



Jagananna Government felicitates Village/ Ward Volunteers for selflessly serving the people without any corruption and discrimination based on caste, religion, region and political affiliation and for making sure that the welfare initiatives of Jagananna Government reach the doorstep of every eligible citizen..



Ugadi greetings to the people of Andhra Pradesh..

Your Chief Minister,

Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy



Awards by Jagananna Government...

to Village / Ward Volunteers, who have rendered selfless & immaculate services to the people of Andhra Pradesh..

- Starting from the eve of Ugadi, the 12th of April, Government will grandly felicitate volunteers hailing from one Assembly constituency in each district every day.
- The Volunteers who are engaged with the department continuously for one year will be awarded in **3 categories** depending on the services rendered.
- **2,22,990** Village/Ward Volunteers will receive awards along with cash incentives of **Rs. 228.74 Crores..**
- Awardees selected based on the following parameters: Corruption free delivery of service, Integrity, One year service with no complaints/ Grievances, Household surveys, distribution of pensions, usage of various apps, attendance, ration door delivery, pension cards, rice cards, Arogyasri cards, Covid-19 surveys..



HATS OFF TO VOLUNTEERS..



For selflessly rendering services to the 50/100 households in their jurisdiction by hand holding them...

For being the bridge between the Village / Ward secretariats and the people of their jurisdiction...

For carrying out the 'Navasakam' survey, identifying eligible beneficiaries and delivering the Welfare Scheme benefits without any bias or scope for corruption...

For prompt distribution of pensions to eligible beneficiaries on the 1st of every month...

Besides pensions distribution, for ensuring ration door delivery, rice card, ArogyaSri card, house site pattas & other Govt. welfare schemes reach all eligible beneficiaries, within the prescribed time limit...

For protecting the people from Covid-19 by carrying out 5 household Covid surveys and distributing masks, medicines and other essentials...

For rendering services during floods and natural calamities.. For spreading awareness about key laws such as 'DISHA',



Seva Mitra

Certificate, Badge and Shawl along with cash incentive of

Rs/-10,000 per Volunteer will

be presented to **2,18,115**

Volunteers who are engaged with the department continuously for one year, without any complaints..



Seva Ratna

5 Volunteers in every Mandal / Municipality, 10 volunteers in every corporation will receive Medal, Certificate, Badge and Shawl along with cash

Incentive of **Rs/-20,000**

3,295 Volunteers in 659 Mandals, 545 Volunteers in 109 Municipalities, 160 Volunteers in 16 Corporations. In all, 4,000 Volunteers will get

Seva Ratna Awards..

సేవారత్న 2021



Seva Vajra

5 Volunteers in every constituency to receive Medal, Certificate, Badge and Shawl along with cash incentive of **Rs/-30,000**

A total of 875 Volunteers in 175 constituencies will get **Seva Vajra** Awards..

సేవవజ్ర 2021



Sri Botsa Satyanarayana, Hon'ble Minister for Municipal and Urban Development

Sri Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development

Monday Mirchi

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

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

Laying sound foundation for building AP

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

Lobbying begins amid talk of babudom shake-up

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

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

'Financial crunch' is for public consumption

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

Power-hungry babu to keep tabs on performance

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

—Yours truly

YSRCP complaints EC against TDP pamphlets

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP had objected to the pamphlets being used by TDP in the wake of Tirupati by-poll and lodged a complaint with the Election Commission. YSRCP representatives urged the chief electoral officer (CEO) to initiate action against TDP, de-recognition the party and its contesting candidate for distributing pamphlets against YSRCP with false allegations, that the YSRCP mortgaged the Special Status of AP for relief from personal cases to gain political advantages.

"In fact such false propaganda is nothing but in violation of model code of conduct and attributing aspersions to the state and central governments and judiciary. It is a known fact that the TDP and the then ruling Congress party filed false cases against YSRCP president

and the same are pending before courts. Once the matter is seized by the courts and the same is subjudice. It is the prerogative of the judiciary to adjudicate the matters pending before the court.

But, the parties / persons should maintain restraint respecting the outcome of the court's verdict. But, TDP with a view to gain undue political advantage in the bye-elections is distributing pamphlets by making false allegations without any basis against central, state governments and judiciary," said YSRCP state general secretary, Lella Appireddy in the complaint.

He added that the conduct of the TDP was nothing but contempt of the court and in utter violation of model code of conduct prescribed by the Election Commission of India and rules framed under

Representation of Peoples Act,1951.

"In fact, YSRCP is still committed to its promise and striving hard to get Special Category Status to the state by all means. YSRCP and state government is repeatedly requesting and demanding for grant of Special Category Status, assured in the Floor of House at the time of bifurcation. Our chief minister is tirelessly pursuing the matter with the central government for grant of Special Category Status," he added.

Now, TDP is distributing pamphlets with false propaganda, as if YSRCP mortgaged Special Status issue for the sake of pending cases, which act is highly objectionable, derogatory and the same attracts penal action under the provisions of Representation of Peoples Act,1951, Reddy said.

PM says 'Tika Utsav'...

Continued from Page 3

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

Five states -- Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh and Kerala -- cumulatively account for 70.82 percent of India's active COVID-19 cases, while Maharashtra alone accounts for 48.57 percent, the Union Health Ministry said.

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

Most of these states have reimposed restrictions, including the closure of schools, night curfew, weekend and local shutdowns, while ruling out a total lockdown, but as the latest wave of patients contin-

ues to flood hospitals, there are some signs of a rethink.

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

Kejriwal on Sunday said the COVID-19 situation in the national capital is "very serious".The city recorded 10,774 fresh COVID-19 cases on Sunday, the highest single-day spike so far, with 48 more fatalities.

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

The chief minister said that his government does not want to impose lockdown in Delhi but such a situation may arise if there is a rush to the hospitals and beds are unavailable for serious patients.

Shadow over...

Continued from Page 3

It can be noted that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy after attending a video conference with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Covid Tika Utsav asked the officials to conduct the programme successfully in the State from April 11 to 14. He wanted the officials to vaccinate six lakh people a day during those four days and come up with a plan for the success of Tika Utsav covering a total of 24 lakh people.

The CM also pointed out that there were nearly one crore people aged 45 and above waiting for vaccination in the State and said steps should be taken to complete the vaccination drive in one month.

On the other hand the state reported 3,495 fresh Covid-19 positive cases besides nine deaths. In all 1,198 people made complete recovery from the virus. 31,719 samples were tested during the last 24 hours.

Naidu dared to...

Continued from Page 3

BJP with its brute majority in parliament has been ignoring Andhra Pradesh, yet YSRCP MPs have raised about special status various times, he added.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had implemented over 90 percent of the promises made in the manifesto and had redefined welfare by doing more than what was promised, he said. Prioritizing farmer welfare, the state government had set up Rythu Bharosa Kendras, assisted farmers through YSR Sunna Vaddi Panta Runalu,

and provided MSP for their crops, Reddy said.

"The government established a village volunteer system delivering the welfare schemes directly to the beneficiaries irrespective of their caste, creed, religion, or political affiliations. Apart from welfare schemes, the Chief Minister had also taken up many developmental works like revamping government schools with world-class infrastructure under the Nadu-Nedu initiative, rolled out 1088 new ambulances, and was also setting up 16 new medical colleges," he said.

Covid scare looms large over Tpt...

Continued from Page 3

YSRCP leaders are also deeply involved in mass contact programmes. Pawan Kalyan personally took part in a rally in Tirupati and also addressed a huge public meeting flanked with several key BJP leaders of Andhra Pradesh. Both TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and his son Nara Lokesh have been taking part in many road shows pulling in good crowds.

Pawan Kalyan is supposed to participate in the poll campaign, along with BJP National President JP Nadda, scheduled

on April 14. Now, it should be seen whether Pawan Kalyan breaks the quarantine and joins Nadda or he stays away. And also if Nadda visits Tirupati or skips.

It's noteworthy, as per the latest data, Chittoor district under which Tirupati Lok Sabha falls has been witnessing the highest spike of Covid cases over the last few days, among the other districts in the state. On Saturday of the total 31,929 samples tested Chittoor alone had 740 cases, highest among all the districts in the state.

Devineni Uma...

Continued from Page 3

The chief minister was discussing about the lack of specialists in SVIMS Hospital of Tirupati, as those were not willing to move away from Hyderabad and expressed his desire to change the situation.

The original video was edited to give the opposite meaning and audio was selectively and mischievously edited to give an impression that chief minister had belittled the town of Tirupati. Apart from this the audio from the original video was of 2014 speech on the occasion of manifesto release, the complaint said.

Punters are...

Continued from Page 3

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

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

AP Govt to focus on cost-efficient power

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The state government has asked power utilities to lay more focus on strengthening the safe, reliable and cheap electricity supply to consumers in future as well and becoming most consumer-centric utilities in the country.

