

**ANALYSIS 7**  
‘OUTSIDER’ EFFECT RATTLES  
BJP IN CERTAIN STATES

**MONEY 8**  
INDIA'S POWER CONSUMPTION  
RISES 18% TO 30.33 BU DURING JULY 1-7

**SPORTS 12**  
INDIA W KEEP T201  
SERIES ALIVE

HYDERABAD, MONDAY, JULY 12, 2021; PAGES 12-13



# the pioneer



SOUTH STARS  
GO HIGH ON  
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## TWITTER NAMES RESIDENT GRIEVANCE OFFICER, PUBLISHES 1<sup>ST</sup> COMPLIANCE

Amid tensions with the government, Twitter has appointed a Resident Grievance Officer, days after it designated a chief compliance officer, as it also released its first India Transparency Report to meet the new IT rules. The US social media giant's website has listed Vinay Prakash as the new grievance officer, providing contact details and procedure for users to report potential violations of its rules and terms. Twitter had previously appointed Dharmendra Chatur as its interim grievance officer for India after the new IT rules came into force on May 26. However, Chatur stepped down within weeks of taking over the key role.



## INDIAN-AMERICAN SAMIR BEATS VICTOR LILOV TO WIN BOYS' SINGLES TITLE

Indian-American Samir Banerjee on Sunday won the Wimbledon boys' title at Number 1 Court. He defeated Victor Lillov of America by 7-5, 6-3 in the finals to lift the trophy at All England Club. For the first time since 2014, and only the second time since 1977, there was an all-American conclusion to the boys' singles event. Notably, both 17-year-olds were unseeded for the Championships. The first set between the duo went back and forth, but in the end, Banerjee managed to hold his own to win the set by 7-5. In the second set, Banerjee was in cruise mode as he broke the early serve of Lillov and completed his triumph over the compatriot in just 1 hour and 21 minutes.



## POPULAR MIMICRY ARTISTE-ACTOR MADHAV MOGHE DIES AT 68

Actor and mimicry artist Madhav Moghe, best known for featuring in films like Salman Khan-Govinda starrer "Partner" and Meenakshi Seshadri's "Damini", passed away on Sunday after battling lung cancer. He was 68. The actor, who was not keeping well since past one month, was admitted to Bombay Hospital last week where he was diagnosed with lung cancer, his daughter Prachi Moghe said. Moghe was brought back home on Saturday. "He passed away today early morning at his residence. He wasn't keeping well for the last one month. His health kept deteriorating so he was admitted to Bombay hospital. Last week, he was diagnosed with last stage lung cancer," Prachi said.



## MINISTERS HAVE INCREASED BUT NOT COVID VACCINES: RAHUL'S JIBE AT PM

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday took a swipe at the central government, saying the number of ministers has increased but not the COVID vaccines. He also shared a chart of the average vaccinations per day, which are falling short of the target to vaccinate all adults by December 2021. "The number of ministers has increased, not of vaccines," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi, using the hashtag "WhereAreVaccines". His comments came after 43 ministers were inducted into the Modi government, taking the total number of ministers to 77. The chart shared by Gandhi was on India's vaccination equation that aims to stop the third wave of COVID-19.



## India evacuates diplomats, security personnel from Kandahar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has pulled out around 50 diplomats and security personnel from its consulate in Kandahar in Afghanistan in view of the deteriorating security situation and the Taliban gaining control of new areas around the southern Afghan city, people familiar with the development said on Sunday. A special aircraft of the Indian Air Force was sent on Saturday to bring back the Indian diplomats, officials and other staff members including a group of Indo-Tibetan Border Police personnel, they said.

India's move to temporarily shut the consulate in Kandahar came in view of Taliban fighters rapidly seizing control of a number of key areas in the region as well as in western Afghanistan triggering huge security concerns.

# Centre to take over all disputed inter-state projects

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The Union government is planning to take over the maintenance and operation of all disputed inter-state irrigation projects across the country.

Central government officials aware of the matter reportedly conveyed this to the Andhra Pradesh government.

Projects on Krishna, Godavari, Thungabhadra, Cauveri, Narmada, Mahanadi and other rivers in the country have inter-state disputes.

In the wake of the dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana over the sharing of Krishna waters, AP Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy reportedly wrote two letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi request-



ing him to resolve the dispute. In one of the letters, Jagan had asked the Prime Minister to take over all the irrigation projects constructed on the Krishna River.

Building on this suggestion, the

Union Ministry of Water Resources has formally informed the Union government that it is planning to take over the maintenance and operation of all disputed inter-state projects.

There are eight major river systems in the country with more than 400 rivers. It may not be an exaggeration to say that no major river in the country is without inter-state dispute projects.

The central government feels that water-sharing disputes across the country would only escalate in the years ahead with increasing demands from states concerned. Besides, given the increasing pollution and losses, the quantum of water available for sharing would be reduced.

The central government has constituted several tribunals from time to time to resolve inter-state disputes. There are several irrigation projects involving inter-state disputes.

## Union Minister bats for caste-based census

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment, Ramdas Athawale on Sunday pitched for a caste-based census in the country, which will help the needy avail social, economic and academic benefits.

"There is a need for caste-based census to figure out the community-wise population.

This will help avail social, economic and academic benefits to the needy," Athawale told reporters here.

The Union Minister also stressed upon increasing the reservation so that socially and economically backward people can avail its benefit.

He said the amount of reservation should not exceed 50 per cent as per rules, but there is a need to increase the quota for social justice.

In this regard, a discussion has



taken place with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Athawale also pointed out that the intent behind introducing reservation was to empower people socially and economically but those who are well-off are using it mostly.

There is a need to stop such a trend, he explained.

## Providing better prices, timely credit to farmers crucial: Vice Prez

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said that providing better prices for agricultural produce and timely, affordable credit to farmers are crucial to sustain agriculture in the country.

Citing a UN Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) report about an impending global food crisis, he said that "if we provide timely assistance to our farmers, India would not only remain self-sufficient, but also feed the world in the years to come".

Praising farmers for increased food grain production last year despite the severe hardship caused by the pandemic, Naidu was quoted in an official release as saying that there was a need to focus on increasing the storage capacities, remove restrictions on crop transportation and encourage food processing to make agriculture more remunerative.

Releasing a book 'Palleku Pattabhishekam' by former MP Yalamanchili Sivaji here, he said that villages and agriculture are intrinsically connected and "we



must address their issues holistically to bring 'Gram Swarajya' to our villages".

"Farmers need to focus on cost-cutting, along with increasing production. We also need to utilise our resources such as water and electricity more judiciously", Naidu said.

The Vice President suggested the creation of strong lab-farm links to ensure fruitful outcomes to the farmers. He urged scientists to develop climate and drought-resistant seed varieties.

## Komatireddy says Revanth is a small boy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Member of Parliament from Bhongir and Congress leader Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has characterized TPC chief A Revanth Reddy as "a small boy" and asserted that there is no efficient leader to take the party's unit in TS forward.

Speaking to media persons after a meeting with Union Minister G Kishan Reddy at the latter's residence on Sunday, Komatireddy said that he would focus on development. He made it clear that he would not change his political affiliation and would remain with the Congress.



## Djokovic wins 20<sup>th</sup> grand slam with 6<sup>th</sup> Wimbledon win



Novak Djokovic won a record-equalling 20th Grand Slam title and sixth Wimbledon on Sunday with a four-set victory over Matteo Berrettini of Italy. The world number one triumphed 6-7 (4/7), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 to move level on 20 majors with Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal. His win also put him three-quarters of the way to the first calendar Grand Slam of all four majors since 1969.

-Report inside

## AP CID to probe 'irregularities' in Fibernet

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh government on Sunday decided to entrust to its Crime Investigation Department, the investigation into the alleged irregularities in AP State FiberNet Limited as the Central Bureau of Investigation is seemingly reluctant to proceed with it.

In June last year, the state Cabinet decided to entrust the probe to the CBI and a confidential order was issued on July 13, according consent to the national agency to exercise powers and jurisdiction "for taking up regular investigation and follow up action pertaining to the scam in APSFL."

Subsequently, letters were written to the Centre and Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy personally took up the issue with Union Home Minister Amit Shah.

Energy Secretary Srikant Nagulapalli issued a formal order on Sunday, directing the Additional Director General of CID to investigate the irregularities and submit a detailed report to the government. On June 11, 2020, the state Cabinet decided to order a probe by the CBI, based on the preliminary inquiry by a Cabinet Subcommittee, into various "financial scandals" committed by the previous Chandrababu Naidu regime in different schemes, causing a loss running into hundreds of crores of rupees. The Centre initially provided a financial assistance of Rs 3,840 crore for the FiberNet project under the National Optic Fibre Network.

## TODAY

**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Shukla Paksha  
Panchangam  
Tithi : Dwitiya 08:18  
Nakshatram : Ashlesha 27:14  
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)  
Rahukalam : 7:30 am - 9:07 am  
Yamagandam : 10:44 am - 12:21 pm  
Varjyam : 3:38 pm - 5:17 pm  
Gulika : 1:58 pm - 3:36 pm  
Good Time : (to start any important work)  
Amritakalam : 1:35 am - 3:14 am  
Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:55 am - 12:47 pm

## HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm  
Temp: 27/22  
Humidity: 94%  
Sunrise: 5:48 am  
Sunset: 06:54 pm  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated JULY 11, 2021 5:00 PM

## Kishan Reddy stresses on completion of all projects in NE on time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister G Kishan Reddy on Sunday said the socio-economic development of the entire northeastern region at a fast pace will be his key focus area, an official statement said.

The minister told senior officials that all the ongoing projects in the region should be completed within the stipulated time-frames.

He said all pending projects should be completed at the earliest through a proper consultation mechanism with other ministries.

preprehensive review meetings of the ministry.

He emphasised that the socio-economic development of the entire northeastern region at a fast pace will be his key focus area, an official statement said.

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He said all pending projects should be completed at the earliest through a proper consultation mechanism with other ministries.



## Babu rules out Brahmani or Balakrishna taking reins of Telangana Telugu Desam

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former AP chief minister and TDP national president N Chandrababu Naidu has ruled out the possibility of his family members, particularly Brahmani and

Balakrishna (brother-in-law) taking the reins of the party unit in Telangana.

In the backdrop of TDP president L Ramana crossing over to the Telangana Rashtra Samithi, Babu had a meeting with TDP seniors and party district presi-

dents and parliamentary constituency unit leaders. He is understood to have put his foot down when it was suggested that he should hand over reins of the party to Balakrishna or Brahmani.

## A month into launch, glitches still mar new I-T portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A month after its launch and two weeks after the finance minister reviewed its functioning, technical glitches continue to mar the functioning of the new income tax portal as certain key utilities like e-proceedings and digital signature certificate are not yet functional, say chartered accountants.

Also, some overseas firms have been facing problems in logging into the portal, they said.

Even after two weeks of the meeting and over a month of the portal launch, users still continue to encounter multiple problems like unable to file I-T returns for



past years, download intimation notice u/s 143(1) for AY 2019-20

and earlier years, and Form-3 under 'Vivad se Vishwas Scheme'



# Monday Mirchi

## Double-faced babus

For bureaucrats active in public life, wearing a mask has become a double-edged sword. When it comes to a photo-op their dilemma is: whether to mask up or not. If it happens to be a ribbon-cutting event, one can notice that the mask lowers. The official who is wearing a mask prefers to lower it due to the pressure of paparazzi.

Paranoid about cynical media scrutiny and associated trolling, some officials are always seen in a mask, while others make sure the mask is at least at the chin, so they can claim in defence that it was only for photo-op. At the end of the day, almost all the pictures passed onto media are double-faced: one with a mask and the other one without a mask.

## Field day for IPS officials

Social media presence has become imperative for babus. In Telangana, IPS officers are outdoing their IAS counterparts on almost all platforms. While a handful of IAS officers tweet or respond, IPS officials have some updates or the other to post almost daily. Some police officials publish voice notes as well in their efforts to reach out to the public. In fact some of the handles to create awareness, like the Traffic cops or SHE Teams, have gone a step ahead and started using memes, Tollywood movie references to convey messages.

While many of the IAS officers have their handles, most of them respond only when a Minister tags them. Whatever is sent to mainstream media goes onto social media when it comes to IPS officials. Of late, IAS officers too have been showing their creativity on social media. Some really good pictures have been emerging out of these handles, particularly those of young IPS officers. Irrespective of who is behind the handles, IPS and IAS babus are in touch with people.

## Golden period for blue-eyed babus

The Jaganmohan Reddy regime will perhaps go down in history as a golden period for

babus handling critical or high-profile subjects or assignments. For, these blue-eyed babus have got extensions or re-employment post retirement on contract basis. Now, R Vijay Paul, who retired as additional SP on June 30, has joined the list of exalted administrators. For, within a week of his retirement, he has been rehired as OSD in the CID department. The reasons are not far to seek.

He has been handling crucial cases, including the 'sedition' case registered against YSRCP's rebel MP from Narasapur, K Raghurama Krishna Raju. Even otherwise, the CID has turned out to be a very important department that is overseeing the sensitive Amaravati land scam in which TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu has been named. Vijay Paul has been re-hired on contract basis in CID as OSD for a period of one year starting July 1, 2021, with the remuneration being his last pay drawn minus pension. Money is fine. What is more important for such preferred babus is the trappings of power when you are after powerful people.

## Time for shake-up in administration

With the completion of Palle Pragathi and Pattana Pragathi programmes on Saturday, the line is now clear for streamlining TS administration. So, IAS officers are game for the much-talked-about 'major reshuffle' of the administration. At present there are no regular secretaries for major departments like Power, Education, Revenue and Agriculture, among others. In the impending rejig, these departments may get regular secretaries. It is widely expected that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao may move long-standing secretaries in some of the departments, like Sunil Sharma, Principal Secretary of Transport and R&B department, and Jayesh Ranjan, principal secretary of Industries and IT. Some district collectors are also readying for the shake-up. According to sources, KCR has already completed the exercise relating to the transfers with Advisor to CM and former CS Rajeev Sharma in tow.

*Yours truly*

# Sharmila's entry not likely to have much impact on Telangana politics

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

A series of developments last week added some spice to the otherwise dull politics in Telangana which has been completely dominated by the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) since the formation of the state in 2014.

The first development was A. Revanth Reddy taking over as the new president of the Congress party in the state on July 7. The firebrand leader brought new enthusiasm among the party cadre and raised hopes of a revival of the grand old party's fortunes in its former stronghold.

The next day saw Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy's sister Y.S. Sharmila formally entering Telangana politics with the launch of her YSR Telangana Party.

The resignation of Telugu

Desam Party's (TDP) Telangana unit president L. Ramana from the party on July 9 and his decision to join TRS was the third consecutive development, although not of much political significance as TDP's presence in Telangana has almost come to an end.

The emergence of a new party on Telangana's political scene sparked a debate in political circles. When seasoned politician and former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu failed to keep the TDP afloat in Telangana, how will Sharmila succeed in taking on the TRS, which claims to be the only true champion of Telangana sentiment?

Like Chandrababu Naidu, Sharmila is also seen as a leader from Andhra. The TRS sees her entry as another attempt by Andhra leaders to meddle in Telangana.

Sharmila, like her brother, is

trying to invoke the legacy of their father Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy, who was the Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh.

YSR, as Rajasekhara Reddy was popularly known, served as the Chief Minister from 2004 to 2009. He died in a helicopter crash on September 2, 2009, a few months after the Congress party under his leadership retained power.

Sharmila, 47, made her formal political foray on the birth anniversary of YSR. Like the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led YSR Congress Party (YSRCP), Sharmila's political outfit also has YSR's name.

Interestingly, she launched the party at a time when the two Telugu states are engaged in a bitter fight over sharing of the Krishna river water and TRS leaders have been attacking Jagan for trying to take away Telangana's share of water

like his father did as the chief minister of the undivided state.

Sharmila promises to bring back 'Rajanna Rajyam' in Telangana. The term usually refers to YSR's rule when he launched several pro-poor schemes. She declared that welfare, self reliance and equality would be the three main pillars of the new party.

However, for TRS and other groups which fought for statehood to Telangana, YSR is still seen as an anti-Telangana figure. They say YSR took up projects to divert the Krishna river water from Telangana to Rayalaseema, the region he came from.

TRS leaders also maintain that there is no room for Andhra parties in Telangana. They refer to the injustices meted out to Telangana for over 50 years by 'Andhra rulers' in the undivided Andhra Pradesh. On the slogan of

Telangana self-rule and self-respect, the TRS effectively countered the Chandrababu Naidu-led TDP. It is likely to use the same strategy to take on Sharmila.

Despite the slogan of 'Rajanna Rajyam', Sharmila's party is not likely to have much impact on Telangana politics. Political analyst Telakapalli Ravi believes that the YSR Telangana Party will have a very limited impact on state politics. In fact, her entry is expected to help the TRS in 2023 by dividing the anti-incumbency votes.

"She may take a chunk of YSR fans' votes and provide shelter to some disgruntled Reddy group leaders unhappy with the Congress, thereby helping the TRS. The new party may split anti-TRS votes. She may prevent these votes from going to the Congress and the BJP," he said.

## TRS likely to shock Cong by taking Kaushik into their fold

**SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD**

Ahead of the Huzurabad Assembly bye-election the TRS is planning to give a big shock to its main rival there, the Congress party. TRS has taken the Huzurabad bye-election as a prestige fight. For this TRS is adopting a two-pronged strategy. On one hand they are strengthening their own party and on the other hand they are trying to weaken their political rivals. In this process TRS is trying to bring the strong Congress leader in the constituency, Kaushik Reddy, into their party fold. TRS wants to utilise the group politics within the Congress, in so doing, Kaushik Reddy had unsuccessfully contested against

Eatala Rajendar in the last two Assembly elections as a Congress candidate.

In the previous election the difference between Eatala and Kaushik Reddy, in terms of votes pulled, was about 40 thousand. In the ensuing bye-election also Kaushik Reddy is a strong contender for the Huzurabad Assembly seat from Congress' point of view. However, some doubts have cropped up. Kaushik Reddy is a relative of the former TPCC President and MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy, who does not enjoy best of relations with the present TPCC Chief A Revanth Reddy, who not only did once complain against Uttam to the high command when he was the president, but also has reportedly appointed

a committee to select a Congress candidate for the Huzurabad constituency. This has raised some doubts in the mind of Kaushik Reddy.

In the recent past Kaushik Reddy in a function had met the TRS Working President and IT Minister KT Rama Rao and before that in the Eatala episode Kaushik Reddy had criticized only Eatala and not the TRS. These two facts gave birth to speculations that Kaushik Reddy might be joining the TRS. Though Kaushik Reddy cried foul against the people giving birth to such speculations, yet observers felt that there might be some meat in the speculation as the TRS had reportedly decided to take Kaushik Reddy into their fold.

## MLA rubbishes allegations by TDP leaders as 'baseless'

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

YSRCP's Mangalagiri legislator A Ramakrishna Reddy has said that TDP leaders should note that he was an employee in the Ramky group's firm in 2006. He said he was not involved in any corrupt activities in his political career. So, TDP leaders should comment only after gathering facts with proof, he said, while addressing media persons here on Sunday.

