Dr Lohith Reddy, a post-graduate paediatrician treat-ing child Covid patients at Gandhi Medical College, told The Pioneer, "We are treating children from infants to children of up to 12-years age and what we observed is that even though the severity is same from the previous year, the only thing is that the number of Covid cases among children has increased. And if children are getting infected, they are spreading even to their family members. The severity is lesser in children when compared to adults because of

quite different from those of adults, and severity depends on comorbidities in children".

He added, "So far, in Gandhi Hospital we have seen 30-40 positive cases in children, but a huge number of cased was reported in Niloufer Hospital in the second wave. In the first wave, we have seen 5 to 10 percent of cases; whereas, in the second wave, it has increased to 10 to 15 per cent of positive cases. More cases are reported from the age group of 5 to 12 years of age. Children with comorbidities are seen symptomatic, whereas children without any comorbidities are asymptomatic. Children and parents both should be very careful and wear masks even at home as the infection is easily spreading from each other".

Hospitals overwhelmed...

Continued from page 1

Covid-positive patients - from a one-and-a-half-year-old toddler to many elderly - and their relatives kept streaming in to the emergency ward at LNJP, arriving by ambulance, cars or auto-rickshaws through the

seen such a bad situation. This time the number is very high and increasing very rapidly, going (at a) very fast speed, so the situation is really alarming," said LNJP Medical Director Suresh

"We are definitely overburdened... Today we have 158 admissions in Lok Nayak alone. All sick patients, all severe patients," Kumar added.

India has added 200,739 infections over the last 24 hours, health ministry data showed, for a seventh daily record surge in the last eight days, while 1,038 deaths took its toll to 173,123.

Its tally of 14.1 million infections is second only to the United States, with 31.4 million.Despite injecting about 114 million vaccine doses, the highest figure worldwide after

HYDERABAD **BULLION RATES**



RATES ₹/KG Dressed/With Skin ₹193 Without Skin

CHICKEN

Broiler at Farm

RATES ₹/100 **HYDERABAD** 446 VIJAYAWADA 393 VISAKHAPATNAM 505 RETAIL PRICE ₹4. 46

the United States and China, India has covered only a small part of its 1.4 billion people.

India said on Thursday regulators would decide on emergency-use applications for foreign COVID-19 vaccines within three working days, as it tries to attract Pfizer, Johnson & Johnson and

One patient is now infecting up to nine in 10 contacts

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The world's hardest-hit country after the United States has reported about 950 cases of people contracting the variants first detected in the United Kingdom, South Africa and "The point is that these

variants of concern are still not on top of the discourse," said epidemiologist Rajib Dasgupta of New Delhi's Jawaharlal Nehru University. "Even if it is a new variant,

you need to do the same things" to control it and treat patients "but it requires a different urgency to recognise that", he said.

Doctors at New Delhi's All India Institute of Medical Sciences have found that one patient is now infecting up to nine in 10 contacts, compared with up to four last year.

Scientists in Britain say the B.1.1.7 variant here, widely known as the British mutant, is 70% more transmissible than previous variants, and

The northern Indian state of Punjab, which has reported one of the highest recent fatality rates in the country, said late last month 81% of 401 COVID-19 samples it sent for genome sequencing were found to be the British

"This virus is more infectious and virulent," said Dhiren Gupta, a senior consultant at New Delhi's Sir Ganga Ram Hospital.

US expels Russian diplomats...

Continued from page 1

side in 2019. Each hood-

Besides that hack, US officials last month alleged that Russian President Vladimir Putin authorised influence operations to help Donald Trump in his unsuccessful bid for reelection as president, though there's no evidence votes or manipulated the out-

The measures announced Thursday include sanctions on six Russian companies that support the country's cyber activities, in addition to sanctions on 32 individuals and entities accused of attempting to interfere in last year's presidential election, including by spreading disinformation.

The 10 diplomats being expelled include representatives of Russian intelligence services, the White House

The White House also said Biden was using diplomatic, military and intelligence channels to respond to reports that Russia encouraged the Taliban to attack US and allied troops in Afghanistan based on the best assessments of the intel-

Reports of alleged bounties surfaced last year, with the Trump administration coming under fire for not raising the issue directly with Russia. The White House did not publicly confirm the reports. The safety and well-being of US military personnel, and that of our allies and partners, is an absolute priority of the United States, the White House said Thursday.

It was not immediately clear what, if any, other actions

might be planned against Russia. Officials had previously said they expected to take actions both seen and unseen.

The sanctions, presumably intended to send a clear retributive message to Russia and to deter similar acts in the future, are certain to exacerbate an already tense relation-Russia.

President Joe Biden told Putin this week in their second call to de-escalate tensions following a Russian military buildup on Ukraine's border, and said the US would act firmly in defence of its national interests regarding Russian intrusions and election interference.

In a television interview last month, Biden replied "I do" when asked if he thought Putin was a killer.

Poll notification...

Continued from page 1

The following is the list of wards in the seven urban local bodies: Greater Warangal Municipal Corporation-66 wards, Khammam Municipal Corporation-60 wards, Atchampet municipality in Nagarkurool district- 20 wards. Siddipet municipalily in Siddipet district- 43 wards, Nakrekal in Nalgonda district-20 wards, Jadcherla in Mahabubnagar- 27 wards and Kothur municipality in Ranga Reddy-12 wards.

A total of 11,26,221 voters are there in the seven ULBs, comprising 5,53,862 male voters, 5,72,121 female voters and 236 others. A total of 1,532 polling stations will be set up and they will be covered either by videography, webcasting

The SEC deployed 203 Returning Officers, 203 Assistant Returning Officers, 6,070 other polling personnel, counting staff- 1,555, Zonal officers- 97, Flying Squads-33, Static Surveillance Teams- 22 for the election duties.

The Commission also appointed eight general observers, 10 expenditure observers, and 20 assistant expenditure observers. A total of 2,479 ballot boxes will be used for the election.

The SEC also notified elections to nine casual vacancies, including Ward No.18 Lingojiguda at LB Nagar in GHMC, to be held along with polls to the seven ULBs.

The SEC said Covid-19 guidelines should be adhered to during the campaign

Manickam says new TPCC...

Continued from page 1

Jana then reasoned that naming the new TPCC chief might have an impact on the Nagarjuna Sagar by-poll.

Accepting the request of Jana Reddy, the party High Command with name the TPCC chief. Due to this decision of the High Command, officiating TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy has been continuing in the position, though he tendered his resignation immediately after the party's debacle in the GHMC elections.

TPCC working president and Malkajgiri MP A Revanth Reddy, Naglonda MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy and a few others have been seriously trying to grab the position. Even Manickam Tagore had gleaned opinions of party leaders by staying for three days in Hyderabad. However, a few MLAs had warned the High Command then stating that a split would be inevitable if it failed to take the opinions of the party's senior leaders in TS. However, a few party leaders batted for Revanth Reddy openly. The process of N'Sagar by-election will end on May 2 and the new TPCC chief may be named soon after the results of the bypoll are out. However, the irony is that the results may its impact also on the appointment of the new TPCC chief

High-pitched campaign ends; all political parties exude...

Continued from page 1

Top leaders of all the three political parties addressed public meetings, braving the corona scare in support of their respective candidates in addition to road shows and paday-

fielded Nomula Bhagath Kumar, son of late MLA Nomula Narasimaiah, for the sitting seat against K.Jana Reddy of the Congress, seven-time MLA from the constituency, and Ravikumar Naik

The TRS Ministers and MLAs who have been camping in the constituency for the last three weeks say that KCR's image, irrigation schemes and welfare programmes reaching over one lakh beneficiaries in the constituency and sympathy for Nomula's family will ensure Bhagat's win with a thumping

Once the notification was issued for the bye-election on February 23, soon after the MLC elections, TRS deputed its Ministers and MLAs as incharges to cover each of the seven mandals in the Sagar constituency and drill into the electorate nuggets about the welfare and developmental programmes implemented by the government. The TRS leadership was convinced that it was important to talk about

what they had done till date as well as what they would be doing to address pending issues.

Minister Chief Chandrasekhar Rao addressed a public meeting at Halia on Wednesday -- second in span of two months -- seeking votes for the party candidate and mainly targeting the Congress party and former MLA Jana Reddy for failure to develop the constituency. His advice for

people was to see the visible development of last six years after he had risked his life to achieve Telangana.

The Congress party, which was the first to announce veteran Congress leader K Jana Reddy, who had lost to Nomula Narasimaiah in the last Assembly elections, is equally confident of Jana Reddy's win. The grand old party is sure that Jana's victory would be a turning point in State politics.

Telangana cancels SSC, postpones...

Continued from page 1

Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy, who discussed the situation with officials on Thursday, decided it would be better to cancel the SSC examination and the file relating to the subject was sent to the Chief Minister for his approval. In the evening, a GO was issued cancelling the 10th

class exams to be held from

May 17. It was stated that the

results of 10th class students

would be prepared on the

basis of objective criteria to be

developed by the SSC Board Telangana at a later date. Any candidate not satisfied

with the marks allotted will be given an opportunity to sit in an exam as and when the conditions are conducive, the GO issued by Special Chief Secretary Chitra said. The Government also issued a GO about postponement of Inter second year exams. It was stated that all Intermediate first vear students would be promoted without exams and that exams would be held whenever possible at a future date.

All Intermediate second year students having backlog would be given minimum passing marks. The 25 per cent weightage of Inter marks would not be considered for Eamcet this year.

The government had cancelled the SSC exams last year as well and promoted all students taking their internal assessment marks into consideration. The exams were finally cancelled after repeated postponements due to challenges in the High Court, citing Covid-19 cases.

Every 4th Covid +ve person in TS...

Continued from page 1

According to Dr Sravan Kumar, city-based pulmonologist working in a government hospital, "In this wave, patients are exhibiting moderate to severe symptoms, irrespective of age group. People are getting ill more this time, compared to the previous wave. Even those in 30-40 age group are complaining of low oxygen

🍩 GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

EE-Div 16 (9B) (SBZ), GHMC

NIT No: 03/Cir-16/Engp-Div-16/(Div-98)/S82/GHMC/2021, Dt:15-04-2021; Name of the work S.W Works in Circle -16, Secunderabed Zone, GHMC. Total Tender Amount: Rs: 4.98 Lakhs St. No. 1 Start Date: 16/04/2021 From 11:00AW, Last Date & Time for receipt of Bid: 17/04/2021 at 11:00 AM, Smt. D. ASHA LATHA., Executive Engineer, Division-16, Circle-16 Amberget, Sectbed Zone, GHMC, Cell: 9963550657. Address of the Concerned Executive Engineer. Div-16, SBZ, GHMC Abids, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Further details can b seen at E-Procurement www.tender.telangana.gov.in

R.O.No: 10909-PPICL/ADVT/1/2021-22, Dt. 15.04.2021

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SECUNDERABAD ZONE 'e' PROCURENENT NOTICE
Short NIT No.85'SE (M)/Sec'bad Zone/GHMC/2821-22, Dated: 15.04.202
NIT N.: 05'SE/Sec'bad Zone/ GHMC/2021-22, Dt: 15.04.2021, Name of the Work: Construction of

storm water drain parallel to existing drain from 14-13/115 to 15-17/24, Raja Shrivvasa Nagar and Verkatadri Nagar at Goutham Nagar, Ward No. 141, Malkiegir Circle - 28, GHMC, (1 work) Estimated Amount (Rs. In lakha): 176.00, Bid Submission Start Date & Time: Dt 17-04-2021 4.00 PM, Bid Submission Closing Date & Time: Dt 24-04-2021, 1.00 PM, Name & Address Officer Cell No. 5EJM, Sectoral Zone, GHMC, Cell No.040-27806901, Further details can be seen at (§ https://www.tender.telangana.gov.in R.O.Ho: 19821-PPICLAOVT/12021-22, Dr. 15.04.2021 Sdl- Superintending Engineer (M

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Hyd police end Sharmila's fast

Hyderabad police on Thursday detained former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy's daughter YS Sharmila as she tried to continue her fast demanding job notifications for Telangana's unemployed youth.

She was taken into custody as she tried to take out a 'pady'atra' after police forcibly ended her fast at Indira Park. Police forcibly ended her protest as the permission was given for one-day fast, though she had applied for a three-day fast.
Police stopped Sharmila at

the Telugu Talli flyover when she, along with her supporters, was walking towards her Lotus Pond residence in Baniara Hills. There was even a stampede-like situation. At one stage, she collapsed and was briefly unconscious.

She was later dropped at her residence. Sharmila, however, staged a sit-in outside her residence and made it clear that she will continue the fast till all her supporters are released by the police.

Condemning the police action against her and her supporters, she targeted Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar

Sharmila, who plans to launch a new political party in Telangana in July, undertook the fast to demand the state government issue job notifications for unemployed youth.

The sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy, she questioned the silence of Chandrasekhar Rao on suicides by unemployed youth. She said the Chief Minister



should respond to the burning problem.

She said she would stand with the unemployed youth who are seeking jobs. "Whether other opposition parties speak for you or not, will stand by you," she told the youth.

She said fasts and protests will continue across the state till the state government issues job notifications to fill the vacancies in various government departments. She alleged that dejected over the delay in job notifications, unemployed youth were ending their lives but the Chief Minister is neglecting the issue. Recalling that youth were in the forefront of the movement for statehood to Telangana, she demanded that Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government fulfil their

aspirations by providing them

Former AP Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy's daughte jobs. "There are 1.91 lakh vacancies. The government should fill them," she said and

appealed to youth not to

resort to suicides, assuring

them that she would lead the

fight to pressurise the government to issue job notifi-Sharmila undertook the fast week after addressing a public meeting at Khammam, where she announced that she will launch the political

party on July 8, the birth

anniversary of her father.

Unemployed youth, students and leaders of various groups met her during the fast and expressed their solidarity. She said she would unveil the flag, name and ideology of the new party on July 8. The public meeting at Khammam was also addressed by Sharmila's mother YS Vijayamma, who appealed to people to bless her daughter

government should fill them

will stand with the unemployed youth who are

seeking jobs. Whether other opposition parties speak for you or not, I will stand by you. There are

1.91 lakh vacancies in Telanagana. The TRS-led state

with their support. Vijayamma also shared the dais with Sharmila at Thursday's fast. An interesting incident at the venue caught the attention of all and triggered speculations.

Asking video camera persons to move aside, Sharmila remarked that Sakshi (the media house owned by her brother) will not give coverage. Vijayamma, who was sitting next to her, was apparently taken aback. She immediately patted her hand in an

obvious signal to stop.
Sharmila has been holding meetings with loyalists of her late father in Telangana for more than a month as part of the preparations to float a political party here.

Andhra Pradesh's ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) has already made it clear that its leader Jagan Mohan Reddy has difference of opinion with his sister's plan to enter Telangana politics and launch

TS records highest single-day spike in Covid cases; 8 deaths

For the second consecutive day, Covid claimed eight lives across Telangana while the daily count of new cases jumped to 3,307, the highest so far in the state.

The previous highest oneday spike was on April 11, when 3,187 cases were recorded. The cumulative Covid tally moved up to 3,38,045.

Eight fatalities were reported in the 24-hour period (between 8 p.m. on Tuesday and 8 p.m. on Wednesday). This is the highest fatality in a

day during the second wave.

The fresh fatalities pushed the death toll to 1,788. The case fatality rate remained at 0.52 per cent against the national average of 1.2 per cent.

The spike continued across the state. Greater Hyderabad remained the worst hit with 446 new cases while adjoining districts of Medchal Malkajgiri and Rangareddy recorded 314 and 277 cases respectively.

Nizamabad district bordering Maharashtra remained one of the worst affected districts with 279 new infections. Jagtiyal reported 155 cases followed by 153 in Sangareddy, 148 in Nirmal, 128 in Kamareddy, 102 in Nalgonda

and 101 in Khammam. Concerned over the massive surge, director of public health, Dr G Srinivas Rao, on Wednesday warned that if the situation continued like this, Telangana will soon become like Maharashtra.

He asked people to be careful and follow all Covid guidelines. "The next four to six weeks are extremely crucial for Telangana and the situation will spiral out of control if we are not careful," he said. "The fact that the state is not imposing a lockdown does not mean we are not in a critical situation. The lockdown is not being imposed because it will affect livelihoods and the economy of the state," Rao said.

According to a media bulletin issued by the health department on Thursday, the number of active cases in the state jumped to 27,861 including 18,685 who are in home or institutional isolation. The recovery rate dipped further to 91.22 per cent, still above the national average for 88.3

per cent. During the last 24 hours, the health authorities in the state conducted 1,06,627 tests, taking the cumulative number of tests to over 1.13 crore. Samples tested per million population rose to 3,05,212.

The admissions in 72 government and 249 private hospitals treating Covid rose to



Somesh Kumar speaking at a high level meeting with senior officials at BRKR

Increase bed strength for Covid patients: CS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Thursday directed the officials to further increase the bed strength for Covid patients in government hospitals and private medical colleges so as to be prepared for any eventuality in case of increase in Covid-19 cases in the State.

Somesh Kumar was speaking at a high level meeting with senior officials at BRKR Bhavan to take stock of the

prevailing Covid-19 situation in the State.

The Chief Secretary directed the District Collectors to ramp up testing, intensify vaccination and focus on enforcing government orders on Covid appropriate behaviour including mandatory wearng of masks.