According to officials, the state government told the power utilities that there was a significant change in consumer expectations who were expecting more cost-efficient, reliable and resilient services from power utilities as well as providing quality power supply. The government had already made lot of efforts on strengthening 24x7 power supply to domestic,

commercial and industrial consumers and wanted to transform the entire sector as per the aspiration of consumers to fulfill future needs, they said.

As part of this, the government has laid focus on creating a healthy, efficient and consumer-centric power sector in the State. As a developing State, Andhra Pradesh would witness a rapid growth in industrial and agriculture sectors. In view of this, power utilities need to address the future challenges for which the utilities shall move deeper into consumer engagement for new business development. "Providing the best quality service to consumers is the prime objective of government.

Electronic device...

Continued from Page 3

The gadget can reduce 99 per cent of the novel coronavirus in just 15 minutes, according to the test held with support from the ICMR (Indian Council of Medical Research).

Allabout Innovations founder Shyam Krishnan Kurup said the appliance when switched on would provide 360-degree protection and 24x7 shield by sterilising the air.

This will also prevent in-house transmission of viruses inside any space. The negative ions also have proven to enhance health and vitality, he said.

Negative ion thrusters are standard devices used in developed countries like Germany and Japan, Kurup said.

Share markets become highly vulnerable

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

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

Other economic parameters remained moderate. Brent closed at US \$ 62.95 (per barrel) while Crude MCX oil was quoted at Rs.4,432 (per barrel).

While Gold MCX stood at Rs.46,610 (per 10 gms), MCX Silver closed at Rs.66,916 (per kg) and Copper M C X closed at Rs.689.90 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 49,591.32 and 14,834.85 points.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

HC UPADHYAY

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

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

tion because its outcome was bound to affect the interests of every Indian citizen.

The high-profile case was dismissed by the apex court with the following observations:

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

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

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

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

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

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

The said complaint was filed by the DCP in his personal name under Section 199 (2) of the CrPC against some statements made by Arnab with regard to the role of the said DCP in course of investigation into the death of the actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Explaining the technical flaw in the complaint, the Judge Uday M. Padwad said: "Section 199(2) of the Cr.P.C requires that the complaint has to be in

writing and has to be made by the public prosecutor. This, in other words, means that no other person against whom the offence is alleged to have been committed, can make such a complaint."

Adverting to the status of the aggrieved party, the Court said that he will be only a witness in the case. The Court observed that in the instant case, the complaint was not made by the public prosecutor but was made by the DCP while the public prosecutor had just put his signature as is the practice while preferring an appeal or revision.

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

Jaleel, took a decision as the Minister to change the qualifications for the post of General Manager in the Kerala State Minorities Development Finance Corporation by adding, "B.Tech with PGDBA" as a necessary qualification to make his cousin KT Aadeb eligible for the post. The declaration made under Section 12(3) of the Kerala Lok Ayukta Act now has to be accepted by the Chief Minister under Section 14 of the said Act. On acceptance by the Chief Minister, the Minister has to resign from the office as per Section 14(2)(i) of the Act. **Bombay HC decries VIP culture** The Bombay High Court came down heavily on some political leaders in Maharashtra who were getting vaccinated against Covid-19 virus at homes. "When even the President and the Prime Minister of the country were going to the designat-

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

These observations came from the bench in the course of hearing of a PIL plea filed by advocates Dhruvi Kapadia and Kunal Tiwari seeking a direction to the Centre and the Maharashtra government to provide door-to-door vaccination facility for senior citizens above the age of 75, bedridden persons and specially-abled persons.

16 States defer National Lok Adalats Due to the sudden rise in the number of Covid-19 cases in the country, 16 State Legal Services Authorities have decided to postpone the scheduled National Lok Adalats to future dates. Accordingly, in Andhra Pradesh the National Lok Adalat will be organized on May 8, it is learnt.

ANALYSIS 7
THE BIG TENT OF THE
PPP DECODED**MONEY 8**
FRANKLIN UNITHOLDERS TO GET
RS 2,962 CR IN SECOND TRANCHE**SPORTS 11**
RANA,TRIPATHI POWER
KKR TO 187

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



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PAWAN KALYAN
ISOLATES SELF AS
PERSONAL STAFF
TEST POSITIVE
FOR COVID
Page 12**TAMIL NADU CONGRESS CANDIDATE
MADHAVA RAO DIES OF COVID**

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

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

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

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

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

**UAE SELECTS FIRST ARAB WOMAN
FOR SPACE PROGRAMME**

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



PM says 'Tika Utsav' another major war

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The active COVID-19 cases in India breached the 11 lakh-mark for the first time after a record high of 1.52 lakh new infections while a massive vaccination push, dubbed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the beginning of another major war against coronavirus, was launched on Sunday in a bid to abate the surge.

The active caseload till now was at its lowest at 1,35,926 on February 12 and at its highest at 10,17,754 on September 18, 2020.

Amid an unprecedented burden on health infrastructure in 15 states and Delhi, which are witnessing an upward trajectory, authorities have started reserving more COVID hospitals and taking steps to address any shortage of medical supplies, besides enhancing curbs on the movement of people.

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



of their stockists and distributors. There were some reports of shortage of drugs from a few states.

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

While the cumulative number of COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has crossed 10 crore after 85 days, the 'Tika Utsav' or a special 'vaccination festival' was started till April 14. "Anyone eligible for the vaccine

**Shadow over 'Tika Utsav' as vax
stocks dry up in Andhra Pradesh**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Acute shortage of Covid vaccine prevailed in the state creating problems for the nationwide vaccination programme, 'Tika Utsav', launched by the Prime Minister Narendra Modi. 'Tika Utsav' is targeted to vaccinate 24 lakh people in the state between Sunday and Wednesday. Despite Sunday being a holiday, the health department took all measures to kick start the Tika Utsav programme across the state.

According to reliable sources, Covid vaccine stocks were totally exhausted in almost all the districts across the state and all the department officials were eager-

ly waiting for the vaccine stocks from the Union government. A few district heads informed that they didn't have a single vaccine vial for Monday to take forward the Tika Utsav programme.

Dr L. Devi, Joint Director, Covid, said that an indent was placed to the central government for vaccine doses for the Tika Utsav and the vaccination programme.

She said that ten lakh vaccine doses have been dispatched by the Union government to Andhra Pradesh as of now. The vaccine doses were yet to be received by them.

waste" and urging the people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour.



TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy presenting a picture of Lord Sri Venkateswara and Goddess Padmavathy to Supreme Court judge Justice NV Ramana and his wife after they were honoured with Vedaseervachanam by a team of Vedic scholars inside Ranganayakula Mandapam in Tirumala on Sunday.

Justice Ramana worships at Tirumala

Chief Justice of India- designate Justice NV Ramana on Sunday offered prayers at the ancient hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at nearby Tirumala, a temple official said.

The senior-most judge of Supreme Court, Justice Ramana who was recently appointed as the 48th CJI with effect from April 24, after a night halt on the hills visited the shrine Sunday morning and paid obeisance to the presiding deity of Lord Venkateswara, the temple official told.

He spent about an hour in the temple, the official added.

An ardent devotee of Lord Venkateswara, Justice Ramana born in an agriculture family in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh arrived here on Saturday with wife Sivamala.

After worship, he was honoured by presenting with a sacred silk cloth, a portrait of Lord Venkateswara and prasadam by TTD Board Chairman YV Subba Reddy and Executive Officer KS Jawahar Reddy

**Madasu
Gangadhar quits
Jana Sena Party**

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**Time has come to
defeat YSRCP in
Tirupati by-poll**

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

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PEDDIREDDY PICKS UP THE GAUNTLET

Naidu dared to get his MPs to resign if TDP loses in Tirupati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Asserting that the 22-month governance of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was the trump card of YSRCP for Tirupati by-poll, the party had picked the TDP gauntlet to treat the election as a referendum.

Speaking to media here on Sunday, Minister for Panchayat Raj Peddireddy Ramachandraya Reddy accepted the challenge of Chandrababu Naidu's referendum motif saying that YSRCP MPs would resign in case the party lost in Tirupati and asked Naidu whether his party MPs would quit otherwise.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy cancelled his April 14 Tirupati by-poll campaign, in wake of the spike in Covid-19 cases and instead the Chief Minister has sent letters to every household



explaining the development and welfare programmes initiated by his government in the past 22 months. He urged the voters to cast their valuable vote for YSRCP and strengthen the government.

The Minister further slammed opposition TDP, BJP and Pawan Kalyan for their false propaganda and termed Pawan Kalyan as a political paid artiste. He asked the BJP leaders why would people vote for their party, whether for fail-

ing to fulfill bifurcation promises, or betraying the state on special status and dared them to speak on those issues and tell people what they had done to the state. BJP leaders have degraded more than Chandrababu Naidu and are resorting to character assassination of the YSRCP candidate, he said and added that the three parties had struck a secret pact to face YSRCP.

