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PAPER WITH PASSION

Shrewd move

Tikait plans to renew the agitation after May 10 so that the protesting farmers can use the breather

By no measure can one compare the ongoing farmers' crusade with popular movements like the Satyagraha or Quit India that eventually led to India winning its Independence from the British. However, there is an uncanny similarity and it is inherent to any movement in general if it aims to survive for long. It seems that the farmer agitation's most prominent face and voice, Rakesh Tikait, has taken a leaf out of India's Independence movement and is adroitly following the strategy that Mahatma Gandhi believed in — Struggle-Truce-Struggle (STS) — as he has announced that the struggle against the Centre over the three contentious farm laws will pick up intensity after May 10. He has also proclaimed that the movement will continue for at least another eight months. The agitation, which has been going on for four months and reached its peak when a few anti-nationals among the protesters hoisted certain flags on the ramparts of the Red Fort on Republic Day, has now apparently lost steam. Obviously, Tikait, who is striving to make a political career for himself riding on the popular movement, doesn't want the growers' struggle to be lost into oblivion. He is doing whatever he can to inject fresh lifeblood into it but he also seems to be aware that mass movements have an inherent tendency to ebb after reaching a certain point. According to Mahatma Gandhi, the capacity of the masses to withstand repression, endure sufferings and make sacrifices is not unlimited and there comes a time when breathing space is needed to consolidate, recuperate and gather strength for the next round of the struggle. The truce period would enable the masses to recoup strength to renew the fight.



So, Tikait has said the farmers amassed at Delhi's borders can harvest their wheat crops till May 10 and the movement will now gather speed only after that. He is well aware of the compulsions a grower faces and, himself being a farmer, knows the importance of timing in harvesting and sowing a crop. Despite several rounds of negotiations with the Government, no results have been achieved. The farmers are adamant on their demand for repealing the three laws and a legal guarantee on the MSP while the Government is not ready to concede. On the other hand, Tikait is using the opportunity of becoming a mass leader to the fullest. His visit to the poll-bound West Bengal last month turned out to be an unsuccessful attempt in that direction as he failed to garner much support against the BJP. Whether this movement will survive or succumb to the politics of those spearheading it, only time will tell. However, it is advisable for Tikait to drop all his plans of scoring brownie points in politics by milking the farmers' protest. He'd better seek parleys with the Government and reach an amicable solution. It would be in the interest of both the farmers and the Government. This is not a Satyagraha but just a movement led by the strong lobby of middlemen and greedy politicians who have otherwise failed to make a mark in politics.

PICTALK



A devotee carries a wooden cross during a procession on Good Friday, at a church in Amritsar

Tyranny continues in Myanmar

How India and the world should respond to the murderous atrocities unleashed by the military there on peaceful protesters



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

The emergency United Nations Security Council (UNSC) meeting on March 31, held at the United Kingdom's initiative, to discuss the situation in Myanmar, has drawn a blank. This is clear from the statement issued after its conclusion by Britain's permanent representative at the UN, Barbara Woodward, that the council would continue to "discuss the next steps". Evidently, no steps were agreed upon, and mainly because of China. According to the Chinese mission at the UN, its permanent representative, Zhang Jun, had said in his statement: "China emphasises that all parties in Myanmar should take up the responsibility of maintaining national stability and development, act in the fundamental interests of the people, find a solution to the crisis within the constitutional and legal framework through dialogue and consultation, and continue to advance the democratic transition in Myanmar."



The rest of the statement carries on in the same vein with a succession of platitudinous exhortations, completely overlooking the fact that it is Myanmar's ruling junta that has unleashed a country-wide wave of murderous repression, while the multitudes demonstrating against the coup on February 1, 2021, have remained completely peaceful. Not surprisingly, his statement did not contain even a single word of condemnation of the junta's actions. If anything, it was an effort to let the junta continue its savage repression while assuming a posture of virtuous neutrality. One, of course, could not expect anything different from a regime that perpetrated the Tiananmen Square massacre of June 4, 1989, and is seeking to stamp out the cultural identity of the Uighurs of Xinjiang amid unspeakable atrocities. Nor can it be expected to do so in future, given its own autocratic orientation and the stakes it has acquired in Myanmar. Given its veto, it is unlikely that the UNSC will be able to take any effective step against the junta. This, needless to say, is unfortunate. As Christine Schraner-Burgener, the UN special envoy

