



sunday pioneer

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India remembers great
'flying Sikh'

Take third wave
seriously: Ajit Pawar

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No delay in fixing
minimum wages

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Union secretary Guruprasad dies of Covid-related complications

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

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

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

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

IAF Chief RKS Bhaduria on Saturday said the induction of 36 Rafale aircraft into the Indian Air Force would take place by 2022. The IAF is absolutely on target with respect to the Rafale induction plan, he said while responding to a reporters' query on timeline for receiving all the 36 fighter jets from France. "The target is 2022. It is absolutely on target. I mentioned earlier. Except for one or two aircraft, minor delays because of COVID related issues, but, in fact, some deliveries have been ahead of time. So, broadly, we are absolutely on target on the Rafale induction plan. On the operationalisation plan, you are aware, we are fully operational. So, in terms of time, we will be absolutely on time," he told reporters after reviewing the Combined Graduation Parade (CGP) at the Air Force Academy in Dundigal here.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Jyesthitha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Tithi : Dashami: 04:20 pm
Nakshatram: Chitra: 06:49 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 05:11 pm - 06:48 pm
Yamagandam: 12:17 pm - 01:55 pm
Varjyam: 11:56 pm - 01:24 am
Gulika: 03:33 pm - 05:11 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 12:52 pm - 02:21 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:51 am - 12:43 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 40/27
Humidity: 50%
Sunrise: 05:41 am
Sunset: 06:51 pm
Current Weather Conditions: Updated June 20, 2021 5:00 PM

OBTUSE ANGLE



AP targets 10L beneficiaries in huge vaccination drive today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh is all set to carry out a huge vaccination drive on June 20, targeting about eight to ten lakh people a day.

Though officially no target has been announced, the top health authorities told the Collectors of all the 13 districts that the objective is to vaccinate 8-10 lakh people in a day.

"We have already showcased our capacity to vaccinate more than six lakh persons in a day. This time we are aiming to inoculate more people," Principal Secretary (Health) Anil Kumar Singhal said.

Already, 14 lakh doses of the coronavirus vaccine have been dispatched to all districts for the special drive.

So far, over 1.25 crore doses of Covid-19 vaccine (both Covaxin and Covishield) have been administered in the state. While 98.5 lakh people got the first dose, another 26.5 lakh completed the second dose as well, government data



showed.

Persons over the age of 45 years and mothers with children below the age of five years are the main focus groups during the Big Vaccine Sunday, according to Anil.

Over two lakh people each have to get the second dose of Covaxin and Covishield this month.

More than 12.7 lakh mothers with children under five years also have to get the coronavirus vaccine jab.

Over 40 percent of the 1.33 crore persons over 45 years of age have not yet taken even the first dose.

Daily death toll falls below 50 after more than 2 months

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

For the first time in more than two months, the number of daily Covid-19 fatalities in Andhra Pradesh fell below 50 as 45 people succumbed in 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday.

The state registered 5,674 fresh cases from 1.03 lakh tests in 24 hours, at the rate of 5.5 percent, a drastic drop from the high of 25 percent a month ago.

Also, 8,014 recoveries were reported in a day, according to the latest health department bulletin.

The number of active cases has reduced to 65,244.

Lockdown lifted in Telangana; all curbs go

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

Telangana, despite being one of the worst-hit states in the country, on Friday reported just 1.14 per cent case positivity. The number of daily cases was just over 1,400 in 24 hours, with the number of Covid-linked deaths being 12. The vast improvement in the Covid situation is attributed to the strict lockdown the state government had imposed. The K Chandrashekar Rao government had extended the lockdown on June 9 by 10 days. However, it had eased several restrictions as the wave showed signs of waning.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

In its statement, the Ministry said the figures "do not indicate the quantum of much debated alleged black money held by Indians in Switzerland. Further, these statistics do not include the money that Indians, NRIs or others might have in Swiss banks in the names of third-country entities."

The Ministry noted that customer deposits have actually fallen from the end of 2019. The funds held through fiduciaries



have also more than halved from 2019-end.

"The biggest increase is in 'Other amounts due from customers'. These are in form of bonds, securities and various other financial instruments," the Ministry added.

It also listed out the reasons that could have led to the increase in deposits, including rising business transactions by Indian companies, rise in deposits owing to the business of Swiss bank branches located in India and increase in inter-bank transactions between Swiss and Indian banks.

Besides, capital increase for a subsidiary of a Swiss company in India and increase in the liabilities connected with the outstanding derivative financial instruments could be the other

potential reasons for this jump in deposits, the Ministry explained.

"The Swiss Authorities have been requested to provide the relevant facts along with their view on possible reasons for increase/decrease....," the Ministry added.

An automatic exchange of information in tax matters between Switzerland and India has been in force since 2018. Under this framework, detailed financial information on all Indian residents having accounts with Swiss financial institutions since 2018 was provided for the first time to Indian tax authorities in September 2019 and this is to be followed every year.

Centre appoints Advocates Panel to AP HC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Union Ministry of Law and Justice on Saturday issued orders appointing a five-member Advocates Panel to hear arguments on behalf of the Central government in the Andhra Pradesh High Court.

The advocates in the five-member panel are Jupudi Venkata Krishna Kumar, Datla Divya, Venna Hemanth

Kumar, JVMV Prasad and Kilaru Krishnabhushan Chowdary.

The appointed advocates will act on behalf of the Central Government in the AP High Court on legal matters of all the departments of the Central Government except Income Tax and Railways.

This is the first Advocates Panel appointed by the Central Government after bifurcation.



COVID TOLL ON COUPLES

Till death do them part and more

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's Flying Sikh Milkha Singh has died, five days after his wife Nirmal Kaur succumbed to Covid. As the pandemic swept through India, many other couples faced the same tragedy -- partners for decades or perhaps beginning their journey together giving up on life, within weeks and sometimes just days of each other.

Psychiatrists have a term for it



broken heart syndrome'. And the

legendary Singhs may have epitomised it.

While Singh, one of India's greatest sporting icons, died late Friday in a Chandigarh hospital after a long battle with Covid at the age of 91, his wife, national volleyball player Nirmal Kaur, passed away on June 13, 58 years after they got married and 65 years after they first met.

AP creates most jobs under IBPS scheme

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The India Business Process Outsourcing Promotion Scheme (IBPS) launched by the Centre has facilitated expansion of several IT and BPO companies in tier-II and III cities across the country, the Software Technology Parks of India (STPI) said on Saturday.

Under the IBPS Scheme, Andhra Pradesh is the highest in employment generation by creating 12,234 new jobs followed by Tamil Nadu at 9,401 while remaining was spread across Punjab, Odisha, Maharashtra, Jharkhand and Bihar, an official press release said.

STPI, an autonomous body under the Ministry of Electronics

and Information Technology, is the executing agency for India BPO Promotion Scheme.

"In recent years, IBPS has generated direct employment for more than 40,000 people residing in tier-II and III cities, out of which about 38 percent are women. The units have reported more than 3,000 additional employment generation in the last year," the release said.

"The BPO Promotion Schemes have received an overwhelming response from the BPO industry. Currently, 252 BPO/ITeS units are operational on 47,043 seats under the scheme," said STPI director general Omkar Rai.



AP to conduct EAPCET-2021 from August 19

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

Notification for EAPCET will be issued on June 24, said State Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh.

Suresh said that the submission of online applications without late fee is from June 26 to July 25, 2021.

Submission of online application with late fee of Rs 500 is allowed from July 26 to August 5, 2021.

