144 PC TO 36 MN UNITS IN 2020

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY MARCH 5, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



NAVDEEP CONFIDENT OF **GOOD SECOND** INNINGS

HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW

BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH

BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA

RNI No. TELENG/2018/76469 Established 1864 **Published From**

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www.dailypioneer.com

DEEPIKA PADUKONE'S LEVI'S AD CAUGHT IN A PLAGIARISM ROW

new Levi's ad featuring Deepika Padukone has been accused of plagiarism by the director of Yeh Ballet, Ascoused of piagrams in by the director of the listing of Sooni Taraporevala. The filmmaker took to Instagram on Wednesday to call out the makers of the ad film for lifting the set design "to the very last detail" from her film Yeh Ballet. "I was shocked to see our Yeh Ballet dance studio set in this ad because it was conceptualized & created out of a derelict space by Shailaja Sharma (our PD) from scratch," Sooni Taraporevala wrote on Instagram. "No such dance studio exists in Mumbai which is why we built it." The ad has

SPACEX STARSHIP ROCKET PROTOTYPE NAILS LANDING... THEN BLOWS UP

he third time appeared to be the charm for Elon Musk's Starship rocket - until it wasn't. The latest heavy-duty launch vehicle prototype from SpaceX soared flawlessly into the sky in a high-altitude test blast-off on Wednesday from Boca Chica, Texas, then flew itself back to Earth to achieve the first upright landing for a Starship

model. But the triumph was shortlived. Listing slightly to one side as an automated fire-suppression system trained a stream of water on flames still burning at the base of the rocket, the spacecraft blew itself to pieces about eight minutes after touchdown.

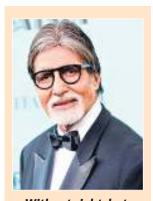
INDIA DOWNGRADED TO 'PARTLY FREE' IN REPORT BY US THINK TANK

ndia was downgraded to "partly free" for the first time since 1997 in an annual ranking of democracies by the U.S.-government funded research group Freedom House, which cited worsening civil rights under Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The world's largest democracy slipped in rankings this year because of continuing discrimination against its Muslim citizens and increased harassment of government critics and journalists, according to the "Freedom in the World'

report released by the Washington-based organization. The report cited "a multi-year pattern in which the Hindu nationalist government and its allies have presided over rising violence and discriminatory policies.

SURGE IN DAILY COVID CASES, INDIA RECORDS OVER 17,000 INFECTIONS

he daily new Covid cases in India were recorded above 17,000 after a little over a month taking the total tally of cases to 1,11,56,923,while recoveries surged to 1,08,26,075,according to the Union Health Ministry data updated on Thursday. A total of 17,407 infections were reported in a day. The death toll increased to1,57,435 with 89 daily new fatalities, the data updated at 8 am showed. 18,855 new infections were recorded in a span of 24 hours on January 29. The active caseload has increased to 1,73,413 which comprises 1.55 per cent of the total infections.



garnered over 5 million views on YouTube

Without sight, but sightless not in my path: Big B

ITIR central for

voters' choice in Hyd-

RR-M'nagar Graduate

constituency



Yadadri may be reopened in May, proclaims KCR

PNS HYDERABAD

Minister Chief Chandrasekhar Rao has indicated that Sri Narasimha Swamy Temple at Yadadri,

The Telangana High Court

on Thursday breathed fire at

the civic authorities for the

unbridled illegal construc-

tion activity across the state

The court questioned,

What have the field staff

been doing? Why are the

officials not taking action against the field staff show-

and spiritual significance, can be reopened in May.

The Chief Minister inspected the Yadadri temple, being reconstructed and developed as a prestigious temple town, being developed as a place of worship of great architectural Thursday. He keenly inquired

HC seeks report on action taken to

rein in illegal constructions in city

progress of works in the temple complex as well as in facilities and amenities com-

ing up in the vicinity. While the works at Yadadri temple are nearing completion, Chandrasekhar Rao visited the

of the officers about the temple town to apprise himself of some of the pending works. KCR, who reached Yadadri

from Hyderabad, first offered prayers at Balalayam and went on a field visit, along with the

Adani poised to take control of

Gangavaram port SNV SUDHIR VIJAYAWADA

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zones (APSEZ) Ltd - India's largest private ports and logistics company and a key subsidiary of the diversified Adani Group, is poised to gain total control over Gangavaram port on the east coast, located close to Vizag city.

KTR slams Centre for pulling chain on Kazipet coach factory

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao has lashed out at the Centre for stating, in response to an Right to Information (RTI) query: "There is no need for Kazipet Railway Coach Factory'

In a statement issued here on Thursday, KT Rama Rao mentioned that the Centre was habituated to doing injustice to the Telangana State and expressed his apprehensions that the proposal for a railway coach factory at Kazipet would go the ITIR project way (the Centre has almost dropped the ITIR project in many states, including Telangana).





Warns BJP that TRS would take up a movement to achieve the coach factory at any cost

Asks Telangana BJP to respond to concerns over privatization of railways. instead of making hue and cry over jobs in state



Centre's reply to a RTI query on Kazipet Railway Coach Factory.

'Weird ranking' pushes Hyderabad to bottom

PNS HYDERABAD

Trashing years-long profes-India's cities, new slipshod, non-transparent rankings released on Thursday by the Union Ministry of Housing and Urban Affairs gives Hyderabad the 24th and 17th ranks in 'Ease of Living Index' (EoLI) and 'Municipal Performance Index' (MPI)

of livable cities!

respectively for the year 2020. Åghast at the rankings, and riled by the ranking of several less conspicuous cities above Hyderabad in the skewed rankings, a high-ranking official in the Telangana Government, who did not want to be named, told The

'Happy to share that @arborday foundation (which works with FAO of UN) has recognised Hyderabad as a Tree city of the world. The only Indian city to be included in this list This is an acknowledgement of our efforts to improve green cover as part of

have been #1 in Mercer's Quality of Living Index in India since 2015 till date (5 years in a row) and not finding ourselves in not even top 10 is weird.

#HarithaHaaram program

Naidu targets Jagan by supporting **Sharmila**

Former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on between Jaganmohan Reddy and his sister by saying that YS Sharmila Reddy was forced to hit the streets and announce plans to float her own party as she was cheated by the YSRCP chief who did not give her the due share of property nor a suitable position in his party.

Campaigning in favour of TDP candidates in Kurnool Municipal Corporation polls, Naidu minced no words in his criticism of Jaganmohan Reddy, going to the extent of calling his bitthe extent of carrier ter rival a "coward".



599 points in line with global meltdown

8

TODAY

Month & Paksham: Magha & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam Tithi: Saptami: 07:53 pm **Nakshatram:** Anuradha: 10:37 pm

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work) **Rahukalam:** 10:59 am – 12:27 pm **Yamagandam:** 03:23 pm - 04:51 pm

03:59 am - 05:31 am 08:03 am - 09:31 am Good Time: (to start any important work) **Amritakalam:** 12:48 pm − 02:19 pm **Abhijit Muhurtham:** 12:04 pm - 12:51 pm

HYDERABAD

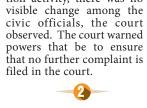
Forecast: Partly cloudy **Temp:** 34/18 Humidity: 24% Sunrise: 06:31 am Sunset: 06:23 pm **Current Weather Conditions**

3,000 kg ganja seized in Andhra

PNS CHODAWARAM

Police seized more than 3,000 kg marijuana worth Rs 80 lakh at Chodawaram in Andhra Pradesh's Visakhapatnam.

'The marijuana came from agency area in Visakhapatnam district bordering Malkangiri and Khoraput," said Visakha-patnam Rural superintendent of police B. Krishna Rao.





Pioneer: "Totally baffled ... we HC awards 3-month jail to Dt Collector for contempt

PNS HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court has sentenced Rajanna Sircilla District Collector D Krishna Bhaskar and two other officials, to three months simple imprisonment in a contempt case over acquisition of farm land belonging to a batch of farmers for building a reser-

Justice M S Ramachandra Rao held Bhaskar, then joint collector Yasmin Basha (now Collector of Wanaparthy dis-

trict) and Revenue Divisional Officer N Srinivasa Rao had wilfully disobeyed the court's October 12, 2018 order restraining the authorities from dispossessing the peti-tioners of their land and taking up further construction

The court, however, suspended the sentence for six

In a recent judgement, the Judge ordered that an adverse entry for "willful disobedience" of the court orders shall



be recorded in the service records of the officials. He also imposed a fine of

Rs 2,000 and directed them to pay costs of Rs 10,000 to each of the petitioners, who filed the contempt petition, within four weeks. The petitioners, who are

land owners and small farmers from Ananthagiri village in Rajanna Sircilla district filed the contempt petition seeking to punish the respondents for disobeying the court's order, resulting in their land being submerged.



54% in Hyd have corona antibodies: CCMB

About 54% of Hyderabad's population is estimated to have antibodies against coronavirus. A joint effort by CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB), ICMR-National Institute of Nutrition (NIN) and Bharat Biotech has estimated the seroprevalence of antibodies against the coronavirus SARS-CoV-2 in Hyderabad.

This study, involving around 9,000 samples, found around 54% of



Hyderabadis show antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, indicating prior exposure to the

coronavirus. Scientists checked for antibodies against the virus in people across 30

This study, involving around 9,000 samples, found that around 54% of Hyderabadis show antibodies against SARS-CoV-2, indicating prior exposure to the coronavirus

wards of the city. In all, 300 people from each ward, all of them older than 10 years of

age, were tested.

Most of the wards showed a similarly uniform range of seroprevalence, from 50-60%. However, a few wards showed as much as 70% or as low as 30% as well. Women showed a marginally higher seropositivity rate (56%) than the men (53%). Those aged above 70 years showed a lower seropositivity (49%), perhaps because of limited mobility and extra care taken by older individuals during the pan-

Raids on Tapsee, Anurag others; I-T dept claims Rs 650 cr discrepancies

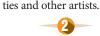


PNS NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department has detected financial irregularities of over Rs 650 crore after it raided two film production companies, two talent management companies and a leading actress, the Central Board of Direct Taxes claimed on Thursday but did not take any names.

The statement from the CBDT came as raids on the homes and offices of B'wood actor Taapsee Pannu, director Anurag Kashyap and his partners who launched the now





talent management of celebri-







'Complete Palle **Pragathi works** by month-end'

PNS ADILABAD

District Collector Sikta Patnaik instructed officials concerned to complete the works relating to Palle Pragathi, an innovative scheme aimed at empowerment of rural civic bodies by this month end.

Speaking at a review meeting with mandal level officials over various initiatives taken up under the scheme here on Thursday, Sikta asked the officials of the Panchayat Raj Department to complete the works of Palle Prakruthi Vanams within a week, besides expediting works of crematoriums. She asked them to take steps for manufacturing vermicompost fertilizer under the solid waste management plan. She underlined the need to ensure tidy environs in rural parts.

The IAS officer further instructed the authorities to enhance daily wagers when implementing National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme and to ground works of platforms. She stated that 608 platforms were completed as against the 1,936 platforms grounded so far.

Steps in offing to make CMO people-friendly?

ML MELLY MAITREYI

The 'sacking' of Chief Minister's Public Relations Officer G Vijay Kumar citing personal reasons has not come as surprise to those who are familiar with his style of func-

Sources said that Vijay Kumar was 'asked' to put in his papers with clearance of Chief Minister based on the information gathered by the Intelligence sources that the CM's PRO allegedly misused his influence and position for personal and pecuniary gain and illegal land deals.

There was no indication however if any inquiry will be initiated for the alleged misuse of his position by the former

While Vijay Kumar became the key person to handle all press communication from the Chief Minister's Office and for covering the closed door meetings and review meetings of the Chief Minister K



With the departure of Vijay Kumar from the CMO, it is said the functioning of some officers in the Chief Minister's Office who have been noted for their high handed behaviour giving a bad name to the CMO, may also be under review

credible information about

government policies and deci-

sions, many criticised that, he

has become an impregnable

wall around the Chief Minister.

While it was earlier assumed

that it was the brief to him

from the Chief Minister him-

self to keep people and media

persons at bay, later on it

became known that Vijay

Kumar would decide who

should get time or appoint-

Chandrasekhar Rao, the major complaint about Vijay Kumar was his inaccessibility and his 'arrogance' as privy to the information related to various proposals and developments presented to the Chief Minister by heads of government

departments. While a PRO should be the link between the Chief Minister's office and the media and public at large and share

With the departure of Vijay Kumar from the CMO, it is said the functioning of some officers in the Chief Minister's Office who have been noted for their high handed behaviour giving a bad name to the CMO, may also be under review. The CMO itself may see a revamp to project a peo-ple friendly image. It is said that measures may be taken to democratise the functioning of the CMO.

Some observers pointed out that while none would question the need to keep certain sensitive information confidential, the tight veil of secrecy to share information that should be in public domain is being increasingly questioned by people from various walks

This even prompted the opposition parties to criticise that the government administration became highly centralised and controlled to the advantage of few rich and influential.

Adani poised to

take control...

Continued from page 1

Once it has control over

Gangavaram port, the group

will have more or less total

control over strategically

located private ports across

the country except in West

Bengal and Puducherry, and

APSEZ on Wednesday

announced acquisition of

31.5 percent stake earlier

held by Windy Lakeside Investment Limited, an affil-

iate of New York-based pri-

vate equity firm Warburg

Pincus, in Gangavaram Port Limited (GPL). The acquisi-

tion is valued at Rs 1,954

crore and is subject to reg-ulatory approvals. Such approvals appear to be a for-

APSEZ is also in talks

with DVS Raju and Family

to acquire their majority

58.1 percent stake in GPL.

Notably, it was only last year that APSEZ had

acquired a controlling stake of 75 percent valued at Rs

12,000 crore in India's sec-

port at Krishnapatnam near

Both Gangavaram located

northern,

Krishnapatnam, in southern

Andhra Pradesh, are consid-

ered strategically important

to tap the vast hinterland the

state offers.

also some minor ports.



Over 21K get Covid vaccine in Telangana PNS HYDERABAD Since the launch of the

A total of 21,207 individuals above 60 years and those between 45 years and 59 years with comorbidities in Telangana were vaccinated in the Covid vaccination drive for priority age groups, on Thursday.

In 171 State-run vaccination centres, the authorities targeted 9,378 individuals out of which 8,986 were inoculated while in 162 vaccine centres in private hospitals, 12,221 individuals out of the targeted 13,274 were vaccinated.

Covid vaccination drive for priority age groups on Monday, there has been a gradual increase in the number of individuals receiving the vaccines. So far in four days, 49,762 individuals from the priority age groups got themselves vaccinated in Telangana.

The total number of individuals including healthcare and frontline workers, senior citizens and those with comorbid conditions who received the first dose of Covid vaccine in Telangana is 5,05,542.

HC seeks report on action taken to rein in...

Continued from page 1

The HC asked the officials concerned to take stringent action against people behind the illegal constructions and bring all such construction activity to a halt. It asked the

GHMC Zonal Commissioners to submit a report in this regard. The report should highlight the illegal constructions identi-fied in 2019 and the discipli-nary action taken against such constructions.

The report should also indicate the petitions filed by the GHMC asking the HC to vacate the stay orders. The officials should also indicate the reasons for not filing the stay vacation petition, the court said, and posted the matter for April 15.

KTR slams Centre for pulling chain on Kazipet coach factory

Continued from page 1

The IT Minister pointed out that the state government had allotted 150-acre parcel of prime land to the Centre towards the establishment of the proposed railway coach factory. However, the Railway Department, in response to an RTI query, had stated that there was no need for setting up the railway coach factory. He mentioned that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao too had urged the Centre several times to set up the proposed railway coach factory at

KTR expressed his concerns over the move to privatize the railways, considering that the Indian Railways provided the highest number government jobs in the nation. Privatization of the railways would also mean the end of the issue of job notifications by the railways, compromising lakhs of jobs and putting a question mark on the future of youth looking for secure jobs.

The IT Minister demanded the Telangana BJP, which had been making a hue and cry in regard to state government jobs, to first address concerns over privatization of railways. He asserted that the TRS would initially take action plan on the railway coach factory issue, should the Centre fail to reverse its decision. The TRS would then wage a fight to protect the interests of Telangana people. The party would take up any sort of movement to achieve the railway coach factory, he

'Privatisation of railways an anti-national act'

IT Minister KT Ramarao, while slamming the Centre on Thursday for going back on the proposal for establishing a railway coach factor at Kazipet, termed the Union government's move to privatize the railways, "heart of the Indian transport system", as nothing but "an anti-national act".

KTR pointed out that the Centre had decided to give 109 main railway routes in 12 heavy traffic clusters to private companies. With this decision, the Railways would lose Rs.63,000 crore annual income through privatization of 109 routes. It was painful that the Indian Railways too was becoming a part of government companies being sold by the BJP-led NDA

warned the BJP TS unit.

Constitutional right KTR said that Warangal in particular and the State in general would experience coach factory was not set up. The setting up of the proposed railway coach factory in Warangal was the state's Constitutional right. The BJP had no right to negate the assurances given to Telangana people in Parliament. The

TRS government would con-

ernment in Parliament on the move to deny railway coach factory to TS. He said that TRS MPs would launch protests during the upcoming session of Parliament.

KTR remarked that the Centre had been doing injustice to the state every time in regard to railways' plans. It did not allocate a single rupee to pending railway lines in the latest Budget. Unlike in the case of other states, the Centre did not clear high- speed trains or bullet train, he said. Antagonism towards TS

The IT Minister alleged that the Centre had been doing injustice right from the inception of Telangana State. He alleged that the BJP government had shown its antagonism Telangana again by throwing in the dustbin the railway coach factory assurance, which had found mention even in State Reorganisation Act. He demanded the Centre to change its ways and make a clear statement on setting up the proposed railway

coach factory at Kazipet.
The TRS working president alleged that there was no response from the Centre to long-pending railway works which are in survey level, 4 new railway lines proposals, Kazipet Railway Coach Factory, and demands like Kazipet Railway Division as well as Railway University. Every time Telangana was getting zero in the Union Budget, he underlined.

Yadadri may be reopened in May...

Continued from page 1

He went around 'Mada streets', queue line, boundary mandapams, Brahmotsava mandapam, Raja gopuram, Shivalayam, Pushkarini, steps route and made several sugges-

The Chief Minister made specific suggestions for beautifying the boundary of the temple with ancient and impressive sculpture, brasswork and paintings to enhance the ornamentation. The illumishould be such that it would evoke the devotional spirit of pilgrims, he said.

The temple should be an amalgamation of ancient and modern architectural styles, he said and directed the offi-

Continued from page 1

In the October 12, 2018 inter-

im order, the court had

restrained the officials from

taking posession of the land

mentioned in acquisition

declarations issued in January

and May 2017 and taking up

any further construction

work in the said land pend-

ing disposal of the petition. The petitioners, whose

₹ 45, 600 (10 gm)

₹ 700 -

₹ 71, 600 (1kg)

₹ 1400 🛡

₹177

₹201

380

393

HYDERABAD

CHICKEN

Dressed/With Skin

Broiler at Farm

RATES ₹/100

HYDERABAD

VIJAYAWADA

RETAIL PRICE

VISAKHAPATNAM 505

Without Skin

RATES ₹/KG

BULLION RATES

cials to visit various temples in the country to examine the sculpture in those temples. The epics of Prahlada, Narasimha Swamy and other Gods should be depicted through sculptures on the temple premises, he suggested.

