

ANALYSIS 7
WE SHOULD CELEBRATE
INDEPENDENCE MONTH

MONEY 8
28 PC GST LIKELY
ON GROSS REVENUE

SPORTS 12
INDIA WOMEN EYE SERIES
SWEEP AGAINST SRI LANKA

HYDERABAD, MONDAY, JUNE 27, 2022; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



DIVYANSHA KAUSHIK
THRILLED TO BE A
PART OF RAMA RAO
ON DUTY

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DESTRUCTION EVERYWHERE, HELP SCARCE AFTER AFGHANISTAN QUAKE

When the ground heaved from last week's earthquake in Afghanistan, Nahim Gul's stone-and-mud house collapsed on top of him. He clawed through the rubble in the pre-dawn darkness, choking on dust as he searched for his father and two sisters. He doesn't know how many hours of digging passed before he caught a glimpse of their bodies under the ruins. They were dead. Now, days after a 6 magnitude quake that devastated a remote region of southeast Afghanistan and killed at least 1,150 people and injured hundreds more, Gul sees destruction everywhere and help in short supply. His niece and nephew were also killed in the quake, crushed by the walls of their house.

PRINCE CHARLES GOT SUITCASE OF CASH FROM QATAR FOR CHARITY

Prince Charles, the heir to Britain's throne, allegedly accepted a suitcase full of cash as a charitable donation from the former Prime Minister of Qatar, according to a UK media report on Sunday. The Sunday Times' says the suitcase was one of three bundles of cash given as charitable donations which the 73-year-old received from Sheikh Hamad bin Jassim bin Jaber Al Thani. The three lots, which reportedly totalled Euro 3 million, were handed to the prince personally between 2011 and 2015. Each payment was reportedly deposited into the accounts of the Prince of Wales's Charitable Fund (PWCF), a low-profile grant-making entity which funds projects close to the royal's heart and his country estate in Scotland.

IRAN LAUNCHES ROCKET INTO SPACE AMID NUCLEAR TALKS

Iranian state television said Sunday that Tehran had launched a solid-fueled rocket into space, drawing a rebuke from Washington ahead of the expected resumption of stalled talks over Tehran's tattered nuclear deal with world powers. It's unclear when or where the rocket was launched, but the announcement came after satellite photos showed preparations at Imam Khomeini Spaceport in Iran's rural Semnan province, the site of Iran's frequent failed attempts to put a satellite into orbit. State-run media aired dramatic footage of the blastoff against the backdrop of heightened tensions over Tehran's nuclear program, which is racing ahead under decreasing international oversight.

AROUND 3 LAKH PILGRIMS HAVE REGISTERED FOR AMARNATH YATRA

Around three lakh pilgrims have registered so far for the annual Amarnath Yatra which is scheduled to begin on June 30 amid unprecedented security arrangements in south Kashmir Himalayas, officials said on Sunday. Shri Amarnathji Shrine Board (SASB), which manages the annual pilgrimage, commenced the registration of pilgrims for the 43-day yatra on April 11 through 566 designated branches of various banks across the country, in addition to the facility on its website. Registrations will continue till the end of the yatra.

TS candidates who lost local tag to approach HC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The nearly 3,000 candidates who had applied for Group-1 posts in Telangana and were rejected by the Telangana State Public Commission (TSPSC) saying that they are non-locals as they have studied a year or two outside the state are planning to approach the HC.

The number of these candidates according to officials is 9,000 but there are students from AP also on the list. These students have already approached the TSPSC and they were told that the TSPSC is following the presidential order.

After submitting representations to the Telangana Secretariat and politicians like Harish Rao the students decided to file a petition in the High Court.

One of the affected students, Sai Krishna, who is preparing for UPSC exams and other exams said, "We belong to Telangana. My father is a Sub Inspector and my



mother is a government teacher. Some of us belonging to Sainik School Korukonda had pursued school education (from Class IV to VII) for some years in schools in undivided Andhra Pradesh which are now part of AP, or elsewhere and thus became non-locals in Telangana."

Our fear is that we will become ineligible for all Group-1 openings simply because we have studied a year or two outside the state. Non-local candidates are eligible only for a meagre five per cent of jobs as per the notification, he added.

2

BYPOLLS BJP wrests Rampur, Azamgarh from SP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/LUCKNOW/AGARTALA

Consolidating its position, the BJP wrested high-profile Rampur and Azamgarh Lok Sabha seats in Uttar Pradesh from the Samajwadi Party and won three assembly seats, including that of Chief Minister Manik Saha, in Tripura in by-election results announced on Sunday. While the AAP lost Punjab's Sangrur parliamentary constituency, vacated by Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann, to Shiromani Akali Dal (Amritsar) leader Simranjit Singh Mann, it was able to retain Rajinder Nagar assembly seat in Delhi that party leader Raghav Chadha had given up after he was elected to Rajya Sabha. The Congress won a seat each in Tripura, where it opened its account after drawing nil in the last assembly polls, and Jharkhand, while the ruling YSR Congress emerged victorious in Atmakuru Assembly seat in Andhra Pradesh. Counting of votes was held on Sunday for the June 23 by-election to three Lok Sabha and seven assembly seats spread across five states and Delhi. In Uttar Pradesh, the opposition Samajwadi Party suffered a major setback as it lost to the BJP in its strongholds of Azamgarh and Rampur Lok Sabha seats, vacated by SP chief Akhilesh Yadav and party stalwart Azam Khan after they were elected to the Assembly.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Tithi: Chaturdashi: Jun 27 03:26 AM
to Jun 28 05:52 AM

Nakshatram:
Rohini: Jun 26 01:06 PM
to Jun 27 04:02 PM

Mrigashirsha: Jun 27 04:02 PM
to Jun 28 07:05 PM

Rahukalam: 7:25 AM to 9:03 AM

Yamagandam: 10:41 AM to 12:19 PM

Varjyam: 10:21 PM to 12:09 AM

Gulika: 1:56 PM to 3:34 PM

Amritakalam: 12:27 PM
to 02:14 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy

Temp: 29°C

Humidity: 81%

Sunrise: 5:44 AM

Sunset: 6:54 PM

Updated: JUNE 26, 2022 5:00 PM



Resignations worry TRS

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

Ahead of the Assembly elections, the TRS leadership is worried about leaders leaving the party one after the other.

The TRS leadership is more worried about the erstwhile Khammam district as many prominent leaders are leaving the party. Interestingly, the leaders who are resigning from the TRS are showing more interest in joining the Congress than the BJP.

The TRS leadership also thinks that the Congress will be the main opposition in the coming Assembly elections.

Compared to other districts, the TRS is weak in Khammam district. Former Aswaraopet MLA Tati Venkateswarlu left the TRS and joined the Congress. Along with Venkateswarlu, Karakagudem ZPTC Kantha Rao also resigned from the TRS and joined the Congress.

According to sources some more



senior TRS leaders are also likely to leave the TRS and join the Congress. Some TRS leaders said that it was better to leave the party before the elections.

There are two to three leaders in many Assembly constituencies who are in the run for tickets. But only one can get the ticket. So if they continue in the party may backstab the official candidate.

If such leaders leave the party competition will come down and there will be no possibility of back-

stabbing the party's official candidate.

In the erstwhile Adilabad district, Manchiryal ZPTC Chairperson N. Bhagyalakshmi and her husband former Chennur MLA N. Odelu resigned from the TRS and joined the Congress.

Two days ago the daughter of late Congress leader P. Janardhan Reddy, GHMC Corporator Vijayareddy, also resigned from the TRS and joined the Congress.

2

BJP'S COUNTDOWN CLOCK ANGERS TRS, THREATENS TO HIT BACK

The BJP's countdown clock displayed at the BJP's state office's main gate here has provoked the TRS. The TRS warned the BJP will face serious consequences if it fails to remove the countdown clock. The BJP put up the countdown clock on Saturday displaying the message 'Saalu Dora—Selavu Dora' and the days and time left for the TRS government. TRS Whip Balka Suman warned that they will display Prime Minister Modi's digital screen boards across Telangana with wands of sandals. Suman said that the countdown has started for the BJP and not for the TRS. Suman asked the BJP to tell whether any political party will display such digital screen boards at their offices.

2

KTR goes to Delhi to attend Sinha's nomination

○ TRS MPs to sign in as proposers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRS Working President IT Minister KT Ramarao has gone to New Delhi on Sunday night to attend the nomination filing function of Opposition presidential candidate Yashwanth Sinha on Monday, that is, June 27. TRS MPs Nama Nageshwar Rao, G. Ranjith Reddy, KR Suresh Reddy, BB Patil, Venkatesh Netha, and K. Prabhakar Reddy accompanied KTR. KTR and the TRS MPs will attend the nomi-



nation filing function on Monday. The TRS released a press note regarding this on Sunday night. It may be recalled that the TRS which did not declare its support for Yashwanth Sinha formally may use this opportunity to declare its support by attending the nomination filing function. Actually, the TRS had thought of staying away from the opposition presidential candidate as the Congress had played an active role in his nomination.

Moderate rains likely in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast low to moderate rainfall in some areas of Telangana during the next three days. There will be scattered thundershowers in some districts. The IMD has sounded a yellow alert for the state on Sunday, Monday and June 30. Surface winds are likely to be westerlies with speeds of around 8 to 14 kmph. The maximum and minimum temperatures are likely to be around 33°C and 23°C respectively. The maximum temperatures are expected to be between 34°C and 36°C in Telangana.

2

‘KCR is enough to take on Modi’

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Countering the comments of Telangana BJP affairs in-charge Tarun Chugh that Prime Minister Modi's Hyderabad public meeting on July 3 will become a turning point in Telangana politics, the TRS on Sunday said that Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao is senior to Prime Minister Modi in politics.

It is certain that national politics will change after Modi's public meeting in Hyderabad. The TRS warned that the Telangana BJP would face the fate of West Bengal BJP. The TRS said that BJP leaders have no political experience and asked them to explain where TRS



leaders looted the public.

Addressing the media along with MLAs KP Vivekananda, Muta Gopal, Dr Methuku Anand, Nomula Bhagath and MLC Dande Vittal on Sunday at the TRSLP office, Government Whip Balka Suman said that Modi has been giving priority to toppling non-BJP state governments across the nation. He said that the BJP had

toppled the non-BJP governments of Karnataka, Madhya Pradesh, and Goa and now it is trying to topple the Maharashtra government.

He alleged that all goods are being imported from abroad through Modi's proxy Adani. It has been proved that Modi's foreign tours were undertaken for Adani. Suman said that the people are demanding that Modi step down. Modi has been threatening Opposition leaders across the nation with IT and ED.

He demanded that the BJP which is going to organise its National Executive Committee (NEC) meeting in Hyderabad should explain what it has done for Telangana.

2

Admit us in Indian colleges Medical students sit on hunger strike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Medical students, who were evacuated from war-torn Ukraine, sat on a hunger strike at Jantar Mantar on Sunday demanding admission in the country's medical colleges as a one-time measure.

They said there are approximately 12,000 students, barring those in the final year, and as there are at least 600 medical colleges in the country, each institution needed to accommodate only around 20 students.

Around 350 people participated in the protest. Of these, 35 students from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Himachal Pradesh,



Punjab, Uttarakhand, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan sat on a hunger strike from 10 am to 5 pm, Parents' Association of Ukraine Medical Students (PAUMS) president R B Gupta said.

"We also held a march at Jantar Mantar. We want the government's help in accommodating our children.

2

‘Long Covid in children akin to adults, but no reason to worry’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Noting that long Covid manifests itself in children similar to adults, experts on Sunday said there is no need to panic but stressed on early treatment.

Children infected with the SARS-CoV-2 virus can experience symptoms of long Covid lasting at least two months, according to a study published in The Lancet Child & Adolescent Health journal recently. The largest study to date of long Covid symptoms in children up to 14 years used national level sampling of kids in Denmark and matched positive cases with a control group having no prior history of the infection.

According to Dr. Col. Vijay Dutta, senior consultant in Internal Medicine, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre, long Covid problems in children is a well-known issue.

"We are encountering long Covid syndrome in children similar to adults. They can have multiple presentations, like in the adult population we have involvement of the respiratory system, patients are experiencing recurrent pneumonia, the immunity is lower, so they are experiencing GI infections, such as chronic diarrhoea and weight loss," he said.

"Due to lowered immunity, they have symptoms like any rheumatological disorder overlap syndromes and other symptoms which are

commonly seen in the immunocompromised pediatric age group. They are now being commonly encountered in children who have suffered from Covid. Long Covid is now a well-recognised problem across the world," Dutta added.

Dr Krishan Chugh, Director and Head of the Paediatrics Department, Fortis Memorial Research Institute, said there was no need to panic.

Citing the Lancet study, he said in all three groups of children -- less than three years, four to 11 years, and 12-14 years -- those who tested positive in RT-PCR had higher chances of having at least one symptom at the second and third month compared to the children

that remained indoors.

"However, in majority of the children, these symptoms were mild. Interestingly, the quality of life related to emotional and social functioning was better in those who had Covid compared to controls in the older children age group," he said. The most commonly reported symptoms among children in the 0-3 year category were mood swings, rashes and stomach aches, the study said.

Among four to 11 years old, the most commonly reported symptoms were trouble remembering or concentrating and rashes besides mood swings.

2



Monday Mirchi

DONE AND DUSTED WITH GHMC

One heavy spell of rain is enough to wash out the claims, be they tall or genuine, of any corporation these days regarding the soundness of civic infrastructure. The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation is no exception. There are very few IAS and IPS officers left in GHMC, compared to the situation a couple of years ago. A little bird told us that most of these officers also want to leave the corporation as they are done and dusted with it. While the corridors of power are yet to move the file related to an IPS officer who wants to move out of the corporation, some IAS officers have expressed their willingness to become district collectors and bid goodbye to the civic body. Officials are discussing the irony of how some of those who want to return to Hyderabad 'miss' GHMC. With the onset of monsoon, and looming threat of viral diseases, it would be surprising if any moves are made. Nonetheless, Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao hand-held Lokesh Kumar and made him inaugurate the Khaitlapur flyover last week. While shutterbugs captured shy Lokesh Kumar, the buzz is that the GHMC Commissioner might end up being the long-standing officers in the same post.

EXCEPTION TO THE GAG ORDER

After a long hiatus, some tongue-tied babus in TS have started 'speaking' to the media, though it is more in the nature of an exception to the existing gag order. All of them are speaking on only one common topic: How to prepare for exams? A little bird told us that officials are allowed to talk to scribes only about what went into their cracking civil services exam and how to study, considering that the state government has released notifications for various examinations. Otherwise, the order restraining babus from talking to the media is still in vogue. Bureaucrats now have a stock phrase as response when news hounds approach them for interviews: 'Keeping a low profile'. The larger, unanswered question is: From whom -- people or the higher-ups?

DON'T SAY IT WITH FLOWERS

Of late, some of the bureaucrats have done away with the culture of saying it with flowers and are offering saplings instead. At a recent FTICCI event, others went a step further. Krishna Bhaskar, Commissioner of Industries, got tributes, certificate, and a sapling for speaking at an event. The man, who had concluded his speech, rushed to the mic again to appreciate the gesture. He said, "In your honour, we will donate three dictionaries to the Government school students of Telangana. This is so much better than the culture of bouquet. This is exceptional, it has been on my mind always, but seeing it in reality for the first time""

NOT IN RACE FOR DGP POST

Top IPS officer from Andhra Pradesh

VSK Kaumudi, who had been on central deputation for quite some time, recently got a new posting at the Centre. The buzz is that this implies that he is no longer in the race for the AP DGP post. Going by his seniority, Kaumudi was expected to throw in his hat for the DGP post. While the government is yet to send a panel of names to the Centre, Kaumudi's name figured among the probables. Kaumudi, 1986-batch IPS officer, has been appointed as secretary (security) in the central cabinet secretariat. He served as a special secretary (internal security) in the Ministry of Home Affairs. Kaumudi, an IPS officer of Andhra Pradesh cadre, served previously as superintendent of police in the state and then as superintendent of police in the Central Bureau of Investigation. He has served also as additional director general in the railways and in the National Investigation Agency. The officer was also posted as an Additional DG in the Bureau of Police Research & Development, which is the think tank for the Indian Police.