The MLA said that TDP could not win in the Mangalagiri constituency despite all efforts and it would stay like that in the near future too. He said that considering he had won as

MLA for the second consecutive time, more responsibility lay on his shoulders. He was committed to the development of the constituency. He said that he did not indulge in corruption in his entire political career. The TDP leaders were throwing mud with political and personal vengeance.

TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh should check their party leaders the basis on which allegations should be made against others. He said that the company went for public issue in 2006. He asked the TDP leaders to show a single transaction in the company in his name.

## Centre to take over all disputed inter...

*Continued from page 1*

Between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh there is dispute over the sharing of Krishna water from Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects. There is dispute between Andhra Pradesh and Odisha

on the Vamshadhara Project. There are disputes among Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and Puducherry over the sharing of Cauvery water. There are disputes among Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and Chhattisgarh on the Polavaram project.

Hence, the Union government is mulling the takeover the maintenance and operation of all projects involving interstate dispute. The Centre's idea is to release water from various projects as per the requirements of states concerned. There are water disputes

among Gujarat and Maharashtra, Punjab, Haryana and other states as well.

All told, a majority of the states, including Telangana, are likely to oppose the central government's move with regard to the irrigation projects involving disputes.

## Komatireddy says Revanth...

*Continued from page 1*

"Why should I change my political party? I have no thoughts of changing my party", he said.

He opined that there were no efficient leaders in TS of the caliber of former chief ministers Marri Channa Reddy and YS Rajasekhar Reddy in the state. He suggested that the party's present leaders should concentrate on development.

Komatireddy said that Kishan Reddy was non-controversial and a soft person. "We worked for 15 years as colleagues in the Assembly. Today, Kishan Reddy achieved the Union Ministry position. Kishan Reddy is the only leader who got a place in the Union Cabinet from the two Telugu states", he observed. He said that he had requested Kishan Reddy to extend his cooperation in completing pending issues and take the same to the notice of Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## AP CID to probe 'irregularities'...

*Continued from page 1*

In the project, which was meant to provide Internet and telephone services to all households, costs were inflated by at least Rs 700 crore, the Cabinet Sub-Committee, headed by Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath found out.

Besides, a person with fake certificates was allegedly appointed as head of the project.

Also, inferior quality Set Top Boxes were purchased from different companies, sidestepping the lowest bidder (a South Korean firm) that came forward to supply high-end STBs at a lower price, it

said. "This alone cost hundreds of crores of Rupees to the exchequer while the project remained unaccomplished," the Cabinet Sub-Committee pointed out.

It said that various lapses and favoritism were exhibited by the concerned in awarding contracts to the ineligible and in favour of the contractor who was not the lowest bidder.

"Tender conditions were relaxed to facilitate the award of work to Tera Software Ltd., though the Central Public Sector Enterprise, Telecommunications Consultants India, emerged as the lowest bidder.

## Babu rules out Brahmani...

*Continued from page 1*

Balakrishna was an MLA in AP. If he was given the party reins in Telangana, it would send wrong signals to people. The TDP should not be criticised like Sharmila's outfit. If they wanted to serve the party, it was up to them, Babu said.

"When I asked you (party leaders) to take the reins of the party into your hands and strengthen the party, you are in turn advising me to hand over the reins to my family members," he observed.

Babu revealed his plans to undertake tours in Telangana to save the party, which has weakened in the state. Babu, who spoke to TDP seniors from Telangana via Zoom on Sunday, ruled out the chances of his daughter-in-law taking

a plunge into politics. She was busy with her family responsibilities. Similarly, her father Nandamuri Balakrishna would not enter Telangana politics, Babu said.

Babu said that he would undertake padayatra or bus yatra. The TDP was born on the soil of Telangana. Therefore, the situation of deserting the party in TS did not arise, he said. Party leaders reportedly advised the former CM to undertake bus yatra, covering all constituencies. In AP, the TDP was able to implement programmes. So, there would be no other alternative to YSRCP, except TDP, Babu said. For creating a similar situation in Telangana, the TDP leaders should work hard. There was no need to look towards him for everything, he said.

## India evacuates diplomats, security...

*Continued from page 1*

On Tuesday, the Indian embassy in Kabul said there was no plan to close the embassy and the consulates in Kandahar and Mazar-e-Sharif.

Two days back, the Ministry of External said India was carefully monitor-

ing the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan and its implications on the safety and security of Indian nationals.

"Our response will be calibrated accordingly," External Affairs Ministry Spokesperson Arindam Bagchi said at a media briefing on Thursday.

## A month into launch, glitches still mar new I-T portal...

*Continued from page 1*

The I-T department said presently, users are reporting some issues related to non-availability of Income Tax Return 3, 5, 6 and 7 and rectification functionality, issues in ITR filing, e-verification or login to the portal in certain cases or technical issues in filing of certain statutory forms.

"The Department is continuously engaged with Infosys to expedite the resolution of any pending issues and to make available all balance functionalities at the earliest. The Department is also taking corrective measures based on feedback from taxpayers, tax professionals and representatives of ICAI to provide taxpayers with a

smooth e-filing experience," the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) said.

Senior officials in the Finance Ministry are having meetings and feedback sessions with team members from Infosys and external stakeholders such as ICAI on a regular basis.

In response to queries on the glitches on I-T portal, Infosys said, We're in our silent period. Clarity on the income tax matter was provided at our recently concluded AGM. Infosys in 2019 was awarded a contract to develop the next-generation income tax filing system to reduce processing time for returns from 63 days to one day and expedite refunds.

BDO India Partner (Tax & Regulatory Services) Amit Ganatra said after the meeting of the Finance Minister with the Infosys team on June 22, it appeared that all the pending issues would get resolved quickly. While there has been improvement in the functioning of the site thereafter, it seems that the technology-related challenges still persist and it may take some more time to get the site up and running completely.

The e-proceedings tab is not fully functional, online rectification option is not available, JSON utility for filing tax returns in ITR 5, 6 and 7 is still not available and unlike the earlier website there is no tab for the VsV scheme for providing comprehensive information and

no update of the pending actions tab, these are some of the functionalities amongst others that remain to be addressed in the new tax portal, Ganatra added.

Dhruva Advisors LLP Partner Sandeep Bhalla said Form 15CA/CB utility (relating to remittances) is still awaited. While physical filing of the same is permitted, it is a time-consuming process. This is a time when companies declare and pay dividends and physically filing Form 15CA/CB for remittance to each shareholder can be a task.

"Also, the DSC is now required to be registered on the personal e-filing account of the authorized signatory. In the case of foreign compa-

nies having non-resident authorized signatories not having a PAN in India, it is unclear as to how this procedure will work. In fact, for such foreign companies, an error is being encountered even at the time of attempting to login onto the e-filing portal," Bhalla added.

Industry chamber PHDCCI's Direct Taxes Committee Chairman Mukul Bagla said the new income tax portal is expected to improve efficiency in tax return filing alongwith general tax administration. However, since the portal has major glitches even till date, the income tax work of taxpayers and tax professionals is seriously hampered.

## KTR extends financial aid to distressed family

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao extended financial support to the family of a 17-month-old boy who underwent a major heart surgery recently.

Kadari Vishwa, a native of Karimnagar town, underwent heart surgery two months ago. The helpless family members, who spent large amount of money on the surgery, approached the government for help.

The boy's mother, Anusha, appealed to Rama Rao for help through a tweet tagging the Minister on July 10. Responding immediately, Rama Rao called up BC

Welfare and Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar and instructed him to help the boy.

Based on Rama Rao's instructions, Kamalakar on Sunday handed over Rs 10,000 to Anusha at his camp office here. The Minister also assured of all help in the further treatment of Vishwa besides providing Chief Minister's Relief Fund. He also instructed the district officials to help the boy's family every month.

Kamalakar said Rama Rao, who was just a tweet away, was helping the needy people always by alerting the government machinery. The State government was always working for the welfare of the poor.

## Thirteen injured in group clash

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Thirteen persons sustained injuries when two groups clashed at Barkas following an argument over sitting on chabutra in the night.

According to the police, a group of persons including one Nawaz were sitting in front of the house of Salman Bamasood late in the night. On noticing this, Salman objected to their presence and reportedly abused using vulgar words to them. "Later Salman and his relatives attacked Nawaz and others using sticks. On noticing it, relatives and friends of Nawaz and others rushed to the spot and attacked Salman and others," said K N Prasad Varma, SHO Chandrayangutta.

## Providing better prices, timely credit to farmers...

*Continued from page 1*

Referring to the growing urban-rural divide, Naidu said that villages should not be seen as mere "factories supplying food to the cities".

In order to achieve Mahatma Gandhi's dream of 'Gram Swarajya', he called for a renewed national effort through collaboration of civic society, agriculturalists, agronomists, students and researchers to make agriculture profitable and villages thriving economic hubs.

He wanted people to return to their roots and work with fellow villagers on solving long-standing problems.

With rising costs of inputs in agriculture, Naidu suggested that natural and organic farming offers great potential in cutting down costs and generating a steady income for farmers.

Increasing demand for organic products provide an opportunity to farmers to take up natural farming in a big way, he said. Naidu also wanted farmers to diversify into allied sectors like poultry, dairy farming, fisheries, horticulture, aquaculture and pisciculture to ensure regular income.

On the role of youth, Naidu called for greater participation of the new generation in agriculture - as farmers, researchers, scientists and entrepreneurs.

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# Folk fete Bonalu begins with gaiety

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bonalu, the traditional folk festival in Telangana, began on Sunday with gaiety adhering to Covid protocol.

The traditional festivities began at the Jagadambika Temple on Golconda Fort here. The religious procession started from Langar Houz to the temple near Bala Hissar on top of the historic fort. The three-kilometre procession will reach the temple late in the evening.

Incessant rains since morning impacted the celebrations as the authorities had a tough time controlling the crowds through narrow pathways around the fort. Women queued up at temples to offer Bonalu, which consists of cooked rice, jaggery, curd and turmeric water, carried in steel and clay pots on their heads. The devotees believe that the annual festival will ward off evil and usher in peace.

Public events during Bonalu were cancelled last year in view of the Covid pandemic. However, with the lifting of restrictions last month, the government allowed people's participation this time.



This year the festivities will be organised with mass gatherings and traditional procession. The organizers have been directed to ensure adherence to Covid-19 protocol, including wearing of masks and social distancing. Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav said the temple committees were briefed on the precautions to be taken during the festival.

Ashada Bonalu is a festival held in the month of Ashada, according to the Hindu calendar, celebrating Goddess Mahankali. Devotees, especially women make offerings in the form of food to goddess Mahankali in specially decorated pots. During the nearly month-long festival, people also hold 'rangam' or forecasting the future, organise processions and cultural events.

After the formation of Telangana State in 2014, the TRS had declared Bonalu as the state festival. The festivities reflect Telangana culture with performances by the artistes. This year, the government has allocated Rs 15 crore for the celebrations. The money was spent to spruce up the temples for the celebrations and for making all necessary arrangements for the devotees.

# Monsoon active over state, rains lash several districts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With a low pressure area formed in Bay of Bengal, southwest monsoon has become active over Telangana as several districts received heavy rains since Sunday morning.

Parts of Hyderabad and surrounding districts witnessed downpour since morning affecting normal life.

Vehicular traffic was thrown out of gear in some parts of Telangana as roads were flooded with rain water. Hyderabad Traffic police urged pedestrians and cautioned motorists to drive carefully. The police also advised pedestrians not to stand under trees or near electric poles.

Very heavy rainfall occurred at isolated places in Nirmal and Nagar Kurnool districts and heavy rainfall occurred at a few places in Badraddi Kothagudem, Karimnagar districts and at isolated places in Siddipet, Wanaparthy, Mahabubabad and Jangulamba Gadwal districts of Telangana.

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has warned



that heavy to very heavy rains are likely to occur at isolated places in Nirmal, Nizamabad, Rajanna Sircilla, Bhadraddi Kothagudem, Jangaon and Siddipet on Sunday and Monday.

The IMD has forecast heavy rains in Adilabad, Kumaram Bheem, Asifabad, Mancherial, Jagtial, Karimnagar, Peddapally, Jayashankar, Bhupalapally, Mulugu, Warangal (rural), Warangal (urban), Vikarabad, Mahabubnagar districts. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning is likely to occur at isolated places in many districts of Telangana.

It issued a red warning for some districts between 8:30 a.m. on July 12 and 8:30 p.m.

on July 13. Heavy rains at a few places and very heavy rains with extremely heavy rains likely to occur at isolated places in Nirmal, Nizamabad, Mahabubabad, Warangal (rural), Warangal (urban), Jangaon, Mahabubabad and Yadadri Bhuvanagiri.

The IMD warned of flooding/ waterlogging in many parts of low-lying areas and disruption of rail/road transport in few areas.

According to Hyderabad Meteorological Centre, Khanapur in Nirmal district recorded highest rainfall of 13 cm. Nagar Kurnool recorded 12 cm rainfall, Burgampadu and Aswapuram in Bhadraddi Kothagudem district 10 cm each.



## PHYSICAL FITNESS

Warangal Police Commissioner Dr Tarun Joshi takes part in bicycle rally as a chief guest. The rally was conducted by the Tri City Cycling Group in Warangal on Sunday, to create awareness on health and environment.

## OGH NEW BUILDING Saving lives more important than preserving heritage: AIMIM chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Reiterating the demand for construction of new building of the Osmania General Hospital, Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi on Sunday said that saving lives is more important than saving heritage.

"If you want to save heritage, save it, but if you want to save lives, and save money, we need a new building for Osmania Hospital," he said after inaugurating the 23-bed Covid ward at the Indo-US Hospital at Malakpet here.

During a visit to the Osmania Hospital last month, the MP demanded that the state government build a new hospital at a cost of Rs 1,000 crore. "If you want to keep the building, keep it. If you want to demolish it, do so," he said.

Heritage activists, who have been urging the government to protect the heritage structure, had taken exception to the

## OGH NEW BUILDING



MP's remarks.

Owaisi, however, defended his stand, saying the condition of the Osmania Hospital is deteriorating with every passing day. He said the Osmania Hospital needs a built-up area of 20 lakh square feet.

The AIMIM chief said that people criticising his party for supporting the Osmania Hospital's new building are neither aware of the situation at the hospital nor have ever

visited it for treatment.

The MP said when the Chief Minister can demolish the Warangal Jail and build a hospital there, why can't he build a new building for the Osmania Hospital Medical College, which is the oldest medical college in the country and has given countless doctors in different disciplines.

Designed by Vincent Esch, the Osmania Hospital building on the banks of Musi River was completed in 1925.

Owaisi pointed out that the shortage of beds and ventilators led to loss of many lives during the second wave. "Covid treatment is expensive. And hospitals like these can help patients save their hard earned money during times of crises," he said.

He assured cooperation to the Sahayata Trust-run Indo-US Hospital to further improve healthcare infrastructure and Covid treatment facilities with the help of his MP fund.

## Cyb cops: Maintain your social media account in privacy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jagruthi Kalabrandam of Cyberabad Police has organised a training programme to spread awareness on SHE Teams, social media frauds, legal issues, drug abuse and others at Srinivasa Nagar Colony in the limits of Narsing Police Station on Sunday.

Explaining that the details of the complainants would be on privacy, the police officials have shared the details of SHE Teams to contact them.

They have given the examples of frauds and exploitation on social media, especially on women.

Reiterating that accepting friend requests on social media from unknown persons would land people in trouble, the police officials asked the citizens, especially women to maintain their social media accounts in privacy mode.

## Adapt to tech, Hyderabad CP tells new SHOs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad Anjani Kumar said that the usage of technology in the world of crime is throwing challenges to the police. To address the issue, the police officials should update and adapt to technology and solve the cases.

Addressing at the training session organised for 23 newly-posted SHOs of Hyderabad on Sunday, Anjani Kumar explained about the performance and rankings of Police Stations and motivated the officers to perform their duties effectively by using technology. Focusing on the need for adoption of technology, the CP has given examples of police operations which were failed due to the lack of technology and motivated the new SHOs to not to repeat such mistakes.

## Doc from UP airlifted to Hyd for lung transplant

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A female resident doctor of the Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences, Lucknow was Sunday airlifted to the KIMS Hospital Secunderabad here for lung transplant.

Dr Sharda Suman, a post-graduate resident at Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences' Gynaecology Department, had contracted Covid-19 on April 14. She was 32 weeks pregnant then. When her health condition deteriorated, she was put on a ventilator and emergency C-section surgery was done on May 1 to save the child.

After the delivery, she was put on ECMO support but her condition didn't improve. Ram Manohar Lohia Institute of Medical Sciences Director Dr Sonia Nityanand constituted a 3-member committee

which recommended that she should undergo a lung transplant.

As her family was not in a financial position to afford the process, Dr Nityanand personally met Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and explained the situation. He immediately sanctioned Rs 1.50 crore required for the procedure.

After consulting the hospitals in Hyderabad and Chennai, they finally decided to undergo the transplant procedure at KIMS Hospitals, where already several transplants were done with utmost success.

Sharda Suman was shifted to Hyderabad through an air ambulance.

A green corridor was formed with the help of Hyderabad police to bring the patient to the hospital from airport without any delay.

## 2,723 cases settled at Lok Adalat

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

A total of 2,723 cases were settled at the National Lok Adalat held at Rachakonda.

The High Court and Legal Service Authority had ordered legal services functionaries to convene the National Lok Adalat. As per the schedule, the event was held by courts in Ranga Reddy and Nalgonda, during which, settlements were worked out between parties in 2,723 cases.

## Hyderabad zoo abuzz with animal lovers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After remaining closed for nearly 70 days due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, the Nehru Zoological Park opened its doors for visitors on Sunday.

It being a weekend, several families came to the park and according to the zoo officials, a total of 2,536 animal lovers visited the park today. The zoo authorities took all the Covid-19 precautions to ensure the visitors' and staff safety. All the visitors were checked with thermal scanning before entering in the zoo and wearing face mask in the park's premises is



mandatory. The officials also made markings in front of the booking counter for maintaining

social distancing. Inside the zoo as well, the officials have taken all the Covid precautionary measures and nearly 40

sanitiser dispensers have been placed at different locations. All the washrooms were also sanitised properly and the soap dispensers have been placed.

One of the biggest attraction at the zoo, especially among the kids, the battery operated Toy Train also started functioning from Sunday. To ensure the safety of those boarding, the train facility was started with only 50 per cent occupancy.

Sign boards on Covid-19 precautions were placed at different locations for the visitors along with penalties to be imposed upon violation of the pandemic norms.

## Elderly couple spends pension funds to fill potholes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the intention of saving lives, an elderly couple from Hyderabad has been filling potholes of the roads of the city for the last 11 years.

The couple has been using money from their own pockets so that people can be saved from accidents that happen due to potholes.

Gangadhar Tilak Katnam, a 73-year-old man from Hyderabad, is popularly known as the 'Road Doctor'. He, along with his wife, Venkateshwari Katnam, 64, set out on to roads in a car, or what they call it as a 'Pothole Ambulance' and fill up potholes where ever they find one. Gangadhar Tilak Katnam said, "After witnessing several accidents on the roads because of



potholes I decided to do something about the issue and to find a solution to it. "Initially, I tried to complain

about the issue with the police and the Municipality officials but none of it was of any use. That is when I have decided to

fill these potholes by myself," he added. Tilak worked as an employee with the India Railways for

nearly about 35 years. After his retirement Tilak came to Hyderabad to work as a software design engineer in a software company. He has been filling up potholes across the city ever since.

