



sunday pioneer

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India remembers great 'flying Sikh' P 10

Take third wave seriously: Ajit Pawar P 5

No delay in fixing minimum wages P 6

In brief

Union secretary Guruprasad dies of Covid-related complications

Secretary in the Department of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) Guruprasad Mohapatra died of COVID-19 related complications at AIIMS on Saturday. Mohapatra, 59, was admitted to AIIMS in mid-April. He is the first serving secretary to the Government of India to have succumbed to COVID-19. Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed grief over Mohapatra's demise. "Saddened by the demise of Dr. Guruprasad Mohapatra, DPIIT Secretary. I had worked with him extensively in Gujarat and at the Centre. He had a great understanding of administrative issues and was known for his innovative zeal.

3rd wave in 6-8 weeks if Covid-precautions not followed

If Covid-appropriate behaviour is not followed and crowding not prevented, the next wave of the viral infection can strike the country in the next six to eight weeks, AIIMS Director Randeep Guleria warned on Saturday. Until a sizeable number of the population are vaccinated, Covid-appropriate behaviour needs to be followed aggressively, he said and stressed on the need for stricter surveillance and area-specific lockdowns in case of a significant surge. Guleria reiterated that till now, there is no evidence to suggest that children will be affected more in the next wave of the infection.

Iran cleric Ebrahim Raisi named Presidential election winner

Ultraconservative cleric Ebrahim Raisi was declared the winner Saturday of Iran's presidential election, a widely anticipated result after many political heavyweights were barred from running. Raisi won 62 per cent of the vote with about 90 per cent of ballots counted from Friday's election, poll officials said, without releasing turnout figures, after the three other candidates had conceded defeat. "I congratulate the people on their choice," said outgoing moderate President Hassan Rouhani, who has served the maximum of two consecutive four-year terms and leaves office in August. Raisi, 60, is set to take over at a critical time, as Iran seeks to salvage its tattered nuclear deal with major powers and free itself from punishing US sanctions that have driven a sharp economic downturn.

Lockdown lifted, all curbs go

ML MELLY MAITREY ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State government has decided to reopen the state completely from Sunday, relying on the 'medical authorities' reports that the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic has abated and that the overall viral situation is under control. The government has ordered "all branches to lift all types of regulations imposed during the lockdown in full extent."

"The state cabinet has decided to lift the lockdown completely. The decision has been taken to lift the lockdown by examining the reports given by medical authorities that the number of corona cases, positivity percentage has decreased significantly, corona have come into full control," the Chief Minister's Office posted on Facebook.

Telangana, despite being one of the worst-hit states in the country, on Friday reported just 1.14 per cent case positivity. The number of

daily cases was just over 1,400 in 24 hours, with the number of Covid-linked deaths being 12. The vast improvement in the Covid situation is attributed to the strict lockdown the state government had imposed. The K Chandrashekar Rao government had extended the lock-

down on June 9 by 10 days. However, it had eased several restrictions as the wave showed signs of waning.

"The second wave of the pandemic has killed thousands of people over the last two months and devastated the country's economy. It is gradually receding from several other parts of the country as well.

The Cabinet met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K.Chandrashekar Rao at Pragathi Bhavan here on Saturday to inter alia take a call on whether the lockdown should be extended. It took a decision to lift the lockdown after examining reports submitted by the Medical and Health Department that Corona cases as well as the positivity rate have come down drastically and that the pandemic was now under control in the State. The State Cabinet also noted that the virus was coming under control in neighbouring States also. Based on the reports and statistics submitted by the department, it was acknowledged that Corona had come under control much faster in Telangana.

The Cabinet also instructed the Education Department to reopen all categories of educational institutions in the State from July 1 with full preparedness and to ensure that students are allowed to attend the classes physically.

All educational institutions to reopen physically from July 1

Cabinet seeks full cooperation of people in adhering to Covid-appropriate behaviour in totally controlling Covid-19

Says lifting of lockdown does not mean giving up responsible behaviour



40 MLAs under KCR watch

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The performance of at least 40 Telangana Rashtra Samiti MLAs is under scrutiny by party president and Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, who has received damning inputs from intelligence and other sources regarding their functioning, public image as well as irregularities or financial issues pertaining to their or their family members' role in the constituency concerned.

Although there is no strong opposition party, leave alone 'alternative', to TRS at present in the state, KCR wants to give due attention to the next Assembly elections, considering that, upon completion of two terms back to back, there could be a bit of anti-incumbency factor at work. So, poor performance of sitting MLAs, coupled with the money power of the Bharatiya Janata Party, may create problems for the ruling party at least in some of the seats. Keeping this in view, KCR wants to take corrective measures in the Assembly seats concerned well in advance.

KCR, during his upcoming



surprise visits across the State, will zero in on the ground-level feedback from some of these constituencies. He has given strict warning to MLAs, saying he will not flinch from giving tickets to fresh candidates in the next Assembly elections if sitting legislators do not measure up to his expectations. Some of these MLAs are facing allegations of corruption, land grabbing and other issues. Among these, there are MLAs elected on behalf of TRS and those who had defected after the Assembly elections.

City to get four Super Speciality Hospitals

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three more super speciality hospitals will come up soon under the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation area and the Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences (TIMS) at Gachibowli will be modernized as a super speciality hospital.

Cabinet approves sanction

A decision to this effect was taken at the State Cabinet meeting chaired by Chief Minister K.Chandrashekar Rao on Saturday. As for the new super speciality hospitals, one will be constructed on the campus of the Government

Chest Hospital, second one on the premises of the fruit market at Gaddi Annaram (which is to be shifted) and the third one will come up between Alwal and the Outer Ring Road in Medchal-Malkajgiri district. The State Cabinet ratified a decision taken by the government to

modernize the existing vegetable market in Kothapet and convert it into an integrated veg and non-veg market. Officials of the Agriculture Department informed the Cabinet that the paddy yield last year was more than three crore tonnes.

Centre says Indian deposits in Swiss banks 'fell'; fails to give numbers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Maintaining that Indian customer deposits in Swiss banks have fallen since 2019, the Finance Ministry on Saturday said that it was seeking details from Swiss authorities on the relevant facts along with their view on possible reasons for changes in the funds parked by individuals and entities in 2020.

Rahul comes across as a fine person: Gowda

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Former Prime Minister and JD (S) supremo H D Deve Gowda joined many others to wish Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on his 51st birthday on Saturday.

"Rahul Gandhi has always come across as a fine person, deeply committed to a humane and inclusive society. It is his birthday today. I wish him well, and sincerely pray that his view of the world and his compassion defeat the narrowness that surrounds us," Gowda tweeted. Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah too greeted Gandhi. "A very happy birthday to former INC president Shri Rahul Gandhi. I wish him good health and a long life. His vision for the people of our Country and commitment to the ideals of our Constitution has always inspired the Congressmen," Siddaramaiah tweeted.

Mixed reaction to full reopening of edu institutions from July 1

Parents allege that schools are being reopened only to collect fees amidst rising fears of third wave

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state cabinet's decision on Saturday to reopen fully all educational institutions from July 1 has drawn mixed responses from parents, with most of them expressing fears that their children might contract Covid as no one aged under 18 has been vaccinated so far and even the vaccinated ones among those aged over 18 years have not been given the second stage booster dose. The Hyderabad School Parents' Association is totally opposed to



the government's decision to conduct physical education classes from July 1, even though the lifting of the lockdown in Telangana is widely considered a good development in view of the official position that the corona situation is under control.

AP to hold EAPCET 2021 from Aug 19

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh government on Saturday announced the schedule for the Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Common Entrance Test (EAPCET), hitherto known as the Engineering, Agriculture and Medical Common Entrance Test (EAMCET).

Notification for EAPCET will be issued on June 24 and the last date for submission of online applications is July 25 without any late fee and up to August 18 with a late fee of Rs 10,000.

Induction of Rafale aircraft into Indian Air Force by 2022: IAF Chief



An awesome Air Show was the highlight of the Combined Graduation Parade reviewed by Indian Air Force Chief R K S Bhadauria at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal on Saturday.

State aspires to team up with Centre for toys

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government is hoping to up the ante in its quest to become the country's manufacturing hub for toys.

The Union government recently identified the toy sector for thrust under its Atma Nirbhar Bharat initiative and Telangana has positioned itself as a potential hub for toy manufacturing, given its prominence in traditional toys, electronics sector, and cotton production.

According to sources, the toy

industry in India has the potential to grow to \$ 2-3 bn by 2024 and Telangana wants to tap this potential.

The state government has therefore requested the Central government to consider the opportunities available in the state for manufacturing toys.

Sources explained that, when it comes to raw materials like textile, plastic, electronics etc. needed for modern toys; the state has abundant supplies of all of them.

Centre asks states to ensure lockdown opening up is 'carefully calibrated'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The easing of Covid-related lockdown norms has led to crowding in some markets and other places, the Centre said on Saturday, as it urged states to ensure the "extremely important" five-fold strategy of Covid-appropriate behaviour, test-track-treat and vaccination to prevent the spread of the disease.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Tithi : Dashami: 04:20 pm
Nakshatram: Chitra: 06:49 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 05:11 pm - 06:49 pm
Yamagandam: 12:17 pm - 01:55 pm
Varjyam: 11:56 pm - 01:24 am
Gulika: 03:33 pm - 05:11 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 12:52 pm - 02:21 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:51 am - 12:43 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 38/22
Humidity: 32%
Sunrise: 05:41 am
Sunset: 06:51 pm
Current Weather Conditions Updated June 12, 2021 5:00 PM

OBTUSE ANGLE



COVID TOLL ON COUPLES

Till death do them part and not even then

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Flying Sikh Milkha Singh has died, five days after his wife Nirmal Kaur succumbed to Covid. As the pandemic swept through India, many other couples faced the same tragedy -- partners for decades or perhaps beginning their journey together giving up on life, within weeks and sometimes just days of each other. Psychiatrists have a term for it broken heart syndrome. And the legendary Singhs may have epitomised it. While Singh, one of India's great-



In such cases -- where one partner has passed away while the other is still recovering -- medical experts recommend that the news of the death be shared only after the spouse is well out of danger

est sporting icons, died late Friday in a Chandigarh hospital after a long bat-

tle with Covid at the age of 91, his wife, national volleyball player Nirmal

Despite adversities, I will remain with CM: MP Nama

KCR is my strength, Khammam people are my support

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRS MP Nama Nageswara Rao whose residence and offices were searched by the Enforcement Directorate and who along with others was served summons recently sought to clear his name from the charges levelled against the Madhucon Group of companies.

The Khammam MP who is the TRS Parliamentary leader in the Lok Sabha said-people in his constituency knew him and his commitment to His company was charged with diversion of bank loans sanctioned for highway project

Addressing media persons here on Saturday, Nageswara Rao said TRS President

K.Chandrasekhar Rao made him Parliamentary Party leader by reposing faith in him and he would continue to work sincerely to keep KCR's trust in him intact. "Whatever adverse situations I may face, I will be with KCR who is my strength and people of Khammam constituency are my support system," the MP said.

Giving the antecedents of his company, he said he had set up Madhucon 40 years ago and it had executed many prestigious construction projects. The Mumbai-Mangalore project was executed and the company was also laying roads in the difficult terrain along China border.

The MP said that as he

was in politics, the company's affairs were being looked after by his brothers. The Ranchi Expressway, SPV BOT project commenced in 2011 with 30 per cent equity. The NHAI as per agreement should give 80 per cent site and 100 per cent site in 90 days. However even after seven years, the NHAI could not handover major portion of site and thus 60 per cent of work to the extent site was given had been completed. Only 10 per cent of work was in pendency but the company's project was terminated by the NHAI. In the Rs 1,655 crore project, company should invest Rs 463 crore and the remaining by banks and the amount should be

deposited in an escrow account. While the company put its Rs 485 crore, the Bank put only Rs 652 crore. The project got delayed as NHAI could not handover the site. As 50 per cent of work was completed, NHAI said it would give the remaining funds. No one ever complained against the project. In one PIL related to felling of trees, the company was implicated.

Nageswara Rao said he had faith that they would get justice in the arbitration tribunal and wait for its award. The company will cooperate with the ongoing inquiry "I am not even a director in the company as I have been in public life since 20 years," he said.

Lockdown lifted, all curbs go

Continued from page 1

It directed the Education Department to issue instructions and guidelines soon with regard to continuation of online classes, mandatory physical attendance, and other related issues.

The Cabinet sought support and cooperation from people for its decision taken with the chief objective of letting people resume their normal lives and securing the livelihood of common people. It, however, made it clear that people should not be callous with regard to their behaviour just because lockdown has been lifted. They should continue to stick to Covid-appropriate behaviour such as wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, using sanitizer etc., and voluntarily follow the instructions of government.

The State government had imposed restrictions after the cases started spiraling in the second wave of corona across the State, starting with

night curfew from April 20. Subsequently, it brought the State under lockdown from May 12 to contain the virus, initially for 10 days and extended it thrice till June 19.

The State had seen gradual improvement in the pandemic situation after the government instructed the Director General of Police and senior police officials to strictly enforce lockdown regulations and Covid-appropriate behaviour among the public. People were allowed to come out only during the relaxation hours, which were increased gradually during the lockdown period.

The Medical and Health Department, which has been monitoring the cases, positivity rate, and recovery rates, submitted its recommendation for lifting of the lockdown. So far, over 88 lakh people aged above 45 years and those among the high-risk groups in the above 18 years cohort have been vaccinated in the State.

State aspires to team up with Centre for toys...

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As per the infrastructure map of the central government, the ecosystem for manufacturing toys is large in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Tamil Nadu, Telangana and Rajasthan, in that order.

The Indian toys industry is estimated to be \$1.5 bn, accounting for 0.5% of the global market. Toy manufacturers in India are mostly located in NCR, Maharashtra, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu and in some clusters across central Indian states.

The sector is fragmented with 90% of the market being unorganized and 4,000 toy industry units from MSME sector.

Even the Industries Department's Annual Report stated that Telangana is a manufacturing hub and many high-quality toy ancillaries can be easily made available for tie-ups with prospective investors in the sector.

Centre says Indian deposits in Swiss banks...

Continued from page 1

The Ministry, however, said that the deposits have halved but did not give numbers.

Quoting data from Switzerland's central bank, PTI had reported on June 17 that funds parked by Indian individuals and firms in Swiss banks, including through India-based branches and other financial institutions, jumped to a 13-year high of 2.55 billion Swiss francs (over Rs 20,700 crore) in 2020 on a sharp surge in holdings via securities and similar instruments, though customer deposits fell.

In its statement, the Ministry said the figures "do not indicate the quantum of much debated alleged black money held by Indians in Switzerland. Further, these statistics do not include the money that Indians, NRIs or

Mixed reaction to full reopening of edu institutions...

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The HSPA has appealed to the government to reconsider its decision on how good it is to conduct physical classes when experts have warned of the onset of a third wave in six to eight weeks.

K Venkat Sainath of HSPA said, "Under the present circumstances, it is not possible to follow the rules of physical distance, sanitation and wearing a mask in private schools or public schools. The government should take some more time to conduct physical class-

es and discuss with the parent committees before taking a decision on re-opening the schools while assessing the situation from time to time. The HSPA wants the government to make an effort to allay fears that parents have".

Some parents have alleged that this reopening could be a ploy for fee collection and may lead to exploitation in schools run by corporate entities. These parents say that immediately after schools and colleges open, the institutions would make parents and students sign fee commitment forms, after

which the state might close them in the name third wave.

Nagati Narayana, State President, Telangana Parents Association (TPA), said, "Government should intervene and ensure that private schools are given fresh orders to take only tuition fees for this academic year as well. The state should follow the directions given by the Supreme Court on May 5 to pay the tuition fees due last year in installments. The government should regulate institutions to ensure that they do not harass parents for fees".

AP to hold EAPCET...

Continued from page 1

Education Minister A Suresh said EAPCET-2021 would be conducted from August 19 to 25. He said other Common Entrance Tests for admission into various professional courses were proposed to be conducted in the first and second weeks of September.

The CETs include ECET (lateral entry for diploma holders into engineering courses), ICET (for MBA, MCA), LAW CET, EdCET (for B. Ed), PECET (for physical education) and PGECET (M.Tech, M.Pharm). With the state government yet to take a final call on conduct of Intermediate annual exams, the CETs had to be delayed this year.

40 MLAs under KCR watch

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In 2014, the TRS won 63 seats out of the 119 seats in the Telangana Assembly. In the 2018 Assembly elections, the pink party won 88 seats and,

including turncoat legislators, the pink party presently has 101 MLAs in the Assembly. KCR wants to win more than 100 seats in the upcoming Assembly elections. So, he has begun his exercise to remove deadwood.

In the next Assembly elections, KCR will give tickets "only on the basis of winning criteria", said a senior TRS leader. Some of the Ministers are also facing allegations that their family members are

involved in corrupt practices. All told, KCR is determined to hit a hat-trick by winning the next Assembly elections. If this happens, there will be no opposition in Telangana State even for namesake.