Submission of online application with late fee of Rs 1,000 can be done from August 6 to August 10, 2021, with late fee of Rs 5,000 from August 11 to August 15, 2021. Submission of online application with late fee of Rs 10,000 can be done from August 16 to August 18, 2021.

Kurnool top in births, EG in deaths in AP

PNS ■ KURNOOL

In Andhra Pradesh, Kurnool leads in births and East Godavari district in deaths.

The Central Government has released the 2019 census of births and deaths in the country.

According to the latest figures, the country has a population of 133.89 crore. In 2019, there were 2.67 crore births and 83 lakh deaths.

An average of 51 babies were born per minute, while 16 died. Andhra Pradesh has a population of 5.23 crore and Telangana has a population of 3.72 crore.

AP ranks 16th in gender ratio while Telangana ranks seventh.

In Andhra Pradesh, Kurnool leads in births and East Godavari district in deaths. As many as 7,54,939 people were born in AP while 4,01,472 died.

The number of births was 88 percent higher than the number of deaths. According to the latest data released by the Central Government, the total population of AP by mid-2019 would be 5,23,15,000.

Semi-orphaned children wait for SC-ordered sops

K KALYAN KRISHNA KUMAR ■ VIJAYAWADA

NGOs working for children's rights and protection are unhappy with the governments of various states for failing to implement Supreme Court orders to provide Rs 2,000 under the ICPS sponsorship scheme to kids who have lost one parent to Covid-19.

The Supreme Court orders had come following reports that children who lost the breadwinners in their family were facing immense hardships and to the extent of starvation.

While thousands of children have been orphaned in the country, having lost both their parents due to the pandemic, tens of thousands were left semi-orphaned, with the breadwinner in the family succumbing to the virus.

Various states, including Andhra Pradesh, as well as the Central government, have announced measures to support the orphaned children in the form of monetary compensation.

However, not all governments have taken into consideration the

plight of children left with a single parent, in particular single mothers. NGOs demand that the government should come forward to help semi-orphans on lines of orphans, and announce at least Rs 5 lakh as ex gratia while Rs 10 lakh is being set aside for orphaned children.

It may be mentioned here that some states have announced compensation for both orphans and semi-orphans. However, Andhra Pradesh has already announced Rs 10 lakh for orphans and has already distributed

cheques to almost all Covid-hit orphans. No decision has been made regarding semi-orphaned children so far.

On May 28, the state government directed collectors to provide Rs 500 under the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) sponsorship scheme to all of the Covid semi-orphans, along with other semi-orphans and orphans. With this, only Rs 500 is being provided to single parent children under the ICPS sponsor scheme.

However, not all governments have taken into consideration the

Rahul comes across as a fine person: Gowda

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

"Rahul Gandhi has always come across as a fine person, deeply committed to a humane and inclusive society. It is his birthday today. I wish him well, and sincerely pray that his view of the world and his compassion defeat the narrowness that surrounds us," Gowda tweeted.

Former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah too greeted Gandhi.

"A very happy birthday to former INC president Shri Rahul Gandhi. I wish him good health and a long life. His vision for the people of our Country and commitment to the ideals of our Constitution has always inspired the Congressmen," Siddaramaiah tweeted.

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

AP targets 10L beneficiaries in huge vaccination drive today

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At least 15 percent each of healthcare workers and front-line workers too have remained uncovered so far.

The government is now targeting to inoculate the maximum number of people in these groups during the special drive.

YS Subba Reddy likely to continue as TTD chairman

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has decided to extend the term of his uncle YV Subba Reddy as the chairman of world famous Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Board for some more time.

A former MP, Subba Reddy will be completing his term as the TTD chairman on Monday and the government is expected to issue orders appointing the new Board.

Two days ago, Subba Reddy said that he was not interested in continuing as the TTD chairman and that a new person should be given a chance.

Sources said that Subba Reddy is expecting a seat to the State Legislative Council and a Cabinet berth. If this is not possible, he prefers a Rajya Sabha seat.



Meanwhile, several prominent YSRC leaders, including former MP Mekapati Rajmohan Reddy, MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy and others are aspiring for the TTD chairman post.

This is precisely the reason Jagan has decided to continue with Subba Reddy as the TTD chairman for some more time. The time will allow him time

to work out a formula to avoid competition among the party leaders and also in the selection of new MLC candidates.

The Jaganmohan Reddy government had two years ago appointed the TTD board with 24 members and Subba Reddy as the chairman. Among these 24 members, eight from Andhra Pradesh and seven from Telangana, four from

Tamil Nadu, three from Karnataka and one each from Delhi and Maharashtra. Among these members there are nominees of Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and others.

During his recent visit to Delhi, Jagan discussed his choices for the TTD board members with Amit Shah. Sources said that the Chief Minister has decided to continue with some of the existing members and replace others with YSRC MLAs.

According to the grapevine, Indian Cements MD N Srinivasan, My Home Group chairman Rameswar Rao, MD of Namaste Telangana D Damodar Rao and Hetero Group chairman B Parthasaradhi Reddy may be continued as members of the TTD Board.

Governor, Jagan grieve Mikha Singh's passing

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan on Saturday expressed grief over the passing away of legendary athlete Milkha Singh, popularly known as the Flying Sikh, on Friday due to Covid-19 complications.

Harichandan said Milkha Singh was the first Indian athlete to win an individual athletics gold medal at the Commonwealth Games and represent the country in the Olympic Games held in Melbourne, Rome and Tokyo. The Governor said Milkha Singh held the unbeaten Indian national record of fourth place time of 45.73 seconds in the final of 1960 Rome Olympics for 40 years and



was honoured with Padma Shri in 1959.

Harichandan prayed for Milkha Singh's soul and offered his heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family members.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy too

expressed grief over the passing away of Milkha Singh.

"Milkha Singh has been an inspiration for many young athletes and will continue to remain so," the Chief Minister said and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members.

Daily death toll falls below 50...

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After 2.10 crore total sample tests so far, the overall infection positivity rate came to 8.7 percent, while the recovery rate improved to 95.6 percent.

The mortality rate remained constant at 0.66 percent, according to the health department data.

The prime hotspot East Godavari district reported 1,068 fresh cases, Chittoor 854 and West Godavari 758, while the remaining ten districts added less than 500 each.

East Godavari's coronavirus graph, however, has witnessed a sharp fall from a high of 37.5

percent (positivity) in the second week of May to just about 12 percent now.

Chittoor had nine fresh fatalities, East Godavari, Guntur and Krishna five each, Anantapur, Srikakulam, Visakhapatnam and West Godavari three each, Kadapa, Kurnool, Prakasam and Vizianagaram two each and SPS Nellore one in a day.

Only East Godavari district now has 14,139 active cases while the remaining 12 districts have less than 10,000 each.

Anantapur and Kurnool have less than 2,000 active cases each.

Semi-orphaned children wait for ...

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The fact is that the scheme of sponsorship under Section 45 of Juvenile Justice (Care and Protection of Children Act, 2015) has been in force for the past few years, wherein all needy children will be paid Rs 500 each to supplement nutritional, medical and educational requirements.

On June 7, 2021, the Supreme Court ordered the state governments to pay Rs 2,000 under the ICPS scheme to all single parent children or the semi-

orphans. The order was supposed to be implemented 12 days ago, but this has not been done yet.

BVS Kumar, former chairman of the Child Welfare Committee Krishna District, said, "We are seeing problems being faced by single parents to bring up and protect the rights of the children at the grassroots level.

I request the State government to consider paying Rs 2,000 per child as per the orders of the Supreme Court, under ICPS sponsorship programme."

Till death do them part and more...

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Their children, three daughters and a son, golfer Jeev Milkha Singh, doffed their hat to true love and companionship.

