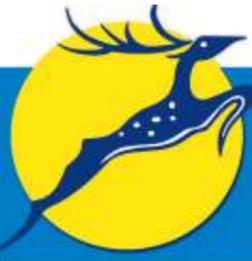


NATION 5
PAGD LEADERS WILL ATTEND MEETING ON KASHMIR FUTURE, SAYS FAROOQ

MONEY 8
NCLT APPROVES JALAN'S RESOLUTION PLAN FOR JET AIRWAYS

SPORTS 12
MISSION IMPOSSIBLE MADE POSSIBLE

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 23, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



MEHREEN IN BALAKRISHNA-GOPICHAND MALINENI FILM

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IN FAKE TRP CASE, MUMBAI POLICE NAMES ARNAB GOSWAMI AS ACCUSED

The Mumbai Police has named senior television journalist Arnab Goswami as an accused in the alleged TRP rigging scam in its second chargesheet filed before a court here on Tuesday. The chargesheet was submitted before a magistrate's court by the police's Crime Intelligence Unit (CIU) probing the case. "Among others, Goswami and ARG Outlier have been named as accused in the chargesheet," lawyer of Goswami, the Editor-in-Chief of Republic TV, said. The alleged fake TRP scam came to light in October last year.



CENTRE NOT TO SEEK DISCLOSURE OF FLASH SALES FROM E-TAILERS

The Centre on Tuesday said it will not seek disclosure of flash sales from e-commerce players to regulate the fraudulent sale of goods and services but will take appropriate action as per the law on consumer complaints. Discount sales that benefit consumers will continue, but not fraudulent flash sales on e-commerce platforms, the government said. Ban on fraudulent flash sales, mis-selling and appointment of chief compliance officer/grievance redressal officer -- are among key amendments proposed to the Consumer Protection (e-commerce) Rules, 2020.



37 PER CENT EXCESS RAINFALL SO FAR ACROSS INDIA THIS MONSOON, SAYS IMD

India has received 37 per cent excess rainfall during the monsoon season so far, the IMD said on Tuesday. The country gauged 13.78 cm precipitation against the normal of 10.05 cm till June 21, it said. The cumulative rainfall during this year's Southwest Monsoon season till June 21 has been excess by about 37 per cent above Long Period Average (LPA), the weather department said in a statement. It said that the southern peninsula received 133.6 mm rainfall, 24 per cent more than normal, while east and northeast India witnessed 253.9 mm rainfall against the normal of 224.8 mm.



LEGENDARY CARNATIC MUSICIAN PARASSALA B PONNAMMAL DIES AT 96

Legendary Carnatic musician and Padmashree awardee, Parassala B Ponnammal, who enthralled classical music lovers for the last eight decades through her incredible concerts, passed away at her home in Vallyasala here on Tuesday, family sources said. She was 96 and was suffering from age-related ailments for some time, they said. A doyen of Carnatic music, Ponnammal was a musician who had broken gender stereotypes in classical music and became the first woman student to enrol in the historic Swathi Thirunal College of Music here during the 1940s.



Govt. to implement GO 46; schools not to hike fees

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State government has decided to implement the G.O. No. 46 for the 2021-22 academic year as well. According to G.O.No.46, private schools cannot increase fees; they can collect only tuition fee. The government may issue orders in the connection in a day or two. The state government issued the G.O. for the 2019-2020 academic year in view of the Covid pandemic, stating that the private schools



should not increase fees normally collected under various heads. The G.O. is applicable to all private schools in the state. The GO states that schools can collect only tuition fee and that too month-wise. The Department of School Education had served notices to several corporate and big private schools for violating the G.O.No.46. Enquiries are going into allegations of violation of the GO against 11 schools.

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In this connection, School Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy has decided to have a meeting with the managements of private schools very soon.

Don't adjust Rythu Bandhu with old loans, Harish tells banks

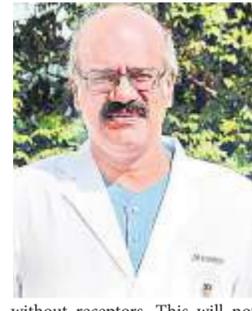
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Finance Minister T.Harish Rao has cautioned that banks should not adjust the Rythu Bandhu investment assistance sanctioned by the Government towards farmers' dues relating to past loan repayments. The Minister held an emergency meeting with bankers here on Tuesday as some instances of Rythu Bandhu amounts being withheld by banks towards recovery of dues relating to past loans have surfaced. The bankers, however, clarified that no instructions to withhold investment assistance to farmers were issued. Harish Rao, however, insisted that instructions be issued again to bankers not to deprive the farmers of funds credited by the government for a specific purpose and any amount withheld should be credited back to the accounts of the farmers.

'Third wave is not exclusive to children, they can go to school'

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

Dismissing the mass hysteria whipped up after some experts shared their view that children could be relatively impacted more in the much-talked-about third wave of Covid-19, Dr D Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of AIG, told The Pioneer that they can go to schools. He said, "There will be a third wave, but in a very mild form. It will be less intense, Children won't be affected. In the process of natural infection, they might get infected, but it won't be like target. There is hysteria of children hospitals gearing up; it is wrong, and it won't happen. We did a lot of research on how the virus enters the body and it requires ACE2 receptors. In children, these are not there: unless the virus mutates to an extent that it would attack even



without receptors. This will not occur in the next few years. There is no harm in going to school, but we should quickly get into children vaccination". Dr Nageshwar Reddy said that the vaccines were safe and added: "I don't understand why this vaccine hesitancy has come. People should

30% of Covid infected will come back with problems

take whatever vaccine is available. I am of the opinion vaccine should be given to children and some of these vaccines are very safe even in children" Speaking about complete unlock, the chairman of AIG said, "Even in partial lockdown, people were going around a lot. So, I don't think it makes much difference even if it is complete unlock or partial. Even after unlocking we should have Covid-appropriate behavior -- wear masks, maintain distance and follow hand hygiene. There are very good studies, if people follow all these three, it is almost as complete lockdown".

'Centre-state bhagidari' huge success: PM Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said the economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic was formulated to ensure that solutions do not follow a 'one size fits all' model, and asserted that "reforms by conviction and incentives" were undertaken on the back of "Centre-state bhagidari (partnership)". In a post on social media platform LinkedIn, he said that in the backdrop of the financial crunch seen across the world, Indian states were able to borrow significantly more in 2020-21. "It would perhaps pleasantly surprise you that states were able to raise an extra Rs 1.06 lakh crore in 2020-21. This significant increase in availability of resources was made possible by an approach of Centre-State bhagidari," the prime minister said. Noting that COVID-19 pandemic has come with a whole new set of challenges to governments across the world in terms of policy-making, Modi said India was no exception and asserted that raising enough resources for public welfare while ensuring sustainability is proving to be one of the biggest challenges. "When we formulated our economic response to the COVID-19 pandemic, we wanted to ensure that our solutions do not follow a 'one size fits all' model. For a federal country of continental dimensions, finding policy instruments at the national level to promote reforms by State governments is indeed challenging," he said. "But, we had faith in the robustness of our federal polity and we moved ahead in the spirit of Centre-State bhagidari," he said in his post titled "Reforms by Conviction and Incentives". Modi noted that in May 2020, as part of the Atmanirbhar Bharat package, the Centre announced that state governments would be allowed enhanced borrowing for 2020-21.



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Nitish in Delhi amid talk about JD(U) joining Union govt

PNS ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Tuesday left for the national capital, purportedly for medical reasons, though speculations ran rife that bargaining a decent share in the Union cabinet was also on the agenda of the JD(U) de-facto leader. The JD(U) has been a BJP ally close to three decades, barring a hiatus in 2013-2017. Kumar, who had himself served in the cabinet headed by late Atal Bihari Vajpayee, turned down the offer of the saffron party of a "token representation" to all alliance partners after the 2019 Lok Sabha polls which saw Prime Minister Narendra Modi steering the BJP to a thumping majority. "I do not know why his Delhi tour is being linked to the proposed cabinet reshuffle. To the best of my knowledge, he needs treatment for some eye problem and is visiting the national capital for the purpose," said Rajiv Ranjan Singh alias Lalan, one of the closest aides of Kumar.

Entire Valasamarri my family, says KCR

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, who has always pitched for building 'Bangaru Telangana', on Tuesday zeroed in on Vasalamarri - the village he has adopted in Bhongir district - as the nucleus of his broader vision, and called for collective efforts to make it 'Banagaru Vasalamarri'. At the Gram Sabha he addressed in the village on Tuesday, he gave a peep into the developmental projects he has in mind to transform the village. The 'mantra' for his projects was collective efforts by the residents to turn Vasalamarri into a model village with no caste, religion and gender divide. "The village should have only one caste -- 'caste of development' - with no influence of political parties once elections are over," he said in a statesman-



like manner. "This is a mission. If we all think and work unitedly, this can be transformed into Bangaru Vasalamarri within one year," he underlined. Going beyond his words of wisdom

and inspiration to the villagers, KCR sanctioned Rs.25 lakh to each of the 421 gram panchayats in Yadadri district from the Chief Minister's fund for developmental works.

Festive atmosphere, sumptuous lunch for Vasalamarri villagers with Chief Minister

A festive atmosphere prevailed in Vasalamarri village of Turkapalli mandal in YadadriBhongir district on Tuesday as the entire village had the rarest of rare occasion of having community lunch with Chief Minister K.Chandrasekhar Rao. It was a sumptuous feast with 23-item course at the lunch hosted by the Chief Minister in the village adopted by him.

SC refuses to interfere with CBSE, CISCE assessment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Tuesday refused to interfere with the assessment scheme propounded by both CBSE and CISCE for evaluation of Class 12 students, whose board examinations have been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The top court rejected the objections raised by a parents' body as well as students and said that it is not possible to have a second guess approach with regard to various aspects of the assessment scheme. A special bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari said, "We accept the scheme as propounded by both the boards - (CBSE and CISCE) ."

YSR and YSJ are water thieves, war with AP inevitable: Vemula

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana R & B and Legislative Affairs Minister Vemula Prashant Reddy has called upon people in the state to be prepared in case Telanana has to wage a war against Andhra Pradesh, which has been constructing illegal projects. He characterized former chief minister of combined Andhra Pradesh Y S Rajashekar Reddy as "thief" and present AP Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy as "big thief" for illegally diverting Krishna waters. Prashanth said, "YSR became a



water thief by taking waters through Pothireddy padu. He was against Telangana. We thought his

son (Y S Jagan) changed all that. But we realized that everyone in Lanka is a demon. Every Andhra person is against us." While the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme and the Rajolibanda Diversion Scheme are being expanded in AP, new projects are being designed in Telangana. These conditions are leading to a sort of water war between the two states. Prashant Reddy said, "All the natives in Lanka are demons and all the Andhras are against Telangana".

'Not political,' says NCP after 8 parties meet at Pawar's house

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A meeting today at veteran politician Sharad Pawar's house, which drew outsized attention over reports of Third Front manoeuvres ahead of the 2024 polls, featured eight parties including Mamata Banerjee's Trinamool Congress, Arvind Kejriwal's Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) and the Left. The Congress was missing. Former Union Minister Yashwant Sinha said he had asked Sharad Pawar to host the gathering of his outfit Rashtra Manch to "debate current events". "The meeting was called by Yashwant Sinha, not Sharad Pawar, this was not a political meet,"



stressed Majeed Memon, a leader of Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party (NCP). For the NCP, leaving out the Congress, its ally in Maharashtra, would be awkward.

"There are talks that the meeting was for a third front without the Congress, which is not the truth. There is no discrimination. We called all like-minded people. We

also invited Congress leaders. I called Vivek Tanha, Manish Tiwari, Abhishek Manu Singhvi, Shatrughan Sinha for the meeting. They couldn't come. It's not true that we didn't invite Congress," Mr Memon asserted, when reporters asked why the Congress was MIA at a gathering of opposition parties. National Conference leader Omar Abdullah, RLD's Jayant Choudhary, the Samajwadi Party's Ghanshyam Tiwari; AAP leader Sushil Gupta; CPI's Binoy Viswam and CPM's Nilotpal Basu were among those who attended the meet. "It was not a political meeting but an interaction among like-minded people."

TODAY

ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Trayodashi 06:59
Nakshatram : Anuradha 11:48
Time to Avoid : (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 12:18 pm - 1:56 pm
Yamagandam : 7:24 am - 9:02 am
Varjyam : 4:47 pm - 6:12 pm
Gulika : 10:40 am - 12:18 pm
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 1:20 am - 2:46 am
Abhijit Muhurtham : Nil

HYDERABAD WEATHER
Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 33/23
Humidity: 50%
Sunrise: 05:43 am
Sunset: 06:53 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated JUNE 21, 2021 5:00 PM

Working with foresight on politically significant caste combinations

For any shrewd politician, foresight is essential to work on politically significant caste combinations. Likewise, a community that forms a sizeable chunk of the vote bank will definitely be the cynosure of all eyes at the time of elections. In this context, it becomes essential to woo the Kapu community in Telugu states.



East Godavari districts. It has considerable base in the Rayalaseema region, though it is known there by another name - Balija.

AP Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy appears to be very calculative on these caste combinations. He has been on the job and is following the formula of social engineering in allotting nominated posts and chair-person posts of urban and rural local bodies. Jagan has to consolidate his party's position with regard to the Kapu community to retain power in the 2024 elections.

In Andhra Pradesh in particular, the community has extraordinary capacity to influence poll outcomes. Therefore, the ruling YSR Congress Party in AP has been moving forward cautiously to influence the Kapu community.

One does not need a psephologist to drive home the fact that the party that manages to win the hearts of Kapus would have the last laugh at the hustings! For, the community has strong presence in the central Andhra region, consisting of Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari and

Until recently, there were apprehensions among some of the political pundits that there could be simultaneous polls for the Lok Sabha and the legislative assemblies of all states in 2022. Now, it appears that the idea of 'one nation, one poll' has been ruled out. Hence, every political party has to redraw its plans and have a relook at its calculations.

One does not need a psephologist to drive home the fact that the party that manages to win the hearts of Kapus would have the last laugh at the hustings! For, the community has strong presence in the central Andhra region, consisting of Guntur, Krishna, West Godavari and East Godavari districts.

Keep aside things like allotting tickets, nominated posts and other unofficial opportunities to members of the Kapu community for a while, every party in AP has to first instill confidence in that community.

It is a known fact that the ruling party has kept itself away from committing on the issue of reservation for the Kapu community in the fields of education and employment by latching on to the view that any such quota can't be implemented at the present juncture.

Wounds following the tussle between the Kapu community and Dalits due to the tonsuring of a Dalit person almost quarter century ago are still fresh in people's minds.

Newly nominated MLC Thota Trimurthulu (YSRC) was involved in that case, which is still pending in the court. Meanwhile, Trimurthulu got MLC post under the Governor's quota in the AP Legislative Council. It is natural for the general public to see only clean persons as members in the Council. But Trimurthulu,



M D RATNA KUMAR Senior Journalist

were accepted by the Governor immediately after meetings with Jagan.

While some sections are saying that the ruling party will have to face the repercussions in this regard in the days to come, there is a feeling among the cadre that it is a strong effort in expressing the party's solidarity with the Kapu community.

The ruling party might be under the scrutiny of Dalits following its attitude that shows a tilt towards Trimurthulu.

There might be no immediate reaction from the Dalit community, though there would be considerable impact in the days to come.

Former IAS officer & Lok Sabha member from Amalapuram (SC) constituency KSR Murthy (Congress) took up the tonsuring case during the 1998 mid-term elections for the Lok Sabha.

There was a clear polarisation in favour of caste following which the Kapu commu-

nity turned against Murthy in that particular election. Some Congress leaders warned Murthy not to take up the tonsuring issue fearing that Kapus might turn against the Congress. Their apprehensions came true, resulting in the defeat of the Congress then. Now also the principal opposition may face the same issue.

If they stand behind Dalits in the case, the Congress' experience might be repeated like in the case of the Telugu Desam Party in days to come.

Actually TDP had faced criticism in this case as Trimurthulu had been its legislator 25 years ago.

He was in jail for some period in that tonsuring case, which had found its echoes in the Assembly in 1997.

Then TDP government headed by N.Chandrababu Naidu faced embarrassing moments when jail authorities allowed Trimurthulu to address his supporters who had come in large numbers to

visit their leader. Subsequently Naidu got 'anti-Dalit' tag for some time.

Trimurthulu switched his loyalties to YSRC and then TDP heaved a sigh of relief. Jagan is believed to have given relief for Naidu from the pain of bearing such tag by selecting Trimurthulu for the Council under the Governor's quota. But it might bring political dividends in the form of support from the Kapu community.

The possible impact of Janasena party, headed by film star Pawan Kalyan, on the Kapu community might have driven the ruling party in this direction.

Whatever be the political compulsions, the Kapu community will show its impact in the elections. Therefore, political parties are unabashedly running after the community, bothering least about the sentiments of Dalits. Let us see what would happen in the future on the political arena of Andhra Pradesh.

Cops decide to release vehicles seized during lockdown in state

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The office of the Director General of Police has passed a circular to release all the vehicles seized under the lockdown violation rule, during the prevailing corona second wave in the state.

As a result of this all the offices of the police superintendents and the police commissionerates are processing the release of all vehicles after recovering the fines imposed. Vehicles can be taken away by paying e-challans from the local police stations.

For record the police have sent some cases to the court depending on the seriousness of the breaking of the lockdown rules by the vehicle owners. In such cases the owners have to go directly to the court and pay the fine there. According to the court proceedings, the police will file a charge sheet against the person. Based on that, the court will punish the person.

To convey this information to the public and the owners of seized vehicles, the city police have been sending text messages to their cell phones about these rule violations and fines levied. According to information gathered from the concerned department, everyone whose vehicles

have been seized receives a message from the local police station. The message includes how to pay a fine for rules violations. It shows T-App, T-Wallet, Pay at this service / your service / Paytm / TS Online or https://e.chalan.tspolice.gov.in for paying the fines.

For record, the lockdown had been imposed in the state since May 12 to curb the growing corona cases. Police in the lockdown period have registered cases under Section 16 of the Epidemic Act, IPC 188, for violating the lockdown rules. Police sources said that even if the lockdown was lifted, the police would

slap cases on those, who would violate the corona guidelines mentioned by the government. To this end, orders have also been issued to all SPs and commissionerates offices. The police department has clarified, that the Epidemic Act will continue to be implemented as corona has not been completely eradicated.

The police said that wearing face mask was mandatory in public places and also warned that those who wouldn't do it or wouldn't follow social distancing and hand sanitizing rules would be prosecuted under the Epidemic Management Act and fined Rs 1,000.

need your determination and commitment to work unitedly for the development of every family in the village. I will come here at least 20 times to see the transformation I visualize for the village," he said.