Recalling Pawan Kalyan's criticism of BJP leaders during 2019 polls, the Minister said that everyone had witnessed his dual stand, who earlier made harsh comments on BJP and teamed with them post-elections.

Neither Chandrababu Naidu nor Pawan Kalyan had ever spoken on increasing prices of daily commodities or questioned BJP on the inflation that the state is facing.

Covid scare looms large over Tpt by-poll campaign

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Covid's second wave, which had emerged as more lethal and contagious than the first one, had brought to the fore the ongoing high decibel campaign by the political parties for the upcoming by-poll to the Tirupati Lok Sabha.

Due to daily spike in Covid cases, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had cancelled his Tirupati campaign and Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan, who visited Tirupati last week and also later attended a high profile film event in Hyderabad, had went into self quarantine after his personal staff who move closely with him on daily basis tested positive to Covid.

It is not immediately known whether Pawan Kalyan had also tested Covid positive but an official note from his party office said

he was going into quarantine as a precautionary measure. There were some unconfirmed reports that some of the key members of TDP, who campaigned with party supremo N Chandrababu Naidu in the last few days in Tirupati had also tested positive to Covid.

The campaign for Tirupati by-poll had only reached a crescendo over the last one week, as only a few days were left for the polling slated to take place on coming Saturday and the campaign by all the political parties should end by Thursday as per the norms of the Election Commission (EC).

Due to the high stakes involved in the Tirupati by-poll battle, all the political parties, especially opposition BJP and TDP have been holding road shows, public meetings and other mass contact programmes as a show of strength.

Electronic device to curb airborne spread of virus developed

PNS ■ KOCHI

An incubator under Kerala Startup Mission (KSUM) has developed a pioneering electronic device that could contain airborne novel coronavirus.

The new device of Allabout Innovations Pvt Ltd -- 'Wolf Airmask' -- performs real-time sterilisation rupturing the SARS-CoV-2, a press statement from the KSUM said here on Sunday.

The device has proven its efficiency at tests conducted by Rajiv Gandhi Centre for Biotechnology (RGCB), an autonomous institute of the Department of Biotechnology.

RGCB, Trivandrum, is an ICMR-recognised testing lab. "The Wolf Airmask is the first of its kind in the country for RGCB to give such an attestation," the statement said.

Devineni Uma booked for forging poll papers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

CID had registered a case against former minister and TDP senior leader Devineni Umamaheswar Rao for allegedly forging an electronic document, which he displayed in a press meet on April 7 in Tirupati in which he showed a video which shows Chief Minister YS Jaganmohana Reddy, as saying that who would like to come to Tirupati?

Devineni Uma in his press meet alleged that chief minister had belittled the town of Tirupati, by quoting the video which he displayed on his mobile.

Acting on a complaint from one Narayana Reddy, an advocate from Kurnool, who complained that the video which shown Jagan in



bad light was a forged and morphed video, the police had taken action.

He said in the complaint that the context and time of the video was different, in which Jaganmohan Reddy was portraying the difficulties involved in attracting talent to cities like Tirupati from comfortable cities like Hyderabad.

Punters are busy as IPL season starts

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

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

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

Before the start of the match every day, these websites sites put out reviews of the performance of each team, apart from giving dope on every player's form. Besides, some of these sites are conducting betting. They are dealing with bets on



Man of the Match, Man of the Series, apart from ball-to-ball bets. They also offer bets on runs scored per over. For example, while the match is in progress, they ask about each ball: will the batsman hit four or six. Besides, there are individual bets, mostly between two persons. Individual bets are more prominent in East Godavari and West

Godavari. In these two districts, on every issue individual bets have become the order of the day. Betting organisers earn money by collecting some commission from punters. In the bettings on IPL matches, lakhs of rupees are changing hands. The India vs Pakistan matches attract record level betting amounts. Bettings in cricket are not confined

to only one section; politicians, businessmen, students and others are also involved in it. Mumbai is the main headquarters for betting organizers, be it for politics or cricket. Betting organisers appoint their agents in important cities like Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam and Delhi, among others. They are in regular touch with the punters.

Punters are busy mining websites for material to place reviews of teams' performances every day. Some of these websites are giving ranks to teams, depending on their past performance. One website, while giving tips to fresh punters on how to bet for IPL matches, says: "If you don't know how to bet on IPL, we have you covered. We have done a full-fledged comparison of the best IPL to help you decide where to place your best cricket bets".

TODAY**ALMANAC****Month & Paksham:**Phalgun & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam**Tithi** : Amavasya: 07:59 am**Nakshatram** : Revathi: 11:29 am**Time to Avoid**: (Bad time to start

any important work)

Rahukalam: 07:38 am - 09:11 am**Yamagandam**: 10:44 am - 12:16 pm**Varjyam**: NIL**Gulika**: 01:49 pm - 03:22 pm**Good Time**: (to start any important work)**Anurakalam**: 08:50 am - 10:36 am**Ahhit Muhurtham**: 11:52 am - 12:41 pm**VIJAYAWADA****WEATHER****Forecast**: Mostly Sunny**Temp**: 37/24**Humidity**: 53%**Sunrise**: 06:02 am**Sunset**: 06:31 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated April 11, 2021 5:00 PM

AP Governor, CM pay tributes to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan and Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy paid rich tributes to Mahatma Jyotiba Phule on the occasion of his 195th birth anniversary on Sunday.

The Governor offered floral tributes to the portrait of Mahatma Jyotiba Phule at a programme held in Durbar Hall at Raj Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that Jyotiba Phule was a great social reformer who fought against casteism and untouchability in the country during 19th century. He also fought for the rights of peasants and downtrodden people of the society.

He said that Mahatma Jyotiba Phule was also a pioneer of women's education and was the first to establish an orphanage for under-privileged children. He fought for the emancipation of people who were subjected to social deprivation in those days.



The Governor said Jyotiba Phule stood as an inspiration to leaders like Mahatma Gandhi and Dr BR Ambedkar in the later years.

Speaking on the occasion, the Governor appealed to the people of Andhra Pradesh to be very cautious over Covid-19 pandemic which posed a challenge not just to the country but entire humanity.

The Governor said that people should follow all the guide-



He appealed to all eligible persons to get vaccinated as it will not only help people save themselves but also others in the society.

The Governor appealed to people to spread the message to entire society and help eligible persons in getting vaccinated and motivate people to observe all the guidelines and restrictions imposed by the authorities and help them in the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy paid floral tributes to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule on his birth anniversary at camp office here on Sunday. BC welfare minister Chelluboina Srinivasa Venugopala Krishna, MP Mithun Reddy, MLA Jogi Ramesh, MLC Janga Krishna Murthy, CM events coordinator Talasila Raghuram and others were present on the occasion.



Two lakh to get vaccine during Tika Utsav, says collector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District collector A MD Imtiaz said that the Covid vaccine would be administered to about two lakh people in the district during the four-day Tika Utsav programme.

The collector launched the Tika Utsav programme at VM Ranga School in the 46th Division here on Sunday. VMC Mayor R Bhagyalakshmi was also present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that everyone should take

vaccine shot for protection against the deadly Coronavirus as the positive cases were on the rise across the nation.

Every day about 50,000 people will be vaccinated during the Tika Utsav till April 14, he added.

He said that restrictions and lockdown could contain the spread of the virus only to some extent and the onus lies on the people to follow Covid guidelines to contain the spread of Covid.

He said that the scientists

have identified the second wave of Covid virus as 3.1.617 and the virus was spreading very fast when compared to the previous one. "Everyone should get vaccinated to protect themselves from the deadly virus and also follow covid guidelines. The vaccine shot is provided at all village/ward secretariats till April 14, said the collector.

Corporators Appaji, Rajesh, district programme officer V Maheswara Rao, Dr Hemanth and others were present.

Jagan realising aspirations of Phule, say YSRCP leaders

YSRCP leaders paid tributes to social reformer Jyotirao Phule on the occasion of his birth anniversary. Taking part in the celebrations at Party office here on Sunday, BC Welfare Minister Chelluboina Venu Gopala Krishna garlanded the portrait of Jyotirao Phule and said Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has been

working towards fulfilling the dreams and aspirations of Mahatma Jyotirao Phule. He said the Chief Minister has given recognition to 139 castes by setting up 56 corporations and appointing 672 directors for BCs. He said the Chief Minister had implemented all the welfare schemes despite Covid pandemic

and all the weaker sections have come under one roof and supporting his leadership. He said the Chief Minister has become a role model by working for the realising the aspirations of Phule. Chief Minister has chosen Dr Gurumoorthy who comes from an ordinary family as YSRCP candidate for Tirupati by-

poll. Speaking on the occasion, MLC Janga Krishna Murthy said Mahatma Jyotirao Phule was a philosopher and social reformer and worked for the betterment of downtrodden and weaker sections. Taking his ideologies forward, the Chief Minister had been working for the welfare of all sections of the society,

especially SCs, STs, BCs and minorities. MLA Vidadala Rajini said Mahatma Jyotirao Phule had worked hard for the empowerment of women and likewise the Chief Minister has been implementing many schemes and programmes for the welfare of women.