Simultaneously, Covid care centres should be doubled in all the districts. Private hospitals should also be sensitized on judicious use of oxygen, he

Cops arrest two with marijuana worth Rs 19.2L

The Nampally police arrested two persons, including a woman, on charges of possession and transportation of drugs here on Thursday. Police seized 38 kilos of marijuana, worth Rs 19.2 lakh, from them.

The arrested persons were Rajaram Swami Kannu, 72, from Thane in Maharashtra and Preethi Pradeep Mandal, 22, from Mumbai.

Police said the duo were found moving suspiciously with luggage at Nampally. On seeing the cops, the duo tried to escape. They were chased by SI J Sudhir, B Venkatesh and Abid Hussain, both police constables. The police, after nabbing them, checked the luggage and found the marijuana.

City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar congratulated the police team.

CITY LIGHTS

UoH appeals students to leave campus amid rising virus scare

onths after reopening the campus in a phased manner, the University of Hyderabad on Thursday appealed to its students to leave to their native places in view of the rising Covid cases. In an appeal, the dean of the students' cell Prof B Nagarjuna noted that they are going through an unprecedented



global predicament and that all lives are adversely affected by the scare of infection and contagion. "I would like to share your anxiety and preoccupations and express my solidarity with you and your family " he added. The dean said that as many as 15-20 students who are affected with Covid have been currently isolated at Lake View Guest House and that the number keeps on surging every day. "The situation demands utmost care and caution." he said. "Keeping in mind your health and wellbeing, all the students and scholars are requested to leave to their native place," Prof Nagarjuna appealed. In January this year, the University of Hyderabad has reopened the campus for post graduate students in a phased manner. By then, it had already enabled the return of over 320 research scholars of MPhil, and PhD programmes from various branches.

Increase skills to check cyber crime: DGP Mahendar Reddy

pirector General of Police M Mahendar Reddy on Thursday advised police personnel in the State to hone up skills required to probe cyber crime cases effectively. Addressing the inaugural session of a three-day physical level-III training on cybercrimes against women and children organized by the Telangana Women Safety Wing in virtual mode, he said the session would enable the police personnel empower themselves with necessary skills in investigating cyber crimes cases. As many as 117 select police officers across the State attended the session which will help them in gaining expertise to collect digital evidence in cybercrimes. Using open source technologies and other IT tools, the IOs will get to know the modus operandi adopted by cyber criminals. At the same time, the IOs must also know the open source technologies in identifying the criminals involved in cybercrimes, he said.

Srinivas Goud says, chalk out plans to develop heritage spots

ourism Minister V Srinivas Goud instructed officials on Thursday to chalk out plans for developing tourism and heritage spots in the State. Minister V Srinivas Goud convened a meeting with



archeological and tourism department officials at Ravindra Bharati here on Thursday and reviewed the progress of different works. Alampur MLA Dr. Abraham, who also participated in the meeting, thanked Chief Minister of Telangana K Chandrasekhar Rao and Tourism Minister V Srinivas Goud for sanctioning Rs.37 crore to take up development works at Sri Jogulamba temple and adjoining areas. Dr Abraham appealed to the Tourism Minister to lay the foundation for the first phase works to be taken up with a cost of Rs 20 crore. The Tourism Minister said the works would commence in the first week of next month and directed tourism officials to make necessary arrangements.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA NIT No.7 & 8/2021-22 TENDER NOTICE

No. of works (02): Supplying and delivery of 11000 no's Plastic Chairs and Public address system to all Rythu Vedikas (88) No's in Mahabubnagar District. TOTAL ECV: 66.16 Lakhs. The Tenders will be available on eprocurement https://tenders.telangana.gov.in from 15.04.2021 to 23.04.2021. Further details can be had from the office

Sdi- Regional Officer, PR Mahabubnagar .O. No.: 44-DIP/CL-AGENCY/AGVT/1/2021-22

Charminar, Golconda shut till May 15 PNS HYDERABAD After the monuments

Amid the ongoing rise of Coronavirus cases, the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has shut down the historic Golconda fort and Charminar. A circular from the ASI on Thursday said that all monuments/museums protected by the Central government under the agency have been shut with immediate effect until May 15.

While the ASI has closed its monuments for visitors, there is no intimation about other heritage buildings or historical monuments that fall under the state government, like the



Qutb Shahi tombs, which are currently still open. The Charminar and Golconda fort were also shut last year as well due to the lockdown imposed due to the lockdown imposed due to the ongoing pandemic. Both, along with other places, had reopened only in September 2020.

reopened, there were not many visitors for the first few months, but things had slowly staggered to normalcy by February this year, as hundreds of people were visiting both the Charminar and Golconda fort. In Telangana, the government has not imposed any kind of lockdown so far, but has shut down schools and colleges in wake of the pandemic.

It is unclear as of now if the state government will also shut down historical monuments. As of Thursday, all public spaces are open, and there not been any intimation on this





Two charred to death as truck catches fire in city

Two persons were charred to death after a moving container truck caught fire on the Outer Ring Road here on Thursday. Police said the fire engulfed

the container truck after it hit another vehicle from rear. The accident occurred near Telangana State Police Academy at Himayat Sagar. A police officer said that the

driver and cleaner were charred to death as the flames engulfed the cabin, leaving no space for them to escape.

Some passersby tried to

save the driver and cleaner by breaking the windowpanes of the cabin but were not successful. The entire vehicle was gut-

ted before a fire tender rushed

to the scene to douse the fire.

The accident led to the traf-

Police personnel from Rajendra Nagar police station rushed to the spot to clear the jam. The deceased were identified as driver Surai and clean-

fic jam on the busy ORR.

er Murtunjaya. Their charred remains were shifted for

The truck carrying a load of sea food products from Narsapur in Andhra Pradesh and heading towards Gachibowli rammed into another vehicle moving in front. The vehicle was on its way to Mumbai.

39-year-old man gets 20 years RI for raping minor PNS HYDERABAD

A local court on Thursday sentenced a man to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment on charges of raping a minor girl.

Sukrat Singh Uikey, 39, a labourer who is a resident of Dhoolpet, entered a house at Shibil Hills under Mangalhat police station limits on October 10 and raped the girl aged around five years when her parents were away.

Based a complaint lodged by the mother of the victim, the police arrested Sukrat. The local court convicted him to 20 years of rigorous imprisonment and imposed a fine of Rs 10,000 as well.

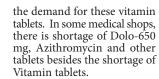
Shortage of antiviral drugs as virus cases spike PNS HYDERABAD

There is acute shortage of Covid medicines in medical shops, a similar phenomenon experienced last year, as people have been administering self-medication as a precautionary measure in the wake of the second wave of the pan-

While there is shortage for some Covid medicines, some manufacturing companies doubled the price of medicines. People have been adminis-

demic, according to reports.

tering themselves the Vitamin-C and D and B-complex tablets and zinc tablets, which are part of the Covid-19 regimen, as a precautionary measure, ignoring the doctors warning against the self-medication, pushing up



The prices of some tablets namely Biofolate has been increased more than double to

Rs 157 per a strip of 10 tablets. Earlier, a strip was sold at Rs 60 only. Owners of various pharmacies indicate that the prices of various vitamin tablets have almost doubled. Shortage of raw material, shortage of hands due to the pandemic conditions and surge in demand for of these tablets.

the tablets has pushed the cost

There is shortage of Remedisivir injection, which is used in the pandemic treatment. The use of the injection has increased as the number of patients has increased with each passing day. There is no stock of Remedisivir in market. However, the injection is available in treatment centres, earlier the injection was available in pharmacies. Currently, the injection almost disappeared from the private pharmacies, barring the government phar-

macies, the patients allege. Because of the surge in Covid cases in Maharashtra, there is shortage of injections in the state. There is no permission to sell these injections in outside pharmacies. The Centre has stepped up the production of Remedisivir and even stalled the export of the drug to other countries.

It may be recalled that raids on some medical shops led to the arrest of a racket which is selling the vitamin tablets at higher prices.

People have been in the habit of administering vitamin tablets themselves without medical advice. It is dangerous. People should not get addicted to use of vitamin tablets. The tablets should be used only on prescription from doctors. The continued use of the tablets will lead to imbalance of vitamins posing other health related prob-

lems to people.

NAGARUNASAGAR BYPOLL

Cong keen to regain lost glory

K VENKATESHWARLU HYDFRARAD

The Congress is keen to regain its lost glory by romping home in the Nagarjunasagar bypoll as it has been facing defeats since the formation of a separate State for Telangana.

Congress senior leader and Nagarjunasagar bypoll nominee K Jana Reddy, too, lost the 2018 Assembly elections, along with other Congress candidates, as it won only 19 seats. Moreover, the 12 Congress MLAs had shifted their loyalties to the TRS leaving the party in the lurch.

After that, Congress had lost Huzurnagar and Dubbak by-elections besides losing all local body elections, including recent GHMC elections. The party wanted to bounce back with the victory of K Jana Reddy, who won seven times from this constituency.

Taking the election seriously than ever in his entire political career, the 70 plus K Jana Reddy has been working hard for the past three months. Jana Reddy, who lost elections three times from

almost all 346 villages in the constituency. He has the access of calling the people with their names in the villages of his constituency and requested the voters to cast their vote as it will be his last election.

However, the TRS took the

election much more seriously than the Congress and BJP. Minister Chandrasekhar Rao participated in two public meetings before the issuance of notification and on the penultimate day of election campaign targeting K Jana Reddy and see that not to repeat Dubbak

In contrast, the Telangana BJP fielded ST candidate Dr Ravi Naik, however, it didn't show much seriousness though it took up the campaign seriously last week. BJP's attitude created an atmosphere like a fight only between Congress and TRS only.

Meanwhile, Jana Reddy has been facing two young leaders Nomula Bhagat (37 years) of TRS and Dr Ravi Naik (36 years) of BJP.



Jana Reddy, who lost elections three times from this constituency, toured almost all 346 villages in the constituency. He has the access of calling the people with their names in the villages of his constituency and requested the voters to cast their vote as it will be his last election



■ The TRS took the election much more seriously than the Congress and BJP. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao participated in two public meetings before the issuance of notification and on the penultimate day of the election campaign targeting K Jana Reddy and see that not to repeat Dubbak result

'Govt will transform lives of farmers'

PNS KARIMNAGAR

Minister for Civil Supplies and BC Welfare Gangula Kamalakar inaugurated the first centre to procure paddy for the Rabi season at Cherlabuthukur village in Karimnagar rural mandal on Thursday.

During an interaction with media persons, the Minister informed that the district administration had decided to open 351 Paddy Procurement Centres to procure 4.34 lakh metric tonnes of paddy during the Rabi season. He added that the government had decided to open 6,400 centres across the state to procure paddy at the minimum support price (MSP). The Minister advised farmers to ensure that the crop that they brought to the procurement centre contained less than 17% mois-

He claimed that Telangana is the only State that had initiated procurement of paddy by opening the centres at the doorstep of farmers despite the outbreak of the Coronavirus. He informed that the State government would procure 'A' grade paddy at Rs 1,888 per quin-



Minister for Civil Supplies and BC Welfare Gangula Kamalakar inaugurating the first centre to procure paddy for the Rabi season at Cherlabuthukur village in Karimnagar rural mandal on Thursday

Minister for Civil Supplies and BC Welfare Gangula Kamalakar claimed that Telangana is the only State that had initiated procurement of paddy by opening the centres at the doorstep of farmers despite the outbreak of the Coronavirus

tal and 'B' grade at Rs 1,868

per quintal.

The centres will function for about 45 days till the entire paddy crop from the farmers in the vicinity is procured. I appeal to the farmers to follow the Covid-19 norms while visiting the

procurement centres and assure payment within four days after procurement," he

He also inaugurated a Rythu Vedika constructed at his own expense in memory of his brother Gangula Prabhakar in Muqdhoompur

mandal. He called upon the farmers to utilise the Rythu Vedikas and avail of the advice from the agriculture department to cultivate crops that provide higher

"The farmers in Muqdhoompur village have been provided irrigation through the Kaleshwaram Lift Irrigation Project. The State government is committed to transforming farmers of the State into 'kings'," the minister affirmed.

Collector K Shashanka instructed the officials concerned to open procurement centres in all villages at the earliest and ensure the farmers are not inconvenienced in any manner.

The agriculture department officials were directed to maintain an adequate supply of gunny bags, arrange for transportation of the procured paddy to the mills and purchase tarpaulins to protect the paddy from unseasonal summer rains. Additional collector GV Shyam Prasad Lal, district civil supplies officer Suresh and MPP K Srinivas among others were present

SHORT TAKES

VH withdraws hunger strike

HYDERABAD: Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao has withdrawn his hunger strike on Thursday following the request of Telangana Congress Affairs In-charge Manickam Tagore. The latter urged Hanumantha Rao to withdraw the hunger strike as Congress will take up his demand of setting up of Ambedkar statue at Punjagutta Chowrastha. Tagore offered lemon juice to VH to withdraw his hunger strike at the latter's residence and assured that he will bring the issue to the notice of AICC chief Sonia

Uttam's PA, driver, gunman test Corona positive

HYDERABAD: TPCC chief and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy disclosed that his personal assistant (PA), driver and gunman have tested positive for Covid. He asked all those who had come in contact with them to undergo Corona tests. It may be recalled they accompanied Uttam in the Nagarjunasagar bypoll campaign. Meanwhile, Nalgonda District Collector Prashanth Jeevan Patil also

MLA inaugurates 11 paddy procurement centres

PATANCHERU: Pathancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy on Thursday inaugurated 11 paddy procurement centres at various villages in Pathanceru constituency to procure rabi paddy. These centres have been set up at Pathanceru, Muttangi, Lakkaram, Velimela, Gummadidala, Kottapalli, Kanukunta, Jinnaram, Ootla, Vavilala and Solakpalli. The government fixed the MSPof Rs 1888 per quintal for Grade-A paddy, Rs 1868 for ordinary varieties. The money would be credited into the bank accounts of farmers withok of the procurement. He advised the farmers against approaching middlemen to dispose of their paddy. He advised the farmers against congregating at the procurement centres as the pandemic cases are on the rise. ZP chairman Prabhakar, Agricultural market committee chairman Harika Viiava Kumar and other elected people's representatives were present on the occa-

'Implement 11th wage agreement for SCCL workers'

JAYASHANKAR-BHUPALAPALLY: MLC Alugubelli Narsimha Reddy on Thursday demanded the SCCL to implement the 11th wage revision agreement as the 10th wave revision is going to come to an end by July 1 this year. Meanwhile, the pada yatra undertaken by CPM demanding development of Bhupalapally district entered the seventh day on Thursday. Addressing media in this connection, the MLC alleged that the people are suffering due to government not appointing regular officers to the newly created districts. Therefore, he urged the government to appoint regular officials to the districts. He demanded the government to give alternative lands to the SCCL displaced persons and jobs to one member of the family. He said that the rulers have failed to resolve the drinking water crisis in Bhupalapally. He urged the government to give the promised 3 acres of lands to the Dalits and Girijans. He said that it is not proper to close schools and open wine shops and theatres during the current pandemic period. He sought free laptops to the poor students to enable them to pursue online education. He demanded allocation of Rs 1000 crore to the district for its comnrehensive development

Tribunal invites objections on decisions on RoR

MAHABUBNAGAR: Mahabhub Nagar District Collector S VenkataRao said that a session of the tribunal on RoR cases was held here on Thursday acting on the orders issued by the special sitting of the tribunal held here earlier. He said about 60 applications were received objecting to the orders passed at the special tribunal session held previously. The tribunal session would also be held on Friday too. Only those applications objecting to the decisions of the special tribunal session woudbe entertained here. He clarified that applications would not be accepted. Additional Collector

Cases against those who fail to wear masks: Rachakonda CP

MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI: Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh Bhagawat has exhorted people to observe Covid-19 precautions otherwise threatened to impose a fine of Rs 1000 on those who do not wear masks. Addressing media here on Thursday, he said that cases have been registered against 832 on Wednesday with the help of the CCTV footage. He said that the RAchakonda police have been sensitising people at main intersections on Covid-19 precautions. He said that over 5000 Rachakonda police have received their vaccine and warned the people against inviting more than 200 to functions like marriages. He insisted on people maintaining social distance and wearing

PD Act invoked against pimp

PNS MEDCHAL-MALKAJGIRI

Rachakonda Commissioner Mahesh M Bhagwat invoked the PD Act against one of the human trafficking gang members for organising prostitution in the limits of Saroornagar Police Station and detained him in the Central Prison, Cherlapally, on Thursday.

Bathini Organisers Manaša, Vallapu Mallikarjun and Pokala Lingaiah were running the brothel house by procuring girls/women from Andhra Pradesh and other parts of Telangana. They lure the girls on the pretext of providing employment, livelihood and later force them into prostitution.

It may be recalled that the racket was busted in a joint operation by the SOT, Rachakonda and Saroornagar police on January 8 and arrested the accused and rescued the victim who hails from AP. The arrested were remanded in judicial

tody.
While accused Pokala Lingaiah procures girls/women from AP and other parts of Telangana State and sends to them to individual organisers on a commission basis while Manasa and Mallikarjun were already detained under PD Act.

To prevent them from further indulging in human trafficking, prostitution and to preserve public order, Mahesh M Bhagwat invoked the PD Act against offender Pokala Lingaiah and lodged him in the Central prison.

