

ANALYSIS 7
PEGASUS AFFAIR IS AN
ASSAULT ON PRIVACY**MONEY 8**
ELECTRICITY BILL MAY COME BEFORE
UNION CABINET FOR APPROVAL**SPORTS 11**
CAKE WALK FOR
SINDHU

VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY, JULY 26, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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MADHAVAN ON THE
IMPORTANCE OF
BEING KIND, CARING
AND COMPASSIONATE

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PRESIDENT KOVIND COMPLETES FOUR YEARS IN OFFICE

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday completed four years in office, the Rashtrapati Bhavan said, highlighting that he gave assent to 63 Bills of the Union and state governments, besides lauding frontline Covid warriors for saving countless lives across the country among others initiatives. Kovind, aged 76, was sworn in as the 14th President of India on 25 July, 2017. "President Ram Nath Kovind completes four years in office today," the Rashtrapati Bhavan said in a tweet and shared an e-book highlighting activities during his fourth year of presidency. As "Everyone's President", Kovind visited 13 states and two union territories and met 780 people during these visits, according to the e-book.

**WE MUST MOVE FORWARD WITH 'NATION FIRST, ALWAYS FIRST' MANTRA: PM MODI**

Stressing on 'Nation First, Always First' mantra, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday that as the country enters its 75th year of Independence, every citizen should lead a 'Bharat Jodo Andolan' in the same manner as Mahatma Gandhi had led the 'Bharat Chhoro Andolan'. In his monthly Mann Ki Baat radio broadcast, he noted that on the coming August 15, India will enter its 75th year of Independence and highlighted that Amrit Mahotsav is being celebrated throughout the country to mark that year. The need of the nation is to unite and work towards national progress, Modi said. "Just like Babu (Mahatma Gandhi) led the 'Bharat Chhoro Andolan' (Quit India movement), every Indian must lead the 'Bharat Jodo Andolan' (Unite India Movement)".

**RAHUL GANDHI SLAMS GOVT FOR PACE OF COVID-19 VACCINATIONS**

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday questioned the pace of COVID-19 vaccination, and said had the country's 'Mann Ki Baat' been understood, such would not have been the state. His remarks came just ahead of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' address to the people of the country. "Had you understood the country's 'Mann Ki Baat', such would not have been the state of vaccinations," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. He used the hashtag "WhereAreVaccines" to question the government on the inoculation rate. The former Congress President also shared a video highlighting the alleged slow vaccination rate and media reports where people were not getting vaccines across the country.

**KERALA VET DOC GETS PATENT FOR BIODIESEL FROM CHICKEN WASTE**

After waiting for more than seven years, John Abraham, a veterinary-doctor-turned-inventor, has finally received the patents for inventing biodiesel from slaughtered chicken waste that offers mileage of over 38 km a litre at around 40 per cent of the current price of diesel and lowers pollution by half. After seven-and-a-half years, the Indian Patent Office finally granted us the patent on July 7, 2021, for inventing 'biodiesel produced from rendered chicken oil', Abraham, an associate professor at the veterinary college here under the Kerala Veterinary & Animal Sciences University, told PTI from Wayanad. The invention is an outcome of his doctoral research at the Namakkal Veterinary College under the Tamil Nadu Veterinary & Animal Sciences University.



The foreground of the temple with the Sabha Mandapa or outer porch.

Ramappa gets UNESCO heritage tag

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

UNESCO has conferred the World Heritage inscription to the historic Rudreswara Temple, also known as the Ramappa Temple, at Palampet in Mulugu district of Telangana, Union Minister G Kishan Reddy said on Sunday.

The Rudreswara temple was constructed in 1213 AD during the

reign of the Kakatiya empire by Recherla Rudra, a general of Kakatiya king Ganapati Deva. The temple is dedicated to Lord Shiva and worshiped by devotees.

The presiding deity is Ramalingeswara Swamy.

It is also known as the Ramappa temple, after the sculptor who executed the work in the temple for 40 years, an official release said.

The Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy said in a tweet: "It gives me immense pleasure to share that @UNESCO has conferred the World Heritage tag to Ramappa Temple at Palampet, Telangana. On behalf of the nation, particularly from people of Telangana, I express my gratitude to Hon PM @narendramodi for his guidance & support". Kishan Reddy

in a release said that owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting of the World Heritage Committee of United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) could not be conducted in 2020 and the nominations for 2020 and those for 2021 were discussed in a series of online meeting that are currently underway.

**Rain God prevents water dispute between two Telugu states!**SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad: The two Telugu states may not be fighting over water this year as the rain god has blessed both the states with abundant supply of water till now. Most of the reservoirs of the two Telugu states are approaching full capacity. Experts, therefore are hopeful that there will be no shortage of either drinking water or water required for cultivation in Telangana State and AP this year. Generally water disputes arise between the two states when the required level of water is not there in the reservoirs. However, this year the disputes may not arise as the reservoirs will be full.

For the first time in the current season inflows to Srisailem reservoir crossed three lakh cusecs. With this, water storage in the Srisailem reservoir reached 855.60 feet against total capacity of 885 feet. In the last 12 hours about 8.74 TMC water had reached the Srisailem reservoir. The officials said the storage in the reservoir was changing every hour. At present the inflows into the Srisailem reservoir is 3.72 lakh cusecs and it may further increase. The officials said



going by the present inflows, by Monday morning the water storage in the Srisailem reservoir is likely to cross 100 TMC. From Narayanpur reservoir in Karnataka 3.50 cusecs water is reaching Jurala project in Telangana. Due to the continuous heavy rains in the catchment areas of Karnataka and Maharashtra the water flow in the Krishna river and its tributaries is increasing. In view of the heavy inflows in Krishna river the major reservoirs in Karnataka, Almatti and Narayanapur, have reached full capacity level. The Karnataka irrigation officials are reducing

the water storage in these reservoirs by releasing water downstream, due to heavy inflows. The Telangana irrigation officials are also reducing the level of water storage in Jurala as heavy inflows are reaching from Karnataka. At present in Jurala the officials are maintaining the water level in the reservoir at 1039.17 feet. From Jurala 3.72 cusecs is being released to the Srisailem reservoir. If the present inflows continue, by next week the Srisailem reservoir will reach its full capacity level.

**YSRCP creates record by clinching all 12 corporations**C PRADEEP KUMAR
■ VIJAYAWADA

With the win in Eluru Municipal Corporation, the ruling YSRCP made a clean sweep by winning all the 12 corporations in the state with the absolute majority creating a new record. The YSRCP won 47 of the 50 divisions while the opposition TDP was left with a humiliating defeat and was confined to just three divisions in the Eluru Municipal Corporation.

The election to the Eluru Municipal Corporation became very controversial with court cases.

**World experts shower accolades on Vizag's investment bazaar**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vizag, the city of destiny, has found special mention in an international webinar in which international stakeholders took part. Vizag's investment bazaar was mentioned in that international webinar in which delegates from Paris, the USA, Denmark and the UK participated. And they all showered accolades on the APSECM and the AP government, along with BEE for organising such an important event.

The Government of India (GoI), through Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Ministry of Power, had specifically mentioned the Government of AP's foresight to creating a path for accelerating energy efficiency, which helped achieve the sustainability of the industrial sector, particularly in



the Covid-19 scenario.

During the "international webinar on energy efficiency financing", organised by Organization For Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), Paris, in coordination with the BEE, GoI, the Director General, BEE Abhay Bhakre said energy efficiency

financing was a highly effective initiative in promoting energy efficiency for achieving the goal of reducing emission intensity of country's GDP by 33 to 35 per cent by 2030 from the 2005 levels.

**Free pizza offered to Mirabai Chanu for life**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An Olympic medallist's wish is anybody's command. Domino's Pizza has pledged free pizza for life to India's silver medallist Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, after the champion said she wished to eat pizza after her feat at the Tokyo Olympics.

The chain on Saturday also delivered pizzas to her family to celebrate Chanu winning the silver medal for India.

"Aapne kaha, aur humne sunn liya. We never want @mirabai_chanu to wait to eat again so we're treating her to FREE Domino's pizza for life! #PizzasForLife," Domino's Pizza tweeted.

On Saturday in her interview with an Indian media house after winning the medal Chanu said: "First of all, I will go and have a



pizza. It has been a long time since I ate it. I will eat a lot today."

The video of the said interview was tagged to Pratik Potathe, CEO and Wholtime Director of Jubilant FoodWorks Ltd (JFL), which operates fast-food chains Domino's Pizza in India, suggesting him to deliver "Pizza for her - for life".

**CM to deposit 2nd tranche of Vidya Devena' on July 29**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The second tranche of the 'Jagananna Vidya Devena' (fee reimbursement) scheme as part of the 'Navaratna' flagship programme of the YSRCP government, amounts will be released on

July 29 to about 10.97 lakh students across the state to the tune of Rs 693.81 crore. During the first tranche in

April Rs 671.45 crore was disbursed to 10.88 lakh students in the state.



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashadha & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Tritiya 26:53

Nakshatram : Dhanishtha 10:26

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

Rahukalam : 7:33 am - 9:09 am

Yamagandam : 10:46 am - 12:22 pm

Varjyam : 5:34 pm - 7:09 pm

Gulika : 1:58 pm - 3:35 pm

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 3:05 am - 4:40 am

Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:56 am - 12:48 pm

VIJAYAWADA
WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 33/26

Humidity: 88%

Sunrise: 5:53 am

Sunset: 06:51 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated JULY 25, 2021 5:00 PM



MAHA MONSOON FURY

113 dead, 100 missing; CM visits rain-hit areas

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The number of deaths due to flooding, landslides and other rain-related incidents in parts of Maharashtra reached 113 on Sunday with one more casualty reported in the last 24 hours, while 100 people were missing after the monsoon fury, the state government said.

So far, 50 people have also been injured in these incidents, the government said in a statement.

On Sunday, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray visited Chiplun, the site of severe flooding in Ratnagiri district of the Konkan region.

A group of locals stopped the CM's convoy and informed him about the problems they were facing following the rain havoc in the area.

The chief minister interacted with residents, businessmen and shopkeepers, and promised them all help from the state government to restore normalcy in the area.



Thackeray said they will require "central assistance for long-term mitigation measures", and added that he will tour western Maharashtra on Monday and a comprehensive data of the extent of damages will be prepared.

Union MSME Minister Narayan Rane visited Taliye village in Raigad, the site of a massive land-

slide on Thursday, and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi has asked him to submit a report on the damage caused by the rains.

Rane said damaged houses would be rebuilt under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana after suggestions are taken from local residents.

**73 bodies recovered, 47 people missing following landslides: NDRF**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seventy-three bodies have been retrieved and 47 people are missing following landslides triggered by heavy rainfall in the coastal regions of Maharashtra, the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) said on Sunday.

S N Pradhan, the Director General (DG) of the federal force, tweeted the latest data of its operations being undertaken in Raigad, Ratnagiri and Satara districts of the state.

**DRDO chief inspects Missile Testing Range in Krishna district**

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO) Chairman G Sateesh Reddy on Sunday inspected the ongoing construction work of the Missile Testing Range at Gullalamoda village in Krishna district of Andhra Pradesh.

The Rs 1,000 crore MTR is being built on the Bay of Bengal coast, work on which commenced last year.

This will be the second MTR after the one at Balasore in neighbouring Odisha.

The project, coming up on a 154.4 hectare site, will comprise a technical facility, a few launch pads, control centre and state-of-the-art communications systems.

Both short and long-range missiles could be tested from this facil-



ity once it is fully up, official sources said.

"At least 1,000 people are working on building the project. The works are progressing at a brisk pace," Sateesh Reddy said on the occasion.

The DRDO would adopt Gullalamoda village and contribute to its overall development, he said.



Monday Mirchi

One more IAS official joins the 'waitlist'

In official circles, there cannot be a greater torture than to wait in the General Administration Department (GAD) indefinitely for posting. In the TRS government, one more IAS officer has joined the 'waitlist' of those who have been transferred without being given a specific post. Four IAS officers viz. Sandeep Kumar Jha, Abdul Azeem, V Venkateswarlu and Anitha Ramachandran were transferred in November last.

These four IAS officers had been serving as collectors. Till now they have not been given any post. Now, as part of recent IAS transfers, Karimnagar District Collector Shashank has been moved. He too has not been given any post, but simply asked to report to GAD. His wait has just begun. Unfazed, Shashank thanked Karimnagar people, officers and public representatives of the district for their support and affection. He took to social media to share that he would always cherish his experiences and then welcomed new collector R V Karnan.

What is being discussed animatedly in IAS circles is why some IAS officers, especially those loyal to the government, are made to wait for long by the TRS government. Are they going to be groomed for something special? When there is a shortage of IAS officers, we have a strange situation where some are waiting impatiently and indefinitely for posting and others are transferred to inconsequential positions or places. These IAS officers do not know whether they have been given punishment; and, if yes, what was their mistake in the first place.

Gender disparity in TS

There are very few women IPS officers in Telangana -- just about 22 at last count. When it comes to the number of IPS officers across the country, Telangana occupies the 11th position. On this front, Assam has more women IPS officers than the state, according to data presented in Parliament. Questions are now being raised if this paucity of women officers in leadership roles is the reason for the increasing harassment and violence targeting women. Besides, there are 51 women IAS officers in TS. Here again, at least 10 states have far more than this number.

Mysterious delay in promotions to Spl CS cadre

It has been close to two months since a release did the rounds about the promotion of two senior IAS officers, Principal Secretary - Finance and Director-General of MCRHRD in the rank of Principal Secretary to Government Ramakrishna Rao and Harpreet Singh respectively, to the cadre of Special Chief Secretary. Since it was deemed to be a routine administrative process, nobody imagined that there would be so much delay in its execution that eventually it would have to be treated on par with 'breaking news'. This is so because the undue delay in promotion to the Special CS cadre of the two gentlemen has become a topic of discussion in many circles.

Employees in various government departments look up to IAS officers heading various departments for smooth promotions. Recently there were large-scale promotions in various

government departments, though some of those promoted are yet to be given postings. Their morale takes a beating when they see that their bosses themselves face inexplicable hurdles even after securing approval for promotions from no less a person than the Chief Minister himself.

There are two clear vacancies in the Special CS cadre, the retirement of Suresh Chanda on March 31 and of Chitra Ramachandran on April 30. In February itself, the Chief Minister had approved in principle promotions to fill those vacancies. Strangely, the file was sent again to the Chief Minister for approval. Many see this as a deliberate delaying tactic. As the head of the State administration, the onus is on the Chief Secretary. It is of course true that he has been busy with his field visits to supervise vaccination and medical infrastructure in health centres to address 'routine' administrative issues.

Loyalty to whom also matters

In the administrative totem pole, a lot depends on to whom one is loyal. Let's take the case of 2008 batch IAS officer Vadrevu Vinay Chand, who has been transferred from his current post as Vizag Collector. The shift has not surprised many, considering whispers about his imminent transfer have been going around in the corridors of the Velagapudi Secretariat for quite some time. However, the posting of Aarogyasri CEO Dr A Mallikarjuna as Vizag Collector has raised many eyebrows. For, the names of many other worthies were banded about as the next district collector of Vizag. Not many guessed Mallikarjuna could be the dark horse, though he is going to occupy the 'hot seat'. With Vizag billed as the Executive capital of the state and the only metropolitan city in Andhra Pradesh, loyalty matters more than merit when it comes to picking officials. The eyes of all the state's top political bosses are on the lands in Vizag that have turned invaluable these days. Vinay Chand, given his efficiency, could have been continued for some more time, a little birdie from the Velagapudi Secretariat shared. Vinay's undue loyalty towards a top leader of the ruling party cost him his position. The incoming Collector would do well to take a hint from this to survive in Vizag for a reasonably good period. Incidentally, Vinay Chand served as Vizag district collector for exactly two years.

Kadapa guy is Vizag Collector

Dr A Mallikarjuna, incoming District Collector of Vizag, has been cherry-picked by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy from his home district Kadapa. His is a success story of grit and remarkable determination. Coming from a very humble background, he cleared the 2012 Civils after five attempts. He was once selected for the Indian Foreign Service. However, he attempted the Civils exam again and secured All India rank 20. He hails from Narasaramaiahgaripalle village under the Kadapa Municipal Corporation limits and was a medical graduate from the Kurnool Medical College before he joined civil service. He initially joined the primary health centre at Y Kota village in Obulavaripalle mandal of Kadapa district.

Yours truly

Excise duty on petrol, diesel hiked by 88%,209% in 6 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Central excise duty on petrol has almost doubled and gone up by 88 per cent in the last six years while excise duty on diesel has gone up by three times and witnessed a 209 per cent hike during the same period, as fuel prices across the country have crossed Rs 100 per litre.

As on July 1, 2021, central excise duty on petrol is Rs 32.90 per litre inclusive of cess, whereas on July 1, 2015 it was Rs 17.46 per litre on petrol including cess, according to official data. This shows that excise duty has almost dou-



bled on petrol in six years between July 2015 and July

2021 and witnessed 88 per cent increase.

2,252 Covid cases, 15 deaths in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh reported 2,252 fresh cases of coronavirus, 2,440 recoveries and 15 deaths in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday.

The gross COVID-19 cases in the state has increased to 19,54,765, a health department bulletin said.

The total recoveries rose to 19,19,354 and toll to 13,256, it said.

The active cases further dropped to 22,155. East Godavari reported 385 fresh cases, Chittoor 316, SPS Nellore 269, Prakasam 241, Krishna 240, West Godavari 222, Guntur 171 and Visakhapatnam 125 in a day. Five other districts added



less than 100 new cases each.

Kurnool, which reported nine and eight cases in the last two days, registered 53 on Sunday.

Chittoor reported four fresh fatalities, Krishna three, East Godavari two and Kadapa, SPS Nellore, Prakasam, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari one each in a day.

Govt 'insulting' farmers, it must repeal farm laws: Priyanka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After the Centre said it has no record of farmers who have died during the agitation at Delhi's borders against three agri laws since 2020, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday alleged that the government has been constantly "insulting" the farmers and demanded that it must repeal the legislations.

Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar informed Parliament on Friday that the government has no record of farmers who have died during the agitation at Delhi's borders against three new farm laws since last year.

Rain God prevents water dispute...

Continued from Page 1

In the Thungabhadra dam the water has reached 1625.14 feet against the full capacity of 1633 feet. The present inflows into Thungabhadra is 1.2 lakh cusecs. At present the water level at Nagarjuna Sagar is 537.50 feet against the full reservoir capacity of 590 feet. While the out flows from Srisaillam is 39 thousand cusecs the inflows into the Nagarjuna Sagar is about 30 thousand cusecs.

Meanwhile, the various projects on the river Godavari are also getting huge inflows. At

Free pizza offered to...

Continued from Page 1

While replying to it, Pota said: "Done! That's the least we can do for someone who has brought so much honour for the country! #MirabaiChanu."

Three hours later, Pota shared photos on twitter of Domino's team in Imphal delivering pizzas to her family.

"Even as we prepare to give #MirabaiChanu a hero's welcome and let her eat pizzas to her heart's content, our Imphal team went to her house to congratulate her family with what else but Domino's Pizza @dominosindia. Congratulations @mirabai_chanu you have done India proud!" he tweeted.

Bhadrachalam second level warning alert has been issued as the water level there has crossed 48 feet on Saturday evening. In Sriramsagar project the water level has reached 1089.60 feet against the full capacity of 1091 feet.

The present inflows out of Sriramsagar is 75 thousand cusecs.

