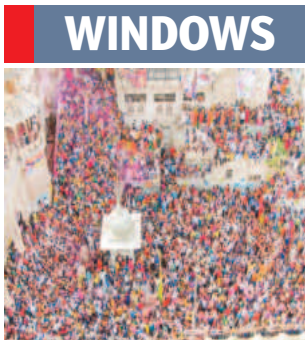




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Devotees during 'Lathmar Holi' celebrations, at Barsana in Mathura district on Tuesday

Extradition of Mumbai terror attack accused

WASHINGTON: The Biden administration has urged a federal court in Los Angeles to certify India's request to extradite fugitive Pakistani-origin Canadian businessman Tahawwur Rana, sought for his involvement in the 2008 Mumbai terror attack, saying he meets all the criteria required for the handover. US District Court Judge in Los Angeles Jacqueline Chooljian has scheduled the extradition hearing for April 22. Assistant US Attorney John J Lulejian, in his submission before a federal US court in Los Angeles, California, said Rana, 59, meets all the criteria to be extradited to India for his trial in the Mumbai terrorist attack. On February 4, Rana's attorney had opposed his extradition. Rana, a childhood friend of David Coleman Headley, was rearrested on June 10 in Los Angeles on an extradition request by India for his involvement in the Mumbai terror attack in which 166 people, including six Americans, were killed.

10 killed in US store shooting

DENVER: At least 10 people, including a police officer, were killed when a gunman opened fire at a grocery store in the US state of Colorado, authorities said, adding that a suspect was in custody. The shooting took place on Monday at the King Soopers grocery store in the city of Boulder. Addressing a press conference, Boulder Police chief Maris Herold said that the officer, identified as 51-year-old Eric Talley, was one of the first responders at the scene, dpa news reported. She called his actions "heroic". Herold said that police began receiving calls about shots fired and a call about a person with a "patrol rifle" at around 2.30 pm. Talley was one of the first officers at the scene and was "fatally shot." Police said that the names of the victims would not be released until their families are notified. The White House confirmed that President Joe Biden has been briefed about the carnage.



JAB FOR ALL ABOVE 45

People without comorbidities eligible for vaccine from April 1

NEW DELHI

THE government on Tuesday announced that from April 1, all people above 45 years of age will be eligible to get Covid-19 vaccines and requested them to get registered for the inoculation. Briefing reporters on the decisions taken by the Cabinet after its meeting, Union minister Prakash Javadekar said now even people without comorbidities who are more than 45 years of age can get vaccinated. He requested people entitled to get themselves registered to take the jabs. He said the Cabinet also decided that the second dose of the vaccine can be taken between four and eight weeks, on the advice of doctors.

The vaccine could be taken between four to six weeks earlier, but scientists have now said that taking the second dose between four and eight weeks gives improved results. The Union cabinet discussed about the vaccination drive which has already achieved speedy and good progress, Javadekar said.

"Today after discussion and on the advice of the task force and scientists, it was decided that from April 1 the vaccine will open for everybody above 45 years of age. We request that all eligible people should immediately register from April 1 and get vaccinated, as it is the shield against the disease," Javadekar told reporters.

He said till this day, 4.85 crore vaccines have been

administered for Covid-19 and more than 32 lakh people administered the vaccine in last 24 hours. Another decision taken, on the advice given by scientists and world scientist bodies, was that the second dose of vaccine can be administered between fourth and eighth week, particularly for Covishield, he said.

The second dose of vaccine can be administered between fourth and eighth week, particularly for Covishield



"Our appeal is that all above 45 years should take vaccine as early as possible, that will provide them the shield against coronavirus and they should register for getting vaccinated," the minister said.

Vaccines are available in enough number and there is no scarcity and the supply chains and supply line were intact, he said, adding that "I am sure everyone will welcome this decision and come forward to get vaccinated." The minister said he was confident that vaccination will increase at a fast pace. To a question on cases of Covid-19 rising in some States, he said, the Central government is in touch with them and there will be effective management. "We hope that virus would not be allowed to spread," he asserted.



CS plans meet on how to curb corona

HANS NEWS SERVICE AMARAVATI

WITH surge in corona cases and the Centre issuing guidelines to all the States to follow Trace, Test and Treat protocol, the state government has now decided to work out a detailed plan of action to see that there was no second round of outbreak of the pandemic. According to official sources, nearly 163 students of a private college tested positive for corona on Tuesday. Keeping the last years' experience in view, Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das said that he would conduct a meeting with all the district collectors on Thursday and give necessary directions to be followed by the district

administration. The CS is likely to direct the collectors and SPs to act against those who do not use masks and ensure that social distancing was maintained. Awareness rallies would be taken out on Friday throughout the State and candle rallies would be organised against the corona virus on April 7 at all mandal headquarters.

The campaign for getting the vaccination for all those above 45 without medical certificate from physician would start on Thursday and continue till April 7.

The chief secretary stated that the ministers, MLAs and MPs along with the mandal revenue officers should also take part in the campaign at the field level.

32.53 lakh vax doses given on single day

NEW DELHI: More than 32.53 lakh Covid-19 vaccine doses were administered on Monday, the highest single-day vaccination so far, taking the total number of people inoculated to over 4.8 crore, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday. As on day 66 of the vaccination drive (March 22), more than 32 lakh (32,53,095) vaccine doses were administered. Out of these, 29,03,030 beneficiaries were vaccinated across 48,345 sessions for the first dose and 3,50,065 healthcare workers (HCWs) and frontline workers (FLWs) received second dose of vaccine.

RS to discuss bill to give more power to LG today

NEW DELHI

RAJYA Sabha will take up on Wednesday a bill which seeks to make it clear that the "government" in Delhi means the "Lieutenant Governor", as the House witnessed repeated brief adjournments during the day following uproar by opposition parties which termed the proposed legislation "unconstitutional".

The Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which was passed by Lok Sabha on Monday, also makes it mandatory for the Delhi government to take the opinion of the lieutenant governor (L-G) before any executive action.

"We have discussed with leaders of all parties and arrived at a consensus that the House will meet tomorrow at 10 am ... First we will discuss the Finance Bill, NCT and other Bills," Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pralhad Joshi said.

Joshi also informed that there would be no Zero Hour, Question Hour and Lunch Hour. Earlier in the day, Rajya Sabha witnessed repeated adjournments as opposition Congress and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) members protested against the bill. The uproar in the Upper House of Parliament started when Deputy Chairman Harivansh asked Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy to move a motion for the consideration of the Government of National Capital Territory of Delhi (Amendment) Bill, 2021.

AAP member Sanjay

'Delay bill in view of WB polls'

New Delhi: TMC MP and national spokesperson Derek O'Brien has written to the chairman of the Rajya Sabha to delay the consideration and passing of the Delhi (Amendment) Bill in the view of absence of party members in the Upper House due to the upcoming assembly polls in West Bengal.

"I am writing to you as the Parliamentary Party Leader (Rajya Sabha) of the All India Trinamool Congress on a matter of urgent legislative importance. As you are well aware, the Election Commission of India announced election dates for five states, including West Bengal on 26 February, 2021.

Singh protested against allowing the motion, saying his notice has been pending in the House.

The deputy chairman assured the AAP member that his notice would be considered after the motion is moved, but Singh called it "unconstitutional".

Leader of Opposition Mallikarjun Kharge said that the bill is dangerous and it will grab rights of the elected government of Delhi and destroy democracy. He alleged that the government wants the L-G as government and the elected dispensation as his "servant". Harivansh adjourned the House till 5.24 pm.

ASSAULTING AIIMS SECURITY STAFF

Order for 2-yr jail to Somnath upheld

NEW DELHI

A Delhi court Tuesday upheld an order sentencing AAP MLA Somnath Bharti to two years in jail for assaulting the AIIMS security staff in a case registered in 2016. After the pronouncement of the order, Bharti was taken into custody, a lawyer said. A magistrate court had in January sentenced him to two years in jail. Special Judge Vikas Dhull partly dismissed Bharti's appeal and convicted him for the offences under sections 147 (rioting) read with 149 (unlawful assembly) of IPC and under section 3 (mischief causing damage to public property) of the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act. The

court, however, set aside his conviction under sections 323 (voluntarily causing hurt), 353 (assault or use of criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) read with section 149 of IPC. In January, Bharti was granted bail to enable him to file an appeal before the high court against his conviction in the case and jail term. According to the prosecution, on September 9, 2016, Bharti, along with nearly 300 others, brought down the fence of a boundary wall at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) here with a JCB operator. The case was lodged on the basis of a complaint from RS Rawat, Chief Security Officer, AIIMS.

Govt raises PF threshold limit to ₹5 lakh for earning tax-free interest

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Tuesday raised the limit for tax exemption on interest earned on provident fund contribution by employees to Rs 5 lakh per annum in specified cases as against Rs 2.5 lakh proposed in the Budget.

However, the minister in her reply to discussion on Finance Bill 2021 in the Lok Sabha said the concession would be available to employees only in cases where his or her employer does not make any contribution to the retirement fund.

The Finance Bill was later passed by the Lower House with 127 official amendments by voice vote. With the passage of the Finance Bill, which contains tax proposals for the next financial year, the Lok Sabha has completed the budgetary exercise for 2021-22.

cannot interfere with the government's decision to fix priorities for relief during the pandemic which has affected across the country and the government has been under severe financial constraints. The bench said this in its verdict on a batch of pleas filed by various trade associations, including from real estate and power sectors, seeking extension of loan moratorium and other reliefs in view of the pandemic.

SC: No compound or penal interest during loan moratorium period

NEW DELHI

IN a relief to borrowers, the Supreme Court Tuesday directed that no compound or penal interest be charged during the six-month loan moratorium period announced last year amid the Covid-19 pandemic and the amount already charged shall be refunded, credited or adjusted.

The apex court refused to interfere with the Centre's and the Reserve Bank of In-



dia (RBI's) decision to not extend the loan moratorium beyond August 31 last year, saying it is a policy decision. A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said

that the top court cannot do judicial review of the Centre's financial policy decision unless it is mala fide and arbitrary.

The apex court said it

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TWEET PATROL



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23/3/1931 Three students heavily influenced by Marxist ideology, in their 20's were put 2 death by the colonial British Indian govt for raising their voices & raising arms against an oppressive, unjust, colonial regime & waging a war for freedom AND social justice in India



Habits that cause hair damage

In our never-ending quest for luscious hair, we often experiment with things that cause extensive damage to our hair. Often, we overlook the fragility of damaged hair, and continue to go about our routines that cause harm to one's hair leaving them looking frizzy and unhealthy.

Rayed Merchant Director Marketing (Global) & Head Brand Procurement, SSIZ International said, "While hereditary hair loss is beyond our control, preventing stress-induced shedding is much easier said than done. However, some habits and mistakes can make hair-loss issues worse. A lot of people consider excessive hair loss as a natural sign of ageing. Although this is accurate to a certain degree, there are actually a number of habits in our day-to-day life that cause hair loss as well."

Irregular diet

Our hair is composed of a strong protein known as keratin. In order to maintain opti-

might just be the reason for your bathroom drains being clogged. Studies show that hot water dehydrates your hair strands leading to dry, brittle hair, making it more likely to snap and fall out. Taking hot showers also wash out the natural oils present in your scalp, stripping it of all nourishment which makes it produce more of the oils which in turn only causes more shedding.

Mishandling your hair

Wet hair is prone to more breakage. It is also more fragile than dry hair as the protective cuticle in wet hair is slightly raised. Brushing or combing your wet locks, then following with aggressive towel-drying, can create the ideal environment for excessive shedding.

If a tight ponytail or braid is what you love, beware: Carrying out these styles puts excessive amounts of tension on the hair follicles, damaging them. Loosen up! When you pull your hair back in a pony or braid remember to keep it soft—if it's pulling on your skin, it might be way too tight. Try wearing your hair down whenever possible. For example, while rolling around on a pillow when you sleep, can create a ton of friction.

Mental stress

We all know that mental health has a drastic impact on our bodily health as well. Our hair follicles are surrounded by a network of nerve cells. Any unfavourable chemical activity in the nervous system might send unwanted signals to the hair follicles. A good night's sleep is also key in causing hair loss. Mental stress can lead to sleep deprivation in many which in turn can lead to hair loss. It is important you try and lead a stress-free life if a luscious mane with full hair is what you desire.

