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In brief

Venezuela plans stock sale of state-owned companies

In a break from its socialist model, Venezuela's government plans to open for private investment a number of state-owned companies in vital sectors as it seeks to address a need for capital for severely underinvested businesses. Scant details on the move are fuelling doubts. The government intends to sell between 5 per cent and 10 per cent of shares in various companies, some of which were nationalised by the late President Hugo Chvez in his bid to transform the South American country into a socialist state. But basic information for a public offering, including number of shares, stock price and the exchange in which a company will be listed, remain unclear ahead of the planned Monday sale.

Registration, trip card mandatory for Char Dham pilgrims

With the Himalayan shrines in Uttarakhand receiving unprecedented crowd, check posts in Dehradun, Mussoorie and Rishikesh were activated on Saturday to ensure that only registered pilgrims are allowed for the Char Dham Yatra. 'This has been done to ensure that the number of pilgrims does not exceed the daily limit prescribed for the temples. It will also help prevent any last minute confusion,' Dehradun District Magistrate R Rajesh Kumar said. The pilgrims will be stopped at the check posts and will not be allowed to proceed on their onward journey cards.

Doctor couple becomes India's first to scale Mt Everest

A surgeon couple from Gujarat scripted history on Friday by becoming the first Indian doctor couple to climb Mount Everest, while another Indian climber conquered the world's fourth-highest peak without using supplemental oxygen, Nepal's media reported on Saturday. Dr Hemant Lalitendra Leuva and his wife Dr Surbhiiben Hemant Leuva stood atop the 8,849-meter (29,032-foot) summit at around 8:30 am on Friday, becoming the first Indian doctor couple to climb the world's highest peak, said Rishi Bhandari, Managing Director at Satori Adventure.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Titthi: Chaturdashi: May 14 03:23 PM to May 15 12:46 PM

Purnima: May 15 12:46 PM to May 16 09:44 AM

Nakshatram:

Swati: May 14 05:28 PM to May 15 03:35 PM

Vishaka: May 15 03:35 PM to May 16 01:18 PM

Rahukalam: 5:01 PM to 6:37 PM

Yamagandam: 12:12 PM to 1:48 PM

Varjyam: 08:39 PM to 10:05 PM

Gulika: 3:24 PM to 5:01 PM

Amritakalam: 07:28 AM to 08:56 AM

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:46 AM to 12:38 PM

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny

Temp: 37°C

Humidity: 38%

Sunrise: 5:48 AM

Sunset: 6:36 PM

Updated: MAY 14, 2022 5:00 PM

OBTUSE ANGLE



Shah sounds poll bugle

Asserts that BJP is ready for elections even if they are held tomorrow

- 'Yatra was meant to root out TRS party'
- 'Time to dethrone KCR government'
- 'Minority reservations have to go'

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah, alluding to reports that TRS supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao might go for early elections to upstage other parties, has declared that the Bharatiya Janata Party is ready to face elections "even if it happens tomorrow".

Amit Shah was speaking at a public meeting at Tukuguda on Saturday at the culmination of BJP TS unit chief Bandi Sanjay's Praja Sangrama Yatra.

Amit Shah said: "Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, sitting in the five star farmhouse, you keep planning to go for early elections. Not early, do it tomorrow. Bharatiya Janata Party is ready. Your loss is written and I can see it".

Amit Shah observed that there was no need of him and that Bandi Sanjay Kumar was enough to dethrone the Chief Minister. He said it was time to dethrone the KCR government, which he described as 'Nizam government'. Bandi Sanjay Kumar's Praja Sangrama Yatra was intended to free people from the 'Razakars' rule in the state', he remarked.

Slamming the TRS government, he said that in his entire life, he had never seen such 'nikamma and



Union Minister Amit Shah greeting people at a public meeting held at Tukuguda on Saturday. State BJP leaders are also seen in the picture.

brashtachari sarkar'. He said that Bandi Sanjay's Yatra was to root out the TRS party, which indulged in graft involving thousands of crores of rupees and which was feared of AIMIM. He called upon the youth to come forward to dethrone the government in the state.

Amit Shah said, "KCR believes some Tantrik who said that if he goes to the Secretariat, he will lose CM post. Not tantrik, but the youth of Telangana will throw him out of his post." He said that BJP will remove minority reservations. He said, "Minority reservations have to go as they were hurting the BC, SC and ST reservations"

He said that Bandi Sanjay Kumar

AMIT SHAH DID JHUMLABAAZI & DHOKEBAAZI: KTR 'Aaya, khaya, piya, chal diya'

Hours after Amit Shah's speech on Saturday, Telangana Municipal Administration and IT Minister KT Rama Rao said that the season of political tourism continues. In a tweet, he said, "Ek Aur Tourist Aaj: Aaya, Khaya, Piya, Chal Diya". He added, "8 saal mein kuch nahi diya Telangana ko, aaj bhi wahi silsila. Wahi jhumlabaaazi aur dhokebaazi". KTR suggested that one more tourist came, ate, drank and left. He gave nothing to Telangana, apart from deception. KTR said that BJP was living up to its name: Bakwaas Jhumla Party.

did Praja Sangrama Yatra for the welfare of people, but not for the transfer of power from one political party to another or to make anyone as Chief Minister. He alleged that KCR

had launched 'murder politics' in the state and had taken the life of BJP activist Sai Ganesh.



Modi's policies on agriculture contradictory: TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is taking unsustainable measures, said Vinod Kumar, the Vice-Chairman of the State Planning Commission. He expressed concern that this has created a ridiculous situation in India.

He recalled that Prime Minister Modi had announced during a virtual meeting with US President Joe Biden a month ago that India would supply enough food to the world. But now the Centre has decided to ban the export of wheat from India. Vinod said the Modi government had no idea how many farmers were cultivating and what the yields of various crops were.

West Hyderabad resembles 'mini-Singapore' at night: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao said that Hyderabad is a city that combines old-world charm and new-age vibrance.

"If you go to the Financial District or Knowledge City at night it is a mini-Singapore. Many of my friends said that you are not marketing the city enough," KTR said.

Speaking at the national conference 'NATCON-21 Arch Utsav' organised by the Indian Institute of Architects (IIA) in Hyderabad on Saturday, KTR said, "The city is growing, and it is important for the state and the country. The top 8 to 10 cities run our nation whether we like it or not. We have to make sure that the cities continue to perform and do well, if not the economy will tank. When we aspire and dream to be a global city, political opponents laugh at us, scoffing at us for dreaming too much. Unless you think big and think of the impossible, you cannot aspire to be a world-class city."



Telangana Minister KTR speaking at 'NATCON-21 Arch Utsav' on Saturday.

'RAHUL KNOWS ONLY ABOUT DANCES, PUBS'

Industries Minister KT Rama Rao came down heavily on Congress MP Rahul Gandhi on Saturday. He said, "Rahul Gandhi has no knowledge about Yedulu (bulls) and Vadlu (paddy). He knows only about pubs and clubs." KTR inaugurated and laid the foundation stone for development projects in Halia and Nandikonda Municipalities in Nagarjuna Sagar constituency. KTR addressed the gathering at Halia and recalled that he had asked the people to give him one more chance. "How many times Congress represented this constituency? They were given a chance seven times, but nothing was done. The Congress was given a chance 10 times in this country. They ruled for 50 years. They couldn't do in 50 years and now asks for another chance." He said that Congress leaders are fighting each other and that Nagarjuna Sagar is moving forward in development. KTR advised the people not to trust the Congress and praised Nomula Bhagat.

56 L cases settled in National Lok Adalat in 24 states, UTs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 56 lakh cases were settled in the second National Lok Adalat organised in 24 states and union territories on Saturday with a total settlement amount of Rs 2,648 crore, the National Legal Services Authority (NALSA) said.

Heat wave: Red alert in Raj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Searing heatwave gripped North India as temperatures crossed 45 degrees Celsius in many states, while pockets of Delhi saw an upwards of 47 degrees Celsius, with little relief expected in the next couple of days.

Jammu recorded the season's hottest day at 43.5 degrees Celsius, while a red alert has been sound-

Jagan, KCR busy selecting candidates for RS polls

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

The crucial exercise for selection of Rajya Sabha candidates has begun in the Telugu states. Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao has to select three candidates and Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy has to select four candidates. KCR has to also select a candidate for the RS by-election.

Usually, hopefuls try to please the respective parties' high commands to get tickets. But surprisingly, in Telangana, the situation has been reversed in selecting a candidate for the RS by-election. The TRS leadership had decided to give a Rajya Sabha ticket in the by-election to former MP Ponguleti Srinivasa Reddy. He had given up his Khammam Lok Sabha seat in the last general election. Ponguleti, then a sitting LS Member, had sacrificed his Khammam seat to accommodate Nama Nageswar Rao as per the request of the TRS leadership. Now, the TRS leadership has offered a Rajya Sabha ticket to Ponguleti. But Ponguleti has reportedly refused to take the Rajya Sabha ticket for the by-election. According to sources, Ponguleti has told the TRS leadership that he does not want a Rajya Sabha by-election ticket as it has only a two-and-a-half-year term. He reportedly wants the TRS high command to give him the Rajya Sabha ticket for the elections to be held on June 19 as it has a full (six-year) term.

However, the TRS high command is trying to make Ponguleti accept the ticket for the RS by-election. If Ponguleti does not change his



Hopefuls try to please the respective parties' high commands to get tickets. But surprisingly, in Telangana, the situation has been reversed in selecting a candidate for the RS by-election



mind, the TRS high command may choose former minister Motkuppally Narasimhulu or former MLC Naradasu Lakshman Rao.

As for the other two seats, former MP and State Planning Board Vice Chairman B. Vinod Kumar is one of the strong contenders. The names of former MP Sitaram Naik and actor Prakash Raj, among others, are doing the rounds.

Bid to win back weaker sections

Cong to provide 50 pc quota to SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities



Congress president Sonia Gandhi having discussion with senior leaders at Chintan Shivir held on Saturday in Udaipur

PNS ■ UDAIPUR

The Congress is set to provide 50 per cent representation to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, OBCs and minorities at all levels in the party organisation as part of its social engineering efforts to win back the confidence of the weaker sections.

In a change in stance on quota within quota in the women's reservation bill, the party is likely to resolve to demand that from out of the reservation for women in Lok Sabha and legislative assemblies,

there should be proportionate reservation for SC, ST and OBC women.

Addressing a media briefing on the deliberations of the panel on social justice and empowerment formed by party chief Sonia Gandhi to lead discussions on this issue at the Congress' three-day 'Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir' here, senior leader and Union minister Salman Khurshid said establishing a social justice advisory council to the Congress president has also been recommended by the panel.

Tripartite meeting on AP-TS issues on 25

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A tripartite committee meeting on all pending issues between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will be held on May 25 as part of the AP Reorganisation Act. The committee which held a meeting once will meet again next week.

The meeting will be held virtually and will be chaired by the Union Secretary of State for Home Affairs. The Finance Secretaries of both the states, Ramakrishna Rao and SS Rawat, will participate in the meeting.

The bifurcation issues between Telangana and AP will be reviewed. The AP Bhavan in New Delhi and the division of assets under the Ninth Schedule of the Reorganisation Act will be reviewed. Singareni and its subsidiary Opinel will also be discussed.

Parties competing in name-calling netas on social media

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Using funny names for self as username or catchy nicknames for friends on social media is quite common. Political parties have gone a step further to name and, in the process, shame or defame, albeit in a lighter vein, netas belonging to rival parties. Surprisingly, the netas who are the butt of these jokes, rarely feel offended, and often take the insinuating monikers, whether hilarious or sarcastic, as compliments.

Sample these: 'KaChaRao', 'Kurekure

Reddy', 'Thondi Sanjay' and 'Manikchand Tagore'. These are the words used by Telangana social media users to refer to politicians. Each political party has given such names for its rivals in other parties.

The TRS uses a set of names to refer to opposition leaders. Kishan Reddy is allegedly referred to as 'Kurekure Reddy'. It is not without reason. During the Covid lockdown, he was seen distributing Kurkure and Doritos to healthcare workers as part of a company's CSR activities. Bandi Sanjay is called variously as 'BS Kumar' (bull shit), 'Tambaku

Sanjay' and 'Thondi Sanjay'. Dharmapuri Arvind is referred to as 'Gundu' or 'Fake degree MP'. The allusion is to his baldness and to his degree, which is reportedly fake.

Congress Incharge Manikyam Tagore is referred to as 'Manikchand Tagore'. TPCC Chief Revanth Reddy is referred to as 'TPCC Cheap' because TRS feels that his comments are often very cheap.

For Prime Minister Narendra Modi also, his initials are used. BJP calls Chief Minister Kalvakuntla Chandrashekar Rao as 'KaChaRa', derived from initials of his full name. He is also referred to as

'Farmhouse CM' and 'Dora'.

They call Kavitha as 'Thaithakka'.

Harish Rao is called 'Agipetta macha'. It is a reference to an incident during the agitation days when petrol was there, but no match box.

Rajya Sabha MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar is referred to as 'Happy Rao'. Santosh means Happy.

Even the party cadre have names. Pink party people are called 'Pinkies'. BJP folks are referred to as 'flowers' or 'Battai' (orange). By the time poll bulge is sounded more leaders will be given such trendy names.

TUS asks Govt to pay salaries on first of every month

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Udyogula Sangam (TUS) has urged the government to deposit salaries and pensions in the accounts of government employees and pensioners on the first day of every month.

The TUS also urged the government to initiate steps to deposit salaries immediately after passing salary bills, surrender leave/medical bills/GPF and other bills of employees and pensioners following the old system of PAO/DTO/STO by removing them from the Finance Department.

The TUS also urged the government to complete the transfers of spouses soon and to initiate steps to correct the injustices that took place in

transfers as per GO No: 317.

The TUS demanded that the government should set up a medical trust and appoint a chairman for it from TUS.

The TUS held an emergency meeting on May 14 and passed many resolutions.