The Sripada Yellsmally project has also received heavy inflows following which the officials have released 3.75 cusecs water downstream till Saturday. Now the water has been reduced by about one lakh cusecs.

73 bodies recovered, 47 people missing...

Continued from Page 1

As per the data, NDRF rescuers have retrieved a total of 73 bodies from these areas with the highest number of 44 from the worst-hit Taliye village under Mahad tehsil of Raigad.

Forty-seven people have been reported missing in these three districts, as per the data posted at 12:19 pm on Twitter.

The force has deployed 34 teams for relief and rescue operations in the affected regions of Maharashtra.

The NDRF is operating in landslide-affected Taliye in Raigad, Porase in Ratnagiri and Mirgaon, Ambeghar and Dhokawale in Satara dis-

trict, the data said.

As per state government figures updated till Saturday, the death toll from the torrential rains that battered Maharashtra's Pune and Konkan divisions, triggering landslides in some areas stands at 112, including 52 in the coastal Raigad district alone.

As many as 1,35,313 people have been shifted to safer places, including 78,111 in western Maharashtra's Sangli district, followed by 40,882 in Kolhapur district.

The Krishna river in Sangli and Panchganga in Kolhapur are in flood though the rains were reported to have subsided on Saturday.

DRDO chief inspects...

Continued from Page 1

Later, talking at a get-together organised by the Krishna District Writers' Association in Vijayawada, the DRDO chief said India's defence sector was constantly growing in strength. "We are not only able to produce our arsenal using indigenous technology but also reached a stage where we are able to export weapons to other countries. Right now, defence equipment is being manufactured in 11 small and large factories within the country," Sateesh Reddy pointed out.

Former Andhra Assembly Deputy Speaker Mandali Buddha Prasad said Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu, Supreme Court Chief Justice Nuthalapati Venkata Ramana and Sateesh Reddy rose to great heights in their respective fields and not only made Telugus proud but also earned the acclaim of all countrymen.

At the same time, they have been striving to sustain the glory of Telugu language, Buddha Prasad noted.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹267
Without Skin	₹287
Broiler at Farm	₹149
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	480
HYDERABAD	496
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹4.80

CM to deposit 2nd tranche of...

Continued from Page 1

The state government aimed to provide good education to the poor by paying full fee reimbursement on time, without any dues. The state government has been taking steps to deposit the second tranche of fee reimbursement amount directly into the mothers' accounts under the Jagananna Vidya Deevena scheme despite the state being in severe financial crisis due to the Covid.

Through the 'Jagananna Vidya Deevena' scheme, the government deposits amounts into the accounts of the moth-

ers of students once every three months for the poor students pursuing ITI, Polytechnic, Degree, B Tech, MBA, MCA, Pharmacy and other courses.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has already deposited the amount into the bank accounts of mothers of students on April 19 as the first tranche for the academic year 2020-21.

The government has taken measures to deposit the second tranche amount into the mother's account of the students on July 29 of Rs 693.91 crore.

YSRCP creates record by clinching...

Continued from Page 1

The court had initially deferred the election following a case filed for the non-inclusion of new voters.

Later, the court directed the officials to conduct elections but put off the counting till further orders. Chodimella, Komadavolu, Venkatapuram, Ponangi, Satrampadu, Tangellamudi and Sanivarapupeta were merged into Eluru Municipal Corporation but a petition was filed alleging mistakes in voters lists and reservation of wards.

The AP High Court stopped election directing to conduct elections after correction of mistakes. But the government moved the High Court and the poll was restricted.

The election was held on March 10 for 12 municipal corporations but the AP High

Court put off the counting process of Eluru Municipal Corporation responding to a petition filed citing irregularities. However, the counting process was done in the remaining 11 corporations in the state resulting in a landslide victory of all the 11 municipal corporations by YSRCP.

Earlier Eluru municipal corporation was grabbed by TDP in the year 2014 election by winning 41 divisions and its ally BJP winning one division and now the YSRCP which faced a humiliating defeat in the year 2014 has registered a clean sweep by winning 47 divisions.

The Jana Sena Party that claims to have a strong foothold in Eluru could not win a single division with the alliance BJP.

The clear mandate to the ruling YSRCP was with the

implementation of welfare schemes to all eligible beneficiaries without any bias and directly into the accounts of the beneficiaries, says political pandits.

Poor show of Jana Sena Party and others were due to political tactics of the opposition TDP. Political analysts say that during the Eluru municipal corporation election, TDP senior leaders in Eluru lured local Jana Sena Party leaders and announced support of JSP to TDP candidates against the BJP-JSP alliance which turned futile to both parties.

They recalled that during the TDP government the Janmabhumi committees belonging to TDP did not provide welfare schemes to all eligible people and provided to only TDP supporters indulging in corruption and illegalities.

Kolhapur, Sangli, Satara and Pune were affected by the torrential rains, while 1,35,313 people were evacuated to safer places, it said.

Around 2,000 people were lodged at six relief camps in Ratnagiri, the release said.

A bridge on the Vashisthi river in Chiplun had earlier got damaged following heavy downpour.

Thackeray, while talking to reporters after a review meeting in Chiplun, said the economy was "sluggish" because of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We will require central assistance for long-term mitigation measures. The central government has provided

assistance by deploying rescue teams from defence forces," he said.

The chief minister said he will tour western Maharashtra on Monday and a comprehensive data of the extent of damages will be prepared.

"We will provide all assistance," he assured.

Thackeray said there will be no technical difficulty in providing assistance to the affected people.

Some residents of Chiplun, who had stopped Thackeray's convoy, later told reporters that they informed the chief minister that they need immediate relief, and not assurances.

World experts shower accolades on Vizag's...

Continued from Page 1

EE financing was important in the coming decade because every country, policymaker, department was going to push for higher objectives, he said.

Every sector, every scheme would have specific targets and to achieve those targets, more efforts were required in terms of

technology deployment, capacity building and even seeking latest technology on the low carbon side that required huge investments, the DG BEE said.

Director (EE Financing)/BEE, Vineeta Kanwal said that India had been working proactively to achieving 40 per cent of electric power installed capacity from non fossil fuel based energy

resources by 2030 and creating an additional carbon sink of 2.5 to 3 million tons of Co2 equivalent through forest and tree cover by 2030. As per the UNNATI report of BEE, there was a huge investment potential of Rs10 lakh crore in energy efficiency that could achieve energy savings of 86.9 Mtoe by 2031. In this, the industrial sector

alone contributed up to 50 per cent savings.

AP Secretary Energy, Srikanth Nagulapalli mentioned that as per International Energy Agency (IEA), carbon emissions were set to hit an all time high by 2023 as just two per cent of pandemic recovery finance was being spent on clean energy. Keeping this in view, AP would take lead

in curbing greenhouse gases (GHGs) by implementing energy efficiency programmes through APSECM, SDA, he said. APSECM would motivate the entrepreneurs from the industrial sector, various government departments and the general public towards the energy efficiency movement to reduce the impact of GHGs globally.

Ramappa gets UNESCO heritage tag...

Continued from Page 1

The discussion on Ramappa Temple took place on Sunday, he said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi also extended his greetings to the people of Telangana.

"Excellent! Congratulations to everyone, specially the people of Telangana. The iconic Ramappa Temple showcases the outstanding craftsmanship of great Kakatiya dynasty. I would urge you all to visit this majestic Temple complex and get a first-hand experience of its grandness," he said in a tweet.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu hailed the decision of UNESCO to recognise the historical Ramappa Temple as the World Heritage Site.

"The Spiritual and cultural property developed by the Kakatiya Kings with a tremen-

dous creativity, sculptural value has a very special place in the country's cultural heritage," Rao said according to a release from CMO.

He said under self-governance, the state government is making all efforts to revive and restore the historical, spiritual and proud cultural heritage of Telangana.

The Chief Minister thanked UNESCO member Nations, Central Government for its support.

Telangana Minister for Tourism V Srinivas Goud said in a tweet, "Happy to announce that the 800-year-old architectural marvel of Kakatiya era Ramappa Temple is inscribed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site."

Kishan Reddy congratulated the entire team of Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) for their untiring efforts towards making the

Ramappa Temple a World Heritage Site and also thanked the Ministry of External Affairs for their efforts.

The temple complexes of Kakatiyas have a distinct style, technology and decoration exhibiting the influence of the Kakatiyan sculptor.

The Ramappa Temple is a manifestation of this and often stands as a testimonial to the Kakatiya creative genius.

The temple stands on a six feet high star-shaped platform with walls, pillars and ceilings adorned with intricate carvings that attest to the unique skill of the Kakatiyan sculptors.

Rudreshwara (Ramappa) Temple is a masterpiece of Kakatiya style of temple architecture with the use of engineering innovation by creating floating bricks, sand-box foundations, material selection knowledge and ingenuity in

stone sculpting as a technological ensemble.

The sculptural and form modification, evolution of temple art, sculpture and use of technology in material selection and making as displayed in Rudreshwara Temple are masterpieces of human creativity.

The sculptural art and decoration specific to the time and Kakatiya Empire have an outstanding universal value.

The distinct style of Kakatiyas for the gateways to temple complexes, unique only to this region confirm, the highly evolved proportions of aesthetics in temple and town gateways in South India.

European merchants and travelers were mesmerised by the beauty of the temple and one such traveler had remarked that the temple was the "brightest star in the galaxy of medieval temples of the Deccan," the release added.



Two major rivers in spate as inflows continue in Andhra

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The two major rivers, Godavari and Krishna, in Andhra Pradesh remained in spate on Sunday with copious inflows from the upper catchment areas.

Two teams of National Disaster Response Force and three of State Disaster Response Force have been deployed for rescue and relief operations in vulnerable areas in East and West Godavari dis-

tricts of Andhra Pradesh as the flood flow in river Godavari increased to over 10 lakh cusecs on Sunday evening. In the Devipatnam mandal, more than 30 villages remained marooned and road communication was cut off because of the flood.

The first warning signal has been raised at the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowaleswaram near Rajamahendravaram as a flood of 10,11,382 cusecs was record-

ed, State Disaster Management Commissioner K Kanna Babu said.

All the flood water was being discharged into the sea. He, however, said the severity of the flood was expected to reduce by Monday.

In a release, Kanna Babu asked people living along the Godavari course to remain vigilant. He said NDRF and SDRF teams have been deployed in Kunavaram, Chintoor and V R Puram in East Godavari and Jangareddygudem

and K R Puram in West Godavari for emergency operations in view of the flood.

The Disaster Management Commissioner asked people not to venture into the river in boats and steamers.

Meanwhile, East Godavari district officials said the tributaries of Godavari, like Vainateya, Vasishtha, Gautami and Vruddha Gautami were also in spate in the Konaseema region. Accordingly, people residing in the vulnerable villages along

the course were being evacuated to safer places.

In river Krishna, the Srisailem reservoir received an inflow of 4.5 lakh cusecs by Sunday evening.

Water level touched 863.7 feet against the full reservoir level of 885 ft, with a storage of 117.77 tmc ft of water.

As power generation was continuing in the Left Bank powerhouse, 31,000 cusecs of water was being discharged from Srisailem.

GVL terms AP a debt-ridden state

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP MP GVL Narsimha Rao said that the whole country has come to know that Andhra Pradesh was in a severe financial crisis and is a debt-ridden state.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday the BHP MP said that every day the state is looking for new loans and least bothered to improve income to the state. He said that the government failed to generate income through natural resources.

He said that salaries and pensions to retired employees are getting delayed as the state is in a severe financial crisis. He termed the state financial minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy as a loans minister who is always in search of new loans. He alleged that the state had violated Article 266 (1) on consolidated funds by forming State Development



Corporation and misusing funds.

He said that this misuse of funds will be brought to the notice of Union Finance minister Nirmala Sitaraman and will be also discussed during the parliament sessions. He said to fulfil electoral promises loans were being taken in violation of all rules pertaining to seeking loans. Loans were taken by the state government violating FRMB rules and a loan audit will be

called for by CAG, said the BJP MP Narsimha Rao.

He said that a request will be made to the Center to issue guidelines for the implementation of government schemes, especially schemes for direct transfer of funds to beneficiaries and will have a debate in the Parliament. He said that we want the schemes to be implemented and resources should be mobilized to implement schemes, he added.

2 kg gold seized from passenger

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The special enforcement bureau police apprehended a person for carrying two kilograms of gold ornaments illegally on Sunday. The police seized the gold ornaments and detained the person. He was identified as Sahil Bordia native of Hyderabad. As part of regular checks, the police conducted checks in a private travel bus at Pottipadu village in Unguturu Mandal in the Krishna district. The bus was on the way to Hyderabad from Rajahmundry.

As there were no bills pertaining to the gold jewellery he was carrying, the police registered a case and started an investigation, according to Gannavaram CI K Shivaji.



PM Modi showers praises on AP's tech

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday showered praise on a software engineer from Tirupati in Andhra Pradesh for helping farmers by providing weather-related information in the local language, in his 'Mann Ki Baat' monthly radio programme. The Prime Minister mentioned B Sai Praneeth, who calls himself the 'Andhra Pradesh weatherman', and had observed that due to inclement weather, farmers of his area had to suffer huge losses.

He had a keen interest in meteorology and decided to use his passion and his talent for the welfare of farmers, Modi said. He purchases weather data from various sources, analyses them, translates them into local language and disseminates the neces-

sary information to farmers, he said. Sai Praneeth also gives guidance on the dos and don'ts for different climate conditions, especially for protection from floods, storms and lightning, the Prime Minister said.

The 24-year-old youth, who had done B Tech in electrical engineering observed that farmers were suffering losses due to unseasonal rains, sudden changes in weather and natural calamities. He felt that if they had access to some advanced information about the weather, they could be saved from losses.

He also opened accounts on social media platforms and began to post weather information and analysis in Telugu. Sai Praneeth's work was also featured on The UN Habitat Journal's site last month.



YSRCP MPs must quit to intensify steel plant stir

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP leader Bandaru Satyanarayana Murthy on Sunday demanded that all the YSRCP MPs should resign in order to step up pressure on the central government in the current session of the Parliament to withdraw the ongoing process of privatisation of the Visakha Steel Plant (VSP). Satyanarayana Murthy asserted that YS Jaganmohan Reddy should come to the rescue of one lakh workers of VSP since it was his basic duty in his capacity as the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. Only in the interests of the workers and the people, Chandrababu Naidu came forward to follow Jaganmohan Reddy if the latter took up leadership of the steel plant agitation. The CM should have responded positively to the gesture made by the Opposition leader in a respectful manner.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader told the Chief Minister that the YSRCP MPs were focusing their fight in the Parliament only on the Special Status. Jaganmohan Reddy should realise that the present burning issue in AP was to prevent the privatisation of VSP and to safeguard the interests of the workers. The TDP leader termed as 'reckless' the statements of CM Jaganmohan Reddy's Advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy,



who coldly asked the TDP MPs to resign if they wanted. It was clear how the Chief Minister, his Advisor and his Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Sai Reddy were not bothered about the steel plant at all. The CM's advisor had not learnt any lessons even though the High Court of Andhra Pradesh had passed strictures on his behaviour, he said. The court has clearly said that the advisors had no locus standi to make political statements but still, Sajjala Reddy continued with his press conferences. Naidu had on Saturday asked Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy to join the struggle and lead it from the front. Extending his party's complete support to the 'Save Vizag Steel' agitation, Naidu reiterated that his party's elected representatives would be ready to

resign from their posts for the sake of the steel plant. Satyanarayana Murthy said the general feeling among the people is that the only goal of YSRCP MPs is to have their rebel MP Raghurama Raju disqualified. Jagan Reddy should realise that the present burning issue in Andhra Pradesh is to prevent the privatisation of steel plant and to safeguard the interests of the workers, he said. He recalled that Jagan Reddy had stated during the elections that he would bend the necks of the central leaders if he was given 25 MPs. If Jagan takes over leadership of the steel plant agitation, then the AP MPs can bring Parliament to a standstill till the privatisation move was withdrawn, Murthy said. The TDP leader termed as

'reckless' the statement by Jagan Reddy's advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy that if TDP MPs want to resign they can do so. "Instead of giving a plan to stop the Steel Plant privatisation, Sajjala is only diverting the public attention by making unwarranted comments against the appeal of Mr. Chandrababu Naidu. It is clear how the chief minister, his advisor and his Rajya Sabha MP Vijay Sai Reddy are not bothered about the steel plant at all," said Satyanarayana Murthy. The TDP said that the YSRCP is ruthlessly betraying the aspirations of over 38 villages that contributed their thousands of acres of land for the VSP. He alleged that YSRCP leaders were only interested in making quick and easy money through sand, land, liquor and cement mafia but not in the struggles of the workers and common people. He urged the people to realise whether the TDP or the YSRCP had the credibility when it came to the fight for saving the steel plant. He pointed out that Chandrababu Naidu immediately rushed to the protest camp and extended his party's overall support to the agitating workers whereas, Jagan Reddy was playing all sorts of discreditable dramas without giving any hope to the steel plant workers on the privatisation issue.

2,252 Covid cases, 15 deaths in AP

Amaravati, July 25 (PTI): Andhra Pradesh reported 2,252 fresh cases of coronavirus, 2,440 recoveries and 15 deaths in 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday.

The gross COVID-19 cases in the state has increased to 19,54,765, a health department bulletin said.

The total recoveries rose to 19,19,354 and toll to 13,256, it said. The active cases further dropped to 22,155. East Godavari reported 385 fresh cases, Chittoor 316, SPS Nellore 269, Prakasam 241, Krishna 240, West Godavari 222, Guntur 171 and Visakhapatnam 125 in a day.

Five other districts added less than 100 new cases each. Kurnool, which reported nine and eight cases in the last two days, registered 53 on Sunday. Chittoor reported four fresh fatalities, Krishna three, East Godavari two and Kadapa, SPS Nellore, Prakasam, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari one each in a day.



Lakshmi Parvathi moots AP Telugu & Sanskrit Academy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Telugu Academy Chairperson N Lakshmi Parvathi said that everyone should note that Telugu language was derived from Sanskrit language. Addressing the gathering at the Telugu and Sanskrit Academy language awareness conference organised on the premises of Acharya Nagarjuna University on Sunday, Lakshmi Parvathi said that there was nothing wrong in changing the name of the Telugu Academy to Telugu and Sanskrit Academy. With due respect to Telugu and Sanskrit the conference was organised.

The academy chairperson said that during the TDP regime, Chandrababu had completely weakened the Telugu Academy while Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had taken steps to bring back the lost glory of the Telugu Academy. She said that a Telugu and Sanskrit Academy building had been set up in Tirupati and



language awareness seminars would be organised in all the universities across the state.

She said that earlier, the TDP government had entrusted the text books printing work to Narayana Educational Institutions and the textbooks were black marketed and sold privately, resulting in loss to the students. During the Jaganmohan Reddy regime the

Telugu Academy regained the lost laurel by setting up a Telugu Academy building in Tirupati. The printing of textbooks was also carried out and the text books were distributed on time to the students, she added.

Nagarjuna University Rector P Vara Prasad Murthy, professors, and intellectuals participated in the conference.

Eluru verdict reflects people's faith on Jagan's rule

PNS ■ ELURU

Deputy Chief Minister Alla Krishna Srinivas (Nani) said YSRCP today won a landslide victory in the Eluru Municipal Corporation elections and the resolute mandate reflects the endorsement of people's faith

in the governance of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

Speaking to media here on Sunday, the Minister said the results of Eluru Municipal Corporation were delayed due to the political conspiracies of

TDP Chief Chandrababu Naidu and added that YSRCP swept the polls by winning 47 out of 50 divisions of which three were unanimous.