Pulling out grey strands

As you get older, you might notice a few grey strands here and there. Though some people start noticing them as early as their late teens or early 20s. While pulling out grey strands is very common for a lot of people who are conscious about them; it's also a huge blunder that one can commit. If a tight ponytail is considered to be harmful to your hair follicles, one can only imagine what proactively pulling out strands would do to your scalp. Avoid pulling out your grey strands no matter how badly your mind says otherwise. It could lead to a ton of bald patches on your head. You're much better off using a colour treatment on your hair rather than pulling out greys.



mal hair health, it's crucial that one consumes a balanced diet that consists of a variety of proteins, vitamins, and nutrients that help promote hair growth. Skipping meals causes an intake of insufficient nutrients and this unhealthy habit can affect our hair and overall health. When you starve yourself, it forces the body to divert all its remaining energy towards essential functions like helping your heart and brain function rather than making hair. Problems that are not easily detected in your health, show on your hair first. So, while we may feel healthy, we may find our hair suddenly looking dull or shedding excessively. Now, this is something that shouldn't be ignored. In order to have healthy hair, it is important to eat foods that are rich in proteins like lentil, fish, eggs, meat etc. that help in maintaining your strands as the hair is essentially made up of protein.

Hot showers

A hot steaming shower is what we all crave for at the end of a long tiring day. While nobody can deny the stress busting powers of a hot shower, they

Help your children cope with traumatic events

TEJAL SINHA

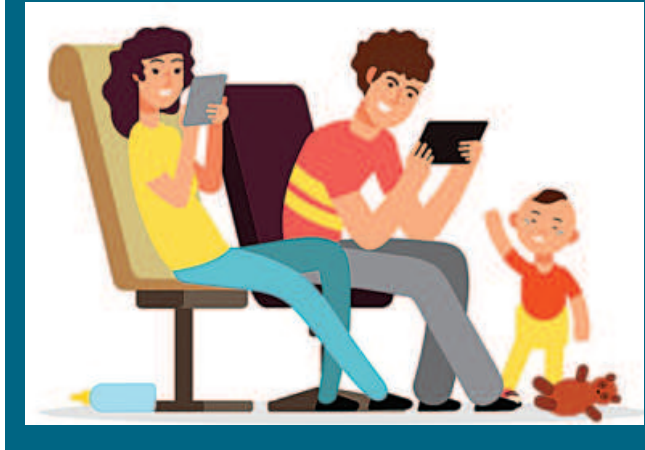
In the wake of a traumatic event, your comfort, support and reassurance can make children feel safe, help them manage their fears, guide them through their grief, and help them recover in a healthy way.

Long term effects are mostly with their self-esteem and self-confidence and the ability to trust others and maybe have phobia or other psychological disorders which will affect their lives.

As a parent what you can do to help them is basically never judge them, try not to find the fault in them or help comforting them to their fears, avoid comparing them with other child and their siblings. What happens is when you judge you create a doubt in their minds whether they're good enough to do it or no. It's better to be supportive to your children and be positive by giving them the space to create what they can respect their space.

Rooshi Hashmi, Clinical Psychologist, Energy Therapist, sound healer and access bars facilitator shares, "You much spend as much as time you can, as it helps the child open up to you even more freely. One way they can also do is to teach them ask questions about things going on in their minds. Asking questions will help them to choose from different possibilities and create greater. You should also teach your kids to take responsibility for things happened in their life, allowing them to take responsibility which will help them make life choices more clearly and change it. With kids normally you can ask what their choice will create so that they know they create and then can change it accordingly."

Make your child feel safe. All children, from toddlers to teens, will benefit from your touch extra cuddling, hugs or just a reassuring pat on the back. It gives them a feeling of security, which is so important in the aftermath of a frightening or disturbing event



ferent possibilities and create greater. You should also teach your kids to take responsibility for things happened in their life, allowing them to take responsibility which will help them make life choices more clearly and change it. With kids normally you can ask what their choice will create so that they know they create and then can change it accordingly."

Your kids need to replace the judgement with gratitude. most

of the problems that happens in parenting is that they tend to judge a lot if you replace your judgement by gratitude by asking questions.

One of the factors that are concerned with parenting is that they strive to compare children to make sure they win and succeed things. Wining is not important. It is the journey that you go through. It's the passion or fun that you have in learning things. Give your child the scope to

Live performances are 'exhilarating experience': Usha Uthup

SIDDHI JAIN

"Stage performance teaches you humility, dignity and honesty and makes you realise that the only reason you are up on stage is because of the audience and their love for your art and entertainment," says legendary playback singer Usha Uthup.

The 1947-born artist says that performing live for an audience is an exhilarating experience. Uthup, in a recent collaboration with Subramaniam Academy of Performing Arts (SaPa) India which was founded in 2007 by violinist Dr L Subramaniam and Bollywood playback singer Kavita Krishnamurti Subramaniam, took a masterclass on the tips and intricacies of stagecraft. The popular artiste and singer broke down the elements of entertaining on stage.

Sharing about what has been her prominent learning during the lockdown, she says, "Throughout the past year, I think I have worked the most through the lockdown. It's been a huge learning curve for me, I have learned how to set up a small studio at my residence with the help of my recording engineer

at the studio. My team has helped me with the nuances of Zoom and other online communication platforms. I have been connected to people through phones and video calls. I have learned and what the pandemic has taught us is to be global citizens. It has increased our horizon to think and care for people outside our social circle." To be careful and mindful of our deeds and how we impact people around us. She also shares that she has also realised having a routine and being disciplined helps and is what has kept me going.

She adds, "I start my day by chanting mantras and taking a walk in my home. Post that I continue with my singing work. During the lockdown, I was able to adapt to the digital stage seamlessly through the help of my team Gautam Basu, Somresh and Rinta. Through the lockdown, even though the stage shows couldn't happen, I was able to connect with my audience through the 6-7 songs which I recorded in my home



The pandemic has taught us to be global citizens; has increased our horizon to think and care for people outside our social circle, says the singer

studio and released them on the social media platforms. The response has been humongous and shows the kind of love the audience has for you as a singer. It has also helped me to be a Global artist through my work. The digital stage has not only boomed for performances, but also for online learning. Through SaPa India, I am able to conduct this masterclass on Stagecraft where people can learn about posture, stage manners and other nuances which can be used not only for live shows but for virtual

shows as well."

For 51 years of her career, she has performed on stage for numerous shows.

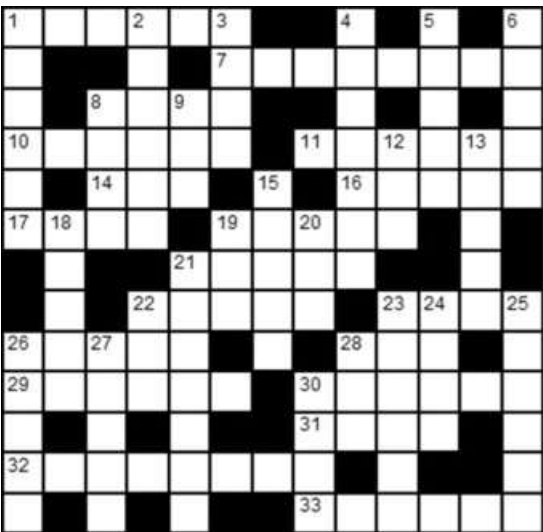
She shares, "It's an exhilarating experience of performing for the audience who are right in front of you and the musicians right beside encouraging you with each verse of the song. The stage performance teaches you humility, dignity and honesty and makes you realize that the only reason why you are up on the stage is because of the audience and their love for you art and entertainment. So yes, it's great we can go back to such ways of entertainment of course keeping the COVID-19 precautions in mind. I'm looking forward to doing shows again."

Kavita has always been a dear friend of Usha for years and she has high admiration and respect for both Dr L Subramaniam and Kavita Subramaniam.

"It's great that they have a brainchild like SaPa, an academy, which is training children as young as 3 years old. And I am so

grateful to them for including Stagecraft as a subject. It's one of the most important aspects of being an artist apart from technical knowledge, regular practice amongst others. And I'm very thankful to them for giving me this opportunity to take the masterclass. It provides an awakening to people that no matter how good of a singer or an artist you are, what would you do if you didn't have the right kind of stagecraft to perform. Because entertainment is a serious business indeed. Apart from this masterclass, I am also designing and launching a self-paced course with SaPa India to be released shortly," adds Usha.

Presently, Usha has released about 6-7 songs with videos. She believes that the only difference between her and the other artists is that she doesn't actively promote them through digital platforms like Instagram and YouTube because she is not very well versed with such mediums. Her work is not just in Hindi Films, but she has also done songs across Kannada, Malayalam, and Tamil as well. Her latest project is now with SaPa India.



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SOLUTION TO MARCH 23

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Attacked by gunfire (4,2)
- 7 Caught up with (8)
- 8 Ripped (4)
- 10 Fit for farming (6)
- 11 Even though (6)
- 14 Large (3)
- 16 Poetic feet of one kind (5)
- 17 Border (4)
- 19 Antelope (5)
- 21 Cover, hang or adorn (5)
- 22 Nairobi is its capital (5)
- 23 Part of the brainstem (4)
- 26 Big bird of prey (5)
- 28 Church bench (3)
- 29 Fried potatoes (6)
- 30 TV's "Gunsmoke" star (6)
- 31 Naming word (4)
- 32 Kiln for making lime (8)
- 33 Kind of gas (6)

Down

- 1 Instrumental piece (6)
- 2 Small-time (3,3)
- 3 Sound quality (4)

- 4 Sugarcoated almond (7)
- 5 Emblem (5)
- 6 Short humorous plays or sketches (5)
- 8 Leading lady of Maachis (4)
- 9 Ring Laser Gyro (3)
- 12 Naughty (3)
- 13 "Peer Gynt" author (5)
- 15 Stage productions (5)
- 18 Wild rose (5)
- 19 East ender? (3)
- 20 All points addressable, abbr. (3)
- 21 Ms Padukone of Bollywood (7)
- 22 Kilolitres, abbr. (3)
- 23 Abject poverty (6)
- 24 Wilfred ____, war poet (4)
- 25 "Valley of the Dolls" author (6)
- 26 French school (5)
- 27 Gadget (5)
- 28 Quid ____ quo : thing given as compensation ? (3)
- 30 Part of A.D. (4)

SUDOKU

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SOLUTION TO MARCH 23

NEWS ROUNDUP

Amika Shail cast as naive village belle in new web series

Singer-actress Amika Shail is all set for a rural makeover in her new OTT show. In the upcoming 15-episode web series tentatively titled "Nachaniya", Amika will be seen playing a village girl. The story revolves around three female friends who entertain people in villages with dance performances. "The name of my character is Dhaani and she is a naive village belle. It is very different from what I am in real life. Dhaani is not career-oriented in life and her only goals are to find her Prince Charming and get married. All she thinks of is setting up her home with her husband," said Amika.

Directed by Shraddha Pasi, the series also features Vikram Singh Chauhan, Sandeepa Dhar, Nimai Bali and Deepak Qazir. Amika can't help gushing over her director. "Shraddha is a fantastic director and knows how to get the best output," she said from her experience of working in the series, which will get a new title soon and is set to drop on Disney+ Hotstar in April. Amika has previously worked in the Akshay Kumar-starrer film "Laxmii", besides the web series "Mirzapur 2" and "Gandii Baat". She has also appeared on the TV series "Baalveer Returns".



A year after controversial meet, Markaz chief yet to join probe

NEW DELHI

A year after Tabligh-e-Jamaat's Markaz in Nizamuddin West came under criticism for holding a religious congregation amid the COVID-19 outbreak, its cleric Maulana Saad Kandhalvi against whom an FIR was registered in connection with the incident is yet to join the probe despite several notices by Delhi Police.

The meet in March 2020 was attended by thousands of Jamaat members from different states, along with hundreds of foreigners. After several of them tested positive for the infection, a nationwide search operation was carried out by respective state

governments to locate and quarantine them on the direction of the Centre.

Taking action against the organisers of the congregation, Delhi Police's Crime Branch on March 31, 2020 lodged an FIR against seven people, including Kandhalvi, on a complaint by Station House Officer Nizamuddin under sections of the Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act (2005), Foreigners Act and other relevant sections of Indian Penal Code.

Kandhalvi was later booked for culpable homicide not amounting to murder after some of the attendees of the congregation died due to coronavirus. According to



the police, Kandhalvi is yet to join the probe despite several notices issued to him by the investigators but statements of his sons and of

vice-bearers of the Markaz were recorded in connection with the case.

Most of the forensic reports of

documents and electronic devices seized from the centre have been received while a few is still awaited, a senior police officer said. However, in December last year, a Delhi court acquitted 36 foreigners, who were listed in a charge sheet for attending the Tablighi Jamaat congregation by allegedly being negligent and disobeying the government guidelines issued in wake of the coronavirus pandemic in the country.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Arun Kumar Garg had said the prosecution failed to prove the presence of the accused at the Nizamuddin Markaz premises from March 12 to April 1. According to the list of evacuees, none

of the accused had COVID-19 symptoms and hence, there was no question of any negligent act on their part, the court had said in its order.