on Myanmar, told the UNSC emergency session, the junta's continuing savagery required a "firm, unified international response". The question is what can countries like the US, Britain, members of the European Union and Australia do? The Biden Administration announced on February 11 the suspension of the 2013 Trade and Investment Framework Agreement, meant to boost bilateral business between the US and Myanmar, until the restoration of democracy there. It also imposed sanctions on 10 generals, some of them retired, who led the coup, and three commercial entities. Besides imposing restrictions on strategic exports, it has prevented the generals associated with the junta from improperly accessing the Myanmar Government's funds of over \$1 billion lying in the US. The US Commerce Department placed under suspension on March 4, four military-controlled Ministries and conglomerates and, on March 22, the US Department of Treasury imposed sanctions on Myanmar's police chief, a military commander, and two military units for their role in repressing demonstrators. Britain, Canada and New

INDIA CANNOT REMAIN SILENT INDEFINITELY ABOUT THE TATMADAW'S STOMACH-TURNING CRUELTY. IT HAS, AS THE WORLD'S LARGEST DEMOCRACY, A MORAL DUTY TO STAND BY THOSE STRUGGLING TO PREVENT ITS THROTTLING IN A NEIGHBOURING COUNTRY

Zealand have also imposed sanctions and travel bans, and frozen assets. Australia had announced, on March 7, the suspension of its limited cooperation with the Tatmadaw (as the Myanmar Army is officially called) and said it would re-direct the aid marked for the Government to aid groups. Sanctions, however, generally do not deliver much, and the ones imposed on the Tatmadaw earlier, did not. President Biden had perhaps this in mind when he said while announcing the first slew of sanctions in February: "We'll be ready to impose additional measures and we'll continue to work with our international partners to urge other nations to join us in these efforts." Linda Thomas Greenfield, the US ambassador to the UN, articulated the same approach when, after hoping that the Tatmadaw would return to the barracks and allow the democratically-elected Government to take its place, she said that if it did not do so and continued with its attacks on civilian populations, "then we have to look at how we might do more". It remains to be seen what the US does, and with what effect. Meanwhile, India has also to look at its own role.

While affirming its commitment to Myanmar's transition to democracy, it has not condemned the junta. There are doubtless reasons for this. The junta has been closely cooperating with its efforts to counter the ethnic insurgent groups operating along its border with Myanmar. It has emerged as a significant seller of arms to the Tatmadaw and developed strong economic links with Myanmar. Besides, there is the compulsion to counter China's growing influence there. India, however, cannot remain silent indefinitely about the Tatmadaw's stomach-turning cruelty. Besides, it has, as the world's largest democracy, a moral responsibility to stand by those struggling to prevent its throttling in a neighbouring country. It must now speak out and stand with the other democracies in condemning what is happening next door. Fortunately, the Manipur Government has reversed its inhuman order to deny food and shelter-and even turn back-those crossing over to escape the junta's savagery. India must do the opposite, and provide them with all the care it can. (The author is Consulting Editor, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEED FOR UNIFORM CIVIL CODE

Sir —Despite various amendments and Supreme Court judgments in the sphere of property law, there are still certain legal provisions that are inconsonant with the precepts of gender equality. The current form of these laws is attributable to the unsuccessful codification process of customary laws that first began during British colonialism and was furthered after Independence by the Nehru-led Congress Government to specifically reform Hindu personal laws. The purported objective furnished by the leaders was to establish uniformity and gender equality. However, the gap between rhetoric and reality was too large to go unnoticed. As a consequence of the intense opposition faced from the northern leaders, the laws so codified ended up reinforcing gender stereotypes. For example, the Hindu Succession Act of 1956 solely granted males the rights over ancestral property. It was only through the Amendment Act of 2005 and the Supreme Court's verdict in *Vineeta Sharma vs Rakesh Sharma* in 2020 that females became equal coparceners by birth. Be that as it may, relying on individual amendments and judgments to extend equality is not the way forward. The most expedient and effective means towards legal equality is enacting a Uniform Civil Code. It will put an end to gender discrimination by eliminating personal laws and by creating uniform standards for all communities.