Recalling that 270 villagers were sent to model Ankapur village previously to see the development it had achieved under its Village Development Committee, he asked the villagers to form a similar Village Development Committee, which could be tasked to address all issues concerning people. Ankapur village was not visited by a police officer in the last 45 years as there have been no disputes in the village, he told them. All the 2,600 people of Vasalamarri

Don't adjust Rythu Bandhu with old...

Continued from page 1

The Minister also asked the District Collectors to monitor the RythuBandhu disbursements at the district level and a State level team would also monitor any issue faced by the farmers.

Two toll free numbers- 18002001001 and 04033671300 to address any issues faced by the farmers have been set up and they work between 8 am to 8 pm. The Minister also directed the bankers to expedite the disbursement/renewal of crop loans.

The meeting was attended by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Principal Secretary (Finance) Ramakrishna Rao and officials of other departments and senior bank officials.

'Centre-state bhagidari'...

Continued from page 1

An extra 2 per cent of GSDP was allowed, of which 1 per cent was made conditional on the implementation of certain economic reforms, he said.

Asserting that this nudge for reform is rare in Indian public finance, Modi said it was a nudge, incentivising the states to adopt progressive policies to avail additional funds.

"The results of this exercise are not only encouraging but also run contrary to the notion that there are limited takers for sound economic policies," the prime minister said in his LinkedIn post on "innovative policy making in the time of COVID-19".

The four reforms to which additional borrowings were linked with 0.25 per cent of GDP tied to each one had two characteristics -- they were

linked to improving the ease of living to the public and particularly the poor, the vulnerable, and the middle class and secondly, they also promoted fiscal sustainability.

Modi pointed out that the first reform under the 'One Nation One Ration Card' policy required state governments to ensure that all ration cards in the state under the National Food Security Act (NFSA) were seeded with the Aadhaar number of all family members and that all Fair Price Shops had Electronic Point of Sale devices.

He said that the second reform, aimed at improving ease of doing business, required states to ensure that renewal of business-related licences under seven acts is made automatic, online and non-discretionary on mere payment of fees.

YSR and YSJ...

Continued from page 1

The Telangana Minister warned the AP CM Jagan that a fight would be inevitable if the illegal projects launched by AP were not stopped. He said that AP, while assuring the Green Tribunal that no new projects were being built, was illegally constructing projects.

Third wave is...

Continued from page 1

Speaking about long Covid, he said, "Long Covid is going to be a major problem for us in the future. About 30 per cent of people who got Covid will come back with various other symptoms. Covid virus produces various other autoimmune antibodies in the system.

SC refuses to interfere with CBSE, CISCE...

Continued from page 1

The bench also noted the submission of Attorney General K K Venugopal, assisting the court in individual capacity and also appearing for the Centre, that University Grants Commission (UGC) will issue directives to all the colleges and varsities that admissions be made after the declaration of results by all the boards -- CBSE, CISCE and state boards.

The top court, which dealt with all the major objections of the interveners -- Uttar Pradesh Parents' Association, and second compartment and private students -- said the scheme propounded cannot be doubted on the mere apprehension of manipulation of marks by the CBSE

schools to favour their own students.

The bench rejected the submission of senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for UP Parents Association, Lucknow, that option to students for external examination as given in the CBSE's scheme should be offered at the very initial stage to both the school and the students and the results should be declared together. It said that after hearing the views of Venugopal, We are of the view that this suggestion cannot be taken forward. This would result in denial of an option to the students and also result in increasing the uncertainty until the exam of improvisation is conducted and the results are declared".

Addaguduru SI, two constables suspended

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh Bhagwath has issued orders suspending Addaguduru Sub inspector Mahesh, two constables Rashid and Janaiah in connection with the lockup death that took place in Addaguru police station in Bhongir.

It may be recalled that one woman named Mariamma, 45, died in lockup three days ago. Following Mariamma's lockup death, Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwath ordered a comprehensive inquiry with higher officials. The investigation revealed that SI and constables were involved in the death. Mahesh issued orders on Tuesday suspending SI and two constables.

Entire Valasamarri my family, says KCR

Continued from page 1

He also sanctioned Rs.1 crore to the Bhongir municipality and Rs.50 lakh each to the remaining five municipalities in the district on the occasion.

KCR, who began his sojourn in the village with prayers at the Kodandarama temple, partook in community lunch leisurely by interacting with some of the villagers and later addressed the Grama Sabha. Indicating that his administration had come closer to people, he said just for the sake of sanction of a few tractors, buffaloes and sheep, villagers and sarpanch need not come (to Hyderabad) all the way. A word to the District Collector would be enough. "More than giving facilities, I

Festive atmosphere...

Continued from page 1

Many of the residents were apparently pleased to see the Chief Minister greeting them and exchanging a few words. Several women were seen sharing their issues as the Chief Minister stopped at their table and enquired about their well-being. He asked the officers present to note those issues. The leisurely time spent by KCR has given him a fair idea about the issues facing the villagers.

Later, addressing the Gram Sabha, KCR said that during his future visits, he would prefer to sit with small groups of villagers and chat with them to understand their individual aspirations. He said he would visit each of the three Dalitwadis in the village. "This time I could only interact closely with Sarpanch Anjaiah, MPTC member

Nitish in Delhi amid talk about...

Continued from page 1

The Union cabinet reshuffle is a prerogative of the prime minister and it is for him to decide whom to hold consultations with on the issue, Singh said. Singh, who has been with Kumar ever since the latter broke ranks with Lalu Prasad to chart his own political course, is

seen as one of the candidates the JD(U) might strongly back, were it to join the Union council of ministers. Another ministerial probable RCP Singh, who succeeded Kumar as the national president of the party a few months ago, laughed off at the suggestion but dropped ample hints that the JD(U) was now eyeing a spot in

All eyes on political parties in Telugu states

Continued from page 1

support Modi in fighting Covid-19. His cordial relations with the Union government are hardly a surprise though - Andhra Pradesh is battling a severe financial crunch and the State government simply cannot afford to be on the wrong side of Modi. Not to mention the CBI cases against Jagan. Also, Jagan is anti-Congress, having parted with the party after being denied the Chief Minister's

chair following the death of his father. If Jagan has to choose between BJP and Congress, he may be inclined towards the saffron party. Coming to the third important regional party in the Telugu States - the TDP - the position of its national president is pitiable, especially after his rout in the last Assembly and Lok Sabha elections. Before the General Elections, Naidu tried to bring

Third Front mooted by Pawar, Naidu will have no option except joining it. However, the Third Front leaders will prefer Jagan to Naidu, and if they manage to successfully woo the YSRC chief, the TDP national president may be left in the wilderness.

Also, the BJP may not want Jagan to snap ties as its leadership is well aware that the saffron party has no base in Andhra Pradesh.

The Union government. "My name has been doing the rounds since 2017. Any decision as to who will be in the Union cabinet from our party has to be taken by our leader. Of course, he does so after consulting all," said Singh, a former IAS officer whose rise in politics, after retirement from service about a decade ago, has been meteoric.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹160
Without Skin	₹200
Broiler at Farm	₹130

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	490
VIJAYAWADA	524
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.90

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Illegal dumping of chemical waste makes lives of residents miserable

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On June 7, 2021, an industry set up in the industrial areas of Jeedimetla, Dulapally, dumped medical waste on the way to the Gagillapur thanda.

On June 9 and 11, large quantities of chemicals were dumped at Gurjakunta on the way from Dundigal to Gagillapur. During this month only, more than 100 drums of chemical wastes were dumped at the construction site of double bedroom flats on the way from Dundigal Outer Ring Road to MLRT.

The above three examples are not isolated. Some of the industrial units set up at the industrial areas of Jeedimetla, Dulapally in the Quthbullapur constituency and Gaddapotharam in Sangareddy constituency have been dumping their industrial waste in the vacant spaces, construction sites and forest areas and sometimes in the open areas close to residential houses, making the lives of the people living in and around the above mentioned



industrial areas very difficult. Most of the chemical dumps can be seen at the areas in the Outer Ring Road within the municipality, extending from Mallampeta to Dundigal. In addition to this, there are thousands of acres of government land and barren areas in the vicinity and the mafia appointed by the industry are dump-

ing large quantities of chemical wastes there overnight, from Gaddapotharam, Kazipally and Bollaram areas. The people residing in these areas have made several complaints to the Pollution Control Board, but the PCB authorities, it appears, have turned a deaf ear to those complaints. The PCB Task Force, which was set

up to keep a constant watch on the chemical industries in the area had hardly been functioning. No action has been taken against any industry so far. PCB authorities on receiving the complaints rush to the dump site to collect samples of the waste dumped and their role ends there, locals have alleged.

Owners of industries have appointed mafias, who take the solid and liquid wastes from the factories and dump those in the open spaces in the locality at the middle of the night. The owners have resorted to this as moving the industrial waste to the JETL for treatment of the same is more costly than dumping those in vacant spaces. The chemical mafia is collecting the industrial wastes from the factories at night and carrying those in tractors and dumping those in available vacant land, including government sites, forest areas and even in ponds in the suburbs.

As a result of this illegal dumping of chemical wastes, locals are suffering from various skin and respiratory diseases. Residents of the area are also suffering from shortness of breath due to the strong smell that these chemical wastes generate, especially at night. These chemical wastes have serious side effects on children, the elderly and women. Locals are demanding strict action against these illegal dumping.

Cyberabad cops bust cricket betting racket; five arrested

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Cyberabad police have busted an online cricket betting racket with the arrest of five bookies and seizure of over Rs 20 lakh cash. Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar said on Tuesday that the arrests were made by Special Operation Team (SOT), Madhapur Zone, which has been keeping a close vigil on betting activity in view of the ongoing Pakistan Super League.

Acting on a tip off, SOT personnel conducted a raid in Nizampet under the limits of Bachupally police station in the early hours of Monday and arrested five bookies while they were exchanging the money related to cricket betting. The police seized Rs 20.50 lakh cash, one betting board, one laptop, 33 mobile phones, one MI TV and one Hathway router from their possession.

All the six accused in the case are residents of Andhra Pradesh. Three of the accused are organisers. Main organiser Somanna, a resident of East Godavari district, is absconding. According to police,



Somanna was the key person in this online cricket betting in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Gunturi Satya Pavan Kumar and Uddara Raju Sathesh Raju took mainline access from the main organizer. The accused hired Trinath, Nandipamu Bhaskar and Jakkapudi Prasad to operate the communicator board, laptop which are connected through main line. They had online access to numerous bookies in Hyderabad for commission.

The profit and loss of the gamblers/punters can be seen from time to time in the online betting apps like Live Line Guru, Cricket Mazza, Lotus, Bet-365, Bet fair provided by

the agents. The illegal cash payment transactions of Cricket betting were online, but in some cases it was through cash.

Police said the cash transaction between Somanna and Pavan Kumar happened through hawala money. It is observed that many youth have indulged in this online cricket betting and losing high amounts of money through online cricket betting.

The police commissioner said parents should keep a strict vigil on their children. He said it was learnt that due to loss of money in betting and to repay the bookies, people are taking hand loans or selling property.

Officials directed to expedite renovation works of Yadadri

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu has directed the officials to complete the renovation works of Yadadri temple in two-and-a-half months.

The Chief Minister visited the Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Temple on Monday night to inspect the renovation works. He examined the newly installed lighting system in the temple premises. KCR instructed the officials concerned to complete the works as early as possible to ensure that even if lakhs of pilgrims come at one go, it should ensure their "darshan". The Chief Minister, who reached



Yadadri after a visit to Warangal, said since Covid-19 is under control, the works on the temple should speed up and all the works should be completed simultaneously.

He went around the temple ring road and examined the works. Later, he had a darshan and took blessings from the Vedic scholars.

He enquired about the constructions in the temple and outside.

He held a review meeting with the temple authorities and other officials and instructed Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar to conduct a Differential Global Positioning System (DGPS) survey of lands under the ring road.

Junction works to disrupt water supply in some areas on June 25

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

There will be no water supply for 24 hours from 10 pm on June 25 in Shaikpet, Jubilee Hills, Filmnagar, Prashasan Nagar, Gachibowli, Madhapur, Ayyappa Society and Kavuri Hills.

The Hyderabad Metro Water Supply & Sewerage Board said the supplies would be affected due to junction work on pumping main of KDWSP Phase-III Ring main-I coming under alignment of SRDP fly over from SBI Bank to Archaic Stone at Tolichowki. The HMWSSB requested the consumers to use water conservatively.



A TRIBUTE

The works relating to installation of the statue of former Prime Minister PV Narasimha Rao at the newly rechristened PV Narasimha Rao Marg, earlier known as Necklace Road, are at brisk pace. The bronze statue costing Rs 20 lakh will be installed by the Telangana State Cultural Department. Officials sources said that the work on the statue will be completed in about a week. The installation was approved by Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu last year to mark the end of the late Prime Minister's birth centenary celebrations.

—SV Chary

Hyd woman urges MEA to bring back daughter

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Atiya Begum, a resident of Hyderabad, has written a letter to the Minister of External Affairs, Subrahmanyam Jaishankar, urging for the rescue of her daughter Aliya Begum, who has been stuck in Qatar's Doha for the last 20 months.

Atiya Begum said, "My daughter, Aliya Begum, was in search of a job and was approached by a travel agent Muneer and offered a job to work as a beautician in a beauty parlour in Doha, Qatar. She went to Doha, Qatar in November of 2018 and joined a beauty parlour and worked there for 14 months. Later the parlour was closed and she was asked to work in some other beauty parlour 'Black Saloon' where she worked for six months."

"She did not receive proper treatment, proper food and accommodation and she was

also not given her salary properly. During August 2020 she fell ill and was admitted to a government hospital but her employer foisted a case on her and she was sent to Al-Rayan Jail for six months," she added.

She further said that Aliya was released by her employer and asked to rejoin her job again as a housemaid at her home for two months as her beauty parlour was not open due to lockdown.

"During January 2021 she was asked to work at one Rosaa restaurant as a waitress, and her new employer Salma is harassing her a lot, beating her and not giving proper accommodation. Whenever we speak she is crying and wants to come back to India. She has been stuck there for the last 20 months," added Atiya Begum.

She said, "I appeal to the government of India to rescue my daughter and bring her back to India."

Government urged to construct OGH building in the vacant land

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Tuesday demanded the state government to construct a new building for the Osmania General Hospital in the vacant land in the OGH premises immediately.

In a media statement, he said that government should give a grant of Rs 1,000 crores for the new OGH building and it should be developed into multi super specialty hospital. He said that Osmania Hospital's name was not mentioned in the three new multi super specialty hospitals being proposed in the state by the government.

He said that he has visited Osmania General Hospital in July last year along with former MP V Hanumantha Rao and Nampally Assembly Constituency in-charge Feroze Khan and examined the issues being faced by the patients and facilities available in the hos-



pital. The police have filed a criminal case on them, Uttam Kumar Reddy said.

He said that state government should construct new building for OGH in the vacant seven acres land available in the premises of OGH without disturbing the old heritage building.

"It is ironical to note that the name of Osmania Hospital was not mentioned in the three new multi super specialty hospitals announced by the Chief Minister recently," the TPCC chief said.

He said that at least Rs 1,000 crores should be sanc-

3 of a gang held for illegal sale of 165 kg PDS rice

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force nabbed three members of a gang involved in smuggling of PDS rice from the city to Karnataka. The police seized 165 quintals of rice and three goods carrier auto-rickshaws. Three others involved in the case are absconding.

The arrested persons were Mohd Qadir, 33, Mohd Sami, 27, and Mohd Qadir, 27. Three others, the prime suspect Dawood, 25, a history-sheeter from Musheerabad, Akbar of Bowenpally and Karim of Rasoolpura, were absconding. According to the police, Dawood, who was involved in one murder case and other property offences, along with others was illegally procuring rice meant for distribution under the Public Distribution System. "He was supplying it to Karnataka with the help of his associates at higher rates," said P Radha Kishan Rao, DCP, Task Force.

Producer cheated by man promising Covid vaccine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Leading Telugu filmmaker D Suresh Babu has been cheated by a man, who collected Rs 1 lakh from him for promising to arrange Covid-19 vaccination for employees of his production house.

The producer, who is actor Rana's father, through his aide, registered a complaint in Jubilee Hills police station on Monday against one Nagarjuna Reddy, who has already been arrested by the police for duping a television channel.

The man called up the producer and offered to arrange 500 Covid vaccine doses for people working in his Suresh Productions. The accused asked Suresh Babu to transfer Rs 1 lakh to bank account of his wife. After withdrawing the amount, Nagarjuna Reddy switched off his mobile phone.

After realizing that he has been cheated, he lodged a

complaint with the police through his aide.

Hyderabad Cybercrime Police had arrested Nagarjuna Reddy on June 14 on charges of cheating a TV channel in the guise of providing vaccination to its employees at a cheaper rate.

Nagarjuna Reddy called the entertainment TV channel and identified himself as a personal assistant of Minister KT Rama Rao and offered to arrange Covid vaccines for its staff members at Rs 100 per dose.

The channel paid Rs 1.5 lakh for the vaccination drive for 1,500 employees. However, after receiving the money, Nagarjuna Reddy stopped responding to the calls.

The Cybercrime police booked a case on a complaint from the channel management and arrested him. He was remanded to judicial custody.

Teachers asked to work from June 25

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Education Minister Sabita Indra Reddy on Tuesday asked teachers to report for work at schools from June 25 and advised all schools to accept tuition fees as per the GO No. 46 issued last year.

However, she said that she would soon be holding a meeting with managements of private schools.

The Intermediate Second Year examinations would be released within a week, she said asked the government officials to take steps to com-

plete degree and PG examinations from July 1 to July 31. She said that special classes for degree, PG and engineering students would be held from July 1.

A decision on resuming classes for high school and Intermediate would be taken

after taking ministers of welfare ministries into confidence. A meeting with the ministers would be held in two days.

She said that administering vaccines to teachers, degree and PG students would be implemented soon.

MMTS TO BE PARTIALLY RESTORED

Railways extends season tickets' validity

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the gradual resumption of the train services being done over the South Central Railways, the MMTS service will be partially restored in the city from June 23. Due to the cancellation of the MMTS train services during March 2020, some of the season ticket holders having a valid tenure could not utilise their tickets for the remaining period. To assist such ticket holders, the Railway Board has extended the validity of all the season tickets to the extent of number of days lost, from the date of resumption of the train services, June 23.

All such season tickets are eligible for extending the tenure in proportion to the number of days lost. The passengers holding valid sea-



son tickets - purchased either online or at booking counters - should approach the booking counters at MMTS or suburban stations to validate and extend their existing season tickets. The authorities also plan to reward all the passengers who opt for contactless and cash-less purchase of MMTS tickets.

Passengers booking tickets through ATVMs, available at all major MMTS stations, will get an additional benefit of 3 per cent bonus purchases. Those who buy MMTS tickets through the UTS mobile app will get an additional 5 per cent bonus in case they opt to pay via the R-Wallet available in the app.