Apart from them, FIRs were also filed against those Indian nationals who housed the attendees of the congregation. Two among them - Feroz Siddique and Rizwan - along with six others moved court seeking quashing of the FIRs against them in connection with the event. Delhi Police said till date, it has filed 48 charge sheets and 11 supplementary charge sheets against 956 foreign nationals from 36 countries. According to the charge sheets, all the foreigners were booked for vi-

olating visa rules, violating government guidelines issued in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and regulations regarding Epidemic Diseases Act, Disaster Management Act and prohibitory orders under section 144 of Code of Criminal Procedure and other relevant sections of Indian Penal Code. The Centre had cancelled their visas and blacklisted them. At least 9,000 people participated in the Nizamuddin congregation.

Later, many of them travelled to various parts of the country. Tablighi Jamaat workers, both foreigners as well Indians, indulge in preaching tours or 'chilla' across the country throughout the year.

Light rain in Delhi-NCR, temp to rise by weekend

NEW DELHI

THE national capital and its neighbouring areas witnessed light rain coupled with thunderstorm on Tuesday afternoon, providing much-needed relief to the people from the rising mercury levels.

According to Kuldeep Srivastava, the Head of India Meteorological Department's (IMD) regional weather forecasting centre, a western disturbance is behind the sudden rain, thunderstorm and increase in wind speed.

The western disturbance is a cyclonic storm that originates in the Mediterranean Sea and travels across Central Asia. When it comes in contact with the Himalayas, it brings rains to the hills and the plains.

However, the respite will be short-lived. The city recorded a maximum temperature of 31-degree Celsius on Tuesday, which will rise to 37-degree Celsius by March 28. The last time the city received rain and thunderstorm was on March 12.



The IMD has predicted partly cloudy sky for Wednesday. The temperature will, however, be constant.

The System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR) said that the

rainfall has contributed to the improvement of air quality in the national capital, where the Air Quality Index (AQI) stood in the 'poor' category at 245 microgram per cubic metre.

"Better ventilation and

washout are likely to influence AQI positively. AQI is likely to marginally improve to the lower end of the 'moderate' category on Wednesday. Moderate to poor AQI is forecasted for March 25 and March 26," it stated.

37 held for duping foreigners



Thirty seven people were arrested for duping foreign nationals in the name of social security number (SSN), Amazon Technical Support and Apple Technical Support in Delhi. Three illegal call centres were busted; one in Bindapur and two in Janakpuri. The accused used to send voice recordings to foreign nationals pretending to be US Drug Enforcement and then extort money from them. They also used to send recorded messages pretending to be from Apple Technical Support and Amazon Technical Support and then cheat unsuspecting callers

130 people still missing in Uttarakhand glacial burst

NEW DELHI

As many as 130 people continue to be missing following the February 7 glacial burst in Uttarakhand, which claimed 74 lives, the Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) has constituted a joint study team of experts from different institutes and organisations of central and



state governments to understand the causes of the flash floods in river Rishiganga and Dhauliganga, and to suggest mitigation and preparedness measures to prevent such events.

He said the government of Uttarakhand has also constituted a committee to review the glacial natural lakes and their effects. "As per information received from the state government of Uttarakhand, 74 bodies have been recovered so far and 130 persons are still reported missing.

The State government has announced an ex-gratia of Rs 4 lakh each for the next of kin of those who have lost their lives due to the incident," Rai said in a written reply.

Water gun equipped with sensors will drive away Covid blues

VIVEK TRIPATHI
VARANASI

TO drive away the fear of Covid-19 pandemic and at the same time celebrate Holi without anxiety, young innovators from Varanasi have come up with a unique anti-corona pichkari (water gun).

The resurgence of the Covid-19 pandemic has left the government worried and also dampened the spirits of people. It may prove difficult to strictly follow social distancing during the festival of colours.

In this situation, youth from Varanasi, which also happens to be Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency, have created a water gun which would not play spoilsport during Holi while maintaining social distancing among people.

This special water gun, equipped with sensors, would sprinkle colour at people without physically

touching one another and would caution people as soon as they try to break social distancing norms. Vishal Patel, a student of Ashoka Institute of Technology and Management, has created this water gun. In a special conversation with IANS, he said that the festive spirit of Holi must not fade away due to Covid-19. So, we have created an anti-corona water gun, which would follow Covid guidelines issued by the government as well as help people sprinkle colour on each other. Patel said the water gun will be placed on the roof in front of one's house. As soon as a person comes near this water gun, its sensors will get activated and would start throwing colour. As long as nobody comes in front of the water gun, it will remain inactive. This unmanned water gun can prove useful in fighting coronavirus.

Apart from fighting against Covid-19, this special pichkari can

also be used for the purposes of sanitisation. It took 15 days to create this water gun in which 8 litres of colour can be filled at a time. It has been built using a 12 volt battery, infrared sensor, ultrasonic sensor a switch and an LED light. The watergun costs nearly Rs 750.

Manish Arora, Banaras Hindu University Coordination, Department of Behavioural Arts and Coordination Design Innovation Centre, said this water gun is an innovative idea. It will protect people along with helping people celebrate Holi.

Shyam Chaurasia, In-Charge of the Research Development Cell of the institute, says technology has brought relief to people during the pandemic. The water gun is another experiment in this direction. "The children have done a remarkable job. This will help maintain social distancing and celebrate the festival of colours with gusto,"

SUMIT SAXENA
NEW DELHI

THE Ministry of Information and Broadcasting has submitted before the Supreme Court that the new IT regulations will keep a strong check on the content on OTT platforms like Netflix and Amazon Prime. The government said the regulation is similar to mechanisms in many countries like Singapore, the European Union, Australia, etc.

The response from the government came on a plea filed by Supreme Court advocate Shashank Shekhar Jha seeking regulation of content on over-the-top (OTT) platforms.

"It is humbly submitted that in various jurisdictions across the globe like Singapore, European Union, Australia, etc., have also framed similar mechanisms regulating/restricting access on the



OTT platforms", said the affidavit filed by the ministry.

The affidavit said the government was already seized of the need for developing an institutional mechanism regarding regulation of audio video content streamed on OTT platforms and it has been in active consultation with stakeholders for over two years. The affidavit added that the government had received several complaints, representations from members of civil society, MPs, chief ministers regarding contents of programmes being streamed on

OTT platforms and the need for putting in place a mechanism to check the content on these platforms.

The government said there is a mechanism for regulation of the OTT platforms under the provisions of the Information Technology Act, 2000, and the new framed Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) Rules, 2021 has been notified by the government under Section 87 (2) of the IT Act, 2000 for regulation of on-line curated content. These rules were notified on February 25, 2021, for social media platforms, OTT players and digital media.

"In respect of the Internet, the IT Act has provisions for prohibition of publishing or transmitting content that is obscene, containing sexually explicit act or containing sexually explicit act involving a minor under Sections 67, 67A and

67B," said the affidavit. The affidavit added that there are also provisions for criminal proceedings with punitive measures depending on the nature of complaints filed with police authorities.

"The Information Technology (Intermediary Guidelines and Digital Media Ethics Code) rules 2021 are comprehensive in nature and framed keeping in view the major audience enjoyed by the OTT platforms and maintaining a fine balance so that various age groups are taken into an account and a healthy classification is being done", said the affidavit.

The top court on March 5, had observed that the Centre's guidelines on regulating content on OTT platforms lack teeth. The observation was made while granting protection from arrest to Amazon Prime Video's India head Aparna Purohit in FIRs lodged over web series Tandav.

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Bullish signs in IT as demand picks up

The season of bonuses and increments seems to be back in the global IT industry. After showing amazing resilience during the ongoing Covid pandemic period, the market leaders in the cash-rich IT sector are coming back to their normal increment cycle. Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) last week said it would give its employees an average increment of between 6-8 per cent to its over 470,000 employees effective April 1, 2021. This is the second such hike in the span of six months, cumulatively raising wages by 12-14 per cent during this period. Similarly, global technology major Accenture announced a one-time bonus, equivalent to one week of the basic salary, for all its five lakh staffers across the world. Around two lakh people in India will benefit from this bonus scheme. Early this month, Cognizant said it would be rewarding employees with bonus payouts, promotions, and merit raises, which would be substantially higher than 2019. Bengaluru-headquartered Infosys has also come back to its usual

increment cycle from the third quarter onwards. It has announced that salary increments would be rolled out from January 2021 apart from giving 100 per cent variable pay and a special bonus in the December quarter.

The return to the usual increment cycle is a reflection of the optimism on growth prospects. According to global consultancy firm Gartner, global IT spending is projected to grow 6.2 per cent to \$3.9 trillion in 2021 from a decline of 3.2 per cent in 2020. Such forecast indicates IT services companies globally require more hands on deck to execute projects. These companies also need to retain skilled staffers to cash in the emerging opportunities.

Apart from getting prepared for the new demand, IT firms also need to reward their employees for seamless execution of project work during the pandemic period. This was achieved despite 95 per cent of employees working from remote locations. Also, higher utilisation levels of staffers need special attention from

human resources personnel failing which burnout will lead to rising attrition once the market comes back to normal.

Utilisation levels of most IT majors are currently at an all-time high. In the October-December quarter, both Infosys and Wipro reported utilisation level of 86.3 per cent. Though TCS and HCL Technologies don't make these numbers public, the scene is not radically different from other peers. Though there is no ideal level of employee utilisation, most firms used to operate with around 75 percent level not long back. Therefore, IT companies are rolling out increments to check future attrition through increments and bonus payouts.

It is heartening that mass layoffs, just like one seen during the Global Financial Crisis in 2008-09, have not been seen in the IT sector this time around despite the scale of the present event. Rather, the technology industry has turned out to be a major beneficiary of the pandemic due to rising digitalisation among enterprises. In this perspective, going back to the usual increment cycle augurs well for both Indian IT firms and their employees.



Nalanda University to promote water harvesting

MANOJ PATHAK

WHILE the Bihar government is running the 'Jal Jeevan Hariyali' campaign, Prime Minister Narendra Modi launched the 'Jal Shakti Abhiyan' on the occasion of World Water Day on March 22. The internationally acclaimed Nalanda University in Bihar is teaching water harvesting to the people under the Central government's campaign.

Nalanda University located at Rajgir in Bihar's Nalanda district is trying to explain the importance of the message 'Water is the basis of life' to the people in the state.

Nalanda University Vice-Chancellor Sunaina Singh has reiterated the varsity's resolve to conserve water. She said the university is contributing towards water conservation in its campus as well as nearby villages.

Singh said, "The university campus is entirely based on the hypothesis of 'Net Zero'. Modern as well as traditional resources are being used to conserve every single drop of water inside the campus. I have once again made the ignored 'Ahar Pyne' method (a 5,000-year-old floodwater harvesting system that evolved during the Mauryan Empire to bring water to the rocky terrain of Magadh, in south-central Bihar) in modern times the mainstay of water conservation in the varsity campus."

She said two methods are being used for water management in the campus. The first method is to conserve the water obtained through nature and the second method is to save the available water from being wasted.

A special plan has been prepared for water management in the varsity campus under which awareness is being spread among people to prevent unnecessary use of water.

According to one estimate, water wastage can be reduced by up to 80 per cent through better water management. A reduction in water demand by low flow fittings and fixtures is aimed at preventing 30 per cent wastage of water. The demand for water is being reduced by 50 per cent by using native and local natural sources.

Traditional alternatives like 'Ahar-Pyne' have been adopted for water harvesting inside the campus premises. With the help of 'pyne' (water channels) attached to the boundary wall of the campus, the rain water is transported to the 'Ahars' ('Aa' means 'to come' and 'Har' means 'to capture') constructed in the campus.

The huge amount of rainwater that flows from the hills of Rajgir is deposited in the campus and its surrounding areas. Today this water harvesting is done inside the campus with the help of the 'Ahar-pyne' technique.

Decentralized water treatment systems are also being effectively implemented inside the campus, with the goal of purifying 80 per cent of the water which could be reused.

This water stored by traditional and modern methods is being conserved in the Lotus Sea, a cluster of four ponds built in the centre of the campus premises. Nalanda University has established aquifer storage and recovery system for water resource management at seven sites in Nalanda and Nalanda villages at Rajgir. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has laid special emphasis on conserving rainwater. Nalanda University's water conservation plan is also based on the same concept launched by the Central government. Along with this, the university has also imbibed the concept of 'Sabka Saath, Sabka Vikas' of the Central government.