TUS Honorary Chairman A. Padma Chari said in a statement that they passed a resolution to pay one per cent of their basic pay for medical expenses and urged the government to release three per cent as the government's share.

The meeting also urged the government to provide cashless treatment in all corporate hospitals and to exempt the contribution from Income Tax.

The TUS asked the government to regularise the services of contract employees as soon

as possible, pay equal salaries for equal work as per court directions and to issue orders giving postings to those awaiting compassionate appointments.

The TUS asked the government to appoint a Service Secretary immediately as there is delay in solving the problems of employees.

The TUS asked the government to make adjustments for employees who came on transfer from Andhra Pradesh Secretariat to Telangana Secretariat by creating supernumerary posts in case there are no vacant posts.

TUS General Secretary C. Harish Kumar Reddy, President M. Ravinder Kumar and others also attended the meeting.

Modi's policies on agriculture...

Continued from page 1

He accused Prime Minister Modi of being anti-farmer and said that the Modi government did not have the slightest understanding of agriculture.

Vinod said that Prime Minister Modi's only agenda was to deceive farmers in all possible ways. India produces about 300 million tonnes of food grain a year. He said that 50 per cent of the grain was stored for food security and it was the responsibility of Prime Minister Modi to export the rest. inod said that 100 small countries are importing food grains and products from abroad. He recalled that Union Minister Piyush Goyal had sent a delegation of officials to Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Turkey, Algeria and Lebanon for exporting wheat.

‘Majoritarianism will be extremely dangerous for the future of India’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Majoritarianism will be extremely dangerous for the future of India and it should be resisted at every step, noted economist and former RBI governor Raghuram Rajan said on Saturday.

Addressing a webinar, Rajan emphasised on the need to make the government more responsive to criticism by removing some of the legislative constraints on criticism.

"Our trend towards majoritarianism has enormous consequences, all of them adverse...it is against every economic principle," he warned. Known for his frank views, Rajan said India needs inclusive growth and the country cannot have inclusive growth by treating any segment of the population as second class citizens.

According to him, majoritarianism is divisive, it divides India at a time when India has to stay together, given external threats that the country faces. "The way we see majoritarianism playing out, in a sense, will be extremely dangerous for the future of India. I think it should be resisted at every step," the eminent economist said.

Rajan, currently a Professor at the University of Chicago Booth School of Business, said that India has strong growth today but one has to be careful about growth numbers.

"Any growth obviously should be celebrated. But we can't ignore the fact that the strong growth is from disastrous numbers posted in the last fiscal year," he said.

The eminent economist

pointed out that India has been underperforming ever since the global financial crisis. "We have not created good jobs that we need...despite the strong growth, we are significantly below the pre-pandemic trend line," he noted.

According to Rajan, India's export performance has been good but not spectacular.

The eminent economist stressed on increasing female labour force participation in India. He however added: "Even during the last decade of slow growth India has had some successes But we need to do better." Noting that data is needed for making the right decision, Rajan said, "We need a learning government. We should stop suppressing data, whether it is data on unemployment or data on COVID deaths."

Back to normal? Cannes Film Festival prepares to party

PNS ■ PARIS

After the 2020 Cannes Film Festival was canceled by the pandemic and the 2021 edition was scaled back even kisses were forbade on the red carpet the lavish French Riviera cinema soiree is set to return with a festival that promises to be something like normal.

Or at least Cannes' very particular brand of normal, where for 12 days formal wear and film mingle in sun-dappled splendour, stopwatch-timed standing ovations stretch for minutes on end and director names like Kore-eda and Denis are spoken with hushed reverence.

What passes for the usual at Cannes has never been especially ordinary, but it has proven remarkably resilient to the fluctuations of time. Since its first festival, in 1946 on the heels of World War II, Cannes has endured as a maximalist spectacle that puts world cinema and Cote d'Azur glamour in the spotlight. This year marks Cannes' 75 anniversary.

Hopefully it will back to a normal Cannes now," says Ruben stlund, who returns this year with the social satire 'Triangle of Sadness, a follow-up to his Palme d'Or-winning 2017 film 'The Square.

"It's a fantastic place if you're a filmmaker. You feel like you have the attention of the cinema world, adds stlund. To hear the buzz that's going on, people talking about the different films. Hopefully, they're talking about your film.

This year's Cannes, which opens Tuesday with the premiere of Michel Hazanavicius' zombie movie 'Z', will unfold against not just the late ebbs of the pandemic and the rising tide of streaming but the largest war Europe has seen since WWII, in Ukraine.

VH asks Sonia to discuss caste census at Chintan Shivir

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior Congress leader V. Hanumantha Rao has addressed a letter to AICC chief Sonia Gandhi urging her to take up the caste-wise census issue on priority at the Chintan Shivir to exert pressure on the NDA Government.

He mentioned in the letter sent on Saturday that this initiative will send a positive message to OBCs.

There is also a possibility of the OBCs tilting towards the Congress. He exuded confidence that Sonia would take this matter in the right perspective.

In the letter, VH said that the NDA government is ignoring requests from OBCs for a caste-wise census.

In 2018, when Rajnath Singh was Home Minister he openly said that a caste-wise census would be conducted. But his assurance is yet to see the light of the day, VH said.

Even Prime Minister Modi who hails from an OBC community is also not taking into account this important issue. It is a well-known fact that a caste-wise census was conducted in 1931. Till today there is no clarity on the caste-wise population of the country, VH added.

West Hyderabad resembles...

Continued from page 1

"We are an urban state. Telangana is more than 46 per cent urban. With rapid urbanisation, we will be a predominantly urban state in the next 5-7 years. We will have a majority living in urban areas. If you don't keep up the pace of rapid infrastructure expansion you are in trouble. Most of the world and Indian cities face this challenge today. India is run by cities and towns and we cannot destroy them by not creating infrastructure," KTR said.

KTR described Hyderabad as a place where Biology meets Technology and Data Sciences marries Life Sciences. He said, "During the initial days we had a tough time selling Telangana because it is a name that doesn't easily roll off your tongue. But today after eight years TS has done exceedingly well despite Covid-19,

demonetisation and many other issues."

Citing Ayn Rand's Fountainhead KTR said, "I read it during my college days. I was intrigued by the persona of Howard Roark. He has an interesting personality. It got me to question whether you conform to stereotypes and existential realities of the world or would you rather want to do something truly different and path-breaking. That is a dilemma which any designer or Urban Development Minister or bureaucrat has on a day to day basis." He said that Telangana has done many things in innovating our policy, design, and practices. He spoke about Ts-iPass and Ts-bpass.

He said that the T-Hub, Image Tower, Command Control and the new secretariat follow green building and fire safety norms.

Jagan, KCR...

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, in Andhra Pradesh, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy is rethinking the selection of Rajya Sabha candidates. Jagan had previously decided to re-nominate Vijayasai Reddy and to give a ticket to the Adani family. For the other two seats, Jagan was considering advocate Niranjan Reddy and Beedam Masthan Rao or Killi Kruparani.

But now he is thinking about Kamma and Vysya candidates. In the new Cabinet, both these castes have no representation. In the first cabinet, the Kamma community was represented by Kodali Nani, and the Vysya community was represented by Yellampalli Srinivas.

If Jagan chooses to give the Kammass representation, he might pick Marri Rajasekhhar and if he elects to give representation to the Vysyas, he might go for former minister Sidda Raghava Rao.

Shah sounds poll bugle

Continued from page 1

"KCR is trying to turn Telangana into Bengal. We will not leave the death of Sai Ganesh and will ensure justice is served and all those behind it are punished," he said.

KCR completed the projects from which he got commissions, Amit Shah claimed. He said that Bandi Sanjay's Yatra was not for positions, but to dethrone "Nizam Prabhu".

Amit Shah said Telangana was not one's jagir and everyone had equal rights in the state, he said. Asking the public rhetorically whether there was a need to change Telangana, Amit Shah said that BJP had taken up Yatra to change the 'Hyderabad Nizam'. He called upon people to give a missed call on 6359119119 to support Yatra.

Amit Shah alleged that TRS' steering was in the hands of

MIM. "We will not be afraid of MIM and TRS. We will procure every food grain produced by the farmers of the state if power is given to the BJP. Once KCR said that he will celebrate Telangana Liberation Day, but not be afraid of MIM. We will celebrate Telangana Liberation Day while sending TRS and MIM out at a time. In the past, Hyderabad was freed from the Nizam with Sardar Vallabhai Patel", he said. He said that BJP would remove minority reservations. He said, "Minority reservations have to go as they are hurting the BC, SC and ST reservations".

Amit Shah asked the public whether the present ruler provided water, funds, and assured them that the BJP would implement all schemes after coming to power. He alleged that KCR had failed to implement his own assurance

Bid to win back weaker sections

Continued from page 1

There will be an attached department that will collect data for social engineering and will make it available for Pradesh Congress Committees (PCCs) and other party units, said Khurshid, who is the convenor of the panel on social justice and empowerment.

Social justice is a principled commitment but the basic instrument for that is social engineering, he said.

K Raju, a panel member and coordinator to oversee the activities of the Congress' SC/OBC/Minority Departments, said the party's constitution as of now provides for 20 per cent reservation for SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities.

"The group has discussed and decided that in the short run we must step up this to 50 per cent. Fifty per cent reservation in all the committees starting with booth committees, block committees, district committees, PCCs and the CWC, be provided, he said.

There is a view from some of the participants that we need to go beyond 50 per cent but members felt that let us step it up first from 20 per cent to 50 per cent, he said.

Raju said the Khurshid-led group has identified that there are many sub-castes within SCs and STs and the party needs to focus on those sub-castes which have not so far been represented in the organisation or in the govern-

ment, and give justice to them.

"So, henceforth attention will be given to identify those sub-castes in these communities who have not been adequately represented within the organisation and also in the government, Raju said.

He said the panel has also recommended for adoption by the CWC that once in six months there shall be a special session of the working committee, PCCs, DCCs to discuss all the issues concerning SCs, STs, OBCs and minorities, so that the party remains alive to their issues and takes decisions accordingly.

The panel also discussed major policy commitments to demand the government which is in power and implement them where the Congress is in power, Raju said.

"The group has debated at length, the issue related to caste-based census of OBCs and all other communities. The group has strongly recommended that the Congress has to demand and express its commitment to caste-based census," he said.

Raju said that there was a discussion in the panel on the Women's Reservation Bill and it has been recommended that the party should push for quota within quota.

Out of the reservation provided for women, there should be proportionate reservation for SC, ST, OBC women, Raju said.

Asked why there was a U-turn in its

stand as, when the UPA government passed the women reservation bill in Rajya Sabha, it had resisted quota within quota, Khurshid said, Sometimes you have to push legislations strategically, we were committed to a quota for women and the problem with the quota within a quota was that we had assumed there would not be easy agreement and consensus on that and the result would be we would lose out on reservation for women at that stage.

"Therefore, a conscious strategic decision was taken that let us get the quota first then we will see about further segmentation'. Now we have lost a lot of time and politics has also undergone a significant change since then and we believe that now is the right time to make it clear where you stand, Khurshid said.

He said the party stands for women's participation in a fulsome manner so that women from all categories should be able to participate.

"We don't want anyone to believe that there is a hidden agenda that you bring in women but you bring in women that find it easy to get elected. Therefore, after thoughtful inputs we came to the conclusion that we recommend to CWC that now the time has come to take the bull by horns and make sure we get quota within quota all pushed in one go, Khurshid said.

There is no inconsistency, we have moved on from that position where we

felt strategically that the quota should come first, he added.

Responding to another question on the party's change in stance on quota within quota, senior Congress leader and former Union minister Kumari Selja said, "There was never any objection to this (quota within quota). At that time there was a coalition government and it was difficult to take every-one together.

Noting that a very important policy for advancement of SCs and STs was Schedules Caste Sub-Plan and Tribal Sub-Plan, Raju said the group has recommended a central and states' legislation on them.

Another important issue the group deliberated and is in the process of is the reservation in private sector for the SC ST and OBCs because the jobs in the public sector are coming down, Raju said.

He said policy for providing for reservation for OBCs in state legislatures and Parliament was also deliberated upon and the group is inclined to recommend reservation for OBCs in assemblies and Parliament.

The discussions at the 'Chintan Shivir', which began on Friday, will continue on the third day as well and the conclusions will be recorded in the form of a declaration. A draft of the declaration will be discussed at the Congress Working Committee (CWC) meeting to be held here on the third and last day of the conclave.

Heat wave: Red alert in Raj

Continued from page 1

The Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's base station, recorded a maximum temperature of 44.2 degrees Celsius, which was five notches above the normal and the highest this season so far. The mercury rose to 46.9 degrees Celsius at Sports Complex, 46.4 degrees Celsius at Pitampura, 45.8 degrees Celsius at Jafarpur and 45.4 degrees Celsius at Ridge and Ayanagar.

All weather stations in the capital recorded a heatwave day, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said.

Weather forecasters predicted the heatwave spell to worsen on Sunday even as they issued an 'orange' alert to caution people. This is the fifth heatwave in the capital this summer.

The IMD uses four colour codes for weather warnings - green (no action needed), yellow (watch and stay updated), orange (be prepared) and red (take action).

With scanty rains owing to feeble western disturbances, Delhi had recorded its second hottest April this year since 1951 with a monthly average maximum temperature of 40.2 degrees Celsius.

The IMD said a thunderstorm or a dust storm is likely in the national capital on Monday. As far as the water supply is concerned, officials said the production capacity at Wazirabad, Chandrawal and Okhla water treatment plants had reduced to 85 per cent and that it could further decrease to 75 per cent on Sunday. A Delhi Jal Board official it has already resorted to water rationing.

Meanwhile, in Rajasthan, 23 cities recorded maximum temperature above 44 degrees Celsius on Saturday.

Sriganganagar recorded 48.3 degrees Celsius followed by 48.2 degrees in Bikaner, 47.9 degrees in Karauli, 47.8 degrees in Sangaria, 47.5 degrees in Churu, 47.4

degrees each in Jaisalmer and Phalodi, 47.3 degrees each in Alwar and Pilani, 47 degrees in Nagaur, 46.9 degrees in Sawai Madhopur, 46.8 in Anta, 46.5 in Bundi. Jaipur recorded 45.6 degrees Celsius.