12 RPF personnel of SCR selected for Ati Utkrishi Seva Padak

As many as 32 Railway Protection Force officials of South Central Railway were bestowed with the prestigious Ati Utkrishi and Utkrishi Seva Padak for the year 2019 from the Ministry of Home Affairs in recognition of their meritorious service and dedication towards duty. 12 RPF personnel of SCR were awarded with Ati-Utkrishi Seva Padak and 20 RPF personnel were awarded with Utkrishi Seva Padak. The Utkrishi and Ati-Utkrishi Seva Padak were instituted by the Ministry of Home Affairs for the permanent police personnel throughout the Indian Union in consideration of the long term service medal.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

AMENDMENT

Name of the Work: Construction of toilets at Bhokshi Nagar near Hubs in Ward No-135, Aival Circle, GhMC. (Rs. in Lakhs): 2.8. (2) Construction of community hall at Raju Weaker section, 134 division (CDP Funds) (Rs. in Lakhs): 10. (3) Laying 420mm dia PVC SW Pipe in Vijaya Nagar colony and sub areas (Municipal Corporation) (Rs. in Lakhs): 3.4. (4) Laying of CC Road from H.No-1-5-451/2142 to 1-5-451/2146/1 and 1-5-431/20146 to 1-5-431/20150 in Sai Brundavan Colony, Aival (CDP Funds). (Rs. in Lakhs): 10.2. (5) Laying of BT Road in Prem Nagar Colony of Aival (CDP Funds). (Rs. in Lakhs): 8. (6) Laying of CC Road from H.No-2-104/98 to existing CC Road at Sai Nagar Colony in Aival (CDP Funds). (Rs. in Lakhs): 11.6. (7) Laying of CC Road at Subash Nagar Graveyard in ward No-135, Aival Circle, GhMC. (Rs. in Lakhs): 14.4. (8) Resurfacing of BT road in internal lanes of Kothabashi, Venkatapuram of ward 134 Aival Circle, GhMC. (Rs. in Lakhs): 14.50. (9) Numbering to Community Halls with Paint in Aival Circle, GhMC. (Rs. in Lakhs): 0.47. (10) Laying BT road in Raj Nagar, Maa Sarabeshwari Colony, MES Colony, Vijaya Nagar Colony in ward no 135 of Aival Circle, GhMC. (Rs. in Lakhs): 20.8. (11) Restoration of damaged CC Road in Ward 118, Venkatapuram, Ramachandrab Colony, other locations of Venkatapuram in Ward 135, Aival Circle. (Rs. in Lakhs): 17.50. (12) Restoration of damaged CC Road near Hanuman Temple to H.No-1-21-220 of Hanuman Nagar and other locations in Ward 135, Aival Circle. (Rs. in Lakhs): 15.2. (13) Laying of SW Pipe from 22A bus stop to H.No-1-5-417/4 at Surya Nagar in ward no 133, Aival Circle, GhMC. (Rs. in Lakhs): 31.00. Total (Rs. Lakhs): 207.27. Events: Download Start Date: 26.06.2021 09:30 A.M. Download End Date: 30.06.2021 04:00 P.M. Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 30.06.2021 09:30 P.M. Price Bid Opening: 30.06.2021 04:30 P.M.

R.O. No.: 13086-PP/CL/AM/1/2021-22

CREATING ENGINEER AJAY, CIRCLE, GHMC

Telangana logs 1,175 new cases, 10 deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Tuesday reported 1,175 new Covid infections and 10 fatalities taking the cumulative number of deaths to 3,586 and the total number of positive cases to 6,15,574. The number of active cases in Telangana, as on Tuesday, stood at 16,640. Between Monday and Tuesday, author-

ities conducted 1,24,907 Covid tests of which results of 820 samples were awaited. On Tuesday, 1,771 individuals have recovered with a recovery rate of 96.71 per cent. So far, a total of 1,77,70,083 Covid-19 tests have been conducted in the State out of which 6,15,574 have tested positive and 5,95,348 persons have recovered.

TRS, BJP going whole hog in Huzurabad, Cong in slumber

K VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

Since the beginning of the Eatala Rajender episode Huzurabad constituency has been hogging the limelight and been a hot topic of discussion in the Telangana political circle. Things have warmed up further as there is an ensuing bye-election there, whatever may be its date. While the ruling TRS party and the BJP are fully concentrating on winning the seat, the Congress party is yet to wake up from their slumber.



For record the bye-election will take place as the sitting MLA of the constituency, Eatala Rajender, has resigned from the seat, the TRS party, which he represented, and has joined the BJP. Both for the BJP and the TRS the bye-election has become a prestige fight. While the BJP may field Eatala Rajender or his wife Jamuna Reddy from the seat, the TRS has adopted the Nagarjuna Sagar formula for the Huzurabad constituency as well - the formula being, it is the party that is important and not the candidate. Following this formula the TRS is concentrating on implementing its strategies there without focusing on the selection of the candidate. Contrary to the activities of both the TRS and the

BJP, the Congress party seems, till now, to be following a 'no strategy' approach to the Huzurabad bye-election. The party leaders are yet to meet on the Huzurabad bye-poll. Instead they are busy preparing strategies to get the TPCC chief's post, or prevent their rival leaders from getting the post. Even the party high command and the Telangana Congress Affairs In-charge Manickam Tagore are not concentrating on the Huzurabad bye-election.

Moreover, the Telangana Congress leaders are yet to come out of the shock given to them by Eatala Rajender. The Congress leaders have still not managed to digest the fact that Eatala has joined the BJP, instead of the Congress party. For record, they had been caught on the wrong foot as

they had criticized the TRS party and the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao severely on the Eatala issue and had extended support to Eatala. They had been thoroughly embarrassed as Eatala joined the BJP. The Congress leaders were expecting that Eatala would either float a new political party or would join the Congress. However, things took a different turn.

Another mistake that the Congress leaders had done was that they didn't support the Huzurabad constituency Congress In-charge P Kaushik Reddy, who spat fire on Eatala from the beginning of the Eatala episode. Kaushik Reddy has stopped criticising Eatala Rajender and also has stopped all his activities in the constituency giving rise to speculations. His accidental meeting

with the TRS Working President and IT Minister KT Rama Rao has also given birth to speculations that he may join TRS if offered a ticket. But Kaushik Reddy has made it clear that he will not join the TRS party at any cost. But political analysts were saying that anything could happen in politics.

One of the senior Congress leaders stated that the party would focus on Huzurabad constituency only after the announcement of the new TPCC chief. The present TPCC Chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy is not at all showing any interest in the Huzurabad developments. It may be recalled that Uttam Kumar Reddy is the leader who paved the way for bye-elections in the state. Uttam Kumar Reddy tendered his resignation to Huzurabad constituency after winning as an MP from Nalgonda Lok Sabha constituency. However, Uttam's wife Padmavathi Reddy lost her elections in the hands of ruling TRS party's candidate S Saidi Reddy. Later, Dubbak and Nagarjuna Sagar bye-elections were held in the state. BJP won in Dubbak and TRS won in Nagarjuna Sagar bye-elections. TRS therefore, has a 2 to 1 edge over BJP in the bye-elections held in the state till date. However, the Congress had lost all the bye-elections held so far.



Maoist leader Haribhushan dies of Covid

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR
BHUPALAPALLY

A senior most Maoist leader Yapa Narayana, more famous with his nom de guerre Haribhushan, has reportedly died of Covid in Bastar forests of Chhattisgarh on Monday night, according to sources. However, there was no confirmation from Maoist party so far.

Haribhushan, is the secretary of the Telangana State Committee of the CPI (Maoist) and was reported to have been inducted into the Central Committee, the most powerful decision making body of the ultra left revolutionary party. Haribhushan is one of senior most Maoist cadres wanted in connection with scores of cases in different states. Sources, who monitor the Maoist activity, maintained that they got reliable inputs about Haribhushan passing away in Bastar forest areas last night. Yapa Narayana hailed from Madagudem of Kothagudem mandal in Mahabubabad district.

The CPI (Maoist) central committee has on June 15 issued a statement rebutting the police claim that many senior cadres of Maoists were afflicted with Covid-19.



Minister thanks CM for giving priority to develop Warangal

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has thanked Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for giving top priority for comprehensive development of undivided Warangal district and for showering sops for the welfare of the people.

Addressing media along with Chief Whip Vinay Bhaskar, MLAs Dr Rajaiah, Nannapaneni Narendar, MLC Basvaraju Saraiiah, Mayor Gundu Sudharani here on Tuesday, Dayakar Rao said that the CM is keen to develop the district in the spheres of education, health, IT, agriculture and industrial sectors giving unprecedented priority to the district development.

Earlier, the government proposed to set up a health hub in the city in 200 acres combin-

ing the premises of MGM Hospital, Kakatiya Medical College, Regional Eye Hospital, Central Prison and now proposed to set up a 33-storeyed multi super speciality hospital with global standards with the cooperation of Canada. He asked the authorities to complete the super speciality hospital in 33 months at a cost of Rs 1,575 crore.

The credit for providing irrigation facility to farmers through Kaleswaram and Devadula projects go to the CM, he said adding that the CM has been paying special interest to Warangal district in terms of providing irrigation facility. The CM wants to dedicate the Devadula project for irrigation development of Warangal district and wants to fill every tank with the project water by allocating Rs 100 crore.

The government, responding to public opinion, has decided to name Warangal Urban district after Hanmakonda and Warangal Rural district after Warangal and to set up a medical college, dental college, veterinary college in the city, to develop an airport near Mamunuru.

Terming the BJP as 'dirty party', the Minister said that the party is rendering injustice to Telangana forgetting the promises made by the Centre at the time of bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh. The BJP was out to prevent KCR from developing the state as a pride of the globe, he said pointing out that the BJP which boasted of victory in the Nagarjuna Sagar by-elections, Hyderabad, Warangal and Khimmam Municipal Corporation elections and municipal elections bit dust.

'Take steps for avenue plantation'

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

District Collector L Sarman has ordered officials to take steps to plant saplings on either sides of main roads and link roads under the town municipality to promote greenery.

Inspecting avenue plantation near the main road as part of the Telangana Ku Haritha Haram here on Tuesday, he asked the authorities to install a welcome board near the main road and take steps to clear the bushes on either side of the road and plant tall and attractive plants on either side of the road.

5.3 cr fishlings to be released in 1,591 Medak district tanks

PNS ■ MEDAK

Plans have been afoot to release 5.35 crore fishlings in 1591 tanks in the district at a cost of Rs 4.36 crore during the current year. The state government of Telangana will not take a single rupee from fishermen for the purpose.

The district officials are readying themselves to release three varieties of fishlings in water bodies - 40 per cent of Katla, 10 per cent of Merige and 50 per cent of Rohu.

The fishlings would be in 35-40 mm size and 82-100 mm size.

In 2020, the government released 4.14 crore fishlings

in 1,132 water bodies in the district spending Rs 2.62 crore for the purpose.

On account of the state government releasing the fishlings annually in water bodies, fish wealth has increased. The production and consumption of fish has increased in the district.

There are 262 fishermen's cooperative societies in the district - 246 for males and 16 for females.

In all, 1591 tanks are there in the district, besides Pocharam Project, check-dams on Haldi Vagu stream.

There are over 15,700 fishermen's families in Medak, Haveli Ghanpur, Ramayampet, Nizampet,

Narsingi, Chegunta, Sankarampet, Toopran, Manoharabad, Masaipet, Veldurti, Kaudipalli, Kolcharam, Narsapur, Chilpeehed, Pappannapet, Tekmal, Alladurg road, Regode, Sivvampet, A Sankarampet and so on.

Fisheries department Additional Director Mallesam said that the fishlings would be released into tanks depending on the water level in the tanks and prevailing dry or wet conditions. He said that special measures would be initiated for economic development of fishermen besides lending support to the fishermen's cooperative societies.

'Living standards of fishermen improved'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav has said that the living standards of fishermen have improved in the state manifold as the state government is releasing fishlings in water bodies annually.

He said that a meeting of representatives of fishermen communities of Gangaputra and Mudiraj will be held on July 8 to iron out solutions to many thorny issues, including giving membership to fishermen who have completed 18 years of age in the cooperative society.

The meeting would discuss among others many issues related to development of fishermen communities. Taking part in a review meeting held



at his office in Masab Tank here on Tuesday along with Rajya Sabha member Banda Prakash, he said that many new districts

have been formed. In view of this, suitable steps to set up fishermen's cooperative societies in the newly

formed districts would be taken. The Minister said that the life insurance cover of Rs 2 lakh to each of the 116 fishermen's bereaved families would be released soon.

Rajya Sabha member Banda Prakash raised the issue of leasing the panchayat raj tanks, the Minister assured him to take it to the notice of the Chief Minister.

The Minister asked officials to prepare policy guidelines to pay revised and enhanced insurance cover of Rs 6 lakh to the bereaved fishermen's families.

Secretary to the department of Animal Husbandry Anita Rajendra, fisheries commissioner Lachchiram Bhukya and other officials of the department were present on the occasion.

KCR did not give 2 lakh jobs as promised: Jagga

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MLA from Sangareddy T Jagga Reddy has stated that all the leaders would work together no matter who ever attain the TPCC chief post. It's very natural in politics to have small differences like we have it among the family members, Jagga Reddy said adding that through there may be differences among the leaders after the High Command announces the new TPCC Chief, we all remain united.

Speaking to the media at Assembly media point on Tuesday, Jagga Reddy

ridiculed Telangana BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar saying that the latter has to daydream hoping that Congress leaders would join BJP. Expecting leaders from other party shows the weakness in their own party, he added.

The Congress MLA alleged that the Chief Minister has forgot all the assurances given in the year 2018.

Reminding the promises made by the CM, Jagga Reddy said that KCR did not give 2 lakh jobs and had not increased the reservations to Minorities and STs yet.



The open gym facilities set up by the Municipal Corporation of Karimnagar in its parks are getting good response and patronage from children and elderly.

Ensure no water problems in city, MLA tells Water Board officials

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Sherilingampalli MLA Arikepudi Gandhi has directed the Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board (HMWSSB) officials to resolve even minor problems without any delay.

In a review meeting held here on Tuesday, he asked them to identify any areas left out for supply of drinking water in the city, areas which done not come under the network of the water board, areas receiving polluted water and the areas where the tap connections are to be replaced.



MLA opens Rytu Vedika

PNS ■ ZAHEERABAD

Local MLA K Manik Rao along with former minister MD Fariduddin inaugurated Rytu Vedikas at Renjital, Hadnur, Nalkal, Chalki, Hussain Nagar, Hussain Palli, Mamidigi clusters and termed the Rytu Vedikas are very much beneficial to the farmers.

He explained various schemes being implemented

by the K Chandrasekhar Rao-led TRS government for the sake of the farmers.

DCMS chairman M Siva Kumar, district agriculture officer Narsing Rao, Assistant Director Agriculture Bikshapati, ATMA chairman Vijay Kumar, ZPTC Swapna Bhaskar, MPP Anjamma, officials of the agriculture department and TRS activists were present.

Awareness drive held for students to prevent frauds

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

Assistant Commissioner of Police Umender has appreciated the education department for preparing an action plan to sensitise school students on cyber crimes as the use of android phones is on the increase.

On Tuesday, a Cyber Congress training programme was held for the school students of Mancheril district through zoom application. In Mancheril and Peddapally district, 100 teachers and 200 students took part in the programme. Umender said that SHE Teams would sensitise students on how to check atrocities being perpetrated against students and how to check online frauds.

'Fully prepared to meet needs of farmers during monsoon season'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has a stock of 13 lakh quintals of seed required for the cultivation of various crops during the ongoing Vaanakalam (Kharif) season in the State. Farm operations commenced in about 18.88 lakh acres across the state with cotton alone sown in around 14.82 lakh acres and red gram in 1.58 lakh acres.

In a statement here on Tuesday, Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy said the department is fully prepared to meet the needs of farmers during the monsoon season. As per the decision to promote organic farming, the government has supplied compost fertilisers worth Rs 61.52 crore to farmers on subsidy which can improve soil fertility in about 14



lakh acres.

Further, about 8.64 lakh tonnes of fertilisers, including around 4.41 lakh tonnes of urea, is currently available with the state as on date.

Meanwhile, the average rainfall in the state was about 137.6 mm rainfall, which is 40 per cent more than normal of 95.4

mm rainfall as on date. The government had deposited Rs 6,669.79 crore into the bank accounts of 59.71 lakh farmers under Rythu Bandhu.

"We made all arrangements to meet the requirements of farmers in the State as per directions of the Chief Minister," Niranjan Reddy said.

BJP objects banner on vaccine without image of PM Modi

PNS ■ MEDAK

District BJP president Gaddam Srinivasulu and other BJP leaders have objected to the flexi banner displayed at the Mandal Parishad Development Officer (MPDO) office not featuring the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but featuring that of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on the occasion of the Centre administering the Covid vaccine free of cost to all those who are aged 18 years and above.



KU JAC condemns arrest of students

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The Joint Action Committee (JAC) of Kakatiya University students' union has found fault with the state government of Telangana for not solving the problems of the students but unleashing repression on them and vowed not to put a halt to the movements irrespective of the state government foisting false cases against students.

Condemning the arrest and subsequent bind-over cases foisted against the leaders of the JAC of KU students' union - Tirupati Yadav, Convenor Kadapaka Rajender and Kondapaka Rakesh, the KU students' union called the arrest as atrocious.

The students' union alleged



that the government was not keen to resolve the students' problems.

The students union held the state government squarely responsible for the suicide deaths of students due to non-issue of recruitment notifications.

The separate statehood for Telangana was realised due to sacrifice of over 1,200, the students' union said blaming KCR for being adamant on issuing recruitment notifications.

CPM focuses on 5,000 villages to strengthen the party in T'gana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana wing of CPM has decided to focus on 5,000 villages to strengthen the party besides waging a fight against the government on public issues. The party also planned to organise 'Chalo Raj Bhavan' programme on June 30 in a big way against the sale of government land.

The CPM State Committee had a meeting on Tuesday under the leadership of state executive committee member T Jyothi. Later, CPM state secretary Veerabhadram said that the party has decided to complete the appointment of committees at village, mandal and district level followed by State Maha Sabha in December.

PAGD leaders will attend meeting on Kashmir future, says Farooq

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) will attend the all-party meeting convened by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Thursday, said alliance chairperson Farooq Abdullah.

The announcement came after PAGD leaders met at Abdullah's Gupkar Road residence here on Tuesday to discuss the Centre's invitation to leaders from Jammu and Kashmir.

"We have received the invitation from the prime minister and we are going to attend (the meeting)," Abdullah, who was flanked by other leaders of the alliance, told reporters after the meeting.

Fourteen leaders from Jammu and Kashmir have been invited to the meeting to be chaired by the prime minister to discuss the future course of action for the union territory.

The meeting is the first such exercise since the Centre announced the abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and its bifurcation into union territories on August 5, 2019.

The PAGD chairperson said the alliance was confident that it would be able to put its stand before the Prime Minister and



the Union Home Minister during the meeting at New Delhi.