KCR also suggested that the rituals performed at the main idol should be visible clearly to devotees from any distance and care taken to see there would be nothing to block the view of pilgrims.

The Chief Minister later ramined the 'Dwaia Stambham' and Lord Hanuman idol, Tanjore paintings in the sanctum sanctorum and gold-plated figures of deities. He said as in Tirumala, an action plan for offering

various 'sevas' to the Lord

HC awards 3-month...

struction of Anantagiri reser-

voir under Kaleswaram pro-

ject, had first approached

the court contending that no

relief and rehabilitation ben-

efits had been paid to them

under Section 31 of the Right

to Fair Compensation and

Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation

and Resettlement Act, 2013.

Continued from page 1

Unsurprisingly, those who

had ĈOVID-19 positive

cases in their own house-

holds, showed the maximum

was followed by those with

known COVID-19 contacts

outside their household

Dr A Laxmaiah, Scientist

'G' at NIN, observed that

having a larger number of

rooms in houses and small

family size households had

low prevalence of coron-

"This multistage random

sampling study on 9,000 peo-

avirus infection.

In their contempt pleas, the

Narasimha Swamy should be formulated. He said that Yadadri was

being developed to provide all amenities to thousands of pilgrims, who would come from different states. In terms of purity and cleanliness, Yadadri temple should become a role model for other temples in the country and adequate number of employees should be appointed to ensure cleanliness, he told the temple author-

KCR specially appreciated mirrors' and suggested where 'hundis' and prasadam counters should be set up. He, however, conveyed his displeasure at incomplete lifts for the guest

He also inspected the works

submerged with water from

upstream despite the interim

"I hold that petitioners

were dispossessed from their

lands in October, 2019 itself

and their lands were sub-

merged as alleged in the

Contempt Case and all the

respondents have thus will-

fully disobeyed the order....,"

54% in Hyd have corona

ple in the city of Hyderabad

showed that more than 75%

of the seropositive popula-

tion did not know that they

had contracted coronavirus

infection in the past. This

suggests seroconversion, that

is antibody formation has

happened even with silent

infections," said Dr R Hemalatha, Director of NIN.

individuals who had suffered

the prominent COVID-19

symptoms as well as those

who were asymptomatic;

both had equivalent sero-

prevalence of around 54%.

About 18% of the study

group had been tested earli-

According to the study,

order by the court.

the judge said.

antibodies: CCMB

down the hillocks, bus stand, residential Kalyanakatta, Annadana satram and instructed that the inside part of Ring Road around Yadadri temple be filled with greenery to develop an ambience of spirituality. He gave suggestions for fine-tuning of the presidential suite that

is nearing completion.

The Chief Minister also interacted with people, who would be losing their shops and assured them that they would be allotted spacious Similarly, small traders earlier doing their business on the hill would be allotted shops in the temple town as per the old pattern. He also assured that he would examine the request to provide jobs to local people.

Naidu targets...

Continued from page 1

The TDP national president dared Jagan to reply to his criticism against the govern-

"People know who the culprit in the murder case of former minister Vivekananda Reddy is. Why should people cast their vote for Jagan?" Naidu said, questioning the achievements of the YSRCP chief. He also dared Jagan to face elections in a "democratic manner".

er and found positive for the

coronavirus. About 90% of

them were found to be

seropositive, suggesting that

they retain the antibody

prehensive perspective of potentially protective

immune response against the

coronavirus in the city's pop-

ulation. The data indicates

that the population of Hyderabad might be slowly

moving towards herd immu-

nity, which will be certainly

accelerated by the ongoing vaccination effort," said Dr

Rakesh Mishra, Director,

This study brings a com-

response.

Raids on Tapsee, Anurag others; I-T dept claims...

Continued from page 1

Official sources identified the entities raided as Pannu and the four former promoters of Phantom Films -- Kashyap, d i r e c t o r - p r o d u c e r Vikramaditya Motwane, producer Vikas Bahl and producer-distributor Madhu Mantena. They also identified the celebrity and talent management companies as Kwan and Exceed.

The second film production company that was raided belongs to Kashyap, the sources said. Evidence of huge suppression of income by the leading film production house compared to the actual box office collections has been unearthed," the statement from CBDT, the administrative body of the IT Department, claimed.

"The company officials have not been able to explain discrepancy of around Rs 300 crore," it said.

Evidence related to "manipulation and under-valuation" of share transactions of the production house amongst the film directors and shareholders, with a tax implication of about Rs 350 crore has also been found and is being further investigated, it alleged. "Evidence of cash receipts by the leading actress amounting to Rs 5 crore has been recovered and further investigation is going on," the CBDT claimed.

Also, "non-genuine or bogus expenditure" to related concerns by the leading producers and directors having tax implication of about Rs 20 crore has been detected, the statement

"Similar findings have been made in the case of the leading actress also," it alleged. The statement added that

"huge amount" of digital data has been seized in the form of emails, WhatsApp chats, hard disk from the offices of the two talent management companies. A total of seven bank lock-

ers were found and placed under restraint, the CBDT statement said. The searches against

Mantena are also being carried out in context of his links with KWAN, of which he is a copromoter, officials said. While Kwan's client list includes Deepika Padukone, Exceed manages Saif Ali Khan and Sonakshi Sinha among others.

Pannu, 33, and Kashyap, 48, both known to be outspoken in their views on a range of issues, were shooting in Pune on Wednesday and were understood to have been questioned by the tax sleuths as part of the preliminary questioning that takes place during raids.

'Weird ranking' pushes...

We would have understood if we were in top 3 or 5. And looking at cities which are above us, it is almost bordering

on being ridiculous ranking.
"We were #1 among all the metros in last year's Swachh ranking and it comes as a rude shock...There is more to it than meets the eye. We feel it is very unfortunate that such rankings are not based on transparent criteria and are done always in a subjective manner.'

In the context, the official said Hyderabad had a unique place among the nation's cities in respect of lung space and cited a recent tweet by IT and MAUD Minister KT Rama Rao: Cities with population of one million and above were covered for the latest rankings by the Centre.

Hyderabad scored 55.40 points in the Ease of Living Index in the framework devel-

while it scored 49.08 points in the Municipal Performance Index

Of the 111 cities that participated in the assessment exercise conducted in 2020, Bengaluru emerged as the top performer, followed by Pune, Ahmedabad, Chennai and Surat in the Ease of Living Index (Million+ category). Among cities with less than one million populations, Shimla grabbed the top spot.

Also, Visakhapatnam was the top city from Andhra Pradesh and ranked 15th with a score of 57.28 score in EoLI.

Indore emerged as the highest-ranked municipality in the Municipal Performance Index, followed by Surat and Bhopal. In the less than one million population category of the same ndex, New Delhi Municipal Council emerged as the leader, followed by Tirupati and

handa HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY 7th Floor Swarzeleyanth Commercial Complex, Americat, Byderabad. Public Notification U/s. 15 (3) of HMDA Act. 2008 (G.O.Ms. No. 14, dated 01.02.2021)

(G.O.Ms.No.14, dated 01.02.2021)
In exercise of powers conferred by Sub-Section (1) of Section 15 of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority Act 2008 (Act No.8 of 2008), the Government hereby makes the following variation to the land use envisaged in the Notified Master Plan-2021 vide G.O.Ms.No.288, MA dt: 03.04.2008 as required by sub-section (1) of the said section. The site in Sy.Nos.46 & 47 situated at Nagaram (V) Keesara (M), Medchal-Malkajgiri Dist., to an extent of 1106.21 Sq.mis, which is presently earmarked for manufacturing use zone as per notified Master Plan-2021 vide G.O.Ms.No.288 MA&UD Dept. dt:03.04.2008 is now designated as Commercial use zone. The details of the above are available in Web sites http://gazette.te/angana.gov.in//. RDR-1991.450c/ms/No.284 (2008) 18:14-03.450c/ms/No.284 (2008) 18:14-03.450c/

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After bumpy ride, civic body focuses on pothole-free roads in Hyderabad

To lower the death toll in road accidents and give value to the lives of innocent people, the government officials are taking necessary steps to maintain the roads in city.

Strict actions would be taken against the officials if the city roads are not maintained properly, warned the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) commissioner, Lokesh Kumar.

He held a review meeting with higher officials of GHMC and stated that maintaining potholes-free roads was the sole responsibility of the assistant engineer of the concerned area. Negligence in filling the potholes on the roads may lead to severe action against the official. First, the concerned engineer will get a warning notice and will be fined according to the level of negligence. If that did not change the officer might face criminal

Already, the government ernisation in the city and this



had handed over the contract agency will also be Comprehensive Maintenance Programme (CRMP) to the contract agencies for 709 km of road mod-

fined if the municipal authority gets any compliant against them in terms of maintenance

to look at the problems in the The remaining non-CRMP roads like potholes and other occurring frequently and work accordingly with the contract agencies in solving the road issues by filling the potholes and repairing the damaged From the data collected in

the past two years the black spots where accidents have occurred frequently fall within a range of 200 meters. Mahatma Gandhi Community Hall, Tirumalagiri, Towli Chowk RTA office, Mythrivanam junction, Secunderabad junction, Erragadda, Banjara Hills Road no.2 are some such areas were highly dangerous both for pedestrians and motorcyclists.

By this year, the government wants to bring down the number of pedestrian deaths in road accidents.

For this the government does not want to compromise in the works of road maintenance. And this is indeed a great step taken by the government officials for maintaining better road safety.

Spice box in kitchen saved many lives during the pandemic: Eatala

regularly, he said adding that

it is the duty of one and all to

sensitise people in this regard.

not healthy, the development

to eat food prepared with mil-

lets, while the rich used to eat

rice. Now the situation has

reversed, he compared.

Therefore, he laid emphasis on

would suffer, he analysed.

If the youth of the state are

In old days, the poor used

The spices box in the kitchens saved many lives during the turbulent pandemic period. The immunity power of the Indians saved them from the clutches of the Covid-19, Health Minister Eatala Rajender said underlining the need for safeguarding our natural remedies.

The Minister said that the modern technology brought comfort to humans and at the same time it has also acquired them several diseases as it prevented them undertaking physical work.

He was speaking as chief guest at an awareness programme held at CARE Hospial in Banjara Hills on Thursday in connection with the World Obesity Day.

People are not realising the link between the physical work and health. Majority of those who tested either positive for Coronavirus or died due to the pandemic suffered from obesity. In addition to undertak-

ing physical work daily, the saving traditional cuisine and people should also exercise practices.

For over two decades, obesity has emerged into a bigger health crisis globally and in India, than hunger, Eatala said. Obesity is now the leading cause of disabilities and deaths around the world. More so, during the Covid pandemic when lakhs of people died across countries, one key reason was the ailments asso-

CITY LIGHTS

Musical night at Moazzam Jahi Market on March 7 at 6.30 pm

usic enthusiasts have a treat to look forward to as the Government of Telangana and GHMC collaborate with Surmandal, a city-based music organisation, to conduct Guldasta, a musical program at Moazzam Jahi Market on March 7 at 6.30 pm. A tribute to the late BP Singh, the ex-director of



VST Industries, known for his contributions to the spread of art and culture nationwide, this event will feature Vibha Hegde, a talented Hindustani vocalist along with Arnab Bhattacharya on Sarod. Poorva Guru will perform Sufi and Ghazals at the same event. A 52-year-old organisation, Surmandal featured several top artists of the nation along with giving a platform to budding musicians

cases in Telangana continues to be on rise as the state recorded fewer recoveries than the new infections during the last 24 hours.

cases during the last 24 hours, pushing the cumulative tally to

cumbed to the virus, taking the death toll to 1,637.



roads of 2300 km will be

looked after by the assistant

Assistant engineers will have

ing 27 districts the daily count was in single digit.

A total of 114 people recovered during the last 24 hours, eries to 2,95,821. The recovery rate stands at 98.80 per cent against the national average of

Sub-Registrar offices to be open on Saturdays, Sundays in March

PNS HYDERABAD

Secretary Government of Telangana Somesh Kumar complimented the employees of Registrations and Stamps department and appreciated the good work done by them particularly during the last two months in clearing Registration docu-

The office bearers of Registration and Stamps Employees Association met Chief Secretary at BRKR Bhavan on Thursday.

The Association members thanked the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary for completing the process of promotions to all categories of employees in the department with in a very short period of time. Keeping in view the pent-up demand for registrations and also the fact that we



are in the last month of financial year, the Association Members offered to work on all Sundays and Second Saturday during March, 2021.

Accordingly the Government has decided to keep all the Sub-Registrar offices open on all Sundays (March 7, 14, 21, 28) and Second Saturday (March 13) in the month of March. Thus, the Sub-Registrar offices will be open on all days during March, 2021 except on Mahashivaratri (March 11) and Holi (March 29). The Public are requested to avail and IGf Registration and Stamps Sheshadri, President of Association Sthita Prajna, Convenor and TNGO's Hyderabad City president Mujeeb, Associate President of TGO Sahadev and Association

Members Pranai Kumar, Siraj

Anwar and Naresh Goud were

International call diversion racket busted

ciated with overweight.

PNS HYDERABAD

A three member gang involved in call termination racket was arrested by the Rajendranagar police.

The gang was organising the racket from a flat and diverting international call through mobile networks, the police said.

Those arrested are identified as Mohammed Ashraf, 23, who has an IT background, Syed Mohammed Nasir, 30 and Shaik Akbar, 25.

On information the police raided a house near Pillar No 181 of PVNR Expressway and busted the racket following information. The gang had arranged a Jio SIP truck device of 500 channels and each channel could accommodate three SIM cards. "At a time, 1,500 calls could be diverted to using the device," the ACP said.

CDM Secunderabad conducts webinar for Army personnel

ollege of Defence Management (CDM) Secunderabad, a premier tri-service institution of the Armed Forces, commenced a two-day national webinar on "Transformation: Imperatives for the Indian Armed Forces", on Thursday. General Bipin Rawat, Chief of Defence Staff (CDS), delivered the keynote



address, outlining that transformation for Indian armed forces has become a prerequisite to stay relevant in the fast changing geopolitical environment and highlighted that a key strategi management competency is the ability to anticipate, prepare for and adapt to change. He also emphasised that India is facing a complex and challenging security environment, which dictates enhancement of military capabilities and requires addressing voids in national war-fighting ability. Speakers covered the issues pertaining to "Structural Imperatives" highlighting a conceptual framework on theaterisation, for building future ready force. Final session concluded with deliberations on a suggested model for Oceanic Theatre Command (OTC).

Toddler from Ireland treated for skin allergy in Hyderabad

or the first time in the two Telugu speaking States, a 15-month-old baby from Ireland was tested and treated for skin allergies at Aswini Allergy Centre, in Chikkadpally. The team of experts led by Allergist & Immunologist, Dr Vykarnam Nageshwar have implemented the immunological treatment path of breaking the Allergic Atopic March. This will enable the kid not to fall into the routine allergy related sufferings of different organs of body in coming days, a press release said. A game changer and long term target oriented treatment in any allergic diseases is the allergy skin testing and allergen specific immunotherapy. Rest of all treatment strategies undertaken regularly comes under symptomatic treatment relief which will be for short duration only, Dr Nageshwar said. Some of the allergic diseases which could be successfully avoided in childhood by allergy skin testing and allergen specific immunotherapy include Allergic Atopic Dermatitis, Allergic Rhinitis Allergic Asthma, Allergic Sinusitis and Allergic Collitis.

ACP asks cops to be cautious while on duty under hot sun

with summer fast approaching, Traffic police personnel have been urged to be cautious while on duty under the hot sun. Speaking after a roll call of personnel at the Mirchowk Traffic Police station, ACP (Traffic) K Ravi Shanker said that the personnel must take measures to protect



themselves from the scorching sun and use protective gear like goggles when they were out on duty. He also asked them to carry water bottles with them and drink a lot of water/liquids when on the field. Advising small breaks and not to stand for long hours under the sun while discharging traffic regulation duty, the ACP said the roll call was regularly taken at the police station by the officers concerned. "In view of the intensifying heat condition, I took the roll call on Thursday and briefed the men about the precautions to be taken to stay safe. I will be visiting all the police stations in the division and interacting with the head constables, constables and home guards," he said.

Telangana sees surge in active Covid cases

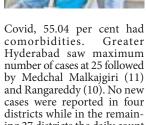
engineers.

The number of active Covid According to the daily

media bulletin released by the health department on Thursday, the state added 36 active cases during the period. The total number of active cases now stands at 1,948 including 835 who were in home/institutional isolation. The state reported 152 new

Two more persons suc-

The fatality rate remained 0.54 per cent against the national average of 1.4 per cent. While 44.96 per cent of the deaths occurred due to



taking the cumulative recov-97.1 per cent.

BEAUTIFICATION WORKS

As part of Musi river front beautification and developmental works, Musi River Front Development Corporation is executing walkways, greenary and other works. Seen here are



3,000 kg ganja

artists undertaking beautification works.

Continued from Page 1

seized in...

One person, a truck driver, acting as a courier has been arrested while shifting the banned substance in a truck on Wednesday. "He is not the key person, only a driver acting as a courier. Another person was supposed to be at Tuni highway but he escaped as the courier got arrested," he said.

Aimed at hoodwinking the police, the courier was carrying husk to camouflage the ganja or marijuana. Police arrested the courier under NDPS Act. Following the key persons escape, the IPS said they are working towards establishing the front and back end of this illegal network to zero in on the persons involved in this illegal trade. The entire agency area,has the habit of growing illegal marijuana.

Sewage overflow in Misri Gunj leaves locals worried PNS HYDERABAD and the children to walk in the

Amid the pandemic, an overflow in the drainage line at Misri Gunj, Chunne Ki Bhatti, here has been causing trouble to the local residents for over a month. It has created fear among locals that it might lead to an outbreak of several communicable diseases.

The overflowing of the sewage water in the area spreads up to the road and it is difficult for the commuters

Locals said that despite complaints, almost a month has passed but no corrective action has been taken by the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Local residents said they are

facing a harrowing time due to the stench emanating from the drainage water and unattended garbage and have urged the GHMC to take immediate



Man held for carrying bullet at Hyd airport

PNS HYDERABAD

Immigration officials at Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) took a passenger into custody after a bullet was found in his bag.

According to the sources, the passenger was traveling to the United Stat es of Ame-

rica. He was taken into custody after a bullet was found

in his bag during the immigration checking.

Later, he was handed over to the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA)

Police registered an FIR and started investigation.

4 held for selling fake gold, Rs 8 lakh seized

The sleuths of the Special Operation Team, Shamshabad zone, busted a fake gold racket on 4 March and arrested four persons for cheating peo-ple by promising to give gold biscuits at cheaper rate. They seized 11 fake gold biscuits weighing 5.85 kg and Rs. 8,00,000 cash from the

accused. The arrested persons have been identified as Syed Dasthagiri Ahmed, 65, Shaik Hafeez, 46, Ali Akber Tayyabi, 50 and Mirza Abbas Ali Sajjad, 46. All are residents of Hyderabad. Another accused, Ábdul

Faheem, 48, is absconding.
According to Cyberabad
Police Commissioner VC
Sajjanar, Syed Dasthagiri Ahmed indulged in black magic and convinced people, mostly who visited his clinic, that he could unearth gold treasure hidden in their house or other places. He lured or other places. He lured Faheem and Hafeez similarly, while Sajjad, a realtor, had approached him saying his mother was having dreams about a hidden treasure.

