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the pioneer



FOR POOJA, NERVOUS ENERGY IS GOOD

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IMF CUTS COVID-HIT INDIA'S GDP GROWTH FORECAST TO 9.5 PC FOR FY22

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday cut its economic growth forecast for India to 9.5 percent for the fiscal year to March 31, 2022 as the onset of a severe Covid second wave cut into recovery momentum. This forecast for 2021-22 is lower than the 12.5 percent growth that IMF had projected in April. For 2022-23, IMF expects economic growth of 8.5 percent, larger than the 6.9 percent it had projected in April. "Growth prospects in India have been downgraded following the severe second Covid wave during March-May and expected slow recovery in confidence from that setback," IMF said.



SENIOR JOURNALISTS MOVE SC FOR PROBE INTO PEGASUS SPYWARE ISSUE

Veteran journalists N Ram and Sashi Kumar have moved the Supreme Court seeking an independent probe by its sitting or retired judge into reports of government agencies using Israeli spyware Pegasus to allegedly snoop on eminent citizens, politicians and scribes. The petition, seeks investigation into the hacking of phones using the spyware saying it represented an attempt by agencies and organisations to muzzle and chill the exercise of free speech and expression of dissent in India. It also sought a direction to the Centre to disclose if it or any of its agencies obtained licence for Pegasus spyware and used it, either directly or indirectly, to conduct surveillance in any manner.



BJP PICKS BASAVARAJ BOMMAI TO SUCCEED YEDIYURAPPA AS K'TAKA CM

The Karnataka BJP legislature party on Tuesday elected Basavaraj Bommai as its new leader and he will succeed outgoing Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa. According to party sources, Bommai, a Lingayat leader from North Karnataka, had the backing of the outgoing Chief Minister Yeddyurappa to succeed him. Basavaraj Bommai is the son of former chief minister, the late SR Bommai. The 61-year-old leader was Minister for Home Affairs, Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Legislature in Yediyurappa's council of ministers which was dissolved on Monday. Soon after the announcement, Bommai sought the blessings of Yediyurappa, and he was greeted by other party leaders.



PROMOTION, RS 2 CRORE FOR OLYMPIC SILVER MEDALIST MIRABAI CHANU

Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw felicitated weightlifter Mirabai Chanu on Monday for winning a Silver medal in the Tokyo Olympics, and announced a reward of Rs 2 crore and promotion in the Northeast Frontier Railway. Chanu, who has returned home, has inspired billions around the world with her talent, hardwork, and grit, the minister said. "It was great to meet and congratulate the pride of India and honour of Indian Rty, @mirabai_chanu. Also felicitated her & announced Rs 2 Cr , a promotion and more. She has inspired billions around the world with her talent, hardwork and grit. Keep winning for India!" Vaishnaw tweeted.



AP allows Telangana to use its software to improve school infra

SNCN ACHARYULU HYDERABAD

In an interesting development, the Andhra Pradesh government headed by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has extended software assistance to the government of Telangana headed by K Chandrababhu Naidu.

The YSRC government issued orders (GO RT NO-177) on this effect on Monday, giving permission to use the software developed for use by the AP School Education Department.

In the orders, School Education Principal Secretary B Rajasekar said that the Director of School Education has submitted proposal for permitting the government of Telangana to utilise the software developed by TCS, for implementation of Infrastructure Development Project in schools.

"After careful examination of the



matter, the State government hereby issues 'No Objection' to the Government of Telangana, for utilising the "Nadu Nedu Software" developed by the TCS for Mana-Badi and Nadu-Nedu Programme of the Government of Andhra Pradesh, for implementing the same for the Schools Infrastructure Projects pro-

posed to be taken up by the Government of Telangana".

The novel schemes - Nadu-Nedu and Mana Badi - were introduced by the Jaganmohan Reddy government in Andhra Pradesh to create infrastructure facilities in schools. For this, separate software was developed.

When the Telangana government decided to provide infrastructure facilities in schools across the State, it requested the Andhra Pradesh government to allow it to use the software.

The 'No Objection' from the AP government came at a time when the two States are at odds with each other over sharing of river waters.

Incidentally, it was just two days ago that the Chairman of National Education Policy- 2020 Dr K Kasturirangan lauded the reforms being carried out in the education sector by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

KRMB seeks DPRs of all Krishna projects

ML MELLY MAITREYI HYDERABAD

In an effort to resolve the differences between the two Telugu States over the sharing of Krishna waters, the Krishna River Management Board has sought the details of all the projects constructed, ongoing and proposed in the Krishna basin. It also sought the details of the proposed Jogulamba barrage, for which the Telangana government issued a GO recently for taking up a survey.

The KRMB sought the Detailed Project Reports of all the completed projects, those in progress, and the ones proposed to be taken up, giving an indication that it is now determined to have access to all the data pertaining to the projects, after the Centre issued the gazette notification about the jurisdiction of the Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards. It sought the details of 37 major, medium and minor irrigation projects of Telangana in the Krishna basin.



file photo

After the notification was issued, both the States wrote to the KRMB about their respective water shares. The Telangana government had requested the Board to allocate Krishna waters on 50:50 basis till the Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal - 2 made project-wise allocation of the available water. It said that, in the absence of guidelines for project-wise

allocations and joint projects, only ad hoc allocations had been made every year. At present, Telangana was getting 299 tmc and AP 512 tmc as the request for re-allocation of Krishna water to Telangana State had been pending for the past six years. Telangana also complained that Andhra Pradesh was diverting 4.9 tmc from Srisailem per day for projects like

the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation that were not approved. Also, AP had facility to store 300 tmc of water in Penna basin, but Telangana can only lift 0.28 tmc per day.

Telangana said that they had complained to the KRMB and Jal Shakti Ministry several times against the diversion of the Krishna water to other basins by Andhra Pradesh. Hence, for the year 2021-22, KRMB should allocate 811 tmc of Krishna water equally between the two States. Meanwhile, the Telangana Retired Engineers Association advised that both the Chief Ministers of AP and Telangana and their representatives should discuss and resolve the issue amicably.

Finding fault with the Centre for the notification of KRMB and GRMB jurisdictions comprising all the projects in Krishna and Godavari basins, the association said it looked as if the States were being treated as Union Territories by the Centre.

Non-Covid services to resume in Gandhi from Aug 3

NAVEENA GHANATE HYDERABAD

Non-Covid services, including those provided at the outpatient block, will resume at Gandhi Hospital from 3 August, while continuing Covid services. This was decided at a meeting held recently, after obtaining the consent of all HODs to start General (non-Covid Services), OP, IP and Emergency Services) in Gandhi Hospital from 03 August 2021 and continuing with Covid services. The hospital was converted completely to provide only Covid services starting April 3.

The Nursing Superintendent and Health Inspector were instructed to prepare all wards, Operation theaters and other areas for Covid and non-Covid Services, according to Hospital Infection Control Protocols. Ortho ICU Floor, along with 2nd and 3rd Floor would be utilized for Covid cases, while the 4th floor would be utilized for mucormycosis cases. The rest of hospital areas, wards will be utilized for general non-Covid services.

High Court asks report on cinema ticket pricing

PNS HYDERABAD

With cinema halls across Telangana set to open from Friday, the Telangana High Court has given four weeks' time to the state government to take a call on the report on pricing cinema tickets submitted by a committee for the purpose.

The Telangana High Court held a hearing on the issue over ticket pricing on Tuesday. The High Court questioned the government as to what rules had



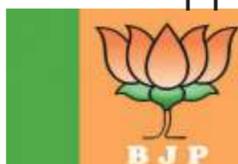
been framed to determine cinema ticket prices after the formation of the state.

BJP dreams are disappearing in TS

PNS HYDERABAD

Although the Bharatiya Janata Party, buoyed by its performance in the LS elections, Dubbak by-polls and GHMC elections, has been tomming that it is an 'alternative' to the Telangana Rashtra Samiti in Telangana State, the series of recent exits of its key leaders, with some of them switching to TRS, has shattered the dreams of the saffron party.

After the GHMC elections and the Dubbak Assembly bye-election, the BJP left no stone unturned to assert that it is becoming stronger, day by day. But the downfall of BJP started apparently from the Lingoiguda division bye-election in the GHMC.



The bye-election to this division occurred due to the death of a BJP corporator. In the bye-election, the BJP failed in protecting its sitting seat in spite of TRS not contesting, reportedly in deference to some BJP leaders' request. Later, BJP failed to protect its sitting MLC seat in the Hyderabad Graduates constituency. In the Nagarjuna Sagar Assembly

bye-election, the BJP was expected to give a strong fight to the TRS and the Congress. But the BJP was failed in protecting its deposit also. Given the foregoing outcomes, the BJP has been in a desperate mood. Adding insult to injury, some of the party leaders have started giving shocks to the high command. In the last 15 days, the resignations of several important leaders of the party could not be digested by the BJP leadership.

All these days, the BJP leaders have been confidently telling people in Telangana that their party was an alternative to the ruling TRS.

KTR wants insurance coverage for party workers speeded up

PNS HYDERABAD

TRS working president K T Rama Rao has asked the general secretaries to speed up the process for giving life insurance coverage to party workers.

KTR, who held an internal meeting with the party general secretaries at his office in Pragathi Bhavan here on Tuesday, reviewed the membership drive taken up by the party and digitization of all the details of members. He reportedly wanted the process to be speeded up.

Praveen Kumar to take over as TS BSP chief on Aug 8

PNS HYDERABAD

BSP chief and ex-Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh Mayawati announced in New Delhi on Tuesday that R.S. Praveen Kumar (IPS official in TS who sought voluntary retirement recently) is going to join the Bahujan Samaj Party and that he would be chief of the party's Telangana unit.

Praveen Kumar, who has sought voluntary retirement with six years left for his superannuation, has stated that he would serve the people and try to work out the modalities. He had declared that he would work for the benefit of Bahujan, which means the Backward Classes. He claimed to be



a follower of Kanshiram and his policies. That statement had signaled political circles that he might join the BSP.

Jagan pull up babus, says performance is 'very bad'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

For the first time since becoming Chief Minister 26 months ago, YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday pulled up bureaucrats, saying the performance of some of them was "very bad" and "not acceptable".

He said memos would be issued to all such officers who failed to perform their assigned tasks well. "Issuing memos is a painful thing for me. It's like issuing a memo on my own performance, as your failure is my failure," Jagan remarked.

KTR launches Telangana investors guide

ML MELLY MAITREYI HYDERABAD

For the benefit of all those interested in exploring investment opportunities in Telangana, Minister for IT, Industries and Commerce and MA&UD K.T Rama Rao released the 'Pink Book: An Investor Guide to Telangana' at Pragathi Bhavan here on Tuesday.

The investors' guide 2021 gives an overview of the opportunities Telangana offers to investors and sheds light on the amenities and infrastructure in the state. The Pink Book also lists out the activities undertaken by important departments.

Appreciating the effort, KTR said Telangana had always aimed



at figuring amongst the best states in India, particularly in respect of the Ease of doing business (EoDB). "The Pink book is a comprehensive document that lists out sectoral policies of the state and also lists out important governmental con-

tact details. I'm sure it will help the investors take an informed decision on their future investment plans and also enhance Ease of Doing Business in state."

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Titthi : Panchami 26:47
Nakshatram : Purna Bhadrapada 10:45
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 12:22 pm - 1:58 pm
Yamagandam : 7:34 am - 9:10 am
Varjyam : 8:52 pm - 10:33 pm
Gulika : 10:46 am - 12:22 pm
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritkalam : Nil
Abhijit Muhurtham : Nil

HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 29/22
Humidity: 88%
Sunrise: 5:54 am
Sunset: 06:50 pm
Current Weather Conditions
 Updated JULY 27, 2021 5:00 PM

Huzurabad bypoll brings windfall

PNS HYDERABAD

The spin-off from the resignation of Huzurabad MLA Eatala Rajender has been a windfall for the constituents, considering the attention of the government and ruling party they have been garnering.

It is anyone's guess when the Election Commission will schedule the by-election. Normally, the EC will conduct by-elections for all the constituencies that have fallen vacant across the country at one go and sometimes it can be much before the six month outer limit for a vacant constituency.

Given the focus of the ruling party on Huzurabad to win over every segment of voters there, and the preparations for piloting the latest welfare scheme 'Telangana Dalit Bandhu' in the seat, speculation is rife that the



by-election is not far away. The pilot project, if successful, will be extended across the State to transform the lives of Dalits by ensuring their economic and social empowerment, Chief Minister K

Chandrasekar Rao has said. KCR held a marathon meeting on Monday at Pragathi Bhavan with about 450 Dalit representatives from Huzurabad explaining them how the scheme, involving one-time financial

assistance of Rs.10 lakh to each Dalit beneficiary, would enable the down-trodden section to start a trade, vocation or a MSME unit and earn a decent living without the burden of loan and interest. It left them overwhelmed. Apart from pushing the innovative scheme, which no other State or Chief Minister could think of in the country till now, KCR gave instructions to the officials and the District Collector to address each and every grievance of people in the constituency pertaining to basic amenities, land issues, and welfare schemes like ration cards and pensions. If indeed the long-pending grievances are addressed, people of Huzurabad will be the envy of those in every other constituency, political observers quipped.

Bar Councils request V-P, CJ for setting up SC bench

PNS HYDERABAD

Chairmen of Bar Councils of southern States have met Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu and Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and requested them to set up a bench of the Supreme Court in the southern region.

A delegation of Bar Council heads of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala on Monday met the Chief Justice and the Vice-President at Delhi and submitted a representation to them in this regard.

They have responded positively, Bar Council of Telangana Chairman A Narasimha Reddy said in a release here.



The plea to set up Permanent Regional Benches of the Supreme Court has been a long pending demand, they said pointing out that the Standing Committees of Parliament, Bar Councils at the State and National Level, Law Commissions have made representations in this regard.

It appears as if everything in the administration of Andhra Pradesh is on in a smooth manner and the government is paying needful attention to the implementation of various welfare programmes at the behest of the person in the hot seat. Still, an eerie calm prevails in the daily routine of the government and its representatives. Besieged by emerging vital issues, the government is believed to be closely following certain sensitive developments. Despite winning unprecedented people's mandate, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy seems to be a ruler who leaves much to be desired. The possible impacts of the outcomes of certain cases on Jagan's political career seem to have affected the wheels of administration. Even ordinary workers of YSRC are spending nervous moments while watching anxiously the pace of investigations into various cases. Allocation of funds for the multi-purpose Polavaram

An eerie calm prevails in AP!

project; key developments in the investigation of the gruesome killing of former minister & MP YS Vivekananda Reddy, brother of late former CM YSR and paternal uncle of Jagan; and ongoing political tussle between Jagan and his own party MP K. Raghuramakrishnam Raju, who filed a petition in CBI court seeking cancellation of bail for Jagan, have definitely affected the morale of the party. Most of the Ministers too are moody because of the talk that in the impending reshuffle most of them are going to be dropped.

The Polavaram project is not getting the expected attention from the Union government, which has refused to give revised rates, despite the revised estimated costs. It means that AP will have to meet additional financial bur-

The possible impacts of the outcomes of certain cases on Jagan's political career seem to have affected the wheels of administration. Even ordinary workers of YSRC are spending nervous moments while watching anxiously the pace of investigations into various cases.

den of Rs. 7,192/- crore.

The AP government needs Rs. 10,500/- crore just to meet the expenses of paying salaries.

The Polavaram works are getting affected also by floods in the Godavari and the conifer dam, which is nearing completion, with its impact on storing flood waters on a large scale. As a result, 27 villages are in the areas of sub-

mergence.

In fact, the present government should be thankful to the earlier regime for getting seven revenue mandals of Telangana State that are in submergence area through an Ordinance issued by the central government. Otherwise, there would have been serious wrangling with Telangana State over the submergence.



M D RATNA KUMAR Senior Journalist

Having control over the area of submergence is considered a positive sign for the state of AP. This has forced Telangana State to give up its hopes of getting back again those seven revenue mandals.

However, the ongoing tussle

between the ruling party government and MP Raghurama is causing much embarrassment to the ruling party as the latter could establish that he had been tortured and given third-degree treatment in police custody. Raghurama highlighted the issue of an MP getting third-degree treatment in police custody by writing letters to all MPs in their respective mother tongues. So, he struck a chord with his colleagues in Parliament. Raghurama's attempt to get Jagan's bail cancelled has been countered by YSRC MPs by demanding action against him under the Prevention Money Laundering Act.

However, the rebel MP managed to get access to RSS leadership and tried to inject the acts of the AP government against Hinduism into their

brains.

As for the petition filed by the rebel MP in CBI court seeking cancellation of Jagan's bail, lawyers representing the investigative agency suddenly requested leave, citing ill-health as the reason. This has raised several eyebrows.

The gruesome killing of Vivekananda Reddy had created a sensation in Andhra Pradesh ahead of the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

Within no time, then principal opposition party YSRC had accused then TDP government headed by Chandrababu Naidu of killing Viveka by instigating then minister D. Adinarayana Reddy of Kadapa district. Investigative agency CBI recently recorded a statement of the watchman who was on duty on that fateful day. He is

believed to have stated that 'supari' of Rs.8 crore had been given for killing Viveka and there was possible involvement of two 'prominent persons' in this sordid episode. This created a sensation, leading to wild imagination about the outcome of the CBI probe. People have noticed the transfer of the DIG rank officer who is leading the investigation and his replacement by an officer of SP rank. People are curious to know why the investigating officer was transferred at a crucial stage of the probe. The opposition has questioned the 'stoic silence' of the Chief Minister and the Director General of Police with regard to the murder of Viveka.

Viveka had faced painful moments, including 'domestic pressure' that drove him to almost 'relinquish' the Lok Sabha membership to pave the way for Jagan to contest 15 years ago. But Viveka had continued as an MP, thanks to then Congress president Sonia Gandhi!

Who will be Telangana's youngest Chief Minister?

SNCN ACHARYULU HYDERABAD

The question that has created interest in the political circle of the state as also among the general public is who is going to be the first youngest Chief Minister of the Telangana State. The next Assembly election in Telangana is crucial to four political leaders, who are aspiring to become Chief Minister. The first and present Chief Minister of Telangana State K Chandrasekhar Rao is 67-years-old. In the neighbouring Telugu state in the previous Assembly election 70-years-old former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu was replaced by 41 years (now 43 years) old YS Jaganmohan Reddy. Now in Telangana, in the next Assembly election, who is going to replace the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will be decided by the people of Telangana.