With zeal to make roads free of potholes, he quit his job as a software design engineer within a year and has been, since then, completely dedicated to filling the potholes of the city.

When asked about the finances, Gangadhar said, "I am managing the finances of this initiative from the pension that I receive."

"All the material that is required for the task is bought using money from my pension. For the last 11 years, I was able to fill nearly about 2,030 potholes in and across the city and

spent about Rs. 40 lakh on it" he added.

He further said that looking at his works, the government officials have also stepped forward to help him and have provided him with the required material.

He also mentioned that he runs an organisation called 'Sramadhan' with an aim to extend his work. "I would never ask anyone for funds/donations. People would step-in voluntarily step to help in filling the potholes," he said.

Mentioning that increasing population is a burden only until everyone steps out to help, he said, "Many problems can be solved very easily if everyone starts helping the other." Lastly, he said, "Road by road, we make a difference."

## Police detain two cyber criminals under PD Act

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of an ongoing drive against repeat offenders, the Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar on Sunday invoked the Preventive Detention (PD) Act against two offenders for their alleged involvement in cyber fraud. The two accused were currently detained at the Central Prison, Cherlapalli, in the Medchal Malkajgiri district.

The accused Kamalkant Vidyarthi, 23, and Uttkarsh Singh, 21, created fake web-

sites of reputed companies and generated Google and Facebook advertisements for the same. They then assured the people who contacted them that they would aid in providing loans, tower installation and franchise of companies to the public. This was easily done due to Uttkarsh Singh's work experience as a web developer for a company called Digital Chanakya. The excuse offered to the victims was that the money and documents were required for registration and processing fees.

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**SHORT TENDER NOTICE**

Tender Notice No. 02/2021-22 of EEC&M/Adilabad & Suryapet/Adilabad, Dt. 12.07.2021

Tenders are invited by the under signed for the following works:

1. Tender Specification No. 02/2021-22 - Providing of Furniture, Bonwell, Water supply arrangements to the store yard and Electrification works to the newly formed District stores, Suryapet District.
2. Tender Specification No. 03/2021-22 - Clearing, levelling and raising of compound wall around the newly formed outdoor store at Suryapet Circle, Suryapet District.
3. Tender Specification No. 04/2021-22 - Providing of Main Cais, Weighing machine shed and rising of the compound wall side to the Division Office at newly formed District Stores, Suryapet District.
4. Tender Specification No. 05/2021-22 - Raising of Compound wall and construction of wall to separate the ERO from newly formed District Stores at Suryapet Circle, Suryapet District.
5. Tender Specification No. 06/2021-22 - Construction of Wall to raise the height of Existing compound wall around the indoor store of newly formed District Stores at Suryapet Circle, Suryapet District.

For the detailed specifications, eligibility criteria and other terms and conditions etc may be downloaded from the web site www.southpower.com. For further details, please contact: EEC&M/Adilabad & Suryapet/ISSP/POO, Hyderabad. Last date for sale of tender is 21.07.2021 and tender opening date on 22.07.2021. Phone No: 0331019371

R.O. No. 13724-PP&L/AD/1/2021-22 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER/CIVIL,ADILABAD/ISSP/POO

# Heavy rain lashes Warangal, low-lying areas inundated

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Heavy rain lashed in parts of Warangal town and many colonies were inundated with rainwater on Sunday. SBH Colony, Excise Colony, Sainagar Colony and Waddepally areas flooded with rainwater in Hanamkonda. Heavy rain created havoc in the low-lying areas in Warangal district.

Urban Collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanth and Mayor Sudharani have extensively toured the flood-hit areas on Sunday. Government Chief Whip Dasyam Vinay Bhaskar directed the officials to take measures on war-footing to prevent losses due to incessant rains.

He inspected the low-lying areas in Ambedkar Nagar behind the Asian Mall and arranged rehabilitation for the affected people at Saibaba temple. He ordered the officials to remove the garbage in the drains to ensure the free flow of water.

Collector Rajiv Gandhi Hanumanth said a control room was set up with Toll-free Nos 1800 425 1980, 97019 99645 and WhatsApp No:



79971 00300 to provide immediate relief to the people in the flooded areas. The control room will function 24/7 to help people in trouble. He said about 12 JCBs and 4 bulldozers were kept ready and directed the officials to press them into service wherever they are required.

He said all precautions are taken up to avoid untoward incidents causing the loss of lives of the people or to the properties.

Mayor Gundu Sudharani appealed to the people to stay safe and alert and asked the



officials to take relief measures in the event of flooding of areas. She directed the municipal corporation officials to clear all the drains to flow flood water freely.

# BJP chief Bandi Sanjay donates medical equipment worth Rs 3 cr to Govt hospitals

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

On the occasion of his birthday, BJP state president and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar has proved his magnanimity by donating ambulances and medical equipment to various hospitals in the district.

Bandi Sanjay on Sunday donated medical equipment worth Rs 3 crore to several government hospitals on the occasion of his birthday. The medical equipment includes four ambulances, ultrasound scanning machines, ventilators, CPAP machines, anaesthesia, CTG, laparoscopic, fetal doppler, biochemistry and Covid profile machines.

The ambulances were donated to Vemulawada, Sirsilla and Huzarabad government hospitals along with district GGH in the limits of Karimnagar Parliament constituency. All the equipment available in an ICU was made available in the ambulances. He donated fetal dopplers, biochemistry, Covid profile syringe, imphen pumps, syringe pumps, CPAP, hys-



teroscropy with hydro-jet machine and ventilators. Bandi Sanjay said oxygen concentrators and medical oxygen cylinders are kept ready at the MP's office with a view that no one should suffer due to the lack of oxygen shortage with Covid.

They will be supplied free of cost to those who required them. All the remaining government hospitals in the parliament constituency limits will also be given ambulances in the next two months, he added.

The BJP president also kick-started a mega programme to

of party workers and people thronged Karimnagar and greeted Bandi Sanjay on the eve of his birthday on Sunday. Thanking everyone who greeted him, Bandi Sanjay said he has taken up service activities on his birthday as per the call given by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Earlier, the BJP chief visited the Mahashakti temple along with his family members and offered special prayers. He planted saplings along with BJP corporators at the district headquarters.

Former MLAs Enugu Ravinder Reddy, Kuna Srisailem Gowd, Bodige Sobha and Kondeti Sridhar, ZP former chairman Tula Uma, BJP state leader Kollu Madhavi, Sangappa, Umarani, NV Subhash, BJYM state vice-president Asish Gowd, State BJP social media convener Venkataramana, Lankala Deepak Reddy and others were among those who greeted Bandi Sanjay on the occasion. The BJP leaders conducted blood donation camps on the eve of Bandi Sanjay's birthday celebrations.



## Medaram Trust Board chairman dies of heart attack

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Medaram Trust Board Chairman Alam Ramamurthy died of a heart attack on Sunday. Minister for Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and RWS Errabelli Dayakar Rao expressed shock over the death of Ramamurthy.

He recalled his services for Medaram and extended his deep sympathies to Ramamurthy. He prayed to the Lord that his soul may rest in peace.

# Cordon & search operations only for people's safety: DCP Udaykumar

PNS ■ PEDDAPELLY

The police personnel conducted cordon and search operations under the leadership of DCP Udaykumar Reddy and ACP Akhil Mahajan at Morrighuda and Purvanaik Thanda in the limits of Jannaram police station of Manchiryal district on Sunday.

Two Circle inspectors, eight SIs, 60 constables and special party staff participated in the cordon and search operations. The police divided into teams and searched every household.

DCP Udaykumar told people during the interaction that the cordon and search operations are carried out for the safety and security of the people and the police would know the issues being faced by the people, apart from sensing any strangers or criminals taking shelter. The aim of the cordon



and search operation was to ensure crime-free villages.

It is also to ensure people that they could live peacefully without any insecure feeling and give assurance that police are with them to ensure their security, the DCP said.

Udaykumar said people should arrange CC cameras in

every village as crime control and detection will be easier and people could dial '100' in case of emergency or any help to pass on information. The police detected illegal brewing of gudumba at the house of Badhavath Ramulu during the searches. The police also seized liquid jaggery to be used in the

Gudumba making in the houses of Badavath Lakshman and Badavath Ramu. Two auto-rickshaws and 54 motorcycles without valid papers were seized.

The DCP said about 15 families are involved in the making of Gudumba and appealed to the people to stop such brewing as it is against the government policy. Otherwise, legal action will be initiated against the errant people, he added.

He said the motor vehicles are found without valid registration or number plates and action will be initiated if they drive vehicles without a proper license. He advised the people not to buy used vehicles without proper documents.

Laksettypet CI Narayana Nayak, Jannaram SI Adi and several women constables participated in the search operations.

## Pawan Kalyan wishes speedy recovery of VH

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jana Sena Chief Pawan Kalyan on Sunday wished the speedy recovery of Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao, who has been suffering from kidney related problems. In a statement, he said that he has been enquiring about the health condition of VH since he joined Apollo Hospital and could not visit VH in the hospital in view of prevailed Covid conditions.

Pawan Kalyan said that he is praying to God for early come back of VH with good health and do political service to the people. VH has waged fight wherever there is a problem and his fighting spirit is an inspiration to all leaders, he added.

On the other hand, the Amberpet Congress Committee conducted Mahachandi Yagam in Amberpet Mahankali temple. The Yagam started on Saturday and ended on Sunday with Purnahuti and special puja wishing the speedy recovery of VH's health.



# Plantation alone not Pattana Pragathi: CPM

PNS ■ PEDDAPELLY

CPM leader Y Yakaiah has alleged that the state government was wasting crores of money in the name of Pattana Pragathi and it was just planting saplings in the name of the programme.

CPM leader Y Yakaiah and other party leaders toured Sundaraiah Nagar in Ramagundam on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, he said crores of rupees sanctioned for Ramagundam corporation, but there are no proper roads and the drainage system is very poor. The rainwater is flowing into the residential colonies as there is no proper drainage system. Water is stagnating in the middle of the colonies, causing a stink and people are unable to stay in houses. He said though it

was brought to the notice of the Ramagundam municipal corporation officials on several occasions, there was no proper response. Where the government spent crores of rupees when the issues are still unresolved, he asked.

What is Pattana Pragathi? Mere planting of saplings is not Pattana Pragathi, he asked and said there should not be any issues pertaining to roads, drainage and drinking water. Exploiting public money is not Pattana Pragathi. The CPM leader said the corporation should resolve all the issues in Sundaraiah Nagar or else the CPM will organize agitation.

District CPM committee members Velpula Kumara Swamy, leaders V Nagamani, Sammakka, Rama, Raja Komaraiah, Kishan and others were present.

# NTPC Mahila Samithi helps children with spl needs

PNS ■ PEDDAPELLY

In a bid to bring smiles to the faces of the children with special needs, NTPC of Ramagundam in association with Deepthi Mahila Samithi (DMS) organized the distribution of school bags and blankets for children on Sunday.

As part of its transforming lives and generating smiles through its proactive initiatives,

NTPC and Deepthi Mahila Samithi gave away bags, stationery and bedsheet to 25 children with special needs from 'Network of person with disability organization', an NGO from Mancheril which is actively supporting and nurturing children who are in need of care and protection.



Dakshin Deepanjali Mahila Samithi president Santosh Madan, SRHQ and Arpita Mahila Samithi WR-II along with DMS president Usha Kumar distributed the goods. Santosh Madan interacted with the children and their

parents and thanked the Network of Person with disability organisation' for their noble work. She also asked all to come forward in support of such initiatives. Office bearers from DMS and CSR dept officials were present.

# CM KCR to address Podu land issue soon: ZP chief

PNS ■ MULUGU

Zilla Parishad Chairman Kusuma Jagadishwar has assured that farmers of Podu will get pattas as soon as possible. Jagadeeshwar has been on a whirlwind tour in Tadvai mandal on Sunday and participated in several programmes.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that Podu farmers will hear good news soon from Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrasekhar Rao with regard to pattas for podu lands. Chief Minister KCR will soon inaugurate the Sankam Barrage which was built at Rs 1800 crore in Mulugu district.

Participating as a chief guest at a gram saba organized by the sarpanch Siddaboina Sammakka in Chennaboipalli, he said he

brought to the attention of the locals the problem of fallow lands and also internal roads in the village.

Responding to this, he said that he had discussed the land issues with Mulugu district DAFO Pradeep Shetty along with Minister Satyavathi Rathod at the previous Palle Pragati programme. DFO Pradeep Shetty replied that he had made it clear that new fallow lands would be encouraged and old fallow lands should be ignored. Therefore, the local forest department officials advised the Podu farmers to bring it to their notice if the old Podu lands were excavated.

Similarly, the sarpanch and villagers told him that there was a problem with internal roads in Chennaboipalli village and the ZP chairman assured them that funds would be sanctioned soon.

# Kodandaram: TJS will contest Huzurabad by-poll

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) Chief Prof M Kodandaram has made it clear that their party will contest not only in the Huzurabad by-poll but also all elections from now onwards. He said that they will strengthen the party at the constituency level as it is confined to the district level till now.

Speaking to the media on Sunday at TJS head office, Kodandaram said that the party meeting held on Saturday decided to launch agitations on public issues. "We will implement our action plan in 25 constituencies immediately", he said. He said that some people in collusion with the ruling TRS party are spreading false information about TJS stating that it is going to join hands with BJP. Presently, they

are spreading misinformation stating that TJS will merge with the Congress party, he said.

The TJS chief alleged that the ruling TRS party is trying to win the Huzurabad by-election with money power. The election will be held on the issue of earning money and no internal freedom in TRS, he said.

Kodandaram said that the TJS will conduct a party plenary at the end of August. He questioned Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who is claiming that his government gave one lakh jobs, he should answer where they have given them. The unemployed youth are still committing suicide due to the lack of jobs. All the suicides of the unemployed youth are the government's murders only, he alleged and said how long these suicides will continue in the separate Telangana state.

# Karimnagar's Sakhi Centre offers hope for distressed women

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Apart from rescuing women in deep distress after being victimised with sexual harassment, women trafficking, child marriages and domestic violence, a Karimnagar-based Sakhi Centre is striving to prepare women self-reliant and lead a courageous life after they faced mental trauma.

On the occasion of 'Malala Day', the birthday of Malala Yousafzai on Monday, who fought for the rights of girls' education, 'The Pioneer' throws light on the Sakhi Centre, which is extending support to the distressed women by providing them medical and legal services.

The 16-member team at Sakhi Centre with its social workers, a lawyer, paramedical and IT staff, a police facilitation officer, security guards and



volunteers, works round-the-clock.

The helpline '181' of Sakhi centre is always open to receive the calls of the women, girl children and senior citizens in distress and provide them with care and support. The centre provides the women approaching them with shelter and food for 10 to 15 days. It also provides counselling to bring them

out of the distress and make them emotionally strong. Medical assistance is also given in case the victims are wounded or abused. The Centre assists them to help to file cases against domestic violence, without the women facing the humiliation of going to the



police station. The team approaches the jurisdiction of the victim and with a zero FIR, files case and sees to it that justice is ensured to the women. The legal advisor of the Sakhi Centre will extend the necessary legal support.

"Our Sakhi Centre has resolved 1,247 cases till now

out of total 1,569 cases we received. Among them 1,205 are of domestic violence, four rape cases, five sexual harassment cases, two women trafficking, eight sexual abuse, 15 child marriage, 29 missing cases, 113 cheating, cyber crime cases, one dowry harassment case and 187 are the issues related to senior citizens. We strive towards providing

justice in short period of time. As a part of our future projects, we are working towards designing programmes for the empowerment of women by identifying the talent in them, training them in the field they are already in and making them self-reliant", says Laxmi, Administrator of the Sakhi Centre district unit.

"After this pandemic, we have plans to extend our services by providing counselling to high school students, college students in handling the day-to-day issues of their lives", says Sharada, the District Welfare Officer.

"I am leading a happy life now, after obtaining support from Sakhi. We hope the unit continues to extend its services and fills happiness in the lives of many women like me, says a survivor of domestic violence from Malkapur in Karimnagar.

INDIA CORNER

### 3 suspected terrorists arrested from south Kolkata: Police



The three suspected terrorists were nabbed following a tip-off, a senior police officer said. "We are investigating the matter and interrogating them. It is at a very initial stage," the officer told PTI.

Three suspected terrorists of Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) were arrested from south Kolkata's Haridevpur area on Sunday afternoon, police said. The arrests were made by the Kolkata Police's Special Task Force (STF), they said. The three suspected JMB terrorists were living in a rented accommodation for a few months in the middle-class locality, raising concern among

### Gehlot asks people not to become careless, follow Covid-appropriate behaviour



and reopened multiplexes and outdoor activities with certain restrictions in view of the constant decrease in the Covid positive cases. There were 750 Covid active cases in the state on Saturday.

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Sunday warned people that a third wave of coronavirus may strike if they become careless and asked them to take all precautions and follow Covid-appropriate behaviour. "If we are negligent, then like other countries, there may be a third wave. There should be no need of taking strict steps like lockdown again. This will be possible only with the cooperation of everybody," he tweeted. He said Covid positive cases have reduced due to which many relaxations have been given in the state. "But remember, although corona has reduced but it is not gone yet, so do not be careless at all. Follow the corona protocol, wear a mask and maintain social distancing," he said. The state government on Sunday withdrew curfew

### India's first cryptogamic garden opens in Dehradun



India's first cryptogamic garden housing nearly 50 species of lichens, ferns and fungi was inaugurated in Uttarakhand's Dehradun district on Sunday. Located in the district's Chakrata town, the garden was inaugurated by social activist Anoop Nautiyal. Around 50 species have been grown in the garden at Deoban in Chakrata at a commanding height of 9,000 ft. Chief Conservator of Forest (research) Sanjiv Chaturvedi said. "We chose to locate the garden, which is spread over three acres, at Deoban because of its low pollution levels and moist conditions which are conducive for the growth of these species," he said. Deoban has pristine majestic forests of Deodar and Oak which create a natural habitat for cryptogamic species, he added. Cryptogamae means "hidden reproduction" referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are produced.

the garden, which is spread over three acres, at Deoban because of its low pollution levels and moist conditions which are conducive for the growth of these species," he said. Deoban has pristine majestic forests of Deodar and Oak which create a natural habitat for cryptogamic species, he added. Cryptogamae means "hidden reproduction" referring to the fact that no seed, no flowers are produced.

# Amit Shah lauds PM Modi's development-oriented approach

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi is probably the first leader to create systems ensuring continuation of development work even after he left the post, citing Modi's tenure as the chief minister of Gujarat.



Shah laid the foundation stone of projects worth Rs 244 crore in Ahmedabad and surrounding areas, which are part of his Gandhinagar Lok Sabha constituency, and hailed the development work started in Gujarat after Modi became the state's chief minister of the state. "After so much of experience in politics, I have seen many type of leaders. There are some who just allow things to happen at their pace and go to cut the ribbon. There are such leaders also who work hard to ensure best development takes place during their tenure," Shah said.