"When the meeting ends, we will brief you here as well as in Delhi on what we did there, what we said and what was their response," the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister and National Conference president said.

Asked what would be the stand of the alliance, Abdullah said, "You all know our stand and there is no need to repeat it." "Whatever our stand was, is still there and will be there," he added.

Various constituents of the PAGD have approached the Supreme Court with a petition asking for the restoration of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and its statehood.

The PAGD is a six-party alliance of mainstream parties

which came into existence after the Centre revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir under Article 370.

Abdullah said all those invited will attend the meeting. "(PDP chief) Mehbooba ji, me, (CPI-M leader) Tarigami sahab and all those who have been invited from us (the alliance), will go," he said.

As the invitation is to individual leaders of various parties "they all will go and all will speak there", the NC leader added.

Asked about the agenda of the meeting, Abdullah said "no agenda has been pitched from their side (the Centre)".

"We can talk about any issue there," he added.

The alliance's vice-chairperson and PDP president Mehbooba Mufti reiterated her

BJP welcomes PAGD's decision to take part in PM-led all party meet

PNS ■ JAMMU

J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina on Tuesday welcomed the decision of the Peoples Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) to take part in the scheduled all party meeting to be chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in Delhi, saying "we all must unite in the interest of the nation and work for 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'".

Raina also thanked the Prime Minister for convening the meeting and said he had always shown his big heart for Jammu and Kashmir by addressing developmental issues and providing justice to the deprived communities.

"Prime Minister has convened a meeting of J&K parties on June 24 and it is a proud moment for all of us. We will utilize this opportunity to raise the issues of public interest and talk about strengthening the nation to keep its flag flying high," Raina told reporters after an emergency meeting of the party here.

He said the Centre has extended the invitation to J&K parties with an open mind and heart and it is now the responsibility of the invitees to reciprocate and join the meeting.

"It is a very important meeting and when the PM is on the chair it has its own sanctity. All issues of public interest will be discussed," he said, adding "we will need to join hands to speak in one voice for our nation and the tricolor. We should strengthen the pledge of 'Ek Bharat Shreshtha Bharat'".

He said Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India.

that it was a mistake and it was an illegal and unconstitutional act, without restoring which, the issue of J-K and the situation in J-K and peace in the whole region cannot be established," Mehbooba said.

party's stand and said that she would press for the restoration of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir along with statehood.

"We will talk on what has been snatched away from us,

Maha to finalise policy on door-to-door vax in a week

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court on Tuesday that it will finalise within a week its policy on starting door-to-door COVID-19 vaccination drives for the elderly, disabled persons and those who are bedridden and unable to visit the inoculation centres.

The state's counsel, Geeta Shastri, submitted a draft policy before a bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni.

The state had constituted a special task force comprising experts and stakeholders to come up with such a policy, Shastri said.

While details of the policy could not be made public yet, the same will be finalised within a week and submitted before the court, she said.

The bench accepted Shastri's submissions.

It was hearing a bunch of PILs, including a plea filed by lawyer Dhruvi Kapadia seeking door-to-door COVID-19 vaccination for people above 75 years of age and specially-abled or bedridden persons.

During a previous hearing, the high court observed that the Centre had not imposed any prohibition on states from carrying out door-to-door vaccination for the elderly and disabled citizens.

It had also said the Union government's policy or the



Maha plans to hold monsoon session for 2 days: Fadnavis

Mumbai: The Maharashtra government has planned to hold the monsoon session of the state legislature for just two days, Leader of Opposition in the Assembly Devendra Fadnavis said on Tuesday and slammed the move.

Speaking to reporters after attending a meeting of the Business Advisory Committee (BAC), Fadnavis alleged the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) dispensation is trying to "run away" from the issues concerning the common people and

also from the democratic process.

"Today, we (BJP leaders) met the ruling coalition to decide the schedule for the monsoon session of the state legislature. We were surprised to see the government is planning to hold the session for two days only," he said.

The former Maharashtra chief minister said BJP leaders walked out of the BAC meeting in protest against the government's plan to hold the session for such a short duration.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) on vaccination that did not provide for door-to-door drives was merely an advisory.

On Tuesday, the High Court bench had said, "Prima facie, we are of the opinion that the

task force is proceeding in the right direction. We, however, leave it to the task force to incorporate such measures which are beneficial for the health of the elderly and disabled citizens."

HC tells NIA to reply to bail plea

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Tuesday directed the National Investigation Agency to file its affidavit by July 3 in response to the bail petition of activist Sudha Bharadwaj, an accused in the Elgar Parishad-Maoist links case.

Bharadwaj was arrested on August 28, 2018 and has been in jail since then.

The case was registered against her and some other activists under provisions of the stringent UAPA.

Bharadwaj had sought default bail, contending the trial judge was not authorised to take cognisance of the 2019 charge sheet filed against her, as the judge was at that time not designated as special judge under the NIA Act to hear matters pertaining to the UAPA.

A division bench of Justices S S Shinde and N J Jamadar on Tuesday directed NIA's advocate Sandesh Patil to file an

affidavit in response to the petition and posted the matter for further hearing on July 3.

In her petition, Bharadwaj relied on documents received from the high court under the Right to Information (RTI) Act to demonstrate that the court of Additional Sessions Judge Kishor Vadane in Pune was not authorised to take cognisance of the 1,800-page supplementary charge sheet filed by the Pune police in February 2019.

"This judge was not designated as a special NIA judge at the time and hence, could not have taken cognisance of the charge sheet. We are also challenging an earlier order passed by this judge in November 2018 granting the police time to file the charge sheet," Bharadwaj's counsel Yug Chaudhry argued.

The case relates to alleged inflammatory speeches delivered at the "Elgar Parishad" conclave on December 31, 2017, which the police claimed triggered violence the next day.

Vaccinate on war footing, prepare for 3rd wave: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Tuesday urged the government to prepare for the third wave of coronavirus by improving medical infrastructure and vaccinate on a war footing to protect all Indians.

He also released a "white paper" by the party on the Centre's Covid handling, saying, "It is pretty clear that the management of the first and second wave was disastrous."

Gandhi also took a swipe at the prime minister for turning emotional while talking about Covid deaths in his address to the nation, and said the deaths have been needless and could have been avoided.

"The prime minister's tears cannot wipe the tears of those who lost the lives of their kin. The PM's tears did not save the lives of those who died, but oxygen could have saved them," he said.

He alleged the prime minister did not take the second



wave seriously and was fighting elections in Bengal and his focus was elsewhere.

The former Congress chief said there were some central reasons as to why the first and second waves were disastrous and added that the party has "tried to point out those reasons in our white paper".

"This is a blue print on how to react to the third wave, which is going to come. It is our intention to provide the government with information and insights on what went wrong," he told reporters at a virtual press conference.

The purpose of this white paper is not to finger point at

the Government, but to help the nation prepare for the third wave that is going to come.

"If the second wave was bad, the third wave would be worse," Gandhi said, noting that the virus is smart and is mutating fast.

"The idea behind our white paper report on COVID-19 is to provide insights and information so that avoidable deaths can be prevented in the coming waves. GOI must work on our constructive inputs in the interest of the country," he later tweeted.

Asserting that the central pillar to fight Covid is vaccination, Gandhi said it is important that "we aggressively do vaccinations and cross this bridge over 100 percent vaccination as soon as possible, because that is the only protection."

"It is important that the government prepares itself for what is going to come," he said, adding that it needs to have the infrastructure like oxygen and medicines required ready.

Woman fulfils decades-old doctorate dream at 67

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

While for many, age is a reminder to take things slow, for 67-year-old Usha Lodaya, it pushed her to pursue her teenage dream of becoming a doctor.

Lodaya, who had dropped out of college at 20, has completed her doctorate course in Jainism after resuming her education in her sixties.

The gritty Vadodara resident enrolled into a Jainism course at Maharashtra-based Shatrunjay Academy, an institution set up to spread the knowledge of Jainism among the community members.

On Sunday, the sexagenarian passed her viva voce on 12 contemplations in Jain tradition, to earn her doctorate degree.

"It has been my dream to become a doctor ever since I enrolled for a BSc," she said.

Stalin assures resolutions against farm laws, CAA

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Resolutions would be adopted in the Assembly during the upcoming budget session against the Centre's farm laws and the Citizenship Amendment Act, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin said on Tuesday.

Eversince the three farm laws were enacted by the union government, the DMK had all along demanded the Centre to withdraw the laws, which are "against the interests of farmers," the Chief Minister said intervening his party MLA Tamizharasi, who spoke on the matter in the House.

The government has made a clear decision to pass a resolution seeking the withdrawal of these three farm laws reflecting the feelings of farmers across the country, he said

adding there is no change on that decision.

However, since this is the first session after the DMK assumed office and when the debate on motion of thanks to the Governor's Address is on, it would not be appropriate to adopt such resolutions, he said.

Stalin asserted that Tamil Nadu government's opposition to the farm laws would be made known by way of a resolution during the budget sitting.

Similarly, since the CAA has "affected the interests of minorities across the country leading to a sense of fear" among them, a resolution would be adopted in the budget session urging the central government to take back the Citizenship Amendment law, he added.

U'khand allows ayurvedic docs to prescribe allopathic drug

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The ayurveda-versus-allopathy debate has taken a new turn with the Uttarakhand government deciding to allow ayurvedic doctors to prescribe select allopathic medicines to patients in emergencies.

Making the announcement on the sidelines of a programme to mark the International Day for Yoga at the Uttarakhand Ayurvedic University here on Monday, Ayush Minister Harak Singh Rawat said the decision was taken for the benefit of the people living in the state's remote hill areas, where the primary health centres mostly have ayurvedic doctors.

There are around 800 ayurvedic doctors in Uttarakhand and as many ayurvedic dispensaries, of which 90 per cent are located in the remote hill areas, he said.

The decision, which requires changes in the Uttar Pradesh Bharatiya Chikitsa Adhinyam, will help people living in the disaster and accident prone hill areas who are deprived of proper health-care facilities, the minister said.

However, the announcement sparked a sharp reaction from the Indian Medical Association (IMA), Uttarakhand, which termed it "illegal".

Journalist robbed, police say 'no complaint'

PNS ■ NOIDA

A journalist was allegedly waylaid and robbed at gunpoint by five unidentified men in Greater Noida.

The incident took place on the intervening night of June 19 and 20. The accused took around Rs 5,000 cash that he was carrying in his wallet and tried to choke him, the journalist, Atul Agrawal, who works with a Hindi news channel, said in a Facebook post.

Police said on Tuesday that they have not received a com-

plaint from Agrawal regarding the incident but have launched an investigation into the matter after taking suo moto cognisance of his social media post.

In his Facebook post, Agrawal claimed the incident took place barely 250-300 metres from a police post in Greater Noida (West), also called Noida Extension.

"The music system in my car had some issues so I had to stop my car to adjust the USB pen drive. Suddenly, five young men on two bikes came there and waylaid my car," he said.

"The car was locked from the inside. They started banging the windows but I resisted. Then one of them pulled out a gun and pointed it at me, forcing me to come out of the car. I had no other choice so I followed their instructions as they held me at gunpoint," he claimed.

Agrawal said he pleaded with the assailants, all of whom were wearing face masks, to spare his life as he has a young son and told them they could take his car and whatever money he was carrying.

He said the assailants took around Rs 5,000 cash that he was carrying in his wallet but left behind his mobile phone and gold jewellery after finding out that he is a journalist.

At one point, Agrawal claimed, one of the accused attempted to choke him but was stopped by one of his associates.

The local police, however, said Agrawal is "not cooperating" with them and has not given any complaint to them even after 48 hours of the incident.

North Bengal ethnic groups reject separate UT proposal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Several ethnic groups, which had spearheaded agitations for creation of separate states in north Bengal over the past few decades, have now rejected a BJP MP's controversial demand for a union territory comprising all districts of the region, calling it an "unrealistic" and "vindictive" move.

John Barla, the saffron party MP from Alipurduar, recently sparked a political debate in the state when he called for bifurcation of Bengal, drawing sharp retort from the TMC and other parties.

Ironically, Barla's demand did not find resonance with the prominent identity-based groups in the region - the Gorkha Jana Mukti Morcha, Greater Cooch Behar People's Association and those backing

the Kamtapur movement.

They said it was an attempt to create unrest ahead of the next Lok Sabha polls in 2024.

Barla, during an interaction with the party's north Bengal leaders, had said he would take the matter up in Parliament during the upcoming Monsoon session.

His views were endorsed by BJP MP Jayanta Roy and some other leaders.

Noida range to be renamed: Yogi

PNS ■ NOIDA

As a mark of respect to women power, the shooting range at the Noida stadium will be named after "Shooter Dadi" Chandro Tomar, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Tuesday.

Jewar's BJP MLA Dharendra Singh wrote to the chief minister on Monday with a request that the recently-built shooting range in Noida's Sector 21 be named after Tomar, who died on April 30 due to COVID-19.

Hailing from Baghatp in western Uttar Pradesh, Tomar was above 60 years of age when she picked up the gun for the first time, but went on to win many national competitions for veterans, her feats

inspiring the award-winning Bollywood movie, "Saand ki Aankh".

Adityanath announced on Twitter that the shooting range would now be named after Tomar, an eminent shooter who symbolised "vitality, will power and women empowerment".

"Naming the shooting range after Chandro Tomar is a tribute to women power, in line with the Mission Shakti programme of the Uttar Pradesh government," he tweeted in Hindi.

In his letter to the chief minister, Singh had highlighted how Tomar, who hailed from Baghatp's Johri village, broke the barriers of orthodoxy to make the state and the country proud.

HC stays 2 orders of Lakshadweep administration

PNS ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Tuesday stayed the operation of two recent orders of the Lakshadweep administration - to close down dairy farms and remove meat products, including chicken from the menu of midday meals for school children.

The stay order was issued by a Division bench, comprising Chief Justice S Manikumar and Justice Shaji P Chaly on a PIL filed by a lawyer from the Islands.

Petitioner Ajmal Ahmed R alleged that when Praful Khoda Patel took charge as island administrator in December last year, his top priority was to close down the farms run by the Animal Husbandry Department and to 'attack' the food habits of the Islanders, being followed from time



Lakshadweep has been witnessing protests by various political parties since administration started implementing reform measures in the islands.

immemorial.

Challenging the May 21, 2021 order of the Director of Animal Husbandry, directing immediate closure of all the dairy farms, Ahmed said it was done with an intention to implement the proposed 'Animal Preservation

(Regulation), 2021,' which bans slaughter of cows, calves and bulls.

He submitted that as per this proposed rule, sale and purchase of beef and beef products would be banned by closing down the farms, curtailing the islanders' source of getting

milk products and forcing them to purchase milk products imported from Gujarat.

"This is nothing but interfering with the right to choose the food habits of the Island people, which is against the right enshrined under the Constitution," Ahmed alleged. The petitioner also chal-

lenged the administrations' decision to remove chicken and other meat items from the menu of midday meals for school children in Lakshadweep.

"Now the Administrator wants to intervene and as part of his ill-motivated intention to implement his hidden agenda, a meeting of the union territory level monitoring committee was held at his instance.

As per the decision taken by said committee in the meeting held on January 27, 2021, a new menu has been suggested, totally altering the prevailing menu for mid-day meal for the students in the Islands", he alleged.

Lakshadweep has been witnessing protests by various political parties since the administration started implementing reform measures in the islands.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The bulwark

An Opposition front is seemingly in the making, but its united impact on the BJP remains to be seen

It is best to think of the meeting of like-minded parties and individuals convened by Sharad Pawar and Yashwant Sinha as being exploratory. For, the invitation issued for the meeting is not clear about the real purpose of the deliberations at this juncture, who all are expected to put up a united political front to confront the BJP and the scope of the political strategy. The meeting between Pawar and political strategist Prashant Kishor preceding the invite gave rise to speculations in the entire Opposition camp. There is also ambiguity about the status of the Congress in this scheme of things because the invite did not go to the party but to three senior leaders who are part of the 'G-23' group. Prashant Kishor clarified that what they will look for is not the Third Front model. Be that as it may, the meeting comes just as the political parties gear up for the next round of Assembly elections, including in Uttar Pradesh. The second wave of Coronavirus has left most parties, in power in one State or the other, scarred by exposing their inadequacies in handling the pandemic. Both are good enough reasons for the politicians to take stock of where they stand individually and what it means to shape themselves into a united forum to challenge the BJP in 2024.



There is enough on the table even for an exploratory meeting. The regional parties are strong in their respective States, but lack national presence or relevance. Most of the leaders, save a few,

do not have a national presence either. Many of them fight the Congress in regional politics. Some, like the YSRCP and the TRS, are partners with an umbilical rivalry. The true postures of these parties will become apparent in the next presidential election due next year. The national parties suffer from a shrinking area of influence even as they confront one another, like in Kerala, or are whipped by a regional force, like in West Bengal. Some of these parties are not even attending the meeting. Second, they will need to project a correct perception of their relations with the Congress. A non-Congress, anti-BJP bloc of regional parties is one thing. An anti-Congress, anti-BJP forum of regional parties is another. For, the latter, by definition, shares anti-Congressism with the BJP. The Congress, despite its dipping political fortunes, remains the fulcrum of anti-BJP politics, given that in both 2014 and 2019 it was the runner-up in upwards of 200 seats. It all depends on whether the Congress can retain Punjab and fare better in other States in the upcoming elections. The real issue, however, is coming up with an alternative to brand Narendra Modi's political narrative that has an equal resonance nationally and a post-pandemic economic agenda. What the exploratory meeting can afford not to do is wait for the law of diminishing utility to eventually kick in against the BJP.

PIC TALK



Devotees offer prayers on the occasion of Bada Mangal, at Bade Hanuman Ji temple near Sangam, in Prayagraj

Fuel on fire

The Government should exercise fiscal discipline rather than exploiting oil prices to shore up revenue

While every graph of economic indicator is nose-diving, oil prices and inflation are defying gravity. This month, diesel also breached the ₹100-mark in Rajasthan. In seven States, petrol is selling for more than ₹100. This is indeed not a good sign for economy, which is reeling under severe recessionary pressures. Manufacturing is down, employment is low, and so is the purchasing power of the common man. The petrol-diesel prices put an extra burden on him. Oil prices push the prices further up as these have a cascading effect on economy. The Government is in no mood to relent. Moreover, volatility in the international market limits its options. These two factors are responsible for putting the fuel prices on fire. The prices were hiked 43 times this year. This has indeed helped the Government collect more revenue. The excise collection during April-November 2020 was at ₹1,96,342 crore, up from ₹1,32,899 crore during the same period in 2019. The central taxes increased from ₹10.39 in May 2014 to ₹32.9 in June 2021! This explains the dynamics of oil pricing. Before Modi



Government, crude oil price constituted two-thirds of the fuel price, now taxes have taken that spot. The central and State Government taxes account for nearly 54 per cent of its cost.