"Ahmed visited Sajjad's house and convinced him that his mother would die if the hidden gold in the house was not found. He agreed to perform a ritual costing Rs 5 lakh, for which Sajjad agreed to pay in installments and paid Rs 3

lakh as advance," Sajjanar said adding that Ahmed then collected brass pieces and got them coated in gold through Faheem. On the day of the ritual, Ahmed dug pits at different spots and after diverting attention of Sajjad and his family members, hid the fake gold pieces in those pits.

"After performing the ritual, he again dug up the pits and took out the fake gold. He did not allow Sajjad to touch them saying they had spiritual powers which could kill those who touch them. He wrapped the 'gold' in a cloth and gave it for safe custody," the Commissioner said. However, Sajjad could not hold back his anxiety and curiosity, and opened the cloth to discover the brass pieces. When questioned, Ahmed replied the gold had changed into brass because the cover was opened before it should have been.

To make up for the loss of his money, Sajjad along with Tayyabi decided to sell the brass biscuits projecting them as gold and at cheap rates. They took Rs 50,000 from one Mubeen and handed over the fake gold biscuit to him. Mubeen, realising he was tricked, approached the police.

Based on a complaint, the SOT tracked and nabbed the suspects, who were produced before court and remanded in judicial custody.

'It is hereby informed that Sri Kanipakam Shanmuga Devanand & Others Rep by their DGPA Holder MS SVC Constructions LLP Rep. by its Designated Partners Sri Vishnu Chaitanya Gupta & Another have submitted an application for building permission in File No.1/C25/16047/2020 for construction of Multistoried Residential Blocks consisting of (3) Blocks i.e., A, B & C with Cellar, Stilt for parking + 10 floors and Ground + 3 floors for Amenities in Sy. Nos.69/P, 70/P, 71/P of Petbasheerabad and Sy. Nos. 340/A, 341/A, 344/A, 122/P & 337/A of Jeedimetla Village, Quthbullapur Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri Dist on the site area 22460.05 Sq. Mts and is under process in GHMC.

Any interested person/organization may file objections to Chief City Planner, GHMC Tank Bund

Road, Hyderabad within (7) days from the date of Publication'

FOR COMMISSIONER, GHINC

ITIR central for voters' choice in **Hyd-RR-M'nagar Graduate constituency**

HYDERABAD

Central to the campaign for the two MLC seats from the Graduates' constituencies is the issue of who botched the proposal to set up an Information Technology Investment Region (ITIR) project in Telangana. With the campaign reaching a feverish pitch, leaders of BJP and TRS now are trading charges and apportioning blame on each other for the project not seeing the light of the day.

The IT Investment Region project has been long shelved by the NDA government and the Union Minister for IT&C was on record to state that the project proposed by the previous UPA government did not justify the huge land acquisition.

To be fair to the TRS government, it had been representing to the Centre right from the formation of the state to implement the project because of its huge employment potential. It has substantiated its claim by the number of representations



it had made to the Centre. BJP state unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar's allegation through an open letter that it was because of the failure of the Telangana government to pursue on the ITIR project that the state lost the project was well utilised by TRS working president and IT& C Minister K.T.Rama Rao, who demanded an apology for spreading deliberate lies and

misleading the youth in the run-up to the MLC elections. The issue became important

in the Hyderabad-Ranga Reddy and Mahbubnagar Graduate constituency as the ITIR project was proposed in and around Hyderabad.

"The ITIR project was sanctioned not only to Telangana but also to Karnataka, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Why the project failed to take off in Karnataka even when the BJP government was in power in the state and the Centre," was the counter from the TRS.

The TRS which was on backfoot about the opposition

"The ITIR project was sanctioned not only to Telangana but also to Karnataka, Odisha and Andhra Pradesh. Why the project failed to take off in Karnataka even when the BJP government was in power in the State and Centre," was the counter from the TRS

criticism on slow recruitment process to fill vacant posts in the government did release data on over 1.3 lakh posts that were filled and stated the recruitment process would begin soon for another 50,000

It is an established fact that it was the IT and ITES sector that brought lakhs of direct jobs to the state much more than the government sector and every IT job generated at least four indirect jobs in the service sector. The number of jobs generated in the IT and ITES sector in Hyderabad and surroundings and indirect employment in the last five years are being showcased by the ruling party well to its advantage and so with the units set up under the TS iPASS. Meanwhile, Ministers Vemula Prashanth Reddy, Gangula Kamalakar anˈd Harish Rao, who were made in-charges for the three districts to ensure victory of TRS candidate and late Minister P.V.Narasimha Rao's daugh-

ter Surabi Vani Devi, exuded confidence that graduates had now understood who had made efforts to generate employment opportunities for the youth.

'Second- preference vote to decide the fate of MLC candidates'

Several candidates in the fray in the ongoing graduate MLC elections are giving jitters to the representatives of the mainstream political parties. There are 93 candidates competing with each other in the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahabubnagar constituency and 71 candidates are there in the Nalgonda- Khammam-Warangal constituency. While of all these 13 candidates are from the recognised political parties, 80 are independent candidates contesting from the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahabubnagar constituency and 16 candidates are from the recognised political parties and 55 are independent candidates contesting from the Nalgonda-Khammam-Mahabubnagar constituency.

The second-preference vote, analysts feel, is going to become a big threat to the candidates contesting on behalf of the TRS, the BJP and the Congress par-

from other political parties and several independents are in the fray. There is no problem for the candidate if s/he gets more than fifty percent of total votes or else the candidate will have to depend on second priority votes for the final result. Many candidates in the fray, in the process, may give trouble to the candimay give trouble to the candidates contesting from TRS, BJP and Congress. According to political observers, it is not that easy for any party's candidate to get more than fifty percent first priority votes as several condi priority votes as several candidates are in fray.

In the last election, the sit-ting MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy didn't get more than fifty percent first priority votes in Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal constituency. BJP candidate Perala Shekar Rao stood in the second place. The counting officials counted the second-preference votes. Palla Rajeshwar Reddy had got needed second-preference votes and went on to win the election.

testing candidates is three times more when compared with last election in Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal constituency. Moreover, not only TRS, BIP and Congress candidates—Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, Gujjula Premender Reddy and Ramulu Naik but also TJŚ candidate Prof M Kodandaram, CPI candidate Jayasarathi Reddy.

Telangana Inti Party candidate Dr Cheruku Sudhakar, Yuva Telangana party candidate Rani Rudrama, Theenmar Mallanna are campaigning extensively alongside other political parties. These candidates may affect severely the fortune of any other candidates in getting more than 50 percent first priority votes and then they will be forced to depend on second-preference votes.

The situation in Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahabubnagar constituency is no different from Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal constituency.

Rs 24-K cr excise revenue for TS in 11 months

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The excise revenue during the past 11 months is put Rs 24,814 crore helping the excise department to earn revenue of over Rs 15,000 crore after deduction of the VAT. Since there is still one month for the fiscal year to close, the department is set to earn another Rs 1,000 crore, enabling it to reach the target set for the department in the budget for 2020-21.

The excise department officials say that there was no sale of liquor in the State for about 46 days from March 22 to May 6 denying the department rev-

enue of at least Rs 1,000 crore. Had liquor was sold during this period, too, the revenue would have gone up further. On an average, 5.6 lakh litres of beer was sold per day, while 8.22 lakh liquor was sold a day. The daily consumption of beer and liquor was put at 14 lakh litres per day. Barring the excise department, no other government could meet the targets fixed for them in the budget for 2020-21.

The revenue due to GST, registration of properties and some other crucial sectors has nosedived, but the excise revenue remained steady.



Jayashankar Bhupalpally district YSRCP president Appam Kishan and YSRCP youth wing district president Kusuma Ramakrishna called on YS Sharmila at Lotus Pond in Hyderabad on Thursday. Scores of former Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy's followers and sympathisers are meeting his daughter after the latter announced that she would float a party soon. Speculations are rife that they may switch over their loyalties to her party

HC angry over delay in filling **PP** posts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Thursday expressed dis-satisfaction over the delay in appointment of public prosecutors (PP) and attributed the delay in trial of various cases to the delay in appointing the public prosecutors.

The government pleader told the court that discussions are under way to appoint the public prosecutors. Out of the 414 posts, 212 have been filled, he added. The Court passed remarks saying that it insists on results but not on discussions. If 50 per cent of the PP posts remained vacant, how can justice be delivered speedily, it questioned the government pleader.

The HC posted the matter to April 1.

'Govt strove for Kurumas' uplift'

have done.

MLC Kalvakuntla Kavita, highlighting the role of Golla-Kurumas in the TRS victory, has said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao implemented several schemes, which any Yadava Chief Minister could not

Addressing the media here on Thursday, she dubbed the TRS as the party, which will do good to the Golla-Kurumas. She desired that the members of the community should get benefits under all government schemes. He said that KCR has been implementing several schemes for them

which no previous government

Moreover, the members of the community have been supporting the party always. She said that she would urge

the CM to allocate funds to ZPTCs and MPTCs in the budget. She made it clear to the members of the community,

who called on Thursday, the government would resume soon the sheep units distribution programme, which was stalled due to the

pandemic. She said that a meeting would be held at the Kuruma Association building once its execution is completed in

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION (See Sub-rule (1) of rule-25 and Section -190) of the Act-30/2013) Nstrict Collector, Mahabubabad Declaration Gazette

The Dist Collector, Mahabubabad File No. 01/906/2019 The District Collector, Mahabubabad File No. B/616/2016 04.22.02.2021 land is required situated at Abbaijsalem village of Maripeda Mandal of Wahabubabad

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This Declaration is made after hearing o objections of persons interested and due enquiry as provided Uis 15 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013 (Act No. 30/2013) to all whom it may concern. Mines of coal, iron-stone, state or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except su h parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used dur ng the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, ale not needed. A plan of the land may be inspected if the office of the District Collector, Mahabubabad & Land Acquisition Officer/Revenue Divisional

Officer, Thomar on any working day during the working hours. Land Acquisition Additional Collector, District Mahabubabad Mahabubabad IPR R.O. No: 1304/LA/PP/Advl/Pub/2020-21

Teachers will teach a lesson to KCR: Bandi

The pen is mightier than the sword, reminding the adage, BJP State unit chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar said that KCR is assuming that teachers have pens in their hands, however, the same pens would blast like guns on March 14 in Graduate MLC

Addressing the Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal Graduate MLC elections campaign in Bhongir town on Thursday, Bandi Sanjay asked KCR whether the latter got to know his PRO Vijay Kumar is corrupt after many days as the government suspended him now. He questioned KCR to tell as to where the unemployment allowance was. There is no law and order in the state and TRS leaders' hands were behind the murder of the advocate couple, he alleged.



HYDFRABAD

The Telangana government has received the much-awaited written communication from the Food Corporation of India paving the way for procurement of paddy from the farmers for the Rabi season. But, the FCI's decision came with the rider that it will procure mainly 'raw' rice

Taken aback by this lastminute decision of the FCI, the State government has written back that it should respect the Memorandum Understanding to procure the variety of paddy that is grown during a season. Normally during the Rabi, the majority of paddy cultivated is suitable for boiled rice because of the high

in it, sources explained. As FCI wanted to procure 80 per cent of raw rice this time. fresh doubts arose over paddy

percentage of moisture present



procurement again. If the FCI failed to procure boiled rice, then farmers may not be able to sell their produce at the Minimum Support Price and will be left at the mercy of the market forces.

However, Civil Supplies Corporation authorities clarified that it would be mandatory on the part of the FCI to purchase the variety of paddy that was cultivated during a season."We are confident that FCI would see reason and respond positively as it will not be possible for the State to procure 'raw' rice in this season," they said. The paddy procurement will begin from the first week of April, sources

Uttam exhorts people to question TRS, BJP on polls promises

PNS HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee President N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday exhorted people to question leaders of TRS and BJP for not fulfilling poll promises.

Addressing a series of meetings as part of MLC election campaign for S Ramulu Naik, the Congress candidate from Warangal-Khammam-Nalgonda Graduates constituency, Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the TRS government in Telangana and BJP government at the Centre did not deliver the

promises they had made to people. Instead of coming up with a progress report for the last seven years, TRS and BJP leaders are now coming up with a list of new promises and blaming each other for the failures, he reminded.

During a meeting at Kakatiya University, Uttam Kumar Reddy, along with Congress candidate Ramulu Naik, had an interaction with students. The TPCC chief recalled the role played by students



Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee President N Uttam Kumar Reddy addressing a gathering of advocates in Warangal on Thursday

TPCC accuses the TRS govt of neglecting education sector

of Kakatiya University during the Telangana movement. However, he said none of the students, who made sacrifices and risked their careers, benefitted from the formation of Telangana. Only the KCR family grabbed all the benefits and encroached upon the resources. He said that the TRS government delayed the withdrawal of cases reg-

istered during the Telangana agitation, which prevented thousands of students from applying for government jobs. Furthermore, he said no special exemption was given in recruitment drives for those who participated in the statehood movement. He said that the TRS government has reduced the overall budget for the education sector and did not appoint a single teacher or nonteaching staff in the last seven years.

Arrangements for Shivaratri at Vemulawada reviewed

PNS RAJANNA SIRCILLA

District Collector Krishna Bhaskar directed the authorities concerned to work for the success of the Maha Shivaratri Jatara, which will be conducted at the Vemulawada shrine, on March 11.

On Thursday, the Collector, along with District Superintendent of Police Rahul Hegde, inspected the arrangements in Vemulawada like the parking lots, the place where the Shivarchana will be performed, the place where temporary showers will be set up.

Later, he held a review meeting with officials of the concerned departments at the guest house of the temple and enquired about the arrangements being made for the Jatara. On the occasion, the

Collector said that all the officers

Maha Shivratri a success.



Collector Krishna Bhaskar and District Superintendent of Police Rahul Hegde going around the Vemulawada temple on Thursday to review arrangements for Mahashivaratri

of the departments concerned should go ahead with a special plan and work hard to make the

Municipal Commissioner was directed to pay special attention to sanitation by giving top priority to cleanliness in the town as there is a possibility of more devotees

coming. The Collector vented his ire at the Municipal Commissioner for not removing the garbage on the suburbs of Moolawagu. The Collector directed RTC

manager Bhupathi Reddy to take appropriate steps to ensure that 793 buses from all depots will run to the Vemulawada depot this year as well as 14 mini-buses for the convenience of devotees. "We have made arrangements for parking lots in 10 sectors and will see that devotees do not face any difficulties while parking their vehicles."
The Collector enquired

about the progress of con-struction of Kodurupaka-Karimnagar road, which was being laid under the supervision of the Department of Roads and Buildings. Indicators that were ordered will be

ZP chairperson distributes sports apparel

PNS JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

Playing sports will reduce stress and in turn, students, who will play sports, will be able to concentrate more on students, which will lead to good results, said Zilla Parishad chairperson Jakku Sri Harshini Rakesh.

She distributed sports apparel to students at the Tribal Boys Gurukul School (Tribal Welfare School) in Kataram zone on Thursday. In all, 22 students from the Karimnagar district were selected for the state-level Kho Kho tournament from the school. She said that students should play sports and games not only for physical fitness but also for improving their concentration levels

Ramchander Rao has no regard for graduates: Harish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Finance Minister T Harish Rao has suspected the sincerity of the BJP candidate Ramchander Rao, who is in the fray for the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar districts graduates' constituency MLC polls/

Addressing the media in Malkajgiri here on Thursday, Harish Rao said that all sections of society supports Vani Devi's candidature.

Quoting others as saying, he alleged that Ramchander Rao had not met graduates in Parigi, Tandur, Mahbubnagar in the last MLC polls and charged him with having no respect for voters of his constituency. Being an MLC, Ramchander Rao, unsuccessfully contested as an MLA in 2018 and MP in 2019, he said adding that he would have quit the MLC post had he been successful. If he really wants to serve the graduates, why

should he contest for MLA and MP seats, he said concluding that Ramchander Rao has no respect for graduates of his constituency.

Where is the guarantee that he would not quit the MLC post if he gets a better position, he wondered. Surabhi Vani Devi is not the only daughter of former PM PV Narasimha Rao, but hails from a traditional family and an eminent educationist. She served the education sector as a lecturer, professor and correspondent of an education-

al institution. He said that she produced more than one lakh graduates. Therefore, he appealed to voters to give their vote to her.

In fact, two lakh voters belong to TRS activists' families, he said adding that women are looking to Vani Devi to support her. As there is antagonism towards Ramachander Rao, he predicted Vani Devi's victory in the polls.

Indian scientists identify new mutations of Corona

PNS NEW DELHI

A studyfrom the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) has identified multiple mutations and unique proteins in isolates of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The recent study, published in the Journal of Proteome Research', has also shown that the host produces several proteins of their own as their body launches an immunologicaldefence in response to the viral attack, the Bengalurubased IISc said in a statement on Thursday.

To better understand how the virus is mutating and its protein biology (proteins are made using genetic informa-tion), an IISc team led by Utpal Tatu, Professor in the

Biochemistry, has carried out a comprehensive proteogenomic investigation a

CoV-2 isolates.

The isolates or viral samples were recovered from nasalsecretions of consenting COVID-19 positive individuals here.

The genomic analysis was done using what molecular biologists like Tatu call next generation sequencing (NGS), a technology that allows for rapid sequencing of the entire genome.

He says that sequencing the genomes of viral strains from around the world is important because it helps keep track ofmutations that are arising constantly.

His teams analysis suggests that the virus is nowmutating faster than before the three Bengaluru isolates had 27 mutations in their genomes with over 11 mutations per sample, more than both the national average (8.4) and global average

To understand the spread and evolutionary history of

virus, the team constructed a global phylogenetic tree, or atree of relatedness, of viral isolates using the sequence data.

The phylogenetic analysis found that the Bengaluru isolates are most closely related to the one from Bangladesh.

It also showed that the isolates in India have multiple origins rather than having evolved from a single ancestral variant, the statement

The SARS-CoV-2 genome codes for more than 25 proteins, but only a handful of these proteins have been identified sofar, it said.

"Studying viral proteins provides functional informationwhich is currently not well represented," says Tatu. his team detected 13 different proteins most of them previously unidentified from clinical samples.

"One such protein called Orf9b, which suppresses the hosts immune response, had been predicted, but the IISc

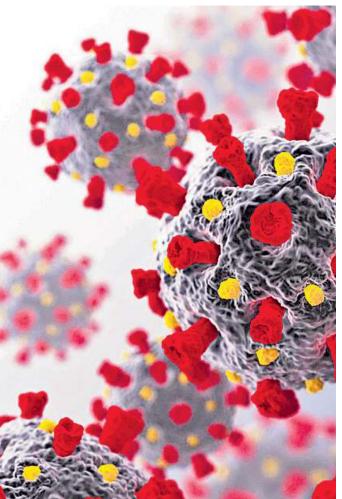
provided the first evidence of its expression", it

"Just knowing how the virus functions will not be We need to put it in the context of the host," Tatu

Therefore, in the third analysis, his team explored how our bodies respond to the virus by

examining host proteins.