Centre asks states to ensure...

Continued from page 1

In a communication to all states and Union Territories (UTs), Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla also said that vaccination against COVID-19, in the present scenario, is critical to break the chain of transmission. Therefore, all state and UT governments should step up the pace of vaccination, to cover maximum number of people in an expeditious manner, he said.

The home secretary said that during the second Covid wave, a significant surge in cases was witnessed in several states and UTs, and many of them imposed restrictions in order to contain the spread of

the infection. "With a decline in the number of active cases, many states and UTs have started relaxing restrictions. I would like to highlight that the decision to impose or ease restrictions has to be taken, based on the assessment of the situation at the ground level," he said. Bhalla said while the opening up of activities, after decline in cases is essential, states and UTs must ensure that the whole process is "carefully calibrated".

"While opening up, it would be extremely important to follow the five-fold strategy of Covid appropriate behaviour, test-track-treat and vaccination," he said.

The home secretary said

regular monitoring of COVID-19 appropriate behaviour is required to prevent relapse.

To reiterate, Covid appropriate behaviour includes mandatory use of masks, hand hygiene, social distancing and also proper ventilation of closed spaces, he said.

"However, easing of restrictions in some states, have led to resumption of crowding of people in markets etc., without adherence to the norms of Covid appropriate behaviour," he said. It is, therefore essential to ensure that complacency does not set in, and there is no let-up in adhering to Covid appropriate behaviour, while opening up activities, the home secretary said.

Rahul comes across as...

Continued from page 1

Congress State chief D K Shivakumar too wished Gandhi saying may he continue to be the voice of the common people standing with them in times of adversity and fighting for their rights.

2nd wave receded 6 times faster than first in TS

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This eventually resulted in increased mortality. In the first 13 months, a total of 1,635 deaths were reported, while in 111 days, a total of 1,911 deaths were reported - from March 1-June 19.

Last year, the first wave of Covid hit in March, although cases were controlled due to

prolonged lockdown. The curve went up and reached the peak in August-September and then fell to lowest level in December. If we compare the first and second waves, the peak of the first wave saw around 3,018 cases, while, during the second wave, it was 3 times more at peak, with 10,122 cases being reported in May. However, the number of

tests conducted in the first wave was far less than that conducted in the second wave. From March 2, 2020 to 1 March, 2021, 87.61 lakh tests were conducted. Over the next 111 days, 86.76 lakh tests were done in Telangana.

During the peak, Telangana had a positivity rate of 9.91 per cent, which came down to 1.1 per cent on Saturday.

According to official data, while at peak 53 per cent of beds in the state were occupied, on Saturday only 12.2 per cent of beds were occupied. Besides, Telangana did not impose lockdown during the peak. It was only on May 11 that the lockdown was imposed when the descent had already begun in the state.

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Cabinet condemns illegal constructions of irrigation projects by AP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State Cabinet has placed its resentment on record against the construction of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation scheme and the Rajolibanda Right Canal by the Andhra Pradesh government and take the 'water theft' by the AP government to the Centre and people in a big way.

The Irrigation department informed the Cabinet in the meeting here on Saturday that Telangana government has already approached the National Green Tribunal against the illegal constructions taken up by the AP government and filed a petition in the Supreme Court.

The Cabinet condemned the AP government for not heeding the directions of the

NGT and the Union Government. As even 17 years after the constitution of Brijesh Kumar Tribunal and seven years after formation of Telangana, the fair share of the State in Krishna waters has not been determined, the Telangana government appealed to the Centre to set up a Tribunal as per Section 3 of Inter-States River Water Disputes Act-1956. However as a case was pending in the Supreme Court, Union Jal Shakti Ministry said that they were unable to constitute a Tribunal and if the Telangana State withdrew its cases, then it would take initiative to resolve the dispute. The Telangana government had withdrawn the case in the Apex Court and written a letter to the Centre but

the Centre's indifference now would go against the interests of Telangana farmers, the Cabinet said.

The Cabinet thus decided to take all measures to protect the interests of Telangana farmers. It said that because of illegal projects of AP government, severe injustice would occur in supply of water for irrigation and drinking water purposes to Palamuru, Nalgonda, Khammam, Warangal, Ranga Reddy districts. Thus the State Cabinet took the following decisions:

Construction of Barrage on Krishna river between Gadwal, Wanaparthy districts near Alampur to divert 60 to 70 tmc of flood water through pipeline and meet the requirements of ayacut

under Palamuru Kalwakurthy projects.

Construction of Pulichintala left canal to provide irrigation facility to two lakh acres in Nalgonda and Suryapet districts. Construction of another LI scheme from Sunkesula reservoir to irrigate one lakh acres in Nadigadda area.

The Cabinet also decided to increase reservoir capacity under kalwakurthy LI scheme to 20 tmc and construct another LI scheme from Nagarjuna Sagar Tail Pond to irrigate two lakh acres under Nagarjuna Sagar project. The Cabinet instructed the irrigation department to take up surveys and prepare DPRs immediately.

It also resolved to generate

electricity through hydel projects in the rainy season to lift water under the Kaleswaram project and reduce the power cost of LI schemes. The Cabinet instructed the Energy department to generate hydel power from the projects with capacity of 2,375 MW on Krishna and Godavari rivers and use it for Kaleswaram, Devadula, AMRP and other LI schemes. The Cabinet also felt that a memorandum should be submitted to the Prime Minister and Union Jal Shakti Minister for stopping the illegal projects taken up by the AP government. The issue should also be raised in the monsoon session of Parliament, in the public forum and in the Courts.

Till death do them...

Continued from page 1

Former Rajasthan chief minister Jagannath Pahadia and his wife, former MLA and Rajya Sabha MP Shanti Pahadia, lived together and died together well almost. He took his last breath at the age of 89 on May 20 in a Gurgaon hospital. She, two years younger, was in the same hospital and passed away three days later.

Both of them lived together for their entire lives and remained politically active and left together for their heavenly abode. They were married in their childhood by their parents and lived happily thereafter," their son Om Prakash Pahadia said. Senior journalists Kalyan Baruah and Nilakshshi Bhattacharya also lost their battle to Covid in a Gurgaon hospital in May. Like the Pahadias, they, too, passed away within three days of each other.

After a lifetime of togetherness, Bikaner-based couple Om Prakash and Manju Devi couldn't, it seems, bear to be apart either. They passed away in November within 15 days of each other.

Married for nearly four decades, the couple stuck together through many ups and downs, including financial woes and the weddings of their five daughters.

Their nephew, who did not want to be named, said it was possible his aunt could not bear the news of her husband's death. While my uncle passed away in the hospital due to Covid complications, I think it was the grief of his death that likely resulted in my aunt suffering a brain haemorrhage that eventually led to her death, he told PTI. In such cases -- where one partner has passed away while the other is still recovering -- medical experts recommend that the news of the death be shared only after the spouse is well out of danger.

According to Mumbai-based psychiatrist Harish Shetty, lack of knowledge helps recovery. Informing the spouse when one is physically devastated can destroy mental equilibrium, thereby causing deterioration. I have been part of teams that have been involved in informing the other spouse after recovery.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT. No. 08/GHMC/MP/EE/2021-22
 Name of Work: Artistic Painting, Bucket cleaning & other.
 Estimate Amount/ECV: Rs. 15.90 Lakhs. Start Date/Last Date & Time for receipts of Bids: 21.06.2021 @ 03.00 PM. - 22.06.2021 @ 03.00 PM. Name & Address Officer: Sri. K. Shankar, Executive Engineer, GHMC, Moosapet Circle-23, Cell: 7995009091.
 For further details can be seen at e-procurement @ www.tenderprocurement.gov.in
 I.D. No. 13005-PPCL/AM/1/2021-22 | EXECUTIVE ENGINEER GHMC, MOOSAPET DIV-23

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Telangana SHE Teams know no bounds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A couple from Hyderabad went to England in search of jobs. There the relationship between the couple went sour and the duo ended up having regular altercations. The husband living her wife in England returned to Hyderabad. The wife, who suspected that her husband was in an affair with another woman in Hyderabad called up the SHE team in Telangana. After receiving the complaint the SHE team called up the husband, who was in Hyderabad and counseled him. Following the counseling the man, who realized his mistake, went back to his wife in England.

This is not an isolated example of the SHE team, a brainchild of CM KCR and established on October 24, 2014, to ensure better safety and security of women, helping a woman from Hyderabad, who is not staying in the city, but in a far-away land. KCR was inspired by similar policing acts in Singapore and decided to replicate it in Telangana.

At present there are more than 100 such teams ensuring protection of women in Hyderabad. The SHE teams, which accept complaints from women over the phone, or through WhatsApp or online, in



recent times have widened their net of operation and are helping women from Hyderabad staying at foreign shores.

SHE teams are now helping the wives of NRIs and other women staying abroad or in other states solve their problems concerning domestic violence, harassment, child abuse etc. Those who are living abroad and do not know how to tell anyone about their problems are complaining to the SHE teams in the city and the friendly police teams are solving their problems in real quick time.

Even during Covid, these teams of the Hyderabad Police are constantly working and standing up for the woman. Other than taking action against harassment of women, the SHE teams are also working to pre-

vent child marriages in Telangana State. The teams work in small groups to arrest eve teasers, stalkers and harassers. They operate mainly in busy public areas in Hyderabad. They, as has already been mentioned, respond to complaints delivered through WhatsApp and other social media.

The SHE team comprises an assistant sub-inspector (ASI), who acts as a leader with four to five male and female constables in each zone, under an assistant DCP rank woman police officer discreetly resolving incoming complaints.

In another case, a couple from Hyderabad went to England to get jobs. They were met with frequent altercations between the two. In this order, the husband came to

Hyderabad. The wife from England complained to the SHE team online that her husband was having an extramarital affair with another woman in Hyderabad. Responding to the complaint, the SHE team in Hyderabad immediately called her husband who was in Hyderabad and Counseling was given to change the mind about the things that happened in England and what was happening in Hyderabad. Realizing the mistake, he went back to England not to do it anymore.

Teams of Telangana police department enhanced for safety and security of women in the state are showing their full potentials in work towards the social-evil crimes on women. Mainly there are more than a

Rachakonda SHE Teams avert 11 child marriages

53 eve teasers booked in nine weeks

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rachakonda She Teams caught 53 persons, including one minor boy for harassing women in the last nine weeks. Apart from this, they averted 11 child marriages during this period. According to officials, 71 cases, including 31 FIRs were booked in the last nine weeks. All those arrested were counselled at the Police Commissioner's Camp Office in LB Nagar. In one incident, J Sravan Kumar Reddy from Jodimetla was arrested for peeping through the ventilator of a bathroom, while a woman was inside. In another case, an elderly man was booked for sexually harassing his daughter-in-law in Vanasthalipuram.

Apart from this, many persons were caught during decoy operations at Kusaiguda, Keesara, Malkajgiri and

Choutuppal. The She Teams also conducted decoy operations in Metro trains and caught 10 male passengers for intruding into the women's compartment.

The She Teams also averted 11 child marriages in Bhongir, Choutuppal, Kusaiguda, Ibrahimpatnam and LB Nagar during this period.

The eve-teasers have attended the counseling session conducted by Rachakonda SHE teams, at the Commissioner Camp office, Alkapuri X roads, LB Nagar, along with their family members. They were counseled by the professional counselors from the Bhumika Women's Collective, a city based non-government organisation. The Rachakonda Police requested citizens to report child marriages on Dial 100 facility or the Rachakonda Police WhatsApp number - 9490617111.

hundred women protection teams in Hyderabad working on all kinds of complaints

from women and regarding women, on the phone and direct complaint and in recent

times, they were also taking the online complaints and mobile complaints from Hyderabadis who are abroad.

SHE Teams stands for Safety, Health and Environment was started on 24 October 2014, is a brainchild of Chief Minister, K Chandrashekar Rao who was impressed by a similar initiative in Singapore.

SHE teams are helping the wives of NRIs and other women abroad for work and some other reasons.

Those who are living abroad and do not know how to tell anyone about their problems like harassment, child abuse, torture, and other evil things on women are complaining to the SHE teams in the city and they too are resolving the problems in a short time.

The team comprises an Assistant Sub-Inspector (ASI), who acts as a lead with four to five male and female constables in each Zone, under Assistant DCP rank woman police officer discreetly resolving incoming complaints. SHE teams are promptly resolving complaints from other countries, other states and districts without any pendency depending on their severity. Even during Covid, these groups were constantly working and standing up for the woman.

T'gana registers 1,362 new Covid cases, 10 deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Saturday reported 1,362 new Covid infections and 10 fatalities, taking the cumulative number of deaths to 3,556 and the total caseload to 6,12,196. The number of active cases in Telangana, as on Friday evening, is 18,568.

Between Friday and Saturday, authorities conducted 1,23,005 Covid tests of which results of 1,206 samples were awaited. On Saturday, 1,813 individuals have recovered with a recovery rate of 96.38 per cent.

The Covid-19 positive cases reported from the districts included five cases from Adilabad, 81 from Bhadradi Kothagudem, 145 from areas under GHMC, 25 from Jagtial, 16 from Jangaon, 25 from Bhupalpally, nine from Gadwal, 3 from Kamareddy, 84 from Karimnagar, 122 from Khammam, five from Asifabad, 26 from Mahabubnagar, 66 from Mahabubabad, 42 from Manjeri, eight from Medak, 66 from Medchal, 24 from Mulugu, 16 from Nagarkurnool, 83 from Nagalonda, 7 from Narayanpet, five from Nirmal, six from Nizamabad, 58 from Peddapalli, 26 from Siricilla, 97 from Rangareddy.

Mayor appeals for donations amid 'severe' blood shortage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City Mayor Gadwal Vijayalakshmi has appealed to people to donate blood at the blood-donation camp to be held at Khaza Mansion Hall in Banjara Hills on Monday in connection with the Mayor's birthday.

She said that Tollywood hero Nikhil would take part as chief guest and would donate blood. The blood donation camp is being conducted for the benefit of the Thalassemia and sickle cell anaemia patients. In fact, the city is in the grip of shortage of blood. Annually, the state requires 1.20-1.50 lakh units of blood. However, prior to Covid, the procurement of blood was put at 2 lakh units per annum. Now the situation has turned for the worse. On account of lockdown, Covid and other problems, people are not volunteering to donate blood. In fact, the number of blood donors has come down by half. Accordingly, she agreed to conduct a camp from 9 am to 4 pm at Khaza Mansion adhering to Covid rules and regulations.

Six new districts in state to get HCA membership

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

HCA President Mohammed Azharuddin has decided to add six new members from the District quota in the Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the Hyderabad Cricket Association (HCA). This decision was taken in view of the increase in the number of districts in TS.

In a statement Azharuddin informed the same. HCA, which is responsible for the management and development of cricket in Telangana, has 10 districts as its members, modeled on the erstwhile combined state of Andhra Pradesh in which Telangana had 10 districts.

In view of the increase in the number of districts in Telangana, it is imperative that HCA memberships should be co-terminus with the reorganisation of districts to ensure equitable distribution of resources and opportunities that will enable youngsters from remote areas to learn and exhibit their skills which will help them realize their dreams. Telangana Cricket Association (TCA) which has been active in the districts by organising tournaments in all districts

except Hyderabad, has been strongly pitching with the BCCI through court orders to grant associate membership to them. If this happens, HCA will lose its relevance in all districts in the state of Telangana except Hyderabad.

HCA president Azharuddin said, "The objects and purpose of HCA 2(d) states 'to encourage the formation of district, regional or other cricket associations and the organization of inter-district and other tournaments to lay down norms for the recognition which achieve uniformity in the structure, functioning and processes of the member association' in line with the implementation of the above vision of the state and the scope of HCA as outlined in 1(A)(ii). I propose to expand the membership of districts in HCA by adding six districts-Manjeri (Sharath Chandra), Sangareddy (Bhikshapathi Matam), Vikarabad (Sravan Reddy), Kamareddy (Sandeep Kumar), Jagtial (Suresh), Siddipet (Mallikarjun). The members named against each of the districts have been appointed as ad-hoc district secretaries to manage cricket in the above districts".



BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY

While 'Relief Riders', a group of cyclists, are known to deliver medicines for elderly people and to cater the requests for assistance ranging from arranging oxygen cylinders, blood plasma units, emergency drugs and even ICU beds. The members of the group on Saturday cleared decomposed material and plastic from the water body and the grounds near Shamirpet lake in the city as part of 'lake clean up drive'.



Hyd Metro services to run from 7 am to 9 pm from Monday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of the government orders regarding removal of the lockdown restrictions, the timings of the Hyderabad Metro Rail service will be rescheduled from Monday.

From Monday, Hyderabad Metro Rail will start its first train from respective terminal stations at 7 am while the last train will start at 9 pm and reach the respective terminating stations by about 10 pm.