The department has forecast for severe heat wave condition (red alert) in S r i g a n a g a r , Hanumangarh, Bikaner and Churu districts on Sunday. An orange alert for severe heat wave condition has been issued for Sunday for Jhunjhunu, Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur, Karauli, Sawai Madhopur, Bundi, Kota, Barmer, Jaisalmer, Jodhpur and Nagaur districts.

In Haryana, Gurugram was the hottest place, recording a high of 46.8 degrees Celsius, while Ambala, Hisar, Karnal, Rohtak, Narnaul, Bhiwani and Sirsa recorded their respective maximum temperatures of 44, 46, 43.2, 46.6, 45.5, 45.4 and 46.4 degrees Celsius.

Chandigarh, the common capital of Punjab and Haryana, registered mercury at 43.6 degrees Celsius, up by three degrees above normal.

In Punjab, Bathinda recorded its maximum at 46 degrees Celsius while Amritsar, Ludhiana, Patiala, Pathankot and Gurdaspur recorded their respective maximums of 45.6, 45, 44, 43.8 and 43.5 degrees Celsius.

In Jammu and Kashmir, Jammu recorded its hottest day of the season so far with the mercury touching 43.5 degrees Celsius on Saturday as the heatwave intensified engulfing most parts of Jammu and Kashmir.

The maximum temperature in Jammu city was 6.6 degrees above season's average, forcing people to stay indoors especially in the afternoon. Jammu recorded a minimum temperature of 23.3 degrees Celsius which is almost near normal during this part of the season, an official of the meteorological department said.

Telangana shy of 'Kooing'

Continued from page 1

The social media manager of a prominent BJP leader said, "On the Koo app followers are more but engagement is not much. In fact, these followers are mostly outsiders. We post information on it like all other social media handles."

Interestingly, the Embassy of Russia has a verified handle on the Koo App. Sources in TRS claimed that it is a platform dominated by the right-wing and there is no major benefit in joining it.

Incidentally, neither the BJP's national handle nor Narendra Modi is on it, even though Prime Minister Modi mentioned Koo in a Mann ki Baat in 2020. But almost all Union Ministers, Publicity Cell, PIB, and local BJP handles are on it.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹300
Without Skin	₹320
Broiler at Farm	₹165
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	411
VIJAYAWADA	405
VISAKHAPATNAM	420
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹4.11

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Sunkishala project will meet Hyd's water needs till 2072: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao laid the foundation stone of the Sunkishala intake well and pumping station project costing Rs 1,450 crore near Nagarjuna Sagar on Saturday to meet the drinking water needs of Hyderabad city.

The minister said that steps are being taken to ensure that Hyderabad has no drinking water problem till 2072.

Speaking on the occasion, KTR said that the project will be completed by next summer.

He said the Sunkisala project was a 50-year-old project and if the project is completed there will be no shortage of drinking water in Hyderabad even if there is five consecutive years of drought.

Every year in summer, emergency pumping is required to pump Krishna waters to the city at a cost of Rs 6 crore. He said the Sunkishala project would provide an opportunity to utilize water not only for drinking but also for industrial purposes. KTR said that



Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao at Sunkishala intake well inaugural function near Nagarjuna Sagar on Saturday

water pipelines have also been set up from Sunkishala to Kondapur and around Hyderabad.

The Minister said that in future, even though the city of Hyderabad extends 100 sq.km, steps are being taken to ensure that drinking water is not a problem.

He said plans were afoot to provide drinking water outside

the Outer Ring Road as well as outside areas. KTR described foundation day as a truly auspicious day for the people of Hyderabad, Rangareddy and Medchal districts.

KTR also said that the Telangana government is preparing for civil works of Krishna Phase 4 and 5.

He said the city needs 37 TMC of water and estimates

that it will need 71.9 TMC of water by 2072. "New projects are being undertaken to cater to future needs. 60 TMC of water would be available on the outskirts of Hyderabad through Sunkishala and Kaleshwaram," KTR said.

Meanwhile, Minister Talsani Srinivas Yadav said that in the past there were drinking water problems in Hyderabad and

there used to be protests in front of the Water Board office.

He said water shortage was still acute in other major cities, but in Hyderabad water supply was being maintained without any problems. He thanked Chief Minister KCR for addressing the water shortage in Hyderabad. He said Hyderabad is expanding rapidly and everyone was setting up permanent residence here.

He said that the Sunkishala Intake Well project would provide water supply without any hassles for the next 50 years.

Water Board MD Danakishore said, "Every year in summer, emergency pumping is required to pump Krishna water to the city, at a cost of Rs 5 crore per annum. The Sunkishala project would be of great use for water supply in Hyderabad."

He said the city would have a steady supply of water with Sunkishala and water would be available to Hyderabad even during droughts. He said the water board was carrying out works costing Rs 6,000 crore simultaneously.

Aspirants demand postponement of NEET exams

A memorandum has been submitted to Union Minister G Kishan Reddy, requesting him to ensure that the examinations are put off

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

NEET PG-2022 aspirants from Telangana State on Saturday submitted a memorandum to Union Minister for Tourism G Kishan Reddy seeking postponement of the examination by 8 to 10 weeks.

The memorandum said, 'We 15,000 aspirants are writing on behalf of the majority of NEET PG aspirants suffering due to ongoing counselling and upcoming NEET PG 2022 exam scheduled on May 21. The counselling process conducted by MCC for NEET PG 2021 has been made null and void at least seven times. As per the latest notification from MCC, May 7 was the last date for admission into PG courses whereas the registration for NEET 2022 was closed on March 25 itself. With the uncertainty of counselling process, more than 50,000 aspirants could not apply for the examinations.' The aspirants said that there was a sudden issue of notification by the Medical Counselling Committee (MCC) on May 5



stating that the last day of admission is May 7 and on top of that the AIIMS INICET exam was scheduled to be held on May 8, they couldn't return back from counselling to attempt the exam. Moreover, the date of College of Physicians and Surgeons (CPS) Mumbai counselling is also clashing with the NEET examination.

Considering all these, the aspirants met with Union Minister Kishan Reddy in Hyderabad and submitted their representation requesting the government to postpone the exam for 8-10 weeks.

As per the latest notification from MCC, May 7 was the last date for admission into PG courses whereas the registration for NEET 2022 was closed on March 25 itself.



Karkhana Police arrests two automobile thieves



Police officers holding a media conference at Karkhana Police Station in Hyderabad on Saturday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD: Karkhana Police in the early hours of Saturday, while checking vehicles, took two persons into custody for travelling on a bike without proper documents. They were taken to the police station and after verification, the two persons confessed that they had been committed automobile theft and they sold the stolen vehicles to a scrap dealer. The suspects confessed to stealing six bikes and an auto trolley, the police said. The police said that the suspects would go round the city late at night and search for vehicles whose locks are easy to open. They would start the vehicles with the help of master keys and flee. If the vehicle would not start, they would tow them away. The arrests were made under the supervision of Additional DCP North Zone G Venkateshwarlu, ACP Mahankali Division B Ramesh along with the team from Karkhana Police Station.

MNREG worker dies of sunstroke

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY: A labourer engaged in MNREG scheme died of sunstroke at Majidpur under bdulla-purmet mandal in the district on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Pochampalli Narasimha Reddy (54). He collapsed suddenly. He was rushed to hospital where he was declared brought dead.

Police arrest businessman for torturing daughter-in-law

PNS ■ HYDERABAD: A city-based businessman was booked by the Punjagutta police along with his son and others for allegedly harassing and torturing his daughter-in-law. A 34-year-old woman, a resident of Begumpet, lodged a complaint at the Punjagutta police station stating that in 2014, she was married to the son of the businessman at Bengaluru. Her parents had gifted Rs 75 lakh, silver articles worth Rs10 lakh, diamond jewelry, a diamond worth Rs 9 lakh and other jewelry as dowry. She complained to the police that on May 10, her husband, his sister and parents had made an attempt to murder her by pressing a pillow on my face and resulting in suffocation. She said she had extricated herself. They had threatened to kill her daughter as well, she said in her complaint. The police invoked Section 498 (A), 341 r/w 34 of IPC and Section 3 & 4 of Dowry Prohibition Act and have booked a case.

Minor girl found dead under suspicious circumstances

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A minor girl was found dead under suspicious circumstances at Gokul Plots in Miyapur on Friday night. The girl, aged 12, was the daughter of a watchman in a multi-storied apartment. The family came from Kakinada in Andhra Pradesh and staying on the ground floor of the apartment, the police said. Police said on Friday night the girl went to the terrace of the building, but did not return. Her family members, who grew suspicious, went to the terrace. They were shocked to find their daughter hanging from a ladder attached to the overhead tanker. Miyapur police booked a case and took up investigation.

Vice President stresses need for farm research

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday called for enhancing the quality and capacity of agricultural research in the country to achieve substantial gains in agri-productivity in the long term.

Observing that Indian agriculture is going through a great transition now, he said reducing availability of quality soil, nutrient deficiency in soils, climate change, emergence of new pests and diseases, fragmentation of farms and market uncertainties are some of the changes that will make the task of agricultural research even more critical in the coming years.

"These changes impacting agriculture call for a paradigm

shift in our research approach. We have to harness the potential of modern science, encourage innovations in technology, and provide for enabling policies to support investments. We must also start investing seriously in critical areas such as genomics, molecular breeding, and nanotechnology, among other areas," Naidu said.

The institutions of agricultural research in the country must redouble their efforts and aim for excellence in technological innovation, human resources, and extension services to meet these challenges, he said.

"Of these, the importance of creating a skilled manpower in secondary and tertiary agriculture to make it profitable cannot be overstated.

UoH uploads 33186 degrees on the Digilocker NAD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The University of Hyderabad (UoH) has successfully uploaded a total of 33,186 records of the degrees awarded to the Digilocker NAD. With this, all records of the degrees awarded so far from the 1st - 21st convocations were uploaded. This included all degrees awarded from 1977 to 2020.

The National Academic Depository (NAD) is a 24x7 online repository of all academic awards such as certificates, diplomas, degrees, mark

sheets, etc. issued by Academic Institutions, such as universities, colleges, research institutes, training academies, and secondary education boards and stored in a digital format.

Digilocker NAD is a Digital Repository for Academic Institutions and the benefits include the digital Awards are legally valid under IT Act, 2000, Globally recognized and acceptable awards, easily shareable and verifiable, and access to Millions of Digital awards without risk of fake and forged awards.



IIT Delhi Tech Innovation Hub signs MoU with CISCE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

I-Hub Foundation for Cobotics (IHFC), the Technology Innovation Hub (TIH) of IIT Delhi, has signed an MoU with the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), a premier school education board in the country, to design curriculum for schools affiliated to the CISCE in upcoming technologies including Robotics, Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Data Science.

According to the press release, the IHFC will help the CISCE curate the syllabus for reinforcing 21st century skills and execute certain aspects of New Education Policy (NEP 2020) for students in its affiliated schools.

The IHFC has also offered its expertise to the CISCE to revamp the current STEM courses in line with the New Education Policy (2020) launched by the Ministry of Education, government of India. Speaking about the



MoU, Prof S K Saha, Project Director, IHFC and professor at IIT Delhi mentioned, "We are delighted to join hands with the CISCE for developing syllabus for Robotics and AI for school children in India. Nurturing teamwork, innovation, and knowledge to bridge gaps between young engineering students and potential future Robotic enthusiasts are the pillars of

our vision". Ashutosh Dutt Sharma, CEO, IHFC, indicated that the IHFC may play a key role in executing the same in more than 2700 schools affiliated to the CISCE and provide them with guidance to implement the same.

Stressing upon the need to introduce new and contemporary subjects at the school level, Gerry Arathoon,

CE&S, CISCE stated, I am pleased that the syllabus for these two subjects is being created and developed by the IHFC, TIH of IIT Delhi. Their expertise and guidance is much appreciated by the CISCE. The CISCE plans to introduce the subjects - Robotics & Artificial Intelligence at the ICSE (Classes IX & X) and ISC (Classes XI & XII) levels".

India accounts for 42 per cent of asthma deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Global Burden of Disease (GBD) study has estimated that India is home to over 30 million asthma patients accounting for about 13 per cent of the global burden.

However, when it comes to mortality, India accounts for over 42 per cent of global asthma deaths. Despite being a leading cause of morbidity and mortality, the disease continues to be undiagnosed and untreated for years in India.

According to a study by the Global Asthma Network (GAN), about 82 per cent of patients with early symptoms and 70 per cent with severe symptoms of asthma remain undiagnosed in India. The study also says that less than 2.5 per cent of patients use the daily inhalation therapy.



Dr Rajeshwar, the Chest Physician at Kanteshwara Hospital said, "Asthma is considered a stigma and many patients conceal it. It is only when the symptoms worsen or become intolerable that a

patient consults a physician and medication is prescribed. We need to keep reminding patients that symptom-free does not mean asthma-free. Many patients stop using inhalers once they start feeling

better. This often leads to the flaring up of symptoms. Further, incorrect notions such as inhalers being harmful also play a role in the non-adherence of treatment guidelines." The World Health

According to a study by the Global Asthma Network (GAN), about 82 per cent of patients with early symptoms and 70 per cent with severe symptoms of asthma remain undiagnosed in India. The study also says that less than 2.5 per cent of patients use the daily inhalation therapy.

Organisation (WHO) has added asthma in their Global Action Plan for prevention and control of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) and the United Nations 2030 agenda for sustainable development. The WHO in its report on asthma has said that people with untreated asthma can suffer sleep disturbance, tiredness during the day, and poor concentration. If symptoms are severe, they may need emergency healthcare and will have to get admitted to a hospital for treatment and monitoring.

People with asthma and their families need to educate themselves to understand more about asthma and its treatment. It is also important to raise community awareness to reduce the myths associated with asthma.