NO 'LAV' FOR AP

It appears that Lav Agarwal, Andhra cadre IAS officer on central deputation, is in no mood to return to his parent state. The Centre has extended the tenure of Lav Agarwal, Joint Secretary, Department of Health & Family Welfare, up to August 28, 2023. Lav Agarwal, 49-year-old IAS officer and an engineer, has worked for various state governments before he was appointed to the Union Health Ministry in 2016. A 1996-batch officer, Agarwal is an IIT-Delhi graduate. He has been on central deputation for the last six years. "Given the extensions he has had till date, one should not be surprised if he gets a few more extensions and completes a decade in Delhi," quipped a senior bureaucrat.

THE 'LINK' BETWEEN PRAGATI BHAVAN AND RAJ BHAVAN

In the fight between the Pragati Bhavan and the Raj Bhavan, one IAS officer is believed to be playing a key role. This IAS officer is giving all inputs to the Governor against the state government. In the past, this IAS officer and a Minister had a dispute regarding one project. Finally the Minister got the upper hand over him. Since then, the IAS officer has been angry at the TRS government. The Pragati Bhavan-Raj Bhavan tussle came in handy for the IAS officer. The IAS officer worked as the Joint Collector in the combined Andhra Pradesh state and as Collector in the Telangana government upon bifurcation. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan has reposed a lot of confidence in the IAS officer. She is consulting him on issues relating to the state government. After dispute with the state government, that IAS officer has gone to the central government on deputation.

-Your's truly

MAHA POLITICAL CRISIS

Radisson Blu Guwahati closes new bookings till June 30

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Luxury hotel Radisson Blu Guwahati, where dissident Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde is camping along with other MLAs from Maharashtra, has stopped all new bookings till June 30.

Dissident legislators of Shiv Sena, which heads the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) coalition government in Maharashtra, have been camping in Guwahati, around 2,700 km away from Mumbai, since June 22, resulting in a political crisis in the western state.

The five-star property's official website, through which one can make reservations, has stopped taking new requests till June 30.

"There are no available rooms for these dates. We recommend changing dates or selecting a different rate type when available," the website said when booking was attempted till the last day of this month.

Reservation is, however,



being allowed from July 1 on the website.

When contacted, a senior official of the hotel told PTI, "We are booked to capacity."

He, however, declined to comment anything related to the stay of the Maharashtra MLAs.

Sohail Choudhury, an IT professional based in Guwahati, wanted to book a few rooms at the hotel next week, but he was denied.

"I tried to book the hotel for

our guests coming to attend a function organised by my company. But they said no booking is available due to the stay of the MLAs. They do not even know when the rooms will be available next," he said.

It is learnt that around 70 rooms have been booked for the Maharashtra MLAs and their associates. The hotel has closed the restaurants, banquets and other facilities for other non-resident guests.

A senior officer of the

Guwahati Police confirmed the development and said that no new guest is being allowed to enter the complex.

"Only airline staffers are allowed to come in and go as they have agreement with the hotel," the official said.

Policemen, under the supervision of senior officers, were checking every guest coming into Radisson Blu. They returned general visitors in most cases. Apart from personnel from nearby Jalukbari

Police Station, paramilitary forces and dozens of jawans from reserve battalions and commando units of the Assam Police were keeping a strict vigil on the hotel, which is around 15 km from Lokpriya Gopinath Bordoloi International (LGBI) Airport in Guwahati.

The hotel, located at Gotanagar area near Jalukbari, has been turned into a complete fortress, and it was made inaccessible for the media.

A battery of journalists from across the country were present outside the hotel, located off NH-37 that passes through Guwahati city. The police have been stricter and non-compromising with the journalists who went there to cover the political development. Radisson Blu Guwahati, opened in 2014, is the first five-star hotel in the Northeast. It was built on one side of the picturesque Deepor Beel lake and is located next to the Gauhati University and Assam Engineering College campuses.

Assam natives stage protest at Jantar Mantar demanding special package for flood-hit Silchar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

People hailing from Assam's Barak Valley and living in Delhi-NCR on Sunday staged a demonstration at Jantar Mantar demanding a special economic package for the rehabilitation of flood-hit Silchar, which has been severely affected by floods.

The protestors also sought a planned distribution of relief materials in the flood-hit areas.

People in highly affected areas such as Rangirkhari, National Highway Road, Link Road, Public School Road and Chengkuri Road are yet to get proper relief materials, including drinking water, they said.

Accusing the Cachar district administration of an "unplanned" rescue and relief

operation, Joydeep Samaddar, a native of Silchar living Delhi, said, "The rescue and relief operations are totally unplanned. Youth groups and NGOs were reaching out to stranded people in far-flung areas by risking their lives as they don't have life jackets and specialised boats for flood relief work." Rajib Mehera, who works at a private firm in Delhi, demanded from the central and state governments a special economic package for Silchar.

"The economy of Barak Valley has shattered. A major section of Silchar residents lost everything. The central and state governments should announce a special economic package as most of the residents, businessmen and others,

lost their lifetime savings," he said. Rabydyuti Biswas, a professor at the School of Planning and Architecture, said, "Many people are facing acute shortage of food and drinking water. Proper distribution of relief materials is the need of the hour." The flood situation in Assam improved on Sunday, although five more people died and over 22 lakh people continued to reel under the deluge across 25 districts, an official report said.

According to the daily bulletin of the Assam State Disaster Management Authority, the five people included four children and they drowned at different places of Barpeta, Cachar, Darrang, Karimganj and Morigaon districts.

It's our duty to ensure Sinha's win in Presidential poll: Pawar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The opposition parties will have to make every effort to ensure victory of Yashwant Sinha, their common candidate, in the presidential election, NCP chief Sharad Pawar said here on Sunday. Pawar said if one looked at the arithmetic for the presidential election, the situation was not as bad as it was made out to be, and the opposition parties will have to make concerted efforts to put up a good fight. The NCP chief's

remarks come at a time when some opposition parties such as YSRCP and BSP have already declared support for Droupadi Murmu, the BJP-led NDA nominee in the July 18 election. Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), which was part of the opposition grouping that selected Sinha as their common candidate, was veering towards Murmu, a tribal leader of Odisha from the Santhal community.

When we contest an election, we contest to win. When there

are two candidates, both cannot win. The situation is different for each candidate. This contest is about principles. We have selected Yashwant Sinha as our common candidate and it is our responsibility to make every effort to ensure his victory. Whatever be the result, we can talk about it later, Pawar said. Should we not contest elections if the numbers are stacked against us, Pawar shot back to questions on Murmu better poised to win the July 18 elections. The NCP chief said it was

Moderate rains...

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, heavy rains lashed some TS districts on Sunday. The IMD said that moderate to heavy rainfall occurred at some places in Kamareddy district and in Bhadradi Kothagudem, Medak, Komaram Bheem, Rangareddy, Mancherial, Nirmal, Nizama bad, Jagtial, Peddapalli, Kari mnagar, Rajanna Sircilla, Kamareddy, Medchal-Malkaj giri, Yadadri Bhuvanagiri, Khammam, Mahabubabad, Warangal and Mulugu districts.

Resignations worry...

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, there are speculations that a former MP from Khammam district, Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy, and a former minister from the erstwhile Mahbubnagar district, Juppally Krishna Rao, is also likely to quit the TRS.

After the resignation of leaders one after the other, the TRS leadership has woken up and has started taking corrective measures. TRS Working President Minister KT Rama Rao is holding talks with such leaders. KTR recently held talks with former minister Juppally Krishna Rao and former MP Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. After resigning from the TRS the comments made by former MLA Tati Venkateswarlu and Bhadradi Kittagudem TRS president Rega Kantha Rao have angered TRS leaders.

Kantha Rao said that unable

to face competition some TRS leaders are resigning from the party and it is not known from which party former MLA Jalagam Venkatrao will contest the next Assembly elections.

Former MLA Tati Venkateswarlu is a strong follower of former MP Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. Political observers think that the resignation of Tati Venkateswarlu from the TRS signals the exit of Ponguleti from the party.

In other districts also there are differences between TRS leaders and there are many unhappy leaders. Opposition parties like the Congress and the BJP are waiting for them.

Even though the Congress has lost two Assembly elections it has some strong leaders in all constituencies. After the resignation of some Congress leaders, second-line leaders were hoping to get party tickets in the next Assembly elections.

BJP's countdown...

Continued from page 1

"Will the BJP display such a digital screen board about Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao?" he asked. Balka Suman asked the BJP to explain whether it is KCR who has been helping everyone is the Dora or is it arrogant Modi? Quthbullahpur MLA KP Vivekanand demanded that the BJP should remove the countdown digital screen board as it is an insult to KCR. He warned the BJP that they will display Modi's digital screen boards with wands of sandals across Telangana.

Vikarabad MLA Dr Methuku Anand appealed to the people to display boards in every village showing the welfare schemes introduced by the TRS.

it is difficult to identify cases of long Covid in children.

"Long Covid syndrome or post-Covid syndrome refers to symptoms seen in children for at least two months post the Covid infection and this cannot be explained by another disease or ailment, though this problem is very well identified in adults. But it is very difficult to diagnose long Covid syndrome in children because there are a lot of factors which can affect and there are diseases which can present in a similar way and also the symptoms can vary," she opined.

'Long Covid in children...

Continued from page 1

Among 12-14 years old, fatigue, mood swings, and trouble remembering or concentrating were the main symptoms, it noted.

Most of the symptoms the infected children exhibited were the same that could occur in those forced to stay indoors without any contact outside, such as mood swings, Chugh said. The study included children infected during the Alpha and the Delta waves (first and the second waves) and not the present Omicron wave, which in all ways is milder, he added.

"So, while we have to recognise the children who have long Covid symptoms early and treat them, I think there is no cause for undue alarm. Children have braved Covid better than adults in every way. A meta analysis of several other studies in children on the same subject published in 'Nature' on June 23 shows a lower incidence of long Covid than quoted in the Lancet study," Chugh said.

Dr Meena J, a senior consultant in paediatrics and neonatology at Dwarka's Aakash Healthcare, however, differed with her counterparts and said

RTC's losses down by Rs 342.37 crore

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ever since VC Sajjanar took over as the Managing Director of TSRTC, its accumulated losses have come down by Rs 342.37 crore. The losses of the RTC now stand at Rs 1,986.86 crore during 2021-22.

Sajjanar who took over in December last year took corrective measures to put the RTC back on rails. Compared to the losses in 2020-21, its accumulated losses were down by Rs 342.37 crore.

Because of the corrective measures, there are changes in daily income and expenditure statement of the RTC. The RTC earned Rs 245 crore through other sources, which is Rs 100 crore more than the last year's income from other sources. The TSRTC conducting cargo services is one of the reasons. Moreover, the RTC is reducing its own fleet



of buses. In 2020-21, the RTC operated a fleet strength of over 9459 - 6544 are owned by the RTC while the remaining 2915 are under hire with the RTC. This year, the number of buses owned by the RTC is down by 226. It is predicted that the TSRTC losses would come down further during the current fiscal year. The RTC incurred Rs 1,228 crore expenditure towards

the expenses on diesel in 2021-22 as against only Rs 736 crore spent the previous year. Therefore, the RTC is collecting diesel cess from the commuters leading to long distance travelers coughing up Rs 170 more. Also, the RTC increased various surges. Currently, the RTC earns Rs 14 crore annually. During the fiscal year 2022-23, the RTC sustained Rs

129.95 crore losses in April. However, the loss has come down by Rs 22.76 crore in May. As the Covid-19 situation eased, the number of people availing themselves of the public transport facility has increased. During the pandemic situation, the RTC earned only Rs 3-4 crore per day. Currently, the daily revenue of the RTC increased to Rs 12-14 crore. The occupancy ratio of the RTC increased to 70 per cent.

During 2021-22, the RTC operated its fleet to a total distance of 98.28 crore km as against it operating its buses to a total distance of 73.87 crore km.

The RTC sustained total loss of Rs 1986.86 crore in 2021-22 and its losses increased to Rs 2329.23 crore in 2020-21. However, the RTC's losses in 2019-20 were only Rs 1002.32 crore.

Home Minister inaugurates dental clinic at Jubilee Hills



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Apollo Dental, a subsidiary of Apollo Hospitals Group, launched its 110th dental clinic at Jubilee Hills on Sunday. Minister of Home Mohammed Mahmood AI inaugurated the clinic. The new clinic will provide all oral healthcare services under one roof, including facilities for tooth or gum trouble, braces, dentures, aligners as well as more complex treatments like dental implants, emergency maxillofacial surgeries, cosmetic dentistry or laser and macroscopic assisted surgeries. Anand P Wasekar, COO, Apollo Dental was also present.

Precautionary dose of Sputnik-V unavailable in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As Covid cases are increasing in the state, many people in Hyderabad are worrying as the precautionary dose of the Sputnik V vaccine they had taken is not available in Hyderabad.

The increasing covid cases have alarmed a lot of people who have to take the booster/precaution dose of the respective vaccine.

While it is easy to get a booster dose of Covishield and Covaxin, people who have taken the Sputnik V as their first and second dose are now unable to find any place where they can get it.

Kamlesh, a resident of Hyderabad, who works for the state government in Hyderabad, said that he had taken the first dose of Sputnik in September 2021 and as



soon as he was due for the second dose, he got that as well.

As cases had started decreasing he did not pay attention to the booster dose but recently one of his friends who stays in Mumbai got himself administered a precaution dose of Sputnik.

"That made me access the Cowin portal and check whether it is available in Hyderabad. To my surprise, none of the centres, government or private, had listed the precautionary dose of Sputnik

on the cowin portal," he added.

According to the dashboard on Cowin website, a total of 1,43,928 people from Telangana have been administered the Sputnik V vaccine, out of which 56,733 are from Hyderabad. More than 12 lakh people in the country have taken the vaccine. The two doses of Sputnik V have to be administered between a gap of 21 to 30 days.

However, unlike Covishield and Covaxin, both the doses of Sputnik V have a different composition. The first dose of the vaccine contains adenovirus type 26 and the second dose contains recombinant adenovirus 5.

People from the city have also taken to social media appealing to the government to start administering the precautionary dose in the city as well as the state.

UoH joins global project for PhD graduates in Humanities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TRaCE Transborder Project, a partnership programme of universities and organisations in Australia, Canada, China, England, Ghana, India, Netherlands, Nigeria, and the US, will transform the problem of humanities PhD underemployment into a global opportunity.

The project will fashion narrative knowledge about PhD career pathways into an instrument for individual career

advancement, international bridge-building, and institutional and social change. Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and by the partners, the three-year TRaCE Transborder Project will enable PhD graduates in humanities from nine different nations to contribute more effectively to their own well-being and to the well-being of their own and other societies across multiple sectors of work inside and outside the academy. The University of Hyderabad

explains the reasons for the project for students. It will enable us to develop valuable international collaborations, enable our institution to address issues of central concern and in the light of new evidence about PhD career pathways on an international scale, provide in-programme PhD students with valuable, usable career narratives that will help them move readily from graduation to remunerative careers, provide in-programme PhD students with an international PhD mentoring

and networking community, and help us to attract highly capable individuals to our doctoral programmes.

The TRaCE Transborder Project will connect substantially with and enable us to expand academic exchanges between international students and UoH students.

For the University of Hyderabad, it is a unique opportunity to participate in a global project on careers of PhD students in Humanities, Social Sciences and SN School.

Secunderabad's Shree Jagannath Yatra on July 1

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Shree Jagannath Swamy Ramgopal Trust has been organising the Rath Yatra of the deities of Lord Jagannath, Lord Balabhadra and Goddess Subadra every year, coinciding with the Rath Yatra at Jagannath Puri. The trust has been conducting the Rath Yatra regularly for the last 130 years from the Jagannath Swamy Temple at General Bazaar, Secunderabad. After being

cancelled during the last two years due to Covid, this year the Rath Yatra will be held normally. The temple gates will be opened for Darshan at 6:30 am and will be closed at 1 pm. After that, the Rath Yatra will start from the temple at 4 pm and after passing through General Bazaar it is scheduled to pass via MG Road from 6:30 pm to 10 pm. After that, it will pass through Hill Street and Ranigunj and will reach the temple at around 3 am.

Purshottam Malani, the Founder Family Trustee of Shree Jagannath Swamy Ramgopal Trust said, "It is with great joy that we announce the resumption of the chariot festival of Lord Jagannath after two years. We expect that devotees from Secunderabad and Hyderabad will seek the blessings of the Lord in large numbers." He requested everyone to note the above timings and plan their darshan accordingly.