The aspirants for the post of CMs are 51-year-old A Revanth Reddy, the Telangana Pradesh Congress committee (TPCC) President, 43-year-old YS Sharmila, the head of YSR Telangana Party and 50-year-old Bandi Sanjay, the President of Telangana BJP unit. The 41-year-old KT Rama Rao, the IT Minister and the son of present Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is also a strong contender for the CM's post. In fact KCR had thought to make his son KTR the CM in his place, but due to some reasons KCR postponed it. Otherwise, by this time KTR would have become the first youngest CM of the Telangana State. For Revanth Reddy, Bandi Sanjay and YS Sharmila becoming the CM is in the hands of people of Telangana. But for KTR it is in the hands of his father KCR the Chief Minister of Telangana.

There is speculation in the

TRS circles that KCR may make his son KTR the Chief Minister in the election year. KCR plans to face the next Assembly elections under the leadership of his son. If this happens KTR will create record as the first youngest Chief Minister of Telangana. As of now, the TRS is still strong enough to come to power for the third consecutive time in the next Assembly elections. If not in this term KTR would have a chance to become the CM in the next term. But in politics fate may change any time. The fact is that after the appointment of Revanth Reddy as TPCC President the Congress cadre have become more active. The Congress leaders are nurturing hope of coming to power for the first time in the Telangana State. BJP is not that much strong in Telangana that they may come to power and at the national level the image of BJP is grad-

ually fading. There is a chance of BJP winning some Assembly seats due to anti-incumbency factor in the state.

Meanwhile for YSR Telangana Party it is not easy to come to power in Telangana. YS Sharmila feels that in the next Assembly elections there will be hung Assembly. If YSR Telangana Party wins 25 to 30 Assembly seats the TRS or Congress would not have a chance to get majority to form the government. In such circumstances these two parties have to depend on YSR Telangana party. They will need the support of YSR Telangana party to form the government as they will not support each other. In the 119 members Telangana Assembly to form the government support of 61 members is required. However, in the event of a hung Assembly the TRS and Congress may indulge in horse trading to get majority as well.

KRMB seeks DPRs of all...

Continued from page 1

It said it would be in the interests of both the States to come to an understanding on the sharing of water till the Tribunal resolved the water allocation issue. If that was not possible, then the Telangana government should approach the Supreme Court on the gazette notification issued by the Centre.

The Retired Engineers Association advisors Anantaramulu and Venkata Ramarao and its president Damodar Reddy and general secretary Syamparasad Reddy have written a letter to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in this regard. They also said that as there were no joint projects on the Godavari River, there was no need for the Godavari River Management Board. It would also burden the States as they would have to give Rs.200 crore each towards salaries and establishment expenditure of engineers and others brought under the purview of the Boards, while depriving the States of their powers.

'Extremely insensitive' of techies refusing to come to offices: Jayesh

PNS HYDERABAD

It is extremely insensitive of IT employees refusing to come to offices. Thousands of small time people who work in IT offices such as taxi drivers, vendors, facilities management and others depend just on the jobs for their livelihood are facing difficulties, said Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary of the Industries & Commerce and Information Technology Departments, interacting with the media.

In a reply to a question about employees refusing to join back in offices, Jayesh Ranjan replied

that it was extremely insensitive for IT employees refusing to come back to offices. We can understand when they refused during the peak period of the pandemic. Now, the risk is minimised and is much less, still, they don't want to join back is not fair. All I can say about it is very insensitive and very unfortunate, he said.

Speaking about the newly inaugurated ICU ward, Ranjan said that, "Preparedness is the best way to handle any crisis, including the pandemic. No patient should miss out on treatment due to the lack of medical infrastructure. The

effort undertaken by Cognizant and Round Table India Trust in setting up this ICU ward at Osmania General Hospital is commendable, and their initiative will enable the government hospital in dealing with any future wave and help mitigate the crisis."

I am happy that with this facility coming up, even the poor will be able to utilise the most advanced health infrastructure. Jayesh also appreciated the services offered by Helping Hands Foundation for guiding, counselling patients and creating awareness about healthily living.

BJP dreams are disappearing in TS

Continued from page 1

Good show in the GHMC elections, surprise victory in Dubbak bye-election and the influx of leaders from other parties and Congress leaders leaving the party had given booster dose to BJP leaders' claim that their party "is an alternative to TRS".

Some of the BJP leaders are leaving the party and joining even the Congress. Former MLA Erra Chandrasekhar from erstwhile Mahabubnagar district, BJP strongman in Warangal district Gandra Satyanarayana, former Ministers Mothkupalli Narasimhulu, E Peddi Reddy from erstwhile Nalgonda and Karimnagar districts respectively, and some other leaders resigned from the BJP.

Meanwhile, BJP leaders expected that former MP Konda Vishveshwar Reddy would join their party after resigning from the Congress. But now Konda is likely to rejoin Congress, after his aide A Revanth Reddy's elevation as TPCC president. Former MLA K Srisailem Goud and some others are also planning to resign from the BJP.

Jagan pull up babus, says performance...

Continued from page 1

At a videoconference with district Collectors on the public grievances programme 'Spandana', the Chief Minister took the officials to task by reading out statistics on their performance, in particular reference to the periodic inspection of village and ward secretariats.

"The village and ward secretariats are our brainchild. If we don't own them, progress will

deteriorate. Regular inspection is the only way to improve the secretariats' performance," the Chief Minister said.

He asked the officials how they would appreciate the people's problems if they did not conduct field inspections.

"We are humans first and officers next. We need to first have a humane perspective. If we overlook the poor man, we have failed in our duties," Jagan observed.

He reminded them that the

Collectors were supposed to inspect two secretariats a week, while others like Joint Collectors, Municipal Commissioners and Sub-Collectors were required to inspect four each.

"While 1,098 field-level inspections had to be done, only 733 happened, which is only 66.75 percent. Collectors did 106 percent and JCs (secretariats) did 107 percent against the target. These officials have done well, Jagan

said.

But he pointed out that three other Joint Collectors handling revenue, welfare and housing accomplished only 78, 85 and 49 percent of the target (inspections).

The municipal commissioners achieved 89 percent of the target, but the Integrated Tribal Development Agency Project Officers (18 percent) and Sub-Collectors (21 percent) lagged way behind, the Chief Minister said.

Centre junks reports about missing half-billion vaccine target by July 31

PNS NEW DELHI

The government today dismissed media reports that claimed that India will miss the end-July target of administering 50 crore Covid vaccine doses as 'ill-informed and misrepresenting' and asserted that over 51.60 crore

vaccine doses will be supplied from January to July 31.

The Health Ministry issued a statement referring to recent media reports alleging that the country will miss the target of administering half-a-billion (50 crore) doses of the COVID-19 vaccine by July-end, while point-

ing out that the government had stated in May that it would make 516 million (51.60 crore) vaccine shots available by the end of this month.

"These reports are ill-informed and have clearly misrepresented the facts," the statement said.

Bar Councils...

Continued from page 1

"The constitution of Regional Benches will reduce the number of pending cases before the apex court and reduce the time taken for their disposal," they said. They further said that it will create more positions of judges and the law practitioners will have the opportunity to argue cases in the Apex court bench in their region.

High Court asks report on...

Continued from page 1

However, the counsel of the state government informed the High Court that a committee had been set up to determine the ticket prices in the state. The counsel told the court that the committee had submitted recommendations to the government. Responding to this, the court directed the government

to inform the Court of its decision on the committee's report within four weeks. Besides, the High Court directed the secretaries of the Telangana Cinematography and the Home Ministry to file a counter on the same.

It may be mentioned here that theatres in Telangana have been permitted to have 100% occupancy. The Telugu film industry

has time and again sought revision of ticket fares so that film screenings could become more viable, especially after suffering losses during pandemic.

It may be mentioned here that the AP government had issued a notification directing theatre managements to adhere to the maximum ceiling rates, in accordance with the ticket prices fixed by the government.

Huzurabad bypoll brings windfall

Continued from page 1

Brushing aside the opposition's criticism that the Dalit Bandhu or the special focus on constituency was only with an eye on the impending by-election, Chief Minister justified his choice of Huzurabad for implementation of the pilot of Dalit Bandhu. The TRS government launched even popular scheme like Rythu Bandhu and its major political meetings from Huzurabad, he reminded his detractors.

Even politically TRS has been improving its strength further in the constituency with leaders from Congress

and BJP joining the TRS, but the opposition leaders too are determined to defeat the TRS, notwithstanding its populist schemes.

Rajender resigned as TRS MLA on June 12 and the very next day the Assembly Speaker accepted the resignation and the Election Commission was notified about the vacancy in Huzurabad. Going by the six-month window, the election has to be held by December 12.

Assembly by-elections are also due in West Bengal and Uttaranchal and in West Bengal, Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee, who lost the Assembly election in

Nandigram, has to be elected to the Assembly by November 5, given the six-month deadline. However, sources said that because of the extraordinary times in view of pandemic (which at this point of time has seen a lull in Covid-19 cases but experts and doctors caution the public to be wary of the third wave), the Election Commission need not stick to the six-month deadline and can put off the by-elections beyond the six-month time limit or can advance the by-election before the pandemic may see a resurgence. However, political parties, particularly the BJP leaders in Telangana, are

confident that elections would be held within the next two months and the former MLA Rajender who joined the BJP is most likely to be its candidate - unless his wife Jamuna enters the arena for some reason - has started his Padayatra making it the fight between the 'autocratic' attitude Chief Minister KCR and the self-respect of Huzurabad people. He has been campaigning that KCR humiliated the MLA elected by people of Huzurabad leading to his resignation just because he had dared to express his views on a number government policies and decisions in a democratic manner.

Meanwhile, in an interesting turn, former MLA Gone Prakash Rao wrote a letter to the Chief Election Commissioner on Tuesday requesting him to hold the Huzurabad by-election as early as possible. He alleged that the ruling TRS party and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had deputed his party men to spend hundreds of crores over the last two months to buy over people and leaders of different caste/communities like cattle in shanties. He alleged the TRS had already spent Rs.300 crore and would spend another Rs.400 crore, making it the most expensive election in the country.

Non-Covid services to resume...

Continued from page 1

Currently, there are only 1,494 beds in Gandhi Hospital, of which 375 are occupied. Of these 375 beds, 341 are occupied by ICU patients.

According to Superintendent Raja Rao, "As the number of Covid patients is still high and further surge is unpredictable,

all Heads of Departments were requested to allot their department faculty, Senior Residents and PGs in 40:60 ration: that is, 40% to Covid services and other 60% doctors for non-Covid general services". In this regard, the HoD requested to give the list of Faculty, SRs and PGs to the Roster Committee to prepare the roster.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹259
Without Skin	₹279
Broiler at Farm	₹144

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	455
VIJAYAWADA	524
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.55

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION GHMC

'e Procurement Notice'

NT No.: 18EECR-20/SLPZ/GHMC/1-2021-22 Dated: 26.07.2021

category of work: Civil & other works Estimate Amount (Rs in lakhs): 56.00 Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: 27.07.2021@1:30PM 5.07.2021@1:30PM Name & Address, Officer Cell No:EE.CIR-20.SLPZ.GHMC 9849906750

REGD. No.: 14528-PPCL/ADVT/1/2021-22

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CIRCLE-20, GHMC

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Over 1,300 firms closed; 12,000 opened in T'gana since April '20

NAVEENA GHANATE
HYDERABAD

The Coronavirus pandemic has hit the businesses hard as the number of companies shut down runs into thousands in Telangana over the past one year.

While many parts of the economy have begun to hum again, many small businesses are still struggling and report needing further economic aid and stimulus to survive.

The number of closed companies registered with the Ministry of Corporate Affairs (MCA) for the period from April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021 is 1,347.

However, the silver lining to this is about 12,586 new companies have been registered in Telangana during the Covid



pandemic, from April 2020 to June 2021. As of June 2021, 264 companies are under liquidation and 68 are in dormant state in Telangana, while 77,476 companies are in active state.

Nearly 536 companies were struck off in Telangana during this time frame. Under Section 248, a company can be struck off the official records subject to certain conditions.

These include instances where the registrar of companies has a reasonable cause to believe that companies are not carrying on any business or operation for two immediately preceding financial years and have not made any application within such period for obtaining dormant company status.

Likewise, in AP, about 85 companies were closed, 4,229 are new companies registered from April 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021. Nearly 108 companies were struck off in Andhra Pradesh during this time frame. As of June 2021, as many as 52 companies are under liquidation and 31 are in dormant state in AP while 24,429 companies are in active state. Across the country during April 2020 to June 2021

names of 16,527 number of companies were struck off from the register of companies pursuant to the provisions of section 248 of the Act.

There were 1,26,051 registered and 46,237 closed companies in Telangana as of June 2021 while the number was 1,13,624 and 44,890 respectively as of June 2020.

According to the MCA portal, the total number of companies registered in the country as on June 30, 2021 stood at 21,87,026. Of them 7,62,654 companies were closed. As many as 2,288 companies were assigned dormant status as per the Companies Act, 2013 and 6,918 were under liquidation, while 38,800 companies were yet to be struck-off. There were 13,76,366 active companies as on June 30, 2021.

Villagers soar at beautification works reducing area of tanks

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Congress alleges sub-standard execution of Komatikunta and Pochamma Kunta tanks beautification work at Almasguda village in Badangpeta Municipal Corporation limits. The tank beautification works have been initiated at a cost of Rs 2 crore and subsequently the cost of the works was revised by Rs 1 crore for each of the two tanks.

The Congress leaders and villagers have been questioning the rationale behind revising the allocations for tank beautification works in Maheswaram, being represented by Minister Sabita Indra Reddy.

The Congress leaders have been objecting to building the tank bunds using construction debris. When they tried to seek clarification from Badangpet Municipal Corporation engineering officials, they could not be contacted over phone.



However, corporation employee A Bikku Naik, who could be reached over phone, tried to pass the buck on others stating that the issue did not come under his jurisdiction. Right from the beginning, Congress leaders have been objecting to the beautification of the two tanks. They wondered how could the municipal corporation execute tank beautification works without first fixing the limits of the full tank level.

The beautification works will reduce the area of the tank,

the villagers said expressing concern over the danger awaiting those who lived in the vicinity of the tank. Low-lying colonies would be flooded even if there was a minor shower, they cautioned the officials.

Had the recent rains lasted for two more days, the Almas Guda colonies would have been flooded, they said clarifying that they were not against beautification of tanks. They insisted that the authorities took up the works only after fixing the full tank level.

Big B plants for GIC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Superstar Amitabh Bachchan on Tuesday took part in Green India Challenge by planting saplings at Ramoji Film City here.

The actor lauded the efforts of Green India Challenge and its founder and Rajya Sabha MP Joginipally Santosh Kumar in expanding the green cover across Telangana and the country. Amitabh Bachchan enquired about what inspired Santosh Kumar to take up this initiative, how plants are cared for, tended even after years of plantation and expressed his happiness at the results.

He said he was surprised to know that GIC planted three crore saplings recently on the occasion of the birthday of Telangana's minister for municipal administration and urban development KT Rama Rao. "It was certainly a mammoth task, and I am in awe of their dedication and commitment towards the environment," he said.

The Superstar also congratulated GIC for entering into Guinness Book of World Records with a massive plantation of 2 crore seed balls within an hour. "I have always been aware of Green India Challenge but taking part in this is a great privilege. I wish very best to Joginipally Santosh Kumar in taking this



great work forward," the actor said.

Amitabh Bachchan opined that a noble and great initiative like Green India Challenge requires great participation from across the world and said that he would challenge three more people to take part in the same from his twitter handle.

Telugu superstar Nagarjuna also took part in the programme and planted a sapling along with Producer Ashwini Dutt and Ramoji Film City MD Vijayeeswari. Incidentally, July 27 is also the death anniversary of India's greatest scientist and former President of India APJ Abdul Kalam and on many occasions, Santosh Kumar mentioned how Kalam inspired him to take up this challenge and do his bit for the environment.

Women harassed more on social media

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Women are facing harassment mostly through social media, the report released by SHE teams revealed.

From January to June 2021, SHE teams have received a total number of 2,803 complaints. Of them, 69 per cent were received through indirect mode (most of the complaints were received through WhatsApp) and 31 per cent through direct walk-ins to SHE team offices.

Telangana Police have released the report of the last six months on Tuesday. The majority of the cases have witnessed that the victims were harassed through social media and mobile.

At present there are 331 SHE teams working in TS. The SHE module collects daily DSR through specially designed software and compiles the same and creates a



database of the SHE Teams work.

The performance of the SHE team is monitored through a software, which will give day to day reports to the officials. Along with WhatsApp and other social media gateways, SHE team has provided a QR Code mechanism as a provision to complaint for the victims.

The QR code mechanism has come into force and as many as 40,000 QR code barcodes

in Telugu, English, Urdu languages were distributed to all the districts. Through this facility the victim can file complaints and send feedback.

The barcodes have been placed in all metro trains, RTC bus depots and bus stands, inside the buses, major railway stations in Cyberabad and Hyderabad Commissionerate.

Until now a total of 326 complaints were received. The Cyber Congress train-

ing programme - "CybHER III" is being taken up by the SHE Team with the initiation by the Women Safety Wing, as part of creating cyber awareness to the school going children, in rural and urban areas.

The project is running to all the 33 districts of TS, targeting 50 schools from each district. Overall, the project aims to enable 1,650 teachers and 3,300 children in 10 months.

Girl safety clubs were launched in the month of February 2020 in five selective colleges where shortlisted students were made volunteers to report any crime happening against girls students in the respective colleges, recently an online 'train the trainer' three-day programme was organised to 13 colleges by the Women Safety Wing.

The programme is it is being extended to all colleges in state.

Bonalu celebrated at GHMC head office

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Musheerabad MLA Mutha Gopal on Tuesday took part in the Bonalu festival held on the premises of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

Deputy Mayor Srilata Sobhan Reddy, TRS labour wing state president Devisri Prasad, GHMC employees' union leaders - president K Balakrishna, General Secretary K Venkatesh, working president B Harisam, Malleh, Durgaiah, Srinivas, DAS, Advisor Abdul Sattar and others took part in the festival.



COLD 'KICK'
Some of the air-conditioned bus shelters at various locations in the city are serving as recreational spot for tippers. Photographs of a person mixing his peg and having it in an air-conditioned bus shelter at 10.00 pm on Sunday went viral on social media after a social activist posted them on Twitter on Tuesday. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Deputy Commissioner for Moosapat division responded to the tweet and assured to take necessary action soon.

transfer. M Ramana Kumar who is serving as joint Director of Anti Corruption Bureau in Hyderabad has been appointed as the new police commissioner of Ramagundam.