PNS HYDERABAD

Minister for Forests A

Indrakaran Reddy called upon

forest department's person-

nel to get themselves vaccinat-

ed against the Covid-19 as the

second wave of the pandemic

He asked the forest depart-

ment personnel to be careful

for the next two or three

months. He asked the field-

level employees and those

who are stationed at the base

camp to remain alert. He said

that the pandemic can be pre-

vented by receiving the vaccine

and observing precautions. How many of the depart-

ment's employees received the

shot and how many have been

affected by the virus and how

many forest department employees died of Covid-19,

he enquired from the forest

department authorities while

taking part in a review meet-

ing at Aranya Bhavan here on

He directed Principal Chief

Conservator of Forests R

Sobha to ensure that all per-

Thursday.

is spreading thick and fast.

Indrakaran exhorts

forest officials to

get vaccinated

Removal of AP cops demanded

PNS HYDERABAD

TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy urged Police Observer of Election Commission Sunil Kumar Meena to remove six police officers from duties in the Nagarjunasagar by-election. In his letter, Uttam stated that some police officers of Andhra origin have been placed in key duties with an ulterior motive of helping the TRS and damaging the Congress in the Nagarjunasagar by-election.

He said in the last couple of days, these police personnel have assaulted Congress party general secretary and Dalit eader Manavatha Roy and illegally detained him. They have detained Congress candi-

date Jana Reddy's brother-inlaw and PA Shyam Sundar Reddy.

They had also detained student leaders Mahipal Yadav and Muni Naik. He said that they do not have confidence in their neutrality and requested him to remove them from election duty. He identified the police

personnel from Andhra Pradesh as Veera Raghavulu, CI, a native of Guntur district; Gouri Naidu, CI, Chandru, a native of Srikakulam district; Suresh, CI, DCR, Nalgonda, a native of Vizianagaram dis-Basha,

Showligouraram, a native of Kurnool district; ND Prasad, a native of Sri Kalahasthi, and Aadi Reddy, CI, Devarkonda, a native of Machilipatnam. It may be recalled that natives of Andhra Pradesh are still working in Telangana as

transfer of some more officials,

including police personnel, is still pending.

He said that he came to know that District SP Ranganath is also from Guntur, but Congress has been hoping that since he is a senior

IPS officer, he will be neutral and fair in the polling process. He asked the Election Commission to remove six

police officers from duties in Nagarjunasagar by-election. He also submitted the letter to the CEC, Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi, CEO, Telangana and District Collector

Man murders son PNS NAGAR KURNOOL

In a barbaric incident, a man killed his six-year-old son at Manthati village in Nagar Kurnool district on Thursday. According to police, Shiva Shanker's wife died recently due behind. Shanker developed an extramarital affair with a woman after his wife's death. In the meantime, he felt that his sons as a hurdle to his illicit relationship and decided to eliminate them. On Thursday, he slit the eldest son's wrist with a knife at his residence in broad daylight and when he was battling for life, he throttled him to death. Being a mute witness to the horrific incident, three-year-old his youngest son fled the spot, but his father chased him and bashed him up brutally. Later, police arrested him based on a complaint.

Shabbir blames PM, CM for vaccine shortage

PNS HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader Mohammed Ali Shabbir blamed the Central and State governments for the shortage of Covid vaccine. "Both Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Minister Chandrasekhar Rao are busy with election campaigns and

the elections at any cost. They appear to have no clue on the huge shortage of vaccine, which is bound to worsen the Covid situation," he said in a statement on Thursday.

their only focus is on winning

He pointed out that those who took the first dose of Covaxin and Covishield need to take the second dose within the specified time interval. As per the guidelines pre-scribed by the Union Ministry of Health, the second dose of Covaxin can be taken within four to six weeks after the first. Similarly, the second dose of Covishield must be taken within six to eight weeks from e minietry has clearly stated that both doses should be taken within the recommended time period for stronger immunity and both doses must be of the same vaccine type. However, he said that lakhs of people, who took the first dose, were bound to miss the deadline for the second dose due to a huge

Citing his case, Shabbir Ali said he took the first dose of Covaxin on March 13, and he was supposed to get the second dose on April 11. "When I enquired with the Apollo Hospitals, Jubilee Hills, where



I took the first dose, I was told that the vaccine was unavailable. I was also asked to check for the availability of Covaxin with other hospitals. But, no other hospital had the supplies of the Covaxin. Finally, on Thursday, I was informed that as against the requirement of 900 doses, they got the supplies of 200 doses. Therefore, they were administering the doses on a first-come-firstsecond dose of vaccine with just two days left for the end of the deadline," he informed.

Shabbir Ali said that the situation in government vaccination centres was even worse due to shortage. While lakhs of people are in the queue to get the vaccine, the supplies are not even in the thousands. "Why Modi and KCR did not anticipate this situation? They give their 100% when it comes to winning the election. But, when it comes to saving people's lives, they don't adopt a humanitarian approach," he pointed out.

Nomula did not get due respect: Revanth

PNS HYDERABAD

Targeting the TRS govern-Nomula Bhagat, TPCC working president and Malkajgiri MP A Revanth Reddy alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao did not give due respect to the departed when he was alive.

Hence, he appealed to the people to vote for Congress nominee K Jana Reddy as he will redress their grievances of people if they ensure his vic-

He found fault with the government for not taking action against the TRS MLAs, who were involved in the drugs case.

sonnel of the department right

from the low-rung employees

to top officials received the

vaccine. He asked her to

appoint two nodal officials to

monitor the Covid situation

She told the minister that

236 have been affected by the

virus during the past one year

while 11 succumbed to the

pandemic. The Minister con-

veyed his sympathies to the

He suggested to the district

medical and health officials to

take steps to administer the

vaccine to the forest depart-

ment's personnel who have

been working shoulder-to-

shoulder with the frontline

bereaved family members.

among the employees.

Speaking to the media at Haliya on Thursday, Revanth Reddy said that the Chief the issues of public in Haliya public meeting and there was no mention of Telangana martyrs, Jayashankar sir and others, he alleged.

He reminded that Nomula Narasimhaiah didn't speak in the Assembly after he joined TRS. KCR never allowed Nomula to enter Pragathi Bhavan, he pointed out calling upon the people to question KCR and defeat TRS.

BJP allotted a ticket to ST candidate Dr Ravi Naik as part of an agreement between Union Minister G Kishan Reddy and KCR", he alleged.

Maoists kill

PNS JAYASHANKAR **BHUPALAPALLY**

two cops

Two police personnel were killed by Maoists around 300 km from the base camp at Bheji village in the Sukma district of Chhattisgarh on Thursday. According to Sukma District The Superintendent of Police, a head constable and constable were going on a bike when Maoists waylaid and stabbed them to death. It is learnt that Maoists conducted a recce a few days ago to eliminate the policemen. On receiving information, Sukma District SP rushed to the spot and enquired about the inci-

Rail coach factory works at a brisk pace in Kazipet

Alleging that the Centre has been rendering injustice to Telangana since its formation, TRS working president KT Rama Rao on Thursday said that the BJP meting out stepmotherly treatment towards the State by failing to fulfil its promise to set up a rail coach factory at Kazipet in Warangal district as promised in the AP Reorganisation Act- 2014.

Irrespective of the Centre's negligence, the TRS government attracted the largest private sector rail coach factory



Works going on at a brisk pace at rail coach factory in Kazipet

investment in the country by The rail coach factory would Medha Servo Drives, he said. be completed soon.

No darshan at Vemulawada temple from April 18

PNS RAJANNA-SIRCILLA

The Rajarajeshwara Swamy temple in Vemulawada will be closed for devotees for five days from April 18 to 22. Temple authorities in a statement here on Thursday asked pilgrims not to visit the shrine on the aforesaid days. Temple authorities have taken this decision in the wake of the

rapid spread of Coronavirus in

the temple town. The authorities said they

decided since scores of devotees gathered at the shrine on the occasion of Sivakalyana held on March 31.

They could not control the rush of pilgrims from reaching the temple town, hence, they had decided not to allow devotees for the celestial wedding of Sri Rama.

Bakthostva Kalyanam and

Rathostavam scheduled for April 21 on the occasion of Sri Rama Navami stand cancelled. Besides the famous ritual in the shrine Kodemokku, all other rituals have also been cancelled. Devotees can perform pujas online. If they register their names for different rituals through TS Mee Seva 2.0 or T Appfolio, the rituals would be performed in the shrine in their name.



MISUSE OF INTERNET BY TERRORISTS

Global cooperation must to end menace: Delegates

The immense challenges posed by the misuse of the Internet by terrorists can be effectively tackled by international cooperation and sharing of good practices, delegates at a BRICS seminar hosted by India observed.

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) organised the two-day online event of the BRICS nations that includes Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa on April 13-14.

The seminar on the topic of 'Misuse of Internet for Terrorist Purposes and Role of Digital Forensics in Terrorist Investigations' was inaugurated by Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla, the NIA said in a state-

The NIA organised the seminar as India is holding the BRICS chair for the year 2021, it said. "The delegates at the sem-



are immense," a statement said. "It was emphasised that it is only through expedient interna-

emphasised that it is only through international cooperation and sharing of good practices one can end this menace and secure safe environment for citizens of BRICS member states"

media as an arsenal ', 'dark web and anonymisers', 'emerging technologies and artificial intelligence', 'crypto currency and virtual assets: vulnerability of privacy and online stealth', equipping law enforcement agencies: counter-terrorist investigations and digital forensics.

SC asks CBI to probe cops' role

circumstantial evidence and

form a prima facie view on the

acts of omission and commis-

the Centre's plea seeking consid-

eration of the report filed by the

committee regarding the role of

erring police officials in espi-

onage case relating to Narayanan, who had been

acquitted and was eventually

awarded Rs 50 lakh compensa-

On April 5, the Centre had

moved the top court seeking urgent hearing and consideration of the panel's report terming

The apex court had appoint-

ed the panel on September 14,

2018 while directing the Kerala

government to cough up Rs 50

tion by the top court.

it as a "national issue".

The apex court was hearing

sion of erring officials

A number of technical ses-

sions were held during the sem-

inar like 'exploitation of social

The Supreme Court Thursday

ordered that the report of a high-

level committee on the role of erring police officials in 1994

espionage case relating to ISRO

scientist Nambi Narayanan be

given to the CBI and directed the

agency to conduct further inves-

may treat the panel's findings as

part of preliminary investigation

and asked the agency to submit

its report to the court within

M Khanwilkar said the report of

the three-member panel, head-

ed by former top court judge

Justice (retd) D K Jain, be kept

in a sealed cover and it should

The top court rejected the

submission of former DGP Siby

Mathews, who was then heading

the SIT probe team, that he was

not heard by the committee

while Narayanan was heard.

The bench, also comprising

Justices Dinesh Maheshwari and

Krishna Murari, said the com-

mittee was not to adjudicate the

matter but it had to go through

A bench headed by Justice A

The apex court said the CBI

tigation on the issue.

three months.

not be published.

PNS NEW DELHI

ISRO ESPIONAGE CASE

Cong gets 12 seats, NPP 11 in GHADC

PNS SHILLONG

The Opposition Congress has won 12 seats while the ruling National People's Party (NPP) won 11 seats in the 29-member Garo Hills Autonomous District Council (GHADC), an official said on Thursday.
The election to the GHADC

was held on April 12. The counting of votes was held on Thursday, the official of the District Council Affairs Department said.

The BJP which is the junior alliance partner of NPP in the Meghalaya Democratic Alliance government has won two seats, the GNC one and Independents won three seats in the GHADC, the official said.

BJP's Bernard Marak won the prestigious Tura constituency which is under the South Tura Assembly segment represented by Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma.

Marak is a former member of the Achik National Volunteer Council, armed militant group which signed a tripartite agreement with the state and the Central government.

lakh compensation for com-

pelling Narayanan to undergo

the committee to take appropriate steps against the erring offi-

cials for causing "tremendous harassment" and "immeasur-able anguish" to Narayanan and

had directed the Centre and state

government to nominate one

Terming the police action

against the ex-scientist of the

Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) as a "psy-

cho-pathological treatment",

the apex court had in

September 2018 said that his

'liberty and dignity", basic to

his human rights, were jeopar-

dised as he was taken into cus-

tody and, eventually, despite all

the glory of the past, was com-

pelled to face "cynical abhor-

The espionage case, which had hit the headlines in 1994,

pertained to allegations of trans-

fer of certain confidential doc-

uments on India's space pro-

gramme to foreign countries by

two scientists and four others.

including two Maldivian

rence"

officer each in the panel.

immense humiliation". It had ordered setting up of

Monitor Covid appropriate behaviour among people: Maha

Maharashtra Chief Minister Thackeray on Uddhav Wednesday asked officials to closely monitor COVID-19appropriate behaviour among shop owners, who have been allowed to operate during the new restrictions, as well as customers, and penalise the violators.

In a virtual meeting with his cabinet colleagues, divisional commissioners, district collectors, municipal commissioners and police officials, Thackeray stressed on effective implementation of the measures which came into force at 8 pm and will remain in operation 7 am on May 1.

He said officials should ensure that vegetable vendors and grocery shop owners, who have been allowed to operate during the "lockdownlike" restrictions, scrupulously follow COVID-19-related norms like social distancing and use of face masks to avoid the infection spread.

"If crowding happens, the officials can shut down the shops," he said.

Thackeray asked them to keep an eve of marriage ceremonies so that they do not become super-spreading

The state has noticed that marriage ceremonies were one of the reasons behind the COVID-19 spread.

"The district administration and police should ensure that mistakes committed in the past are not repeated, the chief minister said.

Under the new curbs, only 25 people can attend a mar-

riage.
The state's COVID-19 task force members stressed on avoiding indiscriminate use of Remdesivir medicine which is causing its shortage.

There should be sensible

approach towards the use of Remdesivir, a key COVID-19 drug, and medical oxygen, they told the meeting. Áll essential services,

including medical stores, hospitals, supply of medicines, among others will remain operational, according to a government notification.

Barber shops, saloons, spas, schools, colleges, coaching classes, beaches, clubs, swimming pools, gyms, drama theatres and cinema halls will remain shut during the next 15 days, according to the notification.

Maha: 5,566 new COVID-19 cases in Thane, 33 more deaths



cases of coronavirus, the infection count in Maharashtra's Thane district has reached 3,95,690, an official said on Thursday. Besides these new cases reported on Wednesday, the virus also claimed the lives of 33 more people, raising the death toll in

the district to 6,794, he said. The COVID-19 mortality rate in the district is 1.71 per cent, he said. So far, 3,30,876 patients have recuperated from the infection in the district, which reflects a recovery rate of 83.62 per cent. There are 58,020 active COVID-19 cases in Thane district at present, the official said

Aurangabad records 1,718 Covid-19 cases. 27 deaths

AURANGABAD: As many as 1,718 persons tested positive for coronavirus, while 27 have died of the infection in Maharashtra's Aurangabad district, an official said on Thursday. With the latest cases and casualties reported on Wednesday, the caseload in the district reached 1,03,254 and the toll touched 2,052, the official said. A total of 85,400 patients have recovered from the disease so far. leaving the district with 15.802 active cases, he said

Over 5,000 beds reserved for **Covid patients** in Raigad

ALIBAUG: In light of the rise in coronavirus cases, the administration in Maharashtra's Raigad district has reserved 5,086 beds in government and private hospitals, an official said on Thursday. According to a release issued by the district administration, 3,552 beds without oxygen support, 1,042 with oxygen support, 311 ICU beds and 181 ventilators have been prepared for COVID-19 patients. There are 3,552 beds without oxygen support in the COVID-19 isolation ward, while a separation room has been set up with 1,042 beds that have oxygen support, the release stated

No move to cancel Goa **board exams: Sawant**

PANAJI: The Goa government has not yet thought of cancelling the state board exams of Classes 10 and 12 in the wake of the COVID-19 surge, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant has said. The final exams of Classes 10 and 12 of the Goa Board of Secondary and Higher Secondary Education are scheduled to be held from April 24. Talking to reporters here on Wednesday, Sawant said, "Right now, we have not thought of cancelling any board exams. We will ensure that all measures (related to COVID-19 prevention) are taken when the students appear for their exams." The Goa education department has already allowed examinations of other classes to be held online after the fresh outbreak of COVID-19 in the state, he said. Sawant noted that the board exams were held successfully in the state last year amid the pandemic by following all the necessary measures to prevent spread of the virus. Only 11 students were allowed to sit in one examination hall last year to maintain proper social distancing, he said. The CBSE on Wednesday cancelled its exams for Class 10 and deferred those for Class 12. Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra have also postponed their state board exams for these classes due to an alarming surge in coronavirus cases. States like West Bengal and Uttar Pradesh have said they are monitoring the situation and are yet to decide whether to go ahead with the board exams. Karnataka has said it will conduct the exams as scheduled. On Wednesday, Goa recorded 473 fresh cases of COVID-19 and four more casualties due to the disease. With this, the tally of infections in the state has reached 63,815, while the toll has mounted to 857, as per official data.

