

BJP holds meet to finalise first list of picks for Karnataka polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Sunday held its Central Election Committee (CEC) meeting here at the BJP headquarters to finalise the first list of candidates for the Karnataka Assembly elections slated for May 10.

According to sources, the list may not be announced immediately and may "take longer time" and "could be out on Monday."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi attended the important meet to approve the first lot of nominees for total 224 Assembly seats in the Southern state, currently run by the BJP.

Former State Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa (BSY) who is a member of the parliamentary Board and the CEC was present in the meet.

Other top Karnataka leaders who were present and vetted the candidates list for the crucial assembly polls included state CM Basavaraj Bommai, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi and state chief Nalin Kumar Kateel.



BJP chief JP Nadda, Union Home Minister BJP Amit Shah and defence minister Rajnath Singh were seated with the Prime Minister in the meet which commenced post 6 PM and closely scrutinised the candidates which were discussed a day before by the top leaders at the residence of Nadda with Shah in attendance.

There could be "major changes" in the Karnataka list of candidates with a number of sitting MLA could be dropped and the younger nominees given preference, sources said. Yediyurappa, though, had earlier said that most of the sitting MLAs would be allotted tickets by the party.

The former CM wants his younger son BY Vijayendra to contest from Shikaripura, the seat held by the BSY. The party, however, seeks BSY's son to take on the Congress leader and ex-CM Siddaramaiah from Varuna assembly seat. The Karnataka Assembly poll is "evenly poised" and hence ticket selection would be key to winning in the elections in which JDS is also in the fray, making the contest a triangular one.

Jaishankar to begin 6-day visit to Uganda, Mozambique today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar will embark on a six-day visit to Uganda and Mozambique beginning Monday to explore ways to expand India's ties with the two countries.

The Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), announcing the visit, said on Sunday that Jaishankar's first destination would be Uganda.

"The external affairs minister will visit Uganda from April 10-12. During the visit, he is expected to hold delegation level talks with his counterpart Foreign Minister of Uganda General Jeje Odongo, call on leadership of the country and meet other ministers," the MEA said.

It said Jaishankar will also inaugurate a transit campus of the National Forensic Science University (NFSU) in Jinja.

An MoU between India and Uganda on setting up of the first ever campus of NFSU outside India, is likely to be signed during the visit.



The MEA said Jaishankar will also participate in the ground-breaking ceremony of a solar powered water supply project in Uganda.

He will also address the trade and business community of Uganda and have an interaction with the Indian diaspora.

The MEA said Jaishankar will visit Mozambique from April 13 to 15, adding it will be the first-ever visit by an external affairs minister of India to Mozambique.

During the visit he will call on top leadership and also co-chair the fifth session of the Joint Commission Meeting with Mozambican Foreign Minister Veronica Macamo.

Jaishankar is also expected to meet several other ministers and representatives of the Assembly of Mozambique.

He will also interact with the Indian diaspora based in Mozambique.

"The external affairs minister's visit to Uganda and Mozambique is expected to further strengthen India's strong bilateral relations with these two countries," the MEA said.

Chandrappa named working president of Karnataka Cong

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Days ahead of the Karnataka Assembly polls, the Congress on Sunday appointed B N Chandrappa as working president of its State unit.

Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge has appointed Chandrappa as working president in the Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee, a party statement said.

The Karnataka unit is headed by D K Shivakumar. The appointment of Chandrappa comes after Karnataka Congress working president R Dhruvanarayana passed away last month.

Congress has so far declared 166 candidates for the polls, including one for the Karnataka Sarvodaya Party.

While the party had declared 124 candidates in



its first list, it declared another 42 candidates in the second list. The party's Central Election Committee has met at least four times and held detailed deliberations on all the candidates for the total 224 assembly seats, but is yet to declare 58 more candidates.

The Congress is seeking to wrest power from the BJP in Karnataka, the only southern state where the saffron party is in power. The elections to the assembly will be held on May 10 and results will be declared on May 13.

Her doctor, Dr Gururaj Sangondimath, Senior Consultant & Unit Chief, Minimally Invasive and Spinal

'Politics of convenience': Sibal hits back at dynasty remarks

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha MP Kapil Sibal on Sunday accused the BJP of indulging in "politics of convenience", as he hit back at Prime Minister Narendra Modi over his remarks on dynasty in Telangana and cited past instances of the party aligning with dynastic political families in various states.

Addressing a public meeting in Hyderabad, Prime Minister Modi took a swipe at Bharat Rashttra Samithi chief and Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and urged the state government to not allow any hindrance in the works related to the development.

In a tweet, Sibal said, "PM Takes swipe at KCR: Says corruption and dynasty go hand in hand. Why did BJP join: 1) Punjab (Akalis) 2) Andhra (Jagan) 3) Haryana (Chautalis) 4) J&K (Muftis) 5) Maharashtra (Thackerays)...Not dynasties when BJP joined them!"

"It's called politics of convenience!" the former Union minister said.

In another tweet, Sibal said, "PM: Takes a swipe at KCR, says dynasty and corruption go hand in hand. BJP makes allegations of cor-

Broccoli decreases risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease: Study

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

If you or your kids are not big fans of broccoli, then you must read this study that has found why this edible green plant in the cabbage family is called a superfood and that its consumption decreases the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease and overall mortality. As if this is not enough, a team of researchers has now found that it contains certain molecules that bind to a receptor within mice and help to protect the lining of the small intestine, thereby inhibiting the development of disease.

"We all know that broccoli is good for us, but why? What happens in the body when we eat broccoli?" said Gary Perdew, H. Thomas and Dorothy Willits Hallowell Chair in Agricultural Sciences, Penn State. "Our research is helping to uncover the mechanisms for how broccoli and other foods benefit health in mice and likely humans, as well. It provides strong evidence that cruciferous vegetables, such as broccoli, cabbage, and Brussels sprouts should be part of a normal healthy diet."

According to Perdew, the wall of the small intestine allows beneficial water and nutrients to pass into the body but prevents food particles and bacteria that could cause harm. Certain cells that line the intestine — including ente-

Congress points to Adani Group's alleged 'China links'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Firing a fresh salvo at the government, the Congress on Sunday pointed to Adani Group's alleged China links and asked why the conglomerate is still being permitted to operate ports in India.

Attacking the Centre, Congress general secretary Jairam Ramesh cited a media report which claimed that the government denied security clearance in 2022 to a consortium of APM Terminals Management and Taiwan's Wan Hai Lines after agencies discovered a connection between a Wan Hai director and a Chinese firm.

This blocked the consortium's bid to operate a container handling terminal at the Jawaharlal Nehru Port Authority, Ramesh said in a statement, pointing out that it is a government policy to prevent Chinese firms and entities with Chinese connections from operating ports and terminals in India.



