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89 fresh cases, 4 deaths in Delhi

NEW DELHI: The national capital reported 89 cases of COVID-19 and four deaths on Sunday as the positivity rate dipped to 0.12 per cent, according to data shared by the health department here. Delhi has so far recorded 14,33,934 coronavirus cases. Of this, over 14.07 lakh patients have recovered while the death toll stands at 24,965. According to the health bulletin released on Sunday, 170 COVID-19 cases from earlier weeks were added to the tally in the ICMR portal on Saturday by Central Jail Hospital, Tihar Prisons. On Saturday, the city reported 85 cases of coronavirus, the lowest daily count this year, with a positivity rate of 0.12 per cent and nine deaths.

Rotary to plant 15 lakh saplings

CHANDIGARH: Rotary International District 3080 on Sunday announced to plant 15 lakh saplings here. This was stated by Ajay Madan who will take over as Rotary District Governor on July 1. Addressing over 500 Rotary leaders at the virtual Rotary District Training Assembly, Madan said nearly 3,500 Rotarians in District 3080 and the new leaders are all geared to "Serve to Change Lives", Rotary International's theme. He said this year the fourth Indian in Rotary's 116th years of service, Shekhar Mehta from Kolkata, would take up the leadership of 1.2 million Rotarians of the world.

Two arrested for stabbing man

NEW DELHI: Two men were arrested on Sunday for allegedly stabbing a 42-year-old man to death over a personal enmity in southeast Delhi's Govindpuri area, police said. Accused Rahul, along with his friend Babu, killed one Hari Kishan on Friday and fled to Uttar Pradesh's Agra, where they had been hiding. Rahul is the son of the victim's brother-in-law. With the help of technical surveillance and source based inputs, the accused duo was nabbed from Agra, police said. Both Rahul and Hari Kishan had developed enmity over a family dispute, which led to the murder, they added. On Friday evening, when the accused duo got an opportunity, they confronted the victim inside the lane near his house during which Kishan, who was under the influence of alcohol, tired to attack them with a beer bottle.

SCHOOLS TO REMAIN SHUT, SAYS CENTRE AND STATES

NEW DELHI

Even as the second wave of Covid-19 pandemic across the country is slowly receding with each passing day, the Centre and the state governments have decided not to allow schools to be reopened yet. Experts have now predicted a third wave of the pandemic, however, many students, parents and parent organisations want schools to be opened in such places where the outbreak of Covid-19 is under control. Ashok Agarwal, All India Parents Association President, told IANS, "According to an estimate, nearly 30 per cent of the students

studying in government schools are 'school dropouts'. We should not ignore the fact that the best and the safest place for children is school. The closure of schools for a longer period of time has given rise to social evils and other abuses like child labour, sexual harassment, diseases etc."

"When all other economic activities have resumed during the unlocking of the lockdown, why can't schools be opened. The Delhi government must reopen schools with 50 per cent occupancy following the necessary Covid protocol. Schools could be closed at any time if necessary," Agarwal said.

The All India Parents Association, which is



a nationwide organisation of parents, told IANS, "All ration stores, vaccination centres, ration and food distribution centres should be shifted from Delhi government schools immediately. Schools should be reopened for students with immediate effect. Twenty-five lakh students of Delhi alone are not able to avail of regular education since March 2020."

According to a survey, more than 70 per cent of parents in the country still do not want to send their ward to school. These parents say that schools should not be opened till the coronavirus situation in their areas is completely under control. On the other hand, 30 per cent parents are ready to

send their children to school.

Delhi deputy chief minister and education minister, Manish Sisodia, said the schools will remain closed in the national capital till the Covid-19 situation normalises. However, the interaction between teachers and students using online and semi-online means will resume soon.

Parents of many students studying in government schools across Delhi have demanded from chief minister Arvind Kejriwal to start online studies for all classes. One parent, Vimlendra Singh, said, "Teachers in government schools send recorded videos on mobile phones.

FIR registered under UAPA in IAF station blast case

JAMMU

An FIR was registered Sunday under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act after two explosives-laden drones crashed into the IAF station at Jammu airport, officials said, while indicating the case may be taken over by the terror probe agency NIA. The drones crashed into the IAF station at Jammu airport in the early hours of Sunday, perhaps the first time that suspected Pakistan-based terrorists have used unmanned aerial vehicles in an attack, the officials said.

An FIR was registered under relevant sections of the Explosive Substances Act, Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act and the Indian Penal Code (IPC) at Satwari police station on the application of a junior warrant officer of the IAF, the officials said. "The NIA is likely to take over the case. They are already supervising the investigation at the scene of the blast after joining the probe," one of the officials said. He said an FIR was registered under UAPA sections 13/16/18/23 of the (unlawful activities/terrorist act/conspiracy/enhanced penalties), and IPC section 120-B (criminal conspiracy). Sections 3 and 4 of the Explosive Substances



Act (causing explosion likely to endanger life or property/attempt to cause explosion, or for making or keeping explosive with intent to endanger life or property) have also been included.

The explosions took place around 1.40 am within six minutes of each other. The first blast ripped off the roof of a single-storey building at the high security technical area of the airport manned by the IAF in Satwari area of the city. The second one was

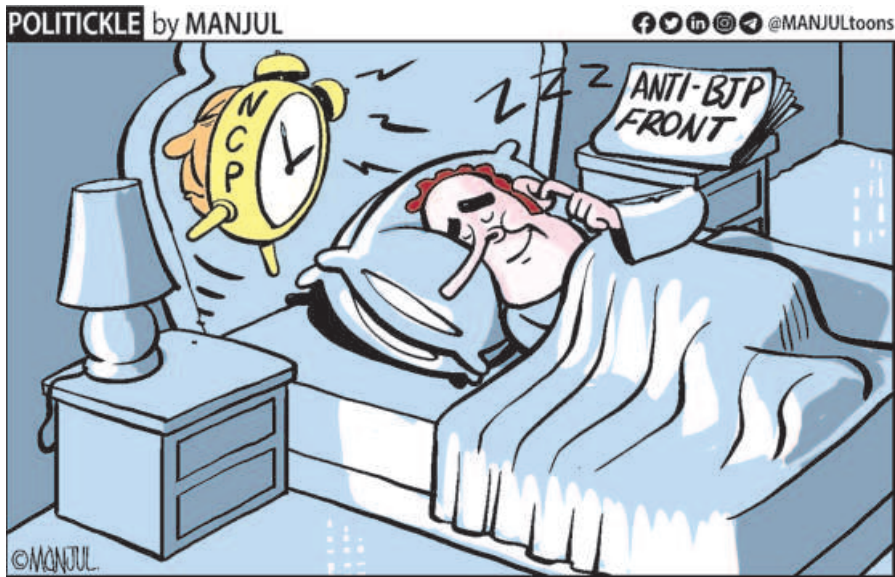
on the ground, the officials said. Two IAF personnel were injured in the incident, which Jammu and Kashmir police chief Dilbag Singh has termed a "terror attack". Probe teams from the IAF and Special Forces have also visited the scene along with forensic experts to investigate the nature of the blast and collect evidence, they said. Meanwhile, a battery of media-persons camped outside the main gate of the IAF station hit by the twin blasts.

One more held in stadium brawl case

NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police's Crime Branch has arrested a 22-year-old man in connection with the Chhatrasal Stadium brawl involving Olympic medallist Sushil Kumar in which a wrestler died and his two friends were injured, officials said on Sunday. The accused, Haryana-native Gourav Lora, is also a wrestler. He was living in Najafgarh's Baprola village. Lora was arrested around 9.30 pm on June 26. He was produced before Rohini court here which remanded him in police custody for two days, said Deputy Commissioner of Police (Crime) Monika Bhardwaj. A senior po-

lice officer said, "He was found to be involved in the incident at Chhatrasal Stadium here. He engaged in the fight along with others leading to the death of the young wrestler." Sushil Kumar and his associates allegedly assaulted wrestler Sagar Dhankar and two of his friends Sonu and Amit Kumar on the intervening night of May 4 and 5 over a property dispute. Dhankar, 23, succumbed to injuries later. The two-time Olympic medallist wrestler was arrested, along with co-accused Ajay Kumar, on May 23 from outer Delhi's Mundka area. Police said 12 accused people, including Kumar, have so far been arrested in connection with the case.



Shed vaccine hesitancy: Modi

NEW DELHI

Cautioning people that the threat of COVID-19 remains, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday urged them to shed vaccine hesitancy and get themselves inoculated soon. In his monthly Mann ki Baat broadcast, Modi sought to tackle vaccine hesitancy, which has been seen in a section of the population, and spoke to some residents of Dulariya village, a tribal area in Betul district of Madhya Pradesh, as they shared fears and doubts being spread about the jabs.

The prime minister noted that both he and his nearly 100-year-old mother have taken both doses of the vaccine and asked people to trust science and scientists, and to work to dispel rumours. If someone says corona is gone, do not be under this mistaken notion, Modi said, adding that the virus ailment is a "master of disguise" which surfaces in myriad new forms, a reference to its mutants. "And to protect ourselves from it, we have two ways. One is adhering to the protocol for corona: wearing a mask, frequently washing hands with soap, maintaining social distancing. The other way is, along with all this, getting vaccinated. This too



is a good safety shield," he said. Modi hailed the feat of administering over 86 lakh vaccine doses in a single day on June 21 at the start of the new phase of inoculation under which all adults are being given free jabs by the Union government. Over 31 crore people have got themselves vaccinated so far, he noted.

With the National Doctors Day falling on July 1, Modi lauded the contribution of doctors in the corona period and said the day has become all the more special this time. He also paid tributes to Guru Prasad Mohapatra, secretary in his government who died due to Covid recently, saying that the officer worked overtime

to make arrangements to ramp up oxygen production and supply during the recent wave even as he was battling the disease himself.

