



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



BJP slams Kerala Minister for supporting Ayesha

P 5



Consumer anxiety at highest levels

P 8



Priyamani on being trolled for her skin colour, weight

P 11

2nd wave is ebbing, third wave won't be as severe

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Confirming that Covid-19 cases have been declining across the state for the past few days, Director of Public Health G Srinivasa Rao said that people need not worry about the third wave and the state government is all prepared.

"In the first week of lockdown there were 29,778 active cases. Now in the fifth week of lockdown, the number of cases has come down to 8,734. Positivity rate in the first week (of lockdown) was 6.74 percent which has now come down to 1.40 percent in the fifth week and as low as 1.36 percent on Monday. Even the bed occupancy ratio which was 52 percent when the lockdown began was 16 percent on Monday," Srinivasa Rao said.

The DPH added: "Lockdown has to be lifted some day. Whenever it is lifted, we have to continue to maintain precautions against Covid-19." He said that as part of a house-to-house survey, 4,49,815 kits were distributed among the 27.28 lakh



people screened. "Since cases are coming down, the Chief Minister has issued instructions to continue the fever survey to keep a check on seasonal diseases," the DPH said.

He said that around 350 complaints were lodged against about 170 private hospitals and show cause notices were issued to them. "If the hospitals charged in violation of GO, they will be directed to refund the excess money," Srinivasa Rao said.

Phased unlock from June 19 in TS

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

After following the Delhi model of lockdown, Telangana will now emulate the unlock process of the national capital. Telangana which is currently under lockdown, is likely to ease restrictions from June 19 onwards.

The government wants to maintain a balance between controlling the spread of Covid-19 and allowing economic activity.

Accordingly, night curfew is likely to continue and educational institutions and places of recreation will remain shut.

Telangana began the process of curbing coronavirus, first by imposing night curfew and following this up by imposing a complete lockdown. Now the 'unlocking' comes as Covid cases have seen a steady fall in recent weeks.

In Delhi, the unlock was phased and currently the national capital has released unlock 3.0 guidelines.

The first unlock had imposed complete curbs on entertainment



and educational institutions. Within a week, a second unlock was announced wherein shops in markets and malls were allowed to open on an odd-even basis.

Again within a week, on Monday, a third unlock was announced easing restrictions. As per the new unlock rules issued in Delhi on Monday, all market complexes, malls will now be completely open from 10 am to 8 pm. There will be no specific restrictions on

shops dealing with non-essential goods and services such as liquor vendors.

Telangana is reportedly planning to emulate this model with lockdown restrictions being eased up every week. Health department reportedly submitted a report on decreasing cases and the positivity rate coming below 1.4 percent in the state. Delhi began the unlock process when the positivity rate came to 1.5 percent two weeks ago.

TS on track to complete vaccination by January 2022

If the current rate of vaccination is sustained, it will take eight more months to inoculate all people aged 18 and above in Telangana. However, supply continues to be a constraint. On average, the State is vaccinating two lakh persons per day, including government and private hospitals. If the rate of vaccination continues at this pace, by January, the majority of Telangana will be vaccinated with two doses. While private hospitals are vaccinating nearly 60,000 people per day on average, government centres are inoculating 1.3 lakh every day. The government plans to increase this to 2 lakh people per day. If this pace continues, the inoculation process can be completed even by the end of the year.

In brief

After Mumbai, Hyderabad sees Rs 100/litre petrol

Hyderabad on Monday became the second metro city in the country to see petrol price crossing Rs 100 per litre mark after fuel prices were raised yet again. Petrol price was hiked by 29 paise per litre and diesel by 30 paise, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The hike -- 24th in six weeks -- pushed fuel prices across the country to new historic highs. In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 96.41 a litre, while diesel is now priced at Rs 87.28 per litre. Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges.

National award-winning actor Sanchari Vijay dies after accident

Kannada actor Sanchari Vijay, who met with an accident on June 12, died at the age of 38 on Monday. He was moved to the Intensive Care Unit (ICU) of the Apollo Hospital in Bengaluru, where he was being treated. The actor's family has decided to donate his organs in the light of the irreversible brain damage. A statement from Apollo Hospital in Bengaluru said he was on life support in the neuro ICU. "Neurologically he is deeply unconscious and is showing signs of brain failure. The family had come forward and consented for organ donation keeping in view the current irreversible brain damage.

Day after flagging mafia threat, UP journalist dies; cops say 'accident'

A television journalist based in Uttar Pradesh's Pratapgarh district died Sunday night in what the police have called a "motorcycle accident". Just a day before his death, Sulabh Shrivastava, who worked for ABP News and its regional arm, ABP Ganga, wrote to senior police officials saying he felt threatened following his recent reportage of liquor mafias in the district. "Shrivastava was returning on his motorcycle after media coverage, at around 11 pm at night on Sunday. He fell from his motorcycle near a brick kiln. Some labourers lifted him from the road and then used his phone to call his friends, and they called an ambulance too.

No door-to-door drive in natl policy, Centre tells HC

The Union government on Monday told the Bombay High Court that its national guidelines do not at present allow a door-to-door drive to vaccinate people against COVID-19. The Union government's counsel, Additional Solicitor General Anil Singh, said some state governments and municipal bodies had decided to ignore its advisory guidelines and were conducting door-to-door vaccination for special categories of citizens, but it was not possible yet to make such drives a part of the national policy. ASG Singh was responding to a previous query posed by a bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice GS Kulkarni on what the Centre thought about the BMC's request seeking its permission to conduct door-to-door vaccination for the elderly, bedridden, or such category of citizens.

Engineers held for selling cars taken on hire

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Police on Monday arrested six people, including a 34-year-old MTech graduate, for allegedly selling cars which were taken on rental basis.

There are two B.Tech graduates and a master's degree holder in social work (MSW) among the arrested.

According to Cyberabad commissioner VC Sajjanar, the main accused, Palle Naresh Kumar, used to take cars on rent by giving false promises to car owners and travel agencies and later sell or mortgage the vehicles.

Nares, with the help of the others, got hold of 272 cars. However, owners of 205 cars took back their vehicles after he failed to pay the promised rent monthly.

The Ramachandrapuram police recovered 50 cars.

BJP a sinking boat, Eatala will sink with it: Jagadish

ML MELLY MAITREY ■ HYDERABAD

The first reaction from the TRS to its former member Eatala Rajender joining the BJP on Monday came from Minister G Jagadish Reddy who said that the "BJP is a sinking boat and Eatala and all those who joined the saffron party will sink with it."

Addressing a media conference here, Jagadish Reddy taunted Eatala for joining a party that he had once described as "a party of Hitler's successors". "He is now talking about democratic values," the Minister said sarcastically. "The loss was to the individuals who left the TRS and not to the party," he said.

Stating that there was no relation to Eatala's words and deeds, Jagadish Reddy said it appeared like he had joined the BJP as per an agenda. "BJP was a party being opposed by people across the country as they were subjected to several hardships under its rule



which has seen a steep increase in the prices of petrol and diesel and which brought the controversial farm laws. Eatala joining BJP was tantamount to betraying people," Jagadish Reddy said.

He said that Eatala lacks the moral right to criticise TRS president and Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu "who through his people's welfare oriented rule, put an end to starvation deaths and suicides that the region witnessed before formation of the State."

No Modi, no Shah, Pradhan does the honours for Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In all fairness, Eatala Rajender may be forgiven for being a tad bit disappointed on Monday, after the brouhaha that had been the norm ever since he parted ways with the TRS.

Much had been made of his entry into the BJP, with everyone inclined towards saffron saying that he was a prize catch for the BJP, and would lead the party to its destiny — capturing power in Telangana.

Such was the buzz that Eatala may be forgiven for believing that he would be accorded the grandest of welcomes when he landed in Delhi.

It was perhaps this belief that he took a chartered flight to the national capital, and accompanied by 220 of his supporters flew to Delhi where he was welcomed by Union Minister Dharmendra



Pradhan and BJP Telangana state affairs in-charge Tarun Chugh. No Modi, no Shah, no other bigwig was present at the ceremony to welcome Eatala into the BJP fold.

In fact, the hype around his joining the BJP fizzled out to such an extent that BJP national president JP Nadda wasn't the one to

induct him into the party fold by handing over the saffron shawl. Perhaps Eatala's disappointment came to be known, since Nadda did drape him with the shawl later when the former minister called upon him at his residence.

Vaccines don't prevent Covid but help in keeping symptoms mild: Sangita Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vaccines don't prevent coronavirus infections but will help in keeping the symptoms mild, Apollo Hospitals Joint MD Sangita Reddy said on Monday.

In a series of tweets, Reddy also said she was going home today after being hospitalised for coronavirus infection.

"After 500 days of dodging #COVID19 I tested +VE on June 10th My initial reaction was of shock & dismay - Why me? I was careful & vaccinated. Hospitalized with high fever I took the cocktail



#Regeneration therapy within the early window period & it has made a dramatic difference," she said.

Highlighting the role of vaccines and timely diagnosis and treatment, she said, "The imp point 2 remember vaccine dont prevent

#COVID BUT help keep symptoms Mild. Timely diagnosis & treatment r key 2 quick recovery". "As I go home 2day & continue #self isolation under Med sup via #telemedicine My heartfelt gratitude 2 R

#Nursing, Doc & #scientific com," she noted. Reddy has been emphasising that the government should move quickly to ramp up the availability of the COVID vaccine in the country by enhancing domestic production as well as increasing procurement from abroad.

In a tweet on May 17, Reddy said, "The challenge of India's vaccination strategy is not admin as much as supply. I urge R #govt to move quickly on ramping up domestic prod, enhance intl procure, seek Intl aid in the form of vaccine & establish a dist network of all Pub & Pvt hospitals 2 accelerate the pace of inoculation."

WPI inflation hits record high of 12.94% in May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The wholesale price-based inflation accelerated to a record high of 12.94 per cent in May, on rising prices of crude oil and manufactured goods. Low base effect also contributed to the spike in WPI inflation in May 2021. In May 2020, WPI inflation was at (-) 3.37%.

This is the fifth straight month of uptick seen in the wholesale price index (WPI)-based inflation. In April, 2021, WPI inflation hit double digit at 10.49 per cent. "The annual rate of inflation, based on monthly WPI, was 12.94 per cent for the month of May, 2021 (over May, 2020) as compared to (-) 3.37 per cent in May 2020.

"The high rate of inflation in May 2021 is primarily due to low base effect and rise in prices of crude petroleum, mineral oils viz.

Only hallmark Gold from today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union government will enforce mandatory hallmarking of gold jewellery and artefacts from today. As per the new guidelines, jewellers across India will now be allowed to sell gold items of only 14, 18 and 22 carats from June 15, 2021 onwards.

Hallmark is a purity certification for gold. Currently, only 40 percent of gold jewellery sold in India is being hallmarked. Furthermore, only 35,879 of India's approximately 4 lakh jewellers are currently BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) certified, according to the World Gold Council.

As per the government, hallmarking centres have grown by 25 percent in the last five years. With the existing capabilities at certifi-



cation centres, India has the capacity to hallmark around 14 crore articles per year.

Under Hallmarking scheme of Bureau of Indian Standards, Jewellers are registered for selling hallmarked jewellery and recognised testing and Hallmarking centres.

BIS Hallmark will be for three categories - 14 carat (14K585), 18(18K750) carat and 22 (22K916) carat with A&H centre's identification mark/number and jewellers identification mark/number.

Oppn wants fund crunch to affect welfare: Harish

They want fund crunch to affect TRS gov't welfare, development agenda, says Finance Minister

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that the 'double standards' of the Opposition parties have been exposed with their stand against the TRS administration's decision to sell prime government lands lying unutilised to mobilise additional resources, Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Monday said that it was the Congress that had initiated the sale of such lands during its tenure and the BJP was going ahead with it today.

Describing the demand to stop the sale of government land as ridiculous, Harish Rao said: "Leaders of these parties are in a way criticising their own govern-



ments."

Speaking after the launch of the Sangameswara Lift Irrigation survey works in Sanga Reddy, the Minister said that there was a conspiracy behind the demand by the Opposition parties as they wanted the welfare and development programmes of the government to be stalled due to shortage of funds.

Monsoon covers two-third of India, a fortnight early

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's annual monsoon rains have covered two-third of the country, nearly a fortnight ahead of the normal schedule, a weather department official said on Monday, adding that conditions are favourable for further advancement into the north-western parts this week.

The early arrival of monsoon rains in central and northern India will help farmers accelerate sowing of summer-sown crops such as paddy rice, cotton, soybean and pulses, and may boost crop yields too.

"Monsoon has already covered some parts of Punjab. Usually, it enters Punjab in the last week of June," said an official at the India Meteorological Department (IMD), who declined to be named. Monsoon arrived in the southern



state of Kerala on June 3 against the usual June 1, but has advanced quickly since.

Since the start of the season, the monsoon has delivered 25% more-than-normal rainfall, boosted by higher rainfall in the central India

region, data compiled by IMD showed.

Monsoon is crucial for India's \$2.7-trillion economy, as it delivers nearly 70% of the rain needed by farms, besides replenishing reservoirs and aquifers.

Sowing of summer-sown crops such as cotton, rice, soybean, corn and pulses has already started in southern and western states, and could start in central and northern India this week, said a Mumbai-based dealer with a global trading firm.

"Farmers are interested in rice and oilseeds due to higher prices. We might see higher area under soybean and paddy," the dealer said.

India is the world's biggest exporter of rice and top importer of edible oils such as palm oil, soyoil and sunflower oil.

Nearly half of India's farmland gets no irrigation and is dependent on the annual rains from June to September. Farming accounts for nearly 15% of the economy but sustains more than half of a population of 1.3 billion.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Panchami: 10:56 pm
Nakshatram : Ashlesha: 09:42 pm
Time to Avoid : (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 03:32 pm - 05:09 pm
Yamagandam : 09:01 am - 10:38 am
Variyam : 09:59 am - 11:40 am
Gulika : 12:16 pm - 01:54 pm
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 08:01 pm - 09:42 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:50 am - 12:42 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy
Temp: 31
Humidity: 71%
Sunrise: 05:41 am
Sunset: 06:51 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated JUNE 14, 2021 5:00 PM

G-7 summit was perfect platform for Modi to make India shine

If proof was needed, last week's three-day G-7 summit was proof that the charisma of Narendra Modi, respect for him and his impact on the world stage remain intact. Modi got the opportunity to address the leaders of the G-7 nations thrice during the virtual summit and his message to the leaders of participant nations to work democratically, transparently and unitedly left them mesmerised. Modi called upon them to show solidarity and work together so that no pandemic would ever recur. British Prime Minister Boris Johnson said that he would have personally invited Modi to visit the UK, but because of the pandemic situation, he felt as though he had lost an opportunity to extend an invitation to Modi. Modi had attended the 2019 summit held in France

at the invitation of the French President. He would have attended last year's summit to be held in the USA responding to an invitation by Donald Trump, the then President, but the conclave was cancelled on account of the pandemic. At the recent summit, India's ministerial working group took active part in the discussions. Why was Modi's address to the global leaders so attractive? Covid-19 has exposed the disparities between the rich and poor nations as far as medical infrastructure is concerned. While top nations are able to wriggle themselves from the pandemic situation, the poorer ones are ruined. The wealthy nations have state-of-the-art medical facilities and infrastructural amenities, while the poorer nations don't, leading to more deaths in such coun-

Covid-19 has exposed the disparities between the rich and poor nations as far as medical infrastructure is concerned. While top nations are able to wriggle themselves from the pandemic situation, the poorer ones are ruined. Modi's desire is to eliminate these differences.

tries. Modi's desire is to eliminate these differences as far as medical amenities are concerned. That was why, addressing the summit on Saturday, Modi laid emphasis on building strong medical and health systems with the idea of 'one world, one health'. He called for joint efforts to achieve this. Modi led governments, industries and civil society to work together as he felt that this would encourage the entire world to fight against

Covid-19. That was why India was able to mitigate the impact of the second wave in less time than it could gain control over the first wave. Besides the G-7 nations, many other countries have been supporting India. Modi thanked them for their support and called for improving health administration. He expressed his preparedness to share India's Covid experience with other nations. Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, South African President Cyril



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

Ramaphosa supported Modi's contention that restrictions on Intellectual Property Rights should be lifted on Covid related technologies. The USA also extended its support to Modi, which is an important development. The World Trade Organisation and the UNO Secretary-General also identified the issue as impor-

tant. As one of the biggest democracies in the world, India is a natural ally to G-7 nations. Modi announced at the summit that the participants share more or less the same views on issues like dictatorship, terrorism, violent extremism and spread of wrong information. Referring to technological companies, he called for a safe cyber atmosphere to evolve an open and transparent society. If a pandemic-like crisis surfaces, is it possible to resolve it without the contribution of India, Modi questioned, reflecting his bold leadership style. Modi need not draw lessons from anyone on how to enhance the image of the country on the global fora.

Whatever is the forum, his novel ideas lend greatness to him and the G-7 summit was no different. In fact, when Covid-19 second wave was sweeping across the country, Modi used his ties with global leaders and tried to bring the country out of the difficult situation. Unmindful of the criticism of the Opposition, Modi took measures to solve problems of the people. The PMO benefited thousands of people, including journalist Rubika Liyaquat, information commissioner Uday Mahurkar, a Sangh activist in Jamshedpur, during the turbulent times of Covid. The PM called up many people to enquire about their health. Modi helped the editor of a magazine, who was critical of the PM, and ensured that he received

proper treatment. Modi yearns to speak with those who are in suffering, to ensure that all receive the vaccine, to ensure that there should be proper medicare in hospitals. If anyone criticises Modi, there is no bigger atrocity than this. Ask anyone in the PMO how Modi spent sleepless nights when Covid was at its peak. Those who spread rumours about differences between Modi and Yogi, should be construed as that they do not know how the BJP functions. Modi reviewed the development programmes in UP for over 1.5 hours. Because of such a constructive approach, there is no doubt that the BJP will romp home in the elections to be held next year under the leadership of Modi and Yogi to the bewilderment of their critics.



Wgl Jail slides into history

Foundation for Warangal Super Speciality Hospital on June 21

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The 135-year-old Nizam era Warangal Central Jail in Telangana became history with the authorities demolishing the prison structures to build a multi super-speciality hospital. The demolition work, which was taken up on Sunday on a massive scale, was almost completed within 24 hours. Spread over 59.5 acres the jail was built in 1885 by the government of Nizam Mir Mahbub Ali Khan VI, the ruler of then Hyderabad State. Many prominent personalities including those who took part in the Indian freedom struggle, Telangana Peasants' Movement, and Telangana Statehood movement were imprisoned in this jail in Warangal town. Amid reports that some individuals are planning to move the High Court seeking directions to stop demolition

of the jail, the authorities deployed heavy machinery to complete the work at a brisk pace. The operation was completed with secrecy as all approach roads were sealed and even media persons were not given access to the area. It was the second-largest jail in Telangana. Earlier this month, all 957 prisoners imprisoned there were shifted to jails in Mahabubabad, Chanchalguda, Cherlapally open-air jail, Nizamabad, Adilabad, and Khammam. The state government has allocated Rs 250 crore for a new central prison for Warangal. Director General of TR Prisons Rajiv Trivedi said the new jail will be built near Mamnoon fourth battalion police camp premises on the outskirts of Warangal. Officials carried out a survey of the 100-acre land for building the new jail. Meanwhile, the state government has decided to build a 24-storied building for the

super multi-speciality hospital coming in place of the old prison. Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao said this hospital will have better medical facilities than any other such hospital in the country. He directed officials to provide all modern facilities including a helipad facility on the terrace for landing of helicopters bringing patients for emergency care. KCR, as Rao is popularly known, asked officials to build the hospital as a Green Building with the Canadian style of cross ventilation. He directed officials concerned to visit Canada to have the first-hand experience. The chief minister will be laying foundation stone for the hospital on June 21. The facility is likely to be built on the lines of the multi-storied Mackenzie Health Sciences Centre in Canada. The foundation stone for the hospital will be laid exact-

ly a month after KCR visited Warangal jail and decided to demolish it to build a multi super-speciality hospital with the latest technology, equipment and medical services. He announced that a jail would be built on the lines of Cherlapally Open Air Jail in a sprawling campus on Warangal outskirts. The new prison would also have a correctional centre. The proposed hospital in Warangal, the second biggest city in the state after Hyderabad, is part of the state government's plans to strengthen healthcare infrastructure in the state. The State Cabinet decided last week that the government will spend Rs.10,000 crore over next two years to provide world-class healthcare facilities to the people. The government wants to focus on the public health sector the way it strengthened irrigation sector and brought qualitative changes.

TS on track...