The Government is justifying the high excise on petrol and diesel by saying that it needs money to spend on welfare schemes. Petroleum Minister Dharmendra Pradhan concedes that it is problematic for people, though quickly adding that the Government spent ₹35,000 crore on vaccines. So, apparently the logic is that people who drive should foot the bill. But then it is not only the cars and bikes that consume petrol and diesel. The trucks that carry freight and diesel pump sets that push water into the fields also run on diesel. That was one reason that diesel was always priced less but that consideration has been done away with. This naturally translates into higher input costs for farmers and a higher cost of farm products. However, adjusting excise and other taxes could control the fuel prices. With the Opposition struggling, there are hardly any street protests. Each time, the increased new price becomes normal. The Government has done little to tighten its expenses. It has failed to avoid wasteful expenditure on projects of little value. Fiscal discipline is missing in the Government. The petrol price hike comes in handy.

Corona's orphans: Kids of a lesser god



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

Stung by the tragedy of one or both parents succumbing to the virus, thousands of children stare at an uncertain future, if they have one

Even as the country braces for the third Corona wave which experts feel would be tougher on children, the pandemic has already taken a toll. On June 1, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) reported in the Supreme Court more than 9,300 Corona orphans in India. These include more than 1,700 children who lost both the parents. The actual figure could be many times this number as the data is yet to be collected from across the country.

Unfortunately, as of now, the Government does not have a plan in place to rehabilitate these children. Let alone a plan, it has not even identified these children yet. Many children have been orphaned due to circumstances created by the pandemic. Many people lost their lives while going back to their hometowns during the lockdown. They carried children in their arms or dragged them on wheeled suitcases. Many never reached their destinations and the children were left in the middle of nowhere. Who can forget the pictures of a toddler trying to wake up her dead mother on a railway platform? Of course, these children would not figure in the Government data of Corona orphans.

The pandemic has already killed the dreams, aspirations and hopes of the Corona orphans. Their number is now in thousands, if not lakhs, after the second wave. Many people who succumbed to Corona could not even have the last word with their children. Some children are still waiting for their parents to return. They are fed on lies that their parents have "gone to work" and will "return with goodies". The day they find out the truth would be shattering for them.

Often, especially in the second wave, both the parents died within a few days of each other. The child was left alone without any support system to fall back upon. Even those survived by a single parent do not have the normal childhood left for them. The person who got them toys,



played with them, attended their PTMs is gone. A bleak future and hardships await them; the innocence all set to yield at the altar of the real world.

Corona took away the children's childhood as it did their innocence. Most people at a tender age wilt under pressure. If it is a child, the chances of her/his being altered for life are high. For children, losing parents is traumatic. Parents fulfil not only the needs of a child but give him a sense of security which is important in the growing up years. Most of the behavioural traits of the children get consolidated in the first seven years. Losing parents during that time scars children, changing their worldview forever.

It is the time when we, as a nation, need to step up our efforts to take care of such children. The parents cannot be replaced but, in the least, the child can be given a sense that there is someone who cares and provides him support. It could be his relatives, adopting parents, non-governmental organisations, or the Government itself.

The moot question is, what next for these children?



THE PERSON WHO GOT THEM TOYS, PLAYED WITH THEM, ATTENDED THEIR PTMs IS GONE. A BLEAK FUTURE AND HARDSHIPS AWAIT THEM; THE INNOCENCE ALL SET TO YIELD AT THE ALTAR OF THE REAL WORLD

Indeed, adoption comes up as the most natural way these children could be given a second lease of life. But there are some inherent dangers. The chances of fake adoptions are high. Child traffickers see it as an opportunity. Often, the children get adopted by traffickers and sold off.

The Central Adoption Resource Authority (CARA) handles adoptions in the country. Strict guidelines govern the process of adoption in India. Any adoption without following this process is illegal. It puts children at high risk. Many adopted children are exploited, trafficked and abused. Moreover, the adoption rate in India is rather low. Only around 4,000 children are adopted every year; so few children would find a family that way.

An abandoned child is an easy prey for traffickers. In this situation, it becomes the responsibility of each one of us to help a child in distress. At the least, one could call children's helpline number (1098) and inform the authorities about the child in distress. Or, one can also contact the district Child Welfare Committees (CWCs) or inform the local police sta-

tion. The CWC decides the fate of these children — whether the child needs to go to a long-term or short-term shelter or for adoption. The Prime Minister has announced that such children will get a monthly stipend once they turn 18 through a corpus fund of ₹10 lakh under the "PM-CARES for children" scheme. But the important question is how a child, says age two, survives 16 years to take that stipend!

Foster care is another option that can be explored and encouraged. The kith and kin of the deceased can take care of the child. But then that, again, is not free of problems. Many a time, the children end up working as domestic helps, their education stopped, their rights curtailed. There must be an agency to monitor such cases. There is an urgent need to tackle this issue on priority so that these children do not fall into the wrong hands. We, as a nation, have to think out of the box to help these children of a lesser god!

(The writer is a columnist and documentary film-maker. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

AN UNCHARITABLE DECISION

Sir — We have only heard of insurance companies trying to find some loopholes in the claim applications and find some lame excuses to deny claims made against policies issued by them. It is shocking that the Central Government is trying to follow the tactics of such insurance companies to deny *ex gratia* compensation to the family of those who died of COVID-19 on the plea that this is not a one-time disaster and that such a huge payout will empty the disaster funds available with the Government.

While we have witnessed the Government defending the expenditure of more than ₹20,000 crore for the not-so-urgent and not at all necessary Central Vista project and a luxury mansion for the Prime Minister, the Government has denied compensation to the victims' families. What is the use of dumping the available funds in developing new infrastructure for medical facilities without paying the amount to the bereaved families that need immediate support in the absence of the breadwinner of the family?

The argument of the Government to deny COVID-19 compensation is uncharitable when it has taken decisions to give huge tax benefits to the corporates and also to write off non-performing assets in banks amounting to millions of rupees.

Tharcisus S Fernando | Chennai

BEFORE THE NEXT WAVE HITS

Sir — The strains of the third wave of Coronavirus would fall upon us during October, according to medical experts. So, it is the foremost duty of the States and the Centre to be prepared to combat it from all directions. Further, people should strictly follow guidelines, protocols and advisories issued by the authorities concerned. It is also suggested that stress should be on the production of vaccines, medicines and other healthcare facilities. Hopefully, this third wave may be outcast from the country without putting any deleterious impact on the health of people.

If the Government takes their advice and opens up schools, then what will hap-

Blue Dot Network versus Chinese BRI



The G7 Summit held recently in the wake of the COVID-induced crisis will be remembered for certain positive outcomes like adoption of the US-backed "Build Back Better World" plan to support middle and lower income countries in high-quality infrastructure. What is surprising is that it took several years to visualise and conceptualise a network akin to the Chinese model. In its quest to contain the overgrowing influence of belligerent China in the world panorama. Considering the emergence of Indo-Pacific as the centre of the rivalry between the US and China, there is an urgent need to explore alternative areas of collaboration. The Blue Dot Network (BDN) is one such area. The concept of BDN, envisaged under the Trump Administration in 2019

at the 35th Asean Summit in Bangkok and proposed in the recent G7 Summit under the auspices of the OECD, can serve as a counterweight to the Chinese BRI unveiled in 2013.

As China has acquired the dubious distinction for unsustainable debt creation in participating countries, this network can serve as a balancing act to curb the hegemonic designs of China. The BDN's objective is to assist smaller countries in developing quality infrastructure, to promote open and transparent investments, which was found wanting in the latter, as they did not adhere to international certification standards. Moreover, the BRI in the guise of economic and infrastructural development has put several participating countries of Asia and Africa in a debt trap. Sri Lanka and Pakistan are glaring examples of this.

The BRI's intention to develop deep sea ports in the Indo-Pacific region is also ambiguous. Australia pulled out of BRI in April 2021 on grounds of violation of territorial integrity. As one of the ardent critics of BRI, India must play a significant role in shaping a global discourse in order to counter China.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

pen? The issue is not just whether children get severe illness, it is about children easily becoming the link in the transmission chain in society. What is needed is a temporary restructuring of society where everything from travel, commerce, education, Government interactions, food supply and so on isn't hampered in the aftermath of the virus.

Krishnan Subramaniam | Kozhikode

OPERATE THE INTEGRATED VACCINE COMPLEX

Sir — It is perplexing why the Centre is still tightlipped over the reopening of the Integrated Vaccine Complex on the outskirts of Chennai in Chengalpattu for the production of antibodies for COVID-19 though there have been strong representations from the DMK-led Government and as well by Chief Minister MK Stalin himself during his recent meeting with Prime Minister

SOUND BITE

It (the Government) failed to learn from the lessons and response models of other countries which had been hit by the pandemic.



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi



Easing measures at the border will happen as we see our communities increasingly become safe.

Canadian Health Minister — Patty Hajdu



#gotvaccinated. Join the fight back. Now loading: Antibodies...

Actor — Kartik Aaryan



I am humbled to have this opportunity of representing India at the Olympics for the third time, this time as team captain.

Hockey midfielder — Manpreet Singh



Way to go Team AP. More power to you. Congrats to YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for his inspiring leadership.

Actor — Chiranjeevi

Send your feedback to:



FIRST COLUMN

NEED FOR HOLISTIC EDUCATION POLICY

An important position should be given to education, and particularly inclusion, in the scheme of things



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Gender disparity and non-inclusivity is a major hindrance in India's pursuit to achieve the 4th Sustainable Development Goal of ensuring quality education for all. India lags behind China and other BRIC nations in terms of inclusivity and participation in education. China in particular has near universal levels of enrolment in lower secondary and a majority completing upper secondary in most parts of the country. India has a smaller proportion of its population enrolled at secondary levels than Brazil, Russia, and China. The only region of the world with lower participation at secondary school level than India is sub-Saharan Africa. India witnesses a huge gender disparity and access to education in India remains widely problematic, with great variations between and within states, and large differences in participation between identifiable sub-populations like Scheduled Castes and Tribes, girls, and some Muslim communities. Nationally, there is a high initial enrolment rate in the first grade. However, about 30 per cent of them fail to complete Grade V (primary), about 50 per cent drop out before completing Grade VIII (upper primary), and 60 per cent do not finish Grade X (lower secondary). This is prevalent in northern India, particularly in the BIMARU states. Gender plays an important role in education in India. According to



the Census of India 2011, only 26 per cent of girls completed secondary education as compared to 50 per cent of boys. The Annual Status of Education Report (Rural), 2019 also found that preference is given to the education of sons in comparison to daughters, by enrolling the former in private schools, which are considered better than government schools in imparting education.

In India, both direct and indirect costs of schooling are high and the lower household incomes of the majority of the population makes participation in secondary schooling a big challenge. Household surveys show the poorest allocate less than five per cent of expenditure to education. Unsubsidised secondary schooling is not available to most rural households and is considered a prerogative only for rich urban households. The present globalized world and integrated economies have brought to the fore the core importance of education. It plays a crucial role in empowering individuals and pave way for transformation of the society at large. Education has a major role in making the youth improve their social standing by alleviating their poverty-ridden condition. One of the main measures of human development is access to education, and as the Human Development Report 2012 mentions, the growth in index is associated with growth in public spending on education. Therefore, a fundamentally important position should be accorded to education, and particularly inclusion, in the entire scheme of things. The importance of quality education and the urgent need of equality in education should be ingrained in the policy. As education is imperative for empowering people, equality and inclusivity have to be crucial for any education policy to facilitate and drive widespread social transformation in the society. The government should create a framework based on equality of condition, which has five dimensions of 1) resources; 2) respect and recognition; 3) love, care and solidarity; 4) power; and 5) working and learning. With equality of condition as a base, gender equality framework can be extended by adding the aspect of inclusion, which, in addition to parity, equity and equality, can become the pillars for achieving quality education for all. It is proposed that these four elements of the gender equality framework have to be guided by another framework — strategy, practices, resources and governance — to develop a holistic and integrated education policy.

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

Big Tech vs Governments: The road ahead

A few unaccountable and unelected corporations having the power to silence or amplify an opinion and directing a country's political discourse doesn't bode well



ANIL K ANTONY

Great corporations exist only because they are created and safeguarded by our institutions, and it is, therefore, our right and duty to see that they work in harmony with these institutions." These were the words of the 26th US President Theodore Roosevelt during his 1901 State of the Union address. "There is a widespread conviction in the minds of the American people that the great corporations known as trusts are in certain of their features and tendencies hurtful to the general welfare," he wrote before he used the Sherman Antitrust Act to break up monopolies including the largest railroad conglomerate, J.P. Morgan's Northern Securities, and the largest oil company, Rockefeller's Standard Oil.

The US since then has used updated antitrust legislatures to clip the wings of giants including AT&T and Microsoft which were deemed powerful enough to stifle free-market competitiveness. The extent of influence of Big Tech companies that drive today's internet-technology-driven world is much more profound.

None of us can imagine a life where we do not use one of their products. They have aided in the creation of a hyper connected planet where any individual with technical know-how, irrespective of other differences, can access the internet and find myriad avenues for acquiring knowledge, form communities, create or get access to digital products and services, and be a part of a global digital economy. They act as instruments of economic and social mobility for billions.

Their valuations also unsurprisingly increased with their rapid expansion. Currently, eight of the world's largest ten companies based on their market capitalisation are from this industry. They exceed the GDP of most nations. Some of their balance sheets have surplus cash greater than the reserves of most countries. Apple, for instance, has a valuation exceeding \$2 trillion, and cash reserves of nearly \$200 billion.

The growth of this sector has been immune even to the Covid-19 pandemic that wrecked economies as people's reliance on digital tools increased during lockdowns. This sector's growing prominence has also led to some of the great maladies of our time, including never-seen-before inequalities, and democratic recession.

Integration of Artificial Intelligence, and Automation into Big Tech products has cut down the need for new jobs, leading to jobless growth. The same platforms that disrupted mass communication have ironically been used by governments with authoritarian tendencies to further extend state control. They have also aided in the rise of many demagogues to power across the world.

As these tech titans continue their market conquests, run-ins with governments have become commonplace. The past year saw fronts opening across continents between these companies and various governments. Antitrust lawsuits are the biggest battlegrounds. Major Big Tech firms including Google, Amazon, Apple, Alibaba, Facebook, and Flipkart are facing multiple investigations across the United States, European Union, China, and India.

This is mainly because the Big Tech firms have evolved into the gatekeepers of the Internet. They have userbases in hundreds of millions. Customers and enterprises cannot access many markets without going through their tech infrastructure. These companies set up large barriers of entry, or promote unfair business practices that charge



OUR DIGITAL ECONOMY IS DRIVEN BY DATA AND ALL THE BIG TECH FIRMS DERIVE TREMENDOUS VALUE FROM THE DATA COLLECTED FROM THEIR MYRIAD USERS. WE SHOULD SEE MORE COUNTRIES MAKE LAWS THAT WOULD MANDATE THE BIG TECH FIRMS TO SHARE SOME OF THE WEALTH CREATED WITH THE MAIN CONTRIBUTORS, INCLUDING PUBLISHERS

(The writer is a tech entrepreneur, public policy commentator, and works on the Congress party's digital initiatives. The views expressed are personal.)



excessive platform fees, limit competition, and kill smaller businesses.

Very recently, five bills have been moved with bipartisan support in the US House of Representatives meant to prevent big tech firms from favouring their products and services through their platform over their competitors. These proposed laws could separate their primary platform from their other line of businesses. Interestingly, US President Joe Biden has named Lina Khan, a very vocal Big Tech critic, as the country's top regulator.

The EU has proposed a sweeping set of legislation through the Digital Markets Act (DMA) that has clauses to fine an offender up to 10 per cent of their annual global revenue for anti-competitive behaviour. Provisions are included to break up repeat offenders. Aspirants are vying to be modern-day Teddy Roosevelts on both sides of the Atlantic.

India in 2018 itself had banned e-commerce companies from selling products they have an equity interest in through their platforms. The latest CCI probes are based on allegations of them circumventing these laws through circuitous business structures.

Google and Facebook, meanwhile, locked horns with the Australian Government over a new law that requires these tech companies to pay news companies for any original content they share on their platforms. After an altercation that resulted in a week-long blockade of the country's news links on Facebook, local news publishers started receiving payments. These developments will have conse-

quential effects.

Our digital economy is driven by data and all the Big Tech firms derive tremendous value from the data collected from their myriad users. We should see more countries make laws that would mandate the Big Tech firms to share some of the wealth created with the main contributors including publishers. Upcoming technologies like Blockchain would enable micro-payments to be made to every person contributing value in cyberspace. Big Tech's unassailable influence was highlighted during the months following the 2020 US Presidential elections when Donald Trump and some of his most vocal supporters were locked out of all social media platforms in a united effort by Big Tech. What can happen to the all-powerful President of the United States could happen to anyone. Angela Merkel of Germany called Trump's bans 'problematic'.

The prospect of a few unaccountable and unelected corporations having the power to silence or amplify any voice or opinion based on their predilections and thereby directing a country's political discourse does not bode well for any democracy. Since then, Uganda banned Twitter before their Presidential elections, and Nigeria banned Twitter after the social media platform deleted a tweet of their President.

Twitter and the Indian Government are at loggerheads over its intermediary status. Tech platforms have created internal systems for flagging and deleting questionable content posted on their platforms. However, there are repeated altercations with

authorities. India could again take a leaf out of the EU, which through its newly proposed Digital Services Act (DSA) makes it mandatory for all platforms to reveal to regulators currently opaque areas of tech platform functioning including possible dissections of their proprietary algorithms, and requires clear-cut mechanisms on filtering or removing content. Penalties up to six per cent of the company's turnover, and even suspension of service await non-complying offenders.

The tech sector, whose role and impact would only increase with time, requires broad, standardized, holistic regulations including well-defined penalties. Policy ambiguity would only create avenues of Government overreach. Regulatory bodies and tax authorities could arbitrarily open probes based on individual whims and fancies.

India's ruling party and the Union Government have many a time been accused of using these very same platforms for spreading false narratives, and for the propagation of underhanded political practices. Our Parliamentary Committee of IT should take the initiative in creating watchdog institutions under their purview, comprised of domain experts, with independence and authority to check Government excesses in tech policy.

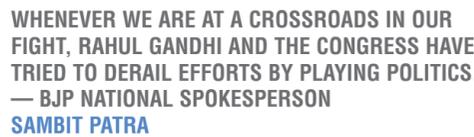
Institutions and regulations thus formed are essential to ensure that our markets and political processes remain free and fair, and our digital landscape remains safe places for open discourses, without being subjected to digital colonization.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

90 PER CENT OF PEOPLE WHO DIED... BIGGEST REASON WAS LACK OF OXYGEN. THE PM'S TEARS CAN'T WIPE FAMILIES' TEARS....
— CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



WHENEVER WE ARE AT A CROSSROADS IN OUR FIGHT, RAHUL GANDHI AND THE CONGRESS HAVE TRIED TO DERAIL EFFORTS BY PLAYING POLITICS.
— BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON SAMBIT PATRA



Sasikala planning a return to Tamil Nadu politics?