IAMC organises maiden mediation refresher course

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The International Arbitration and Mediation Centre (IAMC) organised its first meditation refresher course on Saturday at its premises in Hyderabad. The chief guest at the event was Justice Ujjal Bhuyan, a Judge of the Telangana High Court.

Delivering the inaugural address, Justice Bhuyan explained the meaning, process and important concepts of mediation.

He said that the process of mediation is informal, confidential and allows parties to interact on a one-to-one basis.

Emphasizing the role and functions of a mediator, Justice



Bhuyan explained that a mediator does not impose a solution but creates a conducive environment in which the disputing parties can resolve their disputes. Justice Ujjal Bhuyan concluded saying, "Mediation is a skilled art that needs to be

fine-tuned and upgraded." The registrar of IAMC, Tariq Khan, thanked Justice Bhuyan for gracing the occasion. He also thanked Chitra Narayan, JP Singh, and Uma Ramanathan for conducting the training programme.



Ministers K T Rama Rao, Srinivas Goud, Malla Reddy, and Sabita Indra Reddy at the inauguration of Buddha Vanam in Nagarjuna Sagar on Saturday



Buddha Vanam will emerge as spiritual tourism destination: KTR

Minister for Municipal Administration K T Rama Rao promises to bring to the notice of Chief Minister an offer to set up a Buddhist University at Nagarjuna Sagar

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development K T Rama Rao on Saturday expressed confidence that Buddha Vanam at Nagarjuna Sagar would emerge as a 'spiritual destination' in the country.

Speaking at a meeting, shortly after inaugurating Buddha Vanam, developed in 275 acres at Nagarjuna Sagar, Rama Rao felt that people from Buddhist countries like Japan, Taiwan and others would visit the Buddha Vanam. Employment opportunities would also be created when it is developed as tourism spot.

He welcomed the offer made by some institutions to set up a Buddhist University at Nagarjuna Sagar. He promised to bring this to the notice of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

Setting up of a private university in the State can be allowed, he said. He stressed the need to invite consulates and delegates of different to Buddha Vanam to give more exposure to the project at international level. He directed the officials to prepare good brochures and video on Buddha Vanam.

In response to an appeal by Nagarjuna Sagar MLA Nomula Bhagath Kumar, he would examine the feasibility of setting up a cycling track at Buddha Vanam and development of Chakalagutta at Nagarjuna Sagar as a tourist spot. He praised Mallepalli Laxmaiah, Special Officer of the Buddha Vanam project for developing the site. Later, he examined the structures developed in Buddha Vanam.

Harish sets targets for cultivation of oil palm in Siddipet district

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Minister for Finance T Harish Rao has predicted bright future for farmers who switch to cultivation of the oil palm crop. He pointed out that Siddipet district is most suitable for the cultivation of the crop. He said that the oil palm has global demand.

Addressing the Agriculture and Horticulture officers, village-level Rythu Bandhu Samiti leaders through teleconference on Saturday, he gave directions to officials on cultivation of oil palm, sericulture cultivation, green fodder crops and paddy procurement. Directing the Agriculture Culture Extension Officers (AEOs) to encourage cultivation of oil palm, mulberry cultivation and green fodder crops, he set targets for cultivation of the crops in each cluster.

In view of unseasonal rains, he asked the farmers to bring dried paddy to the procurement centres. He wanted the AEOs to sensitise farmers in this regard.

Against the target to grow oil palm in 30,000 acres, so far farmers came forward to raise the crop only in 8,000 acres. If the AEOs failed to motivate the farmers, action would be inevitable against them, he warned them.

Agriculture, horticulture and Rythu Bandhu Samiti leaders should work with greater coordination to reach the targets, he felt.

The Agriculture Extension Officials should hold meetings with farmers under their respective clusters and sensitise them to take up oil palm, mulberry and paddy cultivation through the method of broadcasting of seeds.



Drip irrigation equipment is being given on 100 per cent subsidy to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes farmers, while the subsidy for other farmers would be 90 per cent, he said asking the farmers to sensitise the other farmers in this regard.

As the Centre is not going to procure Yasangi paddy and there would be no paddy procurement centres in future, therefore, he wanted the government officials to sensitise the farmers on oilpalm which enjoyed global demand and fulfil the targets fixed for increasing the area under the crop. He asked the village, mandal and district-level Rythu Bandhu leaders to create awareness among the farmers in this regard.

Regarding sericulture, he wanted the officials to identify beneficiaries for the purpose

and give them subsidy to raise the sheds and supply them silkworms on subsidy. He wanted the officials and elected people's representatives to identify beneficiaries in this regard. Sericulture provides stable income to the farmer and provides economic guarantee to them, he said.

The Agriculture Extension Officials should hold meetings with farmers under their respective clusters and sensitise them to take up oil palm, mulberry and paddy cultivation through the method of broadcasting of seeds.

Additional Collector Mujameel Khan and Srinivasa Reddy, District Agriculture officer Siva Prasad, District Horticulture Deputy Director Ramalakshmi, mandal, village-level leaders, AEOs, panchayat secretaries and others took part in the programme.



Top police officials fulfil their vows to Vemulawada deity

PNS ■ VEMULAWADA

Director-General of Police Mahender Reddy and Telangana State Police Housing Corporation Chairman Koleti Damodar on Saturday visited Sri Parvati Rajarajeswara Swamy temple at Vemulawada and offered Kode Mokku to the presiding deities - i.e. offering ox to the deities - as part of

fulfilling their vows to the deity.

They arrived at the temple amidst offering of traditional welcome by the Vedic scholars at the temple. After fulfilling their vows, the Vedic scholars blessed the top ranking police officials.

The temple AEO Ramesh presented the police authorities with photos of the deities and temple prasaad.

SP warns erring seed traders of stringent action

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Mahabubnagar District Superintendent of Police R Venkateswarlu on Saturday warned erring seed traders of stringent action. The coordination committee comprising the officials of the Agriculture Department and the police are chalking out an action plan to tackle the menace of spurious seeds.

Speaking at the coordination committee meeting here, he recalled that the police had registered 29 cases against the seed traders on the charge of selling spurious seeds. They were all remanded in judicial custody. He said the police would punish the erring traders severely.

The members of the coordination committee would conduct surprise raids on traders. The coordination committee would also collect intelligence on the traders selling spurious seeds. There is no question of leaving those harming the interests of the



Mahabubnagar District Superintendent of Police R Venkateswarlu speaking at a coordination committee meeting on Saturday in Mahabubnagar

farmers unpunished, he asserted.

The officials of the Agriculture Department stressed the need to educate the farmers on the harmful effects of using unpackaged seeds. They cautioned the farmers against falling prey to traders selling unpackaged seeds. The farmers were advised to buy seeds from the licensed dealers only. The officials also advised the farmers

to take receipts on buying the seeds and preserve it till the crop was harvested.

Additional Superintendent of Police A Ramulu, District Agriculture Officer B Venkatesh, Deputy Superintendents of Police Mahesh Goud and Venkataramana Reddy, Lakshman, Assistant Directors Anjeneyulu, Yeswanth Rao and Hymavathi and officials were present.

CPM asks govt to allot land for its offices in districts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana CPI-M Secretary Thammineni Veerabhadram has addressed a letter to Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar demanding allocation of land in all districts to construct party offices as allocated to the TRS as per GO 167.

In his letter sent on Saturday, Veerabhadram said that the TS government had issued GO 167 on August 16, 2018, stating that the government would sanction one acre of land to all recognised political parties for the construction of party offices in district headquarters.

The CPI-M had submitted memoranda to the government for land to construct party offices where the party did not have offices. However, the government did not allot land to the CPI-M and other recognised political parties. He said that this was intentional on the part of the government. He said that the

CPI-M had brought the issue to the notice of the Chief Minister and the Principal Secretary of the Revenue Department on June 24, 2019. He also attached copies of the letters the CPI-M had submitted to the district Collectors. He said that the CPI-M had once again submitted memoranda to the Chief Minister and the Revenue Department Principal Secretary on August 24, 2020, as the government had failed to allot lands to the party even after 14 months. The government has not allotted lands to the CPI-M even now.

However, the same government allotted lands worth crores in all districts to the TRS. Veerabhadram said that it looked as if the government had issued the GO for the sake of TRS only. The CPI-M State Secretary asked the Chief Secretary to intervene in the issue and direct the District Collectors to allot lands to the CPI-M in all districts immediately.

Man dies in group clash in Medak dist

PNS ■ MEDAK

One person died in a clash between two groups at Sangaipally village under Chinna Shanarampet mandal in the district on Saturday. The deceased was identified as Shivagalla Lakshminarayana (49). He hailed from Sangaipally village. Lakshminarayana, the police said, had died while undergoing treatment at a hospital.

In retaliation, his relatives set the huts belonging to their rival groups on fire. Tense situation built up in the village. Previous enmity between two groups led to the clashes, the police said.

A police picket was set up in the village.

Sub-Inspector Subhash Gowd said one persons, Praveen, was arrested.

Govt according priority to law and order: DGP

PNS ■ VEMULAWADA

Director General of Police M Mahender Reddy on Saturday said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has been according top priority to the law and order. The police, he said, would fulfill all the priorities of the government.

Mahender Reddy, during his visit to the district, said that all police stations in the State will have permanent buildings. Construction of police station would be undertaken after completing the construction of District Police Office and the Police Commissionerate complexes.

Budgetary allocation for

construction of police stations was made, he pointed out. After the DGG and Police Housing Corporation Chairman Koleti Damodar inspected the ongoing works of the District Police Office in the district, Mahender Reddy held a review meeting with contractors, designers and architects. He said that construction of quarters for the police personnel too would be undertaken, he said.

Police Housing Corporation Managing Director Sanjay Jain, SP Chetan, District Collector Anurag Jayanthi, Superintendent of Police Rahul Hegde and others were present.



DGP M Mahender Reddy inspecting the works of Rajanna-Sircilla district police office building in Sircilla on Saturday.

Man brutally murdered in Suryapet dist

PNS ■ SURYAPET

A 70-year-old Pagadala Janardhan Reddy was brutally murdered at Mothey in the district in the early hours of Saturday. Two assailants armed with knives attacked Janardhan Reddy when he was sleeping outside his house. His grandson, Surakanti Uday Reddy, who went to the rescue of his grandfather, too, was injured in the incident, according to Mothey Sub-Inspector Praveen Kumar. A land dispute is suspected to be the motive behind the murder.

TPCC invites state chiefs of YC, NSUI, MC, DCCs to PAC meeting

K. VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The TPCC has invited for the first time, the Youth Congress, NSUI, the Mahila Congress and DCC presidents as they play an important role in the party. An AICC member told 'The Pioneer' that the All India Mahila Congress President, the Youth Congress President, the NSUI President, the INTUC President and the Seva Dal President have a place in the Political Affairs Committee of the AICC.

However, these five presidents have no representation in Telangana. He said that the Mahila

TPCC had invited the Youth Congress, the NSUI, the Mahila Congress and DCC presidents as they play an important role in the party.

An AICC member told 'The Pioneer' that the All India Mahila Congress President, the Youth Congress President, the NSUI President, the INTUC President and the Seva Dal President have a place in the Political Affairs Committee of the AICC.

However, these five presidents have no representation in Telangana. He said that the Mahila

Congress, the Youth Congress, the NSUI, the INTUC, and the Seva Dal are called the five fingers of the hand, the symbol of the Congress.

He said that he didn't know why the TPCC was ignoring these Presidents. They should be included in the PAC, he said.

The Telangana PAC has the TPCC President, Working Presidents, MPs, MLAs, and former PCC presidents as members. AICC in-charge General Secretary and the AICC in-charge Secretaries were also part of the PAC.

Govt to extend Aasra pension to poor aged 57 & above

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

Roads and Buildings Minister Vemula Prashant Reddy has declared that the Telangana State emerged as top ranking State in the country with the implementation of unprecedented welfare and developmental programmes.

He said that the public welfare programmes being implemented in Telangana State are unheard of in other States.

Speaking after laying the foundation stone for two road bridges on Peddavagu to be built on Bheemgal mandal of Nizamabad district at a cost of Rs 10 crore and to several BT road projects on Saturday, he said that the TRS government achieved the development in just seven years that could not

be achieved even in 60 years.

He referred to extending Aasra pensions to those who crossed 57 years of age and extending Rs 3 lakh financial assistance to the homeless poor to build own houses on their own land. He said that these would become a reality in less than two months.

Prices of agricultural lands in the State have gone up by at least four times because of the support the agriculture got in Telangana, he said quoting the example of how an acre that was only Rs 5 lakh increased to Rs 25 lakh.

Projects, check-dams are being built in the state. Every house will have CC roads, drainage, he said adding that the credit of releasing funds direct to panchayat goes to

Telangana government.

Haritha Haram programme has been helping increase green cover in villages, he said.

Out of the 10 best villages identified on the basis of drinking water availability, sanitation, greenery, power supply, electric crematoria, CC Roads and drainage facilities, all the 10 best villages are found to be located in Telangana, he said. The survey projected Telangana as top-performing State. He attributed the delay in extending Aasra pensions to Covid-19 pandemic. Now, the State government set the stage for distribution of Aasra pensions as per revised guidelines reducing the pensionable age to 57 years. He said that the people need not be sceptical about it.



Minister for Roads and Buildings Vemula Prashant Reddy speaking at a programme in Bheemgal mandal in Nizamabad district on Saturday

One more complaint lodged against Teenamar Mallanna

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Chintapadu Naveen Kumar alias Teenamar Mallanna is in trouble once again. A police complaint was lodged against him for allegedly making false allegation against Minister for Transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar. The Minister's personal secretary, according to reports here, had made a complaint to the Hyderabad Police Commissioner that Mallanna had published a baseless article against the Minister in a digital daily and telecasting the same in his YouTube channel Q News on May 13. It said that Mallanna had falsely accused the Minister of land encroach-

ments in Khammam. He had peddled lies against the Minister on his YouTube channel last month and used an abusive language against him. The complaint appealed to the police to investigate into it and take action against him. Meanwhile, SUDA Chairman Bachu Vijay Kumar, Mayor P Neeraja and Agriculture Market Committee chairperson D Lakshmi Prasanna condemned the false propaganda unleashed by Mallanna. The TRS youth wing district unit president Chintanipuru Krishna Chaitanya and others too condemned Mallanna for peddling lies against politicians.