They discovered as many as 441 proteins unique to COVID-19 positive patients, many of which are speculated to play a key role in the bodys immune



INDIA CORNER

OPPN MLAS SHOWED DISRESPECT TO NATIONAL FLAG, SAYS HP CM

pposition Congress MLAs showed disrespect to the national flag while banging on the bonnet of the governor's car on the first day of the ongoing Budget Session, Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jai Ram Thakur said o Replying to the discussion on Governor



the Assembly, Thakur said the tricolour was affixed to the governor's car and the Congress members showed disrespect to it. Leader of the Opposition Mukesh Agnihotri and four other Congress MLAs -- Harsh Vardhan Chauhan, Satpal Raizada, Sunder Singh and Vinay Kumar -were on Friday suspended for the Budget Session after they allegedly manhandled the governor. The alleged incident had taken place outside the Speaker's office when the Governor was leaving for the Raj Bhavan after he cut short his address to the House following a ruckus. Speaker Vipin Parmar had also lodged a complaint with police in this regard. Members of the Congress did not attend the proceedings on Thursday as well to press their demand for revoking suspension of the five party legislators who continued their dharna outside the House.

Without sight, but sightless not in my path: Big B

egastar Amitabh Bachchan on Thursday shared a poem about his eye surgery, saying that he is in the "sweet company" of those who care for him. The actor, who had revealed about the eye surgery on to fans for their well wishes in the poem. In the poem, posted on his official blog on Thursday, Bachchan said that he is "without sight" but not



"sightless". "I am without sight, but sightless not in my path, I am without convenience, but never inconvenienced," he began. "A gracious opulent heart, doth blossom with gratitude... For some time i am but time bound now. For the prayers I get I am folded hands bound, yes folded hands bound... Ever folded hands bound," he wrote. On Monday, the actor had said that the best is being done for him. "Eye surgeries at this age are delicate and need precision handling.

DMK seals poll pact with VCK; Allots six seats

he DMK on Thursday allotted six constituencies to ally Viduthalai iruthaigal Katchi for the April 6 assembly elections in Tamil Nadu.An electoral pact was signed by DMK president M K Stalin and VCK chief Thol Thirumavalavan at the Dravidian party headquarters 'Anna



Arivalayam' here. "We have decided to fight from six segments." Though there was dissatisfaction on the number of seats offered in the party, it was decided to accept the deal to drive out 'Sanathana forces' from Tamil Nadu and to absence of DMK patriarch M Karunanidhi and AIADMK matriarch J Jayalalithaa, the BJP was trying hard to weaken both the Dravidian parties and working towards destroying politics that was aimed at upholding social justice, he alleged.

Makers urged to disclose capacity to manufacture vax

he Delhi High Court
Thursday directed Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech to disclose their capacities to manufacture Covaxin, Covishield vaccines. The high court also asked the Centre to explain in affidavit the rationale behind keeping strict control over class of persons who can be vaccinated against



COVID-19 currently as under the present system those above the age of 60 years or between 45 to 60 years with comorbidities can receive vaccination. A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rekha Palli said the two institutes-- Serum Institute of India and Bharat Biotech -- have more capacity to provide the vaccines but it seems that they are not exploiting it fully. "We are not utilising it fully. We are either donating it to foreign countries or selling it to foreign countries and are not vaccinating our own people. So there has to be that sense of responsibility and urgency," the bench said. It also asked the Delhi government to carry out inspection of medical facilities available in court complexes here and to report if COVID-19 vaccination centres

Sena extends support to TMC

PNS KOLKATA

After the Rashtriya Janata Dal and Samajwadi Party (SP), the Shiv Sena on Thursday extended its support to TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, and said it would not contest assembly elections in Bengal.

Hailing Banerjee as the "real Bengal tigress", the party, which had earlier said that it would join the electoral battle in the state, vowed to "stand in solidarity" with the TMC camp. Senior Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut, in a tweet, made the announcement and said that the decision was taken following discussions with party president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray.

Azmi wants Maha Muslim ministers to quit over CM's Babri remark

PNS MUMBAI

A day after Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray made a remark about Babri Masjid demolition in the Legislative Assembly, SP leader Abu Azmi on thursday objected to itand asked Muslim ministers in the state to resign over the statement as well as two other issues.

Former Congress MP Sanjay Nirupam also expressed his disapproval over Thackeray's

Addressing media persons outside the Vidhan Bhavan here, Azmisaid Thackeray has forgotten that he is not just the president of the Shiv Sena, but also the state chief minister.

Azmi also hit out at the Congress and the NCP, saying that these parties had earlier talked about giving five per cent



quota to Muslims in jobs and education, but it has not hap-

He said that at least ministers from the Muslim community should feel ashamed and resign over Thackeray's remarks and the quota issue.

The Samajwadi Party leader said that the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government was formed to "stop the BJP" from attaining power and the Congress and the NCP had supported it based on the common minimum programme (CMP).

"Uddhav ji forgot that he is a chief minister. When the Supreme Court wrote the Supreme Court wrote the judgement, it had said that installing idol inside the Babri Mosque and bringing down parts of the mosque were both criminal activities.

"So, I think it is very disappointing that a chief minister accepts criminal activities."

ister accepts criminal activity in the Ĥouse," Azmi said.

The government was formed on the basis of CMP, but it is now talking about "temples and mosques", he said, asking the Congress and NCP leaders to think what is to be done now.

"The chief minister had said that the CAA and the NRC will not be implemented in the state. The Congress and the NCP earlier said Muslims should get five per cent reservation.

Rift among leaders worries Bengal BJP

With Assembly polls just threeweeks away, the BJP, amid an all-out effort to oust Mamata Banerjee from power in Bengal, is also struggling to keep its house in order, as old-timers and new entrants engage in feu-dover multiple issues, including ticket distribu-

The saffron party, which had witnessed unprecedented growth in terms of vote share and mass base over the last few years, had opened its doors wide open for leaders from other parties, as part of its poll strategy, but that did not go down well with many senior leaders, who had once locked horns with the newbies from rival camps, sources in the BJP said.

According to a senior BJP leader, the strategy had initially reaped dividends for the saffron camp, which labelled the TMC as a

"sinking ship", but it eventually led to infighting within the organisation and diluted the party's "fight against corruption", as several new entrants were found to have graft charges against them.

The party recently did a course correction, and stopped the mass induction, but the damage by then was done, with the leadership now having to face the "her-culean task" of identifying suitable candidates from 8,000 aspirants for the state's 294 constituencies, the

senior leader said.
"We never thought that induction of leaders from other parties could lead to such a situation. Every day we hear reports of infighting between the old-timers and newcomers. We apprehend that post announcement of names (of contenders), discontentment within the camp will grow further," the BJP leader noted.

State BJP chief Dilip Ghosh, however, insisted that expanding the party's base was necessary at this

"The BJP is a big family. When your family grows, such incidents do take place. If we don't take people from other outfits, how will we grow? That said, everyone has to abide by the rules and regulations of the party. No one is above the party,'

Woman gang-raped, accused detained

PNS MAHOBA

A 20-year-old woman was allegedly gang-raped by three youths in City area here, police said on

An FIR was registered on Wednesday by the victim against the three men, all residents of Gandhi Nagar locality. She has alleged that the three youths gangraped her five months ago and also made a video of the act that was used to blackmail her, the police said. Acting on the compliant, police has detained the youths.

The FIR stated that the woman on October 8, 2020 had came to the city and the three youths dragged her into a house where she was raped. They also filmed the act on their mobile phone and had physical relationship with her several times, it stated.

She also alleged that the trio took away Rs 1.5 lakh cash and a gold chain from her in this context. Police is probing the matter.

'Membership of INSTC project will be expanded'

PNS NEW DELHI

India has proposed the inclusion of Chabahar port in the International North South Transport Corridor (INSTC) route, External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar, said on Thursday, and expressed hope that member states involved with the INSTC will agree on expanding membership of this project. In his address on 'Chabahar

Day' at the Maritime India Summit 2021, Jaishankar said the shift in the fulcrum of global economic growth towards Asia is creating unprecedented opportunities for connectivity in the region. He asserted that the mark-

ing of Chabahar Day by India reflects its strong commitment to enhancing regional connectivity. Jaishankar said India has also proposed the inclusion of Chabahar in the INSTC route. The INSTC is an important trade corridor project, where-

in India is partnering with 12 countries to establish an economic corridor, he said. The International North

South Transport Corridor is a 7,200-km-long multi-mode transport project for moving



freight among India, Iran, Afghanistan, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Russia, Central Asia and Europe. "We also welcome the interest of Uzbekistan and Afghanistan to join the multilateral corridor project. Establishing an eastern corridor through Afghanistan would maximize its potential," he said.
"I am hopeful that dur-

ing the INSTC Coordination Council INSTC meeting, member states would agree to the expansion of the INSTC route to include the Chabahar Port and also agree on expanding the membership of this project," he said.

Jaishankar also said that as the world goes through a fundamental re-balancing, correcting many distortions of the past, it is only natural that connectivity should be central to that exercise.

'Nothing to fear', Kejriwal on vaccine

PNS NEW DELHI

Arvind Kejriwal, who along with his parents took their first dose of COVID-19 vaccine on Thursday, appealed to all eligible people to come forward and get vaccinated, asserting that there's "nothing to fear".

The vaccine was first

"I and my parents got our first dose of COVID-19 vaccine today. We had no problems and are perfectly healthy. There is nothing to fear. Doubts in people's mind (about the vaccine) no longer exist. I appeal to everyone eligible for the vaccine to come and get themselves vaccinated," Kejriwal told reporters after getting the jab.

Delhi Chief Minister

administered to Kejriwal's parents, Govind Ram Kejriwal and Gita Devi, and then to the chief minister at the government-run Lok Nayak Jai Prakash Narayan hospital here. They all were given the Covishield vaccine.

CBI interrogates 3 railway officials in coal pilferage case

PNS KOLKATA

The Central Bureau of Investigation on Thursday interrogated three railway officials of Asansol Division in connection with its probe into the multi-crore coal pilferage scam, sources said. The chief controller and

senior divisional operationsmanager of Eastern Railway's Asansol Division, and the station manager of Barabani were questioned by the anticorruption branch of the central agency, the sources said. The officials were asked to

explain how 500 tonnes of "stolen" coal was kept at railway siding areas under their jurisdiction. The "stolen" coal had been subsequently seized by Eastern Coalfields Limited

(ECL) in December 2019, the sourcessaid. The CBI is also interrogating close associates of kingpin

Anup Majee, alias Lala, the prime accused in the case. Majee, the director of a company engaged in the purchase and sale of the dry fuel,

has been evading arrest. The investigating agency



has already interrogated two Randhir businessmen, Barnwal and Manoj Agarwal, in connection with the alleged illegal coal mining in the Asansol-Raniganj belt of West Bengal. The CBI on Tuesday had

raided premises of people inUttar Pradesh and Madhya Pradesh, who it suspected have links with Majee. The central agency on November 28 last year carried

out a massive search operation in several locations $\bar{\text{in}}$ West Bengal, Bihar, Jharkhand and Uttar Pradesh

after registering a case against Majee. The CBI had acted on

information from "reliable sources" indicating illegal excavation and theft of coal in the leasehold area of ECL in "connivance" with the officials of the miner, CISF and

A ĆBI team had on

February 23 visited the resi-

dence of Trinamool Congress

MP Abhishek Banerjee and examined his wife Rujira in connection with the case. The agency also examined Rujira's sister Menaka Gambhir on the previous day

on the same matter.
The MP is West Bengal

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's nephew. Apart from the CBI, the

Enforcement Directorate, another central agency, is also probing the illegal coal min-

OTTs 'at times show porn, says SC

PNS NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday said that few over-the-top (OTT) platforms show some kind of pornographic content at times and there should be a mechanism

to screen such programmes.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan asked Solicitor General Tushar Mehta to place before it the recent guidelines of the government to regulate social media platforms on Friday, when it would hear the plea of Amazon Prime Video's India head Aparna Purohit challenging the Allahabad High Court order rejecting her anticipatory bail in connection with FIRs lodged against her over web series 'Tandav'.



"A balance has to be struck as some OTT platforms are also showing pornographic materials on their platforms," the bench, also comprising Justice R S Reddy, said.

Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, appearing for Purohit, termed the case against her as "shocking" saying this woman is an employee of Amazon and she is neither a producer nor an actor but still she has been made an accused in around 10 cases relating to the web series across the country. Tandav, a nine-episode political thriller starring Bollywood A-listers Saif Ali Khan, Dimple Kapadia and Mohd Zeeshan Ayyub, started streaming recently.

Purohit has been accused of inappropriate depiction of Uttar Pradesh police personnel, Hindu deities and an adverse portrayal of a character playing the prime minister in the web series.

Earlier, the apex court, on January 27, had declined to grant interim protection from any coercive action to Ali Abbas Zafar, Director of the web series, Purohit, producer Himanshu Mehra, the show's writer Gaurav Solanki and actor Mohammed Zeeshan Ayyub. It had said that

they may seek bail from courts concerned in the FIRs lodged in connection with the web series. Now, Purohit has appealed to the top court against the Allahabad High Court's February 25 order declining anticipatory bail to

A single judge bench of the High Court had said that Purohit had not been "vigilant and has acted irresponsibly making her open to criminal prosecution in permitting streaming of a movie which is against the fundamental rights of the majority of citizens of this country and therefore, her fundamental right of life and liberty cannot be protected by grant of anticipatory bail to her in the exercise of discretionary powers of this court.

Kerala BJP pitches for making 'Metroman' NDA CM candidate

PNS THIRUVALLA

BJP in Kerala on Thursday said it has requested the party's national leadership to declare "Metroman" E Sreedharan, who recently joined the party, as the NDA's chief ministerial candidate in Kerala in the coming assembly

elections. If the NDA, "under the leadership of "Metroman", gets an opportunity to rule the state, "we are confident we will be able to implement development works under Prime Minister Narendra Modi with a ten-fold force in Kerala", state unit president K Surendran said.

Addressing a party meeting here, he highlighted the achievements of Sreedharan, including the completion of the reconstruction of Palarivattom flyover here in five months, much ahead of the stipulated time.

"He completed the project in five months without anycorruption. That is why we requested Sreedharan and our party leadership that he should be projected as the (NDA's) ChiefMinister candidate", he said at the meeting organised as part of the "Vijay Yatra" led by him.

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-PAPER WITH PASSION-

Burmese Spring

The Army, unmoved by global appeals, is back to repressive tactics to quell pro-democracy protests

Il hell has broken loose on the streets of Myanmar as the security forces resorted to unbridled violence to crush peaceful anti-coup protests, reminding one of the Chinese crackdown in Tiananmen Square in the spring of 1989 and the bloodshed in Libya and Yemen in the Arab Spring of 2010. Though the official number of people killed in the "Burmese Spring" is being put at 38, the United Nations (UN) says the number is close to 50. However, the activists put the toll even higher as the armed forces continue to use lethal weapons on the protesters, resulting in unarmed teenagers, women and youth being killed for demanding what is rightfully theirs. No one is surprised at the recent show of brutality by the Tatmadaw, which had been in power in



Myanmar since 1962 and had just about tolerated the *quasi*-democracy that began in 2011, even though the parliamentary elections and other reforms had been initiated by the military itself under global pressure. The February 1 coup, which returned the military to full power, had seen a major pushback from the repressed citizenry that obviously did not want to be living once more under the shadow of the ruthless Tatmadaw, which had gained notoriety for having crushed pro-democracy movements in 1988 and 2007 by shooting protesters. Though the forces had initially shown some restraint when the protests began, the Army became increasingly repressive each

passing day as the demonstrations showed no signs of abating.

In fact, the movement swelled as more people rallied together to protect their democracy and seek the release of their democratically-elected leaders. The military regime had to face global embarrassment and resort to firing the country's ambassador to the UN a day after he gave an impassioned speech to the UN General Assembly in New York, pleading for international help in restoring democracy in his nation. Rattled by the unwanted global attention, the Tatmadaw became increasingly aggressive, thus inviting global sanctions. Now, the military, which has long been documented to be engaged in human rights abuses in conflict zones, seems to be past caring if the revelations by the UN's Special Envoy Christine Schraner Burgener are to be believed. When Burgener warned the military that the UN Security Council and member States were likely to take strong measures against it, she was told: "We are used to sanctions, and we have survived those sanctions in the past." Warned of global isolation, the Tatmadaw's answer was: "We have to learn to walk with only few friends." This is a worrying line of thought because when a regime that has a history of brutality and repression becomes indifferent to the consequences of its actions, there is not much the global community can do. For the people of the beleaguered country it means double trouble: The wrath of the authoritarian regime on the one hand, and the economic hardship that the sanctions bring, on the other. Whatever the global community has to do for the beleaguered citizens of Myanmar it must do fast, because the people there are running out of time.



People build barricades to block police in Mandalay, Myanmar

Political gambit?

Sasikala's retirement comes as a boost for the AIADMK. But how long will she keep still?

n a stratagem that has left Tamil Nadu's political circles stunned, VK Sasikala — considered by many the closest aide of the late Chief Minister J Jayalalithaa — has declared that she will "stay away from politics and public life" while also "praying" for the AIADMK to retain power in the April 6 election. She unequivocally spelt out the reasons for her decision, too: That the AIADMK cadres need to stay united rather than fighting among



themselves, so that the party can continue to rule even after Jayalalithaa and keep the "evil DMK" out of power, "as was Amma's wish". Chinnamma, as Sasikala is fondly called by her followers, had aired the same sentiment even on the day she came out of Bengaluru jail after serving a four-year sentence in a corruption case and undertook the road journey from Karnataka to Tamil Nadu. The latest surprise was delivered even as the central leadership of the BJP, which is allied with the AIADMK in Tamil Nadu, had been mounting pressure on the regional outfit to work with Sasikala and her nephew's party, the Amma Makkal Munnetra Kazhagam (AMMK). The move clearly translates into an unexpected advantage for

the beleaguered party — already facing anti-incumbency and with the odds stacked against it as the State alternates between the AIADMK and DMK Governments — and

a maior setback to AMMK leader TTV Dhinakaran. With one deft stone, she has killed two birds: Sasikala has taken the moral high road, projecting the image of a leader whom the masses want to see in an office of authority but who doesn't hanker after power; and, at the same time, she has shielded herself from any blame that might have come her way, should the AIADMK perform poorly in the elections. This possibility, however, is bleak as the Congress is already considering an exit from the DMK-led front since it's not being offered a "respectable number of seats". Of course, Sasikala's current assertion keeps her safely away from the party's inner turmoil and political heat and dust in the State without compromising her chances of springing back on to the centre stage at an opportune moment later. There's nothing that could stop Sasikala from re-entering politics after assessing the poll results. For Chief Minister Edappadi K Palaniswami, it would be tough to keep his hold on the party when he is no longer in the top seat. That is when Sasikala would probably time her comeback.

Stop romanticising interfaith marriages



If a Muslim man and Hindu woman marry, it is recommended they do it under the Special Marriage Act, which doesn't have unequal rights

in a church, the officiating priest began by declaring: "Marriage is a union; divine and indivisible." This is a succinct way of expressing that marriage is a sacrament; no breaking until death does the union part.

The Dictionary of Islam by Thomas Patrick Hughes (published by Rupa & Co) calls marriage a *nikah*, a word that in its literal sense means a conjuncion. It is a contract till the husband wants it. He can divorce his wife at pleasure by giving a notice of three months. The wife does not have this privilege. If she wants to separate, she has to follow the procedure of khul, which entails finding a *qazi* and convincing him under the rules of figh or dogmatic theology of Muslims.