He will be replaced by Ramagundam police commissioner V Satyanarayana on

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Man killed as car rams into autorickshaw

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 22-year-old man was killed in a road accident at Gachibowli on the city outskirts early on Tuesday. According to the police, the deceased was identified as Shahabuddin, a resident of Musheerabad.

The accident occurred when the car in which the victim along with his friend Afzal Khan was travelling rams an auto-trolley.

"When they reached Vattinagallapally on the Outer Ring Road, the car rams an auto-trolley at high speed.

Shahabuddin died on the spot while his friend was injured.

Later he was shifted to hospital," the Gachibowli police said, adding that the auto driver too was injured and shifted to hospital.

A case was booked and investigation is on.

Cyb cops hand over recovered property

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 'property release mela' was organised by the Cyberabad Police to hand over the stolen properties recovered from the habitual offenders, to the complainants at Cyberabad Police grounds on Tuesday.

The properties 93.1 tolas of gold, 360.2 tolas of silver ornaments recovered in 20 cases, Rs 30,67,463 cash recovered in 30 cases, as many as 90 vehicles recovered in 90 cases, 35 mobile phones recovered in 25 cases, 11 other properties recovered in 11 cases.

Property worth of Rs 1.50 crores recovered in 176 cases reached the hands of the owners. The Commissioner of Police VC Sajjanar has distributed mobiles, vehicles and gold ornaments to the victims, who have lost them. Victims of property offences from all over the Commissionerate were present at the program and received their hard earned property back.



FIR against Jubilee Hills Society prez

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jubilee Hills Police filed FIR on Jubilee Hills Society president Ravindranath and treasurer Nagaraju on Tuesday for allegedly selling of the society for a less rate.

After receiving a complaint against them, the police officials have filed an FIR and are investigating further.

Society Member Suresh Babu has complained to the police that the Society President, treasurer and others have plotted a conspiracy and sold out a property of the society for lesser price. He has alleged that they have caused a loss of Rs 5 crores to the society.

The police officials went to the Society office on Monday and inquired the staff and registered a case on Tuesday against Ravindranath and Nagaraju. The accused may get notices within two to three days from the police asking them to attend the inquiry.

After the issue came to limelight, GHMC officials have taken action and removed a construction in the government site, which is just behind the property of society. That property was only sold out by the society recently. This sale has become a dispute now and is sending the shivers down the spine of governing body, which was elected few months back.

Woman found dead in house

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman was found dead under suspicious circumstances at her house in Nacharam on Monday late night.

The woman, identified as Lalitha, along with her husband had consumed liquor in their house in the night. The couple had an argument in an inebriated condition. Lalitha then went into the bedroom, where she allegedly slipped and fell on the floor. She suffered grievous injuries on her head and died on the spot.

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Now, trains can travel 100 kmph on Godavari Bridge

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South Central Railway has been continuously strengthening and modernising its infrastructure to enhance the speeds over its rail network and provide better transport services to its passengers. In this direction, another important step has been taken by doubling the maximum permissible speed on the important Godavari Bridge located between Manchiryal - Peddampet section to 100 kmph. This is also the first time on SCR that a ballasted deck bridge of over 1 km length has been permitted to operate at 100 kmph. The stretch between

Manchiryal - Peddampet covering a distance of 9 kilometers, is located in the golden diagonal route of Kazipet - Balharshah section, which is a gateway of Southern region

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Now, trains can travel 100 kmph on Godavari Bridge

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

particularly from the northern region of the country. Seven minor bridges are located within this critical stretch along with one important bridge of 1.2 kilometers length across Godavari. This section is surrounded by several coal, cement and thermal plants with separate line for their sidings leading to heavy congestion of the section. In order to ease the congestion and also considering its importance, third line had been successfully completed in the year 2018.

Since then, the maximum permissible speed in the block section between Manchiryal - Peddampet was 80 kmph,

while the maximum speed over the Godavari Bridge has been 50 kmph. To double the speed on this major bridge, South Central Railways undertook major work involving welding all the Long weld Rails along the bridge, providing Switch Expansion Joint (SEJ) on the both sides of the bridge approaches, strengthening the track formation by unloading of another 120 wagons of Ballast and tamping among others. Accordingly, Track Recording Cars (TRC) & Oscillation Monitoring System (OMS) tests were successfully conducted over the bridge to ensure no defects.

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SOUTHERN POWER DISTRIBUTION COMPANY OF TELANGANA LIMITED
Energy Service & Energy Production
E-Procurement Tender Notice (Paper Notification: SP/21-22)
Tenders are invited from eligible contractors for tender 1) Sp No. 8021-22 CGMP/21-22 of 11KV Lines, DTRs at Stretch -VI, Road No. 5 & 7 2) Sp No.8021-22 of CGMP/21-22 (Reserved for ST Category) 'Stretch of 22 KV & 11KV Lines, DTRs & Erection of 11KV & 22KV Poles at Stretch -VI, Road No. 18 Service road to Junction' 3) Sp No. 8021-22 of CGMP/21-22 of 33KV/11KV Lines, DTRs & Erection of 11KV & 22KV Poles at Stretch -VI, Road No. 11 (Adjacent to GDR road) for Integrated Development of Kowtal Layout including construction of Transport and interchange at Narsingi (Vidya Brahmachari Division of ECRH Division in Master Plan/RK Circle under DC Works (Bid start at 28.07.2021 at 15:00hrs; Last of for uploading of bid: 12.08.2021 at 15:00hrs; Hard Copies Submission Dt: 13.08.2021 by 12:00 pm). Note: Any further information in the regard can be obtained in website www.spcotelsangana.gov.in. Sp Chief General Manager R.C.No. : 2014-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/0221-22 Dt: 27.07.2021. Nagar Park, 2nd, 3rd Compound, Hyderabad.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
TELANGANA MINORITIES RESIDENTIAL, EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS SOCIETY.
NT No. E117297/MS/RES/2021 Dated: 27.07.2021
1) Tender Notice
2) The Society is inviting tenders for 204 TMR Schools and 1191 Junior College situated in 33 districts of Telangana State in two parts (Technical Bid and Financial Bid) from the "Government Agencies/Government Undertaking Agencies" for printing and supply of Registers at TMR Schools and Junior Colleges.
In the regard e-tender shall be available on the website <https://tender.telangana.gov.in> from 28.07.2021 to 13.08.2021.

Sl. No.	Description	Date
01	Publication of e-tender	28-07-2021
02	Pre-bid meeting	30-07-2021 at 03:00 PM
03	Last date for sale of tenders	11-08-2021
04	Last date for uploading of bids	12-08-2021 upto 06:00 PM
05	Opening of Technical Bids	16-08-2021 at 03:00 PM
06	Opening of Financial Bids	16-08-2021 at 03:00 PM

DPR No. : 428-OP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/0221-22 Sol: Secretary, TMRRES

UDANDAPUR RESERVOIR

Snail's pace of works worry ryots

Villagers allege discrimination in rehabilitation packages

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Land acquisition for the 16 TMC reservoir to be built in Udandapur village of Jacherlamandal of Mahabubnagar district as part of the Palamuru Rangareddy Lift-Irrigation Project is going on at a snail's pace, allege the villagers.

In fact, government has targeted to acquire 5,000 acres for the project. The villagers treat the government's version of having acquired 90 per cent of the targeted land with a pinch of salt.

Villagers find fault with government offering only Rs 3-6.30 lakh per acre as the compensation to the lands according to the nature of the land. The farmers are apprehensive about government not yet launching works to build rehabilitation colonies for the reservoir-displaced persons so far.

They alleged discrimination by the government in spite of they have to leave their homes and lands for the sake of the



project.

The reservoir works have been divided into 17 or 18 packages and the project is being built at a cost of Rs 2,920 crore. The officials say that only 30 per cent of the works are through.

The engineering officials attribute the delay in execution of the works to delay in extending rehabilitation package to the

displaced persons.

As 100 to 200 acres locked in court cases, the land acquisition could not take place, the officials said.

The farmers have been cultivating crops in the lands acquired by the officials for the reservoir. As a result, the project works could not take place as planned, say the contractors.

The farmers say that they are not able to hand over the lands to the government as the rehabilitation package was not extended to them.

The reservoir will displace people of Udandapur, Vallur and two tribal thanadas. The total number of families affected by the project would be at least 1900 families.

The displaced persons have been demanding a rehabilitation package on the lines of the package extended to MallannaSagar farmers.

The people have been alleging that the government has not been providing basic amenities in the rehabilitation colonies. They also complained of bad roads leading to other villages from their village. There is none to pay attention to the problem, they said.

The villagers allege that the project would not be through even after five years going by the slow pace of execution of the works. There is no congruence between sayings and doings by the government, they point out.

But, the government is understood to have asked the contractors to complete the reservoir so that irrigation facility is provided from it by September next year, he said.

But, the contractors allege that bills for the works executed were not yet sanctioned.

Palamuru Rangareddy LI scheme water to fill all tanks in Hanwada

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Minister for Excise Dr V Srinivas Goud on Tuesday made it clear that the state government will fill tanks in all villages of Hanwada mandal with water for irrigation with the help of Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme (PRLIS).

Speaking after distributing ration cards among 79 beneficiaries on the premises of office of the Tahsildar in Hanwada, Srinivas Goud said that a plan to convert the Hemasamudram tank into a balancing reservoir is on the drawing board.

Over 4,000 ration cards were issued to beneficiaries. Other applicants will also get the ration cards soon, Srinivas Goud said adding that the state government has plans to increase the commission being paid to the dealers of fair-price shop.

Similarly, more social welfare pensions would be issued to the eligible, he said.



In the past, there was acute shortage of power and drinking water in Hanwada mandal, he said.

Currently, power supply to agriculture sector is round the clock, agricultural input subsidy under Rythu Bandhu is being extended to the farmers, drinking water is available under the Mission Bhagiradha at the door step of the people, desiltation of tanks, village parks, tractor to every panchayat, nurseries in villages have been provided, he said.

Not a single Covid case is reported from anywhere in Hanwada mandal, he said.

Karivena reservoir is feeding tanks in villages in Hanwada. A BT road would be laid from Tankara to Gudi Malkapur. A rythu bazaar and open gym was set up in Hanwada, he said asking the contractors to speed up Rythu Bazaar works.

A slaughter house and a mini-market are going to be set up at a cost of Rs 2 crore, he said adding that the progress would be automatic provided political leaders and officials work with coordination.

He asked the people to execute all works for the sake of people. A food park will also be sanctioned soon. All government schemes should reach the people directly eliminating middlemen. He wanted the authorities to step up on execution of 2BHK houses in the mandal. He said that new houses would be sanctioned at places where the sanctioned houses were executed.



Fruit-yielding saplings to derive the fruits of TKHH

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Zilla Parishad chairperson Peddapalli Padmavati, District Collector L Sarman and additional collector Manu Chaudhary planted 500 flower and fruit-yielding saplings as part of Haritha Haram along the boundaries of three acre site allotted by the government for construction of Zilla Parishad office here on Tuesday.

The ZP chairperson laid emphasis on everyone planting saplings to enable the posterity derives the fruits of Haritha Haram programme.

She asked the district collector to take steps to protect every saplings planted by the time the construction of ZP office building is through.

ZP CEO Usha, additional CEO Bhagya Lakshmi, ZP office personnel and others took part in the event.

No scope for lobbying in issue of ration cards, says Gangula

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar has described issuing 3,09,083 ration cards simultaneously is a record of sorts in the history of the country.

Participating as the chief guest in the ration cards distribution function held at Government High School in Subash Nagar on Tuesday, he said that 2.79 crore benefit by the 87 lakh ration cards under circulation in the state.

The state's population is only 4 crore. The Centre permitted the state to issue only 53 lakh ration cards. However, the Chief Minister sanctioned an additional 35 lakh cards.

The Department received 4.97 lakh applications for issue of ration cards. The officials



upon scrutiny at the field level, found 3,09,083 eligible for issue of ration cards.

He said that 1,811 ration cards will be issued to the eligible in Karimnagar urban areas. Measures to add additional family members to the existing ration cards would be initiated soon, he added.

The Minister said that the food security cards will be sanctioned to the eligible in the district soon.

The rice being issued to per head has been increased to six kg from the earlier four kg without any ceiling on family members. Earlier, the ceiling was 20 kg per family.

The issue of ration cards would be transparent without any scope for lobbying. On account of series of measures initiated by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao paddy yield enormously increased to 92 lakh tonnes.

1.32 L jobs created in last 7 years: Errabelli

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao has said that 3.93 lakh ration cards would be issued to the eligible in the state soon.

He said on Tuesday that over 12,305 ration cards will be distributed afresh among beneficiaries in undivided Warangal district. Speaking after distributing new ration cards in Inavolu, Upparapalli villages in Vardhannapeta constituency, he said that 1.32 jobs were created in the last seven year in state government and state government undertakings. A notification will soon be issued to fill an additional 56,000 jobs.

The government has been initiating measures to give ration cards to the eligible, he said adding that issue of pensions would take place. The age limit to become eligible to receive pensions would be brought down to 57 years.

Centre: Sanctioned Rs 17,459 cr to TS for NREGA works

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre has stated that it had sanctioned Rs 17,459 crore to Telangana State for the last 7 years for NREGA works.

Reacting to a question raised by the BJP MP from Karimnagar Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Tuesday in the Lok Sabha, Union Minister Sadvi Niranjani has said in reply that the Centre has provided employment to 42 lakh people on an average every year.

During the Coronavirus pandemic (for the year 2020-21), the Centre provided employment to 54.27 lakh people. The highest employment was provided to the people of Nalgonda district with 3.94 lakh people and spent Rs 268.38 crore funds for the same. The Centre provided lowest employment to the Medchal with 6,000 people spending Rs 7.68 crores.



K Rajagopal Reddy booked for pulling mike from Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A case was booked against Congress MLA from Munugode at Choutuppal Police Station on Tuesday after Choutuppal Tahsildar Giridhar lodged a complaint with the police against Komatireddi Rajagopal Reddy for allegedly pulling the mike from the Minister for Energy G Jagdeesh Reddy in the meeting held for the distribution of ration cards to the beneficiaries on July 26. The police also filed cases against several Congress leaders accompanied Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy on Tuesday.

Magical queen of the night blooming all over Siddipet

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

For plant lovers in the Siddipet area, it's a magical time of year-when white cereus flowers bloom at night, popping from tree trunks and branches like ghostly paper lanterns.

The night-blooming cereus, known as the 'queen of the night' or by its scientific name, Selenicereus grandiflorus, is actually a type of cactus that grows as a vine along trees. Before it blooms, you will see a slender orange bud appear on the vine. After it grows dark, those buds will burst into life, then eventually shrivel and fall to the ground.

The family of Sutari Ramesh in Prashant Nagar performed special prayers on Monday night as seven such flowers bloomed in one night in the house.

Generally, blooming of these flowers is once in a year affair in the Himalayas.

According to the Hindu



mythology, the flower is the seat of Lord Brahma. Households regard blooming of the flower as a sign of good omen.

Neighbours thronged the house to capture selfies with the flowers. The flowers are also used in preparation of some drugs. These flowers will not bloom in ordinary weather conditions. They bloom at places situated 3500 feet to 3800 feet above the sea level. As these flowers have bloomed in Siddipet, people took interest in watching them. The speciality of the flower species is leaves transforming into flowers.

'State government working for the welfare of weaker sections'

PNS ■ HUSNABAD

Local legislator V Satish Kumar has said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao introduced many administrative reforms as part of his objective to extend clean administration to the people.

Speaking after distributing ration cards, Kalyana Lakshmi cheques and cheques under CMRF to beneficiaries at a meeting held at Saidapur,

Chigurumamidi mandals under Husnabad constituency limits here on Tuesday, he said that the government would issue ration cards to the eligible and also the social welfare pensions.

He recalled how the government gave pensions to the eligible and cheques to Kalyana Lakshmi beneficiaries even at the height of Coronavirus.

He said the government has been functioning with the

objective of the welfare of the weaker sections.

The government sanctioned residential schools for the poor, procured paddy from farmers, ensured that there is no shortage of seeds and fertilisers, he said. The government brought Godavari waters to Chigurumamidi and Saidapur mandals, he said the TRS government is the only government to extend life insurance cover to the farmers.

Two Maoists surrender

PNS ■ MULUGU

Two dalam members of South Bastar's 8th platoon of the Dandakaranya Special Zonal Committee of the outlawed CPI (Maoists) surrendered before Sangram Singh G Patil, Superintendent of Police, Mulugu, on Tuesday. They were identified as Mutchaki Joga, 25, of Sukma district and Punam Bhadri, 24, of Bijapur district of Chattisgarh.

"As the Maoist party top leadership is not allowing the party cadre infected by Coronavirus to get proper

treatment, several Maoists died of the virus recently. Scared of the situation, these two Maoist party members decided to give up arms and join the mainstream to lead the normal life," Patil said in a statement here on Tuesday.

Both the surrendered Maoists joined the banned outfit in 2015 and were involved in several offences including exchanges of fire with security forces and ambush on security forces in the border villages of Chhattisgarh and Telangana State.

Eatala Rajender terms KCR as 'Naya Nizam'

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Former Health Minister Eatala Rajender demanded the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to give Rs 10 lakh to each of the nomadic families along with the Dalit families, if the latter had any humanity.

Rajender alleged that the government officials disrupted power supply during his

'padayatra'. He was deeply pained at families expecting government jobs to their wards. Some unemployed have been committing suicide unable to work as a casual hand and to feed their parents.

He appealed to the unemployed not to commit

suicide and offered to join them to fight against the government.

He blamed the Chief Minister for not issuing new ration cards and pensions to more and accused him of running the state administration like 'Naya Nizam'.

He asked KCR against 2BHK colonies, but the CM included it in 2018 Assembly elections. The colonies yet to materialise even after three years of coming to power again in the state.

He claimed that KCR funded the Congress in 2018 to defeat him in the elections. When we protested against Jagan's visit to Manukota,

Congress leader Kaushik Reddy pelted stones on us. The same Kaushik Reddy joined the TRS, he pointed out.

He denied having amassed wealth by providing government jobs to unemployed. In 2002, when Eatala joined the TRS, the media reported that a big businessman joined the TRS. He claimed to be very right by then.

Fight like Rudrama Devi, BJP Mahila Morcha told

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Dubbaka MLA Raghunandan Rao has appealed to members of BJP Mahila Morcha to work with the objective of getting BJP candidate elected in Huzurabad by-elections.

Addressing Mahila Morcha executive body members here on Tuesday, he asked them to fight like Rani Rudrama Devi and Sammakka Sarakka wherever injustice was done to women.

She appealed to every woman to work hard for the Huzurabad BJP candidate's election. He asked them to adopt one village in Huzurabad constituency and campaign there to increase polling percentage by undertaking door-to-door visits.