‘Rules on linking Aadhaar with electoral rolls soon; sharing details voluntary’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rules on linking Aadhaar with the electoral rolls can be issued by the government soon, Chief Election Commissioner Sushil Chandra has said, adding that sharing Aadhaar details will be voluntary for voters, but those not doing so will have to give "sufficient reasons".

Chandra, who demits office on Saturday evening, also said that the poll panel played a key role in intensifying the vaccination drive in the five states where assembly elections concluded in March this year to ensure that voters and those involved in election duty were safe from the coronavirus.

In an interview with PTI, he said two major electoral reforms which took place in his tenure as the CEC are the provision of four dates in a year instead of one to enrol those turning 18 as voters and the linking of Aadhaar with electoral rolls to check duplicate entries in the voters' list.

"Earlier, only January 1 of every year was the cut-off date.



We convinced the government that this reform is very essential and these people should be enrolled as soon as they turn 18. With this reform now, there will be four dates in a year to get these people registered when they complete 18 years of age. This reform was pending for the last 20 years," Chandra said.

The four cut-off dates for enrolment is part of a Bill passed by Parliament a few months back to allow linkage of Aadhaar with the electoral rolls.

As of now, those turning 18

on or before January 1 can be registered as voters. Those who turn 18 on January 2 or later have to wait for one year to register as a voter. But once the rules are issued, young people can get registered as voters on four different dates every year.

"The second biggest reform is the linking of Aadhaar with electoral rolls to check duplicate entries. It will make the voter list pure. It will make the electoral roll more robust," he said. Asked when the rules will be notified by the government, Chandra said

"I think very soon because we have already sent draft proposals in this regard. We have also sent the forms which are to be changed and they are with the (law) ministry. Very soon, I think they will be cleared. We will also have to tune up our IT system."

On whether sharing Aadhaar details will be voluntary, he replied in positive. "It will be voluntary. But sufficient reason will have to be given by voters for not giving their

Aadhaar numbers. The reason may include not having an Aadhaar or not having applied for one or any other reason they can think of. I can not think of any other reason," the CEC said said.

Chandra was of the view that sharing Aadhaar number will help the EC to purify the voter list. It will also ensure that the poll panel is able to give more services to the voters through its communication system, he added. "If we know about the voter more clearly, then we can give more services such as when the elections will be held and booth (details) on their phone numbers... We should know clearly that he/she is the right person," Chandra said.

Asked about the biggest "We had regular meetings with health secretaries and chief secretaries of the states. We asked them to intensify vaccination and we kept a close watch every week. We were giving a very graded response to our campaigning methodology. We opened it gradually. By the time electioneering started,

the vaccination rate was very high in all the five states, and the voters had been given the first or the second doses as per protocol," he added.

Chandra replied in positive when asked whether it was the EC which had in a way been responsible for intensifying the vaccination drive in the five states.

"Definitely. In states where it was especially less like Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Manipur, we reviewed the situation and asked the chief secretaries and the health secretaries to boost the vaccination drive.

"Each and every person should have taken at least the first dose. If the first dose had been administered, then the second should be given. In Uttar Pradesh, the first dose coverage was 100 per cent. The percentage of vaccination in Punjab and Manipur also went up. We took each and every step possible to check the spread of Omicron during the elections in these states so that the voters and the voting process can be safe," he said.

MUNDKA FIRE

29 still missing; death toll likely to mount

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after a massive building fire in outer Delhi's Mundka claimed 27 lives, frantic relatives were still searching for their loved ones as police said 29 people were unaccounted for.

According to the fire department, the death toll could rise up to 30 as charred remains were found in the building during cooling operations on Saturday morning. Twelve injured were undergoing treatment at a hospital here.

They said the four-storey building, which did not have a fire safety certificate, had a single entry and exit point which could have been the reason for the high number of casualties.

"The building had a single escape route which is why there were so many casualties. Twenty-seven people have died," Chief Fire Officer Atul Garg said.

Officials said there was only



one narrow staircase for entry and exit which made escape from the burning building difficult.

Garg said it is suspected that an explosion in an AC may have triggered the fire.

Harish Goel and his brother Varun Goel, owners of a CCTV camera and router manufacturing and assembling company, from whose office the fire is suspected to have started, have been arrested, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Sameer Sharma

said. Garg added it was difficult to ascertain whether the remains found on Saturday morning were of one person or more.

Of the 27 deceased, seven have been identified so far as Tania Bhushan, Mohini Pal, Yashoda Devi, Ranju Devi, Vishal, Drishti and Kailash Jyani, the DCP said.

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal and his deputy, Manish Sisodia, visited the spot on Saturday.

Rana couple pray in Delhi for Thackeray's ouster

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Independent lawmakers Navneet and Ravi Rana on Saturday recited the Hanuman Chalisa at the Hanuman temple here and claimed to have prayed for removal of the "biggest danger looming over Maharashtra in the form of Shiv Sena".

The couple was arrested last month on sedition charges after a call for reciting the Hanuman Chalisa outside Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray's residence in Mumbai and released on bail 12 days later.

Dressed in a saffron sari and accompanied by her husband and scores of supporters, Navneet Rana, the independent Lok Sabha member from Amravati, walked on foot from her North Avenue residence to the Hanuman temple in Connaught Place to offer prayers.

"Uddhav Thackeray is the biggest danger looming over Maharashtra. I have come to offer prayers to rid



Maharashtra of this danger," Navneet told reporters outside the temple.

The Rana couple also performed aarti at the temple.

The temple visit comes on a day when Thackeray is scheduled to address a massive rally in Mumbai.

Meanwhile, Navneet Rana accused the Shiv Sena of abandoning the cause of Hindutva by joining hands with the Congress and NCP to grab power in Maharashtra.

"Uddhav Thackeray has forgotten the legacy of Balasaheb Thackeray. Balasaheb was the

real torchbearer of Hindutva, these are duplicates," she said to questions on Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut's remarks that the time had come to show the real style of Shiv Sena.

Navneet Rana dared Thackeray to take action against "those offering prayers at Aurangzeb's grave" instead of targeting her for espousing the cause of Hindutva.

AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi had offered prayers at the grave of Mughal ruler Aurangzeb at Khuldabad, near Aurangabad in Maharashtra.

Kejriwal's meet on demolition drive cancelled

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's meeting with his party's MLAs, which was scheduled for Saturday, has been cancelled in the wake of a massive fire in outer Delhi's Mundka in which 27 lives were lost, official sources said.

Several other events, including the inauguration of electric vehicle charging points by Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, have been cancelled as well, they said.

Kejriwal, national convener of the Aam Aadmi Party, was scheduled to hold a crucial meeting with party legislators here to prepare a strategy to counter the anti-encroachment drives launched by the BJP-ruled municipal corporations in the national capital.

The meeting was scheduled to begin at 11 am at the chief minister's official residence in Civil Lines.

The fire in the four-storey commercial building on Friday started from the first floor that houses the office of a company which manufactures and assembles CCTV cameras and routers, the police



The Delhi chief minister announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of the deceased

have said.

Kejriwal and Sisodia visited the spot to take stock of the situation.

The Delhi chief minister announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh each to the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 for those injured in the blaze.

"A magisterial enquiry has been ordered into the incident. The families of the deceased will be given a compensation of Rs 10 lakh, while the injured will be given Rs 50,000," he said.

Wheat export ban, 'anti-farmer', says congress

PNS ■ UDAIPUR

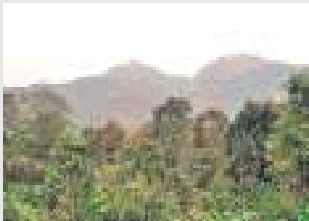
The Congress on Saturday hit out at the government over the ban on the export of wheat, saying it was an "anti-farmer" measure as it deprives farmers of reaping the benefit of higher export prices. According to an official notification, India has banned wheat exports with immediate effect as part of measures to control rising domestic prices.

Asked about the government's move at a press conference on the second day of the Congress' ongoing 'Chintan Shivir' here, senior leader and former finance minister P Chidambaram said, "I presume that it is because the central government has failed to procure enough wheat. It is not that wheat production has come down, it is more or less the same. In fact, it may be marginally more." Chidambaram said that on Friday, a Chhattisgarh minister had told him that the government there had procured 97 lakh tonnes of paddy.

If procurement had taken place, there would not have been any need to ban the export of wheat, he said.

INDIA CORNER

Goa govt to develop eco-tourism in forest areas



The Goa government will develop eco-tourism in the forest areas and parks of the coastal state, state Minister Vishwajit Rane said. Taking to Twitter on Friday, Rane said that discussions were held with officials of the forest department for the development of eco-tourism

and to improve infrastructure in wildlife sanctuaries in the state. "Following discussions with forest dept officers, we have decided to give thrust to development of forest eco-tourism within forest areas and forest parks. We will improve infrastructure of Dr Salim Ali Bird Sanctuary, Bondla Wildlife Sanctuary, build camping areas, jungle trails etc," the state forest minister tweeted. "We will carry out these activities with guidance from experts in order to ensure that people are more interested in and visit forest parks. Camping areas and jungle trails will be prioritised. We will create an entirely new

CAF constable injured in IED blast by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur



A jawan of the Chhattisgarh Armed Force (CAF) was injured when a pressure improvised explosive device (IED), planted by Naxals, exploded in Bijapur district of Chhattisgarh on

Saturday, police said. The incident occurred around 11 am near Pandemurga village under Nelasnar police station limits, where a road opening party (ROP) of the CAF's 8th battalion was out for patrolling, Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P said. When the patrolling team, that had launched the operation from Nelasnar camp, was cordoning off the route ahead of Pandemurga, constable Ramnath Maurya stepped on the pressure IED connection, triggering the blast, he said.

17-year-old boy killed as bomb explodes in garbage



A 17-year-old boy was killed on Saturday morning when a container bomb exploded in a garbage dump in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district, police said. The incident happened in Ajamtala behind Rahara police station, around 15 km from Kolkata, they said. The

bomb, which was inside a container, exploded when Sheikh Salim took it from his father and threw it at a lamp-post, they said. Sheikh's father found the container while clearing the garbage dump, police said. "Sheikh was first rushed to Barrackpore BN Bose Sub-divisional Hospital, and then to Sagar Dutta Hospital where he was declared brought dead," a senior police officer said. A large contingent of police was deployed in the area as the incident triggered panic among the locals. An investigation is underway to find who kept the bomb there, police said.

'Good luck and goodbye Cong': Sunil Jakhar as he quits party



"Good luck and goodbye Congress", former PCCF chief Sunil Jakhar said on Saturday while announcing his decision to quit the Congress that last month removed him from all party positions for alleged anti-party activities. The disgruntled leader, whose decision comes during the party's three-day 'Chintan Shivir' in Udaipur, went live on his Facebook page to make the announcement. "It is my parting gift to the party. Good luck and goodbye Congress," Jakhar said while announcing his decision to part ways with the Congress party. The former Punjab Congress chief had been upset with the party for serving him a show-cause notice on April 11. However, Jakhar chose not to reply to the Congress disciplinary committee panel. The former MP had criticised former chief minister Charanjit Singh Channi and termed him a "liability" for the party after the Congress lost to the Aam Aadmi Party in Punjab.

Raut for 'one country, one language'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Making a pitch for "one country, one language", Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Saturday said Hindi is spoken across India and has acceptability, and added that Union minister Amit Shah should accept the challenge that there should be one language in all the states.

His statement comes over a month after Shah said that Hindi should be accepted as an alternative to English and not to local languages, a statement that was vociferously opposed by several prominent political leaders in southern states, who said foisting Hindi on people was not acceptable, and also called it a part of an agenda to weaken the regional languages.

Raut made the remark here while talking to media persons here. The comment was in response to a question about



Tamil Nadu Education Minister K Ponnudurai a day earlier decrying any attempts of alleged imposition of Hindi and questioning claims that learning the language would fetch jobs.

Taking a dig at those who insist jobs will be available for those who learn Hindi, the Tamil Nadu minister had also asked who are selling 'pani puri' in Coimbatore now, an obvious reference to the predominantly Hindi-speaking vendors involved in the trade.

Mumbai - where civic body polls are likely to be held later this year - has a sizeable number of people from northern belt of the country.

Asked about the Tamil Nadu minister's remark, Raut said his party has always respected Hindi.

"Whenever I get an opportunity in the House, I speak in Hindi. Because the country should listen what I want to say, it is a language of the country. Hindi is the only language which has acceptability and is spoken in the entire country," he said.

To drive home his point, the Shiv Sena leader also said that the Hindi film industry is influential in the country and the world.

So, no language should be insulted, he added.

"Union Home Minister Amit Shah should accept this challenge that there should be

one language in all states. One country, one Constitution, one nishan (emblem/symbol) and one language should be there," Raut said.

The chief spokesperson of the Sena further said Maharashtra Chief Minister and Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray's rally, scheduled to be held later in the day, will be "historic and revolutionary".

He added the entire country is "excited" to know what stand Thackeray will take during the public rally, first of the party in the last two-and-half years.

"Some people want to vitiate the atmosphere in Maharashtra, want to defame the Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government and want to destabilise the state (government). Shiv Sena chief Uddhav ji Thackeray will give a befitting reply to all this," he added.

Sonia chairs meeting of AICC brass

PNS ■ UDAIPUR

Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday discussed the party's action plan for the second phase of the mass contact programme to take on the policies of the government as well as rising inflation and unemployment in the country.

She presided over the meeting of AICC general secretaries, PCC presidents and legislature party leaders during the party's Nav Sankalp Chintan Shivir here.

Former Congress president Rahul Gandhi also spoke at the meeting and called for planning the next stage of the

action plan for Jan Jagran Abhiyan, sources said.