Nissim Aggarwal | Chandigarh

HAIL THE GREAT ACTOR OF INDIAN CINEMA

Sir — The news that Rajinikanth has been bestowed with the prestigious Dadasaheb Phalke Award comes as a delight to everyone. Fondly called '*Thalavaiva*' by his fans, Rajinikanth has made profound contribution in the sphere of cinema not just as an actor, but also as a producer and a screenwriter. What amuses one is that, while his on-the-screen personality is impressive, his off-the-screen personality is equally inspiring. His sincerity, hard

Dropping the guard is lethal



More people are getting infected even after getting vaccinated. Among such people are also the political leaders who became careless after receiving the first dose of the vaccine. This can be explained through the '*Peltzman Effect*'. According to this effect, humans tend to engage in risky activities when security measures have been mandated. The vaccines are giving a sense of security to the people which in turn leads to increased risky behaviour. But the problem is that the vaccines do not

give immediate protection while the sense of protection develops much earlier. Many people, after getting inoculated, have stop wearing masks or maintaining social distancing and thus, instead of containing the spread, the virus is spreading like wildfire.

We have to take precautionary steps to contain the virus even after getting vaccinated. Only this will help stop the '*Peltzman effect*' coming into play. The number of Coronavirus cases continues to rise as India reported the highest single-day rise of 2021 with 72,330 new infections in 24 hours. With this, the nationwide tally of cases has increased to 1,22,21,665. Among the worst hit States is Maharashtra which has reported the highest daily new cases at 39,544. Further, India has already launched the third phase of COVID-19 vaccination, open for all aged 45 and above. In a bid to exponentially expand the inoculation drive, the Centre has announced that all vaccination centres, both public and private, will remain operational throughout April, including on gazetted holidays.

Kavya Shah | Ujjain

work, talent, zeal and, above all, immense love coupled with humbleness towards his fans has made him create a space for himself in the hearts of billions worldwide. With lots of respect for him, I congratulate '*Thalavaiva*' for achieving the highest award in Indian cinema. On the other hand, the legendary actor shared a thank-you note on Twitter, in which he wrote: "For all the love, greetings and wishes I've received from eminent political leaders, my film fraternity friends and colleagues, well-wishers, media, every person who took the time to wish me and my beloved fans across India and all over the world... My deepest gratitude and thanks."

Ramala Kinnera | Hyderabad

MAMATA BANERJEE IS OVERAMBITIONOUS Sir — This refers to the editorial '*Plan B?*' (April 2). Impartially speaking, the success of Trinamool Congress supremo

Mamata Banerjee's efforts to unite all parties against the formidable BJP with a view to dethroning it from the Centre and simultaneously breaking its winning spree in the States, squarely hinges upon the Grand Old Party's response to the letter the West Bengal Chief Minister has recently dashed off to all party chiefs in this regard.

But in case the Congress develops cold feet over the matter, Didi's '*Plan B*' will simply come a cropper, given that any anti-BJP *Mahagathbandhan* (grand alliance) sans the Congress will be skating on thin ice in the country. The flip side of the matter is also that the shelf-life of all the grand alliances that have come into being so far has been very short-lived.

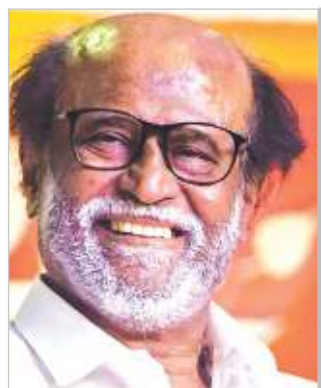
Azhar A Khan | Rampur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Award/Reward

The award to actor-legend Rajinikanth in the election season is open to myriad interpretations

At the outset, let it be put on record that nobody has any misgivings about super star and style icon Rajinikanth's claim on India's highest award in cinema, the Dadasaheb Phalke Award, winning which is undoubtedly the single biggest honour for anybody related to the cinematic field. If it needs be said, the accolade is richly deserved by the larger-than-life hero who started his journey to dominating the silver screen from very humble origins, when he was a coolie and, later, a bus conductor. Born Shivaji Rao Gaikwad on December 12, 1950, to a Marathi family in Bengaluru, he put in hard work learning the Tamil language before entering the Tamil film industry. His first film was *Apoorva Raagangal* (1975, directed by K Balachander) alongside Kamal Haasan. Having acted in over 160 films, he has a massive, hysterical, pan-India appeal since he has worked in almost all South Indian languages, besides Hindi and Bangla.