The Minister attributed the victory to the effective delivery of a plethora of

welfare schemes under 'Nava Ratnalu', the people-first centric approach in governance and the administration's handling of the Covid-19 pandemic. Naidu has been indulging in political conspiracies and TDP will have no future if Naidu

continues his cheap tricks.

The Minister, on behalf of the people of Eluru, thanked Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for sanctioning Rs 80 crore for modernization of the Tammileru river to solve the flood issue.

Mega corona vax drive today in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A mega corona vaccination drive will be launched in Vijayawada on Monday. Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh said that as many as 22,000 Covid-19 doses are available, which would be administered to people in the city on Monday. He said that Covishield vaccine doses would be administered to people above 45 years of age, pregnant women, lactating mothers and mothers having children below five years of age. He said that besides this vaccine would be administered to teachers, frontline workers and healthcare workers. He said that Covid-19 vaccine doses would be administered in all vaccination centres.

APRS: Stop fixing water pump meters

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The AP Rythu Sangham demanded cancellation of power meters to water pump sets under the free power scheme. APRS State President Y Kesava Rao and State General Secretary M Suryanarayana said that the agriculture sector was facing severe problems due to the absence of remunerative prices, increase of prices of agriculture essentials, hike in diesel and workers wages and now the power meters would shatter cultivation.

The APRS leaders alleged that the YSRCP government agreed to the electricity reforms of the Union government and was trying to privatise the power sector under which the AP govern-

ment decided to fix meters to water pump sets. They deplored that agriculture in 30 lakh acres would be affected due to fixing of meters as the meters would put an extra financial burden of Rs 3,000 to Rs 5,000 per pump set every month. They expressed fear that farmers, who were facing a lot of financial difficulties due to the Corona crisis would be forced into debts with the power meters.

The APRS leaders claimed that the YSRCP government had promised to continue with the free agriculture power scheme for 30 years and further claimed that hence there was no need of fixing meters to the pump sets as it would be in violation of the poll promise.

PM thanked for heritage tage to Ramappa

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union minister of culture and tourism G. Kishan Reddy on Sunday thanked Prime Minister Narendra Modi for his guidance and support as the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) conferred the World Heritage inscription to Telangana's Rudreswara Temple, also known as Ramappa Temple.

The 12th-century temple is located at Palampet in Mulugu district near Warangal.

The minister thanked the Prime Minister on behalf of the nation, particularly from the people of Telangana. "It gives me immense pleasure to share that @UNESCO has conferred the World Heritage inscription to Ramappa Temple at Palampet, Warangal, Telangana. On behalf of the nation, particularly from people of Telangana, I express my



thanks to Hon'ble PM @narendramodi for his guidance & support," tweeted Kishan Reddy.

The minister also took the opportunity to congratulate the entire team of the Archaeological Survey of India

(ASI) and also thanked the Ministry of External Affairs. "I congratulate the entire team of @ASIGoI for their

untiring efforts towards making the Ramappa Temple a World Heritage Site. I would also like to thank the Ministry of External Affairs for their efforts under the guidance of Hon'ble PM @narendramodi."

The Minister observed that owing to the COVID-19 pandemic, the meeting of the World Heritage Committee (WHC) of UNESCO could not be conducted in 2020 and the nominations for 2020 and those for 2021 were discussed in a series of online meeting that are currently underway. The discussion on Ramappa Temple took place on Sunday.

Reddy stated that there were 21 Members in the World Heritage Committee with China currently as the Chair of the Committee and credited the goodwill that PM Narendra Modi built with UNESCO member countries during his tenure.

380 villages face flood threat in EG



PNS ■ KAKINADA

Following heavy rains in the catchment areas, River Godavari has been in spate and over 380 villages in various mandals in East Godavari district are facing inundation threat. The floodwater level in river Godavari has been rising constantly for the last three days.

Though there was no rain on Saturday in the district, the heavy inflows to the Godavari

The road connectivity has been cut off to several villages in Vara Ramachandrapuram, Kunavaram, Yetapaka and Kukkunuru mandals which were merged in East Godavari after bifurcation, as the floodwater was overflowing on roads and causeways at many places.

As a precautionary measure, the officials stopped the operations of mechanised boats between Kotipalli and Mukteswaram, forcing the villagers to travel 30 KM additionally to reach the villages.

According to information reaching here, the road was washed away in P Gannavaram mandal, disrupting connectivity to some villages. The villagers who live in the island locations are in the grip of fear.

Special Control rooms were set up in the RDO and Collector's offices to provide information and monitor the flood situation, official sources said.

The irrigation officials have been put on high alert and a special focus was laid on the Dowleswaram barrage where the water level stood at 11 feet in the morning today and it is expected that the water level would rise in the evening.

The first warning would be sounded if the water level touches 11.75 feet, the irrigation officials said.

At present, 8.53 lakh cusecs of floodwater is being released into the sea at Dowleswaram barrage by lifting 175 crest gates.

would continue for another three days, officials said. The floodwater has entered many villages in Devipatnam mandal. The famous Gandhi Pochamma temple was submerged in the floodwater and the peak could be visible now.

Three villages in the Kukkunuru mandal were inundated in the flood water. The flood water has also gushed into 10 villages in Vara Ramachandrapuram mandal.



Two lakh to be vaccinated in EG today

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Joint Collector (Development) Kirti Chekuri has said that a mega vaccination drive will be launched across the East Godavari district on Monday (July 26). Two lakh Covishield vaccine doses would be made available for the programme.

The Joint Collector said the first dose for those over 45 years of age and the second dose for those who have taken the first dose 84 ago, would be vaccinated at all village and ward secretariats.

Four lakh people over the age of 45 in the district were waiting to take the first dose, while 40,000 people were expected to take the second dose, all of whom were advised to take advantage of the mega vaccination drive. The first dose would also be distributed to pregnant women and teachers, the Joint Collector (D) said.

Eluru polls: YSRC bags 47 out of 50 seats

PNS ■ ELURU

The ruling YSRC has made a clean sweep of the Eluru Municipal Corporation elections, counting for which was held on Sunday. The outcome was more or less the same as earlier. While the ruling YSRC won 47 out of the 50 seats, the Opposition TDP had to contend with a mere three seats (Divn Nos. 28, 37 & 47). The elections turned prestigious as Eluru is the hometown of Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas (Nani).

Unfortunately, Bethapudi Mukherjee and Pyari Begum, two corporators who won with a solid majority from the YSRC in this election, passed away, a few days ago even before the election results were out. By-elections would be held for the two divisions soon.

According to the Election Officer, YSRC candidates A Radhika from Division 1 (Unanimous) and Boddani Akhila from Division 3 won unanimously.

According to the Election Officer, 1st Division was won by YSRC candidate A Radhika (Unanimous), 2nd Division YSRC candidate Jannuri Kanaka Narasimha Rao won with a majority of 788 votes, 3rd Division YSRC candidate Boddani Akhila won unanimously, 4th Division YSRC candidate Dimple Job won with a majority of 748 votes, 5th Division YSRC candidate Garikapoodi Emmanuel won by 8 votes, 6th Division YSRC candidate Sunkara Chandra Shekhar won with 1753 votes majority, 7th Division YSRC candidate Pillangolla Sridevi won with



Bethapudi Mukherji and Pyari Begum, the victorious YSRC candidates who passed away recently



822 votes majority, 8th Division YSRC candidate Vankadari Praveen Kumar won with 28 votes majority, 9th Division YSRC candidate Sabbana Srinivas won with 534 votes majority, 10th Division YSRC candidate Paidi bhimeswara rao won by a majority of 812 votes were won with solid victory.

Similarly, 11th Division YSRC candidate Jaya Ganga won with 377 votes, 12th Division YSRC candidate Karri Sreenu won with 297 votes, 13th Division YSRC candidate Needukonda Annapurna won with 1339 votes, 14th Division YSRC candidate Darapu Anusha won with 711 votes, 15th Division YSRC candidate Panduri Bhavani won with a majority of 1267 votes, 16th Division YSRC candidate Jijuvapuram Vijayanirmala won by 8 votes majority, 17th Division YSRC candidate Pamu Padma won with 755 votes majority, 18th Division YSRC candidate Munagala Kedareswari won with 1012 majority, 19th Division YSRC candidate Yarramsetti Nagababu won by a majority of 202 votes were registered record victory, 21st Division YSRC candidate

Annapuneni Sri Bharti won with 836 votes, 22nd Division YSRC candidate Nooka Peyi Sudhir Babu won with 468 votes, 23rd Division YSRC candidate Kalavakollu Samba won with 1828 votes, 24th Division YSRC candidate Madiri Nirmala won with 853 votes, 25th Division YSRC candidate Gunipudi Srinivas with a majority of 744 votes, 26th Division YSRC candidate Addanki Haribabu won with a majority of 1111 votes, 27th Division YSRC candidate Battina Vijay Kumar won with a majority of 687 votes, 28th Division TDP candidate Tangirala Aruna won with a majority of 313 votes, 29th Division YSRC candidate Panduri Bhavani won with a majority of 1267 votes, 30th division YSRC candidate Pappu Uma Maheshwara Rao won with a majority of 38 votes, 31st Division YSRC candidate Potharlanka Laxman Rao won with 471 votes majority, YSRC candidate Bandaru Sunita Ratna Kumari won unanimously from 32nd Division, 33rd Division YSRC candidate Kattiri Ram Mohan Rao won by a majority of 88 votes, 34th Division YSRC

candidate Yarransetti Suman won by a majority of 684 votes, 35th Division YSRC candidate

G Srinivasa Rao won by a majority of 354 votes 36th Division YSRC candidate Bhimavarapu Hemasundari won by a majority of 724 votes, 37th Division TDP candidate Prithvi Sarada won by a majority of 944 votes, 38th Division YSRC candidate Thota Hema Madhuri won by a majority of 261 votes, 39th Division YSRC candidate Kiladi Jyoti won by a majority of 799 votes and 40th Division YSRC candidate Tumarada Sravanti won by a majority of 758 votes.

Likewise, Edupally Kalyani Devi, 41st Division YSRC candidate won by a majority of 547 votes, Arji Satyavathi, 42nd Division YSRC candidate won by a majority of 79 votes, Janapureddy Kanaka Rajeshwari, 43rd Division YSRC candidate, won by a majority of 968 votes, 44th Division YSRC candidate Polimera Ramdas won by a majority of 410 votes, 45th division YSRC candidate Betapudi Mukharji won by a majority of 410 votes (died of illness), 46th Division YSRC candidate Pyari Begum won by a majority of 1232 votes (died of illness), 47th Division TDP candidate Vandana Durga Bhavani won by a majority of 55 votes, 48th Division YSRC candidate Nunna Swathi Sridevi won by a majority of 483 votes, 49th Division YSRC candidate Devarakonda Srinivas won by a majority of 1271 votes and 50th Division, former mayor and current mayoral candidate Sheikh Noorjahan won by a majority of 1495 votes.

FIR filed against SI, probe ordered

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A Zero FIR has been registered against Sub-inspector Balakrishna based on the complaint of a woman and an inquiry into the case has been ordered.

Police said that a woman attempted suicide by dousing herself with petrol in front of the Tadepalli police station on the night of July 23. However, the police personnel prevented her from ending her life.

When the SI was working at the Arundel police station, the same woman lodged a complaint stating that the SI had deceived her. Then, the SI was sent to Vacancy Reserve (VR). Later, he was transferred to the Tadepalli police station.

As the issue went to the notice of higher-ups, a Zero FIR was registered against the SI.

The police officials ordered a comprehensive inquiry into the incident.

CPM to hold dharna in Delhi resenting privatisation of VSP



PNS ■ KAKINADA

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPM) will organise a dharna at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on August 2 and 3 in protest against the Union government's proposal to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant (VSP).

Addressing a press conference in Rajahmundry on Sunday, CPM State executive councillor Raula Venkaiah said the CPM would organise a dharna at the Jantar Mantar in New Delhi on August 2 and 3 opposing the privatisation of the VSP.

He said that VSP was achieved through massive agitations and sacrifices of many people decades ago.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi-headed Union government is diluting the mighty public sector organisations and at the same time the government is helping the corporates to expand their business," he slammed.

Referring to the distress of the evacuees of Polavaram project evacuees, he lashed out at the indifferent attitudes of the Union government in doing justice to evacuees. He said that hundreds of evacuees

were living in the floodwater of River Godavari as the governments had failed to provide them houses and compensation.

The CPM leader criticised that though the farmers had been agitating against agriculture laws for the last seven months, the Union government had not taken steps to resolve the crisis by negotiating with the agitating farmers.

The CPM leader said that a 'Chalo Parliament' would also be organised in Delhi on Aug 5 demanding the Union government to do justice to the Polavaram project evacuees.

Venkaiah predicted that the BJP would taste a debacle in 2024 elections as the people were disenchanted with the misrule.

CPI district secretary Tatipaka Madhu, city secretary Nalla Rama Rao, city assistant secretary Vangamoodi Kondala Rao and district committee member Kirla Krishna were among those present.



A large number of holidaymakers at the Kakinada beach in East Godavari district on Sunday stand testimony to the carelessness and indifference of people towards the Covid-19 pandemic. People were seen flocking to the beach without wearing masks.

Jagan govt failed to unravel Viveka murder case: Ramaiah

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP Politburo Member Varla Ramaiah on Sunday expressed concern that the ongoing CBI investigation into the ghastly murder of ex-MP YS Vivekananda Reddy had slowed down completely after the recording the statement of the main witness before a magistrate, under Section 164 of the CrPC, three days ago.

Ramaiah demanded an explanation as to why Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy

and AP DGP were maintaining a disturbing silence, instead of jumping into action in order to nab the assassins. The recorded statement clearly said that 'two dignitaries' conspired and gave Rs 8 crore 'supari' to the assassins. The CBI could bring the probe at least to this stage after two years while the Jagan Reddy regime and the AP Police had miserably failed in every aspect.

Addressing a press conference here, Varla Ramaiah asked whether the AP Chief Minister

was really interested in knowing or nabbing the killers of his uncle. By now, the CM should have asked the CBI to catch the culprits as early as possible. Even the AP DGP, Intelligence Branch DGP and the DIG concerned should have been ordered to find out the assassins and murder conspirators based on the prime witness' statement.

Ramaiah expressed doubts over the future of the CBI investigation since the investigating officer was changed at a very crucial time.

Cops save life of yet another man

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The Prakasam Police have saved the life of yet another man in a span of one week. Just a few days after saving a man from committing suicide, under the supervision of SP Prakasam Malika Garg, the Prakasam police saved the life of another man using technology.

According to sources, a man hailing from Ongole hired a car and went to his relative's house in Kurichedu along with his family members. Because of some reasons, his mother admonished him so he decided to end his life by committing suicide. When the owner of the car called him to ask when he will return to Ongole, he said that he was

going to commit suicide and his vehicle would be returned to him by the next day afternoon.

He lodged a complaint with Ongole I Town CI Ch. Seetaramaiah and SI Suresh informed SP Malika Garg.

Acting on the instructions of the SP, the IT Core Team swung into action and traced the man's location and found that he was on the Kurichedu - Darsi road. The IT Core Team immediately alerted the Kurichedu SI and they went to the location swiftly and took him to the hospital and eventually saved his life with help from the public.

The District SP appreciated the efforts of the officers and staff for their good performance in their duties.



IS EVERYTHING IN ORDER?



District Collector Vivek Yadav inspecting a secretariat in Guntur on Sunday

PHC doctor saves lives of two pregnant women

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The timely action of paramedical staff and human gesture of a PHC doctor saved the lives two pregnant women at Karapa village. Two pregnant women were brought to the Karapa Primary Health Center at 11:30 pm on Friday for delivery. In fact, medical treatments can not be provided at the PHC after six in the evening.

As soon as the pregnant women were brought to the

PHC, sweeper Durga informed the matter to PHC doctor Dr. Srinivasa Nayak. After receiving the information from Durga, the doctor alerted and asked the paramedics to attend to the pregnant women in the hospital immediately.

The doctor reached the PHC on Sunday morning (00.30 hours) and attended the delivery of two pregnant women Kashi Manikumari and to M Bhavan at 1.15 am. The mothers and their new born babies are safe. After delivery, the two

women were given Covid vaccine. The nursing staff helped the mothers in breastfeeding their new born babies.

Relatives of the pregnant women thanked Dr. Srinivasa Nayak, saying that he had attended to the deliveries at midnight without being sent to Kakinada and saved mothers and their new born babies.

The paramedical staff and Asha workers congratulated the doctor. They also honoured Sweeper Durga and other Asha workers who assisted in the

delivery cases.

Significantly, during the Coronavirus crisis last year, the doctor conducted medical tests at Pithapuram Hospital and had lost his own daughter.

Dr.Srinivas Nayak joined the duties within 15 days. The doctor is known as a good medical officer throughout the district. He is recognised as the physician who performed the most Covid tests in the district, and the medical officer who administered the most vaccines.



Five cops suspended

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Etapaka Circle Inspector Geeta Ramakrishna, Anaparthi SI MD Ali Khan, ASI Guravaiah (Station Writer), PC 3688 SK Abdul Durani, (Assistant Writer) and PC-3686 J Varaprasad (Assistant Writer) were suspended on charges of abuse of power and negligence of duty, according to a press release.

Actress Gehana Vashishth, two others fail to appear before police

Actress Gehana Vashishth and two other persons, who were summoned by the Mumbai crime branch in connection with a pornography case, failed to appear for questioning on Sunday, a police official said. Notably, the police recently arrested businessman Raj Kundra, husband of Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty, in connection with a case, which it said, related to alleged creation of pornographic films and publishing them through some apps. After Kundra's arrest, Vashishth, who worked in three films produced for Kundra's app, had in a video said erotic content was different from pornography. Gehana Vashishth and two others were recently summoned by the crime branch's property cell, but they failed to reach the police office here on Sunday, the official said. Before the Mumbai crime branch took over the case, there was a complaint with the Maharashtra cyber department about the porn films racket, a senior police official earlier said. The Malwani police had filed FIRs on the basis of complaints received from two women, while another one woman had submitted a complaint at the Lonavla police station, around 120 km from Mumbai, he said.



Blinken's India visit: Afghan situation, terror havens in Pak to figure in talks

The implications of the withdrawal of American troops on the security situation in Afghanistan and the need for sustained pressure on Pakistan on terror financing and terrorist safe havens will be on the agenda of talks during US Secretary of State Antony Blinken's two-day visit to India from July 27, official sources said on Sunday. In the discussions, India will press for gradual resumption of international travel while maintaining health protocols, and will particularly seek easing movements of students, professionals and business travellers among others, they said. India will continue to push for ensuring open and consistent supply chains for materials and items required for the production of coronavirus vaccines as it ramps up the manufacturing for domestic and global supplies thereafter, the sources said. During his two-day visit, Blinken is scheduled to meet External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and will call on Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



'No follow-up results' after meeting with PM: Farooq Abdullah

A month after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's outreach to mainstream leaders of Jammu and Kashmir, National Conference president Farooq Abdullah said on Sunday that there has been 'no follow-up results' on the ground. Abdullah said this in reference to the prime minister's remarks at the June 24 meeting in New Delhi that he wanted to win the hearts of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and remove 'Dilli ki doori' (the distance from Delhi) and 'dil ki doori' (distance between hearts). "That was a welcome statement but there is no effort on the ground to win the hearts of the people. People continue to be locked up and dissent is not tolerated. We want to see the change on the ground, a visible effort to win back the people who went through the trauma of their state being dismembered, its special status removed in one sudden blow," the three-time former chief minister told PTI here. "...we are yet to see any follow-up results even after a month," he said. "Trust is something that has been missing from both sides (Delhi and Srinagar). Successive prime ministers -- Jawaharlal Nehru, Narasimha Rao, Atal Bihari Vajpayee -- made promises but the trust deficit has persisted," he added.