Vijayawada Railway Division starts Tika Utsav, 200 receive jab

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a bid to contain the spread of Covid, South Central Railway-Vijayawada Division, has kick-started India's Special four-day vaccination programme at East Main entrance of Vijayawada Railway station on Sunday with the aim to inoculate maximum number of eligible people at workplaces.

Taking cue from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's appeal to the Nation, the mass vaccination programme, for staff above 45 years at work places, is being conducted by Vijayawada Division.

A total of 200 staff got vaccinated with Covaxin and Covishield vaccines at Vijayawada Railway Station. Railway hospital staff made elaborate arrangements at the



railway station by setting up a help desk and registration counter.

Medical department will organise vaccination camp at Electric Loco Shed, Wagon

Work Shop Rayanapadu and Divisional Office, Vijayawada. Employees must carry their Railway ID card and Aadhaar card compulsorily for getting the vaccine shot.

Speaking on the occasion, Md Naseer Ahmed, in-charge, CMS, Railway Hospital, Vijayawada, thanked the state administration for rendering support and assistance.

He also said that medical department is planning to organise a vaccination camp at important depots at across Vijayawada Division by coordinating with state health department at district headquarters for supply of vaccines.

Md. Naseer Ahmed advised the staff above 45 years to get vaccinated during the 4-day Tika Utsav.

Vijayawada Divisional Railway Manager P Srinivas complimented the efforts of the medical staff for launching the vaccination drive for the benefit of railway staff.

S-I fishes out bodies from canal, lauded

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Reddygudem Town S-I D Anand Kumar displayed courage and humanity in fishing out two dead bodies from NSP canal near Adavikothuru village in Reddygudem mandal in Krishna district on Sunday.

According to the sources, a few farm labourers went to Vallabhaneni Satyam mango farm to pluck mangoes. After plucking mangoes for some time, at around 2 pm they ventured into NSP canal to take bath. In the process, P Venu (23) and K Vasu (14) drowned in the canal.

After two hours, the bodies were floating in the canal and none of the villagers dared to fish the bodies out of the canal.

S-I Anand Kumar alone entered into the canal and fished out the dead bodies.

Fire at scrapyard sparks panic in APSEZ

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A massive fire broke out in a scrapyard situated here at the Special Economic Zone (SEZ) in Duvvada on Sunday.

Firefighters rushed to the spot and are trying to douse the huge flames amid the billowing smoke clouds.

Police officials said that the mishap originated at Puja Scrap industry. The management of the scrap yard said that an electric short circuit had led to the fire which rapidly spread.

People in the surroundings were seen running helter-skelter as the massive smoke clouds engulfed the area.



Liquor bottles worth Rs 2.14 lakh seized

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Special Enforcement Bureau officials seized a lorry transporting 1,816 non-duty paid liquor bottles at Anumanchipalli village of Jaggayyapeta mandal in Krishna district on Saturday. A person was arrested in connection with the illegal transportation of liquor worth Rs 2.14 lakh.

According to the SEB S-I Murali Krishna, on a tip off, they carried out checks at Anumanchipalli village and caught the person who was transporting the liquor bottles in a lorry clandestinely towards Vuyyuru. On checking, the load they found that the liquor bottles were covered with cement load.

The police recovered the liquor bottles, seized the lorry and arrested the culprit.

Chicken prices touch ₹300 a kg

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The price of chicken in Vijayawada has touched a new high of Rs 300 per kg due to shortage of supply on Sunday. The price of chicken is hovering between Rs 280 to 300 at various places in the city even as the mercury levels continue to rise.

As the Covid second wave sweeps the entire nation, the doctors are suggesting people to take healthy and protein-rich food which could have ultimately led to the increased demand for chicken, mutton and seafood.

The chicken price unprecedentedly shot up from Rs 180 per kg in the first week of March to Rs 250 per kg by the last week of March. Now it has reached Rs 300 per kg.

Interestingly, mutton price is stable at Rs 800 per kg while there is no much variation in the price of fish.

Though Covid positive cases



are increasing, people thronged the market places on Sunday to purchase their desired protein-rich food sold at unhygienic places in the city. A large number of people thronged BSNL centre in the city and ironically most of the people were seen without a mask and without following social distancing.

V Abhishek, a chicken shop owner, said that every year during the summer, the prices of chicken will be on the higher side as there would be a

shortage in chicks. Currently, the shortage of broiler chicken is very acute. Hence, chicken prices soared to Rs 300 per kg and the situation may continue till May end, he said.

He said that country fowl will be sold at a fancy price as per the customer choice, not by weight. A private employee Suresh said that all prices starting from edible oil, pulses, rice and every commodity have been increasing for the past few months.

Madasu Gangadharam quits Jana Sena Party

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party senior leader and former MLC Madasu Gangadharam has resigned to the party stating that he was unable to cope with the unstable attitude of party chief K Pawan Kalyan.

In a statement on Sunday, Gangadharam stated that he joined JSP three years ago with a lot of hopes and aspirations to serve people through the party in the state. He stated that in the beginning Pawan Kalyan

gave preference to him in party affairs and appointed him as JS political affairs committee convener.

Gangadharam said that he was miffed over not convening JSPAC meeting to formulate political strategies.

He said that after the humiliating defeat, he along with other leaders toured North Andhra districts and submitted a detailed report about the causes of defeat but it was put aside.

He said that Pawan Kalyan

did not consider the report but trusted the words of a leader in the party which saddened party leaders and cadre.

Gangadharam said that Pawan's statements are biased in support of Telugu Desam and hiding the facts. He stated that CBI conducting a probe into YS Vivekananda Reddy's murder. Hence, there is no role of the AP government in the CBI probe but Pawan held the State government responsible which is far away from the truth. He lamented that Pawan

turned into a part-time politician giving priority to films that are not suitable to do politics and serve people.

Gangadharam said that Pawan's attitude of alliance with political parties for a short time period is not good as JSP first allied with TDP, later with Communist parties and now working with BJP reflecting an unstable attitude.

He said that he cannot continue with unstable attitude of Pawan Kalyan and hence submitted resignation to the party.



Madasu Gangadharam

Will AP's land scheme for middle income groups dent realty?

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has initiated a demand survey for middle income groups housing scheme near municipal corporations and municipalities, which on fructification could give a run for the money to realtors.

This is the government's brainchild: Acquire land about 3 km to 5 km away from the municipalities and municipal corporations will develop them neatly into plots with facilities such as approach roads, parks, drainage system, street lights and several other attractive amenities.

And most important of all, sell these plots without a profit motive, contrasting with the profiteering real estate agents, middlemen and companies.

Looking like the second iter-

ation of a government land scheme, following the free distribution of land to thousands of poor people, this new initiative, believed to be called as 'Jagananna smart town' will cater to income groups in the range of Rs 3 lakh to Rs 18 lakh per annum.

Only one plot for family and government employees are also eligible.

Being promoted through AP government's grassroots governance system, ward volunteer and secretariat mechanism, the scheme is proposing to offer housing sites in three dimensions: 150 sq yards, 200 sq yards and 240 sq yards, translating into 3 cents, 4 cents and 5 cents of land.

Though the scheme will be open for everybody, Municipal Administration special chief secretary Y. Sri Lakshmi said a



committee will decide as to who will get how much quota. Sri Lakshmi said: "Actually it is open for everybody but we

will be giving a percentage to non-locals (non-municipality residents) and the rest to locals. So we haven't discussed that

and put it before a committee. They will come with their recommendations. Most likely we will give 5 per cent for ex-ser-

vicemen."

She hinted that 85 per cent of the quota may go to respective municipality locals but is waiting for the committee's recommendations based on the demand, whose survey is currently underway, already attracting a few lakhs applications.

Sri Lakshmi said the government may not know where the demand is coming until the survey is completed, considering the whole project is a demand driven one.

"Once the demand totally comes in, we will see whether it is only from locals or there is a demand from non-locals or is from ex-servicemen. So based on that we will work out the parameters," she opined.

However, an enquiry by a villager with a West Godavari district municipality's town

planning department official gave the notion that non-locals are not offered this opportunity.

The southern state does have a big population which aspires for upward social mobility by relocating into urban areas for better opportunities and job prospects.

However, the senior IAS officer hinted that the lion's share of the plots may go to the locals by virtue of them being locals in municipalities.

She clarified that the scheme has only been launched recently and is currently at the demand assessment stage but not in application mode yet.

According to Sri Lakshmi, the survey is underway in all the municipalities and a place like Chimakurti in Ongole district attracted as many as 4,000 applications already.

Likewise, the government is also not intending to blanket apply the scheme in all the municipalities at once as she said it could begin with 30-31 towns, choosing the beneficiary applicants on the basis of a lottery system.