He asked them not to take criticism to their heart and said that each and every activist working in the party would get adequate position.

He said that 11 women found place in the Union Cabinet and noted that it was possible alone for the BJP.

He said that he was elected from Dubbaka by-elections because of the hard work of the party activists.

Women in BJP are valued more than their counterparts in any other parties, he said.

He asked the party activists not to given to despair and work hard. He exuded confidence that the BJP would come to power in the state after the next Assembly election.

BJP leaders Mantri Srinivas, former MLA Chintala Ramachandra Reddy, BJP district president D Srikanth Reddy, Mahila Morcha leaders Geetha Rani, Sulochana, Niveditha Reddy, Jajula Gowri, Malati Rao, Tokala Umarani, Gadipalli Aruna Reddy, Sudha Reddy and others took part in the meeting.

Workshop held to sensitise residents on administration

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

A workshop was conducted to sensitise people on laws and administration of the village for sarpanch, vice-sarpanch, police and others in Ganayagula village on Tuesday acting on directions from Telangana State High Court.

Additional district judge S Ravi Kumar participated as the chief guest. He sensitised the participants on Laws governing assigned lands, tenant farmers.

The additional district judge should have the knowledge of laws. The four-day workshop will have lawyers and judges sensitising the participants of the workshop. He said Yadireddyapalli and Ganayagula villages have been identified for conduct of the workshop. Lok Adalat member PK Babu, government pleader Shyam Rao spoke.



Covid vaccination centre set up for advocates, kin

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

The sixth additional district judge GVN Bharata Lakshmi on Tuesday inaugurated the Covid Vaccination Centre, set up by the Bar Association for advocates and their family members and said that vaccine is the key to check Covid.

She advocated people observing precautions like wearing masks and sanitising their hands besides observing physical distance. She appealed to people to always

remain on the alert to keep the virus at bay.

In case if Coronavirus symptoms surfaced, the people should get themselves tested and implement advice of doctors rather than succumbing to tension. Municipal magistrate at Godavarikhani Parvatapu Ravi, Bar Association president and secretary Amarendra Rao and JuvvadiSrinivas, several advocates, doctors at Ramagundam Dr Krishnaveni, Bhagya Lakshmi, Anita and others were present.

Basaveshwara, Sangameshwara will change face of Sangareddy

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Legislative council pro tem speaker Bhupal Reddy has said that the TRS government has been issuing ration cards to ensure that the poor of the state have two square meals per day.

He was distributing cheques to beneficiaries under Kalyana Lakshmi, CMRF and ration cards along with MP Kotta Prabhakar Reddy at a function held at Balaji Gardens here on Tuesday.

Addressing a gathering in this connection, the CM has been implementing all welfare programmes promised by him in the new state of Telangana.

The government gives priority to welfare of the farmers and strives for the welfare of the poorer sections, he said.

The state government has been supplying quality goods through fair-price shops and gives 6 kg of rice per head. He said the Shadi Mubarak and Kalyana Lakshmi schemes benefit the poor to celebrate weddings of their daughters.

The state has been implementing unprecedented number of schemes. Foundation was laid for Basaveshwara and Sangameshwara LI schemes to bring Godavari waters to Sangareddy district, the MP said.

In fact, the government has soft corner for Sangareddy, he added. In fact, the government wants to develop Sangareddy on the lines of Hyderabad city.

For economic development of Dalits, the government has been implementing Dalit

Bandhu scheme, he added.

ZP chairperson Manjusri Jaipal Reddy spoke.

The pro-tem speaker and the MP distributed Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak cheques among 396 beneficiaries of Sangareddy, Sadasisvpet, Kondapur and Kandi mandals and distributed ration cards among 1383 beneficiaries.

District Collector Hanumantha Rao, Additional Collector Veera Reddy, municipal chairman Bongula Vijayalakshmi, vice-chairperson Latha Vijayendra Reddy, Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha chairman Narahari Reddy, Civil Supplies deputy commissioner Srikanth Reddy, MPPs, ZPTCs, MPTCs, sarpanches, government officials and others were present.

INDIA CORNER

Health Ministry seeks details on issue of fake Covid tests from States



The Union health ministry has sought details on the issue of fake Covid tests from states, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar informed Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Uttarakhand has reported instances of fake Covid tests, Pawar said in a written reply to whether the government is aware that several private firms have been found to be involved in fake Covid tests rackets endangering people's lives. The ministry was also asked about details of such states where such instances of fake tests have been reported. As reported by the state of Uttarakhand, FIRs have been registered against the firms involved, Pawar said. Police investigation against all laboratories involved is underway and they have been debarred from further testing in the state and all payments have been withheld, the minister said.

Climate change is most critical challenge before humanity: President

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday said that climate change is the most critical challenge before humanity and global warming is making its impact everywhere. Addressing the 19th convocation of the Kashmir University here, he also hoped that the centres for glaciology and Himalayan biodiversity at the varsity will show the way to the world in fighting climate change. "Climate change, as you are aware, is the most critical challenge before humanity in this century. Global warming is making its impact everywhere, but nowhere is it more felt than in the fragile eco-system of the Himalayas," the president said. He said the University of Kashmir has added another feather to its cap with the setting up of two centres that are of high importance. "One is devoted to glaciology and the other to Himalayan biodiversity documentation, bio-prospection and conservation. There is also the National Himalayan Ice-Core Laboratory. I am confident that these two 'Centres of Excellence' and the laboratory will help Kashmir and also show the way to the world in combating climate challenges and nurturing nature," Kovind said.



Teary homecoming: Mirabai Chanu breaks down on meeting mother

It was an emotional homecoming for newly-crowned Olympic silver-medallist Mirabai Chanu, who broke down on meeting her mother here on Tuesday before being felicitated by Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh at the airport. Much like the reception at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Monday, Chanu was met with media frenzy at the Bir Tikendrajit International Airport here. A stringent training regimen after the 2016 Rio Games had limited Chanu's visits to home for the past five years. Chanu, who won the silver medal in the women's 49kg category on Saturday, was seen hugging her mother Saikhom Ongbi Tombi Leima and her father Saikhom Kriti Meitei with tears rolling down her face as security guards formed a ring around her. The now famous gold earrings, shaped like the Olympic rings, that Chanu sported at the Games were a gift from her mother who sold her own jewellery for them five years ago ahead of the Rio Games in the hope of bringing the weightlifter luck.



Pegasus snooping 'most important' for IT panel: Tharoor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliamentary panel on Information Technology will question government officials on allegations relating to suspected phone tapping of politicians, journalists and others using Pegasus spyware, the committee chairman and senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said on Tuesday asserting that it is the "most important issue" for many members.

The 32-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, for which the listed agenda is "Citizens' data security and privacy", according to a notification issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat. The panel, which has the maximum members from the ruling BJP, has summoned officials from the Ministry of Electronics, Information and

Technology and the Ministry of Home Affairs. An international media consortium has reported that over 300 verified Indian mobile phone numbers were on a list of potential targets for surveillance using Israeli firm NSO's Pegasus spyware. Opposition leaders including Rahul Gandhi, two union ministers -- Prahlad Singh Patel and Railways and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav, business-



man Anil Ambani, a former CBI chief, and at least 40 journalists are on the list on the leaked database of NSO. It is, however, not established that all the phones were hacked.

"The subject of Citizens Data Privacy and Security is an approved agenda item of the committee and it was under this item that we had earlier discussed the Pegasus issue in November-December last year. So it's a continuing issue. There would be other questions as well, as this is not necessarily the only issue. But, for many of us in the committee this is perhaps the most important issue," Tharoor told PTI a

day before the panel's meeting. Since the beginning of the monsoon session on July 19, both houses have seen repeated disruptions as opposition parties have been demanding a Supreme Court-monitored judicial probe in this matter. "Parliament is not functioning because of this issue. People are anxious to find out about this and we are definitely likely to have questions for the government officials attending the meeting. We are going to see what the answers are," he said. Meanwhile, the TMC-led government in West Bengal has set up a Commission of Inquiry to probe allegations of snooping on politicians, officials and journalists. Leaders from all parties have been maintaining that the entire opposition is united on this matter and they want a discussion on the Pegasus snooping issue in Parliament.

Mamata meets Cong leaders Kamal Nath, Anand Sharma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leaders Kamal Nath and Anand Sharma here. This is the first of her series of meetings with senior political leaders in the national capital after her assembly poll victory in Bengal. Nath, after meeting the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo, said he had come to congratulate Banerjee for her victory in the recent assembly elections. "We have not discussed any strategy. That will be discussed by the leader of our party. We just discussed the current situation and the issue of rising prices," the Congress leader told reporters. Nath said Banerjee's victory in the assembly polls has sent a message across the country. Later, Banerjee met Sharma. During the meeting, Sharma is



reported to have told her that there cannot be a non-BJP front without the Congress as it is a national political party with a pan-India presence. Banerjee will be meeting another Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Abhishek Singhvi in the evening. Sources said the Banerjee's visit, is part of her efforts to cobble up a national front against the BJP. She will also be meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Banerjee is slated to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday evening.

RSS leader's son ends life after cops beat up his mother

PNS ■ BAGHPAT (UP)

A 22-year-old man ended his life by hanging after his mother was allegedly roughed up and their house ransacked by police, following a brawl at a Covid vaccination camp in Ranchhad village here. Superintendent of Police, Baghat, Abhishek Singh said 10 policemen of Binauli police station have been relieved of their duties and attached to police lines. Akshay, a son of a local RSS leader, had taken his mother (62) to a vaccination centre to get her vaccinated against COVID-19 on Monday. He wanted to get her the jab first instead of standing in queue, citing her age. This led to an altercation with police, his family members said.

NHRC members probing post-poll violence share ties with BJP: WB govt

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The TMC government in West Bengal has alleged in an affidavit filed before the Calcutta High Court that the NHRC committee which probed incidents of post-poll violence in the state "was fraught with bias against the ruling dispensation". The affidavit, submitted to the court on Monday, also claimed that members of the panel share close ties with BJP leaders. Criticising the Mamata Banerjee government, the NHRC panel, in its report placed before the high court recently, has underscored that "the situation in the state is a manifestation of law of ruler instead of law of law". It recommended CBI probe into "grievous offences like murder and rape". Contradicting the findings of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) panel -



which was set up by its chairman on the order of the court -- the affidavit submitted by the TMC government said, members of the committee "have close association with the Bharatiya Janata Party and/or the central government". "The formation of the committee and the purported field teams are fraught with bias against the ruling dispensation in the state of West Bengal. "It will be evident that the committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch hunt against the entire state machinery in West Bengal," the

affidavit maintained. The matter is scheduled to be taken up for hearing on Wednesday by a five-judge bench of the high court, presided by Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal. The state government, in its affidavit, has further claimed that the "NHRC chairperson has abused the process of this honourable court and appointed only those members who are interested in conducting a hatchet job against a democratically elected government." It said that such members who have an "inherent bias" against the ruling dispensation were chosen and accordingly "predisposed to give a negative report" on the law-and-order situation. Under such circumstances, the credibility of the panel to investigate in an "unbiased and neutral manner" is questionable, the state government pointed out.

SC asks HC to decide appeals of convicts within four months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming it a "hard case of unduly long incarceration", the Supreme Court has asked the Allahabad High Court to make an endeavour to dispose within four months the appeals filed by two life convicts, including one from Bangladesh, who have in custody for over 30 and 15 years. The apex court directed the state to file paper book in the pending separate appeals within two weeks as per the high court rules, if the convicts have not done so, so that these matters may proceed for hearing. "We request the high court to make an endeavour to dispose of the criminal appeals within four months from the date of filing of additional paper book by the state," a bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna said. The apex court passed the order on a plea filed by two convicts, serving life terms in sepa-

rate murder cases, seeking bail on the ground that they have already undergone custody of over 30 and 15 years respectively and their appeals against conviction are pending before the high court. The two convicts, in their plea filed through advocate Rishi Malhotra, have said that deprivation of personal liberty without ensuring speedy trial in not consistent with Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution. During the arguments, the counsel appearing for the state, said that one of the petitioners is a foreign national and as per the state policy, he cannot be released prematurely. The counsel said trial in a separate case for alleged offence of attempt to murder is pending against the second petitioner. He argued that both the petitioners can move the high court for relief and the apex court can ask the high court to decide these matters within a time frame.



Harappan-era city Dholavira inscribed on UNESCO list

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dholavira, a Harappan-era metropolis, in Gujarat has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the organisation said on Tuesday. "Dholavira: A Harappan City, in India, just inscribed on the @UNESCO #WorldHeritage List. Congratulations!" UNESCO tweeted. The ongoing 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of the UNESCO has already given India a new world heritage site in the form of the Rudreswara/ Ramappa Temple in Telangana, which dates back to the 13th century. Gujarat so far has three world heritage sites -- Champaner near Pavagadh, Rani ki Vav in Patan and the historic city of Ahmedabad. This session of the World Heritage Committee is being chaired from Fuzhou in China and is being held online. It started on July 16 and will end



on July 31. The 44th session ombrines current work, and issues left outstanding since last year, when the annual meeting was postponed due to COVID-19. "It gives immense pride to share with my fellow Indians that #Dholavira is now the 40th treasure in India to be given @UNESCO's World Heritage Inscription. Another feather in India's cap as we now enter the Super-40 club for World Heritage Site inscriptions," Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy said in a tweet. Today is a proud day for India, especially for the people of Gujarat, he said. "Since 2014, India has added 10 new World Heritage sites - one fourth of our total sites. This shows PM @arendramodi's steadfast commitment in promoting Indian culture, heritage and the Indian way of life," Reddy tweeted.

MP: Mandsaur spurious liquor death toll rises to six

PNS ■ MANDSAUR (MP)

The death toll in the spurious liquor incident in Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur rose to six on Tuesday with the death of three more men during treatment, officials said. Four others are undergoing treatment at various hospitals. "Three more men, two of them 40-year-old and another 35-year-old, died during treatment at different hospitals," said Piplia Mandi police station in-charge OP Tantwar. He said those undergoing treatment had reportedly purchased liquor from a dhaba (roadside hotel) and a liquor outlet. Earlier, three persons died at Khakhrai village in the Mandsaur district on Saturday and Sunday after consuming liquor purchased from a local grocery shop. The exact cause of their deaths was not yet clear.

Hundreds died due to O₂ shortage during 2nd wave: BJP MLA

PNS ■ HARDOI

A BJP MLA here claimed that "hundreds of people died" due to lack of oxygen during the second Covid wave, days after his party's Union government told Parliament that states did not report such deaths. BJP's Gopamau MLA Shyam Prakash wrote this on the Facebook wall of journalist Anand Mishra, who had posted newspaper cuttings of letters of some MLAs, in which the issue was raised. "You have told the truth, I agree with you, hundreds of people died in agony due to lack of oxygen. No one can see the pain of lakhs of families, including that of MLA Rajkumar Agarwal," the MLA said. Agarwal, a BJP MLA from Sandila, had lost his son during the second coronavirus wave and had alleged negligence on the part of the hospital. Shyam Prakash, however, on Monday told reporters that he had not written about

Uttar Pradesh when he made the comment on the Facebook wall of the scribe. The Union government had last week told the Rajya Sabha that no deaths due to lack of oxygen were reported by states and UTs during the second COVID-19 wave. "All states and UTs report cases and deaths to the Union Health Ministry on a regular basis. However, no deaths due to lack of oxygen have been specifically reported by states and UTs," Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar had told Parliament in a written reply to a question. Earlier too, several BJP leaders had complained of mismanagement during the second coronavirus wave, with even former Union minister Santosh Gangwar writing to CM Yogi Adityanath about the situation in his Bareilly constituency. He said officials don't take calls and government health centres send back patients for "referrals" from the district hospital.



IIT, IIM researchers claim breakthrough in sensing 'carbon risk'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Higher carbon footprint of companies gives higher returns to investors in the short term but could lead to heavy losses in the long term as governments impose regulations on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to a new mathematical analysis conducted by researchers from IIT Guwahati and IIM Bangalore. The team from the two top institutions has established a relationship between the carbon footprint of companies and the potential risks of investing

in these firms. The researchers did an extensive data analysis of over 200 of the largest listed companies in the American market and the findings have been published in arXiv, a curated research-sharing platform maintained by a team at the US-based Cornell University. To assess the carbon footprint of the companies, direct GHG emissions of the companies and purchased GHG emissions (in power consumption or heat) were considered. According to the three-member team, as the world looks to move towards a sus-



tainable future and economies everywhere try to reduce their carbon footprint, the future of companies that rely on excessive emissions of greenhouse gases remains uncertain. The researchers found that most of these companies (71.6 pc) had shown a decline in their carbon emissions in the

2016-2019 period. "It was found that carbon footprint had a positive correlation with the size of companies and revenues. However, the correlation with expenses was found to be slightly less than that with revenue, which they attribute to the higher expenses of switching to renewable energy sources," said Siddhartha Pratim Chakrabarty, professor at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati. "On analysing the data of annual stock returns, along with data of GHG emissions and other financial data (rev-

enue, debt, and book value, among others), it was found that there exists a 'carbon risk premium' in the stock returns, which means in the short term, higher carbon emissions are found to be inflating the price of the stocks. "It was found that a higher carbon footprint gave higher returns to investors in the short term," he said. In the past couple of years, Chakrabarty said, there has been a lot of research in climate finance and the existence of a carbon risk premium has been confirmed independently by many researchers worldwide.

Several BJP leaders had complained of mismanagement during the second coronavirus wave, with even former Union minister Santosh Gangwar writing to CM Yogi Adityanath about the situation in his Bareilly constituency.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Upheaval

India should wait and watch and resist global pressure to move into Afghanistan

It will mean a massive turnaround in India's Afghanistan policy to send its soldiers into the war-torn neighbouring country. No current indication warrants such an approach even though friendly external powers want India to play an active, hard role in Afghanistan. The situation is similar to the one where the Quad members (the United States, Australia, India and Japan) would like India being their active spearhead in containing China. In the western theatre, China has planned joint action with Pakistan to fend off the threat of terrorism in Afghanistan even though the Afghan media has created a perception that Pakistan is aiding the Taliban. Still, China's articulation may convince the West to prefer pulling India into the neighbourhood war. India, thus, already has its hands full trying to ensure that it is not forced into taking sides. India has clarified it is not "aware" of any "invitation" to be part of the American initiative through Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan or the Russia-US-China grouping on Afghanistan. The relationship between Kabul and New Delhi is shaped by the strategic partnership between the two countries signed in October 2011. It is the basis for their strategic efforts "against international terrorism". India's role is limited to training and equipping Afghan national security forces and executing capacity-building programmes. To go beyond this point will mean freshly assessing its Afghanistan policy that so far translated into India keeping itself out of the conflict but contributing to capacity building with an external power — the Iran-Russia front initially and, later, the United States — maintaining stability. This policy allowed India to keep away from the Taliban.