INDIA CORNER

Mumbai couple convicted in drug case in Qatar returns home

Mumbai-based couple Oniba and Sharique Qureshi, who was sentenced to 10 years in jail in a drug case in Qatar in 2019, returned to the city on Thursday with their minor daughter, A Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) official said the couple landed at the Mumbai airport at 2.30 am. The couple



had been cleared of all charges after it came to light that a relative planted narcotics in their bag without their knowledge. The couple was arrested at Hamad International Airport in July 2019 after Qatari authorities recovered 4.1 kg of hashish in their bag. It later came to light that Sharique's aunt, Tabassum Qureshi, had used them to transport the drugs. The trip had been sponsored by Tabassum, the official said. At that time, while Sharique was employed with a Japanese company, Oniba had just learnt that she was pregnant. She delivered a girl, Aayat, in jail last February. The couple's family members approached the Indian Government, asking it to intervene in the matter. Following this, the NCB got in touch with the authorities in Qatar and the family challenged the lower court order convicting the couple.

15-year old school boy stabbed to death in Kerala

A¹⁵-year old boy was stabbed to death allegedly by a group of people during a temple festival at Padavanivattom near here on Wednesday night, police said. Abhimanyu, a student activist of the Students' Federation of India (SFI was stabbed to death at around10 PM on the night of Vishu, allegedly by members of the RSS, family

Jharkhand's Congress MLA Irfan Ansari on Wednesday

performed puja at the famous

Deoghar, considered to be the

Baidyanath Dham temple at

most sacred abode of Lord

Claiming that entry of non-

Hindus is not allowed in

Shiva, creating a controversy.

the temple, BJP MP Dr Nishikant



sources said. "We have taken into custody and questioned the father and brother of Sajay Datt, a local, who is the accused in the case. We are yet to nab him, a search is on," police told P T I. The CPI(M) has called for a hartal in Vallikunnam area protesting the murder of the tenth standard student, Abhimanyu. He was supposed to attend the ongoing tenth standard

Congress MLA Irfan Ansari

performs puja at Baidyanath

Dubey demanded immediate arrest of Ansari. The MLA of Jamtara.

along with his companions, entered the sanctum sanctorum of the

temple and performed the puja. Photographs of the act were also

taken. Ansari claimed that he has been coming to the Baidyanath

Dham temple since his childhood to take the blessings of Lord

Shiva. "Whenever elections come, I have been blessed by Baba Bhole (Lord Shiva) and I have won. Who is Nishikant Dubey to take

demanded that the states JMM-led government order arrest of Ansari and take action against the deputy commissioner and the

superintendent of police of Deoghar for allowing this to happen.

me away from Baba?" Ansari said. Dubey, the MP of Godda,

Uttarkhand's toll in forest

fires rises to eight

Uttarakhand forest fires

since January this year

dousing a wildfire in Chamoli

district, a police official said

has risen to eight with one

more person dying while

HC seeks Maha govt's reply on Jains' plea

The Bombay High Court on Thursday sought to know from the Maharashtra government if members of the Jain community can be allowed to take away parcels of special food from their temples while fasting for the annual nine-day Ayambil Oli Tap, noting that it was a "reasonable request".

A vacation bench of Justices S C Gupte and Abhay Ahuja was hearing petitions filed by two Jain trusts, seeking permission for members of the community to take away parcels of pious boiled food to be consumed during the fast from the premises of the trusts.

Shah argued that they are not asking for temples or dining halls to be opened for people to come and eat there, but only for allowing people to take away food parcels.

"The government order of April 13 titled 'Break the Chain' allows restaurants and bars for home delivery and take away. We are also seeking the same permission, but only for nine days from April 19 to April 27. There will be no congregation at temples," Shah said.

Additional government pleader Jyoti Chavan said people should not flock to these temples to pick up their parcels.

the joint call for proposals from

a range of areas.

Salon owners, barbers seek aid from Maha govt PNS/AURANGABA

Salon owners and barbers in Maharashtra have demanded financial assistance from the state government in the wake of their shops being shut to curb the spread of COVID-19. The state government has enforced tough new measures, which exclude essential services, from Wednesday for 15 days to break the COVID-19 transmission chain. Barber shops, salons, spas, schools, colleges, coaching classes, beaches, clubs, swimming pools, gyms, drama theatres and cinema halls will remain shut dur ing the period, according to a government notification. The Maharashtra Nabhik Mahamandal in a memorandum to Chief Minister Uddhay Thackeray on Wednesday, claimed 20 salon owners committed suicide.

dedicated Covid facility

The Mumbai civic body has decided to convert the Jaslok Hospital here into a dedicated facility only for COVID-19 patients in the wake of a huge spike in cases of the viral infection in the city.

According to a circular issued by the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation (BMC) on Wednesday, the Jaslok Hospital will no longer admit non-COVID-19 patients and instructions to this effect have been issued to the hospital's manage-

It is the first prominent private hospital to be declared as a dedicated COVID-19 facility in the city since the second wave of the

coronavirus here, BMC sources

Jaslok Hospital to be fully

The civic body has directed the hospital to discharge all stable patients, admitted in its non-COVID-19 wards, who do not require tertiary care.

The hospital has also been asked to transfer the non-COVID-19 patients requiring tertiary care to nearby facilities within 48 hours.

"All patients admitted for elective surgeries to be discharged by postponing the elective surgeries," reads the BMC's order.

According to the BMC, the hospital was treating COVID-19 patients with advanced critical care since the outbreak of the pandemic last year.

Sharad Pawar discharged

MUMBAI: NCP chief Sharad Pawar, who underwent a gall bladder surgery at the Breach Candy Hospital here three days back, was discharged from the facility on Thursday, party spokesperson Nawab Malik said The 80-year-old leader underwent a laparoscopic surgery (a minimally invasive procedure) at the hospital on Monday. "Pawar was discharged from the hospital some time back " Malik said on Wednesday. The NCP chief was hospitalised for the removal of his gall bladder and the surgery was followed by a two-day stay at the medical facility, he said.

Indian, Sri Lankan scientists to collaborate on focused research areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of Indian and Sri Lankan scientists will collaborate in areas ranging from food to information and communication technology, the Department of Science and Technology said on Wednesday.

"Nine teams consisting of scientists from India and Sri Lanka will work on focused research in areas like food technology, plant based medicines, metrology, space research and applications, robotics and automation, industrial electronics, renewable energy, waste management, and information and communication technology,"

the DST added. It said the teams have been



granted collaborative support from the Department of Science and Technology (DST), the State Ministry of Skills Development, Vocational Education, Research and Sri Lanka in 2008. Innovation of Sri Lanka, against The S&T cooperation

The call for proposal was launched as a result of the conclusion of inter-governmental cooperation in Science & Technology between India and

between India and Ŝri Lanka was initiated and discussed

through India Sri Lanka Sub-Commission on Science & Technology under the umbrella of the inter-governmental India-Sri Lanka Joint Commission.

The commission in its meeting held at Colombo in November 2010 had recommended development of a programme of cooperation in Science and Technology, identifying mutual areas of interest, including use of space technology for societal services using Indian satellites.

Apart from these, the two countries have also decided to support three workshop proposals from among 193 common proposals received in response to the call.

J&K: Case registered for posts on Geelani

PNS SRINAGAR

Police in Budgam district of Jammu and Kashmir have registered a case under Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) against unidentified people for posting false information about veteran separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani on social media, an official said on Thursday.

A twitter account, claiming to be the official handle of Geelani, posted a press release allegedly issued by the separatist leader wherein he purportedly called for a general shutdown against what he alleged as "killing of children and desecration of religious places".

The press release, allegedly signed by Geelani, was referring to the killing of 12 militants in

four encounters since last Friday. One of the encounters took place inside a mosque which was extensively damaged during the operation. "According to family sources

of SAS Geelani, the tweet is fake and issued by someone from Pakistan. Police is taking action against those who are circulating it through social media to instigate violence," a spokesperson of the Budgam Police said on Twitter.

Meanwhile, Inspector General of Police, Kashmir Zone, Vijay Kumar asked people not to pay heed to social media rumours.

"People are requested to carry out their normal activities in the holy month of Ramzan & need not to pay any heed to rumours on social media," Kumar tweeted on official Twitter handle





Sonivala forest area near his farm in Gadoli village on Tuesday, Station House Officer of Gairsain police station, Subhash Jakhmola, said. A 19-year-old man had died of injuries sustained while Pithoragarh district on Saturday last week. Two deaths due to forest fire were reported from Almora in January and two each from Bageshwar and Pauri districts in February.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Walk the talk

Only lip service won't do, the *neta*s must follow COVID-appropriate behaviour at all times

he pandemic has upended all the notions of life, as we knew it, from personal hygiene to societal behaviour to health to economy, but the one bulwark it has failed to burst through is the way our politicians think and act. There should be no double standards in dealing with the raging contagion but unfortunately this duality is a trait quintessential to our politicos. Though the Government is fastidiously dealing with the rising COVID-19 cases, it has literally turned a blind eye to the situation in the States currently undergoing polls, where the COVID-appropriate behaviour is a disregarded casualty. During their public rallies, road shows and campaigns, almost all political leaders and their minions overlook measures like wear-



ing masks, maintaining social distance and other protocols. For these power-hungry politicians, the vote of any individual is more important than his/her life — hence, they have scant concerns if the COVID protocols stand in the way of their votes. Despite repeated warnings by the Election Commission, the ground condition hasn't ameliorated. But there are good examples to be had from most of the politicians abroad who - discounting the likes of ousted US President Donald Trump and Brazil's strongman President Jair Bolsonaro — aren't dyed in the same wool. For instance, British Prime Minister Boris Johnson earlier this year

put off his India visit, where he was to be the chief guest at this year's Republic Day parade, because the number of COVID-19 infections in his home country shot up exponentially and he chose to stay with his constituents to alleviate their fears. Now, again, Johnson has decided to curtail his India trip later this month because of the virus situation in England.

Johnson said the rapid drop in the COVID-19 deaths in the UK was because of the three-month lockdown and not so much because of the vaccination. We don't know whether he has any empirical evidence to back his claim, but the fact remains that the condition in his country has steadily improved while India has consistently been climbing the chart of the worst-hit countries, lagging behind only the US at the number two position, for now. Our leaders, therefore, should be ashamed of facing the electorate, for whatever it is worth, rather than milling with them to garner votes. God forbid, but if they do contract the virus — as has become the lot of a host of them — they immediately quarantine themselves in the best of medical institutes and access the best of medical care, of course at the cost of the taxpayers' money. But what about the fate of the poor masses that they leave behind, afflicted? It is for several similar reasons that after almost winning the war against COVID, we are again pinned down on the mat; thanks partly to our insouciance and largely to our political leaders. All the festivals, including the celebration of democracy, can be cherished in the real sense only when the nation's people remain healthy and enjoy their basic right to life.



Preparations to showcase a heritage engine, on the eve of the 168th anniversary of the first train run in India, in Thane

Matters of faith

Can devotion alone, in the absence of precautions, protect one from deadly contagions like COVID-19?

ven as lakhs of devotees throng the Kumbh Mela venue every day in Haridwar, with practically non-existent observation of the COVID-appropriate behaviour including face masks and social distancing, Uttarakhand Chief Minister Tirath Singh Rawat kicked up another controversy by saying that the Coronavirus won't infect the



pilgrims. The corollary to his logic: The devotees are "our own people" (read Indians) spread over a "vast open area" and "*Ma* Ganga's blessings will ensure the devotees' well-being". His reasoning flies in the face of all expert warnings and empirical evidence — the authorities detected 1,701 COVID-19 cases between April 10 and 14 at the congregation. Rawat's pearls of wisdom sprang forth when some sceptics dared to compare the largest human gathering in India to the Jamaat at the Nizamuddin Markaz, which was tainted in April last year as the "hotspot" and "epicentre" of the COVID-19 cases in Delhi and across India. He said the Kumbh was different because the Tablighi event was organised

in a small enclosure, with several overseas attendees and when the Markaz was held, neither was there much awareness about Corona nor were any guidelines.

Coming from a Chief Minister who had tested positive for the viral infection on March 22 before winning the battle against it in early April, it seems that some people, and unsurprisingly the politicians, have so thick a skin that they don't learn any lessons from even personal experiences. India is currently being battered by a rapidly spreading second wave of the pernicious virus and here we are, throwing all sense and caution to the winds amid a sea of humans. One shudders to think of what may happen at the Kumbh if the virus spreads like wildfire and when these lakhs of asymptomatic devotees head back to their homes all across India and unknowingly become the delivery agents of the contagion. Experts have already warned that such a large gathering in the midst of a raging pandemic can prove to be catastrophic and severely impede India's fight against the deadly disease that has claimed millions of lives globally. Yes, Mr Chief Minister, the matters of faith can't and shouldn't be ignored but can these be subservient to the right to life and the joys of good health? That really is the question.

Socio-economic divides in 2021



As a nation, we must tear down all the obstacles that impede the participation of women in the economy, even those of the mind

the post-COVID economic data point to a widening of three pre-existing divides: The gender divide, increasing asymmetries between the incomes of the rich and the poor, and an increasing rural-urban digital divide. As each of these inequalities are subjects that need targeted policy interventions, the focus in this post is on the World Economic Forum's Global Gender Report 2021, wherein India has slipped to the 112th ranking among 153 countries.

India, home to 0.65 billion women, has widened its gender gap from 66.8 per cent a year ago to 62.5 per cent this year. The decline is seen on multiple subindex parameters, like the labour force participation falling from 24.8 per cent to 22.3 per cent; the share of women in senior managerial positions being as low as 14.6 per cent; estimated earnings being one-fifth of men; the political empowerment index has regressed by 13 per cent wheren ministerial berths for women have declined from 23.1 per cent in 2019 to 9.1 per cent.

Gender equality is a basic human right enshrined in our Constitution and its achievement has multiplier socio-economic benefits. India is committed to the timelines of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) set by the United Nations which place gender parity at the heart of bringing a gender perspective to all development initiatives. However, the COVID-triggered economic stress will defer the timelines for achieving the SDGs by 2030.

The post-pandemic policy initiatives require increased gender-specific budgeting and recovery strategies: The Modi Government's flagship schemes that positively impacted women during the first term are an outcome of closely aligning with the Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) norms of the 'UN Women'. The GRB is a globallyfollowed "best practice" among nations which allocates fiscal expenditure with specific gender perspectives. Though the Magna



of the allocation is for women.

In the recent years, while some schemes have achieved transversal benefits like the Jan Dhan Yojana, DBT and MNRE-GA, specific gender-targeted schemes have made significant improvements in the socioeconomic living conditions of women. However, the funds allocated for the GRB are limited to less than five per cent of the public expenditure, and shrink to about one per cent of the GDP, making it necessary to significantly increase these budgetary outlays. The NITI Aayog estimates that India will have to increase its gender-specific spend by an additional 6.2 per cent to comply with the SDG targets. Upskilling women to



DATA POINT TO THE FACT THAT THE GIG **WORK MODEL HAS** FOUND A GROWING TRACTION. A WHOPPING 78 LAKH WOMEN WHO HAD EARLIER DROPPED OFF FROM WORK FOR **REASONS LIKE** CHILD CARE, HAVE SOUGHT TO REVIVE THEIR CAREERS

adapt to the changing nature of jobs: The job market has undergone a tectonic shift since COVID, so the nine-to-five model is no longer the future. Deloitte's research shows that economic contraction is nudging companies towards hiring experienced freelancers.

Data point to the fact that this gig work model has found a growing traction, with 78 lakh women who had earlier dropped off from work have sought to revive their careers as the WFH concept has opened the floodgates for those who hold professional degrees combined with robust work experience. Therefore, while automation will displace many jobs, it will also create 90 million flexi-jobs in the next 10 years, according to the Boston Consulting Group.

Second, as self-employment and micro-entrepreneurship is expected to grow at an annual rate of 17 per cent and projected to reach \$455 billion banks must readjust their models to disburse loans at lower rates for priority sector lending to women because the data show that women have stronger saving habits and lower nonperforming loans than men. As most women lack collateral and

credit history to access formal lending, we need innovative ways to build credit history.

How much has gender inequality stunted India's economic progress? The lack of equal ownership of land, access to formal credit, the unfamiliarity of women with the latest technologies, high educational dropout rates as well as inequitable household and unpaid workload distribution have impeded Indian women's economic prosperity.

Gender inequality has, therefore, translated into enormous notional capital losses for India. The economic impact of achieving optimum levels of gender equality in India is estimated to be \$700 billion of the added GDP by 2025. The IMF estimates that equal participation of women in the workforce will increase India's GDP by 27 per cent.

There is clear evidence: "When women do better, economies do better. That by 2023, State and cooperative means we must tear down all obstacles that impede the participation of women in the economy, even the subconscious obstacles of the mind."

(The writer is an author, columnist and Chairperson, NCFIL, at NITI Aayog. The views expressed are personal).

LETTERS

GOOD DECISION TO CANCEL BOARD EXAMS

Sir — It would ease the minds of students and their parents that the CBSE exams for Class 10 have been cancelled and those for Class 12 were postponed to minimise the risk of infection. It was a wise and welcome move needed at this point in time when we are fighting a second wave. It reflects the priority given to the health and safety of stu-

dents and keeping them out of harm's way. The exams by State or other boards, now in progress or scheduled to be held in the coming weeks and months, too should be either cancelled or put off for the simple reason that it will aid in mitigating the pandemic and minimising morbidity and mortality. A picture can be drawn only if there is a canvas or a wall. The preservation of life is of paramount importance. The considerations of safety override all other concerns. It is true that education is vital for students to be able to unlock their potential but treating examinations as the be-all-and-end-all of students' existence is not done.