Continued from page 1

Around 35 lakh people are due for a second dose of the vaccine in July alone. Around 13.58 lakh people in high-risk groups were vaccinated from May 25 to June 13. After vaccination of high risk groups is completed, members of self-help groups will be inoculated. Currently, Telangana has around 9 lakh vaccine doses in stock. Director of Public Health G Srinivasa Rao said that if vaccines are made available, the state can scale up and inoculate everyone in just one week. He said, "We have vaccinated 16 lakh people in the last 20 days. At government centres alone, we will be vaccinating two lakh people every day from Tuesday onwards. We will be completing administering 1 crore doses of vaccines in June."

Handlooms Minister relaunches Nethanna ku Cheyutha in T'gana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Handlooms Minister K T Rama Rao on Monday relaunches the Nethanna ku Cheyutha savings scheme for handloom weavers and ancillary workers in the State. A decision to this effect was taken during a meeting with Handloom department officials here on Monday. The Minister said handloom weavers and ancillary workers in the State can enroll for the savings scheme. As part of the scheme, the State government contributes 16 per cent of the declared income against 8 per cent contributed by the handloom weaver. Similarly, the government contributes eight per cent to the ancillary workers contribution of eight per cent. The scheme will ensure

financial assurance for nearly 25,000 handloom weavers and 10,000 powerloom workers, the Minister said. In undivided Andhra Pradesh the benefits of the scheme were confined to handloom weavers but after State formation, the benefits have been extended to powerloom workers too, he said. In the past, the scheme benefitted only weavers registered with societies but currently the scheme is open to handloom weavers, dyers, designers, weavers, winders and other ancillary workers, he said. "More importantly, prior to Telangana formation, the State Government contribution was only eight per cent but after State formation it has been enhanced to 16 percent" said Rama Rao. This scheme has

been very helpful to weavers during the hardships arising due to Corona pandemic. Considering their hardships, last year the Government facilitated to draw the accumulated funds and reap benefits before the expiry of lock-in period, the Minister said adding this move helped the weavers get benefitted to the tune of Rs.109 crore. Since the scheme was beneficial to the weavers and as per the requests made by them, the State Government has responded positively and decided to extend the scheme this year as well, the Minister said. "The Government has already released the requisite funds for the scheme. Telangana Government is committed for the welfare for weavers" said KT Rama Rao.

2nd wave is ebbing, third wave won't be as severe

Continued from page 1

He said that people need not worry about the third wave and the state government is all

prepared. DME Dr Ramesh Reddy said that the intensity of the third wave of viral diseases are less severe "as several people achieve immunity, and vac-

cines are taken if available." DME and DPH said that police complaints will be filed against anyone spreading fake news about the third wave.

Speaking about fatalities, the DPH said that irrespective of Covid-19, about three lakh people die in the state per year and Covid supplemented the count.

No Modi, no Shah, Pradhan...

Continued from page 1

While Nadda may have made some 'amends', netizens were not as kind. Social media was abuzz over how Eatala, who claimed to be of Chief Minister level, wasn't welcomed into the BJP in the presence of bigwigs like Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Home Minister Amit Shah. Several questioned as to what happened to the real self-esteem of Eatala, when people who were not even in power like DK Aruna and Babu Mohan could join BJP in presence of Amit Shah. Along with Eatala, former MLA Enugu Ravinder Reddy, former ZP chairperson Tula Uma, RTC workers union leader Ashwathama Reddy joined the BJP.

WPI inflation...

Continued from page 1

Petrol, diesel, naphtha, furnace oil etc. and manufactured products as compared to the corresponding month of the previous year," the Commerce and Industry Ministry said. Inflation in fuel and power basket spiked to 37.61 per cent during May, against 20.94 per cent in April. In manufactured products, inflation stood at 10.83 per cent in May, against 9.01 per cent in the previous month. However, inflation in food articles eased marginally to 4.31 per cent in May, even as onion prices spiked. Inflation in onion stood at 23.24 per cent in May, against (-) 19.72 per cent in April. The RBI in its monetary policy earlier this month kept interest rates unchanged at record lows and committed to maintain an accommodative policy stance to support growth. RBI pegged retail inflation at 5.1 per cent in this fiscal ending March 2022, with upside risks from higher commodity prices and re-emergence of higher supply constraints amidst the current phase of lockdowns.

Oppn wants fund crunch to affect...

Continued from page 1

The TRS government had announced its intention to raise additional resources at a time the State was facing resource crunch due to pandemic that impacted economic activity, he said. "As Finance Minister during the Budget presentation, I announced in the Assembly the proposal to raise funds through the sale of government lands. Accordingly, the government is going ahead in the most transparent way to auction the identified lands," he said. It may be mentioned here that the Telangana government decided to auction in the first phase 64 acres of land in Ranga Reddy district and will be issuing a notification on June 15 for auction of 49 acres belonging to HMDA in Kokapet and 15 acres in Khanamak under Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Corporation. A pre-bid meeting will be held on June 25. The last date for submitting bids is July 13 and the auction will be held on July 15.

Harish Rao said the Congress Legislature Party leader Bhatti Vikramarka went to the extent of saying that the Congress would take back the sold lands when it returns to power. Deploring the statement by such a senior Congress leader, Harish Rao said that 88,500 acres of land in the combined State were sold during the term of three Congress Chief Ministers — YS Rajasekhara Reddy, K Rosaiah and N Kirankumar Reddy from 2004 to 2014. As TRS MLA he had opposed the sale of lands in Hyderabad and diversion of funds to Andhra but then Congress MLA including Bhatti Vikramarka raised their voice, Harish Rao recalled. Taking on the BJP, he said it had kept the lands of BHEL and Ordnance Factory for sale and disinvested the government share in 24 Public Sector Units 45 times so far. The Union Finance Ministry had written to the State Government to divest its share in PSUs and even offered incentives to the States

for speedy disinvestment in PSUs and that 40 percent of the amount would be given as grant to the State. While Centre was selling PSUs and adding to joblessness, TRS government was helping state public transport RTC by allocating funds from the State Exchequer. Disinvestment of PSUs would take away reservations extended to SC, ST and BCs, Harish Rao said. Lashing out at the Central government, he said it was fleecing people by increasing petrol prices 43 times so far even as people were reeling from the Covid crisis. The price of petrol has shot up by Rs 25 a litre and diesel by Rs 23 a litre in one year, the Minister pointed out. "In contrast the TRS government continued Aasara pensions, Kalyana Lakshmi scheme, extended 10 kg free rice, Rs 1,500 cash assistance to poor ration-cardholders and also gave 25 kg free rice and Rs 2,000 a month assistance to private school teachers and strengthened government hospitals during Covid crisis," he said.

BJP is sinking boat, Eatala...

Continued from page 1

"There is no comparison between BJP-ruled States and the TRS government which achieved several stellar milestones and turned Telangana State into the rice bowl of the country overtaking Andhra Pradesh and Punjab," the Minister said. The State made great strides in giving quality 24x7 power to agriculture and other sectors and providing drinking water through Mission Bhagiratha. The TRS government created wealth and distributed it to people through various welfare schemes, he said. To a question, Jagadish Reddy said Eatala should have waited till the inquiry into assigned lands encroachment was completed. "He left the crowd and ventured into the forest," the Minister quipped. He dismissed reports about anti-party remarks made by some who attended the party he organised in Hampi.

Aerosols with climatic implications form frequently in urban locations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Researchers at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) have found frequent formation of sub-3nm neutral aerosols in the atmosphere over urban locations. The findings are of critical importance as a major fraction of these newly formed particles can reach sizes of cloud condensation nuclei, where they have climatic impacts. Vijay Kanawade and Mathew Sebastian from the UoH measured neutral sub-3nm particle concentrations in Hyderabad, and reported the formation rate of small molecular clusters, for the first time, in sub-3nm size regime, where aerosol nucleation triggers. Aerosols are tiny solid or liquid particles suspended in the atmosphere. The studies have also established a strong positive correlation between sub-3nm particle concentrations and sulphuric acid concentrations, confirming the potential role of sulphuric acid in the formation of sub-3nm particles which can grow to sizes that affect the climate. The formation of small molecular clusters of sub-3nm particles and their subsequent growth to large sizes is called atmospheric new particle formation (NPF). NPF occurs everywhere in the terrestrial troposphere, and therefore

it is a large source of aerosol numbers to the atmosphere. While NPF often starts with sulphuric acid in the atmosphere, sulphuric acid alone fails to explain observed particle formation and growth rates in the atmosphere. Other vapours such as ammonia, amines and organics play a crucial role in the growth of newly formed particles. Moreover, these newly formed particles did not always grow to large sizes, and the team hypothesised that the particle growth was limited by lower concentrations of condensable vapours such as organic compounds, calling for research using state-of-the-art instrumentation to understand the mechanisms driving NPF in diverse environments across India. The researchers used AIR-MODUS nano Condensation Nucleus Counter (nCNC) to measure particle size distribution in the size range of 1 to 3 nm diameter since January 2019 at the University of Hyderabad campus site. Jeff Pierce from the Colorado State University in the US was also part of this study. Their findings published in the journal 'Atmospheric Environment' showed that a pool of sub-3nm particles is often present in the atmosphere, but how fast these clusters grow depends on various factors.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	₹ 49,640 (10 gm)
SILVER	₹ 660
SILVER	₹ 76,500 (1kg)
SILVER	₹ 600
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹168
Without Skin	₹191
Broiler at Farm	₹116
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	519
VIJAYAWADA	524
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE	₹5.19

Power makes top heavy BJP an attractive proposition

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

With each passing day, the Telangana unit of the Bharatiya Janata party (BJP) is getting 'top heavy'. The latest to add weight to the 'upper echelons' of the party in Telangana was Eatala Rajender, the former health minister of the state. This is despite the fact that the Congress remains the main political rival to the TRS. But given the fact that the BJP is in power at the Centre, senior political leaders of other parties are preferring

to join it, rather than the Grand Old Party. These leaders ignore the fact that compared to the BJP in Telangana, the Congress has more strong leaders across the state and it has a strong cadre in the grassroots level. However, the fact that the BJP remains a behemoth at pan-India level, and is flush with funds, makes it a more attractive proposition for politicians of all hues, especially those in trouble. Admittedly, the Congress lacks proper leadership both at the state level and at the national level since it has not

been in power for the last two terms. Also, the Congress leadership is simply unable to infuse confidence among the leaders of other parties who want to join it. Leaders looking for greener pastures factor in the situation on the ground — there is more than two-and-a-half years still left for the next General Elections. Ample time for them to perhaps bag some nominated posts or realise some individual favours. Some of the former MPs who joined from other parties are aspiring for Rajya Sabha seats from party senior lead-

ers N Indrasena Reddy, K Muralidhar Rao and others. Meanwhile on Monday, former MP Ramesh Rathod and former MLA Enugu Ravinder Reddy joined the BJP along with Eatala Rajender. A senior Telangana BJP leader said all these leaders getting Rajya Sabha seats is impossible, but they will get tickets in the next Lok Sabha elections. "Generally before elections, leaders changing parties has become common. If some other parties come with a good offer, some of them may leave the BJP," he added.

Publicly, the BJP leadership maintains that all those leaders who have joined it, especially after the 2019 Lok Sabha elections, have not been given any assurance. However, there are several leaders of the BJP in Telangana aspiring for Rajya Sabha seats. These include former MPs G Vivek, AP Jitendar Reddy, Vijayashanthi, Garikapati Mohan Rao and Vijayarama Rao, former ministers DK Aruna and M Narsimulu, former Telangana state Legislative Council Chairman K Swamy Goud and others apart from party senior lead-

GREATER WARANGAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Tender Notice No. SEOW/MC/CT/06/2021-22, Dated: 11.06.2021
N.W. Development Works-2 No of New New Work in various places of GWMC
Estimated Amount: Rs.190.00 Lakhs and 1 Recall Works. Proposed Dates for Fresh
mark:Start & Last date of receipts of bids: 15-06-2021 from 4.00 PM onwards & 02-07-
2021 upto 4.00 PM. Proposed Dates for Recall work:Start & Last date of receipts of
bids: 15-06-2021 from 4.00 PM onwards & 23-06-2021 upto 4.00 PM. NOTE: Further
details can be seen @ 'e' procurement market place @ www.tender.telangana.gov.in
COMMISSIONER, GREATER WARANGAL MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
H.O. No. 12005-PPCL/AMT/1/0621-22

KHAKI UNDER ATTACK

Friendly policing: Cops on receiving end

KAUSHIK GUNUGANTI
HYDERABAD

Amid stricter policing in the wake of the Covid pandemic, there has been a marked increase in the number of assaults on government officials, including police personnel.

The 'friendly police' approach of the Hyderabad police is leaving cops on the receiving end. Even while dealing with criminals or suspects, cops are being told to adopt the same policy.

Mostly lower-rung police officials, ranging from assistant sub-inspectors (ASIs) to constables, are on the receiving end as they spend the most time in the field. "Many entitled people get away with misbehaving with cops due to political interference," said an official, who did not wish to be named, adding, "On being stopped for checking, most people make it a prestige issue and start hurling abuses at the cops."

Such people can be booked under Sections 353 (use of assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of duty), 186 (obstructing public servant in discharge



of public functions) and 332 (voluntarily causing hurt to deter public servant) of the Indian Penal Code.

During the past fortnight, the number of attacks on police personnel has increased. Anti-social elements and those who try to take law into their hands have been misusing the friendly policing policies of the government.

In fact, three young men, including the local man

Sameer, have tried to assault the police enforcing lockdown duty in Emmad Nagar under Rajendra Nagar police station limits. In another incident, Mohammad Aneel Iqbal of Yakutpura called up Moghalpura police inspector Ravi Kumar and threatened him with dire consequences.

While this was a good policy, relaxation should be allowed while handling criminals or suspects or even

crowds in tense situations, said senior cops. "The policy has a very thin line separating handling of different types of people and that has to be made clear," a senior IPS officer said.

In Chilakalaguda, an accused in a stabbing case attacked police constable with knife while being questioned. According to Gopalapuram ACP and Chilakalaguda CI Naresh, Mamidi Hari a vegetable vendor of Srinivasa

Nagar in Chilakalaguda has two sons, including David.

During the past one week, there are clashes between the family of Hari and a provisional store owner in the area Seetala Srikant. An argument ensued between the two families. In a fit of rage, David attacked Srikant with a vegetable cutting knife. Srikant was admitted to a private hospital in Musheerabad. The police took Hari and his two sons into custody.

While Constable Kiran Kumar was questioning the accused, David using the knife with him stabbed Kiran Kumar on neck and chest inflicting serious injuries on him. Doctors ruled out any danger to his life.

A case was registered against Mamidi Hari and his two sons.

City-based psychiatrist Dr Rajiv Sharma said, "The restrictions imposed to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus have affected some people mentally as well as physically. As the police take action against violators, some people view cops as villains for deterring them, which is one of the reasons behind increased assault on police personnel."

Purchase of luxury cars for IAS officers amid Covid pandemic raises eyebrows

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government came under Opposition's fire for purchasing a fleet of luxury cars for IAS officers in the state amid the Covid crisis.

As many as 32 new luxury multi-utility vehicles reached Pragati Bhavan on Sunday for distribution to additional collectors posted in the state.

With the state exchequer in a bad condition due to less revenue and insufficient medical infrastructure, the allocation of the cars, estimated to cost about Rs 25 lakh each, has raised eyebrows. Criticising the move, BJP spokesperson K Krishna Sagar Rao registered a strong opposition on his party's behalf against the 'criminal splurge of public exchequer' by Chief Minister to 'appease bureaucrats' in the state.

"How can Chief Minister KCR justify spending over Rs 11 crores to buy 32 ultra-luxury vehicles for additional collectors in Telangana State?" the BJP leader asked.

Claiming that Telangana Chief Minister is indulging into a 'massive wastage of public money' in the middle of a pandemic, he termed the deci-



sion to buy ultra-luxury vehicles for additional collectors as 'horrendous and unthinkable' in the current public health situation. Krishna Sagar Rao further said, "Finance Minister Harish Rao made statements recently that state has lost massive revenue with lockdowns and wanted increased FRBM limits to raise more loans."

The BJP questioned the Finance Minister's bare minimum fiscal discipline in the current economic situation as his department is releasing crores of rupees for ultra-luxury vehicles.

Krishna Sagar suggested that the money used in buying luxury cars could have been used to expand beds or provide free treatment to the poor. He demanded the immediate rollback of the decision and asked the government to stop the purchase of the vehicles. He also blamed the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government for 'brazen appeasement' of bureaucrats and said, "BJP wants to know, what is the Chief Minister expecting from the additional collectors with this brazen bureaucrats appeasement splurge?"

CM's mentality is 'I, me, myself': Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On expected lines, former minister Eatala Rajender trained his guns on his former boss and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao immediately after joining the BJP in Delhi on Monday, giving an insight into the mind of the TRS president in the process.

Speaking to the media along with Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy in Delhi, Eatala said, "KCR's mentality is that it's better to rule alone. KCR wants no one else except his chosen ones to win." He recalled that the TRS chief induced Congress and TDP MLAs to join the TRS though his party had a comfortable majority in the Assembly.

Eatala also reminded that KCR didn't form his Cabinet for almost three months after winning the 2018 Assembly elections by a handsome margin. "Is any Minister in Telangana able to work in



peace? Working under KCR is tough; he has never given any value to democracy. KCR never honoured the opinions of others. Telangana protagonists will work under the BJP flag from tomorrow onwards in the State," Eatala asserted.

Alleging that democracy was "being murdered" in Telangana, the former minister said that soon enough, all districts across the State would witness mass migrations into

the BJP.

"Is anyone living peacefully in Telangana? The truth would be known if this question was posed to the family members of MLAs, Ministers working under KCR. There is no mention of thousands of Telangana protagonists. KCR kept away protagonists and allowed others inside (the TRS). The entire State is observing these developments," Eatala said.

He said that he had spoken

about many issues over the last two years. "I am not against Rythu Bandhu. The government has to help farmers in one form or the other. The problem is that KCR feels that what he does is law. There is no tradition of listening to others. I came to a final decision only after several instances of friction," he said.

Eatala said that there were hundreds of leaders who were inclined towards leaving the TRS. "Our agenda from tomorrow onwards is to bring all public representatives under one umbrella. We will strive to strengthen the BJP. The people are opposing KCR's rule. We will work towards democratic Telangana and scuttle attempts by the TRS to lure people with money bags. It is not an issue whether I am Rightist or Leftist. My agenda is to end the atrocious rule of KCR. Karimnagar will become a focal point for the change. Change will not take place within minutes," he said.



ALL-PURPOSE

Murals were painted on government school building at Gambhirapet village in Rajanna Sircilla district not only to attract the children to come to school after reopening but also for creating awareness among the students, teachers and the public about the handlooms.

Police nab 23 for gambling in Lal Darwaza

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force (South zone) nabbed 23 persons in a late night raid on a gambling den in Lal Darwaza on Sunday night. The police officials seized Rs 28,180, 19 phones and 10 vehicles from them.

Acting on a tip off, the Commissioner's Task Force (South) raided a building near Lal Darwaza on Sunday night and found the suspects playing a 'three cards' game with cash at stake. "One Vijay was organising the betting and invited people to participate. He was collecting a commission from the players," said S Raghavendra, Inspector, Task Force (South).

The arrested persons were handed over to the Moghalpura police for further action.

Plaint against Hyper Aadi for remarks on TS dialect, culture

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A complaint was lodged against noted Telugu comedian 'Hyper' Aadi by representatives of Telangana Jagruthi Students Federation for allegedly making derogatory comments on Telangana dialect and culture.

The members of the federation approached LB Nagar division ACP Sridhar and submitted the complaint here on Monday.

In the complaint, they alleged that Aadi, who is known for his performance in 'Jabardasth', a popular Telugu television show, had in an event made comments demeaning the Bathukamma festival and also the Telangana dialect. Apart from Aadi, the members also sought to take action against the script writer and the production house.

HMRL, LTMRL vax drive benefits 1,300 employees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HMRL) launched a comprehensive vaccination drive for all Metro Rail employees at Metro Rail Bhavan in Begumpet on Monday.

HMRL MD NVS.Reddy has stated that as a part of Government of Telangana's initiative to curtail the spread of Covid, about 700 Metro Rail security personnel, HMRL staff, their family members and others were administered the first dose of vaccine on Monday.

Simultaneously, vaccination of all the frontline Metro Rail station staff loco pilots and others is also organised by L&T Metro Rail Limited (LTM-RHL), the SPV which operates Hyderabad Metro Rail.