"Corona has snatched him away from us. There are countless people who have never been discussed. Our tribute to every such person would be that we follow the Covid protocol fully, get our vaccinations done," Modi said. With the Monsoon season gathering pace, the prime minister also stressed on water conservation and likened it to serving the nation. In this context, he mentioned Satchidanand Bharti of Pauri Garhwal in Uttarakhand, a teacher whose hard work, Modi added.

Centre will not reject demand for restoration of statehood: Azad

NEW DELHI: Senior Congress leader Ghulam Nabi Azad on Sunday expressed optimism that the Centre would not reject the demand of the mainstream political parties in Jammu and Kashmir for restoration of statehood before the polls, adding the union territory status of the erstwhile state was "not acceptable" to anyone.

Azad, who was part of a 14-member delegation from J and K that had a key meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Thursday, said the dialogue process "was only a beginning" and now it was up to the Centre to build trust and confidence in the erstwhile state. "One thing was there that everybody was asked to speak frankly. I think all the leaders spoke very frankly and the important thing is there was no ill will towards anyone," Azad, a former chief minister, told PTI in an interview. Azad, 72, said he had made it clear at the meeting that the union territory status of Jammu and Kashmir is not acceptable for which every political leader extended support.

Delhi needs 45L doses in July to keep up pace

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi government has informed the Centre that the city needs 45 lakh doses of COVID-19 vaccines in July to keep up the current vaccination rate of 1.5 lakh jabs daily, AAP MLA Atishi said on Sunday.

"More than 45 lakh doses will be needed if the pace of vaccination increases," she said. According to the city's vaccination bulletin, 25 per cent of Delhi's population in the 18-44 age group has received at least one dose of vaccine. Ninety-two lakh people in this age group are eligible for vaccination in the city. Atishi said the national capital administered a record 2.07 lakh vaccine doses on Saturday, of which more than 1.50 lakh were given to youths. Delhi has 7.06 lakh vaccine doses, including 5.4 lakh Covishield

doses, available at present.

If the authorities continue to vaccinate people at the current pace of 2 lakh daily, this stock will be over in three days, she said. "We have written to the Centre that Delhi needs 45 lakh vaccine doses to keep vaccinating people at the rate of 1.5 lakh jabs per day," she said while presenting the vaccination bulletin.

"We have been asking the Centre to increase vaccine supplies for the 18-44 age group because youths are eager to get vaccinated. They don't come alone; they bring senior members of their families with them to vaccination centres," Atishi said. Delhi has so far administered over 73 lakh doses since the inoculation exercise started on January 16. More than 17 lakh people in Delhi have received both doses.

Wedding industry heaves sigh of relief as Delhi unlocks

NEW DELHI

For the wedding industry in the national capital, it is the permission to reopen rather than the hope to make some profit that has shown a sliver of hope after three months of no business.

The Delhi government on Saturday allowed weddings at banquet, marriage halls and hotels with 50 people in attendance, and reopening of gyms and yoga centres at 50 per cent capacity under the phased unlock process initiated with an improvement in the city's COVID-19 situation. The relaxations will come into force from 5 am on Monday. Wedding planners and banquet hall owners welcomed the Delhi government's decision.

They, however, said they do not hold any hopes for making profit this season.

"We are glad that we have been allowed to open at least. After paying the employees from our pockets and incurring losses, we will at least be able to make the ends meet," said Sunil Juneja of Precious Moments Banquets. He said earlier booked weddings that had postponed will be given priority now, while new bookings have also started to come in. In the last one year since the outbreak of the pandemic in March 2020, the wedding business was severely hit as episodic lockdowns in March-September last year and since April this year prevented any lavish marriages from taking place.

Wedding planner Jitesh Khanna of



The Velvet Weddings noted that as Delhi maintained strict lockdown guidelines, disallowed weddings or any sort of congregation since April, most planned weddings were shifted out of the city. "So now that 50 people are allowed, we are happy with the decision. And we are hoping soon 100 people will be allowed. It is any day better than no business," Yadav said. However, he added, it would be difficult to maintain the budget as a wedding for 50 requires just as much preparation as a wedding of 200. Shrawan Yadav of Shubh Muhurt Luxury Wedding Planners echoed Khanna's thoughts and said that "they were not looking at making profits, as reopening the business was more important for now". The one year of pandemic has not

been favourable to the industry, said Mohsin Khan of Vivah Luxury Weddings, as he said several people postponed their weddings last November after revision of Covid guidelines. "We had no business last year. This year too, the complete wedding season was lost due to the lockdown.

Either people postponed their weddings or cancelled their booking altogether," Khan said. Over 50 per cent of the bookings got cancelled this year, he added. Khan, who has been in this line of profession for over 10 years now, said that he is not thinking about profits, but it is some relief that the business has reopened at least. "Now coronavirus is part of our life. We have to run our lives around it, according to it.

A visionary

A HANS INDIA FEATURE



DELHI MONDAY 28 JUNE 2021

A leader who made us all proud



A TRIBUTE
BY HIS SON
PV PRABHAKAR
RAO

In 1991, at the annual meet of World Economic Forum in Davos, the then Prime Minister of India Sri P.V. Narasimha Rao spelt out what was perhaps the most spectacular and ground breaking economic policy for the country, introducing the far reaching, big bang economic reforms to the world. His economic policy brought about a paradigm shift in not only the economy and how we Indians looked at our country, but in how the world looked at India.

P. V. Narasimha Rao, the man who made all of us proud, hailed from a humble village in Telangana and rose to the stature of the Prime Minister of the country due to his intellect, erudition and hard work. 2020-21 is the birth centenary year of this versatile genius. Very rightly, the Govt. of Telangana has celebrated his birth centenary year through events held in India and across the world. Thanks to CM KCR for taking up this cause in all earnestness and adding a splash of festivity and grandeur to the celebrations befitting the status of PM.

Narasimha Rao was a restless man, a revolutionary at heart who always strived for change. A relentless, burning desire to change things around him was the driving force for his reforms narrative which spanned over 3 decades and ranged from Prison reforms, Education reforms, Land reforms, New Education Policy, and Navodaya Schools, to the Look East Policy and the Economic Policy of 1991.

The impact of these economic reforms on the lives of Indians should not be underestimated. The smartphones in our hands, the choice of airline carriers, the 8 lane highways criss-crossing



the country, the dynamic space programme, our nuclear power and even the vibrant IT industry that employs millions - all these are largely due to the vision of Sri P. V. Narasimha Rao. In a nutshell, he is the man who laid the foundations for today's aspirational and emerging India.

He believed that the country's growth depended on three key factors - meritocracy, pragmatism and personal integrity. Accordingly, he neither compromised on merit when it came to appointments in the key positions in government, nor did he complain about the circumstances he had to face or waste time in wishful thinking. William Ward once said "a pessimist complains about the wind, an optimist hopes for the wind to change, but a realist adjusts the sails" - this was exactly what Narasimha Rao did. He converted the Balance of Payments crisis in 1991 to opportunity and

introduced the Economic Reforms, the benefits of which we are enjoying today. Finally, it needs no mention that he was a man of the highest integrity and commitment. For him, India came first and serving the poorest of the poor was his top priority. In true pragmatic style, it didn't matter to him which ideology he pursued as long as it yielded results - they were all tools to achieve the same ends. He was aware that he was treading a difficult path, often quipping, "I lost one job following socialistic ideology, trying to implement land reforms, and as though to compensate it, I lost another pursuing a capitalistic ideology - trying to implement economic reforms". However, history has shown us that both his Land Reforms and economic reforms have immensely contributed to the great changes of his times.

It is these innate qualities of Narasimha Rao which changed

APARA CHANAKYUDU

Pamulaparthi Venkata Narasimha Rao is no ordinary person. I was very closely associated with him since he happens to be my Chinanna (uncle). "When I was studying in fourth standard, Narasimha Rao launched a big movement against Nizams in all the villages taking out rallies, giving slogans against the rulers holding lanterns during night. The Razakars, private army of the Nizams, were looking for him and Rao had to go underground to hide from them.

Later, the Government took up police action and Hyderabad got liberated. Telangana was divided in the States- Reorganisation and Maharashtra, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh came into existence.

Being a great visionary PV was instrumental in bringing the Land Ceiling Act at a time when there was strong resentment against this. He was a minister and went on to become Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh. "He was a dynamic leader, who knew the needs of the people. I still remember his words to me... 'If we don't bring an Act like Land Ceiling, there will be a bloodbath. He had to lose the post of Chief Minister for bringing such an Act." PV was supportive of the Mulki rules (a certificate which was needed to get jobs in Telangana region). The Andhra rulers influenced their national leadership and got the rules removed. PV then wanted to stay away from politics and was attracted towards agriculture... even now we consume the fruits from his Mango orchard. PV also took up cotton seeds production. that PV was the only Prime Minister to win the two no-confidence motions which were brought during the minority government. Before he became PM, the country was suffering with problems like lawlessness, Gurkha and Nagaland agitations, economic crisis, Gold was mortgaged in foreign countries and the situation of the country was weak. After taking over the reins, he improved the economic situation, brought the gold back into the country, and improved the law and order situation in the country. He gave confidence to the industrial sector, he brought large foreign exchange reserves, and simplified the process for setting up industries. He is known as 'Apara Chanakyudu' and dedicated his life to the Congress party. But it is a matter of regret that the Congress party did not honour the leader who dedicated his life for the party. They did not permit to have his memorial in Delhi, did not allow his body to be taken to AICC office. They also denied cremation in the capital.



Captain
Lakshminantha
Rao TRS MP

our country and ushered in a new era. His term as Prime Minister is a watershed period for India - the history of post Independence India can be written in two parts, one before P. V. Narasimha Rao came to power and the other after his term.