"But there are some others, probably Narendra bhai is the first such leader, who builds such mechanism that development continues even after they have left," he said addressing a gathering in Bopal area of the city. He said Gujarat has benefited a lot from the 14-year rule of Narendra Modi as the chief minister. "Systems and arrangements were made in those 14 years which ensure development work takes place even after he has left Gujarat," Shah said. The Union minister inaugurated a civic centre, a reading centre with a capacity of over 150 students in Bopal area, supply of drinking water to Ghuma, a community hall, party plot and various other

projects. He also inaugurated some projects of the Western Railway for redevelopment and increasing facilities at stations in the western part of Ahmedabad. "It is my endeavour to ensure development of the Gandhinagar Lok Sabha area and I thank all officials who have worked for the completion of these projects," Shah said. He said the government has started a massive work of providing a 'suraksha kavach' (protective shield) against the coronavirus by taking up the vaccination drive. "I am pleased to inform you that around 86 per cent of those aged above 45 and 32 per cent of people in the age group of 18 to 45 have been vaccinated in Ahmedabad. But, this is not enough," he said. The remaining 14 per cent in the 45 plus age group and 70 per cent youths (in the 18-44 age group) should get vaccinat-

ed and all should take their second doses also. "This will provide protection to all," he said. Shah said though there was a shortage of oxygen in the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic, Prime Minister Modi has taken up the task of setting up oxygen plants in hospitals and substantially augmented the production capacity of the life saving gas. He asked BJP workers to ensure everybody in their area is vaccinated. The BJP leader also advised party workers to fight vaccine hesitancy and spread the message that the medicine (against COVID-19) is safe. Shah also said that for daily wagers, the government has extended the free 5 kg food grain per person scheme till November. He asked BJP workers to spread awareness among people about the scheme and to ensure every eligible person gets free food grains.

## Zika virus outbreak causes major concern for Kerala

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM



Rising COVID-19 cases in Kerala, coupled with the recent outbreak of the Zika virus, is causing concern to the health authorities here as the southern state battles to bring down the fresh infections. After winning accolades for its "Kerala model" of combating the contagion about a year ago, the state is now seeing daily fresh cases between 12,000 to 15,000 with no end in sight to the 'prolonged surge', as some experts put it. The state had reported 14,087 fresh covid infections on Saturday and 109 deaths taking the total caseload to 30,39,029 and toll to 14,380. The active cases touched 1,13,115. Health Minister Veena George had recently said the virus numbers spiked due to certain unlock measures and that they were expected to go down. While on June 1 this year, Kerala reported 19,760 positive cases, there was a slight decline

for a week with 9,313 new cases being recorded on June 7. However, two days later it again shot up to 16,204. For over a month, the state has been reporting cases between 11,000 to 13,000 on a daily basis. Incidentally, India's first Covid-19 case emerged from the state in January 2020 when a third year medical student from Wuhuan, the epicentre of the virus in China, tested positive. Two other Wuhuan returnees from the state had also tested positive and all the three had subsequently recovered. According to experts, the steady rate of COVID infection in

Kerala would help the state to fight off the virus and ensure medical facilities are not overwhelmed, but the more it prolongs the more stressful it would be for doctors and healthcare workers. While the medical experts who spoke to P T I praised the Kerala government for its preventive measures which helped keep the infection rate from peaking drastically, some opined the administration's inability to enforce COVID appropriate behaviour after the unlock phase came into effect was one of the reasons that the numbers have not gone down.

## 'Coop movement in Maha won't be hit by new central ministry'

PNS ■ PUNE

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Sunday refuted reports which claimed that the newly-formed Ministry of Cooperation at the Centre may "hijack the cooperative movement" in Maharashtra. The concept is not new, but the Centre cannot interfere in the state's cooperative sector, Pawar told reporters in Baramati town here. "As per the Constitution, cooperative institutions registered in a state come under the (jurisdiction of that respective) state," he said. The Centre's newly-formed ministry is about multi-state cooperative institutions, the former Union minister said. "A state cannot control a cooperative institution regis-



tered in more than one state, which is called multi-state, and the central government has control over it," said Pawar, whose party shares power with the Shiv Sena and Congress in Maharashtra. He said taking a decision on such a multi-state cooperative institution comes under the central government's cooperation department.

"This is not a new decision as such. It was there when I was in the central government. But, unfortunately, the media is painting a different picture that the Centre's Ministry of Cooperation may hijack or end the cooperative movement in Maharashtra," he said. The central government recently carved out a new ministry for cooperation, which earlier was a small department in the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers Welfare. Union minister Amit Shah, who has been given the charge of the newly-created ministry, on Saturday said the government is determined to make cooperatives and all cooperative institutions more empowered.

## 4.4 magnitude earthquake hits Yavatmal

PNS ■ NANDED

An earthquake of 4.4 magnitude hit Maharashtra's Yavatmal district and neighbouring areas on Sunday, officials said. There was no report of any casualty or damage to property, they said. The earthquake was experienced at 8.33 am, with its epicentre at Sadhunagar in Yavatmal district, Dr Vipin Itankar, the collector of neighbouring Nanded district, told PTI while quoting data of the National Centre for Seismology.

## Raut: Stan Swamy's death in custody can't be justified

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday said the death of Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case accused Jesuit priest Stan Swamy in custody cannot be justified even if Maoists are "more dangerous than Kashmiri separatists". In his weekly column Rokhthok in the party mouthpiece 'Saamana', Raut wondered whether India's foundation was so weak that an 84-year-old man could wage a war against it, and said being critical of an incumbent government doesn't mean being against the country.

Swamy, 84, possibly the oldest person to be accused of terrorism in India, died in a Mumbai hospital recently in the middle of his fight for bail on health grounds. "A government that is scared of an 84-year-old physically challenged man is dictatorial in character, but weak in the mind," said Raut, who is the executive editor of 'Saamana'. The activities of the Elgar Parishad cannot be supported, but what happened later should be called a "conspiracy of cracking down on freedom", Raut said, referring to the arrest of activists like Varavara Rao, Sudha

Bharadwaj, Gaurav Navlakha and others in connection with the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case. Raut said all those arrested (in the case), including (scholar-activist) Anand Telumbde, belong to a particular ideology who voice their rebellion through literature. "Can they overthrow the government with this?" he asked. Raut said Stan Swamy died in custody while Prime Minister Narendra Modi held talks with those who want autonomy for Kashmir and are demanding restoration of Article 370 there.

## Strong winds off Guj coast; fishermen alerted

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The IMD on Sunday predicted squally weather and strong winds off the Gujarat coast along with heavy rains in some parts of the state till July 14, and advised fishermen not to venture into the Arabian Sea. The Ahmedabad centre of the India Meteorological Department (IMD) also forecast high sea waves in the range of 2.5-3.6 metres during the next two days along the north Gujarat coast between Jakhau and Diu. "Squally weather with wind speed reaching 45-55 kmph gusting to 65 kmph very likely along and off north and south Gujarat coasts and over northern Arabian Sea from July 11-14," the MeT office said. "Fishermen are advised not to venture along and off north and south Gujarat coasts and over northwest Arabian Sea from July 11-14," it said. In its latest bulletin, the MeT department also said many places in Gujarat, including Saurashtra-Kutch region, and the Union Territory of Dadra and Nagar Haveli, Daman and Diu will receive light to moderate rainfall between July 11 and 14. Some parts of south Gujarat are also likely to receive heavy to very heavy rainfall, it said.

## Man held for objectionable comments against PM

PNS ■ UJJAIN

Madhya Pradesh police have arrested a 28-year-old man for allegedly making objectionable comments against Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani on social media, an official said on Sunday. A local BJP leader filed a police complaint on Saturday against Govardhan Nagar, a resident of Akya Jagir village in Ujjain district, Khachrod police station in-charge Ramkishor Singhavat said. In his complaint, Khachrod BJP mandal unit president Chetan Sharma alleged that the accused posted an edited picture along with some objectionable comments on social media platforms, the official said. Following the complaint, Nagar was arrested and a case registered against him under provisions of the Information Technology Act, the official said, adding that the accused was later released on bail. A probe is on into the case, he said.



## TMC leaders protest fuel price hike

PNS ■ KOLKATTA

TMC MLA Atin Ghosh, who led the protests at Paikpara in north Kolkata, said the unabated rise in prices of petrol, diesel and LPG has burdened the common people. However, the BJP-led government at the Centre is not bothered about the people as they are solely concerned about revenues and serving the interests of big oil companies, he alleged. At the Baguiati protest site, TMC members cooked on a firewood oven and served the food to those who were attending. "This is a symbolic protest. The fuel price hike is pushing us backward and we are going back to the age of such ovens and bullock carts," TMC MLA Aditi Munshi said.

Thousands of Indians studying medicine in China came home early last year for their winter break and have remained stranded since, unable to return as Covid tightened its grip and now getting more anxious as the months roll by with no clarity on when Beijing will lift travel restrictions. While online classes have been continuing, the lack of access to hands-on practical classes puts a big question mark on their education and future as medical doctors, said several students. "I have attended classes online, but we are completely missing out on practicals. I

## IAF base attack: Pak military role suspected

PNS ■ JAMMU/NEW DELHI

The 'pressure fuse' used in the bombs that were dropped on the Indian Air Force station in Jammu through drones in a first-of-its-kind attack indicates that some elements of the Pakistan army or the ISI helped fabricating the IEDs, according to security sources. The improvised explosive device (IED) that pierced the rooftop of one of the IAF buildings at the Jammu airport carried less than one kg of RDX and a cocktail of



other chemicals whereas the one that was dropped on the ground contained a little over one kg of the deadly explosives along with some ball bearings, they said. The sources said the IED used

in the June 27 attack on the IAF station "definitely" used the technical expertise of the Pakistani military. The 'pressure fuse' used is similar to the ones used by the Pakistani army.

A 'pressure fuse' is generally used in minefields, anti-tank mines and those dropped by the air force in the fuselage between the explosive and main detonator of a shell or an IED. The explosive devices are activated by the pressure of either falling on the ground with force or some individual or vehicle passing over it. However, in these sophisticated IEDs, the 'pressure fuse' had been deployed at the nose of the bombs so that they trigger with a force after falling on the ground, the sources said.

## STRANDED AT HOME Indian medics in China desperate in the doldrums

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/BERJING

Thousands of Indians studying medicine in China came home early last year for their winter break and have remained stranded since, unable to return as Covid tightened its grip and now getting more anxious as the months roll by with no clarity on when Beijing will lift travel restrictions. While online classes have been continuing, the lack of access to hands-on practical classes puts a big question mark on their education and future as medical doctors, said several students. "I have attended classes online, but we are completely missing out on practicals. I



have completed two years of my course but I still haven't done an anatomy dissection," said Delhi-based Richa Singh, a second year MBBS student at Xi'an Jiaotong University. With most Chinese applica-

tions banned in India, Singh\* said many students, including her, have been forced to install virtual private networks (VPN) to access their classes. While their inability to resume physical classes for a

large part of 2020 was understandable due to global travel norms, the students are pressing for a deadline on when they can return to China. According to 2019 data, over 23,000 Indian students studied in different courses in Chinese universities and colleges. Of them, over 21,000 enrolled to study MBBS. According to Shamik Majumdar of Omkar Medicom, a consultancy for Indian students wanting to pursue MBBS abroad, China is allowing international students to return gradually but the second wave of COVID-19 in India has slowed down the process for Indian students. "I have been in touch with

the deans of different universities where Indian students are studying, and the colleges are saying that they want the students to return, but India's Covid situation is not completely under control yet," he said. "Since China is preparing for the Winter Olympics, it is likely that these students will be allowed to return by September-October this year," he added. Nearly 3,000 students came together recently to form a group, Indian Students in China, on instant messaging software Telegram to brainstorm on how to draw the attention of the governments of India and China.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

### On guard

The nation is not past the COVID threat factor; let there not be any breach of safety protocols

The issue is not when a third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic will strike India. The issue is what the Government and the people are doing to minimise its impact. There are fresh predictions daily about the onset of the new wave in July or August but the only reality is that the second wave is still around. India on Saturday, July 10, recorded 42,766 fresh cases. Just over half of them came from Kerala with 13,563 new infections and Maharashtra with 8,992. In the north-east where too infection lingers, Assam accounted for 2391 fresh positive cases in one day. The Kerala Government attributes the growing numbers to the high awareness quotient among Keralites — people go and get themselves tested the moment they feel they have the symptoms rather than neglect it. Even if most of these people have mild symptoms and do not get admitted to hospitals, their cases get recorded swelling the total figure. However, the fact remains that only a breach of safety protocol can cause symptoms in the first place. So, the answer to rising cases is not an explanation about testing but about enforcing protocols strictly. In other States, like Delhi, the rapid decline in the number of cases is being cited to claim that threshold immunity could have been reached because the number of people originally infected was more. This argument is not backed by any scientific assessment.



In both Kerala and Delhi, there appears an element of over confidence of having already overcome the worst. If that explains the nonchalance with which the safety protocols are being violated, it is not a good sign at all. In Delhi the Government took the extreme step of closing down one of the biggest markets for violations. Chaos rules tourist towns in the hill regions. Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand are toying with the idea of opening the Char Dham Yatra and the Kanwar Yatra, both of which attract huge crowds. Uttar Pradesh has already witnessed the impact of breach of protocols during the Kumbh Mela. In some States, schools and colleges are being reopened from the middle of this month. The states have already relaxed most of the lockdown restrictions. The big worry is also about the kind of virus variants the violation of safety protocols can invite. As on date, there are six variants of concern or interest across the world. The latest Lambda variant is not present in India. The Health Ministry quotes June data to say there are 3,969 Alpha, 149 Beta, 1 Gamma, and 16,238 Delta and Kappa variant cases in India. The options are clearly limited to stricter enforcement of basic regulations, scientific lockdown relaxations and conducting sero-prevalence surveys that estimate the proportion of population that has acquired antibodies against the virus, and, of course, increasing the pace of the vaccination drive. Tripura has shown the way by extending curfew in urban areas after detection of the Delta Plus variant.

### PICTALK



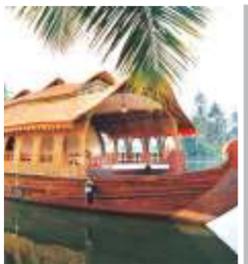
Vehicles ply on the new Pal-Umra overbridge in Surat

PTI

### Left out?

Kerala, hailed for decades on various counts, needs to regain the trust and confidence of entrepreneurs

Hardly two months into office after registering an unprecedented mandate for a second term, the CPI(M)-led Left Democratic Front Government in Kerala is facing a crisis of the worst kind. There are four million unemployed youth in the State, according to the Kerala Government itself. According to NORKA, a joint venture by Kerala Government and expatriates, 2.5 million persons from West Asia have returned to the State since the outbreak of COVID-19. It is at this time that KiteX Ltd, a ₹1,000 crore company made it known that it was withdrawing from the MoU it had signed with the Kerala Government to set up an industrial enterprise with an investment of ₹3,500 crore which would have generated 35,000 jobs. Sabu M Jacob, the chairman of the group, alleged that there were more than 12 raids during the last one month by various departments. His enterprise in Ernakulam employs 11,000 workers and the branded products manufactured in the company are key attractions in internationally reputed supermarkets and malls. Jacob has decided to set up shop in Telangana



while the Governments of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Maharashtra have invited him with offers of subsidised land, power and series of tax concessions.

KiteX is not the first company to leave the shores of Kerala citing unfriendly attitude of the Government. Groups like MRF, Synthite Ltd and V-Guard have left Kerala to neighbouring States because of political interference, demand of protection money and militant trade unionism. Dr Raj Mohan Pillai, Chairman, Beta Group, a leading industrialist, has said that four entrepreneurs in the State committed suicide in the last two years following financial crisis, a fallout of unfriendly policies of the Government. Two young industrialists who returned to the State from West Asia too resorted to the extreme measure. A German automobile giant which had come to Kerala opted for Tamil Nadu because of their apprehensions about the business-friendly nature of the politicians. Jacob says environmental activism and the cartel of politicians and bureaucrats are a curse on God's Own Country. It is for the Government and the Chief Minister to regain the trust and confidence of entrepreneurs. Turf wars between gold smuggling cartels and "quotation gangs" specialising in contract killing are on the rise in God's Own Country, more aptly named as Gold's Own Country by BV Kumar, former chief of Enforcement Directorate.

# A confusing Cabinet expansion exercise

Burdening Ministers with three Ministries can seldom be a formula for success. It cannot be averred that the Modi Government has shed deadwood and found the manna



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Under the much-touted logic of "perform or perish", Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti has apparently emerged more efficient than, say, Ravi Shankar Prasad or Dr Harsh Vardhan. The MoS, Rural Development, has not merely saved her own portfolio during Cabinet reshuffle but added one more charge, ie Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution, to it. Several heavyweight Cabinet ministers were dropped like deadwood from their Ministry. There is no deal in sight on the lines "Kamraj Plan" (1963), which suggested that senior Cabinet Ministers in the Nehru Government should resign to work for revitalising the party.

Ravi Shankar Prasad, Harsh Vardhan and Prakash Javadekar were educated and suave faces of the Government. Each one of them came to occupy up to three Union Ministries. Was the Prime Minister's trust in them so misplaced that these senior leaders had to be dropped for non-performance without any honourable rehabilitation plan? Why there was no mid-course correction applied? Is the Prime Minister sure that he made the right choices now by inducting a large element of untested people? Does by dropping senior Ministers, he wishes to send a stern message to the inductees that in the long run no is indispensable? For better or worse, these people will lead the Modi Government's programmes into the 2024 elections.

When one burdens a Cabinet Minister with three Ministries, performance is at risk. It was only under this Government that one sees that the Railway Minister might hold charge of two other Ministries. Previous Minister of Railways who was additionally holding the charge of Commerce and Industry Ministry, also found the Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution falling in his lap as Ram Vilas Paswan passed away in October 2020. Thereby Piyush Goyal had to negotiate with the agitating farmers alongside the Minister of Agriculture, viz Narendra Singh Tomar.

The new Railway Minister, Ashwini Vaishnav, has also the charge of two more Ministries, Communication and Electronics and IT. The MR Cell — or the Railway Minister's Office — will



now work in two shifts lasting from 7 am to 12 am. The extended hours do not constitute overtime, but indicate the Minister's efforts to juggle with three Ministries. While Vaishnav might depend upon his razor sharp intelligence, the same might not be said about Mansukh Laxmanbhai Mandaviya, who has been in news for his old tweets in outrageous English. Promoted to Cabinet rank, Mandaviya has been given charge of two Ministries, including Health. It was not a good idea to remove a doctor-turned-senior politician from the helm of the Health Ministry in the middle of the pandemic. While one should not be culturally prejudiced against under-proficiency in English, it would become a handicap during the pandemic when a Minister has to pursue research briefs on COVID, mostly of foreign origin and invariably in English.