Age and circumstances are against her but she will not throw in the towel easily and will weigh her options to see how she can stage a comeback

Will V.K. Sasikala, a one-time close confidante of late Tamil Nadu chief minister J. Jayalalithaa, make a comeback? It is a question mark as politics is changing fast in the state. 'Chinnamma', as she was known, has had her ups and downs in the past four decades. She enjoyed power as Jayalalithaa's shadow but she never did understand that she was only the shadow, not Jayalalithaa. She took over the party and nearly became Jaya's successor in 2017 but the BJP spoiled her plans and she instead went to Parappana Agrahara jail in Karnataka for four years.



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

before going to the Bengaluru jail and thumped the memorial platform thrice with her palm vowing to avenge her enemies. Now, after her release and a month after the AIADMK lost power in the Tamil Nadu polls, she is all set to return to active politics. In a recent alleged, phone conversation with one of the party cadres, Sasikala confirms her plans to take the political plunge.

She has been sending confusing signals about her future. Significantly, 2021 is not 2017. Much has changed in the past four years. Her two hand-picked leaders - former chief ministers O.Panneerselvam (OPS) and E.Palaniswamy (EPS) — have captured the party and they do not want



her to return. Sasikala had been involved in separate power tussles with both leaders earlier.

The intensifying feud between EPS and OPS even after the electoral defeat and Sasikala's come-back plans are threatening to break the party again. EPS pipped OPS to the post of the leader of

opposition after a literal show of strength: the former had more legislators backing him. Sasikala, on the other hand, sees an opportunity in the two leaders' tussle to avenge her setbacks.

Though she cannot contest until 2027, there is no legal ban to head a party. It is a mystery why Sasikala announced her retirement from politics in March and why she wants to come back now. The timing she has chosen is also significant because the AIADMK is still struggling to come to terms with the loss of power. The cadres, especially EPS backers, are opposed to her emerging as a power centre again. EPS is one of the big hurdles for her return to the AIADMK because he

senses a threat to his position in the party.

The 'leaked' audio clip of an alleged conversation between Sasikala and one of her supporters has gone viral, creating a flutter about her imminent return. In the clip she is heard saying, "we will for sure streamline the party... certainly, I will come". And this as well: "You don't worry at all. Sure. We will resolve all the problems in the party. I will come. I will definitely come. You take care and be safe." For now, she has sent enough signals to her supporters that she is ready and waiting. Will Sasikala achieve her ambition? Though age is against her, those who know her believe she will not throw in the towel easily and will

weigh her options to see how she can stage a comeback.

The second hurdle is her own corrupt image. Her first effort to float an outfit AMMK through her nephew, TTV Dhinakaran, flopped in the recent assembly polls even though he initially won the R.K.Nagar assembly by-poll in 2017. Now she wants to find a place for herself in politics.

Thirdly, there still are other cases against her pending in the courts. She is particularly troubled by a case involving the purchase of properties with demonetized currency. With a Union Government and the State Government hostile to her she is skating on thin ice.

Fourthly, according to insiders, Sasikala is in no

hurry as her target is the 2024 Lok Sabha polls. She wants to get back into the BJP's good books by that time and establish herself and her nephew as players by using her money power. She wants to do this either by dividing the AIADMK or expanding her nephew's AMMK. Being the backroom player and Jayalalithaa's shadow in Tamil Nadu politics since the 1980s, Sasikala knows the ins and outs of Dravidian politics. She and her family were called the "Mannargudi mafia" in Jaya's time.

Chinnamma's future hangs in balance for now. It depends on many factors. Where one week is long in politics, another three years is too long.

NCLT approves Jalan's resolution plan for Jet Airways

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) on Tuesday approved the Jalan Kalrock Consortium's resolution plan for the bankrupt Jet Airways, two years after the once-storied airline went into insolvency proceedings.

Financial distress forced Jet Airways, which flew for more than two decades, to suspend operations on April 17, 2019 and a consortium of lenders, led by the State Bank of India (SBI), filed an insolvency petition in June 2019, to recover outstanding dues worth over Rs 8,000 crore.

An NCLT Mumbai bench, chaired by Mohammed Ajmal and V Nallasenapathy, has approved the resolution plan

for Jet Airways that will have to be implemented in 90 days starting from

June 22.

In an oral order, the bench also said that if further extension of the effective date is required, the resolution applicant (Jalan Kalrock Consortium) can approach the tribunal again.

On the historicity of slot allocations for Jet Airways, the tribunal said it was not giving a direction and the issue will be handled by the government or the appropriate authority.

Slots will be crucial for the

revival of Jet Airways once it restarts operations. The slots that were with the airline prior to the suspension of operations in April 2019, have been allocated to other carriers.

In October 2020, the airline's Committee of Creditors (CoC) approved the resolution plan submitted by the consortium of the UK's Kalrock Capital and the UAE-based entrepreneur Murari Lal Jalan.

Jet Airways has been undergoing a resolution process under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) for two years, and its affairs are

being managed by resolution professional Ashish Chhawchharia.

After the CoC gave its approval to the resolution plan, Chhawchharia had approached NCLT stating that the "slots are a vital part of the plan, and it is important that DGCA and MoCA submit their stance on the same".

However, in a joint affidavit to the tribunal, DGCA and MoCA had submitted that Jet Airways does not qualify for grant of slots on the basis of historic precedence and the allocation will be based on 'Slot Allocation Guidelines'.

"Jet Airways does not qualify for grant of slots on the basis

of historic precedence and the submission of the airline's that it is in operation for the last 25 years is not a criteria for claiming historicity and it can't substitute the requirements for claiming historic precedence.

"Thus, the claims are wrong and denied," as per the affidavit that was filed earlier this year. DGCA is the Directorate General of Civil Aviation and MoCA is the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

The carrier, which was admitted to the NCLT in June 2019, owes more than Rs 8,000 crore to banks, with public sector lenders having significant exposure.

The carrier started off as an air taxi operator on May 5, 1993, with a fleet of four leased Boeing 737-300 aircraft.

Private hospitals to log 15-17 per cent revenue growth in '22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Higher occupancy due to surge in COVID-19 cases would help private hospitals post 15-17 per cent revenue growth this fiscal year, a shade higher than what they attained in 2020-21, ratings agency Crisil said on Tuesday. The growth will aid recovery of operating margin by 100-200 basis points to 13-14 per cent, but still fall short of the 2020-21 mark due to higher proportion of COVID-19 treatments, which are less profitable, it said in a statement.

"While the second wave lashed again in April, the first quarter this fiscal will be sharply better on-year, with occupancy of 75 per cent, almost double on-year. This will be largely on account of a surge in COVID-19 treatments more than offsetting the deferral of elective surgeries and outpatient footfalls," Crisil



Ratings Senior Director Manish Gupta said.

As the second wave recedes in the second quarter, Crisil expects pent-up demand for non-COVID treatments to rebound and support occupancy, he added. "Overall, higher occupancy of 65-70 per cent this fiscal versus 58 per cent in the last, would drive rebound in revenue growth," Gupta said.

Recovery in revenue and

margins will nevertheless spur hospitals to resurrect capex, which had almost halved year-on-year last fiscal.

"Much of the capex this fiscal is expected to be brownfield in nature, towards bed addition and related infrastructure including oxygen plants, and funded significantly through accruals," Crisil Ratings Associate Director Rajeswari Karthigeyan said.

MONEY MATTERS

Kesoram Industries suspends work in rayon factory

B K Birla group company Kesoram Industries Ltd on Tuesday suspended work at its rayon factory in West Bengal's Hooghly district due to fall in demand. The company management blamed the slump in demand due to COVID-19 led disruptions for the suspension of work till further notice.



"We had to issue a suspension of work as there is no demand for the product due to COVID-19 situation. If we continue our loss will triple from current losses," a senior company official told PTI. The company employs 2,500 people in the loss making rayon plant. The finished products are used in textile and textile decoratives and the pandemic has led to sharp slump in demand for textiles. Rayon division contribution is negligible for the company that is struggling to bring down its Rs 1,900 crore debt to a sustainable level. Kesoram Rayon was established in 1959. The division manufactures quality viscose rayon filament yarn (VFY), cellulose transparent paper and has a chemical manufacturing unit.

ACME, Brookfield to develop 450 MWp solar project in Rajasthan

Solar power producer ACME on Tuesday said the company along with Brookfield Renewable will jointly build a 450 MWp solar project in Rajasthan. "ACME, India's leading solar IPP (independent power producer), today announced closure of a deal with Brookfield Renewable, a global owner and operator of renewable power assets, to build a 450 MWp Solar Project in Rajasthan," a company statement said.



According to the statement this solar project includes a 25-year power purchase agreement with Maharashtra State Electricity Distribution Company Limited (MSEDCL), a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Maharashtra State Electricity Board, the largest electricity distribution utility in India and the second largest in the world. The project will provide clean and green electricity to over a million households. It is also expected that the project will provide jobs for over 450 people during its construction phase and 150 people while it's operating.

BMW drives in three new cars under MINI brand in India

German luxury carmaker BMW on Tuesday said it has launched three new cars under its MINI brand in India. The all-new MINI 3-Door Hatch is priced at Rs 38 lakh, the all-new MINI Convertible at Rs 44 lakh and the all-new MINI John Cooper Works Hatch at Rs 45.5 lakh (all prices ex-showroom).



This new MINI range will be available in petrol engines as completely built-up units (CBUs). "This significantly strengthens the exceptional position of MINI within the premium small car segment in India," BMW Group India President Vikram Pawah said in a statement. The MINI 3-Door Hatch and MINI Convertible come with a 2-litre petrol engine. The MINI 3-Door Hatch can sprint from 0 to 100 km/hr in 6.7 seconds while the MINI Convertible takes 7.1 seconds for 0 to 100 km/hr. MINI John Cooper Works Hatch on the other hand can hit 100 km/hr in 6.1 seconds. In March this year, BMW launched the new MINI Countryman in the country.

Gold rises to Rs 46,213; silver declines to Rs 66,389

Gold in the national capital on Tuesday gained Rs 45 to Rs 46,213 per 10 gram, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 46,168 per 10 gram. Silver declined marginally by Rs 86 to Rs 66,389 per kilogram from Rs 66,475 per kilogram in the previous trade.



"Spot gold prices for 24 carats in Delhi were up by Rs 45 reflecting an overnight recovery in COMEX gold prices and rupee depreciation," according to HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst (Commodities), Tapan Patel. Meanwhile, the Indian rupee slumped 10 paise to 74.20 against the US dollar in opening trade on Tuesday. In the international market, gold was trading marginally lower at USD 1,778 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 25.84 per ounce. "Gold prices traded marginally down with spot gold prices at COMEX trading at USD 1,778 per ounce on Tuesday," he added.

Clean Science, Shriram Properties get Sebi nod IPO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Three companies -- Clean Science and Technology, Shriram Properties and GR Infraprojects -- have received markets regulator Sebi's to raise funds through initial public offers (IPOs).

The three firms had filed their preliminary papers with Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) in April.

Clean Science and Technology, Shriram Properties and GR



Infraprojects have obtained Sebi's observations on June 12, June 15 and June 16 respectively, according to an update with Sebi. Sebi's observation is

very necessary for any company to launch an initial public offer (IPO), follow-on public offer (FPO) and rights issue. Speciality chemical manu-

facturer Clean Science and Technology plans to raise Rs 1,400 crore through its initial share sale. The IPO is entirely an offer for sale (OFS) by existing promoters and other shareholders, according to draft red herring prospectus.

Those offering shares in the OFS include Anantroop Financial Advisory Services, Ashok Ramnarayan Boob, Krishnakumar Ramnarayan Boob, Siddhartha Ashok Sikchi, and Parth Ashok Maheshwari.

EU investigates Google's conduct in digital ad tech

■ LONDON

European Union regulators have launched a fresh antitrust investigation of Google, this time over whether the U.S. tech giant is stifling competition in digital advertising technology.

The European Commission said Tuesday that it has opened a formal investigation into whether Google violated the bloc's competition rules by favouring its own online display advertising technology services at the expense of rival publishers, advertisers and advertising technology services.

Indian cos' m-cap grew fastest last year, presents fin stability risk: SBI

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Indian companies' market capitalization has grown at the fastest pace last year among major economies despite contraction in GDP, economists from SBI said, flagging the risks to financial stability it poses.

Further, retail investors have shown higher interest in markets and their numbers have increased by 1.42 crore in FY21 and another 44 lakh in April and May, they said in a note, wondering if this will be a lasting behavioural change or is transitory. The economists at the country's largest lender



attributed the growth in equity markets to lower returns on other financial instruments amid a low rates regime, increase in global liquidity, and even a tendency to spend more time at home because of mobility restrictions which led many to trade more. The 30-share benchmark

index BSE has rallied from 28,000 points in early April 2020, to over 52,000 points at present. "The rise in the stock market without significant development in the real economy may raise the issue of financial stability which as per our financial stability index shows modest improvement in April 2021, but lower than the peak witnessed in December 2020. However, it is expected to have declined in May 2021," it warned.

It can be noted that in the past, the Reserve Bank has also expressed risks of financial stability because of the fast growth in stock markets.

Existing investment advisers should get BASL membership

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All existing registered investment advisers will have to obtain membership of BSE Administration and Supervision Ltd (BASL) before August 31, leading stock exchange BSE said on Tuesday.

BASL, a wholly-owned subsidiary of BSE, has been granted recognition as Investment Adviser Administration and Supervisory Body (IAASB)

for a period of three years from June 1, 2021 under investment advisers rule.

It has been entrusted with the administration and supervision of Investment Advisers (IAs). Moreover, all existing SEBI Registered Investment Advisers (RIAs) are mandatorily required to obtain membership of BASL. "All existing SEBI RIAs shall be required to submit their membership application and obtain their BASL membership before August 31, 2021," BSE said.



Auto component suppliers to see 70% dip in profits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Auto component industry is likely to witness a 70 per cent decline in operating profits in the first quarter of the current fiscal due to disruptions caused by the second wave of COVID-19, as per domestic ratings agency Icria.

The challenges for component manufacturers will be further compounded by the sharp increase in commodity prices, which are generally passed through to original equipment manufacturers (OEMs) with a lag of 3-6 months, Icria noted.

"ICRA estimates a revenue loss of 30-40 per cent quarter on quarter, and this will translate into a sequential decline in EBITDA of over 70 per cent



during the first quarter for the industry," it added. Exports have come to the industry's rescue in the last few months, when domestic

demand nosedived due to lockdown restrictions, Icria said. Suppliers dependent solely on domestic demand have been the worst impacted, it

added. Icria noted that despite the short-term headwinds, it expects the domestic auto component industry to register a 20-23 per cent revenue growth in the current fiscal year, supported by double-digit volume growth across most automobile sub-segments and impact of commodity inflation on realisations.

"The overall industry revenue will still be almost double than the April-June quarter of last financial year," it added.

Elaborating on the current situation, the rating agency said that while the production volumes were stable in April, retail sales declined sharply during the last two months indicating inventory build-up

Green hydrogen purchase to be made mandatory: R K Singh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Green hydrogen would be brought under renewable purchase obligation (RPO), Power and New & Renewable Energy Minister R K Singh said on Tuesday.

Under RPO, bulk purchasers like discoms, open access consumers and captive users are required to buy a certain proportion of renewable energy out of their total consumption of electricity. They can also buy RE certificates from renewable energy producers to meet the RPO norms.

Interacting with media in a virtual curtain raiser press conference on India's role as a Global Champion for the Energy Transition theme at the UN High Level Dialogue on Energy 2021, Singh said the RPO for green hydrogen which

can also be called hydrogen purchase obligation for states would ensure that products sell. We are going to include green hydrogen in RPO."

Green hydrogen is produced using renewable energy and electrolysis to split water and is distinct from grey hydrogen, which is produced from methane and releases greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, and blue hydrogen, which captures those emissions and stores them underground to prevent them causing climate change.

The minister also expressed dismay over under-achievement of RPO targets by states.

"Most states have not achieved their RPO. In 2030, total installed power generation capacity of the country would be 821 GW including 450 GW of renewables. (So RPO is required to be met by states)," the minister said.

He noted that there would be a penalty for states for not meeting the RPO. Explaining about the high or unviable price of green hydrogen, he said the price will come down with an increase in volumes (sales and production) as was seen in the case of solar and wind energy.

IIFCL profit surges over three-fold to Rs 325 cr in FY21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India Infrastructure Finance Company Ltd (IIFCL) on Tuesday reported a more than three-fold jump in its net profit to Rs 325 crore for the fiscal ended March 2021, mainly helped by recovery and reduction of bad loans.

The state-owned infrastructure finance company had earned a net profit of Rs 94 crore on a consolidated basis in the previous fiscal.

At the same time, the standalone profit of the company rose over five times to Rs 286 crore as compared to Rs 51 crore in 2019-20.

Hyderabad

the pioneer

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Wednesday
 June 23, 2021

SHIKHA DUGGAL

THE INSPIRING JOURNEY OF A MOTHER-SON JEWELLERY DUO

Conceptualised in early 1998 by Sushma Maloo, an iconoclast with her forward-thinking and unique designs in an industry that is largely male-dominated, for her at the moment, creativity is soaring in terms of how jewellers market, show and sell their collections! Today her son, Pradyuman Maloo, the creative head of 'Nornament' is also now a household name after featuring on the Netflix Original documentary series 'Indian Matchmaking' and is carrying forward his mother's legacy that is deeply rooted in Indian craftsmanship. The pandemic influenced consumer tastes in rings with a notable rise in minimalist styles. Social media has never been more important to all brands across all sectors than it is now, millennials want to be assured about what they buy has not had a negative impact on humans or the environment. "As a boy, I watched the dream of my mother when she founded our brand in 1998. I saw myself assisting her in practically everything related to the business. Be it photographing images, designing jewellery, tagging along as a kid to buying offices to sitting next to workers to mould a piece to life. We further recognised the compatibility of classic traditions with modern functionality and felt that's the way forward! From the very beginning, I have created models that merged with my mother's vision of bespoke luxury jewellery. From the business perspective in the current times, customised affordable luxury is something I see becoming the new trend or need of the hour! The jewellery business generally has come a very long way, from people buying jewellery only for investments to now when people are buying jewellery to reward themselves or pass on a legacy or an emotion. Jewellery is becoming more of an extended personality of an individual," shares



Pradyuman.

Jewellery is indeed embedded in the fabric of the country's cultural history! Contributing to 29 percent of the jewellery consumption worldwide, India today is an integral part of the global fine jewellery landscape. And, the recent rise of this independent fine jewellery brand, which builds its business

on transparency has shone a light on the exceptional craft associated with jewellery made in India also. "The inception of a collection has mostly been something that catches my eye during when I travel or the way a material speaks to me. The most difficult part is to translate the concept or the vision into a piece of jew-

ellery. After the initial designing of the concept on paper, I love to use a wide range of materials, gems, or metal to mix-match and figure the perfect fit for the design or the collection. Often, I am just caught glaring at the stones as if I have transcended to another reality! Recreating my whole design into a visual design is

an extremely exhilarating process. After the smallest to the most significant modifications, we generate a rendering which is later translated into a wax piece and further into metal. After completion of the whole process of jewellery making, seeing the final product is one of the most satisfying things for me — it's a feeling that one feels to make a dream into a reality," adds the creative head.