"This raises fresh questions about the Adani Group's China links. As we have repeatedly pointed out in our Hum Adani ke Hain Kaun (HAHK) series of questions to PM Narendra Modi, Chinese citizen Chang Chung-Ling is closely associated with the Adani Group," Ramesh alleged. "His son owns PMC Projects, a firm that has constructed ports, terminals, rail lines, power lines and other infrastructure assets for the Adani Group. The Adani Group and PMC were alleged to be involved in a Rs 5,500 crore power equipment over-invoicing scam by the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence," he claimed.

President Murmu taking sortie on Sukhoi-30 fighter jet has inspired every Indian: Modi

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi hailed President Droupadi Murmu on Sunday after she undertook a sortie on a Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter aircraft, saying she has displayed exceptional leadership time and again.

Murmu took a sortie on the Sukhoi-30 MKI fighter jet at Assam's Tezpur Air Force Station on Saturday.

Tagging a tweet by Murmu on undertaking the sortie, Modi said, "This has inspired every Indian! Rashtrapati Ji has time and again shown exceptional leadership."

Also tagging a tweet on the conclusion of the "Yoga Mahotsav", Modi said with less than 75 days to go for the International Yoga Day, 2023, he would urge people to mark it with great enthusiasm and also practise yoga on a regular basis.

Responding to a tweet on his visit to Tamil Nadu on Saturday, the prime minister said, "As I said in my speech yesterday -- I love the Tamil



language. Tamil culture and the vibe of Chennai."

In another tweet, he said the projects launched on Saturday will have a very positive impact on Tamil Nadu's growth.

Tagging a tweet by former Indian cricketer Laxman Sivaramakrishnan hailing the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) government at the Centre for the inauguration of a new integrated terminal building (phase-1) at the Chennai International Airport, Modi said the new terminal building will significantly contribute to the growth story of Chennai and Tamil Nadu.

Responding to a Twitter user who lauded the Make in India logo, Modi said people across the country's length and breadth, including him, share that sentiment.

Dive feet first, not head, in shallow water, doctors warn swimmers

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

As swimming becomes more prevalent in these warmer months in a swimming pool or natural water ponds, doctors suggest just diving feet first. The water should be 12 to 14 feet in depth. For the head-first jump into shallow water can break the neck cord injury that can leave the diver quadriplegic, warn the doctors.

Take the case of a 22-year-old software engineer in Pune who succumbed to head and spine injuries last Sunday, nearly 10 days after he dived head-

first into a shallow swimming pool. According to police, he had suffered severe head and spinal injuries in the fatal dive into the 3.5-foot-deep swimming pool.

However, Pearl, a 26-year-old girl who also took headfirst jump into a swimming pool and suffered spinal injuries has been lucky enough to not only survive but has also partially recovered from her paralytic state and is making good progress with an advanced rehabilitation program.

Her doctor, Dr Gururaj Sangondimath, Senior Consultant & Unit Chief, Minimally Invasive and Spinal



Deformity Robotic Surgeon, Indian Spinal Injuries Centre (ISIC), Delhi who performed spine surgery says: "Due to a lack of awareness, people dive into shallow waters headfirst

and hit the floor or bed, and break their necks, many of them become completely paralyzed under the neck.

"We perform spinal fusion and fixation surgery that usually takes around one-and-a-half to three hours. The recuperation period can be anywhere between one-and-a-half to six months."

Over the years, ISIC has been witnessing several such cases of spine injuries, especially in the age group of 15-35 years. A lot of people dive in water canals in India, particularly young boys, and become quadriplegic for life for not adhering to the diving norms.

Dr HS Chhabra, Chief of Spine & Rehabilitation Centre at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, notes that younger people are risk-takers. Unfortunately, they are also the main victims of spinal injuries leading to paralysis due to head-first diving into shallow waters in a pool or river.

Shallow water is defined as water with a maximum depth of 1.5 meters. A study by Blanksby finds that 89% of injuries occur in water less than five feet deep. The incidence of spinal cord injury after diving or falling into shallow water ranges from 1.2 to 21%.

Also, if someone dives in a water body for the first time they may not be aware of the depth. People should dive only in water that is deep enough to support their size, weight, and skill level. Finally, one should never dive into the shallow end of the pool and always dive feet first, first time every day so that the exact depth gets known.

The doctors say that the rehabilitation process in such cases is very crucial to regain physical and mental strength so that the patients get back into society.

Dr Gururaj emphasizes creating awareness, especially among younger age groups who are very fond of recreational swimming, and said, "jump leg first" in unknown waters of the pools, ponds, canals, and wells. Otherwise, there will always be a risk of getting injured in the neck. Shallow water diving has to be done very carefully after assessing the depth of the water, he says.

According to the Mayo Clinic, 10% of all spinal cord injuries are caused by sporting and recreational activities. A large proportion of these recreation injuries come from routine swimming activities such as diving in shallow water or slipping and falling outside of the pool.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

China getting exposed

Beijing's role in spreading Covid is so great that even Tedros, whom it made WHO chief, is unable to defend it

When the going gets tough, moles feel the heat. With the suspicion about China's role in spreading the novel coronavirus that caused the Covid pandemic becoming clearer, even World Health Organization chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has to say things he would never have said. Last week, he was forced to announce: "Without full access to the information that China has, ... all hypotheses are on the table." Including that of its lab origin. It needs to be mentioned here that for more than a year since Covid-19 was accepted as a pandemic, the Tedros' WHO and a vicious coterie of 'experts' had made the natural origin of the coronavirus almost a dogma; questioning that was considered as a cardinal sin, and those who dared to challenge the natural origin thesis were treated as outcasts—maligned by the 'experts,' silenced by the liberal establishment, and de-platformed by Big Tech. Needless to say, the dogma suited Beijing. An article by the prominent science journalist Nicholar Wade in the May 5, 2021, edition of the Bulletin of Atomic Scientists demolished the natural origin orthodoxy. When some conservative politicians and commentators in the United States expressed their suspicion about the virus being lab-made, they were derided and denounced by Left-liberals for being—well, you can guess that—'xenophobic,' 'racist,' 'bigoted', etc. Conservatives all over the world are described in such terms, but that's another story.