ISRO's customised programme takes off with 8 firms on board

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Indian Space Research Organisation's customised space-themed merchandise programme in partnership with industry has taken off with multiple companies on board.

Now, one will be able to purchase authorised products connected to ISRO's missions and work, such as scale models, T-shirts, mugs, space-themed educational games, science toys, and more.

ISRO believes this brand promotion exercise can play a game-changing role in creating awareness and kindling interest of students, children and public, in the domain of space science & technology, and propagating its achievements.

"Eight companies have so far registered with ISRO on a non-exclusive basis with a registration fee regarding customised ISRO-theme based articles / models", an official of the Bengaluru headquartered space agency, under the Department of Space (DoS), told PTI on Sunday.

They include Indic Inspirations (Pune), 1947IND (Bengaluru), and Ankur Hobby Centre (Ahmedabad), sources said.



"We will soon be launching a whole collection of ISRO themed Merchandise that will appeal to all Indians and Science & Space enthusiasts alike," said Founder and CEO of Indic Inspirations, Sunil

Jalihal, recently. As part of the MoUs, ISRO shares the themes, general arrangement drawings, images or any other design for enabling these companies to use them appropriately "with-

out causing any damage to the pride of the department".

Specific samples of catalogued ISRO identifiers, which will be updated from time to time, would be made available to registered companies which have shared their product details with the space agency.

According to the terms and conditions, the party (registered companies) shall avoid using the ISRO identifier, imagery, etc. on products such as doormats, slippers, or any such items, which affect the reputation/ image of the organisation. "Wherever 3D models and 2D drawings are being used to make scaled models, LEGO sets, jigsaw puzzle, etc., extra care shall be taken to ensure accuracy and ISRO intellect," they read.

"The rates for the merchandise shall be reasonable in line with market conditions, as there is no brand value charged by ISRO to the party," as per the MoUs.

"ISRO never takes any responsibility for the sale or after sale of the items, for the delivery, quality or damages due to sale".

The initiative came from ISRO after many companies interested in creating customised articles and handicrafts approached it for themes.

Dalai Lama condoles loss of lives, writes to CM showing solidarity

PNS ■ DHARMASHALA

Tibetan spiritual leader Dalai Lama has written to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, expressing grief over the loss of lives due to rain-related incidents in the state and also donated to the ongoing relief and rescue efforts. The death toll from the torrential rains that have battered Maharashtra's Pune and Konkan divisions over the last three days and triggered landslides in some areas rose to 112 on Saturday, including 52 in the coastal Raigad district alone. Moved by news reports about the loss of lives, damage to properties and suffering faced by so many people in Maharashtra as a result of devastating flooding over the last few days, His Holiness the Dalai Lama has written to the chief minister to offer his prayers and condolences to the families who have lost their loved ones, a statement said. "I understand that the state government and concerned authorities are making every effort to help those affected by severe monsoon rains. As a gesture of our solidarity with the people of Maharashtra, I have asked the Dalai Lama Trust to make a donation towards relief and rescue efforts," the statement said quoting the Dalai Lama.

PEGASUS SNOOPING

Who funded it? Raut compares it with Hiroshima bombing

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday asked who funded the alleged snooping of politicians and journalists by Pegasus and compared it with the Hiroshima bombing, saying while the attack on the Japanese city had resulted in death of people, the spying by the Israeli software led to 'death of freedom'.

"The modern technology has taken us back to slavery," Raut said in his weekly column 'Rokhtok' in the Sena mouth-piece Saamana.

He said the Pegasus case is "no different from the atomic bomb attack on Hiroshima".

"People died in Hiroshima, while in the Pegasus case, it led to the death of freedom," he claimed.

He said politicians, industrialists and social activists fear they are being spied upon, and even the judiciary and media are under the same pressure.

"The atmosphere of freedom in the national capital ended a few years ago," said Raut, who is the executive editor of Saamana.

He also sought to know who paid for the alleged snooping by the Israeli spyware.

Quoting a media report, he said the Israeli company NSO charged Rs 60 crore annually as license (fee) for the Pegasus software.



By way of one license, 50 phones can be hacked. Hence, to tap 300 phones, six to seven licenses are required, the Rajya Sabha member said.

"Was so much money spent? Who paid for it? The NSO says it sells its software only to governments. If it is so, which government in India purchased the software? Rs 300 crore were spent for spying on 300 people in India. Does our country have the capacity to spend so much money on spying?" Raut asked.

He also said BJP leader (and former Union IT minister) Ravishankar Prasad had justified spying by saying 45 countries in the world used Pegasus. Raut, whose party shares

power with the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra, claimed that journalists who criticised the Modi government were snooping targets.

An international media consortium had recently reported that several verified mobile phone numbers, including of some ministers, journalists, opposition leaders, and scores of business persons and activists in India could have been targeted for hacking using Pegasus software/spyware.

The government has, however, dismissed allegations of any kind of surveillance on its part on specific people, saying it 'has no concrete basis or truth associated with it whatsoever'.

'PM must make statement in Parliament on Pegasus row'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Sunday said the government should either call for a joint parliamentary committee probe into the Pegasus snooping allegations or request the Supreme Court to appoint a sitting judge to investigate the matter, and demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi make a statement in Parliament clarifying whether there had been surveillance or not.

The former home minister said he was not sure that one can go to the extent of saying that the entire electoral mandate of 2019 was vitiated by the "unlawful snooping" but added that it may have "helped" the BJP to score that victory which has been "tainted" by the allegations.

In an interview with PTI, Chidambaram also said a probe by a joint parliamentary



committee (JPC) can be more effective than an investigation by the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information Technology, asserting that the former would be more empowered by Parliament.

Asked about Parliament IT panel head Shashi Tharoor's remarks that the subject is "already on the mandate of my committee" and a JPC is not required, Chidambaram expressed doubts whether the IT panel with a majority of BJP members will allow a full investigation into the matter.

Pak trying to maintain supply lines to terror groups using drones: Police chief

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The improvised explosive device (IED) dropped using a drone along the Indo-Pak border on July 23 was meant for triggering at a crowded market in Jammu region, and it shows that Pakistan is maintaining its supply lines to various terror groups despite the February ceasefire agreement, Jammu and Kashmir Police chief Dilbag Singh said on Sunday.

Singh, a 1987-batch IPS officer, said terror groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) have been running short of arms and ammunition after the police and other security agencies managed to choke it by arresting many of their modules of Over Ground Workers (OGWs).

"We see that some of the state actors in Pakistan have adopted the use of drones for dropping arms, ammunition and even cash to cater to the



demands of terror groups since September last year," he told PTI here.

The police managed to shoot down a hexa-copter that had come from Pakistan in Kanachak area of Jammu region along the International Border on July 23.

It carried an IED, weighing five kg, that was almost ready to be used and the intelligence suggested that the Jaish-e-Mohammed terror group wanted to trigger it in

a crowded place in Jammu for inflicting maximum casualties, he said.

The police chief said that despite the ceasefire agreement along the Line of Control and the International Border since February this year, some "state actors" have been helping Pakistan-based terror groups operating in Jammu and Kashmir, by trying to maintain their supply chain of arms, ammunition and cash.

The police chief said there was a difference of single digit in the flight controller serial numbers of the drone shot down on July 23 and another brought down a year ago in Kathua's Hiranagar sector in Jammu region.

Some parts of the assembled unmanned aerial vehicle brought down last week were from China and Taiwan.

He said since drones have added a new dimension to the security threats from terror groups, more efforts are required to ensure this new

and emerging threat is neutralised effectively.

The police chief had earlier said that the signatures of explosive material used in the June 27 bombing of an Indian Air Force station clearly indicated involvement of the ordnance factory of Pakistan in fabricating it.

"Drones have come recently, say in September last year. First, it came as a big surprise, but we were able to gear up our resources to counter that threat. I am happy to report that in cases of use of drones carrying weapons and narcotics and other explosives... our security grid, intelligence grid of police and security agencies were very effective in taking countermeasures," the Director General of Police (DGP) said.

With the shooting down of another drone, the security agencies have been able to intercept around 33 sorties out of roughly 41 sorties which were made so far, the police chief said.

Mosque, Kashi temple engage in land swap

PNS ■ VARANASI

The committee governing the Gyanvapi Masjid in Varanasi has given 1,700 sq feet of land outside the mosque to the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust in exchange for a piece of land measuring 1,000 sq feet.

Both the plots are equal in value, Sunil Verma, Chief Executive Officer of the Kashi Vishwanath Temple Trust said.

The land given to the temple is part of the property of the Waqf Board. As it could not be bought, a plot which was equal in value was handed over to the masjid committee, Verma said.

In April, a Varanasi court had ordered an archaeological survey of the Kashi Vishwanath temple and the Gyanvapi mosque premises to resolve a decades-old dispute involving the two shrines.

The court had ordered the archaeological survey of a centuries-old mosque complex about-



ting the famous Kashi Vishwanath temple, saying the exercise was required to decide on pleas that allege the mosque was built by Mughal emperors after partially demolishing a Hindu shrine.

The suit was filed in 1991 seeking restoration of the ancient temple at the site where the Gyanvapi mosque currently stands.

Experts: Many now have immunity against Covid, but don't lower guard

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While a large number of people now have immunity against coronavirus due to previous infections or vaccination, a guarded approach is needed in terms of implementing restrictive measures to avoid a second wave-like crisis, experts said.

Dr Yudhyavir Singh, who has been managing the COVID-19 ICU at AIIMS New Delhi, said it is important to lift a few restrictions to resume economic activities when cases are low.

"However, one should not lower their guard ... Adopt a guarded approach in terms of following COVID-19-appropriate behaviour and implementing restrictive measures," he said.

Dr Singh added that Delhi may have already achieved herd immunity, considering the mas-

sive number of cases seen during the second wave.

However, Dr Pooja Khosla, senior consultant (Department of Medicine), Sir Ganga Ram Hospital, said the second wave of the coronavirus has taught us that cases can increase suddenly.

"There are warning signs from different parts of the world. In India too, a small increase in cases has been recorded. Infections can increase exponentially anytime. I think one should not assume anything and make all efforts to prevent a second wave-like crisis, which was a nightmare," she said.

"Opening everything is not appropriate ... everyone has been saying the third wave is a couple of days away," Dr Khosla added.

Pragya Sharma, professor (Department of Community Medicine) at the Maulana Azad Medical College, said a third

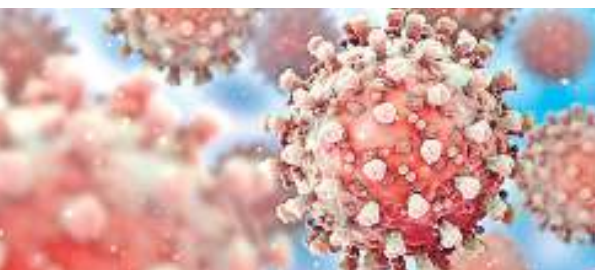
wave is a certain thing but the number of people it will infect will depend on the implementation of preventive measures and the pace of vaccination.

"Even if there are breakthrough infections among vaccinated people, the severity will be less and hospitals will not be overwhelmed," she said.

Sharma thinks the implementation of preventive and restrictive measures is an issue.

"People either don't wear mask or don't wear it properly. Most of them use cloth mask, which doesn't serve any purpose. There is hardly any vigil being maintained in crowded areas," she said.

After a devastating second wave of the coronavirus, people had started taking vaccination seriously. There would be queues at vaccination centres, but things have changed again. There is lax-



ity on the part of the people, Dr Sharma said.

"At the inoculation centre at MAMC, only around 50 people are getting vaccinated a day, while we can vaccinate around 200 people every day. Vaccines are available but people are not coming forward," she said.

Dr Jugal Kishore, head of the Community Medicine department, Safdarjung Hospital, said around 80 per cent of people have

immunity against the virus, either due to previous infection or due to vaccination.

"The Delta variant of coronavirus was responsible for up to 60 per cent of the cases during the second wave. We haven't observed any major difference between 'Delta' and 'Delta Plus' variant. So, a sudden spike in COVID-19 cases is not expected, until a new, more infectious variant emerges," he said.

Still, there is a percentage of people who have not been infected or did not develop enough antibodies despite getting vaccinated, due to various reasons. This set of people, which is almost 30 per cent of the population in Delhi, is likely to get infected.

"Two cases are possible -- first, the virus continues to infect people slowly until herd immunity is attained, and second, a new, more infectious variant leads to an increase in cases till everyone has immunity. But it seems the third wave won't be as severe as the second," he said.

With the lifting of restrictions, people from rural areas have started coming to Delhi or those who have remained isolated so far are stepping out. "If such people go to crowded places, then there is a possibility of a spike in cases," he said.

There is also a possibility that a new variant bypasses the immunity achieved through vaccination and previous infection. If that happens, it will be a huge problem then, Dr Kishore added.

Niti Aayog member Dr V K Paul has also told the Delhi government to remain watchful as the next three months are important and unlocking activities can lead to an increase in COVID-19 cases.

However, a third wave of COVID-19 is "unlikely to be as severe as the second wave", Dr Samiran Panda of the Indian Council of Medical Research had told the Delhi Disaster Management Authority during a meeting on July 9.

He had mentioned that a substantial third wave would be plausible if any new, more infectious variant of the coronavirus emerges

and escapes prior immunity in the absence of adequate lockdown measures.

Dr Panda had suggested that vaccination efforts be ramped up to strongly mitigate the impact of a possible third wave.

Delhi battled a brutal second wave of the pandemic that claimed a massive number of lives, with the shortage of oxygen at hospitals across the city adding to the woes.

On April 20, Delhi had reported 28,395 cases, the highest in the city since the beginning of the pandemic. On April 22 the case positivity rate was 36.2 per cent, the highest so far.

The highest number of 448 deaths was reported on May 3.

The capital has recorded 2,369 cases of the coronavirus in the last 30 days (since June 24), 79 cases a day on an average.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

No laxity

All signs say the third wave of COVID-19 is on its way; India must keep its guard up

The second wave of COVID-19 is supposed to be abating since June 25, but the sense of relief is not reflected in either the total number of cases or the observations of the anti-pandemic strategists. The national count of fresh cases is over 39,000 and rising. And the empowered strategy group tells the Government not to allow the count to cross 50,000 a day. Should this be taken as a warning to the Government that the third wave may well be on the way? Yes, it is. For the first time, the strategists have given an early alert. For the first time, too, the country's anti-COVID policy is being directed by scientific rather than administrative considerations. The earmarked limit sends two messages. One, that the second wave has abated as much as it can in the country though the surge is largely limited to two States — Kerala and Maharashtra. Two, the breach of the 50,000-case limit will mark the beginning of the stress on medical infrastructure. The strategists appear to be playing it safe and assuming that the peak of a future wave would see four-five lakh cases a day, nearly 10 times the new case limit. That should give the Union and the State Governments a clear picture of how much additional infrastructure they should organise in the next couple of months.



The example of the UK should show how they are dealing with a situation where the daily cases have crossed 50,000. People are testing positive at an alarming rate. Nearly 650,000 people are estimated to have tested positive in the second week of July. Admissions are rising in hospitals. And yet, the Government has eased all restrictions. Social distancing is no longer mandatory, face masks are no longer required by law, and the ban has been lifted on large gatherings of people. The British Government is facing criticism for the complete unlock, but its confidence perhaps stems from two sources. One, that over 46 million people in the UK or 87.6 per cent of the adults have received their first dose and 35.5 million, or 67.5 per cent, are fully vaccinated. The high number of vaccinations and the presence of antibodies in the infected unvaccinated is said to reduce the severity of infection and the need for hospitalisation, and lower the chances of death. Secondly, thousands of people using the NHS COVID App are receiving self-isolation alerts every day, informing them they have been in close contact with a positive case. The UK is highly vaccinated and has rid itself of safety protocols and the cases are growing. Indian vaccination levels are low and the protocols are violated more and the cases are growing. This goes on to show that an either-or attitude towards vaccination and safety measures is a sure-shot invite to a third wave of the pandemic. The mandatory requirement is a combination of both and that is what the Indian strategists should emphasise on.

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PICTALK



A submerged Old Sangli area after the Krishna river's level rose following rainfall

PTI

In a hurry?

The Delhi Govt allowing public transport to ply at 100% capacity raises a number of uncomfortable questions

Another step towards unlocking Delhi would take place today, Monday. Indeed, people will welcome it that buses are plying at full capacity though standing passengers would still not be allowed. Cinema halls are also opening after a long gap. The Delhi Metro would operate at 100 per cent capacity. This would truly bring Delhi closer to normalcy. The Capital has already suffered a great deal due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Though Corona's second wave is ebbing and very few cases are being reported on a daily basis, the threat of the third wave is looming large. In this situation, going for almost complete unlock does not seem reasonable as the experts have warned that the third wave could be here sooner than later. It would have been better had the Delhi Government waited at least three more weeks, until August 15, to open up public transport and recreation centres. The Delhi Government officials say that the restrictions have been eased as the number of cases is falling. But we have seen even in the second wave that the scenario can change very fast and cases can shoot up within a matter of days.



This is certainly not the time to take the pandemic lightly, especially since we are on the verge of defeating the virus. It would not at all be prudent to let the guard down. Apart from these concessions, 100 people will now be able to attend funerals instead of the earlier 20. A similar number of people can now attend weddings instead of the earlier 50. This would indeed expose people to risk. One can understand that people would welcome these steps but the Government should think beyond that. One can understand people's mounting economic hardships but totally unlocking Delhi might not be the solution. That must be dealt with at a different level. It defies logic why the Government is in a hurry to open cinemas, theatres and multiplexes in the national Capital. The Government's first and foremost responsibility is to save lives and, therefore, it should not put people's lives in danger by going for such-scale unlocking at this moment. Mercifully, the Delhi Government has not yet made plans to open schools and colleges, which may have serious consequences. The Government must work for people and should not play to the gallery, making policy decisions to win accolades and public support.

China's 'friendship' must bother Putin

In 1969, China gained quite a few islands on Siberia's Ussuri river. Now, it has already started claiming the entire Siberia as its territory



PRAFULL GORADIA

Late last month, Russia and China renewed their friendship treaty for a further five years. Comrade Putin appears to be making a dangerous mistake by ignoring the potential threat from China. He was only 17 when the Soviet Union fought a seven-month mini-war across the Ussuri river, which is located in Russia's Siberia (Sleeping Land). How big was Beijing's ambition one does not know, but the Soviets had to convey an implicit nuclear threat to the aggressor. To save face, Mao Zedong, through his Premier Zhou en Lai, threatened a "People's War", which meant that hundreds of thousands of Chinese soldiers would swarm Soviet tanks as they had done with the Americans in the Korean War in 1951-52. The Chinese leader's belief of convenience was the superiority of man over machine. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) did demonstrate its idea of warfare on one of the islands on the Ussuri by ambushing Soviet soldiers.