Minister inspects ongoing works at Ujjaini Mahankali temple

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Sunday inspected the ongoing developmental work at the Sri Ujjaini Mahankali Ammavari Temple at Sanathnagar constituency and the construction of the temple gates. He provided funds for the development of the temple.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav said that Bonalu is a symbol of Telangana culture.

Ujjaini Mahankali Bonalu will be held on July 17 and Rangam Bonalu on July 18. The Minister said that during

the Secunderabad Bonalu, millions of people would offer prayers to the Goddess and arrangements are being made accordingly, he said.

Minister further said that all measures should be taken to avoid any inconvenience to the devotees.

After the formation of the state of Telangana, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao declared the Bonalu festival as a state festival and reminded that it is being organized under the auspices of the government. In this context, the Minister said the government had sanctioned Rs 15 crore for the Bonalu festival.

Ujjaini Mahankali Bonalu will be held on July 17 and Rangam Bonalu on July 18. The Minister said that during the Secunderabad Bonalu, millions of people would offer prayers to the Goddess and arrangements are being made accordingly, he said.



Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav inspecting works at Ujjaini Mahankali temple in Sanathnagar in Hyderabad

Govt sanctioned Rs 13,030 cr for road projects after 2014

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has sanctioned Rs 13,030 crore for the construction and widening of 7,360 km of roads after 2014. The length of 4-lane R and B roads has increased from 669 km in 2014 to 1,029 km now. Work on the remaining 1,346 km is progressing.

According to a press release by Telangana Road and Buildings Department officials, the length of 2-lane roads has almost doubled in the last eight years and 4-lane roads have increased by 54 per cent.

Currently, the Department of Roads and Buildings main-



tains 32,445 km of roads. Of this, 27,461 km are state highways and 4,983 km are National Highways. Of these, 2,682 km are under NHAI and 2,301 km are under the state

Roads and Buildings National Highway Department control. The Road and Building Department officials added that under the rehabilitation programme of state highways,

13,740 km of roads have been rehabilitated at a cost of Rs 4,118 crore. Of this, 8,621 km were completed at a cost of Rs 2,141 crore. The reconstruction and widening of 519 bridges were undertaken at a cost of Rs 2,650 crore. Of them, 391 bridges worth Rs 1,405 crore have been completed. The remaining 125 works are in progress.

After the formation of Telangana, 33 bridges on 59 roads (698 km) have been sanctioned as part of the Rs 854 crore Rural Development Scheme with a Central share of Rs 447.36 crore. So far three roads and 13 bridges have been completed with a total length of 285 km.

Apart from that the construction of 120 flats for MLAs at an estimated cost of Rs 166.00 crore in Hyderguda, and 120 plots completed is in progress. Officials said that there are 4,983 km of roads in Telangana. Of this, 2,682 km are under NHAI and 2,301 km under state R&B control. A total of 1182 km of R&B roads have been upgraded to NH standards. Of these, 270 km of roads have been handed over by the Government to the NHAI.

22 road projects extending 553 km costing Rs 4,586 crore are in progress. Another 15 works extending 590 km costing Rs 6,726 crore are in the tender invitation stage.

TSRTC introduces digital payment system

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) has gone digital by issuing cashless tickets in 40 airport buses. After receiving a good response to the scheme, TSRTC introduced a digital payment system. Payments can be made using debit, credit cards, Phonepay, GooglePay and Paytm. The system will be introduced in ordinary city buses. The TSRTC Officials are taking steps to expand the digital payment system within the next two months. The TSRTC will roll out the system



in phases in districts also. It will be introduced for air-conditioned Pallo Velugu, Express, Rajadhani, Garuda and luxury buses. The digital payment system is already available for bus passes.

Railway police to seek Subba Rao's custody

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The railway police have decided to file a petition in court seeking custody of private defence academy organiser A Subba Rao for further interrogation. The police alleged that Subba Rao is the principal accused in the violence at Secunderabad Railway Station. Subba Rao, along with his associates Malla Reddy, Shiva Kumar and Beesi Reddy, was arrested last Friday, alleging that he had provoked the job aspirants against the Agnipath scheme.

Soft skills: Key to enhance employability, shine at workplace

Human resource drives business organizations and performance of employees is central to a company's priorities. Hence, apart from requisite technical skills, employees need soft skills to deliver on their job because customers will contact employees first. A combination of hard and soft skills will make people more efficient and productive.

Today, corporate firms focus on communication, relationships and ways of presenting the organization in a positive way to the stakeholders. Hence, soft skills at the workplace are becoming increasingly important. Soft skills among employees will help organizations use their technical skills effectively without being hampered by interpersonal issues.

ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS
In this fiercely competitive

business world, organisations are always looking for ways to move forward. Technical skills will no longer suffice for the workforce to compete in this highly competitive world. A college student or an employee exhibiting soft skills has a greater chance of being successful in their professional career. To become a stellar employee or an admired leader requires an arsenal of skills. Human resource experts opine that employees without the right mix of soft skills will be a liability to the organisation. Growth in one's career depends a lot on good relationships.

WHAT ARE SOFT SKILLS?

In 1918, the Carnegie Foundation published research findings that only 15% of job-related achievements depend on a person's knowledge and technical skills. As much as 85% of suc-

In 1918, the Carnegie Foundation published research findings that only 15% of job-related achievements depend on a person's knowledge and technical skills. As much as 85% of success in the workplace is based on soft skills.

cess in the workplace is based on soft skills. Soft skills are personal attributes that enable a person to interact effectively with others. Soft skills are behaviors, personality traits and work habits, such as collaboration, critical thinking, perseverance and communication that help people propel themselves at work. Hard skills can be quantified and measured, whereas soft skills are intangible and difficult to evaluate. Soft skills are a combination of people skills, social skills, communication abili-

ties, personality traits, attitudes, interpersonal intelligence, and emotional intelligence that enable employees to navigate their work environment. People who have eclectic soft skills can create a salubrious climate to achieve their goals. "A plumber's knack to use the grip wrench is a hard skill, whereas his ability to communicate with his clients effectively is a soft skill".

Soft skills such as effective communication, empathy, emotional intelligence, adaptability, integrity, team work,



SRINIVAS VISSAPRAGADA

optimism, self-motivation, interpersonal relationship and resilience have become crucial factors for business success. Soft skills are complementary to hard skills.

BENEFITS OF SOFT SKILLS

Managing people at workplace is a difficult task without soft skills. Usually,

recruiters consider the technical abilities of candidates, but soft skills bring career success. According to a research survey report, 89 per cent of recruiters say that when a hire does not perform well at office, the ostensible reason would be lack of soft skills. Usually, companies hire people based on their qualifications and knowledge, but they often terminate employees due to lack of soft skills. HR managers consider soft skills as an essential part of the hiring process. The success of a team, and a business, does not depend on just the workers' technical know-how but also on how employees interact with one another and with clients. Skills such as conflict resolution, emotional intelligence, time management, and working well under pressure are critical at the work-

place. Employees with diverse soft skills will engender harmony at the workplace. Soft skills decrease employee attrition and enhance personal effectiveness. Soft skills eliminate conflicts and promote camaraderie among workforce that leads to improved organizational performance. People who have soft skills can be transferred to any job or organization and could build relationships with peers and managers.

SOFT SKILL VITAL TO LURE RECRUITERS

When choosing between two seemingly equal candidates, organizations are now prioritizing soft skills as a key component for selection. In the corporate workplace, interpersonal relations will be given priority and they show a huge impact on employee pro-

ductivity and organizational success. Personal attributes like listening, presenting ideas, resolving conflicts, and fostering openness and candid work environment are given profound importance to build nourishing human relations. This relationship helps people to positively participate in team projects and extend support to team members. Without the right mix of soft skills, it is difficult to manage people at the workplace and execute tasks. Young job seekers should realize that besides hard skills they should nurture soft skills to become an effective team player and move forward in career.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Department of Commerce, P.B. Siddhartha College of Arts & Science, Vijayawada)

Factional feud in TRS sparks tension in Kollapur town

MLA Beeram Harshvardhan Reddy and former minister Jupalli Krishna Rao dared each other for an 'open debate', leading to police arresting the MLA

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

The situation in Kollapur constituency turned tense on Sunday with TRS MLA Beeram Harshvardhan Reddy and TRS leader and former minister Jupalli Krishna Rao daring each other for 'open debate.'

The war of words between the two leaders escalated and the followers of the two factions were prepared to confront each other in the guise of an 'open debate'. The police intervened to ward off a potentially explosive situation. But, both Harshvardhan Reddy and Krishan Rao did not relent. Krishan Rao dared the sit-



Police taking Kollapur MLA Beeram Harshvardhan into custody at Kollapur on Sunday

ting MLA Harshvardhan Reddy for an 'open debate' at Ambedkar junction in Kollapur town. Harshvardhan

Reddy said he would not even hesitate to visit Krishna Rao's house for a debate. The police, led by District Superintendent

of Police K Manohar, tried to persuade him not to precipitate the crisis. The police told the MLA that permission for holding an 'open debate' was denied. When the MLA remained adamant and wanted to go to the residence of Krishna Rao for a debate, the police took him into custody. The police shifted Harshvardhan Reddy to Peddakothapally police station amid tension as his followers tried to prevent their leader being whisked away.

The police since morning started erecting barricades at the residence of Harshvardhan Reddy to ensure that the followers of the two factions

would not confront each other. Meanwhile, Krishna Rao said the MLA had no evidence to substantiate the allegations against him. That was why the MLA had played a drama of 'arrest' to run away from debate. It may be recalled that Minister for Information Technology and TRS working president K T Rama Rao recently tried to mediate a truce between the two factions. He went to the residence of Krishna Rao and also Harshvardhan Reddy and tried to impress upon them the need to work in coordination with each to strengthen the party. But the mediation efforts failed.

Bhatti, Komatireddy induct TRS leaders keeping Revanth in dark

K. VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

The inductions of leaders from other political parties into the Congress without keeping the Congress leaders in their respective districts in dark has been creating problems for TPCC president A Revanth Reddy.

It has led to some Congress leaders too launching inductions into the party on their own without informing the TPCC president. Three TRS leaders were inducted into the Congress on Sunday without the knowledge of the TPCC president.

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka and TPCC Star Campaigner Komatireddy Venkat Reddy launched counter inductions without informing Revanth Reddy.

Revanth also inducted BJP senior leader and former Minister Boda Janardhan and TRS leaders from Sirpur into the Congress at the Gandhi Bhavan. Both Bhatti Vikramarka and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy inducted TRS leaders separately. Bhatti Vikramarka inducted the leaders from the erstwhile



Adilabad district offering a shawl to the leaders. The TRS leaders joined the Congress in the presence of Bhatti Vikramarka at his chamber in the CLP office.

The induction took place due to the initiative of former MLC Kokkiral Premnagar Rao from Mancherial. During this programme, Bhadrachalam MLA Podem Veeraiah was also present at the CLP office.

TRS leader Vaddepalli Ravi joined the Congress in the presence of Komatireddy Venkat Reddy at the latter's residence in Hyderabad.

Revanth did not meet Vaddepalli Ravi when he went to Revanth's residence after joining the party with Komatireddy. It is learnt that Revanth informed Vaddepalli



Ravi through his followers that he will meet him later. However, Addanki Dayakar of Thungathurthy constituency who was defeated twice addressed a letter to Revanth and Telangana Congress affairs in-charge Manikam Tagore asking them not to accept Dr Vaddepalli Ravi into the party as Vaddepalli Ravi had been suspended for six years. Addanki Dayakar said that Vaddepalli Ravi was behind his defeat in the 2018 elections. It may be recalled that Vaddepalli contested the elections as a Congress rebel from Thungathurthy and lost in 2018. The official candidate of the Congress was Addanki Dayakar. Both Addanki Dayakar and Vaddepalli Ravi lost the elections. After that Congress had suspended Vaddepalli Ravi for six years.

Dalits advised to provide best education to children

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Minister for Tourism V Srinivas Goud on Sunday said that the Dalits will get recognition in society only when they are educated.

He inaugurated the steel and cement unit started by eight partners under Dalit Bandhu at a cost of Rs 80 lakh in Christianpally of the town. He also inaugurated Mee Seva unit. He distributed four centring units and two tractors sanctioned to beneficiaries under Dalit Bandhu.

Later speaking to media, he advised Dalits to encourage their children to pursue education. He desired that the Dalits should lead a respectable life in society with income from Dalit Bandhu units.

The State government started special hostels, 2BHK houses for the benefit of Dalits and also gives Rs 10 lakh to each eligible Dalit family under Dalit Bandhu.

He said that the government would support Dalits who start steel and cement unit under Dalit Bandhu procuring steel and cement from such units for government schemes.

He described Telangana state as a laboratory for the country and predicted that a day will



come wherein Telangana schemes will be implemented across the nation.

Development of by-pass road, Construction of New Collectorate Complex, double railway line to the region are some of the achievements of the state government in developing Mahabubnagar.

The minister also distributed 2 cars to two Dalits under Dalit Bandhu.

Mahabubnagar MP Manne Srinivas Reddy, Municipal Chairman KC Narasimulu, market committee chairman Abdul Rehman, DCCB vice-president Koramoni Venkataiah, SC corporation executive director Yadaiah goud, Zilla Grandhalaya Samstha president Rajeshwar Goud, market committee former chairman Cherukupalli Rajesh and others were present on the occasion.



Minister for Health T Harish Rao unveiling posters welcoming students into TRS Vidyarthi Vibhag, in Siddipet on Sunday

Harish stresses need to expose BJP's 'vicious campaign'

The Minister exhorts TRTS Vidyarthi leaders to take the message of party to masses and help strengthen the party

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Minister for Finance and Health Minister T Harish Rao has called upon the TRS Vidyarthi leaders to expose the BJP's 'fake propaganda' unleashed by the party's social media. He stressed the need to take the message of BJP 'vicious' campaign to the masses. He said that the BJP pushed all sections of society in country into a crisis, while the TRS was striving for the welfare of downtrodden sections of society.

Releasing the TRSV (TRS Vidyarthi) wall poster welcoming new students into the TRS here on Sunday, he said that every TRSV activists would find suitable place in the party.

Extolling the role played by students and youth Telangana movement, he asked the student wing to play an active role in the party. The responsibility

of taking the government's welfare and development programmes rested with the student wing leaders, he said.

To achieve Arogya (healthy) Telangana, the TRS government sanctioned a medical college in each district. The number of medical colleges in Telangana went up to 17 in seven years as against just four medical colleges in 70-year-rule of the successive regimes of national parties. It stands as an example of the greatness of Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu.

The government focused its attention on public health and KCR focused mainly on promotion of medical education, he said.

He called upon the students to bridge gap, if any, between the government and the governed and described students as the captains of the future of the party. He asked the students to take the TRS, which

he called a people's welfare party, closer to the masses. The rupee value vis-à-vis US dollar has come down further and the image of the soldier has come down in the BJP rule. The BJP did not do anything in eight years. There is no qualitative change in governance. The saffron party had fuelled communal clashes and violence in the country. The term BJP meant 'spreading falsehoods', he alleged.

The BJP was responsible for job retrenchments, he said demanding that the Centre fill over 15-lakh jobs vacancies in various government departments. He asked the students and party activists to take the injustice being done to Telangana at the hands of the BJP to the people.

He hailed the provision of drinking water to all households in Telangana, Rytu Bandhu programmes is a unique one, he said.

Komatireddy Rajagopal attends Konda's mother's death anniversary along with Eatala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress MLA representing Munugode, Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy, attended former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy's mother's first death anniversary function along with BJP MLA Eatala Rajender on Sunday raising eyebrows among political observers.

There were rumours that Komatireddy Rajagopal may join the BJP during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's public meeting on July 3 along with Konda Vishweshwar

Reddy. But Konda Vishweshwar Reddy's associates told 'The Pioneer' that both Komatireddy and Eatala came together, paid tributes to Konda's mother and both left after around 40 minutes.

It may be recalled that Komatireddy Rajagopal has said several times that he will join the BJP. He had also said that the BJP is the only party that can take on Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Naidu. Komatireddy Rajagopal has also not been participating in any party programmes of the Congress. Komatireddy

Rajagopal has also been keeping away from public meetings including the meeting attended by former AICC chief Rahul Gandhi in Warangal giving clear indications that he will not continue in the Congress and can quit anytime.