Tedros, who owes his position to the machinations of Beijing, did his best (or worst) to serve the interests of the Chinese Communist Party. Friendlier analysis of his words and actions in the early weeks of Covid-19 is that he was unpardonably careless; a more critical examination would make him an accomplice of the CCP's. As late as January 14, 2020, his WHO tweeted, "Preliminary investigations conducted by the Chinese authorities have found no clear evidence of human-to-human transmission of the novel #coronavirus (2019-nCoV) identified in #Wuhan, #China." This was despite the fact—a detailed report by the Associated Press later proved that—that scientists at the WHO and elsewhere suspected not just human-to-human transmission of the coronavirus but also its high lethality. But, in spite of the CCP's malicious intentions and Tedros' spinelessness, the truth about the deadly virus is coming out. Maria Van Kerkhove, WHO's technical lead, talked to journalists about the new data on Thursday. The data, she said, "collected in January and February 2020, more than three years ago" should have been shared long ago. Tedros had to say this. Unsurprisingly, this has attracted China's ire; its health officials slammed the WHO for its "offensive and disrespectful" comments. China Center for Disease Control and Prevention Director Shen Hongbing accused the WHO of "attempting to smear China." What Shen and his political masters fail to realise is that their lies are getting exposed. Even their moles are unable to stem the tide.

PICTALK



A tiger at Van Vihar National Park in Bhopal. The Project Tiger has completed 50 years. PTI

Shrinking media freedom is a cause of concern

The freedom of the press is critically important to protect the foundation of democracy, writes Bishal Kumar Saha

India, one of the world's largest democracies, has been witnessing a disturbing trend in recent years – a steady decline in its ranking in the World Freedom Index. The country's rank has deteriorated from 112 in 2016 to 150 in 2022. It is not surprising that India's ranking is deteriorating sharply when the government is making blatant efforts to oppress the media's free voices at any cost. The Indian government's heavy-handed approach towards the media has been a cause of concern for the last few decades. The country has witnessed a series of attacks on journalists. The government has also been accused of using various tactics to suppress dissenting voices, including imposing restrictions on the media, detaining journalists, and shutting down social media platforms. One of the most significant challenges faced by the Indian media today is the threat of defamation lawsuits. The government has used these lawsuits as a means to silence journalists and media outlets critical of its policies. The lawsuits are often



frivolous, and the damages demanded are exorbitant, which leads to self-censorship among journalists and media outlets. In addition, The use of surveillance and counter-terrorism laws, such as NSA (National Security Agency) UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act) and Sedition law as conventional weapons to silence dissent and intimidate those who speak out against the government. Such laws are meant to be used for legitimate national security purposes, and should not be abused to stifle dissent or intimidate the press. The Indian government has also been using its regulatory powers to silence journalists and media outlets critical of the government,

imposing fines, and suspending broadcast licenses. The government has also used its control over state-run media to shape public opinion and suppress dissent. The government's attempts to control the narrative have also extended to social media platforms. In recent years, the government has asked social media platforms to take down content it deems objectionable. The government has also proposed new regulations that give it more power to regulate social media platforms, which has raised concerns about censorship and free speech. The pathetic situation of media freedom in India is a matter of great concern. Free and independent media is essential for the functioning of a healthy democracy. It serves as a watchdog, holding those in power accountable and informing citizens about the issues that affect their lives. Recently, The Supreme Court issued a landmark judgment in support of press freedom and ordered the government to refrain from taking any action that would impede the functioning of Media One or Madhyamam. The

Democratising the Commonwealth

The Commonwealth represents one-third of humanity that needs urgent reform in its leadership to make it democratic



SANJAY DALMIA



The world order has changed since the inception of the Commonwealth. It is the right time to take a fresh look into the working of the commonwealth and there is an urgent need to make a paradigm shift in its total approach towards the member countries. Recently in succeeding his mother, Queen Elizabeth II, King Charles III not only takes over the leadership of the United Kingdom but also that of the Commonwealth. A British dynasty as head of the Commonwealth, a free association of 56 independent self-governing nations, has always been an embarrassment to democratic values and leaders. In today's democratic world, hereditary leadership has no place in any organization. A monarch from the United Kingdom can't be the head of the Commonwealth. As a confederation of states based on shared history and values, the Commonwealth represents one-third of humanity. All members share one common history which is the illegal occupation by Britain. Trying to delineate history from the Commonwealth is impossible. There is no organization like it when it comes to historical baggage. Due to its colonial heritage, it has always suffered from an imperial hangover which impedes its reformation.

The Commonwealth represents one-third of humanity that needs urgent reform in its leadership like Group 20 (G-20) which runs under the leadership

of a rotating Presidency. The leadership of the Commonwealth should also be chosen under the leadership of a rotating Presidency of all member countries by a principle of rotation among its members in the appointment of its leader during the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM). Rotation-based leadership is characterised by equality. This means that every member of the Commonwealth has the same rights with the same hierarchical level; there is no place for a King. It is also recommended that the office of the Commonwealth also operates from the Commonwealth's leader country till the period the country is in a leadership position. There is a growing desire among the members of the Commonwealth to be free of any imperial aura associated with the British royal family that indicates the organisation's colonial origins as the British crown is the symbol of monarchy that has a very bloody history. Hereditary leadership cannot be tolerated by republic members who hold democratic values. And if the commonwealth doesn't agree with the reform of Democratic leadership then members have the right to leave this autocratic organization. The subject of whether the leader of the organisation



DEVELOPING A POSITIVE COMMONWEALTH AND UPDATING ITS MISSION TO ALLOW ITS MEMBERS TO FLOURISH AS EQUAL PARTNERS IN TODAY'S ENVIRONMENT IS A TALL ORDER THAT WILL REQUIRE NEW LEADERSHIP

should be a natural leader in the contemporary democratic world has been raised again with Prince Charles' succession as head of the Commonwealth. In addition, the Chagos Archipelago territorial issue has favoured Mauritius and disadvantaged Britain. Britain's actions are not in the best interests of its leadership in a post-Brexit context because the Commonwealth is made up of numerous small island states, and the handling of Windrush immigrants has raised concerns between Britain and the 12 Caribbean countries. The Commonwealth must set boundaries between its colonial past and its present and adopt a new perspective. It would be nothing less than a colonial artefact if the smaller states are unable to relate to the ideology and values of the organisation. The Commonwealth needs to be redesigned, and more significantly, its power base needs to be decentred from London. The organisation can capitalise on a variety of shared risks and opportunities in the absence of a direct common threat without having to resort to its dismal past. Fostering an effective alliance based on equality and sovereignty that can deliver an ambitious agenda for its members requires fresh and proactive leadership. Therefore, we advocate rotating leadership

instead of automatic succession as in the past, but what's more important than the nominal figurehead of the Commonwealth is its actual leadership, and the UK is no less aligned on this issue. Today, the UK's political leaders lack both the willingness and the capacity to lead the Commonwealth, as they are far removed from their historic power positions. Developing a positive Commonwealth and updating its mission to allow its members to flourish as equal partners in today's environment is a tall order that will require new leadership. In the world of today, India is a growing force that will have a profound impact on how the world looks in the future. For more than a century, India was the jewel in the Crown of Britain's global colonial empire. The idea of the jewel becoming the bearer of the crown may be called for if the nobler of the many diverse values of old are to continue. As a strong and able nation, India is capable of leading if properly supported and guided. Reshaping the Commonwealth as a force for global progress is an opportunity it should not miss given its ambition to play a broader role in world affairs. (The writer is the Chairman of the Dalmia Group of Companies. Views expressed are personal)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