In the end, China gained quite a few islands on the river, which were a loss for the Soviet Union. Logically, more conflict lies ahead. China is a much bigger nuclear power than it was in 1969. Its ambitions have grown and, by current indications, it wishes to become a superpower. We have to remember that Siberia is over 13 million sq km with a sparse population, whereas China is bubbling with people but is short of arable land. Incidentally, the Yellow Giant gained several hundred islands in the midst of not only the Ussuri but also the Amur and Argun rivers. This gain by China and loss by the USSR were after decades of harrowing negotiations which ended in 2004.

With climate change and the earth getting warmer, Siberia can well become more hospitable. Today, the whole region is considered hostile due to its very low temperatures in winter. With global warming, Siberia is likely to become attractive for China to occupy. The region is rich in coal, natural gas, diamonds, iron ore, gold and aluminum. A possible scenario of China forcibly occupying Siberia can no longer be



looked upon as hypothetical or imaginary. Patrick Princeton, a Western columnist, informs us that a Chinese portal *Jinji Toutiao* published an article, the author of which calls Siberia "Chinese land". The Chinese media regularly praises Russian ruler Vladimir Putin and how cleverly he puts the West in its place. Simply, from the point of view of Beijing, Russia is not only a good friend but also has an excellent potential prize. "There are no countries around the world that are always friendly or, conversely, always hostile to each other. In the past, Siberia was conquered by the Mongols and, therefore, in fact, is Chinese territory." This is increasingly becoming China's refrain.

Joe Burgess in *The New York Times* column 'Why China Reclaims Siberia' lays out a starker scenario: A land without people for a people without land, Burgess says. The land is as resource-rich and people-poor as China is the opposite. The weight of that logic should scare the Kremlin. Like love, a border is real only if both sides believe in it. And on both sides of the Sino-



CHINA IS A MUCH BIGGER NUCLEAR POWER THAN IT WAS IN 1969. ITS AMBITIONS HAVE GROWN. WE HAVE TO REMEMBER THAT SIBERIA IS OVER 13 MILLION SQ KM WITH A SPARSE POPULATION, WHEREAS CHINA IS BUBBLING WITH PEOPLE BUT IS SHORT OF ARABLE LAND

Russian border, that belief is wavering. Siberia — the Asian part of Russia, east of the Ural Mountains — is immense. It takes up three-quarters of Russia's land mass, the equivalent of the entire US and India put together.

The 1.35 billion Chinese people south of the border outnumber Russia's 144 million almost 10 to 1. The discrepancy is even starker for Siberia on its own, home to barely 38 million people, and especially the border area, where only six million Russians face over 90 million Chinese. With intermarriage, trade and investment across that border, Siberians have realised that, for better or for worse, Beijing is a lot closer than Moscow. The land is already providing China "the factory of the world", with much of its raw materials, especially oil, gas and timber. Increasingly, Chinese-owned factories in Siberia churn out finished goods as if the region already were a part of the Middle Kingdom's economy. Beijing could use Russia's own strategy: hand out passports to sympathisers in contested areas, and then move in militarily to "protect its citizens". If Beijing

chooses to take Siberia by force, the only way Moscow could stop it would be by using nuclear weapons.

In a meeting with the press on May 20 this year, Putin, using a bit of colourful language, threatened to "smash the teeth of anyone who tried to bite off even a piece of Siberia". He surely could not have been thinking of the US or the West. Chinese dictator Xi Jinping only last year described Putin as his "best friend".

But despite all the nice sounding rhetoric, the reality of the China-Russia relationship is a shallow one. The US and friendly countries have grown closer by a set of common values or structures like the Quad. There is nothing even remotely comparable in the case of Russia and China; in this partnership, which is purely transactional without any real political integration, Russia is very much the junior partner, with China eyeing its geographically vast, resource-rich but under-populated Eurasian neighbour.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MIRABAI CHANU IS OUR NATION'S PRIDE

Sir — The sight of Mirabai Chanu lifting 87kg in snatch and 115kg in clean and jerk, an astonishing 202kg in total, in the 49-kg category at the Tokyo Olympics and the visuals of her standing on the podium showing the silver medal with a huge smile filled us with pride. Obviously, success in sports is a source of national pride. It was natural and legitimate for us to bask in the reflected glory of our compatriot bagging the silver medal.

Recognising the determined effort, dedication and hard work, everyone speaks of her remarkable performance in glowing terms. The daughter of a humble Government employee and a street *samosa* vendor, Mirabai started her "career" with wood-lifting (she, like most children in her village, used to fetch firewood from nearby hills). We salute the gutsy weightlifter for opening India's medal account on Day 1 of the Games.

On a different note, considering our population and the potential for developing a medal-winning talent pool, we should send a bigger contingent to future Olympics and hope for even more medals than we do.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

MONSOON FURY BATTERS MAHARASHTRA

Sir — Heavy rains in Maharashtra have delivered a huge blow to those residing in the coastal areas. Incessant rains have triggered landslides and floods, leaving over 140 dead and thousands of people displaced. The destruction appears irreversible in cities, districts and villages. Districts like Raigad and Ratnagiri have been among the many worst-hit areas of Maharashtra, the coastal areas have been battered by torrential rains. Since the torrential rains started, 140 individuals died in tragic incidents in Maharashtra like floods, landslides and so forth. Satara in Maharashtra reported at least 21 deaths as a consequence of rain-related incidents and landslides.

The cities of Chiplun and Khed in Ratnagiri district have been devastated

Rid the Ganga of pollution



In spite of the launch of the Ganga Action Plan (GAP), the river continues to be highly polluted. More impetus is required to rid the river from pollution which the Government targets to achieve by 2030. Rejuvenation of the Ganga project is now faced with a new challenge. A new study by Toxics Link has found that the Ganga is polluted with multiple kinds of plastic.

Plastic products and waste materials in the river break down to micro particles. The river transports this into the ocean. This brings into sharp focus the poor state of both solid and liquid waste management. As the river flows through densely populated cities, untreated sewage, industrial waste and religious offerings

wrapped in non-degradable plastic add large pollutants. Micro plastics that get into our body are a serious health hazard. Plastic waste causes marine pollution with profound consequences for marine life and their habitats. It has been reported that over 663 species are badly affected by marine waste and 11 per cent of them are related to micro plastic. Micro plastics drained into the ocean cause serious imbalance in the marine ecosystem.

Micro plastic pollution in the Ganga has huge ramifications. The water from the river is used for various purposes. The river provides drinking water to several cities. Hence, micro plastic pollution has severe impact on the environment and human health. Implementation of plastic waste management must be strengthened. Single-use plastics must be banned. There must be more data and research on micro plastics and their impact on rivers. The threat of plastic on aquatic life must be addressed more realistically. Various stakeholders must join hands and work towards improving plastic waste management and reducing micro plastic pollution.

Venu GS | Kollam

after heavy rainfall and cut off from land routes, according to the State Disaster Management Authority. More than 25 NDRF groups are working on the ground or are on the standby mode, three teams each of the Indian Military and the Indian Coast Guard have been pressed into service, besides seven teams of the Indian Navy and one of the Indian Air Force. Apart from all these arrangements, the local authorities are engaged with the rescue operations nonstop for over 24 hours now. Maharashtra is in deep trouble due to the heavy rains.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

HUMAN-WILDLIFE CONFLICT MUST END

Sir — India's high rate of urbanisation has caused a hasty expansion of human settlements into areas that were once exclusively wildlife habitats. With vaguely defined boundaries for fauna, human-

occupied areas in the country have increasingly become the hangouts for wandering wild animals ("The human-animal conflict on the rise", July 24).

The conflict with wildlife has reached unprecedented levels, with predators attacking livestock, thus leading to retaliatory animal killings. The deadly human-animal conflict has largely been the consequence of a fast growing human population's inability to find sustainable ways to coexist with the bustling wildlife. As a result, humans and wildlife compete for the same diminishing resources. It is, therefore, necessary to address the issue in a holistic manner and co-create palliative solutions with full engagement of all the relevant stakeholders.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I'm very happy to win the first medal for India... I don't belong to just Manipur, I belong to the whole country.



Olympic silver medallist — Saikhom Mirabai Chanu

The Opposition led by the Congress has got no issue to raise that is related to people. Therefore, they raise such issues (snoopgate).

BJP national president — JP Nadda

Latin American States should do something similar to the European Union, but attached to our history, our reality and our identities.

Mexican President — Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador

It is okay to be boxed. I am fine with it because eventually people will box you with what they see and like.

Stand-up comic and actor — Sunil Grover

I will come to Rajasthan on July 28 and 29. I will talk to each Congress MLA; we feel that the AICC should know the opinion of the MLAs.

Congress in-charge of Rajasthan — Ajay Maken

FIRST COLUMN

ADMINISTERING INDIA

The British administered India with the help of Indian Army and an institution called the ICS



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

India as an entity has existed for several millennia. The concept of a unified territory from the 'seas to the horizon' has been documented at least from the time of the Gupta Empire in the 4th century AD). India has seen different models of administration, including those of the Mauryan and Harsha empires, the Cheras, the Cholas, and the British. India came under the British Crown in 1857 and was known as 'British India'. The rule lasted 90 years. There is a notion that this imperial state unified India administratively. It is a myth. British India was initially ruled from Calcutta and then the capital moved to Delhi. Besides the territory under direct British rule, there were hundreds of princely states with various degrees of administrative and revenue autonomy: Travancore-Cochin, Baroda, Jammu and Kashmir being among them. The British withdrew from India with a strange term that the princely states could secede to either of India and Pakistan. It was an attempt to restore the status quo ante to 1857.



The British administered India with the help of the Indian Army and an institution called 'The Indian Civil Service'. After Independence, the service metamorphosed into the Indian Administrative Service. The story of Indian unity post-independence is a saga that many have testified to. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel was the chief architect of the merger of the princely states with India. Some territories also merged with Pakistan by a wafer-thin majority. The first few years of Indian independence were also spent on reorganising the Indian Union into linguistic states and the states into districts. The story still continues with new states emerging and the districts of the states being reorganised. Two administrative reforms commissions have been set up since independence and their recommendations used to carry out administrative restructuring. Appraisal systems of IAS officers have been thoroughly revised and the writer has been involved with some of these efforts. It is not sufficiently recognised that every IAS officer does not automatically graduate to the level of Secretary to the Government of India. There are institutional filters, evaluations, barriers, and in-built learning opportunities. After 1947, the nascent Indian Administrative Service, through special recruitment, spread across India. However, a few thousand civil servants, definitionally, could not fully administer all aspects of a nation's life. Their expansion no matter how planned was bound to leave gaps. One of the first felt needs was for an 'Indian Foreign Service' which would handle external affairs. An all-India competitive examination was conceived and the Union Public Service Commission was entrusted with the task of holding it and selecting recruits depending on their need. Administering India is not just a simple function of civil administration. The railways have to run, health and education need policy attention, information needs handling, etc. So, separate services like the Indian Railway Service and the Indian Information Service were created while IRS and IPS became essential collaterals of the Indian administration. Over time, administrative groups were created, with IAS, IPS, and Indian Forest Service officials coming under Group A. However, because of their coordinating role, IAS officers remain prima donnas. Their perks and salary structures are also superior. Gradually, the states developed their own civil service to look after their administrative needs. Provision is there for movement from state service cadre to central service cadre after due evaluation. Domain specialists began to occupy specialised administrative positions, especially in the departments of science and technology, biotechnology, taxation, and customs. The message is simple: the Indian Administrative Service, in its fullness, is amongst the powerful sections that administer India. *(The writer is founder Director, IIM-K and a management thinker and practitioner. The views expressed are personal.)*

Small businesses and wealth maximisation

Since surviving is the main goal of small businesses, they are more inclined towards profit maximisation by reducing costs

Any organisation is an ongoing concern and has to make decisions, either big or small, daily. These decisions converge towards its overall goal. So, what should be the overarching goal of a firm from the point of view of financial management? Financial management is a critical branch of economics that makes profit maximization the main goal of any firm.

Profit, as an accounting term, is the excess of income generated by sales over the expenses incurred from the overall operation of a business. Any business is said to be in a loss if the expenses are consistently more than the income. And it is said to be profitable if the income is more than the expenses. Therefore, in the context of economics, the goal



HIMA BINDU KOTA

(The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.)

of a firm should be to maximize profits, or to say in simple terms, to realize a large amount of profit. Profit maximization can be achieved in two ways: enhance revenue and minimize costs. Therefore, to maximize profits, many firms minimize their costs and boost their revenue. The problem, however, with such a goal is that it is short-term in nature and banks on extreme measures to reduce costs, like cutting down and paring advertisement budgets, employee training, development expenses, research and development expenditure, customer care budget, employee salary, or bonuses. In some cases, firms, in an attempt to maximize profit, may also neglect the safety,



welfare, benefits of the environment, and their different stakeholders. These knee-jerk reactions are short-term in nature and can be efficient for the near future but in the long run, these measures slow down the sales, which in turn diminishes the profits and dwindles the overall value of the firm. Therefore, the objective of profit maximization has a myopic outlook towards the long-term growth of the firm. Over the years, when financial management became independent from economics

and became a branch on its own, the objective of the firm witnessed a steady shift from profit maximization to shareholders' wealth maximization. This is a comprehensive approach focusing on the long-term growth, profitability, and the value of the firm. This goal focuses on wider objectives and includes the welfare of employees, communities, and society at large. It is a fact that wealth or value is a long-term concept and for the firms, it is reflected in the market price of its shares that in turn depends on the success and expectations of the future success of a firm. Firms with higher performance receive a higher valuation from investors which is reflected in the increase in the share prices as compared to the initial listed value. Therefore,

the value of a firm is a dynamic function of the overall performance of the firm and the rationality of the firm's investment, financing, and dividend decisions. In a way, shareholders' wealth maximization is also associated with intangible assets like goodwill, branding, good customer relations, a significant and loyal customer base, committed employees, and intellectual property rights. This concept also overarches and includes community and social welfare. Therefore, firms are moving away from the goal of profit maximization that has a short-term approach, ignores any risk or uncertainty, and overlooks the timing of returns. In comparison, a long-term vision acknowl-

edges risks and uncertainty and considers the overall shareholders' wealth and not just profits. This concept of shareholders' wealth maximization is mainly applicable to large firms where there are a large number of shareholders, including promoters, financial institutions like banks and mutual funds, foreign investors, and retail investors. The managers' actions should enhance the value of the firm to benefit all shareholders. But does this concept apply to small businesses, where the owners are the managers and there are no diverse set of shareholders, except family members or partners? The situation for small businesses is also different as they are not listed on the

stock markets. In the absence of external shareholders, the objective of profit maximization appears to be the correct approach. For small businesses, the availability of funding or capital is difficult, which is not a constraint for many large firms and they can invest in other stakeholders and efficient business processes. This improves the overall value of the firm and increases the wealth of the shareholders. Since surviving is the main goal of small businesses, they are more inclined towards profit maximization by reducing costs or enhancing revenue. As and when these small businesses start to grow and achieve a sizable expansion, the concept of shareholders' wealth maximization should be the way to go forward.

Pegasus affair is an assault on privacy

Anyone defending this will be slipping down a steep slope of undermining the basic rights of an individual



PRIYANKA CHATURVEDI

In a sensational international news break last week, it was revealed that over 300 Indians were being surveilled through an Israeli spyware called Pegasus. This software had the ability to hack into phones and be able to access files, documents, voice calls, and videos of the hacked individual. Those on the list were journalists, opposition voices, activists, and cabinet ministers. Most of the names were anti-establishment and their investigative stories uncovered the various failures of the government.

The Pegasus scandal has once again opened the floodgates of the notion of privacy and to what extent can the state abuse privacy rights. While the history of snooping is not new in India, this is the first occasion of sophisticated technology meant for defence and national security purposes unethically used to get access to all the communication of those who are anti-government. Anyone defending this will be slipping down a steep slope of undermining the basic rights of an individual and also the democratic principles of the nation.

Ever since the controversy has broken, the IT Minister's only defence has been that there is a law in place to protect the privacy of individuals and for the government's need to surveil. The surveillance in India takes place under two laws - the Telegraph Act and the Information Technology Act. While the Telegraph Act deals with audio call records and interception, the IT Act deals with all electronic communication. However, loopholes exist in both Acts and they have not yet been addressed by the Centre and that gap is exactly what it uses for snooping and silencing opposition voices.

India is a democratic nation. At the heart of democracy are its people. When incidents like this (Pegasus snooping) happen, it infringes on the basic fundamental rights of the citizens. The right to privacy, though not explicitly mentioned in the Constitution, is inherent under various provisions of the Constitution. The unanimous Supreme Court of India Judgement in 2017 recognised the Right to Privacy as a fundamental right despite the Union government asserting to the contrary. Article 21 of the Constitution of India includes the Right to Privacy which is mentioned in the Puttaswamy Judgment as 'the right of an individual to exercise control over his personal data and to be able to control his/her own life would encompass his right to control his/her own life and his/her existence on the internet'.

In the surveillance issue, the absence of privacy impinges on the ideals of liberty and dignity as envisioned in the Constitution of India and hinders the growth of the individual as a citizen of this country. In these times of digital communication, the 'zero detectable'



THE ISSUE HAS BECOME POLITICAL SINCE THE NAMES OF MANY OPPOSITION LEADERS CROPPED UP IN THE SURVEILLANCE INVESTIGATION AND ROCKED EVERY SINGLE DAY OF PARLIAMENT SINCE THE MONSOON SESSION BEGAN. THE GOVERNMENT, INSTEAD OF AGREEING TO LOOK INTO THESE CHARGES, IS BUSY REJECTING THE REPORT ALTOGETHER

(The writer is Deputy Leader of the Shiv Sena in the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)



form of surveillance has engulfed the notion of privacy. The Pegasus allegations threaten the very ideals of democracy our nation is based upon. It threatens the sovereignty of the nation and forms a grave concern for our nation since an accountable institutional framework and mechanism for the protection of citizen's data and privacy is absent. An absence of a credible, sovereign, and accountable framework puts the whole nation at the mercy of such cyber exposure. The Personal Data Protection Bill, which is supposed to be the framework designed to ensure accountability and bring in transparency, is marred by many discrepancies and is still under scrutiny by the Standing Committee.

As India has fast-tracked digital communication and businesses, smartphones have become a necessity rather than a privilege and Covid-19 has fast-forwarded the process of digitisation. The availability of almost everything at the mere touch of your finger makes it an absolute necessity for a sovereign nation to have a blanket institutional framework in place.

The idea of Digital India, with 900 million active internet users by 2025, is afflicted by the threat of cyber warfare weapons being unleashed by any foreign state. Therefore, it becomes pertinent

that the government comes up with stringent data protection and privacy laws and a framework that protects the very people that form the nation. With an increased population that is now using smartphones, we in India have no Data Protection Policy in place. With this very obvious loophole in the system there is no accountability on the issue of who owns the digital data. Imagine you living in the reality show Big Boss where your every movement is monitored and you haven't even signed up for it. Stripping people of their privacy and dignity is what this kind of data invasion does.

The issue has become political since the names of many opposition leaders also cropped up in the surveillance investigation and has rocked every single day of parliament since the monsoon session began. The government, in the interest of transparency, instead of agreeing to look into these charges, is busy rejecting the report altogether and going so far as to say that this is an anti-India conspiracy. This is ridiculous, to say the least; while various countries named in the snooping investigation have launched an inquiry, France has initiated it while Israel has formed a senior inter-ministerial group to look into it but the Indian government continues to tie itself up in knots by defending it.