For everyone's safety, passengers were also advised to strictly follow the Covid safety guidelines including social distancing, wearing of face masks, hand sanitisation and thermal screening, among others. Passengers were requested to cooperate with staff of Hyderabad Metro Rail in their efforts towards keeping their journey safe.

Body builder gets a new lease of life

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 32-year old bodybuilder, who had a severe Covid-19 infection, got a fresh lease of life at Yashoda Hospitals here in the city. Actor-philanthropist Sonu Sood also came to his aid and played his part in the recovery of the youngster.

An accomplished bodybuilder representing Telangana in multiple competitions, Susheel Kumar Gaikwad from Malkajgiri had developed fever and cough in the last week of April and was diagnosed with Covid and admitted initially in a local hospital. As he was severely afflicted with Covid-19, his condition deteriorated and was not able to maintain saturation despite non-invasive ventilation.

He was then shifted to Yashoda Hospitals, Malakpet and a multidisciplinary team including pulmonologists, intensive care specialists, respiratory therapy, physiotherapy and allied specialists attended to him and the latest Covid treatment including antivirals, steroids and other medication was started. Susheel's lung was almost completely involved with a CT severity score of 25/25. He required intubation and mechanical ventilation besides advanced modes of ventilation, proning, early tracheostomy and other measures were initiated. He also had developed septic shock requiring antibiotics, antifungals besides vasopressors and optimised fluid management.

Sabitha sets target to plant 70L saplings in Rangareddy

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

The forest cover in Telangana has gone up due to the implementation of Haritha Haram programme annually, said Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy.

She said that the target fixed for the seventh phase of the programme is to plant at least 70 lakh saplings in Rangareddy district. Addressing MLAs, ZP chairperson Teegala Anita Reddy, district Collector Amoy Kumar, Additional Collector Pratik Jain and officials of mandals, civic bodies, people's representatives through video conference here on Saturday, the Minister asked them to strive hard to reach the target and save the saplings planted.

She appealed to them, saying, "Let us make Haritha



Haram programme a grand success and let us put our best foot forward to achieve green Telangana." She wanted the people's representatives and authorities to plant saplings in vacant sites, on either side of roads and in suitable places.

She wanted them to set up village parks and pay special attention to plant nurseries in village. Citizens are purchasing water as water sources are

dwindling, if this situation continues, in future we may have to buy oxygen to breathe, said the Minister for Education adding that realising the urgency of the matter, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao launched Haritha Haram programme. At village level, ward members to sarpanches everyone is saddled with responsibility of planting saplings and carefully nursing them.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA									
REVENUE (LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT									
FORM-VII									
(PUBLICATION OF DECLARATION)									
[As per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013, as per the sub-rule 1 of Rule 18 of Central Act 30/2013 and state rule 13 (1)]									
Special Deputy Collector's office file no. A71/2015 Date: 02-28-2021									
Collector's office file number: C2/696/2020 Date: 02-28-2021									
The Government of Telangana District Collector, Manjeri has issued a publication of declaration to acquire Ac 2,25 guntas in Vaddanagali village of Manjeri district for Special Deputy Collector (Vidyanjali) project's displaced persons rehabilitation colony for Kanamam and Vaddanagali villages of Pujara mandal of Manjeri district for the purpose is to build drains in the colony as the government felt the land is necessary for construction of drains and issued a declaration under Section 19(1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013. Therefore, a declaration has been issued to acquire the necessary Ac 2,25 guntas in Vaddanagali village of Manjeri district from those whose names have been mentioned in the below annexure.									
SCHEDULE									
Village: Vaddanagali Mandal: Hajipur District: Manjeri									
Sl. No.	Ac. No.	Area (Guntas)	Part No.	Name of Father/Husband or other	Name of Father/Husband or other	Own	Transferred	Others	Total
1	91/a	0.09	Parta	Rameshwar Sushil Rao	S/o Kamra Rao	Own			0.09
2	92/a-1/a	0.09	Parta	Rameshwar Chakanna	W/o Venkata Rao	Own			0.09
3	92/a-2	0.09	Parta	Rameshwar Sushil Rao	S/o Kamra Rao	Own			0.09
4	95/1-a	0.10	Parta	Mahesh Viswanath	W/o Anjantha Rao	Own			0.10
5	95/1-b	0.10	Parta	Koti Chandra Mohi S/o	Veeranna	Own			0.10
6	95/1-c	0.10	Parta	Koti Sarath Rao	S/o	Own			0.10
7	95/1-d	0.10	Parta	Koti Raju S/o	Veeranna	Own			0.10
8	95/2	0.07	Parta	Jayavel Kotiah S/o	Bharamiah	Own			0.07
9	95/3	0.23	Parta	Mahesh Viswanath	W/o Anjantha Rao	Own			0.23
10	119/2	0.24	Parta	Mahesh Jagannath Rao S/o	Madhava Rao	Own			0.24
11	119/3-a	0.01	Parta	Chavva Krishnaiah S/o	Heeranna	Own			0.01
12	119/3-b	0.01	Parta	Chavva Krishnaiah S/o	Heeranna	Own			0.01
13	119/3-c	0.01	Parta	Mahesh Jagannath Rao S/o	Madhava Rao	Own			0.01
14	121/2-1	0.03	Parta	Sairam Raghav Bhanu Rao	S/o Venkata Rao	Own			0.03
15	121/2	0.04	Parta	Raganna Sathyanarra W/o	Suresh	Own			0.04
Total: 2.26									
The declaration has been issued under the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 and under Section 15 (1) of the Central Act 30/2013, as no objection has been received by land acquisition. Mines of coal, iron-ore, state or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be retained or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed. A copy of the land may be inspected in the office of the Special Deputy Collector, Land Acquisition, Unit-4, Manjeri, and District Collector, Manjeri during working hours on any working day.									
(SAC) Special Deputy Collector, Manjeri (SAC) Special Deputy Collector, Manjeri (SAC) Special Deputy Collector, Manjeri									
DIPR R.O. No. 233/APP/Adm/Pat/2021-22									

Beggar sells infant daughter for Rs 3K

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A seven-day-old baby girl was allegedly sold for Rs 3,000 by her mother, who is a beggar at Quthbullapur in Bachupally here on Thursday. The incident came to light after a dispute over money arose between her and the buyer on Friday. Radha has recently given birth to a girl child, but due to financial constraints and her expenses shooting up after the baby was born, decided to sell the infant. Police said Radha sold the baby for Rs 3,000 to a woman named Shanthi on Thursday. However, Radha started demanding more money from Shanthi, who then approached the Child Welfare Department officials and informed them about the incident.

Induction of Rafale aircraft into IAF by 2022: IAF Chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IAF Chief R K S Bhaduria on Saturday said the induction of 36 Rafale aircraft into the Indian Air Force would take place by 2022. The IAF is absolutely on target with respect to the Rafale induction plan, he said, while responding to a reporters' query on the timeline for receiving all the 36 fighter jets from France. "The target is 2022. It is absolutely on target. I mentioned earlier. Except for one or two aircraft, minor delays because of COVID related issues, but, in fact, some deliveries have been ahead of time. So, broadly, we are absolutely on target on the Rafale induction plan.



On the operationalisation plan, you are aware, we are fully operational. So, in terms of time, we will be absolutely on time," he told reporters after reviewing the Combined Graduation

Parade (CGP) at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal here. In 2016, India had signed an inter-governmental agreement with France to procure 36-Rafale jets at a



cost Rs 59,000 crore. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh had in February said the country would have the entire fleet of the fighter aircraft by April 2022.

Asked for his assessment on the situation in eastern Ladakh on the Indo-China border, the IAF Chief said talks are on between the two sides and the first attempt is to continue with

the parleys and carry out the disengagement at the "balance friction points." According to the IAF chief, so far 11 rounds of talks have been held between the Indian and Chinese commanders and the grounds are being prepared for another one. "The first attempt is to continue with the talks and do the disengagement at the balance friction points. And, of course, follow it up with de-escalation," he said. "However, in parallel, the ground realities are being monitored closely. Whatever is the reality across, in terms of current leftover locations, deployments, any changes, that is being monitored closely and whatever actions are

required on our part, we are taking, Bhaduria said. On Phasing out MIG 21s from the fleet, Bhaduria said the current squadron of the aging aircraft will take place in the next two to three years depending on their life and they will be replaced by Light Combat Aircraft. "As far as the phase out plan is concerned for this current squadron of MIG 21, there is a plan... In another 2 to 3 years they are being phased out depending on them as soon as they get to their life. There is already an induction plan. You are aware four Squadrons of LCA have been ordered. They will start inducting in the three and half years from now.

BJP splits into two groups in Huzurabad?

MARTHI SUBRAHMANYAM
HYDERABAD

The BJP is apparently split into two groups with one group supporting former minister Enugala Peddi Reddy and another supporting Eatala Rajender in Huzurabad.

As such, Eatala Rajender, who joined the BJP in Delhi, returned to Hyderabad amidst tumultuous welcome by his large posse of fans.

Eatala is reported to be facing rough weather in his Huzurabad due to alleged non-cooperation by the BJP seniors.

Eatala not calling on Peddi Reddy, who is in charge of Huzurabad Assembly constituency, even for the sake of courtesy and not seeking his support has become a moot point in the party circles.

Peddi Reddy, who plans to run for the next Assembly elections from Huzurabad, set up his office and running the party activities. He found himself in a bind, with Eatala, resigning from the TRS and



joining the BJP.

Peddi Reddy was apparently angry at Eatala Rajender not taking him into confidence while admitting Eatala into the BJP.

It may be recalled that Peddi Reddy, at a recent media conference, warned of an impending tsunami in the party if Eatala was admitted into the BJP. However, he questioned the BJP leadership for taking a decision without consulting him.

Neither Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay nor Union Minister Kishan Reddy took Peddi Reddy into confidence on the issue.

Peddi Reddy's followers are angry at Eatala Rajender not calling on him either prior to joining the party or upon joining the party.

Peddi Reddy's aides feel that it is not just suffice for Eatala to join the BJP consulting the leadership at Hyderabad and Delhi. Going by Eatala not consulting Peddi Reddy, his followers try to reason saying that Eatala would only encourage only those who have crossed over to the BJP from the TRS.

In this backdrop, Peddi Reddy abstaining from field officers' meeting held at Huzurabad became a moot point. Though Peddi Reddy

was very much in Huzurabad till Friday evening, he apparently chose not to attend the meeting. His followers also did not attend the meeting. It indicates vertical split in Huzurabad constituency unit of the BJP.

Several councillors of the BJP in Huzurabad and many single window directors have resigned from the BJP to join the TRS. When approached for his clarification, Peddi Reddy said that he reached Hyderabad to get his father admitted to a hospital. He claimed that he has no intimation about the field officers' meeting. "As my father is indisposed, I reached Hyderabad to get him admitted to a hospital."

Not only Eatala, but also the top leaders of the BJP in the constituency are apparently not giving due respect to Peddi Reddy, causing severe indignation to his followers.

They accuse Eatala of not even giving information to Peddi Reddy about the rally taken out by him in Huzurabad

soon after his return from Delhi.

Some say that the information was sent to Peddi Reddy only on the date of the rally, objecting to the practice.

An ordinary mandal level BJP leader called up Peddi Reddy to alert him about field officers' meeting, causing much heart-burn to Peddi Reddy.

Later, district unit of the party president Krishna Reddy called up Peddi Reddy to inform him about the meeting.

The invitation circulated through WhatsApp about field officers' meeting included the names of Bandi Sanjay, Eatala Rajender and district in-charge Premender Reddy, sending out a message that Peddi Reddy has nothing to do with Huzurabad Assembly segment. This has upset the Peddi Reddy's followers.

A senior leader in the party, who wished not to be named, criticised that Telangana president of the BJP Bandi Sanjay should learn how to respect the party seniors.

SEC: Register fresh voters, set up godowns to store EVMs soon

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

State Election Commissioner Shashank Goyal has asked district Collectors to register new voters, incorporate changes in voters' list and set up godowns meant for storing Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) within 15 days.

Addressing the Collectors through virtual mode on Saturday, he asked the district Collectors to take steps to send the EVMs to godowns after setting up godowns.

He asked them to appoint a district level EVM nodal officer entrusting him with their security and maintenance.

The SEC asked them to incorporate changes to voters' list, rectifying the mistakes, through changes suggested in form-6, form-7, form-8 and form-8A.

To monitor the election expenses of contestants in

'Avoid duplication in voters' list'

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

State Election Commissioner Shashank Goyal has asked the district collector to take steps to avoid duplication of names in voters' list and sensitise the newly-registered voters to download their electronic photo identity cards from online.

Responding to the SEC, District Collector Krishna

Aditya said that the construction of godowns to store EVMs would be completed in two months. He said that the registration of voters would take place round the clock.

District additional collector YV Ganesh, RDO Srinivas, Panchayat Raj DE Venkateswarlu, collectorate election superintendent Ravi Kumar and others were present.

elections, he asked the district collectors to appoint to master trainers.

Responding to the directions, Nagarkurnool district Collector Sarman said that godowns to store EVMs would be completed as early as possible. He told the SEC

that measures to provide right to vote to all those who crossed 18 years in the district would be provided.

Kollapur RDO Hanuma Naik, Collectorate administrative officer Karthik and others were present at the meeting.

TRS put TS development on fast track in seven yrs: Harish

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Saturday said that the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will tour Siddipet district on Sunday and will inaugurate MLA camp office, City Police Commissionerate on the outskirts of the city and integrated office complex.

Inspecting the integrated office complex prior to CM's visit, Harish Rao said that the CM would stay in the district from 11 am to 2 pm.

After inaugurating the integrated district offices' complex, he would address a meeting of the elected people's representatives and officials. He said that the TRS achieved development, which did not take place in the past seven decades, of the state in just seven years.

The district integrated offices complex was set up for greater administrative convenience and also for the benefit of the people and employees.



1K cops deployed for CM's visit

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Commissioner of Police Siddipet D Joel Davis said that they will deploy 1,250 Police personnel for Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's visit to Siddipet district on Sunday. The Chief Minister will be coming to Siddipet on Sunday at 11 am in a chopper to inaugurate new Integrated Collectorate Complex, Police Commissionerate building and MLA Camp office. Addressing the police

personnel, drafted for security arrangements for CM's visit, the Commissioner said that they have divided the security routes into 15 sectors. Asking them to report at their allotted places by 7 am on Sunday, Davis said that police were issuing white colour passes to revenue officials and other department staff and blue passes to media persons. Instructing them not to allow any person without passes, he asked them to behave properly with the people.

20 injured as lorry hits bus

PNS ■ WARANGAL

At least 20 passengers sustained injuries, some of them fractures, as an RTC bus which they were going towards Jayashankar Bhupalpally, was rammed by a lorry on the outskirts of Mandharipeta village of Shayampet mandal near Parkal town in the district on Saturday.

The injured have been shifted to Parkal civil hospital and MGM Hospital in Warangal for the treatment. Both driver and conductor of the bus P Ravi and J Ravi Kumar respectively also suffered injuries in the incident. The front portions of the bus as well as the lorry were mangled due to the impact of the collision. However, the police said that only eight of them suffered serious injuries.



Rahul is visionary and man of people: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday stated that former president of All India Congress Committee Rahul Gandhi is a visionary and a man of the people.

He was speaking at state party headquarter, Gandhi Bhavan, on the occasion of birth day of Rahul Gandhi. On the instructions of AICC the state PCC has celebrated the birthday in a simple manner.

Student wing of Congress - NSUI has organised free vaccination camp and Other Backward Classes Cell and Minority Cell have organized free rice and groceries distribution at Gandhi Bhavan. Uttam Kumar Reddy inaugurated the camps and addressed the party workers.

He said that as Rahul Gandhi was a visionary he has forewarned the central government about the present crisis nearly 15 months ago. But the Bharatiya Janata Party



leaders made light of him. He said that Rahul Gandhi gives preference to well being of the people and not to the posts.

"Though Rahul has been offered Prime Minister and Union Minister posts, he has refused them and engaged himself in the service of the people. Even though he has born in a family which has occupied higher public offices, he did not show interest on them and dedicated himself to the service of the nation," Uttam Kumar Reddy emphasized. The TPCC chief reminded that grandfather, grandmother, and father of Rahul worked as Prime Ministers of the country and higher posts are not new to the young leader.



Secretary to CM Smita Sabharwal planted a sapling here on Saturday on her birthday as part of The Green India Challenge programme initiated by Member of Parliament, Santosh Kumar.

CPI protests over hike in fuel prices

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CPI and CPM activists, led by CPI state secretary Takkallapalli Srinivasa Rao, staged protest at Ekasila Park here on Saturday demanding the state government to bring the petrol and diesel prices under the GST as the hike in prices of petroleum products is breaking the back of the people.

He said that the prices of petrol and diesel were increased at least 22 times this month alone, burdening the people. The hike in petroleum prices will affect all other sectors

of economy and push up prices of essential commodities due to the hike in transport costs.