As part of this vaccination drive, on Monday, over 600 employees and their family members were vaccinated at the LTMRL administrative office at Uppal Depot. KVB Reddy, MD and CEO, LTM-RHL also visited the vaccina-

tion camp and oversaw the entire process. The vaccinated persons were kept under observation as per the medical protocol. Ambulance, medical staff and stretchers were available to handle any emergencies. Refreshments were also made available for the people getting vaccinated.

Speaking on this occasion, KVB Reddy said, "The second wave has taken a huge toll on every one of us. During this tough time, we have ensured that Hyderabad Metro Rail continues to run within the relaxed window of lockdown efficiently and with utmost safety protocols in place. As the critical backbone of the Metro Rail service, our employees and associated agencies have displayed phenomenal professionalism and utmost dedication towards these public services. We have extended all required support to employees and their family members who were impacted with Covid. Vaccination camps and other initiatives are our humble gesture to ensure safety of our employees.

DPH complains against TS engineer for creating panic

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's Director of Public Health and Family Welfare Dr. G. Srinivas Rao on Monday lodged a police complaint, seeking action against a chemical engineer for creating panic among people by making certain comments regarding the third wave of Covid.

In his complaint lodged with Sultan Bazaar police sta-

tion, he said Dr Paruchuri Mallik, while participating in a talk show on a television channel, passed the comments "which are highly objectionable in terms of medical ethics regarding third wave and will create panic among the general populace".

Srinivas Rao stated in his complaint that Mallik is not a subject expert and sought action against Mallik under

section 54 of the National Disaster Management Act for spreading false warnings leading to panic among people.

Police said they were looking into the complaint and will take appropriate action.

"No institution/individual (globally even) had any experience/scientific prediction regarding the impending thirds wave, its effect on families or children," reads the

complaint.

Unnecessary spreading of rumours which are unfounded and do not have any scientific backing by Mallik will definitely cause panic and great distress to the common man.

The official said "passing such negative, demotivating, scary statements, basing on falsehood, lies, without any basis/evidence by an unqualified, non-caring person

amounts to gross criminal act with mala fide intentions, for focus on self and gaining cheap publicity and popularity".

Addressing a news conference, Srinivas Rao appealed to people not to believe the rumours. He reiterated that the state is prepared for possible third wave as it is well equipped in terms of hospital beds, medicines, oxygen and manpower

Talasanai acquitted of charges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Animal Husbandry Minister Talasanai Srinivas Yadav and other leaders were acquitted by a special court here on Monday in a case registered during the Lok Sabha elections in 2020 in Gopalapuram, due to lack of proper evidence.

The special court judge Vara Prasad in Nampally on Monday delivered the verdict declaring the Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasanai Srinivas Yadav, MLC Stephenson, TRS party leader Rajeshwar Rao, MP candidate



Talasanai Sai Kiran and the then Monda Market coroprorator of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Akula Rupa and other leaders accused in the

case as innocent as the prosecution has failed to establish the case against them.

It may be recalled that the Gopalapuram Police registered cases for violating Model Code of Conduct (MCC) during Lok Sabha elections held in 2020. Advocates Aadoori Chinna Srinivas and Annapurna represented the minister in the special court. It may be remembered here that the Minister Talasanai Srinivas Yadav was acquitted by a local court previously in two cases registered during the elections in 2009 and 2014.



Mayor stresses on upkeep of lakes, sanitation works

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Greater Hyderabad Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi inspected the open drains desiltation and other ongoing sanitation works in Charminar zone along with MLA, zonal commissioners and other GHMC officials.

The Mayor, who first went to the Mir Alam Tank with local corporator Mohammed Mubeen, observed that the horse hoof was unattended for a long time and she ordered it to be removed from time to time. The Mayor directed zonal commissioner Ashok Samrat to build flakes so that all the rubbish there would not fall out.

The Mayor also visited Rajender Nagar along with MLA Prakash Gowd and local corporator Srinivas Reddy and directed officials to strengthen the output of sanitation works by quickly completing the works in monsoon and she

ordered garbage removal from open drains and roads on time as there is a high chance of raising stink. The Mayor went to Bandlaguda and suggested that steps be taken to beautify the open drains and set up a walking track to expedite the work there.

Local corporator Tara Bhai and Rahman were present when the Mayor visited the Falaknuma Bridge works and suggested that the nala works there should be completed as soon as possible.

Later the Mayor, on inspecting flyover works near Owaisi Hospital, expressed dissatisfaction with the delay in the works. Then she directed Chief Engineer Suresh to take immediate action to complete the works as soon as possible. The Mayor visited Dabirpura Nala and appreciated the beautification works done in the area. She has also ordered the officials to complete the pending fencing works.

GHMC boosts SNDP action plan to prevent flooding

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the onset of the monsoon season the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is covering the last mile in completing all the works that has been initiated under the Strategic Nala Development Plan (SNDP), to ensure that lives of the people living in the low-lying areas in the GHMC limits do not get affected by flood waters as it did during the last rainy season in the city. SNDP, a wing under the GHMC, has been executing a systematic action plan to bolster the city's drainage system since almost the past one year.

Since the floods that affected large parts of the Greater Hyderabad during the last monsoon the GHMC officials have turned their focus on the flood-affected areas and colonies with poor drainage system, covering over 1,368 km in the city.

This year the government aims to make the lives of the people free from the hassles of stagnated floodwaters by dredging the canals in and around the city and expanding the nalas to ensure free flow of rain waters. The special SNDP unit had been set up with an outlay of Rs 858 crore for the integrated development of canals and nalas to ensure that



there was no water stagnation as had happened during last year. Apart from this, the government this year has earmarked Rs 45 crore for waste

and sewage removal in the city. Till date, 92 per cent of the listed works had been completed, since January. To complete the work in time the

GHMC, SNDP officials have boosted the speed of work in a bid to complete those before 19th of this month. Field work is going on in full swing to ensure that the drainages operated to their full capacity this monsoon. Beginning Monday, the officials will set all precautionary measures by June 19 to prevent water logging problems in the flood-affected areas.

Animal Husbandry Minister Talasanai Srinivas Yadav and city mayor Gadwala Vijayalakshmi directed the officials to conduct a series of reviews to this effect.

Till now from January this year, GHMC officials had cleared 884.15 km of canals in the city and 830 km of dredg-

ing work had been completed. Of this, 663.11 km were handled manually and 221 km were cleared by machineries. The removal of the silt is being carried out under the supervision of six SEs and the respective Zonal Commissioners.

Talsani Srinivas Yadav said that a WhatsApp group had been set up to monitor the removal of silt from the canals in the twin cities and receive complaints. Those who wished to lodge a direct complaint should call the given number or could message. He said the government had allocated Rs 45 crore for the removal of silt from the canals under GHMC limits.

R&R colonies built for evacuees of Pochamma Sagar extraordinary: CS

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

The evacuees living in R&R colonies built at Mutrajpalli and Tuniki Bollaram in Gajwel Assembly constituency were happy as they have a nice layout, wide roads and all infrastructure facilities and it was the first of its kind in the country, Telangana Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar said on Monday.

After visiting the R&R colonies at Tuniki Bollaram built for the evacuees of Kondapochamma Sagar reservoir on Monday along with District Collector P Venkatrami Reddy, Somesh Kumar said the R&R colonies brought fame to the state government. Later, he inspected the convenient sites for setting up the special food-processing zones at Vargal and he also visited Mutrajpalli R&R colony and integrated market model at Gajwel.

Somesh Kumar said he had sanctioned R&R colony for the district when he was Revenue Department Secretary and it was the first time in the history



of the country that a R&R Colony was built with 6,000 houses at Mutrajpalli. The evacuees of Konda Pochamma Sagar reservoir have been rehabilitated in the Tuniki Bollaram R&R Colony with 2,200 houses, he said and added that he had personally interacted with them and they were very happy over the facilities. The colony layout, internal roads and infrastructure facilities were fantastic and it brought fame to the state government, he added.

Terming the integrated market at Gajwel as a model for the country, The Chief Secretary said Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has taken a decision to build integrated markets in all municipalities in Telangana taking the spirit from the Gajwel model of market and he sanctioned Rs 500 crore in the budget for construction of these markets.

He said it was user-friendly for both sellers and consumers and the construction was giving no



scope for foul smell as it has nice ventilation for light and air. He said he had specially mentioned the model market of Gajwel at the district Collectors meeting and it would also be explained at the NIRD training. Arrangements would be made for the Additional Collectors to visit the Gajwel integrated market. Later, Somesh Kumar visited the R&R colony at Tuniki Bollaram built for the oustees of Kondapochamma Sagar reservoir. He expressed pleasure over

the facilities there.

He lauded Collector Venkatrami Reddy saying that under the direction of the state Chief Minister, the R&R Colonies were built at Mutrajpalli and Tuniki Bollaram with a nice layout. He patted on Venkatrami Reddy's back extending his best wishes and greetings.

State IT Department Chief Secretary Jayesh Ranjan, Additional Collector Mujmil Khan, RDO Vijayender Reddy, Municipal Chairman Chandramouli Gupta, and others participated in the visit.

Govt committed to provide free medical aid: Errabelli

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The State government was strongly determined to provide free medical treatment to the poor on par with corporate hospitals and taking measures in that direction, Minister for Panchayat Raj, Rural Development and Rural Water Supply Errabelli Dayakar Rao said on Monday.

Speaking after inaugurating the diagnostic centre at the Government General Hospital at Janagao on Monday, Minister Errabelli Dayakar said the government identified that diagnostic tests were crucial for people for getting treatment not alone doctors and medicines when the people were facing hardships to have lab tests. As part of its drive, the government launched 19 diagnostic centres in 19 districts and brought a revolutionary change in the medical and health department.

He said modern equipment was arranged in the government hospitals on par with corporate hospitals. Along with corona tests, blood, urine



BP, sugar, heart, bones, liver diseases, kidney, thyroid and other 57 types of tests would be conducted at the centres. Facilities like X-Ray, ECG, 2D Echo, Ultrasound digital X-rays would be introduced soon, the Minister said.

The Minister said the facilities would also be available, not alone in district headquarters but also Primary Health Centres (PHCs) as blood samples would be collected there and tests would be done for which vehicles were arranged. The test result would reach directly to the mobile numbers of the beneficiaries. The diagnostic centre was built at Rs 40 lakh in the district headquarters, required lab

technicians were recruited and equipment worth Rs 1 crore was arranged. The government was spending Rs 15 lakh for its maintenance per month, he added.

Errabelli said the steps taken by Chief Minister KCR the corona brought under control and the state stood as an ideal state for other states in the country. The Hyderabad Gandhi Hospital and Warangal MGM hospital were made as Covid treatment centres and the best medical services were given to the people. Stating that the leaders and officials made relentless efforts to contain the corona, he appealed to the people to follow the Covid regulations.

HC Chief Justice inaugurates 3 civil courts

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Telangana state High Court Chief Justice Hima Kohli expressed hope that the inauguration of three additional junior civil courts in a day would help speeding up cases. Hima Kohli inaugurated the Second Additional Junior Civil Court in Nagarkurnool and First and Second Additional Junior Civil Courts in Kolhapur virtually from Hyderabad on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, she said people and advocates used to travel to either Mahabubnagar or Hyderabad for civil court cases and now they were relieved of their hurdles and people would get speedy justice now. He called upon the Bar Association and the advocates to work with coordination and hasten the court cases to ensure justice to the people.

Telangana State High Court Judge A Abhishek Reddy, who attended the programme virtually, greeted the people for getting all the three additional junior courts inaugurated in a single day.



Nagarkurnool Bar Association President M Madhusudhana Rao thanked the High Court Chief Justice and sought basic amenities for the two civil courts and allocation staff and judges for the two additional civil courts. The court building which was under construction was completed 95 per cent in November last itself and the remaining 5 per cent was still pending. The land, where the second additional junior civil court was built, belonged to the Bar Association and the advocates were forced to sit outside. He urged the Chief Justice to take initiative to complete the construction of a new building and to issue necessary orders for the construction of a judicial guest house. He also urged

the District Collector to identify and hand over 20 acres of land for the court.

He sought district SP to set up a police outpost in the court as there was no proper compound wall. Mahabubnagar Principal District Sessions Judge S Premavathy, fourth Additional Sessions Judge N Ravikumar, senior Civil Judge Seethal, Mobile magistrate Murali Mohan, Junior Civil Judge Swaroopa, District SP Dr Y Saisekhar, Additional Collector P Srinivas Reddy, Bar Association members, advocates and others were present. Mahabubnagar first Additional district Judge T Raghuram, Kolhapur Bar Association President Bhaskar and others were present at the Kolhapur court.

Minister Gangula disburses Kalyana Lakshmi cheques

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Minister for BC Welfare Gangula Kamalakar on Monday distributed cheques of the Kalyana Lakshmi scheme to 260 beneficiaries in Huzurabad. Addressing a meeting at Huzurabad, the Minister said Telangana was the only state in the country that has introduced many schemes benefitting the women of the state. Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes were filling the lives of the young women with joy and blessing them with the bliss of marital life. The Chief Minister has designed the welfare schemes to make sure they should benefit people of all the sectors, especially in the rural areas, he added. The girls were happily getting married with the assistance being given under the Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak schemes and the credit goes to CM KCR, Gangula Kamalakar said.

Cong takes out protest rally over fuel price hike

PNS ■ MEDAK

The Congress activists took out a unique rally pulling bullockcart laden with motor-cycle under the leadership of DCC president Kantareddy Tirupati Reddy at Chinna Sankarampet here on Monday protesting against the fuel price hike. Speaking on the occasion, Tirupati Reddy said the BJP came to power with the promise of reducing the petrol and diesel prices and it put an unbearable burden on the people by hiking fuel prices after came to power.

He lamented that the price of petrol was Rs 75 per litre even when the crude oil price was 100 dollars, now it was reduced to half, but the Centre was increasing the petrol prices day by day and brought the petrol price to Rs 100. The BJP government became a puppet in the hands of the corporate powers and as a result, it was putting a heavy burden on the poor and the middle-class people by increasing petrol



and diesel prices beyond their control. With the rise in prices of petrol and diesel, all the prices from essential commodities to cosmetics were skyrocketing and its burden fell on every sector. The price of an LPG cylinder was Rs 400 before 2014 and now it went up to Rs 1000. The BJP said "Ache din", but it brought "Sache din", he remarked.

The people were facing severe financial issues for the past two years due to the corona pandemic, but the government was missing in action and it was proved beyond doubt that it was not a poor people's government it was a government for rich people.

The state and Central governments were blaming one another for responsible for the fuel price hike, he said and demanded that the government should roll back the fuel prices at least now.

He warned that otherwise, the Congress party would launch an agitation in a big way. Mandal Congress president Ramana, MPP Satya Gowd, MPTCs Sivakumar, Prasad Gowd, Sriman Reddy, Ramakishiaiah, Anjugowd and Palle Ramchander Gowd, Youth Congress president Mahender Reddy and others participated in the protest rally.

Mass vax drive launched at NTPC Ramagundam

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

Driven by the philosophy of "People before Plant Load Factor," NTPC was taking all measures to provide the best healthcare facilities to its employees and their family members, Sunil Kumar, CGM Ramagundam and Telangana of Singareni Collieries said on Monday.

Inaugurating the mass vaccination drive on Monday in adherence to Covid protocols, he said employees and contract workers were putting their best efforts into uninterrupted power generation at NTPC-Ramagundam and continuous construction activities in the Telangana project. He said the NTPC management was providing the best healthcare facilities and medicine kit to those who got infected with Covid. With this mass vaccination, the management intended to give them one more protective shield against the deadly Corona.

Govt going lethargic on sale of spurious seeds, alleges Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government was not serious about the sale of spurious seeds as it was going unabated in the state and as a result, the farmers were going to face huge losses, Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy said on Monday. Addressing the media after attending the general body meeting of the Huzurnagar municipality, he said that the Chief Minister has announced that PD Act would be invoked against the sellers of spurious seeds, no action has been taken on the culprits till now. Spurious seeds have been seized in Chintalapalem village but the culprits were let out. Threatening to launch an agitation against the sale of spurious seeds in the state, Uttam demanded that tough measures should be taken against

the culprits. Later, addressing the Huzurnagar municipal general body meeting, he said that the municipality was an autonomous body and it should not allow others to wield powers. He made it clear that all financial powers should be used only after resolutions were passed in the general body meeting. He advised members of the council to hold meetings of the council every month to discuss issues. He said that in view of prevailing Covid conditions, the meetings could be held in the function halls or online. He said that there should be transparency in the functioning of the municipality so that there would be no doubts about its activities. He said that the councillors should be given enough time to discuss the issues. As MLA and MP, he strived for the development of the Huzurnagar town.



2.2 lakh farmers to get Rs 230 cr Rythu Bandhu funds

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

About 2.2 lakh farmers were going to get Rs 230.85 crore towards the Rythu Bandhu scheme for raising crops in the rainy season and the amount would be credited into their bank accounts between July 15 and 25, Minister for Excise, Sports, Cultural and Tourism V Srinivas Gowd said on Monday.

Addressing a meeting at his camp office here on Monday, the Minister said as the rain season commenced the farmers could start sowing using the funds. He suggested farmers not raise paddy always and try to cultivate crops such as cotton, red gram and green gram which have high demand in the market.

CJI Ramana thanked for granting judges to Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister and Congress leader Mohammed Ali Shabbir paid a courtesy visit to Chief Justice of India N Venkata Ramana at Raj Bhavan on Monday. Shabbir Ali felicitated Chief Justice NV Ramana by offering a shawl and congratulated him on his appointment as the 48th Chief Justice of India. He also thanked the Chief Justice for sanctioning additional judges to the Telangana State and hoped that this would reduce the pendency of cases while ensuring delivery of justice at a faster pace. Describing Chief Justice Ramana as a truly inspirational personality, who began his journey from a small village and reached the top position of the Chief Justice of India, Shabbir said CJI Ramana has redefined the meaning of judicial activism for which he



would be remembered for decades. The Congress leader also recalled the landmark judgments delivered by CJI Venkata Ramana on various issues including bringing the office of the Chief Justice of India under the ambit of RTI, lifting internet curbs in Jammu & Kashmir and ordering fast track courts to deal with criminal cases against MLAs and MPs. He also lauded CJI Ramana for recommending social justice in the

appointment of judges. He said he told the CJI that despite being a first-generation lawyer with agricultural background, he has reached the top position and he would pray the Almighty to grant him and his family a healthy, prosperous and long life. Justice Ramana was a role model for all Telugu people. He further said he had a brief discussion on a few important issues with the Chief Justice during the meeting.

WB-type political scenario may replicate in TS: Narayana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CPI national secretary K Narayana has predicted that West Bengal political developments would likely repeat in Telangana and Eatela Rajender's political journey was moving from revolutionary rhetoric to moderate BJP.



In a statement on Monday, Narayana said that the BJP state leaders took Eatela and his team in a special flight to Delhi inducted him in BJP similar to the acts of disciples of 'Paramanandaiah'. The BJP government was wielding power over the states, while the state government was moving towards KCR-led autocracy. The democratic forces were facing trouble due to the suppression in Telangana. With the suppressive acts, the parties and leaders were failing to wage the movements effectively against the gov-

ernment, he opined. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was the leader who gave opposition place to the BJP in the state and it was leading to run the state politics similar to the West Bengal model of politics. As part of it, Eatela was joining the BJP and one has to wait and see how the consequences will turn up as danger in the state.

If that happened, then the conditions would prevail that the Left forces, secular parties and Congress would face a lot of troubles. By delaying, Congress, CPI and CPM failed to face the consequences that arose in West Bengal. West Bengal conditions would likely replicate in Telangana if the parties failed to think about the changing political situations. Narayana warned all political parties to get alert and unite to face the political challenges in Telangana.

Bhatti blames State, Centre for failure in combating Covid

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka has said that the state and central governments have no scientific approach to contain coronavirus and subsequently the people across the nation were facing trouble.

Participating in a webinar meeting on "Corona - what is going on? What needs to be done" on Monday, Bhatti said that the central government has ignored even AICC former president Rahul Gandhi's warning that how dangerous the corona second wave would be in the country. The Center



had failed to initiate steps to control Corona during the first wave in the beginning. On the other hand, it had organized events like "Namaste Trump" and Kumbh Mela ignoring the warnings of health experts and opposition

parties. It failed in providing an adequate quantity of oxygen, ventilators and other medical equipment to fight the pandemic.

IAS Sujatha Rao, journalists Kingshuk Nag, K Ramachandra Murthy, K Srinivas, Jahiruddin Ali, Pasham Yadagiri, Dr Sanjeev Singh Yadav, Anand Marikanti, Dr Vinay Kumar, Dr Sathyanarayana, Dr BN Rao, MLC T Jeevan Reddy, MLAs Podem Veeraiah, Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy, D Sridhar Babu, T Jagga Reddy and others participated in the webinar conference.