Narasimha Rao was not only an exemplary statesman, but a polyglot who could converse in 14 languages. He was an avid reader and a prolific writer, and enjoyed music and theatre. He also had a prodigiously scientific bent of mind - though he was over 60 when he first saw a computer, he very quickly learnt so much about the technology that he could both do

some coding, and also take a computer apart and reassemble it in no time. He learnt to play the electronic keyboard at the age of 82 - six months before he passed, he told me that he was ready to give a concert on the keyboard. His obvious talents aside, his life serves as a lesson in always being ready to learn, despite the age. He exemplified the saying 'Shradhvan labhate gnanam' from the Bhagavat Gita. On this wonderful occasion of his birth centenary let us salute this legend. His various achievements, his personality and his philosophy are like an ocean - several facets are still to be unravelled.

THE TOUGH ADMINISTRATOR

K CHANDRA PRAKASH RAO
(PV's SECURITY OFFICER WHEN PV WAS CM)

P V Narasimha Rao was a matured politician and a very strict administrator who never used to compromise once a decision was taken. "I was the security officer of PV sir in 1972 when he was the Chief Minister. He was day in day out busy in bringing land reforms. Whatever work he used to start, he used to take that to a logical conclusion and never compromised," said Chandra Prakash Rao. Many had opposed the Land Ceiling Act, which PV Narasimha Rao had aspired to.

Though there was resentment from big landlords and politicians, he implemented the Act without seeing the repercussions. "No file went unchecked from his office. He used to check every file coming to him from the secretaries and used to give his views in points. He never used to sign the files sent by secretaries blindly. He was very pungent in his decision making and used to write his opinion in a simple summary. All thought he was slow but he was not slow, he wanted to be perfect. The officials used to face difficulties in answering his queries.

I remember once he had taken a decision to transfer a DSP stating that there were some complaints against him. The then Inspector General of Police replied stating that the DSP was a good officer and it will be difficult to maintain law and order without him.

Responding to this, Narasimha Rao sent another note stating, "When a DSP can control, why are you here? If you cannot control law and order, better you hand over the charge to others and go on a leave."

Once there was a file of dismissal of a magistrate on corruption charges. The highly influential people from his caste, who supported the magistrate pressurised PV from different quarters. He told the people who came to him, "What can I do, I have written a note on the magistrate, let the officials send their opinion. I will see and respond to that." Time had passed one month and two months... but there was no reply and it never came from the officials as they knew PV would not go back on his decision. PV had asked the magistrate to go on compulsory retirement. PV was a mature politician, who didn't talk much but his decisions were strong. During Bombay riots, when Muslim communities approached him for justice, he only said 'I will inquire.' He said that PV had done background work for bringing computers because he used to be busy on computers all the time.

"People say Rajiv Gandhi brought IT revolution, but PV Narasimha Rao was the one who did background work for this. This Telugu Bidda deserves Bharat Ratna.



PV Madan Mohan, Journalist, PV's brother's son

We the family members are happy and thank the State Government for organising centenary birth celebrations of PV Narasimha Rao. We are all fortunate to be part of this great man. I request the government to make PV's birth and death anniversaries as calendar events to uphold his legacy forever. He taught us simplicity and to be the first man to help the needy. The government needs to extend the birth centenary celebrations as almost all the year leading to it lost in chaos due to coronavirus pandemic.



Chakilam Anil Kumar

My father Chakilam Srinivasa Rao and the legendary figure P V Narasimha Rao were great friends. My father was an MP when PV was the Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh. Both PV and my father Srinivas Rao were elected as MPs from the state in 1989 and worked collectively to strengthen the party in the state. I had the privilege to watch the great leader from close quarters as a kid as PV had given lot of importance to my father till his death. He even unveiled the statue of my father in 1998. The relationship between our two families is so great that even now I am maintaining that relationship with his family members.



Retired Prof M Panduranga Rao of the NIT, Warangal

My association with PV began in 1984 when the REC (now NIT) celebrated its Silver Jubilee. He was impressed by my design on SRSP flood flow canal and mid Manair reservoir, aimed at utilising Godavari floodwaters. Later, he laid foundation stone for the construction of flood flow canal in 1991. His article, Ramappa - A Symphony in Stone, published in The Illustrated Weekly of India in 1966, emphasises the fact that Ramappa Temple would have had the UNESCO's World heritage Site tag long ago.



C Hanumantha Rao

It is a matter of great pride for Telugu people that P V Narasimha Rao was the first Telugu person, especially from Telangana region to become the Prime Minister of India. He was well known for his good command over several languages and was a famous writer.

We used to meet regularly in New Delhi when I was a Planning Commission member. PV was keen about offering equal educational opportunities to all in the society. Though he was used to being silent most of the time, his silence also answered many questions. In fact his silence was his strength. He was the first person to bring revolutionary reforms in the Indian economy and laid a strong foundation for the economic development of the country when the Indian economy was on the decline. The country is enjoying the fruits of his reforms. I strongly believe that the Union government should announce Bharat Ratna to PV in recognition of his services. The younger generation should emulate his ideology and take him as an inspiration.



R Venkat Reddy, Vangara village ex-Sarpanch

I am not that of caliber who can speak about PV who triggered the economic growth of the nation by taking some bold decisions. Irrespective of positions he held, PV proved himself as a wizard. I met PV twice - once in Delhi in 1996 - during my stint as the Sarpanch of his native village. On his arrival to Vangara, he always touched the soil and prayed with folded hands. Such was his love for his village. The residents always remember his services to the nation and to his village.



Pingali Venkateshwar Rao, All India President of FLDI

I have the privilege of hobnobbing with PV, who was a close friend of my father Mrutyunjaya Rao, as the big man used to frequent to our house. I in fact shared a room with him. I used to pick up him at Kazipet Railway Station on his arrival from Delhi and drive him to Vangara, his native village, after he shifted to national politics. His proficiency in 17 languages reflects his penchant for learning. PV never looked aggressive but he was a genius who mastered subtle variations in telling what he wanted to tell. Sometimes it was difficult to pick up what he had said - be it due to his scholarly vocabulary or the hidden banter. He had audience in splits at a public meeting during his election campaign when they showed resent against former minister T Hayagreevachary at Machapur near Narsampet.



Never imagined that village boy like me will occupy highest post: Prez

LUCKNOW/KANPUR

PRESIDENT Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday said he had never imagined that an ordinary village boy like him would have the honour of occupying the highest post in the country, and thanked the people of his birth place for this. He was addressing a gathering at the Paraunkh village, which is his birthplace, in Kanpur Dehat district of Uttar Pradesh.

The Rashtrapati Bhavan tweeted that in a rare emotional gesture, after landing at the helipad near his village, Kovind

bowed and touched the soil to pay obeisance to the land of his birth. This is the first time the president is visiting his village after taking over his present assignment. Though he desired to visit the place earlier, plans could not materialise because of the pandemic, an official statement had earlier said. "I had never imagined, even in my dreams, that an ordinary village boy like me would have the honour of occupying the highest post in the country. But, our democratic system made this possible," Kovind said. "Wherever I have reached today, the credit

goes to the soil of this village, this region, and to your love and blessings," he said. The president paid tributes to B R Ambedkar, makers of the Constitution and freedom fighters. He also visited Milan Kendra and Veerangana Jhalkari Bai Inter College and addressed a Jan Sambodhan Samaroh.

"According to my family's 'sanskaar' (values), the oldest woman in the village is given the status of mother and the oldest man is given the status of father, irrespective of caste or community. Today, I feel happy that this tradition of giving respect to the



elders in our family is still continuing," Kovind said. He said that the scent of soil of the village and the memories of its residents always remain etched in his heart.

"For me Paraunkh is not only a village, it is my 'maatribhoomi' (motherland) from where I get inspiration to serve the country," Kovind said. "This inspiration has made me reach from high court to the Supreme Court to the Rajya Sabha. From the Rajya Sabha, I moved to the Raj Bhavan and from there to the Rashtrapati Bhavan," the president said. Kovind also recited a San-

skrit phrase to highlight the pride of "janmabhoomi" (place of birth), and said, "The pride of a mother who gives birth (to a child) and the 'janmabhoomi' is greater than heaven." He said that as he was quite late in his visit this time and he will try not to delay it so much next time. The president said all people are from equal backgrounds. "There have been a number of prime ministers from UP, but this is the first time that the state has given a president to the country. Now, the path for the people of UP to become president has also opened up," he said.

No alliance with MIM for 2022 UP polls: Mayawati

LUCKNOW

THE BSP will not enter into any alliance for Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand assembly polls, party chief Mayawati said on Sunday.

In a series of tweets in Hindi, the former chief minister categorically denied any tie-up with the AIMIM for the assembly election in Uttar Pradesh due next year. "A news channel is broadcasting news since yesterday that in the upcoming UP Assembly elections, BSP will contest along with (Asaduddin) Owaisi's party AIMIM.

This news is completely wrong, misleading and devoid of any fact. There is not even an iota of truth in this. The BSP vociferously denies this. "The party wants to clarify that barring Punjab, the BSP will be contesting the Assembly elections to be held in UP and Uttarakhand alone, and will not be entering into any alliance with anyone," Mayawati



said in another tweet.

The BSP has recently joined hands with the Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab. Mayawati said that BSP general secretary and Rajya Sabha MP Satish Chandra Misra has been made the national co-



ordinator of the party's media cell. She also appealed to the media to consult Misra before publishing any news regarding the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) or its national president. Mayawati, 65, is a four-time former chief min-



ister of UP. Her party had tied up with Akhilesh Yadav's Samajwadi Party (SP) and RLD in Uttar Pradesh for the 2019 Lok Sabha polls. BSP had won 10 seats while SP had bagged five out of 80 Lok Sabha seats.

Govt plans to link e-courts with land records

NEW DELHI

SEEKING to help bonafide buyers know whether the land they plan to buy is under any legal dispute, the government plans to link e-courts with land records and registration database.