Despite the BJP's hype on cultural nationalism, education and culture have remained two non-priority sectors in the Modi Government. It never had HRD and Culture Ministers who could instil confidence. Many of the research organisations went headless for years, or like Asiatic Society continued to be ruled by people averse to this Government. The AB Vajpayee Government had an academi-



IT WAS NOT A GOOD IDEA TO REMOVE A DOCTOR-TURNED-SENIOR POLITICIAN FROM THE HELM OF THE HEALTH MINISTRY IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PANDEMIC. WHILE ONE SHOULD NOT BE CULTURALLY PREJUDICED AGAINST UNDER-PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH, IT WOULD BECOME A HANDICAP DURING THE PANDEMIC

cian in the form of Murlu Manohar Joshi as the HRD Minister. There was a sincere attempt to revise the textbooks, which subsequently the UPA-I Government overturned in the name of "de-toxification". In the Sangh Parivar circle, one frequently hears complaints about books written by "Leftist historians". However, the Modi Government has done little to redress the situation in the last seven years. One of their HRD Ministers proudly declared that the Modi Government did not change even a chapter in history textbooks.

The Education portfolio is now in the hands of Dharmendra Pradhan, who has been Petroleum and Natural Gas Minister since the first day of Modi Government in 2014. A thorough gentleman and hard-working Minister, he might do his best for education. However, it shows that the Government is not inclined to treat Education and Culture any differently from say agriculture, petroleum, textile or chemical industries. If the PM can induct professionals/former bureaucrats/diplomats to head other Ministries, why not any eminent educationist/cultural personality was brought to head Education/Culture Ministries? All the tall talks

about "Sanskritic Rashtravaad" (Cultural Nationalism) actually holds very little water.

Babul Supriyo, once the blue-eyed boy of PM Modi, has also been dropped from the Council of Ministers. Will Nishit Pramanik, the TMC-turned-BJP-MP, be able to prove his mettle as MoS, Home? Pramanik, who has several criminal cases pending against him, might be an expert turf dominator. However, when it comes to administration, it is a different ball game.

Apart from the pandemic, in the last two years, India had seen anti-CAA protests, Chinese incursion at Galwan river valley and the intense farmers' agitation. The economy was not managed well, even before the COVID struck. However, not only the FM Nirmala Sitharaman survived the purge, but her deputy Anurag Thakur got promotion to Cabinet status. If one were to fix responsibilities, several other heads should have rolled by the logic. But an eye-for-an-eye principle would leave the world blind. The stakes are high for Modi's new team in the remaining half of the Government's tenure.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### 100 YEARS OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY

Sir — The last few decades have seen a meteoric rise of China from a war-torn, poverty-stricken, medieval-feudal society to the world's second largest economy, altering the balance of power and even challenging the US, likely to overtake the latter in 2028. This unprecedented success can be attributed to its massive strength and a century of CPC's aggressive foreign and expansionist policy in military, space, cyber, economy, infrastructure and technology. However, towering leaders like Mao Tse Tung, Deng Xiaoping and now Xi Jinping, one-party rule with expansive designs, ruthless authoritarianism and aggressive nationalism took China to even greater heights.

The recent celebrations of 100 years rule of the party should be viewed as an objective of selfish expansionist designs, with little or no contribution in maintaining world peace and must be visualised as a threat to the world order.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

### UNIFORM CIVIL CODE IS NEEDED

Sir — There is a dire need of a Uniform Civil Code in our country. It needs to be implemented immediately without wasting more time which has been stuck in political and vote bank affair for three decades. Different sections of society, different laws of marriage, divorce, property division, adoption and succession among communities are taking a toll. There are more beliefs and when these matters reach the courts, it takes a lot of time to give justice to the courts, due to the diversity and complexity in their laws, due to this, the issue of Uniform Civil Code has been raised by many forums of the country.

It has also been mentioned in the election manifesto of the BJP, the Constitution also talks about making such laws. In the Directive Principles of State Policy, Article 44 instructs the State to make uniform civil code for all religions, due to the personal laws of some communities there women and children are not getting their full rights. At present, Goa is the first State in the country to have a uniform civil code. It is applicable that

### Be on guard at Afghan border



Due to the dangerous and deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan's Kandahar, many of the staff of the Indian embassy have been evacuated and sent back to India. India is under fear and amid an earlier threat it had hinted that it will bring back its nationals and officials from Afghanistan if the security situation worsens as the Taliban, a notorious terrorist group, is making advances and has captured more than 85 per cent territories of Afghanistan and more provinces.

With the Afghan security situation continuously deteriorating, the matter has been discussed for bringing back Indian citizens and officials present in different parts of that country. India has its embassy in Kabul along with the consulates

in Kandahar and Mazar, where it has over 500 staff members deployed. The country, which has had a big presence in Afghanistan since the fall of the Taliban in 2001 following the US invasion, has been helping the successive Governments there, including the members of the northern alliance who have been friends with India for a long time.

More than 200,000 Afghan civilians are already displaced. There is an active fight going on between Afghan forces and Taliban fighters in 200 districts out of a total of 375. There is also trouble in 18 border districts that share a border with several countries, such as Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Iran. Considering that the complete withdrawal of the US troops from Afghanistan by end of the August, the Taliban have been capturing newer districts and areas at a lightning speed and the Afghan Government forces are also fleeing from a number of places there.

With Taliban re-capturing Afghanistan, it is setback for India as the Taliban terrorist groups have very good equation with Pakistan terrorist groups which will be used against India at the border.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

too without any controversy, then what is the problem in implementing it in other parts of the nation?

Devanand Ray | New Delhi

### THE GEM CALLED DILIP KUMAR

Sir — Acting legend Dilip Kumar belongs to all generations. He acted with three of the Kapoor brothers: Raj Kapoor (Andaz: 1949), Shammi Kapoor (Vidhata: 1982, Jwar Bhata: 1944) and Shashi Kapoor (Kranti: 1981). He acted with three generations: Grandfather Prithviraj Kapoor (Mughal-e-Azam: 1960), son Raj Kapoor (Andaz: 1949) and grandson Rishi Kapoor (Ghar ki Izzat: 1994). His first movie was Jwar Bhata in 1944; he saw major success with his movie Jugnu with Noor Jehan.

He acted with ease with many other stars of next generation too such as Amitabh Bachchan (Shakti: 1982), Shatrughan Sinha and Shashi Kapoor

(Kranti: 1981), Manoj Kumar (Aadmi: 1968, Kranti: 1981), Sanjeev Kumar (Vidhaata: 1982). He played double role in Ram Aur Shyam (1967) and triple role in Bairaag (1976). With his wife Saira Banu, his major movies were Gopi, Sagina, Bairaag, Duniya. His last appearance was Qila. Although his 1996 films (Aag ki Duniya and Kalinga) never got released.

Totally, he acted in 65 movies. So 1944 to 1996 implies more than five decades of career in movies. No doubt Dada Saheb Phalke (1994) and Padma Vibhushan awards (2015) were very late to him. He was the encyclopedia of acting skills. Yousuf Ali Khan is known only as Dilip Kumar (his screen name). He is the greatest award to the Indian cinema industry.

Madhu PV | Secunderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

The number of Ministers has increased, but not of vaccines. Where are vaccines?



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi



The President thanked King Abdullah, who expressed satisfaction with the recent return of diplomatic ties between the two countries to their proper track.

Israeli President — Isaac Herzog



4.30 am on sets of #InspectorAvinash Shoot resumes. That's what makes it so attractive.

Actor — Urvashi Rautela



Generally we travel a lot, and play a lot of practice matches. We do a lot of acclimatisation.



It was unlike in the previous regimes when anarchy prevailed and criminals held sway.

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister — Yogi Adityanath



## FIRST COLUMN

### COVID-19: RACE TO PREVENT 3RD WAVE

Economic activity has shown improvement since May-end, with a robust recovery in sectors



ABHISHEK RAJA

An SBI Research report titled "Covid-19: The race to finishing line" warns of a third wave from August 2021 with a peak in September. The report says full vaccination is the only saviour.

At the time of writing, six per cent of India's population is fully vaccinated while 24 per cent have had the first dose. The figure is low compared to other countries, such as the US (47.1 per cent), the UK (48.7 per cent), and Israel (59 per cent). The devastating second wave is "not yet over in the country and is exhibiting a fat tail".

India has started giving over 40 lakh vaccination doses daily. Rajasthan, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Kerala, and Uttarakhand have given both doses to a large section of the population above 60 years. Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Assam, Bihar, and Jharkhand have vaccinated a smaller proportion of those above 45 years, according to the report. The pace is slower in the rural areas, it says.

Indian households are facing financial stress and the ratio of GDP to debt has risen sharply. The SBI Research reported that the ratio rose



to 37.3 per cent in fiscal 2021, up from 32.5 per cent the previous year. It expects the situation will worsen due to a decrease in bank deposits in FY21 and rising health spending, which would increase household debt.

According to the report, the decline in bank deposits is indicative of a decrease in household financial savings rates. Fiscal policy action is needed as India's income from wages as a percentage of GDP has fallen to 30.6 per cent in FY21 from 34.1 per cent in FY20. The profit after tax of Indian industry as a percentage of gross value added has increased significantly to 23.7 per cent in FY21 from 13.4 per cent in FY20.

States with high per capita GDP have been associated with higher Covid-19 deaths per million while low per capita GDP are associated with low Covid-19 deaths.

High per capita states like Maharashtra, Kerala, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttarakhand witnessed high deaths per million while lesser deaths were reported in low per capita states like Bihar, Jharkhand, UP, Assam, Odisha, and Rajasthan.

Economic activity has shown improvements since May-end, with a robust recovery in weekly vegetable arrivals, revenue collection at regional transport offices, and the Apple Mobility Index, despite a declining labour participation rate, the report said.

The second wave coupled with lockdown pushed manufacturing in the reverse gear as PMI for June dipped to 48.1. Services have the maximum share in India's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) with over 57 per cent contribution. Manufacturing had a share of around 17 per cent of GDP. Both sectors faced job losses and this means nearly two-thirds of the economy was not in a good shape in the April-June quarter.

India's services activity plummeted to an 11-month low, contracting for the second consecutive month in June and indicating that services firms have taken further losses due to the cautious consumer sentiment despite the easing of the lockdown in some states. Business activity and new orders decreased in four out of the five broad areas of the service economy, with the fastest rates of contraction registered in consumer services. In line with a further reduction in new work intakes, companies lowered payroll numbers midway through 2021. The decline in jobs was widespread across the five monitored sub-sectors.

India has to vaccinate everyone and people have to follow guidelines to safeguard us from the third wave. We have lost enough in the second wave and the economy has suffered a lot. It is time for better days ahead.

(The writer is a GST specialist and analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

# 'Outsider' effect rattles BJP in certain States



DEEPAK K UPRETI

The strategy to open party gates indiscriminately to disgruntled Opposition leaders boomeranged as the exercise began to erode the party's basic ideological content

Honey attracts flies. Power too has the same quality of attracting 'borderless flying politicians' ever on the lookout for an opportunity to side with power.

The march of the Bharatiya Janata Party across the states was stupendous after the Modi era began in 2014. In 2015, it breached the high wall of Jammu and Kashmir, coming to power in alliance with the Peoples' Democratic Party. By 2018, the party ruled over 21 states and was looking forward to bring the remaining states under its control when it started suffering electoral setbacks.

The territorial shrink began in December 2018 when the assembly election results in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, and Chhattisgarh favoured the Congress. Losing in three major Hindi-heartland states was quite a setback to the BJP. And then it lost Maharashtra after forming a government.

The steady rise of the BJP owes itself to the unwavering popularity of brand Modi, strengthening of the National Democratic Alliance at state levels, and engineering defections, and accommodating 'borderless flying politicians' looking for greener pastures. As electoral returns shrank, the party managers increasingly used the third option of attracting wannabes from rival political camps.

The low political dividends on account of admitting those not rooted in BJP's 'ideology' was amply reflected in the recent upheavals in Karnataka, Tripura, and West Bengal.

The strategy of Narendra Modi and Amit Shah to open party gates indiscriminately to disgruntled opposition leaders boomeranged as the exercise began to erode the party's basic ideological content. West Bengal is the latest example where the BJP candidates who joined the party on the eve of the assembly elections are now itching to go back to the Trinamool nest.

Even Madhya Pradesh is resting on unstable ground. The BJP wrested power from the Congress in early 2020 by encouraging several legislators to defect, including veteran Jyotiraditya Scindia. The newly 'safronized' MLAs formerly with Congress are today controlling the levers of power. They superseded the cadre-based leadership in the Gwalior-Chambal belt, triggering discontent among the latter.

The party's 'go-for-it' philosophy is quite unlike that of its famed mentor Atal Behari Vajpayee who preferred to quit as Prime Minister in May 1996 saying, "if breaking up political parties is the only way to form a coalition that stays in power...I don't want to touch such a coalition with a barge pole".

In Karnataka, the BJP which demolished the Congress bastion is currently witnessing relentless dissent also on account of demands made by turn-coats who were allotted plum portfolios at the expense of hard-working party leaders.



NOT ALL 'OUTSIDERS' IN THE BJP SETTLED DOWN PEACEFULLY AFTER GETTING THEIR REWARDS FROM THE PARTY AND THE GOVERNMENT. CP YOGEESHWARA, AN EX-CONGRESSMAN WHO PLAYED A KEY ROLE IN THE FALL OF THE CONGRESS-JD(S) COALITION IN KARNATAKA AND WAS MADE TOURISM MINISTER, IS NOW WANTING THE REMOVAL OF CHIEF MINISTER YEDIYURAPPA

(The writer is with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)



There still are a few 'party hopper-s' who are not satisfied with the rewards they got for switching over and want to stage a coup against Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa.

K Sudhakar is one of the 17 Congress and JD(S) legislators who shifted their allegiance to the BJP and helped Yediyurappa form the government in 2019. He was given the important portfolio of health. He crossed over from the Congress and won the Chikkaballapur bypoll in 2019 on a BJP ticket. The youngest cabinet minister in the Yediyurappa government, Sudhakar is a rising Vokkaliga leader in a government led by a 'Lingayat' strongman.

The growing prominence of a former Congressman in the BJP highlights both the new 'realpolitik' of the party and its pitfalls.

Not all 'outsiders' in the BJP settled down peacefully after getting their rewards from the party and the government. C P Yogeeshwara, another ex-Congressman who played a key role in the fall of the Congress-JD(S) coalition in Karnataka and was made tourism minister in the Yediyurappa government, is now one of the prominent leaders wanting the removal of the Chief Minister.

The state BJP leadership wanted to use Yogeeshwara as the party's face in the Vokkaliga-dominated old Mysuru region against Congress state president D K Shivakumar and former Chief Minister and JDS leader H D Kumaraswamy. But he turned against Yediyurappa and the fight is in the open with the latter's loyalists accusing the minister of corruption.

The BJP is unsettled in its lone southern bastion because of the newly acquired 'political asset' becoming a liability. The Congress and the JDS are waiting for an opportunity to use him and any other turn-coats to rock the saffron boat.

Yogeeshwara, the actor-turned-politician, first entered politics in 1999 and won as an independent, then joined the Congress and contested successfully in 2004 and 2008. He quit the Congress in 2009 and contested the by-elections from Channapatna on the BJP ticket and lost. He won another by-election in 2011 and went on to become a minister.

However, in 2013, he quit the BJP and joined the Samajwadi Party which he left in 2016 and came back to the Congress only to join the BJP again ahead of the 2018 polls and settled for a cabinet post after the success of 'Operation Kamal-2' that brought the BJP government to power in 2019. He was made a Minister even though he lost the MLA bye-election and was later inducted as an MLC.

Besides him, the 16 other JDS and Congress legislators who joined the BJP, got disqualified, and became MLAs again after contesting in the subsequent by-elections are also demanding portfolios of their choice and fuelling unrest and disrupting governance in the state.

The instability in the state BJP units and the governments run by the party is 'linked to the rising aspirations' of the 'new Bhakts' who are neither accustomed to the party's stated dictum of 'seva hi sangathan' nor are patient like

trained BJP and RSS workers to await their turn.

The simmering discontent in the first-ever BJP government in Tripura last month has also much to do with the freshly recruited 'outsiders'. Reports of a group of 'dissident' BJP MLAs led by the former health minister and MLA Sudip Roy Barman planning to head over to a resurgent Trinamool Congress Party caused ripples in Delhi. Party General Secretary (org) B L Santosh was rushed there to manage the turn-coats.

Barman, who along with other leaders left the Trinamool to join the BJP in 2017, was dropped by Chief Minister Biplab Deb from the ministry in 2019 with a caution that leaders are but a product of the organisation and should not forget it. Barman and five former MLAs met BJP President J P Nadda last year to complain against Deb.

Interestingly, the roots of the BJP's recent crisis in Tripura can be traced to the BJP's erstwhile 'trouble-shooter' and former party Vice-president Mukul Roy who himself returned to the TMC in West Bengal after Mamta Banerjee won her third election victory in the state.

In its desire for an unbridled expansion across the country, the BJP is gradually losing its projected character as the party with a difference -- the tagline it used effectively when in the opposition and which found resonance with the people.

Asked about the BJP opening its doors to anyone without any checks, a BJP General Secretary said, "that we will see that in the long-run".

## POINT COUNTER POINT

THE DELHI GOVT IS COLLECTING ₹23 FROM A LITRE OF PETROL AND ₹13 FROM A LITRE OF DIESEL AS VAT, WHICH IS A BETRAYAL ON DELHI'S PEOPLE.  
— DELHI CONGRESS PRESIDENT ANIL KUMAR



WE ARE PAYING FOR THE OIL BONDS THAT WILL COME UP FOR REDEMPTION STARTING FY2021 TILL (2026), WHICH WERE ISSUED BY THE UPA TO OIL COMPANIES.  
— BJP'S IT CELL CHIEF AMIT MALVIYA

# Time to take stock on World Population Day

There is as yet no real check on world population growth as 140 million are born and 58 million die every year, adding a net 82 million

Unusual weather phenomena like extreme heatwaves in the USA and Canada or the recurrent cyclonic onslaughts on the Indian coasts are now causing concerns. Scientists and meteorologists attribute them to overuse of non-renewable energy, excessive rise in ocean water temperature, absorbing more greenhouse gas emissions, widespread deforestation, et al. Aren't they indicative of over-exploitation of nature's bounties leading to a serious ecological imbalance?

American biologist Paul Ehrlich in his book 'Population Bomb' rang the alarm bell when he said in 1968 when the global population touched 3.5 billion that the earth's resources are "finite" and cannot cope with "infinite popu-



ARCHANA DATTA

(The writer is former Director-General, Doordarshan and All India Radio. The views expressed are personal.)

lation growth".

If we look back, the global population doubled from 0.25 billion to 0.5 billion within 700 years from the early 9th century to the middle of the 16th century, and the same trend continued till the first half of the 20th century. In the latter half, the fastest doubling occurred between 1950 and 1987, as the population grew from 2.5 billion to 5 billion in just 37 years.

To counter the rising population, a concerted global move originated in 1987, and the world began to observe July 11 as 'Population Day' under the auspices of the United Nations from 1990. It aimed to curb unbridled population growth and issues that have a bearing on it such as gender equality, women's



empowerment, their sexual and reproductive health and rights, mother and child health care, family planning, eradication of poverty, etc.

These efforts yielded positive gains, registering an almost 60 per cent reduction in Child Mortality Rate from 93 deaths per 1000 live births in 1990 to 38 in 2019. However, the rate is not uniformly distributed across the globe. In India, the number of deaths of children under five

fell from 3.4 million in 1990 to one million in 2017, that is from 1-in-4 to 1-in-20.