It is also learnt that Komatireddy Rajagopal has been eyeing the LB Nagar constituency to contest the 2023 elections after joining the BJP if things fall in his favour. It is also learnt that Komatireddy Rajagopal is facing a dilemma about the time of quitting the Congress.

Underground drains will be developed in Siddipet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Medical and Health T Harish Rao has said that underground drainage works in the town have been taken up at a cost of Rs 300 crore as part of laying strong foundation for Siddipet.

He laid the foundation stone for development of a CC Road at a cost of Rs 25 lakh.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, he said that the government is developing Siddipet region in all respects. The underground drainage system will solve the mosquito menace forever. The sewer water is released into drinking water tank after treating at the treatment plant. In fact, drinking water and irrigation problems have been solved wriggling Siddipet out of the

drinking water problem, faced by the people of the town long back.

One can easily notice perceptible change in the development of Siddipet compared to the condition of the town 10 years ago. Siddipet is not only clean and green but also setting an example for other towns in safeguarding the health of the people, he said adding that every road in the town is spick and span. Besides temples in the town - Bhogeswara temple in Parupalli street, Ravi Chettu Hanuman temple and Siva temple - have been developed. The school in Parupalli area has been developed wonderfully and it would impart educational instructions in English medium from this academic year onwards. The government hospital in the

town has been developed on a par with corporate hospitals. The hospital will soon conduct cardiac surgical treatments, cancer treatment. Soon, a 650-bed hospital is going to be set up in the town. There would be no need for one to travel to either to Hyderabad or to Karimnagar for advanced medical treatment as all the amenities are available at the district headquarters government hospital here.

He felt that the town will witness more and more development in days to come. The people of the town proved that anything is possible with the participation of the people. People's representatives Jangiti Kanakaraju, Gampa Ramachandram, former municipal chairman Raj Nars and others were present on the occasion.

Dayakar pats the Warangal police for curbing drugs

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Minister for Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has hailed the police for their efforts in containing the drug menace in the city.

In connection with International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking on Sunday, Dayakar Rao along with city Mayor Gundu Sudharani and District Collector flagged off a 25-km cyclothan, 15-km fun race and 5-km kids bicycle race competitions here.

Dayakar Rao flagged off the 25-km race along with Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi. Dayakar Rao took part actively in the race. International cyclist Rahul Misra performed



Minister for Panchayat Raj Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Warangal Police Commissioner Tarun Joshi participating in rally in Warangal on Sunday

various feats on bicycle. Youth should play a crucial role helping police nab drug peddlers and smugglers. They should strive to instil fear of police in

the peddlers, he said, adding that the cyclothan programme was arranged to sensitise the youth to stay away from drugs. He specially congratulated the

Police Commissioner for arranging the cyclothan, which also sensitises people on the health benefits of cycling.

Tarun Joshi appealed to the

people for their support to the police struggle against the drug menace. Later, he administered oath to the participants of the event. Cash rewards were given away by the chief guest to the winners of the cyclothan.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Ashok Kumar and Venkata Lakshmi, additional DCPs, ACPs, inspectors, sub-inspectors and other police personnel took part in the event.

Government Chief Whip D Vinay Bhaskar, Greater Warangal Municipal Commissioner Praveenya, international cyclist Rahul Misra, Bollywood actor Nakul Roshan, table tennis player Naina Jaiswal and others were present.

Daggers drawn

The Maharashtra crisis deepens while the Thackeray heir and his dissenters fight for Balasaheb's legacy

The political drama in Maharashtra is getting interesting every passing hour. The fear, however, is that it can become dirty in no time. In fact, Shiv Sena president and Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's loyalists have already begun protesting against rebel Shiv Sena leader Eknath Shinde and his followers. The banners of rebels have been defaced, stones hurled at some places and an MLA's office has been vandalised in Pune. It seems that Chief Minister Thackeray, having overcome the initial shock of such a massive revolt, has decided to dig his heels in. It is not the first time that the party has suffered dissidence to a noticeable extent. In December 1991, Shiv Sena founder Bal Thackeray's confidant Chhagan Bhujbal sought to split the party. Bhujbal, who belongs to other backward classes or OBC, might have thought of riding the Mandal wave, but the party remained intact. The revolt by Narayan Rane in 2005 also didn't break the party; ditto Raj Thackeray's rebellion a little while later. That was then; Bal Thackeray, who liked to be compared with the tiger, was alive and kicking. But political commentators are watching with great anticipation if his son, Uddhav, would be able to weather the raging storm? He is not believed to be aggressive as his father or even his own cousin Raj. He has often been portrayed as a gentler version of a typical Shiv Sena leader with an interest in wildlife photography. Would he be able to take on street fighters like Eknath Shinde who have risen through the ranks?

Anticipation is accompanied with fear, for Shiv Sena leaders are not known for patience and tolerance of their adversaries' views. Thankfully, the semblance of normal party functioning is being maintained. So, on Saturday, Uddhav Thackeray chaired a meeting of the party national executive, attended by his partisans. Unsurprisingly, they authorised him to take all party decisions. The meeting also asserted that only the Shiv Sena (that is, the group under Uddhav Thackeray) can use the name of Balasaheb Thackeray. It was also decided to serve disqualification notices to 16 rebel MLAs on the ground that they did not attend a party meeting Uddhav had called earlier in the week. Meanwhile, Shinde's supporters are crying foul, arguing that Deputy Speaker Narhari Zirwal, an NCP leader, is not qualified to act against the 16 MLAs as there is a petition seeking his removal. The rebels are reportedly seeking legal opinion. Shinde, meanwhile, has presented himself as a Hindutva warrior. In a tweet, he urged the Shiv Sainiks to "understand MVA's plan". He claims to be "fighting a battle with a dragon to free the Shiv Sena and Shiv Sainiks from its clutches". Colourful imagery indeed, but the point is that Uddhav Thackeray is still the Chief Minister and therefore has control over the administration and police. One only hopes that the internecine battle within the Sena doesn't get nastier.

PICTALK



Castle Elmau and surroundings during the G7 summit in Kruen, near Garmisch-Partenkirchen, Germany

First among equals

There's nothing exciting about the Prez poll, at least not till the eve of the 2024 LS election

The process of electing the 16th President of India has begun. The election is scheduled for July 18 and the counting of votes will take place on July 21. Exactly a month earlier, Yashwant Sinha, the Opposition's unanimous choice, filed his papers. The choice of the ruling BJP and its allies is Droupadi Murmu. Unlike other elections, the presidential election is routine and there's nothing exciting about it. Generally, the ruling party with a majority in the Lower House and sufficient seats in the Upper gets its candidate elected. The Opposition candidate is more of positioning to tell all that the next President was not a consensus choice. Though the BJP is a little short on the numbers, its candidate is likely to sail through as BJD and others have pledged support to Murmu. The President is indirectly elected by an electoral college consisting of MPs and MLAs. The electoral college comprises 776 MPs and 4,123 MLAs who would be voting to elect the President. Total votes for UPA candidate (including the support of non-UPA parties) are 4,02,682 which is 37.31 per cent of total votes while the votes for NDA candidates with outside support are 6,13,849 or 56.82 per cent.

Thus the outcome of the election is obvious. Though often the office of President is seen as politically insignificant, it is not. The President's role gets pronounced at the time of the formation of a new Government, especially when no party has a clear mandate. For this reason, the party in power never takes it lightly and settles for the most trusted person. Murmu is a former Jharkhand Governor, a two-term MLA from Odisha and served as Minister in the BJP-BJD coalition Government. Sinha has had an illustrious political career and a clear political ideology; he served as Finance Minister in the Vajpayee Government. But it is the numbers and not merit that would decide the President and Murmu's credentials as a tribal lady are unbeatable. What is more, Murmu is getting a lot of support from non-NDA parties and so is likely to win hands down. But her moment of truth would come in 2024 when she would be instrumental in the formation of a new Government at the Centre.

India at G7 Summit & its Ukraine stand

It is quite clear that the western nations will make efforts to convince India to change its stance on Russia, which is a delicate diplomatic challenge

The upcoming G7 Summit in Germany will see global leaders get together to discuss several issues. The one that will dominate the deliberations is likely the Ukraine invasion, sanctions on Russia and how the world, the western world, should deal with defiant Russian President Vladimir Putin. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be there, as India, Indonesia, South Africa and Senegal have been invited as special guests. According to a report in *Bloomberg*, Germany was in two minds as to whether to extend the invitation to India; the reservation being that India has not condemned Russia for its invasion and also abstained from the United Nations Resolutions censuring Russia. But pragmatism won the day and India was extended the invitation. But it remains quite clear that in the luxury resort of Schloss Elmau in the Bavarian Alps, where the Summit will take place, the western nations will make efforts to convince India to change its stance on Russia.

For India and Modi, it will present a delicate diplomatic challenge. Of course, India today wants to be a part of the global leadership but it has no intentions of breaking ties with old and tested allies, Russia being the best example. The problem also is that not only has India not condemned Russian actions in Ukraine, it continues to buy oil at discounted rates from it and is also working out an alternative payment system to keep this going. The United States and Europe, who have been leading the charge against Russia, have expressed their frustrations but, of late, the approach has been more nuanced in public with the western world trying to show an understanding of India's position.

Indications are clear that while India will stick to its stand, so will the western world. Earlier this year, while visiting Germany, Modi called on both Russia and Ukraine to end the fighting, saying: "We believe that no party can emerge victorious



in this war." Foreign Secretary Vinay Kwatra also said that India has always maintained that "there should be cessation of hostilities in Ukraine and the path to resolution goes through diplomacy and dialogue". India is likely to toe this line during the G7 Summit. But, behind closed doors, the G7 intends to raise the pressure on India.

So far, one has to admit that India has maintained its 'neutrality' on the Ukraine war with success. The Quad, a grouping of the US, Japan, India and Australia which initially seemed to be tested by the Ukraine crisis with three members vocally critiquing Russia and India being the lone neutral voice, seems to have reconciled to the in-house differences. Challenges in the Indo-Pacific are a common cause for Quad and even as the Ukraine war presents a new challenge, reality stares hard in the shape of China. All four need one another to counter the dragon's ever-expanding global footprint. Also, for India, China is another worrisome factor that explains its stand on Russia. In the regional dynamics, Russia's embrace of China is worrisome and a

THE SUMMIT WILL TEST INDIA NOT ONLY IN HOW IT PUTS FORWARD ITS UNIQUE GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE BUT ALSO CHECK WHETHER INDIA IS READY TO PUSH BACK DELICATELY AND DEMAND THAT THE WORLD SEE SITUATIONS AND CRISIS FROM A NON-WESTERN VIEWPOINT

closer relationship between Russia and Pakistan even more so. After the Ukraine war, the world has seen a change in the shape of its alliances and a closer Russia-China axis is there for all to see. It doesn't make the world comfortable but it worries India even more, with a boundary dispute, and the Chinese looking for yet another excuse to expand territorially.

The G7 consists of Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the US (the European Union is not a member of the G7 but attends the Summit). It is an informal grouping of the world's richest nations and hence the most powerful, too. Russia had joined the G7 in 1998 making it G8 then, but following the annexation of Crimea in 2014, Russia was shown the door. Interestingly, China, despite the size of its economy and the global influence it asserts, has been kept out of the grouping. So looking at the G7 in an unbiased fashion, it's quite apparent that it is a grouping of rich and powerful western nations that has zero representation from Africa and the Middle East.

It also helps explain and understand the contradictions not just in the global order but also the response to the Ukraine war.

India is not part of the G7 or the western world. But with an economy that is growing and a strategic place in the Indo-Pacific, it today cannot be kept out. India is also one of the few countries that have shown the occasional spine to the western nations that still seem to view the world from a very narrow post-World War II perspective. The upcoming G7 Summit will test India not only in how it puts forward its unique global perspective but also check whether India is ready to push back delicately and demand that the world see situations and crisis from a non-western viewpoint. That, at the end of the day, is the hallmark of a global leader.

(The author, a Delhi-based journalist and foreign affairs analyst, holds a *Masters in International Relations from the American University in Washington DC. In 2009, her book 'Piercing the Heart: Untold Stories of 26/11', was published. The views expressed are personal.)*

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

ANTI-MURMU PROTEST ISN'T GOOD

Sir — This refers to the editorial, 'First among equals' (June 23) wherein it was logically elaborated that the BJP has been playing its game beautifully, and reaping rich dividends. By nominating Droupadi Murmu for the post of the new President of India, the NDA has given a gift to all tribals, besides redeeming the tribal vote bank towards the alliance. Her nomination by the ruling NDA will tilt the political equations in its favour. Murmu has risen from the grassroots political level. She had attained a remarkable position as a teacher, Nagar Panchayat representative and ministerial position in the Odisha Cabinet.

She has completed the tenure as the Governor in Jharkhand without any controversy, which shows that she has a lot of experience of working in a high constitutional post. The NDA will get an opportunity to strengthen its penetration in tribal States like Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh. Opposing Murmu's candidature will prove to be politically harmful for the Opposition parties. Another special thing is that in the presidential election, neither the NDA nor UPA will be in a position to issue a whip to their MLAs and MPs since the election is done by secret ballot.

Yugal Kishore Sharma | Faridabad

PURE AIR MAKES LIFE BEAUTIFUL

Sir — Through your columns, I wish to draw attention towards the topic of air pollution and its fatal effects. In today's world, almost everything around us is contaminated and so is the air that we breathe. Air pollution is becoming a matter of great concern each passing day. Every living being needs fresh air to remain healthy. Breathing in polluted air can lead to fatal diseases like asthma and cancer, which in turn can lead to death. With the increasing number of cars and factories, the world is becoming a tougher place to live in. Our environment thrives upon balance.

To curb the air pollution, more trees

US must review gun rights order



It is most unfortunate that the US Supreme Court has not taken seriously many firing incidents on the locals and foreigners, including schoolchildren in major cities, expanded gun rights and ruled that Americans have a right to carry handguns in public (June 24). Though the Supreme Court ruled that handguns can be carried in public for self-defence outside homes, most of the guns are used for various offences and crimes. Many Indian students, software workers and salespersons are among the worst victims of guns

should have been planted. Instead, we can see deforestation all around us. People seem to carelessly do things that are making the environment more polluted. They need to take steps that will reduce the effects of air pollution, like using solar panels, replacing fossil fuels and by using electricity and petroleum efficiently. I hope that my small but sincere effort will help spread awareness among people about the fatal effects of air pollution and how dangerous it can be for the lives of those inhabiting this planet.

Divyansha Sharma | Ujjain

WHAT A COMEBACK, DK!

Sir — As India's head coach Rahul Dravid has rightly said, Dinesh Karthik hasn't just knocked on the door of Indian cricket, but banged it hard and made a spectacular comeback into the national side after a gap of three years, riding on his stellar performance in the IPL this year. The Tamil Nadu wicket-keeping batter last played in Indian colours in the forgettable 2019

World Cup semifinals against New Zealand. Picked up by Royal Challengers Bangalore and donning a new persona, 'Dinesh Karthik 2.0', the seasoned middle-order batter, took up the role of a finisher to perfection, which became one of the biggest talking points in the cash-rich tournament.

Since making his Test debut way back in 2004 against Australia, Dinesh Karthik has made several comebacks to the Indian team but the latest one is undoubtedly the most inspiring of all and is nothing less than a fairytale. His 27-ball 55 against South Africa in the Rajkot match, which was his first half-century in T20s, further underscores his value as a 'finisher'. Ahead of the 2022 T-20 World Cup to be held in Australia in October-November, Dinesh Karthik will be the cynosure of all eyes.

Ranganathan Sivakumar | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

The laws of J&K, adapted in Ladakh, provide protection to both jobs and land.

Ladakh Lt Governor

—RK Mathur

China's and India's common interests far outweigh their differences.

Chinese Foreign Minister

—Wang Yi

Women today are capable enough of doing their own thing in their own way.

Actor

—Ankita Lokhande

It's so easy to get up for these relays... and just not think and go. I'm proud of our team.

World championship swimmer

—Katie Ledecky

There is a need to tighten the (Indian cyberspace) accountability matrix.