All set for opening of new Police Commissionerate

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

All is set for the inauguration of the new Police Commissionerate built on the outskirts of Rampalli on the Rajiv Rahadari in Kondapaka mandal of Siddipet district. State DGP M Mahender Reddy, who visited the new Commissionerate building complex on Monday, expressed satisfaction over the pace of work. Police Commissioner D Joel Davis detailed him about the building site and allocation of rooms on the ground floor and first and second floors.

The DGO inspected the Commissioner Chamber, Additional DCPs chambers, conference hall, grievance cell, CC camera control rooms, reception counter and other



wings. Speaking on the occasion, DGP Mahender Reddy directed the Telangana Police Housing Board Corporation Chief Engineer Vijay Kumar, EE Srinivas Rao, DE Rajaiah, AE Sudhakar and building contractor CH Gowrisankar to complete

the minor works including signboards, tables, furniture and command control room works in 2-3 days.

He said the Siddipet Police Commissionerate was built with the highly sophisticated technology with all facilities and con-



gratulated the Housing corporation engineers and contractor Gowrisankar. Later, the DGP visited the Ranganayaka Sagar Project, which was filled with full of its water capacity. IGP P&L Police Housing Board Corporation MD Sanjay Kumar

Jain, Hyderabad Region IGP M Stephen Ravinder, Nizamabad Range IGP N Sivasankar Reddy, Chief Engineer Vijay Kumar, EE Srinivasa Rao, DE Rajaiah, Additional DCP Admin Srinivasulu, AR DCP Babu Rao and others were present.

BJP, RSS have made Ram temple a 'medium of business': Rajbhar

PNS ■ BALLIA (UP)

Backing the demand for a central agency probe into the alleged corruption in the purchase of land for the proposed Ram temple in Ayodhya, SBSP chief Om Prakash Rajbhar on Monday said the BJP and the RSS have made the shrine a "medium of business".

He also asked Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath when action will be taken against the accused.

Rajbhar's remarks came a day after the Samajwadi Party (SP) and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) alleged that Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai bought 1.208 hectares of land in Ayodhya's Bag Bjaasi village worth Rs 2 crore at an inflated price of Rs 18.5 crore for the Ram temple with the help of trust member Anil Mishra.

Terming it a case of money laundering, SP leader Pawan Pandey and AAP leader Sanjay Singh sought a probe by the



Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) into the matter. Rai strongly refuted the allegations.

Speaking to reporters here in Rasra, Rajbhar said, "The temple is a symbol of faith for common people but the BJP and the RSS have made it a medium of business."

The Suheldev Bharatiya Samaj Party chief claimed the said piece of land was purchased for Rs 2 crore on March 18 for the construction of Ram temple and five minutes later,

it was bought by the Ram Mandir Trust for Rs 18.50 crore.

The SBSP leader also sought a probe by the CBI and the ED into the "scandal".

Targeting Modi and Adityanath, Rajbhar, a former BJP ally, said, "Both the leaders claim zero tolerance (for corruption). Modi ji and Yogi ji should make it clear as to when a case will be registered against the trustee of the Ram Mandir Trust and when the accused persons will be sent to jail."

Trust must clarify if money collected in name of faith misused: Raut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Amid charges of corruption in the land purchased by the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust in Ayodhya, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Monday demanded "clarification" from the Trust and other leaders, saying the construction of the temple is a matter of faith for the saffron party and the common people. Talking to reporters here, Raut said Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) MP Sanjay Singh spoke to him on the issue this morning and the "evidence provided by him is shocking". "Lord Ram and the fight for the Ram mandir is a matter of faith for us. For some, it is a political matter. The Trust formed for the construction of the temple should clarify if the allegations are true or false. The temple's 'bhoomipujan' ceremony was also attended by Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat. They should also speak out. Ram temple is a matter of

faith. People have made donations out of faith. Even Shiv Sena had contributed Rs one crore to the Trust," Raut said. If the money collected out of faith is misused then what is the use of having faith? he asked. "We need to know what is happening. We need to know whether the allegations are true or false," the Sena leader said. The allegation that the land worth Rs 2 crore was bought at an inflated price of Rs 18.5 crore by Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary Champat Rai for the Ram temple premises was made by AAP's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh and a former minister in the Samajwadi Party government, Pawan Pandey. The allegation was strongly refuted by Rai. Terming it a case of money laundering, Singh and Pandey had sought a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate.

LJP MPs join hands against Chirag Paswan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Five of the six Lok Janshakti Party MPs in the Lok Sabha have joined hands against their leader Chirag Paswan and elected Pashupati Kumar Paras in his place, causing a big churn in Bihar politics.

Paras on Monday lauded Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar as a good leader and "vikas purush" (development-oriented man), highlighting the deep fault lines within the party as his nephew Chirag Paswan has been a strong critic of the JD(U) president. "I have not broken the party but saved it," Paras, MP from Hajipur, said, asserting that 99 per cent of LJP workers were unhappy with the turn of events in Bihar as Paswan led his party against the JD(U) and fared poorly in the 2020 assembly polls. Paras said his group will continue to be part of the BJP-led NDA and said Paras can remain part of the organisation. The group of five MPs has conveyed their decision of electing Paras as the LJP leader in Lok Sabha to the Speaker.



Chirag Paswan has reaped what he had sown: JD(U)

PNS ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar's JD(U), which bore the brunt of Chirag Paswan's brinkmanship in the assembly polls last year, on Monday said the LJP president was reaping what he had sown. JD(U) national president RCP Singh reacted with a sense of vindication to the developments in the party founded by late Ram Vilas Paswan, whose son has been

left cornered in a revolt led by the former's younger brother Pashupati Kumar Paras and supported by four other MPs, including nephew Prince Raj. "It is a well known adage that as you sow, so you reap. Chirag Paswan was heading a party which was with the NDA. Yet, he adopted a stance that damaged it in the assembly polls. This led to a sense of unease within his own party," Singh told reporters here.

Misuse of donations is insult to faith: Priyanka Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid charges of corruption in the land purchased by the Ram Janmabhoomi Trust in Ayodhya, Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday said misuse of donations by devotees is a sin and an insult to their faith. "Crores of people made their offerings at the feet of God out

of their faith and devotion. Misuse of those donations is unrighteous and is a sin and an insult to their faith," she said in a tweet in Hindi.

The Congress on Sunday alleged that scams are happening by taking donations in the name of Lord Ram after two opposition leaders accused Shriram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust general secretary

Champat Rai of buying a piece of land at an inflated price for the Ram temple premises.

The allegation that the land worth Rs 2 crore was bought at an inflated price of Rs 18.5 crore was made by AAP's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Singh and a former minister in the Samajwadi Party government, Pawan Pandey. The allegation was strongly refuted by Rai.

Tagging a tweet on Rai refuting the allegation, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala had said on Sunday, "Lord Ram, what kind of days are these? Scams are happening by taking donations in your name. Shameless robbers are intoxicated with arrogance like Ravana and are selling faith." "The question is how the land bought for Rs 2 crore was

sold after 10 minutes to 'Ram Janmabhoomi' for Rs 18.50 crores?" he asked.

"Now it seems... Kans are ruling, Ravana is everywhere!" Surjewala had said in a tweet in Hindi. Terming it a case of money laundering, Singh and Pandey had sought a probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation and the Enforcement Directorate.

All centrally protected ASI monuments to reopen from June 16

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Taj Mahal and all other centrally protected monuments, museums and sites, closed for around two months due to the Covid pandemic, will be reopened on June 16, an Archaeological Survey of India order issued on Monday said.

These include 3,693 monuments and 50 museums across India.

An ASI official said visitors will be able to book entry tickets online.

However, no offline booking facility will be available, the official added.

According to the ASI order, the opening of the monuments will be in strict compliance with the executive orders, if any, issued by the state, district or the disaster management authority.

"Today @MinOfCulture GoI has given @ASIGoI approval to duly open all the monuments of India from 16 June 2021. Tourists can visit the monuments following the Corona rules. Good luck to all," tweeted Union Culture and Tourism minister Prahald Patel.

Appropriate guidelines and SOPs issued by Union and states governments, ministries and departments will be scrupulously followed while regulating the flow of visitors, the order said.

In an order on April 15, the ASI had shut these monuments till May 31.

INDIA CORNER

Chhattisgarh: Two trampled to death by elephant

A 59-year-old woman and a four-year-old girl were killed and injured in separate incidents of attacks by elephants in Chhattisgarh's Jashpur district on Monday, officials said. Prakash Ekka (55) and Dayamani Tirki were trampled to death by a pachyderm when they were visiting their fields located in the forest and collecting forest produce in Jamuna village under the Tapkara police station area, a forest official said.



Forest personnel have been trying to chase away the elephant from the spot to retrieve the bodies, he said. In another incident that occurred in the Kunkuri area near Janglekona village, a four-year-old girl was attacked by an elephant when she was collecting Mahua fruits with her parents. The girl was admitted at a hospital in Kunkuri, he added. "With the latest incident in Jashpur, a total of 19 people have been killed in separate incidents of elephants' attacks in the district over the last one year", the official said. On June 7, a woman was trampled to death by an elephant in Bagicha forest range.

Stepson kills all of family, then dies by suicide: Police

A married couple and their two sons were found dead at their home in Dhanbad town in Jharkhand on Monday morning, police said. Munna Yadav (45), his wife Meena Devi (35), and sons Rahul (20) and Rohit (14) were found dead at their rented accommodation in Gandhi Road in the Dhansar police station area, they said.



It is suspected that Rahul, who is Meena's son from her previous marriage, stabbed the others to death and then slit his throat with a sharp weapon, police said after the initial investigation. The neighbours first spotted the bodies after seeing blood coming out from the house. All the four were found lying in a pool of blood after police broke in as the door was locked from inside, an officer said. Two sharp weapons were recovered from the room, police said. Additional Superintendent of Police Manoj Swargyari said the incident appears to be the result of a family dispute. "The bodies were sent for post-mortem. An investigation is underway," he told reporters.

61 people arrested from Noida pool party for Covid norm violation

The Noida Police has arrested 61 people, including 15 women, for allegedly partying at a farmhouse here in violation of restrictions imposed to combat COVID-19, officials said on Monday. The arrests were made following a raid on the property in Sector 135, under the Expressway police station limits, on Sunday night, they said. "A pool party was being held at the Green Beauty farmhouse in the Yamuna floodplains area in Sector 135 in violation of the COVID-19 protocols. A total of 46 men and 15 women were arrested," a police spokesperson said. "All accused were bathing in the swimming pool in violation of the pandemic protocols. They were without face masks and some of them were even spitting at various places in the open premises of the farmhouse," the spokesperson said.



HC asks IMA chief not to use platform to propagate religion

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Monday refused to stay an order of a trial court directing IMA president J A Jayalal not to use the organisation's platform to propagate any religion and cautioning him that loose comments cannot be expected from a person chairing the responsible post.

Justice Asha Menon said the court will not pass any ex-parte order as nobody appeared on behalf of the person on whose complaint the trial court had passed the order on June 4.

The high court issued notice on the appeal filed by the Indian Medical Association (IMA) chief challenging the trial court's order and listed the matter for further hearing on June 16.

It said the high court will have to look into the order passed by the trial court and cannot take a superficial view. The trial court had passed the order on a plea filed

against Jayalal for allegedly starting a defamatory campaign against the Hindu religion "by way of promoting Christianity, in the garb of proving superiority of Allopathic medicines over Ayurveda in treatment of COVID-19 patients".

Complainant Rohit Jha had alleged before the trial court that Jayalal was misusing his position and misleading the nation and its citizens in order to convert Hindus to Christianity.

The trial court had said no injunction is required based on the assurance given by Jayalal that he will not indulge in such kind of activity and had noted that the plea seemed to be an offshoot of a verbal duel with respect to Allopathy vs Ayurveda.

Challenging the trial court's, advocate Tanmaya Mehta, representing Jayalal, claimed that the IMA chief never gave such an assurance to the trial court since he has not done anything wrong.



India natural ally of G7 in defending democracy : PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday said India is a natural ally for the G7 and its partners in defending democracy, freedom of thought and liberty from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism, violent extremism and economic coercion.

The prime minister made the remarks in a virtual address at an outreach session of a summit of the Group of Seven (G7) richest democracies which was held in the British seaside resort of Cornwall.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) said that Modi, as the lead speaker at the session titled 'open societies and economies', highlighted India's civilisational commitment to democracy, freedom of thought and liberty. "As the world's largest



democracy, India is a natural ally for the G7 and guest countries to defend these shared values from a host of threats stemming from authoritarianism, terrorism and violent extremism, disinformation and infodemics and economic coercion," he said.

The prime minister also highlighted the revolutionary impact of digital technologies on social inclusion and empowerment in India

through applications such as Aadhaar, Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) and JAM (Jan Dhan-Aadhaar-Mobile) trinity. While underscoring the vulnerabilities inherent in open societies, the prime minister called on tech companies and social media platforms to ensure a safe cyber environment for their users, additional secretary (economic relations) in the MEA P Harish said at a press conference.

'Vaccines help in keeping symptoms mild'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vaccines don't prevent coronavirus infections but will help in keeping the symptoms mild, Apollo Hospitals Joint MD Sangita Reddy said on Monday.

In a series of tweets, Reddy also said she was going home today after being hospitalised for coronavirus infection.

"After 500 days of dodging #COVID19 I tested +VE on June 10th My initial reaction was of shock & dismay - Why

me? I was careful & #vaccinated. Hospitalized with high fever I took the cocktail #Regeneron therapy within the early window period & it has made a dramatic difference," she said.

Highlighting the role of vaccines and timely diagnosis and treatment, she said, "The imp point 2 remember- vaccine dont prevent #COVID BUT help keep symptoms Mild. Timely diagnosis & treatment r key 2 quick recovery".



"As I go home 2day & continue #self isolation under Med sup via #telemedicine My

heartfelt gratitude 2 R #Nursing, Doc & #scientific com," she noted.

Delhi: 1 held for hoax call about bomb on plane

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A 22-year-old man onboard a Delhi-Patna flight was apprehended on Monday for allegedly making a hoax call to Delhi's Police Control Room saying that there was a bomb on the plane, officials said.

The man has been identified as Akash Deep. He is "mentally disturbed", the police said.

After boarding the flight with his father, Deep made the call to the PCR saying that there was a bomb on the plane, a senior police officer said.

BJP slams Kerala Minister for supporting Ayesha

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The BJP in Kerala on Monday came out against state Education Minister V Sivankutty for promising support to filmmaker Ayesha Sulthana, against whom the Lakshadweep police had recently slapped sedition charges over her alleged comment against the spread of COVID-19 in the archipelago. Senior BJP leader and former Mizoram Governor, Kumanam Rajasekharan termed the minister's act as "highly condemnable" and "unconstitutional".

He said legal measures had been initiated against the woman filmmaker for her remark that allegedly amounted to disrupting the communal



harmony and unity of the country. Sivankutty had told her over phone that she could save herself from Lakshadweep police if she met him and Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan, the BJP leader alleged. "It is unconstitutional for a minister, holding the constitutional position, to intervene in a case registered in another state," Rajasekharan said.

Accusing Sivankutty of being silent over the alleged corruption and violence in his home constituency Nedom, the BJP leader said the minister's motive behind supporting such persons was understandable.

Senior CPI(M) leader and education-labour minister Sivankutty last week had called Sulthana over phone to express his solidarity with her in her fight against alleged dictatorial and fascist policies of the Lakshadweep administrator.

In a statement issued later, the minister had said Sulthana was not alone in her fight and the entire democratic community of the country was with her.

Meanwhile, criticising the Lakshadweep police for slapping sedition charge against the

woman filmmaker, state Assembly Speaker M B Rajesh had said the apex court had already ruled that only acts that cause public violence or disorder fall within the ambit of 124-A. "International law and civilised society regard freedom of expression as paramount. At this time Ayesha Sulthana was charged with treason for making a remark against the Lakshadweep administrator during a television discussion," he said in a Facebook post.

Stating that it is high-time to redefine 'patriotism' and 'sedition', Rajesh said true patriots cannot accept that 124-A, an instrument of colonial oppression, is still being imposed on the people of a country, years after it had become independent.



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Caution ahead

Considering the third wave, would it be more prudent to slow down the lockdown lifting process?

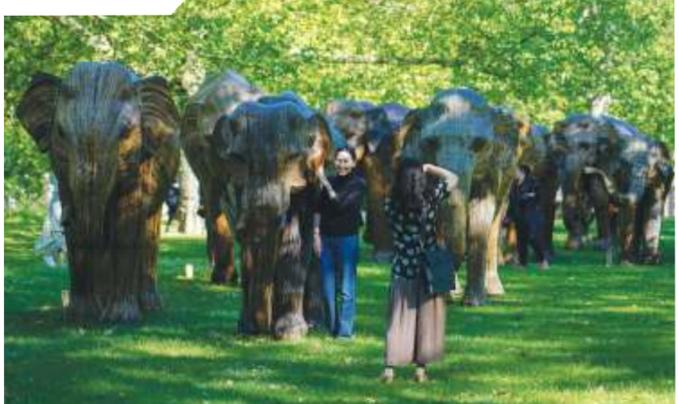
India is opening up gradually. The States have set their schedules and pace for lifting the lockdown. There is a general sigh of relief that the second wave of COVID-19 has nearly abated. Most States are bound to lift the lockdown completely by the third week of June. Call it a coincidence, but that is around the same time the UK Government originally proposed to remove all legal limits of social contact. However, it has since decided to delay the process by a few weeks in view of infections from the Delta variant of Coronavirus, the B.1.617.2 Variant of Concern (VoC) first identified in India, again rising in the country. The VoC designation — assigned by the WHO — means the variant may be more transmissible or cause severe disease, not succumb to medical treatment or evade immune response. The British Health Secretary has said that over 90 per cent of the new cases comprise this variant which is 40 per cent more transmissible. The United States says Delta has a “wild type” transmission and is beginning to get worried about its presence in the country. The Delta variant is also the one that kick-started the second wave in India, which was at its worst in April and May when life became an agony for millions of infected people. India entered May reporting nearly 400,000 cases, coupled with scarcity of medicine, oxygen and beds and even spaces in crematoria.



However, now that the wave has nearly dissipated, India is beginning to open up. Is it the right decision to have a goal of eventually lifting all restrictions when faced with four questionable situations? One is the re-think within the UK Government itself on lifting the lockdown because of the same Delta variant. Two, everybody in India, including scientists and doctors, have predicted a third wave three or four months from now. Three, the Delta variant the UK and US talk about originated in India and there is no evidence that it has died out. In fact, reports from the UK suggest that it has mutated into a more virulent version called AY.1 or Delta+. Four, while India followed the UK when it came to increasing the gap between vaccine jabs to three months, it is deciding not to when it comes to moving towards lifting the lockdown. Considering India's terrible experience with the second wave, would it not be prudent to slow down the lockdown lifting process? The States have the option of reducing the pace of opening up to ensure in the meantime that the vaccination process finally gets streamlined, that vaccine unavailability and hesitancy both stand resolved and that virologists and the National Task Force obtain proof that the vaccines are effective in reducing hospitalisation and deaths. Importantly, it needs to be ascertained that the current rate of infection does not suffer a spike after the easing of restrictions because of sudden, inevitable laxity in following COVID-19 protocols in public places.

decision to have a goal of eventually lifting all restrictions when faced with four questionable situations? One is the re-think within the UK Government itself on lifting the lockdown because of the same Delta variant. Two, everybody in India, including scientists and doctors, have predicted a third wave three or four months from now. Three, the Delta variant the UK and US talk about originated in India and there is no evidence that it has died out. In fact, reports from the UK suggest that it has mutated into a more virulent version called AY.1 or Delta+. Four, while India followed the UK when it came to increasing the gap between vaccine jabs to three months, it is deciding not to when it comes to moving towards lifting the lockdown. Considering India's terrible experience with the second wave, would it not be prudent to slow down the lockdown lifting process? The States have the option of reducing the pace of opening up to ensure in the meantime that the vaccination process finally gets streamlined, that vaccine unavailability and hesitancy both stand resolved and that virologists and the National Task Force obtain proof that the vaccines are effective in reducing hospitalisation and deaths. Importantly, it needs to be ascertained that the current rate of infection does not suffer a spike after the easing of restrictions because of sudden, inevitable laxity in following COVID-19 protocols in public places.