Similarly, the global fertility rate also fell from 3.2 births per woman in 1990 to 2.5 in 2019 and is projected to decline further to 2.2 in 2050. Nevertheless, there are a few places where fertility remained above the global average. The Maternal Mortality Rate (MMR) also declined globally by 38 per cent (2000-2017) although it was found unacceptably high in sub-Saharan Africa.

However, the declining mortality and fertility rates are not the only determining factors in raising the population growth. The number of women in the reproductive age also matters. If there are more women in the reproductive age

bracket (15-49 years), the number of births will be high, even when the fertility rate is low, which is termed as 'population momentum', and it explains why the number of children in the world will not decline as rapidly as the fertility rate. UN projections show women in the reproductive age group will increase from 1.8 billion in 2013 to two billion by 2025. As a result, the number of births is expected to peak at 143 million by the middle of this century, and then taper down to 131 million by 2100, with the global population touching at nearly 11 billion.

Nevertheless, as per the latest UN data analysis, the global population has already reached its peak between 1961 and 1963. It is now the low fertility rate that keeps the popu-

lation changes small while in the past, it was the high mortality that maintained the population under check. Yet, the population growth has not stopped: every year 140 million are born, and 58 million die, adding 82 million people. India is projected to overtake China by 2027 when the latter's population is expected to decrease by 31.4 million.

As the world passes through a severe pandemic situation, a WHO survey said that family planning services were the most extensively disrupted. The UNFPA's estimate in March 2021 was that about 12 million women suffered because of such disruptions in 115 countries, resulting in 1.4 million unintended pregnancies. All this could lead to a situation of changing

fertility rates and demographic shifts. Such a disturbing trend also evokes apprehensions that many countries may resort to coercive measures for fertility control, which are likely to make adverse impacts on women's and girls' decision-making power, freedom of movement, and access to health services.

As the world celebrates Population Day 2021, the UNFPA has urged upon the nations to prioritise women's health, sexual, and reproductive rights to offset the pandemic's damaging impacts and to adopt holistic responses through family support and child-care systems, allowing women to exercise their choice and rights over their bodies as the solution to shifting fertility rates.

# India's power consumption rises 18% to 30.33 BU during July 1-7

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's power consumption grew nearly 18 per cent in first week of July to 30.33 billion units (BU) compared to a year ago and returned to pre-pandemic level mainly due to easing of lockdown curbs and delayed monsoon, according to power ministry data.

Power consumption during July 1-7 last year was 25.72 BU.

Power consumption was recorded at 26.63 BU in first week of July in 2019. Thus, consumption of power has not only grown year-on-year but also returned to pre-pandemic level.

Experts say recovery in power demand and consumption in first week of July is mainly due to delayed monsoon and improvement in economic activities due to easing of lockdown restrictions by states.



They said power demand as well as consumption returned to pre-COVID levels in the first week of July, giving clear indication that there would be robust recovery in coming days.

The commercial and industrial power demand and consumption got affected April onwards this year due to lockdown restrictions imposed by states.

Experts say since the number of daily COVID-19 positive cases has declined across the

country and states have eased lockdown curbs, the commercial and industrial demand of power is bound to see an uptick from July.

Peak power demand met or the highest supply in a day touched an all-time high of 200.57 GW in the first week of July (recorded on July 7, 2021).

Daily power consumption also touched an all-time high of 4,508 million units on July 7, 2021. In the first week of July,

peak power demand met witnessed a growth of nearly 18 per cent compared to 170.40 GW (recorded on July 2). Peak power demand met for the entire month of July 2020 was also 170.40 GW.

The peak power demand met was recorded at 175.12 GW in July 2019, showing recovery to pre-pandemic level.

Last year, the government had imposed a lockdown on March 25 to contain the spread of coronavirus. The lockdown was eased in a phased manner, but had hit the economic and commercial activities and resulted in lower commercial and industrial demand for electricity in the country.

Power consumption in April 2021 saw year-on-year growth of nearly 38.5 per cent. The second wave of COVID-19 started in the middle of April this year and affected the recovery in commercial and industrial power demand as states started imposing restrictions in the latter part of the month.

# India's coal import rose 20% in May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's coal import rose 20.4 per cent to 19.92 million tonnes (MT) in the month of May. The country had imported 16.54 MT of coal in May last fiscal, according to data compiled by mjunction Services.

"On a year-on-year basis, however, India's coal and coke imports in May 2021 were up 20.4 per cent as against 16.54 MT clocked in May 2020," it said. Import volumes of dry-fuel, it said, are expected to remain subdued in the ongoing monsoon season on account of lower demand, firm prices and high freight rates.

India's coal import also rose 25.4 per cent to 42.19 MT in the first two months of the ongoing fiscal, against 33.63 MT of coal imported in the corresponding period of previous financial year, it said. Of the total import in May, non-cooking coal was at 13.64 MT, against 10.54 MT imported in May last financial year. Coking coal import was at 4.41 MT, up against 3.18 MT imported in May last fiscal.

# G-20 finance ministers back plan to stop use of tax havens

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Top finance officials representing most of the world's economy have backed a sweeping revision of international taxation that includes a 15% global minimum corporate levy to deter big companies from resorting to low-rate tax havens.

Finance ministers from the Group of 20 countries endorsed the plan at a meeting Saturday in Venice.

U.S. Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen said the proposal would end a "self-defeating international tax competition" in which countries have for years lowered their rates to attract companies. She said that had been "a race that nobody has won. What it has done instead is to deprive us of the resources we need to invest in our people, our workforces, our infrastructure."

The next steps include more work on key details at the Paris-based Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development and then a final decision at the Group of 20 meeting of presidents and prime ministers on Oct. 30-31 in Rome.



Implementation, expected as early as 2023, would depend on action at the national level. Countries would enact the minimum tax requirement into their own laws. Other parts could require a formal treaty. The draft proposal was approved July 1 in talks among more than 130 countries convened by the OECD. Italy hosted the finance minister's meeting in Venice because it holds the rotating chair of the G-20, which makes up more than 80% of the world economy. The event also attracted around 1,000 protesters under the banner "We Are The Tide," an umbrella group of environmen-

tal and social justice activists, including opponents of large cruise ships and the hordes of tourists they bring to the lagoon city. A small group scuffled Saturday with police after breaking away from an approved demonstration area.

The U.S. already has a minimum tax on overseas earnings, but President Joe Biden has proposed roughly doubling the rate to 21%, which would more than comply with the proposed global minimum. Raising the rate is part of a broader proposal to fund Biden's jobs and infrastructure plan by raising the domestic corporate tax rate to 28% from 21%.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Six of top-10 valued companies lose Rs 92K cr in mkt valuation

Six of the 10 most valued companies took a combined hit of Rs 92,147.28 crore in market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services and Reliance Industries leading the losers' chart. Reliance Industries, Tata Consultancy Services, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever, ICICI Bank and State Bank of India suffered losses in their market capitalisation (mcap). On the other hand, HDFC Bank, HDFC, Bajaj Finance and Kotak Mahindra Bank posted gains in mcap. The valuation of Tata Consultancy Services dived Rs 43,574.83 crore to Rs 11,86,563.20 crore and that of Reliance Industries declined by Rs 35,500.88 crore to Rs 13,14,293.35 crore. The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever Limited tumbled Rs 9,139.9 crore to Rs 5,75,555.28 crore and that of Infosys dipped Rs 1,981.5 crore to reach Rs 6,65,930.24 crore. ICICI Bank's valuation eroded by Rs 1,102.33 crore to Rs 4,42,302.42 crore State Bank of India's by Rs 847.84 crore to Rs 3,78,046.54 crore.



# China vows retaliation after US blacklists cos

PNS ■ BEIJING

China on Sunday said it will take "necessary measures" to respond to the US blacklisting of Chinese companies over their alleged role in abuses of Uyghur people and other Muslim ethnic minorities.

The Commerce Ministry said the US move constituted an "unreasonable suppression of Chinese enterprises and a serious breach of international economic and trade rules."

China will "take necessary measures to firmly safeguard Chinese companies' legitimate rights and interests," the ministry's statement said.

No details were given, but China has denied allegations of

arbitrary detention and forced labour in the far western region of Xinjiang and increasingly responded to sanctions against companies and officials with its own bans on visas and financial links.

The US Commerce Department said in a statement Friday that the electronics and technology firms and other businesses helped enable "Beijing's campaign of repression, mass detention and high-technology surveillance" against Muslim minorities in Xinjiang.



The penalties prohibit Americans from selling equipment or other goods to the firms. The United States has stepped up financial and trade penalties over China's treatment of Uyghurs and other Muslim minorities, along with its crackdown on democracy in the semi-autonomous city of Hong Kong. The Chinese government since 2017 has detained a million or more people in Xinjiang. Critics accuse China of operating forced labor camps and carrying out torture and coerced sterilisation as it allegedly seeks to assimilate Muslim ethnic minority groups.

The US Commerce Department said 14 companies were added to its Entity List over their dealings in Xinjiang, and another five for aiding China's armed forces. "The Department of Commerce remains firmly committed to taking strong, decisive action to target entities that are enabling human rights abuses in Xinjiang or that use US technology to fuel China's destabilizing military modernisation efforts," Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo said in a statement posted on the department's website.

### IT earnings, macro data to guide stock markets this week

Quarterly earnings from IT majors Infosys and Wipro, macroeconomic data announcements and global cues would be the major drivers for the equity markets this week, said analysts. Leading IT companies Infosys and Wipro and other players such as Mindtree, Tata Elxsi and HDFC AMC would announce their financial results this week. Moreover, industrial production numbers, retail and wholesale inflation data would be released this week. "This week, markets would take cues from earnings announcements and macroeconomic data ie IIP, CPI inflation and WPI inflation. Besides, global cues, monsoon progress and updates on the new COVID variant will be closely monitored by investors," said Ajit Mishra, VP Research, Religare Broking. Investors would also track coronavirus cases and the spread of Delta variant and its impact on the global economic recovery.



### GST officers bust network of 23 firms for claiming Rs 91 cr

GST officers have busted a network of 23 entities involved in creation of fake invoices worth Rs 551 crore and passing inadmissible input tax credit worth Rs 91 crore. Based upon specific intelligence, the officers of the anti-evasion branch of Central Goods and Service Tax (CGST) Commissionerate, Delhi (West) have unearthed a case of availment/utilization and passing on of inadmissible input tax credit (ITC) through goods less invoices of about Rs 91 crore, the Finance Ministry said in a statement. The firms involved in this network are M/s Girdhar Enterprises, M/s Arun Sales, M/s Akshay Traders, M/s Shree Padmavati Enterprises and 19 others. These 23 firms were floated in order to generate goods-less invoices with an intent to pass on fraudulent ITC without paying actual GST to the government.



### CIFL may explore inorganic route to grow its capability

NBFC firm Capital India Finance Limited (CIFL) is looking for collaboration or acquisition of fintech firm to improve technical capability to grow its business, a top official of the company said. CIFL, promoted by S K Narvar, is also in the process of developing a digital lending platform which should go live by the end of this fiscal. "We are actively looking at improving our technological capabilities and for this purpose we will either collaborate tie-up or takeover... We are looking for certain takeovers and mergers for technology based small ticket loans for disbursement in housing and education sectors," CIFL Chairman Harsh Kumar Bhawanala told PTI. He said that company plans to double the book size during the year. The outstanding loan at the end of March was Rs 560 crore. "We are aiming at the balance sheet size of Rs 1,100 crore by March 2022. Beside, our housing finance subsidiary would be double loan book to over Rs 250 crore," he said.



### Govt extends last date for transaction, legal advisors to bid for IDBI Bank

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has extended the deadline for transaction and legal advisors to bid for managing the IDBI Bank strategic sale by 9 days till July 22.

The Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) had on June 22 invited bids from merchant bankers and law firms for managing and giving legal advice for the sale process. The last date to put in bids was July 13.

"The competent authority has decided to extend the bid submission date of the... tender by nine days. The last date of bid submission will now be July 22, 2021," the DIPAM said in a notice. DIPAM, which manages government's equity, had also clarified to the merchant bankers that LIC's holding in IDBI Bank would be sold along with government's stake, but the exact quantum of stake dilution would be decided later.

LIC, currently having management control, has a 49.24 per cent stake, while the government holds 45.48 per cent in the bank. Non-promoter shareholding stands at 5.29 per cent.

The cabinet in May had approved the strategic sale of the entire stake of government and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) in IDBI Bank. In response to queries received from potential transaction advisors in IDBI Bank, DIPAM has clarified that since LIC's stake would be sold along with that of the governments, a single transaction advisor would manage the entire share sale process.

# FPIs pull out Rs 2,249 cr from Indian equities in July so far

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After a month of net inflows, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) pulled out Rs 2,249 crore from the Indian equities segment in the first seven trading sessions of July.

This could be largely attributed to profit booking by FPIs with markets trading near all-time highs and investors choosing to stay on the sidelines, said Morningstar India Associate Director (Manager Research) Himanshu Srivastava.

V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services, said it was important to appreciate the fact they are not selling big.

"This is because even though valuations are stretched, there are no signs of a major crash in markets. The sharp dip in the US 10-year bond yield to around 1.3 per

cent has again tilted the market in favour of equity," he said.

The steady rise in the dollar index has become a headwind for capital flows to emerging markets, he further added. Conversely, the debt segment saw a net inflow of Rs 2,088 crore between July 1 and July 10, as per the depositories data. The total net outflow during the period under review stood at Rs 161 crore.

In June, FPIs became net investors to the tune of Rs 13,269 crore in Indian markets (equity and debt), after remaining net sellers in April and May. Kotak Securities Executive Vice-President (Equity Technical Research) Shrikant Chouhan said the MSCI Emerging Markets Index has lost 3.9 per cent this week, overall.

"All key emerging markets and Asian markets have seen FPI outflows this month to date. Taiwan, South Korea, Thailand, Philippines and Indonesia saw month-to-date FPI outflows of USD 1,640 million, USD 991 million, USD 171 million, USD 89 million, USD 77 million, respectively," he said.

For the future of FPI investment, he said India is expected to remain vulnerable to US Federal Reserve's monetary policy and rising crude oil prices. "Elevated crude oil price hurts India's external account, results in higher inflation and possible currency depreciation which can adversely impact the foreign portfolio flows," Chouhan added.

Srivastava added that interim profit booking cannot be ruled out given high valuations, while dollar movement could also have an impact on the flows going ahead.

# Alpha Corp to invest Rs 900 cr for 3 projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gurugram-based realty firm Alpha Corp will invest around Rs 900 crore to complete three stalled projects of Earth Infrastructure that it acquired through insolvency process, a senior company official said.

The three projects, comprising developable and saleable area of around 4.5 million sq ft, are located in Gurugram and Greater Noida.

"We have acquired three projects of Earth Infrastructure which were stalled. Buyers have already paid around 70 per cent of

their money but did not get their units," Alpha Corp CFO and Executive Director Santosh Agarwal told PTI.

These projects were launched during 2010-12, but not completed in the stipulated time period.

"As per our estimate, the total investment required to complete these projects is around Rs 900 crore," Agarwal said.

Alpha Corp expects around Rs 300-350 crore collections from existing buyers, he said. "We will invest the remaining amount of around Rs 500 crore through mix of equity

and debt to complete these projects over the next 4-5 years," Agarwal added.

Asked about financial viability of these projects, the CFO said the company estimates that around 30-40 per cent of the total 4.5 million sq ft saleable area should be unsold.

"We expect realisation of around Rs 1,100 crore from these projects including receivables from customers against sold units and sales value of unsold stocks," Agarwal said.

Alpha Corp's team is currently compiling and verifying

the data of sold and unsold units in these three projects.

Agarwal said the works should start in these projects within 6-9 months, subject to approvals from various development authorities. Approximately 2,900 units are to be developed in these projects.

Ananta by Alpha Corp (erstwhile Earth Copia) - Sector 112, Gurugram is a housing project launched in February 2011; Earth Sapphire Court, Greater Noida, is a commercial project launched in July 2010; and Earth Techone, located on Yamuna

Expressway in Greater Noida, is a mixed use project launched in June 2012.

Agarwal pointed out that the Gurugram project is only 30-40 per cent complete, while Greater Noida projects is 60-70 per cent complete.

The project on Yamuna Expressway is only 20-30 per cent complete.

Agarwal said the insolvency process started in June 2018 Submission of separate resolution plans was allowed to each project as per the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) order, he added.

# 'Swift recovery expected due to limited impact of lockdown'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's economy is expected to see a swift recovery from the impact of the second wave of COVID-19 as lockdowns were largely designed to limit social gatherings and did not affect economic activities much, a CII survey said.

About 60 per cent of CEOs participating in the survey expect that the recovery in sales of their companies would

be better than that in the first wave of the pandemic.

"CII CEOs poll of 119 top corporates indicate swifter economic recovery from the impact of the second wave. The deadly second wave has not affected much of the economic activities as lockdowns were largely designed to limit social gathering and this has helped limit the impact of the second wave on economic growth when compared to the

first wave," CII Director General Chandrajit Banerjee said.

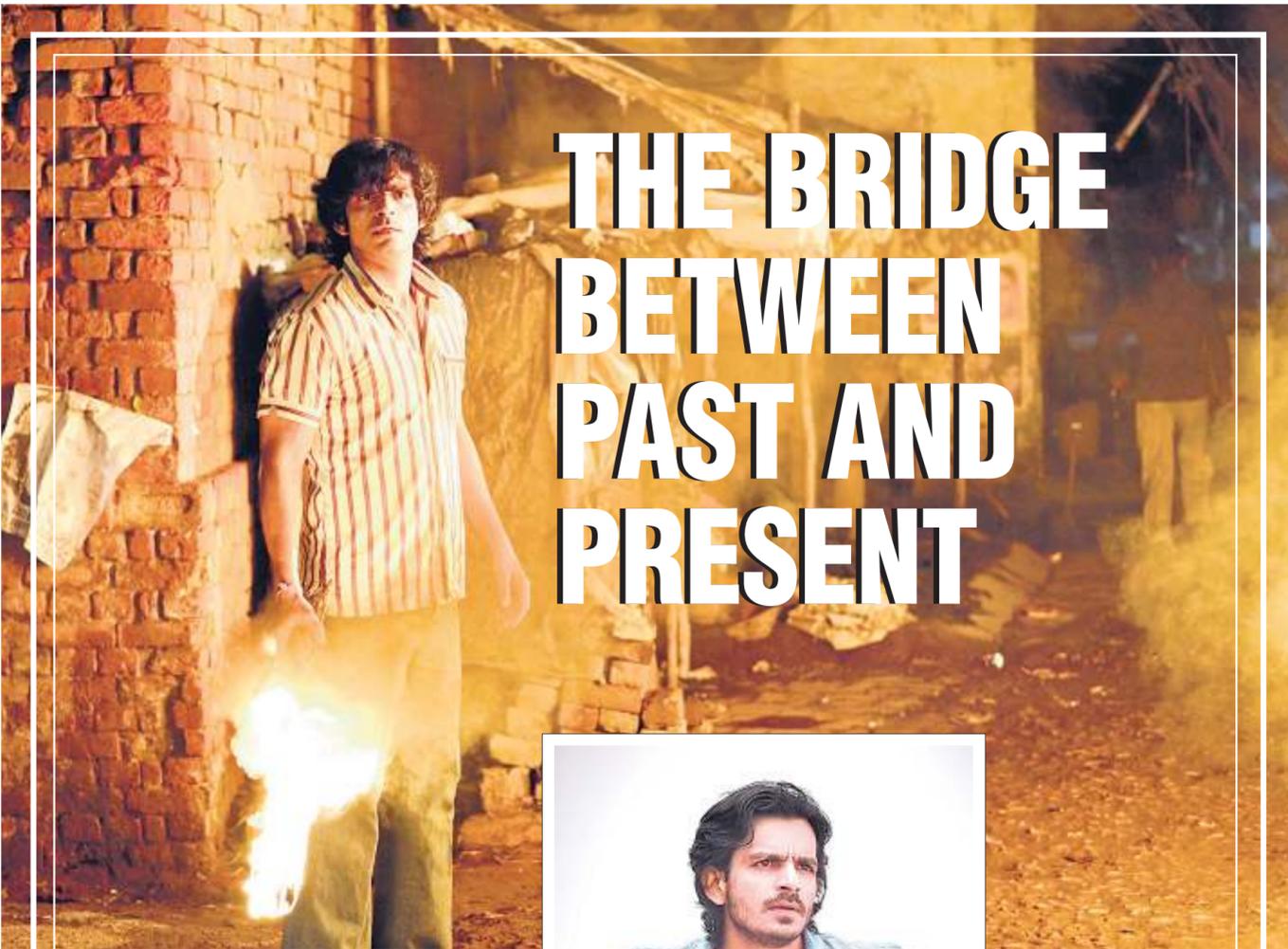
The survey added that vaccination holds the key to mitigating the impact of the second wave on economic activity and boosting consumer sentiment.