Union Minister

—Rajeev Chandrasekhar

FIRST COLUMN

HELP KIDS COPE WITH DEATH OF DEAR ONES

Handle them sensitively yet with honesty



SONALI KHAN

With the novel coronavirus hitting the globe, many families were left staggered to their feet with medical emergencies, untimely death of their loved ones. What began with a learning loss resulted in weakened financial conditions and also, in many cases, the loss of parents, grandparents or loved ones for children. Usually, when it comes to talking about death with children, adults don't know how to start the conversation or how and what exactly to say.

Here's how you can explain what happened. While explaining about death to children, it is critical that they are handled most sensitively yet with honesty. It's important for an adult (whom the child feels safe and comfortable to interact with) to talk to him or her in a quiet place. Conversations help to create an open and comforting environment that allows them to question and freely express their thoughts and feelings.

You can begin with explaining what death is. For example, you might say, "When a person dies, his or her body stops working. The heart stops beating and the body stops moving, eating, and breathing."

Many times, younger children may not realise that death is permanent and ask questions like "when will Naani come back?" and "I want to show Papa what I made". Phrases such as "he is gone into long sleep," "your loss," and "passed away" may seem gentler but can also confuse the young children, who often think literally. They may think if the relatives look for the "lost" loved one, he or she could be found. Hence, it's important to reaffirm the facts gently, and reassert death with most honesty.



Children go through waves of emotions when something like this happens in their life. They experience anger, frustration, anxiety and build a story that it might have happened because of a certain reason. Remind them that nothing they did caused the death or there's nothing that can reverse it.

Also, sometimes it is natural for children to feel angry or disappointed with the family member for leaving them alone or when a close relative passed away. In such a situation, one must allow kids to express themselves freely and assure that feeling this way is alright by saying something like "I know you're upset that Mom died. Sometimes I feel like that, too."

However, children can develop strong fears about their own personal safety or about the death of the surviving parent. And that's when their fears need to be addressed and they need to know that you are there to take care of them. Grief is a very complex emotion; it is not easy for children to cope with. Sometimes children's responses can be harsh when coping with the death of their parent or any loved one. Children may have nightmares or scary thoughts. They may not want to talk about the deceased person in any way, inclusive of happy memories. They may experience trouble sleeping, concentrating, and others. If such feelings or behavioural patterns occur to a degree that concerns you, then it's best to seek professional help.

It may not be possible to prepare fully for the emotions that may follow however, with time they may become easier to process. Remind your children that while change is hard for everyone, you are there for them to get through this time. It's important that you give them all the information that they need to avoid assumptions leading to confusions.

Maintaining some routines can help children. It's important to keep the memories of the deceased alive for your children; after all, they still love the deceased person.

Remember grieving is a slow process that requires time. While feelings attached with the loss may never completely go away, with each passing day they can become easier to endure. Give yourself and your children permission to feel happy again. Be assured that the memory of your loved one can live on in the hearts of your family.

(The author is a journalist-turned-activist who works towards women empowerment and development of children.)

We should celebrate Independence Month

Individuals celebrate birthdays, but a nation ought to celebrate its Independence for a month, not in a single day



BALAKRISHNAN SATYAM

To understand a certain concept better, we expect that a paragraph about it will help us better than a single sentence. Likewise, we say that to achieve greater skill development, our practice sessions need to be longer. Thus, when we accord something more time, we hope to have given it that much more attention.

Generally, in our minds the expression 'a day or two' suggests a quite short duration. 'Day' is such a familiar word, and so casually used that we rarely reflect on it. It is an important unit of time. If an individual celebrates his or her birthday, shouldn't a nation celebrate Independence Month rather than only a day?

Many kinds of organisations played a role in our gaining Independence; they were quite different from each other, and unique in what they did. You have heard it said that we should also render proper respect to many movements and sacrifices across the country. An Independence Month, organised as themed weeks, or even as distinct days to recognise and highlight various aspects of self-governance would also spread greater political awareness among the people.

There are of course programmes on the day of official and ceremonial significance, but in practical terms, Independence has meant our own currency without colonial insignia, that our houses of legislature are sovereign, our own Chiefs of the Armed Forces, our own Election Commission, and various Indian Councils for research, our Central Universities, and national corporations in the Energy and other sectors. Showcasing each of them and celebrating their progress is something that can be done in greater detail than through only a few tableaux over three hours in a single day. It can be a richer, longer, more informative experience through an Independence Month.

The opportunity to organise a number of exhibitions on progress will not only inform our citizens about the energy sector, the telecom and ITES sector, the space sector and so on; it will also help the youth.

Now, for argument's sake, someone could say that a much larger country in terms of area and with about twice our number of states is, after all, observed on one day with a lot of fireworks and parades. Their struggle for Independence, while admirable for many things, was quite different. It was concentrated in a few battle arenas, and basically under one command. Their nation itself grew in territory over the mainland over several decades, and largely drew upon the progressive political ethos of Western Europe as its main source.

While we thus appreciate the US's particular history, it is plain to see that our own liberation from the colonial yoke has been a different kind of process. Given our geography and ancient heritage, our



THE OPPORTUNITY TO ORGANISE A NUMBER OF EXHIBITIONS ON PROGRESS WILL NOT ONLY INFORM OUR CITIZENS ABOUT THE ENERGY SECTOR, THE TELECOM AND ITES SECTOR, THE SPACE SECTOR AND SO ON; IT WILL ALSO HELP THE YOUTH

(The author is a creative director, advertising faculty, and an amateur epistemologist. The views expressed are personal)



Constitutional spirit includes elements from Western and indigenous frameworks as we had an equally illustrious and forward-looking team of authors as were the Founding Fathers of the US.

In fact, the project to draft the Constitution is itself an undertaking about which more information can be shared. From inception, there has been a strong inclusivist orientation in the Republic of India. Cabinets at national and state levels have sought to have members from under-represented or marginalised communities, or from places far away from economic and political hubs.

On the contrary, it is much rarer to find Native Americans among Secretaries or in the House of Representatives. Representation for them was initiated only in 1924, and it took till 1965 for them to even properly participate as voters across most States. Given our own greater diversity and many regional and district cultures, India is more representational in its political culture from the beginning.

Much more remains to be done, yet the Constitution adopted within three years of Independence got us off to a flying start. There is in it a pluralism and coexistence of doctrines—there are some curbs on exploiting fellow humans for profit even while incentivising industrial growth. The mixed economy approach of having some utilities undertaken and operated by the State, a broadly welfarist outlook, a planning model suited to the developmental needs of a Third World country (typical for most recently decolonised)—all parts of a

unique 'middle path' policy, in itself a marvel. There was advocacy of a scientific temper and promotion of modern education for all. In an ethos where both consumerism and spirituality have been pursued parallelly!

The generation of leaders and experts who determined and agreed upon such a choice was a generation that could boast of knowledge and practical experience. While no set of principles may be such that a further adaptation cannot be considered at all, what we've had already so far is not narrow, and any fault is actually about weak implementation.

A month, therefore, would not only be a celebration, it would be a thanksgiving, a reaffirmation and a renewal of our commitment to our fair polity. With the passing years, we won't have people any more who had known how things were, prior to 1947. The domination by the European, the severely limited participation in governance in those times, the inadequate infrastructure across sectors, will all be long forgotten. Our present rights and freedoms had been dreamt of for decades before they were ushered in 75 years ago.

The very theme of Independence can lead us to reflect, as families and citizens, on how it can be practically maintained. There's an important aspect of economic freedom, which Gandhiji had underlined.

In the US, a lot of ordinary people are groaning under the yoke of steep debt—for housing, healthcare and education. A small part of it is due to heedless use of credit cards, but much of it has to do with the lack of a sense of soci-

ety, and with the adoption of a view of people as customers first, and only then as humans. Student debt, and steep cost of university education are formidable barriers to opportunity and social mobility. It helps to remember something here that is often forgotten.

Rather than being accorded our freedom, we have to realise that we are born free, and as Rousseau famously said, the chains get forged only subsequently.

For India, decolonisation halted the robbery of our natural resources by an imperial power. It brought us into the modern era of representative government, and put us on the path of inclusive development. It shook off past shackles and at the same time, launched visions of a prosperous and progressive future for all strata in our society. The Directive Principles, as enshrined in the Constitution, undertake to uplift large numbers living in various kinds of deprivation, whose circumstances in recent generations had offered little or no scope.

This is a socioeconomic gap that a positive governmental agenda can bridge. Yet, independence is really all about people being kept out of debt, than being placed in debt. We reciprocate by serving national interest in many small ways for the broad support we receive. This is what President J.F. Kennedy, in his 1961 White House inaugural, said, "Ask what you can do for your country."

An Independence Month of thirty-one days would offer enough time to ask these questions, and to discover enough answers.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SHARAD PAWAR IS THREATENING THE (REBEL) MLAS TO COME TO THE ASSEMBLY. THEY'LL VOTE AS PER THEIR WILL.
—UNION MINISTER
NARAYAN RANE



WE WILL STAND BY CM UDDHAV THACKERAY. WE ARE KEEPING AN EYE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION.
—MAHARASHTRA DEPUTY CM
AJIT PAWAR

Israel: All turbulence in politics is about Netanyahu
Netanyahu or Bibi is the standard-holder for the Jews who favour a bigger country but without citizenship to Palestinian Arabs

There was a rare moment of grace in Israeli politics last Monday, as Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Foreign Minister Yair Lapid announced they would dissolve their extraordinary coalition and pitched Israel into its fifth election in three and a half years.

The coalition was extraordinary because it included such a broad spectrum of political conviction in Israel, from Rightwing pro-settler parties like Bennett's Yamina to Centre-Left Yesh Atid (Lapid's Party) and even, for the first time ever, an Islamic party, the United Arab List.

The moment of grace was the loyalty and even friendship shown by Bennett and Lapid, political and ideological opponents who rose above the bitter divisions of a fragmented Israeli



GWYNNE DYER

The author's new book is The Shortest History of War

political scene characterised by defections and betrayals.

They did not blame each other for the coalition's collapse. They treated each other with respect. Bennett even kept his word to share the top job in rotation with Lapid, who will become prime minister of the transitional government for the months between now and the next election, probably in late October.

"They are political rivals who were wise enough to create a rare partnership, almost utopian by Israeli political standards. They began nicely and ended even better. We were as dreamers—is this Israel, or Denmark?" wrote Haaretz journalist Yossi Verter. But these two men apart, it's Israel. Definitely Israel.

The eight-party coalition

had one unifying principle: to stop 'Bibi' (Binyamin Netanyahu, prime minister for most of the past 25 years) from coming back to power yet again. It could only work by concentrating on social issues (where there was some agreement) while preserving the status quo on 'security', settler violence and Palestinian rights.

Even so, the attempt to hold such a spectacularly diverse coalition together was ultimately sunk by the defections of members who felt morally compromised by working with people of such radically different views. It only had 62 Members of the Knesset out of 120 to start with, and just three MKs quitting, one at a time, destroyed its parliamentary majority.

So will Netanyahu be back



in power again after October? He's still on trial for breach of trust, accepting bribes, and fraud, but the coalition didn't get around to banning people on trial for felonies from becoming prime minister, so it's certainly possible.

That was why Netanyahu strove so hard to bring the coalition down, getting the

opposition to vote against every single coalition measure. The Knesset and the country are so evenly balanced that any reshuffle of the deck is another chance to win.

Netanyahu even got his allies in the Knesset to vote against another five-year extension of the regulation that places Jewish settlers in the West Bank under Israeli civil law, not the military law that controls life for Arabs in the occupied territories.

That normally goes through automatically, without debate, but Netanyahu's Likud Party and its allies voted against it despite the fact they are pro-settler parties. Bibi knew that the four Arab members of the coalition government couldn't bring themselves to vote for the settlers having special rights, so the

measure failed and the coalition fell.

Actually, everything political in Israel is ultimately about the settlers and the occupation now, and the country is split down the middle with almost surgical precision. That's why it was so hard to make an anti-Bibi coalition, but it's just as hard to form a pro-Bibi one.

Few people realised that this was the future they were creating when Israel won the 1967 war and conquered substantial Arab-populated territories in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights.

Between the 1948 war, when most Arabs fled or were driven from what then became Israel, and the Six-Day War of 1967, about 85 per cent of Israel's population was Jewish. After Israel's victory in that

war, about half the population on the land now controlled by Israel was Arab and either Muslim or Christian.

That is still the case today, although the Gaza Strip has been turned into an open-air prison that is technically not in Israel. So unless you are planning to give the occupied territories back, you can have a democratic Israel where half the population is Arab, or a Jewish Israel where half the population has no political rights.

That's the choice that divides and paralyses the country, and there's no decision on the horizon. Bibi is the standard-holder for all those Israeli Jews who favour a bigger country but one where most Palestinian Arabs are not citizens, and he may be back in power by the end of the year.

MONEY MATTERS

After 5 months, ONGC finally gets a director on HPCL board

After over five months, Oil and Natural Gas Corporation (ONGC) has finally got a director appointed on the board of Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd -- a firm it had acquired for Rs 36,915 crore. The Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas on June 22, conveyed its consent for the appointment of Pankaj Kumar, Director (Offshore), ONGC as a director on the board of HPCL, according to regulatory filings by HPCL. For over five months, ONGC had no representative on the board of HPCL -- a company in which it owns a 51.11 per cent stake since January 2018. HPCL for over one-and-a-half years -- between January 2018 and August 2019 -- did not recognise ONGC as its promoter despite the government selling its entire 51.11 per cent stake in the company to the oil explorer. It relented only after a rap from market regulator SEBI. ONGC got the right to appoint one director who HPCL called 'Government Nominee Director (Representative of ONGC)'.



IOB aims to boost advances to retail, MSME, agri, corporate sector in FY23

State-owned Indian Overseas Bank (IOB) is aiming to boost advances in retail, MSMEs, corporate and agricultural loans during the current fiscal year, as the lender has substantially brought down the stressed assets on its balance sheet through sustained and targeted efforts. The outlook of the Indian banking sector is seen to be improving on the back of better credit demand and strong balance sheets, IOB said in its FY21-22 annual report. In the fiscal year ended March 2022, IOB witnessed doubling of its net profit at Rs 1,709 crore, as against Rs 831 crore in the previous fiscal year, as the bank improved on its asset quality through a multi-pronged strategy and focussed recovery initiatives. IOB said the asset quality of Public Sector Banks (PSBs) are on an improving trend though some loans are classified as restructured loans under pandemic permitted RBI schemes.



ASICS expects 50 pc of sales from online channel in India in 2-3 years

Japanese sportswear major ASICS expects online channel to account for 50 per cent of its total sales in India in the next two-three years with consumers opting for more digital purchases due to the pandemic, according to a senior company official. At the same time, ASICS India, the company's arm, is also accelerating expansion of its physical retail stores to tap into the growth potential in the country. "Prior to the pandemic, digital sales from our own website and marketplaces like Amazon and Flipkart was around 25 per cent of the total sales. Now it has touched 35 per cent of the total business...It is still growing," ASICS India and South Asia Managing Director Rajat Khurana told PTI. Stating that the shopping behaviour of consumers has changed, he said, "In the next two to three years, digital sales will contribute to 50 per cent of the overall sales."



CASINOS, ONLINE GAMING AND HORSE RACES

28 pc GST likely on gross revenue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council in its meeting this week is likely to vet a proposal of the panel of state finance ministers on levying 28 per cent GST on online gaming, casinos and horse racing, sources said.

The Group of Ministers, headed by Meghalaya Chief Minister Conrad Sangma, has recommended that online gaming should be taxed at full value of the consideration, including contest entry fee paid by the player on participating in the game.

In case of race courses, the GoM has suggested that GST be levied on the full value of bets pooled in the totalisators and placed with the book-makers. In casinos, GoM recommended that the tax would be levied on the full face value of the chips/coins purchased from the casino by a player. No



further GST would apply on the value of bets placed in each round of betting, including those placed with winnings in previous rounds.

Also, the GoM suggested that 28 per cent Goods and Services Tax be levied on entry/access fees into casinos, which compulsorily includes foods/beverages etc.

However, optional supplies,

made independently of the entry tickets, would be taxed at the rate applicable on such supplies, sources added. Currently, services of casinos, horse racing and online gaming attract 18 per cent GST. The GoM would decide on the method of valuing the services.