These details are important to underline and understand that behind all his charisma, mannerisms and the frenzied global fan following lies a simple, down-to-earth and hard-working man, who has just got his just deserts. By his own admission, he was more aware of his shortcomings than strengths and decided to work within them. So, of course, one can't even think of begrudging him any of the awards and honours he has received. But that begets another question on the other side of the fence. Has every deserving personality related to filmdom been justly awarded by the Government of the day, and in good time? The answer, one would think, is an emphatic "no". Several luminaries have missed out on the pinnacle of the cinematic world's achievement — SD Burman, his son and protégé RD, Vijay Anand, Rajesh Khanna and Kishore Kumar, to name just a few, and only from Bollywood. It would be easier to understand that his idiosyncrasies and "anti-establishment" behaviour worked against Kishore Kumar and roughly the same can be said about the debonair Dev Anand, who was awarded as late as in 2002 despite being a visionary filmmaker and actor. And, surprise, surprise, Rajinikanth's first co-actor and by then already an established actor, Kamal Haasan, hasn't got it to date! Maybe the Tamil Nadu election or Rajini's exit from politics before entry is a factor, isn't it possible?

SOUNDBITE

This time, the COVID-19 cases are increasing faster than last time but the Delhi Government has so far not thought about imposing a lockdown again in the city.



Delhi CM — Arvind Kejriwal



The country will continue negotiating a ceasefire in an effort to achieve peace in the conflict-ridden Donbas region.

Ukrainian President — Volodymyr Zelensky

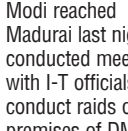


Actress — Raveena Tandon



Our camp is on in full swing. We have been working on deficiencies since the last two tours. It has been challenging since we have the Olympics coming up.

Indian woman hockey player — Navjot Kaur



Modi reached Madurai last night. He conducted meetings with I-T officials to conduct raids on the premises of DMK functionaries.

DMK president — MK Stalin



FIRST COLUMN

APP INNOVATIONS & USER EXPECTATIONS

Given the heavy competition in the sector, the only means for businesses to stand out is through app innovation



ABHAY PAI

As smartphones have become the largest means of accessing the internet, mobile apps are perhaps the most powerful means of connecting with users. In sheer numbers, it is a marketplace that no business can afford to ignore.

Chatbots: These are not new, but their utilisation in mobile apps is certainly changing the way brands connect and communicate with users.



also provide a more cost-effective and efficient solution for routine customer interactions. But from a basic customer feedback service, chatbots are now increasingly being adopted as the primary tool for customer interface.

Wearables: Fitness-oriented platforms today track the user's activity, heart rate and calorie intake along with oxygen monitoring.

Virtual or Augmented Reality: The concept of integrating digital content with the real world may have seemed like science fiction a decade ago, but it is far more common than one may imagine.

Machine Learning (ML): It is a branch of artificial intelligence where the machine uses data analysis to 'learn'. As a consequence, we have 'smart' machines that improve their functioning as they learn.

Progressive web applications: These are the marriage between web technology and apps stores that was just waiting to happen.

Payments: Remembering your PIN for every transaction can become rather tiresome, especially given the multiple platforms where we need passwords.

App innovations will be the key in leading the industry and expanding its reach as more and more people take advantage of disruptive technologies that are fun and customised for their use.

(The writer is co-founder and CTO at StepSetGo. The views expressed are personal.)

Preservation of the lotic ecosystem in India



BKP SINHA

Almost all Indian rivers are under severe despoliation caused by anthropogenic activities; the magnitude varies at various segments all along the rivers' course

One of the crucial challenges of the 21st century is the restoration of degraded running-water ecosystems — streams, rivers, springs— besides preserving those that are still in good condition.

Restoration will dominate in more developed regions where modifications of running water systems and their watersheds have been more extensive.