"He fought hard but God has his ways and it was perhaps true love and companionship that both our mother Nirmalji and now Dad have passed away in a matter of five days," a statement from the family said.

And they are not the only ones.

Former Rajasthan chief minister Jagannath Pahadia and his wife, former MLA and Rajya Sabha MP Shanti Pahadia, lived together and died together well almost.

He took his last breath at the age of 89 on May 20 in a Gurgaon hospital. She, two years younger, was in the same hospital and passed away three days later.

Both of them lived together for their entire lives and remained politically active and left together for their heavenly abode. They were married in their childhood by their parents and lived happily thereafter," their son Om Prakash Pahadia said.

Senior journalists Kalyan Baruah and Nilakshmi Bhattacharya also lost their battle to Covid in a Gurgaon hospital in May. Like the Pahadias, they, too, passed away within three days of each other.

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

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

Their nephew, who did not want to be named, said it was possible his aunt could not bear the news of her husband's death.

While my uncle passed away in the hospital due to Covid complications, I think it was the grief of his death that likely resulted in my aunt suffering a brain haemorrhage that eventually led to her death, he told PTI.

In such cases -- where one partner has passed away while the other is still recovering -- medical experts recommend

that the news of the death be shared only after the spouse is well out of danger.

According to Mumbai-based psychiatrist Harish Shetty, lack of knowledge helps recovery.

Informing the spouse when one is physically devastated can destroy mental equilibrium, thereby causing deterioration.

I have been part of teams that have been involved in informing the other spouse after recovery. Presence of family, a doctor and a counselor is ideal. Allowing the process of grieving to begin effectively with support is the key, Shetty told PTI.

Gurgaon-based psychiatrist Jyoti Kapoor added that the news of the demise of a partner often makes the other suffer from what is known as a broken heart syndrome - a temporary heart condition caused due to high stress and overwhelming emotions.

She said it was natural for couples who had lived together for decades to share a strong emotional dependence where the loss of one can create significant stress for the other.

Our personal experience as well as research has suggested that depending upon circum-

stances of the living partner and individual vulnerability to handle stress, the risk of death in male spouse after wife's death is 18 percent, and risk of women's death following death of husband is around 16 percent.

This has been sometimes described as 'broken heart syndrome', a sort of physical ramification of extreme emotional stress among individuals with pre-existing physical vulnerabilities like chronic illness or frail health, Kapoor said.

Losing a partner in the best of circumstances is challenging. People take years to come to terms with the death of a terminally ill spouse whose death is almost inevitable. The pandemic has magnified this ordeal for couples -- not only were the deaths sudden, the partners left behind were fighting for their own lives as well.

While there is no data to establish the number of couples who succumbed to COVID-19, the National Commission for Protection of Child Rights (NCPCR) gives an estimate that 3,261 children were orphaned during the pandemic.

This data, released earlier this month, only takes into

account children from 0-18 years. The actual numbers would be much more.

An official in Tamil Nadu estimated that at least 50 couples succumbed to COVID-19 days after either one contracted the infection during the first wave last year. District Child Protection offices in the state have identified about 50 children who had lost both parents.

Describing his enormous sense of loss at losing both parents to the virus, comedian Bhuvan Bam said nothing would ever be the same again.

Lost both my lifelines to covid. Aai aur Baba ke bina kuch bhi pehle jaisa nahi rahega. Ek mahine mein sab bikhar chuka hai. Ghar, sapne, sab kuch. Meri aai mere pass nahi hai, baba mere saath nahi hain. Ab shuru se jeena seekhna padega. Mann nahi kar raha. (Nothing is same without my father and mother. Everything is shattered within one month. My home, my dreams everything. Will have to learn living from scratch. I don't want to.)

Was I a good son? Did I do enough to save them? I'll have to live with these questions forever.

AP to conduct EAPCET-2021 from August 19

Continued from Page 1

AP EAMCET is a computer-based test. Students should get a minimum of 25 per cent marks and those candidates will be eligible to seek admissions in the respective colleges. The exam is conducted by Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Kakinada on behalf of the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE).

Suresh said EAPCET-2021 would be conducted from August 19 to 25.

Suresh said other Common Entrance Tests for admission into various pro-

fessional courses were proposed to be conducted in the first and second weeks of September.

The CETs include ECET (lateral entry for diploma holders into engineering courses), ICET (for

MBA, MCA), LAWCET, EdCET (for B. Ed), PECET (for physical education) and PGECET (M. Tech, M.Pharm).

With the state government yet to take a final call on conduct of Intermediate annual exams, the CETs had to be delayed this year.

Lockdown lifted in Telangana, all curbs go

Continued from Page 1

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

The Cabinet met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K.Chandrasekhar Rao at Pragathi Bhavan here on Saturday to inter alia take a call on whether the lockdown should be extended. It took a decision to lift the lockdown after examining reports submitted by the Medical and Health Department that Corona cases as well as the positiv-

ity rate have come down

drastically and that the pandemic was now under control in the State. The State Cabinet also noted that the virus was coming under control in neighbouring States also. Based on the reports and statistics submitted by the department, it was acknowledged that Corona had come under control much faster in Telangana.

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

ly.

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

The Cabinet sought support and cooperation from people for its decision taken with the chief objective of letting people resume their normal lives and securing the livelihood of common people. It, however, made it clear that people should not be callous with regard to their behaviour just because lockdown has been lifted. They should continue to stick to Covid-appropriate

behaviour such as wearing masks, maintaining physical distance, using sanitizer etc., and voluntarily follow the instructions of government.

The State government had imposed restrictions after the cases started spiraling in the second wave of corona across the State, starting with night curfew from April 20. Subsequently, it brought the State under lockdown from May 12 to contain the virus, initially for 10 days and extended it thrice till June 19.

The State had seen gradual improvement in the pandemic situation after the government instructed the Director General of

Police and senior police officials to strictly enforce lockdown regulations and Covid-appropriate behaviour among the public. People were allowed to come out only during the relaxation hours, which were increased gradually during the lockdown period.

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

AP creates most jobs under IBPS...

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Noting that the Indian BPO and ITES sector grew and was centred around a few metropolitan cities, Rai said it forced many youth from other locations to migrate to metro cities for jobs.

"The scheme has helped thousands of local youths get employment at their native places and also helped in attracting investments in the regions. It has led to the establishment of BPOs in cities untouched by BPO/ITES sectors such as Baitalpur, Mayiladuthurai, Bhimavaram, Majuli," he

said.

On the impact of Covid-19 pandemic, he said the Centre introduced new simplified other service provider (OSP) guidelines which were aimed for the BPO and ITES to reduce the compliance burden and facilitate 'work from home' culture.

The new guidelines provided the much-needed impetus to the BPO sector and are helping the industry sail through the pandemic.

Several timely relaxations were introduced to sustain the operations of BPO companies during the Covid-19 pandemic, he said.

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Frequent pauses, price rise leave realty sector on edge of an abyss

C PRADEEP KUMAR
VIJAYAWADA

With about 14 months gone after it first induced a lockdown, Covid has left the realty sector in the State, already reeling due to the pre-pandemic recession and uncertainty caused by the three-capitals decision, on the edge of an abyss.

Lakhs of construction workers are left without work, and their situation is so dire that they literally face starvation. Now, with talk of a possible third wave sweeping the country in October, there is an element of panic. Any third wave would be a massive blow to the construction field and other sectors depending on it.

Realtors say that at best, it will take more than a year, provided there is no third wave, for the construction sector to recover from the present crisis, that too only with the support of the Central and State governments.