PICTALK



Life-size elephant sculptures at Green Park as part of the CoExistence Campaign, in London

The fall and rise of Oli as Nepal PM



RISHI GUPTA

Though he is likened to a ‘Prime Minister of no substance’, Oli is trying every trick in the book to remain in the saddle

A desperate Prime Minister KP Oli is leaving no stone unturned in consolidating his position. In doing so, he is making compromises that were once the exact opposite of his ultranationalistic outlook. After failing the confidence vote in Parliament on May 10, 2021, due to withdrawal of support by archrival Pushpa Kamal Dahal ‘Prachanda’-led Maoist party, Oli had to resign. However, benefitting from the nexus with President Bidya Devi Bhandari, Oli was once again appointed as the Prime Minister considering his Communist Party of Nepal (UML) was still the largest party in Parliament. While the Opposition had requested the President to allow them to form the Government, Bhandari was in a hurry to appoint Oli.



Oli, on the other hand, appointed senior leader Rajendra Mahto as the Deputy Prime Minister, who is leading a faction of JSP and extended support to Oli. Mahto's appointment comes as a surprise as he had opposed Oli's anti-Madhesh ideology and criticised him for stopping the first amendment of the Citizenship Act. As a proud Khas-Arya (high caste hill people), Oli had vehemently opposed any amendment to the Citizenship laws which prevented Nepali citizenship to the children of a Nepali mother married to a foreigner. After Mahto supported the Government, Oli had recommended Citizenship Ordinance on May 23, which was promulgated within minutes. The ordinance will allow the issuance of citizenship by descent to all those children born to Nepali mothers whose fathers' whereabouts are unknown before September 20, 2015.

The ordinance is seen as part of the horse-trading pact between Oli and Rajendra Mahto to appease the Madhesh. Oli's long-term critic CK Lal claims that accommodating Mahto must not have been easy for a “populist demagogue to ignore xenophobia, swallow his jingoistic pride and accept Rajendra Mahto as the Deputy Prime Minister”. Meanwhile, the legality of the ordinance remains in question as it

requires approval by Parliament within 60 days. Since Parliament has been dissolved on May 21, the apex court has stayed its implementation as it could lead to long-term implications. A five-member Constitutional Bench has also issued show-cause notices to the offices of the PM and President to clarify on House dissolution on May 21 and shuffling of the Cabinet.

Feuds Within: To suppress the rising opposition within the UML, Oli has appointed party leader Raghuraj Mahaseth as the Deputy Prime Minister. Mahaseth is also appointed as the Minister of Foreign Affairs despite having no experience in the field. Another UML heavyweight, Bishnu Poudel, has been appointed Deputy Prime Minister and continues as the Minister of Finance. At the same time, Oli has removed Deputy Prime Minister Ishwar Pokhrel and a total of 13 Ministers, including Health Minister Hridayesh Tripathi and Foreign Minister Pradeep Gyawali, who carried out ill-intended foreign policy decisions towards New Delhi during the border row. In the past, Oli had suspended party leaders for speaking against him. However, in the present circumstances, more suspensions

may lead to a credible opposition to Oli within the UML.

Misunderstanding resolved: Within a year of issuing a controversial map of Nepal showing India's territory as its own in the Kalapani region, accusing India for COVID-19 spread in Nepal, claiming that lord Ram was born in Nepal's Birgunj. In an interview to the BBC, Oli said: “Yes, there were misunderstandings at one time, but now those misunderstandings are gone. We should not be stuck in past misunderstandings but move forward looking at the future.” He also requested India to supply COVID-19 vaccines as a good neighbour. Although Oli did not clarify on what he meant by “misunderstanding”. With such remarks, Oli is again trying to reach out to New Delhi with his Madhesh card.

At present, almost 50 per cent of the Oli Cabinet consists of Madhesh and Madheshi people. Knowing that the Khas-Arya may come after Oli for compromising with the Madhesh, Oli has no alternative to keep the premiership safe until new elections in November.

While Oli's rapprochement towards India is short-term and politically motivated, in the hindsight it showcases the strong cultural and people-to-people links between Nepal and India. It is also a strong answer to China's deep-pocketed diplomacy in Nepal. For decades, China has been trying to create artificial people-to-people ties with Nepal. However, Beijing often forgets that it was Tibet with whom Nepal had cultural ties and Tibet's forced annexation in 1950 did not transfer cultural claims to China. Therefore, Beijing needs to learn that political relations with Nepal are a result of a short-term compromise in Kathmandu. India has always supported the democratic aspirations of the people of Nepal and stands alone as the top development partner. China's expansionist outlook will sustain neither in Nepal nor in South Asia. Nevertheless, it will be difficult for India to fully trust Oli.

(The author is an ICSSR Doctoral Fellow at the JNU and Visiting Fellow at the Asian Institute of Diplomacy and International Affairs, Kathmandu. The views expressed are personal.)



AT PRESENT, ALMOST 50 PER CENT OF THE OLI CABINET CONSISTS OF MADHESI LEADERS, WHICH IS A COMPLETE U-TURN FROM HIS LONGSTANDING PREJUDICE AGAINST THE IDEA OF MADHESH AND MADHESI PEOPLE

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SLOW SPEED OF VACCINATION A WORRY

Sir — The speed of vaccination in India is very slow. Seeing the large number of population, it becomes hard to run universal inoculation drive for the vast diversity of Indian nationals. The Government's data reveals that only 3.5 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated so far. The inoculation drive has enrolled more persons than who reach the centres for taking the jab. Many are technologically challenged and thus they cannot register themselves for registration at the CoWin app.

Can anyone imagine how fast the slots get booked in the evening for the following day's jab registration? People are struggling to get at least one dose of either of the vaccines. The elderly and the poor are the most vulnerable. It is good to hear that scientists predict that the third wave of COVID-19 in India is likely to be less severe than compared to the second wave. Thankfully, we can use this as an opportunity for improving the data and ensuring more and more people to get vaccinated. We have successfully suppressed the second wave, and the third wave is expected to peak soon. The gap period is not to waste but to plan the duration's usage to the maximum so that more and more people can benefit with the vaccination at the end of the day.

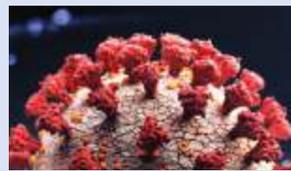
Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

ZOOONOTIC DISEASES AND PREVENTION

Sir — As the human cases of COVID-19 show a declining trend in India, zoonotic diseases are on the rise with several incidents of animals falling prey to it. Recently, nine Asiatic lions in the Chennai Vandalur Zoo got infected and one of them succumbed; besides, many elephants, tigers and leopards have died in Tamil Nadu and in other States.

Since India has a huge population, there are greater chances of transmission from animals to humans. According to a paper published in the Indian Journal of Community Medicine in March 2020, of the 1407 human pathogens detected, 816 were found to be zoonotic, which means these were capable of being transmitted naturally between animals and humans, which

The origin of Coronavirus



It has been 18 months since the outbreak of COVID-19. But the truth about the origin of the SARS-CoV-2 virus, the causative agent of the disease, still eludes the world. Even though how to end the pandemic has now become more important than knowing how it began, the interest in knowing the origin of the Novel Coronavirus has not waned. The accusation against China of a massive cover-up and the call for new investigation into the origin of the virus made by G7 leaders, including US President Joe Biden, have fuelled the debate over whether the virus occurred naturally or it was bioengineered in a lab in Wuhan. Some scientific leads support the theory that the virus may have jumped from ani-

mals to humans, probably in a wet market in Wuhan that sold seafood and exotic animals for human consumption. There is also the theory that someone in the Wuhan lab boasting a large collection of bats for culture of virus may have been accidentally infected with the Novel Coronavirus.

There is a general consensus among scientists that COVID-19 is a zoonotic disease. The WHO still sticks to its stated position that the escape or leak of the virus from the Wuhan Institute of Virology was “highly unlikely”. It may be pointed out here that genetically designing and creating a virus in a lab and unleashing it as a bio-weapon on the world is a futuristic idea to discredit China with conspiracy theories, no matter what one's perception of that country is.

The issue has been politicised so much that to counter the US' lab incident hypothesis, Beijing has said that the US military hatched the virus and released it in China. We can all agree that science, scientific inquiries and investigations and scientific findings should prevail over geopolitics and geopolitical considerations.

G David Milton | Kanyakumari

points to the increase in zoonotic diseases globally. These zoonotic infections' surge like H1N1, SARS, Ebola, Nipah, Zika can be attributed to the human-animal conflict through wildlife trade and increasing practice of injecting the livestock with antibiotics and steroids to enhance their production, narrowing the scope of natural livestock breeding.

The animal to human transmission of diseases is a threat to both the economy and the human species. A comprehensive strategy with a renewed focus on genome sequencing and carrying out testing, besides tracking on a large scale the animals, will be of immense benefit to humanity to tackle the crisis.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

GOVT HAS HONOURED PEOPLE'S RIGHTS
Sir — This refers to ‘Opening Up’ (June 14). The historic decision by the Government to declassify the history of the wars and oper-

ations of national importance, so as to provide a transparent viewpoint to the citizens, is welcoming. After all, people have full right to know this declassified, compiled and published history of these historic moments.

Until the new policy for declassification came into picture, the war history remains a secret for everyone. But with the new policy's introduction, one can expect more clarity over war secrets and tactical approach adopted by the armed forces during the tough times of war and secret operations. The new policy brings more clarity over certain issues of wartime. The section of history lovers would now get excited to decode more information, as well as the facts that are still unknown to them about historic events of the previous wars and operations.

Dimple | Kanpur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

As you complete your successful tenure as the Prime Minister of the State of Israel, I convey my profound gratitude for your leadership.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

The PML-N are the ones who mishandled the Kulbhushan Jadhav case. We are implementing the recommendations of the ICJ.

Pakistan Foreign Minister — Shah Mahmood Qureshi

Took my first dose of vaccine... It's the need of the hour in our fight against #corona.



Actor — Kirti Kulhari

I could have easily cried, but I see no reason for me crying because I tried everything. I could not come up with anything better.

Greece tennis player — Stefanos Tsitsipas

Chirag Paswan has committed so many blunders. Now, its results are coming in the form of a split in the party.



JD(U) national president — RCP Singh

The G7 world

How equipped is the grouping to tackle the changing world realities and the new challenges?

The three-day parleys at the G7 Summit in Carbis Bay ended at a positive note even as the world grapples with the Corona pandemic which has far-reaching economic consequences. COVID-19 indeed figured prominently at the G7 meet but the fervour was perhaps missing. The G7 looked desperate to show how united they were. The G7 is an informal grouping of strong economic powers. It unveiled the US-led plans to counter China in infrastructure funding for poorer nations. It also came up with an accord to prevent future pandemics. The G7 leaders said they would offer a “values-driven, high-standard and transparent” partnership. Their “Build Back Better World” (B3W) project is aimed to counter China's trillion-dollar Belt and Road Initiative. The world realities are changing fast and throwing up new challenges to this elite club which is mostly European and American grouping, after the departure of Russia. The membership of Russia was suspended in 2014 after it annexed Ukraine's Crimea region. Due to internal divisions, the relevance of G7 is under the scanner.



Moreover, the share of the G7 nations' GDP is constantly falling. The aggregate GDP of the G7 members has slid to 45 per cent of the global economy from nearly 70 per cent three decades ago. This naturally reduces its hold on the world economy as well as politics.

Besides, China has emerged as a big challenger, if not a threat, to the supremacy of the G7. G20 is more potent than the G7 today. For its shrinking clout, the G7 is itself to blame. G7 meets annually to discuss issues of global economic governance, international security and energy policy. Its follow-up on its declarations has been rather lacklustre. Its membership often completely ignores the emerging trends. For instance, it did not take China's emerging power into consideration and is oblivious to India. It has deep-rooted differences over trade and climate policies. President Joe Biden has pledged to restore the US' historical commitment to multilateralism. But G7 did not show unity or firmness in Russia's role in Syria, and Russian interference in the US and European elections. In 2017, divisions emerged within the G7 over a proposal to impose fresh sanctions on Russia. If G7 is to survive as a dominant force, it will have to renew its commitment to democracy and building a world order based on equitable and just world order.



FIRST COLUMN

WHEN VILLAGERS TURN TO QUACKS

Not to glorify them, but a handful of quacks in Bihar's countryside are helping out the villagers

AMRITANJ INDIWAR

Last week World Health Organization reported a 13 per cent decrease in new COVID-19 cases in India. However, the number of new infections in the country remains the highest in the world. Rural areas with no proper health infrastructure are bearing the brunt, forcing the villagers to turn to quacks for treatment. Lack of information about government hospitals, PHCs, medicine and vaccinations has affected regulation of the virus in rural areas. Worse, there are hardly a few or no doctors in government hospitals. Thus, quacks have ironically assumed a larger role in several villages across States. The situation in Bihar's Muzaffarpur district is no better. It had the highest number of reported cases in the country. Nearly 208 Covid-19 deaths were reported in 50 days since April 1. Around 315 people were cremated at one crematorium alone in this period. The rural areas of Sikanderpur, Mothijheel, Town Thana, Khabda, Ramdayalu, Patahi, Bhagwanpur, Bhikhanpura and Mushahariblocks were most affected. Ragini, a resident of Alkapuri colony in Muzaffarpur, said: "Those who test positive are isolated in rooms. However, because the virus is highly stigmatized, the infected person is not treated well by the public." Ankush Singh, resident of Manika village in Mushahariblock, said that even after he recovered from the virus, no one was concerned about his well-being. He also complained about unprofessional behaviour and indifference of the block hospital doctor. Chemists and quacks showed better concern than the doctors, he said in a bitter voice.



In the Paru block, dispensary employees and quacks were treating people. Accepting that quacks were the first line of defence against COVID-19, District Councillor Devesh Chandra said they were a lifeline for more than 50,000 people in the block. These quacks have no medical degrees, but practice medicine based on their practical experience. Quacks Balam Shah, Umesh Prasad, Ganesh Pandit, Asharfi Bhagat, Parmeshwar Prasad, and others in Paru Block had decided to come forward and assist the villagers. "Whatever medical experience we have gained over the years, the villagers are benefiting from it. The situation was such that people were scared and unwilling to get vaccinated and, therefore, we decided not to leave them under such circumstances. We are likely to get infected in the process, but helping people is the need of the hour," said these quacks. The Block Medical Officer, on the other hand, stated that trained healthcare workers are going to villages for inspection, vaccination, and medicine on a regular basis. The situation in Bihar's Vaishali district is similar. Basant Kumar, a homeopathic practitioner said: "I went to the block health centre to get the rapid antigen test done. The centre was crowded with no guidelines being followed. Although I had registered myself, due to the huge crowd I had to return without getting tested. Two days later, I received a message on my mobile number informing that I had tested negative. I was shocked to receive that message." Others got such reports too and people are hesitant to visit government hospitals and are relying on quacks. The purpose of this article is not to glorify quacks, but it is equally important to note that if properly trained in pandemic protocols, these quacks can play a critical role in reaching out to villagers. They already share a relationship with them and can create awareness about preventive measures and vaccination in these hard-to-reach areas. The West Bengal government has already ordered training and tagging quacks with health workers to help survey rural areas and identify patients so that the treatment can start early. If successful, other states should also follow suit.

(The author represents Charkha — The Development Communication Network. The views expressed are personal)

Some answers nation wants to know

The Government wants us to believe that while it took about three months to administer 1.91 crore vaccine doses, it will administer 20 times higher doses in less than half the time



VEERAIIAH KONDURI

After much persuasion and the Supreme Court along with more than 10 High Courts taking the Central government to the task, Prime Minister Narendra Modi allowed the nation a peep into his idea on the question of vaccination. This latest address left me perplexed with several unaddressed questions. Let me list out some of them.

The address began with Prime Minister confessing the fact that the country is still coming to terms with COVID-19 second wave. But to our surprise, Home Minister Amith Shah told the media few days ago, "India managed to control the second wave of COVID-19 in a very short time" and attributed this success to the visionary (?) leadership of Modi. This double-speak once again confirms that even after such castigation, the Central government made its best attempt to live in its make-believe world. The Prime Minister continued with untruths for the next few minutes with regard to augmenting medical infrastructure facilities for the anti-virus fight-back. The Supreme Court had castigated the Centre on this very issue. The funniest part of the speech is his stress on the observance of COVID-19 protocols.

The Prime Minister also referred to Mission Indradhanush, the immunization program for children below six years and lactating mothers to bolster his government's capacities of mass immunisation campaigns. According to the 2011 census, population falling under the age group of 0-6 years stands at 13.59 per cent (16.45 crore). Even after launching Mission Indradhanush, according to the Prime Minister, it took five years to vaccinate additional 40 per cent of child population, that is, roughly seven crore. If the government took five to six years to inoculate the additional numbers, we can imagine the time required to inoculate the total adult population in the first place.

The Prime Minister claimed that India developed two Made-in-India vaccines within a span of one year which is not true and does not require any proof. India rolled out the vaccination drive on January 16, 2021. Surprisingly, the Finance Minister in her 2021-22 budget speech, which was presented barely a fortnight later, told the nation that India exported vaccine to about 100 countries. If we were to believe what Prime Minister told the nation, it is a deemed fact that the finance minister committed a breach of trust and violated parliamentary protocols by presenting untruths on the floor of the House for which, in normal times, she would have been served a privilege notice.

The Prime Minister himself launched the first phase vaccination drive on January 16, 2021 for three crore frontline health workers. As on April 19, only 37 per cent got full vaccination and an additional 91 lakh their first dose. In his address to the nation, Modi once again said that by the time he speaks to his fellow countrymen again, about 23 crore of doses have already been administered. The government wants us to believe that while it took about three months to administer 1.91 crore vaccine doses, it will administer 20 times higher doses in less than half the time? That means the government administered dosage at the rate of 46 lakh doses per day!

Doubts arose over the Prime Minister's assertions about funding research and development of vaccine by the Central government. The things are not matching between what the Prime



IF THE CENTRE PLAYS SMART AND SUCCEEDS IN TRANSFERRING THE COST OF VACCINATION OVERTLY OR COVERTLY ON TO THE STATE GOVERNMENTS, THERE WILL BE A HOLE IN STATES' RESOURCES TO THE TUNE OF A MINIMUM OF ₹55,000 CRORE. THUS, THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT'S VACCINATION POLICY IS LEAVING THE NATION WITH TWO SETS OF OPTIONS, EITHER TO CUT DOWN OTHER SOCIAL EXPENDITURE AND DIVERT MONEY FOR VACCINATION OR WATCH THE INCREASE IN NUMBER OF DEATHS DUE TO COVID-19

The author is former CWC member, All India Agricultural Workers Union. The views expressed are personal.



Minister said and what was submitted by the government's law officers to the Supreme Court. The affidavits filed by the government in response to its May 2 order said that no governmental aid, assistance or grant was given for research and development of COVID vaccine. The affidavit also states that the Indian Council of Medical Research spent about ₹ 44 crore for clinical trials and government paid about ₹2520 crore by way advance to purchase vaccine on May 10, 2021. Discarding government's own affidavits the Prime Minister told the nation that they funded thousands of crores for development of vaccine. We do hope that in the next submissions, the trusted Attorney General will correct his statements and let the country know about the thousands of crores the Prime Minister spent for development of vaccine program.

The Prime Minister in an attempt to defend the un-defensible, said his government's new path for the future was criticised by several forces including some state governments. This is totally baseless and an out of context contention.

Not only economic and health experts in India but those across the globe also criticised the Central government's unitary decisions

during first phase of COVID-19 spread. As we all know, the lockdown was declared in hours without even visualising what would be the impact on lives and livelihoods. The lockdown was extended for months leaving the state governments without any option but to implement the same grudgingly.

Towards the end of this speech, Modi made it clear that the state governments need not spend a single pie to vaccinate the population. But the question that slipped through his master oratory skills is about the allocation for health in the 2021-22 budget. According to the ministry of finance, the amount required for fully vaccinating the country would be to the tune of ₹91,000 crore whereas the total budget earmarked for Ministry of Health and Family Welfare for the year 2021-22 is ₹71,268.77 crore only. The secretary, Department of Expenditure in his post-budget press conference stated that "the budget allocation is just part of what will be spent as state governments and corporates will also allocate sums for vaccination drive". However, only ₹35,000 crores are announced and that too failed to get a listing in expenditure under Ministry of Health and Family Welfare. Covering up this fact, the finance minister said that the amount earmarked towards

transfers to state governments will be counted as part of the ₹35000-crore vaccine funding. The expenditure department assesses that the allocations are enough to vaccinate 50 crore of the population.