An intimate glimpse of the 'Republic of Hindutva'

THE RSS, which has just appointed Dattatreya Hosabale as its new General Secretary, is like the tip of an iceberg, exerting its influence much beyond what is visible, says a new book that traces its 95-year history. Beginning with the choice of Narendra Modi as the forerunner for the 2014 general election up to the campaign for the 2019 polls, RSS cadres have been a formidable force behind the staggering rise of the BJP in national politics.

In "Republic of Hindutva" (Penguin), social historian and cultural anthropologist Badri Narayan offers an intimate glimpse of how the Sangh and its vast network of educational, cultural and social outfits have been digging deep roots in the Indian psyche. By refashioning its modes of mobilization as well as assimilating Dalits, OBCs, tribals and other marginalized communities, the RSS has made the Hindutva metanarrative appealing to a large section of Indians. During elections, the BJP, instead of wiping out caste from electoral politics, reaps rich political dividends from this social appropriation.

Drawing on extensive field research in the heartland of India and interviews with RSS volunteers, the author reveals how a new public is being forged at the grassroots, one that will determine the course of Indian democracy.

Badri Narayan is director at the G.B. Pant Social Science Institute, a constituent of the University of Allahabad. His research interests lie in popular culture, social and anthropological history, Dalit and subaltern issues, and the relationship between power and culture.

Writing in both English and Hindi, Narayan is the author of "Fractured Tales: Invisibles in Indian Democracy" (2016), "Kanshiram: Leader of the Dalits" (2014), "The Making of the Dalit Public in North India: Uttar Pradesh, 1950s to Present" (2011), "Fascinating Hindutva: Saffron Politics and Dalit Mobilisation" (2009) and "Women Heroes and Dalit Assertion in North India" (2006). (HANS)



The Sangh and its vast network of educational, cultural and social outfits have been digging deep roots in the Indian psyche. By refashioning its modes of mobilisation as well as assimilating Dalits, OBCs, tribals and other marginalised communities, the RSS has made the Hindutva metanarrative appealing to a large section of Indians. During elections, the BJP, instead of wiping out caste from electoral politics, reaps rich political dividends from this social appropriation

GENDER INEQUALITY

Still a one-sided battle for women

TEJ SINGH KARDAM

INDIA is a male-dominated society in which social, economic, cultural, political and religious institutions are mainly controlled by men. This control over women's livelihood choices and sexuality has existed and evolved over centuries through various discriminatory social practices. A combination of family, caste, community and religion reinforce and legitimise these patriarchal values.

Stereotyping of women and their roles continues in public and private institutions. Discriminatory practices such as child marriage (though has come down), dowry, honour killing and gender-biased sex selection indicate profound vulnerability of, and inequality towards, girls and women in Indian society. Child marriage is a denial of childhood, especially for girls. Dowry devalues women. Gender-based sex selection eliminates girls from families and societies, altering the social fabric. Honour killing is a barbaric violation and humiliation of girls and women.

This paradoxical situation of women in India is alarming. On the one hand they are worshipped as goddesses, while on the other burnt for dowry. Boys are more desirable and seen as a support for parents in their old age and as necessary to continue the family lineage. Girls are considered an unwanted burden yet support their brothers and men and suffer in silence atrocities such as abuse, violence, rape and early marriages. If they break their silence, the repercussions are unimaginable.

Some of the major issues/problems being faced by Indian women, may be in several other countries around the world. I am giving a brief mention of a few major problems faced by women. Domestic violence is one of the major problems being faced by the women. Physical violence is the most common in addition to mental, economic and sexual. For the protection of women from domestic violence, Domestic Violence Act has been enacted during 2005. But even after a decade and half the assurances made in the Act have not been decimated, due to various reasons.

To my mind, one of the reasons could be, in a country like ours where the marital home is the only abode considered right for women - even if it is a very dangerous place, and where even natal families do not welcome women, looking to leave their marital homes, women cannot hope to escape violence unless alternate safe shelters exist.

Interestingly, according to a survey, globally, including India, women faced more domestic violence during lockdown. It shows that domestic violence has been ever-present pandemic which was exacerbated during lockdown, may be due to rising frustrations, insecurities of jobs, wage losses, increased burden of care work, lack of mobility and social contact. Looking at all these aspects, it is high time that the government prioritises Domestic Violence Act for redressal of grievances of the women across the country.

According to National Sample Survey, 2017-18, the Periodic Labour Force - refers to economically active individuals who supply or seek to supply labour for production, which include employed or unemployed, women's participation in paid work has been declining over the last 25 years, whereas men's labour force participation rate has been higher than women. This means that women's involvement in paid work remains low, a challenge to India. Increased participation of women in paid work has larger ramifications. In South Korea and Bangladesh, rise in labour force participation contributed substantially to a lowering of the preference for a male child, though trend is changing in India as girls are seen to be more caring and provide old age support than boys. As per one survey, globally women are dropping out of the labour force than men and India is no exception.

In India women bear disproportionately high burden of un-



paid domestic and care works. As per all India Time Use Survey 2019, 81 per cent females and 26 per cent males participate in unpaid domestic work in the country. The similar disparity persists in the average time spent per day, females and males in India spend 299 and 97 minutes respectively. The data suggests that the females bear more than 83 per cent of the burden of domestic and care works in India. There is a proposal by one of the regional parties in ongoing elections, as paying wages to women for unpaid domestic and care work.

There are two important aspects about it; One, it is well known that women predominantly carry out unpaid domestic and care activities, often at the cost of their employment prospects and health. The monetary reward is a recognition of their contribution to the well-being of the household and the opportunities foregone by them. The proposal of the party will not in the right spirit, because paying monetary benefits will endorse that these activities are meant for women and they are paid for, men can claim that women are bound to do these activities and men will not participate in these activities at all, giving more burden to women.

Second, the economists suggest that the government should

recognize this unpaid work by carrying out proper survey and use the data in national policies. If GDP is a measure of total production and consumer of the economy, the household produces goods and services for its members, this work has to be incorporated by accepting household as a sector of the economy. The unpaid work needs to be integrated with the mainstream economic policies and it could be an important economic sector.

The lives of women across the world have improved for the better but their struggle for equality still continues. In 2018, as per UNDP, India's Human Development Index ranking is not satisfactory because 27 per cent value was lost on account of gender inequality. Women overall received lower-quality medical care than men. Improving health outcomes for women in India necessitates a life-long approach towards managing their health needs.

Women lack religious freedom. In a study by Georgetown University and Brigham Young University researchers were able to connect religious intolerance with women's ability to participate in the economy. When there is more religious freedom an economy becomes more stable because of

women's participation.

According to the World Bank, over one billion women don't have legal protection against domestic, workplace, public, unwilling sexual violence in addition to domestic economic violence around the world. In India, according to the agricultural census, 73 per cent of the women are in agriculture sector - informal sector and 10 per cent are in formal sector. At work place they face all types of harassment/violence, but they don't report due to fear of losing jobs. Instead of legal justice, there are instances in our country, where High Court is asking molester to tie rakhi to the victim and Supreme Court is asking rapist to marry the victim.

In India, for eliminating gender inequality, there is need to make all existing unequal laws gender-equal, we need more than women's movement, there is necessity for change in mindset of the society as a whole about women, more women representation in public life and policy making at national and states levels, not only for the betterment of women but for an egalitarian society and also for a stronger economy in the world.

(The author is a retired IFS officer)

LETTERS

Sharmila unwelcome in TS

TELANGANA does not need disruptive elements like Y S Sharmila whose sole aim is to create rift between communities by sowing seed of dissension. Her statement concerning Muslims in the state is absolutely unwarranted as they are being taken care of adequately by the present dispensation.

Regarding wakf land encroachments, it is prevalent all over the country as the respective boards live up to their bounden duties to the community and a handful of the board members looting in connivance with officials and netas.

The people of the State should, without any second thought, make her a persona non grata by totally dismissing her claims as just an attempt to secure political mileage.

J Kannan, Hyderabad

Keeping schools open

When neighbouring states of Karnataka and Tamil Nadu have closed schools and promoted children to next class without final examinations in view of rising cases of Covid-19, it is unfortunate that State of AP has planned to run classes till May 31st (Mar 23rd report: Half day classes from April 1) at the peak of summer season.

Sajid Farooq, Kurnool

Govt employees happy

This is with reference to the news 'KCR keeps his PRC promise (March 23)'. Telangana CM has done a commendable job by announcing the 30 per cent fitment and increasing of retirement age. This shows that he is kind towards the government employees' welfare and good future. Even he has given the PRC benefits to the con-

tract employees and daily wage employees. But there is a need to regularise the services of contract and daily wage employees in all Telangana government departments. Hope our Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will take necessary steps in this regard and regularise the services of all contract and daily wage employees without any delay.

Syed Nisar Mehdi, Hyderabad

Enable functional freedom of universities

The thought-provoking article "They fear not canons, but pens" (THI March 23) by Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu reveals how the administrators take it negatively when their revered academics exposed freedom of speech. I was reminded of a case similar to two academics mentioned by Acharyulu. Pen is always mightier than sword. Sometimes "vidwan sarvatra pujayet" may not become true. Indian democracy is crying for its freedom.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

II

THE article by Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu was striking inasmuch, over the years, it is witnessed that academic freedom is not only curtailed but their significance is also getting diminished by frequent interference by outsiders ignoring the faculty in running of the university. When freedom of speech and expression of diverse views is bedrock in a democracy and an essential element to any flourishing university in the world, recent instance of two educators stepping down in a reputed private university over curtailment of powers for decision-making process is a clear revelation about lack of transparency and faith.

The fact concerning the policies, rules and guidelines based on best practices for a university are only to be determined and decided within the university and not anyone outside the university. However, with many instances of outsider with influence and political connec-

tions meddling needlessly with internal affairs by exercising control in the decision-making of universities has been only vitiating the academic ecosystem creating heartburns amongst faculty.

However, as such outside views given more weightage and legitimacy is encouraged and implemented in letter and spirit ignoring the decisions taken by faculty reflects that the very purpose of establishing universities to provide world-class education while promoting excellence in research is defeated, it is time, government ensures that no outside influence is allowed in decision-making process essential for universities to thrive with freedom, autonomy, dissemination of knowledge instrumental in transforming society and nation at large.

K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad

III

HATS off to "They fear not canons, but pens" (The Hans India 23 March) by M Sridhar Acharyulu who has shared the full text of the letter of resignation of two highly respected academics out which Dr. Arvind Subramanian happened to be Economic Advisor to PM Modi. It was indeed touching on the part of Dr. Mehta who has pleaded not to punish his poor driver who also followed him when he joined Ashoka University. If the academics in a public-funded private University are turning burden to the management of the university who felt their critical notes on wrong policies of the present regime are hampering the University's expansion plans, imagine the plight of other institutions which are under the control and funded by the government.

The letter of resignation is bound to create noise against them in social media by supporters of the present government who may even paint them as anti-national getting funded by foreign agents to destabilise the government led by Modi. At least in this context, Congress MP Rahul who is often mocked as "Pappu Gandhi" is right when he has been saying that the BJP government under Modi is killing the institutional freedom. Is this government headed by a party that was once in forefront of freedom of expression?

S Natarajan, New Delhi

thehansreader@gmail.com



ERS loans still out of reach for disabled

Financial year comes to end, specially challenged still await loans under ERS

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN
HYDERABAD

DESPITE the government claims (during budget sessions) that it has allocated sufficient funds for the welfare of disabled persons, the pending applications for loans under Economic Rehabilitation Scheme (ERS) and a relatively fewer number of units to be approved is showing a different picture.

The government allocated Rs 5.5 crore under ERS in the financial year 2020-21 which was not at all utilised. Thousands of applications are still pending despite the end of financial year. According to sources, the number of applications received throughout Telangana under ERS is somewhere around 25,000 to 30,000, while the sanction budget hovers around Rs 5.5 crore with



- Rs 5.5 cr allocated under ERS for FY21 not utilised
- Thousands of applications still to get approval
- Delay in approvals is attributed to MLC elections

only 767 units to be approved under the scheme during the year 2020-21. The loan amount fixed for approval varies from Rs 50,000 to Rs 3 lakh. This means out of 30,000 applicants only 767 were processed.

“The process of officials going into the huddle has begun recently but the scrutiny of applications is yet to be done. However, 90 per cent of the district

welfare officials have submitted their bills as against the budget allotted for the scheme after taking the approval from the respective Collectors. However, it is the government which has to decide about clearing the bills. Even the Director Disabled Welfare made a representation to the government in this regard,” informed sources.

If the bills get cleared soon, the

scheme will surely set in motion by next month. Mandal and district level committees were busy all these days due to council elections and now they are getting back to their work. However, the whole thing depends on the passing of bills.