The "real exam" the mankind is currently taking is the continuing pandemic. We cannot afford to do badly in this life-anddeath exam. The sole question that bears on our existence and is far from academics is how best we can respond to the once-in-alifetime global public health crisis and get through it. Our handling of the COVID-19 pandemic must be based on strategies defining how best we can adapt by modifying our behaviour and way of life and availing the benefit of vaccination to achieve population immunity in order to survive.

G David Milton | *Tamil Nadu*

SERVE THE GREATER GOOD

Sir — Do we need to be "Faster - Higher -Stronger", the Olympic motto, or should we just try to be okay and healthy? The Olympics may yet be cancelled completely after having been delayed a year, says Toshihiro Nikai, the secretary general of the Liberal Democratic Party.

The 2020 Olympics were postponed because of the COVID pandemic and the 2021 version will have few people in the stands as overseas spectators have been

Respect our jawans



he Cooch Behar violence may or may not have been fomented by the TMC but West Bengal Chief Minister and party chief Mamata Banerjee has created a flutter by accusing the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) of wrongdoing — that the security force intentionally shot down four people is her serious allegation. Over and above, she has put the blame at the doorstep of the BJP and Home Minister Amit Shah by charging him with

geted by a rampaging mob of over 500 men,

The CISF personnel were apparently tar-

banned and many of the local citizens aren't interested or actually want it cancelled. Any spectators who would attend will only be allowed to clap and not cheer which seems a rather sad, paler version of the event. The first priority for most countries is to get citizens vaccinated, stop the spread of the virus and then start on an economic recovery rather than watching two weeks of Olympians and para-Olympians doing the best they can. Considering how many have already died and will still die, it is probably best to commit all resources to the medical world and stay safe at home. I know a number of Olympics competitors will miss their one opportunity but that may be the cost they have to pay for the safety of the majority.

Dennis Fitzgerald | Australia

STICK TO COVID PROTOCOL Sir — The second wave of COVID-19 is rav-

incensed by a rumour that a boy of theirs was shot dead by the police, so goes the common version. It is said that when things went out

of control, the CISF men fired at the mob. A

very unfortunate incident that should not have

taken place in the first instance if everybody

had a good head on their shoulders. Here, nei-



ther the mob nor the police can be blamed. On the other hand, Shah has accused Mamata of provoking the people Caught between the two political bigwigs are the CISF and the Election Commission (EC). It is a mockery of democracy that the constitutional bodies and paramilitary forces are ridiculed and berated by politicians every now and then. Our paramilitary personnel are steadfast on their duties but our politicos have scant respect for them. Let us face the truth — these entities work against all odds. The security forces have a thankless job — no encomiums for doing a thing right. But one mistake, even if

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

aging India, making the lives of poor, dailyagers and migrant labourers very difficult One of the main reasons for the fast spread of the pandemic is the elections being held in five States where COVID protocols are not being adhered to by the public or lead-

inadvertent, can turn things topsy-turvy. Ditto

Adding to the woes are the large congregations of people at religious events and places. It is advisable that after the completion of elections there should be no more elections, to local bodies or other bodies as these will only aggravate the situation. We all must act responsibly at this stage; else we will lose our battle against Coronavirus. The cases are risisng exorbitantly and taking precaution is the only thing that is in our hands. CK Ramani | Mumbai

> Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

The Governors can play an important role with the involvement of the Red Cross volunteers and others in creating awareness among the people on the COVID- appropriate behaviour.

> **Prime Minister** — Narendra Modi



Over the past two years, we've been reducing our military presence in Afghanistan from a high of

over 1.500 personnel to around 80 personnel currently.

> **Australian Prime Minister** Scott Morrison

Every day you go through your own journey of asking questions to yourself. There are vour own challenges and weaknesses. You

have to overpower them

Actor — Fatima Sana Shaikh



It's nice to have batters behind you, you have the freedom with AB to come and it's a very similar role I have in the Australian

cricket team

Cricketer - Glenn Maxwell

There is no test, no bed in hospitals, no ventilators, no oxygen, no vaccine, bus utsav ka dhong hai (a festive

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi



FIRST COLUMN

AN INVESTMENT FOR PEACE

It is exactly in a moment of crisis that art consoles us with hope and reminds us that we are not alone



rt can serve as an excellent means of self-expression. Curating an art collection that reflects one's personality and taste is indeed An extremely fulfilling experience. When one looks at an artwork from a vantage point, beyond its financial aspect, s/he tends to delve deeper and reflect upon its inherent attributes of mystery and philosophy. This, in turn, will help achieve further clarity and give one the confidence to keep adding art works to one's collection. The World Art Day is observed on April 15 to make people realise that one of the most important roles of art is its ability to trigger introspection and the mirror it holds up to society at any given point of time. Acquiring and being in the presence of art is also about breaking one's perception and engaging with the work of visionary artists. The art one chooses to display at home or the workplace will most likely be a topic of discussion, so it makes sense to carefully pick and select the work that resonates with one's mind and aligns with one's philosophical ethos. The pandemic and the subsequent lockdown also have a positive side when looked at from the aspect of being in the presence of art and the effectiveness of creative expression in our daily lives.



Before the pandemic brought most of the world to a standstill, the World Health Organisation had published a report enlisting the various beneficial effects of art on the health and well-being of individuals. This report encouraged many firms to use art as a medium to boost the morale of their employees during the pandemic. With movements and social interactions largely restricted, art gave countless people a way to look inwards and thus proved to be a means of cathartic relief and helped people in staying optimistic during these tumultuous times. It is exactly in a moment of crisis that art consoles us with hope and reminds us that we are not alone. It's a proven fact that looking at art triggers the human brain to release the feel-good hormone, Dopamine, and initiates a chemical reaction within that is similar to the feeling of euphoria. Hence, one can easily imagine the far-reaching and therapeutic effects of art. Carefully, surrounding oneself with hand-picked creations can play a deciding role in influencing our mood and have a calming effect. It is widely known that colours affect us and certain hues are largely associated with catalysing the onset of different moods. Thus, inevitably, the colour composition of an artwork a person selects will affect him/her. The advantages of being around art are so well-established that a complete art therapy field has been recognised. It helps individuals explore their creative side, arm their perceptions with the thought of the artists, process and present their ideas in a unique way. The fact that museums display artworks as a visual treat for visitors reflects the fact that Governments have recognised these benefits and thus they promote art. People invest good sums in masterpieces made by various renowned artists so as to broaden their horizons and increase their joy.

If these reasons are not convincing enough for someone to actively collect art work, then the originality factor would definitely inpsire him/her to do so. This way, one can be assured that the artwork s/he has decided to collect or which is already in one's possession will be uniquely his or hers. Another important aspect while collecting art is the connections one can forge within the art world with like-minded people. Collecting artwork is a passion for many and certainly adds value to one's life. Currently, technology has definitely eased how enthusiasts can learn and explore the techniques of seminal artists from the past and contemporary ones, too. Virtual exhibitions and online auctions are also tools that can help one make decisions regarding acquiring artwork that will add a soothing presence to one's mental space.

(The writer is vice-president, AstaGuru.

The views expressed are personal.)

Engineering a better future for humankind



SINHA

In this age of unprecedented technological revolution, genetic engineering is fast occupying the centre stage

In this age of unprecedented technological revolution, genetic engineering is fast occupying the centre stage. Susan Hockfield, a Professor of Neuroscience at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), says that viruspendent betteries protein based water filters. powered batteries, protein-based water filters, cancer-detecting nanoparticles, mind-reading bionic limbs, computer-engineered crops, and so on, have the potential to overcome some of the greatest humanitarian, medical and environmental challenges of our time. These are going to be next generation products that have the potential to reshape our lives. For instance, the discovery of products like aquaporin to purify water for our use that functions like a parking lot that permits only cars identified with a specific transponder to enter, is nature's marvel. All these frontier technologies have inputs of genetic engineering.

Genetic engineering has come a long way since 1971, when two scientists, Berg and Jackson, created the first molecules of a recombinant DNA. Many milestones have been accomplished since then to make genetic engineering almost child's play in the hands of a molecular biologist. But gene therapy, which genetic engineering promised, has been fraught with pitfalls despite a multitude of methodologies. As a result, inherited disorders resulting from aberrations in one's genes could not be treated by replacing or correcting a faulty gene. Correcting the gene in its specific location was an issue and when this was overcome by employing viruses, our immune system would play the spoilsport apart from other issues that sprung up. Ever since the failure of the Jesse Gelsinger trial for the cure of a rare metabolic disorder called ornithine transcarbamylase deficiency syndrome, (OTCD) in 1998, gene therapy was left gasping for breath amid stringent regulations. This is where a serendipitous observation of bacteria having the ability to specifically target the DNA of viruses to inactivate the invader, provided the breakthrough to overcome

many of the pitfalls of the earlier methodologies. **CRISPR** and GENE editing: CRISPR technology is a simple yet powerful tool for editing genomes. It allows researchers to easily alter DNA sequences and modify gene function. Its many potential applications include correcting genetic defects, treating and preventing the spread of diseases and improving crops. The CRISPR-Cas9 can do the job easily and precisely as CRISPR is a part of the bacterial immune system and germs, too, can get sick from viruses. Bacteria fight them by chopping their DNA or RNA with CRISPR sequences and then remember them by pasting their DNA bits into their own genome, allowing to ward off any future infections. These genetic scissors, whose use for targeted modification of genomic DNA was perfected by Jennifer Doudna and Emmanuelle Charpentier, have given a new life to genetic engineering and gene therapy. Both these scientists were the recipients of the Nobel

Prize in Chemistry in 2020. The use of CRISPR-Cas9: Many diseases that were incurable through traditional means can now be treated easily, thanks to genetic engineering. There are ongoing clinical trials using



APART FROM MEDICAL APPLICATIONS, IT IS BEING USED TO GENETICALLY MODIFYING CROPS TO MAKE THEM RESISTANT TO VIRUSES, MAKE LEANER PIGS, HELP YEAST MAKE BETTER BEER, MAKE **MOSQÚITOES** INFERTILE AND SO ON. IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO EXTINCT SPECIES, SO A 'JURASSIC

RECREATE AN PARK' COULD **ACTUALLY** BE A REALITY IN THE FUTURE

Sinha is a former IFS

officer and Pai is Assistant Professor, Amity

Institute of Virology &

Immunology. The views expressed are personal.



CRISPR-based approaches to treat monogenic inherited diseases such as sickle cell anemia, childhood blindness and so on. It holds the promise to treat many other diseases such as cancer, autoimmune disorders and polygenic genetic disorders in future.

Apart from medical applica-tions, it is being used to genetically modifying crops to make them resistant to viruses, make leaner pigs, help yeast make better beer, make mosquitoes infertile and so on. It is also possible to recreate an extinct species, so a 'Jurassic Park' could actually be a reality in the

Research is also underway for the use of CRISPR gene editing that could make us less vulnerable to pandemics, cancer, Alzheimer's and other diseases. Mammals have a gene known as p53 that encodes the proteins that suppress the growth of cancerous tumours. Humans and most other mammals have only one copy of this gene, whereas elephants have 20 copies, and they almost never get cancer. Hence, research is ongoing to double this gene in human beings.

Up till 2020, over a dozen clinical trials were underway for a disease called acute myeloid leukemia, super-high cholesterol and baldness. The thrust of the ongoing research is to study how bacteria developed an immune response to ward off new viruses.

Coronavirus: COVID-19 jabs, like many modern vaccines, have also gained from the advancements in genetic engineering.

Bits of the SARS-CoV2 genes have been pasted onto the adenoviral DNA backbone, some of whose own genes have been knocked off to accommodate the foreign gene. When this vaccine is delivered, the adenovirus carrying the SARS-CoV2 will enter the human cell, it will pretend that it produces the SARS-CoV2 protein but will itself be unable to replicate and make a person sick. This creates a temporary SARS-CoV2 protein factory in our bodies to prime our immune system and prepare it to tackle any infection with the real SARS-CoV2 virus.

Hopes and pitfalls: Ever since Herbert Boyer and Stanley Cohen patented the recombinant DNA technology that they developed in 1972, and Boyer co-founded Genentech, the world's first biotechnology company in 1976, genetic engineering has been the subject of intense debate beyond the scientific arena, involving lawyers, journalists, politicians and the public at large.

Since then, genetic engineering has come through the moral issue of man playing God, with a possibility to determine the fate of the evolution of all species on planet Earth. It is generally agreed that genetically engineered organisms will not be released into the environment. Many countries, including India, have put in place ethical committees at various levels

that oversee and approve research that involves the use of genetic engineering. Even routine laboratory experiments which only aim to demonstrate cloning experiments to students in biology laboratories also need mandatory approvals of the institutional ethical committees or relevant boards. Though there are already products of genetic engineering in the market like vaccines, pest-resistant crops and genetically-engineered mosquitoes, debate continues on the ethical and moral issues surrounding genetic engineering and gene therapy. Thankfully, its fruits are slowly blossoming for larger public good.

Fortunately for humankind, in 2015 at the NAPA international conference, a consensus quickly developed that it would be bad to completely ban germ line gene

editing.

The CRISPR inventor, Jennifer Doudna, herself summed it up: "We wanted the scientific community to hit the pause button until the social, ethical, ecological and philosophical implications of germ line editing could be properly and thoroughly discussed ideally at the global level."

It was concluded at the conference that though it was too early to do germ line editing safely, but someday it would happen and the goal should be to provide prudent guidelines. This holds the key to the future of this marvelous inven-

THE POOR PEOPLE OF BANGLADESH COME TO INDIA AS EVEN NOW THEY DO NOT GET ENOUGH TO EAT IN THEIR OWN COUNTRY. —UNION HOME MINISTER





I WOULD SAY THAT HIS KNOWLEDGE ABOUT BANGLADESH IS LIMITED. NOBODY DIES OF HUNGER IN OUR COUNTRY. —BANGLADESH FOREIGN MINISTER **AK ABDUL MOMEN**

Arrest the COVID wave as lockdown is not an option

Any congregation, be it election rallies, religious or social gatherings, must be immediately banned if the pandemic is to be controlled

→here is a familiar sense of dread in the air and a feeling of *déjà vu*. That is because, what we are witnessing right now is a rerun of last year and at vastly alarming proportions than before. The new strain of the Coronavirus is creating havoc across the country and straining the existing healthcare system once

Railway stations and bus depots are getting packed once again with migrant workers trying to catch a public transport back home. Once gain, we can see motley groups of migrant workers silently trudging back home with all their worldly belongings on their shoulders. drooping shoulders. Thankfully, this time the exodus on foot does not seem to be as major as the last time because the trains and buses

are still running. Messages of total lock-



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The writer is a policy

expressed are personal.

shared by State-level Ministers, even as the Centre is maintaining that localised containment is the best solution to effectively bring the pandemic under control.

The only fact emerging from this second wave sweeping the nation is that India has failed to take lessons from the total lockdown and the first COVID wave that hit it last year. As the experts rightly point out, somewhere towards the beginning of this year, when the active cases across the country started to come down drastically, the Government and citizens alike, threw caution to the winds. The best example of this was the number of weddings which took place in the last couple of months or the long queues outside restaurants for a seat at the table. People, tired of being stuck in the house for almost

down are constantly being a year, forgot that masks and social distancing are going to be a part of our everyday existence for a long time to come. From weekly bazaars to shopping malls or airports, not to forget the recent festival of Holi and the Maha Kumbh in Uttarakhand, everywhere there is a massive crowd to be seen.

It was only a matter of time before the contagion started spreading exponentially. This explosion of cases that we are witnessing now was imminent and new studies suggest that the virus strain is much more infectious, even though the mortality rate could be

What, therefore, needs to be done before India shuts down again for business and a year of irreparable economic damage is registered? First, as the Prime Minister has been saying, "track, trace and iso-late." India, in the last two



weeks, has again got back to ramping up its testing infrastructure to identify the patients. However, the strategy should not have been discarded or taken lightly in the first instance. It took a while to set up centres testing for COVID across the country and there were instances of mandatory negative reports before anyone was allowed free movement across borders. The creation of microcontainment zones to stop the spread of infections was also an

effective tool, thereby leaving the larger area open for economic activities. It is time to revisit these lessons learnt last

Any congregation, be it election rallies, religious or social gatherings, must be immediately banned if the pandemic is to be controlled in any manner. It is a mockery of the citizens' patience and persistence if local lockdowns are imposed in some cities or districts thereby curtailing free movement, while thousands congregate to celebrate the festival of democracy, or mammoth religious events like the Kumbh Mela. There has to be political will cutting across party lines to immediately priorities public health and prevent the spread of the contagion by voluntarily calling off any public rallies in the remaining phases of elections.