The nepotism debate isn't new in the society we inhabit and everyone deep down knows that it exists in every field of work. We are a feudal

society and unfortunately, nepotism permeates all levels. Pradyuman Maloo ultimately believes it is your hard work and dedication that will take you the long way! Nepotism might help you in your initial days, it might give you the platform to showcase what you got but finally, your talent will speak. Nepotism can give your cycle a push but paddling it through is on the individual! Leading the conversation towards the inception of Nornament, he says, "It was born to a fearless and passionate dreamer — my mother Sushma Maloo. She was a first-generation entrepreneur who created what she did with forward-thinking and unique designs. Above all, she had the spirit that was willing to beat the odds! More than two decades ago, she was one of the first few women entrepreneurs to have started a jewellery brand in a male-dominated world. Back in the days, my mother was a housewife, she used to receive a monthly stipend from my father to run the house. She got into an argument over 2,000 bucks and she remembers it as the moment she decided to start earning for herself! I decided to take my mother's legacy forward with a determination to make the brand a force to be reckoned with — nationally and internationally."

Mostly, women's tastes and preferences are influencing the jewellery industry. Despite this, the proportion of women's workforce in this industry is still negligible. The jewellery industry is largely seen as a man's world even today! Pradyuman says that empowerment is undoubtedly pivotal even in jewellery business.

At the heart of Nornament lies the philosophy of love, respect and empower women. "My mother who began the legacy was initially a homemaker, that too from a very humble background. She learnt everything at the workplace and the hard way! Back in 1998, there weren't enough women running businesses and there was a lot of opposition from circles that didn't understand why women need to work. But she was sure of what she wanted to do and determined to work hard. She has a way of dealing with problems and manages to get where the business needs to go! It was always daunting to take on the legacy. When it comes to the business, I had applied myself to learn about the ins and outs of it before I came into it. There were things I needed to figure out and I leaned on my mother's advice. I also realised there was a need to adapt the business into the digital age and steer the business towards newer trends," adds the jewellery designer.

Lastly, talking about gold, it has always been a reliable form of investment for generations and decades and it is not surprising to see people investing in gold in any form!

"They are the most safest and liquidate investment, especially during these unprecedented times. Another way to look at it is since social gatherings have reduced considerably due to the pandemic which in turn has resulted in a lower requirement of jewellery as people find it hard to find events and occasions to go to. Therefore, it is completely justifiable for people to give preference to investment-oriented purchases compared to leisure purchases while shopping online," concludes Pradyuman Maloo.



After Lalhnehpua Chhakchhuak became the sixth NBA Academy India graduate to commit to college basketball program in US, Marc Pullés, Director, Basketball Operations Team Leader en National Basketball Association (NBA), talks to K RAMYA SREE about the program aiding the development of basketball in India, future of basketball in India, women's basketball league, and more.

Dunking high AND ABOVE

us about the program, how it's aiding the grassroots development of basketball in the country, what the future holds for basketball in India, women's basketball league, and more.

"Over the years, the program has shown a positive impact and provided a platform for more youth to play basketball and pursue the sport. These online sessions provide a platform for the youth to speak to people they look up to. Having conversations with NBA, WNBA talent is something most will cherish. I think it's important, especially in a time like this where interaction is limited, and everyone has to stay inside," Pullés shares.

Explaining how they manage to pull off the program successfully, he added,

"Rather than having to focus on a one-way presentation through the course of a session, the participating kids, coaches, and Physical Education teachers were encouraged to actively take part in the drills. The program also provided pre-recorded training videos and content to PE teachers and coaches at participating schools, providing year-round development opportunities for aspiring players through digital platforms. In October 2020, we had organised a standalone session with three-time NBA champion Bruce Bowen that explored the subject of mental health and wellness."

Pullés, speaking of the future Basketball holds in India, says they are encouraged by the popularity of cricket, which demonstrates

the strength of the sporting culture in India. "We see this as an opportunity in basketball, especially with a young population, to build a strong fanbase over time. India is a priority market for the

NBA

with tremendous potential. It also poses its own unique set of challenges, including the local basketball infrastructure. We need more basketball courts to allow more people to have access to the game. Our international basketball development strategy is a 'grassroots to high performance' system. As players develop, the NBA's strategy is to move them up the system from Jr. NBA and NBA Basketball Schools to BWN and NBA Academies, which feature NBA-level coaching and facilities, and the opportunity to compete against top competition throughout the year.

Through our developmental efforts, we've put basketballs into the

hands of boys and girls — from grassroots all the way to the elite level. Over 15 male & female prospects from our Academy program have committed to D1 colleges, universities, prep schools, and Academies in the U.S. Princepal Singh became the first

NBA Academy India graduate to sign a professional contract when he signed with the NBA G League Ignite in July last year.

These success stories are the real indicator of the potential and the growth of the game.

The future of sports will be defined by technology's ability to bring the game directly to fans on their preferred device — which is especially true about

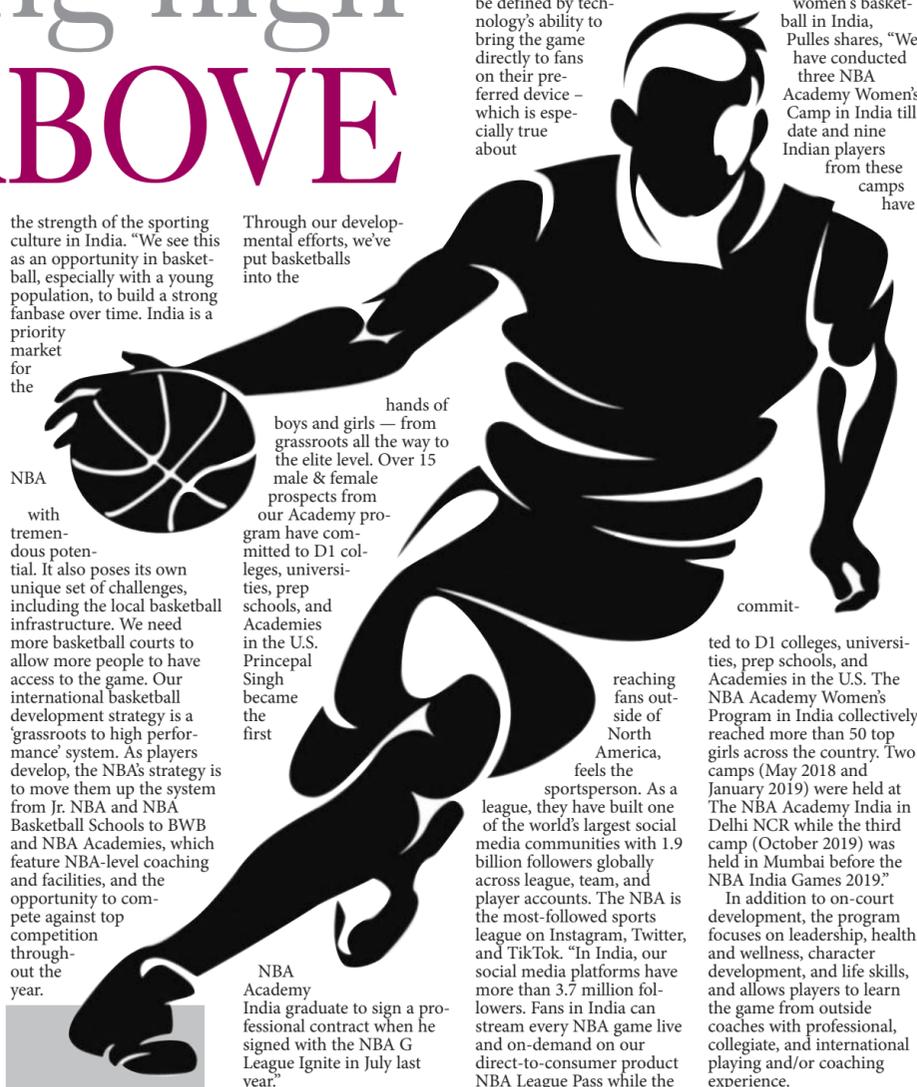
entire Conference Finals and The Finals will be broadcasted live on Star Sports Select," he points.

Explaining the potential of women's basketball in India, Pullés shares, "We have conducted three NBA Academy Women's Camp in India till date and nine Indian players from these camps have

commit-

ted to D1 colleges, universities, prep schools, and Academies in the U.S. The NBA Academy Women's Program in India collectively reached more than 50 top girls across the country. Two camps (May 2018 and January 2019) were held at The NBA Academy India in Delhi NCR while the third camp (October 2019) was held in Mumbai before the NBA India Games 2019."

In addition to on-court development, the program focuses on leadership, health and wellness, character development, and life skills, and allows players to learn the game from outside coaches with professional, collegiate, and international playing and/or coaching experience.



World Vitiligo Day is on June 25. To mark the occasion, *The Pioneer* speaks with doctors about the stigma attached to the condition and whether science has found a cure for it.

THE PROBLEM OF COLOURS

At least once in a while, we must have been told by our parents to maintain distance from people who have white spots on their body. If not, we ourselves must have turned around to inspect those patches on a random person that we might have come across in a grocery store or a super market. Why so?

"Acceptability about vitiligo is poor in our society. Despite the disease being very old there is still a lot of stigma attached to it which needs to be dissipated by spreading awareness about the condition," says Dr Shitij Goel, Senior Consultant, Dermatologist, Sharda Hospital, Greater Noida.

The reason why people often look down upon people with vitiligo or think they are any different is the growing consciousness about looks. "Vitiligo has been called as *shvet kushtha* and other names since ages. Due to the unsightly nature of lesions, it has traditionally been associated with stigma attached to it. Moreover aesthetics/appearance of human skin is gaining more importance in today's world. People have become more conscious of their looks and that has been leading to the indifferent behaviour with people having vitiligo," Goel adds.

Not only the stigma, but the disease also comes with several myths. One of them being — it is contagious.

"This is totally untrue. Vitiligo is an autoimmune disease in which pigment producing cells i.e. Melanocytes are destroyed in the skin, leading to white colour of the skin. There is no role of any infection in this condition and hence it's totally non contagious," Goel tells you.

Dr Pooja Chopra, Dermatologist, Aakash Healthcare, Dwarka, is of the opinion that there is much more awareness related to this skin condition now as compared to a

few years back. "It goes without saying that vitiligo has a lot of social and psychological implications. But yes, people are definitely aware of it now. In fact, we get a lot of patients fearing that any white spot on their body is vitiligo. However, there is not much awareness regarding its treatment. People still think that it's not treatable and hence, resort to alternate medicine or home remedies," Chopra opines.

The early signs of the condition, she says, are asymptomatic white patches anywhere on the skin and hair. "The patches might be stable or can gradually increase in size," says Chopra.

It's difficult to label vitiligo as progressive as it depends from patient to patient.

Some may have a couple of stable patches for years, while others may report rapidly increasing patches.

As for the causes of the condition, Chopra tells you that there are many theories behind it.

"There are many theories regarding the causes of vitiligo: autoimmune, genetic, neurogenic, environmental and others. However, there is no specific cause of the disease. The basic pathology is inability of the pigment cells to produce pigment, melanin," Chopra opines.

Not to forget, that

early diagnosis can curb the spread of patches. Oral medication and topical application of specific creams can definitely lead to repigmentation. "Skin grafting or punch grafting for small, stable patches gives good results. However, the disease has an unpredictable course. Repigmentation can be permanent but there are chances of new patches occurring anytime during the lifetime," adds Chopra.

Goel adds that he wants vitiligo to be seen as other chronic diseases like Diabetes, arthritis and thyroid, which are reversible some times. "In a majority of vitiligo cases complete repigmentation of skin is achievable by medical therapy. There are a lot of medicines, therapies such as pho-

totherapy and lasers which are now available for successful treatment of vitiligo. Even a lot of different vitiligo surgeries are now being done to get back colour in vitiligo patients. So, vitiligo should not be seen as an incurable disease but a disease which needs long term treatment just like many other diseases," explains Goel.



Yoga not only strengthens us physically and intellectually, it is also vital in fighting Covid. Dr Partap Chauhan lists various asanas that can help stimulate your lungs.

Yoga for the lungs



move your palms over your feet at the same time, until your arms are straight. Maintain a neutral position for your neck. For a few breaths, stay in this position. Exhale and slowly return to the starting position. As you straighten up, withdraw your hands and bring them back to your hips.

Ardhachandrasana aka half-moon pose: Begin with Padahasthasana. Then, extend your left leg back, kneel down, and point your toes out. Look up and stretch your arms over your head. Make sure your right knee is parallel to your ankle. Form an arch with your upper body by bending backwards (which resembles half a moon). Hold the position for a few moments. Carry on with the opposite leg in the same manner.

Chakrasana aka wheel pose: Lie down on your back with your legs folded at the knees and your feet firmly planted on the floor. Bend your elbows and face the sky with your palms facing up. Place your palms on the floor on either side of your head and rotate your arms at the shoulders.

Apart from frequent breathing exercises and meditation, obtaining six to eight hours of sleep, and eating a balanced, home-cooked cuisine, keeping a healthy diet is critical for post-Covid recuperation.

(The writer is the Director of Jiva Ayurveda, an author, public speaker, TV personality and an Ayurvedacharya.)

June 21 was International Yoga Day, it coincided with the summer solstice, to recognise the many benefits of the ancient Indian practice of Yoga.

This year marks the sixth edition of the International Yoga Day.

Yoga serves to strengthen us physically, intellectually, and spiritually, and is vital in fighting the coronavirus, as it helps boost the immune system. Yoga asanas, combined with the treatment protocol prescribed by Ayurveda immensely helps in the post-Coronavirus healing phase.

The following are some of the asanas that can strengthen the lungs if practised regularly:

Hasta uttanasana aka raised arm Yoga pose: To begin, stand straight in

samasthiti. Raise your arms over your head and stretch upward, making sure your palms facing each other. Bend back slowly while keeping your head in between your arms. Maintain a straight line with your knees and keep your eyes open.

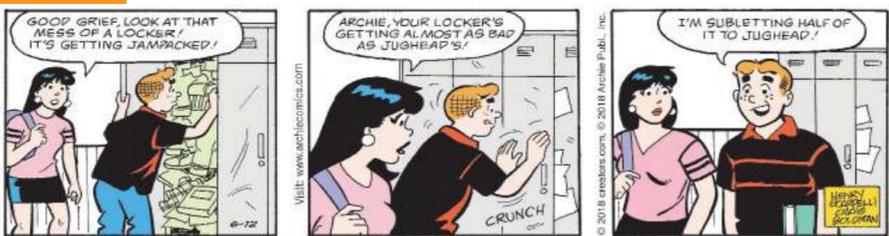
Dhanurasana aka bow pose: Begin by lying on your stomach, bending your knees and holding your ankles with your palms. Have a firm grip. As high as you can, lift your legs and arms. Look up and maintain the stance for a few moments.

Ushtrasana aka camel pose: Kneel on your Yoga mat with your hands on your hips. Arc your back and



FUN

ARCHIE



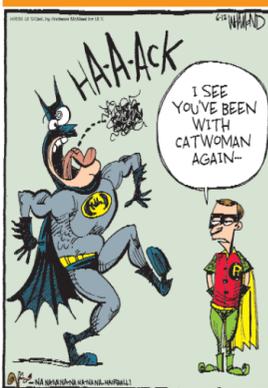
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



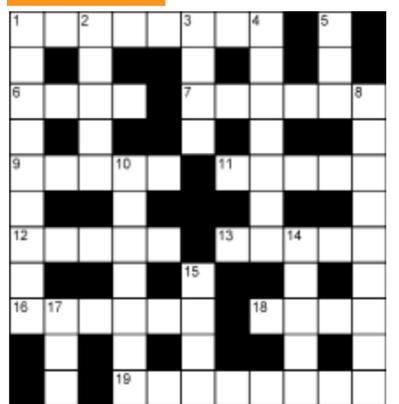
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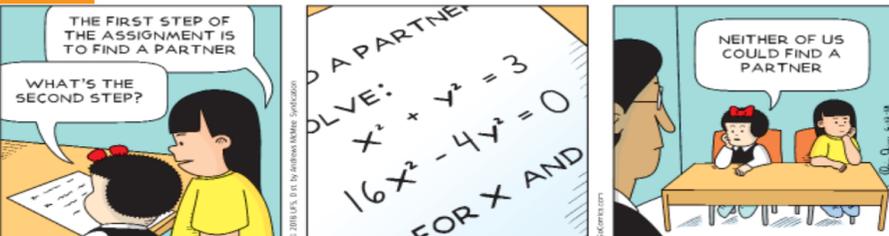
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



ACROSS

- 1 Nice, enjoyable
- 6 Decays
- 7 An animal with a shell
- 9 Causes pain to
- 11 A witch's power
- 12 Footwear
- 13 A hot drink
- 16 A medical professional
- 18 Lengthy
- 19 Inspected closely

DOWN

- 1 Bought
- 2 Go in
- 3 Takes part in a play
- 4 A violent storm with twisting winds
- 5 Unwell
- 8 Swapped
- 10 Go to see shows here
- 14 A king or queen wears this
- 15 Length x width =
- 17 Not at home



GINGER MEGGS



Aadi-Veerabhadram TO WEAVE MAGIC WITH KIRATHAKA



with movies such as *Aha Naa Pellanta* and *Poolarangadu*. Actress Payal Rajput of *RX100* fame has been roped in for the film to romance Aadi Sai Kumar. The upcoming film of Aadi Sai Kumar and Payal Rajput has been titled *Kirathaka*.

The film is being bankrolled by Nagam Tirupathi under the banner of Vision Cinemas. Full details about this project will be revealed very soon. The makers of *Kirathaka* are planning to start the shoot very soon.

Earlier during an interview, Veerabhadram had said, "Aadi Sai Kumar-starrer *Chuttalabbayi*, which I had helmed, became a hit in my career."

We planned a new film in our combination to score a hit. Nagam Tirupati Reddy, P Manmadha Rao are the producers. They are very eager to come up with a good entertainer movie. We will together make a big commercial entertainer without any compromises in the quality of the film and production."

Actor Aadi Sai Kumar has recently joined hands with director Veerabhadram for an upcoming project. Veerabhadram is known for helming the romantic comedy *Chuttalabbayi*. Aadi and Veerabhadram are coming together to dish out an exciting out and out entertainer this year. The director has earned his reputation in the film industry



MEHREEN IN BALAKRISHNA-GOPICHAND MALINENI FILM

After days of speculation, it is officially confirmed now, that Nandamuri Balakrishna has teamed up with Gopichand Malineni for an upcoming project which is produced by Naveen Yerneni and Y. Ravi Shankar under the Mythri Movies banner, whose music will be scored by SS Thaman.