The government feels that in the long run it will reduce dubious transactions, help in dispute containment and also reduce clogging of the court's system. The pilot project on linking of e-Court with land records and registration database has been successfully completed in Maharashtra along with Uttar Pradesh and Haryana and soon it will be launched across the country.

The Department of Justice in the Law Ministry has requested the registrars general of all the high courts to provide clearance to state governments to integrate land records and registration database with eCourts and National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) for speedy disposal of property disputes. Eight high



courts have so far responded. These are Tripura, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Mizoram, Nagaland and Himachal Pradesh.

"In this regard, it will be appreciated if you could facilitate expeditious action at your end in providing the state government with necessary clearances for enabling the nationwide launch of linking of e-Court with land records and registration database as well as other tasks related to it," the Department of Justice letter sent in

April this year said.

It observed that registering property in an easy and transparent manner is one of the parameters evaluated by the World Bank for assessing the performance of 190 global economies on the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) Index. The Department of Land Resources (DoLR) is the nodal department responsible for registering property index and has earned only 3.5 marks against a total weightage of 13 marks for quality of Land Administration Index, it noted.

Haryana extends lockdown till Jul 5



CHANDIGARH

THE Haryana government Sunday extended the coronavirus lockdown by another week till July 5, while allowing university campuses to open for research scholars and practical classes in laboratories.

"The Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana is extended for another week that is from June 28 (5 am onwards) to July 5 (till 5 am) in the state of Haryana," Chief Secretary Vijai Vardhan said in an order issued under the Disaster Management Act, 2005.

The state government has termed the coronavirus lockdown "Mahamari Alert-Surakshit Haryana (Epidemic Alert-Safe Haryana)". University campuses are allowed to open for research scholars, laboratory practicals, remedial and doubt classes by adopting requisite social distancing norms, regular sanitisation and Covid-appro-

priate behaviour, according to the order. Anganwadi centres and crèches under Women and Child Development Department shall continue to remain closed. These places will remain shut till July 31 in the state.

The state's Department of Women and Child Welfare will release the methodology for implementation of various women and child welfare programmes in the state, the order said. The relaxations on reopening of shops, malls, restaurants, religious places, corporate offices, gatherings in weddings, funerals, open spaces etc will continue as currently in place.

According to earlier relaxations all shops are allowed to open from 9 am to 8 pm, malls from 10 am to 8 pm, restaurants and bars, including in hotels and malls, from 10 am to 10 pm with 50 per cent seating capacity. Swimming pools and spas will continue to remain closed.

Sex racket busted in Mathura, 5 women among 12 held

MATHURA

TWELVE people, including five women, were arrested after police busted a sex racket allegedly being operated from two guest houses in Goverdhan in this district of Uttar Pradesh, officials said on Sunday.

Two owners of the guest houses are also among those arrested during late Saturday evening raids, Goverdhan Station House Officer (SHO) Pradeep Kumar said. The raids were conducted at Sri Krishna Seva Sadan and



Pawan Dham guest houses based on inputs received from reliable sources, the SHO said. He said five women and as many men were found in objectionable positions during the raids.

Some objectionable material, including obscene literature, were also seized from the guest houses,

Delhi Metro bags Japan Society of Civil Engineers' award

NEW DELHI

THE Delhi Metro has bagged an award from the Japan Society of Civil Engineers for its "high-quality" infrastructure development projects under phases I-III, officials said on Sunday.

The 'Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award' is for the year 2020. This award is given to highly selective showcasing projects in the development of civil engineering technology across the world, the officials said. "Delhi Metro's Phases I, II and III



projects have been awarded with the prestigious Japan Society of Civil Engineers' (JSCE) 'Outstanding Civil Engineering Achievement Award' for the year 2020.

The JSCE termed the Delhi Metro's project as 'high-quality

Infrastructure development project', the Delhi Metro Rail Corporation (DMRC) said in a statement. The JSCE in its award note mentioned that the Delhi Metro's projects have brought awareness of safety and efficiency at construction sites in India, and provided residents with safe, secure and comfortable transportation. Delhi Metro's civil engineering achievements in the past two decades have received global recognition and have been appreciated by prominent international organisations, the officials said.

Lakha Sidhana, farmer leaders booked by Chandigarh police



CHANDIGARH

THE Chandigarh police has booked alleged gangster-turned-activist Lakha Sidhana, wanted by Delhi Police in the case of R Day violence at Red Fort, and many farmer leaders on several charges including rioting during a protest march on Saturday.

Five FIRs have been registered at police stations of Sector 3, Sector 17 and Sector 36, police said on Sunday. Police have booked Sidhana, and several farmer leaders, including Baldev Singh Sirsa, and their supporters on several charges including rioting, assault on public servants and obstructing them in

performing their duties. Protesting farmers on Saturday had broken police barriers at the Chandigarh-Mohali border while trying to head towards the Punjab Governor house.

The Chandigarh police had even used a water cannon to disperse them. During the protest, Lakha Sidhana, who was booked for his alleged involvement in violence at the Red Fort on Republic Day, was also seen.

Farmers had planned to march towards Punjab and Haryana Raj Bhavans here and submit a memorandum on June 26 to mark the completion of seven months of their agitation against the three new Central agri-marketing laws.

45 more deaths, 222 new cases in Uttar Pradesh

LUCKNOW

THE COVID-19 death toll in Uttar Pradesh rose to 22,518 on Sunday with 45 more fatalities, while 222 new cases pushed the infection tally to 17,05,596, according to an official statement issued here.

Of the fresh fatalities, six deaths each were reported from Lucknow and Allahabad, followed by five in Kanpur, the statement said.

Of the new cases, 23 were re-

ported from Lucknow followed by 17 from Kanpur, 15 from Varanasi and 14 from Gonda, it said. In the past 24 hours, 169 people recovered from the disease, taking the overall recoveries so far to 16,79,913, the statement said.

The count of active COVID-19 cases stands at 3,165, it said. In the past 24 hours, more than 2.77 lakh samples were tested, while over 5.70 crore tests have been conducted in the state so far, the statement added.

Punjab govt to install 75 more oxygen plants by July end

CHANDIGARH

THE Punjab government will install 75 more oxygen plants in the state by July end, boosting the supply of the life-saving gas ahead of a possible third Covid wave, Chief Secretary Vini Mahajan said on Sunday.

Mahajan said all relevant departments have been asked to complete the installation of pressure swing adsorption (PSA) plants by July end, ensuring pressure and purity of oxygen.

With this, the demand for medical oxygen will be met at all healthcare institutes in Punjab, she said



in an official statement after chairing a high-level meeting to review the installation of the PSA plants

and allied works.

Mahajan asked the relevant officials to ensure the completion of all

pre-activities for the installation of PSA plants by July 15 so that work of installation and commissioning is completed by July 25. During the meeting, Principal Secretary (Water Supply and Sanitation) Jaspreet Talwar, who heads the State Oxygen Management Group, told Mahajan that Punjab has two PSA plants, with a capacity of 1,400-litres per minute (LPM) each in Ludhiana and Jalandhar. While 42 plants have been allotted by the Centre, mainly for medical colleges and district hospitals in the state, another 33 plants have been arranged by various agencies and private bodies in the state.

This will add to the state capacity

of generating medical oxygen by more than 50 metric tonnes (MT) per day, she added.

A pressure swing adsorption plant utilises the phenomena of some gases getting attracted to or "adsorbed" to particular solid surfaces when passing by it under high pressure, an official said.

Owing to this phenomena, when air is passed through a tank under high pressure, nitrogen in the air gets adsorbed on the tank's internal surface made up of or coated with a layer of zeolite, and this results in the release of oxygen-rich air from the tank, serving the medical purpose, the official explained.

KCR’s blueprint for Dalit empowerment laudable

THE initiative of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to convene a meeting of Dalit leaders of all political parties to discuss the measures that need to be taken to empower them is certainly a welcome step. So far we have seen public participation in various infrastructure projects but for the first time after formation of a new state, the state government has come forward to involve other parties as well and take their suggestion before preparing an action plan. Some may call it a political gimmick keeping next elections in mind. But if the government can achieve at least 25 to 30 percent of what it proposes in next two or three years, it certainly can prove to be a game changer. While one has to wait

for the final policy document to come out, some of the decisions like earmarking Rs 40,000 crore under the Dalit Empowerment Scheme for next three years, promoting Dalit entrepreneurs, cash benefit scheme, direct cash benefit schemes, create a platform to pursue higher education and promote entrepreneurs in Dalit community, take up a survey on lands possessed by Dalits in Telangana and prepare special schemes etc is a tall order. Another interesting suggestion that had come up at the meeting was that instead of taking back assigned lands where industries have come up, the Dalits to whom they were given should be made share holders based on the current market value of the land. The Chief Minister

himself acknowledged that the government has a crucial role to play in nurturing the society to move forward. Any negligence would ruin the future generations and the rulers will be responsible for the same. “From Kashmir to Kanyakumari, the only word mentioned for the most socially and economically backward community in any town, is Dalits. There shall be no sufferings on their part anymore,” he remarked. Certainly the intent is laudable. But the government which wants to use the services of writers and poets and different media to create awareness should also think of involving local Dalit leaders in every village or town belonging to different political parties and associations in creating awareness

and implementation of the scheme. For this a committee consisting of all important and influential leaders irrespective of party affiliations could be formed. The local leaders too need to rise above political considerations and work hand in hand with government agencies to ensure that the benefits reach the real beneficiaries. If the government succeeds in bringing significant change in the lives of Dalits, certainly this can become a role model for the country. It is unfortunate that parties like Congress and BJP which claim that they are for Dalits did not officially participate in the preparatory meeting. Dalit leaders from those parties like Bhatti Vikramarka of Congress participated in their individual capacity.



South India to remain indifferent to national parties

NARENDRA PUPPALA

IF the outcomes of various elections over the past few decades, till the recent Assembly polls in Tamil Nadu and Kerala, are any indication, south of the Vindhyas, the electoral arena remains a minefield for mainstream national parties, read the BJP and Congress.