In governance, the principle of Caesar's wife should be above suspicion rule should apply. However, this government continues to confuse and obfuscate. This controversy is also a reality check of how a missing policy framework can be exploited by those in power to the hilt. Such disregard for constitutional norms will be up for misuse in times to come irrespective of who is in power.

As we find ourselves at the tipping point of losing our freedoms enshrined in the Constitution one by one, it is time to speak up aloud for defending our rights while following our duties. The government cannot shrug itself off all responsibilities, resorting to lies and subterfuge to avoid any accountability. The government should not forget that the seat of power is never permanent and if it bypasses all rules of democratic and constitutional governance, it gives others in power a chance to pay back in the same coin - the only ones who suffer in their power politics are the people of the country who helplessly see their freedoms being trampled upon bit by bit. For those who stay silent and defend even this assault on democracy, I would just repeat the quote of Benjamin Franklin: "They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety."

POINT COUNTERPOINT

VACCINATION IS AN ONGOING AND DYNAMIC PROCESS AND, THEREFORE, A FIXED TIMELINE CANNOT BE GIVEN FOR THE COMPLETION OF THE COVID-19 IMMUNISATION DRIVE.
— MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH
BHARATI PRAVIN PAWAR



PEOPLE'S LIVES ON THE LINE, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA ADMITS NO TIMELINE. CLASSIC CASE OF MISSING SPINE. #WHEREAREVACCINES
— FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT
RAHUL GANDHI



Gold imports jump multi-fold to USD 7.9 billion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold imports, which have a bearing on the country's current account deficit, jumped multi-fold to USD 7.9 billion (Rs 58,572.99 crore) during the April-June 2021 quarter due to low base effect in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

Imports of the yellow metal had plunged to USD 688 million (Rs 5,208.41 crore) in the corresponding period last year, the data showed. Silver imports, however, dipped by 93.7 per cent to USD 39.4 million. Significant increase in the gold imports has led to widening of the country's trade deficit, difference between imports and exports, to about USD 31 billion during April-June this fiscal.

Electricity Bill may come before Union Cabinet for approval

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet is likely to take up for approval the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 in the next few days, which seeks to enable power consumers to choose from multiple service providers as in the case of telecom services, a source said.

"The Electricity (Amendment) Bill, 2021 could come up for consideration and approval before the Union Cabinet in the next few days as the government plans to introduce it in the monsoon session of Parliament which concludes on August 13, 2021," the source in the government said.

According to a Lok Sabha bulletin issued on July 12, 2021, the government has listed this bill as one of the new 17 bills it plans to introduce in the ongoing parliament session.

The bulletin explains that the proposed amendments (in the Electricity Act) entail de-licens-



ing of the distribution business and bring in competition, appointment of member from law background in every Commission, strengthening of APTEL (Appellate Tribunal For Electricity), penalty for non compliance of RPO (Renewable Purchase Obligation).

The RPO is a mechanism by which the obligated entities (mainly power distribution util-

ities or discoms) are obliged to purchase a certain percentage of electricity from renewable energy sources, as a percentage of the total consumption of electricity.

Earlier last month, Power and Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh had said that the bill seeks to de-license distribution of electricity. "We proposed to de-license distribution of electricity just like the generation. The Cabinet note on the bill was

circulated and all concerned ministries have approved it. But the law ministry has one or two queries," Singh had said.

He had exuded confidence that the bill would be sent for the Union Cabinet approval soon, and hopefully it would be introduced and pushed for passage in the ongoing session.

The proposal to seek the Cabinet approval for the Electricity (Amendment) Bill

2021 was circulated in January this year and the draft law was to be pushed for passage in the Budget session.

The bill seeks to delineate power distribution to reduce entry barriers for private players for creating competition in the segment, which would ultimately enable consumers to choose from multiple service providers.

The bill also prescribes the rights and duties of electricity consumers. Last month, the power minister had also said the penalty for non-compliance of RPO would be increased.

Under the RPO, discoms and other large consumers are required to buy a certain proportion of renewable energy prescribed by their respective regulators. They can also buy renewable energy certificates to meet the RPO obligation.

Earlier on many occasions, the minister had expressed dismay over persistent non-compliance of RPO norms, especially by state utilities.



CII: PMAY needs in-built insurance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry chamber CII on Sunday called for relaunch of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana (PMAY) scheme with mandatory life insurance for all borrowers to ensure that the intent of providing 'Housing for All' does not take a hit due to death or disability of the primary borrower.

The PMAY is the ambitious mission of the government aimed at 'Housing for All' as India completes 75 years of Independence by the year 2022.

The scheme, however, falls

short of covering the risk of death or disability of the borrower as the loans sanctioned under the scheme do not have an in-built insurance provision, the chamber said in a statement.

Addition of insurance component will ensure that in all circumstances, the intended benefit of the scheme of 'Housing for All' is fulfilled, and the families are able to retain their home, it said.

"There is a need for a relaunch of the PMAY scheme with an in-built credit-linked insurance or a mandatory life insurance for all borrowers.

Audi, Mercedes-Benz upbeat about electrical journey in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Luxury carmakers Audi and Mercedes-Benz are upbeat about the electrification journey of passenger vehicles in India with more states coming up with EV policies that encourage electric four-wheelers, according to company officials.

Although the FAME II scheme by the Centre has not offered direct benefits for personal passenger vehicles, incentives like 5 per cent GST on electric cars will also help, they feel.

While Audi kicked off its electrification journey in India with the launch of three all-electric SUVs under the e-tron brand last week, Mercedes-Benz has been selling its all-electric SUV EQC since October last year.

Audi India Head Balbir Singh Dhillion said while the overall policy at present has focussed primarily on the two-wheelers and three-wheelers, many of the state governments are also coming forward to give incentives to electric cars.

"When the states have already



declared there won't be a registration cost on the cars. You already know the GST on electric cars is 5 per cent. So these are already certain incentives the government has put in place, which will also encourage luxury players to also sell cars in the electric segment and these are definitely positive steps," he told PTI.

Recently states like Gujarat and Maharashtra have announced their respective EV policies.

Gujarat has offered demand incentives of Rs 10,000/kwh for

e2W, electric three-wheeler (e3W) and electric four-wheeler (e4W) over and above any subsidies available from the central government, with the maximum ex-factory prices being capped at Rs 1.5 lakh, Rs 5 lakh and Rs 15 lakh, respectively for the three vehicle categories.

On the other hand, Maharashtra is offering demand incentives of Rs 5,000/kwh on 10,000 electric cars with the maximum incentive per vehicle being capped at Rs 1.5 lakh besides exemption of road tax and registration charges.

Mcap of 6 of top-10 firms erode by Rs 76,640.54 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Six of the 10 most valued companies witnessed a combined erosion of Rs 76,640.54 crore in market valuation last week, with HDFC Bank emerging as the biggest laggard.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark dipped 164.26 points or 0.30 per cent.

From the top-10 list, Reliance Industries Limited, HDFC Bank, Hindustan Unilever Limited, HDFC, State Bank of India and Kotak Mahindra Bank witnessed erosion in their market capitalisation. The market valuation of HDFC Bank tumbled Rs 43,578.18 crore to reach Rs 7,97,422.67 crore. The valuation of Hindustan Unilever Limited eroded by Rs 13,004.97 crore to Rs 5,54,326.75 crore. HDFC's market valuation plunged Rs 9,543.39 crore to Rs 4,48,566.27 crore and that of Kotak Mahindra Bank dipped Rs 5,392.88 crore to Rs 3,41,634.86 crore.



RBI central board short of 9 directors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The central board of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) is facing shortage of nine non-official directors, including seven from the category of people of eminence from various fields.

The central board is the highest decision making body of the apex bank headed by the RBI governor.

According to the RBI Act, the government nominates 10 eminent persons from various fields to the central board of the RBI, besides four directors (one from each of the four local boards). The government is yet to appoint seven non-official directors from the category of

people of eminence from various fields while representations from local board from western and southern areas are missing.

Currently, only three eminent personalities -- Tata Sons Chairman Natarajan Chandrasekaran, seasoned banker S K Marathe and chartered accountant and RSS ideologue Swaminathan Gurumurthy -- are serving the central board. They are nominated under Section 8(1)(c) of the RBI Act, 1934, according to the RBI's website.

With regard to directors from local boards, eastern area is represented by Sachin Chaturvedi and northern area by Revathy Iyer, while nomination of two directors is awaited.



Firms struggling with climate risks: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Businesses are finding it hard to manage reporting on climate risks and need to take urgent steps to meet the expectations of regulators as well as investors, according to a report.

Leading consultancy EY's report covered over 1,100 organisations across 42 countries, including India, and focussed on efforts made by them to publish their climate-related risks and opportunities based on the recommendations set by the Task Force on

Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD).

The TCFD was established to improve and increase reporting of climate-related financial information. The scores of companies are based on the number of recommended disclosures that they make (coverage) and the extent or detail of each disclosure (quality).

The EY Global Climate Risk Disclosure Barometer 2021 also showed that coverage and quality of climate-related disclosures remain below global averages in India.

Expecting pick-up in demand, Ceat lines up investments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tyre major Ceat is aiming at increasing production capacity to around 1,400 tonne a day over the next 18 months as it looks to cater to the enhanced demand in both domestic and export markets, a top company official said.

The RPG Group flagship expects demand to gather pace in the domestic market in the next few quarters. The company is already witnessing demand recovery in several of its export markets with improvement in COVID situation in those geographies.

The company, which produces tyres for all kinds of two-wheelers, passenger and commercial vehicles, plans to invest about Rs 1,000 crore capital expenditure for various expansion projects this fiscal year.

"Our total production capacity is around 1,100 tonne per day and we will be looking at taking this up to 1,300 to 1,400 tonnes per day over the next 1.5 years," Ceat Managing Director Anant Goenka told



PTI in an interaction.

He noted that the company has already initiated a slew of investments to enhance production capacities across its various plants.

"We had announced a Rs 3,200 crore investment in the passenger car facility in Chennai. The plant is ready for the last one year and we are at good levels of capacity utilisation there.

"We have also done around Rs 100 crore investment in the

off highway tyre segment expansion and another Rs 1,200 investment on truck radial tyres. So various investments are underway," Goenka stated. In the ongoing fiscal year, the company would be investing about Rs 1,000 crore across various plants to enhance capacities, he added.

Goenka noted that the first quarter was challenging for the company as demand dipped due to the second wave of COVID-19.

IFC lends \$250 mn to HDFC to promote housing finance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

International Finance Corporation (IFC), a private sector investment arm of the World Bank Group, has decided to provide loan of USD 250 million (about Rs 1,875 crore) to promote affordable green housing finance for low-income borrowers.

Low and middle-income borrowers will be able to own homes with improved access to finance, thanks to a new investment aiming to boost affordable housing finance in India, a joint statement said.

Aligned with the government of India's goal to provide 'Housing for All', the funding will also help generate jobs, it said. At least 25 per cent of the financing has been earmarked for green affordable housing, which is likely to encourage this market in India, it said.

‘Quarterly earnings, global trends to drive equity market’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity markets would be guided by the ongoing quarterly earnings season and global trends this week and may witness volatility amid the scheduled derivatives expiry, analysts said.

Investors would also keenly track the US Fed interest rate decision, they added.

"We expect volatility to remain high due to the scheduled derivatives expiry of July month contracts. Besides, the earnings season would gain pace and some of the promi-



nent names like Axis Bank, Kotak Bank, LT, Tata Motors,

Maruti, Colgate, Tech Mahindra, BHEL, IOC, Sun Pharma and Indigo will announce their numbers during the week along with several others.

"Besides, update on the global COVID situation and US Fed meeting outcome on July 28 will be in focus. Markets will first react to the results of index majors like Reliance, ICICI Bank and ITC in early trade on Monday," said Ajit Mishra, VP Research, Religare Broking.

Reliance Industries Ltd on Friday reported a 7 per cent

drop in its June quarter net profit as retail business got hit by the second wave of COVID infections.

"This week, markets will first react to results of Reliance Industries, ITC and ICICI Bank on Monday. It will track global cues for further market direction," Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd said.

ICICI Bank on Saturday reported a 52 per cent jump in its June quarter consolidated net profit at Rs 4,747.42 crore. FMCG major reported an

impressive 30 per cent growth in Q1 net profit and 35 per cent increase in revenue on the back of rebound in segments.

"The week will be driven by global sentiments and expectations of firm quarterly results," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services. During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark dipped 164.26 points or 0.30 per cent.

This week, investors would also track other major market drivers -- Brent crude movement, rupee trend and foreign institutional investors.

MONEY MATTERS

90% consumers willing to pay a premium for buying EV

With global electric vehicles (EVs) sales expected to boom in the next 12 months, nearly 90 per cent of consumers in India are willing to pay a premium for buying an EV, according to a survey by consultancy firm EY.



The EY Mobility Consumer Index (MCI), a survey of more than 9,000 respondents from 13 countries, including 1,000 respondents from India, also found that 40 per cent of the respondents were ready to pay a premium of up to 20 per cent. The survey concluded in the second half of July. "Among the car buyers in India, 3 in 10 respondents would prefer to buy an electric/hydrogen vehicle," the survey said. A majority of the respondents surveyed in India consider a driving range of 100 to 200 miles from a fully charged EV, EY said. It further said, "Nearly 90 per cent of consumers in India are willing to pay a premium for buying an EV and over 40 per cent of respondents are ready to pay a premium of up to 20 per cent."

MCX posts 29.47 pc drop in Q1 net profit

Leading commodity bourse MCX has posted a 29.47 per cent drop in its consolidated net profit at Rs 39.80 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal. The company had clocked a net profit of Rs 56.43 crore in the same quarter previous fiscal, according to a late night BSE filing.



Income declined to Rs 108.94 crore in the first quarter of the 2021-22 fiscal from Rs 122.70 crore in the same quarter previous year. Expenses remained higher at Rs 57.47 crore as against Rs 51.35 crore in the said period. According to MCX, "Based on current assessment, the management is of the view that impact of COVID-19 on the operations of the Group and the carrying value of its assets and liabilities is minimal." With regard to a dispute with a software vendor that was to develop a trading system for the spot market, MCX said, "...the holding company and the software vendor are in the final stages of reaching an amicable out of court resolution whereby the holding company would be provided the rights to the trading software on the payment of the outstanding invoices."

Yamaha: Investments on e-mobility depend on stable policy

Japanese two-wheeler major Yamaha is working on an all-new electric vehicle platform for India and other global markets but the company's investments on electric mobility in the country will depend on the government laying down a clear road map and a stable policy, according to a senior company official.



While the government has pushed for electric vehicles (EVs) with the FAME II scheme under which it had last month increased incentives for electric two-wheelers (e2W), Yamaha believes that the larger issue of availability of infrastructure, charging stations, battery production and swapping infrastructure needs to be addressed. "We already have a dedicated team at our Japan Headquarters, working on an all-new electric vehicle platform for India and other global markets," Yamaha Motor India Group Chairman Motofumi Shtara told PTI.

UNIQLO to launch online store, aims 15% e-com sales

Japanese apparel retailer UNIQLO will launch its official online store for the Indian market to strengthen its presence in the country and is looking at cornering 15 per cent of overall sales from e-commerce, a top company official has said. Besides, the company, which is presently operating six stores in Delhi NCR, is also looking to expand its network of offline stores and exploring some other cities here as well, UNIQLO India Chief Executive Officer Tomohiko Sei said. "Customers are developing an affinity towards our high quality and functional LifeWear essentials and we are confident that with customer support from all over the country, our e-commerce sales ratio would easily surpass the average sales of each store in the coming times," Tomohiko told PTI. He further said that the first goal is to achieve 15 per cent sales volume from e-commerce.



Natural is the new normal

Natural and organic — these have become the keywords of the millennial generation. As the pandemic set in, more and more people started becoming conscious about maintaining personal hygiene. While Covid-19 did give people a sudden jolt as to their handwashing and hygiene requirements, as people began staying home, they realised how badly they had been treating their bodies all the while.

Fast living had been the norm as people rushed to work, commuted for long hours, and barely had time to spend on themselves. But as the world gradually shut down and came to a standstill, personal health, fitness, and hygiene were given top priority. Consumers now want to remain on top of their hygiene game — especially products that are organic and natural.

What does natural hygiene mean?

Hygiene means restoring one's personal state of health to its original biological state. There are two ways of going about this — one is using consumer products that typically have chemicals in them, which hasten the process. The second is using natural or organic products from 'mother nature'.

One would think that natural self-care would be the conventional way of achieving hygiene — however, most fast-moving consumer goods used for health care and hygiene do not have the best natural ingredients. They're made of chemicals and preservatives which help people achieve short-term results. They're also typically priced much lower than all-natural products.

Back to the roots

According to Statista, the global market value for organic and natural cosmetics and skincare is projected to grow to USD 54.5 billion by 2027 — providing data-driven proof of how important the natural skincare segment has outpaced conventional consumer products.

More players in the market are now interested in investing in natural products than ever before, one of the primary reasons



being sustainability. Natural products are more sustainable and environment-friendly than their FMCG counterparts.

Naturally, skin care is positively impacted

Consumers have become extremely cautious about their skin — especially since the Covid-19 pandemic. With more time being spent indoors, people have begun to understand the implications of continued sun exposure and air pollution on their skin. Home remedies made from natural ingredients took precedence in combating this issue, and now caring for the skin has snowballed into a massive industry altogether. According to a BCG report, consumers have strongly started associating with sustainability and using natural products for skincare and personal care, suggesting that this industry has witnessed a massive boom in revenue from unit growth in sales, as opposed to differentiation in pricing or product components and mix.

In spite of uncertainty in disposable income, consumers are now allocating portions of their cash inflow towards using natural skincare products, even if they may be priced relatively higher. By 2024, this market is expected to increase to ~USD 15 billion owing to the following reasons:

Demand for natural ingredients and 'less is more'

It's simple — natural ingredients have a direct impact on consumer health, thus increasing the demand for skincare products made from natural ingredients. Natural ingredients leave the skin healthier and more enriched. Ingredients like aloe vera, lemon, pure honey, cinnamon, coconut oil, rosewater, etc., have various benefits when used on the skin and are used for a variety of reasons like fighting rashes, lightening the skin, healing the skin from sun scars, etc. Beauty has taken on new meaning as more people are inclined towards minimalism.

Innovation and diversity of offerings in the market

Face serums, beard oils, scalp massaging oils, and bath salts — are just a few products that have taken the market on like a storm. Shying from conventional products like body washes, soaps, and regular oils, more and more companies are coming up with innovative products made using extracts of various beneficial natural products. For example, activated charcoal, the use of herbs, ayurvedic plants, etc., are innovative examples of skincare supplements.

Increased distribution channels

Social media is one of the most significant growth drivers of sales today. Innovative ventures and startups dealing in the natural skincare space have taken on platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Twitter to create communities and utilise influencer marketing to increase outreach. The sales funnel for many natural skincare com-

panies like Minimalist has been a leisurely sail-through because of their primary focus on branding and highlighting the use of natural products and the advantage of their long-term use on skin.

Natural products are gentler on the skin, offer long-term benefits, and have a lesser chance of causing skin rashes and irritation as opposed to chemically created products. With growing concerns over general wellness and health care, consumer demand for natural skincare products has markedly caused a shift in the way brands to position themselves. With artificial beauty no longer taking the lead, the most prominent leaders in the FMCG sector are rethinking their market positioning and offerings.