OPPOSITION UNITY

Sir — A joint platform of Opposition parties to fight the dominant BJP in the 2024 elections was always a chimera. In the past few years, many Opposition leaders have talked about unity and challenging the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) with a formidable force, but the repeated calls for this unity were not visible on the ground with one party or another distancing itself over self-protection and attacking Modi personally and range of issues. Oppositions may have forgotten that Indians are definitely looking for an alternative to BJP after its failure on many fronts. At last, the golden opportunities availed, when Rahul Gandhi was convicted and disqualified, even those parties who openly dismiss Congress, such as the Trinamool Congress (TMC), Bharat Rashtra Samithi (BRS) and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) rallied behind Congress and participated in the protests. For the first time in years, India's splintered Opposition is sinking its differences (but NCP chief Sharad Pawar started his divergent views on Adani) to take on Prime Minister (PM) Narendra Modi, which could extend to a substantial challenge in national elections due in 2024. The opposition should remember that people already tested what PM Modi is after hearing his unbridled promises and incongruent deliveries for almost nine years in power. And still, he continues to enjoy popular public support. They need to tell what different offers they have if voted to power. Their stand on the Old Pension Scheme is a definite plus. Hope for the country's sake the Opposition must unite to give a befitting fight against the Modi government. Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

Work-Life Balance



It refers to "Work-Life balance is the need of the hour". Work-Life balance is indeed very important for multiple reasons and it has become all the more critical since the pandemic hit us. It is a given fact that any company wants its employees to be productive, irrespective of the number

of hours they spend at work, and an imbalance between work and life only results in productivity going down. During the pandemic work from home became a norm in many sectors, but that also adversely impacted employees as employees were expected to be on the call and present PPTs even at late hours of the day. So it will not be an exaggeration to say that the human resources department has a tough task to ensure that it keeps employees in better shape so that they help produce desired results for Indian Inc. As rightly mentioned in the article that one size does not fit all, hence HR will have to find what each individual seeks in terms of flexibility, and what are their trigger points ultimately they will have to think beyond the 9 to 5 routine. Bal Govind | Noida

against the will of the government is becoming treason. A case was filed against several students for watching the BBC documentary on the campus of Delhi University. Now over 50 academicians have urged Delhi University to roll back punishment given to students for an on-campus screening of a BBC documentary on Narendra Modi and the Gujarat riots, reminding the century-old institution that the government has to defend it is not his job. We, the teachers and administrators, are not here to control their views or censor their sources of information. While exercising this right all of us should follow only one condition: it should not promote hatred and violence. Will this appeal have any effect on the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Delhi Police? Jang Bahadur Singh | Jamshedpur

POLITICAL MUSICAL CHAIRS
Sir — Intriguingly, the emergence of fault lines between political leaders and their respective party leaderships, leading to the severance of their ties, is commonplace in today's sort of politics. Yet, bizarre are the pleas these disgruntled leaders rely upon while leaving a party—for instance, an atmosphere of suffocation, indifference of the leadership and myriad other excuses, contributing to these refrains. Presently, it is Congress to have for long been beset with this phenomenon. Congress' former stalwart Ghulam Nabi Azad, who parted ways with the party and announced his own Democratic Progressive Azad Party last year, has recently criticised former Congress chief, Rahul Gandhi. Joytiraditya Scindia, once a right hand man of Rahul Gandhi and now a Union Minister in the BJP-ruled Centre, has also picked holes in Mr Gandhi recently and to rub it in, Andhra Pradesh ex-CM Kiran Kumar Reddy also switched his loyalty to the BJP accusing Congress high command of arrogance. A Congress stalwart and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gahlot has, however, taken strong exception to Mr Gandhi's bashing by his former enemies. However, the public perception has it that this happens when the deserters see the greener pastures on the other side of the fence. Azhar A Khan | Rampur

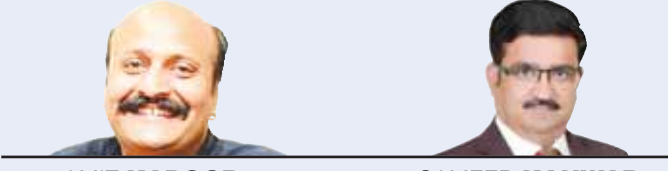
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FIRST COLUMN

DIGITAL HEALTH FOR THE WORLD

India's G20 Presidency can take digital health solutions across the globe



AMIT KAPOOR

SAMEER KANWAR

Worldwide, countries are accelerating efforts toward universal health coverage. Yet, according to the World Health Organization, 30% of the world's population is still unable to access essential health services. Additionally, 930 million people are at risk of falling into poverty due to out-of-pocket health expenditures of 10% or more of their household budget.

Further, unregulated and fragmented healthcare delivery systems, poor administrative coordination, insufficient human resources, and lack of financial support continue to hinder progress toward universal health coverage. Digital health solutions can address most of these challenges if they are integrated into the overall health system strengthening approach for sustainability and impact. Technology can be a great enabler in facilitating an equitable and affordable healthcare system that reaches the last mile.

In 2022, the global digital health market size was valued at US\$211.0 billion. It is projected to grow at a compound annual growth rate of 18.6% from 2023 to 2030. India is a part of this growth story — at an event late last year, the Union Minister of State, Prime Minister's Office, stated that India should see an 80% increase in investments in digital health in the next five years. But a robust need-gap analysis and a comprehensive understanding of its applicability are critical to making digital health sustainable and scalable.



To that end, a global/multi-country Digital Health Collaborative could galvanize efforts and accelerate the adoption and mainstreaming of digital health. There are four potential areas that the collaborative can pursue. First, it can support member countries to identify gaps and existing technology platforms that can be leveraged for healthcare. By providing technical support and guidance, it can be developed to facilitate inter- and intra-country expansion.

Second, a one-size-fits-all approach will not work, as countries have varying resources and challenges. Building lean, mean, and agile technology solutions that allow flexibility, localisation, and customisation is important. Digital Public Goods can play a pivotal role here, with the caveat that issues such as data localisation and country sovereignty should be duly acknowledged and addressed.

Third, the Collaborative needs to focus on developing successful public-private partnerships, given their proven success in addressing healthcare challenges at scale. And finally, data exchange on health is currently, minimal, largely because of the lack of a global regulatory framework. Developing a robust, efficient, and acceptable regulatory framework can have positive long-term implications in solving healthcare challenges. The Collaborative can become an advocate for the safe and regulated sharing of health data.