Riparian zones depict areas that are transitional between terrestrial and aquatic ecosystems. They are distinguished by gradients in biophysical conditions, ecological processes and biota.

A river is more than a channel carrying water; it transports sediments, harbours various organisms, plants, animal and microbes. Hence it should be conceived as a natural resource comprising biotic and abiotic ingredients essential for management of hydrological and ecological system.

In India, rivers are classified mainly into two types based on their geographical locations and origin — Himalayan rivers and peninsular ones. The former are glacier-fed and perennial, while the latter are altogether monsoon-fed.



AN OBVIOUS DIFFICULTY IS THE INABILITY TO DISTINGUISH THE DIRECT EFFECTS OF MODIFIED FLOW REGIMES FROM THE EFFECTS ASSOCIATED WITH OTHER CHANGES THAT OFTEN ACCOMPANY WATER RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT. ONE OFTEN ENCOUNTERS RIVER SYSTEMS AFFECTED BY MULTIPLE STRESSORS, MAKING IT NEARLY IMPOSSIBLE TO DEFINITELY SEPARATE THE EFFECTS OF ALTERED FLOW REGIMES FROM THOSE OF MYRIAD OTHER FACTORS AND INTERACTIONS ASSOCIATED WITH CLIMATE AND LAND USE CHANGES

The writer is a former IFS officer. The views expressed are personal.



The Indian territory. The Himalayan rivers are antecedent rivers having deep gorges exhibiting practically vertical to convex valley walls; and slope failures have become very common particularly in the belts cut by active faults in their hilly stretch.

The ecological conditions of peninsular rivers depend on hydrological characteristics like water level, current velocity and discharge, which vary from very lean to very high depending on relative rainfall in the respective watershed and catchment areas.

All peninsular rivers are monsoonal and display very poor water flow to heavy flood, displaying fluctuating ecological and biological conditions.

effluents, agricultural runoff, mining wastes, religious ceremonies and navigational operations; indiscriminate destruction of drainage basin because of clearing of riparian zone vegetation; huge load of suspended solid, causing increased magnitude and frequency of flood that changes the level of interaction between land and water and hence affects despoiling input of energy source; river regulation, lift irrigation and water allocation without considering the ecological consequences that have adversely influenced the density, diversity and productivity of aquatic bio-resources.

The water accounting study suggests that there is less physical risk of meeting the existing or future water demands and quantity of the supplied water as well. However, water quality is an issue that poses a major threat to the river ecology, risking the livelihoods of people dependent on rivers.

There is a small set of overarching ecological principles that, if employed for river management, may alleviate many of the difficult flow regulation issues facing resource managers and policy makers.

planned, derived on several spatially broad overviews of river and riparian characteristics, are simple to maintain — The flow regime determines the successional evolution of riparian plant communities and ecological processes; the river serves as a pathway for redistribution of organic and inorganic material that influences plant communities along rivers; every river has a characteristic flow regime and an associated riparian community; riparian zones are topographically unique in occupying nearly the lowest position in the landscape, thereby could be integrated with catchment-scale management.

The major challenge for riparian management is to place water resource development within the context of these fundamental ecological principles in order to maintain ecological vitality with long-term planning. Despite growing recognition of the relationships between riparian characteristics and flow regimes, ecologists still struggle to predict and quantify biotic responses to altered regimes.

An obvious difficulty is the inability to distinguish the direct effects of modified flow regimes from the effects associated with other changes that often accompany water resource development. One often encounters river systems affected by multiple stressors, making it nearly impossible to definitively separate the effects of altered flow regimes from those of myriad other factors and interactions associated with climate and land use changes.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

DIDI, IS THERE ANY TRUTH IN THE RUMOUR THAT YOU ARE GOING TO FILE YOUR NOMINATION FROM ANOTHER CONSTITUENCY? — PRIME MINISTER NARENDRA MODI



YES MR PRIME MINISTER, SHE WILL. AND IT WILL BE VARANASI! SO, GO GET YOUR ARMOUR ON. —TMC MP MOHUA MOITRA

Pressing need for World Government and Global Parliament

A World Government can be established and its Parliament could be elected directly by proportional representation based on population of each member nation

Amid ever-increasing threats facing humanity, it's high time to initiate steps at the governance level to make the world a safer place for mankind. The COVID-19 pandemic has provided impetus to the idea of a global democratic government and underlined the necessity of a world organisation to tackle the dangers facing mankind in a more effective manner.