Untouched, green, and un-made up looks are now the next normal, making millennial consumers active endorsers of a new and healthy economy.

(The author, *Sushi Krishna Thanneru*, is the Founder of *Nyrrvana Cosmetics*.)



Fitness from the comfort of your home

From working out in gyms or with personal trainers to nowadays working out with fitness apps, smart screens and trackers, customised live workout sessions and much more — the world of fitness has definitely evolved a lot in the recent years. Thanks to the ongoing pandemic, we have seen an increased emphasis on at-home workouts off late; so much so, it has become the 'new norm' for a plethora of fitness enthusiasts in India and across the world. When it comes to 'indoor' or 'home based' workouts, there's nothing wrong with pumping iron, but there's still something to be said for putting down your dumbbells and stepping out-of-the box, right?

While running on a treadmill isn't really for everyone, an indoor exercise bike, on the other hand, can prove to be an effective and indispensable fitness equipment to work on your cardio and overall fitness regime. With the era of connected new-age fitness being started already,

there are plenty of options for indoor spin bikes that will serve you well. Here are the best spin bikes/indoor cycles to look out for:

TREAD One

Fitness-tech startup TREAD (acquired by Cult.fit) is here to let you ride a journey to "new experience in fitness" that would create a world-class indoor cycling experience at your own pace and time, and from the comfort of your own home. TREAD One-the futuristic indoor spin bike is designed for the generation of new normal to bring holistic and challenging workouts in a more accessible, and efficient way. TREAD One is combining excellent-quality hardware, software, and content—all within a single lightweight and compact device, to enable people to do their daily home-workouts seamlessly through a Full HD (1920*1080) rotatable screen.

With the best quality live streaming, on-demand videos, and leaderboards option, this indoor spin bike—which is set

to revolutionize fitness and digitise spinning in today's era — is to be launched soon in India. In the meanwhile, you can pre-book your TREAD One by visiting: <https://tread.fit/>

Lifelong LLF126 Fit Pro Bike

This stationary indoor exercise bike offers a 320 belt-bearing system that allows soft-pedaling with almost no noise. The bike's counterbalanced pedals ensure you have comfortable workouts with ultimate control. The Lifelong bike has its smooth magnetic resistance system as well with eight levels of difficulty so that you can choose the intensity level as per your own fitness goals; it also features an LCD monitor for tracking speed, distance, calories burned, etc.

Evoke Ojas-110 Blend Exercise Cycle

This exercise cycle is a portable, lightweight device and is quite easy to use. The best part probably is that it has a high-res LCD screen which is used for monitoring your progress, distance covered etc. This bike further combines belt resistance technology with unmatched durability and smooth performance enabling the user to reach his/her full potential. There is also a dual workout option i.e., stationary handles for doing lower body workouts and then you have the moving handles for full-body workouts.

Watt Bike

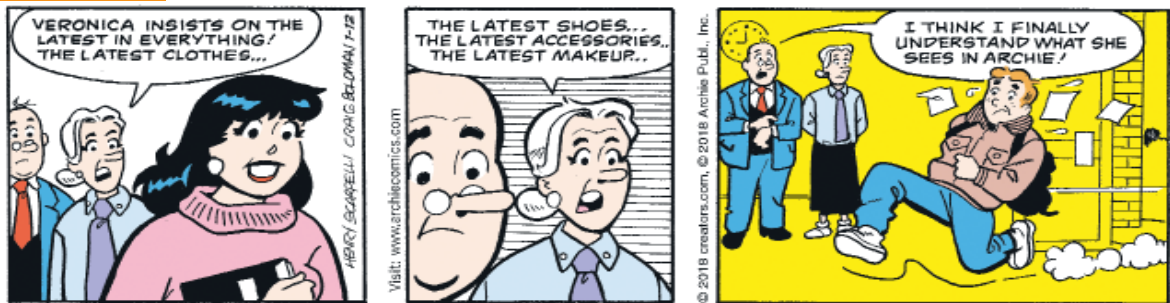
Watt's smart indoor spin bike stands out with its high-definition touchscreen and integrated shifters, thereby allowing people to easily switch between 'ergo' and 'gear' modes. Furthermore, the all-new Climb Mode allows riders to tackle bucket-list climbs from around the world. Wattbike suits everyone right from the beginner cyclists to sophisticated national coaches or professionals who are in the game for the winning edge! The bike's superior technology is bound to replicate resistance and sensation of riding on the roads, while delivering an authentic ride feel at your home!

Flexbike

The Flexbike is a bluetooth-enabled smart bike that connects you with Flexnest's flagship app which allows each user to go through 3 types of bike workouts, namely 'Quick', 'Virtual' and 'Class' ride modes. Other interesting features of this bike are: on-demand classes, and virtual videos to equip users to ride in 100+ different cities across the globe, which allows users to cycle anywhere, anytime.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



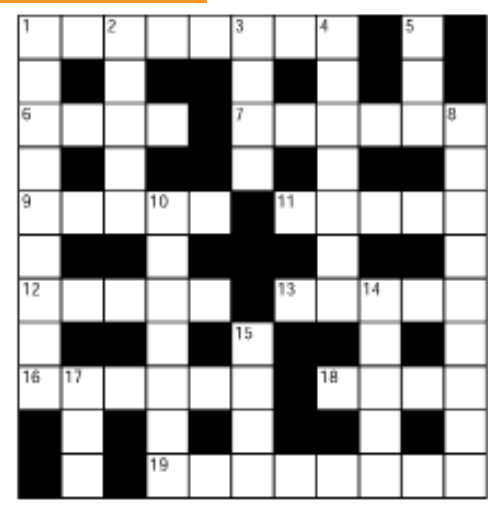
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Creatures that turn into frogs
- 2 Absent
- 3 Extremely foolish
- 4 Someone studying at college or university
- 5 The number 3 in Roman numerals
- 6 Very unsafe
- 7 One fifth of thirty-five
- 8 Inquisitive
- 9 The part of a theatre where people perform
- 10 Take something away
- 11 A toy on a string that can be spun up and down
- 12 Dried grapes used in baking

DOWN

- 1 Someone on a journey
- 2 A male duck
- 3 Fewer



‘LEAD’ING ALL THE WAY

YAMINI KRISHNA BANDLAMUDI

Wear a torn shirt, rather buy yourself a good book, goes the quote of Kandukuri Veeresalingam, which was duly respected and implemented by Kasula Ravi Kumar of Warangal district in Telangana. The teacher-turned-samaritan believes that education is the only powerful weapon to face most of the problems in life, and stands by his motto, despite hardships. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, the teacher who turned his home into a library with the noble idea of imparting knowledge to thousands of students, shares his journey thus far.

Having born in a poor family to father Narendra Chary, who was an auto rickshaw driver, and mother Sarala Devi, a beedi roller, Kasula Ravi Kumar, a resident of Narsampet town, was once a school dropout but his passion for education earned him a gold medal in MA English, a second rank in EdCET and finally the post graduate teacher post at a government model school in Jawahar Nagar.

Usually, libraries are meant for reading in silence. But the scenario is different at the ‘LEAD’ library. ‘Let’s make noise’ is the slogan with the priorities of reading, thinking, discussing and exploring. Not only students of primary and high schoolers but also graduates and post graduates from poor and underprivileged backgrounds studying at government schools and colleges in Warangal and nearby villages come to ‘LEAD’ (Leadership qualities, Education to the poor, Aim in life and Development of rural youth). It was founded in 2007 with the intention to inculcate the habit of reading in children and youth. Those preparing for competitive entrance exams also come here for proper guidance and material. ‘LEAD’ now offers online classes and finds trainers for poor students. They also have a children’s library now!

Ravi allocated a major portion of the ground floor and whole of the first floor of his house for the library. He has collected almost 6000 books until now, from earnest friends and various sources. Further, small libraries in three nearby villages were also set up by LEAD at government



schools. LEAD also reaches out to people via the ‘Mobile library’. Major initiatives taken up by LEAD since 2007 are English, Education and Environment (EEE). ‘LEAD’ has conducted almost 20 batches of spoken English sessions for the last 15 years where Ravi Kasula trained around 10,000 students, 1500 teachers and even a batch of police personnel under probation. Every summer, students from almost 17 villages prefer to stay back in Warangal for a month and throng to attend his Spoken English sessions that helped



many to secure better positions. This passionate teacher trains the students in reading English news, writing, mind-storming sessions, group discussions, 0ersonality development and speaking skills. Ravi Kumar compiled a book on English grammar, ‘Global English Grammar’ and distributed 2,500 copies bearing printing cost from his own pocket! “Due to the meagre income my family earned, I, along with my brother and sister, had to go through tough times. Though I secured a good rank in ECET, I had to give up the hope of join-

ing B.Tech due to financial issues. But I went on to pursue BA English at Dr BR Ambedkar Open University, Hyderabad, and earned MA English at Nizam College of Osmania University, but I preferred joining a private college in my native place since I wanted to continue with my service to students and the youth. All my sacrifices would be fruitful if these efforts can make more people realise the value of education, which would immensely benefit them financially, intellectually and ethically as well,” shares Ravi. “I have been conducting sever-

al awareness programs to the children and youth on the need to protect the environment for the last 15 years. I have distributed around 10,000 pamphlets on the need to protect the Ozone layer and conducted rallies, besides conducting essay writing and drawing competitions in association with the Forest Department,” he adds. He recently released his anthology of poetry *Mugimpu Leni Vakyam* in 2018 and also writes features to vernacular newspapers on different subjects. “Since I worked as a paperboy, at a telephone booth, before entering the teaching profession, it wasn’t hard for me to get into the shoes of Covid-hit families that lost their livelihood. ‘LEAD’ distributed essential commodities to over 265 families during pandemic. We also keep responding to the local news when there’s somebody seriously in need of something. Though I had to give up the dream of preparing for civil services due to time constraints, I am quite satisfied with doing my bit to the needy in my limited capacity,” shares he. Those who wish to teach children or send new/old books can reach out to ‘LEAD’ at 9908311580/ 7981068048.



Efficient, ethical and green

Almost everything is used and reused. SEWA organisation is helping to organise some of the people engaged in such work. One such group works in the textile waste sector! These are women workers who exchange old clothes for utility items, wash and repair these and sell them. Such old pieces of cloth are not thrown away, unlike in developed economies which has a very positive environmental impact in terms of saving landscapes and water bodies from pollution and refuse.

Alongside, this has an important social impact that is this work gives employment to women who then employ others. There are small factories in their homes where people are busy stitching, washing and packing garments which are brought by the less privileged. Young men from poorer families educate themselves but for professional work they need formal clothing! From these vendors, they can buy this for two hundred rupees.

The recyclers work at multiple levels. Apart from whole garments, they deal with waste from textile manufacturing units — larger pieces of fabric are sold to merchants who give these to women to stitch into children’s clothing. Even ‘katrans’ and fragments of fabric aren’t wasted, women make these into quilt covers. Historically, these vendors were often stopped, fined and sometimes even faced physical violence. In many instances, the SEWA organisation confronted the authorities and stopped vendors from being intimidated.

“We went to court and in 2004, managed to get a policy for street vendors with an act for them. Our whole thrust has been that street vendors must have space in urban plans to be able to operate safely and productively. They also face issues of access, they are often not allowed into gated communities. We have tried to negotiate with RWAs, some of ehoch demand that these women pay a fee of Rs. 1000 to enter despite police verification. For a micro-entrepreneur this sum isn’t a small amount, RWAs should re-examine their attitudes towards these women,” informs Renana Jhabvala who works with the Self-Employed Women’s Association.



There are other challenges too! As micro entrepreneurs need capital, most of the banks don’t give them this. Therefore started SEWA bank with this! It gives loans to poor women easily at reasonable rates. Consumers must recognise this essential work for without it, our cities would be landfills drowning in the products we simply throw away!

The Pioneer catches up with actor Meezaan Jaffrey, ahead of the release of his new film, *Hungama 2*

Meezaan Jaffrey, son of the versatile Javed Jaffrey, who made his Bollywood debut in 2019 with *Malaal*, exudes a quiet confidence as he goes about things in a matter-of-fact sort of way. Before our interview, we witnessed him politely declining to comment, with subtle laughter, on a somewhat controversial query by a mediaperson. While we did not know what to expect when our turn came, he appeared to be at ease with himself and was quite frank with every question we posed. He shares his thoughts on *Hungama 2*, ahead of its release on July 23 on *Disney+ Hotstar*. **From a romantic drama by Sanjay Leela Bhansali in *Malaal* to a comedy directed by Priyadarshan, how vastly different were the preparations for these two projects?** When we were working for *Malaal*, I had to strenuously prepare for my role. It would

Finding his funny bone

be safe to say that I was on the edge, to a certain extent. However, for *Hungama 2*, there was no preparation at all. That came as a total surprise going by the fact that I was working on a film by Priyadarshan, alongside Paresh Rawal and Shilpa Shetty. When I asked Priyan sir how would he like me to prepare for the character and the film, he simply said, ‘I don’t want you to prepare at all. I just want you to come on set, listen to what I have to say and then just try to have fun’. That’s exactly what I did and it was something different from what I had expected. Not many people have this way of working, but Priyan sir does, and I must say it works in his favour and that of *Hungama 2*. The spontaneity and the improvisation that comes along with it, bring so many nuances to the screen that would have been missed if we turned up prepared. **How does one prepare for a comedy flick? Is that even a thing, preparing for a comedy role?**

I don’t think so. But to be honest, I can’t really say; it’s not like I have done a lot of



Did working with a veteran of comedy roles, such as Paresh Rawal, provide you any input with respect to preparation? Paresh ji improvises on the spot and improvises a lot. That is something he is incredibly good at. I think we all know without me mentioning it that he is extraordinary at his job. His performance causes a chain reaction of sorts as his

improvisation coaxes better performances from us, the actors around him. Your reactions are bound to be different and original when someone like him throws something fresh at you, with every take of each shot. He is very reserved otherwise, but the moment the camera is focussed on him, he transforms into something else. His experience is out there for everyone to see, with each one of his performances. Some time in the beginning I remember thinking, ‘why is he not preparing his lines?’ But the truth is he does not need to. He has honed his craft to such an extent, that he does not prepare for a role the way, I think, I would. **Your thoughts when you were filming for *Chura Ke Dil Mera 2.0*?** I don’t think I am much of a dancer. While I do enjoy dancing, I think that dad’s genes probably played a huge role. I was extremely nervous filming that song because it was a big deal. Showing my moves for the remake of a prominent song which was filmed over 25 years ago, with Shilpa ma’am of all people, the leading lady from the original song, a lot of things were going on in my mind. I followed Priyan sir’s mantra and tried to enjoy the process. As soon as the camera comes on, I have to get

into the zone. I am glad that song blew up across the globe with people making reels on it and I am grateful for the love that has come my way because of the song. **Did you watch *Minnaram*, the Malayalam film by Priyadarshan, on which *Hungama 2* is said to be based?** Priyan sir specifically told me to not watch *Minnaram*. He felt that if I watch it, I might subconsciously end up copying what Mohanlal did in the film. However, when I sat down to watch *Minnaram* after we wrapped up shooting, I was surprised because it is poles apart from what we had made. And when I expressed this over a phone call with Priyan sir, he shared that he thought it would be wise to not reveal anything so that I could focus on my character. I would say that only 20 per cent of *Hungama 2* bears a resemblance to *Minnaram*. **Working alongside stalwarts such as Priyadarshan, Paresh and Shilpa was surely an incredible learning experience. Is there anything, in particular, that you think was of vital importance?**

Seeing Paresh ji at work I have understood the significance of completely letting yourself go, without any inhibitions, in this industry. That, I would say, was the most important lesson — staying true to the character assigned to you. That is something I won’t forget and will hopefully shape me as an actor in the years to come. Additionally, while an actor is a director’s puppet, with them trying to mould us the way they think works best for the film, an actor must give them a considerable range of nuanced skillset to work with. This is something I have learnt with Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Priyan sir. It is just the beginning of my journey, but something I have learnt is that every time I set foot on the set, I have to give it a little more than just my 100 per cent. **Would you say your father had a big role in helping you in Bollywood?** Well, I did not plan on making it big in this industry and my father knew this. As a kid, I have witnessed my father at work multiple times. There were instances when my mum asked me to drop dad’s lunch on the set and when I would get there he would always welcome my presence and I think it helped him relax as he would ask me to sit with him for a bit. I used to watch, without any interest or intention of becoming an actor. Back then I was into music and sports and was interested in pursu-

ing some sort of business related to sports. I had applied to Loughborough University in London, which is considered to be among the finest universities for sports, and I managed to get in as well, but I don’t know what happened, call it fate or whatever you want, I got into filmmaking. I started learning direction and editing. I met Sanjay sir who expressed his interest in launching me in *Malaal* and I took the opportunity. You know how they say that opportunity does not come knocking twice... Later on, during the time I was shooting for *Malaal*, I realised how much those impromptu visits to my father’s set had helped me. Apart from that, my father has always encouraged me to pursue my interests. **What are you up to, now that you are done with *Hungama 2*?** There are more films in the works, I believe you would be hearing about them soon. The production has its way of announcing, I will respect their call and wait for them to put it out there. What I can tell you is that I have two-three projects in the making and I can’t wait to start filming. Currently, I am busy with all the promotions and *hungama* for *Hungama 2*. Trying to take it one step at a time. (smiles).



CAKEWALK FOR SINDHU

INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 26 (ALL TIMES IST)		
TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:30 AM	Fencing: Women's Sabre Individual Table of 64	C Bhavani Devi
06:00 AM	Archery: Men's Team 1/8 Eliminations	Pravin Jadhav, Atanu Das & Tarundeep Rai
06:30 AM	Shooting: Men's Skeet Event Day 2	Mairaj Ahmad Khan & Angad Vir Bajwa
	Table Tennis: Men's Singles Round 2	Achanta Sharath Kamal
TBD	Tennis: Men's Single Second Round	Sumit Nagal
08:30 AM	Table Tennis: Women's Singles Round 2	Sutirtha Mukherjee
08:35 AM	Sailing: Men's Laser Race 2 & 3	Vishnu Saravanan
09:10 AM	Badminton: Men's Doubles Group Stage	Satwiksairaj & Chirag Shetty
10:15 AM	Archery: Men's Team Quarterfinal	
11:05 AM	Sailing: Women's Laser Radial Race	Nethra Kumanan
11:47 AM	Archery: Men's Team Semifinal	
12:00 PM	Table Tennis: Women's Single Round 3	Manika Batra
12:20 PM	Shooting: Skeet Men's Final	
12:45 PM	Archery: Men's Team Medal Rounds	
03:06 PM	Boxing: Men's 75kg - Round of 32	Ashish Kumar
03:50 PM	Swimming: Men's 200m Butterfly - Heat 2	Sajan Prakash
05:45 PM	Hockey: Women's Pool A	India vs Germany
	LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK	

Tokyo: Reigning world champion P V Sindhu made a dominating start to her Olympic campaign, thrashing Israel's Ksenia Polikarpova in straight games in the women's singles group J match on Sunday.

The 26-year-old Indian, seeded sixth, beat the 58th ranked Polikarpova 21-7, 21-10 in a lop-sided opening match.

"Even though it was an easy first match I didn't take it in an easy way. It wasn't like I wasn't prepared. Every time, it is very important to be focused and be prepared for every single point in every single match," Sindhu said after the match.

"It was quite an easy match but I made sure that we had some rallies and I got used to the court."