India's G20 Presidency offers an opportunity to initiate thought leadership on the Collaborative. India can leverage its past experiences—it has chaired the Global Digital Health Partnership in 2019, moved the Digital Health Resolution in the 71st World Health Assembly which was globally endorsed in 2018, and supported the development of the WHO Digital Health Strategy 2020-2025. India has also successfully demonstrated its ability to develop and scale digital public infrastructure like Aadhaar and UPI, among others, which are the backbone of digital health. Digital health initiatives such as eSanjeevani, Co-WIN, Aarogya Setu, and the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission could only be scaled up due to the digital public infrastructure in place. The G20 is well positioned to create the platform for a Digital Health Collaborative as a concrete step towards making healthcare affordable and accessible for all.

(Amit Kapoor is Chair of the Institute for Competitiveness and Faculty at Stanford University. Sameer Kanwar is Director of Digital Health, India & South Asia, PATH)

Karnataka elections: A precursor to 2024

The BJP must do well in the Karnataka polls to ensure its return to power in the 2024 general elections



KS TOMAR

While riding high on the victory crest in three northeast states, the Bharatiya Janata Party is all set to make its southward journey. It will rely on the charisma of Narendra Modi. But it has to work hard to make the BJP coalition government look good for its lackluster performance. Besides, it will have to tackle several burning issues like anti-incumbency factors, high inflation, and unemployment.

In this backdrop, the BJP has put the prestige of prime minister Narendra Modi and B.S. Yeddyurappa, the octogenarian leader at stake. An outcome of Karnataka polls will have a direct bearing on the ensuing three assembly elections in Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Chhattisgarh besides impacting the 2024 parliamentary elections.

BJP is banking on Modi's vote-catching capability and the influence of former CM, Yeddyurappa who has been reined in by nominating him as a member of the parliamentary board and central election committee though he has been humiliated in the past. He was twice divested of his CM's chair. PM Modi tried to placate Yeddyurappa when he described him as one of the most experienced leaders who has devoted his life to the welfare of farmers and poor people.

Yeddyurappa's community, the Lingayat constitutes 17% of Karnataka's population, mostly in northern areas. Therefore, a belated attempt to woo the community has been made by BJP by appointing this stalwart who will be a star campaigner but not a CM candidate. BJP will have to focus on Southern Karnataka (Mysore region) as it has done well in other regions and improved significantly in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. But the saffron party is organizationally very strong and has no dearth of resources which is strengthened by RSS machinery. BJP's support of the majority of Lingayat 'MUTTS' and 'Love Jihad' agenda, mobilization of Hindu vote bank through polarization etc. Would be part of its winning strategy.

It is an undeniable fact that BJP has been a rising force in central, western and northern states of India during the post-Mandir era. BJP formed a government in Karnataka in 2008 and 2018 but with the help of partners hence it is vying to emerge independently in Karnataka which may be replicated in Maharashtra also in the future. RSS has been working in coastal Karnataka and BJP got a fillip to expand its footprints in other regions except for southern Karnataka (Mysore region) which needs to be improved as it is the stronghold of JD(S) and Congress.

BJP improved its performance in Karnataka in the Lok Sabha polls in 2019. It got 40 per cent of the votes which was much more than in the assembly polls held in 2018. Karnataka has a 224-member assembly spanning six regions - Bengaluru, Central, Coastal, Hyderabad-Karnataka, Mumbai-Karnataka and Southern Karnataka. BJP has been comfortable in coastal Karnataka and polled 51% votes in 2018 while the statewide vote was 36%. In central Karnataka, the BJP won 24 out of 35 seats and got 43 per cent votes with a strike rate of 70%. However, it needs to deliver better in Southern Karnataka to win more seats.

In the hope of creating pro-Hindu sentiments, the BJP-Bomai government scrapped the 4% quota of Muslims who



BJP IMPROVED ITS PERFORMANCE IN KARNATAKA IN THE LOK SABHA POLLS IN 2019. IT GOT 40 PER CENT OF THE VOTES WHICH WAS MORE THAN ITS VOTE SHARE IN THE ASSEMBLY POLLS HELD IN 2018

(Writer is a political analyst and senior journalist based in Shimla)



will be moved to the 10% weaker section (EWS) category hence now they will have to compete with Brahmins, Mudaliyars, Jains, Vysyas and others. It may impact existing EWS castes and adversely affect Muslims' interests. Experts say that it may also hurt those castes in the Banjara Community who have been hit due to this new caste rejig hence they have been lying dormant so far. Analysts say that the Bomai government raised the quota for SCs from 15% to 17% and STs from 5% to 7% in October 2022 to improve its chances based on the social engineering formula. Then, another attempt was made recently when it withdrew the 4% Muslim quota. This would be shared between the powerful Lingayat and Vokkaliga communities which enjoyed five per cent and four per cent sub quotas respectively within the OBC segment.

How did Lingayat move away from Congress?

It is the Yeddyurappa phenomenon that brought a sea change to the entire caste structure in Karnataka. This benefited the BJP in a big way. Rajeev Gandhi's ruthless action of sacking the Veerendra Patil government proved disastrous for Congress which was reduced to 36 seats from 179 seats in 1994 as the Lingayat community moved away from the party. BJP increased its vote percentage from 4% to 17% which was primarily due to the Lingayat community and party made Yeddyurappa face but an identical blunder was committed by BJP's high command which removed him from chief minister's post over corruption. He formed his party Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) and damaged BJP in several constituencies in 2013 as the vote split enabled BJP to win 40 seats compared to 110 in 2008.

BJP's share dipped from 33.86% to 19.95% and Yeddyurappa's party cornered 9.8%. Now the BJP trio composed of Modi-Shah-Nadda has reigned in Lingayat supremo Yeddyurappa and expects to change the dynamics of Karnataka assembly elections.

Bomai-BJP government's 'controversial image' has given hope to Congress to register its victory after losing three eastern states - Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland which may prove a 'Game Changer' for the party at the central level also. But if BJP wins against all odds in the first southern state, it will be encouraged as it will be able to add to its aggressive posture which will help it in state elections and 2024. BJP won 104 seats in the house of 224 in the 2018 assembly elections in Karnataka and toppled the Congress-Janata Dal (secular) coalition in June 2020 barely after 15 months as 16 MLAs of the ruling alliance resigned which brought Bomai to the helm of affairs in the state.