"Everything will be on a lottery basis. There will be no discretion for anybody and no recommendations to be entertained. Now it is early days, we just launched the scheme. The scheme is only a demand driven scheme, we are not imposing anything," she said.

AP government's noble initiative is appreciable but in this modern age it did not give the option of web application, requiring all the interested people to mandatorily physically go to the ward secretariat or other designated offices to evince interest.

Breaking corona norms at Jatharas causes concern

D H V SAMBASIVARAO
■ KAKINADA

The Covid precautions were thrown to wind and the people's representatives were participating in the public gatherings without adhering to norms. The police officials whose responsibility was to ensure the execution of the Covid regulations such as wearing a mask and maintaining social distance in public places were not bothered to do it succumbing to political pressures in the East Godavari district. In a bid to appease the party activists, the ruling party MPs and leaders have been participating in the public programmes without taking minimum care to prevent the spreading of the corona. The police became mute spectators for the gross violation of Covid regulations.

Moreover, Jatharas were being organized for village Goddesses in most of the villages from April 10. As part of this, the Poleramma Jathara was held in Aminabad village of U Kothapalli mandal after midnight on Saturday. The organizers were juggling time till the evening with routine performances and have arranged recording dances with girls with DJs throughout the night. People from all the villages and towns from Tuni to Pithapuram were thronging these areas in large numbers to watch these dance performances. An estimated 50,000 people were attending these midnight programmes.

Shockingly, no one wore a mask. No physical distance was maintained. Pushing and competing with each other, the people were enjoying these dances ignoring the corona



pandemic. However, the corona in the district has been in spike day by day. A total of 111 cases were registered on Saturday alone. About 20 active cases have been reported in the areas where these cultural feasts were organized. Surprisingly, the police personnel were not even entering the villages at least to control the mob.

Meanwhile, the district Superintendent of Police

Naeem Azmi himself has swung into action, fined hundreds of motorists for wandering without masks. Only on The police collected around Rs 1.25 lakh towards fines from people for not wearing masks in the district as a part of a special drive conducted on Saturday.

Thousands of people attended the dance programmes organized in a fishing village, but no police were present

there. It was alleged that the police were conducting special drives against Covid norms violators, but ignoring the large people gatherings in the villages.

The local women were up in the arms against these indecent dance programmes and they demand stern action against the organizers. They expressed concern over the public moving in groups without adhering to Covid norms.

No growth in AP, says Ravela

GADAMSETTY SEKHAR BABU
■ NELLORE

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader Ravela Kishore Babu has strongly criticized the state government for not implementing any development work in the state except the Central-funded schemes.

As part of his election campaign, he addressed the media at the BJP office in Nellore on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, he said there was enough proof that no development was taking place with the regional parties in the state. After the bifurcation of the state, the Central government had sanctioned Rs 7,000 crore to Andhra Pradesh when the TDP government was in the ruling. The then TDP government laid the foundations for the construction of new capital and dropped the proposal in the middle. YSR Congress Party, which came later, was not uttering a single word about the capital city.

The BJP leader said all the development programmes in the state were funded by the Central government. He appealed to the public to vote for Ratna Prabha, a public servant with administrative efficiency, to win the Tirupati Parliament by-election with an overwhelming majority. Prime Minister Narendra Modi was working for the development of the state by allocating maximum funds for the welfare of all sections of the people.

The meeting was attended by Bharatiya Janata Party state vice-president Kaku Vijayalakshmi, Yuva Morcha state executive member Ashok, Rajendra, Mukku Radha Krishna Goud, Irigodra, office secretary Gurram Narasimha and others.

CM's Tirupati tour put off due to Covid spike: Kannababu

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Reacting to the TDP allegations on the cancellation of the Chief Minister's tour to Tirupati, Minister for Agriculture Kurasala Kannababu on Sunday clarified that the tour was put off only due to the spike in Covid-19 cases, but not for any other reason.

Speaking to the media here on Sunday, the Minister slammed the TDP and BJP leaders for the malicious campaign alleging that the Chief Minister was afraid to face TDP in elections and said that YSRCP would continue the winning spree as people have faith in Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's good

governance. As Chittoor and Nellore districts have registered a large number of Covid-19 cases, the Chief Minister cancelled his tour, he clarified.

Kannababu said that the public has blessed YSRCP in the recent local body elections right from Ichapuram to Hindupur and stated that TDP and BJP were only competing for getting second place in Tirupati.

The Minister challenged TDP and BJP leaders that should speak on promises made in the AP Re-organisation Act along with their stand on the special status. He said that neither TDP nor BJP has no right to ask for votes without speaking either on the special status or the Visakha

Steel Plant. Asserting that the previous TDP government had tossed the special status for personal benefits, he said that Chandrababu Naidu utterly failed in resolving the state issues from the centre.

Further responding to the comments over YS Vivekananda Reddy's murder case, Kannababu said that CBI was investigating the case and there is no role of the State government as the issue falls under the jurisdiction of the Central Government. He said that TDP leaders were unnecessarily digging it to create sensation and divert people's attention. Kannababu reminded them that the incident took place during the TDP government.

Tomato farmers in dire straits, amid exploitation by middlemen

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM
■ AMARAVATI

The farmers cultivating tomato crop in about 300 acres in Nagaya Thippachiruvolu island villages in Mopidevi Mandal of Krishna district were facing it difficult to get a remunerative price for their produce. They alleged that the middlemen were exploiting them and they were in extreme distress due to lack of remunerative price. They sought the government's intervention to ensure a minimum guaranteed price for tomatoes.

They worried that tomatoes were perishable goods and hence the brokers were trying to exploit them offering the lowest prices. The farmers said they had spent nearly Rs 40,000



per acre to raise the crop and they need to pay Rs 30,000 towards the lease of the land. A total of 70,000 had been invested to cultivate the tomato crop per acre. In the name of grading, the traders were offering prices ranging from Rs 100 to Rs 120 per crate of 30 kg. In a

bid to exert pressure on the farmers, they stopped buying after the crop was harvested. The middlemen wanted to purchase tomatoes without advance payment. As tomatoes were damaging within 2-3 days after the harvest, the farmers caught between the devil and the deep sea.

Following the complaints, Nagayalanka Market Yard secretary Anand along with officials inspected tomato crops and reported the constraints of the farmers to the notice of the higher authorities. However, no action has been initiated to help the farmers. A 30-kg crate was sold at just Rs 100. The tomato farmers urged the officials concerned to take steps to ensure a better price for their produce.

SFI demands ouster of Kadapa DEO

G GOPIKRISHNA
■ KADAPA

The SFI leaders on Sunday demanded action against the District Education Officer (DEO) for not executing his duties properly. They met the School Education Commissioner and complained against the DEO in Kadapa on Sunday.

In a written complaint to Commissioner Chinna Veerabhadradu, SFI district vice-president Gandhi Sunil Kumar alleged that district education officer Sailaja was not paying

attention to various complaints against corporate educational institutions across Kadapa district. He demanded suspension of the DEO for her negligence in discharging duties. Besides, they asked the commissioner to conduct examinations for DED students for the year 2018-2020. They demanded an inquiry into corruption in the works in Nadu-Nedu.

SFI mandal presidential secretaries Errampalli Ajay and Eddu Rahul, mandal vice-presidents Deva and Rajasekhar, Joint Secretary Kishore and others were present.



Time has come to defeat YSRCP in Tirupati by-poll

PNS ■ NELLORE

If TDP was not in the race of Tirupati Parliament by-poll, the ruling YSRCP would have allocated the party seat to late P Balli Durga Rao's family members, Nellore TDP president Abdul Aziz has said.

Addressing the media at the district Telugu Desam party office he said that the time has come to defeat the

YSR Congress candidate in the Tirupati by-elections.

The YSRCP leaders have been trying to win the Tirupati by-election with bags of money, he said and appealed to the public to vote for Panabaka Lakshmi in the upcoming Tirupati Parliament by-election and elect her with a thumping majority.

The event was attended by

Nellore city constituency in-charge Kotamreddy Srinivasulu Reddy, district general secretary Chazarla Venkateswara Reddy, minority leader Mohsin, rural Mandal presidents Pamujula Pradeep, Jaladanki Sudhakar, Srinivasulu Naidu, Kalyan, Chenchayya, Shanthi Naidu, Pudi Anand Babu, Nagendra and Sukesh Reddy.

2 flyovers coming up in Bhimavaram

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

In a bid to mitigate the traffic problem in Bhimavaram, steps were taken to build two flyovers and some approach roads, Bhimavaram MLA Grandhi Srinivas said on Sunday.

He addressed the media here at the local camp office on Sunday. He said that under the patronage of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the government was working towards urban development and would provide all facilities to the town in the coming days. A master plan was being prepared in view of the growing population, educational institutions, hospitals and commercial establishments in the town, he added.