“Yet another financial year is gone without making approval of the applications under the Economic Rehabilitation Scheme. At least 10 to 12 thousand disabled persons from all the 591 mandals have submitted online applications and are eagerly waiting to get approved by the government. Now, when the MLC elections have finally concluded, the government should initiate the process of approving the applications which are pending since 2018,” said Gorenkala Narsimha, President, National Platform for the Rights of Disabled (NPRD).

IIT-H unveils business innovation programme

HYDERABAD

BUSINESSES, whether big or small, must pivot their business models and strategies to stay relevant in the market. With unprecedented challenges emerging every day, strong leadership skills, a humane approach to building superior business models is imperative.

The Department of Entrepreneurship and Management of IIT-Hyderabad in collaboration with Business Design Lab has launched a certificate programme in ‘Business Model Innovation’ for businessmen, entrepreneurs, and senior design and strategy professionals.

The programme has two Action Learning Courses specially curated to enable business and venture leaders to handle these challenging

times, which demand tremendous tinkering and innovation. It aims to enable participants to identify opportunities and design real-time experiments for dis-

The programme has two Action Learning Courses specially curated to enable business and venture leaders to handle these challenging times, which demand tremendous tinkering and innovation

covering market needs and validate their riskiest assumptions.

The start-up and SME community must get immediate access to insights, guidance

and management expertise at an affordable price. Programme enrollment has started and is on a rolling basis. Participants are encouraged to submit their applications for consideration. This high engagement, cohort-based programme, has a maximum batch size of 20. Unlike low engagement virtual de-



livery, this programme uses research-based insights, methods, tools and guides to promote team collaboration.

It seeks to create an environment of collective thinking, leveraging a collaborative workspace to encourage the spirit of teamwork even during the much-talked-about WFH (work from home) period.

‘PRC gives some relief, but not satisfactory’

HANS NEWS SERVICE
HYDERABAD

THE CITU Telangana State committee has expressed the view that although the PRC announcement by Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has “given some relief, but it is not satisfactory.”

Committee leaders Chukka Ramulu and M Saibabu said in a statement that the PRC was not satisfactory because of the prolonged time (33 months) the government took to announce it. Besides, they said the it ignored many important problems of the employees. “Even while announcing it, KCR did not disclose the minimum wages,” they flayed.

The CITU leaders stated that the PRC was due in July 2018 and that the employees were dissatisfied because of the cut in fitment from 43 to 30 per cent now. Besides, there was no mention of the employees’ demand for scrapping the CPS and implement the old scheme.

Ramulu and Saibabu called for a deep assessment of the PRC and also the need for im-

CITU leaders say the PRC was due in July 2018 and that the employees are dissatisfied because of the cut in fitment from 43 to 30 per cent

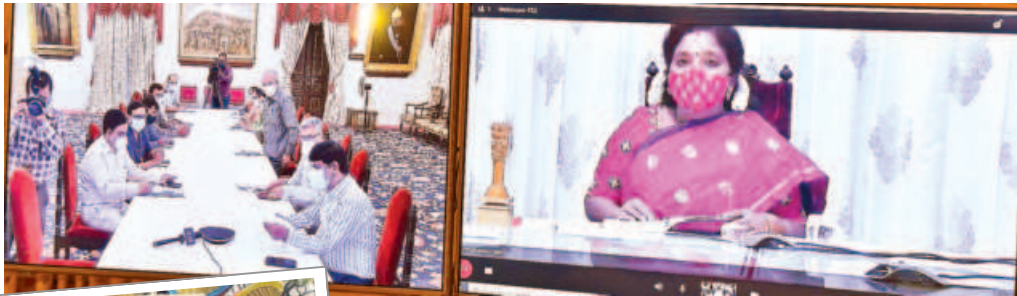
plementing the equal wages for equal work for workers in many sectors. They stated that it was not proper to extend the 180 wage-linked holidays to only some women employees. They said, “it is better that this holiday is extended to all women government staff. Also, there is a need for regularising the services of the contract and outsourcing employees working in various government departments.”

Guv calls for marketing push to tribal products

HYDERABAD

GOVERNOR Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Tuesday emphasised on the need for the better marketing of tribal products so as to ensure their financial empowerment. She stated that there were many exclusive and exquisite products made by the tribal people, and they need to be marketed intensively by creating special markets to sell their products. “Better promotion and marketing of their products will help them get deserving profits and will contribute for their economic empowerment,” she added.

The Governor, through video conference from Puducherry, where she is holding an additional charge as the Lt. Governor, was reviewing the developments related to Telangana State with the Raj Bhavan officials, here. She also asked the officials to explore the further marketing opportunities for tribal products with the help of the Tribal Cooperative Marketing Federation of India, which is known as the TRIFED. “Creating sustainable livelihoods and exploring national and international markets are vital for the economic development of tribal people,” she said.



The Governor reviewed the progress in the proposed nutritional intervention plan for the improvement of nutritional status of the tribal people in remote tribal habitations. The Raj Bhavan will soon initiate a baseline survey with the help of the National Institute of Nutrition (NIN), Hyderabad, and In-

dian Red Cross Society (IRCS) to chalk out a detailed action plan for the effective nutritional intervention programme for the benefit of the tribal population in select areas of the State. It will take care of the individual-wise and habitation-wise nutritional needs of the targeted beneficiaries.

Referring to the injuries to many spectators due to the collapse of a gallery during the inaugural of the 47th National Junior Kabaddi championship at Suryapet on Monday night, Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan expressed concern and asked the IRCS volunteers to extend all possible help to the injured. Secretary to Governor K Surendra Mohan and other senior officials apprised the Governor of the developments in the State during the video conference.



Better promotion and marketing of their products will help them get deserving profits and will contribute for their economic empowerment

Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan

Free training for rural youth in apparel sector

ATDC informs that over 100 students placed with Rs 15,000 salary

HYDERABAD

APPAREL Training and Design Centre (ATDC), the training wing of AEPC (Sponsored by Ministry of Textiles, GOI), in collaboration with EGMM, Telangana government, is providing a great opportunity for rural youth of Telangana. ATDC is offering a six month Industrial Engineering Executive Training Course under the DDU-GKY scheme. It is fully a residential programme. It is free of cost including lodging and boarding. This is a junior management course and the candidates will be placed in leading readymade garment manufacturing companies after successful training. ATDC has so far trained more than 100 students from various districts of Telangana. The students of the first batch are placed as industrial engineers and quality assessors in leading garment manufacturing companies in India with a starting salary of over Rs 15,000 per month.

ATDC invites applications for training and placement for eligible youth from SC and Minority communities belonging to the rural areas of Telangana.

Fast-track Vizag projects: CM



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewing Visakhapatnam project, Clean AP and facilities in Jagananna colonies at Tadepalli on Tuesday

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

CHIEF Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the authorities to pay special attention on keeping the state clean and to take measures for collection of garbage from time to time. He said the garbage would be collected from door to door and the government has procured 8,000 automatic trucks allotting two trucks to each ward and added that these trucks will be launched on July 8.

The Chief Minister reviewed CLAP (Clean Andhra Pradesh), infrastructure facilities in Jagananna colonies and prioritised projects in Visakhapatnam at his camp office here on Tuesday.

He said GPS and camera should be installed in every garbage collection truck and dustbins be set up at the end of each street. Steps should be taken for processing dry and wet garbage and treatment plants should be set up for sewage water, adding that focus should be on sanitation and hygiene in rural areas.

On development of infrastructure facilities in YSR Jagananna colonies, the Chief Minister said quality is very important in all the works in the colonies. An estimated 33,406 crore will be spent on roads, underground drains, drinking water supply, electricity and sanitation in colonies, including social infrastructure.

Reviewing prioritised projects in Visakhapatnam, the Chief Minister directed the officials to start the works of Bhogapuram airport, Beach Corridor Project, diversion of Godavari waters from Polavaram to Visakhapatnam through pipeline immediately and focus should be laid on Metro project after these projects.

Discussions were held on expansion of existing beach road from Visakhapatnam to Bhimili and construction of beach road from Bhimili to Bhogapuram. The Chief Minister ordered completion of land acquisition for construction of the road. The officials said the preliminary estimation for the road from Bhimili to Bhogapuram, including land acquisition, would be around Rs 1,167 crore. The Chief Minister told the of-

ficials to consider Beech Corridor Project as first prioritised project and start the works on a war footing.

Godavari pipeline project should be considered as priority, he said adding that an action plan was being prepared to meet the water needs of the city for next 30 years.

On Visakhapatnam Metro Rail Project, the officials said DPR was prepared for metro connectivity from Vizag steel plant gate to Bhogapuram covering 76.9 kilometre with 53 stations. Proposals were also made for 60.2 km tram corridor. It will have a total length of 137.1 km, including metro and tram. It is estimated that it will cost Rs 14,000 crore for construction of metro and Rs 6,000 crore for tram services. The Chief Minister stressed for best designs for metro and tram and said these projects should bring beauty to the city.

Municipal administration and urban development minister Botcha Satyanarayana, housing minister Cherukuvada Sriranganatha Raju and other officials took part.

HC refuses to issue orders on MPTC, ZPTC polls

HANS NEWS SERVICE
AMARAVATI

THE suspense over conducting MPTC, ZPTC elections during the term of present State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar ended on Tuesday with the High Court posting the next hearing on the matter to March 30, asking both the parties to file counters on the issue.

Buoyed by the victory in municipal and panchayat elections, the state government is eager to face parishad elections and insisting that SEC complete the process before Ramesh Kumar’s term ended on March 31. However, the SEC is not interested to resume the stalled process as opposition parties have been seeking fresh notification for MPTC, ZPTC elections and due to some legal issues.

Refusing to give interim orders on this issue, the High Court said that it can’t direct the State Election commission to conduct elections and issued notices to both state government and the SEC to file counters. The High Court asked the SEC to make it clear when it is going to conduct the elections.

It may be noted that the SEC N Ramesh Kumar, who reportedly applied for leave, joined immediately as the Assembly privilege committed served a notice to him asking him to make himself available for inquiry into alleged breach of privileges on the complaint of two ministers.

GST on TTD opposed

- Vijayasai wonders how can the BJP govt, a representative of Hindus, can impose tax on the Devasthanam Board that is only serving the people
- Says TTD is paying Rs 120 cr a year to the Centre while receiving only Rs 9 cr as input credit

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

YSRCP MP V Vijayasai Reddy here on Tuesday asked the Centre to stop discriminating against the TTD and withdrawal of the GST on the trust board. He wondered how could the BJP, a representative of the Hindus, impose GST on the Devasthanam Board that was rendering only seva (service) to the people.

Raising the issue in the Rajya Sabha while speaking on the Money Bill, Vijayasai Reddy said the TTD was paying the Centre Rs 120 crore towards GST every year but was getting back only Rs 9 crore as input credit. The AP government had exempted TTD as well as the temples in the state from paying taxes on the services extended to the devotees.

Though there was an exemp-

AP doesn’t qualify for SCS, reiterates Centre

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NEW DELHI

THE Centre has once again reiterated that Andhra Pradesh was not entitled to a Special Category Status (SCS) given the fact that it had been given a special financial package in lieu of it.

This was disclosed in the Lok Sabha by the Union minister of state for home, Nityanand Rai, here on Tuesday in response to the questions of the YSRCP MP Mithun Reddy and TDP MP K Rammoohan Naidu.

The two MPs had sought to know when would the state be conferred the SCS as had been promised in the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014. Mithun Reddy said the SCS was AP’s right irrespective of the package.

The Union minister stated as usual that the 14th Finance Com-

mission had ruled out the possibility of the status. As for the other provisions of the Act, the Centre had been keeping its word and all the other promises were being implemented. Some inter-state issues were pending and these had to be resolved by the states. Coming up with educational institutions would be time consuming, he added stating those were at various stages.

Minister of State for Home Nityananda Rai says 14th Finance Commission has ruled out the possibility

Administrative Tribunal) was also pending along with that of Mega Textiles Parks in Anantapur and Nellore and National Institute of Technology at Visakhapatnam, he said.

He sought continuation of NREGS works in coffee plantation areas of Araku as at least a lakh of tribals in the region were dependent on those. Hence, it should not be withdrawn, he said.

The MP was also told by the Union minister Prahlad Singh Patel that Rs 26.17 crore had been allocated for the Buddhist Circuit in AP.

‘Activist IPS’ Amitabh Thakur forced to retire in public interest

Thakur was suspended on July 13, 2015, days after he had accused Mulayam Singh of threatening him

NEW DELHI

Controversial IPS Officer Amitabh Thakur has been given premature retirement from his service after terming him "not fit" for service.