Congress is seriously eyeing Karnataka

The Congress Think Tank is optimistic that it will be able to turn the tables on BJP. This is primarily due to several factors which include skyrocketing prices of essential commodities, unemployment, weakening of the democratic setup, misuse of investigating agencies, atrocities against women, etc. Second, unlike in the past, the Congress general secretary in charge of Karnataka polls, Randeep Surjewala and his team had been deployed by high command well on time. They have been working hard and succeeded in browbeating BJP by releasing the first list of 124 candidates on March 24 which was an unbelievable development. Third, Congress has described its two

guarantees - Grih Jyoti - 200 units of electricity free for every household and Grih Laxmi - Rs 2,000 cash transfer every month to every household as a genuine promise to give relief to these two deserving sections of society.

Fourth, Congress is confident about the sympathy generated by Rahul Gandhi's disqualification from Lok Sabha and other 'excesses' committed by the NDA government. To derive political mileage, Rahul kickstarted the campaign from Kolar in Karnataka on April 5. This is the same place where he delivered a speech that led to his two-year conviction by the Surat court. Fifth, Congress expects the impact of Rahul's Bharat Jodo Yatra as he raised all issues relating to every section of society including common people, youths, women etc.

Finally, the Congress, however, will have to sort out the issues of infighting in the organization. This will include a tussle for the CM's post between Siddaramaiah, the opposition leader and Shiv Kumar. It will have to counter the BJP's communal agenda, caste equations and distribution of tickets.

The Aam Aadmi Party contested 29 seats in 2018 and lost all of its deposits. Now AAP may act as a 'vote cutter' in Karnataka if the Delhi CM fields candidates in Bangalore and around. On the other hand, JD(S) and Congress combined took the lead over BJP when the first list was announced which has given a head start to those who got tickets.

Experts believe that it is do or die for BJP and Congress both as final results will impact the ensuing three state assembly polls and parliamentary polls in 2024. As the first semifinal, Karnataka assumes a lot of importance and relevance from a national perspective.

Advantages of genome sequencing in healthcare

Genome sequencing customises diagnostic procedures for diseases at a very nascent stage and provides personalised treatment

In 1990, The Human Genome Project was started which took 13 years for sequencing 20,000 genes and to understand the relationship between the genes and their work together. The idea behind genome sequencing is customizing diagnostic procedures for diseases at a very nascent stage and providing a personalized treatment and management option for individuals which goes against the "one size fits all" theory.

DNA Sequencing done at an affordable cost and in measured time can help in early diagnosis and targeted treatment of diseases. Genetic risks of developing diseases well before the actual symptoms appear can be detected especially for the young population to manage inherited diseases at



ADRITA BANERJEE

the right time. It can also guide us for specific lifestyle changes that can prevent or prolong the appearance of certain diseases.

During the recent Pandemic that the world was struggling to cope with, genome sequencing enhanced our insight into the mutation of the SARS-CoV2 virus affecting its transmissibility and virulence. This has helped in rapid healthcare decisions and the development of diagnostic tests. This has further been the backbone to fight the COVID-19 crisis.

Taking this reactive to proactive step forward, Genomic sequencing can now help to live up to the idea of "Prevention is better than Cure". With the advent of Preventive Genomics, a growing popula-



tion can now take steps to monitor their health through Biohacking. This helps in personalized efforts of blood tests, diet, exercise and choosing a healthy lifestyle much before the appearance of the disease which in turn reduces the odds of diseases and enhances

longevity.

According to the American Heart Association, 80 per cent of cardiovascular diseases are preventable. Diabetes can be prevented in 60 per cent of cases. The World Health Organization has projected that the total annual number of deaths from NCDs will increase to 55 million by 2023. In India 6.3 million deaths have been attributed to NCDs in 2017. There were more than 73 million cases of Diabetes in India in 2017, the highest in any country across the World. The prevalence of Diabetes is 8.8% in the age group of 20-70 years. NCDs also occupy 5-10 per cent of the GDP and are posing an economic burden to growth and development.

Several large studies such

as PESA (Progression of Sub-clinical Atherosclerosis) using multimodalities have indicated almost 50 per cent of individuals with normal LDL levels have Subclinical Atherosclerosis. As this is undetected at an early stage, individuals present either with Angina caused by reduced blood flow to the heart or with a Heart Attack or Sudden cardiac death. Indians are known to have the highest coronary artery disease rates.

The Risk of having Metabolic Diseases like Diabetes, Hypertension, Dyslipidemia, and Morbid Obesity almost increases by 4 times as we move from the age group 18-25 years to 26-35 years and further by 3 times as we move from 26-35 years to the age group of 36-45 years.

This gives us an insight towards the fact that the economic growth of the country is dependent on the above age groups which can be severely impacted by non-communicable diseases if not detected early and managed before complications begin to set in.

The IIT-Bombay and Godrej Memorial Hospital have launched the first-of-its-kind Comprehensive Genome sequence-based Personalized Health Plan. The plan is based on whole Exome analysis which includes 7000+ genes aided with 58 pathological parameters to unravel the underlying predisposition of an individual to various diseases in their lifetime. Curated datasets obtained from various sources such as GWAS, OMIM, ClinVar, ACMG,

DisGeNET, UniProt, KEGG, and ClinGen have been used for the analyses.

This takes the detection and treatment to the next level. Personalized Health Reports take into consideration the genetic makeup of the individual to highlight the risks of NCDs and Inherited diseases. Besides, it helps in the early detection of predisposed diseases for better management and prognosis. Another positive impact is motivating Holistic lifestyle changes in alignment with the genetic profile of the person for a better quality of life. This could be categorized as the best use of Genome sequencing towards curating a disease-free tomorrow for the generations to come, breaking the shackles of Conventional Healthcare.

RINKU SEALS IMPOSSIBLE WIN FOR KKR

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

The gargantuan Narendra Modi Stadium proved to be too small and an asking rate of 29 too less for Kolkata Knight Riders' Rinku Singh, who hammered five consecutive sixes to seal a miraculous three-wicket win over Gujarat Titans in the IPL here on Sunday.

Just when it seemed everything was lost for KKR after wily Afghanistan spinner and stand-in captain Rashid Khan had taken a hat-trick in the 17th over to reduce KKR to 155/7, Rinku (48 not out off 21 balls) did the Houdini Act to eke out one of the most memorable wins in the history of the Indian Premier League.

KKR needed 29 runs in the final over to attain the winning target of 205. Umesh Yadav took a single to give the strike to Rinku, who looked like a genius with the bat.

It seemed like he was waving a magic wand, which could fetch him a maximum at his beck and call. With 28 needed off the last five balls, Rinku took the aerial route on all five deliveries to conjure up magic hardly ever seen before in an IPL game.

Even as a wave of jubilation spread in the KKR camp, the Titans dugout went silent.

Venkatesh Iyer was the other hero for KKR on the day. Before Rinku unleashed his full fury to silence the crowd and leave the Titans fielders looking skyward, the 28-year-old Madhya Pradesh batter made a real 'impact' and brought KKR to the doorstep of victory with a smashing 84 off 40 deliveries, as the two-time IPL champions looked set to chase down the 200-plus target.