The migrants have already

that the new variant of the reliable options.

started to trickle back into their towns and villages from the big cities, bringing with them unknown variants of the virus. Any mass spread of the pandemic in rural belts and smaller towns may cripple the backbone of India. Any amount of night curfew or complete lockdown may not be able to contain the spread of the disease if a sizeable chunk gets infect-

India has achieved a great feat by vaccinating over 10 crore people in 86 days since the exercise began. However, vaccine shortages are being reported from across the country. First the Central Government should ensure that all States, down to the last district, get the appropriate number of vaccines and are prepared to face any life-threatening conditions due to the iab. It is an established fact now

control. India was one of the largest suppliers of vaccines to the world and it is time the focus shifts to domestic use. As we read this, there are five more vaccines awaiting the Government's nod in order to be introduced into the market. Speedy approval and speedier delivery of the Sputnik V vaccine in India could go a long way in saving lives. The Government needs to rethink its vaccine strategy and provide financial support to private players to ramp up production. Plus, based on vaccine availability they should allow every willing person to start taking the jab. All the facets of this deadly disease are still unknown, however, last year's knowledge and the preventive shield of the vaccine are always

virus may make the vaccine

less effective even though the

mortality rates are still within

'Need to create room for quick scaling up of vax production'

There is a need to create environment for quick scaling up of global production of vaccines and other medical products to contain the spread of coronavirus and this requires temporary removal of all hurdles, including related with intellectual property protection in the WTO, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal has

In this regard, he said, India and South Africa along with 57 other WTO (World Trade Organisation) members have co-sponsored a proposal for temporary and limited-scope waiver from certain provisions of the TRIPS (trade related aspects of intellectual property rights) agreement

treatment and containment of COVID-19.

Goyal said that this waiver is not intended to take away protection given to pharma companies, and it focuses only on COVID-19 vaccines, associated medicines, and cure. "We need to create an environment for quick scaling up of global production, not only for vaccines but also other medical products, such as therapeutics and diagnostics. This requires temporary removal of all impediments to the production of Covid medical products, including where necessary Intellectual Property protection," he has said.

The minister was speaking at a WTO event -- COVID-19 And Vaccine Equity: What Can The WTO Contribute? -

The minister stated that the world is not producing sufficient vaccines due to limited

licensing agreements.

To bridge the supply deficit, every tool at our disposal should be used towards producing enough vaccines, he said adding all initiatives must be explored in parallel and in a timely manner to ramp up manufacturing of COVID-19 medical products. Goyal said that every coun-

try should strive for resilient supply chains by ensuring unimpeded access to raw materials required for COVID-19 products and failure to do so could prolong the pandemic for many years through cycles of mutation and may cost the global economy trillions of dollars.



Flipkart to acquire Cleartrip

Walmart-owned Flipkart on Thursday said it will acquire Cleartrip, an online travel tech-

nology company.

Flipkart will acquire 100
per cent of Cleartrip's shareholding as the company further enhances its investments to strengthen its digital commerce offerings for customers, a statement said.

Under the terms of the agreement, Cleartrip opera-tions will be acquired by Flipkart and Cleartrip will continue to operate as a separate brand, it added.

All employees of Cleartrip will be retained and work closely with Flipkart to further develop technology solutions to make travel simple for cus-The company, however, did

not disclose the value of the "The Flipkart Group is com-

mitted to transforming customer experiences through

Stuart Crighton, CEO and co-founder of Cleartrip, said synonymous with travel for many customers, and as we diversify and look at new areas the company has been a pioof growth, this investment will neer in capitalising on technolhelp strengthen our wide range ogy to simplify the travel expeof offerings for customers," Flipkart Group CEO Kalyan rience for our customers.

"This product-driven focus has enabled us to become the He added that the Cleartrip preferred travel partner of team, with its deep industry choice for consumers in a wide range of markets in the capabilities, will help Flipkart region," he added.

The deal closing will be subject to applicable regulato-

Working with govts to ensure openness of platform: YouTube

PNS NEW DELHI

YouTube is focused on working with governments to better shape regulations that allow the video streaming platform to preserve openness, while protecting communities from harmful content, YouTube Chief Product Officer Neal Mohan said.

The top executive noted that the platform has always had a robust set of community guidelines to protect the ecosystem of users, creators and partners from aspects like hate speech, misinformation and harmful

...We want to work with government agencies, regulators...all over the world discussing ways that YouTube can play the role that it plays in a way that satisfies the framework that governments have... We've been doing that for years, for example, in India for the last 13 years and will continue to do so," he said during a session at the Raisina Dialogue.

"We publish those guide-

lines clearly on our site, and we try to enforce them in a way where we're not distinguishing between regions of the world, who the speaker is, we try to enforce them uniformly regardless of whether it's a private citizen, head of state, in a way that's transparent and clearly published on our platform," the executive said. He further emphasised that YouTube understands its responsibility as an open platform that allows sharing of diverse points of view, and it does that in a way "that builds up things like election integrity, free functioning, democratic societies, as opposed to

clamping down on them".

US remains non-committal on India's move to get TRIPS waiver to vaccines

PNS WASHINGTON

The US remained non-committal on the move by India and South Africa to get Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) waiver for COVID-19 vaccine before the WTO so that the doses are accessible and affordable to low- and middleincome countries.

The move by India, South Africa and several other countries has been supported by more than 60 top American lawmakers, most of whom are progressives.

US Trade Representatives Katherine Tai, in her address to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) virtual conference on COVID-19 vaccine equity on Wednesday, however, did not weigh in on the request made



by India and South Africa. The virtual conference was attended and addressed by her Indian counterpart Piyush Executive Vice President Valdis Dombrovskis of the European Union, and Minister Ebrahim Patel of South Africa on Wednesday. "I have had a chance already

to have very meaningful preliminary conversations with each of you. I am committed to finding ways to partner with you on the issues before us today and more broadly," Tai

Acknowledging that there is still a gaping divide between developed and developing

countries when it comes to access to medicines, she said that this was seen during the HIV/AIDS epidemic, where various policies and actions constrained access to medicines, contributing to unneces-

sary deaths and suffering.
"We must learn from, and not repeat, the tragedies and mistakes of the past. The Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, for example, was born out of the HIV/AIDS crisis, and we all - both in government and in the private sector – need to do our parts to live up to its spirit," Tai said.

But there are many aspects of the institution of the WTO and its rules that have not adapted to a changed world, a changed membership, changed practices and expectations.

MONEY MATTERS

Krishnamurthy said.

knowledge and technology

Group provide deeper value

and travel experiences for cus-

Infosys shares tumble over 5 pc after earnings report



hares of Infosys on Thursday declined over 5 Oper cent on profitbooking after its March 2021 quarter earnings missed market expectations. The stock dipped 5.59 per cent to Rs 1,320.35 on BSE. At NSE, it tumbled 5.52 per cent to Rs 1,320. "Infosys reported a

Products Ltd (TCPL) on

Thursday said it has

elevated Puneet Das as the

company's new President -Packaged Beverages, India

and South Asia. Das takes

over from Sushant Dash who

muted set of Q4 FY21 numbers. FY22 revenue growth (12-14 per cent) and margin (22-24 per cent) guidance were lower than our expectations of 13-15 per cent revenue growth and 23-24 per cent margin," according to a report by Edelweiss Securities. IT services major Infosys on Wednesday posted a 17.5 per cent rise in net profit to Rs 5,076 crore for the March quarter, and announced up to Rs 9,200 crore buyback offer at a maximum price of Rs 1,750 per share. The Bengaluru-based company's net profit (after minority interest) was Rs 4,321 crore in the January-March 2020 quarter. Its revenue grew 13.1 per cent to Rs 26,311 crore in the March 2021 quarter from Rs 23,267 crore in the year-ago period, Infosys said in a

TCPL elevates Puneet Das as

president of beverages unit

Sterlite Power, Vinci Energia to buy Vineyards Project

PNS NEW DELHI

Sterlite Power on Thursday Vinci Energia in the power transmission sector to buy Vineyards Project.

"Sterlite Power and Vinci Energia (VIGT11), through Vinci Infraestrutura Gestora Recursos LTDA, announced the formalisation of the commitment of first acquisition of issuance of debentures convertible into shares for the Vineyards Project that is in the final phase of implementation," a

Sterlite Power statement said. The transaction under this relevant fact foresees 149 million Brazilian Real in debentures aimed at developing projects in Sterlite Power's portfolio.

The investment amount can be converted into shares with an 80 per cent purchase option when the project is complete this year.



Etrio to supply 100 Touro 3-wheelers to Zypp Electric

Electric vehicle maker Etrio on Thursday said it will initially supply 100 units of its Touro brand of e-three-wheelers to logistics startup Zypp Electric for last mile delivery, and scale it up to 1,000 units in the next 6-8 months, under a recent partnership.

To start with, Zypp will deploy Etrio's Touro Mini in Delhi-NCR (Delhi, Noida, Gurugram, Ghaziabad and Faridabad), which will further be bolstered by presence across geographies in the country, going forward, the EV start up said in a release.

French power utility firm EDF on Thursday said it has

installed 1 lakh smart electric-

The milestone marks the

beginning of the commercial

rollout of its 5-million smart

electricity meters contract,

nearly half of which will be

ity meters in India.

installed in Bihar.



Besides, Etrio will also provide end-to-end service support to Zypp through its dealer network along with a dedicated relationship manager for maximum uptime, it said.

Zypp, which is a formidable player in the last mile delivery segment has a fleet of over 1,000 electric scooters in its fleet. The three-wheeler segment has been the front-run-

ner in India's electric mobility vision by contributing over 70 per cent of overall EV sales, said the release, adding that the ganised e-rickshaw market. "Since the launch of Touro

early this year, we have seen a phenomenal response coming in from both institutional and retail customers. Touro Mini sets a new standard in the e-rickshaw/ e-loader category and the positive feedback on the product has bolstered our efforts to build best-in-class products for the last-mile delivery market," said Deepak MV, Co-founder and CEO,

Boeing partners with IAA, USC for training

on Thursday said it has part-nered with the Indian Aviation Academy (IAA) and the University of Southern California (USC) for safety management system training to all stakeholders in the

domestic aviation industry. Commercial aircraft operators, airports and air traffic services are required to have a Safety Management System (SMS), as per International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) requirement. It is considered a best practice to provide a framework for hazard

identification, risk mitigation and promotion of a positive Aircraft manufacturer Boeing safety culture, Boeing said in a release. Boeing is adopting ments an enterprise SMS to support its commitment to the highest levels of safety and quality with its products and services. "As part of our continued commitment to safety, we are collaborating with India's civil aviation stakeholders to promote a collaborative safety culture. We have partnered with IAA and USC

associated with TCPL since 2017. TCPL MD and CEO Sunil D'Souza said: "This is in line with our aspiration to recognise and groom internal talent. We have an exciting time ahead for our packaged beverages business with focus on scaling up our distribution and reach, building on product innovation while strengthening the core portfolio." Tata Starbucks is a 50:50 joint venture between Tata Consumer Products Ltd and Starbucks Corporation and operates around 200 stores in India to introduce the Safety Management System program to India," Salil Gupte, President of Boeing said.

CSMIA to consolidate flight ops at one terminal from April 21

The city's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport (CSMIA) has decide to once again consolidate its flight operations to one terminal -T2 - from April 21 amid rising number of COVID-19 cases in the city. The private airport operator had only on March 10 reopened its domestic passenger terminal T-1 for regular flight operations after keeping it closed for nearly a year.

"In light of the latest developments in the ongoing pandemic situation, CSMIA has decided to re-consolidate all domestic passenger flights currently operating via Terminal 1. With effect from April 21, the airport will be conducting all international as well as domestic flight

operations through its Terminal 2," CSMIA said in a statement.

The Mumbai airport has two terminals T1 and T2. Terminal 1 caters to domestic passengers and Terminal 2 has international services besides domestic operations of some of the Indian airlines. Prior to the pandemic, some airlines were carrying out their operations from T 1.

Okinawa inks pact with electric 2-wheelers rental firm Welectric

Starbucks, said the company, earlier known as Tata Global Beverages

President- Marketing - for the India beverages business and has been

Ltd, in a statement. In February, TCPL had announced that Sushant Dash would join Tata Starbucks as CEO from May 1, 2021, as Navin

Gurnaney was stepping down there. Das was earlier Senior Vice



kinawa Autotech on Thursday said it has partnered with electric two-wheelers lease rental firm Welectric to work with companies involved in lastmile delivery operations to help them switch their delivery fleet to electric

vehicles. Welectric already has a fleet of over 150 electric twowheelers and plans to scale it up to over 2,000 in the next 12 months. With this partnership, it will procure electric scooters from Okinawa, including the latest - Okinawa Dual, a customisable B2B electric two-wheeler, the company said in a statement."With the rise of e-commerce and last-mile deliveries fuelled by the COVID-19 pandemic, it has become imperative for businesses in the delivery segment to consistently innovate, reduce operational costs, and increase efficiency, especially amidst rising fuel prices."This year, we are expecting a mass transition of two-wheeler users to electric scooters and this partnership is one step ahead in this direction," Okinawa Autotech founder and Managing Director Jeetender

Optiemus completes buyout of shares in JV from Wistron



. Thursday said it has acquisition of 19.91 per cent stake in joint venture Optiemus Electronics Ltd (OEL) from Wistron Corporation. In December last year, Optiemus Infracom's

to strengthen ownership and control. Optiemus Infracom previously held 80.09 per cent stake in OEL. After the acquisition of 19.91 per cent stake, OEL has become a wholly-owned subsidiary of Optiemus Infracom, a statement said. Also, after acquisition of the said shares, the joint venture agreement with Wistron has ceased to be effective, it added."This acquisition is aimed to drive value creation for all the stakeholders by strengthening the ownership and work towards enhancing the brand image of Optiemus. It will also help us in foraying into new business verticals besides building up the existing business verticals," Optiemus Chairman Ashok Kumar Gupta said.

board had approved the decision to acquire 27.6 lakh shares of OEL

FB partners CleanMax for renewable energy

"Global low-carbon elec-

tricity leader EDF successful-

ly installed 100,000 smart

meters in India under its

contract with Energy

Efficiency Services Ltd

(EESL)," an EDF statement

said. According to the state-

ment, this is the first large-

scale prepaid smart meter

solution to be deployed in

PNS NEW DELHI

Facebook has partnered CleanMax with a view to move to 100 per cent renewable energy in India as part of its sustainability efforts.

Under the agreement, Facebook and CleanMax will assemble a portfolio of wind and solar projects, supplying renewable power into India's electrical grid, in states where the social networking giant's facilities are also present, a statement said on Thursday.

"Facebook and CleanMax today announced a partnership to support Facebook's sustainability ambitions in India with renewable power from wind and solar facilities set up by



French firm EDF installs

1L smart meters in India

CleanMax, India's leading B2B renewable energy provider," it

The first project to be

brought online in the agreement is a 32MW wind project located in Karnataka, the statement added.

While CleanMax will own and operate the projects, Facebook will provide longterm support by committing to purchase 100 per cent of the environmental attribute certificates (EACs) from the projects for years to come.

'We're excited to announce this important step that is helping us support our operations in the region, including our offices in India, with 100 per cent renewable energy.

"This partnership with CleanMax will enable new solar and wind power to be generated in the near future, contributing to the decarbonisation of the Indian electrical grid. Facebook is committed to upholding the highest standards in environmental sustainability across all aspects of our operations," Urvi Parekh, Head of renewable energy at Facebook, said.

Approximately half of the project capacity has recently been commissioned and is already generating power.

"...We have always strived to develop innovative solutions to help our clients achieve their 100 per cent renewable ambitions. Given the constraints in sourcing power to many facilities, we are working with forward-thinking corporations like Facebook to find creative solutions to these problems," CleanMax co-founder and Chief Commercial Officer Andrew Hines said.

HCL raises Rs 500 crore via QIP issue PNS NEW DELHI

State-owned Hindustan

Copper (HCL) on Thursday said it has raised Rs 500 crore through issuance of shares to institutional investors. "The QIP of Rs 500 crore has been fully subscribed," the PSU said in a statement. The funds from the QIP are proposed to be used to fund the ongoing capex/expansion plan of the company. The QIP closed on April 12 with wide participation from diverse investors including mutual funds, insurance companies, banks and

foreign institutional investors.

Hyderabad the pioneer Dad Compared to the p

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> Friday April 16, 2021



PINK SALT TO HEAL YOUR BODY AND MIND

here are many reasons why
Himalayan salt has grown in popularity! But before you delve into its benefits let's try and understand what exactly Himalayan salt is. It's a rock salt found in Pakistan's Punjab district.
Mined in the Himalayan foothills, it has hundreds of essential nutrients that give it its rosy hue. Previous research indicates that it is one of the purest salts available. It comes in a variety of ways, from exfoliating bath salts to cooking brines and salt lamps.

Lavleen Gambhir, Founder,

Lavleen Gambhir, Founder, Yummiano, shares four ways to reap benefits:

Assists the body in detoxification:

Himalayan salt is a rich source of minerals and elements such as potassium, iron, and calcium. Both minerals help our bodies' normal detoxification mechanism and facilitate bacteria elimination.

Reduces blood pressure:

Sea salt is finely refined, has fewer minerals, and contains more sodium than Himalayan salt. When you replace sea salt with Himalayan salt, your body processes it more easily, so it does not need as much water to flush out the extra sodium as it does if you had used table salt. Furthermore, Himalayan salt is especially rich in iodine, which food manufacturers artificially bind to table salt during processing. Himalayan salt contains natural iodine, which is

very good in assisting the body to create an electrolyte equilibrium, assisting the intestines in absorbing nutrients, and reducing blood pressure

Improves digestion:

The high mineral content of Himalayan salt aids in the pH balance of your body. Our bodies have greater immunity and are better able to store and absorb food while our pH levels are healthy.