Of the five States that comprise South India, three are ruled by regional parties, one has a Left-coalition dispensation, with only Karnataka having a fragile BJP government uneasily in place.

While the Congress continues to lose prominence across the country, its situation has been particularly precarious down south, long considered its citadel. The slow slide to inconsequence began in Tamil Nadu with the party succumbing to the anti-Hindi stance that continues to this day.

Thereafter, in the eighties, fuelled by filmstar-turned-politician NT Rama Rao's Telugu Pride, the then state of Andhra Pradesh showed the door to the Congress. Post-bifurcation, the party has made way for regional parties in Andhra Pradesh as well as the fledgling state of Telangana. For a change, the Congress has managed to be on the winning side in Tamil Nadu, but it lost the Kerala polls for the second time in a row.

The story is not very different for the BJP, ruling the roost at the Centre, and a host of States in the north, west, and eastern parts of the country. With negligible presence for decades, the south remains a tough nut to crack for the BJP. Although the saffron party did make inroads with successes in Karnataka, it has lost steam and continues to steer a leaking ship through the choppy waters of an unconvincing majority in the Assembly.

Compared to States like Tripura and Assam in the East, the BJP has had a lacklustre performance in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana. While it drew a blank in Andhra Pradesh Assembly polls in 2019, the BJP's graph in neighbouring Telangana has been a bit of a rollercoaster. Bolstered by its wins in Dubbaka Assembly poll and Hyderabad municipal polls, the BJP is preparing to squarely take on the ruling TRS in the next Assembly election. While Telangana is its most promising arena in the south, the reverses it suffered in Bengal polls should give the BJP some food for thought.

Despite high expectations, the party ended up losing even the sole Assembly seat it had won in the previous Kerala election. To its credit, the BJP has won four seats, making a comeback in the newly-constituted Tamil Nadu Assembly after 20 years. But with a distinctly Dravidian party at the helm, there is little that the BJP can expect to achieve here in the foreseeable future.

So, what really are the reasons for the national parties' lack of traction in the South?

For starters, the southern states have had a strong tradition of throwing up homegrown leaders. From Karunanidhi, MGR, Jayalithaa, NTR, KCR, and Jagan Mohan Reddy all have built up their vote banks assiduously. All of them are accessible in the vicinity rather than faraway Delhi. In fact, the BJP's success story in Karnataka wouldn't have been possible without Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa, another homegrown leader.

In the Congress, a culture of subservience to the family has effectively killed local leadership. For the BJP it is a case of not having sufficiently large mass base. Unfortunately for the BJP, the process of building up local leadership is a slow and labourious process that cannot be substituted by wholesale imports from other parties. It needs to plan for a long-term future rather than the immediate future.

The second factor that is a stumbling block in the BJP's expansion plans in the south, has to do with demographics.

Compared to the other three parts, the communal composition is not so pronounced in the south. Therefore, sharp polarisation on religious or cultural lines is not easy. The Congress has seemingly hit a wall, apparently not a favourite with youngsters who make up the major share of the electorate. According to social scientists, rising urbanisation and education levels have also majorly affected the party's fortunes at the hustings.

Most importantly, it is the presence of a strong local sentiment in each of these states, wary of being swept away by a north Indian wave. This is precisely why regional parties thrive, and pose challenges for the national parties. A trend that is likely to sustain for at least the next few election cycles. NASS

THE WAY AHEAD



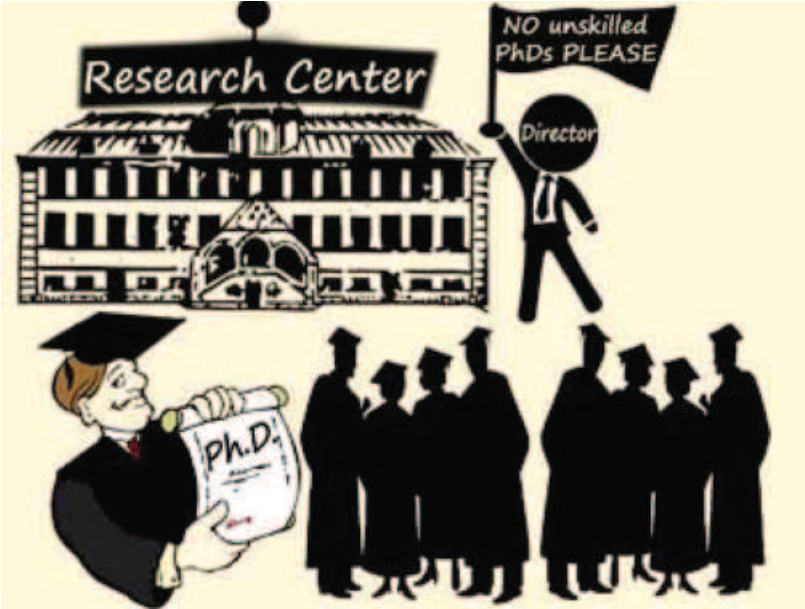
Dr Bharat Hunjunhwal

THE Switzerland-based Institute of Management Development (IMD) makes a World Competitiveness Ranking of major economies. India has been ranked at 43rd among 64 countries. Among the five BRICS economies that are comparable to India, China is placed at 16th rank, Russia 45th rank, Brazil 57th rank, and South Africa at 62nd rank. More importantly, India was placed at 41st rank in 2016. We then slipped to 47th rank in 2017, it climbed back to 43rd rank in 2018 and has remained there in the last two years. Another Global Competitiveness Index of 141 countries is made by the World Economic Forum (WEF). They have placed China at 28th rank, Russia 43rd, South Africa 60th, India 68th and Brazil 71st rank. Here too India has been slipping. India was placed at 58th rank in 2018 and slipped to 68th rank in 2019. This slippage is even more alarming because this has happened despite India having got a high rank in “size”. The WEF has placed India at 3rd for its size of economy. Our rank would be lower if we look at the qualitative parameters only and ignore the size of the economy. Overall, India has been slipping in the last few years and is presently at nearly the lowest rank among the five BRICS countries.

The main cause of this slippage is our education system. India was placed at 59th rank among 64 countries in education. They have also said that youth unemployment increased from 10.4 percent to 23.0 percent in the last year. It is clear that our education system is not providing skills to the youth that may enable them to earn a living. This unfortunate situation exists despite considerable expenditures being made by the Union and State Governments. According to Reserve Bank of India, the governments spent 3.3 percent of GDP on education in 2019-20. The GDP in this year was Rs 197.4 lakh crore. This works out to an expenditure of Rs 6,51,618 crore. The school-going age population is 45.9 crore. The per student expenditure being made is Rs 14,196 per year per student. This money is being spent in paying hefty salaries to government teachers. The government is giving attractions like no fee, free books and mid-

day meals to encourage students to enroll in government schools where they get sub-standard education. The government teachers fundamentally have no interest in teaching because their salaries are secure irrespective of the results of their students. The curriculum is also “backward” looking with focus on regional languages against English; and on languages instead of mathematics and sciences. Time has come to undertake surgery of the government education system. The governments must give this huge money directly to the students in the form of “education vouchers” with which they may pay the fees in a school or university of their choice. My estimate is that about 1/3rd of students will not use these vouchers. The 2/3rd of students who use these vouchers can be given vouchers of Rs 24,000 per year which would be more than sufficient for them to pay the fees of good English medium schools in most of the small towns and rural areas who charge about Rs 1,000 per month as per my assessment. The government also makes teaching of computers compulsory from Class 6 so that the students can be prepared for the future challenges and opportunities. In this background the New Education Policy is entirely a failure. It fails to introduce English at the primary level, and technical education at the secondary level and fails to create a carrot-and-stick policy for the teachers. Unfortunately, the education policy is being made by the same education bureaucracy that is the problem.

The second weakness in our competitiveness rank is in the area of environment and health. The IMD has placed India at 64th rank or the lowest among 64 countries. We are at 64th rank in both components—pollution and human development. As far as pollution is concerned, the policy of the Union Government is to look the other way in order to attain economic growth. For example, in the recent past the government has relaxed the requirements of air pollution for thermal power plants; it has promoted pollution of our rivers by converting them into waterways; and it has proposed amendments to the Environment Impact Assessment that would take a number of activities out of the requirement to obtain an Environment Clearance. The government's policy is counterproductive as it is promoting pollution to jumpstart economic growth but it is having the opposite effect. The pollution is leading to a decline in our competitiveness and hitting at growth.



The main cause of this slippage is our education system. India was placed at 59th rank among 64 countries in education. They have also said that youth unemployment increased from 10.4 percent to 23.0 percent in the last year. It is clear that our education system is not providing skills to the youth that may enable them to earn a living. This unfortunate situation exists despite considerable expenditures being made by the Union and State Governments.

Therefore, Union Government must reconsider its policy of pollution-led economic growth and adopt pollution controlled economic growth. We must remember that large numbers of our rich are migrating out of India due to pollution.

The situation in the second component of the health is similar to that of education. The Union and State Governments are spending Rs 1,900 per year per person. The two components of this expenditure are public- and curative health. Public health constitutes vaccination, health education, epidemiology the activities that can only be undertaken by the government. The expenditures on curative health are substantially made to provide free health care to government employees though, of course, numbers of private patients are also treated. The govern-

ment must dismantle the curative health system and provide “health vouchers” to every citizen with which she can buy health care from either private or government hospital. About Rs 1500 per year can be provided from the present expenditures, including to government servants.

The situation is serious. It is necessary to improve our competitiveness ranking in the community of nations if we have to stand global competition. That, in turn, requires that we repair our education, environment and health policies that are pulling our competitiveness rank. We are slipping and continue to slip as the GDP growth rate will continue to fall as has been happening in the last seven years.