After agriculture, construc-



tion is the biggest unorganised sector in the country, creating livelihood for about 12 percent of the population. The sector also contributes 8 to 10 percent of the nation's GDP with 25 allied fields connected to the construction field directly and 240 industries indirectly.

To overcome the present crisis the CREDAI AP members have put forward a few proposals to the State and Central governments to support them. These proposals

include relaxation in RERA conditions for one year, 50 percent rebate by the department on construction plan approval, labour cess exemption and stamp duty exemption for new projects. They also want the government to regulate prices of cement, steel and sand that are on the rise despite no construction activity. CREDAI AP members also want banks to extend the three months moratorium to six months, reduction in the rate of interest, loan

to be rescheduled and waiver of some loans. RV Swamy, chairman, media affairs CREDAI AP, said that the construction field has collapsed for the 18 months or so, firstly after the announcement of three-capital decision and then the Covid first and second waves. He said that the situation is such that about 10,000 apartments and 500 commercial complexes are ready, but there are no takers.

Swamy said that banks should come forward to offer loans to customers to buy apartments to encourage the economy. The government should reduce the stamp duty from 7 percent to 3 percent and also the registration charges should also be reduced as the existing charges are higher compared to neighbouring states.

M Nagamalleswara Rao, a builder, said that prices of construction material have gone up abnormally during the past two years. "Initially there was a sand

shortage and even before it was resolved, the three-capitals issue sprouted. Now, Covid first and second waves shattered the sector and brought it to a grinding halt," Nagamalleswara Rao said.

He said that during the past two years, sand cost has gone up from Rs 4,000 to Rs 40,000 a truck while cement price has risen from Rs 180 to Rs 320 a bag. "Steel has gone up from Rs 36,000 to Rs 60,000 a tonne. There is an acute shortage of skilled labour as thousands of migrant labour from North India have gone back to their native places during lockdown," Nagamalleswara Rao said. He said that potential buyers are waiting for the prices of apartments to still come down as after the announcement of three-capitals prices have come down drastically.

"We have been providing food to the construction labour in Krishna and Guntur district on the instruction of the government for the last two months," he added.

Plant figurines on medians to spruce Vja roads

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporations plans to spruce up city roads by installing trees in figurine forms.

The VMC has started planting trees in the shape of toy rabbits, elephants and others in the medians of the city roads.

Municipal Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh planted a figurine sapling in the median strip of Nirmala Convent Road in the city on Saturday and inspected the installation of figurine plants on medians.

He said that already the VMC constructed a scrap park by using waste in the form of various animals which is attracting children. Venkatesh said that the figurine project would see small trees shaped like ducks, swans, butterflies, elephants and other animals being installed in the middle of road dividers.

He said that trees clean the air and remove toxic airborne particles and gaseous pollutants.

Venkatesh stated the VMC started this innovative project aiming toward inculcating the habit of tree plantations among masses including children attracting them through figurine trees.

Over 1,000 govt jobs for differently-abled

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Over 1,000 government jobs in the State will be filled with differently-abled candidates, according to Dr Kritika Shukla, Director, Department for Welfare of Differently Aabled and Senior Citizens.

Dr Shukla said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Friday released the job calendar according to which vacancies will be filled in various departments with differently-abled candidates. She said that 668 backlog posts have been identified in medical and health, schools, colleges, backward class welfare departments and steps are being taken to fill the vacancies as prescribed in the job calendar.

Of these vacancies, 62 will be filled through APPSC, 239 by heads of the departments, 178 vacancies through DSC and 189 vacancies will be filled through teachers' DSC notification.

Dr Shukla said that notifications have been already issued to fill 629 vacancies from June 2019 till date out of which 106 vacancies have been filled through APPSC and 523 vacancies through DSC. A total of over 1,000 government jobs have been made available for the differently-abled, she said.

Dr Shukla appealed to the eligible candidates in the state to take advantage of this opportunity provided by the state government.



Jagan betrayed the jobless: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP AP president K Atchannaidu on Saturday demanded the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government to explain why it failed to release its much promised job calendars in the first two years of coming to power and why it was not creating lakhs of jobs for the youth every year.

Atchannaidu reminded how the Chief Minister had raised the expectations of the unemployed youth on DSC teacher jobs at the time of the elections. "But now, the Government has not been filling up the 25,000 teacher jobs and these were not even mentioned in the last calendar," Atchannaidu said.

In a statement here, the TDP leader asserted that the Chief Minister and his advisors owed an explanation to the people why they wasted two precious years to release the job calendar. "Even this was nothing but a calendar of lies and false hopes. Jagan shouted during his elections that he would fill 2.3 lakh



vacant positions immediately after coming to power. He got 151 MLAs and formed the Government with a massive majority. Now, he released a belated calendar only to fill just 10,000 Government jobs," he stated.

Atchannaidu alleged that the Chief Minister and his Ministers made it a habit to betray the people and they were cheating the people with their false promises before and also after the elections.

"The YSRCP leaders should answer to the public why their Government was filling up just 10,000 posts against its grand promise of 2.30 lakh jobs. There were over 7,000 vacancies in the police department but the notification was issued for just 470 posts," he claimed.

Naidu rule left farmers in the lurch financially: Kodali Nani

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Civil Supplies Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) on Saturday accused Leader of the Opposition Chandrababu Naidu of falsely claiming that payments for paddy procurement were done within 48 hours during TDP rule. He asserted that the YSRCP government had cleared over Rs 960 crore of pending arrears left towards paddy procurement.

Speaking to the media here, the Minister stated that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had paid farmers Rs 4,000 crore towards the dues kept pending by the TDP government, within three months of coming to power in 2019.

He stated that both State and Centre have procured 28 lakh metric tonnes of paddy and paid Rs 1,637 crore to farmers by the time Chandrababu wrote a letter to the Chief Minister.

"With directions from the Chief Minister, the government is paying farmers with-



in 21 days of crop procurement, and as on date only Rs 1,619 crore was yet to be paid," Kodali Nani said.

He said that Centre has to release the pending arrears of about Rs 3,229 crore to the State, and although there has been a delay in clearing those dues, the government has been paying the farmers from the State treasury.

He said that Naidu doesn't even know the difference between bran and grain and was afraid of writing a letter to the Centre as he was afraid that he would face the music for his "misdeeds".

Kodali Nani also accused Naidu of betraying one crore farmers by promising to waive Rs 85,000 crore farm loans

during 2014 elections, and not even clearing 20 percent of the promised amount in his five-year rule.

The Minister also lashed out at Nara Lokesh's allegations against the Chief Minister being vindictive towards the Opposition, saying that the TDP MLC was "screaming like a madman confined to his house and zoom app". He warned Lokesh to keep his language under control while level allegations or addressing the Chief Minister.

Kodali Nani stated that many YSRCP leaders were assassinated during the TDP regime and it was not reasonable to attribute such incidents in the villages to the government.

"It was Naidu who backstabbed his father-in-law NTR to gain power and the same Naidu had brought in the law to prevent the CBI from entering the state just to safeguard himself," he said, questioning the former chief minister whether any CBI inquiry had been ordered during his 14 years in power.

Krishna district officials set for mega vaccination drive

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A mega Covid-19 vaccination programme will be held across Krishna district in as many as 260 centres on Sunday.

The officials have made arrangements to administer one lakh vaccine doses to people from 7 am to 6 pm in all the health centres besides 260 special vaccination centres at various places in the district, said Krishna district Collector J Nivas.

He said that people above 45 years of age and women with children below five years of age can get vaccinated.