He said that the common man is caught between the lockdown and inflation. Instead of having nutritious food during the Covid period, the people are suffering from hunger, he lamented.

The government has been putting more and more burden on the common man by hiking the prices of petrol and diesel, instead of coming to the rescue of those who are in difficulties due to loss of livelihood, he pointed out.



Survey of SLIP, BLIP under way

PNS ■ ZAHEERABAD

Survey on proposed Sangame shwara Lift Irrigation project and Basaweswara Lift-irrigation project have commenced to provide irrigation facility to 2.19 lakh acres in Zaheerabad and Sangareddy regions. The company will complete the survey in 60 days against the 90 days time.



MP Santosh Kumar inaugurated the biggest of Chennai Shopping Malls at Kukatpally here on Friday and said that all needs of textiles and jewellery were housed under one roof at the mall. MLA Arikepudi Gandhi, MLC Naveen Kumar, MLC Srinivas Reddy, corporators Raju and Devi Ranga Rao and others took part in the inaugural function.

3 of family hacked to death

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALPALLY

A farmer and his two sons were hacked to death in broad daylight on Saturday in Jayashankar Bhupalpally dis-

trict. In a shocking incident, three persons of a tribal family were hacked to death at their fields by their 'relatives' at Gangaram village of Kataram mandal in the district on Saturday.

The police officials arrested the accused Mahankali Naik, Bhaskar Naik and Sardar Naik.

The deceased were identified as Lavudya Manju Naik aged around 60 years and his sons Sariah and Bhaskar.

DC inspects nurseries, urban park

PNS ■ MEDAK

District Collector S Harish on Saturday visited nursery in Venkatrao Nagar, the urban park and nurseries in housing board colony along with municipal commissioner Srihari and exhorted the people of the town to cooperate with the district administration for maintaining Medak as a clean and green city.

The total forest area shrunk to less than the prescribed 33 per cent of the landed area, he said blamed rapid urbanisation for the same. It has been upsetting ecological balance, he said. He said that a plan was prepared to plant 35 lakh saplings in the seventh phase of Harita Haram.

SCCL: 830 get jobs on compassionate grounds

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

The Singareni Collieries Company Limited (SCCL) GM for RG-1 K Narayana on Saturday handed over appointment orders to dependents of 16 SCCL employees, who have laid down their office on grounds of medical invalidation as per the National Coal Wage Agreement.

The GM put the total number of persons appointed on compassionate grounds in the RG-1 in two years at 830, including 18 women.

He said that the appointment orders on compassionate grounds were given in the shortest period of time with the initiative of Chairman-cum-Managing Director of SCCL CMD N Sridhar.

The employees who have

applied for medical board were declared unfit by it, leading to the SCCL giving appointment orders to their dependents.

He expressed concern over increasing the youth among the employees and said that the future of the company is in the hands of the youth.

The recruits should learn skills from senior employees and should strive to improve productivity of the company, the CMD said.

Besides the GM, TBGKS vice-president Gandra Damodar Rao, DGP (Personnel) Ch Lakshminarayana, GM office in-charge Satyanarayana, senior project officer Sravan, senior security officer Veera Reddy and others were present on the occasion.

Bandi Sanjay: CM failed in protecting rights of T'gana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay thanked Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat for accepting legal advice to set up a new tribunal under ISRWD Act, 1956, Section-3. He expressed confidence that the centre will do justice to the Telangana state by examining the issue properly.

Bandi Sanjay has alleged that the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao failed to protect the Telangana state rights in Krishna River waters. In a statement issued on Saturday, Bandi Sanjay said that the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal KWDT-II awarded 1005 TMCs of water to the united Andhra Pradesh state in 2011. However, the award was not published as the case is in the

Supreme Court on the issue. Meanwhile, a separate Telangana state was formed in 2014. KCR government filed a case in the Supreme Court in 2015 urging it to set up a new tribunal for four states-Maharashtra, Karnataka, Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states as per ISRWD Act, 1956, Section-3. The case is still going on in the Supreme Court.

However, the KWDT-II opined that it will take up inquiry into water allocations in between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states under Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, Section-89 as the case is going on in Supreme Court.

Bandi Sanjay said that KCR has been blaming the centre for the last 7 years alleging that the centre didn't hand over the issue to the new tribunal under

ISRWD Act, 1956, Section-3. However, the centre is making it clear that the case is in the Supreme Court and it is not possible to set a new tribunal till the case ends. The centre also suggested KCR withdraw the case in the Supreme Court but KCR didn't care.

He said that he addressed a letter to the Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekawat asking the latter to stop the Andhra Pradesh state from constructing Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme against the law. Responding to the letter, Shekawat convened an Apex Council meeting on October 6, 2020 and informed Telangana state to withdraw the case filed in Supreme Court to set up a new Tribunal while taking legal advice.

DC: Strive to improve sanitation in villages

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

District Collector Rajarshi Shah has directed panchayat secretaries to work with the objective of achieving cleanliness in the villages and improve greenery.

He was inspecting the village sanitation works, village nurseries, dumping yards and development of village gardens in Kandi, Indrakaran, Yeddumylaram and Kaulampet villages of Kandi mandal of the district on Saturday. ZP CEO, District Rural Development Officer, DLPD also visited villages separately in the mandal.

ZP CEO Yellaiah visited Byatol, Aarutla, Begumpet, Uttaralli, Makta Allur villages, while District rural development officer Srinivasa



Rao visited Rao Cherlagudem, Topugonda, Julka and Cheryal villages.

DLPD Satish Reddy visited Mamidipalli, Vaddennaguda, Tunikila Thanda, Yerthanur Thanda and Yerdanur village panchayat.

They inspected the maintenance of sanitation in the villages, growing of plants in nurseries, village gardens, segregation sheds, burial grounds, drainages and roads.

MP govt to set up Covid-19 pandemic research institute

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The Madhya Pradesh government has decided to set up a state-level research institute for the COVID-19 pandemic and other diseases here, state medical education minister Vishvas Sarang said on Saturday.

He said the proposal was approved by Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Friday.

"A state-level public health institute will come up in Bhopal for the research of the COVID-19 pandemic and other diseases including contagious diseases," Sarang told reporters.

He said various degree and diploma courses will also be run by this institute and experts of various fields will be posted there. The minister said the state government has also decided to run a "pink" campaign in Madhya Pradesh to detect cancer among women. "It was seen that women



don't open up on diseases like cancer due to family and social reasons. We have decided to run a pink campaign in urban areas, small towns and panchayat level for the examination of women's health," Sarang said, adding health check-up camps will soon be organized under this initiative.

Responding to a query, Sarang said the state government was trying to check the 'black fungus' or mucormycosis infection at an early stage. "The state government has ensured adequate availability of Amphotericin-B injection in the treatment of mucormycosis," he added.

"It was seen that women don't open up on diseases like cancer due to family and social reasons. We have decided to run a pink campaign in urban areas, small towns and panchayat level for the examination of women's health," Sarang said

'Masses made aware about water conservation'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is leaving no stone unturned to connect with the people and make them aware about water conservation, Minister of State for Jal Shakti Rattan Lal Kataria said.

Addressing the 27th Water talk organised by the National Water Mission (NWM) under the Ministry of Jal Shakti, he said the ministry has started massive awareness campaigns to sensitise people about the judicious use of water and to conserve it.

"The ministry is leaving no stone unturned to connect with masses and to translate the vision of the prime minister i.e. to make water everyone's business," he said.

In the last two years, Kataria said the ministry has started flagship programmes and campaigns like the Jal Shakti Abhiyan-1, the Jal Shakti Abhiyan - 'Catch the Rain: Where it falls when it falls'.

Rahul's b'day: YC holds vax camps, distributes ration kits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress' youth wing observed former party president Rahul Gandhi's birthday by distributing ration kits among the needy and organising vaccination camps on Saturday. Gandhi turned 51 on Saturday. He has decided not to celebrate his birthday in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Indian Youth Congress, in a statement, said the day was observed as 'Sewa Diwas' as part of which financial assistance was offered to the unemployed and disabled people. The Delhi Congress also distributed face masks, medicine kits and cooked meals for free to the poor in the national capital.

"Ration distribution programmes are being organised at many places in Delhi. Free vaccination camps have been set up for citizens across India and financial assistance is being provided to citizens who have lost their jobs due to the Covid crisis and to disabled



people," Youth Congress president Srinivas BV said.

Congress workers also distributed ration to women cab drivers and organised a free vaccination camp for sex workers at GB Road in Delhi.

All India Congress Committee general secretary K C Venugopal said Rahul Gandhi provided "all possible help to the countrymen in such a dire situation" during the coronavirus pandemic.

"From time to time, by alerting the Central government about their responsibility and duty, he showed the path of excellent and remarkable contribution in the public interest, which is a source of inspiration for all countrymen," he said.

Stalin greets Rahul on his birthday

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Saturday greeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on his 51st birthday, praising his "selfless, untiring work to establish an egalitarian India in every aspect." "Wishing my beloved brother @RahulGandhi on his birthday and I join others in praising his selfless, untiring work to establish an egalitarian India in every aspect," Stalin tweeted. "His commitment to the ethos of the Congress Party has been exemplary," the DMK President added.



Take warning of Covid third wave seriously: Maha Dy CM to people

PNS ■ PUNE

Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Saturday asked people not to lower their guard against COVID-19 in view of the possible third wave of the pandemic, and warned them against visiting tourist attractions in the present scenario just because restrictions have been eased.

He said people need to take the warning about the third wave seriously. Pawar was talking to reporters here after holding a meeting with officials to review the coronavirus situation in Pune district.

He also said that if people continue to go out of the district for tourism purposes, the administration will have no other option but to impose a 15-day quarantine regime on such people after their return home.

Pune city is under level-II of the state government's unlock plan. The coronavirus numbers are coming down, but as a preemptive measure, it has been decided that all the shops under the non-essential category, malls, hotels, and restaurants will remain closed on

weekends, Pawar said.

"This system will continue for the next Saturday and Sunday. After that, if the situation improves further, a decision regarding (lifting) the weekend restrictions will be taken after a review," he said.

The deputy CM said that during the meeting, police officials and public representatives expressed concern over people heading to Mahabaleshwar, Lonavala and other tourist places in large numbers over the weekends.

"I don't understand why people are doing this. There is a need to take COVID-19 infection seriously. A lot of people have started going to tourist places out of the state; some go for trekking. If this continues, there will be no option but to quarantine people going out of the district for 15 days. We may have to issue such orders," he warned.

On the possible third wave of the pandemic, Pawar said that it is around the corner in America, England and Africa. Despite a large-scale vaccination in America and England, the danger of the third wave still looms large there, he added.



Mekedatu: AIADMK flays Karnataka CM, asks TN govt to safeguard farmers' interest

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The opposition AIADMK on Saturday lashed out at the "unilateral" decision of Karnataka government to proceed with the Mekedatu dam project across river Cauvery and urged the Tamil Nadu government not to compromise a wee bit on the state's rights over the issue.

Leader of Opposition and AIADMK Co-coordinator K Palaniswami slammed Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa for saying his state will go ahead with the project after obtaining necessary clearance from the Centre. "The unilateral announcement of Karnataka chief minister

B S Yediyurappa to go ahead with the construction of Mekedatu dam, especially when a contempt of court case is pending in the Supreme Court, is highly condemnable," he said in a statement. On Friday, Yediyurappa tweeted "the Mekedatu project, which is significant for the state of Karnataka, is aimed at drinking water supply." "The NGT (National Green Tribunal), which was hearing a petition seeking a stay on the project, dismissed it and

endorsed Karnataka's argument. The project will be started as soon as possible after getting all the clearances," he said. Palaniswami further said the Tamil Nadu government should pay close attention to the developments in the neigh-

bouring state and strive to get the Cauvery water due for the state. "Tamil Nadu government should not allow Karnataka's attempt a wee bit and take steps to safeguard Tamil Nadu farmers' livelihood," he added. During his tenure as chief minister he had ensured the state's rights on the issue by prevailing upon Prime Minister

Narendra Modi to halt the construction of the dam and said the delta districts in Tamil Nadu would become a desert if the dam was built. He had also initiated a contempt case in the supreme court on the matter, Palaniswami said. He further said the Cauvery river meets the drinking and agricultural needs of several districts in

Tamil Nadu. People are well aware that late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa's government won many legal battles on this front, he said and recalled the then ruling AIADMK's initiative in ensuring the Cauvery Water Management Authority and the Cauvery Water Regulatory Commission were set up.

K'taka, Maha agree to resolve water-sharing issues

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka and Maharashtra on Saturday decided to have better coordination and communication regarding flood management and water supply in the drought-hit regions of both the states.

Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa and state Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai held a high level meeting with Maharashtra Water Resource Minister Jayant Patil here to resolve the water related issues between the two states. Addressing reporters after the meet, Yediyurappa said both the states have agreed to share real time data on rainfall and water release from reservoirs both in Krishna and Bhima basin in order to manage the floods effectively.

"We discussed various issues regarding flood management in Krishna and Bheema river basins. It was decided to have better coordination and communication between two states at ministerial level, Secretaries level and at the field level," the CM said.



It was resolved that a technical team will work towards getting four TMC water from Maharashtra and in return release water to the drought hit areas of the western state, the Chief Minister said. The two states also agreed to complete the Dudhganga dam project at the earliest and Maharashtra will also fund it. "Maharashtra will also supply enough funds for the completion of Dudhganga dam," Patil said in the press conference. Pointing to the shortage of water

during April and May in the Krishna basin region, Bommai said since 2013, Maharashtra has been charging money for the release of water to the state. However, it has been agreed upon that Karnataka will not pay but will supply water to the drought-hit Jath taluk of Maharashtra during the rainy season. For the past three years, the state has been witnessing flood in Krishna and Bhima rivers following downpour in its catchment areas in Maharashtra.

J'khand on high alert as black fungus cases rise

PNS ■ RANCHI

With a rise in mucormycosis or black fungus cases in Jharkhand, the state government has directed the health machinery to be on high alert and extend all possible care to the affected people, an official said on Saturday.

A total of 79 confirmed and 53 suspected cases have been reported to date in 18 of the 24 districts, he said.

"The state has thus far registered 26 deaths due to mucormycosis, while 50 people have recovered from it," Ravi Shankar Shukla, Mission Director of the National Health Mission (NHM) Jharkhand, told PTI.



Mucormycosis is a fungal infection leading to prolonged morbidity and even mortality among COVID-19 patients.

Its treatment requires a multi-disciplinary approach consisting of ENT specialists, and eye, neuro and dental maxillofacial surgeons, besides administering Amphotericin-B injection as an

antifungal medicine.

The state government has declared mucormycosis as an epidemic amid the rising number of cases.

"On the direction of Chief Minister Hemant Soren, black fungus has been declared as an epidemic," the CMO had tweeted.

In May, the state government had asked the Integrated Disease Surveillance Programme (IDSP) to maintain records related to the lethal fungal infection. Civil surgeons in all the districts were asked to report fresh confirmed and suspected cases of mucormycosis to the IDSP. "We are keeping a vigil on the situation and all hospitals have been asked to report any case on an urgent basis. We have asked for providing proper treatment to such patients," a health official said.

Ranchi has reported the highest number of cases at 46, of which 29 are confirmed and 17 are suspected, while eight patients have died.

Kerala Cong chief denies CM's allegation of kidnap plot

PNS ■ KOCHI

Kerala PCC chief K Sudhakaran on Saturday denied Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan's allegation of having plotted to kidnap his two children decades ago and asked why a police complaint had not been registered then.

Hitting out at Vijayan a day after he levelled the allegation during his press meet to give details of COVID-19, Sudhakaran wanted to know why no complaint had been filed.

"Vijayan raised so many allegations. It was the press conference of the Chief Minister. We saw the real Pinarayi Vijayan yes-

terday (Friday), who came out of the PR agency's cover. His stance was that of a political criminal. I cannot reply like him. My post and stature does not allow me to stoop to his level," Sudhakaran said.

"Vijayan alleged that a late friend of mine had told him that I had planned to kidnap Vijayan's children. Why has he not revealed the details, why has he not complained to the police? He said he had not revealed it to anyone. Not even to his wife. Usually, if there is any threat against kids, one will inform the mother as they are always there to protect the kids. Is that how a father reacts?," Sudhakaran asked.

YouTuber arrested in TN for making 'obscene' comments



Kumar was picked up from Dharmapuri on Friday, following a complaint, even as his wife had been arrested earlier for her alleged role in managing the said channels. The complainant accused Madan of using highly objectionable, obscene and disparaging remarks against women in his YouTube channels with sexually explicit language, besides streaming the banned PubG online game. The accused had eight lakh subscribers and made money by involving in banned online games, besides uploading the objectionable videos, they said.

A YouTuber has been arrested for allegedly making disparaging and obscene remarks against women in his online channels and a game portal, and two high-end luxury cars among others were recovered from him. According to police, the accused Madan alias Madan

Software to help identify patients requiring ventilator support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Saturday said that a new software -- Covid Severity Score -- has been developed to identify patients who require ventilator support as well as detect emergency and intensive care unit needs early.