(The author is former professor of Economics at IIM, Bengaluru)

LETTERS

Govt pays honorarium to priests of all faiths

THIS is with reference to the letter ‘Honorarium to pastors in Andhra’ which said that the State government was distributing money and other freebies to deserving and undeserving and referred to honorarium to pastors, published in The Hans India.

It seems that the writer does not know the reality or belongs to the saffron brigade which tried to spread such falsehood in the past as well. The fact is that the state government pays honorarium to pastors, archakas (Hindu priests) and Muezzins also. The government took this decision to ensure religious harmony in the state.

While the monthly honorarium of archakas (priests) or Muezzins in category I increased to Rs 15,625 from the existing Rs 10,000, that for temple priests in category 2 enhanced from Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000. Similarly, the honorarium of Imams serving in mosques increased to Rs 10,000 from Rs 5,000 and Muezzins in mosques will get Rs 5,000 instead of Rs 3,000. Pastors serving in churches will be given a monthly honorarium of Rs 5,000.

For the benefit of the readers, this order was issued by the minority welfare department in 2019, which asked all district collectors to enumerate the pastors through village volunteers and submit a report within 15 days. The note to the effect was sent to different related departments to identify the beneficiaries. The state BJP picked up one note and alleged that the government was aligning with one faith and making others feel like outsiders.

Nayarayana K Rajahmundry

Covid-19 situation and Delta Plus variant

AS per a modelling study conducted by the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the Imperial College London, the potential third wave of Covid-19 is unlikely to be as severe or devastating as the second wave. The prognosis is buttressed by naturally developed immunity (some experts put the number of (people who have immunity from a prior immunity at between 55 to 60%) and vaccine-induced immunity (close to 5% of people) in the population and the variants not becoming very severe or deadlier. Even so, levels of worry about the pandemic vis-à-vis the prospect of a third wave of Covid-19 with the much-talked about Delta plus variant as the causative agent remain high. As of now there is no data to indicate that Delta Plus variant could cause a third wave. The Delta Plus variant is feared so much because it emanated from the Delta variant that largely drove the second wave.

The Union government has raised the alert on the Delta Plus variant and issued an advisory to States urging them to keep an eye on how it behaves and spreads and take proactive steps to prevent an outbreak and emphasizing the need for testing more samples for epidemiological correlations. Delta Plus is found to be the ‘most transmissible’ of all the SARS-CoV-2 variants, to bind more strongly to receptors of lung cells and to reduce monoclonal antibody response. It is considered as a ‘variant of concern’ in view of these characteristics.

Of particular concern is that Delta Plus can affect even those who have been vaccinated and be less amenable to being treated and cured. We wish that gloomy prognostications like Delta Plus becoming the dominant strain do not materialize. At the same time, we have to do all that we can to get the better of the pandemic. It stands to reason that Covid-19-appropriate behaviour (CAB) and the increase in vaccination that certainly provides some amount of protection against the hitherto detected and identified variants could vastly reduce the intensity of the next wave.

G. David Milton Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

Online classes a good step

THANKS to all concerned. Telangana will have only online classes (from July 1st) as a safety precaution. No physical classes. Even on teachers side, only 50% will attend educational-institutes for online classes arrangements (is a safe decision). Same 50% attendance at factories, offices for some more time may be good. Yes, by the above, corona-3 can be easily stopped. The above steps can reduce the pollution too.

Other 50% people may work in other shifts or via internet from home, whichever is feasible. All states may emulate the above steps for some more time. However sweepers may be allowed daily into institutes as they are key to maintenance of hygiene and cleanliness.

Sreelekha. P. N. Boudhnagar, Secunderabad

Congress key to anti-BJP front

AFTER seeing the vain effort of Rashtra Manch in making an impressive beginning of opposition saga on national stage, it's understood that Congress cannot be left out in such non BJP teams to be effective. Though the grand old party is in shambles, it is still relevant with its presence nationally. It can act as glue for other regional parties to stand and challenge the BJP juggernaut. But for that it should leave its ego behind and be ready to act as a devoted team player.

Dr. D.V.G.Sankararao, Vizianagaram

Hats off to Karanam Malleswari

IT is the happiest thing to happen for Telugu people that Karanam Malleswari (retired Indian weightlifter) has been appointed as Vice - Chancellor (VC) of Sports University (DSU). She has spread the fame of Telugu people throughout the world. It is heartening to hear that Delhi government made this decision. She is the first Indian woman to win an Olympic medal. At Sydney in 2000, she won a bronze medal for India and marked her place in Indian history and in our hearts. She won the World Titles for two times in the 54 kg category in 1994 and 1995. She won two bronze medals in 1993 (Melbourne) and



in 1996 (Georgia). She won two silver medals in 1994 and 1998. In 1995, she received the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna, India's highest sporting honour, and in 1999, the civilian Padma Shri award. Her appointment as V-C of the university is another feather in her cap. Let us hope that under her captaincy DSU produces international sport players.

T. V. S. Suchitra, Khammam

thehansreader@gmail.com

Primary education in native language better: Venkaiah

HANS NEWS SERVICE
VISAKHAPATNAM

IN order to deliver the benefits of our language traditions to future generations, Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu has stressed the need for a people's movement to preserve languages, complementing the efforts of the government.

Highlighting the power of language to unite people across generations and geographies during the second day of his visit to Visakhapatnam on Sunday, Venkaiah Naidu called for concerted efforts to preserve, enrich and propagate the languages, cultures and traditions at the sixth annual conference of 'Rashtretara Telugu Samakhya'. Venkaiah Naidu suggested that Telugu people should come together to preserve their language and revitalise the local traditions. Noting that neglecting the language will lead to its decline, the Vice President advised that it is the duty of every-



Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu addresses during the 6th anniversary celebrations of Rashtretara Telugu Samakhya in Visakhapatnam via video conference on Sunday

one to preserve and promote one's native language, without belittling other languages and cultures.

The Vice-President highlighted the need to impart pri-

mary education in one's mother tongue as envisaged by the National Education Policy, 2020. He noted that the persons presently occupying the highest constitu-

tional offices of the country, including the President, Vice-President, Prime Minister and the Chief Justice of India all had primary education in their mother tongue. "People should not get carried away by the false impression that one cannot succeed and grow in life if they learn in their mother tongue. We have many past and present examples to disprove it," the Vice-President said. Noting that there are more than a thousand organisations outside the Telugu states that work for the preservation and propagation of Telugu language, the Vice-President commended the initiative of the organisers in coming together on a common platform called 'Rashtretara Telugu Samakhya'. Himachal Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Minister for Women & Child Devpt and Social Welfare Shashi Panja, president of Rashtrethara Telugu Samakhya Sundara Rao were among those who were present at the virtual event.

Jagan to create awareness on Disha App

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TADEPALLI

CHIEF Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy will participate in a promotional event at Gollapudi on the outskirts of Vijayawada on Tuesday to create awareness on Disha App and to launch an extensive campaign for women to download Disha App, according to a communiqué from the Chief Minister's Office.

It said here on Sunday that the Disha App sends an alert to the control room when a woman or a girl in distress shakes the smart phone. The App has a single touch SOS button that would alert the police control room in case of distress and ensure speedy response.

The app has the option of sending an alert to family members along with police in case a woman or a girl is in distress. Five members including family and friends can be added to send alerts and an alert will be sent to five numbers once the SOS button is touched.

Another option called 'Track My Travel' was installed in the app for safety and guidance dur-

- The Chief Minister to take part in a promotional event today
- Disha app has been downloaded by 16 lakh women till now
- The Disha app sends an alert to the control room when a woman or a girl in distress shakes the smart phone



- Once the SOS button is touched, it will also send alerts to five family members and friends
- Another option called 'Track My Travel' was installed in the app for safety and guidance during travel

ing travel. Dial 100 and Dial 112 numbers are also available in the Disha app. Special options were provided in the app to find out police officials' contact details and the nearest police station details and also details on hospitals, maternity centres, trauma care centres, blood banks and pharmacies will be available in the app.

There is a push button option at command control centre in the police headquarters and an alert can be sent to the police

and users of app at the same time. Disha app was downloaded by 16 lakh women till now and the government has been promoting downloading the app by every woman and girls across the State and also conducting a special drive with the staff of Village and Ward Secretariats. Disha app can be downloaded from Google Play Store in Android phones and Apple app store in iPhones. Registration should be done through mobile number.



TTD EO K S Jawahar Reddy offering Srivari prasadam to Chief Secretary Aditya Nath Das at Tirumala on Sunday

AP CS worships Lord Balaji

HANS NEWS SERVICE
TIRUMALA

CHIEF Secretary Aditya Nath Das offered prayers at Tirumala shrine on Sunday.

Earlier, following the age-old practice, he paid a visit to Balalaya Varaha Swamy to offer prayers and then reached Tirumala tem-

ple along with his family. After darshan of Sri Venkateswara Swamy, he was offered Vedaseervachanam by Vedic Pundits in Ranganayakula Mandapam. TTD EO Dr K S Jawahar Reddy offered Theertha Prasadam and a laminated photo of Srivaru to the dignitary. CVSO Gopinath Jatti was also present.

TDP MP demands CM to cancel 'jobless calendar'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALAGIRI

TDP MP K Rammohan Naidu on Sunday expressed concern that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has been backstabbing the unemployed youth of Andhra Pradesh with his non-stop fake promises and bogus claims like the latest job calendar.

Rammohan Naidu demanded that the Chief Minister immediately withdraw the recently released 'jobless calendar'. In its place, a fresh and genuine calendar should be issued in order to fulfill all his Padayatra job promises made to the youth.

A DSC notification should be issued to fill 26,000 teacher posts. The Chief Minister should fulfill his grand prom-

- K Rammohan Naidu says CM Jagan should issue a fresh and genuine calendar to fulfill all the promises that he made during his Padayatra
- The Srikakulam MP points out that Jagan had promised to fill 2.3 lakh job vacancies in the State

ise made before the elections to fill 2.3 lakh job vacancies in the State. Addressing a press conference here, the TDP MP asserted that the YSRCP could get 151 out of 175 MLA seats in 2019 because of Jagan Reddy's fake promises made to unemployed youth. The Chief Minister talked about 2.30 lakh government vacancies prior to the election but now his job calen-

dar indicated just 10,000 vacancies.