Nivas directed medical officers, municipal commissioners, MPDOs and tahsildars to effectively carry out the vaccination drive and make it a success. Village and ward volunteers under their respective secretariats, ASHA workers,



Anganwadi workers, VROs should inform people above 45 years of age, mothers with children below 5 years of age in advance to get them vaccinated, Nivas said.

He said that people who are scheduled to get a second vaccine dose can also go to their nearest vaccination centre to get the job. The Collector said that first and second doses would be administered in the

vaccine centres as part of the mega vaccination programme on Sunday.

Bringing an Aadhaar card is mandatory to get the vaccine and people should wear masks and follow Covid-19 protocol in the vaccine centres.

The district Collector appealed to people to make good use of the mega vaccination programme on Sunday.

RINL's support for Centre for Medical Genetics

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of Corporate Environment Responsibility, the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, sanctioned a financial support of Rs 65 lakh from CER funds to Andhra University for establishing the Rs 123 lakh 'RINL centre for Medical Genetics' in AU Campus.

KC Das, Director (Personnel) and CMD (additional charge) handed over a cheque for Rs 32.5 lakh, as first spell of payment to Prof. PVGD Prasada Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, Andhra University (AU) at a function held on Saturday.

On this occasion, Das underlined the need for such

a Centre for Medical Genetics at Andhra Pradesh, as mendelian diseases are widely prevalent and that there was a need to address them and also assured the university to extend whatever support is possible.

On the occasion, Prof PVGD Prasada Reddy, VC, AU outlined the initiatives being taken by the University in meeting the guidelines laid out in the National Education Policy 2020 (NEP 2020).

VV Venugopal Rao, Director (Finance) and AK Saxena, Director (Operations), also spoke on the occasion.

Prof V Krishna Mohan, AU Registrar, K Samatha, Rector, AU senior faculty and senior officers from RINL also graced the occasion.

SRM student develops fibre to control temp, files for patent

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Sreelekha Bhuvaneshwari, a first year B.Sc physics student from SRM University, filed a patent for her work titled 'A fibre material with moisture retention capacity with thermal tolerance and a method for manufacture'.

Under the guidance of Dr Sabyasachi Mukhopadhyay, Assistant Professor, department of physics, Bhuvaneshwari's project develops a methodology to design a fabric that would replace the use of air condi-

tioners.

This cloth design is inspired by Saharan silver ants which regulate their body temperatures in the scorching desert heat and also from the cooling properties of clay.

This research would significantly scale down the usage of AC and other cooling

devices in warm places, thus reducing the use of electricity and emission of greenhouse gases into the environment.

As this cloth would be environment friendly with long durability and cost-efficiency, Sreelekha hopes

that this research would bridge the socio-economic divide of haves and have-nots between communities.

SMC alumni contribute oxygen plant to GGH, Vja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Endowments Velampalli Srinivas Rao on Saturday inaugurated an oxygen generation plant on the premises of the Government General Hospital, Vijayawada.

The Minister thanked Siddhartha Medical college alumni on behalf of the state government for contributing to the setting up of the oxygen plant worth Rs 2 crore.

Srinivas Rao said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was

keen on strengthening all government hospitals across the state with the latest and advanced equipment to ensure the poor get quality treatment. Medical colleges in Parliamentary constituencies in the state along with teaching hospitals would be coming up to address the medical and health issues of the needy, he said.

Srinivas Rao said that though the fund flow from the Central government was not to the expectations and insufficient to cater to the needs of the health sec-



tor, the state government was releasing funds to

ensure treatment to the people.

If donors come forward the state government can provide better services to the people, the Minister said. He pointed out that during the Covid second wave, oxygen was imported from other states through road, rail and airways. To overcome the shortage, oxygen plants are being set up, he stated.

District collector J Nivas said that oxygen was supplied from Ramco, KCP cement plants and as per the government's direction, plants with 100 oxygen cylinder capacity should be

set up in hospitals with 50 beds and above.

Siddhartha Medical college alumni secretary Dr N Amanna said that with the support of college alumni who were settled at various places and abroad have contributed to set up the oxygen plant.

Mayor R Bhagyalakshmi, Deputy Mayor B Durga, East constituency in-charge Devineni Avinash, VMC Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh, J-Cs L Sivasankar, K Mohan Kumar and others were present.

Steps taken by Om Birla enriched parliamentary democracy, says PM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday lauded the work of Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla, who completed two years at the helm, saying he has ushered in a series of steps that have enriched parliamentary democracy and enhanced productivity, leading to the passage of many "historic" as well as pro-people legislations.

It is worth noting that he has placed special emphasis on giving first time MPs, young MPs and woman MPs the

opportunity to speak on the floor of the House, Modi said.

"Over the last two years, Shri @ombirlakota Ji has ushered in a series of steps that have enriched our Parliamentary democracy and enhanced productivity, leading to the passage of many historic as well as pro-people legislations. Congratulations to him," Modi tweeted.

Om Birla, who was elected as a BJP member for a second term from Kota in 2019, was elected Lok Sabha Speaker unopposed on this day two years ago.

No political murders in Jagan's rule: Sucharita

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Home Minister Mekatoti Sucharita refuted the remarks made by TDP leader Nara Lokesh that the TDP would retaliate after it came to power. Condemning his remarks, she said it was meant that the TDP would resort to killings if they came to power. She clarified that not a single political murder had taken place after the YSRCP government came to power.



The Home Minister on Saturday participated in a programme where the beneficiaries of Vahana Mitra honoured Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy by pouring milk on his portrait at Swarnabharati Nagar on Saturday.

Speaking on the occasion, she said the TDP leaders have lost manners and were making

provocative allegations and they were resorting to personal attacks to achieve political gains. She lauded Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy as the only leader who has been doing justice to everyone irrespective of caste, religion,

region and party. None of the 600 promises given by the TDP was fulfilled and therefore the party suffered a fatal defeat. She said the people were much aware of the political killings that took place during the TDP regime.

The Home Minister further

said that Rs 10,000 was sanctioned by Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy by introducing the Vahana Mitra scheme as soon as he came to power after realizing the hardships and sufferings of auto drivers during the pandemic.

He praised Jagan Mohan Reddy terming him as a great leader as he provided the third tranche despite the corona catastrophic time and about 22,218 auto drivers and cab drivers got benefited in Guntur district alone, she said and added that the Vahana Mitra scheme was not implemented anywhere in India.

Sucharita clarified that the scheme was very useful for auto drivers for insurance and auto repairs. The division corporators, local YSRCP leaders and auto drivers were present on the occasion.

TTD to develop Anjanadri Anjaneya temple

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy said on Saturday that TTD will take up all round development of the Anjaneya temple at Anjanadri near Akashaganga at Tirumala soon.

Speaking to media after performing special pujas at the temple along with TTD EO KS Jawahar Reddy, other board members and Additional EO Sri AV Dharma Reddy, the TTD Chairman said Akashaganga is believed by devotees as birth place of Sri Anjaneya and hence TTD plans to develop the Anjana Devi sameta Bala Anjaneya temple in this area. Later, TTD EO said the Vedic pundits committee had also assessed that Anjanadri at Akashaganga as birth place of Anjaneya and hence an action plan was prepared for developing all devotee friendly facilities here on war footing.

Prepare for Covid 3.0, Collector tells health officials

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector Praveen Kumar has advised the health officials and GGH doctors to get ready to face the third wave of coronavirus and take precautionary measures to reduce the risk of fast-spreading of the virus in young children.

Collector Praveen Kumar conducted a review with the health officials in the wake of warnings by the health experts on the possible third wave of the Covid pandemic. On this occasion, the Collector said that plans should be prepared well in advance so that no loss of life occurs to the children. Authorities were instructed to prepare precautionary measures and get ready men and material along with beds, medications, oxygen and availability of doctors.