This presents us with few dangerous possibilities. If the Central government mobilises ₹35,000 crore from its own resources, and wishes to honour the Prime Minister's assurance to the world, it will fall short by ₹56,000 crore. As the finance minister stated, if this ₹35,000 crore too is to be chipped in by diverting funds from amounts earmarked under Transfers to States, in addition to what is budgeted orally by Finance Minister, even then there will be short fall of nearly ₹20,000 crore, assuming that the cost estimated by secretary, Department of Expenditure is not breached. Or if the Central government plays smart and succeeds in transferring the cost of vaccination overtly or covertly on to the state governments, then there will be a hole in states' resources to the tune of a minimum of ₹55,000 crore. Thus, the Central government's vaccination policy is leaving the nation with two sets of options, either to cut down other social expenditure and divert money for vaccination or watch the increase in number of deaths due to COVID-19.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

MUKUL (ROY) IS OUR OLD MEMBER. HE WAS NOT IN A GOOD CONDITION IN THE BJP BECAUSE THEY CREATED PRESSURE ON HIM THROUGH AGENCIES.

—TRINAMOOL CHIEF MAMATA BANERJEE



HE BEHAVED LIKE MIR JAFAR, BUT I AM NOT AT ALL SURPRISED. HE IS A BETRAYER. HE HAS NOT MADE ANY CONTRIBUTION TO THE PARTY.

—BARRACKPORE BJP MP ARJUN SINGH

Stop bank sales, empower the middle class instead

If nationalised banks are sold instead of taking corrective steps, it would mean social assets would decline leading to further economic chaos

The middle class, the backbone of the economy, is shrinking and the government announces sale of two major public sector banks, Central Bank of India (CBI) and Indian Overseas Bank (IOB). Should India privatise critical assets when it needs the finances most? The sales instead would be used for one-time financing of budgetary deficits.

Both the banks like many other public sector banks (PSB) have shown improvement in their balance sheets. On June 8, shares of CBI and IOB soared seven and 14 percent, respectively after Niti Aayog announced their privatisation. Both lenders are currently under the prompt corrective action (PCA) imposed by the Reserve Bank of India and have shown marked



SHIVAJI SARKAR

The author is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.

improvements. This shows that the market is ready to lap up assets worth ₹9.7 lakh crore - CBI ₹3.56 lakh crore and IOB ₹2.44 lakh crore. Another asset of United Insurance is ₹3.7 lakh crore - a good sum for a race to a multi-trillion dollar economy.

The bank health is mysteriously linked to the growth of the middle class. Since 1969 nationalisation of banks for development purposes has helped both banks and depositors, largely from the middle class. But as the middle class got a jolt after the 2008 Lehman Brothers meltdown, it started taking the hit.

Moreover, a low-interest, high prices and high-tax-on-deposit regime marginally buffed up revenue figures, but caused impoverishment of the middle class. They are paying income

tax on a skewed higher income as interest and was not considered as hedging against inflation but unwisely as 'income'. This erodes savings.

Pew research, looking into the pandemic lockdown, says 33 million people in the last one year have slid into poverty from the supposed 99-million strong middle class. Poverty rate rose by 9.7 percent in 2020, up from January, 2020 forecast of 4.3 percent and are projected to have reached 134 million. If the food dole is a standard the pandemic has hit 80 crore people. Lower incomes and lesser consumption capacity define this class now. If instead of corrective steps nationalised banks are sold, it would mean social assets would decline. It is often said that PSBs are unable to cope up with pri-



private banks. This is a misnomer. India's private banks Axis, ICICI, HDFC and others have a record

of being eroded by their own bosses. Axis has asset quality problems, ICICI was moth-eaten by its chief executive Chanda Kochhar and HDFC was fined ₹10 crore for wrongfully selling third-party non-financial products to its auto loan customers. By privatizing big financial institutions would they be forced to go the unethical, chaotic way?

The CBI has 33,481 employees in 4,685 branches and IOB 26,334 in 3,400 branches. Once privatized, one-third or more employees would lose jobs.

Despite the PCA curbs, both lenders have managed to grow their loan books. Central Bank's gross advances rose nearly three percent between March 31, 2020 and March 31, 2021 to ₹1.77 lakh crore. IOB's advances stood at ₹1.37 lakh crore as on

December 31, 2020, up two percent year-on-year. Central Bank's deposits grew over five percent in a year to ₹3.3 lakh crore as on March 31, 2021 and IOB's deposits also increased to ₹2.34 lakh crore as on December 31, 2020.

Since nationalisation, the Indian banking sector expanded at an unmatched level but it made banks prone to political interference for many purposes including the 2008 incentivisation of the rich corporate or Jan Dhan accounts that raised operational costs. Largely the financial woes of the PSBs are not due to corruption and nepotism alone.

Many loans of banks like Bank of India, Punjab National Bank, Bank of Baroda, Axis bank and IDBI Bank were writ-

ten off to shore up balance sheets. The quantum of PSB loan stood at ₹32,853 crore higher than recoveries of ₹23,894 crore. Such figures are gradually coming down.

This also does not justify the process of privatization. Even the United Insurance is preferred to most private insurers as its claim settlement process is more realistic and ethical.

It is not easy to create ₹10 billion assets. It might now go to a defaulter? Retaining the asset would help government boost economic activities and jobs. An empowered middle class with lower taxes and TDS exemptions on deposits can do wonders. Mere change in approach could strengthen the economy and open up many avenues for the government.

Sensex, Nifty scale fresh peaks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex rose 77 points to close at its all-time high on Monday, tracking gains in index majors Reliance, Infosys and TCS amid positive cues from global markets.

The 30-share BSE index ended 76.77 points or 0.15 per cent higher at 52,551.53.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 12.50 points or 0.08 per cent to its fresh record of 15,811.85.

Reliance Industries was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 1.5 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, ONGC, Infosys, PowerGrid, L&T and IndusInd Bank.

On the other hand, Kotak Bank, NTPC, HDFC, Sun Pharma, Bajaj Auto and Maruti were among the lag-

gards.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Tokyo and Seoul ended on a positive note. Markets in China and Hong Kong were closed on account of a local holiday.

Equities in Europe were trading with gains in mid-session deals.

International oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.94 per cent higher at USD 73.37 per barrel.

Meanwhile, the rupee declined 22 paise to close at 73.29 against the US dollar.

India recorded a single-day rise of 70,421 new COVID-19 cases, the lowest in 74 days, taking the country's infection tally to 2,95,10,410, while the count of active cases fell below 10 lakhs after over two months, according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Monday.



New Income Tax e-filing portal continues to face tech glitches

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A week after the Income Tax Department's much publicised new e-filing portal went live, users continued to face technical glitches ranging from longer than usual logging time, inability to respond to notices and not all features functioning yet, chartered accountants said on Monday.

The new portal, "http://www.incometax.gov.in/www.incometax.gov.in", was launched last Monday (June 7), which the tax department said as well as the government said was aimed at making compliance more taxpayer-friendly.

But users complained of technical issues facing the site from the very first day and not everything has been fixed even after a week, chartered accountants (CAs) said, adding that taxpayers are unable to view past e-filed returns and many features/ facilities continue to be marked 'coming soon'.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman herself had asked Infosys - the vendor which cre-



ated the portal - and its Chairman Nandan Nilekani to fix the technical glitches.

A day after the launch of the Income Tax Department's new tax filing portal, social media users had flagged glitches in the new e-filing portal to the finance minister.

Following that, Sitharaman took to Twitter and asked Infosys and its chairman to fix the problem.

Replying to the tweet, Nilekani had said Infosys is working to fix the glitches.

Infosys was in 2019 awarded a contract to develop the next-generation income tax filing system to reduce processing time for returns from 63 days to one day and expedite

refunds.

Nangia & Co LLP Partner Shailesh Kumar said starting from the struggle to login to the portal to important features such 'e-proceedings' tabs being unavailable with a message displayed 'coming soon' is creating anxiousness among the taxpayers and tax professionals with respect to orders being passed and non-compliance of notices without getting a sufficient opportunity to present a case.

"The taxpayers could face penalty consequences for reasons beyond their control. Also, taxpayers are facing a major challenge for remitting funds abroad as they are unable to issue Form 15CA/ CB.

SHRIRAM Commercial Vehicle Finance

Shriram Transport raises nearly Rs 2,000 cr via QIP

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Non-banking finance company Shriram Transport Finance (STFC) on Monday said it has raised Rs 1,998.98 crore through its qualified institutional placement (QIP) issue.

The issue, which was launched on June 7, 2021, received 6.3 times oversubscription, a company release said. Several foreign institutional investors (FIIs) and domestic institutional investors (DIIs) participated in the QIP issue.

It was priced at Rs 1,430 per share, representing a discount of 0.23 per cent to the SEBI floor price of Rs 1,433.32.

The company said its board also approved on June 7, 2021 a preferential issue of Rs 500

crore, equally split between equity shares and convertible warrants to the promoter, Shriram Capital Limited, at the issue price of Rs 1,440 per security.

"The QIP proceeds will augment the company's long-term resources for funding requirements of business activities, financing future growth opportunities and general corporate purposes," the company's Vice Chairman and Managing Director Umesh Revankar said in the release.

The book running lead managers (BRLMs) to the QIP included Axis Capital Ltd, Citigroup Global Markets India Ltd and HSBC Securities and Capital Markets (India) Private Ltd.

'Higher incentives on EVs to reduce price gap with CVs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The enhanced demand incentives for electric two-wheelers under the FAME-II scheme by the government will significantly reduce the upfront price gap with the internal combustion engine (ICE)-based counterparts and thus drive up demand, according to ratings agency ICRA.

In the latest modifications to the Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles in India scheme (FAME II), the government has increased demand incentive for electric two-wheelers (e2W) by 50 per cent to Rs 15,000 per kWh, from 10,000 per kWh earlier.

The maximum cap on incentive for e2Ws was also increased to 40 per cent of vehicle cost from 20 per cent earlier, as per the modifications.

"A 50 per cent increase in



demand incentive (in the form of higher subsidy) will significantly reduce the upfront price gap between an e2W and internal combustion engine (ICE)-based 2Ws and thereby increase the demand for e2Ws," ICRA said in a statement.

ICRA Vice-President and Group Head Shamsher Dewan said, "As per ICRA's estimates, the initial cost of ownership for high-speed e2Ws will incrementally reduce by a minimum 10-12 per cent, (when

comparing currently available popular models) and result in a lower payback period." Prior to this, he said, "The payback period was estimated to be four years (in terms of total cost of ownership), which now stands reduced to three years," ICRA, which recently estimated that e2Ws are likely to achieve 8-10 per cent penetration in terms of new vehicle registrations by 2024-25, further said, "The recent changes will help in achieving those targets."

Zydus Cadila gets USFDA tentative nod for Brivaracetam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Zydus Cadila on Monday said it has received tentative approval from the US health regulator to market epilepsy treatment drug Brivaracetam tablets.

Zydus Cadila has received tentative approval from the USFDA to market Brivaracetam tablets, in the strengths of 10 mg, 25 mg, 50 mg, 75 mg, and 100 mg, Cadila Healthcare said in a regulatory filing. Zydus Cadila is a part of the Cadila group. Brivaracetam is used to treat partial-onset seizures.

Zydus Cadila said the drug will be manufactured at the group's formulation manufacturing facility at Ahmedabad.

MONEY MATTERS

Tata Motors to raise up to Rs 500 cr via securities

Tata Motors on Monday said its board has approved a proposal to raise up to Rs 500 crore through the issue of securities on a private placement basis. A meeting of the duly authorised committee has approved subscription, on a private placement basis, up to 5,000 rated, listed, unsecured, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of face value Rs 10 lakh each, aggregating up to Rs 500 crore, the auto major said in a regulatory filing.

The Mumbai-based company, however, did not share details as to how it plans to use the capital. Shares of the company were trading 1.03 per cent down at Rs 347.15 apiece on the BSE. Tata Motors, a USD 35 billion organisation, is a leading global automobile manufacturer of cars, utility vehicles, pick-ups, trucks and buses. Part of the USD 113 billion Tata group, the company is India's largest automaker with operations in India, the UK, South Korea, Thailand, South Africa, and Indonesia through a strong global network of 103 subsidiaries, 10 associate companies, 3 joint ventures and 2 joint operations as on March 31, 2020.



Sebi tweaks delisting rules to make process efficient

To enhance transparency and efficiency of the delisting process, Sebi has said independent directors will have to give reasoned recommendation on such proposal, while the promoters need to disclose their intention to delist the firm through an initial public announcement.

To give effect to this, the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has amended delisting rules, according to a notification dated June 10. This comes after the board of Sebi approved several amendments to delisting norms in March to make the process more transparent and efficient. Under the new rules, timelines for completion of various activities forming part of the delisting process have been introduced or revised to make it more efficient. Sebi said the committee of independent directors will be required to provide their reasoned recommendations on the delisting proposal. Promoter or acquirer will be required to disclose their intention to delist the company by making an initial public announcement.



Amara Raja to invest in lithium-ion batteries, expand current biz verticals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amara Raja Batteries on Monday said it has decided to invest in green technologies, including in lithium-ion batteries, to capitalise on fast-evolving trends in the energy and mobility sectors.

The company's board has decided to expand its lead-acid batteries business and set up a new 'Energy SBU' encompassing lithium cell and battery pack, EV chargers, energy storage systems, advanced home energy solutions and related products and services, the company said in a statement.

The vital role played by lead-acid technology across a variety of applications provide significant growth opportunities in both domestic and international markets, it added.

On the other hand, the emergence of lithium as an alternative energy storage tech-



nology opens up new and exciting growth opportunities, the company noted.

"After a careful review of the global business opportunities, the company board has decided to future-proof our business by repositioning the firm as an energy and mobility player. The board believes that the company has to invest in a portfolio of businesses to maintain its technological and business leadership," Amara Raja Batteries Vice Chairman Jayadev Galla said.

Meanwhile, the company said that its Founder Chairman Ramachandra Galla, who steered the company for 36

years, has expressed his decision not to seek reappointment.

He will continue as Director and Chairman till the conclusion of the Annual General Meeting (AGM) in August and thereafter Vice Chairman Jayadev Galla would assume the role of Chairman, the company said.

The company's board has also appointed S Vijayanand as President - New Energy (business vertical).

Amara Raja is one of the largest manufacturers of lead acid batteries for both industrial and automotive applications in the country. It produces automotive batteries under the brands Amaron and Powerzone and supplies to various original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) like Ashok Leyland, Ford India, Honda, Hyundai, Mahindra & Mahindra, Maruti Suzuki, and Tata Motors.

Rupee falls for 5th straight session, settles 22 paise down

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee declined by 22 paise to end at 73.29 (provisional) against the US currency on Monday, marking its fifth straight session of fall as rising crude oil prices weighed on investor sentiment.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened on a negative note at 73.21 per dollar as against its previous close of 73.07.

"The Indian rupee started the week on the back foot following a stronger dollar and higher crude oil prices. The greenback earmarked the short covering and the expiry of large positions ahead of this week's FOMC meeting," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

BHEL shares tumble after quarterly earnings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of engineering firm BHEL tumbled 19 per cent on Monday after the company's consolidated net loss widened to Rs 2,699.70 crore in the financial year 2020-21. The stock declined 17.91 per cent to Rs 62.55 on the BSE.

At the NSE, it tanked 19 per cent to Rs 61.65.

The earnings were announced post market hours on Friday.

For the quarter ended March, state-owned BHEL's consolidated net loss narrowed to Rs 1,036.32 crore, mainly on the back of higher revenues.

The company's consolidated net loss had stood at Rs 1,532.18 crore in the quarter ended on March 31, 2020, according to a regulatory filing.

Total income during January-March 2021, rose to Rs 7,245.16 crore, from Rs

5,166.64 crore in the year-ago period.

However, in the full financial year 2020-21, the company's consolidated net loss widened to Rs 2,699.70 crore as compared with Rs 1,468.35 crore in 2019-20.

Its total income during 2020-21 dropped to Rs 17,657.11 crore, from Rs 22,027.44 crore in 2019-20.

The nationwide lockdown, consequent to the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic globally, caused disturbance and slowdown in the economic activities. It impacted the group operations during 2020-21, which recouped progressively, the company explained.

Based on internal and external information up to the date of approval of these financial statements, the company expects to recover the carrying amount of its assets, investments, trade receivables, contract assets and inventories, it added.

JSW enters construction chemicals business

PNS ■ BENGALURU

JSW Cement said on Monday it has entered the construction chemical sector with the launch of a green product range in the category. The range comprises 'Enduro Plast' readymix plaster, 'Krysta Leakproof' integral crystalline waterproofing compound and 'Duraflor' floorhardener, it said in a statement.

JSW Cement has established a 0.3-million-ton manufacturing facility in Ballari in Karnataka to produce its construction chemical product range. It has begun the roll-out of these products and will

cover key markets across Karnataka. "With the exponential growth seen over the years in the construction chemicals category, JSW's focus on dry-mix mortar market is expected to reach a contribution often per cent for JSW Cement's consolidated revenues within the next 4-5 years," the statement said.

JSW Cement Business Head - Construction Chemicals, Mubin Hussain said the construction chemicals and drymix industry sector is roughly Rs 12,000 crore with an expected compound annual growth rate of ten per cent over the next few years.

Consumer anxiety at highest levels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Consumer anxiety is at the highest levels since the outbreak of coronavirus pandemic in India with the less affluent most skeptical about economic outlook while a majority of consumers think their income in the next six months will be lower than the pre-COVID levels, says a latest study.

As per the COVID-19 consumer sentiment research by global management consulting firm Boston Consulting group (BCG) conducted between May 23 and May 28, 2021, covering around 4,000 respondents across metros, tier I, II, III, IV and rural India, 51 per cent of consumers expected their spends over the next six



months to be lower. In the last round of survey conducted from July 20 to August 2, 2020, the figure stood at 40 per cent.

As many as 83 per cent of the respondents agreed that coronavirus posed a high level of threat to their jobs or busi-

nesses, while another 86 per cent felt that there would be an economic recession due to the pandemic.

In terms of income outlook, 58 per cent of the respondents expected a decline in income in the next six months, the study said adding the decline in income sentiment is the steepest among less affluent/small towns.

It found that 76 per cent of respondents in the 'struggler/next billion' category expected income lower than the pre-COVID level, while the same was also true for 60 per cent in the 'aspirer' segment. However, only 49 per cent 'affluent/elite' expected decline in income in the next six months.

The less affluent were also

the most skeptical about economic outlook, although health concerns were prevalent across consumer profiles. The impact of the pandemic on daily lifestyles were felt more in urban/affluent India, the study said.

Consumer spending sentiment for essentials, health, at-home entertainment has remained stable or showed minor decline. On the other hand, the expected cutbacks on travel, out of home entertainment and vehicle purchases are high, it added.

Commenting on the findings, BCG India Managing Director and Partner Nimisha Jain said, "There is an impending sense of uncertainty, however, we have observed certain positive messages too."

IOB Quarter 4 profit rises over 2-folds to Rs 350 cr

State-owned Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) on Monday reported a jump of over two times in its net profit at Rs 349.77 crore in the last quarter of the fiscal ended March 2021.

The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 143.79 crore in the same period a year ago. Total income during Q4FY21 rose to Rs 6,073.80 crore as against Rs 5,484.06 crore in Q4FY20, IOB said in a regulatory filing. Provisions for bad loans and contingencies for the reported quarter increased to Rs 1,380.46 crore as against Rs 1,060.38 crore parked aside in the corresponding period a year earlier. For the full year 2020-21, the bank reported a net profit of Rs 831.47 crore. There was a net loss of Rs 8,527.40 crore in 2019-20. Total income during the year increased to Rs 22,524.55 crore from Rs 20,712.48 crore in the previous fiscal year. Bank's asset quality showed improvement with the gross non-performing assets (NPAs) falling to 11.69 per cent of the gross advances as of March 31, 2021 from 14.78 per cent by year ago same period.



THE INFAMOUS SCIENCE OF MIND IN SPORTS!

Danish football star Christian Eriksen's collapse at the Euro 2020 match and South African cricketer Faf du Plessis' 'slight memory loss' after a nasty collision with teammate, sure affected their teammates badly. Anand Chulani, India's leading success coach and mental fitness expert talks to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL on the importance of sports stars' mental health.