The software consists of an algorithm that measures a set of parameters, and then identifies patients likely to require ventilator support in an intensive care unit (ICU), aid on time referral and make necessary arrangements before an emergency sets in. It can also help in reducing

hospital referral for those unlikely to require critical care support, thus freeing more beds, the Science and Technology Ministry said in a statement.

The software scores the parameters against a pre-set dynamic algorithm multiple times for each patient and allocates a Covid Severity Score (CSS), mapping it in a graphical trend, it said.

It measures symptoms, signs, vital parameters, test reports and comorbidities of COVID-19 patient and scores these against the pre-set dynamic algorithm, thus allocating the CSS, the statement said.



"The technology is being used in three community Covid care centres at Kolkata and its suburbs, including a 100-bed government mandated Covid care centre at Barrackpore, Kolkata," the ministry said.

Noting that sudden ICU and other emergency requirements during the pandemic have been a challenge for hospitals to manage, the ministry said timely information about such situations would help manage

the health crisis better.

The algorithm has been developed jointly by the Foundation for Innovations in Health, Kolkata, with support from the Science for Equity, Empowerment and Development (SEED) division of the Department of Science and Technology.

IIT Guwahati, Dr Kevin Dhaliwal, University of Edinburgh and Dr. Sayantan Bandopadhyay, formerly WHO (SE Asia Regional Office) also collaborated in developing CSS, according to the statement.

This technology has been made available at primary care e-health clinics in resource

poor settings through SEED project support.

Frontline health workers trained in the National Skills Qualifications Framework (NSQF) aligned model and certified by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) are trained to record all these parameters in a tablet computer which has the software loaded in it, the statement said.

The CSS is regularly monitored multiple times by 'remote' specialist doctors thus reducing the doctor's consultation time per patient and reducing the doctors travel requirement, it said.

Will continue fight till L'dweep gets justice: Ayesha Sulthana



Filmmaker Ayesha Sulthana, who was booked for sedition in Lakshadweep, on Saturday said she has not done anything against the country so far and would continue her fight till the islanders get justice. She was talking to the media at the airport in Kochi before leaving to the archipelago to appear before the Kavarratti police for questioning on Sunday in connection with the case. She said her advocate was also accompanying her and she would cooperate with the police. "I believe that I will get justice as I have not done anything wrong. My words were wrongly interpreted and I have already mentioned everything in detail in my recent Facebook post," Sulthana said. On her controversial usage of 'biological weapon' during a television discussion, she said all these controversies had happened based on that particular word. "I have not done anything against the country. All these have happened over a word I uttered. So, it is my responsibility to prove that I have not done anything wrong. I will continue my fight till my land and people get justice," she added.

No intention to delay fixing minimum wages: Labour Min

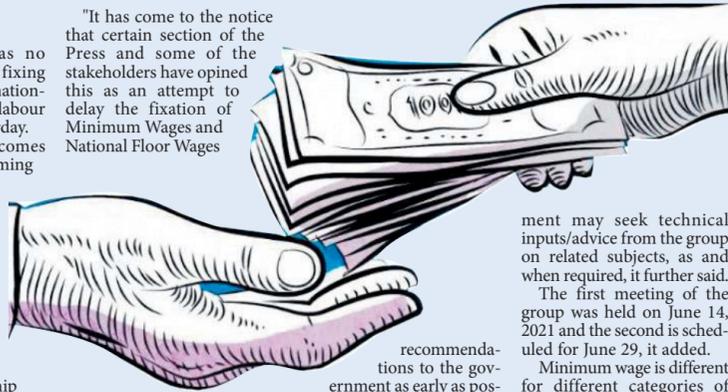
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has no intention to delay fixing minimum wages and national floor wages, the labour ministry said on Saturday.

The clarification comes amid reports that forming an expert group on the issue with three-year term is an attempt to delay fixing minimum wages and national floor wages.

Earlier this month, the ministry announced that the Centre has constituted an expert group under the chairmanship of renowned economist Ajit Mishra to provide technical inputs and recommendations on fixing these wages. The tenure of the expert group is three years.

"It has come to the notice that certain section of the Press and some of the stakeholders have opined this as an attempt to delay the fixation of Minimum Wages and National Floor Wages



by the government. This is clarified that the government does not have any such intention and the Expert Group will submit its

recommendations to the government as early as possible," the ministry said.

The tenure of the expert group has been kept as three years so that even after fixing minimum wages and national floor wages, the govern-

ment may seek technical inputs/advice from the group on related subjects, as and when required, it further said. The first meeting of the group was held on June 14, 2021 and the second is scheduled for June 29, it added.

Minimum wage is different for different categories of workers.

National floor wage refers to the minimum level of wage that is applicable to all categories of workers across the country.

HDFC Bank to buy stake worth Rs 1,906 cr from parent HDFC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Bank on Saturday said its board has given its approval to buy more than 3.55 crore shares in group firm HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company for over Rs 1,906 crore from the parent company HDFC.

"The board of directors of HDFC Bank at its meeting held on June 18, 2021 has approved the purchase of 3,55,67,724 equity shares of Rs 10 each, representing 4.99 per cent of the outstanding issued and paid-up capital of HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd from HDFC Ltd," HDFC Bank said in the filing.

HDFC is the promoter and related party of the bank. The purchase is to happen at a price determined on an independent evaluation report, subject to receipt of necessary approvals including regulatory approvals and approval from shareholders of the bank, it said.

Top govt officials, academicians to take part in Healthcare summit

■ WASHINGTON

Top government officials, leaders from the industry and academicians from India and the US would take part in the annual India-US Biopharma and Healthcare Summit virtually next week that would bring together stakeholders from the two countries.

NITI Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant, Pfizer CEO Dr Albert Bourla, National Institutes of Health (NIH) Director Dr Francis Collins and Food and Drug Administration (FDA) Acting Commissioner Dr Janet Woodcock are scheduled to address the summit.

Being held in the backdrop of the COVID-19 pandemic, that badly hit the United States last year and has had a devastating impact on India this year, the 15th edition of the annual summit on June 22 is being organised by Boston-based USA India Chambers of Commerce (USAIC).

Leaders from the industry, academicians and top government officials from India and the US are expected to discuss



areas of cooperation and emerging trends in drug discovery and development, the organisers said on Friday.

"The pandemic has demonstrated the need for global collaboration and partnership in drug and vaccine development, clinical research and trials, health data analytics to provide solutions at a faster pace," Kant said. In a statement, Kant congratulated USAIC for bringing global BioPharma leaders together to discuss emerging trends in drug development, research and innovation and initiating the dialogue on potential use of data science to boost the sector.

"With a focus on moonshot sectors in pharma such as vaccines, orphan drugs,

biosimilars and complex generics, India is looking at ways to incentivise research, encourage industry academia collaboration and attract global scientific talent to strengthen its R&D ecosystem," he said. Looking forward to hearing from global leaders during the USAIC Summit on ways to enhance international collaboration to conduct high-quality and breakthrough research and place pharmaceutical industry amongst the top industries in the world, Kant said currently contributing to 3.6 per cent of global pharma market, India aims to increase its share to seven per cent in the coming decade by creating global champions.

MONEY MATTERS

Alkem Laboratories gets two observations from USFDA



Alkem Laboratories on Saturday said the US health regulator has issued two observations after inspection of its St Louis-based manufacturing facility.

The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) had conducted an inspection of the company's manufacturing plant at St Louis, USA from June 14-18, 2021. At the end of the inspection, the company received Form 483 with two observations. Alkem Laboratories said in a regulatory filing. The company shall submit to USFDA within the stipulated timeline, a detailed response to close out all the observations associated with this inspection, the drug firm said. An FDA Form 483 is issued to a firm management at the conclusion of an inspection when an investigator has observed any conditions that in their judgment may constitute violations of the Food Drug and Cosmetic Act and related Acts. It notifies the company's management of objectionable conditions at the facility. Alkem, which has operations spread across multiple territories abroad, produces a complete range of formulations of controlled substances at its finished dosage manufacturing facility in St Louis, Missouri.

MoS Fertiliser takes stock of IFFCO's urea plant in Gujarat



Minister of State for Fertilisers Mansukh L Mandaviya on Saturday visited IFFCO's Kalol plant in Gujarat and took stock of the production progress of 'nano urea'. On May 31, Indian Farmers Fertiliser Cooperative Ltd (IFFCO) introduced the world's

first 'nano urea' in liquid form. Its production has commenced from this month. It is a patented technology of IFFCO developed at its Nano Biotechnology Research Center, Gujarat. IFFCO has priced nano urea liquid at Rs 240 per bottle, which is 10 per cent cheaper than the cost of a bag of conventional urea. "Took stock of the production progress of Nano Urea at the state-of-the-art IFFCO Plant in Kalol, Gujarat. Also flagged off a consignment of 'Nano Urea'," Mandaviya tweeted. Eco-friendly nano urea will ensure economic savings and higher yield for the farmers, he added. According to IFFCO, the use of nano urea by farmers will not only improve soil health and crop productivity but will also reduce the use of chemical fertilisers. The nano urea plant at Kalol has production capacity of 1.5 lakh bottles per day. Besides Kalol, IFFCO plans to construct nano urea plants at its Aonla and Phulpur facilities in Uttar Pradesh in Phase-I by end of this fiscal. In Phase-II, four more plants will be commissioned by 2022-23, producing another 18 crore bottles. Farmers can easily use nano urea. One 500 ml bottle of nano urea is sufficient for spraying two times over an acre of field. Now, instead of carrying a 45 kg bag of urea on their shoulder, farmers can easily use a 500 ml bottle of IFFCO nano urea, it added.

Max Life Insurance ranks 18th amongst best firms to work for



Max Life has also been recognized amongst the top 30 'Best Workplaces in BFSI', and retains its position amongst 'Top 50 Best Workplaces' for the fifth consecutive year of participation, as per the Great Place to Work Institute's ("GPTW") 2021 study. This year, the study covered more than

850 companies, out of which the Top 100 have been selected for the marquee recognition. The recognition is a testament to Max Life's long-standing values-driven culture and 'people-first' practices around employee engagement and talent development. Scoring highly on the GPTW Institute's 'Culture Audit Framework' that evaluated the organization on parameters of human touch, variety, originality, integration, and all-inclusiveness, the Company has achieved its best-ever ranking in the latest survey. Commenting on the announcement, Shailesh Singh, Director & Chief People Officer, Max Life, said, "We are honored to be recognized as one of 'India's Best Companies to Work For'. We are committed to maintaining an environment where the most talented people want to come to work, grow their careers and make a difference every day for our customers. This achievement is dedicated to our employees, partners, and their families, and we look forward to moving up in the ranks in the future." "The Great Place to Work' recognition holds deep credibility with its holistic and credible dual-lens methodology. The GPTW survey curates a list of organizations that build an enabling environment of sustenance, growth, engagement, and work-life balance for their employees. The institute then follows a rigorous and comprehensive assessment covering both employee feedback and implementation of people practices.

'Great demand for products made in Punjab, Haryana'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Amazon India on Saturday said it sees a great demand from global customers for items like hosiery, sports goods and other products, manufactured in Punjab and Haryana.

The company further said its flagship e-commerce exports programme 'Global Selling' lowers the entry barrier for micro, small and medium enterprises to expand their business and launch their brands globally from anywhere in the country.

With over 70,000 exporters from different parts of the country, the programme has emerged as an opportunity for businesses to grow, Amazon India said in a statement.

The exports programme has played a key role in helping thousands of exporters from across India sustain and grow their business while serving people globally during the last 18 months of the pandemic, said Abhijit Kamra, Director- Global Trade at Amazon India.

"We see a great demand for products like apparel, hosiery, sports goods and others from global customers and for products manufactured across Punjab, Haryana and Chandigarh.

"We truly believe that with the right set of tools and technology offered by Amazon Global Selling, exporters in the region can create consumer facing global brands from right here," he said.



Continued to strengthen talent pool by recruiting 19K graduates: Infosys

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani on Saturday said the IT major has continued to strengthen its talent pool by recruiting 19,230 graduates in India and 1,941 outside the country to serve its clients' burgeoning demand for digital acceleration.

Speaking at the company's 40th annual general meeting, Nilekani noted that Infosys is well-positioned for another year of "market-leading performance" in a post-pandemic, cloud-first digital era.

"We continued to strengthen our talent pool by recruiting 19,230 graduates in India and 1,941 - both graduates and associate degree holders - outside India to serve our clients' burgeoning demand for digital



tal acceleration. We expanded our US hiring commitment to 25,000 by 2022 with an additional 12,000 new American jobs across a variety of roles," he said.

He further stated: "As part of our continued expansion into Canada, we also committed to double Infosys' Canadian workforce to 4,000 employees by 2023. In the UK, we

UCO Bank looks to raise up to Rs 500 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned UCO Bank on Saturday said its board will meet next week to consider raising up to Rs 500 crore as tier-II capital. The board of directors will consider the proposal for raising tier-II capital of up to Rs 500 crore at its meeting scheduled to be held on June 23, 2021, the lender said in a regulatory filing. Tier-II capital of a bank consists of undisclosed reserves, revaluation reserves, general provisions and loss reserves, hybrid capital instruments, subordinated debt and investment reserve account.

Tech hiring rebounds in May, says report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Hiring across sectors declined in May, though the tech industry job market rebounded from the pandemic-induced downturn as many technology companies have been on full expansion mode, according to a report.

There was a 2 per cent decline in the overall number of new job posts in May on the SCIEKEY Market Network, a job site, including in sectors like banking with a dip of 12 per cent, retail 16 per cent and FMCG 12 per cent, while there was a growth of 5 per cent in the insurance sector.

However, the data revealed that there was robust demand

SEFL gets Rs 2K cr proposal from US consortium

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Srei Equipment Finance Ltd (SEFL) on Saturday said it has received investment interest of Rs 2,000 crore from US-based Arena Investors LP (Arena) led consortium.

A day earlier, the company had received a Rs 2,200 crore investment proposal from Singapore based Makara Capital Partners Pte Ltd (Makara). The strategic coordination committee has received a term sheet from



Arena Investors LP (Arena), USA and its consortium and their affiliates indicating interest for investment of an aggregate amount of Rs 2,000 crore

subject to terms and conditions contained in the term sheet, Srei Equipment Finance said in a regulatory filing through its parent company Srei Infra.

"The strategic coordination committee, chaired by an independent director, will evaluate the said offer and make recommendation of the board to the company," SEFL said.

The company, hit hard by the economic slowdown due to the coronavirus induced lockdown, has been looking to raise money for some time. Earlier in April this year, it had received investment interest of USD 250 million (around Rs 1,856 crore) from Arena and Makara put together.

Kerala Tourism to serve food in parked vehicles

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala Tourism Development Corporation (KTDC) is launching a facility that serves travellers food inside their vehicles, thus allaying health risks while eating in public spaces amid Covid-19.

'In-Car Dining' will help customers remain in their parked vehicles, to where orders placed at KTDC's Aahaar Restaurants will reach, according to Tourism

Minister P A Mohamed Riyas. The scheme is being implemented considering public safety hazards even as a slide in the second wave of the pandemic is expected to help the tourism industry pick up, the Minister said.

Breakfast, lunch and dinner besides snacks, will be served under 'In-Car Dining', adhering to Covid-19 protocol.

To begin with, select KTDC restaurants will carry out the scheme, he added.

Appeals court upholds FCC subsidy ban for Huawei purchases

■ NEW ORLEANS (US)

A federal appeals court refused Friday to hear Chinese tech giant Huawei's request to throw out a rule used to bar rural phone carriers on national security grounds from using government funds to purchase its equipment.

The 5th Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that the Federal Communications Commission was fully within its power and competence to issue the rule barring "Universal Service Fund" subsidies recipients from buying equipment or services from companies deemed national security risks.

The three-judge panel also dismissed a claim by Huawei Technologies Ltd that the FCC lacked the expertise to designate the company's equipment as a security risk to US telecommunications infrastructure.

"Assessing security risks to telecom networks falls in the FCC's wheelhouse," the judges wrote in a 60-page opinion,

rejecting any suggestion it was some sort of "junior-varsity" agency on national security matters.

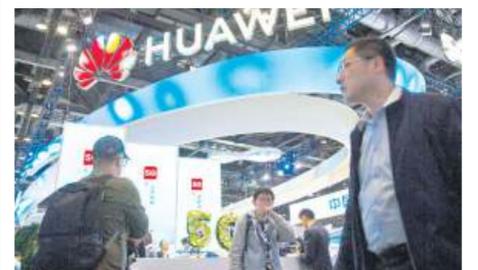
Huawei did not immediately offer a response to the ruling.

The Trump administration imposed a series of sanctions on Huawei, claiming it could not be trusted not to spy for Beijing because Chinese law so compels it. Huawei says it is employee- not government-owned and denies it might facilitate Chinese spying.