If a Muslim man and Hindu woman fall in love, it is recommended that they marry under the Special Marriage Act, which does not have unequal rights nor requires the woman to change her religion or name, whereas a *nikah* insists that both partners be of the same religion, i.e. Muslim. If the man does not wish to divorce, he can take another wife.

It is rare to find an interfaith marriage where the bride is a Muslim and the groom a Hindu. Perhaps the reason is that it is impermissible for a non-Muslim to marry a Muslim woman as he would have legal authority over her. The tenets of Islam say that God doesn't allow non-Muslims to have authority over Muslims. A Muslim man can marry a non-Muslim woman, but not vice versa.

This seems unfair, but the Islamic rationale is that a non-Muslim man will not respect his Muslim wife's faith. These tenets also hold that while Muslims believe in all previous religions and Prophets of God and children as possible so that respect them, a non-Muslim does not return the favour. A non-Muslim husband might not explicitly express this, but a Muslim wife cannot expect her husband to respect her faith. Muslims believe in only the Hughes). Concerned Hindus

revealed religions of the Book, not other religions. A Muslim woman marrying a non-Muslim would eschew respect of the wife's religion.

Some time ago, celebrated IAS couple Tina Dabi and Athar Aamir Khan filed for divorce in Jaipur, two years after they had tied the nuptial knot. Their love story and marriage in 2018 had made national headlines. A video made by Tina, in which she alleged that her Muslim husband tortured her for wearing a burqa, converting to Islam, reading *namaz* and adopting 'Khan' in her name, went viral.

Even without divorce, a Muslim male can marry up to four wives at a time; with divorce, there is no limit on the number of wives he can have. Hinduism and Christianity insist on only one wife. For marrying a Muslim boy, girls must know the possibilities they face. If the boy is Muslim, his faith enjoins upon him to produce as many they achieve demographic preponderance. This is borne out by the Hadith (The Traditions, the second holy book after the Quran; The Dictionary of Islam by



ANY NON-MUSLIM **WOMAN MARRYING** A MUSLIM MAN INSTANTLY FORFEITS ALL HER RIGHTS AS SHE TRANSITS FROM A LEGAL REGIME WITH MORE RIGHTS TO ONE WITH FEWER RIGHTS. THIS IS NOT REVERSIBLE. AS ISLAM DOES **NOT PERMIT**

understandably use the word 'jihad' in this context.

It is time to stop romanticising interfaith marriages blindly. Marrying Muslim men does entail legal outcomes for non-Muslim women. Today's political discourse is less than open in that it tends to ignore arguments of those who have issues with such marriages. Selective quoting and presentation of only particular views as acceptable does not help the cause of any informed debate. The current secular outrage over interfaith marriages souring is focused on romanticising interfaith marriages as a virtue by itself and treating all such alliances as the same, which they regret-

tably are not. The rights of women under the Hindu Marriage Act or Special Marriage Act vary greatly from the rights of those who wed as per the Sharia. This has particular outcomes, as under Sharia, non-Muslim women have to first convert to Islam because this is a condition for marriage. Thus, any non-Muslim woman marrying a Muslim man instantly forfeits all her rights as she transits from a to one with fewer rights. This are personal.)

is not reversible, as Islam does not permit apostasy. Many women who convert for the sake of getting married, believing they can continue to practice their faith, are quickly belied of this notion; the faith they marry into doesn't permit this either.

Moreover, Hindus hold marriage to be a sacrament where even divorce is considered an anathema (though allowed legally). Under Sharia, it is only as a contract where a man can divorce his wife orally and instantly by simply saying talaq thrice (till it was banned). This is the chasm between the two

Non-Muslim women must be made aware of these consequences. The blind eulogy and advocacy of interfaith marriages and pretending that all such alliances are of the same nature is dishonesty. Rosy and romanticised pictures of interfaith marriages carry the serious propensity of harming non-Muslim women, who might make hasty and misinformed decisions only to repent and suffer later.

(The writer is a well-known columnist and an legal regime with more rights author. The views expressed

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BE SENSITIVE TOWARDS HEARING LOSS

Sir — The World Hearing Day was on March 3 and, sadly, it went past like the problems of the hearing impaired go unheeded! It is really shocking to know that according to the World Health Organisation (WHO), one in four people will suffer from hearing problems by 2050. The world body has raised the alarm, stating that currently one in five people has

hearing problems but most often it is just ignored. The same amount of care and attention that we give to other ailments is not given to problems related to hearing except when we have severe pain in the ear or similar such problems.

The WHO has called for global action and asked the nations to take immediate measures to check this 'silent danger'. According to medical reports, almost 60 per cent of hearing loss in children is due to factors such as ear infections and birth complications that can be prevented through public health measures. According to the WHO, over one billion young adults are at risk of permanent, avoidable hearing loss due to unsafe listening practices, stressing the need to make people aware of this danger. Early identification of hearing loss and ear diseases are the key to the effective management.

Modern medicine with modern technology and implementation of certain safety norms can end such difficulties provided that the Governments, health organisations, NGOs and other agencies come forward to mitigate the problem.

M Pradyu | Kannur

RAHUL IS NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR THE PAST

Sir — This refers to the editorial 'Mea culpa' (March 4). Verily speaking, the Nehru-Gandhi family's contribution to the country is unmatched and cannot be questioned. The 'Grand Old Party' has a chequered performance sheet having caustic memories of the Emergency, communal riots and Bofors scandal. But Congress' former president Rahul Gandhi should not be held responsible for them, as he was just a child or minor when these incidents took place. Personally, Rahul is an man of stern rectitude and a honest political leader who possesses the grit

Congress must correct its course

APOSTASY



t refers to the editorial 'Split house' (March 4). The state of affairs within the Congress is gloomy, to say the least. The 'Grand Old Party 'seems to be totally bereft of a centralised command which can control its affairs. Due to the lack of a powerful leadership, the Congress rank and file are working at their whims, fulfilling their vested interests and making whatever statements they feel like, without caring about the party. These

unfortunate things are happening at a time when the party faces elections in four States and a Union Territory. There has always been friction in the party but it seems to have blown out of proportion and is hurting the poll prospects of the Congress.

While cadres of other political parties in the poll fray are investing all their energy in campaigning, big leaders of the Congress are indulging in fights among themselves. It's high time Rahul Gandhi took note of it and took steps to ensure that the party stays united. It is also the duty of the old quard to show more responsibility and talk with other leaders in order to resolve their differences. Merely, making allegations and counter-allegations would serve no good. If this state of affairs continues, it will further shrink the party's vote bank as people would choose not to vote for the party which is divided because of internal feuds and has a weak leadership. The Congress must mull over this issue immediately or must ready itself for another poll drubbing.

Bal Govind | Noida

to contest even his party's decisions if he doesn't agree with these.

Moreover, he put in his papers as the party chief, taking moral responsibility for the Congress' drubbing in the last general elections. On the other hand, it was his personal charisma appealing to the masses that helped the 'Grand Old Party' make a comeback by wresting the States of Maharashtra, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh from the formidable BJP.

The realisation of the past mistakes of the Congress comes across as a welcome gesture from this young and charismatic political leader. As the saying goes, "The sins of the parents are visited on the children"! Azhar A Khan Rampur

MERGE CHANNELS TO INCREASE VIEWERSHIP

Sir — It is welcome that the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha TV channels have been officially merged into one single entity, Sansad

TV. It will help curtail the expenditure that

is incurred in running the two TV channels.

The direct telecast of the proceedings of the two Houses can be aired according to their importance. However, excerpts of proceedings of the two Houses can be shown not only on Sansad TV but also on various Doordarshan channels.

A somewhat similar merger can be considered for the Doordarshan channels according to the viewership statistics. There are several Doordarshan channels which do not have significant viewership; continuing with such channels is a waste of public money. They all must be merged as this will not only help increase the viewership but also save lot of public money that goes in running these channels.

Further, the Government must exercise real control over private news channels and ask them to compulsorily telecast proceedings of both the Houses

Subhash Agarwal | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

My request for 27 per cent reservation for socially and economically backwards in Government jobs in Odisha has

remained unaddressed till date. Union Minister — Dharmendra Pradhan

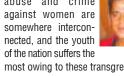


competitor potentially capable of combining economic. diplomatic, military, technological

— Joe Biden

power to mount a sustained challenge to a stable and open **US President**

The issues of drug abuse and crime



most owing to these transgressions — Ravi Kishan

It was important to be



positive and play your shots on that pitch, back vourselves to clear the boundary - just happy that I managed to contribute to the team's cause at that

point of time West Indies captain

Kieron Pollard



ing over large portions of India's wealth to its favourite

crony capitalists **Interim Congress President**

— Sonia Gandhi

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FIRST COLUMN

VACCINE FIRST, POLITICS LATER

Netas getting into poll campaigning must get the jab, both for safety and for sending a message for public good



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

India began one of the largest vaccination drives attempted globally on January 16 and opened it up for frontline workers in February. The second phase of the inoculation drive began on March 1, with the doors thrown open to citizens above a certain age and fulfilling specific criterion. At the launch of the second phase, the nation woke up to a visual of Prime Minister Narendra Modi getting vaccinated at a Government facility. It was a wide message, ranging from taking the India-developed vaccine, being conscious of the home State of healthcare staff administering the shot and the sartorial choice of a gamcha from Assam. However, there was another story unfolding mid-day onwards in many of the vaccination centres around the country as many senior citizens failed to get vaccinated on days one and two despite managing to register successfully on the CoWin website.

Despite the glitches, this is a remarkable feat for our country which, till the same time last year, was not aware of the horror waiting to unfold and, therefore, didn't even have basic toolkits of personal protective equipment handy. The reason it is vital to mention this is so that we keep learning every moment and improvising on the deliverable processes, like we did in 2020.



It is a welcome step that a sizeable chunk of private hospitals has been roped in for the second phase of the vaccination drive. However, it seems like they are being treated like lesser institutions when it comes to supply and execution logistics. Many private hospitals reported one queue for walk-in registrations and those registered with confirmed time slots through the CoWin website. This led to crowding, which is an inyour-face blunder to be avoided during these times. The private sector is equipped enough with stipulated processes for vaccination and with some guided information, could manage the drive with proper social distancing. Ideally, the authorities should have done a workshop with key hospitals and taught the staff to manage a demand-driven hybrid model vaccination exercise. At some stage the Government has to think about opening up the vaccination drive for corporates and the money spent should be treated as part of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR). Most of the corporates are willing to either take up a vaccination drive for their staff under the CSR head or allow staff to pay, provided the exercise like Aadhaar registrations moves to their premises. RS Sharma, the current chief of the National Health Authority, is aware of the private-public cooperative plumbing required to make India's vaccination pipeline a model worth emulating. He is also aware of the role technology is going to play in the exercise and the digital divide in the country over access and use of factual information. The confusion between the use of the CoWin app vs the CoWin website needs to be addressed. Also, vaccine hesitancy among certain sections of society is triggered by opinionated fake information on social media. It is time for all technocrats involved in the process to start tackling the barrage of misinformation and talk about the facts on all platforms available.

Another aspect of the inoculation programme is driven by politics. Already there have been some remarks regarding the Prime Minister's picture on the vaccine completion certificate, specially from States bound for elections. Universal vaccination against the dreaded virus is a shared project of all leaders at the Central and State level. Any attempt to subvert the process by creating barriers may not go down well with the electorate or be good for the leader's image. Of course, the optics need to be high for any candidate facing the electorate in a few days, however it would be good if they start showing their commitment. Most of the leaders getting into campaigning ahead of polls would do well to get vaccinated, both for safety and for sending a loud message for public

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Economy riddled with corruption



Graft is a huge, insidious problem in our country that has eaten into every aspect of our lives, be it in rural or urban İndia

A survey conducted by Transparency International (TI) last year found that India has the highest rate of bribery in the Asian region. The survey titled, 'Global Corruption Barometer (GCB), Asia' revealed that the nation also had the highest rate of people using personal connections to access public services. The country has a bribery rate of 39 per cent while 46 per cent people use "familiarity" to get access to services. The report noted that "slow and complication." ed bureaucratic process, unnecessary red tape and unclear regulatory frameworks force citizens to seek out other solutions to access basic services through networks of familiarity and petty corruption (in India)."

The nation's quest for economic dynamism has been severely stifled by chronic corruption. The country needs to urgently modernise its institutions and end the culture of rent-seeking and cutting corners if it wants the wheel of its economy to roll seamlessly. Corruption is both anti-national and anti-poor because the resources meant for poverty alleviation schemes get siphoned off by dishonest politicians and bureaucrats. It is among the most debilitating economic illnesses that afflict large parts of the world. India is now caught in a situation where many sectors are steeped in endemic corruption, including those charged with controlling it — from the legislators who write the laws, to the judiciary which makes them roadworthy and the police which is charged with enforcing them.

In the last four decades, despite several Government programmes for the welfare of the rural poor, poverty remains endemic. Either the nets were not cast wide or there were too many holes blown into them. The cruel reality is that much of the public spending does not reach the poor. It is either sponged off by the delivery mechanism consisting of consultants, advisors, their equipment and studies — or it gets pocketed. This has become a touchstone for all public-funded programmes and is now parroted in all Indian development literature. Low-level graft remains pervasive. Much of the Western world aid is running down the bureaucratic ratholes. Corruption is a huge, insidious problem in our country that has eaten into every aspect of life. It can lead to distrust in the Government, generating civil strife, violence, and conflict.

While the poor do not have the money to bribe public servant to avail services that are their right, they have a vote that the politician wants. The politician does a little bit to make life a little more tolerable for the poor — a seat in a good school for the lucky few, a Government job for the even luckier, on occasion the unexpected munificence of a loan waiver or, more commonly, a phone call that helps them get a police case registered. For all this, the politician gets the gratitude of his voters. However, he then also has little reason to improve the system by reforming it.

The state of affairs is grim, as every village official must be paid not just to expedite the application form for development schemes but specifically for not obstructing it. There is no easy solution to the problem. The corrupt police officials have a rollicking time at the expense of helpless citizens. In fact, there is no link between corruption and poverty. It is easier to convert a corrupt



IN THE LAST FOUR DECADES, DESPITE SEVERAL GOVERNMENT PROGRAMMES FOR THE WELFARE OF THE RURAL POOR, POVERTY REMAINS ENDEMIC. EITHER THE NETS WERE NOT CAST WIDE OR THERE WERE TOO MANY HOLES **BLOWN INTO** THEM. THE CRUEL REALITY IS THAT MUCH OF THE PUBLIC SPENDING DOES NOT REACH THE POOR. IT IS EITHER SPONGED OFF BY THE DELIVERY MECHANISM CONSISTING OF CONSULTANTS, ADVISORS, THEIR EQUIPMENT AND STUDIES — OR IT

GETS POCKETED

important in politics than individual qualities or merits in India and they strike at the very core of democracy. Grassroots activists and student leaders with no patronage matter little, and given the huge money and muscle power involved in elections, outsiders can only dream of power. In fact, the impact of nepotism goes beyond politics, with the reign of dynasties extending to most businesses too.

Like the mythological hydra, corruption is a many-headed foe of the social fabric — weakening the body politic and jeopardising prospects for economic growth. It can wither only after the heads are lopped off.

It has been a long-standing problem that successive Governments have battled and mostly failed to quell. In his magnum opus 'Arthashastra', written nearly three centuries before the Christian era, Kautilya, the classical master of statecraft, observed:

"Just as it is impossible to know when a fish moving in water is drinking it, so it is impossible to find out when Government servants in charge of undertakings misappropriate money."

The phrase, "probity in public life" has become an oxymoron. The time to start popping the corks would be when corrupt officials are actually convicted and penalised. Unfortunately, our criminal justice system has a truly pathetic record on this front. As long as that remains true, much publicised arrests serve little or no purpose. They certainly do not act as effective deterrents to potential bribetakers or bribe-givers. Corruption is too often seen as merely a moral issue. Not enough people realise just how crippling an economic factor it can be. The cost of the bribes clearly must be factored into the business model and hence into the

ruption and organised systems of tax evasion. Cases of people greasing palms to get a college scholarship, tax refund or mortgage from a State-owned bank are now commonplace. Petty corruption includes slipping banknotes to the police and to officials to get paperwork done. Businessmen have to offer "seed money" to avoid red tape.

Writer and former diplomat Pavan Varma suggests that the persistence of corruption in India also

reflects a strain of amorality in our character: A willingness to tolerate corner-cutting and rule-breaking in the successful pursuit of wealth and power. "Corruption, of course, is not unique to India," he writes in 'Being Indian'. "What is unique is the level of its acceptance, and the creative ways in which it is sustained. Indians do not subscribe to antiseptic definitions of rectitude... Their understanding of right and wrong is related far more to efficacy than absolute notions of morality."

Most Indian businesses cannot survive or remain competitive without stashing away undeclared earnings. Almost everybody who has sold a house has taken one part of the payment in cash and evaded tax on it. Huge quantities of secret wealth are still a part of our system.

The solution lies in ensuring that the Central Bureau of Investigation remains free of Government interference and that The country's economic system whistle-blowers, witnesses and jourthat insinuates itself into every part is fused with many strands of cornalists working on corruption cases are protected. The Government must realise that increasing corruption can act as a speed breaker in the Indian growth story. There is a need for a strong political will to untangle it. Without a strong civil society or an independent judiciary to check Government power, the political class can become complacent. We have a long distance to cover to get rid of corruption and it may require longer sprints as time is run-



The writer is a well-known development professional. The views expressed are

YOU PUT NAILS ON ROADS AND PREVENTED FARMERS FROM ENTERING THE CAPITAL OF THE SOVEREIGN COUNTRY, BUT YOU BEAT A RETREAT AGAINST CHINA. —MAHARASHTRA CHIEF MINISTER

UDDHAV THACKERAY





YOU ARE MAKING INSULTING STATEMENTS AGAINST OUR SOLDIERS WHO DEFENDED (THE COUNTRY FROM) CHINESE AGGRESSION.

—MAHARASHTRA FORMER CHIEF MINISTER **DEVENDRA FADNAVIS**

Technology for pedagogy in music strikes the right note

It helps to build highly effective differentiated learning experiences, which are rather challenging otherwise in a group setting with traditional teaching approaches

dechnology has been one of the mainstays of music . education, particularly contemporary music and its production and sound engineering since the late 2000s. However, the adoption rate was probably slower than anticipated due to the general resistance to change and the reluctance to shift to newer methods of learning and teaching. Interestingly, music technology, which we should clearly differentiate from the technology for pedagogical purposes, has been adopted widely and is frequently adapted by music educators in line with music industry practices.

The year 2020 presented many with a make-or-break situation due to the pandemic and music education providers, both institutions and teachers were swift to drop all inhibitions and embrace technology to aid pedagogy.



The writer is Dean, The

True School of Music,

Vijaybhoomi Üniversity.

Thé views expressed are

tutors — who probably argued the most against technologydriven learning and teaching in place of the tried and tested traditional approach of in-person instruction — were the first to jump on the bandwagon. Consequently, they taught music using every possible technological means, from Skype to Zoom to Google Hangouts. In most of such cases, the technology integration started and ended with these video calling apps that allowed remote teaching and learning and did not extend to more immersive and interactive learning systems.