In the present scenario, however, the Taliban are forcing themselves to be at the centre-stage in Afghanistan, making it impossible to arrive at a resolution without involving them. The situation persuades all parties to decide what kind of contact to have with the Taliban. The other complication is, which of the factions of the Taliban to contact? There is the faction that depends on Pakistan's support while another faction attempts to carve its political space with help from sections in the Middle East. Thirdly, what exactly would a country like India talk to the Taliban about when Pakistan-based terror outfits that are intent on destabilising India are said to be assisting the Taliban in Afghanistan? India will get a fair idea of where the United States, which is in the last stages of withdrawal from Afghanistan, stands on the question of stability in the region when its leadership meets visiting Secretary of State Anthony Blinken. India missed a first-hand briefing on the ground situation in Afghanistan because of the cancellation of the visit of the Afghan Army chief. The situation is not such that India can come to an informed decision about its future action. The external powers are still in the process of firming up their own positions and roles. Till then, India's job is to wait and watch and resist international pressure to move in.

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When politicians pass the buck to military

After decades-long wait, Modi 2.0 appointed Gen Rawat as the CDS in 2019 but the Defence Planning Committee fell short of groundwork



ASHOK K MEHTA

Before the monsoon session of Parliament, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh invited two former Defence Ministers for a briefing. He did not dirty his hands but asked the CDS and COAS to brief them. In the UK, it would not happen. Politicians pass the buck to the military. Expectedly, the Army and Air Force have clashed over the transformational reforms underway. CDS Gen Rawat described the IAF as an extension of artillery and a combat support service. Air Chiefs have been kept out of the loop during the 1965 and 1971 wars, reflecting mistrust of IAF which is about air power required for "shaping the battlefield". But boots on the ground are essential.



Rewind: Gulf War I (1991) lasted 44 days; 38 days of aerial bombardment and four-day land offensive. In Bosnia (1995), air power alone won the war in 17 days. Kosovo (1999), air war was 78 days with no ground offensive. The Afghanistan campaign (2001) lasted 65 days with 11 days of ground operations. The Iraq war (2003) lasted 21 days of air and land battle. In Sri Lanka, the IAF performed its modest role effectively. The IAF's sterling performance though was the Balakot bombing — politically and strategically a turning point, marking the threshold of counter-terrorism response. The omission in employing IAF in 1962 was part of the political and military fiasco. Still, IAF insecurities arising from jointness, including rotation of three-star slots by merit, have to be addressed to achieve unification to obviate IAF Chief having to ask the Army Chief to requisition in writing that air support was required during Kargil.

CDS actually appeared on the horizon: His office was prepared in South Block, Guard of Honour rehearsed by Delhi Area and NDTV announced Adm Sushil Kumar's elevation. But between the cup and the lip was a slip. The Naresh Chandra Task Force in 2013 revived the CDS in its less truculent avatar: Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee. But Defence Minister AK Antony sat on the proposal. It was not until Christmas Day 2019 that Modi 2.0 Government issued a gazette notification appointing Rawat as "primus-inter-paraes-CDS" — tasking him to implement jointness by January 2023. A Department of Military Affairs was also created under MoD. Appointing a CDS has been an article of faith for the BJP.

THE LACK OF CONSENSUS (WHICH ALL MILITARIES HAVE HAD TO OVERCOME) EMERGED CLUMSILY LAST MONTH DURING A SEMINAR IN WHICH BOTH RAWAT AND AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BHADAURIA SPOKE. IT WAS ONE OF THE UGLIEST PUBLIC SPATS BETWEEN A SERVICE CHIEF AND THE CDS

The CDS traces its history to Admiral Mountbatten when he sounded Prime Minister Nehru about its utility. After the 1971 war, Prime Minister Gandhi had informed Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw he would become CDS but nothing came of it. The CDS was resurrected by a 2001 GoM containing 100 recommendations, most of which were implemented except CDS. When an attempt was made to appoint CDS, Air Chief Marshal OP Mehra accompanied by a posse of former Air Chiefs met the President and blocked the enterprise. In 2002, a

Two questions arise from the reform process. First, did GoI do the necessary thinking and research — and who did it — before issuing the gazette notification? Why were the known historical IAF insecurities not addressed by the political authority? Unfortunately, the newly minted Defence Planning Committee under NSA AK Doval merely issued a charter of work to Rawat without the DPC doing any groundwork. Clearly such an epic transformational exercise should have begun by launching an SDRS (Strategic Defence and

Security Review), preferably an Integrated Review, on the lines the UK did in March this year followed by enunciating a National Security Strategy. The DPC conveniently left the thinking to CDS, ignoring the inevitable repercussions. I recall UK Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine explaining to me on the back of an envelope at RCDS London in 1984 how he had rewired the CDS system for unification and whose implementation he ordered in the face of revolt from Service Chiefs. The reforms were ordered top-down without passing the buck.

The Defence Minister ought to have intervened and done a Heseltine.

The IAF's concerns including integrated use of air power have to be addressed, given that IAF has only 30 fighter squadrons. Appointments of CDS and Combatant Commanders of other joint/integrated/unified commands and organisations be made by merit and not in Robin's turn. The concepts of air-land and tri-service battles have to be revised and updated. Joint Professional Military Education should become mandatory for promotion to flag rank. An equivalent of US Goldwater-Nichols Act 1986 will ensure jointness to diminish inter-service rivalry. India was a pioneer in integration through Joint Services Wing/National Defence Academy/Defence Services Staff College/National Defence College. But long ago, the political class responsible for defence of India stopped thinking, leaving it to the military to self-reform. The politician is required to do and say more than "giving a befitting reply".

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)

PICTALK



A pet monkey enjoys tea from a plastic cup collected from a roadside garbage box, in Kolkata

PTI

Zapping the virus

In what may be a breakthrough against Corona's spread, a laser device will kill the virus in 50 msec

Even as the Novel Coronavirus fast mutates into new, deadlier variants since being discovered nearly one-and-a-half years ago, virologists and scientists are scurrying to keep pace and finding more potent ways to eliminate it. According to latest reports, a new laser device has been created in Italy that is apparently capable of obliterating the pernicious virus present within a structure's boundary walls. Work on the machine project, developed by the scientists of the United Nations in collaboration with the scientists of an Italian tech company, the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, and Altec K-Laser, a local company that makes laser equipment, respectively, was started last year when Italy was reeling under the COVID-19 pandemic. How does the instrument work? It's quite simple, really. In the device, the air is passed through a laser beam that kills viruses and bacteria. And it is already getting noticed and winning accolades, too. "This device has completely changed the way I think about laser technology. It kills viruses in 50 milliseconds," claims Serena Zakinya, the head of the Cardiovascular Biology Group at the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology.

As a significant precautionary measure, keeping the areas within the boundary walls free from infection has proved to be a major challenge during the pandemic. A virus-free environment within the boundary walls has become a necessity to prevent the spread of the virus. However, there are Doubting Thomases, too. Some scientists say that the laser-based technology will not be safe to kill the virus. A study published in the *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology* in November linked laser-based devices to the risk of cancer. But the equipment's manufacturers have assured that there is no truth in these reports. They believe that the laser emanating from it never comes in contact with the human skin, so there is no risk of developing cancer. Claiming that it is a recycled product, the Altec founder has said that "our device uses nature against nature". But the one drawback is that though viruses and bacteria can be eliminated in the air, the laser won't be effective if they fall to the floor or any surface. The company, having already bagged a patent for this device which can also be installed in the air-conditioning unit, now plans to take it to the international market.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEERS SHOULD SHUN POLITICS

Sir — It looks that from Punjab to Karnataka, it is the season of change and a show of assertion by the central leadership of political parties to set their house in order, their sights trained on the upcoming elections. The 78-year-old, four-time Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa who had won his current term by engineering defections and toppling the Congress-JDS Government in 2019, has quit.

To date, Yediyurappa and the BJP have remained synonymous in Karnataka and now he, despite being the only mass leader the BJP had in the State and in the entire south, has now resigned. His exit leaves the BJP without an experienced leader to helm the Government. While the RSS wants to move away from caste equations by picking national organising secretary BL Santhosh, a Brahmin, many in the State BJP are against ignoring the Lingayat community that has been the BJP's mainstay all these years.

The hard fact is that the party cannot do without the support of the Lingayat community, particularly its influential mutt heads. But what is most unfortunate is that the effect of what the seers in Karnataka have said openly has the effect of dividing people on the basis of caste lines and community. If these seers are keen on a life in politics, they should drop the pretence of renunciation and contest elections. JS Acharya | Hyderabad

INTERSTATE BOUNDARY ISSUE ERUPTS

Sir — The interstate boundary issue in north-eastern States is a perennial problem and six personnel of the Assam Police died at the border with Mizoram while defending the constitutional boundary of the State. The incident came less than two days after Home Minister Amit Shah met with the northeast CMs to resolve the interstate boundary disputes.

Border conflicts have occurred intermittently since Mizoram was carved out of Assam as a Union Territory in 1972 and got Statehood in 1987. Six Assam police personnel were killed in an exchange of fire with their Mizoram counterparts after the

SC view on beggars heartening



As an imminent third wave of COVID-19 looms large, the Supreme Court refused to take an "elitist" view to ban begging and issued notices to the Centre and the Delhi Government on a petition seeking vaccination and rehabilitation of beggars in the wake of the pandemic in India. According to the apex court, no one would like to beg if not for poverty. It observed that people are generally compelled to beg to eke out elementary livelihood due to the lack of education and employment. As it was a socio-economic problem, beggars could not be stopped from begging, it added.

The Supreme Court has made the right

observation regarding beggary in India. On the other hand, many factors are involved in beggary. But it is a fact that beggars are driven by poverty. However, it must be understood that the state of very poor people in the country is equal to that of beggars. As there is no proper enumeration of beggars, it is difficult to deal with the problem. Wandering beggars in the time of the COVID pandemic pose risk to the public. They must not be deprived of their right to COVID testing and vaccination. They must be rehabilitated and vocational training must be provided to them. Also, education must be provided to their children.

In spite of the advancements made by India in different sectors, beggary continues to be a social problem. As the country is striving to achieve world standards in every field, socio-economic measures are needed to solve the begging problem. A comprehensive programme must be developed for this. Philanthropic approach to beggary must be replaced with therapeutic and rehabilitative work.

Venu GS | Kollam

protracted border row between the two northeastern States took a violent turn. The clashes at the border town of Vairengte also left at least 60 persons from Assam injured. The incident comes less than two days after Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting with the Chief Ministers of the northeast in Meghalaya's capital Shillong for resolving the interstate boundary disputes. However, Assam also harbours border disputes with Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland. Krishnan Subramaniam | Ghaziabad

PUNISH THE CORRUPT POLITICIANS

Sir — During the election campaign season earlier, the leaders of the DMK accused the then AIADMK Government and its Ministers, including then Chief Minister E Palaniswami, of rampant corruption. They even submitted a memorandum to the Governor seeking action against those "corrupt" leaders. They also

assured the electorate that if elected to power, they would initiate serious action against all the Ministers and officials found to be involved in corruption and other malpractices leading to their amassing wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income.

As assured, the DMK Government has commenced action and the recent raids conducted by the DVAC at the residence and more than 20 business places connected to former Transport Minister MR Vijayabhaskar are part of the exercise which, we believe, is going to be a continuing process henceforth. The Government that has started in the right earnest to fix the corrupt should not succumb to any pressure from any quarters, go ahead with the raids and investigations and see that the corrupt get exemplary punishment. Shalini Gerald | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Your (Sidhu's) win is my win and our win is the party's win. We need to work together in the interest of the State and its people.



Punjab Chief Minister — Amarinder Singh

Our role in Iraq will be... continue to train, to assist and to deal with ISIS but we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission.

US President — Joe Biden

I think it's super delicious. It's tasty and when you compare it to everything else, Indian food competes really well.



MasterChef Australia winner — Justin Narayan

I feel like my attitude wasn't that great because I don't really know how to cope with that (Olympics) pressure.

Four-time Grand Slam winner — Naomi Osaka

Social evils begin in the mind... The fear of social stigma should deter people from demanding or giving dowry.



Kerala Governor — Arif Mohammed Khan



FIRST COLUMN THE GLOBAL MINIMUM TAX

Companies will have to pay a minimum tax regardless of the jurisdiction they operate from



KINNARRY THAKKAR

It was a historic event when 130 nations representing over 90 per cent of global GDP agreed to a global minimum tax (GMT) of possibly 15 per cent on corporations for a two-pillar solution to address the tax challenges arising from the globalisation and digitalisation of the economy. These countries are part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which has been working towards preventing tax base erosion and profit shifting by companies that set up their businesses in low-tax jurisdictions to avoid payment of higher taxes. Nothing can prevent companies from engaging in such arrangements but the tax authorities became part of a global race to the bottom to compete which jurisdiction could lower their corporate tax rate most to check revenue leakage. The outcome was a double whammy: Companies still avoided taxes by locating in the jurisdictions that won this race and consequently, the tax authorities kept losing on their revenue collections. The digital companies felt the negative impact



strongly as their headquarters would be in a low-tax jurisdiction and consumers all over the world; they would thus pay tax only in the low-tax jurisdiction thus hurting the tax revenues of all other jurisdictions. To overcome this problem, several countries levied a digital services tax and collected a percentage of revenue from corporations on certain transactions. In India, an equalisation levy of six per cent for 'any specified service' provided by a non-resident in some cases and of two per cent on a non-resident e-commerce operator subject to certain criteria is presently applicable. Such measures are adopted in retaliation of the tech giants exploiting the tax treaties or doing 'treaty shopping' that puts a hole in the coffers of the State.

As a result, there is a strong consensus to make the companies pay a minimum amount of tax irrespective of the location in which their businesses are headquartered. This will deter the companies from designing a complex web of corporate layers for shifting their tax base to low-tax jurisdictions and avoid tax in the country of consumption. The solution to the problem of Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) was enunciated by OECD that provided for a framework in a pillar-wise approach as mentioned below. Pillar one proposes the reallocation of taxing rights in the jurisdictions where customers and/or users are located. Pillar two presents a global anti-base erosion mechanism to stop the shifting of profits to low tax or no-tax jurisdiction facilitated by new technologies and ensure a minimum level of tax being paid by multinational enterprises. The proposed rules aim to annihilate the idea of shifting profits by leaving no added advantage for the corporations in doing so. This will also encourage positive competition among companies by creating a level playing field that is otherwise distorted by the ability of only a few big international corporations to setup businesses in tax havens. The G-20 and the EU have supported this framework, but countries like Barbados, Estonia, Ireland, Hungary, among others, which are tax havens or low tax jurisdictions, have not signed up to the deal for various reasons. The proposed rules shall override the present digital services tax. Also, laws such as the global intangible low-taxed income (GILTI) of the US to discourage profit shifting shall have to be aligned with the proposed inclusive framework. The proposed regulation is a giant step towards an efficient global system of taxation. Concerns of all stakeholders must be considered and addressed to formulate and implement an effective policy framework. The G-20 meeting this October will decide on the agreement and its implementation plan. The rules may take effect in 2023.

(The writer is Professor and Head, Department of Commerce, University of Mumbai, Mumbai. The views expressed are personal.)

Afghan conundrum and the road ahead

The responses can range from total to moderate military support or maybe a combination of various strategies but India won't certainly be indifferent



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

The Taliban taking over Kabul or establishing a parallel regime in Afghanistan will involve the issue of legitimacy via its recognition. Strongly related to this, the message from Russia to India is clear, "it's up to India to analyse the situation and go ahead according to the current realities". The new strategic alignment of Pakistan-China-Russia is already in a process that will have a destabilising effect on the countries of South and Central Asia. With these developments, India might then have to rethink beyond its traditional strategies.

In this context, the entire debate would shift upon India's decision for the Afghan forces and the strategic developments that might follow. India might decide to help the Afghan Air Force with the Strategic Partnership Agreement (2011) being the main guiding principle. The responses can range from total military support to a moderate one or maybe a combination of various strategies, but certainly, the Indian government will not be indifferent because security is at stake.

Irrespective of the decision that would be taken, certain challenges are coming up for the government. An increase in cross-border terrorism with new forms of hybrid warfare, a sharp increase in drugs and human trafficking, especially affecting Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, and an increase in the propaganda warfare by the adversary working in tandem with the existing and the emerging Violent Non-State Actors (VNSA). The fate of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan is also in jeopardy. All these challenges are inter-linked. An India-centric approach is required to deal with them.

First, at the diplomatic level, even though Russia might look to stand with Pakistan, strategic overlaps with Russia can be used for the furtherance of India's interests. As we understand that geopolitics is neither black nor white, how well the current strategic agreements are used to extract leverage would depend upon the government apart from the developments that will follow. India should exercise its strategic leverage with Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries to tighten its noose around Pakistan in the future. The role of OIC in the coming few days would be of immense importance to India. The policy of exposing and isolating Pakistan should continue at a regional and international level. There can be no better platform than FATF and UNGA.

There is also an opportunity for India to reinvent its strategic relations with Iran and find new commonalities to cooperate. Iran's initial euphoria of the US exit may soon end as it might find the Taliban committing atrocities on the Shia minority in Afghanistan. Many hardliner clerics in Tehran have still not forgotten the 1998 killings of Iranian diplomats.

The upcoming refugee problem in the wake of the establishment of an Islamic emirate is going to open up new challenges for



INDIA SHOULD STRENGTHEN ITS DEFENCE SYSTEM THAT IS CAPABLE OF RETALIATING TO THE EMERGING HYBRID WARFARE TECHNIQUES THAT ARE REDRAWING THE BATTLE LINES. TURKEY AND CHINA ARE THE MAIN SUPPLIERS OF DRONES TO PAKISTAN. COLLABORATIVE THREATS EITHER IN A PROXY WAR OR A MILITARY CONFLICT CANNOT BE RULED OUT

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal)



Iran. The Taliban have already taken control of Islam Qala, a military post on its border with Afghanistan. Here, an opportunity for India is open. It is through an independent Iran policy that India can deepen its strategic stronghold. Another geopolitical twist, a positive one, can be a possibility if pursued. Given the geographical proximity of India to both Afghanistan and Iran, the dynamics of the situation are well understood. The US has to accept the region's geopolitical realities. History is full of examples of states having multiple allies who probably don't see eye to eye.