Once suspended by Uttar Pradesh Government in 2015 after he accused Samajwadi Party chief Mulayam Singh Yadav of "threatening" him, Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) on March 17 ordered him to retire.

The order copy was sent to the Uttar Pradesh government where Thakur was currently posted as an Inspector General of Police.

A 1992-batch IPS, Thakur was given retirement orders even before the completion of his service with immediate effect in the public interest.

"In the public interest, Amitabh Thakur is being given premature retirement before completion of his service with immediate effect," the Home Ministry order said.

As per the order, Thakur was "not found fit to be retained for the remaining tenure of his service".

Thakur took to Twitter to inform that he has been given a compulsory retirement by the Home Ministry. Thakur further shared that he had just received the VRS order, stating that the government no longer needs his services and hence given a premature retirement.

In 2017, Thakur had urged the Centre to dispose of his request for change of cadre, saying the "bias" against him does not exist anymore following the Samajwadi Party's rout in the polls.



Thakur had earlier sent an application to the Ministry of Home Affairs for a change of cadre from Uttar Pradesh to any other state, citing a threat to his life.

In a letter to the Secretary, Ministry of Home Affairs, he said: "I had sought cadre change in view of serious threat to my life and family after Mulayam Singh's phone call."

Thakur was suspended on July 13, 2015, days after he had accused Mulayam Singh of threatening him. The state government had then initiated a vigilance inquiry against him. However, the Lucknow Bench of the Central Administrative Tribunal had stayed the suspension of Thakur in April and ordered his reinstatement with full salary with effect from October 11, 2015.

Thakur had urged the Centre to transfer him to

some other state till the departmental inquiries against him got over, accusing some senior state government officials.

His wife Nutan, also a well-known activist, had filed a complaint against state mining and minerals minister Gayatri Prasad Prajapati, and the massive illegal property he had allegedly hoarded.

Amitabh, who hails from Sitamarhi in Bihar, is an IITian who joined the civil service. Fairly early in his career, he began to take up a range of causes and metamorphosed into an "officer-activist".

Along with his wife and fellow RTI activist Nutan, Amitabh wrought havoc in the politico-bureaucratic nexus by bombarding the system with RTIs and PILs, which led to the Allahabad HC - perhaps unfairly - declaring the couple to be "chronic petitioners".

‘STATES CAN IMPOSE CURB’

Ban on scheduled intl flights extended till April 30 midnight
Lucknow doctor tests positive after completing vaccine course

NEW DELHI

STATES can bring in restrictions locally, based on their assessment, but no activity will be restricted outside containment zones, the government said today in new guidelines to tackle a spike in Covid cases in parts of the country.

All states must strictly enforce the test-track-treat protocol and ensure Covid-appropriate behavior to check the spread of the coronavirus, say the Home Ministry's new guidelines, effective for the month of April.

DGCA extended the ban on scheduled international flights to April 30 midnight in wake of a second wave of Covid-19 sweeping many countries

The ban on scheduled international flights has once again been extended to April 30, 2020 midnight from its previous deadline of March 31, 2021, in wake of a second wave of Covid-19 both domestically and globally.

A Lucknow-based doctor has become the first person in Uttar Pradesh to test positive for Covid even after completing the two-dose course of the vaccine.

Nitin Mishra, emergency medical officer at the Civil hospital, had been vaccinated with Covaxin on February 15 and then March 16.

However, he developed a severe cough along with mild fever on March 18 and got himself tested on March 20.

The report revealed he was Covid19 positive and has isolated himself at home because he has only mild symptoms and regularly monitors his blood pressure and blood oxygen levels.

The total number of cases with the UK, South Africa and Brazil variants of SARS-CoV-2 in the country has reached 795, the Union Health Ministry said on Tuesday as India is witnessing a surge in COVID-19 cases.

From 400 cases reported on March 18, the infections by mutant strains have increased to 795 in the country. Minister of State for Health Ashwini Choubey told Rajya Sabha on March 16 that no case of reinfection by mutant variants of SARS-CoV-2 virus has been reported from India so far.

The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has ordered closure of all schools in view of the surge in number of Covid cases in the state.

Classes from 1 to 8 will remain suspended from March 24 to 31 for Holi vacation.

All other educational institutions, including schools between Classes 9 and 12, and higher education institutions where examinations are not scheduled, will be closed from March 25 to 31. Maharashtra, Punjab and Gujarat are turning out to be a major cause of worry as the three states are recording the highest daily new coronavirus cases.

India recorded 40,715 infections in the last 24 hours, 13 per cent lower than a day before, taking the total tally to 1,16,86,796 on Tuesday.



Jain sadhis receive Covid-19 dose in Surat on Tuesday



Pune's Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL) officials conduct investigation on the SUV, seized near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence laden with explosives, at NIA office, in Mumbai on Tuesday

Waze prime accused in Hiren case

MUMBAI

Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad (ATS) on Tuesday said suspended police officer Sachin Waze was a "prime accused" in the Mansukh Hiren murder case and it will approach the special NIA court here to get his custody. More arrests were likely in the case, said ATS chief Jai-jeet Singh.

Waze, arrested in connection with the recovery of explosives-laden SUV near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's residence in south Mumbai,

is currently in the custody of the National Investigation Agency (NIA). The NIA custody will expire on March 25. The ATS had last week arrested suspended policeman Vinayak Shinde and cricket bookie Naresh Gaur in the Hiren murder case. "After the arrest of both these men, ATS found Waze is a prime accused in the case and played a vital role," the ATS chief told reporters. "We need his custody and will approach the court on March 25," Singh added. Waze's statement was recorded in the Hiran case on March

8 when he flatly denied any role in the crime, but probe revealed that he was lying, the ATS chief said. It was Waze who had contacted Shinde when the latter walked out of jail on parole and took his help, he said. Gaur procured 14 SIM cards and some of them were activated and used in the crime, the ATS chief said. According to ATS, Shinde contacted Hiran, posing as 'Tawde saab from Mumbai crime branch' on the evening of March 4, the day before Hiren's body was found in a Thane creek.



The site of bombing by Maoist rebels in Narayanpur district on Tuesday

Five cops killed as Maoists blow up bus

RAIPUR

FIVE police personnel were killed and 13 others injured as Maoists blew up the bus in which they were traveling in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Tuesday, senior police officials said. The landmine explosion took place between Kanhargaoon and Kadenar villages under Dhaudai police station limits.

Personnel of the police's District Reserve Guard (DRG) were returning in the bus to Naryanpur town, 300 km away from capital Raipur, after a counter-insurgency operation, said Inspector General of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraaj P. "Five DRG personnel, including the driver, were killed in the explosion," he told PTI. Reinforcement was rushed to the spot and bodies and injured personnel were evacuated from the forest. The injured personnel are being airlifted to Raipur in an Indian Air Force chopper for treatment, the IG added.

Earlier while confirming the incident, state's Director General of Police D M Awasthi had said over 20 security personnel were onboard the bus.

The bus was passing along the under-construction Barsoor-Palli road which is surrounded by dense forest of Abhujmad when the Maoists triggered a landmine blast near a culvert, said a police official.

KOLKATA/CHENNAI

THE West Bengal BJP released what could be its final list of candidates for the upcoming Assembly polls. It has 13 names - but no Mithun Chakraborty. From Rashbehari, the seat many believed was reserved for the 'Dada' of Bengali cinema, the party has fielded retired Lieutenant General Subrata Saha, who was in charge of Kashmir during crucial years.

BJP leaders had earlier said that the prestigious south Kolkata seat was being kept open for the actor ever since he shared the dais with Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the BJP's mega Brigade Parade Ground rally in Kolkata on March 7.

Several from a fisher community spread across five constituencies of Pudukcherry's Karaikal region have threatened to boycott the April 6 Assembly elections if the demands they have raised were not met with.

Karaikal being a coastal region, has huge presence of fishermen community who has always voted in the elections. The area is an enclave of Pudukcherry state which is going to assembly elections along with neighbouring Tamil Nadu. John Jerry, a fisherman and leader of the United Fishermen Association told IANS: "We will not cast our votes in the upcoming assembly elections. We have raised demands for construction of roads and more facilities for fishing besides provision of drinking water -- that must be met."

The women of Karaikal are also adamant that they will not vote in the assembly elections. Marie Teresa, a fisherman from Nedungandam assembly constituency in Karaikal told IANS: "Every election the politicians come with a broad smile and we get to meet them only when next elections are announced. "This time we have decided not to cast our votes until our demands are met. There is no drinking water, no roads and no infrastructure, so why should we vote."



DMK Women's Wing Secretary Kanimozhi being welcomed by a supporter during an election campaign rally in support of the party's Thiruverumbur constituency candidate in Tiruchi district on Tuesday

‘Corrected NRC to protect true citizens’

New Delhi: BJP President J.P. Nadda on Tuesday said that party will work for a "corrected National Register of Citizens (NRC)" to protect genuine citizens of the country.

Nadda made the remarks after releasing the Bharatiya Janata Party manifesto for Assam, which came just four days before the state Assembly elections.

"For the rise and protection of Assam's rights, the BJP will work for a corrected NRC. As per the mandate of the Supreme Court, we protect citizens of India. We detect infiltrators so that civilisation of Assam is protected," he said.

NYAY will be tested in Kerala: Rahul

Kottayam: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, who has been pushing for Nyuntam Aay Yojana (NYAY) -- a proposed minimum income guarantee scheme, on Tuesday promised people in poll bound Kerala that the scheme will be "tested" in the southern state if the party-led UDF is voted to power. "I have a selfish reason to test it," Gandhi said. A sum of Rs 72,000 a year will go straight into beneficiaries bank account. "And we know what is going to happen next. We are testing a new idea in Kerala," Gandhi told party workers who gathered in large numbers around the campaign vehicle to listen to his speech.

This CPI nominee lives in a hut

CHENNAI

IN a political battle which has quite a few crorepatitis in fray, CPI's K Marimuthu is a relatively poor candidate, with the Left nominee having a few thousand rupees in his possession and lives in a hut.

Single phase polling to 234 Assembly constituencies is scheduled in Tamil Nadu on April 6 and the CPI is contesting from six seats as part of the DMK-led Secular Progressive Alliance. The party has fielded Marimuthu from the traditional left stronghold of Thiruthuraiipoondi, a reserved segment in Tiruvavur district.

While some of his own comrades contesting the polls have declared movable and immovable assets valued at a few crores of rupees, many other rivals even own swanky four-wheelers that could cost a fortune to many.

Marimuthu, living in a hut, is keen to serve people from Thiruthuraiipoondi. CPI has no representation in the outgoing Assembly.

Marimuthu's wife owns 75 cents of land while he has Rs 3,000 cash in hand, besides Rs 58,156 in bank balance.

His spouse has Rs 1,000 and total movable assets valued at Rs 79,304, according to the poll affidavit filed by the CPI nominee.

Her immovable assets total Rs 1.75 lakh while the aspiring legislator has none.

"People in my constituency are poor. They have no patta or means to build houses and so continue to live in huts," the 50-year-old Marimuthu told PTI.

While he has been in active politics since 1994, Marimuthu and his family reside in a hut in Kaduvakudi village and use earthen stove as they cannot afford to refill LPG.

Anti-CAA activist Gogoi claims NIA offered bail if he joins RSS, BJP

GUWAHATI

ANTI-CAA ACTIVIST Akhil Gogoi in a letter from jail on Tuesday alleged physical and mental torture in custody and claimed that he was offered instant bail by NIA interrogators if he joined either the RSS or BJP.

The letter released by Gogoi's newly floated political outfit Rajoor Dal said that the peasant leader was taken to Delhi on December 18, 2019 without the Court's permission.

"At the NIA headquarter, I was lodged in lockup no 1 and was given only one dirty blanket. I slept on the floor in 3-4 degree celsius of temperature," he claimed.

During interrogation, the NIA officials offered him instant bail if he joined the RSS, the letter claimed.

"When I was arguing against the insulting offer, they came out with another proposal of joining the BJP. They said I could contest the Assembly against a vacant seat and become a minister," Gogoi claimed.

The RTI activist also alleged that he was offered Rs 20 crore to start an NGO by leaving the peasant body Krishak Mukti Sangram Samiti (KMSS) and work against conversion of Assamese people into Christianity.

"When I did not accept any of their proposals, they offered me a meeting with the Chief Minister and an influential minister of Assam. I turned down that too," Gogoi said.

He alleged that when he accepted none of the NIA offers of the NIA, he was called a "disobedient citizen" as charged in extreme cases.