Improves respiratory health:

Many people claim that salt therapy, which entails inhaling salt-infused air, can help with lung problems like chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, or COPD. While further study is required on this subject, scientists discovered statistically significant changes in questionnaires provided to COPD patients who used a dry salt inhaler. With all of the false health statements, it's understandable that some people are perplexed about which kind of salt to use. However, if you choose to skip the ingredients used in standard table salt, pink Himalayan salt is an excellent natural substitute.



BRINGING COMEDY AND COOKING TOGETHER

Who doesn't love comedy? And who doesn't love food? Bringing the best of the both worlds onto one stage is the upcoming show *Chef vs Fridge* on Zee Cafe. Popular comedian Gaurav Gera, better loved as Chutki, talks to *The Pioneer*'s SHIKHA DUGGAL about turning host with the show, his tryst with comedy, and more.

ne measly line is all it takes to puncture and break a heart, while it takes herculean effort to make a person laugh. Gaurav Gera, the celebrated comedian of all times actually goes into the pits of sadness where a person lies and gets him/her out with words. With the ability to go underground and bring them to the surface and then take them to heights of laughter, Gaurav aka 'chutki' on social media seems to be the best in it. And, now with Zee Café announcing its new original, titled Chef Vs. Fridge — this ridiculously funny comedian is turning a host with this this new assign-

ment.

"Food takes me into a whole new space of approbation, I cook as well. I can't cook any fancy nourishments, but I'm a good hands-on-try for authentic flavours and Chinese cuisine.

And, this show coming my way blended so well in the current times. Launched with the commitment of 'Ab fridge lega sabki class, aur chefs banaenge kuch world class', Vicky Ratnani and I will experience a relatable situation as we open our fridges. You'll see ounces of my comical traits being smoothly infused in the way I host the show! While the populace calls me funny, so is our celebrity chef Vicky Ratnani, he's a real funny man. It's not just going to be a cooking show but a comedy cooking show!" Gauray shares.

dy cooking show!" Gaurav shares.

Holding the flag high of a
funny business, his famous character 'chutki' has taken over his
online forum like crazy! Inspired
by his regular life experiences, the
crazy random stories Gaurav Gera
is bringing to us leaves us in splits.
Having a lot of influences from
the west, he takes the ownership

of being likeable somehow.
Performing antidotes that are fun, light-hearted and without any undertones of social critiques, he's a self-depreciating comedian. In awe of actor and comedian Sunil Grover's humour, he describes, "I love Sunil so much, the ability to blend in any character that he has to play on screen is phenomenal. Even while performing he's living life and not putting up a rehearsed stand-up act. It's interesting to watch that."

Talking about how social media is helping comedians and influencers create a funny atmosphere online, he tells us, "It isn't just a comedian, every one who specialises in their respective niches can showcase it through social media nowadays. Somebody's either cooking, spreading facts or making spoofs online — it's a worthy platform to be on, others notice you! Look at me, I play almost 35 characters online and chutki seems to be my most favourite.

I am assuming a man wearing a bold lip-shade is doing wonders online, I would like to believe so. It's creating reactions!"

Women in comedy as compared to the other gender seemed to be less, atleast in the past. There was a dearth of female comedians intially. Why, aren't they funny enough?

Well, Gaurav doesn't second

Well, Gaurav doesn't second that opinion at all! In fact, he says, "It all boils down to the society we live in, there was a set of rules that were pre-conceived for how a lady should be or behave. They were forced to be so prim and proper out there! I heard some of them saying 'don't try to be a clown' or 'don't attract attention'. So women have been restricted a lot over the years, however, now with the changing times, there's more



acceptance than dismissal. Bharti or Mallika Dua, they are such funny women. Their sense of

Having discussed that, another facet to the comedy fraternity is that nowadays deep dark humour is landing many of them in jails. Comedians who are into making people laugh today, just like Gaurav, are to be so alert that they re-evaluate their content multiple times before posting it online because the funny man firmly asserts that he doesn't want to offend anyone!

"I don't touch on the topics of religion, sexuality or body-shaming. There's a careful quality control check that I do. I would rather have pure funny videos instead l of landing up into any sort of controversies. Nonetheless, you never know, because at times, people tend to still get offensive on such silly notes which is beyond my imagination."

Lastly, comedy is now a full fledged business! Stand-up stands as a legitimate art form today. Tickling the core of every culture, English stand-up especially is becoming so popular in urban

Does Gaurav Gera wants to be one of them? "The fact of the matter is that stand up comedy gigs have become a rage these days, especially in privileged environments! It's got so popular that

citizens tend to think they're both the same. They think comedy means stand-up, which isn't true. I personally love acting out my humour, to shoot it like fiction. I like to have the appropriate plot lines! Others are doing a really fine job at being stand-up comedians, why should I bother myself now?"

To watch more of Gaurav Gera, that too unplugged, tune into the upcoming competitive food show on Zee Café, it's a must watch for Indian foodies who would love to sit on their couch and have a good laugh along that.

laugh along that.
(Premiering Sunday 25th April,
Chef Vs. Fridge will air on Sundays
at 8 PM on Zee Café)

Students often face the dilemma of whether they should study in India or abroad. Ashish Fernando shares six factors that can help you decide

ne out of every five students face the indecision of whether they should study in India or abroad. Here are six factors that can help you have a better future.

Every student planning their higher education faces many choices. Some of the most important decisions to make range from choosing the right course, a good university and even the

right country. Where you

choose to pursue your education can drastically change your future. Most students who decide between their country options, compare the pros and cons with the same burning questions:

How does the cost of education differ?

Depending upon the course you choose, studying in India can be cheaper than studying in a university abroad. India has some of the world's most affordable higher education options. Thus, Indian universities also attract a lot of global students, especially from European and African countries.

However, that does not mean that studying abroad cannot be affordable. Students from all financial and academic backgrounds study abroad. If you seek hard enough, you are bound to find an institution that has education costs similar to what you would pay in India. The cost of your education also includes your cost of living, of course. It's important to consider that while living abroad may provide a global outlook on things, staying with your families might be more cost-effective. So, if you're still confused, it's better we consid-

er the next factor.

Take your call or a private education systems are afford or a private education system or a private education system or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order or a private education system or a first order order or a private education system or a first order orde



How do we judge the education quality?

The curriculum, the faculty and the scope of taught are the three things every student should look at when judging the educa-

research or the subjects

tion quality of an institution. În India, most institutions fall under a standard government-set curriculum or a private education system. However, getting into the apex universities like the IITs and IIMs can be highly competitive with an admission rate as low as 7 per cent.

However, institutions abroad tend to have coursework that differs slightly for each university. This means that a student who plans to apply for an MBA can choose to do so in STEM specialisations instead of a traditional module. These kinds of niche specialisations and programmes are often unavailable in India. The handpicked faculty members, advanced teaching methods and higher admission rates in universities abroad, often make it a better option for students.

What about job opportunities?

The intention behind almost the entire higher education journey leads to one destination: A wellpaying, satisfactory job. Since the degrees from Indian universities are sometimes more affordable, the return on investment is often considerable. However, foreign university degrees are often held in the same regard as a degree from a prestigious Indian university. This gives students an edge over others applying for similar jobs in India. Applying to one of the numerous jobs overseas also gives you diverse career options and a higher

return on investment. **Where is it safer?**

The physical safety concerns are an inevitable issue faced by every institution worldwide. Many students feel a modicum of comfort in studying in your own country.

However, there are many others who note the safety protocols in universities abroad and pursue education there. Student concerns are taken very seriously and help is immediate. In times such as the global pandemic when education has largely gone digital, safety is a severe con-

cern. Indian universities have put strict restrictions on campus learning. While many universities abroad have also done the same, most institutions in countries like the USA, the UK, Australia and Canada, have introduced a partial lecture schedule on campus.

Which option is better for a career profile?

Whether you plan on staying overseas or coming back to India, pursuing education abroad gives you a global outlook on life. It develops your perspective and decision making skills, thus, helping you build a well-rounded career. However, if you plan on choosing a career that has a greater scope and career options in the Indian industries, staying in India might be what you need to

do.

As you might have noticed, all these factors depend upon one major choice — the course. Be it the curriculum, cost, career or even jobs, the decision you make hinges upon the programme of your choice. The only thing to keep in mind is that country choices are never limited, all that matters is a student's preference.

ence.
(The writer if the founder and CEO of iSchoolConnect.)



what's brewing?













TEXTILE TALES

ne of Hyderabad's most loved fashion extravaganza — Akriti Elite Exhibition, had fashionistas browsing through the many colourful designs on display. The two-day exhibition ends today, So, head straight to Hotel Taj Deccan, Hyderabad and grab your favourite pieces. favourite pieces.

Photos by SV Chary

UNFAIR TO COMPARE MY PERFORMANCE WITH ABHISHEK BACHCHAN'S: PRATIK GANDHI

Abhishek Bachchan as Harshad Mehta in the feature film *The Big Bull* started streaming, critics and audiences have been comparing him to Pratik Gandhi's Harshad Mehta in the web series *Scam*

Pratik feels the comparison is unfair. "I don't think any two individuals especially artists can be or should be compared, as we are different human beings. The way we think, feel, emote is bound to be different. So there is no different. So there is no sense in any comparison. The two performances should be seen in reference to the script and the character requirement for the same."

What is Pratik's take on another film on Harshad Mehta so soon after the Mehta so soon after the first? "I'm yet to watch The Big Bull. But it's exciting to see a new take on the same story."

Coming up next from Pratik Gandhi? "I am

doing a web series with Tigmanshu Dhuliya based



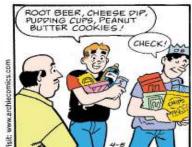
on Vikas Swarup's novel Six Suspects. You and I had discussed this earlier. It is now confirmed

though they haven't announced it yet." Pratik is also excited about a feature film. "It's called Woh Ladki Hai Kahan with Taapsee Pannu being produced by Siddharth Roy Kapur.
There are a couple of other web series and films about which some announcement should come soon."



ARCHIE







CALVIN AND HOBBES









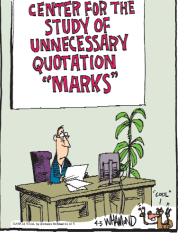
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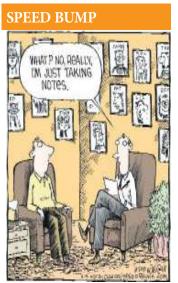






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ACROSS

- 1 Meat from a sheep
- 3 Talk in a friendly way
- 7 A sewed joint 8 Wound someone
- 10 Envious 13 A green gemstone

- 16 Cunning 17 Moist
- 18 Border
- 19 Jail

DOWN

- 1 A face disguise
- 2 Go on a journey 4 Drag along
- 5 Three times four 6 Ask



9 A region's weather

11 Save from danger

14 A long sharp animal

conditions

12 Forever

tooth

15 Twirl around

tollywood

Patriotism, the reigning flavour in South films

uperstars of the south industry seem to be in a race to announce patriotism-themed mega projects. Filmmakers are going all out to launch teasers, trailers and announce-

ments of films that hoist the

Tricolour spirit high. Here are recent announcements in the southern film industry that are high on the patriotic spirit:

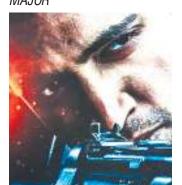
1947



Ghajini director AR Murugadoss will co-produce the pan-Indian film (simply put, the term means it will be made and released in multiple languages). Murgadoss co-produces with Om Prakash Bhatt, and the film will be directed by Pon Kumaran. The Tamil film will be released in multiple languages across the country.



SS Rajamouli film — Roudram Ranam Rudhiram — is said to be one of the costliest films ever produced in India. The film is a fic-tional account starring Ram Charan and Jr NTR as freedom fighters Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem, who fought against British and the Nizam of Hyderabad.



Adivi Sesh stars as 26/11 martyr Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan. The film is a biographical drama and its teaser was recently released. The film marks Telugu superstar Mahesh Babu's debut as producer and is directed by Sashi Kiran Tikka. The film is slated to release on July 2. It is being shot in Telugu and Hindi and will be dubbed in Malayalam.

WILD DOG



The Telugu film released recently. Superstar Nagarjuna plays an NİA agent in the film that references contemporary terrorist attacks. The film also features Dia Mirza and Saiyami Kher.

WILL PURSUE BOTH, MUSIC AND MEDICINE'

Who knew his rendition of *Life of Ram* from *Jaanu* would take him this far. Well it's not just the song, but his talent coupled with hardwork that gave him the much deserved love, work and fame. Sa Re Ga Ma Pa winner Yasaswi Kondepudi, in an exclusive chat with The

Pioneer's K RAMYA SREE, talks about his journey thus far, his upcoming projects cutting across language barriers, his plans, and more.

aking the Life of Ram song from Jaanu to the next level, Yasaswi Kondepudi, the

Kakinada-lad pursuing his MBBS, emerged as the winner of Zee Telugu's

Sa Re Ga Ma Pa - The Next Singing Icon recently, and is now busy with the nine films that he has in his kitty, and is no less than a celebrity.

Yasaswi calls the win a dream come true and says he is yet to sink in this news

Speaking about how he gained interest in music, Yasaswi shares, "Since my childhood I have been in an orchestra along with my parents, who are both singers. My parents had a love marriage. After I was born, they

set up their own orchestra. The group grew along with me. I grew up listening to music every single day."

"I was never into singing during my formative years. However, I think playing the keyboard helped me gain swara gnanam. On one occasion, when one of the singers could not make it, I was asked to be his replacement. That particular music night was a big hit and everyone appreciated my singing. That's when I embraced singing fully," he

For 30 musical weeks, Telugu audiences across the world were obsessed over this young medico's renditions. Millions tuned in every week to watch him sing.
The MBBS lad has set up his

own musical band YK Concerts while in college. "We held concerts across both the Telugu states," he says.

The youngster never knew he would get through Sa Re Ga Ma Pa auditions, let alone winning the show.

Sharing one of the most bitter-sweet moments in life, he says, "I have the habit of recording my every concert and uploading the same on YouTube. From 100 my subscribers grew to 40,000. A day

pointed me. I started a new channel. Two days after *Life of Ram*, I gained two lakh subscribers. The singing star now has celebrity status. While he is enjoying the fame, he some-

after singing *Life of Ram*, someone hacked my channel and I

lost all my work. It really disap-

times feel uncomfortable as he cannot roam openly now with people recognising him wher-

ever he goes.

Not just Telugu, the young-ster also has a Bollywood and Sandalwood (Kannada) project. He is still celebrating his win, by performing concerts across Telugu states. Currently pursuing his final year of medicine, Yasaswi,

dreams of becoming a medical officer while continuing his worked hard and reached my final year of medicine.

I neither want to leave practicing medicine nor music. I want to do both in my life," he concludes with immense joy and pride for making his family, and near and dear, happy with his work.

TAMANNAH UNVEILS KAJAL'S FIRST LOOK FROM *GHOSTY*

Aggarwal's colleague and her good friend Tamannah Bhatia unveiled the first look of her upcoming horror-fantasy dark comedy film Ghosty,

where the actress pla a cop.
In the poster, the actress is seen sitting in front of the Parliament

House surrounded by politicians. *Ghosty* is being

from Kajal, the movie also has Yogi Babu, Urvashi, Jagan, Suresh Menon, Motta Rajendran and KS Ravikumar in the cr cial roles.

The sources close to the makers of *Ghosty* revealed that Kajal Aggarwal is playing the role of a cop who has to deal with the ghosts

helmed by director

Kalyaan and is bank

rolled by Seed Pictures

banner. It is a female

centric film. Apart

troubling her. The Chandamama actress has already joined the sets and started the shoot of her part. The film is being made in Telugu and Tamil languages.
On the work front,

Kajal will also be seen in Acharva alongside Chiranjeevi. She will also be seen in *Mumbai* Saga, Indian 2 and Hey Sinamika. She has also been roped in Nagarjuna-starrer film recently.



Kichcha Sudeep's Vikrant Rona to release on August 19

ega fame Kichcha Sudeep's multilingual upcoming film, Vikrant Rona is all set to have a theatrical release on August 19. The actor shared the news on Twitter along with a motion poster of the film. "After enjoying the process of preparations and it's making,,, its now time for a

new excitement. We the team of #VikrantRona is all excited and happy to mark August 19th 2021 for its theatrical release,"

Sudeep wrote in a tweet.
In a follow-up tweet, the actor thanked his co-stars, colleagues and fans for showing him and his upcoming film with abundant love. "Thanks to many frm my industry n other

fraternities,, n to all my frnzz,for the luv and support u have shown through and through. The team on the post production is surely doin an awesome job. Proud of you guys. #VikrantRona #VikrantRonaOnAug19 @VikrantRona

#WorldGetsANewHero (sic)." Sudeep's Vikrant Rona was supposed to be one of the first big-budget films to have arrived on floors in the early days of the pandemic, however, it was delayed due to subsequent lockdown.

'Power Play helped me experiment with genres'

ctor Raj Tarun and director Konda Vijay Kumar's *Power Play*' is being streamed on Amazon Prime. Produced by

Mahidhar, Devesh under Vanamalee Creations Pvt Ltd as their Production No – 1, the film opened to fairly good response in theatres.

The film now has the highest viewing count on Amazon Prime.
"Our Power Play is getting very good appreciation from

Amazon Prime similar to its theatrical release. I am receiving phone calls from friends, Industry people saying that they have watched a very good thriller."