Huawei sued the FCC in late 2019 after the agency voted to bar rural carriers from using government subsidies to buy equipment from Huawei or its Chinese rival, ZTE Corp.

At the time, the company called the decision "based on politics, not security." It claimed the FCC was exceeding its authority by making national security judgments.

Friday's decision was in line with a longstanding tradition of US courts not to second-guess government judgments about national security.



for jobs like software developer, DevOps, cloud and data engineer, which witnessed 12-16 per cent growth in May.

Other profiles like sales, marketing, site engineering,

human resources, finance and project manager witnessed flat demand, the report added.

The data has been collected using SCIEKEY's job portal and the market research conduct-

ed by SCIEKEY Market Network based on over 10,000 job postings across India.

The data also indicated that hiring for mid-level executives with 8-12 years of experience and leadership roles (more than 16 years of experience) grew by 5 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively. However, hiring for entry-level professionals (0-3 years experience) declined by 4 per cent. "It's been a rough patch for most sectors since the lockdowns took place. Although, tech companies have gained good momentum on hiring. Due to the shift to remote work and the surge in demand for certain online services, tech has been immune to the lockdowns to some extent,"

SCIEKEY co-founder Karunjit Kumar Dhir said.

The increase in tech hiring indicates that such roles remain the most in demand due to increased competition and demand for new digital technology-led projects during the pandemic, he noted.

"This is a positive indicator that businesses are moving towards getting their growth plans into action and not just survival or business continuity strategies.

"Since, the economy is gradually boosting with the unlock measures and increased mobility, we are hopeful that the hiring activities will further improve in the rest of the sectors as well," Dhir added.



the pioneer agenda

It's important to have as many experiences as possible in life because one day you won't be able to do it anymore
—Emma Roberts



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Self-esteem is how we operate in the face of challenges. It is not how others deal with us, but the way we deal with ourselves and the world, writes SHOBHA NIHALANI

SELF-ESTEEM: OUR CORE STRENGTH

Never before have we faced such a disruptive world. It is not surprising, therefore to discover that so much upheaval can adversely impact how we feel about ourselves. The pandemic and lockdown has left many jobless or with an insecure future, plus difficult home dynamics, all of which result in battered egos and low self-esteem. Many struggle to find the self-motivation to pick up the pieces of their life and rebuild. For most people it has become a wellbeing issue.

It's this struggle with the change in lifestyle that has resulted in increasing sense of loneliness. Some are looking to social media for validation or reassurance and this can have the opposite effect on self-esteem. I don't wish to say that social media is all bad, one can also be comforted by using these sites, especially if you use the platforms to keep in touch with long distance friends and relatives, or be in touch with an extended social circle during the lockdown. But, even during those testing times, being on social media shapes the minds of millions of people.

Emotional turbulence is hardly visible. When a person is suffering internally, no one can see the struggle and the pain. The troubled individual may feel useless and unworthy.

Nothing is more important than the judgment we pass on ourselves: how we esteem ourselves touches the very core of our existence. Self-esteem is considered the most relevant to live a fulfilling life, it essentially refers to the way we view our selves — good or bad. Self-esteem is not a luxury but a vitally important psychological strength.

If you have healthy self-esteem, your beliefs about yourself will often be positive, you feel good about yourself, and see yourself as deserving the respect of others. You may experience difficult times in your life, but you will generally be able to face them with resilience, without having too much of a long-term negative impact on you.

If you have low self-esteem, your beliefs about yourself will often be negative, and you put little value on your opinions and ideas. You will tend to focus on your weaknesses or mistakes, and may find it hard to recognise the positive things about yourself. You may also blame yourself for any difficulties or failures that you have.

A particularly interesting catchphrase was described by Nathaniel Branden author of *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem*. He described self-esteem as 'immunity of consciousness.' Now more than ever it seems relevant in these trying times.

Self-esteem is a particular way of experiencing the self. And if that self is at war because of outside pressure then life is full of suffering.

As we grow up, with a certain level of education and parental guidance, we assume that we will be well-adjusted individuals capable of achieving goals and facing problems with ease. But that is not always the case. Often, when we face certain obstacles in life, we realise a lot about our weaknesses and inner strengths. Self-esteem is how we operate in the face of challenges. It is not how others deal with us, but the way we deal with ourselves and the world.

THE EFFECT ON THE YOUNGER GENERATION

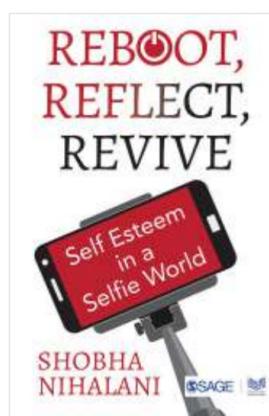
Recent studies show that the lockdown and restrictions has had a significant impact on the education, well-being, and mental health of children.

Children are vulnerable to the behaviours of the adults around them. And the messages children hear become internalised in their inner talk. As a result, self-esteem issues start from a very young age. Once an unhealthy belief is formed, the child internalises this way of thinking into adulthood. It has become even more important to care for the mental well-being of the child during the lockdown.

Parenting is difficult and takes a great toll on families when everyone is confined at home. The "new normal" means that the way we interact with each other has changed. Just stepping out of the house can make one anxious. If a child is already prone to anxiety, the social distancing aspect can seem like a form of rejection. To top it off, masks can contribute to anxiety in different ways. Masks hide half the face, making it difficult to read social cues, like smiles or frowns. And when we want to find ways to relax, breathing deeply is commonly suggested. How to breathe deeply under a mask? That said, masks are critical to protecting against Covid-19, and most kids have adapted well to wearing them.

While parents have to find ways to be proactive and patient, plus keep a cheerful environment, it can create a strain. Therefore, parents should first reevaluate whether their own emotional and psychological needs are met.

We all have heard of the airplane safety tip to always put on one's own oxygen mask before helping a child: the same applies with emotional balance, according to psychologists. When parents mindfully manage their anxiety and stress, through activities like exercise, good sleep, and relaxation, this enables them to cope and to respond calmly with their children. By behaving in this manner, this also teaches children, who learn by example, that they too can



“SELF-ESTEEM IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH. CHILDREN WITH HIGHER SELF-ESTEEM TEND TO HAVE HAPPIER LIVES, BETTER RELATIONSHIPS, AND FEWER SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION. HOWEVER, ROUTINE NEEDS TO BE MAINTAINED, ANY DISRUPTION CAN AFFECT MENTAL AND EMOTIONAL HEALTH”

cope and manage in stressful situations.

Children rely on their parents for support, both physical and emotional. Therefore, when parents are available fully, mentally and physically, the child feels secure.

With the pandemic lockdowns, school closures, and social distancing, many children are deprived of the everyday experiences that normally build their sense of worth as a unique individual. Self-esteem is a critical element of children's mental health. Children with higher self-esteem tend to have happier lives, better relationships, and fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression. However, routine needs to be maintained, any disruption can affect mental and emotional health.

Recent research indicates that the increase in social isolation and loneliness is linked to mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, self-harm, and suicidal behaviours. Children who are confined at home with their parents due to Covid-19 may feel more stressed and anxious.

To create a foundation for children's self-esteem during the pandemic, parents can still do something about it.

According to studies in child psychology, children's self-esteem is built on two pillars: Appreciation and aptitude. Children feel good about themselves when they feel loved and supported by significant others (appreciation) and when they master new skills to achieve their goals (aptitude).

APPRECIATION

Parents can build safe and supportive relationships with their children, like maintaining a comfortable home atmosphere. Children can sense tension in a household, and being home all day can aggravate the situation. Ideally, maintaining a routine as though kids are going to school, can maintain a sense of security. Daily routines give children a sense of stability and predictability. Consistent rules help bring structure to children's lives and combat the sense of disruption and chaos surrounding so many of us.

Another way is that parents can show interest in their children's activities by asking questions about their day, and what they enjoy doing. Encouraging them to journal their thoughts and ideas is another way the child can release some of their pent-up feelings. A family activity, like board games or kitchen work, anything that creates a comfortable routine, can improve and maintain the emotional and mental health of the child. Spending time is key so that the child feels comforted and safe, and able to share his or her fears about the pandemic.

No doubt, children miss their friends; their interactions are an important source of self-esteem. Parents can help children meet up with friends online through games or video chat apps. But maintain a time limit.

Although these seem like insignificant activities, this approach may create a healthier self-esteem in the growing child.

APTITUDE

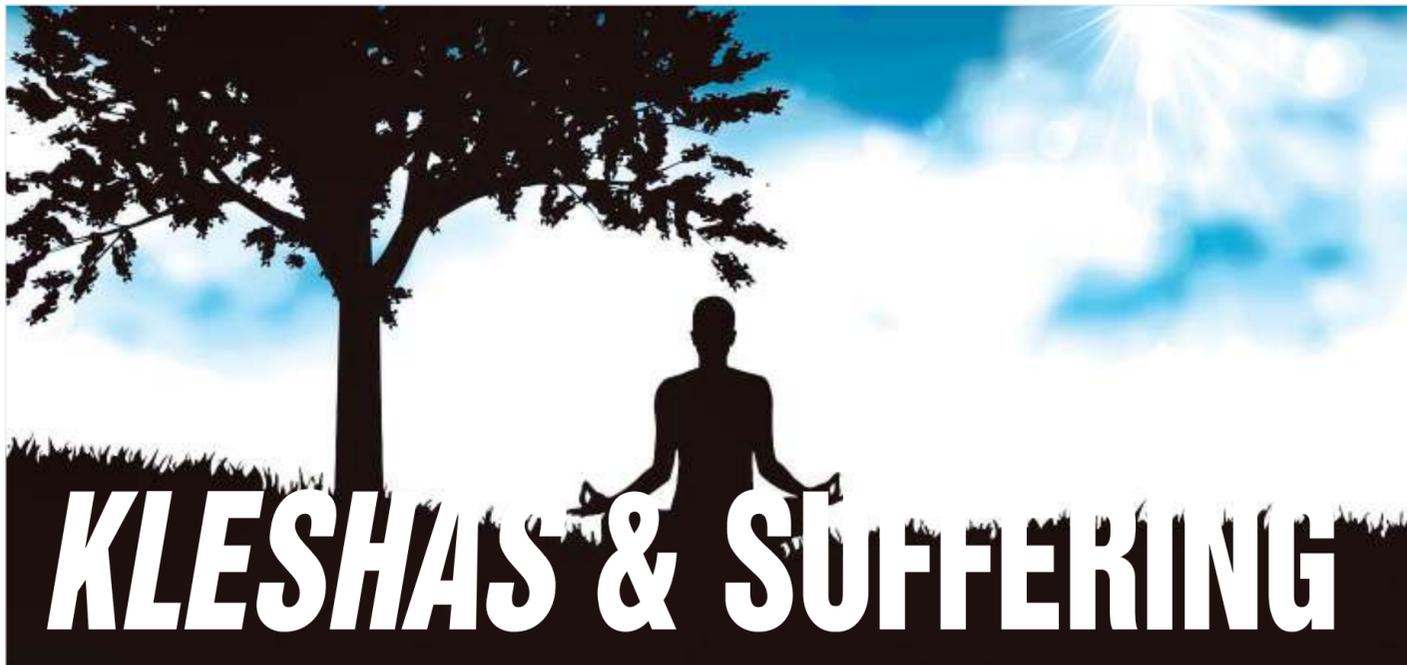
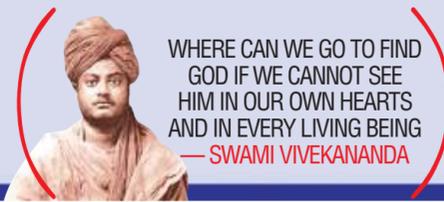
Children benefit from watching adults who fail but learn from their mistakes and keep on trying. Children are born curious and spontaneously want to practice new skills, encourage them to keep trying. Avoid criticising their mistakes or failed attempts. Let them figure it out for themselves. Children tend to feel motivated when they achieve a challenging game or skill. It helps them test their own abilities. And when they feel increasingly confident in their learning process, their self-esteem rises.

Amidst school closures, children may attend online classes, or maybe they are not getting any education at all. In these cases, a large burden is placed on the parents to keep up their children's eagerness to learn. But stuck at home, how can parents nurture children's interest and joy in learning? Some ways is to have a schedule like they have in school. Parents can encourage children to find a topic in science, geography, history that fascinates them. Then they are provided with the resources they need to learn more about it. They can use free educational resources such as *National Geographic Kids' YouTube channel*; create art projects also shared online; and help children build structures with Legos, blocks, or even household items.

In these activities, it is critical for children to experience a sense of learning and growth. Even small steps on the road toward self-improvement should be celebrated. When children know they are improving themselves, they feel proud and eagerly seek out more activities to hone their skills.

And finally, it may be most helpful to remember that children do better when their parents are doing well. Under stressful conditions, it is more important than ever that we make time for our own tried-and-true mental wellness strategies, be it paying attention to nutrition, meditation, turning cell phones off in the bedroom, reaching out to a friend or if need be, connecting with a mental health professional.

The writer is a Life Coach and an author. She has recently published her book, *Reboot, Reflect, Revive: Self-esteem in a Selfie World*, with SAGE Publications India



KLESHAS & SUFFERING

Spiritual practice must help redirect our minds to tap into the wisdom within our internal cosmos to overcome *Kleshas*, writes HINGORI

Distractions, afflictions, hindrances and obstacles of the mind — are some of the words that explain *klesha* and are the reason for most of the suffering.

We are born with *kleshas* as these are a part of our conditioning of past lives. Our *karmas* are often influenced by these *kleshas*. They act as speed-breakers in attaining clarity of mind. *Kleshas* cloud our intellect and obstruct the evolution of our minds. The *kleshas* of attraction, aversion, ego, ignorance and fear, are reactions of the mind to almost every situation. Attractions and aversions induce us to react positively or negatively to most stimuli. Sometimes these lead to guilt, which makes us feel inferior and far removed from divinity.

The *Patanjali Yoga Sutras* lists five such *kleshas*:

- *Avidya* (Misperception)
- *Asmita* (Egoism)
- *Raga* (Attachment/Indulgence)
- *Dwesa* (Aversion)
- *Abhinivesha* (Fear/Insecurity)

The primary *klesha* is *avidya* or belief in a delusory reality or misconception. *Avidya* is our individual circle of *maya*. Crossing the boundary of *maya* leads to *vidya* or enlightenment. *Avidya* is ignorance and delusion. Naturally, this gives us a jaundiced view of reality. It brings the level of our pure consciousness down to a level of body consciousness where the triggers are the senses and the victim our mind.

Let us understand this with the help of example: Priya was a manager in a multi-national firm. She loved her

job. She was the life of the parties she attended and would often regale a captive audience with stories of how she overcame the odds to become as successful as she had. However, a year later, her company's fortunes spiralled downwards. Many employees lost their jobs. She was one of them. Her perfect world fell apart at the seams.

Priya was left without the things that she had based her identity on — her job and her success. She felt like a complete failure. Her sense of self worth was in tatters. The fractured sense of self and the crisis of identity filled her with self doubt. What Priya was suffering from is a fundamental misunderstanding of her real self — a *Klesha* known as *Avidya*!

Often described as the obstacle of the mind, *Avidya* is the sanskrit word for the absence of knowledge and wisdom. *Patanjali's Yoga Sutras* describe *Avidya* as the act of mistaking the impermanent for the eternal, the impure for the pure, sorrow for happiness, and the not-Self for the true Self. This deep rooted misperception of our real nature, keeps us disconnected from the sacred source and stuck in a state of self-inflicted suffering.

Within all human beings lies the core spiritual essence known as the *Atman*. When we identify with the *Atman*, we experience deep contentment that is unshakable. Human experience buries this sacred source under a dense fog of conditioning leading us towards ignorance and the false identification with the ego.

I am Priya. I am a Tamilian. I am a manager. I am successful. I am pretty. I am a failure. I am ugly. People dis-



WHEN WE ARE STUCK IN IGNORANCE, WE IDENTIFY OURSELVES WITH OUR PHYSICAL BODIES, OR WITH OUR FLEETING THOUGHTS — FORGETTING THE SACRED ESSENCE OF WHO WE REALLY ARE — AND THAT ESSENCE IS BURIED DEEPER AND DEEPER UNDER MULTIPLE VEILS



like me. I hate myself... I am everything but divine.

Avidya is the basic failure to recognise that you are the *Atman* and are connected with every atom that exists; and the identification of the self with the ego and all things temporal is a root of why you are unable to identify with the divinity within.

Avidya is a fundamental blindness about our true nature. It is the inability to experience a deep connection with others and to our true self. We see this deep seated ignorance play out in every aspect of our life — in our thought processes, our prejudices, our fears, our needs, our insecurities and our desires.

That probably explains why we seek reassurance and approval from others to amplify our self worth; and why transitory things like wealth, looks, luxury and success gives us joy and a sense of worth. Making your self esteem contingent upon others is like digging a pit that you cannot crawl out of.