Rio Games Silver medallist Sindhu started on an attacking note but briefly found herself trailing 3-4. However, she moved ahead quickly with Polikarpova

making unforced errors. Sindhu entered the break with 11-5 lead.

Soon, Sindhu was on a roll, grabbing 13 straight points. The Indian used her trademark straight and cross court smashes and drops to trouble the Israeli, who couldn't utilise the few opportunities that came her way.

Sindhu sealed the first game in her favour when Polikarpova missed a shot.

Polikarpova, who was playing with a strapped knee, continued to struggle with her strokes as Sindhu opened up a 9-3 lead in the second game and then entered the mid-interval with a massive seven-point advantage.

It was business as well after the break, with Sindhu riding on the errors of her opponent.

Another wide shot from Polikarpova gave Sindhu 13 match points. The Indian squandered three of them before Polikarpova once again sent the shuttle out to end the match.

On her approach to playing a lower-ranked opponent, Sindhu said: "I think it's important to make sure that you play all of your strokes and get used to them."

"All of a sudden if you're playing with a higher-ranked player or a stronger opponent, it's not that you can just play that type of strokes, it's important to get used to the situations also."

'WORK ON AGGRESSION'

In the post match Press conference Sindhu said she has worked on her aggression in the past five years and promised a very 'different' version of herself after making a winning start.

"Mentally, physically and experience-wise, a lot has changed. Coming to (Tokyo) 2020 is completely different; back then there were no expectations," the reigning world champion said.

"I know that I have worked hard and given all my heart all of these years and I think it's time to show now. I've been working on my aggression and my technique and you will definitely see a different Sindhu."

Mary's experience triumphs

Tokyo: Six-time world champion M C Mary Kom (51kg) powered into the Olympics' pre-quarterfinals with a superb tactical victory over Dominican Republic's Miguelina Hernandez Garcia but Manish Kaushik's (63kg) Games debut ended in disappointment following a hard-fought opening-round loss on Sunday.

The 38-year-old Mary Kom, who is a 2012 Olympic Bronze-medallist and a multiple-time Asian champion, prevailed 4-1 against a rival who is 15 years her junior and a Pan American Games Bronze-medallist.

But Manish, a Commonwealth Games Silver-medallist and a world championship Bronze-winner, went down 1-4 to Britain's Luke McCormack in an edge-of-the-seat clash.

Mary Kom was the first to step into the ring and in a bout that was also exciting from start to finish, the Manipuri displayed some brilliant tactics to overcome the fight that Garcia put up.

She will next be up against third-seeded Colombian Ingrid Valencia, who was a Bronze-medallist at the 2016 Rio Games.

Mary has beaten the Colombian both times the two have faced, including the 2019 world championship quarterfinals.

"I have all the medals in my hand. Olympic medal (Bronze) from 2012, Commonwealth Games Gold, six-time Gold at world championships. It's not easy to count them, but the difficult part is continuously winning and performing, it's not easy," she said.

"...What is left is the Olympic Gold medal. That is what is driving me and pushing me to carry on. I am trying my best, if I am able to get it then I will be so grateful, but if not then I will



still be so happy for all the medals I have won in the past," she added.

On Monday, another Games debutant Ashish Kumar (75kg) will open his campaign against China's Erbieke Toutheta.

Medal-winning athletes allowed 30-second smile for photo op

Tokyo: The medal-winning athletes at the Tokyo Olympics will now be able to sport a wide smile for the shutterbugs after the IOC updated its protocol on Sunday, allowing them to remove their masks for 30 seconds during the podium ceremony.

The updated protocol, which allows athletes to remove masks briefly, came into effect on Sunday morning.

"It has been decided today, in line with the Tokyo 2020 Playbooks, to adapt the victory ceremony protocol in order



to allow athletes to have a physically distanced image on the podium without their masks on for 30 seconds, and a group photo with masks on the Gold-medal step," said the IOC in a statement.

"...The victory ceremony protocol has been adapted to allow athletes to have an image for the media that captures their faces and their emotions during a unique moment in their sporting career, as well as to celebrate the achievements of all the medallists together."



Manika Batra competes during TT women's singles second round match AP

Manika rises to the occasion

Tokyo: India's table tennis star Manika Batra made a stunning comeback against world number 32 Margaryta Pesotska to reach the women's singles third round but G Sathiyan succumbed to the pressure on his Olympic debut to exit the men's singles competition on Sunday.

While the 26th seed Sathian was expected to beat world number 94 Hong Kong's Siu Hang Lam in his second round match after getting a first round bye, the same cannot be said about Manika, whose gritty approach under pressure proved decisive against her higher-ranked opponent from Ukraine.

Manika, ranked 62, made a remarkable comeback after losing the first two games to prevail 4-11, 4-11, 11-7, 12-10, 8-

Tokyo: Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh on Sunday produced the best-ever Olympic performance by Indian rowers as they cruised into the men's lightweight double sculls semifinals at the Tokyo Games.

The Indian duo clocked 6:51.36 to finish third in the repechage round at the Sea Forest Waterway.

"We followed exactly what ever had been told to us by our coach. The coach told us that we should try to get the best position for India," the duo said.

"It's (rowing) not a very popular sport in India. So our coach told us that getting to the semifinals is also a big motivation for us, and we had to do our best."

While Arjun assumes the role of the bower, Arvind is the team's stroker. The two had finished fifth in their heats on Saturday.

"Arvind and Arjun are now among the 12 semifinalists. It can be difficult to win a medal but they will be competing in the semifinals. There will be two semifinal races of six boats each and top three from each semifinal will reach the final," Rowing Federation of India president Rajlaxmi Singh Deo said.

The event includes two rowers in a scull boat using two oars each. The long, narrow and broadly semi-circular in cross-section boats helps to reduce the drag.

The maximum weight set

Rowers Arjun, Arvind produce best-ever Indian performance



Indian rowers Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh in action @WeAreTeamIndia

for each male competitor is 72.5kg and the average weight cannot exceed 70 kg.

The semifinals will be held on July 27.

NAYAK FAILS TO QUALIFY

India's lone gymnast at Tokyo Olympics, Pranati Nayak failed to qualify for the All Round finals of Artistic Gymnastics competition.

The 26-year-old from West Bengal recorded a total score of 42.565 over the four categories — floor exercise, vault, uneven bars and balance beam — at the Ariake Gymnastic centre. She is now ranked at 29th overall at the end of subdivision 2.

There are a total of five sub-

divisions, from which top 24 gymnasts (best score across all four apparatus) qualify to the All-Around final, which will be held on July 29.

The top eight gymnasts in each event qualify for the respective individual event finals to be held from August 1 to 3.

However, Nayak finished at the bottom half in all the events.

SAILORS NETHRA AT 27TH, VISHNU 14TH

Nethra Kumanan was placed 27th after two races while Vishnu Saravanan was at 14th after his first race as the Indian sailors opened their campaign in Enoshima.

Srihari, Maana's campaign end



Maana Patel swims in a heat during the women's 100 m backstroke AP

Tokyo: Indian swimmers Srihari Nataraj and Maana Patel's Olympic campaign came to an end as the two youngsters failed to qualify for the semifinals of their respective events.

Competing in their maiden Olympics, both swimmers put up underwhelming performances and were unable to match their personal best times in the 100m backstroke events.

Srihari managed a time of 54.31s to finish his men's 100m backstroke heat in sixth place and overall 27th among the 40 swimmers. While Maana, swimming in the slowest heat, finished second with a time of 1:05.20s. She was 39th overall.

Shooters disappoint, again

Tokyo: The fancied Indian shooting team drew a blank for the second day running in the Tokyo Olympics, with a major weapon malfunction leading to a heartbreaking exit for the young Manu Bhaker in the women's 10 air pistol event.



Appearing in her maiden Olympics, the 19-year-old Manu finished a creditable 12th, despite losing nearly 20 minutes during the qualifications after the cocking lever in her pistol broke down, forcing her to go to a designated area for getting it fixed.

Manu shot 575, while the cut-off was 577.

Yashaswini Singh Deswal, the other first-timer at the Games, recovered from a sub-par start to end 13th, with a total score of 574.

In the men's 10 air rifle event, both the experienced Deepak Kumar and the teenaged Divyansh Singh Panwar finished a lowly 26th and 32nd respectively.

Deepak aggregated 624.7 while Divyansh shot 622.8 over the six series, scores which were never going to be enough to make the final.

India's Angad Vir Singh Bajwa missed two targets out of 75 to be placed 11th on

count back at the end of the third round in men's skeet qualifications. He looks to be in search of a top-six finals spot.

Angad had scores of 25, 24, 24 in the first three series and will come back on Monday to shoot the final two series.

Compatriot Mairaj Ahmad Khan shot 71 and was placed 25th out of the 30 shooters in fray.

Taken together, the first two days' performance, or, the lack of it, is certainly going to raise a few eyebrows within the Indian shooting fraternity, including the National Rifle Association of India (NRAI), which has done its bit in preparing its athletes.

Sania-Ankita pair knocked out



India women's doubles pair of Sania Mirza and Ankita Raina in action during their opening round match on Sunday @AITA_Tennis

Tokyo: Sania Mirza and debutant Ankita Raina were knocked out of the Tokyo Olympics despite dominating a large part of their women's doubles opener against Ukrainian twin sisters Nadia and Liudmyla Kichenok.

Sania and Raina were running away with the contest after baggeling their opponents but in a dramatic turnaround, the Kichenok sisters came back from the dead to pull off a 0-6, 7-6(0), 10-8 win at court 11 of Ariake Tennis Centre.

Sania was serving for the match at 5-3 in the second set

but perhaps nerves got the better of her and ended up dropping her serve.

From there on, it was not the same match, in which the Ukrainians looked out of sort, struggling with their serves and returns. The Indians became the prey and Ukrainians pounced on them.

Sania and Raina were down 1-8 in the Super Tie break but reeled off seven straight points to make it 8-8 but lost the next two points to make an exit from the Games.

Barty exits



Tokyo: Japan's Naomi Osaka won in straight sets on her highly-anticipated return to court on Sunday, while world

No 1 Ashleigh Barty crashed out in the first round.

Osaka defeated China's Zheng Saisai 6-1, 6-4 in her first match since taking an eight-week break for mental health reasons and is now the clear favourite for Gold after Barty, the reigning Wimbledon champion, dropped serve twice in each set and made 55 unforced errors in a 6-4, 6-3 loss to Spain's 48th-ranked Sara Sorribes Tormo.

Govt exempts Olympic returnees from RT-PCR test

Tokyo: Athletes, officials and media returning to the country from Tokyo Olympics will not be required to produce RT-PCR negative test reports for Covid-19 before their departure from Tokyo, the Government of India said on Sunday.

The decision was intimated in an official letter by Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare after the Indian Olympic President Narinder Batra had earlier in the day requested the Government to exempt returnees from the Tokyo Games to produce RT-PCR negative report before boarding their flights.

The Health Ministry official, however, said that only those individuals who have returned negative in the saliva-based test prior to their departure to India will be allowed to board the flight. Besides, all those returning from Tokyo will be retested upon landing in India.

The weightlifting contingent will depart for India from Tokyo on Monday after Mirabai Chanu won a historic Silver in women's 49kg event.

PTI

Surya takes India to 164-5

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Suryakumar Yadav continued his rich vein of form with another attractive half-century but Sri Lanka bowled well to restrict India to 164 for five in the first T20I here on Sunday.

Surya's second T20I half-century was complemented by useful contributions from skipper Shikhar Dhawan (46 off 38 balls) along with Ishan Kishan (20 not out off 14 balls) at the back-end.

Skipper Dhawan added 62 with Surya in eight overs to provide a solid launch-pad but the latter's dismissals surely cost India 20 extra runs.

But looking at the partnership, it was evident that the junior partner was batting in a more assured manner, having already sealed his place in the T20 World Cup team while the skipper is still fighting what looks like a losing battle to jostle inside that jam-packed top-order in the main squad.

There was a six over deep mid-wicket off Akila Dananjaya but the innings did lack the



punch despite four more boundaries.

It was Surya's five fours and a six that really helped Kishan and Hardik to launch the final assault.

At the start, Prithvi Shaw had a forgettable T20I debut as Dushmantha Chameera's (2/24 in 4 overs) outswinger found the edge of his bat off the very first delivery of the match.

Sanju Samson (27 off 20 balls) hit his customary six while batting like a millionaire

before Wanindu Hasaranga (2/28 in 4 overs) trapped him with a googly.

Surya as usual was in his free-flowing self, hitting those whiplash on-drives, cover drives and ramp shots which is a sight to watch both against pacers and spinners.

However what was exhilarating was how Surya picked all those back-of-the-hand slower deliveries from seamers Isuru Udana and Chamika Karunaratne.

MI-CSK to kickoff IPL 2021 UAE leg

New Delhi: Defending champions Mumbai Indians will meet Chennai Super Kings in Dubai on September 19 when the IPL resumes in the United Arab Emirates, the BCCI announced on Sunday.

The tournament was suspended in May after multiple Covid-19 cases were reported in its bio-bubble.

A total number of 31 matches will be played in the duration of 27 days including seven doubles headers.

After the CSK-MI clash, the action will shift to Abu Dhabi where the Kolkata Knight Riders will square off against Royal Challengers Bangalore.

Sharjah will host its first game on September 24 when RCB take on CSK.

In all, 13 matches will be held in Dubai, 10 in Sharjah and 8 in Abu Dhabi.

The first Qualifier will be played in Dubai on October 10, the Eliminator and Qualifier 2 will be played in Sharjah on October 11 and 13 respectively with Dubai hosting the final on October 15.

PNS

Madhavan on the importance of being kind, caring and compassionate

Parents are a child's first exposure to the world. Right from conception till the time they are adults, parents mould a child to be a better human being. Kids learn valuable lessons like love, care, kindness and compassion from everyone through their experiences and face-to-face interactions at home, at school and during playtime with friends. These qualities are learnt over time and through practice, but this learning starts at home.

For father, actor and humanitarian R Madhavan, whose bundle of joy Vedaant arrived in 2005, parenting has been an all-encompassing yet rewarding journey.

Reflecting on how the role of parenting has evolved given the new normal, he

shares, "Unlike a year and a half ago, today's kids are born into a very different world. One restricted to the four walls of their homes. This makes it even more important for parents to be their guide and positively influence their child's learning and development years during these challenging times."

Care comes in many forms, and with kids, one must take baby steps. "Encourage your child to be caring towards everyone around them— especially those that are vulnerable like their grandparents, those less fortunate or the help at home. Small steps go a long way — like donating a toy they have outgrown, or making their grandparents a card. If you have plants and animals at home, encourage your little ones to nurture and care for them too." Recently,

Madhavan joined the Vicks #TouchOfCare campaign where he commended the story of the late pediatrician Dnyaneshwar Bhosale during the pandemic. "Dr. Bhosale worked tirelessly to look after the needs of underprivileged children in his village during Covid. He was a true example of care for each one of us and the children he helped. It's important as parents, we expose our kids to stories of heroes like him and many more health-care workers who have displayed courage and bravery during this time," he added.



DSP is on a back step, why?

Devi Sri Prasad, the high power music director, is known for his energetic music. Once upon a time, he

would compose music for over 4 to 5 films in a year. He had become an instant favourite for big heroes. The Mega family has encouraged him and have also

availed his talent, which became an added advantage for their movies. But, gradually in Tollywood, DSP is said not be getting as many projects.

Recently, he gave two hits *Sarileru Neekevuru* of Mahesh Babu, and *Uppena* of Vaishnav Tej. Now only Allu Arjun's much-awaited film *Pushpa* has been getting DSP's music magic. Other than, that he didn't have any projects in Tollywood. He has stated that a few hindi films are in row, and they have been delayed due to the Covid situation.

Tollywood has become the centre for pan-India films now. Everybody is now planning pan-India movies, expecting huge profits. DSP is not in the team of any of these pan-India movies, except *Pushpa*. On the other hand, S. Thaman has bagged plenty of projects and Mickey J Mayer has got Prabhas-Nag Ashwin movies. Even Manisharma has made a

comeback with Ismart Shankar and then got Mega Star's project *Acharya*, a big one.

Upcoming directors, debut directors seem to be going with new music directors. Where did Mr. DSP fail? What is the reason behind this situation? For these questions, we are being told that he demands a huge remuneration and does not compromise on it. Second, we hear that he gets involved in the story, and tries to suggest where a particular song can be inserted in the movie. Being a lyric writer, he is also involved in the work of lyricists. This unsolicited involvement of his, many say, has become an embarrassment for others. But, fans of DSP are expecting more and more music from him. Let's hope this will change and rock as usual again.

RRR dictates release of all other films

RRR is dictating the release schedules of all other movies including *Acharya*. Rajamouli has already announced the release date of *RRR* as October 13. No other movie has dared to compete with the film. All are being planned before or after the release of *RRR*. As *RRR* is a movie of SS Rajamouli after *Baahubali* that has a crazy combination of NTR and Ram Charan, all others have to give way for it for sure.

Even Megastar's *Acharya* is also facing the same fate. The actual schedules of this movie were disturbed and it has to complete a final schedule.

First, they planned to release it on May 9, which is the release date of Chiru's blockbuster *Jagadekaveerudu Atiloka Sundari*, but, that did not happen. And then hoped for August, the birthday of Megastar. But, now even that seems to be impossible. They are trying to release it in September itself, before *RRR*. But, that proposal too has been in a dilemma. If not in September, it will have to be released only after *RRR*.

Liger, that's coming with the crazy combo of Vijay Devarakonda and Puri Jagannath is also waiting for a proper release date. This film has almost completed its shooting and is in post-production phase. This one too is being planned for September.



New director for Sai Dharam-Akhil film



Jayanth, an assistant of director of Sukumar, may soon get a multi-starrer movie as his first project. The director is said to have narrated a story to Sai Dharam Tej and the mega hero was mighty impressed with it. The story demands another hero, for which Sai Dharam Tej has suggested Akkineni Akhil's name. This potential multi-starrer is what the industry is talking about currently. Everybody is talking about the combination, but nobody knows the director's name. But, as per the sources, Jayanth who worked as assistant director with Sukumar is that

director.

Now, Sai Dharam Tej is in the shoot of his 15th film in the direction of Dandu Karthik Varma, who is also an assistant of Sukumar.

It was during the shoot of this very film that Jayanth was introduced to Sai Dharam Tej and narrated the story to him. If all things work out, the next project of Sai Dharam Tej will be with Jayanth. Already, *Republic* with Deva Katta is ready to release.

The bigger questions is how Akkineni Akhil's dates would be adjusted for this movie. He is already busy with *Agent*, directed by Surendar Reddy. The film may complete shoot by November or



December. If Akhil agrees to fo with Jayanth's new pro-

ject, it may go on sets only by January 2022.

Webseries on different kinds of wives: RGV

Controversy's favourite child, Ramgopal Varma is all set to produce a web series in the name of *Rakarakala Bharyalu* (Different types of wives). The announcement was made on Sunday. 30 Weds 21 fame Chaitanya will be seen playing a key role in

this series. RGV stated that each episode will show a type of wife and how the husband's life will be influenced after marriage.

As we know, he announces every project of his with a commercial aspect. Sources say that he may focus on illicit affairs and others blaming women, and it will be a dispute

from the beginning. Electronic media will soon take up the subject and conduct discussions on the same.

RGV's marketing strategy is known to everybody now. Despite the serial flops, Ram Gopal Varma is doing films continuously, so looks like there's nothing stopping him.