The Government had in May last year set up a panel of state ministers for better valu-

ation of services of Casinos, online gaming portal and race courses for levying Goods and Services Tax (GST).

AMRG & Associates Senior Partner Rajat Mohan said 28 per cent tax bracket for online gaming, horse racing, and casinos would peg them at par with numerous sin goods like pan masala, tobacco and aerated waters. "Taxing online gaming,

horse racing, and casinos at gross revenue instead of net value addition would be a departure from the global tax ethics," Mohan said.

This proposal may sweeten the exchequer for a while; however, it would also entice the unorganized sector leading to rampant generation of black money in the long term, he added.

The report of the GoM is likely to be taken up in the next meeting of the GST Council on June 28-29 in Chandigarh.

The other state ministers in the 8-member GoM include Maharashtra Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Gujarat Finance Minister Kanubhai Patel, Goa Panchayati raj Minister Mauvin Godinho, Tamil Nadu Finance Minister P Thiaga Rajan, Uttar Pradesh Finance Minister Suresh Khanna and Telangana Finance Minister T Harish Rao.

India can bring trusted solutions for world

First semiconductor project approval this year: Vaishnav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The indigenous 5G technology developed by the TCS-CDOT-led consortium has the potential to win global deals as people the world over are looking for trusted telecom solutions and no country can match the level of trust India can bring in, Telecom and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnav has said.

While sharing the government plans to deploy 1.25 lakh mobile sites in the BSNL network based on indigenously developed technology gears, Vaishnav in an interview with PTI expressed concern over the shortage of semiconductors and said the first project proposal for the high-tech electronic chips will be approved in coming few months this year. "We are



very rapidly progressing on developing our own 5G technology stack. There is a huge interest among the whole world community in having a good trusted and affordable technology source for telecom because telecom is today the primary consumption point for all digital services. People want a trusted telecom solu-

tion. And as you know, the trust which India can bring, no other country can match," Vaishnav said. Several countries led by the US and European nations have blocked 5G telecom gear from Chinese companies. India too has set up a process for approving trusted telecom gears in local networks.

Mcap of nine of top-10 valued firms jumps Rs 2.51 lakh cr



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Nine of the 10 most valued firms added Rs 2.51 lakh crore to their market valuation last week, with Tata Consultancy Services emerging as the biggest gainer. Last week, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 1,367 points or 2.66 per cent. HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited and ICICI Bank were among the gainers while Reliance Industries was the sole loser in

the pack. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) added Rs 74,534.87 crore to its market valuation which stood at Rs 12,04,907.32 crore at close on Friday.

The market capitalisation (mcap) of Hindustan Unilever jumped by Rs 44,888.95 crore to Rs 5,41,240.10 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation rose by Rs 35,427.18 crore to Rs 7,51,800.31 crore and that of HDFC's by Rs 24,747.87 crore to Rs 3,97,190.50 crore.

SBI, other PSU banks commit Rs 6,071 cr to Adani group

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ports-to-energy conglomerate Adani Group has forayed into copper manufacturing with tying up of finances from public sector lenders for a 1 million tonnes a year unit at Mundra in Gujarat. "Kutch Copper Ltd (KCL), a subsidiary of Adani Enterprises Ltd (AEL), is setting up a greenfield copper refinery project for production of refined copper with 1 million tonnes per annum in two phases," the company said in a statement. For the phase-1 capacity of 0.5 million tonnes, KCL has achieved financial closure through a syndicated club loan for the greenfield copper refinery project at Mundra, Gujarat. It has executed "financing documents with the consortium of banks led by State Bank of India (SBI).

FinMin asks banks to explore fintech partnership, co-lending

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry has asked public sector banks to explore fintech partnerships and co-lending opportunities to expand their business.

In the recently concluded performance review of PSBs by the Finance Ministry, sources said, lenders were asked to focus on technology and data analytics to push their lending.

The ministry also urged the heads of the public sector lenders to strengthen IT security systems and cybersecurity to check fraud.

According to the sources, banks were asked to sanction loans for productive sectors to accelerate the revival of the economy facing headwinds, including the Russia-Ukraine war. As per the RBI's latest data, growth in lending by PSBs has improved



significantly to 7.8 per cent in March 2022 from 3.6 per cent a year ago. Some of the PSBs recorded 26 per cent growth.

Bank of Maharashtra (BoM) recorded a 26 per cent increase in gross advances to Rs 1,35,240 crore at the end of March 2022. It was followed by the State Bank of India and Union Bank of India with 10.27 per cent and

9.66 per cent growth, respectively. The Pune-headquartered BoM witnessed a 16.26 per cent deposit growth and mobilised Rs 2,02,294 crore at the end of March 2022. Union Bank of India was the second with an 11.99 per cent growth in deposits (Rs 10,32,102 crore), while Indian Bank recorded a 10 per cent rise to Rs 5,84,661 crore.

FPIs' pull out continues; Rs 46,000 cr in Jun so far

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign investors continue to desert Indian equity markets and pulled out close to Rs 46,000 crore so far this month following monetary policy tightening by the Reserve Bank and US Federal Reserve, high oil prices and volatile rupee. The net outflow by foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) from equities reached Rs 2.13 lakh crore until now in 2022, data with depositories showed. Given the policy normalisation narrative by the US Fed and other major central

banks, coupled with high oil prices and volatile Rupee, FPIs are likely to stay away from emerging market assets, Hitesh Jain, Lead Analyst - Institutional Equities, Yes Securities, said.

FPIs inflow will only resume once there is visibility on the peak of bond yields in the US and an end to Fed rate hikes, he added. Moreover, FPIs are likely to sell more if the current trend of rising dollar and bond yields persists, said VK Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.



Global trends, crude oil key drivers for stocks this week

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stock markets will be driven by global trends, crude oil movement and foreign institutional investments this week, analysts said, adding that benchmark indices may also face volatility amid the scheduled monthly derivatives expiry. Moreover, the movement in the rupee and

the progress of monsoon would also be watched by investors, they added. "Indian markets managed to recover from lower levels after two weeks of sharp cuts thanks to a recovery in global markets and a cut in commodity prices. It seems that this recovery may see a further extension and we can expect a decent rally in the coming

days in equity markets," said Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd. "Apart from F&O expiry, monthly auto sales numbers and monsoon development will be important triggers," Meena said. Crude oil, rupee movement and FIIs' behaviour will be other important factors, he added.

EODB: States' ranking to be out on Jun 30

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry is expected to release on Thursday the ranking of states and Union Territories (UTs) in terms of ease of doing business, according to an official. "It has been decided to release the assessment of states/UTs under BRAP (Business Reforms Action Plan), 2020, on June 30 by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman," the official said. The exercise is aimed at triggering competition

among states to improve the business climate to attract domestic and global investors. The parameters include various areas, such as construction permit, labour regulation, environmental registration, access to information, land availability and single window system. The Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) conducts the exercise for all States/UTs under the Business Reform Action Plan (BRAP). In the last ranking released in September

2020, Andhra Pradesh topped the chart, followed by Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Madhya Pradesh and Jharkhand. Till date, state rankings have been released for 2015, 2016, 2017-18 and 2019.

The larger objective of attracting investments and increasing ease of doing business in each state was sought to be achieved by introducing an element of healthy competition through a system of ranking states based on their performance in the implementation of BRAP.



India exported 1.8 mln tn wheat since ban

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has exported 1.8 million tonnes of wheat to a dozen-odd countries, including Bangladesh and Afghanistan, since the country banned exports of the grain on May 13, according to Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey.

About 33,000 tonnes of wheat as humanitarian assistance has already been supplied to Afghanistan against the commitment of 50,000 tonne, he said.

Pandey, addressing a ministerial conference on 'uniting for global food security' held at Berlin, Germany on June 24, said India has always taken the needs of the world into consideration, even while meeting the onerous obligations of feeding its population of 1.38 billion people, an official statement said. The secretary said: It is important here



to explain that the recent decision by the Government of India (GoI) to bring about regulation on wheat exports was essentially taken to protect domestic availability as well as availability to vulnerable countries to whom supplies cannot be ensured by

market forces. "India has nonetheless continued with its commitment to cater for the genuine needs of neighbouring countries and food-deficit nations through Government-to-Government supply commitments already

made, he said. After the regulation until June 22nd this fiscal year, 1.8 million tonnes of wheat have been shipped out, almost four times from the previous year to countries including

Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Israel, Indonesia, Malaysia, Nepal, Oman, Philippines, Qatar, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Switzerland, Thailand, UAE, Vietnam and Yemen," he said.

On May 13, the government suspended wheat export with immediate effect. It moved the export of all varieties of wheat, including high-protein durum, from free to the prohibited category. The decision was aimed at controlling rising prices of wheat in the domestic market.

India had exported a record 7 million tonnes of wheat during 2021-22 fiscal, while typically, the country exports around 2

million tonnes which is around 1 per cent of global wheat trade, he said.

Stating that India is deeply conscious of its responsibilities towards the most vulnerable in various parts of the world, Pandey said the country continued to provide humanitarian assistance, both through the supply of vaccines as well as food consignments, during and beyond the pandemic. For instance, the country has dispatched several shipments of humanitarian assistance to the people of Afghanistan, including 33,000 tonnes of wheat of a total commitment of 50,000 tonnes made by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, and continues to do so in the wake of the devastation caused by the earthquake a couple of days ago, he said.

Govt to invite bids for power from 8,000 MW thermal units without PPAs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government will invite bids from states to sell electricity generated from 8,000 megawatt (MW) thermal capacities without PPAs, Power Minister RK Singh has said.

A total of 8,000 MW of thermal capacities in India are without any power purchase agreements, Singh, who is also the Minister for New and Renewable Energy, told PTI.

Replying to a question related to capacities without PPAs in India, the minister said, "There are 8,000 MW of capacities which don't have PPAs in thermal". Sharing the government's plan to resolve the issue, the minister informed that states



have been asked to send their electricity requirement, and accordingly bids will be invited. "We will aggregate (their demand) and call on for bids and based on the bids, whoever puts in the lowest bids, PPAs will be signed. Once PPAs are signed, they (states) will get the power," he said. Speaking fur-

ther, the minister said there are also some thermal capacities undergoing the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) proceedings, and the government has already taken several steps, including meeting with the bankers, to resolve the issue at the earliest so such plants can start operations.



TEJAL SINHA

We are sure at least once, in your life, that you might have shared a reel (short video), either on your Instagram story or with your friends. It could contain anything. However, there are some reels that take you back to those good old days. Videos posted by Pixoury on its page bring us some aesthetic art along with some of our favourite or underrated songs. Have you ever wondered how Hrishiraj Sugre, the founder of Pixoury, does it? It's through vector art. Vector art is a form of computer graphics and a mechanism where the artist creates some visual images using geometric shapes. Hrishiraj learned all this by watching videos on YouTube and learning various courses online. So, what inspired Hrishiraj to start Pixoury? To this, he shares, "During the first COVID lockdown, amidst the uncertainty of the future of business and life in general, I wanted to entertain people. I thought of utilising my skills, i.e., vector

art, and using it for something Indian audiences like. I tried creating posts on cricket and other trending subjects, but it didn't work. Then I got an idea to work on Bollywood scenes and songs. I never imagined so many people would like the videos. And here we are, a community of 948k families." Like any other page or influencer, he had his own challenges, but the biggest was to create content that would go viral. Telling us more about it, he says, "There were many challenges, but the most difficult challenge was to find a concept for the content which can go viral. After many failed attempts, I found the concept that went viral, but the challenge was making a reel every day. It took me 7-8 hours to make a reel when I started, and it was challenging to keep creating trending reels every day while working on my business." He believes Pixoury is a community and not just a page. "From day 1, I knew I wanted to build a community. The reason is, that the community creates loyal followers and it has a niche where we can market rele-

The fusion of music and art

The Pioneer brings the story behind Pixoury, a community that brings together people who connect with underrated songs and brings back those nostalgic memories of our childhood.



vant products to have less spam content. A few reels went viral in their community, after which, the community suggested new content, and then it went on to get bigger. Pixoury now is a community which likes Bollywood's classic songs and scenes in the manner that I present to them. It helps me to differentiate my work from others and the content doesn't violate copyright laws as it is written by me and is not copied. This helps the community to share some unique content that they don't find elsewhere," he adds. "Imagine playing songs for your friends at a party or in the car. There won't be a single song on which everyone will agree. Everyone has their own choice and they



feel that their favourite song is the best one. Without getting trolled, I have to do this for a million people every day. So the trick that I have followed for a long time now is to create reels on songs which are generally recommended to me more. Also, I try not to create reels based on my own personal favourites, as the audience won't like them. I generally look for the kind of comments that song has on different sites and if the song is trolled less and there are positive comments about it, I go for it," he says, adding that people still ask about the software or the process that he uses to make these videos. People's desire to learn the art prompted him to post videos about the process on YouTube and IGTV. He has been taking live tutorials. Until now, he has conducted over four live tutorials, but soon plans to be regularly taking live tutorials on one of India's leading educational platforms, which will be announced soon. Be it the 90's hits like *Jiya Dhadak Dhadak*, *Zara sa, Dilko tumse pyaar*, or of the most recent *Kesariya*, or *Mere Dholna*, the videos have just gone viral, with every video having more than 60k to more than 441k likes. He has also received the ANN Award for Best Reels from Animation Xpress.



Rise of veganism & its impact on the human race

Veganism is a lifestyle that excludes all animal products and attempts to limit animal cruelty and exploitation as much as possible. Veganism is an extreme form of vegetarianism, the term was coined in 1944, and the concept of animal products and by-products avoidance can be traced back to ancient Indian and eastern Mediterranean societies. Vipen Jain, Founder, Fitspire, India's Premium Vegan and Vegetarian Health and Wellness Brand shares, "Veganism encourages humans to be less destructive to animals and the world around them. This is important in itself, but there are plenty of specific reasons that veganism matters to individuals and to our collective future. People choose to be vegan for health, environmental, and ethical reasons. Vegans, on the other hand, think that all animals have a right to be free from human use." Vegans say no to all the forms of dairy products and eggs as they believe in eliminating every form of animal cruelty, even if many vegetarians don't mind consuming them. As a result, they try to stay away from all animal by-products. Eating a plant-based vegan diet can boost your mood and is associated with lower levels of cholesterol than omnivorous diets. Plant foods are high in antioxidants that help to prevent damage to cells and decrease inflammation. When you consume animal products, you are consuming bacteria and other harmful contaminants that accumulate in the body and have the ability to remain there for years. Eating a vegan diet can help to avoid some of these dangerous toxins. Plant foods can also help restore balance to certain neurotransmitters involved in depression. It helps in reducing your risk of heart disease by lowering cholesterol levels, lowering your chances of getting certain types of cancer, such as colon cancer and managing diabetes by lowering A1C levels. Have you ever wondered how a plant-based diet helps combat global warming that creates a positive impact on the human race? Most of you have wondered the same but, yes the greatest contributor to this cause is human activity, to reduce this we often inculcate some activities in our daily tasks, but changing your diet to one that's vegan is a whole different way to help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, protect habitats, species and conserve water. It was about 2.6 million years ago that non-veg became a significant part of our diet. Being a herbivore was extremely easy as fruits and vegetables don't run away, after all for hunting. But they're also not terribly calorie-dense. So, at that time also there were better alternatives available for a calorie-dense food were root vegetables like potatoes, beets and yams. Carbon dioxide is a significant pollutant that contributes to global warming as it always adds to the greenhouse effect, which drastically damages our environment. As per the research, livestock production is responsible for approximately 14.5% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Moreover, GHG emissions could be as high as 51% which about 37% of these GHG emissions come from the manure that animals produce, which produces methane, a gas that heats the earth almost 20 times faster than carbon dioxide. Other agriculture emissions come from transportation, preparing land for livestock, and producing crops to feed the animals, which creates another harmful gas called nitrous oxide. This shows that the process of meat production requires large amounts of energy which in return emits more greenhouse gas. A study, suggests that going on a vegan diet can save 1.5 tons of carbon dioxide per year.



Veganism encourages humans to be less destructive to animals and the world around them. This is important in itself, but there are plenty of specific reasons that veganism matters to individuals and to our collective future. People choose to be vegan for health, environmental, and ethical reasons. Vegans, on the other hand, think that all animals have a right to be free from human use.