Over 60 per cent of the corporate leaders confirmed that their firms were compelled to scale back operations during the second wave, it added.

As per the survey, about 81 per cent of the respondents expected that the second wave in India would not have an adverse impact on the exports for their sectors in the first half of the current year than the comparable period of 2019-20.

"The buoyant external demand is buttressed by large-scale global stimulus and the fast pace of vaccination coverage across key global economies," it added.





## THE BRIDGE BETWEEN PAST AND PRESENT



-SHIKHA DUGGAL

The internet has become a hub of new talent for people to showcase their skills. Presently, an all-new Hindi web series called *Grahan* is making all the right noise across the country. With the emergence of this controversial web series based on anti-Sikh riots in the country, the fresh wave of it has made us realise how innovative and interesting Indian web series content is! The creator did not all shy away from thinking and creating an excellent story like this and this is also helping the audience to understand the depth of OTT content and enjoy it at the same time. Helmed by Rajan Chandel, it follows the story of Manjeet Chhabra played by Wamiqa Gabbi and Rishi Ranjan essayed by Anshumaan Pushkar as they fall in love with the backdrop of tragic incidents that transpired in Bokaro. The lead actor Anshumaan, now riding high on the success of *Grahan* recalls the environment post the success of it while it's being rated as one of the top five must series to be watched in India at the moment, "I can see a drastic switch around me, the roaring success of the web-show has motivated me to another pedestal! My audiences who never thought of me playing a character from the '90s and then temporarily switching into a Sikh for partial glimpses in the series, I heard were astonished. They felt I did righteous justice to Rishi Ranjan. The audience approval matters a lot to me and that instilled the faith in me all over again that I can continue to leave an impact in

this industry regardless of circumstances running outside or mediums. Offers have changed so much, earlier I was being asked to play a character in a certain zone while now I am receiving versatile characters as I have proved myself." Pushkar and the director in conjunction believe that '*Grahan ko unhone nahi balki Grahan ne unhe as a director-actor jodi chuna hai*'. The actor was hoping for a path-breaking character to come his way in the middle of a pandemic so that he can rightly grab the eyeballs! There were days, when he admits, "My expectations were rising horrendously. After *Grahan* falling in my kitty, I was so thankful for my stars that I felt now I can strike the right chords with the audiences. I am placing this web series at the highest plinth in my life. However, I am still assuming there's a long way to go even hereafter because I still can't be so picky yet or place my desires as a priority! For me, every role has innumerable possibilities to explore and traverse. All I ensure is that my upcoming role is never a duplicate of the former one because audiences want to watch new flavors." Owing to the coronavirus pandemic, savouring content available on varied OTT platforms became a lockdown hobby of sorts. The industry is facing strong competition from OTT, feels the actor. Like many actors, Anshumaan also opted for OTT as the chosen medium for displaying his diasporas of talent further in these unprecedented times. He's indeed an established name now! "With the advent of OTT now, no actor wants to give a repetitive performance. Now,

there's a fine line between being selective and repetitive! If as an actor, you continue to choose similar roles it's organic that your fandom will get tedious from you, how will you be able to show your variation then? An actor is a 'lambi race ka ghoda' only when he/she dares to play multi-faceted characters! I am a big no for alike roles. My previous series called *Jamtara* was also a story revolving around Jharkhand state like *Grahan* however we are touching two different zones! My role as Rishi Ranjan is so cavernous like an ocean and with a perspective of his own that made me accept this role," he confessed. Since the story deals with genocide and exodus, with people constantly being caught in the crossfire it was a heavy subject for the cast and crew. Anshumaan acknowledges that for him Rishi Ranjan is no less than a char-

acter from Ramcharita Manas's *Ramayana*, "Because to be able to play a holy character in this century is a whole new chapter of life. I adopted the same deepness, sincerity, and innocence while it was so daunting for me to present that in the form of a character in the nineties while I am a 21st-century guy. I guess, this is what an actor is meant to do. To delve deep into Rishi's role I made sure that I read the novel based on these anti-Sikh riots and myself in that uproar, I tried to understand what kind of relationship my director wants me to portray on screen, I re-watched Rishi Kapoor and Kamal Hassan sir's movies to reflect that chastity as there was a simultaneous love story going on and lastly focussed on the internalisation on the attitude coming from the 1980s with the help of my theatrical group. It was first ever that I didn't work on my physique

but the emotions because that's the whole gist of *Grahan!*"

A few complainants had alleged that the show was an artwork of a sinister mindset aimed at setting a false narrative about the 1984 anti-Sikh riots. They had also accused the makers of the show of attempting to show that a turbaned man had been involved in looting and arson. However, in its first hearing, the court dismissed an appeal against the web series released recently. But, it didn't stop there! The actor has begun receiving death threats also for his portrayal of Rishi Ranjan just with the onset of the trailer nonetheless he says post the release, there has been a change, and he tells us, "I've always maintained that audience should first watch and then decide. I used to get many threat messages as well along with the creators, but now those very people are like, 'Sorry bhai, humne galat samjha tha'. They are apologising. I understand it's natural for the population to object to topics like violence, riots, and massacres but they need to trust the makers. So many people just raise objections as a publicity stunt and nothing else."

Yes, riots and massacres are sensitive subjects and it may wound someone but the actor revealed the whole cast and crew was immensely empathetic towards the way they are going to shoot these controversial scenes, none of them wanted to hurt any community's sentiments neither evade any memories. There was no point in accusing us of portraying a fabricated story because it wasn't only full of violence, concluded the actor on a hard-hitting note.

## A moment of glory

Singer Kailash Kher tells *The Pioneer* that the *Gratitude Song* draws upon Prime Minister Narendra Modi's vision to make yoga a way of life

that we wanted to shoot in. I must applaud the team effort that went into the making of this song.

**Were there any on-ground challenges?**

I feel there were many challenges, majorly because of the current global health crisis. Many countries, like India, were under lockdown and had so many different guidelines. We had to make sure that we did not disregard any of the set regulations. We had to simultaneously complete this project and meet all of the strict instructions that were in place of various cities and countries. There were many places where we were refused entry. Also, many of us had our homes and studios at different locations, and some things could be done only in a studio, so it was quite a challenge. But eventually, we realised our goal and decided to go with 'plan B', which was to render the imagery on a green screen because no matter what, we all wanted to release this song. It was a moment of glory and pride for us. Luckily, everything just fell in place.

**How was your experience singing alongside internationally renowned singers?**

By the grace of God, my journey in the music industry has been astounding so far. I am proud of the work that I have been doing all this while. I always try to produce unique, out-of-the-box, quality content. I never wanted to be one of those run-of-the-mill kinds of musicians because music, for me, is a blessing from God. I find myself fortunate enough that God has chosen me to excel in singing. I have always wished to stand out from the crowd and that's why I have my own style of working. God has given us one life, one chance, so let's make the most of it and do something hatke. I count music and life as the same thing. For me, if there is no music, there is no life.

**What was the inspiration behind the *Gratitude Song*?**

It has been a great coincidence that International Yoga Day and World Music Day occurred on the same day this year. And it's an amazing fact that both yoga and music act as stress busters to keep our body and mind calm. The inspiration to create the *Gratitude Song* emerged with the urge to commemorate both these special days. I am proud to be a part of this wonderful initiative.

**How does the song aim to raise awareness about yoga?**

Yoga, a tradition that was once restricted to our country only, is now a worldwide phenomenon. It's an important part of India's history and culture. I can recall what Prime Minister Narendra Modi had once said, "Many countries which do not know our language, tradition, or culture, are now connecting to India through yoga." This song not only aims to touch over a million souls but also manages to reinforce the spirit of unity during these difficult times.

**Was it difficult to shoot amid the pandemic?**

Shooting and creating this song within three to four days was the biggest challenge and a miracle in itself. We had to connect all the dots, gather every artiste from India as well as from the international music fraternity. We were overworked but it turned out well because we had passionate people working towards the same objective. We called a few of our international musician friends, some of whom happen to be Grammy Award winners, and told them about the idea of making a song on the theme of yoga in four days. First of all, they laughed and thought it was impossible, but we worked hard, day and night to make this possible. We also figured out the countries

I feel music is like food for every soul, especially in such dystopian times. That's why I wanted to bring together and make some renowned musicians from across the globe a part of this beautiful song.

It has been great working with artistes like Wouter Kellerman (South Africa, Grammy Award winner), Lira (South Africa), Aeone (UK), Tito Da. Fire (Nigeria), Gazza (Namibia), Sonu Nigam, Shankar Mahadevan, KS Chithra, Shaan, Daler Mehndi, Raageshwari and Naresh Kamath.

We are getting amazing, warm responses from all over the world. I am proud to be the creator of this project and I congratulate my whole Kailasa team and Moving Pixels for having done some exceptional work.

## BE A VEGETARIAN YET GET YOUR PROTEIN

Protein is an important nutrient during dialysis. An individual loses as much as 8-16g or average protein per session of dialysis.

Individuals on dialysis need to consume 1.2-1.5g/kg ideal body weight of protein every day to compensate for these losses. A challenge met here is by most vegetarians to consume the required quantity in their diet.

A vegetarian is a person who follows a specific diet which includes consumption of only plant-based foods. Vegetarians do



not consume meat or egg. If you are a vegetarian, you don't have to start eating meat because you have chronic kidney disease (CKD) or have started dialysis. Although most of the vegetari-

an protein sources are either rich in phosphorus or potassium, it is not necessary that you avoid taking them. It is of utmost importance that you take your phosphate binders with food correctly. Vegetarian sources are not as high in biological value as egg or meat but taking them appropriately will help one get their daily dose of protein.

**Vegetarians may include the following sources to enhance their protein:**

- Soy or soy products like soy milk, soya flakes, meal maker, tofu etc.
- Dairy products (restricted to 300 ml/day) most importantly paneer.
- Beans and lentils (leached)
- Grains
- Legumes (leached)

Although protein supplements may be an option for patients who are unable to meet their protein needs by food alone, it is not

compulsory for a vegetarian to shift to being an Ovo-vegetarian.

(Consume eggs) just to get their protein. Follow your dietician's advice and get the daily dose of protein by continuing to be a vegetarian.

(The writer, Apeksha Ekbote, Msc,RD, is the Chief Dietician, NephroPlus, Hyderabad).



# what's brewing?



● Aabha Meerja



● Ayushi



● Diksha Panth



● Advithi and Aditi



● Harshi and Sanjana



● Hetal and Purvi

**A CHILD'S PLAY**  
 Creating a platform for kids of today to showcase their talent, Sameer from Fifth Avenue Event Management conceptualised the biggest-of-its-kind talent event for kids — Cloud Cuckoo's Land — where kids can showcase their talents in dancing, singing, music, ramp walk, acting, storytelling, painting, art and craft, and more, at HITEX Exhibition Centre. Registrations for the same are open from today.

Photos by SV Chary



● Poojitha

## Prateek Kuhad's new song is all about commitment, desire and infatuation

Critically acclaimed singer-songwriter Prateek Kuhad will be welcoming music enthusiasts once again into his intimate world of immersive artistry as he debuts his much-awaited quartet EP *Shehron Ke Raaz*.

Although Kuhad sings in Hindi on the record, there's a flawless authenticity to his delivery that transcends the confines of language and culture, resulting in a dreamy, modest, and profoundly moving EP that serves as a prime example of his eclecticism.

Standing in stark contrast to the heartfelt and longing of Kuhad's 2018 breakout collection, 'cold/mess', 'Shehron Ke Raaz', a refreshingly evocative, full-bodied release, relentlessly dives into the unbounded territory of commitment, desire and infatuation — the songs are hushed and tender, with sparse, subtle arrangements and whispery vocals, and the production is similarly understated and nuanced, calling to mind everything from Jose Gonzalez to Sufjan Stevens in its elegant honesty.

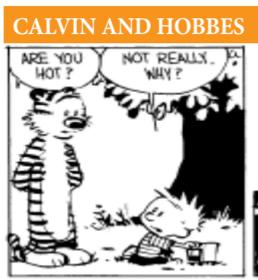
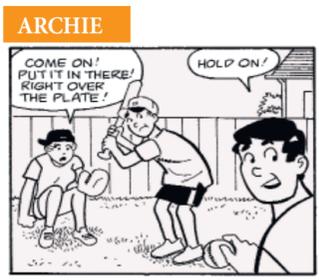
explores love in a very gentle and personal manner. The stories are hidden, and they belong to those who wish to participate in them. The music attempts to represent hope, mystery, and wonder in the most beautiful way possible.

Although Kuhad sings in Hindi on the record, there's a flawless authenticity to his delivery that transcends the confines of language and culture, resulting in a dreamy, modest, and profoundly moving EP that serves as a prime example of his eclecticism.

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## FUN



**CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4	5
6				
7				
8		9	10	11
			12	
13				
14	15	16	17	18
19				

**ACROSS**

- Words that ask you politely to come
- The head of a city council
- Very tall city buildings
- From Ireland
- These birds honk
- A person who has seen something happen and can give evidence in court
- Sweated
- A desert green place
- This fruit has pips
- Rub with a towel
- A thought
- This grows on heads
- Firearms
- The direction opposite west

**DOWN**

- A round handle
- The scene from a window
- Do damage to
- Very small
- Took clothes off

**SOLUTION**

W	I	N	T	E	R	S	L	A	P
L	E	A	D	I	T	T	E	R	A
L	E	A	D	I	T	T	E	R	A
C	L	A	P	P	E	D	O		
H	V	A	N	Y	T				
I	R	K	N	O	C	K	E	D	
D	R	E	F	L	S				
D	R	O	W	S	T	F	L	E	A
E	B	H	E	F					
N	E	E	D	B	R	I	D	G	E



**SUDOKU**

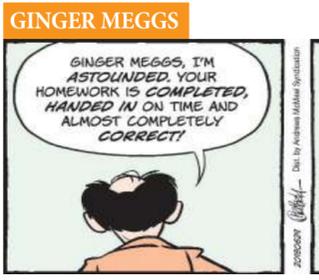
		1	8	9	6			
		3	5	1	4			
		4						
6	3		2	4				
	7					6		
		5	6		8	9		
				9				
	1	6	3	4				
3	2	9	5					

**Yesterday's solution**

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

**Rules**

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



# SOUTH STARS GO HIGH ON SPORTS MOVIES



eral sports films lined up right now, with many scheduled to release over the next few months, with OTT, giving them all-India, nay global, access.

What's more, films in the genre set to emerge from the Tamil and Telugu factories explore sports beyond the familiar cricket and football ambit. While *Muddy* bases its plot on drag racing, *Lakshya* finds its plot in archery. Films like *Sarpatta* and *Ghani* have boxing as the sport on which the storyline is based.

The sports drama, most in the South Indian film trade agree, is a popular and reliable genre in the film market of the region right now, mainly driven by the OTT advantage. Whether these films reach the digital domain directly, or after a big-screen release, streaming platforms will help such films strike instant connect with global audiences.

The cast and crew of these films are aware of this fact and

While there is a lot of hype about upcoming Bollywood sports movies such as '83, *Toofaan* or *Jersey*, an entirely different crop of biggies in the genre is being readied down South.

The Telugu and Tamil film industries, especially, have been increasingly investing in sports movies that let them explore the entire gamut of emotions and drama that come with the story of an individual, often an underdog, who strives against the odds to emerge a winner and make his nation proud.

For South Indian actors and filmmakers exploring the genre, the significance lies beyond box office basics. Given the fact that sports films as a genre draw audience attention easily, these films have become important to regional stars in the context of the pan-India scenario because the advent of OTT now provides a level playing field to all content coming from different parts of India.

Down South, there are sev-

are naturally excited to complete and release their respective films. Actor Varun Tej informed fans on Saturday about starting the final schedule of his Telugu sports drama *Ghani*, which casts him as a boxer.

Actor Naga Shaurya's Telugu film *Lakshya*, too, started shooting for the climax of the film in Hyderabad. The film is based on the sport of ancient archery.

Indeed, boxing is a flavour of the season across the board. If

Tollywood is readying *Ghani* and Bollywood is all set to digitally release *Toofaan*, Tamil bigwig director Pa. Ranjith has Arya-starrer drama *Sarpatta Parambarai* lined up. The poster of the film dropped recently and has garnered some buzz.

Chennai-based trade analyst Shreedhar Pillai agrees on the sports film as a genre that invariably catches the audience's attention, and would seem like an easy way for regional stars to woo the attention of the public beyond their established fan base.

"I think the sports genre always has a market everywhere, with its tales of the underdog succeeding against all odds. That's a formula that has always worked with the masses. So, they will use it. In all sports films, the hero or heroines are underdogs till the interval. You have to look at

movies other than cricket now because cricket is the most popular sport in India but there are too many movies based in India. You have to make a movie on boxing or racing or other sports," says Pillai.

Earlier this year director Praghbal announced the multilingual film *Muddy*, touted as India's first film on mud racing. The film will be released in Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam, as well as in Hindi.

Trade analyst Atul Mohan feels that filmmakers from southern industries are currently leading in terms of content and a film on sports drama can find them a larger audience across the country.

"Sports has always been a safe bet and we know how South filmmakers and actors have raised the bar content-wise. They are leading from

the forefront. When they are coming up with a genre like sports, we can expect blockbusters.

*Jersey* (now being remade in Hindi with Shahid Kapoor) was a Telugu film. South filmmakers are leading content-wise and they are coming up with great content within any and every genre, which is appealing and which leads to the trend of remaking their hits," he says.

Mohan feels the kind of drama South filmmakers add to just about any genre, sports films included, increase the chances of these efforts to be remade.

"If they are making films in the sports genre, I am sure those films will be remade. Content-wise they are ahead. Bollywood is always inspired by them. We would be eagerly awaiting to see sports films from the South," he sums up.