It is obvious that these threats cannot be tackled by any country alone and a united action at the local, regional and international levels is required to rid the world of these dangers. Currently, a world body already exists —the United



JL KOUL JALALI

The writer is a journalist, former IIS officer and producer. The views expressed are personal.

Nations (UN). Formed after World War II in 1945 to prevent and eliminate recurrence of wars and to maintain peace all over the world, it was also mandated in broader terms to look after some aspects like economic, social and cultural development.

The organisation has been beneficial to mankind in many ways but looking back at its record during the over 75 years of its existence, there is not much to feel proud about. Soon after its formation in 1945, it had to face the Cold War between the Western Bloc and the Soviet Bloc headed by former Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR) which lasted till the collapse of the Soviet Block in 1991.

Chinese aggression against India in 1962 and the Cuban missile crisis between the then Soviet Union and the US. Mostly because of the Cold War politics and its attitude, it failed to take bold united action. Its response to natural disasters and epidemics at national or international level also fell far short of expectations.



tries, it has more or less continued with its inequitable representative character. A glaring example of this has been that India, with over 1.38 billion population which constitutes about 18 per cent of the world population, has no permanent representation on its most important decision-making organ — the UN Security Council.

membership of the UNSC, which started from January this year. The world body has also to change its responses so that the threats facing mankind are attended to promptly.

The idea regarding the deep structural changes to turn the UN into a democratic World Government, will take more time to come somewhat into shape. Moreover, in a world full of diversities and ideological differences, such an institution will have to be free from biases and prejudices and will have to transcend the diversities and differences to acquire a truly representative and independent character.

democratic World Government can be established and Parliament of the world body could be elected directly by proportional representation based on population of each member nation.

The challenges facing mankind as also the matters of economic and financial governance can be dealt with in a far better way by a Global Parliament. Such an institution will strengthen democracy, justice and equity throughout the world and help in curbing fundamentalist and the radical ideologies. Proper attention to all threats facing mankind could ensure safety and survival of intelligent life on earth.

deadly nuclear and biological wars at the local, regional or at international levels. At present, there are already scores of organisations in Africa, America, Europe and elsewhere, and some of these are popularly elected. Despite Brexit, the European Union continues to be a best example of such institutions even though at the regional level only. Initially established as an advisory body, it has evolved through decades as an elected representative institution.

Just some time before his death, renowned physicist Stephen Hawking pleaded for establishment of some form of World Government as he apprehended that aggressive instincts of humans could lead to destruction of mankind and hoped that such a Government could prevent the impending doom.

Hyderabad



He walked into the city to help build the Hyderabad Metro Rail as an L&T engineer. He went on to heal people through his medicine of laughter and then starred in hit films like *Goodachari*. With his recent release *Wild Dog* gathering good steam in the theatres, Mayank Parakh talks to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL about his love for the city, his initial struggle looking for vegetarian food, and more.

FROM THE TRACKS TO THE PAPZ!

that migrating as a civil engineer will one day eventually open doors for him as an actor in the Telugu film industry. "I'll term my relationship with this city as very *yaadgaar*, because I got a great chance to express myself. Let me tell you that I was feeling a bit out of place when I arrived in 2013. A fully new place with a new ethnicity, I was taken aback! I am a pure-vegetarian, varied thoughts lingered in my mind about whether I will be able to live to tell the tale here, in the metropolis widely known for its meat dishes. It was a thorny phase initially, I wasn't finding the right

times intact!

When Mayank enquired about the city, all he knew was Karachi biscuits or Paradise biryani, but as he settled deep down in this city, he realised there is utmost *sukoon* here. According to his readings, the locals of Hyderabad have all the time in the world to offer and host you! "I have also lived in Goa and it will be unjust for me to compare both the cities because they are poles apart. Goa was so unruffling! Now, when you look at Hyderabad it has both the facets to tender you with, a metropolitan benefit and three-tier ambience. What's most attractive is the city's *lehza!* The cuisine is as such that — if it has peculiar tandoori dishes or mughlai to present, it has diverse bakery foods too," he adds.