Fake job calendars and false statements would not help the youth in any manner. The unemployed youth in Andhra Pradesh were totally unhappy and they were ready to teach a strong lesson to the Chief Minister at any given opportunity.

Rammohan Naidu expressed surprise how the YSRCP regime could make self-contradictory statements on jobs without fearing public scrutiny.

The government said in media advertisements on May 31 that it gave 4.77 lakh jobs. Again, ads were given on June 18 saying that 6.03 lakh new jobs were provided. The Chief Minister and his Ministers should explain whether they created 1.25 lakh new jobs in just 20 days.

'Handover TIDCO houses to beneficiaries'

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MANGALAGIRI

TDP official spokesman Guduri Erikson Babu on Sunday demanded that the Jagan Mohan Reddy government hand over the TIDCO houses completed during the TDP regime to the respective beneficiaries without causing further delay.

Erikson Babu demanded that the YSRCP government explain why it did not hand over these houses even though two years had passed since it came to power. The poor beneficiaries were not able to pay the house rents because of the reduced income during the coronavirus pandemic.

In a statement here, the TDP leader said that the poor families took loans from the banks and they have been paying interest ever since. Jagan Reddy made a promise during the election that he would waive these loans if he was made the Chief Minister of the State. After coming to power,

he totally forgot his promise. He said that as the government kept the TIDCO houses empty, they were getting damaged.

The TDP leader demanded that the government increase size of the housing units proposed by it in view of the rising number of objections. YSRCP MLA Nallapureddy Prasanna Kumar Reddy's comments would stand testimony to the pitiable condition of the Jagan regime's housing units. Actually, the Chief Minister made fake promises on building 25 lakh houses for the poor beneficiaries. Two years had passed since Jagan Reddy took over, the government has not been able to say how many houses were built so far and how many were handed over to the poor families.

The TDP leader termed it as unfortunate that the Jagan's regime started another drama on the construction of houses for the poor people by spending Rs 30,000 crore.

221 held for indulging in illegal sale of liquor, ganja, gutka

HANS NEWS SERVICE
MACHILIPATNAM

KRISHNA district police booked 214 cases and arrested 221 persons in connection with the sale of ganja, liquor and gutka during the week-long awareness campaign between June 20 and 26.

The district police conducted searches at shops and godowns and tried to create awareness among the youth, auto drivers, anti-social elements and others on the ill-effects of consumption of ganja, drugs and gutka.

As per the instructions of the Krishna District SP M Ravindranath Babu and supervision of additional superintendents of police Malika Garg and Vakul Jindal,

- Krishna district police hold a week-long awareness campaign against the ill-effects of consumption of drugs, ganja and gutka

the police across the district conducted searches and counselling during the week. The campaign was organised to mark the International Day Against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking observed on June 26. Hundreds of police participated in the raids. The police booked two cases and arrested 10 persons for sale of ganja.

They seized 3.7 kg of ganja worth Rs 8,000. They booked 28 cases and arrested 30 persons for the sale of gutka packets. They



Police educating people on the ill-effects of consumption of gutka and ganja in Krishna district

seized 12,390 gutka packets worth Rs 77,745.

The police conducted searches

at the check-posts, highways and other locations and arrested 183 persons and seized 4,400 liquor

bottles. The accused were illegally transporting the liquor bottles without having licence and proper documents. In spite of regular checking and raids conducted in the State, the illegal transportation of liquor from Telangana continues unabated in the district.

SP Ravindranath Babu said the police conducted counselling to 2,450 persons at 220 places during the week. He said the police created awareness with the help of wall posters and flexes against the drug abuse and consequences of drug addiction.

The police booked bind over cases on 32 persons for alleged involvement in preparation of country-made liquor and drug peddling. Rallies were conducted at

Machilipatnam, Mylavaram and other parts of the district.

In Machilipatnam, Additional SP (AR) Satyanarayana, Bandar RDO Khaja Vali, Bandar DSP Masum Basha, circle inspectors, Mahila Mitras, Sub-inspectors of police and others participated in the awareness rally.

The SP warned that the police would take stern action against the drug peddlers.

Police under the limits of Vijayawada Commissionerate, conducted awareness programmes and rallies in Vijayawada and surrounding areas from June 20 to 26. Police have explained to the people particularly the students, youth and others on the ill-effects of the consumption of ganja and gutka.

HANS NEWS SERVICE
WARANGAL

TELANGANA Government has provided bank linkage loans to the tune of Rs 44,278 crore to the self-help groups (SHGs) through Society for Elimination of Rural Poverty (SERP) in last seven years, Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao said.

"In the current financial year, the SERP set a target to provide Rs 12,070 crore to the 3.80 lakh SHGs. As part of it, Rs 168.81 crore loan was provided to 4,833 SHGs in this fiscal. Efforts are on to extend linkage loans to other groups as early as possible," Errabelli said. He said that since the formation of Telangana, the government was focusing on providing linkage loans to the SHGs enabling poor households to access adequate formal credit at their doorsteps. In 2014-15 financial year, the 1.96 lakh SHGs in the State got a linkage loan of Rs 3,739 crore. It rose phenomenally by the 2020-21 financial year. The SERP provided linkage loans to the tune of Rs 10,448 crore to 2.71 lakh SHGs, the minister said. The minister said that since the bifurcation, 78,458 new SHGs have come up in the State. In all, there are 4.38 lakh SHGs now, he added. The total number of members is 47.55 lakh. Of which, 10.21 lakh are scheduled castes, 6.55 are scheduled tribes, 1.54 lakh are minorities, 25.81 lakh are backward classes and 35,138 are forward castes. "The focus of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is to empower women," Errabelli said, referring to the welfare and developmental programmes implemented by the TRS Government. The target is to make women self-reliant, he added. It's heartening to see the products manufactured by the SHGs have become popular in the domestic and international market, Errabelli said.

DGP consoles Mariamma's family members

HANS NEWS SERVICE
KHAMMAM

FOLLOWING the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Director General of Police (DGP) M Mahender Reddy on Sunday consoled A Uday Kiran, the son of A Mariamma, in Khammam town.

It should be reminded here that the CM, took a serious note of the death of Dalit woman Mariamma while in police custody in Addagur police station of Bhongir district, had instructed the DGP to inquire into the incident and take stringent action against those found guilty. Mariamma was a native of Komatlagudem under Chintakani mandal in Khammam district.

The DGP visited Uday Kiran at the private hospital, where he was undergoing treatment and observed injuries on his body and enquired about the incident. Uday explained how the police beat him.

Later, the DGP also interacted with Mariamma's daughters, who were in the hos-



DGP M Mahender Reddy interacting with Mariamma's son Uday Kiran and daughters at a private hospital in Khammam town on Sunday

pital and discussed the issue. They appealed to him to do justice to their family and the DGP assured them of extending all possible help and to take serious action against the police personnel, who were involved in the incident.

Later speaking to the media in the hospital premises, DGP Mahender Reddy said that the custodial death of Mariamma was very painful and against the friendly policing in the State. Asserting that strict action would be taken against the police personnel after conducting a thorough enquiry, the DGP warned that action will be taken against those, who crossed the rules of the department.

Revanth daydreaming of becoming CM: Gutha

HANS NEWS SERVICE
NALGONDA

TELANGANA Legislative Council former chairman Gutha Sukender Reddy stated that it is the responsibility of the Central government to resolve water issues between the two Telugu States and advised the Centre to convene a meeting with the Chief Ministers of Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to resolve the water disputes in an amicable way.

Addressing the media at a press meet here on Sunday, Gutha Sukender Reddy alleged that robbing of Krishna water by Andhra rulers was continuing since 1956 and added that about 55,000 cusecs of water was forcibly taken to Andhra through Pothireddypadu project during former Chief Minister lat YS Rajasekhara Reddy's regime. Even though a few Telangana leaders had opposed YSR's move but in vain as Telangana leaders were ignored by the Andhra rulers in the united Andhra Pradesh, he stated. AP Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy also following



Legislative Council former chairman Gutha Sukender Reddy addressing the media in Nalgonda on Sunday

Bank Nifty, for a second week in a row, closed on a negative note as private players failed to gauge any noticeable momentum. According to ICICI Direct.com, most private banks are trading near their Call bases, which is likely to keep pressure intact in private banks. The Bank Nifty-Private price ratio slipped below its support of 2.20 levels. Analysts feel underperformance in the Bank Nifty should continue and, going ahead, it can move towards levels of 33000 in the expiry week.

ARCHERY WORLD CUP

It's raining gold for India at Stage 3

PARIS

IT was gold rush for Indian archers at the World Cup Stage 3 here on Sunday with star couple Atanu Das and Deepika Kumari clinching the mixed team top honours after the women's recurve trio's victory in a near perfect Olympic build-up.

Deepika and Atanu, who are India's best medal hope in archery in the Olympics, bounced back from a 0-2 deficit to down the Netherlands' Sjef van den Berg and Gabriela Schloesser 5-3 and fetch India a third gold medal from the competition.

This was after the women's recurve team of Deepika, Ankita Bhakat and Komalika Bari notched up the gold medal with a comfortable win over Mexico, shrugging off the disappointment of missing Olympic qualification last week.

"It feels amazing. First time we won the final together, it feels so happy," Atanu said after their win.

The two got married after a two-year courtship and would be celebrating their first wedding anniversary on June 30. "It feels we are made for each other. But in the ground we are not couple but like just other competitors, we motivate, support and back each other," Atanu said. Inciden-



tally, this was also a first mixed pair gold medal for the former world number one Deepika who has five silver and three bronze medals in the event. Her last mixed pair final appearance was also with Atanu in Antalya World Cup 2016.