The role of the UN has to be called upon as sincere joint efforts are required. India should first approach the UNSC and in case of conflicting interests, the task of maintaining normalcy and peace should be discussed in the UNGA. Having an understanding that there would be a lack of unanimity in the UNSC to protect Afghanistan and its people, India cannot let the region be sucked into chaos and anarchy. For this, sooner or later, India has to take the lead for an "emergency special session" of the UNGA. This session can be called by India and its allies under Resolution 377A (V) that provides for a 'Uniting for Peace'. India must remind the international community of its primary duty to maintain peace and security and should request recommendations to act collectively to restore the peace of the region under a unified command. The UN has provisions in case the UNSC fails to "discharge its responsibilities".

All the international legal issues

such as re-arming and unlawful diplomatic recognition to the Taliban, suppression of the human rights of women, children, and religious minorities, and diversion of fundamentalists should be discussed in the UNGA to expose countries like Pakistan. This will also set the tone for India's leadership and the expansion of the UNSC. Additionally, to secure the lives and dignity of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan, the government may think of evacuating them at the earliest before a full-fledged war breaks out.

Second, at a tactical level, hybrid warfare against India will deepen and broaden. New weapons and tactics utilised by the proxy militia will call for measures that favour coercive policies. For instance, the use of drones and rockets by terror groups to avoid casualties in physical attacks has already been initiated. To counter such an emerging threat, India can expand the horizons of its 'offensive defence'. It may incorporate the policy of 'deterrence by denial' through disallowing the terrorists to assemble and execute attacks against India. Of course, it has its own risk of substantial escalation when states are using VNSA. The evolving strategic communication and the military-civil interface through the media to let the world know about India's political will, intentions and interests will surely play an important role.

India should strengthen its defence system that is capable of retaliating to the emerging hybrid warfare techniques that are redrawing the battle lines. Turkey and China are the main suppliers of drones to Pakistan. Collaborative

threats either in a proxy war or a military conflict cannot be ruled out. Here, a two-way approach may be adopted. Apart from strategic purchases of anti-drone platforms from the allies such as the US, Israel, France, and Germany, long-term collaboration may be pushed forward to counter the asymmetric warfare. AI is another thrust area. For instance, the US alone has around 140 projects based on AI, the knowledge of which is available in the public domain. This can be of immense help to the Indian forces. Simultaneously, indigenous R&D in defence manufacturing especially in AI technologies should be boosted for surveillance and tactical capabilities.

There are various new areas of AI that India has not yet explored. These include bio-inspired surveillance systems, AI face recognition cameras in sensitive areas, tools using AI algorithms to counter cyber-attacks, and overlook security issues such as indoctrination, sale of narcotics, and small arms through the darknet. All these measures will help the forces and will ensure efficiency in the changing times. However, the focus on AI and other technologies should not distract the government from developing new warfare platforms such as anti-submarine warfare capabilities and short-range tactical weapons to defeat the conventional threats for there are possibilities for simultaneous provocations on the border. Given the current scenario and the shifting sands, India has to strive for itself and there is no one better than India to think about the national interests.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

DURING FESTIVALS AND GAIETY, DO REMEMBER THAT CORONA IS NOT YET GONE FROM AMIDST US. YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORGET CORONA-RELATED PROTOCOLS.

— PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI



HAD YOU UNDERSTOOD THE COUNTRY'S 'MANN KI BAAIT', SUCH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE STATE OF VACCINATIONS. #WHEREAREVACCINES

— CONGRESS LEADER
RAHUL GANDHI

Yediyurappa out, but still crucial for BJP in Karnataka

If the BJP high command handles him well, BSY, being a mass leader, could still mobilise the Lingayat vote for the party

July 26 happened to be the second anniversary of Chief Minister Yediyurappa's rule in Karnataka. However, it turned out to be an occasion for an emotional farewell speech after he announced his resignation. Though BSY, as he is known in the State, resisted pressures, the high command had decided that it was time for a younger leader to take over.

Yediyurappa is now 78 and well over the party's prescribed age limit of 75 years to hold public office. He will not lead the party in the next assembly polls in 2023, as he would be over 80 by then. Karnataka is the southern gateway for the BJP. It has become the third pillar along with Congress and JD



KALYANI SHANKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

(Secular) and Yediyurappa had a big role in that.

Unfortunately, though he came to power four times, he has not completed a single term. BSY quit reluctantly as the high command had worked out his exit plans with minimum damage to the party.

Incidentally, the RSS, too, wanted a younger leader to take over. Karnataka has produced many important RSS leaders - from RSS chief, the late K. S. Sudarshan, HV Seshadri to present-day leaders like Dattareya Hosbole, B.L. Santosh, and C.R. Mukund.

Yediyurappa has been an asset as well as a liability to the party. BSY was a shrewd manipulator who knew how to snatch power from the



opponents, be it the Janata Dal coalition or Congress. He was adept at using age-old tricks of defection and lure of money. Even in the 2017 polls, the BJP did not get a simple majority. To keep BJP out, the Congress and the JD(S) formed a government with the JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy as Chief Minister. Yediyurappa pulled down this government in 2019 and became the chief

minister for the fourth time.

Why is Yediyurappa important for the BJP? First of all, there is no Lingayat leader to match him in the state, either in Congress or the JD(S). The BJP also did not develop the second rung of leadership.

Secondly, crucial caste politics favour him. Lingayats are the State's single-most significant community, (17 per cent). Of the 500 mutts in the state, most are headed by Lingayats, followed by Vokkaliga mutts. The community can tilt the balance in as many as 90-100 of the State's 224 assembly constituencies. The seers, who received support financially and otherwise from the chief minister, openly supported BSY.

The Lingayats traditionally supported the Congress but moved away in the seventies only to return briefly. But they withdrew their support after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi abruptly sacked popular Lingayat chief minister Veerendra Patil. In the 1994 assembly elections, the community voted against Congress. This was the time when BSY emerged as the face of the Lingayats. Barring 2013, the BJP always had more than 30 Lingayat MLAs in the House - 32 in 2004, 39 in 2008, and 38 in 2018.

Yediyurappa has risen from the RSS ranks and been a seven-term MLA between 1983 and 2013. He joined the RSS when he was barely 15 and cut his political teeth in the Jana Sangh. A mass leader

who installed the first BJP government in South India in 2008, BSY continues to have his own place in the State, despite the corruption charges, nepotism, and voices of dissent.

His meteoric rise in Karnataka was checked in the wake of a land scam that cost him the chief minister's job. He walked out of the BJP in 2012 to float his outfit, the Karnataka Janta Paksha (KJP), which dealt a severe blow to the BJP in the 2013 assembly elections.

The return of Yediyurappa consolidated the Lingayat vote base again in the 2014 general elections. While dealing with him, the BJP leadership had to keep this in mind. For the fourth time, he took over as the chief minis-

ter in July 2019 after engineering defections of 18 MLAs from Congress and the Janata Dal (S). By then he had already crossed 76 years and like before, was facing corruption and nepotism charges from his party detractors.

With the chief minister drumming up support from the mighty Lingayat mutts, the BJP cannot ignore BSY because holding Karnataka is critical for the party before the 2023 Assembly polls or the 2024 General elections.

BSY's innings may be over but if the BJP high command handles him well, being a mass leader, he could still mobilize the Lingayat votes. His successor has a tough job ahead, taking everyone along in a state where factionalism always prevailed.

IMF forecasts 6% global growth this year as economies reopen

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund is sharply upgrading its economic outlook this year for the world's wealthy countries, especially the United States, as COVID-19 vaccinations help sustain solid rebounds from the pandemic recession. But the 190-country lending agency has downgraded its forecast for poorer countries, most of which are struggling to vaccinate.

Overall, the IMF said Tuesday that it expects the global economy to expand 6% this year — a dramatic bounce-back from the 3.2% contraction in the pandemic year of 2020. The IMF's forecast, unchanged from its previous estimate in April, would mark the fastest calendar-year global growth in records dating to 1980.

Beneath the worldwide number, however, a gap between the vaccine haves and have-nots is widening. The

IMF expects advanced economies to grow 5.6% this year, an upgrade from the 5.1% it forecast in April, fueled by the swift recovery of consumers and businesses. But it downgraded its 2021 forecast for emerging market and developing countries to 6.3% from its April forecast of 6.7%.

Advanced economies, in which close to 40% of the population has been vaccinated, are largely reopening after last year's COVID-19 lockdowns. But in developing and emerging market countries, the vaccination rate is just 11%.

Moreover, the governments of poorer countries cannot match the outpouring of government spending that rich countries have been using to propel their economic recoveries.

The United States is expected to register 7% growth this year, a sharp reversal from last year's 3.5% drop and an upgrade from the 6.4% growth the IMF had forecast for 2021 back in April.

President Joe Biden's ambitious spending plans are expected to fuel growth this year and next.

The IMF predicts that the U.S. economy will grow 4.9% in 2022, up from the 3.5% it projected

three months ago.

The 19 European countries that share the euro currency are forecast to grow 4.6% collectively this year, versus last year's 6.5% contraction. Japan, which endured a 4.7% drop in economic growth in 2020, is expected to expand 2.8% this year. But the 2021 forecast for Japan marks a downgrade from what the IMF expected in April, reflecting a resurgence of COVID-19 cases earlier this year.

In the developing world, the outlook for China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, was marked down to 8.1% after the government scaled back spending and investment.

Despite the brighter outlook for major economies, the outlook across the world has been clouded by uncertainty over the delta variant of the coronavirus and the uneven progress of vaccination campaigns.



India among top 10 countries in pharma, healthcare: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is among the top 10 countries in pharma and healthcare sector with exponential growth recorded in the last five years, according to a report by Sagacious IP, a global IP research and consulting firm.

The report stated that patents with Indian publication having Indian priority grew from 2,548 in 2015 to 7,399 in 2020. Such numbers are indicative of increased patent filing activity by Indian companies and MNCs with research centres based in India. The pharma and healthcare sector has also seen massive growth in global patent filings in the last five years, from over 24,000 in 2015 to over 1,50,000 in 2020.

In terms of the origin of patent applications in the pharma sector globally, India is among the top 10 countries, followed by Italy, Australia, Taiwan and Sweden. The applications originating from India are majorly filed in the US, European Parliament and



APAC region. The top Indian filers who filed patents in India during the last five years (2015-2020) include the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), ITC Life Sciences, Lovely Professional University, Colgate Palmolive (India), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Limited, IIT Bombay, Cadila Healthcare, Lupin, Amity University, and Wockhardt Limited, the report said.

CSIR, a research institute, leads in these filings. Among companies, ITC (ITC Life Sciences and Technology

Centre) is on top. The report stated that pharmaceutical companies face major challenges dealing with IP rights and the competition provided by the generics. Further, the biggest challenge in developing approved drugs is the long time spent in research and the investments required for the same.

Also, due to increased awareness and digital connectivity, self-medication has been rampant, which does not go down well in terms of returns on R&D and IP investments in drug discovery.

IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Q1 cattle feed sales up 30 pc to Rs 49 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IFFCO Kisan Sanchar on Tuesday said its cattle feed sales rose by 29.73 per cent to Rs 49.13 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal amid strong demand notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cattle feed sales stood at Rs 37.87 crore during April-June quarter of the 2020-21 fiscal, the company said in a statement.

In terms of volume, cattle feed sales grew 28.24 per cent to 24,756 tonne from 19,303 tonne in the said period, it added.

"We are glad to announce that we could mark a commendable growth number with our cattle feed business in Q1 even though we witnessed a hard time in the market, hit by the second wave of COVID-19 during April-June 2021," IFFCO Kisan Sanchar National Sales Head Ganesh Dash, said.

The business started picking up in June as coronavirus cases were declining and the



company sold 10,000 tonne of cattle feed in the said month alone, he said.

Dash said the rise in sales was due to increase in awareness among farmers about use of quality cattle feed.

He also said IFFCO kisan cattle feed is manufactured with high quality standards and as a result the company is receiving good response across the country. In its first full year of operation in 2020-21 fiscal, the company had sold 1 lakh tonne of cattle feed valuing Rs

160 crore. The Delhi-based company entered into the compound cattle feed business on a pilot basis in the 2019-20 fiscal. It contributes about 30 per cent of the total business of IFFCO Kisan and is a major focus of growth for the company.

IFFCO Kisan, which currently sources cattle feed from several third party manufacturers, is looking to further widen its tie-up and also consider setting up its own feed manufacturing facilities.

Institutional bidders lap up HUDCO shares

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's offer for sale of HUDCO shares to institutional investors was over-subscribed on Tuesday.

Of the base issue size of over 9.90 crore shares, institutional investors put in bids for over 12.59 crore shares, or 1.27 times, till 2.30 pm, according to the NSE data.

Bidding will continue till close of the market hours.

The government is selling up to 8 per cent stake sale in HUDCO at a floor price of Rs 45 apiece. Institutional investors are bidding on Tuesday, and bids would open for retail investors on Wednesday. The sale of over 16.01 crore shares, or a total of 8 per cent stake, would fetch around Rs 720 crore to the exchequer. The OFS comprises a base issue size of 5 per cent stake or over 11.01 crore shares, with an option to retain over-subscription of 2.5 per cent or over 5 crore shares.



Gold down Rs 123, silver falls Rs 206

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Tuesday dipped Rs 123 to Rs 46,505 per 10 grams amid weak international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 46,628 per 10 gram.

Silver also went lower by Rs 206 to Rs 65,710 per kg, from Rs 65,916 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,795 per ounce

and silver was flat at USD 25.16 per ounce. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Overall gold prices traded under pressure trading below USD 1,800, as traders and investors are being cautious ahead of the US FOMC meeting." Motilal Oswal Financial Services Vice-President Navneet Damani said, "Gold prices were steady, pinned below the key USD 1,800 level, as investors turned cautious ahead of this week's US Federal Reserve meeting outcome."

Rupee slips 5 paise to close at 74 against \$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slipped by 5 paise to close at 74.47 (provisional) against the US currency on Tuesday as the dollar strengthened in the overseas markets and the domestic equity indices closed with losses.

Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as investors are awaiting cues from the US Fed's policy decision due on Wednesday and month-end rebalancing.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 74.36 against the dollar and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.35 and a low of 74.54 during the session. The local unit finally ended the day at 74.47, down 5 paise over its last close. On Monday, the rupee had settled at 74.42 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.12 per cent to 92.76.

"The Indian rupee stuck in a small range with thin volume ahead of month-end adjustment. Risk-averse sentiments, stronger dollar, lower US real interest rate, and weaker Chinese yuan weighed on the Indian rupee. Though, rupee remained resilient among Asian currency baskets in today's trade following strong dollar inflows in primary markets," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 273.51 points or 0.52 per cent lower at 52,578.76, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 78 points or 0.49 per cent to 15,746.45.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude advanced 0.39 per cent to USD 74.79 per barrel in futures trade.

Global markets sink ahead of Fed update on economy

PNS ■ BEIJING

Global stock markets declined Tuesday as investors looked ahead to a Federal Reserve report for an update on when US stimulus might start winding down.

London and Frankfurt opened lower while Shanghai and Hong Kong declined. Tokyo advanced.

On Monday, Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index rose to a new record, shrugging off worries about the spread of the more contagious delta variant of the coronavirus.

Investors awaited the Fed report Wednesday for signs of the central bank's level of concern about inflation and when it might start rolling back easy credit and other economic stimulus. Minutes of the Fed meeting in June showed board members discussed how and when they might reduce monthly bond purchases that inject money into the financial system.

"We expect Jay Powell to reiterate that the tapering discussion is underway, but that it's too soon to reveal a specific



date," Danielle DiMartino Booth of Quill Intelligence said in a report.

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London lost 0.9% to 6,961.11 and the DAX in Frankfurt was off 0.9% to 15,471.67. The CAC 40 retreated 0.7% to 6,534.16.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 future was off 0.4% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.5%.

On Monday, the S&P 500 and Dow both gained 0.2%. The Nasdaq composite added less than 0.1%. In Asia, the

Sensex drops 273 pts; Nifty slips below 15K

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled over 273 points on Tuesday, tracking losses in index majors Reliance Industries, Dr Reddy's and Axis Bank amid a massive selloff in Chinese markets.

Despite opening on a positive note, the 30-share BSE index turned red to end 273.51 points or 0.52 per cent lower at 52,578.76, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 78 points or 0.49 per cent to 15,746.45.

Dr Reddy's was the top loser in the Sensex pack, plunging over 10 per cent, after the company reported a 36 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 380.4 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2021, on account of higher expenses.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo advanced 0.5% to 27,970.22.

The Kospi in Seoul rose 0.2% to 3,232.53 after economic growth moderated to 0.7% over the previous quarter in the three months ending in June, down from previous quarter's 1.7%.

Higher Q1 tax mop-up shows economy on recovery path: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Increased tax collection in the first quarter this fiscal shows that the economy is on the recovery path, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Tuesday.

Net direct tax collection in the April-June quarter of the current fiscal is over Rs 2.46 lakh crore, as against more than Rs 1.17 lakh crore during



the same period of the previous fiscal. "Reasons for increase in the collections include revival of economic

activities and positive sentiments among taxpayers during this current financial year, leading to increased income estimates and higher advance tax payments in the first quarter of the FY 2021-22 as compared to the corresponding period of FY 2020-21," he said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

Net Indirect Tax revenue collection in the first quarter of

FY 2021-22 is Rs 3.11 lakh crore, he said. "The increased tax collection as reported in the first quarter of the current financial year as compared to the same period previous financial year shows that the economy is on the recovery path. Higher tax collection would enable Government in increasing public expenditure, which would have a positive impact on GDP," Chaudhary added.

Torrent plans capex of Rs 10,000cr in 5 years

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Three billion Torrent Group, has drawn up a Rs 10,000 crore capital expenditure plan spread over the next five years including Rs 5,000 crore investment in Tamil Nadu, a top company official said on Tuesday.

The company earlier in the day launched 25 CNG stations in Chennai and Tiruvallur districts which was formally

inaugurated by Chief Minister M K Stalin through the virtual mode.

The company has set up its City Gate Station (or the Mother Station) at Vallur near Ennore in Tiruvallur district through which piped gas supply can be made to over 33 lakh residences.

The City Gate Station would also feed the 25 CNG stations that were inaugurated on Tuesday.

UCO Bank net profit jumps over 4-fold to Rs 102 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned UCO Bank on Tuesday posted over four-fold jump in its net profit to Rs 101.81 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, as bad loans fell significantly. The bank had reported a net profit of Rs 21.46 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal.