It's important to talk about mental health all year round! In large part, this is connected to the societal stigma that has plagued mental illnesses even in the sports fraternity. But this topic is about more than just disorders, amidst the pandemic, mental health has increasingly been in the spotlight, especially when it comes to sport. Several sports stars have shared their mental health struggle. Not very long ago, a budding wrestler like Ritika Phogat committed suicide. Times have not been great mentally for sports stars. Mental health is a crucial part of overall health, yet it is often a hushed topic of discussion even on-field. In fact, even Abhinav Bindra revealed earlier this year that he was depressed and lost after winning India's first only individual gold medal at the Beijing Olympics. Talking more about mental health in sports, we have Anand Chulani — India's number one success coach and a leading mental-cum-emotional fitness expert who has worked closely with champions like Nikhil Nanda, Jos Buttler, Ben Stokes, etc. He

says, "There is an urgent need to normalise mental health conversations in sports too. When we utter the phrase 'mental health', instinctively people tend to acclaim that there is something wrong with the individual which is unpleasant. A community of sports persons in good mental health will create a more productive and collaborative environment for the nation. We must take athletes off the so-called pedestals — they aren't Gods. Some of them have still not figured out their lives despite being so successful, they are prominent athletes with eminent skills but are still in a learning phase, so let them be. When I support, say, Ben Stokes, I ain't supporting the popular cricketer but the human life that's approached me for evolving. Their mind, heart, and spirit need to be uplifted too! Even the best of the best sportsmen face mental health issues, it's a fact. It's my job to look at them holistically and I do that." More and more countries are implementing a rest and rotating policy for mental health as well as physical, especially in the arena of sports. There is a sudden pause in most sports-related activities, and there's also social isolation and bio-bubbles. Cricketer Mitchell Marsh recently pulled out of the IPL citing an inability to spend long times inside the bio-secure bubble! "The problems that I usually wit-

ness in athletes are failures, insecurities, the feeling of 'am I good enough', sense of displacement, self-doubt and racism while performing in another country. I always ask them to filter the opinions screaming from outside because every belief isn't gospel truth! A critical aspect could be for them to build an inner-certainty, not from the playground they play on but themselves. Self-worth always brings fruitful successes! An amazing set of skills will allow them to be a part of a recognised team but a better-mental side to themselves will help them enhance those set of skills for a long run — the mental muscle is the strongest muscle," adds

Anand who more recently supported Ajinkya Rahana while he was captaining for the Indian Test Team and helped him score a century that led to India having its greatest comeback in the history and winning the Border-Gavaskar trophy (2020-21)! The Australian cricket team travels with a full-time sports psychologist, it is essential that other teams and sports too have an



chologist who can conduct team-building activities, keep the athletes motivated and focused for their matches. The silver lining of the pandemic is that athletes and coaches have finally started to openly talk about mental health and discuss the importance of a sports psychologist! Anand is currently writing his book, *Absolute Champion*, shares tools and guidance on how to be an absolute champion through a five-step process. He also sheds light on how sports psychology is progressing in our country. Sports psychology is a relatively young field with the first-ever sports psychology lab set up in 1920 in

Berlin. It grew in popularity through the 1970s and 1980s and acquired a more scientific approach to understanding the relationship between psychology and sports performance. Today, the subject draws from multiple disciplines such as biomechanics, kinesiology, physiology, and psychology to assist athletes and their coaches and supporters with the strategies required for optimal sports performance. "Earlier mental health of an athlete was taken for granted. Athletes are used to pressure, some even thrive on it, but sometimes success becomes a hindrance to delicate minds. Don't look at them as medal-winning machines," he shares, adding that it's very important that they have hobbies and social life. "It's time for us to let them get away from the predicted achiever's model and focus on an absolute champion model — the very notion of my upcoming book too. Echoed by my dear friend Abhinav Bindra who felt lost after winning the gold medal as he didn't know what's next.

He later realised happiness is his gold medal! This proves we need to review the very definition of success," he tells us. There were also reports of four-time Grand Slam champion Naomi Osaka not taking questions from the press at the French Open, saying the nature of news conferences puts an undue burden on players' mental health. Indian men's cricket team captain Virat Kohli too revealed his battle with depression back in 2014! Experts reveal that there may not be enough mental health professionals in India who can provide therapy and treatment to sportspersons but Anand Chulani is on a mission to inspire and activate the unlimited potential to be absolute champions, to be happy with themselves, unstoppable, and have the inner strength to achieve sustainable success and triumph in all areas of their lives — personal, relationships, family, education, career, and business, he is on a mission to create global champions of tomorrow!

Actor Mukul Chadda gave up on his lucrative job as a banker in the United States of America to pursue his dream of becoming an actor. Ever since moving back to India, his career graph in showbiz has been spiralling upward journey. After starring in the Indian version of the American show, *The Office*, he will be seen in the forthcoming web series, *Sunflower*. Additionally, he is shooting with Vidya Balan for *Sherri*. We caught him in between a break for a quick telephonic interview. Excerpt:

What drew you to be a part of *Sunflower*?

Right from the word go, I was intrigued by the character of Dr Ahuja, the role I had to portray in the show, as it was very different from the characters I have played in the past. Some of the scenes I was instructed to enact during the audition had me hooked and by the time I got to read the entire script, I think I was completely invested in the project. I found myself chuckling and laughing while I flipped through the pages. As far as scripts go, there are good parts and bad parts but this one was very good and it kept getting better. So, once I read the script, it was a no-brainer. I was very keen to do this project for the script as well as the role of Dr Ahuja.

What was your experience of working with Vikas Bahl?

Vikas is an extremely experienced director who is very calm on set. During tricky moments and difficult scenes, his expertise was evident. The way he handles situations on the set and actors, he puts his experience to good use. Both directors, he

and Rahul Sengupta, never seemed to be flustered or stressed and I think that is very helpful in an environment where you are trying to be creative and create. I am sure there was some pressure or the other, but it didn't trickle down to affect us, the actors. We had a good time putting this show together in that fun atmosphere.

How did you prepare for the character?

Actors have their ways to go about preparing for characters, and it might differ from one role to the other. One of the things that comes to mind for, Dr Ahuja's portrayal, was how I was in constant touch with the writers to develop a particular aspect that caught my eye during a reading with the entire cast before we started shooting. I wondered whether we should take that trait a little further and put immense emphasis on it. I am afraid I cannot share any spoilers right now (chuckles, before continuing) but they were very receptive and welcomed my input by incorporating those suggestions. Apart from that, there are some details you add as an actor that you feel will work for this character. Some work on the back story always helps, as does some time and effort on the body language et al. Again, these might be very subtle and nobody may catch on, but as an actor, it gives you the confidence to believe that what you are doing sounds and looks as authentic as possible.

There's a surge of grey roles now. People don't like to put the characters in a box. Do you think yours in *Sunflower* is one such too?

Absolutely, Dr Ahuja's character is definitely grey by any definition of grey and

Perks of being in the sunflower

Actor Mukul Chadda tells *The Pioneer* that people have moved beyond the masala offered by Bollywood to appreciate more authentic real-life roles



that certainly is one of the exciting parts about playing this character. Your question is very well-phrased. As your question itself mentions, people don't like characters to be put into a box since, in reality, none of us are people who can be put into a box. Nobody's character is monochromatic. It's not like you are either good or bad. We all have shades to ourselves. I mean real life is grey. We all have different sides to our-

selves and different sides get activated at different junctures. So, that is reality and it's wonderful that more and more shows and films are now bringing out the multi-dimensional aspect of characters. There is so much more to it than what meets the eye. It should go without saying that you cannot define a character with just a couple of sentences. Also, as an actor, I think

it's wonderful to try and sometimes understand when you talk about grey or dark characters. Why does this person do what they do? Or what makes them do what they do? Is that something that can happen to any of us? And that is what fascinates me. When you see a character who is seemingly on the darker side of grey, you can't help but wonder what makes a normal person become like

that? And in case something like that happened to me, would I turn out to be just like this character? It is a very thought-provoking process for viewers, ruminating over such characters and the circumstances surrounding them. I think that is part of the attraction of playing such roles. Recently, fellow actor Pankaj Tripathi said in an interview, "We would like our characters to be very simple in real life but very complicated on-screen because it gives you so much meat and so much to play with. The contradictions of such a character make it exciting for viewers as well as the one who is performing as such a character." That was a very well articulated thought, one must say.

Amid this flood of good and realistic content, what do thrillers have to offer? Do you think they still appeal to the audience?

I think there is space for all kinds of genres. There are so many kinds of stories out there. The medium of storytelling has changed over the centuries but its essence hasn't. There are people who love thrillers and let's face it, who would not love a good story where you are guessing

what happens next right up to the end? I think a well-made show or a story well told is always going to work with the audience, irrespective of the genre. If this question is in context to *Sunflower* being a thriller, I don't think it can be pinned down to any one particular genre. Sure, there is a lot of suspense but there is a good amount of comedy as well that is mixed in with other elements in the background.

We heard you would also be starring alongside Vidya Balan in *Sherri*. Can you provide some inside scoops on your character in the eponymous drama?

Okay, now this is something I can help you with. (laughs unabashedly) I play a character called Pawan who seems like an ordinary guy with the standard corporate job on the surface. However, Amit Masurkar (the director) had certain ideas about how he wanted the character to be played. The character isn't entirely as he would seem. There are layers to him, his personality and his relationship with Vidya.

Have the characters you essayed helped you evolve as an actor and a person in real life?

Yes, of course! There's so much one could learn about acting through the experience one attains in this industry. The more you push yourself as an actor and enact roles that are different from the parts you've played in the past, you expand your range. With such experiences, one grows not just in terms of skill but also with the confidence gained with each new project. It also helps sharpen processes because each role you prepare for, you end up doing slightly different things each time. While some of the

processes that work for you can be used more often than not, there are others which you are supposed to unlearn. I often make notes for myself while I am preparing for a role and at times I revisit the notes I had prepared for a previous role for some fresh perspective.

But has it helped me as a person in real life? Hmm... (we hear him thoughtfully scratching his stubble) This is a much harder question, one that I haven't heard often but whenever I have, it always beats me because I think it is very difficult to analyse one's own self as I don't think we are very good judges of ourselves. We might be really accomplished at judging others but to possess a certain level of self-awareness and examine yourself is somewhat, if not extremely, difficult. However, what I can tell you is that being an actor, playing different parts does help one to develop a sense of empathy towards different kinds of people. When you portray a certain role you are that person for a certain period. So, the way they think, the situations they are in, you have to deal with them, because that is the essence of an actor — to slip into the shoes of that character. I can't help but be empathetic after doing that for a long time.

You left the corporate life to embrace the joys of performing arts. Have you ever experienced any lows which made you wish you would not have changed paths?

I definitely have had many low phases during this journey as an actor, but I have to say that I have never regretted my decision, and this reinforces the belief that it was the right one. So, I am actually living my dream right now.

Am I doing it right? This is a question that many parents are asking themselves in the new environment of lockdowns and quarantines. Long before the pandemic, words like 'stress, worry, guilt, fear' have been part of the emotional lexicon as a working parent. With remote working, social distancing, health and wellness issues, and all the uncertainty of the pandemic, everything feels like it's ten times harder than before.

Most parents I know would agree that while working from home has its pros and cons, a year into it, we all are still struggling with the dilemma of how best to juggle a full-time job, be present as a parent, and find some time for ourselves.

One of the much-touted benefits of remote working is the flexibility it offers in one's work schedule. Work-From-Home (WFH) is perhaps the biggest disruption to the concept of the formal workspace since its advent in the 1800s. The rigours of a 9 to 5 job have been replaced with a work 'where you are, when you can' approach. Most of us save a lot of time and energy in a day, now that we don't have to battle the great urban commute.

Ideally, it is supposed to enable people to live a more stress-free life. For example, take a virtual meeting in the morning, help the kids set up for their online classes, do some more work, take a break to do chores around the house, spend time with the kids, do some more work, have family meals together, etc.

While this sounds quite utopian, the reality is far from it. If you appreciate dark humour, you'll see what I mean when I say that one is always 'dashing' these days — dashing off because your kids need you in the middle of work and dashing off because your work needs you when you're with your kids. It feels like one is doing more work than ever before — both as a professional and as a parent. There's a sense of guilt that one is not doing justice to either.

The lines between work



The dilemma of parenting in a work-from-home world

and home have become so blurred that we're all used to seeing the insides of our colleagues' houses, and it's almost normal when someone must take a break to deal with a domestic crisis in the middle of work. The routines that you spent most of your adult life setting up, have been thrown out of the window. The new normal doesn't feel normal at all. So, how does one regain one's balance again?

The bad news is that there is no one-size-fits-all solution to this dilemma. The good news also is that there's no one-size-fits-all solution! If there's no right answer,

then at least, you're not going to be wrong.

I feel that it comes down to finding a 'rhythm' more than a balance. Instead of trying to replace routines and schedules, I think it helps to think of it as finding a fluid rhythm to one's day. Instead of making strict plans, I find that it helps to factor in all the major priorities of the week, and then to move things around that.

This would create enough wiggle room to do things when they're needed. For example, it's one of those days where your kids are in a happy place, and they want to spend more time with

you. Instead of sticking to your routine and then feeling guilty or sad all day that you couldn't be with them, try moving things around so you have a couple of hours to spend with the kids and then catch up to your schedule later on.

Similarly, suppose you have some work that needs you to be absolutely focused, or it's one of those days when you feel inspired and would like some alone time to work distraction-free, it's a good idea to trade 'do not disturb' time with your partner or a family member so that they can be in charge while you work. You could do the same for them as well. Instead of a strict routine that you feel you must live and die by, allow yourself to try a softer, more fluid rhythm where you can make the best of each moment. I find that the best part about this approach is that it allows you to address your needs and wants in the present, taking away that feeling of missing out, or not

doing enough. The act of moving things around to suit what best needs to be done in each moment will also give you a sense of control and help you feel less overwhelmed in the long run.

One of the things that has helped me find my daily rhythm is to think of things in terms of the things I 'must' do, and the things I 'can' do, instead of worrying over all the things I 'should' do. Another strategy that I'd espouse is to do multiple tasks, but not multi-task. For example, you could have a variety of different things you need to do in a day, but you do them one at a time. 'Trying to be mindful and present in every moment really helps to keep the stress away. Be your own best friend. Be compassionate to yourself and above all, be kind to yourself. You are doing the best you can, and that really is enough.'

(The writer, Neerja Birla, is the Founder and Chairperson, Mpower)

Keep away from these foods

Diet plays a major role in a good night sleep. Shivani Sikri lists foods that one should avoid eating at night

The pandemic and work from home for more than a year for most of us has already deeply hampered or rather knocked down the sleeping patterns. Most of the people are not able to follow the right orthodox sleep timings thereby shattering physical and mental health. Here are some foods that should be simply avoided for quality sleep at night.

Alcohol:



Alcohol is a false friend of sleep. Certainly, as it causes relaxation of muscle tone, it helps to fall asleep but this same muscle relaxation promotes snoring and the occurrence of respiratory disorders during sleep (apnea) thus making sleep unstable and causing arousals during the night.

Dark chocolate:



Why should you avoid consuming dark chocolate at night? Because it contains stimulants (tyrosine, theobromine, anandamide) which activate the heart and increase the heart rate. Not ideal before bed if you want to fall asleep easily.

Cold cut meats:

Cold meats like sausages, ham, salami and also sauces or even chips should be strictly avoided at night. This cold/frozen



meat options and other fatty foods require a lot of energy and time to be digested during sleep. Prolonged digestion can lead to restless sleep. They are therefore to be avoided in the evening.

Japanese and Chinese dishes:



Chinese and Japanese foods should be avoided in the evening because they are rich in sodium glutamate, an amino acid which accelerates the metabolism and provides a boost of energy. Sodium glutamate is also found in industrial ready meals, sauces etc.

Spicy dishes:



Spicy foods are contraindicated in the dinner because they can cause heartburn and bloating, and lead to poor quality sleep. Spice also increases body heat, another factor leading to poor sleep.

Ice cream:

Ice creams are super high in sugars which stimulates the brain and can keep the body awake for hours. For the same reason, we also avoid cakes, pastries and mithais in excess.

Cheeses:

Cheese have high fat



content. They are hence hard to digest after dinner. It is always recommended to eat cheese during the day. With this rationality, it is also prudent to shy off consuming hard legumes like chickpeas, lentils, split peas, etc. in the dinner time as they ferment in the intestines and take time to be digested.

Tomato:



Certain vegetables should be avoided in the evening like tomatoes for example. It releases tyramine, an amino acid that causes the production of norepinephrine. This has an impact on digestion, increases brain activity and prevents easy and rapid falling asleep. The same is also the case with brinjal because it is the vegetable that is richest in nicotine resulting in increased heart rate and BP.

Red meat:



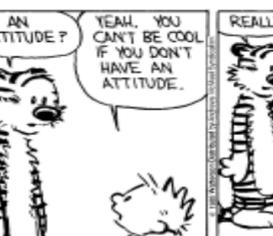
The strong proteins of red meat take a long time to digest. Eating red meat in the evening or at dinner may interfere with falling asleep and cause nighttime awakenings. In general, at dinner, it is better to prefer light proteins like chicken, turkey, yogurt etc. (The writer is Chief Nutritionist and Co-Founder, Nutri4Verve)

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



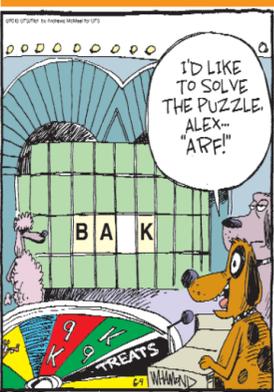
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



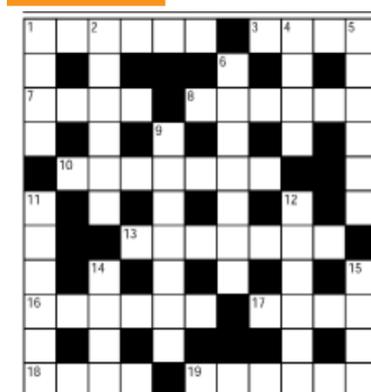
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

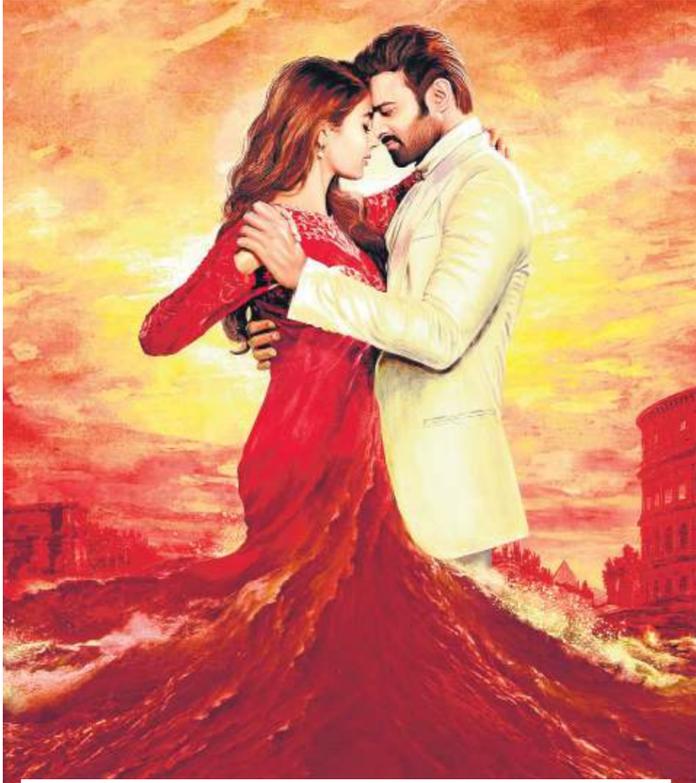
- 1 Begins
- 3 A worshipped statue
- 7 Keep a pet bird in this
- 8 Yells
- 10 A citizen of Israel
- 13 Took no notice of
- 16 People invited
- 17 A large public building for meetings, functions
- 18 One third of twenty-seven
- 19 A pie's covering

DOWN

- 1 Unwell
- 2 A month
- 4 A musical instrument played with sticks



SOLUTION



PRIYADARSHI: WANT TO MOVE OVER THE 'COMEDIAN' TAG

Actor Priyadarshi Pelli Choopulu fame says that he wants to get out of the so-called image of a comedian and be known as an actor who can do whatever he is offered.

"As an actor, you want to come out of that comfort zone. I want to discover the endless possibilities through these characters, entering into worlds that are more challenging and scarier. The so-called image I have of a comedian, I also wanted to get out of that. The image is for the people to give me but I would rather not have an image associated with me and become an actor who can do whatever is asked of him," he shares.

Priyadarshi is known for his roles in films like *Arjun Reddy*, *Mallesham*, and, more recently, *Jathi*

Ratnalu. He will soon be seen in a crime thriller series titled *In The Name Of God*, where he portrays a complex and dark character.

"To discover these dark areas as a human being, my character Adi was the anchor that helped me to go into myself and discover those grey areas. That was a good exercise for me as an actor and something new to work for. I haven't done anything of this sort so far. This has been the most excruciating and rewarding journey for me," shares the actor.