He said the government had prepared new voter lists in Rayalam, Chinna Amiram, Thaderu and Kovvada Annavaram villages near the town as they were recently merged into the town.

Measures were initiated to



prevent drinking water problem especially for the urban people and the reservoirs were under construction in the town and they would be opened within six months. With this, the town would not have any drinking water problem in the future, the MLA said.

He said that in the new master plan some more parks were proposed and the existing ones would be renovated. Similarly, steps have been taken to upgrade the old bus stand. The government was laying CC roads in the remote areas of the town at a cost of about Rs 30 crore, he said.

Minister ridicules Lokesh over false claims

PNS ■ NELLORE

Since the TDP and BJP have nothing to say to the people about their achievements, in the ongoing Tirupati by-elections, they were targeting the ruling YSR Congress Party candidate Dr Gurumurthy, Animal Husbandry Minister Sidiri Appalaraju said on Sunday. They were making wild allegations against YSRCP candidate Gurumurthy, he said.

He was speaking at a media conference organized at the YSR Congress party office in Nellore on Sunday evening. He ridiculed Lokesh, TDP national general secretary for announcing to increase pensions and prices of petrol and diesel would be reduced if TDP won the Tirupati seat. Refuting charges against YSRCP candidate Dr Gurumurthy for being a professional physiotherapy doctor, the Minister lashed out at Lokesh for not having respect towards the doctors' community.



SFI student leaders submitting a memorandum to School Education Commissioner Chinna Veerabhadradu in Kadapa on Sunday.

PD Act against inter-state smuggler of red sanders

PNS ■ KADAPA

The Kadapa police have invoked the Preventive Detention Act against inter-state smuggler of red sanders Jangala Shiva Shankar. Shiva Shankar of Chintarajupalli village in Vontimitta mandal of Kadapa District was involved in the smuggling of red sanders since 2014.

According to the police, the PD Act was raised against him earlier. After spending a year in jail, Shankar has developed links with some smuggling gangs from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka and started smuggling red sanders. Since 2014, 81 cases have been registered against Jangala Shiva Shankar in Kadapa district.

He has links with several international red sanders

smugglers from Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. He brought labourers from Tamil Nadu and starting cutting down red sandal trees in the forest areas of Atluru, Guvala Cheruvu Ghat, Veeraballi and Sundupalli in the district. Later, he transported the logs to neighbouring Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. He amassed wealth by illegally selling red sanders to international smugglers.

Based on the directives of Kadapa District Collector C Harikiran, the accused was produced in court on Sunday under the PD Act. The court remanded him to the Central Jail. District SP KKN Anburajan appreciated the efforts of police officers in arresting the inter-state red sanders smuggler.



Man kills wife, surrenders

PNS ■ KADAPA

A man allegedly killed his wife suspecting her fidelity and surrendered before the police. The incident took place at Ravindra Nagar in Kadapa on Sunday.

According to reports, Dastagiri was married to Beebi Chan and they have three children. The eldest son died in a road accident recently, while the daughter got married. The youngest son was staying at a relative's house. On Sunday, Dastagiri

attacked his wife with a lethal weapon. She died on the way to the hospital. Gausia Begum, younger sister of the Beebi Chan, who resisted Dastagiri, was also received grievous injuries.

Gausia Begum, who was critically injured, was shifted to Tirupati for better treatment and her condition was said to be critical. The police registered a case and are investigating. Dastagiri went to the police station and surrendered before the police.

Undi MLA Ramaraju tests corona positive

PNS ■ UNDI/NELLORE

MLA of Undi in West Godavari district Manthana Ramaraj was tested positive to Covid -19, according to a statement issued by the MLA's office on Sunday. He went for the Tirupati by-election campaign and after returning home, he complained of some health issues.

When he got tested, he was declared Covid positive.

The MLA was admitted to the AIG Hospital in Hyderabad for better treatment. He said his health condition was stable and advised the activists need not worry. Sources say that one of his staff members who accompanied him also tested positive on Corona. Meanwhile, nine students of Vepinapi High School in the Nellore district were diagnosed with corona. The parents were concerned when ten students tested positive to corona in two days. The district education officer directed the school to close immediately after informing the authorities.

TRIBUTES TO A SOCIAL REFORMER



Ministers P Anil Kumar Yadav and Sidiri Appalaraju paying tributes to Mahatma Jyotirao Phule by garlanding the social reformer's statue on the occasion of his 195th birth anniversary at Mini By-pass road in Nellore on Sunday.

Concern over increasing attacks on Dalits in AP

PNS ■ GUNTUR

It was a matter of concern that violence against the weaker sections was on the rise in Andhra Pradesh, Jai Bheem Access Justice founder-president Jada Shrawan Kumar on Sunday said.

He said the condition of Dalits in AP was miserable and the recent Nandyal incident and attacks on Dalits in East Godavari and Prakasam districts were condemnable. He



lamented that the police mechanism was deeply polluted and the Dalits in the state were forced to rely on the judiciary for justice.

The police refused permission

for a meeting of the Jai Bheem Access Justice Forum in Guntur. The meeting was to be held on April 14 at the LEM School premises at the Lodge Center, he added.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Shot shortage

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

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

in the arm. It looked like we had it all under control, till the second wave hit.

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

PICTALK



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

AP/PTI

Deliverance

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

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

had been a long-pending demand of these *teerth purohits* (pilgrimage priests) that the Government roll back its decision as, they pointed out, they have been managing for generations the affairs of these temples, which were set up by their ancestors.

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

Of Sri Lanka and the Andamans

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



PRAFULL GORADIA

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AMP UP VACCINE PRODUCTION

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

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

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

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

NEED TO TAKE IT SERIOUSLY

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

Nix the corruption in Maharashtra



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

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

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

Abhishek Singh | Varanasi

Fleet, the operation was conducted by guided-missile destroyer USS John Paul Jones on April 7 and is consistent with the international law. The Ministry of External Affairs responded that the Government's stated position on the UN convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) is that the Convention does not authorise other States to carry out operations in the EEZ. What is shocking is that it came at a time when India and the US are trying to strengthen their ties and working in close cooperation in Quad for a free and open Indo-Pacific. US President Joe Biden's "tough talk" on China shows that Washington sees Beijing as its rival. However, the recent US misadventure can harm its good rapport with New Delhi.

TV Jayaprakash | Palakkad

NO REASON TO LOWER GUARD

Sir — We are responsible for the rise in

Jubel D'Cruz | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

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



Congress interim president — Sonia Gandhi



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

Iranian Foreign Minister — Mohammad Javad Zarif

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



Actor — Swara Bhasker



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

Cricketer — Virat Kohli

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



Delhi CM — Arvind Kejriwal

FIRST COLUMN

BUILD RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE

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



RIYA RAHIMAN

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



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

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

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

The big tent of the PPP decoded

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



NADEEM PARACHA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But it seems that the party did not go far enough and was toppled by an Islamist General. With its leader hanged in 1979, and its other major players either in exile or in prison, the reins of the party fell in the hands of its lower-tier leadership. Bhutto’s daughter Benazir was at the helm, but she was under arrest. This was also when the party’s leftist militant tendencies, which had been subdued by Bhutto, resurfaced. In 1986, however, fearing that the US would stall the party’s return to power for being “too Left-wing”, Benazir began to gradually push the party back towards the Centre.

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

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

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

Quaking over Iran’s phantom nuclear weapons

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



GWYNNE DYER

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

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

On a better run planet, the US special envoy for Iran, Rob Malloy, would just declare that all the US sanctions on Iran wrongly put in place by the discredited Trump Administration are cancelled as of today. The Iranian delegation, led by Deputy Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, a veteran of the 2015 talks, would reply that Iran will immediately return to compliance with all the terms of the treaty and invite UN inspectors to verify that all its temporary deviations from treaty obligations over the past three years have been reversed. And we would all live happily ever after.

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

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

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

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

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

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

According to President Vladimir Putin, Russia has developed nuclear-powered cruise missiles and torpedos with unlimited range, a hypersonic vehicle called Avangard to deliver nuclear weapons at a low level and ultra-high speed, and a new ultra-heavy ICBM called ‘Sarmat’ that is able to carry even more and bigger warheads (10-15) over a longer range (18,000 km.) There have also been reports of a new nuclear-powered drone torpedo that is capable of delivering a 100-megaton warhead (biggest ever tested was 50 megatons) over a range of 10,000 km. Then it would explode off an enemy’s coast to create a tsunami wave 500 metres tall to inundate the coastal regions with highly radioactive water. But maybe this one is fiction.

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

Traditionally the UK’s strategy is “no first use”, which means Britain’s retaliation would be on cities, not on empty silos. So you’re just bouncing the rubble after the first few dozen warheads explode. That’s probably why Johnson broke with tradition and said that Britain might use nuclear weapons in response to non-nuclear attacks, including even cyber attacks. One way to compensate for not really being very dangerous is to sound very reckless.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Bhatia further said, "We would request that among the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Partial lockdown could impact movement of labour and goods

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

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

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

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

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

Stringent enforcement measures to promote strict adherence to health and safety protocols are essential and any measures to restrict social gatherings should not be extended to regular functioning of industry and commerce, T V Narendran, President-designate, CII, said.