The duo had lost to Korea. Deepika, who had earlier spearheaded the women's team to a second successive World Cup gold medal this year, said: "It feels happy."

She will be shooting for a hat-trick of gold later in the day. India have so far won three gold medals with compound archer Abhishek Verma opening the tally by winning the individual event on Saturday.

In the mixed pair final, fifth-seeded Atanu and Deepika complemented each other well as the latter came into her own after a

sluggish start. Atanu had a near perfect first set, while Deepika stuttered with an 8 en route to a total of 37, while the Dutch pair nosed ahead by one point.

Trailing 0-2, India had commanding opening round scores of 19 with Atanu starting off with another perfect 10 to put pressure on the Dutch team which managed 16 to give a three-point advantage midway into the second set.

Atanu and Deepika shot 9 and 8 respectively in the second round to level it 2-2 at the halfway stage. In the back end, Deepika found her golden touch to shoot two perfect 10s including one X as the duo dropped just one point to take the third set 39-37 for a 4-2 lead.

Needing a tie to clinch the issue in the fourth set, the duo found some resistance from the

Dutch pair and the two teams were locked 19-19 at the halfway mark. Van den Berg and Schloesser put together another 19 in the final round but Atanu held his nerves for a perfect 10 before Deepika seized the moment with a 9.

Earlier in the day, in a repeat of the World Cup first stage final, the troika of world number three Deepika, Ankita and Komalika defeated fancied Mexico 5-1 without dropping a set. This was their second successive gold medal in the World Cup this year, and sixth overall. Deepika was a constant each time.

The trio, which had stuttered to win the gold against the same opponents in Guatemala City two months back, was at its best, shooting four 10s with one X (closest to the centre) for a 57-57 score in the first set.

The Indians' flawless shooting put pressure back on the Mexican team of London 2012 silver-medallist Aida Roman, Alejandra Valencia and Ana Vazquez. They shot a poor 52 to lose the second set by three points.

Leading 3-1, the Indians had another round of consistent shooting with a 55 but the Mexicans failed to equalise and lost the third set by a slender one point to suffer a second successive defeat this year. PTI

MUMBAI

RAHUL Dravid, who is coach of the Indian limited-overs team that will travel to Sri Lanka, said that next month's white-ball tour of the island nation will throw up only an odd player or two for the T20 World Cup squad, which would have been roughly finalised by the team management by now.

Dravid added that he will speak to the Indian team management in England over the next couple of weeks and discuss their requirements for the T20 World Cup, which is likely to be held in the United Arab Emirates.

"These are the only three [T20] games before the selectors and management would have a fair idea by now as to what kind of squad they are looking for T20 World Cup... Can't read too much into it (the Sri Lanka series). There might be the odd spots and people might raise their hands up and knock on the doors," he said and confirmed that a couple of selectors will travel to Sri Lanka for the se-

ries which comprises three ODIs (July 13-18) and three T20 Internationals (July 21-25).

Dravid added that he will speak to the team management in England over the next couple of weeks and ask about their requirement.

"I haven't disturbed them (Virat Kohli and Ravi Shastri) during WTC but will touch base with them over the next couple of weeks and see what they are thinking," he added. The 48-year-

old, known as The Wall for his gritty batting, said the objective of the team is to win the series and hopefully, in the process, the team can throw up a few options for the T20 World Cup.

"There are a lot of people in the squad pushing for places or looking to cement their places in the T20 World Cup coming up but I think the key goal of the squad, and we have had a discussion around it, is to try and win the series," he added.

"The primary objective is to win the series. Hopefully, we will get the opportunity to put in good performances in the course of us trying to win the series, [the players] give themselves the best chance to hopefully knock on the doors of the selectors," he added.

The former India captain said that the tour will be crucial for not just Prithvi Shaw but also others like Devdutt Padikkal and Ruturaj Gaikwad. ANND



Shafali becomes youngest Indian to make debut in all formats

BRISTOL

OPENER Shafali Verma on Sunday became the youngest Indian cricketer to make debut across formats after being picked for the first ODI against England Women here.

On her ODI debut, Verma scored 15 runs off 14 balls before being dismissed by Katherine Brunt. The Haryana girl took 17 years and 150 days to make her debut across format, making her the fifth youngest cricketer overall in the list, headed by Afghanistan's Mujeeb Ur



Rahman. Rahman had made his all format debut at 17

years and 78 days, followed by England's Sarah Taylor (17 years 86 days), Australia's Ellyse Perry (17 years 104 days) and Pakistan's Moham-mad Amir (17 years 108 days).

Verma had scored 96 and 63 in her dream debut in the one-off Test against England which ended in a sensational draw last week. She was the youngest batter to score two fifties on debut in women's Test.

Verma has scored 617 runs with three fifties in the 22 T20Is that she has played so far since making her debut in September 2019. PTI

3rd-place finish for India in Asian Cup qualifiers well deserved: HFC coach

HYDERABAD

INDIAN Super League (ISL) side Hyderabad FC's (HFC) Spanish head coach Manuel Marquez is all praise for the Indian national football team after its performance in the combined FIFA World Cup 2022 and AFC Asian Cup China 2023 qualifiers in Doha earlier this month.

Following their 0-1 loss to Asian champions Qatar, the Sunil Chhetri-led India defeated Bangladesh 2-0 before drawing Afghanistan to advance

to the Asian Cup China 2023 qualifiers final round.

The 52-year-old Marquez, whose contract with Hyderabad FC was extended by two years in February this year, said, "I watched the (India) games against Bangladesh and Afghanistan (earlier this month) and I have to say I thoroughly enjoyed the performances of the Indian youngsters. The game against Qatar was also a real test. India's aim was to finish as high as possible in the group and I believe that the third-place finish was pretty

well deserved." India finished third behind Qatar (22 points) and Oman (18 points) with seven points in the five-team Group E. Afghanistan (6) and Bangladesh (2) finished fourth and fifth, respectively.

Marquez said the long ISL 'post-season' break has both its advantages and disadvantages. "I believe that the off-season for the ISL is a bit too long, which is not ideal for the players. But it gives us time to spend with family and friends and also for an occasional movie. The Euros and Copa America have also

kept us busy. "I have been in contact with the owners, staff, the players and the fans of Hyderabad FC, as we all begin our preparations for the new season," he said.

Hyderabad FC narrowly missed out on the 2020/21 ISL semi-finals as they finished fifth on the points table in what was a huge improvement on their bottom-place finish in the previous season. "It was a pity we missed out on the top-4 after getting so close and cannot wait for the next season to get underway," Marquez said from Spain. ANND

EURO 2020

Spain, Croatia peaking ahead of knockout game

COPENHAGEN

DANI Osmo will be lining up against some familiar opponents when Spain faces Croatia in the round of 16 at the European Championship.

In fact, he easily could have been lining up for Croatia instead of Spain at Euro 2020. The attacking midfielder turned down overtures from Croatia's national team after moving to Dinamo Zagreb from Barcelona's academy as a 16-year-old and spending six seasons at the club.

Olmo has never played senior club soccer in Spain — he moved to RB Leipzig in 2020 — but doesn't regret his decision to stick to his home country. "There was interest from Croatia, but I always preferred to play for Spain," Olmo said.

The 23-year-old Olmo is part of a group of young players who have been given leading roles in Luis Enrique's new-look Spain team. Against Croatia, he has the added role of being the in-house expert on the opposing players.

"Our coach knows the Croatia team

well. If he asks me, I will share my opinion with him," Olmo said. "I have played with the majority of their players. ... I think (Bruno) Petkovic stands out. He is a complete player and we have to pay extra attention to him." However, Croatia will be without one of its best players for the game in Copenhagen after forward Ivan Perisic tested positive for COVID-19. Perisic, who scored two goals during the group stage, will have to self-isolate for 10 days and would also miss the quarterfinals and semifinals if Croatia advances that far. Spain and Croatia both seem to be peaking at the right time after slow starts to the tournament. Spain beat Slovakia 5-0 in its final group game to advance, while Croatia defeated Scotland 3-1 to finish second behind England in Group D.

Both also have strong tournament pedigree, although their recent trajectories have gone in opposite directions.

Croatia reached the 2018 World Cup final before losing to France, and

13 of those players are still in the squad. Spain won three straight major tournaments between 2008-2012, including two European Championships, but lost in the round of 16 at both Euro 2016 and the 2018 World Cup in Russia.

What's more, only seven players in the Spain squad had played at a previous major tournament. One of those veterans, Barcelona midfielder Sergio Busquets, gave the team a massive lift when he returned for the Slovakia game after testing positive for coronavirus before the tournament.

Luis Enrique has continued Spain's traditional possession-based approach but the team's attacking play looked labored in the first two draws against defensive-minded Sweden and Poland. Croatia, though, will play a more aggressive style and won't sit back to let Spain dominate possession.


"When the Spaniards have possession they force it, they had a little difficulty in the first two games with scoring," Croatia defender Dujce Caleta-Car said. "We have players who can show their quality through possession as well, and that's where I see our chance. They haven't experienced that yet, that someone takes the ball from them."

Croatia midfielder Nikola Vlasic also warned against giving Spain too much time on the ball. "We certainly must prevent them from feeling comfortable and playing their football," Vlasic said.

"That would be deadly for us, because they're really excellent technically." Croatia veteran Luka Modric showed with his goal against Scotland that he remains a formidable force at 35 and will be the player trying to dictate the game. Spain has missed its last five penalties overall — including two at Euro 2020 — so the coach probably isn't relishing the prospect of a shootout. AP



Italy's Matteo Pessina scores their second goal during the Euro 2020 soccer championship round of 16 match against Austria at Wembley Stadium in London lateon Saturday. Italy see off Austria 2-1 in extra time to reach quarterfinals





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