"He has high aspiration and little of everything — of greed, love, lust — and puts himself in an inconvenient position. Somehow, he tries to seek redemption from all of this," the actor adds about his character. The series is scheduled to drop on the streaming platform *Aha* from June 18.



Prabhas to resume *Radhe Shyam* this month

Prabhas and Pooja Hegde-starrer *Radhe Shyam*, a romantic drama, has been making headlines since its launch. Being helmed by Radha Krishna Kumar of *Jil* fame, the film has been in the making for the last two years. Prabhas plays the role of Vikramaditya in this film. Owing to the pandemic, the film's shoot was brought to a halt. According to the latest update, Prabhas has decided to join the sets of *Radhe Shyam* from the last week of June month. And with this brief shoot schedule, the entire shoot of Radhe Krishna Kumar's directorial venture will be wrapped up. The upcoming schedule will take

place at a specially-assembled set in Hyderabad, in which both Prabhas and Pooja Hegde will participate.

Radhe Shyam also has Bhagyashree, Priyadarshi Pulikonda, Sachin Khedekar, Murli Sharma, Kunaal Roy Kapur, Riddhi Kumar, Sasha Chettri and Sathyan in crucial roles.

After wrapping up the shoot of *Radhe Shyam*, Prabhas will resume *Salaar* with *KGF* fame Prashant Neel immediately. Prabhas is also expected to commence shooting for *Adipurush* in the next two months. After these movies, Prabhas will also be seen in Nag Ashwin's magnum opus which is touted to be a science fiction drama.



Priyamani on being trolled for her skin colour, weight

National award-winning actress Priyamani is currently basking in the glory of her recently released web drama *The Family Man 2*, co-starring Samantha Akkineni and Manoj Bajpayee.

The actress recently opened up about trolls who called her names and would attack her for her colour and weight. The actress mentioned that the wicked abuse on the social media ranged from people calling her 'black', 'fat', 'aunty'. She added that some netizens even went to the extent of calling the actress a 'pig'!

The Yamadonga actress shared, "My weight increased to 65 kilos and I did look bigger than what I am right now. So a lot of people have said, 'You look fat, and big.' Now they are saying, 'Why you looking thin, we liked you when you were fat.'"

When they said 'She's 'looking black.' I said, 'Look, what is wrong, even if I am a dark-skinned person. Don't call anybody black, because black is beautiful.'

Priyamani who made her debut in Tollywood with *Evare Atagaadu* won many hearts with her performance in the south. She later entered the Hindi film industry with the movie *Raavan*, helmed by Mani Ratnam. The actress also appeared in a special song in *Chennai Express* and *Ateet*.

Anantapur accent in *Narappa*?



Venkatesh is starring in the remake of Dhanush's super-hit film *Asuran*. The film titled *Narappa* is progressing at a brisk pace under the direction of Srikanth Addala.

Srikanth Addala according to sources has made a lot of changes in the original script keeping in view the Telugu sensitivities. Reports have it that the Telugu remake has an Anantapur backdrop and the entire cast will speak in an Anantapur accent.

Srikanth Addala for the realistic feel roped in lan-

guage experts and trained the entire cast in Anantapur accent. He is also taking due care while the artists are dubbing for their characters in the studio.

Priyamani is playing the role of Venkatesh's wife in the film for which music is scored by Manisharma. D.Suresh Babu and Kalaipuli Thanu are producing the film in a prestigious manner on Suresh Productions and V Creations banner.

The film also stars Karthik Ratnam, Prakash Raj, Murali Sharma, Sampath Raj in important roles.

Chiru donates blood, urges fans to help save lives

Megastar Chiranjeevi on the occasion of Blood Donation Day on June 14, along with his wife Surekha Konidela, donated blood at the Chiranjeevi Eye and Blood Bank, Jubilee Hills in the city.

The actor and philanthropist urged his fans and the public to save lives through simple actions like donating blood.

Sharing a picture on his Twitter, the actor wrote, "On this #WorldBloodDonorsDay congratulating all Blood Donors & particularly

my #BloodBrothers & Sisters who help save lives. It's a great fortune that we can save precious lives thru such simple actions & form a bond for life wid fellow humans,through blood #DonateBloodSaveLives."(sic)

Recently, the Megastar set up an oxygen bank to reach out to those who are in need of critical medical care amid the pandemic.

On the work front, the actor is currently working on his upcoming film *Acharya*, that also has his son Ram Charan Tej playing a crucial role in it.



LIGER TO WRAP IT UP IN HYDERABAD?



Director Puri Jagannath has planned to launch Vijay Devarakonda in a sensational manner in Bollywood with his high-octane action entertainer *Liger*. However, coronavirus put paid to all his dreams. But Puri is not backing off though all the plans of shooting the film lavishly in the exotic foreign locations are not happening.

According to the sources, the makers are planning to wrap the shoot of *Liger* in Hyderabad. The makers erected a beautiful set in Hyderabad and will soon

resume shooting once permissions are granted. Vijay Devarakonda is playing the role of a boxer in the sports-based entertainer and is sharing a screen presence with Ananya Pandey.

The film which comes with the tagline 'Saala Crossbreed' is releasing in the month of September. The film is made in Hindi, Telugu, Malayalam, and Kannada and is produced by Puri Connects, Dharma Productions. The film stars Ramya Krishna, Ronit Roy, Ali, Makarand Deshpande, in important roles, and music is scored by Manisharma and Tanishk Bagchi.

WHAT A SCHICK SHOW

Patrik scores brace including one from the halfway line in Czech's 2-0 win over Scotland



AFP ■ GLASGOW

Scotland's long-awaited return to a major International tournament was ruined by Patrik Schick's slick finishing as the Czech Republic won 2-0 at Hampden on Monday to move top of Euro 2020 Group D. Schick's header just before half-time opened the scoring, but it was his stunning strike from

just inside the Scotland half after the break that will live in the memory as one of the all-time great European Championship goals.

After a 23-year wait to qualify for a major tournament, Scotland's hopes of making more history by getting out of the group for the first time now look slim. Steve Clarke's men face

England next on Friday at Wembley before hosting World Cup finalists Croatia at Hampden on June 22.

Playing in front of fans at Hampden for the first time since November 2019 with 12,000 in attendance, Scotland made a nervous start. The hosts were desperately missing the driving runs and

poise on the ball normally provided by Kieran Tierney on the left side of a back three.

Without the Arsenal defender, Liverpool's Andy Robertson was his side's biggest threat with a series of rampaging runs.

A cagey game of few chances burst into life after Schick's towering leap put the visitors in front three minutes before half-time.

Scotland were slow to react after initially clearing a corner and the Bayer Leverkusen forward rose highest to flick home Vladimir Coufal's cross.

Marshall was called into action to make two quick saves from Schick and Vladimir Darida in an explosive start to the second-half.

But twice Scotland were inches away from levelling when Jack Hendry's dipping effort came back off the crossbar before Vadik clawed away a mishit clearance from Tomas Kalas.

However, the home side were stunned by a moment of brilliance from Schick on 52 minutes as he spotted Marshall off his line from halfway and bent in an incredible shot from just inside the Scotland half.

Dramatic win for Dutch

Dumfries late header helps Oranje return to big time with 3-2 success

AFP ■ AMSTERDAM

Denzel Dumfries scored a dramatic late winner as the Netherlands marked their long-awaited return to a major tournament with a 3-2 victory over Ukraine in a remarkable Euro 2020 game in Amsterdam on Sunday.

Dumfries, the PSV Eindhoven full-back, headed in a cross from substitute Nathan Ake to complete a madcap second half after the home side eased into a two-goal lead and then threw it away.

Captain Georginio Wijnaldum and Wout Weghorst both scored before the hour mark in front of a raucous crowd at the Johan Cruyff Arena, only for Ukraine to silence the home supporters as Andriy Yarmolenko and Roman Yaremchuk netted to briefly restore parity. Frank de Boer's side got there in the end and the victory will provide a major lift to the Netherlands after what was their first game at a major competition in seven years.

They will now hope to build on it on Thursday against Austria, who beat North Macedonia earlier in Bucharest in the same Group C.

It was a brilliant game, and a crowd of around 16,000 created an atmosphere fit for the occasion at the home of Ajax, where supporters held up banners with messages of support for Christian Eriksen following the Denmark star's cardiac arrest on Saturday.

Eriksen made his name at Ajax before moving to Tottenham Hotspur in 2013.

After failing to qualify for Euro 2016 or the 2018 World Cup in Russia, the Netherlands were playing their first game at a major competition since beating hosts Brazil 3-0 to claim third place at the 2014 World Cup.

They had not won a game at a Euro in almost exactly 13 years, since Klaas-Jan Huntelaar and Robin van Persie netted in a 2-0 win over Romania at Euro 2008.



Brazil start Copa defence with win

AFP ■ BRASILIA

Star forward Neymar netted a penalty and created a second as hosts Brazil eased to a 3-0 victory over a coronavirus-depleted Venezuela on Sunday in the opening match of the 2021 Copa America.

Centre-back Marquinhos opened the scoring through the first half and Gabriel Barbosa sealed the Group B win a minute from time.

In a tournament already delayed a year and moved from its original hosts Argentina and Colombia due to the pandemic, it was fitting that the coronavirus should take centre-stage right up to the tournament kick-off.

Played in front of an empty Mané Garrincha stadium due to Covid-19 restrictions, Brazil made light of the continent's minnows, who arrived with a makeshift side missing eight players ruled out after testing positive for coronavirus the day before.

Venezuela called up 15 emergency replacements but could still only name seven out of a possible 12 substitutes due to a lack of available players.

Brazil took the lead on 23 minutes when Richarlison flicked on a Neymar corner that deflected into Marquinhos's path inside the six-yard box, allowing the centre-back to bundle home.

Richarlison had a goal ruled out for offside while Neymar incredibly fired wide from 12 yards out as Brazil threatened to put the game to bed before half-time.

It was more of the same after the break as substitute Alex Sandro from distance and Richarlison with a header both shot over the bar.

Neymar somehow failed to turn home a cross-cum-shot from Gabriel Jesus from three yards out but on 64 minutes he doubled the lead from the penalty spot.

Yohan Cumana clumsily brought down Danilo in the box and Neymar sent Graterol the wrong way on 12 yards.

The hosts took their foot off the gas but Neymar kept probing and was denied a second by Graterol following a crazy run and shot from inside the box.

Neymar then created the third, rounding Graterol before crossing for Gabriel Barbosa to chest home from barely a yard out.

"He's developed the ability to create. Right foot, left foot, he's become an unpredictable player," Brazil coach Tite enthused about Neymar.

In the second match, Edwin Cardona scored the only goal of the game as Colombia held on under second half pressure to begin their Group B campaign with a 1-0 win over Ecuador — who thrashed them 6-1 the last time the sides met in a World Cup qualifier in November.

Colombia's goal was a thing of beauty with Cardona taking a short free-kick to Juan Cuadrado, who chipped the ball into the box for Miguel Borja to head down into the path of Cardona to volley home.

It was initially disallowed for offside but a VAR review showed that while three Colombian players were beyond the defensive line, Cardona and Borja were inside.

Chhetri targets record feat against Afghanistan

PTI ■ DOHA

Goal-machine Sunil Chhetri will look to add to his tally and enter the all-time top 10 scorers' list as a buoyant India meet Afghanistan in the joint 2022 World Cup and 2023 Asian Cup qualifiers here on Tuesday.

While the Indian team needs just a draw from their final game against Afghanistan to secure a place in the third round of AFC Asian Cup qualifiers after Oman defeated Afghanistan 2-1 on Friday, a hat-trick for Chhetri will see him equal the iconic Pele in terms of numbers of goals scored in the International arena.

Chhetri is also just one goal off entering the all-time top-10 list of goal-scorers, something he can easily achieve against

Afghanistan, if not a hat-trick.

A Chhetri-inspired India ended their winless run in International football when the captain struck a brace against Bangladesh in their previous outing.

The talk since then mostly centred around the Indian striker surpassing the legendary Lionel Messi as International football's second highest scorer among active players.

A veteran in top-flight at 36, Chhetri played down the comparisons with the Argentine global superstar, but he will certainly look to put his best foot forward come the next match and add to his tally of 74 goals.

If the Blue Tigers can avoid defeat in the upcoming match, they will finish third in their group, an improvement over



the fifth-place result during the last campaign. India are already out of con-

tion to progress further in the World Cup qualifying campaign, and is now looking to secure a

berth in 2023 Asian Cup, scheduled to be held in China.

India will enter the game as clear favourites despite Afghanistan's ability to fight it out.

Igor Stimac's men will be high on confidence after thoroughly dominating Bangladesh, against whom they enjoyed nearly 75% possession while completing more than 600 passes.

If they are to repeat that kind of impressive stats, India will need the duo of Chhetri and Manvir Singh to fire upfront, with Brandon Fernandes marshalling the midfield and keep-

ing the supply chain flowing.

India are currently placed on six points after seven matches in comparison to Afghanistan's five points from seven games.

Form and past record both favour India and anything less than a victory for the Blue Tigers will be seen as an upset.

As far as Afghanistan are concerned, they will take heart from their spirited performance in their previous outing against India, who were held to a stalemate at home by their lower-ranked opponents in 2019.

But the recent defeat against Oman means Afghanistan are not among the top fourth-placed teams in the World Cup qualifiers and a failure to win against India would send them to the playoffs just to get into the third round of Asian Cup qualifiers.

shortpasses

HASAN ALI TO REMAIN IN PSL

ABU DHABI: Islamabad United fast bowler Hasan Ali has decided to stay for the rest of the Pakistan Super League after resolving a family matter. Hasan was due to fly back home on Sunday, but will now remain in Abu Dhabi and complete Pakistan's premier Twenty20 league.

RAHIM WINS ICC AWARD

DUBAI: Former Bangladesh captain Mushfiqur Rahim and Scottish all-rounder Kathryn Bryce were on Monday adjudged the ICC Players of the Month for May in the men's and women's categories respectively. Mushfiqur played one Test and three ODIs against Sri Lanka, where he helped Bangladesh win their first ODI series against Sri Lanka by scoring 125 in the second game in Dhaka last month.

TITMUS NARROWLY MISSES WR

ADELAIDE: A sizzling Ariarne Titmus clocked the second fastest 200m freestyle in history on Monday, narrowly missing the 12-year-old world record, while Kaylee McKeown swam the year's quickest 200m medley as they ramped up Olympic preparations.

MALVIKA WINS CROWN

KAUNAS: India's Malvika Bansod defeated Rachael Darragh of Ireland 21-14, 21-11 to clinch the women's singles crown at the RSL Lithuanian International badminton tournament here.

FARAH TO TRY FOR OLYMPICS

LONDON: Two-time Olympic 10,000m champion Mo Farah will make a last-gasp attempt to qualify for the Tokyo Games at the British Athletics Championships in Manchester on June 25.

1.6M \$ FOR WTC FINAL WINNERS

DUBAI: The winner of the upcoming World Test Championship final between India and New Zealand will walk away with a prize money of \$1.6 million along with the Test Championship Mace, the International Cricket Council said on Monday.

INDIA SEEM MORE FEARLESS

BRISTOL: The Indian women's team has become more 'fearless' than ever, feels England's newly-appointed vice-captain Nat Sciver, who is hoping that the conditions will favour her team against the opponents' heady mix of experience and youth in the upcoming Test here.

Rahane offers Test batting tips to Mithali & Co

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Playing close to the body, working on mindset and setting small targets are some of tips that Indian men's Test team vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane gave to Mithali Raj & Co ahead of their first red-ball game in seven years, against England.

According to sources in the know of developments, Rahane, a Test specialist with 73 games and over 4500 runs under his belt, was requested by women's team head coach Ramesh Powar for a session, primarily with the batters before they left for England.

"Ramesh and Ajinkya have been teammates. Since our girls are playing Test match after seven years, the coach thought that it would be a good idea to have a session where one of the best in the business will talk about Test match batting."

"It was a 50-minute zoom session that was arranged when both teams were in quarantine in Mumbai," a senior official privy to the development said.

The match is starting on Wednesday.

It is learnt that skipper Mithali, her deputy Harmanpreet Kaur, Smriti Mandhana and all the batters, along with senior pacer Shikha Pandey, spoke to Rahane about the long-form batting.

In India also, there has only been 50 and T20 national competitions for the past few years.

"Apparently, Ajinkya told them not to play the drive too much during the initial part of the innings as the ball moves around a lot in the UK. He told the batters to concentrate on playing as close to the body as possible."

"He believes that with late swing, there would always be the lure to play the cover drive but his best to avoid the stroke initially with Dukes ball being used," the source said.

Rahane believes that the foundation of a Test innings should be based on short targets and not on the ultimate goal.

"He told the batters that it

We're mentally prepared for England: Harman

PTI ■ BRISTOL

Indian women's team vice-captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Monday said the squad is mentally prepared to take on mighty hosts England in its first Test in seven years, especially after 'picking the brains' of red-ball specialist Ajinkya Rahane.

India and England will play a one-off Test here from Wednesday, which will start the visitors' full-fledged tour of the UK, where they will also feature in ODI and T20 series.

"I have not played much of red-ball cricket, I have played just two Tests. This time we got a chance to speak to Ajinkya Rahane, we picked his brains on how to bat in the longer format, mentally we are prepared," Harmanpreet said during a virtual press conference.

The swashbuckler has made a name for herself in white-ball cricket and is



now looking to stamp her class in the traditional format. She added, "Even in the nets, we try to be in the right frame of mind. When you are happy, you play good cricket. We try to play to our strengths."

"We had an easy and friendly talk with Rahane, he is very experienced, we had a chance to talk to him and we did exactly that."

Elaborating on the interaction with Virat Kohli's deputy in the men's Test team, she said, "Rahane has so much

experience, he shared them with us, offered us tips on how to bat, what kind approach should we have to batting because it's long format, how to break your batting in parts..."

Asked about teen batting sensation Shafali Verma's chance of making her Test debut, Harmanpreet said the team management doesn't prefer tinkering with her game.

"Shafali is someone we always want to play, she is someone who can dominate the opposition."

"We never tried to tinker with Shafali's game as she is a natural player, it's not a great idea to talk too much about technique and game planning with her."

"All of us are trying to create a very nice situation for her so that she doesn't feel the pressure and enjoys her cricket. She was looking great in the nets, and I hope, if she gets a chance to play, she will do better."

Both the teams have high quality pace bowlers and Lee wants them to be in the game at all times.

"Pace just makes red-ball cricket exciting, I'm a cricket fan and I want to produce a pitch where the cricket lovers have to watch every ball in case they miss something, be that some class batting or an amazing piece of bowling."

"A maiden over can be quite exciting if it's a battle of skill between both bowler and batter. So, yeah, if we can get some pace and bounce in the pitch, but not too one-sided towards seam movement, we'll be happy," he said.

Djokovic eyes Golden Grand Slam

AFP ■ PARIS

Novak Djokovic has set his sights on the Golden Grand Slam of all four majors, and the Olympic title, insisting: "Everything is possible."

The world number one captured a second French Open and 19th Slam with a 6-7 (6/8), 2-6, 6-3, 6-2, 6-4 win over Stefanos Tsitsipas on Sunday.

It allowed him to become the first man in the Open era, and only third in history, to claim all four Grand Slam titles on multiple occasions.

Now he has targeted being the third man to complete a calendar Grand Slam after Don Budge in 1937 and Rod Laver in 1962 and 1969.

On top of that, he also wants the Olympic Gold medal to complete the Golden Grand Slam. "Everything is possible. Definitely in my case I can say that what I've been through in my career, in my life, this journey has been terrific so far," said Djokovic.

"I've achieved some things that a lot of people thought it would be not possible for me to achieve."

"So everything is possible, and I did put myself in a good position to go for the Golden Slam."

The Golden Slam has never been achieved by a man while, in the women's game, only Steffi Graf in 1988 has swept all four majors and Olympic Gold in the same year.

In Graf's case, Olympic Gold came in Seoul. For Djokovic, the opportunity will come in Tokyo later this summer.

"Obviously his goal and our goal is to win the Olympics and then win the Grand Slam. That would be the absolutely top of this year," said Djokovic's long-time coach Marian Vajda.

"But it's still far away from us. We have to still focus on the next one. But overall he's set up for this year."

"His priority is Wimbledon, Olympics and US Open. I think that says all."

Djokovic is already halfway to a calendar Slam having secured a record ninth Australian Open in February. Next up is Wimbledon, where he is the defending champion, Olympics and then a bid to win the US Open for a fourth time.

However, Djokovic has been at this juncture before, winning in Australia and Paris in 2016 but coming up short at the Rio Olympics, Wimbledon and the US Open later in the year.