-Vipen Jain

FILMS CELEBRATING childhood

Taare Zameen Par, Gandhi & Co., Stanley Ka Dabba, Chillar Party, The Blue Umbrella and I Am Kalam has broadened the scope of children's cinema with universal themes. Cinema for children in India has had an indistinct presence even though over the years, there have been popular films including Kidar Sharma's 1957 classic *Jaldeep* which won the Best Children's Film Prize at the International Film Festival at Venice. There was also Shyam Benegal's 1975 film *Charandas Chor* while in mainstream cinema, films like *Jagriti* (1954), *Boot Polish* (1954), *Ab Dilli Door Nahin* (1957) entertained children. Tapan Sinha's 1978 triumph *Safed Hath* won the National Film Award 1978. In recent times, India has not produced enough content exclusively for children but here is our pick of some films that not only engrossed the young but also gave food for thought to the grown-ups.

TAARE ZAMEEN PAR:

Released in 2007, the film revolves around a gifted eight-year-old dyslexic boy, Ishaan Awasthi (Darsheel Safary) who is deeply observant, sensitive and loves to paint. His teachers and father repeatedly make him feel worthless and he is sent to boarding school where he withdraws into his shell even more till a teacher Ram Shankar Nikumbh (Aamir Khan) decides to mentor, guide, and befriend him. *Taare Zameen Par* was screened in Seattle, Washington by the International Dyslexia Association in 2008 and in 2009. It was India's official entry for the 2009 Academy Awards Best Foreign Film category and also won the Filmfare Best Film Award and the National Film Award for Best Film on Family Welfare.

GANDHI & CO.:

Producer Mahesh Danannavar and National-Award-winning director Manish Saini have put Indian cinema for children on the world map with their acclaimed film, *Gandhi & Co* that recently garnered global recognition by winning the Golden Slipper award at the 62nd edition of the prestigious Zlin Film Festival in the Czech Republic.

'Golden Slipper' is a coveted award presented to the best feature film in the children, youth, and animation category. The film's child artists Reyaan Shah and Hiranya Zinzuwadia also won the Best Child Actor awards at the New York Indian Film Festival 2022. The film won the Second-Best Indian Feature award at the 13th Bengaluru International Film Festival and the Best Children Film award at the International Gujarati Film Festival (IGFF) 2022. It has been winning hearts and minds in the international festival circuit, highlights the enduring value of Gandhian principles and revolves around two boys who discover the gentle heroism of Gandhi via a mentor. They learn that Gandhi is not just a chapter in a school book but a way of life. The movie also stars Darshan Jariwala, Jayesh More, Druma Mehta, Sunil Vishrani, Reyaan Shah, Hiranya Zinzuwadia and Dhyani Jani.

STANLEY KA DABBA:

Directed and produced by Amole Gupte, the movie revolves around a schoolboy called Stanley who doesn't carry a lunchbox and

has to rely on his friends to feed him during recess. Nobody knows the dark facts about his life because he is witty, has an irresistible smile and is always cheerful. Despite his hard circumstances, he makes the people around him happy. While his English teacher (Divya Dutta) is impressed by his sunny demeanour, he is always at the receiving end of his Hindi teacher's (Amole Gupte) hostility. The story offers a heart-breaking twist in the end, revealing why Stanley cannot bring a lunchbox to school. And why he is not like any other child in the school. Partho Gupte received the National Award along with the Filmfare Special Award for his role.

CHILLAR PARTY:

Produced by Salman Khan Films, the 2011 comedy entertainer *Chillar Party*, has an ensemble of feisty young children, who challenge adult cruelty and political corruption to protect a dog from certain death. In doing so, the children teach the adults that ideals like, 'We must always

help others', 'A friend in need is a friend indeed' and 'We must do what is right' should not be relegated to books but also incorporated into real life. Led by young actors, Sarath Menon (Arjun/Encyclopedia), Naman Jain (Jhangya), Chinmai Chandranshuh (Panauti/Lucky) and others, the film beautifully shows how only coexistence can bring true happiness and harmony. The stellar performances by the children also overshadowed the adult actors.

THE BLUE UMBRELLA:

Director Vishal Bhardwaj, the film captures an idyllic, rural life of simple joys till a little girl Biniya (Shreya Sharma) gets a blue umbrella from a Japanese tourist and the umbrella becomes the cynosure of everyone's eyes. It inspires jealousy and negativity and even irks the middle-aged shopkeeper Nandakishore 'Nandu' Khatri (Pankaj Kapur). One day the umbrella is stolen and Biniya initiates an investigation into the theft of her prized possession. The film, jointly produced by Vishal Bhardwaj and Ronnie Screwvala also bagged the National Film Award in 2006 for the best children's movie and was also screened at the Pusan International Film Festival.

I AM KALAM:

2010 film directed by National Award winner and Padma Shri recipient Nila Madhab Panda depicted how a positive role model can inspire a child to rise above his circumstances. The film was screened at the 63rd Cannes Film Festival and won 34 international awards at various film festivals. The story is told from the perspective of a child labourer Chotu (Hareesh Mayar), who works in a roadside dhaba. There, he befriends Ranvijay Singh (Husaa Saad), and being an avid learner, takes his help to gain more knowledge. An accidental glimpse of the Republic Day Parade and President APJ Abdul Kalam's salutation march changes something within him and he instantly decides to become just like him. The film continues to remind us of the untapped potential in street children and child labourers whose dreams and reality never match but whose zest for life can inspire us all.

what's brewing?



Orhan Yalman and Ashhan Ozmen Okan



Animesh Barat and Sujatha

FOOD FESTIVAL

Hyatt Place, Hyderabad, is organising an authentic Turkish food festival - Flavors of Türkiye - that will continue till July 3. The interest of this event is to showcase the rich culture of Türkiye and their diverse food flavours to the audience of Hyderabad.



Isha and Chandana



Eyüp Kemal and Samiya Mujumder



Katre



Ronak Yar Khan

PARTY

Photos by SV Chary



Aarti and Ishanee



Vidushi and Muskan



Arthy and Shilpi

FASHION EXP

Pandora fashion and designers exhibition was organized at Taj Deccan, Hyderabad and marked the presence of various renowned designers including Anshu Jain, Anushree Reddy, and Samant Chauhan among the rest.

DIESEL AT YOUR DOORSTEP

GoFuel, a fuel delivery platform, launched its operations in Hyderabad and Secunderabad on Friday, in association with their franchise partner Sushmita enterprises.



Nuthi Amit



Aditya Meesala



Ajay and Sushmitha



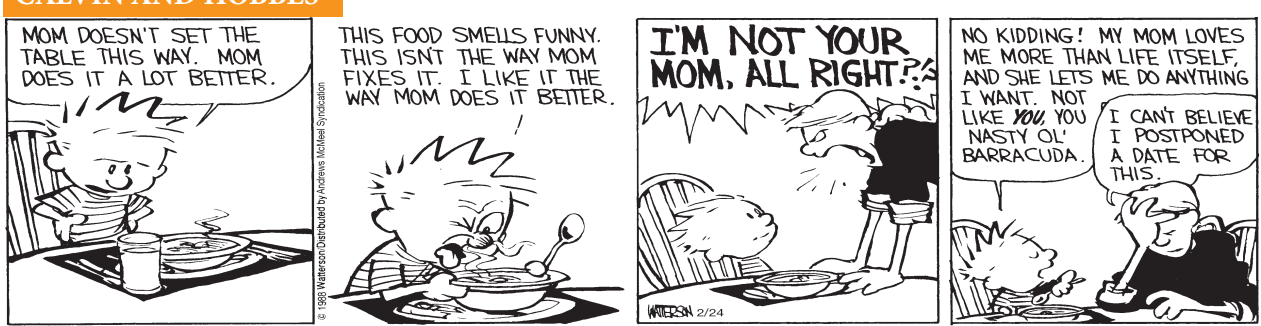
Dr Sreevidya, classical dancer, director of Sreez Overseas and an actress known for her performances in Telugu serials like Intikideepam Illalu, Gruhalakshmi, Prema Entha Madhram, Savithrammagari Abbai, added another feather to her cap by becoming Mrs India Sizzling Diva 2022. She also holds a Masters MD, from Kasturba Medical College.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



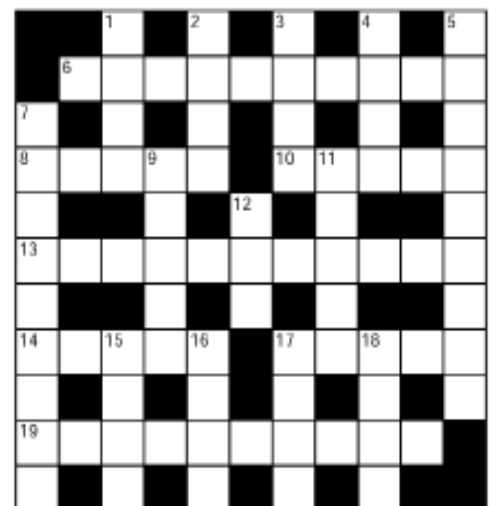
REALITY CHECK



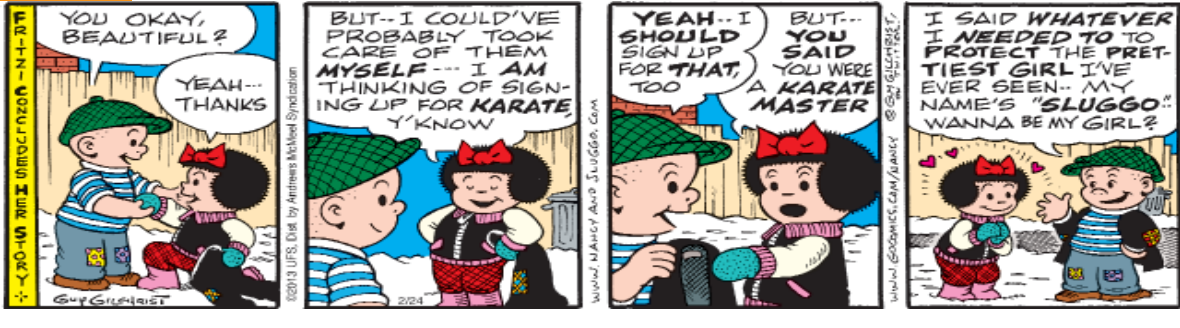
SPEED BUMP



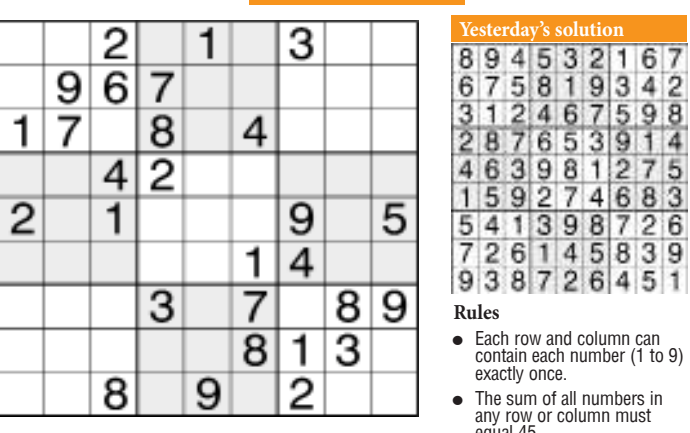
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



GINGER MEGGS



ACROSS

- 6 The total number of people in a city or country
- 8 The starboard side
- 10 The head of a city council
- 13 People who don't eat meat
- 14 Baggie
- 17 Depart
- 19 A sudden shaking of the ground
- 7 Went on a journey
- 9 The back part of the feet
- 11 Living
- 12 Candle substance
- 15 Belonging to us
- 16 Sound rebound
- 17 Very noisy
- 18 Enquires

DOWN

- 1 Lengthy
- 2 Resign from a job
- 3 Peaceful
- 4 Very small
- 5 Took one's clothes off



Divyansha Kaushik thrilled to be a part of Rama Rao on Duty

Actress Divyansha, known for her performance in Majili, will next be seen opposite Ravi Teja in Rama Rao on Duty. She shares with The Pioneer how the film sets are a fond memory for her, and how she is taking training to learn Tamil and Telugu.

Young actress Divyansha Kaushik has worked in Telugu and Tamil films. Although she acted in a hit like *Majili*, now she is anticipating appreciation in her upcoming Telugu movie *Rama Rao on Duty* releasing this July starring Ravi Teja.

The action-thriller written by Sarath Mandava, the plot follows Ramarao, an honest civil servant, on a mission to eradicate corruption to help the people suffering from poverty. In an exclusive conversation with the leading actress, she shares, "I took a break after *Majili*, but soon I realised Tollywood cinema keeps me alive. Lunching with my co-stars on the film sets seems to be really like a fond memory for me whenever shooting."

Produced by SLV Cinemas and RT Team Works, the film began its production in July 2021 in Hyderabad with filming also taking place in Andhra Pradesh and Spain. A little birdie tells

us that after getting Gautham Vasudev Menon on board, the team of Ranjith Jeyakodi's Michael starring Sundeep Kishan and Vijay Sethupathi has finalised the heroine of the film and it's Divyansha Kaushik.

Divyansha went through look tests and an audition before clinching the part.

"Ranjit sir's vision of the project really excited me. I wasn't really nervous when I had auditioned and the moods that he had wanted for the character came to me naturally. But I am quite nervous about acting alongside my co-stars. I am also

training in both Tamil and Telugu so that I can understand the essence of the dialogues fully," she says.

She is plain-speaking and like any other actor who is waiting for a meaty role to show the world, she is not mere eye candy. She continued talking about her debut in Telugu, "There are tense

and fun scenes I have done like the song, montages that will always have an impact. The first time when I met Naga Chaitanya, I said that I am Divyansha and he immediately picked the last part and made it into Anshu. At home, people call me Annie. My mom is Anu and my dad is Ashwini, so I am a combination of both their names. I wanted to be an actor

ever since I saw Kareena as Poo in *Kabhi Khushi Kabhi Gham* and my interest shifted to being an editor of *Vogue* magazine."

Since her mother Anju Kaushik is an established make-up artiste in Delhi, she considered becoming a make-up artiste and a beauty editor. She even took up studies in make-up in London and fashion and media communications in Delhi. And, here she is today fulfilling her dreams.



Pawan Kalyan's mother donates for farmers in distress

The Jana Sena Party (JSP) led by actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan has donated money to rural households whose breadwinners committed suicide due to bankruptcy. Now, Kalyan's mother Anjanamma has come forward donating Rs 1.5 lakh for the benefit of Andhra Pradesh farmers.

She has also given her son's JSP an additional one lakh donation for the functioning of the growing political party. Previously, Anjanamma had given Rs 4 lakh to the JSP in 2014, garnering media attention.

She recently made headlines once more after giving another gift.

In order to help the families of tenant farmers who committed suicide, it appears that Kalyan's family, including his brother Naga Babu, sisters Vijayadurga and Madhavi, nephews Varun Tej and Vaishnav Tej, and niece Niharika Konidela gave the JSP Rs 35 lakh, while Sai Dharam Tej alone donated Rs 10 lakh.

Kapil Dev surprises Sudeep

Sandalwood Star Kichcha Sudeep won hearts with his performance in Rajamouli's *Eega* in Tollywood. He even played a cameo in Rajamouli's *Baahubali*.

His upcoming film Vikrant Rona is set to be released in various languages across the world. The film directed by Anup Bhandari is racing for a grand release.

In the meantime, Kichcha Sudeep got a pleasant surprise from Legendary Cricketer. Legendary Cricketer Kapil Dev who created a record by presenting India with its first World Cup in Cricket in 1983 defeating the Mighty West Indies, presented a

classic bat.

Sharing the details, Kichcha Sudeep posted, "Wohhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhhh... What a Sunday.. thank uuuu Kapil Dev sirrrrr for this hugeeeeee surprise I'm waking th to. Wowwww... wasnt expecting this. This a classic piece and I'm right now feeling on top of the world. Thank you thank you."

The bat that was used in 1983, had the autographs of all the World Cup winning cricketers from the Indian team. Infact, Kichcha Sudeep released the Bollywood film 83, a biopic on Team India's world cup winning campaign.



Another powerful title for RC15?

Mega Power Star Ram Charan's upcoming project *RC15*, directed by Shankar is progressing at a brisk pace and Shankar is set to blow your minds with the action sequences. Ram Charan will be seen romancing Kiara Advani in the film for which music is scored by Thaman. Thaman already started scoring tunes for the film.