Mayank still can't forget from where he began. Narrating to us his fondest memories of Hyderabad, he recalls that novel occasion when he returned from Mumbai and could see the metro functioning here! The first thing that struck his mind was to take a metro ride and he did just that. He travelled from Paradise station to the Madhapur junction and while in the metro, he couldn't stop reminiscing the struggling days and the loads of hard work that went into the making of the L&T Metro Rail Project. It was like a dream for him as he was part of the mak-

ing! He says that he'll always bear in mind that he was one of the key points in bringing development to the city's landscape being a migrant.

Well, we went on to ask him what Hyderabad means to him and he says with an arresting tone, "Hyderabad is the first of many things that have happened to me — my work, my arrival due to that, my theatre performance, my gig and then my big break! I am so disposed to the numerous factors of this city now that all my stand-up gigs are around its culture and locals. The stand-up comedy scene is slowly growing on to become a popular and commercial hub here, while precedence is taken away by the admiration for the stand-up comedian to be honest if he or she is well-known! There is so much to pick up from them as their mannerisms keep altering according to the situations they are into!" He adds, "*Sab apne khyalon ke raja hai yahan* and the acceptance that the Telugu film industry has shown can't be beaten at all." Having talked about all the enchanting pointers about Hyderabad, Mayank feels there's great scope in the improvement of traffic sense here and ultimately he's a fan of *Irani chai*: "Ah, to be able to sit with a friendly group of peers with no passive-aggressive temperament is an experience in itself!"

Everybody wants to be a multifaceted person but it suits better for those geniuses who are God-gifted. Who knew, that from working as an L&T Engineer for the Hyderabad Metro Rail Project, one would go on to become a known face in the fraternity of stand-up comics and also dabble manifold roles in massive Telugu movies!

Mayank Parakh, who you can now watch in theatres nearby in

the recently released action thriller *Wild Dog* alongside Nagarjuna Akkineni, is turning out to be a polymath. Born in the anciently known 'south *kosala*' also called Chhattisgarh, Mayank, a *marwari*, disembarked to the city of Hyderabad in the year 2013 for his job as a civil engineer — until then, he had never been to Hyderabad. Going aboard with drama and arts, stand-up comedy and acting — Mayank established a name for himself, not knowing

place to dine outside. Sooner or later, *iss shaher ne mujhe samjha* and at the moment Hyderabad is going to be my top-most favourite place to reside in, because of its a blend both small-townies and the cream of the crop," shares the *Goodachari* fame.

Whoever eavesdrops to know more about Hyderabad, certain lingos are always in the air, be it the 'deccani language', 'musi river', or the fortified monuments that have kept the olden



If you were to look at fitness trends for 2021, you'd find the outdoors gets a big high five. More specifically a holiday trek is recommended as a way to not only get fit but it offers a unique social distancing advantage in the mountains with breath-taking scenery as a bonus. But then, if you think you can turn up without adequate training and preparation you are in for a shock, although you'd rue the whole thing later and consider your black toenail and blisters as a badge of honour. Marathon Coach Daniel Vaz shares five tips with *The Pioneer* to get you prepped with your holiday trek.

You need to begin with your first step (as Confucius says, for your thousand mile journey of sorts) and that is to begin walking. Begin with one hour walks on alternate days and build up to walking five times a week. With two months to go for your trek, throw in back-to-back long walks on weekends with a backpack that weighs between 5 - 7 kgs and do at least 3 - 4 weekend walks that last six hours. Use inclines, declines and stairs to simulate training for ascents and descents.

Typically, ten-day treks will have a relentless schedule of walking every day for 4 - 6 hours at a stretch and you'll thank yourself for the hours you invest in training. When a few of my runners decided to do Everest Base camp and despite training for marathons, I had them climb and descend stairs in their apartment complex with a backpack. They returned saying they found the whole experience a breeze.