Meanwhile, Rukmini Mondal and Sikha, neighbours at a tiny hamlet Nandigram, Bengal, have stopped seeing eye to eye ever since they joined rival political parties. What had bound the two all these years was the grief that befell on them following the sexual abuse they faced during the anti-land acquisition movement in Nandigram, and the never-ending wait for justice thereafter.

Political colours have changed in this part of Bengal in the past 14 years, but justice continues to elude the women, who are at the crossroads this time, having reposed faith on two opposing camps, with a hope that their demands would be met. This obscure Nandigram village that had shaken the base of the mighty Left regime and propelled the TMC to power now stands divided between its "Didi and Dada", as

Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee has locked horns with her protg- turned-adversary and the face of farmers' protest, Suwendu Adhikari, in the constituency - set to go to polls on April 1.

More than 42 people were killed, including 14 who died in the police firing on March 14, 2007, and over 40 women raped during the ten-month-long bloody battle in then-little-known agrarian town.

With battle lines having been redrawn in Nandigram, which stands polarised along political and communal lines, the survivors, despite all differences, are keenly waiting for justice to be served.

"Didi has given us everything -- compensation, jobs and other benefits. But we have one regret that we didn't get justice. We want to see perpetrators languishing behind bars," Sikha told PTI.

TODAY'S QUOTE

Govt intends to give DBT on fertilisers

“THE intention of government is that fertiliser subsidy should go directly to the farmers’ bank account. But final decision is awaited on direct benefit transfer (DBT). We are eager that at the earliest it should be done. All the stakeholders need to be consulted, including state governments and farmers, to come to a conclusion how it could be done.”


— D V Sadananda Gowda, Union Minister



DIVESTMENT

Govt exits Tata Communications

THE government has exited Tata Communications Ltd (TCL) by selling about 26 per cent stake in the company for about Rs 8,846 crore as part of the disinvestment plan. Public sector company VSNL was privatised in 2002 by disinvesting 25 per cent shareholding along with transfer of management control to Panatone Finvest Ltd, the strategic partner.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)				
US Dollar	73.14	South		
Euro	86.89	African Rand		5.61
UAE Dirham	20.31	Hong Kong Dollar		10.72
Thai Baht	2.57	Japanese Yen		0.77
British Pound	100.76	New Zealand Dollar		51.46
Australian Dollar	56.1	Saudi Riyal		21.23
Canadian Dollar	58.15	Swedish Krona		9.72
Swiss Franc	78.67	Singapore Dollar		55.01

DELHI WEDNESDAY 24 MARCH 2021

BIZ BRIEFS

Itel's VIP offer on vision 1PRO

ITELE has announced a VIP offer on ITEL vision 1 PRO where consumers can avail free one-time screen replacement of a broken screen within 100 days of purchase. The offer comes with the latest stock of flagship smartphone ITEL vision 1 PRO that comes with a VIP card to avail the scheme. The users can repair the damaged or broken screen of their smartphones at all authorized Caricare service centres, without paying any additional amount. Arijet Talapatra, CEO, Transion India said: “We recognise that people spend a considerable amount of money to buy smartphones and are always concerned about high screen replacement costs, in case of damage. The latest scheme has been rolled out to offer our vision 1 PRO users with one-time screen replacement without paying any additional amount.”

Classplus for online teachers

CLASSPLUS is a simple tech platform that helps educators create their own brand online through a mobile app, making it a quick and seamless experience for them to take live classes, share study material, and even sell their courses online. In the past eight months, the company enabled 2000+ teachers across Telangana to adopt the online teaching approach and go national. MSN Mohan and Bhavani Sankar from Guntur are two of these 2000+ teachers in Andhra Pradesh currently using the platform. “We have seen teachers in cities like Kurnool, Guntur, and Vijayawada use and appreciate our platform which is why we have decided to shift focus to the untapped markets of South India. The new age students prefer learning on their computers and smartphones and to help them realise their full potential,” says Mukul Rustagi, Co-Founder, Classplus.

Hyundai releases Alcazar's design

HYUNDAI Motor India Ltd (HMIL) has released the design sketches of its most anticipated 7-seater premium SUV Hyundai Alcazar. Developed on Hyundai's global design identity of sensuous sportiness, the 7-seater synchronises vital design elements of proportion, architecture, styling and technology and portrays a confident and bold stance, while its charismatic appeal and rugged elegance characterizes a unique design theme that is extraordinary among the ordinary. With rich yet solid volume wheel arches and bold character lines, Hyundai Alcazar epitomises a masculine expression of design and dynamic proportions. Hyundai will offer its customers superior mobility experiences. The finest characteristics of space innovation that ensures ample room for 2nd and 3rd row passengers.

Cancer Clinics raises \$1.5 mn

CANCER Clinics, a unit of CIPHER Oncology Private Ltd and digital cancer institute launched to tackle the mounting cancer burden in emerging economies, closed pre-Series A funding of \$1.5 mn led by Axilor Ventures. M- Venture Partners (MVP), a Singapore-based early-stage fund, also participated marking its debut in India. Other investors, who participated include NATCO Pharma Limited, Hyderabad based pharma and infrastructure entrepreneurs, leaders of Bharti group, senior partners from McKinsey, and ISB alumni. Prachi Sinha, Healthcare Lead from Axilor says, “currently, even the meagre infrastructure for cancer treatment is largely urban and grossly inadequate.”

Bankers hail SC verdict on loan moratorium

Supreme Court's decision will have long-term impact on banks' independence in lending, says bankers

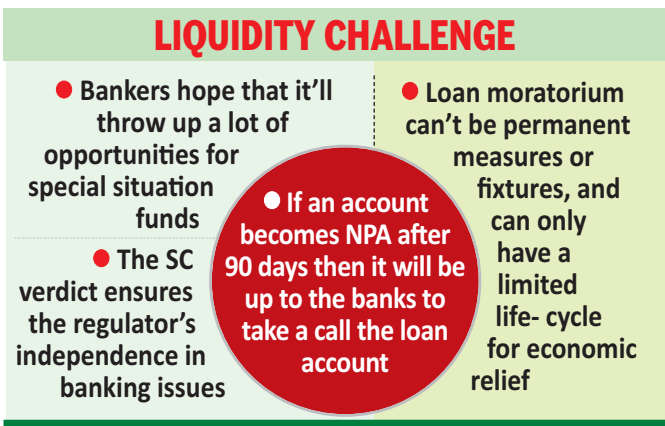
KUMUD DAS
MUMBAI

THE bankers and other stakeholders have welcomed the Supreme Court's order on loan moratorium and said that it will have long-term impact on the banks' independence in taking decisions for loans.

Moreover, experts opine that the SC verdict will throw up a lot of opportunities for special situation funds. Supreme Court bench comprising of three judges said providing complete interest waiver and extension of moratorium will have consequences for the economy. The Supreme Court has pronounced its judgment on a batch of pleas related to the six-month loan moratorium period, stating that it cannot allow waiver of complete interest and extension of the moratorium.

“The Supreme Court has recognized the supremacy of bank's role and has ensured the regulator's independence on the crucial matter which falls in line with global standards. If an account becomes NPA on completion of 90 days then it will be up to the banks concerned how to treat the loan account or if it should go for restructuring,” M Narendra, former CMD of Indian Overseas Bank told Bizz Buzz.

Experts are also of the view that moratorium, which was given for



a limited period in a special situation, cannot be permanent fixtures in any case.

“Government of India and the RBI through it various schemes and subsidies have been mindful of the anticipated liquidity challenges and related impact, which Covid-19 may have had on the ability of borrowers to continue operating in the ordinary course. Having said that temporary meas-

ures viz. the moratorium, introduced to tide over such exigencies like the pandemic, cannot be permanent measures or fixtures, and can only have a limited life-cycle for economic relief,” said Uttara Kolhatkar, Partner, J Sagar Associates. The judicial machinery cannot go beyond its brief. Courts cannot usurp the jurisdiction of decision makers in the garb of Judicial Review. Each wing of the State has the power to act in its own sphere of activity. Courts do not and cannot act as appellate authorities examining the correctness, suitability and appropriateness of a policy nor are courts advisors to the executive wing on matters of policy which the executive is entitled to formulate. Courts cannot usurp or abdicate, he added.

Market rebounds on SC verdict on moratorium

MUMBAI

EQUITY indices regained their footing on Tuesday, propelled by banking stocks which surged after the Supreme Court declined to extend the loan moratorium period and said complete waiver of interest is not possible.

Reversing last session's losses, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 280.15 points or 0.56 per cent higher at 50,051.44. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty advanced 78.35 points or 0.53 per cent to close at 14,814.75. UltraT-each Cement was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 3.06 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank, Titan, Axis Bank, SBI and Reliance Industries.

On the other hand, ONGC, PowerGrid, ITC, NTPC, M&M and HDFC were among the laggards, shedding up to 2.28 per cent. The apex court on Tuesday refused to interfere with the



Centre's and the RBI's decision to not extend the loan moratorium beyond August 31 last year, saying it is a policy decision.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said that the top court cannot do judicial review of the Centre's financial policy decision unless it is malafide and arbitrary. It also directed that no compound or penal interest be charged during the six-month moratorium period, but added that complete waiver of interest is not possible as it will have huge financial implications. “Domestic market ended the day on a strong footing supported by a rally in banking stocks amidst weak cues from global markets. Sentiments in the banking stocks were lifted post Supreme Court's order against granting interest waiver and extension of moratorium period. While its decision to not charge compound interest added a minor concern in the banking space.

Olectra electric buses deployed in Goa

Kadamba Transport deploys these electric buses for public transport in that State

HANS BUSINESS
HYDERABAD

GOA Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant flagged off a fleet of 50 electric buses manufactured by Hyderabad-based Olectra Greentech Limited. Goa's Kadamba Transport deployed these electric buses for public transport in that State.

Olectra, a part of MEIL Group, is India's first electric bus manufacturer for operating and deploying electric buses for public transport in the country. It stands as India's leading electric bus manufacturer with the highest market share in this segment. Olectra has already deployed over 320 electric buses in various state transport undertakings (STUs) in India. Further, it has orders for the deployment of 1,225 electric buses in India.

KV Pradeep, Group Director, MEIL (Olectra Greentech), said, “Olectra is proud and thankful to



Goa Chief Minister Dr Pramod Sawant flagging off electric buses in Goa on Tuesday

Kadamba for giving the opportunity to operate its world-class electric buses in Goa. Our buses would now contribute to preserving the rich ecology of Goa. Olectra committed to its efforts to reduce pollution levels through an efficient electric public transport system. We are sure that, like

other states, our 50 electric buses will be successful in the Goa State.”

Our electric buses have already proved its reliability and efficiency as it has been successfully deployed in Mumbai, Pune, Nagpur, Hyderabad, Surat, Silvassa, Dehradun and Kerala, he added.

CEOs don't expect to see return to 'normal' until 2022

NEW DELHI

THE CEOs of the world's most influential companies are planning what the 'new reality' will look like post-pandemic. The 2021 KPMG CEO Outlook Pulse Survey finds that almost half (45 per cent) of global executives do not expect to see a return to a 'normal' course of business until sometime in 2022, as opposed to nearly one-third (31 per cent) who anticipate this will happen later this year.

As the changes prompted by the pandemic resulted in one-quarter (24 per cent) of CEOs saying that their business model has been changed forever by the global pandemic. The study conducted by KPMG in February and March of this year asked 500 global CEOs about their response to the pandemic and the outlook over a 3-year horizon. A majority (55 per cent) of CEOs are concerned about employees' access to a Covid-19 vaccine, which is influencing their outlook of when employees will return to the workplace. A significant majority (90 per cent) of CEOs are considering asking employees to report when they have been vaccinated, which may help organisations consider measures to protect their workforce. However, one-third (34 per cent) of global executives

24% of the global executives says their business model has been changed forever by the global pandemic



are worried about misinformation on Covid-19 vaccine safety and the potential this may have on employees choosing not to have it administered.

Bill Thomas, Global Chairman & CEO, KPMG, said: “Before any major decisions are made, CEOs want to be confident that their workforce is protected against this virus. The Covid-19 vaccine rollout is providing leaders with a dose of optimism as they prepare for a new reality. CEOs are scenario planning for difference across certain key markets that could impact their operations, supply chains and people, leading to uneven economic recovery.

“Our research shows that some executives have taken strong measures during the crisis to transform their operating model and ways of working, accelerating the rollout of key transformational projects, some by choice, some out of necessity.”