Increasingly, we are now seeing larger music schools tapping into comprehensive learning management systems (LMS), customised mobile apps and subscription-based music learning services such as music notation applications, ear train-

Most interestingly, private ing applications with content libraries, backing music tracks and practice tools for instruments, voice instruction and so on, that integrate into LMS or remote teaching using video calling apps.

LMS are excellent cloud-

based tools to extend learning beyond face-to-face time, and more importantly to build a social learning ecosystem around the class. There are a number of such solutions available now, mostly on a per-user subscription model that is increasingly becoming affordable in markets like India and South Asia.

LMS allow teachers to administer independent learning content to a class or individual learners, provide feedback to students using text, audio or video, conduct online assessments that could be auto-graded and so on. More importantly, LMS allow students to inter-



act with each other, share and discuss topics of interest online, and learn from each other's works. This provides invaluable benefits over just focusing on instrumental or voice mastery.

Newer learning technologies that either work as standalone mobile or web-based apps or integrate into LMS help further enhance the music learning experience. Many schools employ music notation and ear training applications with preloaded content libraries for independent learning and practice.

For example, music teachers are able to assign an exercise with a predetermined difficulty level and a target practice score to student groups or individuals. The students can then practice the material on their own with the app giving highly specific feedback on how well they are doing, and the areas that need improvement. Once the student attains the target score, the teacher assigns a new difficulty level, much like a game.

Similar gamified learning technologies also exist for instrument and voice learning. Many of these systems provide comprehensive content libraries organised in terms of progressive difficulty levels. Teachers are able to assign target goals for practice, and once a student achieves the desired proficiency, conduct an assessment within the app, using similar content to validate the learning and progress to the next level. Some oped. Teachers can drop the of these systems give detailed visual heatmaps of a student's performance, with granular feedback on areas that have met expectations and those needing

improvement. Technology-enabled pedagogy also helps to build highly effective differentiated learning experiences, which are rather challenging otherwise in a group setting with traditional teaching approaches. One of the biggest benefits of technologyenabled pedagogy is its focus on student-centred learning, taking the attention away from the teacher as the sole enabler of learning. With technology-enabled learning, the teacher has the flexibility to adopt a more efficient role of a learning facilitator, provide necessary personalised interventions and allow each learner to grow at their own pace while focusing on the core areas to be develone-size-fits-all approach that works rather poorly in creative arts education.

While this recent and swift adoption of technologies for pedagogical purposes is mainly driven by the pressure to enhance remote learning in light of the social distancing and lockdown conditions necessitated by the Coronavirus pandemic, they are more than likely to find a permanent place in music education since both students and teachers will find obvious enhancements to their learning and teaching experi-

Institutions are likely to adopt and scale such technologies aggressively since they introduce efficiencies and help collect extremely valuable data that will help design newer and more effective curriculum, learning programmes and delivery methods.

India wearables market grows 144 pc to 36 mn units in 2020

The wearables market in India posted a 144.3 per cent yearon-year growth in 2020 with 36.4 million unit shipment, as per research firm IDC.

India was the only country in the top 20 to see triple-digit growth in wearables in the year 2020 and continues to be the third-largest wearables market globally, IDC said in a statement. "This growth was majorly driven by the increasing acceptance of earwear devices and upgrades to watches from wrist bands, both recording their highest annual shipments in 2020," it

The October-December 2020 period was the biggest quarter for the wearables category in the country, maintaining triple-digit growth. Overall, vendors shipped 15.2 million units in the said period, growing at 198.2 per cent year-on-year. "2020 was a year of transition in the audio segment from wired to wireless



devices. In 2021, this category will further migrate to more sophisticated devices with enhanced audio experience being the central theme for all vendors," IDC India Associate Research Manager

(Client Devices) Jaipal Singh said. The high cost associated with wearable watches is not much of a challenge anymore,

Also, the watch form factor is now seen as more appealing to the consumers, and vendors will leverage this shift by further expanding their watch portfolio in the coming quarters, Singh said.

Earwear device shipments grew more than three-fold in over the previous year, mainly driven by affordable launches, and expanding use cases beyond entertainment like virtual meetings and e-learning requirements, IDC said.

The earwear segment accounted for 83.6 per cent of the overall wearable market in 2020. Boat emerged as the 2020. Boat emerged as the biggest player in the category, accounting for one-third of the category shipments. Samsung with its portfolio including JBL, Harman Kardon and Infinity - finished second with a 14.5 per cent share in 2020. cent share in 2020.

Earwear grew over 300 per cent to 12.9 million units in the December 2020 quarter.

'Hearables became one of the most sought-after electronic categories in 2020. The newer version of hearables are much better in managing the increased audio usages and improved aesthetic and design also made them the trendsetter," IDC India Market Analyst Anisha Dumbre said.

Sensex tumbles 599 points in line with global meltdown

Snapping its three-session winning run, the BSE Sensex plunged by around 599 points to crack below the key 51,000level on Thursday amid a meltdown in global shares triggered by a surge in US bond yields. Intra-day, the 30-share BSE

index fell as much as 905 points before ending the session at 50,846.08, showing a decline of 598.57 points or 1.16 per cent.

per cent.
The broader NSE
Nifty too closed with
a loss of 164.85 points
or 1.08 per cent at
15,080.75.
On the Sensex
chart, HDFC, L&T,
SBI Axis Bank

SBI, Axis Bank, Bajaj FinServ and HDFC Bank were major laggards dropping up to 2.62 per cent. Of Sensex shares, closed with

losses. "Domestic equities trad-

lobal cues...Financials and Metals indices were keg drags today, while FMCG, Pharma and IT indices were resilient. A sharp 6 bps rise in 10-Year

yield made

investors jit-tery today," said Binod

Modi, Head

Over the previous three sessions, the Sensex had risen by 2,344.66 points or 4.77 per USA treasury

cent, while the Nifty had added 716.45 points or 4.93 per cent. Foreign investors had bought equities worth Rs 2,088.70 crore on a net basis

Strategy at Reliance

in Indian capital markets on Wednesday, according to exchange data.

On Thursday, Asian shares too tumbled after an overnight surge in bond yields dragged Wall

treet lower. On the orex market front, the rupee ended 11 paise lower ⁷2.83 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, lobal crude oil o e n c h m a r k Brent was trading 1.16 per cent higher at USD 64.73 per

ABB ties up with Lila Poonawalla Foundation

PNS NEW DELHI

Power and automation technology major ABB India on Thursday said it has joined hands with Lila Poonawalla Foundation to build future women leaders in technology.

"ABB India has partnered with Lila Poonawalla Foundation (LPF) on a holistic merit-cum-need based scholarship programme for meritorious girls from economically challenged backgrounds, to give them an opportunity to realise their ogy," an ABB India statement said. dreams in the field of technol-

Through this holistic programme, ABB will support

French IT major Capgemini

on Thursday said it will cover

the cost of the COVID-19 vac-

cination for all eligible employ-

In a statement, Capgemini

said health and well-being of

its colleagues is the highest pri-

ority for the company and that it will cover the cost of coro-

navirus vaccines of all eligible

employees and their depen-

dents in strict accordance with

all government-approved pro-

tocols. "Adhering to the gov-

ernment protocols, Capgemini

will cover the cost of the vaccination for all the eligible

employees and their depen-

dents who are part of our

medical benefits programme,"

Capgemini India has also

joined hands with competent

wellness partners to assist its

team members with any

queries related to the vaccine

including, do's and don'ts,

and provide answers to any

medical queries that the

employee and their depen-

People above 60 years of age

Ashwin Yardi, CEO said.

ees and their dependents.

Capgemini to cover vaccination cost for

employees in India



the higher education and skill development for 100 girls, selected by Lila Poonawalla Foundation, every year, it said.

Lila Poonawalla Foundation is a non-governmental organisation promoting professional education among aspiring

and those above 45 years with

comorbidities are being

immunised in the second

phase of nationwide vaccina-

tion that started on March 1.

Wipro Consumer Care &

Lighting and Executive

Director of Wipro Enterprises,

said as the vaccination gets

rolled out to more people in

the country, the company will

either tie up with partners or

up - as of now its just over 60

and people with co-mobid

conditions between 45-60 but

since we don't have employees

over 60, we haven't started but

we will definitely start getting

people vaccinated as soon as

within India also," he said.

opens to eligible people

"It depends on how it moves

reimburse employees.

Vineet Agrawal, CEO of

girls through scholarships and guidance in India.

The selected candidates are provided the necessary support to pursue an engineering degree and develop core skills and competencies required to be future-ready, without hav-ing to worry about financial constraints.

This programme covers initiatives that go beyond academics in order to equip these girls with a well-rounded expe-

One such enriching initiative is the ABB Volunteering programme wherein ABB employees volunteer to impart industry knowledge through well structured, pre-planned sessions with these students.

Sitharaman

takes first

dose of vax

Finance Minister Nirmala

Sitharaman on Thursday

took the first dose of

the vaccination against

COVID-19 this morning,"

She also thanked sister

Ramya PC for her "care

The government on Wednesday had announ

ced that everyone above

60 years of age and those

over 45 years with comor-

bidities will be able to get

COVID-19 vaccine from

March 1, for free at gov-ernment facilities and for

a charge at many private

hospitals.Citizens can reg-

ister and book an appoint-

ment for vaccination using

the Co-WIN 2.0 portal or

through the Aarogya Setu

app. President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Home Minister Amit Shah,

Health Minister Harsh

Vardhan and Law Minis-

ter Ravi Shankar Prasad

have also got vaccinated against COVID so far.

"Got my first dose of

COVID-19 vaccine.

Sitharaman tweeted.

and professionalism".

Asset growth at NBFCs, HFCs to jump in FY22

After a growth moderation in FY21, Non-Bank Finance Companies (NBFCs) are estimated to witness a 9.5 per cent jump in their assets under management in FY22, a report said on Thursday.

Housing Companies will post a higher growth at 10 per cent as home sales go up, India Ratings and Research said, maintaining its "stable" outlook on both NBFCs and HFCs for FY22.

It estimated the growth to slowdown to 4-5 per cent for NBFCs and 6.5 per cent for HFCs in FY21, driven largely avirus pandemic.

The system liquidity has improved considerably while the majority of large nonbanks have strengthened their capital buffers and the sector

has started witnessing disbursement growth, the rating agency said.

The wide differential among NBFCs' funding costs is likely to push the sector to consolidate, especially in the sectors with a thin margin profile and limited product differentiation, it said, adding the strong regulatory support in FY21 ensured adequate liquidity.

From an asset quality per-spective, wholesale NBFCs will face challenges in FY22, the agency said and maintained the negative outlook on such entities. Stress due to the pandemic has moderated due to government schemes which have cies and moderate addition to **Gross Non-Performing Assets** (GNPAs), it said, pointing out that the overall stressed assets will be higher than a recent RBI estimate of 8 per cent.

up steel plant

agreement with the Odisha government for setting up a 12 mtpa integrated steel plant in Kendrapada district with an investment of Rs 50,000 crore, officials said. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik and steel tycoon Lakshmi

Mittal met Patnaik Alttal met Patnaik at his residence Naveen Niwas earlier in the day and dis-cussed his company ArcelorMittal's pro-jects in the state, an

official said. The industrialist had met Union Steel Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in New Delhi on Tuesday.

AM/NS India inks pact with Odisha to set

Steelmaker Arcelor Mittal Nippon Steel India (AM/NS India) on Thursday inked an

steel tycoon Lakshmi N Mittal were present during the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at Lokaseva Bhavan.

MONEY MATTERS

Maruti Suzuki Brezza crosses cumulative sales of 6 lakh units



he country's largest carmaker Maruti Suzuki (MSI) on Thursday said its compact SUV Vitara Brezza has crossed 6 lakh units cumulative sales mark since making its debut in the market five years ago. The auto major had

March 2016. "The country's best-selling compact SUV has further strengthened its position as the market leader with the sales of six lakh units. This is a testimony of our customers' elevated support and love for the brand, especially in a segment which is traditionally diesel driven," MSI Executive Director (Marketing & Sales) Shashank Srivastava said in a statement. The model comes with a 1.5 litre petrol engine mated with five-speed manual and four-speed

Bajaj Auto drives in Platina 110 priced at Rs 65,920



Bajaj Auto on Thursday said it has launched 115-cc bike Platina 110 in the country priced at Rs The bike comes with ABS (anti-lock braking system) and other features like Nitrox

spring-on-spring suspension as well as tubeless tyres. "The new Platina 110 ABS offers unmatched safety by offering riders complete control over unforeseen braking scenarios. "We hope that millions of Indians who ride across varying terrains and roads of the country would take cognisance of the need to keep themselves and their loved ones safe and upgrade to the bestin-segment braking technology," Bajaj Auto President – Domestic Motorcycles Business Unit Sarang Kanade said in a

EPFO retains 8.5% interest on EPF deposits for '20-21

Retirement fund body EPFO on Thursday decided to retain 8.5 per cent annual rate of interest on provident fund deposits for the current financial year for its more than five crore active subscribers.

The EPFO apex decision-making body Central Board of Trustees decided to fix 8.5 per cent rate of interest for 2020-21 at its meeting in Srinagar on Thursday. "The CBT recommended 8.50 per cent annual rate of interest to be credited on EPF accumulations in members' accounts for the financial year 2020-21," a labour ministry statement said. According to the statement,



the 228th meeting of the CBT, EPFO was held on Thursday in Srinagar, Jammu & Kashmir under the chairmanship of Union Minister of State for Labour & Employment Santosh Kumar Gangwar.

As per the practice, the CBT decision on interest rate would

for concurrence. After getting the finance ministry's nod, the 8.5 per cent rate of interest for this fiscal would be credited into the EPFO subscribers' accounts.

The interest rate would be officially notified in the government gazette following which the EPFO would credit the rate of interest into the subscribers' accounts, the statement said.

"For FY'2021, the EPFO decided to liquidate investment and the interest rate recommended is a result of combined income from interest received from debt investment as well as income realised from equity

Isuzu to increase prices of **D-MAX commercial trucks**



maker Isuzu on Thursday said it will increase prices of its commercial pick-up range D-MAX Regular Cab and D-MAX S-CAB by Rs 1 lakh with effect from April 1. The increase in price is due to the increasing costs of production, transportation and logistics, Isuzu Motors

India said in a statement. At present, D-MAX Regular Cab prices start at Rs 8.72 lakh and that of D-MAX S-CAB begins at Rs 10.7 lakh. The company had in January hiked the prices of the two models by Rs 10,000 to offset increasing input and distribution costs. Apart from the commercial pick-up range, Isuzu also sells ISUZU D-MAX V-Cross, a lifestyle and adventure pick-up and ISUZU mu-X, a premium 7-seater SUV in the personal vehicles segment.

Cos garner Rs 9K-cr through public issuance of NCDs



As many as eight firms Araised over Rs 9,100 crore through retail issuance of non-convertible debentures in the first ten months of the ongoing fiscal to meet their business needs. In comparison, firms had garnered Rs 14,161 crore through this route in the April-January

period of 2019-20. Most of the funds have been mobilised to support lending activities, working capital requirements and other general corporate purposes. Non-Convertible Debentures (NCDs) are loanlinked bonds that cannot be converted into stocks and usually offer higher interest rates than convertible debentures. According to the latest data available with markets regulator Sebi, eight entities mopped up funds totalling Rs 9,118 crore through retail issuance of NCDs in the current fiscal till January 2021

BMW drives in new MINI Countryman at Rs 39.5 L

dents may have.

BMW on Thursday launched an updated version of MINI Countryman in India with price starting at Rs 39.5 lakh (exshowroom Delhi).

Locally produced at the company's Chennai plant, the new MINI Countryman is available in two petrol variants - MINI Countryman Cooper S and MINI Countryman Cooper S JCW Inspired, priced

at Rs 39.5 lakh and Rs 43.4 lakh,

new German luxury carmaker Countryman inspires you to take the path to new experiences and new horizons of the mind. This versatile sports activity vehicle (SAV) is just

as home in an urban jungle as it is in the great outdoors," BMW **Group India President** Vikram Pawah said in a statement

The model comes with a 2litre petrol engine enabling the vehicle to sprint to 100 km/hr in 7.5 seconds with a top speed of 225 km/hr.

3 Republicans bring legislation in Cong to end 'allure of cheap foreign labour' speciality occupations that

PNS NEW DELHI

Three Republican US lawmakers have introduced a legislation in Congress to bar American employers from hiring H-1B workers, who are mostly highly-skilled Indian IT professionals, if they have recently, or plan to fire their local workers, seeking to put an end to the "allure of cheap for-

eign labour". Introduced in the House of Representatives by Republican congressmen Mo Brooks, Matt Gaetz and Lance Gooden, the American Jobs First Act pro-



poses to overhaul the H-1B visa programme by making necessary changes in the Immigration and Nationality

The H-1B visa, most-sought after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in

require theoretical or technical expertise. Technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. According to its text released on Wednesday, a foreign guest worker may not be admitted or provided status as an H-1B non-immigrant in an occupational classification unless the petitioner employer has filed with the Secretary of Labour an application stating the employer is offering an annual wage to the H-1B nonimmigrant that is the greater of

the annual wage paid to the US citizen or lawful permanent resident employee who did identical or similar work during the two years before the petitioner employer filed such application; or USD 110. The petitioner employer also needs to file with the Secretary

of Labour an application stating the employer will not require an H-1B non-immigrant to pay a penalty for ceasing employment with the petitioner employer before the date agreed to by the H-1B non-immigrant and the petitioner employer.

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> Friday March 5, 2021

HOMESTAYS — THE SAFE AND

SUMPTUOUS WAY TO VACAY!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

he coronavirus pandemic has wreaked havoc on the travel and tourism sector, travel bloggers couldn't explore the new aspects of travelling, couples couldn't go on a mini-vacay, and there was no fresh travel content. However, these days something called 'staycation'

is taking over at home-stays! Travelling abroad may have taken a backseat for a while but booking a private home-like-luxurious inn is the new normal. Some want to opt for these homestays for a better content strategy for their Instagram handles, some for minimalism and others, for privacy! The online vacation rental marketplace Airbnb has adapted to this new normal well, with its multiple and diverse options to host guests at comfortable yet homely places to stay. Search options

for a staycation have gone up

— Airbnb released a report on new travel trends for 2021 that shows Indians are looking for ways to reconnect with friends and loved ones while enjoying safe, exclusive experiences off the beaten track. Additionally, it is celebrating the journey of exceptional women, including hos-pitality entrepreneurs who braved the challenges of the past year to nurture successful enterprises in the travel and tourism sector.