The left-handed batter's 100-run partnership with captain Nitish Rana (45 off 29 balls) was the cornerstone of KKR's massive fight-back and came days after both the batters had failed in their match against Royal Challengers Bangalore at the Eden Gardens on April 6.

Putting the disappointment of scoring just three runs in the previous game on the back-burner, Iyer — who came in as an 'Impact Player' for Suyash Sharma — took the stadium by storm, unleashing eight fours and five sixes, leaving the Titans baffled.

Iyer came to the crease at fall of Afghanistan opener Rahmanullah Gurbaz, who was picked ahead of England opener Jason Roy, and he regaled the packed stadium with his lusty hitting.

Iyer's dismissal in the 16th over, following an Alzarri Joseph yorker that cramped him for



space and he ended up hitting it straight to Gill at long on, sent a wave of jubilation in the Titans camp.

Rashid, who was leading the team in the absence of an unwell Hardik Pandya, then weaved magic in the 17th over, dismissing the dangerous West Indian middle-order batter Andre Russell, Sunil Narine and Shardul Thakur off the first three deliveries of his last over to virtually seal the win. But he had no inkling about Rinku's plans. And when it unfolded, it spelt doom for the Titans.

Earlier, a captivating batting display from Gujarat Titans Vijay Shankar, a fine half-century from young top-order batter Sai Sudharsan saw the defending champions put on a formidable total on the board.

Sudharsan, who had scored an unbeaten 62 against Delhi Capitals in the previous match, struck 53 off 38 balls, studded with three boundaries and two maximums, while Shankar took just 24 balls to score an unbeaten 63, embellished with four boundaries and five sixes, as the Titans made hay.

Young Shubman Gill too came to the party, scoring a feisty 39 and sharing a 67-run partnership with Sudharsan before he was dismissed by West Indian spinner Sunil Narine.

The maturity Gill and Sudharsan displayed after opener Wriddhiman Saha had departed early, dismissed by Narine for just 17 runs (17 balls), helped the team overcome the early setback and take the total to 100 runs without losing any further wicket.

The pair's half-century stand laid the foundation and by the time Gill departed, holding out a length delivery from Narine at long-on in the 12th over, he had put the Titans well on course for a big total.

The left-handed Sudharsan flourished from the moment he arrived at the crease at the fall of Saha. He kept picking up handy runs, including a six, as the pair kept the scoreboard ticking.

The best part about the partnership was that the pair kept rotating the strike, taking singles at the first opportunity to keep the opposition on tenterhooks.

Gill's dismissal, which came as a big blow, brought in Abhinav Manohar, who plundered three consecutive boundaries off Umesh Yadav in the 13th over. But his cameo 14-run innings off just eight deliveries was brought to an end by Delhi teenager Suyash Sharma, whose googly ripped through the gap between the bat and pad to dismiss the batter.

Tripathi, Markande help SRH earn 1st win of IPL 2023

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

Sunrisers Hyderabad produced a clinical performance to register a convincing eight-wicket victory over Punjab Kings and open their account in the ongoing Indian Premier League here on Sunday.

With SRH chasing 144 after spinner Mayank Markande's (4/15) exploits with ball, Rahul Tripathi sizzled with an unbeaten 48-ball 74 to help his side complete the task in 17.1 overs.

Skipper Aiden Markram remained not out on 37 off 21 balls, and their efforts ensured that Shikhar Dhawan's 66-ball 99 not out, which lifted Punjab Kings to 143 for nine, went in vain.

Markande did the star turn with figures of 4 for 15 to leave Punjab Kings reeling at 88 for nine in the 15th over. Dhawan hit 12 fours and five sixes. When their turn to bat came, SRH were slow to start with and reached 34 for one at the end of the six powerplay overs.

Having being hit for six by Tripathi, leg-spinner Rahul Chahar came back to grab the big wicket of Mayank Agarwal for a 20-ball 21, in the ninth over. Tripathi then struck two successive fours off Chahar to help SRH cross 50, before hitting left-arm spinner Harpreet Brar for three boundaries on the trot to keep his team in the contest.

On a pitch where almost all the batters struggled, with the exception of Shikhar Dhawan, Tripathi managed to shine and brought up his half-century in 35 balls with a six off Mohit Rahee.

That was followed by the duo of Tripathi and skipper Aiden Markram bringing up the fifty partnership at the start of the 14th over, with SRH requiring 49 runs in 42 balls.

Tripathi and Markram then almost sealed the issue in their team's favour by striking Rahee for 21 runs, bringing the equation down to 26 runs in the last five overs.



Earlier, even as Punjab Kings lost wickets at regular intervals, Dhawan showed his teammates how to do it with his incredible knock.

Asked to bat first, Punjab Kings endured a disastrous start as they lost Prabhshimran Singh in the very first ball of the match, trapped in front of the wicket by veteran India seamer Bhuvneshwar Kumar.

The ball hit him above the knee roll but Prabhshimran decided to walk back without asking for a review, leaving Punjab at none for one.

Skipper Shikhar Dhawan played Bhuvneshwar towards the third man region for the innings first boundary.

However, Dhawan again watched from the non-striker's end as Matthew Short (1) was dismissed lbw by South African left-arm pacer Marco Jansen on the second delivery of the

match's second over at the Rajiv Gandhi International Stadium.

The ball landed on a good length and swung in before hitting Short's pads. Unlike Prabhshimran, Short consulted his skipper before deciding to come back into the dugout, leaving Punjab Kings in a spot of bother at 10 for two in the second over. Next ball, and another swinging delivery struck wicketkeeper-batter Jitesh Sharma (4) on the pads, and a Jansen's loud shout for an lbw was upheld by the umpire. DRS was promptly taken and the ball-tracking technology showed it was going well down the leg-side, leading to the decision being overturned and giving some relief to PBKS.

Dhawan found two fours off his Indian team colleague Bhuvneshwar, before Jansen returned to send back Jitesh Sharma, who failed to clear SRH skipper Aiden Markram at mid-off.

Lord Rinku saved the day: Venkatesh

PTI ■ AHMEDABAD

Rinku Singh's stunning final over onslaught which handed Kolkata Knight Riders an unlikely win against Gujarat Titans on Sunday earned him a new moniker "lord" from his teammate Venkatesh Iyer, who himself slammed a 40-ball 83.

"It was a nail-biting finish, extremely happy that we won the game. Our coach has always said that we can score 200 on any given day. Honestly, the wicket was quite good to bat. When the target is 200, you can't have silent overs. I was just trying to execute my plans," Iyer said after the match.