VSEZ approves greenfield, brownfield investments

VISAKHAPATNAM

UNIT Approval Committee (UAC) of Visakhapatnam SEZ (VSEZ) held a meeting virtually for Telangana, and approved setting up of a few SEZ units and expansion of existing IT/ITES based units. There are a total of 61 SEZs operational under VSEZ as on date with 526 units operational there out of which 30 SEZs fall under the IT sector. Twenty six out of them are operational. The last UAC meeting of VSEZ for the FY 2020-21, held on Monday under the chairmanship of VSEZ Development Commissioner A Rama Mohan Reddy, approved setting up of two new units namely Legato Health Technologies LLP (Unit-3) in Phoenix Infocity Pvt. Ltd, SEZ, and Rocksalt Interactive Games P Ltd in NSL SEZ (Hyd) Pvt Ltd, in Ranga Reddy district. Similarly, two units sought for expansion of existing IT/ITES are Ascent Business Solutions and Infosys (Unit-7) both located in NSL SEZ (Hyderabad) Pvt Ltd, in IDA Upal in Ranga Reddy district of TS.

Startups change corporate landscape

Growth for the Indian startup ecosystem has accelerated as well, making India home to the third-largest set of unicorns globally, behind the US and China, and commanding a total valuation of \$90 billion

NEW DELHI

INDIA's fast-growing community of unicorns - privately-owned companies - valued over \$1 billion, are now driving radical change in the country's corporate landscape moving at an unprecedented pace creating in excess of \$240 billion in value, Credit Suisse said on Tuesday.

A special Credit Suisse report on India unicorns delves into India's 100-strong unicorn market and what India's startup boom means for the economy and the corporate landscape.

According to the research report, an unprecedented pace of new-company formation and innovation in a variety of sectors resulted in a surge in the number of highly valued and as-yet-unlisted companies.

Against 336 listed companies with a \$1 billion market capitalisation, there are now 100 unicorns in



India with a combined market capitalisation of \$240 billion.

“Our research found 100 unicorns in India in a diverse set of industries, including technology and tech-enabled sectors, such as, pharmaceuticals/biotech and consumer goods, benefiting from formalization and accelerating digital adoption. Fast-growing and innovative (unlisted) firms are sprouting up in

new sectors as well as locations across India, rapidly gaining scale as they ride unique growth opportunities from digital public infrastructure and partnerships,” said Neelkanth Mishra, Co-Head of Equity Strategy, Asia Pacific and India Equity Strategist at Credit Suisse.

The Credit Suisse research found out that the sectoral split is highly diversified for the 100 Indian uni-

corns in addition to the largely expected e-commerce, financial technology (FinTech), education technology, food delivery, and mobility companies. Furthermore, there is a rapidly growing number of firms in industries such as Software-as-a-Service (SaaS), gaming, new-age distribution and logistics, modern trade, biotech, and pharmaceuticals. Even fast-growing consumer brands have benefitted from accelerating internet penetration and formalization of sectors.

Along with the rapidly growing economy, the market capitalization of listed equities in India has risen too, making India the eighth-largest market globally. Growth for the Indian start-up ecosystem has accelerated as well, making India home to the third-largest set of unicorns globally, behind the US and China, and commanding a total valuation of \$90 billion.

AND THE AWARD GOES TO...



Raj Kiran Rai G (3rd from left), MD and CEO, Union Bank, and Rother EDs of the bank, receiving an award from Indian Banks' Association (IBA) in the category “The best IT Risk Management and Cyber Security Initiatives – Large Bank” in Mumbai on Tuesday. Union Bank received this recognition for its efforts for implementing best security practices and IT risk management across enterprise wide network and digital channels. The Bank is having a total network of 9590+ branches and 13280+ ATMs across India. The bank has been bringing awareness about Cyber Security amongst Customers as well as the Staff members through various media and knowledge building exercises



India hammer England by 66

PUNE

INDIA outplayed world champions England by 66 runs in the opening ODI here on Tuesday to take a 1-0 lead in the three-match series.

Chasing a steep 317-run target for victory, England folded for 251 in 42.1 overs despite making a dazzling start. Rookie pacer Prasidh Krishna turned it around remarkably after being taken to the cleaners early on to register figures of 4/54 in 8.1 overs, the best by a debutant.

For England, opener Jonny Bairstow top-scored with a 66-ball 94. His 135-run opening stand with Jason Roy (46) put England in a commanding position before there it all unravelled for the visitors.

Earlier put in to bat, India produced a solid batting performance. Shikhar Dhawan delivered under pressure with a solid 98 before Krunal Pandya smashed the fastest fifty by a debutant to fire India to 317 for five. After Dhawan and Virat Kohli (56 off 60) shared 105 runs for the second wicket, Krunal (58 not out off 31) and K L Rahul (62 not out off 43) sent England on a leather hunt with their unbeaten 112-run stand off 57 balls.

Dhawan hammered 11 fours and two sixes in his 106-ball knock while Krunal plundered seven fours and two maximums in his entertaining innings. Rahul also got welcome runs after a lean run in the T20 series.

Put into bat here, Rohit Sharma (28 off 42) and Dhawan shared 64 runs for the opening wicket. Dhawan hammered two successive fours, a square-cut and drive, in the seventh over, while Rohit struck two successive boundaries in the ninth over.

Dhawan, who has lost his place in the playing eleven for

T20s, got a 'life' when hooked over fine-leg to get his fourth boundary. India were placed at 64/0 after 15 overs. However, Rohit soon perished, after getting an outside edge to wicket-keeper Jos Buttler off Stokes.

Skipper Kohli joined Dhawan and the two rallied the innings. Kohli got his first boundary, a cover drive, on the 17th ball and was in his elements as he relied on drives and pulls. Dhawan brought up his fifty, with a maximum, a slog-sweep, off 68 balls, in

the 24th over, and then changed gears. Dhawan got another life after Moeen Ali dropped a sitter at deep-mid-wicket off Adil Rashid.

Kohli and Dhawan took on Ali, as the 29th over fetched India 15 runs. Kohli, who raced to his 61st ODI fifty in 50 balls, was dismissed, after he was caught in the deep off pacer Mark Wood (2/75). India lost their way in the middle overs before Krunal and Rahul went on the offensive. Dhawan pulled one straight to Eoin Morgan at mid-wicket to miss out on a hundred.

Sam Billings went off the field after hurting his shoulder.

Battle of brothers: India's Pandyas vs England's Currans

PUNE: India and England on Tuesday fielded a pair of brothers in their respective XIs for the first ODI. While England featured Tom and Sam Curran, the Indian team featured Krunal and Hardik Pandya at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium on Tuesday.

Krunal and Hardik are the third pair of brothers to play ODIs for India after Mohinder and Surinder Amarnath and Irfan and Yusuf Pathan. The Amarnaths had played three ODIs together while Irfan and Yusuf played eight ODIs and as many T20s.

Meanwhile, Tom and Sam Curran were the first pair of brothers to play an ODI for England when

Handing debuts to young cricketers continues to pay off for India

PUNE

INDIA'S decision to hand out debuts paid dividends once again on Tuesday when all-rounder Krunal Pandya returned with the fastest-ever half-century on ODI debut, against England, here. Pandya's fearless attack and him catching the English bowlers by surprise in the first ODI at the Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium comes after India found fruitful returns from other debutants over the last few months.

Washington Sundar was handed debut in the fourth and final Test in Australia in Brisbane and he responded with four wickets besides scoring 62 and 22. The 62 Sundar made in the first innings of the fourth Test came in a match-turning partnership with Shardul Thakur, who was playing only his second Test -- first after 2018 -- and made 67 while also picking seven wickets.

T. Natarajan, who made his international debut across all formats in Australia -- T20I, ODI and Test, also played his first Test in Brisbane and picked three wickets in the first innings.

India had earlier on that Australia series handed India caps to pace bowler Mohammed Siraj, opener Shubman Gill and pacer Navdeep Saini. All of them had played limited overs cricket before.

Siraj and Gill played key roles in helping India win the Test series. Siraj bowled the most number of overs by an Indian in that series and returned as their highest wicket-taker with 13 scalps. Gill got 259 runs at an average of 51.8 with two half-centuries. On return home, India began their Test series against England with a loss. But they brought in Axar Patel, handing him a Test cap. Patel clicked, picking 27 wickets in three wickets to play the lead role in India winning the four match Test series 3-1.

The experimentation continued in the T20 International series with Ishan Kishan and Suryakumar Yadav playing their first-ever international matches although they had already been household names through their exploits in the Indian Premier League while representing the Mumbai Indians. Both Yadav and Kishan scored half-centuries in their first international knocks, Yadav scoring 57 off 31 in his second T20I -- he hadn't batted in the first. Kishan had made 56 off 32 balls while opening in his debut knock.

In Tuesday's first ODI against England, Krunal scored a half-century while pace bowler M. Prasidh Krishna was among wickets, picking the first two of English wickets. In early 2000s, India under Sourav Ganguly also blooded many youngsters who eventually became the core of a strong India team that went on to win the 2007 T20 World Cup as well as the 50-over world cup in 2011 at home.

Yuvraj Singh and Zaheer Khan made their ODI debut in the same match, the pre-quarterfinal against Kenya in the ICC Knockout Trophy, now known as the Champions Trophy. Harbhajan, who had made his debut in Tests and ODIs in 1998 also got into the groove towards the turn of the century.

Before that, Rahul Dravid and Ganguly had made their Test debuts on the 1996 tour of England and performed well to establish themselves as India's batting greats. However, so many

1 ST ODI SCOREBOARD	
India	
Rohit Sharma c Jos Buttler b Stokes.....	28
S Dhawan c Morgan b Stokes	98
V Kohli c Moeen b Mark Wood	56
S Iyer c (sub) Livingstone b M Wood	6
KL Rahul not out	62
Hardik Pandya c Bairstow b Stokes	1
Krunal Pandya not out	58
Extras: (LB-3, W-5)	8
Total: (5 wkts, 50 Overs)	317
Fall of Wickets: 64-1, 169-2, 187-3, 197-4, 205-5	
Bowling: Mark Wood 10-1-75-2, Sam Curran 10-1-48-0, Tom Curran 10-0-63-0, Ben Stokes 8-1-34-3, Adil Rashid 9-0-66-0, Moeen Ali 3-0-28-0.	
England	
J Roy c sub (SA Yadav) b P Krishna.....	46
J Bairstow c Kuldeep Yadav b Thakur.....	94
B Stokes c sub (Gill) b P Krishna.....	1
Eoin Morgan c Rahul b Thakur	22
J Buttler lbw b Thakur	2
S Billings c Kohli b P Krishna	18
Moeen Ali c Rahul b Kumar.....	30
Sam Curran c sub (Gill) b KH Pandya	12
Tom Curran c Kumar b P Krishna.....	11
Adil Rashid c Rahul b Kumar	0
Mark Wood not out	2
Extras (lb 3, w 10)	13
Total (All out in 42.1 overs)	251
Fall of wickets: 1-135, 2-137, 3-169, 4-175, 5-176, 6-217, 7-237, 8-239, 9-241, 10-251	
Bowling: Bhuvneshwar Kumar 9-0-30-2, Prasidh Krishna 8.1-1-54-4, Shardul Thakur 6-0-37-3, Krunal Pandya 10-0-59-	



India's Krunal Pandya plays a shot during the first ODI against England at Maharashtra Cricket Association Stadium, in Pune on Tuesday

In a first, BCCI conducts Level 2 coaching courses for India, domestic cricketers

NEW DELHI

IN a first of its kind initiative, the BCCI has conducted two Fast Track Level 2 courses for cricketers who have played over 75 first-class games, including India internationals L Balaji, Robin Uthappa and current selector Debashish Mohanty.

Phase 1 of the course was delivered online over four days considering the COVID-19 situation, followed by Phase 2, which was conducted at the National Cricket Academy from March 16-19.

The other attendees included former India players Hrishikesh Kanitkar, Abhinav Mukund, Ramesh Powar, former selector Sarandeep Singh, Wasim Jaffer and Vinay Kumar.

Topics covered included "Skill Acquisition, Applied Biomechanics in Pace Bowling, Spin Bowling, Batting, Wicket-Keeping, Building Social and Personal Competence, Video Analysis etc".

"The experience gained through the rigours of playing first-class and international cricket coupled with knowledge of the technical and tactical intricacies of our game makes for a great combination for a coach," said BCCI president Sourav Ganguly in a statement.

"I believe we have some of the best coaching talents in the world and these courses conducted by the NCA will greatly benefit not only those that have participated in it but also the next generation of cricketers who will be coached by these coaches." PTI



કપિલ્ ચિલ્ડ્ઝ ટૉ
પ્રેમિ બંધં એન્ડે ષલુવૈનલ

નમ્મુકં મીદ ષલબડેન બંધં ચાલા બલમૈનલ

“ કપિલ્ ચિલ્ડ્ઝ ” મી કલલકુ સૌકારં.