The meeting was attended by District Joint Collector TS Chetan, Joint Collector RIMS Nodal Officer K Krishnaveni,



RIMs Superintendent Dr Sriramulu, RMO Venugopal Reddy, Deputy Superintendent Dr Murali Krishnareddy, doctors, RIMS staff and others.

Vaccination drive: Collector Praveen Kumar also ordered the health officers to be prepared and vigilant to execute Covid vaccine special drive on Sunday and asked them to make arrangements to vaccinate about one lakh people.



Telugu Desam stages protest demanding release of arrears to paddy farmers

PNS ■ ELURU

The Telugu Desam leaders staged a protest in front of the Collectorate in Eluru on Saturday and demanded immediate release of the paddy arrears to the tune of Rs 3,650 crore to the farmers in view of the commencement of the Kharif season.

Later, they submitted a memorandum with their charter of demands to District Collector Kartikeya Misra. Speaking on this occasion, Palakol MLA Dr Nimmala Rama Naidu said that the government announced to pay the amount for the paddy to the farmers in just 21 days, but it could not fulfil its promise. Now it was

completed more than two months after the farmers sold their paddy, the government was still keeping mum on the payments.

He said the YSRCP leaders have announced that their government was farmer-biased, but in the reality it was anti-farmer. Stating that Government advisor Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has no rights to comment on the farmers, the MLA said that the government has not paid the input subsidy and paid only the insurance.

Former MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar said that the Jagan Mohan Reddy's government was harassing the farmers by not paying their arrears. Local leaders and TDP activists were present.



Red sanders seized, one arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Andhra Pradesh State anti-red sanders smuggling task force sleuths on Saturday early hours nabbed one smuggler and seized ten red sanders logs, one car at Anjaneyapuram forest check post between Renigunta and Railway Kodur.

According to the task force CI Venkat Ravi, a combing party was conducting checks at the forest ghat section, when they reportedly spotted a car proceeding towards Renigunta. When the task force personnel tried to intercept the vehicles, the accused tried to flee but were chased and one smuggler was nabbed.

TDP flays Chief Minister for not acting on Amaravati stir

PNS ■ GUNTUR

TDP leader and former minister Pratipati Pulla Rao said that they would pray to God to change the mind of Chief Minister Jagan over the capital city Amaravati issue. Even though the Amravati movement has reached 550 days, there was no response from Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and he has huge security at his office to arrest the farmers of Amaravati, he charged.

He spoke to the media along with district leaders on Saturday at the Guntur district



office. He said the farmers who had made sacrifices were being put in trouble because of the Chief Minister's adamant attitude. The TDP opposed the move to do sand dredging by the government. The government failed to show BC backlog posts in the job calendar, he said and added

that Chief Minister Jagan was cheating the unemployed youth with false information though the unemployment has risen to 13.5 per cent in the state. The welfare programmes being implemented in the state would come to a halt once banks stopped lending debts to the state, he lamented.

Two drown as raft capsizes

PNS ■ KADAPA

Two persons drowned when a raft capsized in the Gandikota reservoir in Kadapa district. According to reports, Boru Govardhan Reddy (30), G Srinivasulu (36) and his wife Suhasini (32), residents of the R&R colony, went on fishing on a raft near Thala Proddatur village. The raft capsized due to high winds and two persons Govardhan Reddy and Suhasini drowned in the incident, while Srinivasulu, however, swam ashore safely grabbing a tree branch. Hearing his cries, some fishermen came to his rescue and they brought Srinivasulu to shore. Srinivasulu had two sons, while Govardhan Reddy was not yet married.



After receiving information about the incident, the Kondapuram and Thala Proddatur police launched a search operation under the supervision of CI Sudarshan Prasad to trace the missing persons, but in vain. The villagers also extended support to the police and the fire brigade who deployed through 15 rafts and rescue boats for search-

ing operation. Expert swimmers were also pressed into service on Saturday morning.

The bodies of two people who were missing in the Gandikota backwaters were finally fished out on Saturday evening. The bodies of Govardhan Reddy and Suhasini were found 500 meters away from the spot.

Ongole MP Magunta a surprise visitor at tea stall!

PNS ■ ONGOLE

MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy and his son Raghava Reddy became surprised visitors for the common people who are enjoying the morning tea at a roadside stall. They got down from their cars along with a few followers mingled with people by taking a cup of tea on Mungamuru Road in Ongole on Saturday.



At seven o'clock in the morning, three cars came and halted at a roadside tea stall. Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy got out from a car with his son and greeted the people warmly throwing a sudden surprise to the

people who were gathered to have a morning drink. Realising after some time, the people cordially greeted the MP and invited him to have tea with them. Then, he also enjoyed the tea sitting on the steps of a shop like a normal per-

son and interacted with everyone there hilariously.

It came as a surprise to everyone that the people's representatives, who were busy in their daily political life, came together and drank tea together.

Spurned by girl, stalker slits her throat and attempts suicide

PNS ■ KADAPA

A youth who has been chasing a girl student for a year, killed her by slitting her throat and later attempted suicide by consuming pesticide. The incident took place at Chintalacheruvu village of Badvel mandal of Kadapa district on Friday.



According to the police, Charan, a youth from Chinnarajupalle village of Madhapur panchayat in Aluru mandal has been following Sirisha (19) of Chintalacheruvu who was studying a second-year degree in Badvel in the name of love for a year.



In a bid to go move closely with Sirisha, Charan befriended Sirisha's cousin of the same village and used to come to the village frequently and harassing her whenever she found her isolated to love him. But she rejected him every time. Developing a grudge against her, he decided to eliminate her for rejecting his proposal.

threatening her that he would commit suicide if she did not agree to his love.

As Sirisha bluntly refused, he slit her throat and arm with the knife he had brought along with him. She screamed and died on the spot. Charan drank pesticide and tried to flee from the spot. Alarmed by the screams by Sirisha, the villagers apprehended Charan and beat him black and blue. Then they informed the police.

Rural CI Ramesh Babu and SI Chandrasekhar arrested the accused. Badvel rural Police registered a murder case against Charan and his two accomplices Narasimha and Nayeab Rasool.

MLA makes, distributes Anandaiah's Covid drug

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Undi MLA Manthana Rama Raju was preparing Krishnaapatnam Anandaiah's medicine using the same formula and distributing it to the people of the constituency free of cost as part of his efforts to combat the coronavirus in the Undi constituency in West Godavari district.

The MLA has set up a drug centre in the village of Sisali in the Kalla mandal and was making medicine with some villagers using ingredi-

ents like herbs, garlic, ginger, turmeric, cinnamon, tail pepper, honey, tippateega, Ashwagandha powder etc. The preparation takes about 12 hours and the prepared drug was packed in a special packing of eight grams each.

They also put a label on how to use the medicine. Each person of the Undi constituency was being given medicine to every household. Volunteers at the manufacturing centre said the drug was being distributed only to people in the Undi constituency.



Fishing ban ends, but bad weather hits fishing activities

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Even after the two-month ban on fishing during the summer, the fishermen could not venture into the sea due to rough weather conditions. The fishermen families had to face a tough time to make both ends meet.



The government enforced a fishing ban from April 14 to June 15 every year as it was the period for breeding allowing fish to lay eggs. The fishermen have all set to go fishing after the end of the two-month fishing ban period, but the bad weather was forcing them to confine to indoors.