Further to mitigate the impact



Industrialists fear another exodus of migrant workers

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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

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



Property consultant Anarock has clocked an 18 per cent growth in its revenue at Rs 302 crore during the last fiscal despite the COVID-19 pandemic, its chairman Anuj Puri said on Sunday. In an interview with PTI, Puri said the company sold 14,700 units worth Rs 16,240 crore on behalf of the developers in the full 2020-21 financial year. The numbers are higher than the 2019-20 fiscal year, when Anarock sold 12,710 units worth over Rs 11,000 crore. Puri pointed out that housing sales in the first four months of the 2019-20 were badly impacted due to the nationwide lockdown, which was imposed to control the spread of coronavirus disease. However, he said demand for residential properties improved significantly thereafter. "We have achieved a revenue of Rs 302 crore during the last fiscal," Puri said.

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



Sterling Holiday Resorts is looking to take the total number of rooms in its inventory to 5,000 by 2025 as part of robust growth plans going forward, a top company official said. The company currently has over 2,400 rooms in over 35 resorts across India, including Sterling Nature Trails. "Sterling has aggressive expansion plans and aims to double its inventory from the current 2,400-plus rooms to 5,000 rooms by 2025. "In line with this, over the last one year, Sterling has opened resorts in Guruvayur, Thekkady and Rishikesh," Sterling Holiday Resorts Chairman and MD Ramesh Ramanathan told PTI. For the upcoming resorts, several locations are on active search including Mysore, Udaipur, Jodhpur, Varanasi, Coorg and Kumarakom.

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



Fitday, a nutraceutical start-up, on Sunday said it plans to set up 50 brick-and-mortar stores across the country with an investment of about Rs 60 crore. The company's parent firm, Genomelabs, focuses mainly on product research, formulation, manufacturing and product sales. "Fitday plans to set up 50 brick-and-mortar stores pan-India by 2023 with an approximate investment of Rs 600 million while simultaneously ramping up their online presence," according to a statement. The company will fund the expansion through internal accruals. Fitday founder Suresh Raju cited reports to state that the food systems in many countries do not offer adequate nutrient outputs to fulfill health and nutritional needs. "Nearly half of the world's population is malnourished. Apparently, 840 million have insufficient intakes of protein/energy, and more than two billion people consume diets that are less diverse than 30 years ago, leading to deficiencies in micronutrients.

DoT likely to issue guidelines for telecom PLI within week



The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) is likely to issue guidelines on implementation of production-linked incentive (PLI) schemes for manufacturers in the sector and start inviting applications for the same in about a week, according to government officials. Telecom gear makers firms such as Ericsson and Nokia are keen to expand their operations in India, and global companies like Samsung, Cisco, Ciena and Foxconn have "shown interest" to set up manufacturing bases in the country for telecom and networking products for domestic and export markets. "Telecom PLI has already been approved by the government. The DoT is ready with guidelines to implement it, application format, incentive allocation, etc. It should be published on the DoT website within a week," the official, who did not wish to be named, said.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Power consumption grows 47% in April

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power consumption in the country grew nearly 47 per cent in the first week of April to 28.34 billion units (BU) over the corresponding period a year ago, showing robust recovery in industrial and commercial demand of electricity, according to power ministry data. Power consumption in the first week of April last year was recorded at 19.33 BU.

On the other hand, the peak power demand met, which is the highest supply in a day, during first week this month remained well above the highest record of 132.20 GW in the same period in April 2020.

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



supply and demand shocks across geographies as per logistics majors.

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

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

The pilot project has been successful, he said.

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's electric vehicle (EV) policy needs to be "rejigged" and requires "course correction" in order to make it more effective to achieve envisaged sales targets, according to the country's leading electric two-wheeler maker Hero Electric. Under the FAME-II scheme, which was launched in April 2019, the plan was to put at least 10 lakh high-speed electric two-wheelers on the road by March 2022.

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

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

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

Pension sector: Govt may hike FDI limit to 74%

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

ABHISHEK BACHCHAN RECALLS FALLING IN LOVE WITH AISHWARYA

Actor Abhishek Bachchan in a recent interview spoke about the beginnings of his romantic relationship with wife Aishwarya Rai. The couple tied the knot in 2007, and they have one daughter, Aaradhya.

While promoting his new film *The Big Bull*, Abhishek was asked to label his some of his past films as either 'bullish' or 'bearish' career moves. When he was asked to slot *Umrao Jaan*, he said that it was definitely 'bullish', because 'that's where it all happened'.

Asked if 'mohabbat (love)' happened organically or if he made it happen, Abhishek told RJ Siddharth Kannan, "We'd been friends for a very long time. Aishwarya was one of the first co-stars I'd ever worked with. Our first movie together was called *Dhai Akshar Prem Ke*, which was technically the second film I started shooting, as soon as I finished *Refugee*."

He continued, "So she'd been a dear, dear friend, and we'd worked in so many films together. It was a bit of both. The universe conspired to bring us together."

Abhishek's new film, *The Big Bull*, was released on Thursday on Disney+ Hotstar. The actor played a character inspired by tainted stockbroker Harshad Mehta in the film, which was received poorly by critics.

Aishwarya, in the past, had spoken about how Abhishek proposed to her. In an interview with Filmfare, the actor said that the moment was 'surreal' for her as she was on the sets of her 2008 film, *Jodhaa Akbar*. "We're doing Khawja Mere Khwaja, sitting as a bride, and I am like, oh my god this is surreal, all happening on-screen, off-screen, this is bizarre," she said. Aishwarya and Abhishek have worked together on numerous films, such as *Dhoom 2*, *Guru* and *Raavan*.



Rhea Chakraborty is 'keeping the faith' in rare Instagram post

Rhea Chakraborty seldom shares pictures of herself on social media since her boyfriend Sushant Singh Rajput died by suicide in June last year. The actress has gone through an arrest by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) and jail time. She is currently in the middle of a legal battle in the SSR death case. In such tough times, she seems to be drawing strength from Rabindranath Tagore's collection of poems, *Gitanjali*. Rhea shared a picture of herself reading the Bengali book and shared a quote from it on Instagram.

Rhea is seen wearing a yellow kurti and reading *Gitanjali* while sitting on a couch. She captioned the picture, "The question and the cry 'oh, where?' melt into tears of a thousand streams and deluge the world with the flood of the assurance, 'I AM!' - Rabindranath Tagore, *Gitanjali* (sic)"" Rhea added the hashtag *#keepingthefait*



to her post. Rhea Chakraborty will be next seen in Rumi Jafri's *Chehre* with Amitabh Bachchan and Emraan Hashmi. The film is a mystery thriller and was slated to release in April. However, the release of the film has been delayed due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.



Cameron Diaz said one of her greatest moments in life is the friendship she shares with Drew Barrymore.

Talking about the *Charlie's Angels* reunion, Barrymore, on her show *The Drew Barrymore Show*" said: "As long as I love it, I want more from us we can do anything and everything together."

To this, Diaz replied: "I always say 'never say never' and I feel that in some way there is never a time when we are not going to be connected and I can't wait for us to come back together and share that love once more."

She added: "I can't wait to grow old with you and experience our life together because one of the greatest moments of my life is our friendship and when I think about you, I literally start to cry. I think you're so special and your birthday every year is one of my most favourite times of the year"

Barrymore credited Diaz for making her a "better person".

"You've seen me through everything both ugly and beautiful. I can't wait to grow old with you together," she said on the show, which airs on Zee Cafe in India.

Singer Mika Singh has 'proposed' to singer Bhoomi Trivedi, that too on national television! In an upcoming episode of the music reality show *Indian Pro Music League* (IPML), the Punjab Lions trio of Mika Singh, Asees Kaur and Rupali Jagga perform Sajid-Wajid's popular title song of the film *Mujhse Shaadi Karogi*. During the act, Mika left everyone surprised by walking over to Bhoomi and leading her to the stage even as he continued singing the song. At one point he asked Bhoomi: '*Mujhse shaadi karogi* (will you marry me)?'

Following this, host Karan Wahi asked Bhoomi and Mika to dance together, and that's when Mika went down on his knees and asked her the question once again!

"Bhoomi, *ab toh bata do, mujhse shaadi karogi? Sab log Bhoomi se jude hain, maine socha main bhi Bhoomi se jud jaaoon* (Bhoomi tell me now, will you marry me? Everyone is connected to Bhoomi, I thought I should, too). What do you guys think about Bhoomi Singh?" Mika said.

Did Mika Singh propose to Bhoomi Trivedi on TV?



Bhoomi replied: "What do you think about Mika Trivedi? But to be honest, I have come here to find a bride for you, it would be injustice to them."