Even though you are aware that you alone are responsible for your inner state, knowing the truth on the level of intellect doesn't translate in to a shift in feelings and behavior. For there to be a relevant shift, the understanding needs to percolate down to a visceral level. Only then will *avidya* transform into *vidya* or true knowledge.

When we are stuck in ignorance, we identify ourselves with our physical bodies, or with our fleeting thoughts — forgetting the sacred essence of who we really are — and that essence is buried deeper and deeper under multiple veils.

Our ignorance multiplies when get wrapped in our worldly desires. We become attached to not only our desires but also our aversions. Both are obstacles on the path of enlightenment because they bind us to the ego. The goal of yoga is freedom from these things.

THE SHIFT IN CONSCIOUSNESS

Avidya is a deep rooted condition strengthened by life-times of false identification but it is a condition that can change with intent and practice. Hence, dismantling it is a multi layered process. Yoga prescribes a multi-pronged approach for dismantling its different aspects — Devotion for connecting to the higher self, Selfless action for detachment from outcomes and meditation for stilling the mind.

Another key to dealing with and dismantling deeply ingrained habits and emotions is to view yourself from the perspective of an observer as opposed to a doer. Through practice and intent, you will notice a shift in your consciousness that will, given time, change your patterns of thought and perception.

Any moment that causes us to question our pre-conceived and pre-conditioned notions about reality has the potential to lift our veil. When the source of your happiness shifts from material things, validation from others and other external triggers to the inner you being the source of happiness, the fog of *avidya* will start to lift, slowly but surely, plugging you in to the super consciousness — that is eternal and true.

The writer is the author of Hingori Suktas series of spiritual books



HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK



Emotions and health

The Covid-19 pandemic has shifted the focus to health. Health was never an individual duty or a part of our daily chores. It was something to be worried about only if a disease or injury struck. Preventive health was seldom focused on. Only exceptions were the childhood immunization programmes. Covid-19 has taught how important internal resilience is. And this internal resilience is a result of psychosomatic factors which are dependent on our emotional stability. Emotional quotient has been given due importance in management literature but medical literature still gives limited focus to the subject. Though of late there is greater realisation about the importance of emotional well-being on physical health. The overemphasis on invasive therapy and intensive intervention of the modern medicine system was the reason why emotion was not given due importance. This was evident even in the approach towards corona pandemic. Tweaking of treatments were done with nagging regularity creating a global kerfuffle and trial and error prevailed. But fear, stress and anxiety took a considerable toll. Emotions and health are the two sides of the same coin and in the Indian traditional system *swabhav* was considered an important determinant. *Swabhav* or nature denotes the emotional type of a personality that plays a role in treatment of diseases. With more knowledge on psychosomatic aspects of health, let us examine common emotions and their effect. Continuous negative emotions have always led to serious ailments. Even ancient philosophical schools indicate the importance of *swabhav* in health. Some common negative emotions are anger, fear, anxiety, curiosity, stress, envy and hyper reactivity. While occasional outbursts do not impact significantly, continuous experience may lead to serious health issues. *Swabhav* makes one prone to these reactions, which trigger the mind that activates the endocrine system. This increases or decreases the flow of certain hormones in the blood stream. In anger, for instance, it is commonplace to experience that churning in the stomach which is due to excessive secretion of the hydrochloric acid resulting from hormonal reaction. While occasional bouts of anger is perfectly normal, if anger becomes *swabhav* it is dangerous. Peptic ulcers many a times are result of excessive and continuous acid secretion in the stomach. Fear, anxiety, curiosity and stress are emotions that affect perception, thinking and behaviour in a big way, leading to a number of mental and physical complications. Envy is an irrational attitude towards someone that leads to hatred, anger, violence and frustration. Continuously nursing anger for somebody harms the envious more than the envied. These negative emotions are more of perceived reactions that harm the perceiver in a three step process. They affect the thought process then the internal biochemical reactions and subsequently lead to a diseased body when they persist for long. For healthy body a healthy mind is the first requisite. Our body is an organic machine that is a collection of interdependent parts. Health is a holistic concept and whole is always more than the sum of its parts.

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WARD OFF NEGATIVITY

It takes little to keep ourselves full of hope and dispel negativity during this pandemic, says ACHARYA VINOD KUMAR OJHA

We are living in a stress-driven era and with the ongoing novel Coronavirus pandemic, every other thing is surrounded by negativity. Whether it is a news channel or social media, there is not a single space that seems positive. In such a scenario, even the positive people turn pessimists and lose spirit. Though, these are tough times and getting depressed or tense is normal, but remember that if our spirits are high and strengthened, then we can face any unforeseen situation with elan. The best way to keep ourselves full of hope and ward off negativity during this time is to follow the steps below:

- **Repeat Positive Affirmations:** Affirmations are a few words or phrases that are repeated to fulfill a desire. It is said that our mind responds to signals and starts accepting what we think. This means that if we repeat or think about good things, then ultimately our intellect will respond to it.
- **Chanting Om:** One of the easiest and effective ways of warding off negative thoughts is to chant 'Om' whenever you feel anxious or stressed out. Just remember to look for a peaceful place and devote your entire focus to chanting.
- **Lemons for Positivity:** Though we can't control what's going on outside but can manage the things at our home. Lemons are the best solution to keep negativity at bay and these are easily available in everyone's home. Just keep 2-3 lemons in a glass bottle filled with water in your bedroom or your living room to attract positivity. It is said that lemons and water absorb any negative vibe and helps in healing.
- **Salt for Strengthening:** Done with all



the bad news? Relax and add salt to the water while cleaning. It is said that salt cleanses the negative aura and brings positivity, focus, and prosperity to the family.

- **Let the Music Play:** Music is a therapy and can help you in your direst need. Put your headphones on and just rejuvenate for some time.
- **Recite Hanuman Chalisa:** Reciting Hanuman Chalisa will calm your mind and gives your strength. It will help you in overcoming nightmares.
- **Light Some Sage:** Burning of sage can

fill the atmosphere with alacrity and can give you some moments of peace. Burn sage while performing worship and let the fragrance changes the mood.

- **Shut the social media:** One of the main reasons for the restlessness and instability of emotions is social media. When you get away from negativity, it won't haunt you. So, the best trick to stay strong and don't lose your mind in these tough times is getting away from social media. Follow these simple remedies and keep your spirits high. The time is crucial but together we have to fight this together. The writer is an astrologer & Vastu Consultant

The spiritual perspective

Divine forces are generous to us if our desires are aligned with the material nature, writes AJIT KUMAR BISHNOI

Our bodies are made up of eight elements (*Bhagavad Gita* 7.4), out of which four are gross and three are subtle. The gross elements are: earth, water, fire/energy and air. The subtle elements are: mind, intelligence, self-sense/ego. The eighth element is ether or space. Our bodies are material machines (18.61), and they are parts of the material nature. The material nature gives us bodies as per our *karmas*; they are results of the *karmas* done over previous lives. And our bodies are not independent machines; they are controlled by the material nature. Diseases, though not desired by us, appear according to our *karmaphalas*. Death also comes as destined. Though we can do plenty to keep our bodies fit, the control always remains with the material nature.

Let us go into some details of the functioning of our bodies. People get well functioning bodies, i.e. without serious genetic defects, if they have been good in their past lives. Divine forces are generous to us if our desires are aligned with the material nature. God uses us as His *nimitta* or instruments for what pleases Him, which is to promote *dharma* by preaching God's messages. Rather God is most pleased by sincere preachers. (18.68-69) Arjuna was given all kinds of favours by Lord Krishna, because he agreed to act as Lord's instrument. (18.73) This should motivate us to use our bodies the best way possible, maybe in God's service.

In order to be able to do all of the above, we must maintain our bodies nicely. How do we do that? Lord Krishna has guided in *The Gita*, "One whose eating and recreation are appropriate; of one who strives appropriately in activities; of one who sleeps and



stays awake as required, avoids lots of suffering. (6.17) The Lord has specially mentioned eating, recreation, activities and sleep. Let me start with eating. What determines what we eat? Either due to weakness for taste or ignorance about what we should be eating, most of us harms our material bodies, which are material machines, as pointed out earlier. Unfortunately, some of us are more careful about what we put in our vehicles than what we put into our mouths. And our material bodies are constituted by what we put in. Not surprisingly, we suffer many diseases, which could have been avoided. Those, who eat foods in, goodness enjoy good health for most of their lives extending to the old age.

Like eating, recreation is also important for us, but the choice has to be intelligent. When we confuse recreation to be watching programmes made in the lower modes, we hurt ourselves, i.e. we bring suffering to ourselves. The third factor to watch out for

is activities, i.e. what we do and how much. Both should be proper. The last activity mentioned in the verse is sleeping. This is where many go horribly wrong; they feel that the quantum of sleep can be decided irrespective of the needs of the body. The human machine work best when properly rested, i.e. slept the required number of hours.

One must not forget the mind and the intelligence. Both are crucial for the efficient functioning of the body. The mind is forever desiring/thinking of something. The intelligence should be used to rein in the mind. Unfortunately, our intelligence is mostly not aligned with the realities of life, because we ignore to look up our scriptures, which provide the higher information of what *dharma* is, who God is, what is material nature's role in our lives is, etc. The whole existence is one unitary whole and we are all parts of the same. Existence in isolation is a non-starter. Bishnoi is a spiritual writer and can be reached at spiritual@ajitbishnoi.com

JABBLED

The novelty of Coronavirus has perplexed both doctors and the common man. This has raised several questions, not only related to the virus, but also for its treatment and vaccines. With several options available, people are waiting to get their choice of jab. But, doctors tell MUSBA HASHMI it's a big no-no

Picking and choosing things is a human trait. Be it your favourite pair of shoes, or shirts or even COVID vaccines. Yes, you read that right. With more and more options available in the market, choosing a vaccine has become a task for many.

There were some people who preferred Covishield over Covaxin, while others were waiting for Sputnik V. To add to the list of choices, Serum Institute of India is all set to bring Novavax, which apparently offers more than 90 per cent efficacy, in the country by September, reportedly.

And given the current situation, when a US university, reportedly, had asked the students who got vaccinated with Covaxin and Sputnik V to revaccinate themselves, choosing the best of the lot may seem as the right option to many.

"For the more obvious reasons that these vaccines are not giving prevention from the disease rather making the disease pattern less severe, we have to choose one with a little better studies. Following the advisories are mandatory for people traveling to foreign countries, hence they may select their shot accordingly, but for people staying in India Covaxin is equally good or even slightly better than Covishield in all the studies conducted so far," Dr Rachit Srivastava, Consultant, General Medicine, Apollo TeleHealth, says.

The situation is particularly challenging for students from India. It is becoming increasingly hard to secure an appointment for a vaccine that will be accepted by American campuses. Covaxin is not yet approved by the WHO. Students who got Covaxin are concerned about the uncertainty of its approval.

"The safety and effectiveness of receiving two different COVID-19 vaccines have not been proved yet, but some researchers feel that it may work. The American universities are about to start their autumn semester and Covishield is the only WHO approved vaccine available in India at this time. The Government has done right in reducing the interval for this category of population to 28 days. Rolling out the WHO approved vaccines like Novavax, Pfizer and Moderna in India can make the situation easy for students travelling abroad but this could take time," Dr Namita Jaggi, Chairperson — Lab services and Infection control & Chief — Education & Research, Artemis Hospitals, Gurugram, tells you.

However, if you are not among the people who are travelling abroad, doctors say being fussy about vaccines is not a wise thing to do.

"Not taking the vaccine—whichever one may be available in India—is not a smart move. Almost all existing vaccines drastically reduce the odds of hospitalisation or death due to COVID-19. Take whichever vaccine you can when it's your turn. This is currently the World Health Organisation's guideline, too, which urges people to take whichever vaccine is available in their countries. Globally, doctors believe that barring some side effects, a vaccine is better than no vaccine," Jaggi opines.

Don't compare 95 per cent efficacy of one vaccine with 67 per cent of another. This only means the percentage of people who may not get COVID. All vaccines are 100 per cent effective in preventing COVID hospitalisations and death. With that being said, there is no doubt that vaccines with higher efficacy like the m-RNA vaccines and Novavax will however be better.

Dr Sharwari Dabhade Dua, Consultant Internal Medicine, Madhukar Rainbow Hospital, Malviya Nagar, agrees with Jaggi and says that both Covishield and Covaxin have studies and trials favouring its effectiveness in multiple variants of COVID-19. "The recently launched Sputnik vaccine has evident studies supporting its efficacy too. On the other hand, phase 3 UK clinical trials showed strong efficacy especially against UK and South African variants with Novavax. In my opinion, all the vaccines that are readily available in India today can be taken, because we saw a few cases who got infected with only mild symptoms, after the vaccination, and waiting further for newer vaccines can slow our process of mass vaccination and thus achieve herd immunity," Dua says.

Srivastava emphasise on the fact that in the current scenario waiting for a pre-



ferred vaccine is never an option, use the vaccines that we have and reduce the chances of having severe infection. "We all should understand these vaccines are not the last doses that we are going to take. It's just the beginning of it, we have to keep taking these vaccines for a long period. Obviously, at a later stage, we will get all other privileged vaccines in India and probably then we can choose the better one," he says.

ADDING TO THE WOES

As if multiple vaccines with different efficacy rates, but with a single purpose—that of reducing the severity of the disease—wasn't enough to perplex people, the first confirmed death of a 68-year-old man following vaccination in the country is adding to the woes.

This has raised several concerns among people, especially in the minds of those who are still already apprehensive about getting vaccinated. This might give them a reason to not go for nothing less than the best. But this incident, doctors say, shouldn't give rise to fear.

"This incident should not create fear in the minds of people and there should be no apprehension about the safety of

NOT TAKING THE VACCINE, WHICHEVER ONE MAY BE AVAILABLE IN INDIA, IS NOT A SMART MOVE. ALMOST ALL EXISTING VACCINES DRASTICALLY REDUCE THE ODDS OF HOSPITALISATION OR DEATH DUE TO COVID-19. TAKE WHICHEVER VACCINE YOU CAN WHEN IT'S YOUR TURN. THIS IS CURRENTLY THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANISATION'S GUIDELINE. TOO. GLOBALLY, DOCTORS BELIEVE THAT BARRING SOME SIDE EFFECTS, A VACCINE IS BETTER THAN NO VACCINE

— DR NAMITA JAGGI, CHAIRPERSON, LAB SERVICES AND INFECTION CONTROL & CHIEF, EDUCATION & RESEARCH, ARTEMIS HOSPITALS, GURUGRAM

the vaccines approved for Indian population. The number of deaths reported following COVID-19 vaccination in the country is only 0.0002 per cent of 23.5 crore doses administered which is within the expected death rates in a population. It is also important and pertinent to note that the mortality rates for those testing positive for COVID-19 disease is more than 1 per cent and vaccination can prevent these deaths. Therefore, the risk of dying following vaccination is negligible as compared to the known risk of dying due to COVID-19 disease. Those getting their vaccination need to wait for 30 minutes at the inoculation centre after vaccination as most of the anaphylactic reactions occur during this period and prompt treatment prevents deaths," Jaggi says.

ONE MORE SHOT

"I have got my first shot of the vaccine. The second is due in a few weeks. If this was not all, I have been told that we may need a booster dose as well. How many doses do we have to take and why will we, if we will still get the infection anyway?," a distressed man asks.

He is not an exception, there are many who have the same question. To

answer their queries, experts say that it's time we accept the reality and learn to live with it until herd immunity is achieved.

As for the boosters, Jaggi says, giving smaller doses in multiple shots (boosters) is often better than a large dose of vaccine in a single shot.

"This is because our immune system builds on our immunity like bricks in a wall; each level needs to be laid before the next layer is built. Memory to some pathogens as in Rubella, measles or mumps is life long and in some the immunity wanes over time as in whooping cough or tetanus where boosters may be required. It may also be required if the virus mutates and variants arise as in the influenza vaccine where we require an annual flu shot with the currently circulating strains," she says.

Jaggi adds that for COVID, we are learning along the way. We are not very sure about whether our immunity will last for six months or a year and how impactful variants will be in the long run. "But for now, there is a growing consensus that boosters will be needed. But whether we will need it for the next year or not, will again depend on the way the pandemic behaves. Moreover, the cur-

We should understand these vaccines are not the last doses that we are going to take. It's just the beginning of it. We have to keep taking these vaccines for a long period. Obviously, at a later stage, we will get all other privileged vaccines in India and probably then we can choose the better one

— Dr Rachit Srivastava, Consultant, General Medicine, Apollo TeleHealth

rent vaccines show reduced efficacy against the variants namely the Delta, and the South African variant. So, boosters against the newer variants may be needed. Some researchers are also looking to mix vaccines for a better immune response," she explains.