Director Vijay Kumar Konda said, "I am very happy that *Power Play* is getting very good reach on OTT too. I did this film in a genre that is new to me. This film gave me a boost to experiment with genres in the future.

The film, which is touted to be a thriller, also stars Hemal Ingle,



Poorna, Madhunandan, Ajay, Kota Srinivas Rao, Raja Ravindra, Dhanraj, Kedari Shankar, and others in pivotal





Siddharth inaugurated 'Gismat Mandi' Jailthemed Arabic restaurant in Vijayawada. On the occasion, the Happy Days actor said that Bezawada stands as a destination to serve different food and flavours, adding that it is commendable to set up an Arabic theme to provide unique flavours to the food lovers of the city.

ollywood actor Nikhil

WE PLAYED CROSS BATTED SHOTS, AND THAT'S NOT THE WAY TO PLAY HERE (IN CHENNAI). THIS HURTS. WE KNOW HOW TO APPROACH IN THE UPCOMING GAMES

CAPTAIN'S CALL



208

80

MOST SIXES

RUNS

137

119

99

WKTS

6

6

boundarymeter

PLAYER 1. Nitish Rana (KKR)

PLAYER

2. Sanju Samson (RR)

3. Manish Pandey (SRH)

1. Harshal Patel (RCB)

2. Andre Russell (KKR)

3. Rashid Khan (SRH)

1. Sanju Samson (RR)

3. Nitish Rana (KKR)

UMMER

2. Deepak Hooda (PBKS)

MOTION PICTURE

Hardik gets promotion Unadkat keeps DC

Pandya finds place in A category of BCCI central contracts; Virat, Rohit, Bumrah remain in top bracket; Kuldeep, Chahal demoted

he star trio of India captain Virat Kohli, his white-ball deputy Rohit Sharma and pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah retained their top bracket BCCI contracts, worth ₹7 crore each, while allrounder Hardik Pandya earned a promotion despite an injury-plagued

A total of 28 cricketers were awarded central contracts in four categories on Thursday.

At this moment in Indian cricket, there are only three certainties across formats and the scenario hasn't changed with Kohli, Rohit and Bumrah being the elite of All-rounder Pandya is one

of the notable promotions to Grade A, which is worth ₹5 crore, despite the fact that he endured a back injury which has prevented him from bowling for much of the last year. He was in Grade B

last year. "Hardik is very much in line to play Test match-England and will be one of the most important players after

our A+ cricketers when we play the T20 World Cup. So Hardik's promotion is about what he brings to the team. That's what the selectors have fac

LIST OF BCCI'S ANNUAL CONTRACTS (2020-21)

| GRADE A+ (₹7 CRORE) | GRADE A (₹ 5 CRORE) | GRADE C (₹1 CRORE) |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------|
| Virat Kohli | Ravichandran Ashwin | Kuldeep Yadav |
| Rohit Sharma | Ravindra Jadeja | Navdeep Saini |
| Jasprit Bumrah | Cheteshwar Pujara | Deepak Chahar |
| Jaspiil Duilliali | Ajinkya Rahane | Shubman Gill |
| Losers: Kuldeep Yadav (A | Shikhar Dhawan | Hanuma Vihari |
| to C), Bhuvneshwar | KL Rahul | Axar Patel |
| ,· | Mohammed Shami | Shreyas Iyer |
| Kumar (A to B), Yuzvendra | Ishant Sharma | Washington Sundar |
| Chahal (B to C). | Rishabh Pant | Yuzvendra Chahal |
| Winners: Hardik Pandya (A from B), Shardul | Hardik Pandya | Mohammed Siraj |
| Thakur (B from C). | GRADE B (₹3 crore) | New addition: Mohammed |
| | Wriddhiman Saha | Siraj, Shubman Gill and Axar |
| | I | |

Umesh Yadav

Bhuvneshwar Kumar

Mayank Agarwal

tored in," a senior BCCI official told PTI. Rookies Shubman Gill and Mohammed Siraj have got their maiden central con-

> tracts worth ₹1 crore in grade C while Shardul Thakur has been elevated to group B. The trio has been rewarded for lion-heart-

> > m a n c e s during India's historic Test triumph in Australia

ed perfor-

Among the demotions, pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar has dropped to Grade B, which is worth ₹3 crore, while Kedar Jadhav has been dropped for good. Bhuvneshwar's

demotion from A to B comes in the wake of prolonged absences due to different injuries and he is no longer an all-format regular.

Patel in Grade C.

Kedar Jadhav.

Miss out from last year's list: Manish Pandey and

The biggest setback has come for left-arm wrist spinner Kuldeep Yadav, who has been pushed down two

notches from Grade A to C.
"Kuldeep is slowly slipping down
the radar and he should consider himself lucky that he has managed to retain his contract," said the source.

However Shikhar Dhawan, who is now a certainty in only one format (ODI), has managed to remain in category A along with Test specialists Ravichandran Ashwin and Cheteshwar Pujara.

Axar Patel's 27-wicket haul against England at home has also got him back in the central contracts

Rishabh Pant, who is certainly a future A+ candidate, has retained his grade A position after a dream four months where he has singlehandedly won Test matches against Australia

under check

Jaydev's brilliant spell of 3/15 restricts Delhi to 147 for 8



Rajasthan Royals pacer Jaydev Unadkat celebrates after he takes wicket of DC opener Shikhar Dhawan

PTI MUMBAI

brilliant three-wicket burst from pacer A Jaydev Unadkat helped Rajasthan Royals restrict Delhi Capitals to 147 for eight in their IPL match, here on Thursday.
Unadkat (3/15 off 4 overs) dismissed

Prithvi Shaw, Shikhar Dhawan and Ajinkya Rahane to trigger DC's top-order collapse from which they never recovered fully.

Captain Rishabh Pant's blistering 32-ball 51, studded with nine fours, was not enough as DC could only post a modest total after being put in to bat.

DC made a disastrous start as they were two wickets down for 16 runs in the fourth over with Unadkat dismissing the opening duo of Shaw (2) and Dhawan (9) cheaply.

Shaw was the first to go in the second over, caught at backward point before Dhawan perished while attempting a ramp shot with RR captain and wicketkeeper Sanju Samson taking a stunning diving catch to his right.

Ajinkya Rahane's (8) underwhelming IPL

form continued as he offered an easy caught and bowled chance to Unadkat with a slow ball that clocked just 110km per hour.

DC were 36 for 3 at the end of power-play but the slump continued as Marcus Stonis (0), foxed by a Mustafizur Rahman (2/29) delivery, checked his shot at the last minute to offer running catch to Jos Buttler.

The run rate started increasing once captain Pant came to the crease but still DC were 57 for 4 at the halfway mark.

Once he had a full measure of the pitch, Pant opened up and hit four boundaries, three of which were consecutive, to take 20 runs from the 11th over bowled by Rahul Tewatia.

Pant, in excellent form this year, reached to his fifty off 30 balls in the 12th over, with a four off Mustafizur but he was run out the next over with bowler Riyan Parag's throw crashing onto the stumps. Delhi were 88 for 5 then.

After Pant's exit, Tom Curran gave some respectability to the DC innings with a 16-ball

on Thursday enjoying water sport **MULANI 1ST COVID BACK-UP**

SURFING THEIR WAY: Mumbai Indians' foreign recruits -

Trent Boult, left, and Chris Lynn spend time in Chennai beach

Delhi Capitals on Thursday roped in young Mumbai leftarm spinner Shams Mulani as IPL's first short term Covid-19 replacement as he was brought in for Axar patel, who is yet to recover from the dreaded virus and is still in a medical care facility. DC also has substituted iniured captain Shreyas Iyer with Karnataka off-spinner Aniruddha Joshi. Mulani is a left-handed lower middleorder batsman and a slow left-arm orthodox bowler. The 24-year-old has an economy rate of 6.92 in 25 T20 games and a highest score of 73. He will not be permitted to represent another IPL franchise this season once he leaves the Delhi Capitals.

KOHLI REPRIMANDED FOR DISSENT

RCB captain Virat Kohli has been reprimanded for breaching the IPL's Code of Conduct after he was seen kicking a chair in frustration following his dismissal in the game against SRH. He was not at his fluent best in the game and ended up with 33 off 29 balls.

SHAHBAZ JUSTIFIES HIS SELECTION

RCB pacer Mohammad Siraj feels that spin bowling allrounder Shahbaz Ahmed has justified his selection in the playing eleven, following a match-winning performance against SRH. Ahmed picked up three wickets in an over to stage a remarkable turnaround for RCB on Wednesday night. "Both Shahbaz Ahmed and Rajat Patidar (who played the last game) have been brilliant in the practice games," Siraj said in the postmatch conference. "Shahbaz, as an all-rounder, gives us that extra option with his left-arm spin. The wicket was slow and turning also. Shahbaz Ahmed fitted into it for this game and did the job for us," he added.

in Kings face-off

KEY PLAYERS **CHRIS GAYLE**

Wankhede wicket suits his game and Gayle will be eager to make full use of the conditions



SAM CURRAN

The English all-rounder is capable enough to chip quick runs in death over's besides getting wickets

PTI MUMBAI

hennai Super Kings would look for inspiration from skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni and a much-improved bowling effort when they take on a power-packed Punjab Kings at Wankhede Stadium on Friday. The two sides experienced contrasting for-

tunes in their respective tournament opener. While CSK lost by seven wickets against Delhi Capitals, Punjab Kings eked out a four-run win over Rajasthan Royals in a high-scoring thriller.

With the dew playing a crucial role at Wankhede, the side winning the toss would want to bowl first.

In their first match here, despite failures from the opening duo of Rituraj Gaikwad and Faf du Plessis besides skipper Dhoni, CSK managed to put up a decent total on the board.

But the Chennai outfit's bowling unit looked completely out of sorts and clueless against Shikhar Dhawan and Prithvi Shaw, who were ominous from the word go and stitched a 138-run stand to take the game away from CSK. The likes of Deepak Chahar, Sam Curran,

Shardul Thakur, Jadeja and Moeen Ali all went for big runs and looked rusty. And come Friday, the onus would be on master tactician Dhoni to

inspire his teammates to lift their performance and give Punjab a run for their Punjab Kings, on the other hand, had a narrow escape against RR the other

despite posting a mam-moth 221 for 6 on the board

Opening the batting, KL Rahul played a captain's knock of 91 off just 50 balls. He was ably supported by big-hitting Chris Gayle (40 off 28) and Deepak Hooda (64 off 28).

For Punjab Kings and Rahul, batting is not at all area of concern as they showed with their performance in the opener, but just like CSK, the bowling unit remains a major worry despite

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches Punjab Kings Chennai Super Kings

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

Chennai Super Kings beat Kings XI Punjab by 10 wickets

Chennai Super Kings defeated Kings XI Punjab by 9 wickets in Abu Dhabi



KL Rahul who scored 4933 runs in 140 innings of 153 matches, needs 67 runs to become the 11th Indian and 70th batsman overall to score 5000 runs in T20 matches

70

Faf du Plessis who scored 5930 runs in 224 innings of 240 matches, needs 70 runs to become the sixth South African and 45th batsman overall to score 6000 runs in T20 matches

Faisel Features

spending big money at the auction. And Rahul definitely won't be a happy man with the performances of his bowlers against Raiasthan Rovals.

Young Arshdeep Singh (3/35) eventually emerged as Punjab's saviour. Needing 13 runs off the last over, the left-arm pacer gave away

just eight runs to pull off a fine win for his team. Besides Arshdeep, veteran Mohammad Shami (2/33) too had a decent outting with the ball but the performance of Australian pace duo of Jhye Richardson (1/55) and Riley Meredith 1/49) should be a concern for Punjab, having shelled out ₹22 crore for their services.

Bowlers take centre stage Katich impressed with mature Maxi

lenn Maxwell is proving to be showing ominous form with the bat early in the IPL, feels head coach

Simon Katich. The 32-year-old, who was snapped by RCB for ₹14.25 crore after a massive bidding war with CSK, already has justified the faith shown in him by playing two matchwinning knocks in their back-

pack wins this season. The Australian is also to-back wins this season. looking to shed the perennial under-performer tag in the

"He's shown a lot of maturity, particularly today (against SRH on Wednesday), when wickets were falling around him... He summed up the conditions really well, and took the game deep, that's credit to him for his experience for summing it up and then executing right at the end when we needed some quick runs," said

Glenn Maxwell is proving to be III the 2020 cultion field in the Superior Royal UAE, Maxwell endured a dismal tice, worked with him on that run with then Kings XI Punjah scoring 108 runs from 13 matches

He failed to hit a single six and also struggled to get the team over the line on many a Punjab franchise finally

times as the gave up on the Aussie ahead of this year's auction. But Katich

said he has been multi-faceted with RCB franchise this season. "He's been magnificent. He's had a big role for us, first in the field helping Virat out there with field positioning to have the right guys in the right places at the right time. He has really embraced it," Katich said

posted on their website.

"He's taken a lot of the young In the 2020 edition held in the guys under his wing at fielding pracknow that's an area we have to keep being good and really open up opportunities for run out and catch-

> "He's been brilliant there but the big thing is obviously being with the bat. Both the times he's given himself a chance to get in stick to his

The head coach also hailed the spirit shown by the team in defending the modest total against SRH. "It's certainly obviously gets

tense, but I think spirit with which we played that was fantastic in both games, so regardless of result we're really proud of the way they go about it.

"The fact that we got over the line both times is great. If we hadn't got over the line, then the fact that we fought really hard and stayed in the contest as long as we did, particularly tonight, when Warner and Pandey were putting on a very good partnership, and things were in their favour."

| | | POI | NT | S 1 | ΓΑ | BLE | |
|---|------------|------|----|------------|----|--------|-----|
| | | | Р | W | L | NRR | PTS |
| 1 | 搖 | RCB | 2 | 2 | 0 | +0.175 | 4 |
| 2 | INDIANE | MI | 2 | 1 | 1 | +0.225 | 2 |
| 3 | *** | PBKS | 1 | 1 | 0 | +0.200 | 2 |
| 4 | * | DC | 2 | 1 | 1 | +0.195 | 2 |
| 5 | | RR | 2 | 1 | 1 | +0.052 | 2 |
| 6 | * | KKR | 2 | 1 | 1 | 0.000 | 2 |
| 7 | * | SRH | 2 | 0 | 2 | -0.400 | 0 |
| 8 | 10 | CSK | 1 | 0 | 1 | -0.779 | 0 |
| | | | | | | | |

shortpasses

ALL-WIN DAY AT YOUTH WORLDS NEW DELHI: It was a second successive allwin day for Indian boxers at the youth world championships in Kielce, Poland with two from the women's contingent — Poonam (57kg) and Vinka (60kg) advancing to the quarterfinals after clinching dominating triumphs. In the men's draw, Asian youth Silver-medallist Ankit Narwal (64kg), Vishal Gupta (91kg) and Vikas (52kg) also advance

LONDON: India captain Virat Kohli has been named Wisden Almanack's ODI player of the 2010s, while England all-rounder Ben Stokes was declared the 'Cricketer of the Year' for a second successive time by the highly-rated annual publication. Apart from Kohli, Wisden also named Sachin Tendulkar as the ODI Cricketer of the 1990s. India's World Cup winning former captain Kapil Dev too featured on the list when he was named as the ODI

KOHLI WISDEN 2010S ODI PLAYER

Cricketer for the 1980s. **SARITA RETAINS TITLE**

ALMATY: Scripting a sensational comeback, an aggressive Sarita Mor reeled off nine straight points in the summit clash to retain her Asian Championship title in 59kg while Seema Bisla (50kg) and Pooja (76kg) settled for Bronze medals at the continental C'ship. Mor lagged 1-7 after a botched up challenge but turned it around with a tremendous fight back. Agencies

Foden takes Man City to semis **AFP** ■ DORTMUND

Manchester City set up a block-buster Champions League semi-final against Paris Saint-Germain as Phil Foden's second-half winner sealed a 2-1 victory at

Borussia Dortmund on Wednesday

to send the Premier League leaders

n a video

through 4-2 on aggregate. England midfielder Jude Bellingham gave Dortmund an early lead, but a second-half Riyad Mahrez penalty and Foden's powerful strike moved City into the last four of Europe's top club competition for the

second time. Having also scored the 90th-minute winner to give City a 2-1 victory in last week's first leg in Manchester, England international Foden again broke Dortmund hearts.

We are finally in the semi-finals and we're really happy," Guardiola told *Sky* with his team bidding to win four titles this season. The guys deserve it because

what they have achieved this season is incredible. Guardiola was full of praise for Mauricio Pochettino's PSG after

away goals. We saw yesterday how strong they (PSG) are, Neymar is an excel-

lent player and they have eliminated the world's best team," said

Guardiola. "It's time to celebrate and drink a lot of wine, then prepare to face Chelsea (in the FA Cup semi-finals on Saturday)."



Pep Guardiola celebrates with Phil Foden after Manchester City's win in CL semis

ing past holders Bayern Munich on REAL THROUGH

Jurgen Klopp bemoaned Liverpool's inability to turn dominance into goals as Real Madrid held out for a 0-0 draw at Anfield to progress to the semifinals of the

hampions League 3-1 on aggregate. Mohamed Salah and Georginio Wijnaldum were guilty of wasting glorious opportunities to get Klopp's

men back into the tie.

they reached the last four by squeez-