## RRR making a video on July 15



S S Rajamouli's magnum opus *RRR*, which is making noise from across the country ever since its launch, is gearing up for its promotional activities, it is learnt. The film which is being made on a mammoth budget of over Rs 450 crore, bankrolled by DVV Danayya, is nearing its completion and the makers are planning to begin their promotional activities. To announce the same, the ace director released a motion poster announcing the arrival of the making video.

It is also being heard that Rajamouli is planning to come up with a unique plan for the promotion of *RRR*.

This film brings together two top stars of the Telugu Film Industry — Young tiger Jr NTR and Ram Charan.

The film will also see Alia Bhatt making her Tollywood debut. Apart from them, Shriya Saran, Ajay Devgn, Samuthirakani, Alison Doody, Ray Stevenson, and Olivia Morris will also be seen in important roles. According to the latest buzz, the negative rights of the film are valued at over Rs 950 crores.

*RRR* is a fictional revolutionary tale set in the pre-independence era of India. MM Keeravani is rendering the tune, and KK Senthil Kumar is the cinematographer for the project.



## Tamannah Bhatia dons a quirky avatar for *MasterChef* Telugu

Ending all anticipation from eager fans, the newest promo for *MasterChef Telugu* featuring

Tamannah Bhatia dropped on Sunday. Seen in her usual quirky and playful element, the promo gives a quick

glimpse of Tamannah drooling over plates of tasty food. Since the announcement, there has been a lot of buzz about the event, and palpable excitement has been growing since the stylish diva shared some of her outfits from the show's shoot on her Instagram account.

Tamannah is poised to make her long-awaited television debut, and she is, without doubt, set to bring some of her distinctive elegance and charming brilliance to the show, which is set on a journey to showcase some of the country's top culinary geniuses.



## Akhil's chiseled look for *Agent*

Akhil Akkineni's 5th film *Agent* is touted to be the most expensive project of the actor and Akhil underwent a complete makeover to play the role of an agent. Director Surender Reddy who is known for presenting his heroes in a stylish best avatar will be showing Akhil in a dashing avatar.

Akhil's first look has been released on Sunday where the actor is flaunting his chiseled body. "This is just the beginning...Meeku mundu mundu undi pandaga!!

@AkhilAkkineni8 @AnilSunkara1 @MusicThaman @YamsiVakkantam @AKentsOfficial @S2C\_Official informed Surender Reddy who also posted a video of Akhil working out in the gym.

We can also observe a tattoo of a goat on his back. "Agent loading, are you ready for a wild ride," announces the makers.

S Thaman scores music for the film bankrolled under AK Entertainments. A debutante Sakshi Vaidya is paired opposite Akhil in the movie.



## A culinary treat by Lakshmi Manchu on *aha*

AHA, which is on its high with unique series and talks shows, has announced yet another interesting project *aha Bhojanambu*, a fun talk show hosted by Lakshmi Manchu with a culinary twist.

After receiving applause for hosting talk shows like *Sam Jam* with Samantha, *No.1 Yaari* with Rana, the new project *aha Bhojanambu*, where actor, producer Lakshmi Manchu will host the show, will see top celebs from the industry dish out yummy delicacies and bond with the host over their love for food.

The show is co-pre-

sented by MTR & Himalaya Pure Hands.

The show triggers the many pleasant memories and nostalgia associated with food in the lives of the guests over fun conversations. The viewers will have an adequate dose of adrenaline rush with several food challenges in store. Through *aha Bhojanambu*, the platform rings in a new twist to the talk show format with a mouth-watering culinary dimension.

The list of stars includes Rakul Preet Singh, Tharun Bhascker, Vishnu Manchu, Akhil Akkineni, Prakash Raj, Anand Deverakonda, Rana Daggubati, and Vishwak Sen to name a few.

# DREAM COMPLETED, MESSI

Lionel wins his first international trophy with Argentina as Di Maria's goal seals 1-0 win against Brazil in Copa America final

AFP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Superstar Lionel Messi won his first trophy with his national team as Angel Di Maria's goal gave Argentina a 1-0 win over hosts Brazil in the Copa America final on Saturday.

The victory at Maracana stadium ended Argentina's 28-year wait for a major trophy, and also ended Brazil's unbeaten home record that stretched back more than 2,500 days.

Argentina had last tasted success at a major tournament in 1993 when the great Gabriel Batistuta's brace gave them a 2-1 win over Mexico in the Copa final in Ecuador.

It was the first time in six editions playing at home that Brazil had failed to lift the trophy.

And while 34-year-old Messi's odyssey has come to an end, Brazil's Neymar, five years his junior, is still without a major title at international level having missed the Selecao's win on home soil two years ago through injury.

Argentina edged a brutal and fractious affair thanks to Di Maria's goal on 22 minutes.

The 33-year-old winger ran onto Rodrigo De Paul's sumptuous through ball to lob Brazil goalkeeper Ederson with a first time finish.

Messi could have wrapped up the win two minutes from time but slipped when clean through with only Ederson to beat.

## THE TORMENTOR

Brazil were unchanged from their semi-final win over Peru while Scaloni made five alterations, notably bringing in Di Maria — who made an energetic and decisive entry off the bench against Colombia last time out.

The final was the first match of the tournament, which was originally due to take place last year, to allow in fans as 7,800 — a tenth of the Maracana capacity — took their seats after authorities partially lifted pandemic restrictions.

The first clear chance came on 13 minutes as Richarlison headed down Marquinhos's long ball into the path of Neymar but the Brazilian star was crowded out by a pair of defenders.

Argentina played with aggression and commitment, but no lack of quality with Di

Richarlison but Martinez parried his near post effort.



## COPA AMERICA MEDAL TABLE

Rank	Nation	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
1	Argentina	15	14	5	34
2	Uruguay	15	6	9	30
3	Brazil	9	12	7	28
4	Paraguay	2	6	7	15
5	Chile	2	4	5	11

Messi is the first player to be the tournament top scorer (4), top assist provider (5), Golden Ball winner and championship winner in history.



Football fans in Kolkata dance as they celebrate after Argentina football team victory over Brazil in Copa America final on Sunday

PTI

Maria tormenting Brazil's left back Renan Lodi, who probably should have cut out De Paul's pass for the winger's goal.

Di Maria had a shot from 20 yards blocked while Messi fired just wide following a 40 yard run.

Brazil struggled to create anything of note and even when they had a free-kick from shooting range, Neymar

couldn't beat the wall.

When the hosts did finally maintain some pressure late in the first half, Everton's deflected strike bobbed though to goalkeeper Emiliano Martinez.

## FRACTIOUS, NIGGLY

Tite was quick to act, bringing on forward Roberto Firmino for defensive midfielder Fred at half-time.

Richarlison had the ball in the net soon after but he was flagged offside. And moments later Neymar teed up

"It's a great title, especially for our people. The fans support the team unconditionally. I think they can identify with this team that never gives in."

—Lionel Scaloni  
Argentina coach

"We fell short so many times, but we kept knocking at the door and kept going until today we knocked it down and entered."

—Angel Di Maria  
Argentina winger

"We have to be big enough to recognize (the defeat) regardless of how painful and difficult it is."

—Tite  
Brazil coach

"We have to congratulate our opponents. Argentina neutralised our players and it was very difficult to come back after going a goal down."

—Thiago Silva  
Brazil defender

# Grand Slam No 20

AP ■ WIMBLEDON

Novak Djokovic tied Roger Federer and Rafael Nadal by claiming his 20th Grand Slam title on Sunday, coming back to beat Matteo Berrettini 6-7 (4), 6-4, 6-4, 6-3 in the Wimbledon final.

The No 1-ranked Djokovic earned a third consecutive championship at the All England Club and sixth overall.

He adds that to nine titles at the Australian Open, three at the US Open and two at the French Open to equal his two rivals for the most majors won by a man in tennis history.

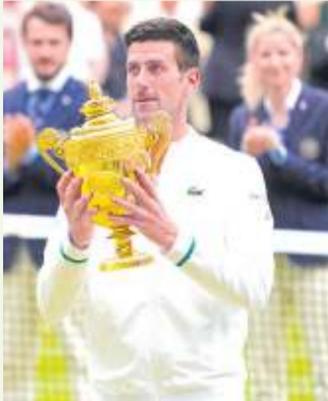
The 34-year-old from Serbia is now the only man since Rod Laver in 1969 to win the first three major tournaments in a season. He can aim for a calendar-year Grand Slam — something last accomplished by a man when Laver did it 52 years ago — at the US Open, which starts August 30.

This was Djokovic's 30th major final — among men, only Federer has played more, 31 — and the first for Berrettini, a 25-year-old from Italy who was seeded No 7.

It was a big sporting day in London for Italians: Their national soccer team faced England at Wembley Stadium in the European Championship final at night.

With Marija Cicak officiating, the first female chair umpire for a men's final at a tournament that began in 1877, play began at Centre Court as the sun made a rare appearance during the fortnight, the sky visible in between the clouds.

The 34-year-old, who came into the title clash having beaten Berrettini in both of their previous meetings, opened a 5-2 lead in the first set with an early break but the Italian fought back



Novak Djokovic holds his winner's trophy and celebrates his victory over Matteo Berrettini during the men's singles final match of the Wimbledon on Sunday

AP

to force a tiebreak which he clinched to draw first blood.

It was only the second set the Serbian had lost in this year's championships. He reacted by racing to a 4-0 lead in the second set before going on to level the match.

A single break of serve in the third and two more breaks in the fourth were enough for Djokovic to close out the contest in front of a raucous Centre Court crowd, who kept on chanting the Italian underdog's name. Djokovic sealed his place in the record books on his third match point when Berrettini's backhand slice landed in the net.

# India W keep T20I series alive

PTI ■ HOVE

Indian spinners worked wonders during the final overs as visitors edged out England by eight runs in the second women's T20 International to level the three-match series here on Sunday.

Batting first, India lost way after a good start provided by opener Shafali Verma (48 off 38 balls) to finish on 148 for 4.

In reply, opener Tammy Beaumont's 59 off 50 balls put England in good position before they were restricted to 140/8 in 20 overs.

Poonam Yadav (2/17) and Deepti Sharma (1/17) brought India back in the game during final five overs.

Earlier batting first, India could not capitalise on a blazing start provided by Shafali Verma and settled for 148 for four.

A flurry of boundaries from Shafali (48 off 38) helped India race to 47 for no loss in four overs.

The 17-year-old produced the kind of hitting she is known for. She slog swept left-arm spinner Sophie Ecclestone for a four and six before smashing pacer Katherine Brunt for as many as five boundaries in a row.

Brunt, who had dismissed Shafali in the first T20, had no answer to the disdainful hitting



Ireland batsman Andrew Balbirnie, centre, takes a knock, during the 1st ODI match between Ireland and South Africa at The Village in Dublin on Sunday

AP

from the Indian, whose five boundaries including a slap past the bowler and three in the cow corner.

Ecclestone bounced back strongly in her following over, bowling a maiden and dropping a tough return catch of Shafali.

The more experienced Smriti Mandhana (20 off 16) was happy being a spectator at the other end.

However, the game changed after the fall of Shafali and Mandhana in a space of three balls.

An out of form Harmanpreet (31 off 25), who promoted herself to number three, and Deepti Sharma (24 off 27) found it tough to maintain

the scoring rate.

The India skipper finally got a release with a heave over deep midwicket off spinner Mady Villiers after coming down the track.

The innings had lost the momentum created by the openers with India reaching 102 for two in 15 overs.

Running out of time, Harmanpreet deposited leggie Sarah Glenn for a four and six in the 16th over before falling to a brilliant running catch by Brunt from long off.

A few much needed boundaries from Deepti and Sneha Rana got India close to the 150-run mark. India collected 46 runs from the last five overs.



Ireland batsman Andrew Balbirnie, centre, takes a knock, during the 1st ODI match between Ireland and South Africa at The Village in Dublin on Sunday

# SA toil under cloudy Irish skies

AFP ■ DUBLIN

Half-centuries from William Porterfield and Andy Balbirnie helped Ireland to 195 for four in 40.2 overs before rain forced an early end to the hosts' innings against South Africa in the first ODI at the Malahide Cricket Club on Sunday.

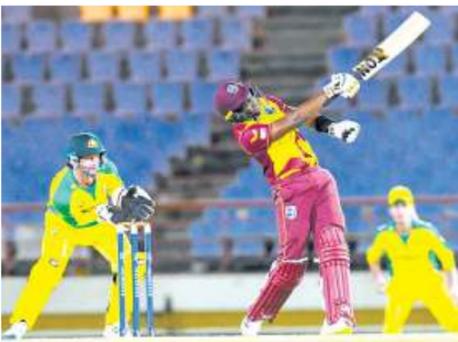
Porterfield, who faced 87 deliveries for his 63, his 18th half-century and first since 2019, struck nine boundaries in a watchful opening innings with Paul Stirling (13). Kagiso Rabada (8.2-43-2) and Lungi Ngidi (8-0-33-0) failed to strike within the first Power Play with Ireland reaching 28 without loss.

Captain Balbirnie (65) laid a good foundation with a second-wicket stand of 87 off 106 deliveries before Tabraiz Shamsi (8-0-35-1) had Porterfield glove-

ing behind to be caught by Aiden Markram, with the ball bouncing off wicketkeeper Kyle Verreynne's helmet.

Porterfield's dismissal did not deter Balbirnie, with the right-handed captain striking six fluid boundaries from 79 balls. Ireland had reached 145 for two after 35 overs before rain brought a halt to proceedings. The match was then reduced to 43 overs per side and with Ireland having just eight overs in the tank, decided to up the ante.

Balbirnie chipped Rabada straight to Shamsi at mid-wicket but Harry Tector (25) struck two fours and one juicy six from 28 balls in trying to lift the scoring rate, to try and put more DLS pressure on the visitors before edging Rabada to Verreynne behind the stumps.



# Back to back win for Windies

AFP ■ GROS ISLET

Shimron Hetmyer led a formidable West Indies batting effort on the way to a comfortable 56-run victory and a 2-0 lead over Australia in the second T20 International of their five-match series on Saturday (Sunday morning IST).

Hetmyer's 61 off 36 balls with four sixes and two fours paced the home side to 196/4 after they were sent in to bat again by visiting captain Aaron Finch.

He received excellent support from veteran all-rounder Dwayne Bravo, who contributed an unbeaten 47 to a 103-run fourth-wicket partnership while Andre Russell crashed 24 not out off only

eight deliveries to leave the Aussies with a much tougher task than in the first match a day earlier when they had limited their opponents to 145 for six.

Australia's pursuit of that daunting target stuttered from the start with the loss of Matthew Wade to the second ball of their chase and despite a second consecutive half-century from Mitchell Marsh, they fell well short in being dismissed for 140.

Leg-spinner Hayden Walsh grabbed three wickets for the second night in a row with the tourists' lower-order crumbling in a heap yet again to leave them in a must-win situation going into the third match on Monday at the same venue.

# All SL first team players test -ve

Colombo: The entire Sri Lankan first team, including senior players Kusal Perera, Dushmantha Chameera and Dhananjaya de Silva, have all returned negative in their latest RT-PCR tests ahead of the limited overs series against India.

It is now expected that the players would be allowed to enter the bio-bubble by Monday as they complete a week-long hard quarantine after their arrival from the United Kingdom.

As far as revised training itinerary is concerned, the Sri Lankan team will be practising

at the Khetarama (R Premadasa Stadium), since the Indians are training at the Sinhalese Sports Club ground (SSC).

Once the players get to enter the bio-bubble, they can at least meet each other in their rooms and also start using the gymnasium in a staggered manner.

The outdoor training and session (net practice) is also expected to start in the next 48 hours.

The official is confident that there won't be any more hiccups before the opening ODI on July 18.

PTI

with our favourite memories resurfacing from the deepest recesses. I am not any different to you and have my own set of remembrances from my days and expectations from the present set of Indian athletes across different disciplines.

Since I used to lead my school team, I followed Indian hockey's fortunes from the early 70s. I used to hear radio commentary from the Munich Olympic Games in 1972 when India won a Bronze medal. By 1976, I was more aware and knew that despite the shift to AstroTurf, India went out of

# Mehidy seals B'desh win in Zimbabwe Test

AFP ■ HARARE

Some resolute batting and dropped catches held up Bangladesh before they completed a crushing 220-run win over Zimbabwe on the final day of a one-off Test at Harare Sports Club on Sunday.

Needing a world record 477 to win, the hosts were all out for 256 after brave innings from nightwatchman Donald Tiripano (52) and fast-medium bowler Blessing Muzarabani (30) delayed the tourists' celebrations.

It was the fifth Test victory for Bangladesh outside the



country and a fitting send-off for all-rounder Mahmudullah Riyad, who is retiring from the longest format after an unbeat-

en career-best 150, his fifth Test century, in the first innings.

The visitors formed a guard of honour for Mahmudullah, playing his 50th Test since making his debut in 2009, and let him lead the team on to the pitch for the final day, which began with Zimbabwe 140-3.

For the visitors, Mehidy finished with 4-66 to give him nine wickets in the match.

The all-format tour by Bangladesh resumes on Friday with the first of three ODIs, which will be followed by three T20 Internationals.

# Tokyo Olympics re-kindle hope for Indian hockey team

ZAFAR IQBAL

The Olympic Games in Tokyo is around the corner and there is excitement building up as it draws closer, with the uncertainty dissolving with each passing day. From long before my playing days, the Olympic Games have been a source of inspiration for many people and Tokyo2020 will be special as it has the potential to bring cheer to a world hit by the pandemic.

Each time the Olympic Games is upon us, we have little clips playing in our minds

semi-final after losing a play-off with Australia via the tiebreaker.

Four years later, I was delighted to be picked to the team that competed in the Moscow Games. And I get goosebumps when I recall the surge of emotions that I felt through the stay in the USSR capital. I was aware that the Olympic Games was the pinnacle of sport, but that did not prepare me for what I experienced there. Suffice to say, it was a whole new universe for me.

India faced some good

competition from Spain, host USSR and Poland in hockey. Despite being a largely new-look squad, with only skipper V Baskaran and Bir Bahadur Chhetri having the experience of the Olympics — and of playing on an AstroTurf pitch, we went on to win Gold and I still cherish that feeling.

I am reminded of how in our short preparatory camp in Patiala we had trained on a ground that had been shorn of all grass and the surface was arranged in a starkly different fashion. In contrast, it was an utter revelation to see the pitch

in Moscow and come to terms with it.

The situation has dynamically changed now with so much Government support for the hockey teams to train and compete internationally. The men's team inspires hope that it can do well in Tokyo2020. I believe the team has the ability to show that it can be different from some of its predecessors which did well in the run up to the Olympic Games but faltered there.

The men's team will do well to find consistency and victories that will give it the confi-

dence to do well in the August 1 quarterfinal and get closer to the elusive medal. As for the women's team, I appreciate how well it has done to qualify and rise in the FIH rankings. It would be wonderful to see it get to the quarterfinals, too.

That would heighten my excitement when tracking the Olympic Games, rekindling memories and adding some wonderful new ones to celebrate.

(Zafar Iqbal, part of the 1980 Olympic Games Gold medal winning hockey team, is also a former National coach)