Sequentially, the net profit rose 27 per cent from Rs 80.03 crore in the March 2021 quarter. The total income during Q1 FY22 increased to Rs 4,539.08 crore, against Rs 4,436.57 crore in Q1 FY21. UCO Bank said in a regulatory filing. However, it was down from Rs 4,936.75 crore in the preceding March quarter. Interest income during the quarter fell 2.5 per cent to Rs 3,569.57 crore, while income from other sources rose 25.3 per cent to Rs 969.51 crore. The Kolkata-headquartered lender trimmed its gross non-performing assets (NPAs or bad loans) significantly to 9.37 per cent of the gross advances as of June 30, 2021, as against 14.38 per cent at June-end 2020.

Sanofi India reports Q2 net profit at Rs 178.3 crore

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Drug firm Sanofi India on Tuesday reported a net profit of Rs 178.3 crore for the second quarter ended in June. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 136.3 crore for the corresponding period of the previous financial year.

Sanofi India said in a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations of the company stood at Rs 789.1 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was Rs 710.5 crore for the same period a year ago, it added. "On account of Ankleshwar manufacturing facility transfer to Zentiva, export sales reduced in the current period and accordingly the export sales performance for the quarter and period ended June 30, 2021, is not comparable with quarter and period ended June 30, 2020," Sanofi India said.



YEARNING TO BE PART OF GOOD STORIES

SHIKHA DUGGAL

From working for the Aamir Khan-starrer *Ghajini* to making a comeback in Bollywood with Kriti Sanon-starrer *Mimi* on Netflix, Sai Tamhankar has come a long way. The actress has a promising career ahead and going by what she said in an exclusive interview, we are definitely going to witness more of Sai on the big screen. She has wowed her fans as well as critics with her performance in numerous plays, Marathi hits, Subhash Ghai's crime thriller *Black & White* and now *Mimi*, which revolves around the story of a young woman Mimi, essayed by Kriti Sanon, introduced by Bhanu (being played by Pankaj Tripathi), to an American couple for surrogacy and there comes in 'Shama' (Sai), who belongs to a conservative family in Rajasthan, and chooses to live her life on her own terms!

Life is about going for things. And when we do, rejection is always a possibility, isn't it? It is true that the actress was formerly rejected for the role in *Mimi*, however she didn't hold back from going after something she truly wanted and alas, destiny favoured her too. After a rejection, Sai was called back and was offered the role again and here she's booming in *Mimi* alongside Kriti Sanon! "It was my first film that I properly got through the process of auditioning, *Mimi* is going to be that veracious film that's going to stay with the audiences due to the subject it touches — surrogacy. Mainly, I think it's a wonderful and very layered subject because it's of its complex procedure, especially in our country where we have morals, values, and high

emotions for everything," she tells us.

Sai also asserts that it's that kind of a film which is being made both for the masses and classes! To be part of a women-centric movie makes Sai jubilant, more for the plotline, that she certainly believes is going to be another convincing factor for the audiences to watch it. "Everything is related to motherhood in it, a relationship that's large, overwhelming, and a beautiful piece of our lives. I don't mind my slow pace in the industry but I want to be a part of the right kind of films and subjects. I want to work on my own terms because I have to like what I do, I have to be convinced with what I play, so it's okay if I have to wait. I am going to be a part of interesting projects only. Also, after *Hunterrr*, I got a lot of roles that were of sexually depressed women. So, I get scared of being stereotyped and that could be another reason that why I am very cautious while choosing the subject and character," she adds.

Because the character in the film knows how to voice her opinions, Sai Tamhankar decided to be a part of this project, for that's what she's all about in the real life too. It makes one vulnerable! With immense happiness to star alongside a stellar cast, Sai Tamhankar did whatever she could to fit into the role of Shama. She further says, "I consider myself very fortunate to be working with such a stellar cast. Supriya ji and Manoj ji and everybody else has such a huge experience. They are '*majhe huye kalaakar*' and so good in front of the camera. I think it was a big challenge to buckle up and power up in front of them and I hope people appreciate my effort this time also. Since I had to play the

role of a Muslim girl, I took up the challenge of learning urdu dialect and what fun it was! Such a royal language, I must say. And then, the peculiar accent to convince I belong to Rajasthan. So this mixture led me on too."

Mimi, Sai says goes accurately well with Kriti's personality. She says Kriti Sanon made her feel warm and pleasant while shooting scenes that involved physical proximity while struggling to hold one another, pull each other and so on. "She's Bollywood's gigantic star who has given such blockbuster hits and for her to make me feel equally enjoyable was a

tremendous feeling in totality!" Sai is all praise for the way Hindi cinema is changing too. "It's great to see Bollywood filmmakers not limiting themselves to stereotypical storylines and characters. We, as an audience, have seen the same story tropes again and again, which gets quite boring. With today's generation being so quick

to call out the hypocrisies and share their feedback, filmmakers want to explore beyond the horizon of stereotypes. Even actors want to bring out stories of people who have been suppressed by society.

Laxman sir really knows how to appease an audience with quirky-relatable characters and heart-

touching storylines. Even though everyone knows motherhood is a boon, people aren't aware of the forms of pregnancy. We need to educate people on how becoming a mother should never be tied down to women being married or not. I love the way my character was shaped throughout the film," she signs off!



City responds well to mental health 'Fist Bump' initiative



After her successful campaign in her hometown Dehradun, Miss Asia Beauty winner, landed in Hyderabad to Promote Awareness about Mental Health. She began her campaign in Hyderabad during early hours on Tuesday at the popular walkers delight KBR Park, grabbing the attention of many walkers and health enthusiasts. She spent more than two hours with a banner behind stating: "DO YOU KNOW: Depression can be treated with medications and therapies, and then her interactive message FIST BUMP with a message to fist bump her — If you take care of the mental health of yourself and your loved ones".

She interacted with many walkers at the venue asking questions about the myths and concerns about their mental health. It turned out to be very interactive.

"Mental health encompasses our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. Further, it helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy alternatives. Mental health is key at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood," Akanksha Singh said.

Miss Asia Award winner of third runner up 2017, Akanksha Singh is a professional model, actor, and fitness enthusiast from Dehradun, Akanksha took a tour around Hyderabad parking herself in prominent malls and parks. At the end of the day, she was happy she could inspire many with her awareness program and covered 4 different locations, 2 prominent parks and malls

in the city to interact with people. She recently also did a 12-hour treadmill marathon in Dehradun to create awareness about mental health.

Akanksha's motivation behind this initiative is her mother Santosh Pundir who herself has suffered clinical depression, and her father Bhanwar Singh Pundir, who has been a constant support in her mother's journey of battling depression.

Talking about her upcoming initiative, Akanksha says, "In today's world, mental health is one of the most growing concerns, especially among youth, I aim to promulgate the importance of talking about it and taking control of one's thoughts. In our country, mental health issues like depression are still considered taboo. It is high time we try to change this mindset of people and undertake initiatives to spread awareness regarding mental health among the masses. I hope that through this upcoming feat of mine, I can do justice on my part towards spreading awareness regarding mental health," she added.

In 2013, the World Health Assembly approved a "Comprehensive Mental Health Action Plan for 2013-2020". The Plan is a commitment by all WHO's Member States to take specific actions to improve mental health and to contribute to the attainment of a set of global targets.

Finally, Akanksha says, "This initiative of mind is a small contribution and as a citizen commitment to contribute to the social wellbeing and in the context of national efforts to promote the mental wellbeing of its citizens, but also address the needs of persons with defined mental disorders."

World Hepatitis Day is observed every year today to raise awareness of viral hepatitis, an inflammation of the liver that causes severe liver disease and hepatocellular cancer. This year's theme is 'Hepatitis Can't Wait'. With a person dying every 30 seconds from hepatitis related illness - even in the current Covid-19 crisis — we can't wait to act on viral hepatitis. There are five main strains of the hepatitis virus — A, B, C, D and E. Together, hepatitis B and C are the most common which result in 1.1 million deaths and 3 million new infections per year.

Senior doctors from Apollo Hospitals Hyderabad share with *The Pioneer* some facts about liver, causes of hepatitis, symptoms, diagnosis and prevention of the disease complications. Let's start with some basics:

Liver is the largest organ in the human body which performs more than 500 vital functions. All the food that we eat including carbohydrates, fats, minerals gets metabolised in the liver after getting absorbed from the intestines. It produces important proteins which help in clotting of the blood. Liver, along with kidneys, works like a filter removing all the toxins and acids from the body. It also plays a crucial role in maintaining ade-



Hepatitis can't wait!

quate sugar levels in the body and also acts like a storage organ.

What is hepatitis?

Hepatitis means inflammation of the liver which if unchecked will lead to significant permanent damage to the Liver and life risk. The most common causes of liver damage are viral Hepatitis (mainly B,C), fatty liver and alcohol. Along

with these there are more than 100 different causes of liver damage which will lead to Cirrhosis (end stage liver disease).

Viral hepatitis

Hepatitis B directly has been causing 10 lakh deaths every year for the last few decades. It is estimated that around 200 crores population is currently or previously infected with hepatitis

B and around 35 crore population is currently infected and carrying this Hepatitis B virus. Around 75% of these infected people are in Asia and Africa. People with hepatitis B have 100 times more risk of developing Liver cancer compared to people who do not have hepatitis.

Similarly hepatitis C is estimated to be present in 18 crore populations worldwide

and most often cause long-term significant damage to the liver leading to irreversible cirrhosis and liver cancer. In fact 2 out of 3 liver cancer deaths are related to viral hepatitis.

Symptoms and signs of hepatitis

Liver is such a brilliant organ that it copes until it is at least more than 80% damaged and by the time symptoms appear it is often too late, hence Liver is like a silent killer. 9 out of 10 people don't even know that they have the virus and often it gets picked up whilst doing routine testing for other reasons.

Common symptoms they present with are jaundice, tummy swelling, leg swelling, blood vomiting or black stools, confusion and drowsiness. These symptoms appear only when the Liver is significantly damaged.

How can I get checked if I have the virus?

Detection of these viruses is with a simple blood test, which is widely available. Once these viruses are detected then the liver specialist will evaluate the stage of the virus and also the amount of the damage that has happened to the liver. Based on these we can offer further treatment.

Treatments available

If recognised early, Hepatitis is treatable and sometimes curable too. We can arrest the progression to cirrhosis by early recognition of these viruses and early commencement of the medications.

There are excellent medications available now to completely cure the hepatitis C. You just need to take one tablet a day for generally 3 months with almost 99% chance of completely curing the

fore eradicating the risk of future cirrhosis and liver cancer. Hepatitis B too has some excellent medications and vaccinations to control the virus. Apollo Hospitals have been running dedicated liver clinics specifically designed to treat and cure these deadly viruses. Their

equipment and expertise to identify and treat these viruses with excellent cure rates has saved many lives. In patients who have developed advanced liver disease, they have been treating them

with excellent outcomes and in patients who need liver transplant as the only mode of survival. It is strongly recommended that everyone gets

checked for these deadly silent killing viruses and if negative then let us get vaccinated. WHO aims to make the world Hepatitis-free by 2030 and it is achievable by all of us doing our part in coming forward, getting checked and treated if positive or vaccinated if negative. And we all know that pre-

vention is better than cure!



what's brewing?

● Aishwarya



● Honey Royal



● Pranjal



● Bhavana



PARTY

● AJ Ariyan and Mahesh Kumar



● Fiza



● Viswa Priya



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



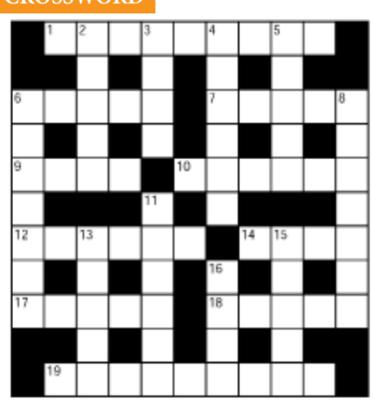
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

GINGER MEGGS



SOLUTION

ACROSS

- The person next door
- Ships tie up here
- Someone in a play
- A drawer for money in a shop
- Precious stones
- A hard safety hat
- A stopper for a bath or sink
- A thick soft quilt used as a cover for a bed
- A sheep's babies
- A country in South America

DOWN

- A letter sent from one computer to another
- Birthday present

SOLUTION

A	H	G	O	G	A
T	R	O	U	T	T
T	O	A	T	R	O
E	A	T	I	N	G
M	P	S	T	R	O
P	I	P	S	T	R
T	I	S	A	F	I
E	X	A	C	T	I
D	N	A	L	E	B
F	O	U	R	T	E

MODEL MOULDING

To spark the advent of the city's next top models, AJ events is conducting a fashion show for those looking to get into the modelling scene! The event, "Face of Hyderabad" is taking place at the Next Galleria Mall in Malakpet currently, and is drawing a lot of attention to the contestants ready to show off their talent.

Photos by SV Chary

FOR POOJA, NERVOUS ENERGY IS GOOD



Actress Pooja Hegde currently has multiple projects announced and rolling in the Tamil, Telugu and Hindi film industries. The actress says that being part of big budget films and high expectations from fans make her nervous.

However, her reasons to feel jittery change with every industry.

The actress also feels that having a non-film background affects how she looks at every film.

"When you come from a non-film background, the whole thing is whatever film you have, becomes like a golden treasure. It's like you have found treasure and you need to make the most of the role you have been given in the film, and hope that it helps you in capturing people's attention.

Unfortunately, I am a classic example of an over thinker but I think ner-

vous energy is good," shares the actress.

From Allu Arjun, Mahesh Babu, Junior NTR, Akshay Kumar to now Salman Khan, Vijay and Prabhas, Pooja has worked with the most bankable actors in the film industries across India.

Does having popular co-stars affect her craft? "I think it would affect my craft because a lot of acting is reacting. So, when they bring in their years of experience, it kind of helps me understand my craft more, it helps me to perform better," she says.

"It's also about learning other things, which are not directly related to acting like tips about the way they lead their lives. For me, it's always about learning something new, besides acting also. So, it's always been a mix of everything and it has made me a better actor for sure."

In Bollywood, Pooja will be seen alongside superstar Salman Khan in *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* and with Ranveer Singh in *Cirkus*. In Tollywood, she has *Kadhe Shyam* alongside Prabhas and in Tamil, the actress will be seen with Vijay in *Beast*.

Talking about how she deals with these expectations which come with taking big leaps with her choice of films, the actress says: "Does it make me nervous? Yes. I think with every industry my reason of nervousness changes. With Telugu now, with 'Radhe Shyam', my role is fantastic. There is a lot of scope for me. So, with Telugu, I want to know how the audience thinks I perform. So, my nervousness is that I give my heart and soul into my performance for this film."

The actress, who made her film debut with Tamil film *Mugamoodi* (2012), eventually went on to give many blockbusters in Telugu films too. She made her Hindi debut with director Ashutosh Gowariker's *Mohenjo Daro*.

Further elaborating on what kind of nervousness she feels with Hindi and Tamil industry, Pooja says, "With *Cirkus* and *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali*, I feel that I have so much to show to the Hindi audience of who I am and that is something, which is making me nervous. With Tamil, the nervousness is very different because it's a new market for me and now I am going back after many years. So, the nervousness is different."

PAN-INDIA CONCEPT DIVIDING TOLLYWOOD?

The pan-India concept has been shooting up like a trend in Tollywood. Actors are looking to work only for pan-India projects these days. This situation has become a trouble for middle level or big directors who stick to narrating local flavoured stories. Only few directors of Tollywood are in a row of pan-India movie making. All others are going to lose star actors' films. Even Koratala Siva, Trivikram Srinivas are under pressure to change their style to make a

pan-India films. Business dynamics of pan-India is going to rule the dynamics of directors too.

Jr. NTR is doing films with big directors like Prashant Neel and Sukumar. Koratala Siva is also not an option for pan-India films. Ramcharan is doing a film with Shankar, which is a pan-India movie. Allu Arjun is working on Pushpa as a pan-India project with Sukumar. Mahesh Babu's next film will be with Trivikram and then with Rajamouli.

Recently, Tollywood has witnessed young directors

like Hanu Raghavapudi, Sudheer Varma, Anil Ravipudi, Sampath Nandi and Maruthi. These directors may not have chances to work with star actors in this era of pan-India movies. This situation will work out in favour of middle level heroes like Nani, Sharwanand, Nikhil, Nithin, Nagashourya and Satyadev.

The directors, who won't be able to get star actors for



their films will choose to work with other actors and the industry may soon be divided into two — pan-India and non-pan-India films.



MIDNIGHT RUNNERS COMING THIS AUGUST

Midnight Runners, a South Korean action film is being remade in Telugu, with Sudheer Varma helming the project. Actresses Regina Cassandra and Nivetha Thomas will be playing lead roles in this film. The story is about two cops under training who chase a kidnapper gang. While the original

film had male leads, the Telugu remake will have female leads. This film started shooting in March itself but due to the second wave of Covid, it had to be stalled. With shoot not resumes, the team is confident of its release in August! Sudheer Varma, who is an expert in taking up such kinds of stories, is expecting a hit with this film. His last film

Ranarangam with Sharwanand didn't get him much success. *Swamy Rara*, *Dochey* and *Kesava* have made a good impact, but post these, Sudheer Varma lacked success.

The subject is a favourite one for Sudheer Varma and producers Suresh Babu, Thati Sunitha and Hunue Thomas, are confident with the film in the former's hands.

RRR set to release first song

SS Rajamouli's magnum opus *RRR* is just two months

away from its release and fans are already getting excited. The team of *RRR* too has been teasing fans with BTS videos, much to everybody's interest! The latest news now, is that music composer MM Keeravani has roped in superstar singers from across India for a multilingual song in the upcoming film. The song titled *Dosti* has been sung in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. Keeravani has enlisted the services of musicians Hemachandra, Anirudh Ravichander, Amit Trivedi, Yazin Nizar, and Vijay Yesudas to sing the song in different languages. The first song from the movie, which is written and directed by SS Rajamouli, is all set to release on August 1 at 11 am. The makers of the film have announced that the music rights of *RRR* have been bagged by T-Series and Lahari Music. PEN Studios has bagged the theatrical distribution rights across North India and the worldwide electronic rights for all languages.

The song release is part of the producers' ongoing promotional campaign for *RRR*, which is set to open in cinemas worldwide on October 13. Earlier, the filmmaker

released the footage showing the massive efforts that went into bringing to life Rajamouli's vision.