"Me and Nitish had a good partnership. Unfortunately, somewhere we lost our way but Lord Rinku saved the day. To be honest, we still believed that we could win. This teaches us that we should never give up until the last ball."

Iyer said the victory will be a "great morale-booster" for the team.

"We want to make winning a habit. I haven't been in great form. Tonight, I went out and played as late as possible. The bowlers were quick and I tried to use their pace, and that worked to my advantage," said



Iyer, talking about his 55-ball 100-run stand with KKR skipper Nitish Rana (45) for the third wicket.

Gujarat Titans' stand-in skipper Rashid also praised Rinku for playing an outstanding innings when all odds were stacked against his side.

Rinku came in when KKR needed 56 off 30 balls, but Rashid's hat-trick almost sealed the game in the favour of Gujarat Titans.

However, the left-handed batter did not give up, hitting five sixes off as many balls from Yash Dayal in the final over after hitting Josh Little for a six and a four in the final two deliveries of the penultimate over.

"It's a tough game for us, especially for me as a captain. You need 30 plus in the last over, the same thing happened for us last year when we won. We will learn from it, more importantly a good game of cricket and the fans would have loved it. It was more about what he is most comfortable with, to trust his (Yash Dayal) plans," Rashid said.

"Rinku played unbelievable shots and credit goes to him for the way he played and for the way he finished. Keep it simple, hit the right area consistently and that's what T20 is all about."

RCB aim to bounce back against LSG

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Royal Challengers Bangalore will be expecting more runs from its batters and discipline in death overs bowling when they take on the high-flying Lucknow Super Giants in the IPL here on Monday.

RCB come into the match after a demoralising 81-run defeat against Kolkata Knight Riders and would be eager to return to winning ways at the M.Chinnaswamy Stadium.

It's early days in the tournament but RCB's death bowling has been a major concern for the team.

RCB looked on course to register their second win of the season but the script went awry after the 12th over. They had the game in the palm of their hands, reducing the opposition to 89 for 5 before KKR went on to post 204/7.

Against Mumbai also they went for over 13 runs in the last five overs. Death overs specialist Harshal Patel and Mohammed Siraj, who had done well with the new ball, have struggled at the back end.

The absence of Wanindu Hasaranga, who is on national duty, and Josh Hazlewood, who is recovering from an Achilles heel injury, has only amplified RCB's death bowling woes.



Both bowlers are expected to link up with team this week. But until then, South African medium pacer Wayne Parnell who has come in a replacement for Reece Topley can help with the ball at the back end of the innings.

RCB bat deep. Openers Virat Kohli and du Plessis did the job in the win against Mumbai but against KKR, the entire line up was done in by spin.

They would be wary against the Lucknow spinners, who come into the game on the back of their stellar display in the five-wicket win over Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday.

Young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi has continued to impress, taking six wickets, while veteran leggie Amit Mishra and Krunal Pandya have also played impactful roles.

In the pace department, England quick and the tournament joint leading wicket taker Mark Wood was down with flu and missed the previous game alongside medium pacer Avesh Khan, who injured himself. It is to be seen if the two are available against RCB.

Lucknow, who have won two and lost one game, would hope their batters are more consistent. While Kyle Mayers has been outstanding, skipper KL Rahul and all-rounder Marcus Stoinis' form is a concern.

Senior guys need to step up starting with me: Rohit

IANIS ■ MUMBAI

After a crushing seven-wicket loss against Chennai Super Kings in an IPL 2023 match, Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma said that the senior guys in the team starting with himself need to step up as they are looking to get some momentum in the league.

It was the second consecutive loss for Mumbai Indians as they had earlier lost to RCB in their campaign opener.

"The senior guys need to step up starting with me. We know the nature of IPL, when the tournament starts we need to get some momentum and when you don't it is tough. Just two games and all is not lost still. If you win, you can win a few on the trot and when you lose it is hard to come out of that momentum. Hopefully things start to change. Things we speak in the changeroom have not worked in the middle," said Rohit.

Chahar to undergo scans, Stokes suffers toe injury

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Chennai Super Kings and India seamer Deepak Chahar will undergo scans after suffering a hamstring injury he sustained during their Indian Premier League match here on Saturday night against Mumbai Indians.

Chahar could bowl only one over at the start of the contest here at the Wankhede Stadium and hobbled off the field after receiving initial treatment, and did not return to take the field for CSK who sauntered to a seven-wicket victory.

The 30-year-old right-arm seamer will now undergo scans on his left hamstring to determine the extent of the injury that he suffered and is expected to be out for a while.

Chahar has had a long injury layoff and returned to top-flight action only in this IPL, struggling in the first two games before suffering a fresh hamstring injury on his left leg.

"Chahar will undergo scans to identify the extent of the injury once the team returns to Chennai," said CSK in a statement on Sunday.

Ben Stokes, who featured in the first two games for CSK but missed the clash against Mumbai Indians on Saturday, is said to have injured his toe, at a time when he is also dealing with a troubled left knee which has prevented him from bowling full tilt in this IPL.

The English all-rounder,

on whom CSK spent Rs 16.5 crore in the auction in December, has so far bowled only one over — against Lucknow Super Giants — and looked far from his best.

"Chennai Super Kings cricketer Ben Stokes is nursing a minor toe injury which forced him out of the match against Mumbai Indians. Stokes played Chennai Super Kings' first two matches of IPL 2023 before injuring his toe during training ahead of the third game, which the Super Kings won by seven wickets," the release said.

The franchise added, "The Chennai Super Kings medical staff are closely monitoring both the players and will provide all support necessary for their recovery."



"I'll never give up, want to play a Test at Wankhede: Rahane

I'll never give up, want to play a Test at Wankhede: Rahane

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Ajinkya Rahane never gives up and after surprising the cricketing world with the fastest fifty of IPL 2023 at the Wankhede Stadium, the out of favour India batter yearns to play a Test match at his home ground.

On CSK debut, Rahane smashed seven fours and three sixes in his 61 from just 27 balls and the fastest fifty of the season came off just 19 balls.

"I always enjoy playing at Wankhede. I have never played a Test here. I would want to play a Test here," said Rahane, who led India to a famous Test series win in Australia in 2021.

Rahane was not supposed to start the game but an injury to Moeen Ali gave him an opportunity.



"There is still a long way to go. Today, I was not sure about my place in the eleven. I got to know just before the toss, for me it is about playing one game at a time and staying in the moment," Rahane told the media on Saturday night.

"Anything can happen. Today, I was not sure about my game. For me, I will never give up. It is about playing with enjoyment and passion.

"Whatever format I play, it is about giving my best every time, rather than thinking about the future, (things) which is not in my hand, not in my control, for me it's all about giving my best every time and be as positive as possible and whenever I get an opportunity I should be ready for that," Rahane said.