The episode airs on Zee TV on Saturday evening. Recently on the very same show, Mika Singh had declared that he would get married only after Bollywood's "most eligible bachelor" actor Salman Khan ties the knot.

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

NANCY

GINGER MEGGS

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

JUNIOR CROSSWORD 824

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9		10		11	
12				13	14
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ACROSS

1 Cold floating chunks in the sea

6 Peas grow in these

7 A type of bird

9 Of greater age

11 A long narrow piece

12 Opposite of outer

13 Seven plus five minus nine

16 Keep a car in here

18 A hired car

19 A prickly animal

DOWN

1 Getting better

2 Came to a finish

3 Animals like large mice

4 Make longer by pulling

SOLUTION

G	O	S	E	S
A	A	I	O	A
L	I	G	H	T
U	I	N	W	H
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SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

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



THE FRENCH-INDIAN LOVE AFFAIR!

When Sarah Todd was growing up, she found her love for food and found that food was love! This Brit is so crazy about south Indian curry, that it regularly gets voted within the top five most popular meals of hers. “I admire chefs who can satiate a diner’s appetite whilst also inspiring the home cook to feel that they can make enticing meals at home on a budget. Not everyone can afford a Michelin star meal, so I believe that creating something yourself at home is just as important. Food is an integral part of everyone’s life. In saying this, Gordon Ramsay inspires me! His success is unparalleled, his passion and love for the hospitality industry are undeniable. His broad appeal across all sectors of the industry inspires us to be better cooks. I aspire to reach his level, however, minus the expletives,” adds the Australian chef who first appeared on the Australian food scene in 2014 as one of that season’s most popular MasterChef Australia contestants. She became curious about what she calls ‘Indian-flavoured food with aromatic spices’ and in anticipation of the same, ushers on a book called ‘My Indian Kitchen’ taking you beyond the well-known restaurant favourites of butter chicken, chicken tandoori, and dal with classical French techniques!

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

The world is changing. And clearly, at this crucial turning point of our planet, three most important things are: Awakening, understanding and changing. Giving us

There is hope

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Balance of nature is quite an interesting term. I think

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

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

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



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

Europe, for example.

What really drove you to this profession — wildlife filmmaking?

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

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

Any message you have for the Indian audience?

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

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

Rana, Tripathi power KKR to 187



Picture credits: IPLT20.com



Picture credits: IPLT20.com

PTI ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

His strokes on the off-side —

NITISH RANA LAST SIX INNINGS IN IPL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MOST SIXES	
1. Nitish Rana (KKR)	4
2. Suresh Raina (CSK)	4
3. Chris Lynn (MI)	3

SUMMER SLAM

MOTION PICTURE



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



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

DHONI FINED FOR SLOW OVER RATE
Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni has been fined ₹12 lakh for maintaining a slow over rate during his side's IPL opener against DC here. "Chennai Super Kings captain MS Dhoni has been fined after his team maintained a slow over-rate during their IPL 2021 match against Delhi Capitals at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai on April 10," the IPL said in a media statement. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Mr Dhoni was fined ₹12 lakh," the statement added.

LOSING HAZELEWOOD A BLOW
Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming said losing Josh Hazlewood was a big blow ahead of the new season's start as it left the team without the overseas pace bowling options with his replacement Jason Behrendorff and South African Lungi Ngidi still not available for team's next game said. Australia pacer Hazlewood had withdrawn at the last moment to keep himself fit for upcoming international assignments. Behrendorff was named his replacement last Friday and is yet to arrive, while Ngidi is serving his quarantine after returning midway from South Africa's ODI series against Pakistan.

Big-hitters galore

RR, Punjab Kings aim for winning start to IPL campaign

KEY PLAYERS
<p>BEN STOKES English all-rounder will have an extra responsibility with the ball this time in absence of Archer.</p>
<p>CHRIS GAYLE He will be the X-factor in Kings line-up. Gayle's power hitting can take PBKS to big total.</p>

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

Gopal, Tewatia and Parag, all bowl leg-spin, so it would be interesting to see whether the Royals opt to go in with two leg-spinners.


Tewatia and Dube have the ability to whack the ball outside the park


VENUE: WANKHEDE STADIUM, MUMBAI

HEAD TO HEAD

Matches	21
Rajasthan Royals	12
Punjab Kings	9

LAST YEAR'S MATCHES

 Rajasthan Royals defeated Punjab Kings by 4 wickets at Sharjah

 Rajasthan Royals beat Punjab Kings by 7 wickets at Abu Dhabi

1922

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

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

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

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

Unadkat, with his experience, might get the nod.

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

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

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

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

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

Dhawan impressed by Pant's calmness on captaincy debut

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



Picture credits: IPLT20.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Missing Jofra is big blow: Sangakkara

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



Picture credits: @rajasthanroyals

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

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

Chetan Sakariya and the immensely talented Kartik Tyagi.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SALMAN, MAHESH, PRITHVIRAJ'S BOOST TO MAJOR

The much-awaited teaser of Adivi Sesh-starrer *Major* will be launched today. Bollywood, Tollywood and Malayalam respectively. *Major* is a biopic based on the life of Major Sandeep Unnikrishnan, who lost his life in the 26/11 terrorist

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

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

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

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

Vishal Mishra is on board *RRR*

Singer and composer Vishal Mishra of *Kaise Hua* and *Aaj Bhi* fame, was a law student when he just decided to give it all away and pursue his dreams of becoming a singer. He is known for his work in few Hindi movies such as *Munna Michael*, *Saand Ki Aankh*, *Pranaam*, *Qarib Qarib Singgle*, *Kabir Singh*, *Jabariya Jodi*, *Notebook*, and *Race 3* etc. Now Vishal Mishra is on the board for SS Rajamouli's upcoming much hyped big budget drama *RRR*.

The young Bollywood musician, singer and songwriter took to Twitter and shared a picture of himself posing with SS Rajamouli and music composer Keeravani and wrote, "We made magic today at the studio. *RRR* coming soon." With the post, Vishal Mishra confirmed that the music sessions of *RRR* are underway and in full swing.

The period drama *RRR* narrates a fictitious tale based on the life of Telugu freedom fighters, Alluri Seetharama Raju and Komaram Bheem. It has Jr NTR and Ram Charan in the lead roles and it is being produced at an estimated budget of Rs 450 crore by DVV Danayya.

RRR is slated to arrive at the theaters on October 13 worldwide.



THANK YOU TEAM TO FLY TO ITALY

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

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

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

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



Pawan Kalyan isolates self as personal staff test positive for Covid

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

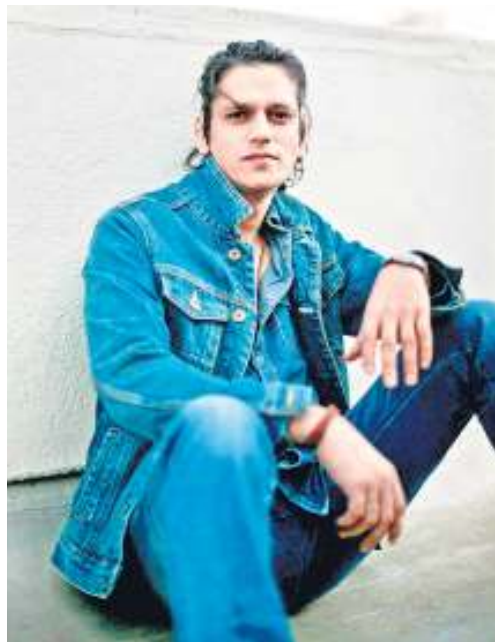
"Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan's chief executive, security personnel and most of the personal staff have been affected by corona. As a precautionary measure he went into the home quarantine with a doctor's prescription," the statement reads.

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

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

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

City star Vijay does not want to stop



Te was born and brought up in Hyderabad and dreamt of seeing himself on the big screens some day. He has been around in the industry for nine years now, but it was only in 2019 that he became a familiar face with his performance as Moeen in *Gully Boy*.

The spotlight has never left Vijay Varma since then, and the actor now asserts he wants to have a

long career in Bollywood.

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

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

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

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

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

Ravi Teja's next with Tamil director?

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

Cinema Choopistha Maava fame. The upcoming film is touted to be an action thriller and is bankrolled by Sudhakar Chelukuri.

Ravi Teja and Sarath Mandava's film is expected to go on the floors very soon.

Sarath Mandava, who'd made the 2016 film, *Ko 2*, in Tamil, had apparently come up with an authentic story that demands high octane action sequences that suit Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja, given the latter's

apparent love for working in action movies. Reports have been coming in that Ravi Teja, who was very impressed, has given his green signal to Sarath.

On the other side, Ravi Teja was last seen playing the role of a powerful police officer in action drama *Krack* in which he shared the screen space with *Gabbar Singh* and *Vakeel Saab* fame Shruti Haasan.

Currently he is playing a dual role in *Khiladi*.