Data shows that for many first-time hosts around the world, sharing their homes on Airbnb also provided an important safety net from the economic challenges of the pandemic. The brand ambassador of Airbnb herself, actress Mandira Bedi, often turns her shooting residence into a one-of-a-kind experience for the guests to stay at with her some personal touches! "My first ever encounter at a homestay was when Airbnb was launched



— a fine-looking home in Delhi, structured so tastefully. Why was it so special, you ask? The lady-host made me feel like it's my home! Asking me relentlessly about what I'd want to have for breakfast, my whereabouts, out of concern, it all felt like my own home. Thereafter, the year of pandemic gave me the power of chaining my thoughts to think out of the box! As we were confined to our homes stringently, I considered turning my bunglow at Mud-island, usually used for filmshooting purposes into a get-away spot with the gorgeous beach as its view. I began the renovations so lavishly that all I had in my mind was to have a new holiday chalet for my guests. What helped me give it a fine makeover were my manifold experiences at Airbnb stays; I got hold of what the guests would prefer. All a visitor would have to do was get their bags, everything else would be taken care of," Bedi says.

place to stay! Looking from a social, economic and envi-

homestays hitting the graphs, guests or travellers are seek-ing for more real, elevating and memorable voyage experience. Valsa Nair Singh, the principal secretary of tourism and culture is all for homestays! Encouraging more and more people to stay at the 'right' home, yes you read that right — a home and not a lodge, both the guest and hosts should hit the right chords and that is why there are homestays now! The country has so much to offer when it comes to sightseeing and Valsa Nair is known for championing the causes of tourism, especially in the state of Maharashtra. "To fulfill your desires of staying at a homestay, or farm stay or just by nature, it's at the moment! Coronavirus is scary but at the same time it has also thrown up a lovely opportunity of trending tourism as people were locked inside their abodes and it as frustrating. Domestic travel is winning right now! A unique ac

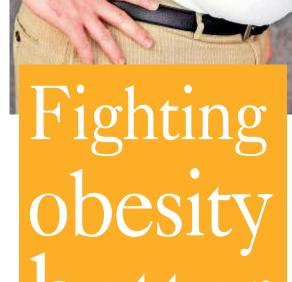
modation place is what attracts the visitors also and home-stays of different kinds and strokes do the thing. After being denied travel for so long, people are hoping to make the most of it through the staycations. Once a traveler hangs about at a home stay, it indeed will send him or her with positive vibes wanting to return. Home-stays are so habitat-like that, they won't leave any unwanted glimpses of litter or pen scribbles on the wall, they are rather elegant and classy. Now, you are spinning your own home into a tourist-destination stay and that brings so much pride as well — Atithi devo bhava. Moreover, this leads to sustainable tourism — you have an off-the-rack built construction ries.

ronmental aspect, home-stays are here to stay." With attractive holiday homes and the advent of technological convergence come fine fondles of content creation! With Instagram leading the social media sites having eye-catching stills of the place one stays at or the 'reels' performed there displaying the good-looking place, the host of a home-stay gets motivated enough to refurbish their inns into something like never before. Be it the newly adopted premises of a penthouse, treehouse, container rooms, forts, wood cabins, snowpods, etc., the visitor wants every corner of it to be on



The first-ever digital influencer of the country, Malini Agarwal famously known as Miss Malini shares how Airbnb managed to make her Goa trip the most unforget-table one. "I had authentic stills of the place I stayed at and the experience that I had. There is no shortcut to success - you have to constantly innovate, self-motivate and never give up! It's amazing to see millions of women get a chance to succeed in their entrepreneurial journeys by partnering with Airbnb. I have always enjoyed my stays at Airbnb homes during my travels across the world and have met so many fabulous female hosts with fascinating sto-

Under this year's International Women's Day theme of #ChooseToChallenge, many highlighted the importance of persevering in their unique journeys despite facing unprecedented challenges. "In 2017, while I was fighting cancer, I started my journey with Airbnb as a host. I had a choice — to let my illness define me and give into my difficult circumstances, or embrace my experience as a 'rediscovery'. I chose not just to survive, but to also thrive as an entrepreneur. Becoming a host was a great journey of self-growth for me, and I encourage women across the country to embrace the spirit of entrepreneurship in every possible way," said Pari Sharma, an



besity, a chronic disease on the rise, not just in India but across the world, is often viewed by many as a lifestyle issue largely caused due to an individual's eating habit and lack of physical activi-ty. People often associate obesity with just weight, but it is a much more complex condition. Obesity has a direct impact on the quality of life and leads to serious health issues including heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, joint pains and many other serious comorbidities including a propensity for certain cancers.

Being a complex and chronic condition, obesity needs lifelong management Healthcare practitioners, therefore, need to view eat meal beyond just diet and exercise for obese individuals. The popular narrative around obesity by medical teams is an

irresponsibility, lack of willpower and puts blame on people, eventually shaming them for being obese, the patients also believe that there is some underlying hormonal cause that has been missed and wan quick-fix solutions in medications without having to put in any

efforts; neither of these we now realise is true.

We are in the process of understanding and have very little knowledge about the causation and perpetu-ation of obesity and most attempts are directed at excluding the hormonal causes (which are seldom the cause) and the effect of the same on the metabolism in terms of glucose and lipid levels.

Whatever its cause, the only known effective methods involve the creation of a negative calorie balance and sustained efforts with the active involvement of the person in question is reali assumption about personal the plan is a long term one Hospitals.)

rather than a course for

rather than a course for some immediate returns like weight loss for marriage or planned surgery. Obesity treatment should be personalised based on the degree of obesity, individual health risks, psycho behavioural, metabolic characteristics, and the result of earlier. and the result of earlier weight loss efforts.

weight loss efforts.
A multilevel obesity
management network
working hand in hand will
help achieve personalised
treatment plans. Centres of
excellence in obesity management or a speciality team will be able to provide all-inclusive programs for the treatment of obesity derived from evidencebased medicine. Obesity management is a medically intensive treatment strategy developed to suit the patient's lifestyle, preference, and condition together. The program can cover review and adjust-ments of medications, nutrition support, increased physical activi-ties, counselling and bariatric surgery if the

It is important to understand that obesity is not iust caused by overeating or lack of exercise. A lot goes into it, including genetics, environment, and behaviour. It is a condition that's tough to fight alone and needs to be managed with the help of a medical expert, the process needs sustained efforts with realistic goals but the benefits justify the efforts.

patient is a right candidate.

(The writer, Dr Bipin Sethi, is a Consultant Endocrinologist with CARE



Grace Rhodes sets her sight on B-Town!

oming to a foreign land into a completely different cultural environment and then to be permanently a part of the Hindi the silver screen is what British

actress and pop-sensation Grace Rhodes desires for! Last seen shaking a leg with choreographer Dharmesh Yelande, famously known as 'D' in the blockbuster dance movie Street Dancer 3D, Grace wants to begin afresh considering the Indian motherland as her own.

Becoming familiar with the local customs, language, etc., the dancer reduced the cultural gaffe and aspires to build a really good professional graph here in the Hindi film industry. With two locations being completely away from each other, the actress continues to put together some intense feelings about setting the dance floors on fire in Bollywood. More intricately inclined towards special appearances in star-studded films, Grace Rhodes is open to all forms of anticipated roles. "I had my first Bollywood experience with such an incredible unit on the sets of Street Dancer 3D. What talent, what energy! Moreover, working with Remo sir was an absolute pleasure. That particular stint made me fall in love with the filmi-duniya here that resides in Mumbai. Í would love to do more item-numbers! With a broad-minded upbringing, I am professionally trained in quite a number of talented fields. There is really no limit to the passion I absorb on a daily basis. Being a British actress cannot constrain my competence, I want to try

traditional dance numbers as well. along with the contemporary moves that I am already known for. Personally speaking, it is a long-yearning reverie for me to work for T-Series music group, to be their go-to-girl for exotic dance sequences," she

We have seen several Bolly actors starring in Hollywood movies, which is like the new talent exchange happening in recent times. But, how often have you seen a Hollywood star paving his/her means on the route that leads to the Indian film industry. Grace Rhodes is obdurate enough to venture more here. This fresh talent has high regards for the field of acting! Telling us in her own words why she loves performing in front of the camera and when the acting bug bit her, she expressed that she has played quite a number of overseas characters as a romantic interest while at the moment seeking to play a badass action-entertainer heroine. "When an artist gets the right opportunity, that is her moment to shine! I am waiting for mine. The entertainment industry is very competitive, be it Hollywood or Bollywood but what remains a similar concentration point is the absolute love to deliver unforgettable performances. If you have that inclination towards the fraternity, you will somehow be drawn to it and it will probably never go away as you explore that hidden part of yourself. I can act, I can sing, I am an artist. No matter what, I am always on the lookout for experiences that sparks the cracker of creativity in me. To discov-

er human emotions is what pulls you

She made fans dance to her tunes with her moves in Street Dancer 3D. British actress, danseuse, and singer Grace Rhodes is all set to re-enter Bollywood and would love to try her hands at all things art. She opens up to The Pioneer's **SHIKHA** DUGGAL about her dream roles, who she wants to act and sing with, and more.

in acting," she adds.

Hoping to embed the flag of the
United Kingdom in another land in
the entertainment business, she wants to seep unfathomably into the Hindustani ethnicity embracing the art-form as it will lend a helping hand for her to progress well, she believes. "From what I have seen so far,

actor Tiger Shroff is a marvellous dancer while Ranveer Singh is a power-house. I would love to be cast alongside Katrina Kaif, Shraddha Kapoor, Nora Fatehi and Jacqueline Fernandez. And, why not sing with Arijit Singh, Guru Randhawa and Raftaar. I am in talks with Kondzilla, a music company in Brazil, so watch out for my imminent musical! It's a funk-based project. My major focus is on pop or conventional songs. I can't wait to come to India," she signs off.

what's brewing?













Manish Dayya

Shravani

A GOOD INFLUENCE

entrepreneurs and businesspeople of all sectors in attendance. Aiming to appreciate the efforts of influencers in post-pandemic market, the event will feature guests from the film industry, government officials and business biggies today, at

Photos by SV Chary

ARCHIE



Chathan







CALVIN AND HOBBES

Vaanya Aggarwal

FUN







CROSSWORD



GARFIELD

NANCY



THANKS



BUT-I COULD'VE PROBABLY TOOK CARE OF THEM MYSELF -- I AM THINKING OF SIGN-ING UP FOR KARATE, Y'KNOW



I SAID WHATEVER
I NEEDED TO TO
PROTECT THE PRETTIEST GIRL I'VE
EVER SEEN: MY
NAME'S "SLUGGO".
WANNA BE MY GIRL?

SAID YOU WERE A KARATE MASTER

YEAH .. I SHOULD SIGN UP FOR THAT,

REALITY CHECK





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19 People on journeys DOWN

ACROSS

14 Queues

6 Good-looking

8 Feeling cheerful

13 This many-legged

17 An animal to ride

1 Come to a halt 2 Mix black and white to make this

3 Athrobbing pain

4 Make music with the voice

5 Periods of a hundred years

10 One third of twenty-four

creature is the young

form of a butterfly

- 12 A gorilla is one 16 Observes
- 15 Tidy and well arranged

7 Yummy brown stuff

9 A part of something

11 A house made of snow

17 Fifty percent

18 Very uncommon



GINGER MEGGS







exactly once.

• The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.



tollywood



NAVDEEP CONFIDENT OF

GOOD SECOND INNINGS

He's wowed fans and critics alike with his intense roles in films like Arya 2, Chandamama, and Baadshah. Back with Mosagallu, a film that promises to set a benchmark, Navdeep says he's finally in a place to choose better roles, writes K RAMYA SREE

true series of incidents that conned a whopping \$380 million (Rs 2,800 crores) and shook the Indian IT Industry, Mosagallu is about cultural clash between generations; between east and west; between rich and poor. A brother-sister duo in India uses the loopholes of the American laws and rips off millions of dollars of US tax payers' money. This hurts the ego of Americans and they deploy Interpol to nab the culprits.
Being released in Telugu and
English, the film directed by Jeffrey
Gee Chin and produced by Vishnu Manchu under the banner of AVA Entertainment and 24 Frames Factory, is making all the right noise ever since its launch — for its ensemble cast and

Navdeep, who will be seen as a white-collar criminal who lives a lavish lifestyle in the film says, "The film is about Interpol's biggest operation. With *Mosagallu*, I have experienced how it feels to work with a Hollywood director. The treatment is special. I will

be seen as a white-collar criminal who lives lavishly, spots Vishnu Manchu and makes him bail him out of a scam. He and his sister (Kajal Aggarwal) go beyond the brief after they realise that they can pull off the scam on their own and the entire film revolves

around solving the scam."

"When Vishnu approached me with the offer, I was told that Mosagallu is based on a true story and that caught my attention. I'm sure the audience will have a good ride with this film as every scene is gripping with thrilling visuals," he adds.

Speaking of sharing screen space with Kajal, who is his good friend off-screen, the *Chandamama* actor tells, "I have previously worked with Kajal in *Chandamama*, *Baadshah* and *Arya 2*. For the first time, we have played enemies to each other. She plays a really

The actor, who is waiting for a hit in the industry for quite some time now, says he did take up many disastrous projects to just keep himself going in the industry not understanding the importance of the script and not

knowing how to reject a few offers. He explains, "Successful actors are not in a dilemma about the kind of roles they want to do. But others are not like that. Gautham SSC, Arya 2 and Chandamama are the few films that were written for me. I ended up doing not-so-great films early on in my career because I was too small to say 'No' to a number of

producers/directors. After Chandamama, for which I teamed up with Krishna Vamsi, no story impressed me until *Arya 2* came. After 17 years in the industry, I have realised to take up films that will bring me a good name and I am now in a position to make such choices."

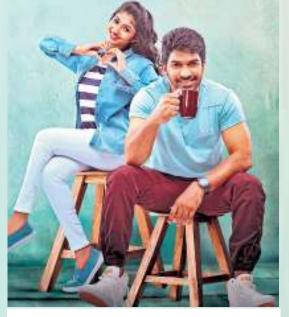
The actor has recently gained appreciation for his work in aha's Masti and he wishes OTT came into existence a few years ago.
"With OTT, actors have become too

busy. It would've been very nice if OTT came into existence earlier. Now, at least 90 projects, both feature films and OTT ones, are on the floors. So much so, production houses are finding it hard to rent equipment."

"After I started a writers' collective C Space, 6,000 aspirants approached us in just 6 months. We interviewed them all and zeroed in on 40 talented peo-ple. Most writers have just one idea because they don't hone their writing skills. Writing is a collaborative effort. There are seven methods of screenwriting. A writer has to smartly adapt to suit the Indian sensibilities. At our collective, we give writing exercises to the writers and make them think through. We have pitched stories for Aha, Amazon Prime and also to Trivikram Srinivas garu. Krish Jagarlamudi *garu* asked us to write a story based on a book. Swapna Dutt garu too made another offer," he tells

Speaking about his next, a fantasy love story, where one of the writers of *Baahubali* will wield the megaphone, Navdeep says, "All this beard you see on my face is for the film. It will be shooting in Meghalaya for 75 days. I am confident that my second innings will begin well with that movie. I have got goodwill in the industry. I just need one success. People are now convinced that I am good but I was misunderstood in the past."

The film, one of the most expensive ones in Vishnu Manchu's career, that is set to release on March 11, also stars Sunil Shetty, Ruhi Singh, Naveen Chandra, Karma McCain in key roles.



'My hunger for something new led to *Shaadi Mubarak*'

he film Shaadi Mubarak, which has TV actor Veer Sagar making another try at his luck on the silver screen, has kept audiences

eagerly waiting for its release today. Directed by Padmasri, the film is produced by Dil Raju and Sirish under Sri Venkateshwara Creations. The film has actress Drishya Raghunath playing Sagar's romantic inter-

est. Talking about Dil Raju producing the film, Sagar says, "To be working as part of a film that is being produced by him is so gratifying. He believes in pushing films with great content and his faith in us was a great morale booster. Dil Raju sir loved the script and said it'll lead me to even better projects in the future." A dialogue from the trailer that says, 'Marriage is for safe sex' has been garnering a lot of controversy. Sagar exp-

lains, "Taking one dia-

logue out of context makes less sense and more noise. I'd say wait for the film and when you see the scenes that follow next, it'll all make beautiful sense."

Sagar had played big roles in serials, especially memorable and lovable ones. On being asked why he'd want to shift from a place like that, he replies, "I've done good, big roles on TV, I thought there won't be bigger roles than that, and felt saturated at a point. I needed change and so looked to working in films. My hunger to play a different one led to Shaadi Mubarak'.

Talking about his costar, he says, "We wanted an actress who'd give out 'girl-next-door' vibes. That's when we liked Drishya's work. She worked for more than a month on her role, language, and diction as part of a workshop."

His next, he says, is a "spy action thriller being directed by Gautham Menon's assistant director."

BHEESHMA DIRECTOR

duped of Rs 60K, speaks up

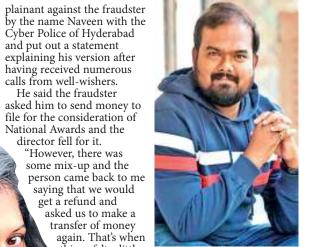
Venky Kudumula is the latest victim of online phishing. The director said he lost Rs 63,600 but luckily realised that he was being duped before he could lose more. Venky even

lodged a

com-

and put out a statement explaining his version after having received numerous calls from well-wishers. He said the fraudster asked him to send money to file for the consideration of National Awards and the director fell for it. 'However, there was some mix-up and the person came back to me saying that we would get a refund and

asked us to make a transfer of money again. That's when things felt a little fishy and I dug deeper into the bank details. It was supposed to be the account of a film corporation but it was an indi-



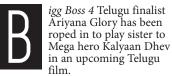
vidual's account," he wrote in the statement.

Since this incident happened, Venky Kudumula trolled for being naïve and not knowing the basics of the National Awards process.

social media to reveal his bait' but haven't we all been there? Should we keep silent so that no one knows or should we raise our voice so that it doesn't happen to anyone else?..... Many friends suggested I should not file a complaint and asked me to keep quiet. But should I? No. I went ahead and filed a complaint just to make sure that fraudsters don't repeat this with anyone else from our industry or anyone outside as well," he wrote in the statement.

The Chalo director concluded saying, "Poga thraguta, madhyam sevinchute kaadhu apramatham ga lekapovadam kuda hanikarame.. (It's not just smoking and drinking that are injurious to health, not being vigilant is, too)."

Bigg Boss fame Ariyana Glory has her hands full



The film is said to be a sportsbased drama, which will be directed by Sreedhar Seepana and produced by People Media Factory and Abhishek Agarwal Arts, presented by GA2 Pictures.

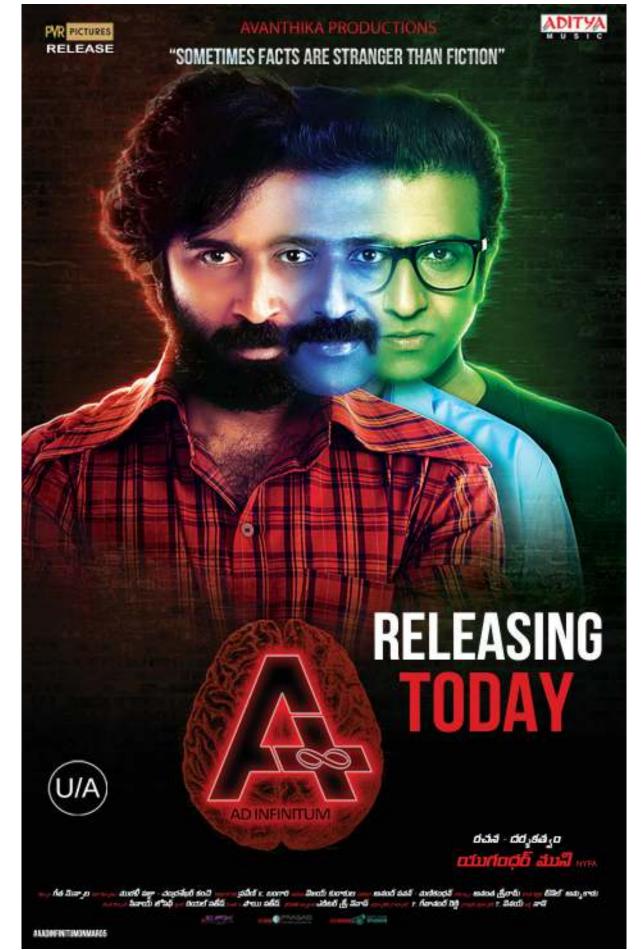
Director Sreedhar Seepana, sources say, cast Ariyana after loving her candid demeanour in the reality show Bigg Boss 4 Telugu. Recently during a media interac-tion, Ariyana Glory said, "I am enjoying this fame and recognition. I have just started shooting and it's an exciting role that offers a lot of scope to perform."