Owing to the adverse weather conditions, 90 per cent of the

fishing boats were still unengaged as strong winds and high tides preventing the fishermen to venture into the sea. The fishermen and their fam-

ilies in East Godavari district were facing severe hardships. Though they are all set for fishing, but forced to remain in the houses as the series of cyclones

hampered their livelihood. However, some fishermen dared to proceed into the sea with fishing nets, but have to return empty as the high tides

prevented them from fishing. But, they could not get back even the expenses like diesel and cost of other inputs which became burdensome, dis-

tressed fishermen felt. Speaking to 'the Pioneer', Pemmadi Nukaraju, a fisherman said they went into the sea for hunting with fond of hope, but returned with empty hands as unfavourable weather conditions in the sea did not allow them to use fishing nets. They never had this type of situation earlier, he added.

Many fishing boats remained at the shore at Ramannapalem bridge in Kottapalli mandal. A similar situation prevailed in many seashore villages in Kakinada rural, Thondagi, Karapa, Tallarevu, Mummidiavaram, Katrenikona, Rajolu, Antarvedi and Sakhinetipalli.

MP govt to set up Covid-19 pandemic research institute

PNS ■ BHOPAL

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

'Masses made aware about water conservation'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



people," Youth Congress president Srinivas BV said.

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

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

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

Stalin greets Rahul on his birthday

PNS ■ CHENNAI

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



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

PNS ■ PUNE

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

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

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

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

weekends, Pawar said.

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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



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

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

J'khand on high alert as black fungus cases rise

PNS ■ RANCHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

Kerala Cong chief denies CM's allegation of kidnap plot

PNS ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

YouTuber arrested in TN for making 'obscene' comments



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

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

Software to help identify patients requiring ventilator support

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

poor settings through SEED project support.

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

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

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



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

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No intention to delay fixing minimum wages: Labour Min

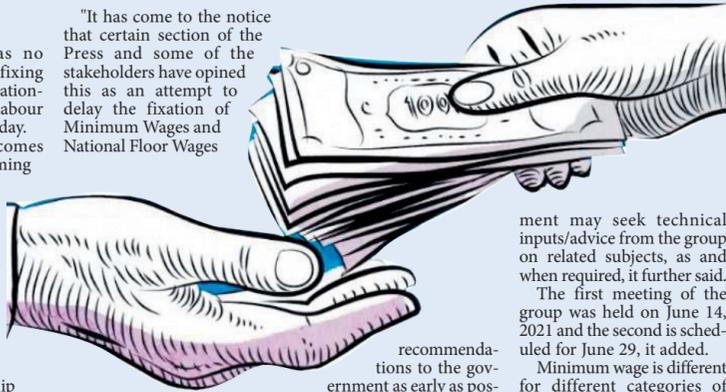
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Minimum wage is different for different categories of workers.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Top govt officials, academicians to take part in Healthcare summit

■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

Alkem Laboratories gets two observations from USFDA



Alkem Laboratories on Saturday said the US health regulator has issued two observations after inspection of its St Louis-based manufacturing facility. The US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) had conducted an inspection of the company's manufacturing

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

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



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

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

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



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

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

'Great demand for products made in Punjab, Haryana'

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

SEFL gets Rs 2K cr proposal from US consortium

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



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

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

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

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

Kerala Tourism to serve food in parked vehicles

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

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

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

Minister P A Mohamed Riyas.

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

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

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

Appeals court upholds FCC subsidy ban for Huawei purchases

■ NEW ORLEANS (US)

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

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

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

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

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

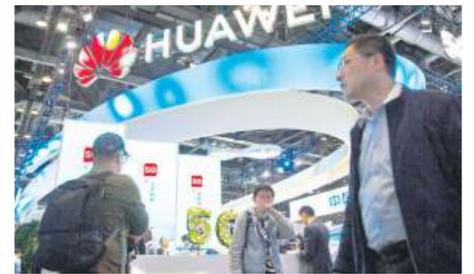
Huawei did not immediately offer a response to the ruling.

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

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

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

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



NTPC Q4 profit zooms to Rs 4,649 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power giant NTPC on Saturday posted nearly three-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 4,649.49 crore for March quarter 2020-21 on the back of higher revenues.

The consolidated net profit of the company in the year-ago period was Rs 1,629.86 crore, a BSE filing said. Total income in the quarter under review rose to Rs 31,687.24 crore from Rs 31,330.25 crore in the same period of 2019-20. Net profit in last financial year was Rs 14,969.40 crore compared to Rs 11,191.98 crore in 2019-20. Total income in 2020-21 was Rs 1,15,546.83 crore, up from Rs 1,12,372.58 crore in the previous year.

UCO Bank looks to raise up to Rs 500 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned UCO Bank on Saturday said its board will meet next week to consider raising up to Rs 500 crore as tier-II capital. The board of directors will consider the proposal for raising tier-II capital of up to Rs 500 crore at its meeting scheduled to be held on June 23, 2021, the lender said in a regulatory filing.

Tier-II capital of a bank consists of undisclosed reserves, revaluation reserves, general provisions and loss reserves, hybrid capital instruments, subordinated debt and investment reserve account.

Tech hiring rebounds in May, says report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

However, the data revealed that there was robust demand



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

Other profiles like sales, marketing, site engineering,

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

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

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

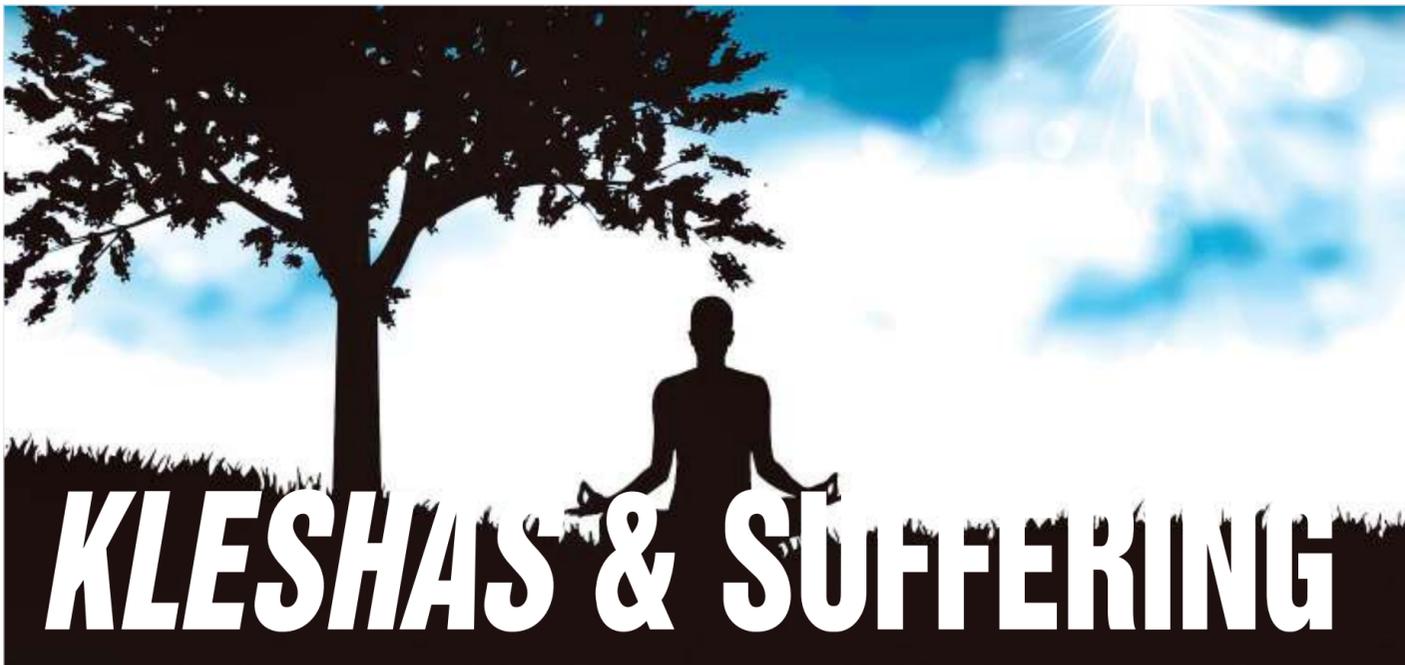
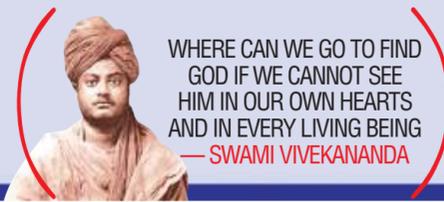
The data also indicated that hiring for mid-level executives with 8-12 years of experience and leadership roles (more than 16 years of experience) grew by 5 per cent and 2 per cent, respectively. However, hiring for entry-level professionals (0-3 years experience) declined by 4 per cent. "It's been a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

SCIEKEY co-founder Karunjit Kumar Dhir said.