There has been several rumours doing rounds in context with the title of the film. The names of *Viswambhara*, *Sarakarodu*, *Adhikari* did rounds. It was also stated that Ram Charan gave the green signal to the title *Adhikari*. Now rumours have it that Shankar is considering another name for the title. Shankar feels the title *Citizen* will be apt for the film.



In fact, Thala Ajith came with a powerful entertainer with the same name *Citizen* in 2001. It has to be seen whether Shankar and Ram Charan will finalise this title.

Manasanamaha makes it to the Guinness records



Manasanamaha, which starred Viraj Ashwin, Drishika Chander, Valli Raghavender, Prithvi Sharma and Bunny Abhiran, becomes the most awards-winning short film in the world. The film has made a record in the Guinness book of the world.

Director and Writer Deepak Reddy shared a post where he is seen holding the Guinness World Record certificate on his Instagram page and wrote, "*Manasanamaha* creates history as the most awards-winning film/short in the world."

Many filmmakers and actors praised the film for its technical aspects and production. The film was dubbed into Tamil, Malayalam, Hindi and Kannada.



Prithviraj hints at directing Telugu film

Prithviraj Sukumaran, a Malayalam actor who is now promoting his next bilingual film *Kaduva*, was recently spotted engaging with the media in Hyderabad. He made references to his prospective endeavours while talking about movies and other areas of his interests. While interacting with the media in Hyderabad, Sukumaran made some revelations about a few other topics and indicated his desire to direct a Telugu film soon in addition to the numerous offers he is currently considering. On making his Telugu debut, he said, "I've already been given a film by a few of top Tollywood producers, and I'm glad and delighted about it. I might soon direct a Telugu movie in addition to acting." Due to his films, including his directorial debut, *Lucifer*, and his most recent acting endeavour, *Jana Gana Mana*, Prithviraj Sukumaran also has a sizable

fan base in Tollywood. They helped him connect with the Telugu audience, and now he wants his future movie, *Kaduva*, to have a direct dubbed release. Sukumaran is considered for a significant role in Prabhas' hyped movie *Salaar*. Prabhas' dates and his schedule are currently a little hazy, according to Sukumaran, but he would never want to pass up the opportunity to work with a star like Prabhas and is waiting for the director Prashanth Neel to come up with a solution.



DJ Tillu sequel to take off in August

The makers of Siddu Jonnalagadda-starrer *DJ Tillu*, which has been one of Tollywood's biggest success stories of 2022, have officially announced the sequel for *DJ Tillu*.

The makers announced that *DJ Tillu* sequel will start filming in August.

Producer Suryadevara Naga Vamsi on Saturday shared a cryptic post on social media with the caption, "Gearing up for Round 2."

"The most awaited Franchise... Gearing up for Round 2. Crazy adventure starts filming in August," he wrote, as he shared a picture from the muhurat event for *DJ Tillu*.

DJ Tillu stood its ground and became a fantastic entertainer with incredible commercial

success in a year when the industry saw pan-India biggies like *RRR*, which isn't normal. For this reason, the film's creators, Sithara Entertainments, have chosen to create a sequel.

Despite Vimal Krishna's directorial *DJ Tillu* lacking a powerful story, Siddhu Jonnalagadda's flawless action, gripping screenplay, and comedy worked in the favor of the movie.

Along with Neha Shetty, Prince Cecil, Brahmaji, and Fish Venkat, the movie also stars other notable actors.

INDIA WOMEN EYE SERIES SWEEP AGAINST SRI LANKA

PTI ■ DAMBULLA

The series already in their pocket, a confident India will look to complete a white-wash when they take on hosts Sri Lanka in the third and final women's T20 International here on Monday.

The Harmanpreet Kaur-led outfit had thrashed the home team by 34 runs in the opening T20 and then followed it up with a dominating five-wicket win in the second game to take an unassailable 2-0 lead in the series.

More importantly, the wins will be a morale booster for India ahead of the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham starting next month, where women's T20 cricket is set to make its debut.

India seem to have found the winning momentum, but they won't be entirely pleased with their performance in the series so far.

While the bowlers have done a stellar job in the two games, India's batting has left a lot to be desired.



Additionally, the Indians have been sloppy on the field.

The bowling unit has been on the mark for India. The spinners have been sensational, making full use of the slow nature of the pitch. They had comfortably defended 138 in the opening game.

Sri Lanka skipper Chamari Athapaththu (43) and opener Vishmi Gunaratne (45) presented the Indian bowling unit with a challenge as the duo put up a 87-run stand in the second game.

But the Indian bowlers made a strong comeback as they gave just 14 runs in the last 3.1 overs while claiming six wickets to restrict Sri Lanka to a below-par 125.

But the visitors were made to work hard for what should have been a comfortable chase.

Shafali Verma (17), Sabbhineni Meghana (17) and Yastika Bhatia (13) were unable to convert their starts.

The team's top scorer in the previous game Jemimah Rodrigues (3) also perished cheaply and will aim for consistency.

After stuttering in the first game, prolific opener Smriti Mandhana roared back to form, her 39 off 34 balls helped the tourists win the match and the series.

Mandhana was complemented by Harmanpreet (31 not out), who is now India's leading T20I run scorer. The all-rounder played a captain's knock guiding her side over the line while also pitching in with the ball.

Sri Lanka will be desperately hoping to avoid a second consecutive whitewash, having gone down to Pakistan 0-3 in a T20 series recently.

The hosts will seek to perform as a cohesive unit and grab a consolation win, which will lift their spirits heading into the three-match ODI series, starting Friday.

For that they need more contributions with the bat while their bowlers will also need to support the spin duo of Inoka Ranaweera and Oshadi Ranasinghe, who have done most of the task with the ball for the side till now.



ASHWIN RETURNS TO SNAP TWO WICKETS

PTI ■ LEICESTER

Opener Shubman Gill struck a sublime fifty while Ravichandran Ashwin snapped two wickets after making his first appearance in the game following his recovery from a COVID-19 infection as India's warm-up match against Leicestershire ended in a draw here on Sunday. As many as five Indians turned up for both the teams during the four-day practice match as the visitors looked to put final touch to their preparation for the rescheduled fifth Test against England starting in Birmingham on July 1.

It was a much-needed outing for Ashwin, who had travelled to England late after testing positive for the virus. He looked in good touch as he bowled 11 overs and took two wickets, conceding 31 runs.

Pacer Jasprit Bumrah led India on the fourth and final day after the country woke up to the news of their skipper Rohit Sharma testing positive for COVID-19, which put his participation in the one-off Test in serious doubt. If he misses out, Gill will have to take the onus of giving India a good start and the Punjab batter, who was earlier dismissed for 21 and 38, finally managed to convert the starts with a 77-ball 62 studded with eight hits to the fence and two maximums.

He emerged as the top-scorer after he turned up for Leicestershire, who were set a target of 367 to win following India's second innings declaration at 364 for 7.

Hanuma Vihari, who also batted for both

the teams, spent some quality time in the middle with his 86-ball vigil producing a 26-run innings. He had scores of 3 and 20 in the earlier innings.

Chasing 367, Leicestershire lost Hasan Azad (12) early on day 4 but Gill stitched a 67 run partnership with skipper Samuel Evans (26) to steady the innings.

However, spinner Ashwin dismissed both the set batters.

The 35-year-old from Chennai had first Gill caught by Mohammed Shami in the 28th over and then removed Evans with wicket-keeper Srikanth Bharat coming up with a clean take behind the stumps to effect the stumping.

Vihari and Louis Kimber (58 not out) then came together and forged a 72-run stand to take Leicestershire close to the 200-mark.

Vihari's stay ended when Ravindra Jadeja (1/35 in 8 overs) had him caught behind in the 56th over.

Kimber and Joey Evison (15 not out) batted for another 10 overs, adding 37 before both the teams decided to shake hands.

Prasidh Krishna and Bumrah bowled for both Indians and Leicestershire but both remained wicketless on the final day.

While Krishna bowled five overs for 19 runs, Bumrah rolled his arms for 8 overs, conceding 12.

Among other Indians, Cheteshwar Pujara also had batted for both teams, while Shreyas Iyer and Jadeja had batted twice in India's second innings on Saturday.

Rohit Sharma tests positive for COVID-19: BCCI



PTI ■ BIRMINGHAM

India skipper Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 in a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) and placed in isolation ahead of 'fifth' Test against England, the BCCI said on Sunday.

The Test match is scheduled to begin from July 1 in Birmingham and if Rohit remains in six-day isolation, either pacer Jasprit Bumrah or wicket-keeper batter Rishabh Pant could be asked to lead the team.

"Team India captain Mr Rohit Sharma has tested positive for COVID-19 following a Rapid Antigen Test (RAT) conducted on Saturday," BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said in a media release.

"He is currently in isolation

at the team hotel and is under the care of the BCCI Medical Team. An RT-PCR test will be conducted on Sunday to ascertain his CT value," the release added. Rohit had batted on first day of the ongoing warm-up game against Leicestershire but didn't take field on the second day. He did not bat in the second Indian innings.

The 35-year-old Indian skipper is expected to open the innings alongside Shubman Gill in the Test match and his participation would now depend on result of his RT-PCR test and recovery.

Off-spinner Ravichandran Ashwin had also joined the squad in England late since he had also tested positive for COVID-19 before the team left for the UK tour.

Mitchell, Blundell frustrate England again

AP ■ LEEDS

New Zealand's Daryl Mitchell and Tom Blundell frustrated England again on Sunday as they denied the hosts a fresh breakthrough in their quest for a series whitewash.

The pair batted through the entire morning session to take the Black Caps to 254-5 in their second innings, a lead of 223 runs, at lunch on the fourth day of the third Test at Headingley.

Mitchell, who had already scored three hundreds this series, including 109 in New Zealand's first innings 329, was 44 not out.

Blundell, fresh from his first-innings 55, was unbeaten on 45.

The pair had so far put on 93 to follow their first-innings partnership of 120 and this latest stand also saw them get through the first two overs the new ball, available to England for two overs before the interval.

World Test champions New Zealand resumed on 168-5, a lead of 137 runs, having lost a flurry of wickets late on Saturday.

And with England having



chased down 299 inside a day to win at Nottingham and go 2-0 up in the three-match series, the Black Caps still had plenty to do if they were to avoid a whitewash.

Mitchell and Blundell, four and five not out respectively overnight, were rarely troubled as England captain Ben Stokes -- yet to bowl himself Sunday -- rotated his pace attack.

But England left-arm spinner Jack Leach, who took 5-100 in the tourists' first-innings, did pose problems by gaining plenty of turn, dip and bounce.

Leach thought he had Mitchell, pushing forward, lbw for 17 with the total on 206.

South African umpire Marais Erasmus raised his fin-

ger, but Mitchell's review indicated the ball would have bounced over the stumps and the decision was overturned.

England had been forced into a late change, with Sam Billings called up as an emergency wicketkeeper after Ben Foakes was ruled out of the rest of the match following a positive test for Covid-19.

Foakes did not take the field on Saturday afternoon because of a stiff back, with Jonny Bairstow deputising behind the stumps, but Billings, who made his Test debut in the final match of England's Ashes series loss in Australia earlier this year, was drafted in for the remainder of this fixture.

Mithali is an inspiration to many: PM Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday paid glowing tributes to Mithali Raj and conveyed his best wishes to the legendary former Indian skipper who announced her retirement earlier this month.

Having made her debut at the age of 16, Mithali brought an end to an illustrious 23-year career, finishing as the most capped player, the highest run-scorer and the most successful women's captain.

In Sunday's episode of 'Mann Ki Baat', Modi described Mithali as "one of the most talented cricketers in India".



"Her retirement from cricket has emotionally moved many sports lovers. Mithali has not only been an extraordinary player but has also been an inspiration to many players. I wish Mithali all the very best for her future," the prime minister said.

Since making her debut on June 26, 1999 against Ireland, Mithali represented the country in 12 Tests, 232 ODIs and 89 T20Is. In 333 international matches, the 39-year-old aggregated 10,868 runs across three formats. She has led India to a record 89 wins from 155 ODIs, ahead of Belinda Clarke who is second in the list with 83 victories.

MP create history with maiden Ranji triumph

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Madhya Pradesh, not considered among cricketing elites during the past decade, on Sunday humbled domestic powerhouse Mumbai by six wickets in a one-sided Ranji Trophy final under coach Chandrakant Pandit, who exorcised the ghosts of losing one at this very ground 23 summers ago.

On the final day, Mumbai could only manage 269 in their second innings, leaving MP with a paltry target of 108, and they did it in style as Pandit won a record sixth national title as a coach.

Sarfraz Khan (45), who finished the season with 18 short of 1000 runs and young Suved Parkar (51) tried their bit, but with the need to attack at every opportunity, MP's Kumar Kartikeya (4/98) and the other bowlers knew that wickets would come their way.

While chasing, there were some hiccups, but with just over 100 to get, it was a stroll in the park for the MP team.

As they completed the victory, Pandit was flooded with memories (not happy ones), which he hasn't been able to erase for over two decades and despite winning five trophies as a coach.

It was here at the Chinnaswamy Stadium in the summer of 1999 when MP, despite a first-innings lead of 75, failed to win the game as Pandit, a proud captain, finished his playing career in tears.

Before the final, he spoke to PTI about divine intervention and circle of life and during the five days, sat in one corner with a white towel on his lap.

He has again proved to be an 'Alchemist', after guiding Vidarbha to four trophies (successive Ranji and Irani Cup), with a team that didn't have superstars.

The Yash Dubeys, Himanshu Mantris, Subham Sharmas, Gourav Yadavs or Saransh Jains aren't players who would give you the feeling that they are India prospects, the classy Rajat Patidar being an exception.



But they gave enough indication that they aren't ready to concede even a micro millimetre without a good scrap.

They gave the Mumbai men a lesson in perfect execution of tactic with dollops of 'Khadoos' cricket, which many thought was a patent of the 41-time champions.

MP's win once again proved

that the Ranji Trophy is often won by sides which don't have too many superstars or India prospects with ambition or wherewithal to play top-flight cricket.

It happened with Rajasthan when they had Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Akash Chopra during their triumph while Vidarbha had Wasim Jaffer and Ganesh Sathish guiding a bunch of

youngsters.

In MP, there was no Avesh Khan or Venkatesh Iyer and had only an emerging potential star in Patidar, yet they followed Pandit's 'Gurukul' style of 'My Way or High Way' coaching philosophy to emerge triumphant.

Since 2010, the Ranji Trophy, barring Karnataka's dominance for a few seasons and Mumbai winning it

once, it has been won by teams like Rajasthan (twice), Vidarbha (twice), Saurashtra (once) and Madhya Pradesh, who would never be in contention in the past.

This shows that cricket has moved from the Shivaji Park, Azad Maidan or Cross Maidan in Mumbai, from the National Stadium in Delhi or the state-of-the-art camps in Bengaluru or Kolkata, to the hinterlands.

Bhopal's Yash Dubey, who had problems with his eye-sight during teenage years or Sultanpur's Kumar Kartikeya, who hadn't gone back home for nine years or Hoshangabad's Gourav Yadav, who would beat Prithvi Shaw's bat many times just for fun are men, who haven't had it easy.

When the Ranji Trophy started, the Madhya Pradesh cricket team wasn't even formed and it was back then known as Holkar, a princely state from the British era, which produced the country's finest cricketers - the charismatic Mushtaq Ali -- or the first ever captain of the Indian cricket

team -- the great CK Nayudu.

Holkar was a formidable team till the 1950s before it was rechristened as Madhya Bharat and subsequently Madhya Pradesh.

MP, over the years, have produced some fine cricketers - spinners Narendra Hirwani and Rajesh Chauhan -- who had brief but eventful international careers.

Amay Khurasiya, who had finished his cricket some years before the IPL, where he would have been a rocking success.

And then there was the peerless Devendra Bundela, who was one of those unlucky middle-order batters, who played in the 1990s and 2000s when Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly, Rahul Dravid and VVS Laxman were in their pomp.

But as a Ranji team, it never looked menacing save the occasional final they played 23 summers back under Pandit's captaincy.

However, this was a team that had enough self-belief and was ready to punch above its weight. They did it with aplomb through five days.