The Congress launched the mass agitation/contact programme - 'Jan Jagran Abhiyan' -- from November 14 to November 29, 2021 to highlight various issues, including inflation, price rise, recession, unemployment rate and farm distress.

The party is now planning to launch Jan Jagran Abhiyan 2.0.

Top Congress leaders from across the country are here for a three-day brainstorming conclave to decide on the party's strategy on key issues and revamp of the organisation.



30% students didn't return to schools after pandemic

PNS ■ BHUBANESHWAR

After discovering that about 30 per cent of students have not returned to schools as classroom teaching resumed after a gap of two years due to the pandemic, the Odisha government has asked the district collectors to try reverse the alarming trend.

Analysing the daily attendance data from schools collected by District Education Officers (DEOs), it was seen that around 70 per cent of students are attending the classes, School and Mass Education Department secretary BP Sethi said in a letter to district heads.



On detailed analysis, it was seen that the attendance in classes 1 to 5 in districts such as Malkanagiri, Boudh, Sambalpur and Nuapada is also poor in case of attendance in classes 6 to 8, he added.

In the secondary section, attendance in schools in

The performance of Malkanagiri, Boudh, Sambalpur and Nuapada is also poor in case of attendance in classes 6 to 8, he added.

In the secondary section, attendance in schools in

Gajapati, Bolangir, Bargarh, Sonepur, Nuapada, Cuttack, Khordha, Koraput, Ganjam, Boudh, Malkangiri, Keonjhar, Sambalpur is less than the state average, Sethi said.

The overall attendance in higher secondary classes is abysmally low in Gajapati, Sonepur, Bargarh, Kandhamal and Nuapada, which is a matter of concern, he mentioned.

"The above figures lead us to believe that thorough analysis has to be made to know the whereabouts of the absentee students. It may so happen, these students who are not attending the offline classes might have dropped out/

moved out along with their parents/ lost interest in academic activities due to non-continuance of the teaching schedule due to the pandemic situation and many other reasons, which need analysis," he noted.

A review by the School and Mass Education Department also found that many students passing out of class 8 are not taking admission in class 9.

"We have to devise a location-specific strategy to bring back the students to the classroom," Sethi told the district collectors.

Noting that the department has prepared a strategy to bring back the absent students,

he asked the collectors to conduct a school-level survey to list the students who are not attending classes.

"The junior teachers who are posted in schools may be sent to the houses of the absentee students to know the reason for their absence from the school," he said.

"These junior teachers should also motivate students and their parents to send their ward to the school and explain the benefit of sending the student to school and steps taken by the government to provide free books, free uniform, MDM (mid-day meals) and scholarships to students...", he said.

NTPC's 20 MW solar capacity at Kawas begins commercial operation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned power giant NTPC on Saturday announced the beginning of commercial operation of the first part capacity of 20 MW out of 56 MW Kawas Solar PV Project in Gujarat.

"Consequent upon successful commissioning, the first part capacity of 20 MW out of 56 MW Kawas Solar PV Project at Kawas, Gujarat, is declared on Commercial Operation from 00:00 Hrs of May 14, 2022," a BSE filing said. With this, the standalone installed and commercial capacity of NTPC has reached 54,616.68 MW. Further, the NTPC group installed and commercial capacity has touched 68,981.68 and 68,321.68 MW, respectively.



BOOSTING CRUISE TOURISM

Committee to create enabling eco-system

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal on Saturday said the government has set up a high-level committee to create an enabling eco-system for the development of cruise tourism in the country.

The committee comprises government officials and cruise industry players.

Sonowal on Saturday inaugurated the first two-day International Cruise Conference being held here.

Speaking to the media on the sidelines of the event, the minister said the government aims to make India the most attractive cruise tourism destination and the industry the world's largest one in the world.

The Minister for Ports, Shipping and Waterways also informed that the government has set up a Task Force under the Secretary in the Ministry of Tourism and the Shipping secretary as its vice-chairman.



The high-level committee will assist the Task Force with its ideas and suggestions to the committee, he said.

"I declare the constitution of a High-level committee comprising both government officials and national and international industry players. It will assist the Taskforce and give it ideas and suggestions,"

Sonowal told reporters.

Emphasising that the purpose of the international conference is to make India a cruise tourism hub, the minister said the government will provide whatever modern infrastructure is required to attain the objective. He also expressed hope that the state governments will also play

their role in the promotion of the industry, which is seeing demand coming back after being hit during the pandemic. "India is going to be the most attractive destination of cruise tourism, and there is no doubt about it because whatever potential we have in the coastal areas and inland waterways are now set to be explored.

Sri Lanka to receive 65,000MT of urea from India

PNS ■ COLOMBO

India has assured Sri Lanka to immediately supply 65,000 metric tonnes of urea to avoid any disruption in paddy cultivation in this country, as it faces the worst economic crisis in its post-independence history.

High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in New Delhi Milinda Moragoda met with the Secretary of the Department of Fertilisers Rajesh Kumar Chaturvedi in New Delhi on Thursday to discuss the supply of urea required for the current Yala cultivation season in Sri Lanka, according to media reports here on Saturday. Moragoda thanked Chaturvedi for India's decision to supply 65,000 MT of urea required for the current Yala cultivation season in Sri Lanka, the High Commission of Sri Lanka in New Delhi said in a statement.

The Government of India has decided to supply this quantity of urea immediately to Sri Lanka at the request of the Government of Sri Lanka, despite a ban on export of urea from India, the Sri Lankan High Commission said in a statement. High Commissioner



Moragoda thanked Secretary Chaturvedi for his personal involvement in arranging necessary approvals and logistics to supply 65,000 metric tonnes of urea to Sri Lanka in consultation with the High Commissioner of India in Colombo Gopal Baglay.

In response, Chaturvedi said that his Department is always ready to support Sri Lanka in keeping with India's 'neighbourhood first' policy, and that the Department is making arrangements to ship the required quantity of urea from the nearest port to Sri Lanka through a State Company coming under his purview.

The High Commissioner and the Secretary also discussed ways and means to

ensure the continuous supply of chemical fertiliser from India to Sri Lanka under the existing credit line and beyond. India has committed more than USD 3 billion to debt-ridden Sri Lanka in loans, credit lines and credit swaps since January this year. Yala is the season of paddy cultivation in Sri Lanka that lasts between May and August.

Sri Lanka is aiming to boost its agriculture sector to avoid any disruption in the agriculture market following the drop in the paddy cultivation in the Maha session.

The Sri Lankan government banned chemical fertilisers last year as part of a phased transition towards organic agriculture.

Legal backing for RoW by Dec, says telecom minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on Saturday said legal backing for Right of Way (RoW) will be in place by December, and launched the GatiShakti Sanchar portal that will centralise and speed up approvals for laying of fibre and tower installations, as the country gears up for 5G roll-out.

The GatiShakti Sanchar portal will facilitate centralised Right of Way (RoW) approvals. An online platform for the industry to apply for RoW approvals as they build telecom infrastructure, including for 5G services, the GatiShakti Sanchar portal offers a unified, integrated, centralised approach covering all states and UTs, and central government ministries.

For players, it promises to



reduce the days involved in getting stipulated permissions, lower costs, and facilitate ease of doing business.

Launching the portal, Vaishnaw asserted the need for legal provisions for Right of Way, and promised that a strong legal backing will be put in place by December this year.

At present, RoW rules are

based on administrative process, and a strong legal backing is required to empower local officials, bring clarity on the fee structure, and fix accountability, he explained.

"That will be our next step. Moreover, all the portals that are there, especially Gati Shakti portal, railway portal, highway portal, and others...integration of those...We will be working on these two technological and legal aspects," Vaishnaw said.

Work has started on these two fronts already, and the integration of portals is expected in the next 3-4 months while the timelines for providing legal backing is December-end. Asked if legal provisions for RoW will also entail penalties if approval timelines are not met, the minister said generally accountability and penalty tend to be linked.

G7 warn of Ukraine grain crisis, ask China not to aid Russia

PNS ■ WEISSENHAUS

The Group of Seven leading economies warned Saturday that the war in Ukraine is stoking a global food and energy crisis that threatens poor countries, and urgent measures are needed to unblock stores of grain that Russia is preventing from leaving Ukraine.

In a statement released at the end of a three-day meeting on Germany's Baltic Sea coast, the G-7 nations also called on China not to help Russia, including by undermining international sanctions or justifying Moscow's actions in Ukraine.

"Russia's war of aggression has generated one of the most severe food and energy crises in recent history which now threatens those most vulnerable across the globe," the group said.

"We are determined to



accelerate a coordinated multilateral response to preserve global food security and stand by our most vulnerable partners in this respect," it added.

The G-7 asked Beijing to support the sovereignty and independence of Ukraine, and "not to assist Russia in its war of aggression."

The group, which comprises Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan and the United States, also called on China "to desist from engaging in information manipulation, disinformation and other means to legitimise Russia's war of aggression against Ukraine."

Flour millers' association RFMFI welcomes govt's decision to ban wheat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Flour millers' association RFMFI on Saturday welcomed the government's decision to ban wheat exports, saying this will prevent "unnecessary panic" in the market regarding domestic supply and also help in controlling any price rise.

Roller Flour Millers Federation of India (RFMFI) President Anjani Aggarwal said the association had written to the government to regulate exports. "It is a very good decision by the Government at this stage, as this will prevent unnecessary panic in the country about wheat supply and prices." He said the wheat production in the 2021-22 crop year, ending June, is likely to decline at 95-98 million tonnes.

MONEY MATTERS

Bharat Krishak Samaj unhappy over wheat exports ban



Farmers' body Bharat Krishak Samaj (BKS) on Saturday expressed unhappiness over the ban on wheat exports, saying that restrictions on shipments of farm produce are an "indirect tax" on farmers. Farmers will not be able to take advantage of high global prices, while India will lose credibility as a reliable trading partner, it said.

"Sadly, India has banned exports of wheat. Restrictions on agricultural exports are an indirect tax on farmers in countries where imposed," Bharat Krishak Samaj Chairman Ajay Vir Jakhar told PTI. Farmgate prices get subdued by policy and farmers are unable to benefit from rising commodity prices while having to pay higher input costs, he added. "Today not only traders but even farmers are holding wheat stock will lose out. Such export bans is the reason why farmers do not trust market reforms. It adds to the trust deficit," Jakhar said. In view of the skyrocketing food prices in the world, he said the UN had also appealed for nations not to make sudden announcements. India also loses credibility as a trading partner, he said. "Lack of credible real-time data and analytics in the government is why we are in this situation," he rued. Jakhar said his association has been advocating for long that farmers must be compensated when they suffer a loss due to government policy as is the norm in the USA.

Sundaram Home Finance bullish on long-term prospects

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Sundaram Home Finance was bullish on the long-term prospects of the sector and would further strengthen its presence in real estate sector, according to a top official. The city-based wholly owned subsidiary of Sundaram Finance Ltd declared its financial results for the quarter ending March 31, 2022. The company clocked 44.9 per cent rise on its net profit for the quarter ending March 31, 2022 to Rs 53.05 crore from Rs 36.60 crore registered same period last financial year. Disbursements during the quarter went up to Rs 794.11 crore from Rs 459.38 crore recorded corresponding period last year. Sundaram Home Finance registered a record disbursements of over Rs 300 crore in March 2022, the highest in its history.

There are mountains to climb: Air India CEO-designate Campbell Wilson

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Campbell Wilson has termed his appointment as Air India CEO and MD as a fantastic opportunity to lead a historic airline and mentioned that there are "mountains to climb" in his new stint.

Wilson is currently the Chief Executive Officer of the Singapore Airlines' wholly-owned subsidiary Scoot Air.

Singapore Airlines (SIA) is a joint venture partner of Tata Group in full service carrier Vistara.

On Thursday, Tata Sons had announced the appointment of Wilson as the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of Air India.

In a communique sent to Scoot employees on Friday, he said, "This afternoon I informed the executive team



and your union leaders of my resignation from Scoot and the SIA Group."

He said it was by no means an easy decision to leave and SIA was his first professional job and has been his home for the last 26 years.

Wilson noted that across three continents, six countries and more than 12 roles, SIA has accorded him many more opportunities and experiences

than he could ever have dreamed of.

"It is especially hard to leave Scoot which, in two chapters, I have had the honour and pleasure of nurturing - together with a wonderful, wonderful group of people, past and present - from a mere spreadsheet to, amongst many other things, the World's Best Long-Haul, Low-Cost Airline," he mentioned.

Carborundum Universal clocks 7.6 pc rise in Q4 standalone PAT

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Abrasives and industrial ceramics maker Carborundum Universal Ltd on Saturday reported a 7.60 per cent jump on its standalone net profit for the quarter ending March 31, 2022 at Rs 61.91 crore.

The city-based Murugappa Group company had registered standalone net profit at Rs 57.52 crore during the corresponding quarter in the previous year.

For the year ending March 31, 2022, standalone net profit grew by 38.30 per cent to Rs 254.48 crore, from Rs 183.97 crore registered a year ago, a company statement said.

Total income for the quarter under review went up to Rs 601.47 crore, from Rs 519.98 crore registered same quarter in the previous year.

For the year ending March 31, 2022, standalone total income was at Rs 2,257.18

crore as against Rs 1,714.65 crore recorded last fiscal.

The company said it incurred a capital expenditure in 2021-22 of Rs 170 crore and the debt-equity ratio at the consolidated level was at 0.09.

Free cash flow for the year ending March 31, 2022, was at Rs 118 crore, the company said. Return on Invested Capital for three major segments together moved from 27 per cent in FY21 to 31 per cent in FY22. Revenue from the abrasives business at a consolidated level grew by 29 per cent to Rs 1,283 crore for the year ending March 31, 2022, as compared to Rs 993 crore recorded last year.

The company said the abrasives business in India, Russia and US registered significant growth. Revenue at consolidated level in the electro minerals business grew to Rs 1,312 crore during the year ending March 31, 2022, as compared to Rs 1,064 crore a year ago.