"It is one of the biggest films we are partnering on. As a viewer, I have always admired SS Rajamouli's body of work and revered MM Keeravani's music. I'm thrilled to be associating with *RRR* because it's the biggest film that will release this year. The music is outstanding and I'm sure the audience will love it, too," said Bhushan Kumar, head honcho of T-Series. We know that the production of *RRR* had to face a slew of problems, including interruptions in the shoot on multiple occasions, owing to the injuries suffered by Ram Charan and Jr NTR, the lead stars of the film. The outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown made shooting and post production works difficult, and the project has to be delayed by over a year. Earlier this month, with the release of the behind-the-scenes video, the filmmakers confirmed that *RRR* will hit the screens as announced on October 13. The announcement has brought much-needed relief to the Indian film industry, which is struggling to get back on its feet since last year. *RRR* is expected to restart the engines of the box office business again.



Navarasa trailer wows fans

The trailer of the much-awaited anthology *Navarasa* spearheaded by Mani Ratnam and filmmaker Jayendra Panchapakesan was dropped on Tuesday. The film is all set to premiere on Netflix on August 6. The anthology is an amalgamation of nine short films based on nine 'rasas' or human emotions — anger, compassion, courage, disgust, fear, laughter, love, peace and wonder.

As soon as the trailer dropped, netizens expressed their joy on social media. The trailer was re-shared and reposted by netizens.

Talking about the anthology, Mani Ratnam said, "Emotions may be momentary but some of those moments stay with us for life. Emotions are part of every day of our lives and yet some of these can change the course of our lives. This is what makes *Navarasa* interesting. Though at most times there is more than

one emotion in play, often it is one that takes control of our mind and soul and spurs us into action. *Navarasa* is a collection of nine stories born out of nine such emotions. Some of these take shape from deep-rooted feelings. *Navarasa* showcases them all." As the project is also intended to support film workers in Tamil cinema impacted by the pandemic, Jayendra Panchapakesan added, "We are extremely happy and proud of our colleagues in the industry, directors, actors and technicians, who have created engaging, exciting stories from these nine emotions or the classical 'rasas'. We are sure viewers across the globe will enjoy and celebrate this confluence of 'rasas'." The films are directed by — Arvind Swami, Bejoy Nambiar, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Karthik Subbaraj, Karthick Naren, Priyadarshan, Rathindran R. Prasad, Sarjun and Vasanth S. Sai.

Sonu Sood: Small businesses are the backbone of India



making 'rotis', the actor has been urging people to support local businesses as he feels they are the basic backbone of our country.

Talking about the same, Sonu said, "Small businesses are the basic backbone of our country. I have always tried to promote small businesses as they need support. Many small businesses are unable to sustain their daily livelihood. I try and help them out whenever I get to see someone put in their hard work and trying to make an honest day's living out of it."

"I come from a very small town and I know how hard these people work in order to make their small businesses successful. By pushing them forward, we can help the nation's economy, as these small businesses are grassroot-level companies and work out of the rural heartlands of the country. So it always feels good to help them out," he added. On the work front, the actor will feature in upcoming projects like the Hindi historical drama film *Prithviraj* and the Telugu action drama *Acharya*.

For the past few weeks, actor and social worker Sonu Sood has been actively campaigning on social media with the hashtag #supportsmallbusiness.

Sharing videos where he can be seen playing a bread and eggs seller on a bicycle, a milkman or a 'dhaba' owner



TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hockey:** India beat Spain 3-0 in Men's Pool A Match.
- **Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat Ben Lane and Sean Vandy (Great Britain) 21-17, 21-19 in Men's Doubles Group A Match.
- **Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain beat Nadine Apetz of Germany 3-2 in Women's 69kg Round of 16 Bout.
- **Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal lost to Ma Long (China) 7-11, 11-8, 11-13, 4-11, 4-11 in Men's Singles Round 3 Match.
- **Shooting:** Saurabh Chaudhary/Manu Bhaker and Yeshahwini Deswal/Abhishek Verma fail to qualify for medal round in 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event.
- **Elavenil Valarivan/Divyansh Singh Panwar and Anjum Moudgil/Deepak Kumar** fail to qualify for medal round in 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event.
- **Sailing:** Nethra Kumaran 32nd and 38th in Race 5 and 6 in Women's Laser Radial.
- **Vishnu Saravanan** 23rd and 22nd in Race 5 and 6 in Men's Laser.
- **KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar** 18th in Race 1 in Men's Skiff 49er.

IN FOCUS TODAY

- **Hockey:** India vs Great Britain (Women's)
- **Badminton:** P V Sindhu vs NY Cheung (Hong Kong) and B Sai Praneth vs M Caljouw (Netherlands).
- **Boxing:** Pooja Rani vs Ichrak Chaib (Algeria).
- **Rowing:** Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh in Men's Lightweight Double Sculls Semifinal 2.
- **Archery:** Tarundeep Rai vs Oleksii Hunbin (Ukraine). Pravin Jadhav vs Galsan Bazarzhapov (Russian Olympic Committee).
- **Deepika Kumari vs Karma (Bhutan).**



India's Mandeep Singh (11) celebrates after Rupinder Pal Singh, right, scored against Spain during men's field hockey match on Tuesday

Back to winning ways

India's Mandeep Singh (11) celebrates after Rupinder Pal Singh, right, scored against Spain during men's field hockey match on Tuesday

Tokyo: Dragflicker Rupinder Pal Singh scored a brace as the Indian men's hockey overcame a demoralising defeat in the previous match to cruise past Spain 3-0 and inch closer to a quarterfinal berth at the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday.

Drubbed 1-7 by Australia in their last match, India produced a spirited performance against world No 9 Spain and scored through Simranjeet Singh (14th minute) and Rupinder Pal Singh (15th and 51st) to record a comfortable win in their third Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium.

India, ranked fourth in the world, had earlier defeated

INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 28 (ALL TIMES IST)

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
06:30 AM	Hockey: Women's Pool A Match	India vs Great Britain
07:30 AM	Badminton: Women's Singles Group Match	PV Sindhu
07:31 AM	Archery: Men's Individual 1/32 Eliminations	Tarundeep Rai
08:00 AM	Rowing: Men's Doubles Sculls Semifinals	Arjun Lal Jat & Arvind Singh
08:35 AM	Sailing: 49er Men's Race 2,3 & 4	KC Ganapathy & Varun Thakkar
12:30 PM	Archery: Men's Individual 1/32 Eliminations	Pravin Jadhav
02:14 PM	Archery: Women's Individual 1/32 Eliminations	Deepika Kumari
02:30 PM	Badminton: Men's Singles Group Match	B Sai Praneth
02:33 PM	Boxing: Women's 75kg Round of 16	Pooja Rani

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New Zealand 3-2 in their opening fixture. Spain, on the other hand, are yet to register a win in the competition.

Spain drew 1-1 against Argentina before losing 3-4 to New Zealand.

The Indians will next play reigning Olympic champions Argentina on Thursday.

For any team it is always tough to recover from a morale-shattering loss within a day, but India looked more organised and sorted against Spain on Tuesday.

Despite the win, India's chief coach Graham Reid said the team needs to work upon a lot of grey areas, like conceding penalty corners, ahead of their remaining matches.

"Better result today, but a lot of things to work on from an improvement perspective. The fact that we gave too many corners, that's always a concern when that happens. But the team did really well in terms of defending," he said.

"The first quarter was played very well, we could move the ball really well and it was exactly what we planned to do. We struggled a bit in the second and third quarters."

Women need to create and grab chances

Tokyo: Enduring a forgettable campaign, bottom-placed Indian women's hockey team can't afford squandering any more chances if it fancies upsetting defending champions Great Britain on Wednesday.

After a 1-5 drubbing against world number one the Netherlands, the Indians players lifted their game by leaps and bounds to give third-ranked Germany a run for their money before losing 0-2 in their next Pool A match.

But two consecutive defeats have definitely pegged the side back. India created a lot of scoring opportunities against Germany but finishing was lacking from the forward line. On one occasion, Vandana Kataria was denied by the goal post too.

However, the Rani Rampal-led side can take a lot of heart from its performance against the Germans given that it kept the intensity and fight intact till the final hooter.

With two defeats from as many games, the Indian women are currently lying at the bottom of the six-team Pool A, which is being headed by Netherlands, followed by Germany, Britain, Ireland and South Africa.

But these are still early days with three matches each remaining for all the teams. Top four sides from each pool of six will qualify for the quarterfinals.

Ranked 11th in the world, India stand a chance to make the quarterfinals but for that to happen they will have to outplay seventh-ranked Ireland and South Africa, who are placed 16th.



Indias Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty play against Britains Ben Lane and Sean Vandy during their mens doubles group play stage match

Chirag-Satwik exit despite win

Tokyo: Indian shuttlers Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy emerged victorious against the England pair of Ben Lane and Sean Vandy in their final Group A match but still missed out on qualifying for the quarterfinals at the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday.

Ranked 10th in the world, the Indians beat world number 18 team 21-17, 21-19 in a 44-minute Group A men's doubles match at the Musashino Forest Plaza.

However, they couldn't make it to the knockout stage as they finished third in the Group A behind top-ranked Indonesian team of Marcus Gideon Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo and world number three Yang Lee and Chi-Lin Wang of Chinese Taipei.

"We knew the moment Lee Yang/Wang Chi-Lin won, we don't stand a chance. They won in two games and we won in three. It is quite sad. Unfortunately, even after winning two matches in the group, we don't go through. But that is badminton and have to live with it," said Chirag.

All three teams finished on same points with two wins each and when the number of games won was considered to identify the qualifiers, the Indians lost.

Chirag and Satwik's straight game loss to the Indonesians on Monday cost them dear.

Moments before the Indian pair stepped on the court, Lee and Wang had completed a three-game win over Sukamuljo and Gideon in the preceding group match, rendering the result of India's contest against Britain inconsequential.

Sharath goes down fighting

Tokyo: Sharath Kamal matched the legendary Ma Long stroke for stroke in the first three games before making a third round exit from the table tennis competition on Tuesday, ending India's medal-less yet impressive run at the Tokyo Olympics.

Following the unprecedented gains made from the 2018 Asian Games, where India won a table tennis medal for the first time ever, the performance of Sharath and Manika Batra in the round of 32 added significantly to the sport's growing popularity.

They both achieved a first by

reaching the third round at the Summer Games.

A less tougher draw in mixed doubles, in which Sharath and Manika were seen as medal contenders, as well as in the men's singles could have seen the Indians scaling new heights.

The way 39-year-old Sharath played against Long has convinced him to think about competing in his fifth Olympics in Paris.

He fought tooth and nail in the first three games against the reigning Olympic and world champion Long before going down 7-

11, 11-8, 11-13, 4-11, 4-11 in 46 minutes.

To have a player like Long under pressure in itself is a significant achievement for the seasoned Indian.

"It was the best three games and probably the best match and best tournament I ever played," Sharath said.

The Chinese great too acknowledged that Sharath made it tough for him.

"It was a tough match. Of course at the Olympics every match, no matter the opponent, no matter the country, it's always tough," said Long.

"I did prepare for difficulties. The third game was crucial. After gutting it out the last two games were better," he added.

With Sharath's defeat, India's challenge ended in table tennis as Manika, Sutirtha Mukherjee and G Sathiyam had already exited the singles competition.

Lovlina makes QFs

Tokyo: Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) advanced to the quarterfinals in her debut Olympic appearance on Tuesday, defeating German veteran Nadine Apetz in a closely-fought last-16 stage bout.

Borgohain, the lone Indian boxer in action on the day, prevailed 3-2 over her rival who is 12 years her senior. Both the boxers were making their Games debut and the Indian became the first from her nine-strong team to make the quarterfinal stage.

The 23-year-old showed great poise in a tense contest to triumph by the thinnest of margins. She claimed all the three rounds on split points.

The 35-year-old Apetz was the first German woman to qualify for a boxing event at the Olympics. She is a two-time world championship Bronze-medallist and a former European champion.



Germany's Nadine Apetz, left, looks for an opening against Lovlina Borgohain during their 69kg boxing match

Borgohain is a two-time World and Asian championships Bronze-medallist and will next face Chinese Taipei's Nien-Chin Chen on July 30, who is seeded fourth.

A win in the upcoming contest would assure Borgohain of at least a Bronze medal at the mega-event.

On Wednesday, Asian champion Pooja Rani (75kg) will square off against Algerian youngster Ichrak Chaib.

Shooters poor form continues

Tokyo: Indian shooters endured yet another forgettable outing at the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday as they crashed out in the qualifying stages of the mixed team events in both pistol and rifle.

Considered the team's best bet for a podium finish, the duo of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker caved in under pressure and failed to qualify for the final of the 10m air pistol mixed team event.

They finished seventh in Qualification 2 after topping the first phase with 582. Both the 19-year-old shooters lost the plot completely when the top eight teams battled it out in the second phase.

The other Indian team in the event, Abhishek Verma and Yashawini Singh Deswal, failed to clear Qualification 1 and finished in 17th place, having totalled 564 across six series (three each for one member).

The team of Chaudhary and Bhaker totalled 380 across



Manu Bhaker & Saurabh Chaudhary during 10m Air Pistol mixed team event

While the top eight teams make the Qualification 2, the top four pairs in the second phase qualify for the medal rounds.

Later in the day, both the Indian pairs participating in the 10m air rifle mixed team event crashed out in the first qualifications stage, missing out on yet another final after an outing that left a lot to be desired.

The duo of Elavenil Valarivan and Divyansh Singh Panwar finished 12th with a total of 626.5 across three series each, while Anjum Moudgil and Deepak Kumar ended 18th out of 29 pairs with an aggregate score of 623.8.

Indian debacle in Tokyo shocks shooting fraternity, NRAI boss talks of 'overhaul'

Tokyo: The Indian shooting federation on Tuesday promised an 'overhaul' of the coaching staff after the 15-strong contingent's Olympic campaign moved from one disaster to another.

As the country's shooters continued to belie expectations with their horror show here, reliving the Rio 2016 debacle, the head of the sport's national governing body promised a major revamp in coaching and support staff.

"Definitely the performances have not been on expected lines and I have spoken of an overhaul of coaching and support staff," NRAI Raninder Singh said.

Questions are being raised about why the shooters were not able to replicate their excellent showing at the ISSF World Cups at the Olympics.

"I feel something is lacking in getting our shooters prepared for these big occasions, because clearly the talent is there and we have seen it here as well," the NRAI boss said.

However, Raninder said that not all is still lost for the Indian shooting team as it is left with a few more starts.

"Having said that we still have starts left and let's continue to back the team and I am sure we'll get results. Postmortems can wait till after the Games," Raninder said.

Osaka eliminated

AFP ■ TOKYO

Japan's Naomi Osaka suffered a 6-1, 6-4 defeat to Marketa Vondrousova in the third round of the Tokyo Games on Tuesday, crushing her dreams of winning Olympic Gold at home.

Osaka, who lit the Olympic cauldron during the opening ceremony, struggled in an error-strewn display under the centre court roof at Ariake Tennis Park and was knocked out in 68 minutes.

Vondrousova, ranked 42nd, will go on to face Spain's Paula Badosa or Nadia Podoroska of Argentina.

Meanwhile, Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the third round of the Olympics men's tennis tournament on Tuesday as he avenged last month's Wimbledon loss to Frances Tiafoe.

The Greek third seed downed American Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4 under the centre court roof at Ariake Tennis Park, where all play on outside courts was delayed an hour by morning drizzle.

Tsitsipas, who is also entered in mixed doubles with Maria Sakkari, will play France's Ugo Humbert or Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia for a spot in the quarter-finals.

Also Novak Djokovic added another medal event to his program by entering the mixed doubles draw with Serbian partner Nina Stojanovic.

Sailors Vishnu, Nethra at 22nd & 33rd spot

Enoshima: Indian sailors Vishnu Saravanan and Nethra Kumaran finished way behind the leaders as they ended at 22nd and 33rd spot in the respective events after six races in the Tokyo Olympics here on Tuesday.

Saravanan finished 23rd and 22nd in the fifth and sixth race in the men's laser event while Kumaran was 32nd and

38th in the two races of the women's laser radial event held at Enoshima Yacht Harbour on Tuesday.

Four more races and medal race remain in the competition and the India duo were far behind in the rankings.

Each event consists of a series of races. Points in each race are awarded according to position: the winner gets one

point, the second-placed finisher scores two and so on.

The final race is called the medal race, for which points are doubled. Following the medal race, the individual or crew with the fewest total points is declared the winner.

The medal races of both the women's laser radial and men's laser will be held on August 1 after 10 races each.



Indias KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar compete during the 49er men's race of the sailing event at the Enoshima harbour on Tuesday



Carissa Moore of US celebrates winning Gold medal in the women's surfing competition



1. Weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz became 1st athlete from Philippines to win an Olympic Gold



2. ROC artistic gymnastics women's team celebrate after winning Gold medal



3. Britain swimmer Tom Dean beats Covid twice to win Gold in 200m freestyle



4. Weightlifter Polina Guryeva wins Turkmenistan's 1st Olympic medal (Silver)

Ind-SL 2nd T20I postponed to Wed as Krunal tests Covid +ve

PTI ■ COLOMBO/NEW DELHI

The second T20I between India and Sri Lanka in Colombo on Tuesday was postponed by a day after Indian all-rounder Krunal Pandya tested positive for Covid-19, forcing him out of the series with seven days of isolation.

However, all his eight close contacts, who were isolated, have tested 'negative' in the RT-PCR tests and will be available for the postponed game which is being held on Wednesday.

As per Sri Lanka's health safety protocols, Krunal will not be able to travel back to India with other members of the contingent on July 30 as he will now have to undergo mandatory isolation and obtain a negative RT-PCR report.

The third and final T20I is scheduled to be held on Thursday.

"Krunal is symptomatic with cough and throat pain.

He is obviously out of the series and will not be able to return with rest of the squad," a BCCI source tracking the developments in Colombo said.

"However the good news is that all his eight close contacts who were identified by the BCCI medical officer (Dr Abhijit Salvi) have tested negative."

For now, the three-match series is on as even if there are a couple of more cases, the Indian team has enough players with negative RT-PCR reports to field a team.

Krunal, who tested positive on Tuesday morning, has already been quarantined.

India are travelling with a 20-member squad plus four stand by net bowlers.

Now, there will be back-to-back matches on Wednesday and Thursday provided there aren't any more players testing positive to affect the balance of the sides which will lead to cancellation.



Pant bats in nets

Durham: Ahead of the gruelling five Test match series against England, the Indian Test team led by skipper Virat Kohli, had a centre wicket training at the Durham Cricket Club here on Tuesday.

Aggressive wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant, who had joined the Test team after recovering from Covid-19, also batted in the nets.

"TeamIndia back at it and having a centre wicket training at Durham Cricket Club ahead of the five-match Test series against England," the BCCI said in a tweet.