Kalyaan Dhev, the son-inlaw of Megastar Chiranjeevi, made his debut with the romantic and family entertainer Vijetha that released



in 2018. Currently, he is also working for another Telugu film Super

Meanwhile, Ariyana Glory will be essaying another crucial role in the young actor Raj Tarun-starrer upcoming untitled film under Srinivas Gavireddy.





Windies skipper Kieron Pollard reacts after he hits Akila Dananjaya for six sixes in an over

Pollard hits 6 sixes in an over

AFP ■ COOLIDGE

West Indies captain Kieron Pollard on Wednesday became only the third man to hit six sixes in an International over in his team's four-wicket T20 victory over Sri Lanka.

The feat came in the sixth over of a bizarre West Indies innings, bowled by off-spinner Akila Dananjaya who moments earlier in his previous over had been celebrating taking a hat-trick.

Pollard followed in the footsteps of South Africa's Herschelle Gibbs against the Netherlands in the 2007 World

Cup and India's Yuvraj Singh, who also achieved the feat in the 2007 T20 World Cup against England.

Pollard was eventually out for 38 off 11 balls as the West Indies chased 132 to win at the Coolidge Cricket Ground, reaching their target in the 14th over when Jason Holder clobbered his side's 13th six. "I felt I could hit six sixes after the third one," said 33-

year-old Pollard. "Once I had five sixes I knew I had the bowler on the back foot. He was going around the wicket and it was difficult for him. I just told

Sri Lanka skipper Angelo Mathews hailed his opposite number. "Pollard as we know is very destructive," Mathews told the post-match presenta-

"What I told Akila was to go for his wicket even if he gets hit for six sixes. If he miscued one we could have got him out. Unfortunately it didn't hap-

Only eight men have hit six sixes in an over in all forms of cricket with fellow West Indian Garfield Sobers the first to do so in an English county game in 1968.

India ended the day at 24 for 1 with wily old James Anderson (5-5-0-1) accounting for an out-of-form Shubman Gill (0). Rohit Sharma (8 batting, 34 balls) and Cheteshwar Pujara (15 batting, 36 balls) were holding fort for the home

with Jonny Bairstow.

PTI AHMEDABAD

ngland's batsmen lost the battle of both mind and

the momentum to India with Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin calling the shots on the

opening day of the fourth and final Test here on Thursday.

crossed the 200-run mark but a total of 205 in 75.5 overs was

certainly not what Joe Root had expected when he called it

right at the toss on a day which would have ideally been best for

but the pitch was far from being a minefield that some of

the England batsmen save Ben

Stokes (55, 121 balls) made it

Ravichandran Ashwin (19.5-4-

47-3) and Washington Sundar

(7-1-14-1) toyed with the

already messed up minds, clue-

less on how to deal with the

45-2) also played his part to

perfection with the semi-new

and old ball, hurrying the bats-

men with sheer pace as he did

Mohammed Siraj (14-2-

For India, spinners Axar tel (26-7-68-4),

out to be.

There was turn and bounce

After five innings, England

skills in yet another shoddy performance to surrender

A cursory look at the England line-up, loaded with an extra batsman, will reveal that four — Stokes, Bairstow (28, 67 balls), Dan Lawrence (46 off 74 balls) and Ollie Pope (29 off 87 balls) got starts but failed miserably on the conversion part.

The others came in and went without breaking a bead of sweat. It was as if already in their minds, they were playing on a track they thought would turn square.

Stokes was a cut above the rest both in defence and offence before a moment's indecision cost him his wicket.

Washington angled one in



Axar, Ashwin undo Poms batting graft

Axar Patel celebrates with his Indian teammates after he takes wicket of England batsman on Day 1 of 4th Test

4th Test. Day 2 STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

and Stokes was on backfoot after initially trying to come forward preempting an off-break. The ball didn't turn and hit the back leg with clear indication of crashing into the leg stump. Stokes' dismissal, after a

good show, upset the team's rhythm just when it was looking to redeem itself after a poor first session.

Similarly for Lawrence, who was ready to play the attacking game, and Pope, intent on using his footwork to defend while negating the turn. There was always going to be a delivery with their name written all over it.

In case of Lawrence, he was beaten by the away turn when he danced down the track only to be stumped. In case of Pope, the strate-

that kept him on course ought about his downfall. He came out when Ashwin

changed the line of his delivery, dropping it a bit short and the attempted flick went between his legs and Gill had a reflex catch at forward short leg.
Patel, whose straight delivbatsmen, was again menacing in the first session with Siraj giving him good support. Stokes and Bairstow, during

eries have scarred the English

their 48-run stand, showed that if one can trust their defences, batting wasn't impos-

sible. Both played the spinners close to their body on most occasions and especially on the front-foot.

But on a track like this, no batsman would feel completely set and that's what happened with both Bairstow and Stokes.

Archer out due to elbow injury **PTI** ■ AHMEDABAD

England pacer Jofra Archer was not considered for the fourth Test due to a persisting elbow injury and some of the squad members including Ben Stokes also have an upset stomach, the ECB said on

Thursday.
Archer had missed the second Test in Chennai due to the same issue.

"Jofra Archer is not playing in this Test match due to his ongoing right elbow issue. The ECB medical team will provide an update in due course," read an update from the England cricket board.

"Ben Stokes has had an upset stomach, the same issue that has affected other members the touring party. It is not expected to keep him off the field," it said.

Archer returned to play the third Test in which he picked up a wicket.

Sindhu, Srikanth & 2 | SA appoint others in Swiss quarters

Thomas Rouxel.



PTI BASEL

Olympic Silver medallist P V Sindhu and former champion Kidambi Srikanth advanced to the quarterfinals of the singles competition along with two other Indians at the Swiss Open badminton tournament here on Thursday.

While Sindhu and Śrikanth Jayaram and last edition's runners-up B Sai Praneeth too dished out superlative performances to make it to the lasteight in the Super 300 event, the first tournament in the extended Olympic qualification period.

It was double delight for young Satwiksairaj Rankireddy also as he progressed to the quarterfinals in both the mixed doubles and men's doubles competitions with respective part- and Freja Ravn in the women's ners Ashwini Ponnappa and doubles second-round.

Bavuma gets limited-Chirag Shetty.
World champion Sindhu hardly broke any sweat, beating USA's Iris Wang 21-13, 21-14 in women's singles, while former world number one Srikenth

overs charge, Elgar to lead in Tests

Johannesburg: Cricket South world number one Srikanth notched up a 21-10, 14-21, 21-Africa on Thursday appointed Temba Bavuma, who is rather 14 victory over world number 50 inexperienced for the role, and Dean Elgar as the national Jayaram eked out a hardteam captains for limited overs fought 21-18, 17-21, 21-13 and Tests respectively.

against third seed Dane Rasmus Praneeth, an Olympic hopeful, later saw off Spain's Pablo Abian 21-12, 21-17 to join others in last eight. Satwik and Ashwini, who had reached the semifinals at Toyota Thailand Open Super

1000 in January, defeated the Indonesian combination of Rinov Rivaldy and Pitha Haningtyas Mentari 21-18, 21-16 in a mixed doubles secondround match. Satwik and Chirag, ranked 10th in the world, then dashed the challenge of Indonesia's

Rambitan 21-17, 20-22, 21-17 to also make it to the last eight. However, Sourabh Verma had a rough day as he lost 17-21, 14-21 to Vitidsarn to crash out of the men's singles event.

Ashwini Ponnappa and N Sikki Reddy too were ousted after losing 11-21, 15-21 to Denmark's Amalie Magelund

new Captains

In a statement, CSA Director of Cricket Graeme Smith thanked Quinton de Kock for leading the side in what are tumultuous times for South African cricket. Both Bavuma and Elgar take over from de Kock, who led the team temporarily.

"We are grateful to Quinton for the work he has put in as captain of the team in the limited overs formats and are indebted to him for stepping up while the National Selection Panel continued its search for the Test captain," said the former South

Pramudya Kusumawardana and Africa captain. Yeremia Erich Yoche Yacob Bavuma has played 44 Tests, six ODIs and 8 T20s for South Africa while opening batsman Elgar has played 67 Tests and eight ODIs. Bavuma will lead the Proteas in the 2021 and 2022 T20 World Cups as well as the World Cup in 2023. Elgar will take the reins into the next cycle of the World Test Championship. PTI

Siraj enjoyed Root's dismissal

 $P^{\text{erfect execution brings}}_{\text{with it an inherent satisfac-}}$ tion which India speedster Mohammed Siraj felt after dismissing England captain Joe Root on the opening day of the fourth Test on Thursday.

Root was trapped before the wicket by Siraj, who bowled a beautiful inswinger which would have hit the middle and leg stump.

"I wanted to set Root up bowling away going deliveries. And then I thought during the start of a new over, I should bring one back in. I could execute it as I had planned and it gave me great satisfaction. Mazaa aa gaya (It was fun)," Siraj said about dismissal.



Similarly, he had done his homework on Jonny Bairstow's apparent weakness against in-coming deliveries. The in-cutter that got Bairstow was bowled at more than 146 kmph. "Bairstow, I wasn't bowl-

ing him at a lot of pace at the start. ...But whatever footages

I have seen of him, he gets out to in-swinging deliveries. So I wanted to bowl in one area and bring it back consistently and it worked," he said.

His skipper Virat Kohli on the day mostly used him in

short bursts and the plan was to hit one area consistently in order to create pressure. "Since the time of Ranji Trophy, we learnt one thing that we have to bowl good areas and especially one area

without trying too many

things. It's all about being "Virat *bhai* just told me to bowl one area and try build the pressure. Ishant bhai also said that don't try too many things because when you build pressure, then automat-

ically you get wickets."

Nagal stuns world No 22 Garin



of his career when he stunned seed second Cristian Garin of Chile in straight sets to enter the quarterfinals of the Argentina Open

Nagal, ranked 150, prouced high-class

tennis on Wednesday night to as she was ousted from the Nagal registered Chilean rival, who is ranked here on Thursday. way above at the 22nd spot in the ATP chart.

Nagal will play Spain's Albert Řamos-Vinolas, in what will be the Indian's maiden quarterfinal appearance at the ATP Tour level

Ramos-Vinolas had defeated Domnik Koepfer of Germany 7-5, 6-4.

SANIA OUSTED

Sania Mirza's first tournament in more than a year ended with a semifinal defeat

register an impressive 6-4, 6- Qatar Total Open along with India's Sumit 3 second round win over his her partner Andreja Klepac,

> partner lost 5-7, 6-2, 5-10 to America's Nicole Melichar and Dutch player Demi Schuurs in one hour and 28 minutes.

Sania and Klepac split \$10000 and earned 185 ranking points each. Since Sania was not defending much points, it will help her improve her ranking.

Sania will break back into top-200 and is expected to climb to the 177th spot from

KARACHI: The Pakistan Super League was on Thursday postponed with immediate effect after three more cricketers tested positive for Covid-19, taking the total number of cases in the T20 event to seven and prompting the cricket board to announce an inquiry into the fiasco. Out of the seven cases, six are players while one is a support staff member. PCB CEO Wasim Khan said an inquiry will be conducted to understand what went wrong.

PSL POSTPONED AFTER 3 MORE TEST +VE

PANGHAL LOSES IN BOXAM QUARTERS

NEW DELHI: World championship Silver-medallist Amit Panghal (52kg) on Thursday bowed out of the 35th Boxam International Boxing Tournament after being upstaged by European Games champion Gabriel Escobar in the quarterfinals. The Olympic-bound Panghal, went down in a split verdict to make a surprisingly early exit from the tournament.

SHARATH KAMAL LOSES IN PRE-QUARTERS **DOHA:** Indian challenge at the World Table Tennis Contender series ended after veteran Sharath Kamal

suffered a loss to world No 7 Lin Yun-Ju of Chinese Taipei in the men's singles pre-quarterfinals here on Thursday. The 38-year-old Indian suffered a 6-11, 4-11, 8-11 defeat against Lin. Earlier, Manika Batra and Sreeja Akula also lost their respective final qualifying round matches in the women's singles category.

LIVERPOOL TO PLAY LEIPZIG IN BUDAPEST

Nyon: Liverpool and Leipzig are going to Budapest for a second time in the Champions League round of 16 next week. UEFA confirmed on Thursday that Liverpool's home second-leg game will also be at Puskas Arena next Wednesday.

NEERAJ IN LINE FOR BRONZE

ROME: India's Greco Roman wrestler Neeraj kept himself in contention of a Bronze medal in the 63kg but four of his compatriots faded on the opening day of the UWW Ranking Series event on Thursday. Neeraj began by losing his quarterfinal 1-4 to Sultan Aseetuly but since the Kazakshtan's wrestler reached the final, he got a repechage round. Making the most of the chance, Neeraj defeated Russia's Aleksei Tadykin 7-3 to book himself a slot in the Bronze play-off.

LEIPZIG REACH GERMAN CUP SEMIS

LEIPZIG: Yussuf Poulsen and Hwang Hee-chan netted second-half goals as RB Leipzig beat Wolfsburg 2-0 in Wednesday's German Cup quarter-final in a tense battle between the in-form Bundesliga sides. After Poulsen opened the scoring, South Korea striker Hwang came off the bench to hit a late second goal and seal a semi-final berth alongside Borussia Dortmund and second-tier Holstein Kiel.

LILLE WIN TO STAY AHEAD OF PSG

PARIS: Canada forward Jonathan David scored two late goals as Lille beat Marseille 2-0 to stay top of the French league. David netted in the 90th minute and again two minutes into injury time on Wednesday. The northern side remains two points ahead of defending champion Paris Saint-Germain, which won 1-0 away

24 HOURS OF LE MANS POSTPONED

PARIS: The 24 Hours of Le Mans has been postponed from its original dates in June until August in the hope fans will be able to attend, organisers announced on Thursday. The race, which was held behind closed doors due to the coronavirus pandemic last year, was scheduled for June 12-13, but has been pushed back until August 21-22.

Dhoni in Chennai; CSK camp from Mar 9

Chennai Super Kings captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni has landed here to take part in the team's training camp likely to begin on March 9 in the lead-up to the upcoming season of the Indian Premier League. The former India captain arrived here late on Wednesday and will serve a fiveday quarantine.

CSK tweeted a picture of Dhoni at the airport and wrote: "Thalai-Vaa! Smile with the Mass(k) on! Super Night! #DenComing #WhistlePodu #Yellove?

Former India batsman Ambati Rayudu also reached Chennai on Wednesday while the Tamil Nadu players in the squad will be joining a little later.



"First #Dencoming of the summer from across the border is Manavaadu Bahubali!!! #Yellove #WhistlePodu," CSK posted with a photo of Rayudu.

The camp is likely to get underway from March 9, CSK CEO K S Viswanathan said, adding the players who are available would take part in it.

Yeah...The camp is likely to start from March 9. Whoever is available would take part in the training sessions," he said.

'The players will undergo five-day quarantine before they start training. Also, they will have to return three negative tests...," he added.

The Indian players in the CSK will be a part of the camp, he said, adding they would be arriving in batches.

Barca return to Copa del Rey final



AFP BARCELONA

Barcelona needed extra-time to reach the Copa del Rey final on Wednesday, with a 3-2 aggregate win over Sevilla com-

ing just two days after a police raid on the club and the arrest of their former president.

Having trailed 2-0 from the first leg, Danish international Martin Braithwaite hit the cru-

cial goal in the fifth minute of extra-time with a diving header off a Jordi Alba cross.

Gerard Pique had equalised in the fourth minute of stoppage time with virtually the last play of the game to save Barca.

The veteran international headed in at the near post after a fine cross from Antoine Griezmann.

That was after Ousmane Dembele, who scored in the 2-0 win at Sevilla in La Liga at the weekend, had given the 30-time Spanish Cup winners a 12th-minute lead in the second leg with a right-foot drive from outside the area

Sevilla could have killed the game off in the 73rd minute in earning a title."

to deny Barca their place in the final for a 42nd time. They were awarded a penal-

ty when Lucas Ocampos was brought down by Oscar Mingueza. However, Ocampos saw his tame right-foot effort from the spot saved by Marc-Andre ter Stegen. Flagging Sevilla were then reduced to 10 men in injury time

when Brazilian Fernando was red-carded for a foul on Francisco Trincao. 'The team deserved to qualify," said Barca coach Ronald

Koeman. "This is a very important result for the club, for the players, and for me of course as well. This is an important step

Man Utd, Leicester drop more points

Manchester United were left a huge 14 points behind Premier League leaders Manchester City as Crystal Palace held them to yet another goalless draw on Wednesday.

Park was United's third successive goalless draw in all competitions ahead of Sunday's Manchester derby against City, who are on a record-breaking 21-game winning streak. Elsewhere, third-placed Leicester had captain Kasper Schmeichel to thank for a point in a 1-1 draw at Burnley.

The stalemate at a foggy Selhurst

they suffered a shock 1-0 loss to bottomof-the-table Sheffield United, who held on for the final half an hour with 10 men. A point in south London left second-placed Man United just one ahead of Leicester, with the main aim now for Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's side to cling on to a top-four place that will secure

Aston Villa missed the chance to move

to within two points of the top four as

Champions League football next season. "We have to do much better, we have to risk more in attack to create more chances," United midfielder Nemanja Matic, who almost broke the deadlock with a deflected shot, told Sky Sports.

"We are Manchester United, we have to win this kind of game. On Sunday we have a big game against Manchester City. We have to refocus for that." Leicester's challenge for a return to

the Champions League next season has been badly hit by injuries to key players, with Chelsea, Liverpool and Everton all able to close in on the Foxes — who have not won in their last three games — when they are in action on Thursday.

MILAN SALVAGE POINT

Franck Kessie scored a 97thminute penalty to rescue a 1-1 draw for AC Milan at home to Udinese on Wednesday, giving Serie A leaders Inter Milan the chance to pull six points clear at the top.

Rodrigo Becao's second-half header at the San Siro completely deceived Milan goalkeeper G i a n l u i g i Donnarumma and Stefano Pioli's fal-tering side looked destined for a third defeat in four games. But a needless handball from Udinese substitute Jens Stryger Larsen offered Milan a lifeline, with Ivorian international Kessie

converting the penalty with the final kick of the match. Elsewhere, Robin Gosens, Jose Luis

Palomino, Luis Muriel, Josip Ilicic Āleksei and Miranchuk all scored for Atalanta in a 5-1 rout of bottom club Crotone.