Dua tells you that booster doses are needed to increase the amount of antibodies against the infection. In the case of COVID-19, we have studies suggesting declining antibodies and rare cases of reinfection too. "Yet, we need some extensive research on the development, the longevity and the efficiency of the antibodies produced by the vaccines to consider the use of booster dose," she says.

On the other hand, Dr Deepak Verma, Internal Medicine, Columbia Asia Hospital, Ghaziabad, says that booster doses are needed in all COVID-19 vaccines that are available right now in India and it is nothing but simply a second dose.

"Even abroad, except for Johnson and Johnson, all the COVID-19 vaccines need a second dose, i.e. a booster dose. This is because COVID-19 is a novel virus and the booster dose increases its efficacy against the virus," he explains.

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

Time and again, experts are emphasising that the virus is relatively new and it will take us some time to understand it completely. Such has been the case with COVID vaccines. There are people who wonder if they test positive after the first dose of vaccine, do they have to restart the vaccination process. The answer is no.

"No, there is no need to restart the vaccination process again. A COVID-19 infection helps the body mount certain protective antibodies naturally and it will boost protection and antibody count. People who recover from COVID-19 have been found to have all four of these components. Specificity about how long this natural immunity will last is not clear but various studies show for at least three months," Jaggi tells you.

In a study published in *The New England Journal of Medicine*, researchers in Iceland studied 1,107 people who had recovered from COVID-19 and tested positive for the antibodies. Over a four-month period, they found that those COVID-19 antibodies did not decline. A study published in the journal *Immunity* found that people who recover from even mild cases of COVID-19 produce antibodies for at least five to seven months and could last much longer.

"Natural infection gives you strength for a longer time. Patients, in such a scenario, may need to revisit their dosage timeline but be sure not to miss it. This is because getting a vaccine jab will add to your immune strength, over and above the natural antibodies and serve additional purposes. So, wait for 90 days post infection and get your second jab that can act like a booster for immunity. It is not advisable to restart the vaccination process after natural infection in between the doses," she suggests.

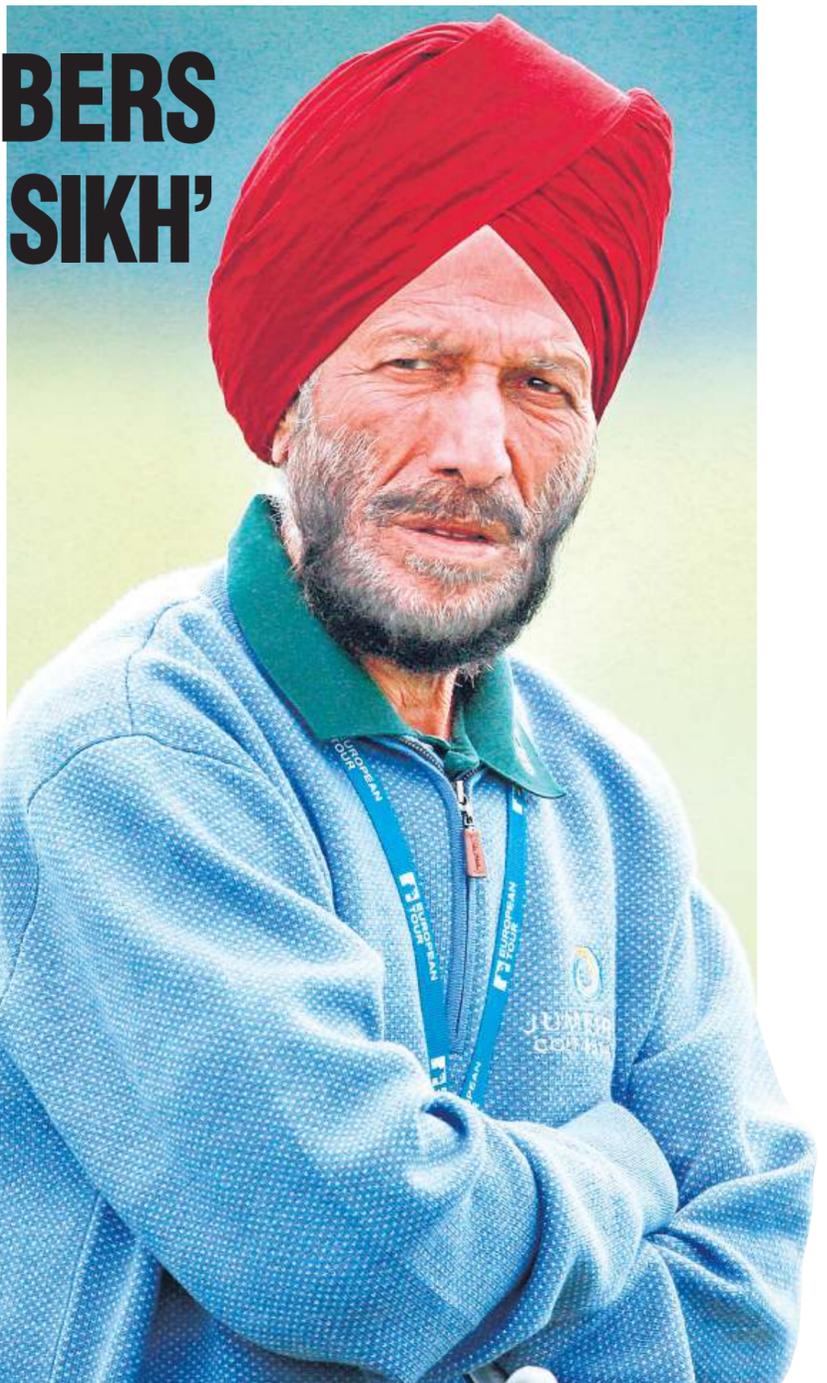
Verma, too, is of the opinion that if a person tests positive after the first dose of the vaccine, there is no way they can restart the vaccination process. The person must increase the gap between two doses and take the second dose of vaccine after three months, as stipulated by the Government of India.



INDIA REMEMBERS GREAT 'FLYING SIKH'

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday condoled the demise of sprint legend Milkha Singh and said he was not just a sports star but a source of inspiration for millions of Indians for his dedication and resilience. The 91-year-old died at a hospital in Chandigarh on Friday after a month-long battle with COVID-19, during which he lost his wife and former national volleyball captain Nirmal Kaur to the same ailment. "Shri Milkha Singh ji was not just a sports star but a source of inspiration for millions of Indians for his dedication and resilience," Gandhi tweeted. "My condolences to his family and friends. India remembers her #FlyingSikh," the former Congress

chief said. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also paid tributes to the legendary athlete, saying whenever stories of flight of ambition and success will be told in the country, then the name of such a person will definitely be taken who gave new heights to the dreams of the country and crores of Indian youth on the race track. The Congress, in an official tweet, said, "We are deeply saddened by the demise of Shri Milkha Singh. A legendary athlete and an inspiration to millions of Indians, the #FlyingSikh will be remembered for his immense contribution to our nation." "Our thoughts and prayers are with his family in this time of grief," the party said.



Milkha Singh cremated with full state honours in Chandigarh

Iconic sprinter Milkha Singh, who died late last night of COVID-19 complications, was cremated in Chandigarh on Saturday evening with full state honours. Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, Punjab Governor and Chandigarh Union Territory Administrator VP Singh Badnore and Haryana Sports Minister Sandeep Singh were among those present at the cremation ground to bid a final adieu to the legend. His son and ace golfer Jeev Milkha Singh lit the funeral pyre. The Punjab government, earlier in the day, announced a state holiday as a mark of respect to the Olympian. Chief Minister Amarinder Singh also announced a Milkha Singh Chair at Sports University in Patiala in memory of the great athlete.



Compete abroad, stay dedicated: PT Usha remembers his advice

You must compete in international meets abroad to improve," was the piece of advice PT Usha received from Milkha Singh when she met him way back in 1982 as she remembers the iconic athlete, who died on Friday. Herself a track and field legend, Usha said she met Milkha Singh during an international competition in Korea. "I met Milkha ji for the first time in 1982 and it was a memorable one. He advised me to focus on participating in international meets to improve my level," Usha told PTI in a telephonic interaction. "Go and run outside the country, only then you can improve and compete with the foreigners, he would insist," she added. The 'Payyoli Express' said it was her coach O M Nambiar, who introduced her to Milkha and she never missed an opportunity to learn the tricks of the trade from him. "Ever since I got introduced to Milkha ji through my coach, I always used to ask him a lot of questions. And, he was always ready to answer them. He offered suggestions and spoke in an inspiring manner," she said. Usha said Milkha Singh, who died of COVID-19 complications after battling hard for a month, would remain in the hearts of millions of Indians. "I was shocked after hearing the news of Milkha Singh's death. He was a great athlete...an inspiring personality. He will continue to inspire many and will remain in the hearts of millions of Indian people," the 56-year-old said. "He used to call me PT. He was a very nice person and whenever I met him he used to enquire about my son, husband. He used to ask about my academy and the trainees," she added. "I was travelling from Calicut to Patiala and was tired. I got several calls and then came to know that Milkha Singh had passed away. I felt very bad because we have lost Milkha ji." Speaking about his performance in the 1960 Rome Olympics, where the Flying Sikh missed out on a bronze, Usha said it showed that an athlete could shine despite not having the best of facilities.

'Every time we ran fast, we ran like him'

We may not have seen you compete, but every time we ran fast as kids, we ran 'like Milkha Singh'," India's football captain Sunil Chhetri summed up what 'The Flying Sikh' meant to the nation, which mourned the end of an era following the nonagenarian sprint icon's death. Milkha died at Chandigarh's PGIMER hospital on Friday night, less than a week after he lost his wife Nirmal Kaur, a former national volleyball captain, to the same ailment. He was 91 and is survived by his golfer son Jeev Milkha Singh and three daughters. From Prime Minister Narendra Modi to cricket superstars to India's new age track-and-field hopes like Hima Das, the tributes were not just an admiration of Milkha's legacy but also the strong influence it had on the nation's sporting culture. Modi described him as "colossal sportsperson, who captured the India's 'imagination.'" One of India's greatest cricketers, Sachin Tendulkar, said Milkha's legend will live on. "Rest in Peace our very own 'Flying Sikh' Milkha Singh ji. Your demise has left a deep void in every Indian's heart today, but you shall keep inspiring several generations to come," Tendulkar tweeted.



I'll be alright in 3-4 days: Milkha's first response after contracting Covid

Even after testing positive to COVID-19, sprint legend Milkha Singh exuded optimism, a trait that he carried all his life, through triumphs and defeats. "Yes Bachcha, I tested positive for COVID-19 yesterday (May 19). But I am fine, I have no problem, no fever, no cough. It will go away. My doctor told me I will be alright in three-four days," he had said when PTI rang him up to check whether the buzz on social media about him testing positive for the virus was correct. The 91-year-old died at Chandigarh's PGIMER hospital on Friday night after battling the infection for a month. Milkha was first hospitalised at Mohali's Fortis hospital on May 23 as a precautionary measure. While there, he was joined by his former national volleyball captain wife Nirmal Kaur, who died six days ago on Sunday because of COVID complications. The couple shared a room before Milkha was discharged on the family's request. He was subsequently hospitalised again on June 3 after his oxygen saturation levels dipped, this time at the PGIMER where he battled it out till Friday night. "Our cook had fever but he concealed it from us. We sent him to his home (native village). After that we thought it's better that all the family members should get COVID-19 tests done," Milkha had said during the May 20 conversation detailing what exactly led to the positive tests. "I am surprised. How could I get this infection?" he wondered. At that point Milkha did not feel any symptoms and said that he had even been jogging and exercising. "I have been keeping indoors except for morning jogging and exercise. I did jogging just yesterday. Don't worry, I am in good spirits," he asserted. "I have been telling people that doing physical exercise and remaining healthy is very important during this COVID times. I am 91 but I have been doing exercise regularly," he had said.

Passing of sporting icon Milkha Singh fills my heart with grief: Prez Kovind

President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday said the demise of Milkha Singh fills his heart with grief and that the story of the sporting icon's struggles and strength of character will continue to inspire generations of Indians. The 91-year-old sprint legend died at a hospital in Chandigarh on Friday after a month-long battle with COVID-19, during which he lost his wife and former national volleyball captain Nirmal Kaur to the same ailment. "The passing of sporting icon Milkha Singh fills my heart with grief. The story of his struggles and strength of character will continue to inspire generations of Indians. My deepest condolences to his family members, and countless admirers," Kovind tweeted.

Film celebrities pay homage to Milkha Singh

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan, Mohanlal, superstar Shah Rukh Khan, Akshay Kumar, Ajay Devgn, actor-filmmaker Farhan Akhtar and others from the Indian film industry mourned the end of an era as they paid tributes to sprint icon Milkha Singh, describing him as an epitome of "hard work" and "determination". Singh, 91, died on late Friday night at Chandigarh's PGIMER hospital after battling COVID-19 for a month. He passed away less than a week after he lost his wife Nirmal Kaur, a former national volleyball captain, to the same ailment.



Sport biopics, cinema and Raj Kapoor: Going down memory lane

As Milkha Singh took position on the track that unforgettable summer day of 1960 when the Olympics were underway in Rome, theatre artist and actor Prithviraj Kapoor organised a 'paath' back home in India to pray for his win. Sixty-one years later, India's legendary "Flying Sikh", who died at a Chandigarh hospital on Friday after a month-long battle with COVID-19, had recalled with great fondness his close links with the Kapoors and his on-off relationship with cinema in an interview with PTI in March this year. Singh, who missed an Olympic medal by a whisker at the 400-m final, coming fourth in one of the most relived races in Indian athletic history, continued his friendship with the Kapoors for years later. "Mera achha yaarana tha Raj Kapoor ke saath (I was good friends with Raj Kapoor, celebrated filmmaker and Prithviraj Kapoor's son). When I used to go to Bombay to run, I would often meet Raj Kapoor and he would take me to RK Studio," the 91-year-old said. In the interview, shortly before he contracted Covid, he also spoke of his early cinema memories and why the trend of sport biopics and films is important to highlight the struggles that athletes go through.

Entire Indian contingent waited for medal: Randhawa recalls Rome race

It was the race of his life but at the end of it, Milkha Singh was simply "dis-traught". The 91-year-old 'Flying Sikh', who passed away in Chandigarh on Friday after battling COVID-related complications, was expected to soar the highest at the 1960 Rome Olympics but missed the podium by 0.1 seconds, an unforgettable heartache that he carried for the rest of his life. Hurdler Gurbachan Singh Randhawa, Milkha's 1960 and 1964 Olympic Games teammate

and one of the few surviving athletes to have witnessed the memorable 400m race in person, vividly remembers how it had built up at the Italian capital. "I was very much there, the entire Indian contingent was there in anticipation of history being created. Everybody was expecting a medal from him. Everybody was waiting (for the race) with bated breath," the 82-year-old recalled in a conversation with PTI. "He was in top form, his timing was among the best in the

world that time. Gold or silver was difficult for him but everybody was sure that he would at least win a bronze. He was capable of that," he added. But Milkha missed the bronze by a whisker, clocking 45.6 seconds, 0.1 seconds more than third-place finisher Malcolm Spence of South Africa, whom he had beaten to win the gold in the 1958 Commonwealth Games. "The whole Indian contingent was stunned, speechless. Milkha Singh was distraught," Randhawa said.



PM Modi calls him 'colossal sportsperson'

The nation mourned the end of an era as it paid homage to nonagenarian sprint icon Milkha Singh, who died on Friday after battling COVID-19 for a month, with Prime Minister Narendra Modi leading the tributes by describing him as a "colossal sportsperson". Milkha died at Chandigarh's PGIMER hospital, less than a week after he lost his wife Nirmal Kaur, a former national volleyball captain, to the same ailment. He was 91 and is survived by his golfer son Jeev Milkha Singh and three daughters. "In the passing away of Shri Milkha Singh Ji, we have lost a colossal sportsperson, who captured the nation's imagination and had a special place in the hearts of countless Indians," PM Modi said in a tweet. "His inspiring personality endeared himself to millions. Anguished by his passing away." India's sporting fraternity also paid homage to one of its most inspiring figures, who continued to be a keen observer even after quitting the track.

An unmatched romance with a near miss

The track, to him, was like an open book in which Milkha Singh found the "meaning and purpose of life". And what a life he made for himself. Before his 91-year-old body lost to COVID-19 on Friday after fighting it for a month, Milkha won the kind of battles that not many would have survived, forget about living long enough to tell the world about them. "Don't worry, I am in good spirits...I am surprised. How could I get this infection?...I hope to get over it soon," Milkha had said in his last interaction with PTI before being hospitalised. One of independent India's biggest sporting icons was a tormented man but refused to let that come in the way of accomplishments which were unheard of in his era. He saw his parents being butchered during partition, indulged in petty crimes to survive in refugee camps of Delhi, went to jail for those and failed three attempts at joining the Army. Who could have thought a man like that would get the sobriquet of 'The Flying Sikh'? But Milkha earned it and earned it with a master-class on how to be bigger and better than one's circumstances.