UK delays ban on buy-one-get-one free junk food deals

PNS ■ LONDON

Rules banning multibuy deals on foods and drinks high in fat, salt, or sugar (HFSS), including buy-one-get-one free (BOGOF), three for two and free refills for sugary soft drinks, will be delayed for a year, the UK government said on Saturday.

The plan had been unveiled in December 2020 to be enforced by April this year as part of a wider anti-obesity health drive.

The Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) said the delay to restrictions on multibuy deals will allow the government to review and monitor the impact of the restrictions on the cost of living in light of an unprecedented

global economic situation.

"Pausing restrictions on deals like buy one get one free will allow us to understand its impact on consumers in light of an unprecedented global economic situation," said UK Public Health Minister Maggie Throup.

"We're committed to doing everything we can to help people live healthier lives," she said. The restrictions banning HFSS adverts on TV before 9 pm and paid-for adverts online will also be paused for a year, meaning they come into force January 2024.

Recognising that the industry needs more time to prepare, a consultation on TV and paid-for adverts online will be launched in the coming weeks.

"We are determined to tack-



le childhood obesity and are working hard to improve young people's health, including by investing 550 million pounds of government and lottery cash to level up access to sport and physical activity right across the country," said

UK Media, Data and Digital Minister Julia Lopez.

"We have listened to the concerns which have been raised and will not be bringing in restrictions on junk food advertising until confident that the time is right," she said.

The plan had been unveiled in December 2020 to be enforced by April this year as part of a wider anti-obesity health drive.

Restrictions on the placement of less healthy products - a key part of the government's commitment to reduce obesity - will still come into force in October 2022 as planned.

These will mean less healthy

products are no longer promoted in key locations, such as checkouts, store entrances, aisle ends and their online equivalents.

DHSC said addressing obesity remains a priority for the government, and will reduce the strain put on the state-funded National Health Service (NHS) as it works to tackle the COVID backlogs.

It pointed to the laws on calorie labelling in large restaurants, cafes and takeaways coming into force last month as part of the anti-obesity drive. The department will also be launching the Better Health: Rewards scheme in Wolverhampton later this year to test whether financial incentives can support adults to move more and eat better.

Future Retail's Chief Financial Officer C P Toshniwal resigns



Debt-ridden Future Retail's Chief Financial Officer C P Toshniwal has resigned from the company, effective May 12. Toshniwal's resignation is the recent addition to the string of resignations that started after the Rs 24,713-crore deal was called off last month by the billionaire

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries after creditors voted against it. Last week, Future Retail's Managing Director Rakesh Biyani stepped down, while officials including the company secretary of the debt-ridden firm tendered resignation. "C P Toshniwal - Chief Financial Officer of the Company has resigned with effect from the closure of business hours of May 12, 2022. Consequent to the same, he shall also cease to be a 'Key Managerial Personnel' (KMP) of the Company," FRL said in a regulatory filing. FRL, a flagship firm of the Kishore Biyani-led Future Group, now faces an insolvency petition filed by its lenders before the National Company Law Tribunal as it has committed defaults. FRL was part of the 19 companies which were supposed to be transferred to Reliance Retail as part of a Rs 24,713-crore deal announced in August 2020. The deal was called off by the billionaire Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Industries last month.

Don't ever doubt
yourselves or waste a
second of your life.
It's too short, and
you're too special.
— Ariana Grande



There is a wide
recognition that the
creation of the IAS
was one of the
cardinal follies of the
wise. It is irrelevant to
the people at large
but it has made itself
hugely useful to the
political class, writes
MANOJE NATH

HAS THE COUNTRY FAILED THE IAS?



Officers of the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) who demonstrate the capability to make money from the system, and make it fast, inevitably endear themselves to people in power. So, whatever the outcome of the ongoing investigation against Jharkhand Mines and Industry secretary Pooja Singhal, IAS, it will not interfere with the chances of her appointment as Chief Secretary of Jharkhand, when her time comes. In its brief history of twenty years as a separate state, Jharkhand has honoured three such IAS officers by appointing them as Chief Secretaries. Among officers so appointed was a gentleman who was facing trial in two cases related to financial irregularities in purchase of fertilizer. Another one had spent many months in jail on charges of forcing entrepreneurs to donate money to his NGOs and finally won a reprieve from the Supreme Court. A third officer who was convicted in an animal husbandry case, and perhaps died in jail, had two stints as chief secretary of Jharkhand. Jharkhand's case may be an exception, but in popular imagination IAS officers can make money not only with impunity but with honour.

There are two standard explanations for the steady diminution of the stature and prestige of the IAS. The first consists of playing down the well-founded criticisms of servility and capitulation, corruption and chicanery. Even though sometimes the merit of the criticism is granted, its significant contribution to the polity and society is dwelt upon at great length; distortions and aberrations that may have crept in are laid at the door of the many extenuating circumstances.

If the IAS has failed it is because the country has failed (or is failing at an accelerated rate). It is only the extreme formulation of such an approach. The other strategy is to deflect and devalue - the criticism by outwitting and silencing the critic with a more vehement self-critical diatribe, an anguished self-loathing of their own, as if the act of advertising could, in itself, absolve the service of all the sins that were being advertised.

The IAS, according to one view, requires a particular kind of society to function to its full potential, something like the idylls of Nehruvian era. The post-Independence leaders and influencers like Nehru, Patel, Rajendra Prasad, Ambedkar, Madan Mohan Malviya, T T Krishnamachari, Acharya Kripalani, Jyoti Basu, Atal Behari Vajpayee, Jaiprakash Narayan (to mention just a handful); industrialists like JRD Tata, Jammalal Bajaj, Dinshaw Petit and GD Birla; editors like Desmond Doig, Arun Shourie, Sunanda K Dattaray, Kushwant Singh, Frank Moraes and Russi Karanjia have been mostly replaced by pygmies and carpet baggers. These people may win elections, make billion of dollars in one year or run up huge TRP ratings, but they are incapable of promoting public values or morals, or establishing ethical corporate standards, or writing an editorial (let alone investigating a story).

But that is hardly the case. The IAS has not only been quick to limber up to the changed political realities, it has scripted an even more indispensable role for itself in the era of "pygmies and carpetbaggers."

Politics, to appropriate Balzac's remark, has become like, "Soldiering, ... chiefly a finan-



Jharkhand Mines and Industry Secretary Pooja Singhal was arrested by the Enforcement Directorate in a money laundering case.

cial undertaking, you need gold in order to do battle, and you need to do battle in order to get gold." Some governments are (were) headed by leaders from newly emergent political classes for whom English was not the language of choice, who did not feel constrained by rules, regulations etc and were quite upfront about their intentions to abuse their office for personal gains.

The longevity of governments challenged the myths that the IAS had forged out of isolated life stories of a young collector telling off a CM,

“THE IAS HAS NOT ONLY BEEN QUICK TO LIMBER UP TO THE CHANGED POLITICAL REALITIES, IT HAS SCRIPTED AN EVEN MORE INDISPENSABLE ROLE FOR ITSELF IN THE ERA OF “PYGMIES AND CARPETBAGGERS.”

a chief secretary recording his dissent in days long gone by, myths that made them intelligible to themselves, provided them with their reassurance during times of self-doubt. Governments were there to stay; they were here today, they were going to be here tomorrow. How long could they wait out in the cold?

Though supposed to be unaligned, personally free and subject to the executive authority only within a defined area, they choose to be incorporated in the apparatus of political power. Commitment to rule based governance, are pragmatically abandoned by such officers. They are for the government, the government is for them.

An interesting example from marine biology will serve as an apt metaphor. In the Bay of Naples, a common sea slug medusa, and a snail, start off as independent organisms but on close encounter become conjoined in such a manner that both the jellyfish and the snail shed off a lot of themselves. A small portion of the snail gets permanently affixed to the ventral surface near the mouth of the jellyfish to become one single organism. They get along nicely in a symbiotic arrangement, exploiting each other's biological capabilities and yet retain their specific otherness.

A clutch of trusted officers-the drastically edited version of service, the cadre may have hundreds of officers, in an arrangement reminiscent of the medusa and the snail, handle the core sectors of the governments as also the entire range of political purpose. The others are kept in a state of idle splendour. But like an Englishman the IAS is "never at a loss for an effective moral attitude ... you will never find ... them in the wrong." It is responsible for the marginalisation of its own service and yet persists with the complaint of political interference.

There is a wide recognition that the creation of the IAS was one of the cardinal follies of the wise. It is irrelevant to the people at large but it has made itself hugely useful to the political class. In an unusual consensus, cutting across their ideological divide, they have found them to be even more valuable after retirement than they are in service. As heads of all the accountability institutions, all those roadblocks to arbitrary exercise of executive power, they render them defunct. In many states you can find officers recruited in the 60s, 70s, 80s making themselves useful to their political masters in a myriad ways. To stand an old saying on its head, "the dead lion is even more valuable than the living donkey."

The alliance of these two major institutions has significantly altered the balance of power much to the detriment of democracy.

Manoje Nath is a retired Government servant.



Every year, on May 17, **World Hypertension Day** is observed in order to educate the public and create awareness on high blood pressure (BP) or hypertension which has no symptoms or warning signs. The HEALTH PIONEER reports

An alarming one in four Indian adults has high blood pressure. Known medically as hypertension, many people don't even know they have it, because high blood pressure has no symptoms or warning signs.

"But only about 10 per cent of them have their blood pressure under control," according to a report by the India Hypertension Control Initiative. Releasing the report, Indian Council of Medical Research Director-General, Dr Balam Bhargava, emphasised on making hypertension a national priority.

Prashant Mathur, director of ICMR's Na Mathur, director of ICMR's National Centre for Disease Informatics and Research, Bengaluru, and corresponding author of the study chips in that "recognising the low awareness and high rates of drop-outs between the diagnosis of hypertension, its treatment and control calls for better planning of providing continuum of care for high blood pressure."

For both women and men, the prevalence increases sharply with age. The increase is for all categories of hypertension, including pre-hypertension, for both sexes. About one-fourth of women and men aged 40-49 have hypertension, says the study.

The recent National Family Health Survey 5 (NFHS-5) too presents an alarming picture of the chronic disease. It shows that when it comes to treatment, only 7 per

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cent women and 6 per cent men who have been diagnosed with high blood pressure are on medication.

The survey also found that 33 per cent of women and 46 per cent men have never got their blood pressures measured. Based on the blood pressure measurement, the NFHS-5 found 21 per cent of women and 24 per cent of men are having hypertension marked by the blood pressure measurement of 140/90 or above.

When elevated blood pressure is accompanied by abnormal cholesterol and blood sugar levels, the damage to your arteries, kidneys, and heart accelerates exponentially. According to a study presented at the American Stroke Association's International Stroke Conference recently, hypertensive young people between the ages of 20 to 40 could experience brain problems in their midlife.

Last year, the World Health Organisation modified its blood

pressure control guideline, suggesting that a systolic pressure of 130 should be the threshold to start medication in people with a history of heart complications or other risk factors whereas for others such a threshold would be 140/90.

Fortunately, high blood pressure is easy to detect and treat. Blood Pressure can be kept under control in a healthy range simply by making lifestyle changes, such as losing weight, increasing activity, and eating more healthfully, say doctors.

you can prevent it

- Reduce salt to less than 5g daily
- Eat fruits and vegetables regularly
- Avoid saturated fats and trans fats
- Avoid tobacco
- Reduce alcohol
- Be physically active every day

YOGA REMEDY

Ishwar V. Basavaraddi, Director of Morarji Desai National Institute of Yoga (MDNIY) tells you, "We have a range of yoga asanas, pranayama and meditation that help to open up the chest cavity, improves lung capacity and increases cardiopulmonary function, which lead to maintain physical activity for longer." According to him, some of the Yoga



asanas that can help in beating high blood pressure are: Tadasana without heel raise/ Katicakrasana/ Ushtrasana/ Gomukhasana/ Uttanmandukasana/ Bhujangasana/ Ardha halasana/ Shavasana / Yoga Nidra/ Abdominal Breathing (30 times)/ Nadi shodhan pranayama/ Sitali pranayama/ Bhramari pranayama and Dhyana.

Three-layered healthcare system to aid common man

Prevention is better than cure. Its significance can be witnessed in the tri-layered healthcare mechanism introduced by the Governments. The mechanism encompasses Primary Healthcare Centres (PHCs), Community Healthcare Centres (CHCs) and District Healthcare Centres (DHCs) after which big hospitals comes into play, whenever needed, says Gaurav Pandey

The objective of this mechanism is to ensure that larger number of ailments shall be diagnosed at the initial stage in rural pockets or small towns and effective medications may begin to uproot it.

The importance of PHCs is considerable as the locals receive medical aid the moment symptoms appear. Also, such Centres are responsible for spreading awareness about and bringing various government healthcare measures to the locals through Aanganvadi workers and Asha workers.

If one does not get cured at the PHCs, s/he is referred to the CHCs which has adequately equipped Diagnostic Laboratory as well. The consultations and investigations may help him to get fully cured. But if there is no respite, s/he may be sent to District Hospital and to higher referral hospitals like All

India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS).

It is quessential for every resident to understand the nuances and structure of this mechanism. Talking of private sector, a person visits a General Physician also known as Family Physician, usually an MBBS degree holder. In case of common diseases, a person gets cured there itself. There are Polyclinics where Specialists dealing with various body parts and related ailments are available and a patient may get synergized expert opinion of these Consultants in case of two-three ailments.

Then there are Nursing Homes where the patients can be admitted. It falls under primary healthcare. The bigger Nursing Homes equipped with Operation Theatre (OT) and Intensive Care Unit (ICU), they are considered as second-level or Secondary care Centres.

The big hospitals with more



The writer is an expert in health care management

than hundred beds, fully-equipped with latest machines, contemporary Modular Operation Theatres, ICU,

facilities of CT Scan, MRI, in-house pathology and Consultants related to every speciality are available fall under the category of Tertiary Care Hospitals.