According to the latest buzz, the makers of the film have approached actress Mehreen Pirzada of *F2* fame to play one of the female lead roles in Balakrishna and Gopichand Malineni's film.

Sources say that Mehreen has responded positively and gave them her nod. Very soon, the official announcement regarding the inclusion of Mehreen in this film of Balakrishna will be made.

Ever since the *Pattas* actress decided to postpone her wedding, she is on a signing spree and is signing back-to-back projects in Tollywood.

Mehreen Kaur Pirzada will be seen playing the female lead in hilarious drama *F3* which has Venkatesh Daggubati, Varun Tej,



and Tamannah Bhatia in lead roles and it helmed by Anil Ravipudi. She will also be seen playing the female lead in Santhosh Sobhan starrer *Manchi Rojulu*

Vachayi. On the other side, Balakrishna is currently working for Boyapati Srinu's directorial venture *Akhanda*.



Nithiin-starrer Maestro to see an OTT release?

That the shoot of upcoming action and thriller drama *Maestro* starring Nithiin, Tamannah, and Nabha Natesh has reached completion amid Covid-19 pandemic, is known news. The Telugu film *Maestro* is a remake of the Hindi blockbuster,

Andhadhun starring Ayushmann Khurrana, Tabu, and Radhika Apte in lead roles. Tamannah will be reprising Tabu's role whereas Nabha Natesh is essaying Radhika Apte's character.

What we now hear is that the movie *Maestro* will skip theatrical release and pre-

miere directly on an OTT platform! Apparently, Disney+Hotstar is offering the team Rs 40 Cr for the direct to digital rights. This is one of the biggest OTT deals in Tollywood to date. An official confirmation from the team about the digital release is still awaited. *Lie* fame Nithiin, who was last seen in the romantic and comedy movie *Rang De*, is thrilled about the release of his upcoming film, *Maestro*. *Smart Shankar* fame Nabha Natesh is paired opposite Nithiin, Tamannah Bhatia's character has negative shades.

Apart from them, *Maestro* also has Jishu Sengupta, Sreemukhi, Harshvardhan, Ananya, Rachha Ravi, Mangli, and Srinivas Reddy in supporting roles.

Helmed by Merlapaka Gandhi, and the film is jointly bankrolled by N Sudhakar Reddy and Nikitha Reddy under the banner of Shreshth Movies Banner. Rajkumar Akella. The film has cinematography by J Yuvraj whereas music is scored by Mahati Swara Sagar.



VD: Rs 200 crore is too little, I will do more in the theaters

Young and happening actor Vijay Deverakonda has established himself to be one of the most exciting stars not only down south but other industries as well. The actor is making his debut in Bollywood with the upcoming film *Liger* which is being directed by Puri Jagannadh, who is known for making *Pokiri*, *Businessman*, *Temper*, and *Smart Shankar*. This will be the first collaboration between Puri Jagannadh and Vijay Deverakonda. The bilingual movie is being produced by Karan Johar. According to the latest news on the film, Vijay Deverakonda took to his Twitter handle to refute reports of an OTT release in a cheeky way.

It was being said that team *Liger* received a mouth-watering OTT deal from a streaming platform. They offered a massive Rs 200 crore for its direct OTT release of *Liger*, including the satellite rights in all languages. Sharing the report on his Twitter account, the *Geetha Govindam* star wrote, "Too little, I will do more in the theaters".

In the film *Liger*, which also has Bollywood belle Ananya Pandey as the female lead, Vijay Deverakonda will be seen as a kickboxer with a stutter.



After Pushpa, Salaar to release in two parts?

Recently, the makers of action thriller drama *Pushpa* starring Stylish Star Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna, made an official announcement that the movie will be released in two parts. Now according to the latest buzz, the makers of action entertainer *Salaar* too, are planning to release the Prabhas and Shruti Haasan-starrer in two parts!

Baahubali was released in two installments and ended up as a super hit. In the same way, Yash-starrer action drama *KGF: Chapter 1*, directed by



Prashanth Neel was also a sensational hit and now all eyes are on the second installment *KGF: Chapter 2* which is slated to hit the theaters in the month of July. Discussion on the film being released in two install-

ments is on, and very soon the official announcement regarding it will be made.

Sources say that director Prashanth Neel believes that the content of *Salaar* has scope to be extended into two parts and he is going to develop the script accordingly.

Salaar is an action drama that has Madhu Guruswamy in the role of an antagonist. It is being produced by Vijay Kiragandur under Hombale Films. Prabhas and Prashanth Neel's film is set to release on April 14, 2022.

Sai Tej starts dubbing for Republic



Sai Tej is busy with his upcoming entertainer *Republic* under the direction of Deva Katta of *Prasthanam* fame. Sai Tej, sources say, started dubbing for the film. The makers are extremely happy with the

output and started post-production. They are keen on completing it at the earliest and plan the film's release soon. Rumours were rife that the makers got a fancy offer from a top OTT platform. However the makers decided to release the film in theatres and now that the lockdown is lifted, they are gearing up for the same.

Actress Aishwarya Rajesh has been paired opposite Sai Tej. Senior actress Ramya Krishna is playing an important role in the film. Deva Katta wrapped up the shoot in record time and made it ready for release, but the second wave of the pandemic undid their plans.



Mikkel Damsgaard, center, celebrates after scoring Denmark's opening goal during the Euro 2020 Group B match between Russia and Denmark in Copenhagen

AFP ■ COPENHAGEN

Denmark made it through to the last 16 of Euro 2020 on Monday after a convincing 4-1 win over Russia which alongside Belgium's victory against Finland meant they finished second in Group B.

Goals from Mikkel Damsgaard, Yussuf Poulsen, Andreas Christensen and Joakim Maehle gave the Danes their first win of the tournament on a joyous evening at the Parken Stadium in Copenhagen.

Delirious fans showered each other with beer as Denmark rattled in the goals that allowed them to end the group stage in party mood after the trauma of Christian Eriksen's mid-match collapse in their opening fixture against the Finns.

Denmark will face Wales in the last 16 in Amsterdam on Saturday.

The Danes came into the match with no points from

MISSION IMPOSSIBLE MADE POSSIBLE

Denmark finish second in Group B after sensational 4-1 victory over Russia & qualify for knockouts

their first two matches but knowing a win over Russia by two goals or more and defeat for Finland would guarantee them passage from the group as the second-placed team.

It was the Russians who had the first chance of the game, Aleksandr Golovin driving towards the goal and fashioning a great scoring opportunity only to shoot straight at Kasper

Schmeichel from close range.

DAMSGAARD'S MOMENT

They were left to rue missing that chance six minutes before the break when Mikkel Damsgaard showed why he was picked to replace Eriksen as Denmark's playmaker.

The Sampdoria winger, who only turns 21 early next month, looked like he had all

the time in the world when he unleashed a curling strike that whipped past Matvei Safonov and caused an eruption of celebrations in the stands.

Denmark second came in almost comical circumstances on the hour mark.

Poulsen could hardly believe his luck when Daler Kuzyaev's miscued back-pass rolled straight to him in front of the Russian goal, leaving him the simple task of rolling into an empty net and giving Denmark the two-goal lead they needed to finish second should Belgium win.

Soon after the already rowdy fans in the Parken let out possibly the loudest cheer of the night as news of Romelu Lukaku's opener against Finland filtered through, but they were soon dampened by that goal being ruled out and Russia being awarded a penalty which was slotted home by Artem Dzyuba.

They were on their feet again with 15 minutes remain-

ing thanks to Lukas Hradecky's own goal which put Belgium a goal ahead and Denmark in second place.

Denmark were now charging forward and Safonov had to pull off three incredible saves in quick succession before Christensen rammed home a superb long-range strike in the 79th minute.

As the fans, who had made a tremendous racket all game, began their celebrations for making the knockout stage, Denmark ended the group stage in style when Maehle slotted home the fourth three minutes later to complete a perfect evening.

BELGIUM FINISH 1ST

In other Group B game in Saint Petersburg, Belgium scored two late goals to see off a valiant Finland 2-0, pushing their opponents to the brink of a group-stage exit.

Finnish goalkeeper Lukas Hradecky's 74th-minute own goal and Romelu Lukaku's third strike of the tournament ensured Roberto Martinez's Belgium finished top of Group B.

The world's number-one-ranked side will face a third-placed team in the next round on Sunday in Seville.

Finland finish third in the group, but appear unlikely to be one of the four best third-placed teams.

5 MAKE IT THROUGH

Five teams advanced to the round of 16 without even playing at the Euro 2020.

France, England, the Czech Republic, Sweden and Switzerland all are assured of advancing because they have four points and will finish no worse than third in their groups.

Results in the final Group B and C games have left Finland and Ukraine in third place in the respective standings with three points. That means any team with four points is guaranteed to be at least among the four best third-place teams.

Finland and Ukraine have not yet been eliminated. Results in Group D on Tuesday and Group E on Wednesday could leave those third-place finishers with only two points.

Mount, Chilwell to isolate until June 28

London: England will be without Chelsea duo Mason Mount and Ben Chilwell for their final Euro 2020 Group D match on Tuesday against the Czech Republic and potentially their last-16 tie, after the pair were forced to isolate following exposure to an opponent who has Covid-19.

Mount and Chilwell were seen embracing their club teammate Billy Gilmour after Friday's 0-0 draw between England and Scotland. Gilmour tested positive on Monday.

England have already qualified ahead of the Czech Republic's visit to Wembley and if they beat the Czechs to win the group, they will play their last 16 match at Wembley on June 29, giving both players a chance to feature.

Second place in the group would see Southgate's men travel to Copenhagen on June 28.

"We can confirm that Ben Chilwell and Mason Mount must isolate up to and including next Monday (28 June). This decision has been taken in consultation with Public Health England," the English Football Association said in a statement.

"Chilwell and Mount will isolate and train individually in private areas at England's training base St George's Park." AFP



Wembley to host 60K fans for Euro semis, final

AFP ■ LONDON

More than 60,000 fans will be allowed to attend the semi-finals and final of Euro 2020 at Wembley with attendance increased to 75 percent of capacity, the British Government announced on Tuesday.

The matches will see the largest crowds assembled at a sporting event in Britain in more than 15 months, with numbers previously strictly limited due to the coronavirus pandemic.

All ticket holders will need

to follow a number of strict entry requirements, including having a negative Covid-19 test or proof of full vaccination.

"We have worked extremely closely with UEFA and the FA (Football Association) to ensure rigorous and tight public health measures are in place whilst allowing more fans to see the action live," said culture and sport secretary Oliver Dowden.

"The finals promise to be an unforgettable moment in our national recovery from the pandemic."

UEFA declines Munich application for rainbow-colored stadium

Munich: UEFA's decision to block plans by Munich to light the Allianz Arena in rainbow colours for the Germany-Hungary Euro 2020 match was met on Tuesday with defiance in the Bavarian city which vowed to decorate other landmarks in protest at a law passed by the Hungarian Government.

"UEFA is a politically and religiously neutral organisation," said European football's governing body in a statement ahead of Wednesday's match.

"Given the political context of this request — a message aimed at a decision taken by the Hungarian national parliament



— UEFA must refuse."

Munich's mayor Dieter Reiter slammed UEFA's decision as 'shameful' and announced plans to decorate other city landmarks in rainbow colours in defiance.

"I find it shameful that UEFA forbids us to send a sign for cosmopolitanism, tolerance,

respect and solidarity with the people of the LGBTIQ community," he said.

He plans to put up rainbow-coloured flags at the Munich town hall and illuminate a huge wind turbine located close to the stadium, as well as the city's 291m-tall Olympic Tower.

Argentina, Chile qualify for quarters



Argentina's Alejandro Gomez, center, celebrates scoring the opening goal against Paraguay with teammates during a Copa America match in Brasilia

AFP ■ BRASILIA

Argentina and Chile on Monday booked their places in the Copa America quarter-finals, ending top of Group A after low-scoring matches that left the other two spots up for grabs.

Argentina logged their second win in three group matches, beating Paraguay 1-0, with Alejandro 'Papu' Gomez scoring the sole goal of a lacklustre match in the ninth minute.

The win placed Lionel Messi's La Albiceleste top of Group A with seven points — enough to secure its spot in the next phase of the tournament being played in empty stadiums in coronavirus-battered Brazil.

The match marked a personal milestone for Messi, who tied Javier Mascherano's record for the most games played for Argentina — 147.

But it was not a night of glory for Messi or his team, who in the second half seemed to resign themselves to defending a spirited, but ultimately fruitless, Paraguayan attack.

In the other match Monday, Chile drew 1-1 with Uruguay to end the day with five log points.

With four matches left to play in Group A, Paraguay has three points, Uruguay one, and Bolivia zero, meaning they all still stand a theoretical

chance to go to the quarter-finals.

Brazil has already qualified from Group B.

The build-up to Chile-Paraguay game had been overshadowed by controversy in the Chile camp after revelations the team had breached Covid-19 protocols by bringing a local hairdresser into the team hotel.

CONMEBOL said it would fine those involved \$30,000.

However there was no sign of the controversy affecting their play, with Vargas firing Chile ahead on 26 minutes from a tight angle after latching onto a clever pass from English-born Ben Brereton.

Uruguay grabbed a share of the points in the second-half when Suarez bundled in the ball from close range during a tangle with former Barcelona team-mate Arturo Vidal at the far post following a corner.

Manchester United striker Edinson Cavani almost snatched victory for Uruguay in the 85th minute, but his glancing header flashed just wide of the post.

Vargas's first-half strike saw him draw level with Peru's Paolo Guerrero on 14 goals in the Copa America's all-time goalscoring rankings, three behind the record of 17 held by Brazil's Zizinho and Argentina's Norberto Mendez.

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Mohammed Shami's artistry was on full display but New Zealand still managed to take a crucial 32-run lead after scoring 249 on the fifth day of the World Test Championship final against India here on Tuesday.

More than the quantum of the first innings lead, New Zealand will gain psychological advantage as their seam attack can go for the kill on the final day to force a result.

New Zealand showed more intent on keeping the scoreboard ticking with Kyle Jamieson (21) and Tim Southee (30) throwing their bats around for useful runs which certainly put the pressure back on India going into the final session of the day.

The tea break was called after the fall of last New Zealand wicket.

Mohammed Shami (4/76), after a mesmerising morning spell, got a couple of more wickets in the post-lunch session. He dismissed Colin de Grandhomme with a delivery

Shami brings India back in match

angled in and Jamieson with a bounce.

During the final half-hour, India's senior-most player Ishant Sharma (3/48) denied half-century to a dogged skipper Kane Williamson (49) with a classic Test match dismissal — delivery rearing up and shaping out which was edged to Virat Kohli at third slip.

Sensing that mere survival would spell doom, New Zealand scored 114 runs in the post lunch session even as Shami and Ishant remained standout performer bowling their hearts out.

Jamieson and Southee got some easy runs at the fag end which could prove to be useful in the final context.

But no amount of praise is enough for Shami, who brought India back in the match before New Zealand could press its foot on the pedal. Such was his



India's Mohammed Shami, left, celebrates the dismissal of New Zealand's BJ Watling, right, during Day 5 of WTC Final

domination that Williamson managed only seven runs in an entire session of play.

Ross Taylor (11) was dismissed as Shami reaped the rewards for finding the fuller length which enticed the batsman to go for a drive. Shubman Gill, at short cover, took a brilliant diving catch.

Ishant then had the normally dependable Henry Nicholls (7), who went for a 'fishing expedition' when the lanky speedster pushed his length fuller by a yard and the edge at second slip was taken by Rohit Sharma.

BJ Watling (1), in his last Test, got a ball that would have put the best in the business in trouble. Shami, who by then had started bossing the batsmen, bowled one that looked like shaping in but held its line after pitching, clipping the off-bail in the process. From 117 for 2, New Zealand were reeling at 135 for 5 in no time.

Younis quits as Pak batting coach

Karachi: Former captain Younis Khan on Tuesday stepped down as Pakistan's batting coach in a surprise decision which the cricket board said was agreed upon 'reluctantly but amicably' even though no reasons were specified for it.

The Pakistan team is due to start a tour of the UK from June 25 to July 20 for three ODIs and three T20Is. The team will next go to the West Indies from July 21 to August 24 to feature in five T20Is and two Tests.

"Pakistan men's national cricket team will travel to the United Kingdom without a batting coach, while the decision to appoint Younis Khan's replacement for the West Indies tour will be made in due course," a PCB statement said two days before the team's departure.

The announcement was followed by speculation that Younis himself had decided to quit the position as he was not happy with his role and wanted greater say in selection matters. PTI

Indian women's resolve, grit & determination in England Test impressed Anjum

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian skipper and commentator Anjum Chopra was full of praise for the Indian women's cricket team for the fight they showed in the one-off Test match against England, which ended in a draw in Bristol on Saturday.

The Indian team which was playing its first red-ball game in seven years, batted for more than 120 overs in the second innings after follow-on to avoid defeat.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* about India's show in the match, Anjum said: "It was a very good performance because there were so many debutants in the Indian playing XI. Barring Mithali (Raj) and Jhulan (Goswami) everyone has very little experience in playing Test cricket. So it was

very nice to see the way they have performed."

"I was very impressed with the resolve and the grit and determination that the players were showing. It was a stand-out feature in that draw. When you talk about Sneha Rana, Taniya Bhatia, Deepti Sharma, Shafali Verma, there was a kind of very strong resolve which was very much visible and that was very heartening to see," she added.

For Anjum, the biggest positive was the fightback by the young Indian side.

"The biggest gain from the Test was the resolve from the players, especially from the ones who were making a comeback into the Indian team. Everyone knew that India is playing without International match practice, so that is fine but how they played was heartening," she said.

Maharaj hat-trick headlines Proteas Test series win

AFP ■ GROS-ISLET

Keshav Maharaj completed just the second hat-trick by a South African in Test history as the Proteas completed a 158-run victory over the West Indies on the fourth day of the second Test of the two-match series at the Daren Sammy Cricket Ground in St Lucia on Monday night.

In the penultimate over before lunch the left-arm spinner removed Kieran Powell, Jason Holder and Joshua da Silva in successive deliveries to join fast bowler Geoff Griffen, who achieved the feat at Lord's in 1960, in the record books.

Maharaj then followed up with two of the last three to fall in the afternoon to finish with figures of five for 36 as the West Indies were dismissed for 165.



Following a comprehensive innings and 63-run victory inside three days in the first Test a week earlier at the same venue, the result gave South Africa the series 2-0, their first away series triumph since 2017 in New Zealand.

"This is huge for us because we haven't won on the road for quite some time," said South African captain Dean

Elgar.

"There will be teething years as captain but this is a good, important step on the way forward."

"As a batting unit we let ourselves down but I must really commend the effort of the bowlers," said a dejected Windies captain Brathwaite.