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

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

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



KLESHAS & SUFFERING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE SHIFT IN CONSCIOUSNESS

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

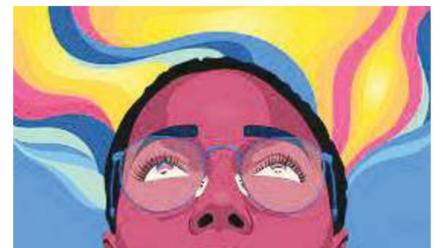
Another key to dealing with and dismantling deeply ingrained habits and emotions is to view yourself from the perspective of an observer as opposed to a doer. Through practice and intent, you will notice a shift in your consciousness that will, given time, change your patterns of thought and perception.

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

The writer is the author of *Hingori Sutras* series of spiritual books



HIDDEN SOULS
PRAMOD PATHAK



Emotions and health

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

Pathak is a professor of management, writer, and an acclaimed public speaker. He can be reached at ppathak.ism@gmail.com

WARD OFF NEGATIVITY

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

The spiritual perspective

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

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



Kleshas & suffering

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



Jabbed

The novelty of Coronavirus has perplexed both doctors and the common man. This has raised several questions



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

SELF-ESTEEM: OUR CORE STRENGTH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

THE EFFECT ON THE YOUNGER GENERATION

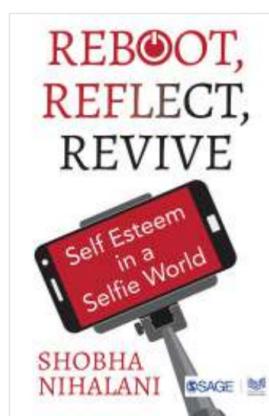
Recent studies show that the lockdown and restrictions has had a significant impact on the education, well-being, and mental health of children.

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

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

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

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



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

cope and manage in stressful situations.

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

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

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

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

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

APPRECIATION

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

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

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

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

APTITUDE

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

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

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

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

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

JABBLED

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

ADDING TO THE WOES

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

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

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

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

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

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

ONE MORE SHOT

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BACK TO SQUARE ONE

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

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

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

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

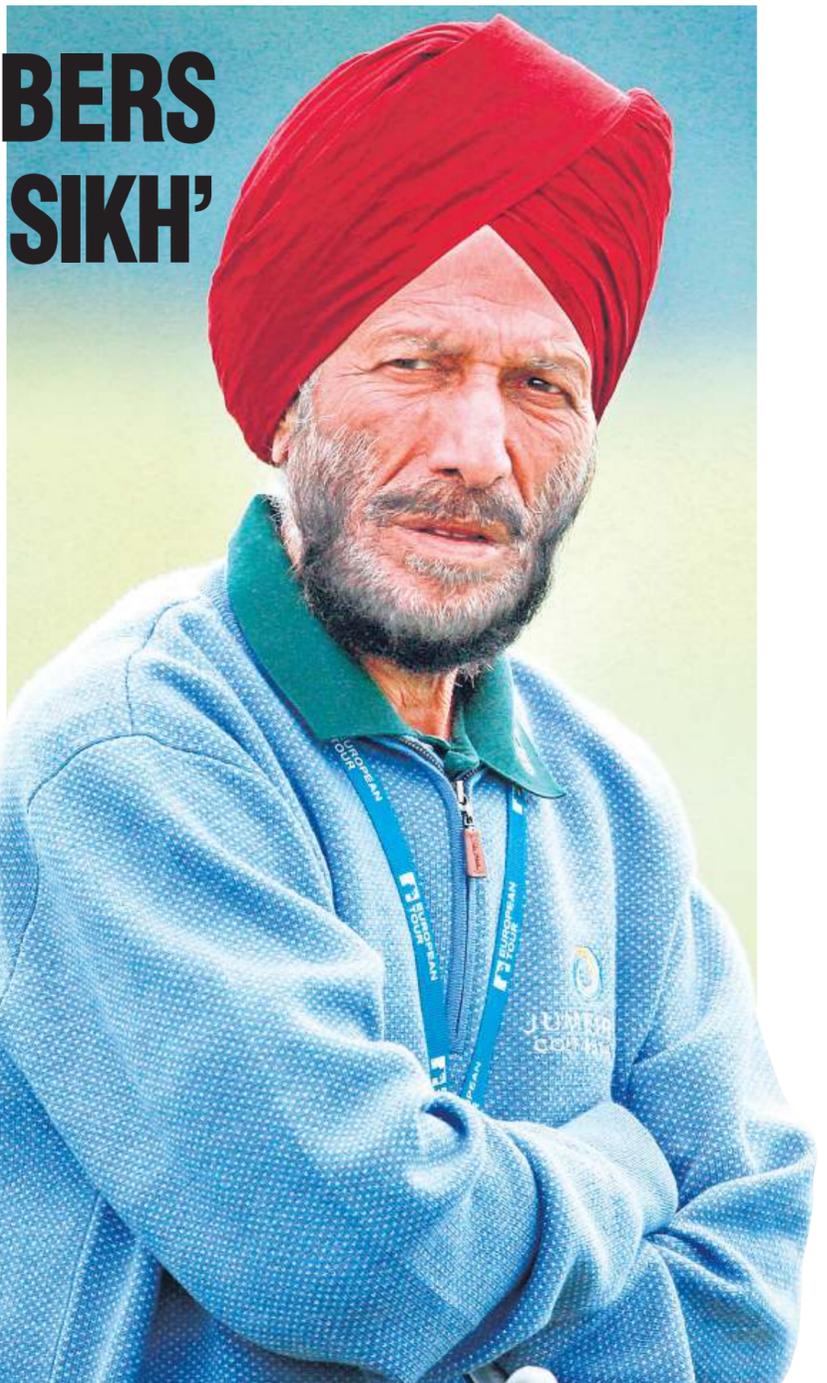
Verma, too, is of the opinion that if a person tests positive after the first dose of the vaccine, there is no way they can restart the vaccination process. The person must increase the gap between two doses and take the second dose of vaccine after three months, as stipulated by the Government of India.



INDIA REMEMBERS GREAT 'FLYING SIKH'

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

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



Milkha Singh cremated with full state honours in Chandigarh

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



Compete abroad, stay dedicated: PT Usha remembers his advice

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Film celebrities pay homage to Milkha Singh

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



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

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

Entire Indian contingent waited for medal: Randhawa recalls Rome race

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

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

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



PM Modi calls him 'colossal sportsperson'

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

An unmatched romance with a near miss

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