The hospitals where Robotics Surgery, Proton Therapy, Heart Transplants, Lung Transplants and other advanced solutions are possible are known to be Fourth-level Healthcare Hospitals which are at the zenith in terms of providing medical solutions.

It may be true that these mechanisms and levels come into play once someone falls ill but it is important for all of us to be aware of these structures so that the illness can be diagnosed at the initial level through investigations and doctor's interventions and prescriptions and can be contained before it may cause serious damages.

In abroad, the cost of keeping every citizen healthy lies with the

Insurance Companies and the Governments. There exist Diagnostic Related Groups where annual medical tests are carried out so that contagious ailments can be contained in time and the burden of paying for cure and recovery may get lessened from the shoulders of the Insurance Company or Government.

Many Insurance Companies offer annual health check-ups to those who hold their mediclaim policies. The private hospitals also play their active part and offer significant rebates on various investigation packages.

The government-run and private hospitals organize free camps continually and the people in remote locations are investigated through mobile vans and people must take benefit of it without second thoughts as many serious ailments get diagnosed in time. More such drives are needed which is possible by effective Public Private People Model.

BEYOND THE STETHOSCOPE

When not pursuing their profession, a breed of doctors prefer to wear different hats to keep themselves fit and centered. The HEALTH PIONEER tries to catch up with them every week.



Doc's Iron Will For Iron Man

What started as a pastime activity in 2010—participating in the 5K category at the Airtel marathon—has now become a passionate hobby for this 48-year-old medico.

Dr. Hariprasad G, Additional Professor at Department of Biophysics, AIIMS, Delhi, has since then even successfully completed the Olympic Triathlon (1.5 Km swim; 40 km cycling; 10 km run) a few times in under three-and-a-half hours.

His thirst for a bigger challenge unquenched, he is now preparing for the Half-Iron Man Triathlon (1.9 km swim, 90 km cycling and a 21 km run) championship to be held this year-end at the Talkatora-SPM Swimming complex. In between this journey, Dr Hariprasad has graduated from a 5 km run to a 10 km and then half marathon and finally a 42 km Full marathon, which he comfortably does in four-and-a-half hours.

He has participated in several marathons including Mumbai, Standard Chartered Singapore, New Delhi and Omaha to name a few. The most recent one was the Hyderabad Marathon, which Dr Hariprasad recalls, was quite a challenge considering the number of steep flyovers in the city all along the route.

Hundreds of colorful medals from all these events and the many glittering gold medals decorate the walls of the living room of this clinician-scientist who along with his team are currently investigating the A-Z of Omicron virus.

The father of two sons who balances out work-family-friends-endurance training shares, "I mix-up of a lot of physical activities like walking, jogging, sprinting, swimming, cycling, stair climbing, yoga, core exercises, skipping to get the best out of my heart, mind and body."

Every event is a learning curve and the challenge only gets bigger and more significant with each passing year, says the doctor who has done his MBBS from a Karnataka Medical College, Hubli and later did his post-graduation MD and subsequently a PhD from AIIMS, Delhi. His inspirations are sports legends such as Phelps, Dressel, Ledecky, Djokovic, Federer, Nadal, and Kipchoge!

Of course, behind all these achievements is his rigorous efforts, a strong-will and most importantly the support of his family, particularly his better half Roopa, a doctor herself who is into cervical cancer prevention at National Institute for Cancer Prevention and Research, Noida. She doubles up as his nutritionist and a personal chef, and ensures he gets the right blend of food in the weeks leading up to the endurance event, during the race and post-event. As a general rule he usually consumes wholesome unprocessed food cooked at home and avoids fast-packaged foods. Even delicacies be it Pani puri, dosas, tacos, pasta, pan cakes, waffles and desserts are given a yummy but healthy twist at Dr Roopa's kitchen, and it is this that helps him in 'the long run,' he chuckles.

"We always have a choice and end up with the easier one. I decided to change that," the doctor quips, adding that "Don't give up on your dreams, because you have no idea what all you are capable of."

(Medicos may write to us at healthp100@gmail.com)

NEWS BRIEFS

CUT DOWN BAD MICROBES

Healthy adults who eat a diverse diet, with at least 8-10 grams of soluble fibre such as grains, beans, lentils, nuts and some fruits and vegetables daily, have fewer antibiotic-resistant microbes in their guts, according to a study by Agricultural Research Service scientists and their colleagues in mBio.

'AYURVEDA AAHARA' ON THE PLATTER

The Union Ministry of Ayush and Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI), India's apex body for food regulation has formulated regulations of safety and quality standards for food products under 'Ayurveda Aahara' category. This comprehensive initiative will ensure manufacturing of quality Ayurveda food products and help in expanding the international market for Make-In-India products.

NEW THERAPY FOR BREAST CANCER

The world's first subcutaneous therapy for breast cancer that is effective and reduces treatment time by 90 per cent has been launched in India, Roche Pharma said recently. The treatment by Roche called PHESGO is the first ever fixed dose formulation in oncology that combines two monoclonal antibodies: Perjeta (pertuzumab) and Herceptin (trastuzumab) with hyaluronidase. It is administered via an under the skin injection in combination with intravenous (IV) chemotherapy for the treatment of early and metastatic HER2-positive breast cancer.

'ONE STEP' PORTAL FOR HEALTH INFO AT INDIAN EMBASSIES

Soon facilitation centres at Indian embassies across the world will be set up for people wanting to travel to India for treatment, said Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya while addressing a roundtable conference with senior IFS officers on 'Building Brand India' in Delhi.

Severe heatwave to worsen in Delhi

IMD has warned that the mercury may soar to 46-47 degrees Celsius



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A heatwave spell scorching Delhi for the last two days is predicted to worsen today, with the India Meteorological Department or IMD issuing an 'orange' alert, warning that the mercury may soar to 46-47 degrees Celsius in parts of the city. The maximum temperature at the Safdarjung Observatory, Delhi's base station, is predicted to settle at 44 degrees Celsius as against 42.5 degrees Celsius on Friday. Delhi on Friday saw the mercury rise to 46.1 degrees Celsius at Najafgarh. The weather stations at Jafarpur and Mungeshpur had recorded maximum temperatures of 45.6 degrees Celsius and 45.4 degrees Celsius, respectively, six notches above normal for this time of the year. Delhi's Pitampura also reeled under heatwave conditions, recording a maximum temperature of 44.7 degrees Celsius. A 'yellow' alert has been issued to caution people about a heatwave on Sunday. The IMD uses four colour codes for weather warnings - green (no action needed), yellow (watch and stay

updated), orange (be prepared) and red (take action). Cloudy skies and thunder may provide some relief from the intense heat next week. This is the fifth heatwave - one in March and three in April - in the capital this summer season. With scanty rains owing to feeble western disturbances, Delhi had recorded its second hottest April this year since 1951 with a monthly average maximum temperature of 40.2 degrees Celsius. A heatwave at the month-end had sent the mercury soaring to 46 and 47 degrees Celsius in several parts of the city. The capital got a miniscule 0.3 mm of rainfall in April against a monthly average of 12.2 mm. March saw nil rainfall against a normal of 15.9 mm. The IMD had predicted above normal temperatures in May. A heatwave is declared when the maximum temperature is over 40 degrees Celsius and at least 4.5 degrees above normal. A severe heatwave is declared if the departure from normal temperature is more than 6.4 notches, according to the IMD.

Delhi on Friday saw the mercury rise to 46.1 degrees Celsius at Najafgarh. The weather stations at Jafarpur and Mungeshpur had recorded maximum temperatures of 45.6 degrees Celsius and 45.4 degrees Celsius, respectively, six notches above normal for this time of the year.



The Cyber Crime wing of Uttar Pradesh Police has arrested three men, allegedly involved in duping people online across the country on the pretext of providing franchises of some popular commercial brands.

UP cyber cops nab three for pan-India 'franchise fraud'



Investigation into the gang's criminal antecedents revealed that it made fake websites of popular consumer retail chains, dairy products, automobile companies and even central government schemes for farmers to dupe people, Cyber Crime's Superintendent of Police Triveni Singh said. The trio was arrested on Friday following a case lodged in Prayagraj where the complainant had alleged fraud of Rs 17 lakh. The complainant was tricked into paying the money in return for the franchise of consumer retail chain Easyday, Singh told PTI. The gang has similarly duped people in the name of big companies like Royal Enfield, Bajaj Finance, Easyday, PM Kusum Yojna etc and are suspected to have conned thousands of people across the country. We are working on more cases linked to this gang and expecting more victims duped by it to approach the police, the officer said. The accused have been identified as Vinay Kumar alias Ashok Singh, 33, Abhishek Sharma, 27, and Ratnesh Bharti, 29. Vinay worked as the main operator while Abhishek developed the websites for the gang, he said. On the modus operandi of the criminals, Singh said the police investigation has revealed that this gang is one of several such groups of cyber cheats which are now operating from Bihar's Nalanda and nearby areas. They are notorious online criminals who have organised their work very smartly. They operate from Bihar, have got mobile phone sim cards from West Bengal, and got fake websites made in Madhya Pradesh. For transaction of the duped money, they used bank accounts which were not in their names, he said. As per our investigations till now, they have duped people from Tamil Nadu and Kerala in south India to people in Jammu and Kashmir in the north. They have several victims in states like UP, MP, Bihar and Rajasthan. Legal action is being taken against them, he added. The Cyber Crime Department, meanwhile, urged people to be cautious during online transactions and social media activities to avoid financial fraud or any other hassles.

Sheikh Mohamed Bin Zayed elected UAE President

The UAE's long-time de facto ruler Sheikh Mohamed bin Zayed Al Nahyan was elected as president on Saturday, official media said, a day after the death of former leader Sheikh Khalifa. Sheikh Mohamed was elected by the Federal Supreme Council, WAM news agency said, becoming the ruler of the oil-rich country founded by his father in 1971. Sheikh Mohamed, often known as 'MBZ', met members of the Federal Supreme Council, made up of rulers of the UAE's seven emirates, as the oil-rich country enters a period of mourning for his half-brother Sheikh Khalifa. His ascension, which was widely expected, formalises his position as leader of the desert state of 10 million after years of calling the shots while Sheikh Khalifa was sidelined by poor health. Under his low-key direction, the United Arab Emirates has put a man in space, sent a probe to Mars and opened its first nuclear reactor, while using its oil-funded clout to develop a more assertive foreign policy. Closely allied with Saudi Arabia, it has emerged as a leader of a reshaped Middle East since the retreat of traditional powers and the reduced involvement of the United States, forging ties with Israel and joining a war against Iran-backed militants in Yemen.



Man beheads uncle, walks on street with severed head



A man allegedly beheaded his 60-year-old maternal uncle over black magic suspicion and walked around two kilometers with his severed head and axe in hands in Sidhi district of Madhya Pradesh before being arrested by the police, an official said on Saturday. The incident occurred on Friday in Karimati village located in the jurisdiction of Jamodi police station, around 10 kms from the district headquarters, he said, adding that the 26-year-old accused suspected his uncle to be creating problems for him by performing black magic on him. Jamodi police station in-charge Sheshmani Mishra said that the accused, Lalbahadur Gaud, went to his maternal uncle Maksudan Singh Gaud's house on Friday and hit him on the neck with an axe following an argument. "The attack was so intense that his uncle's head got severed from the body," he said. Mishra said that after the killing, the accused started walking towards the police station by holding the severed head and the axe in his hands, but the cops arrested him midway after being alerted.



India bans wheat exports 2 days after announcing massive trade goal

India has banned wheat exports with immediate effect as part of its steps to control the spike in prices at home. Only export shipments for which letters of credit have been issued on or before yesterday's notification will be allowed, the government said. Besides, the government will allow exports on requests from other countries, the notification issued by Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said. The notification said that the government had taken the decision "in order to manage the overall food security of the country and to support the needs of the neighbouring and other vulnerable countries". Global buyers had been banking on India - the world's second largest wheat producer after China - for supplies after exports from the Black Sea region dropped since Russia's invasion of Ukraine in late February. The move to ban wheat exports comes after huge crop loss due to a heatwave in March. The government is also under pressure to rein in inflation that surged to 7.79 per cent in April. Also, the move is a u-turn two days after the government announced its plans for a big export push. "The Centre will send trade delegations to Morocco, Tunisia, Indonesia, Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Turkey, Algeria and Lebanon for exploring possibilities of boosting wheat exports from India. India has set a target of a record 10 million tonnes of wheat in the 2022-23 amid rising global demand for the grain globally," a government statement said Thursday. "There is a rise in the demand for Indian wheat in the global market, farmers,

traders and exporters have been advised to follow all the quality norms of importing countries so that India emerges as a reliable supplier of wheat globally. "We are extending our support to all the stakeholders in the wheat exports value chain for boosting shipment from the country," M Angamuthu, Chairman, Agricultural and Processed Food Products Exports Development Authority, said at a sensitisation meeting on wheat exports in Karnal, Haryana, according to the government release. Nuking Pakistan Better Than Giving Power To Thieves: Imran Khan Islamabad: Issuing a confounding statement, former Prime Minister Imran Khan said that "dropping an atomic bomb would have been better than handing over the helm to the thieves". Khan made these remarks while interacting with reporters on Friday at his Banigala residence, according to The News international. Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf chairman also said that he was shocked to see the "thieves" being foisted on the country, adding that dropping an atomic

bomb would have been better than handing over the helm to these people. According to The News International, Khan said those powerful people who would tell him the tales of corruption of the "previous rulers" started advising him to focus on his government's performance instead of the graft charges against others. He further said that the thieves brought into power destroyed every institution and the judicial system, asking now which government official would probe the cases of "these criminals". Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif has said that Imran Khan is "poisoning" the minds of the people of Pakistan with his speeches targeting state institutions. "The nation has been divided as Khan repeatedly called (the then-Opposition and now government) thieves and dacoits," Shehbaz had said during the first regular session of the National Assembly since the new government's formation. The PTI chairman had warned Shehbaz Sharif's government that no power could stop them from entering the federal capital during the long march to be held on May 20.