Tips to trek the mountains better

Invest in a good pair of shoes. These should be water resistant hiking shoes with ankle support. Buy the shoes in the afternoon when your feet are swollen so you get the proper size for your feet. Make sure you 'break-into' your shoes so the shoe upper

moulds itself around your feet and they are snug and comfortable when you wear them on your six hour walks. You'll have to contend with a few blisters during training but better now than later so it saves you the misery and pain when you camp down for the night.

Build strength and cardiovascular capacity. Join a Gym if possible and use the treadmill for 30 - 40 minute cardio sessions, followed by resistance training.

Focus on building leg strength with exercises like weighted walking lunges, barbell

squats, leg presses and dead-lifts.

Hydrate well. You may face all kinds of weather, from hot afternoons to cold mornings. Your fluid requirements will need to be met because you will lose fluid thru' sweat and water vapour when exhaling. Don't wait to feel thirsty because it would mean that dehydration has already set in. This will impair your ability to keep up because fatigue and / or cramps will set in. Carry a sipper in your backpack and keep sipping all throughout the day. Practice hydration during your training walks to know what your specific fluid requirements are.

Fuel up. This is similar to staying hydrated. Don't attempt to make your trek into a weight loss sojourn, you will only end up with very low energy levels. The body will burn carbohydrate (stored in the body as glycogen) and these stores are very limited. If you run out of glycogen you could end up with low blood sugar and resulting deep fatigue setting in. Carry dry fruits as these are typically calorie dense and light weight.

You will probably spend a lot of money registering for your trek and travelling to the location. It makes good sense to prepare for it by training well so you are in good shape and can focus on enjoying the whole experience. One last bit of advice; carry a good deodorant with silver ions technology formulated to kill odour causing bacteria. Camps can be close quarters with several occupants and you'd probably stand out as someone not just fresh as a daisy from being fit but also smelling like one.

Debunked: Obesity myths to let go of



According to numerous studies and reports, more than 1.9 billion adults are overweight and 650 million are obese globally. In India, over 135 million people are affected by obesity. Obesity presents many medical and financial challenges for the individual, society and government. The problem of obesity can be solved by creating public awareness about obesity and its health consequences.

Misconceptions or myths about obesity can result in stigma and weight bias. Countering myths with facts and evidence has been proven to be an effective educational tool to increase individuals' knowledge about a certain condition and to reduce stigma, and obesity is no exception.

Below are some of the common myths around Obesity

Myth 1: Obesity is a result of poor lifestyle choices

FACT:

Obesity is a complex chronic disease with multiple contributing factors such as genetic variables as well as medical conditions. There is still a common belief that obesity is a lifestyle choice and that people become obese because they eat too much or exercise too little. This is not entirely true! Some people are merely susceptible to gaining weight owing to their genetic disadvantages.

Obesity demands a personalised treatment model involving medical therapies and lifestyle interventions, just like other chronic diseases. The interdisciplinary team should consist of health care professionals, (including dietitians and physicians) working together to deliver optimal treatment.

Myth 2: Exercising will fix obesity

FACT:

Exercise has many health benefits; however, weight loss isn't really one of them. Exercise only helps in losing 3% to 5% of the weight. Exercise is important for maintaining weight once you shed a few kilos.

Some forms of strenuous exercise can even be dangerous for obese patients, particularly if started all of a sudden. For some obese people, exercise isn't suitable until they lose a certain amount of weight.

Myth 3: Obesity is always hereditary

FACT:

When it comes to obesity, genetic factors play an important role. However, it doesn't mean that inheriting some traits makes one obese. Obesity rarely shows a clear inheritance pattern when it occurs in families. It seems that in mostcases, obesity is multifactorial, which is the result of complex interactions among many genes and environmental factors.

Myth 4: Obesity does not affect health

FACT:

Obesity has an adverse effect on almost every part of the body and can hamper a person's quality of life. Obese people are at increased risk for many serious illnesses and health conditions when compared to people with healthy and normal weight. These conditions include type 2 diabetes mellitus, arthropathy, arterial hypertension, dyslipidemia, coronary heart disease, cerebral vasculopathy, sleep apnea syndrome, etc.

Myth 5: Eating less will solve the problem of obesity

FACT:

One main reason for obesity is consuming more calories than the body requires, over an extended period of time. The most common steps taken towards controlling obesity are lowering calorie intake, increasing physical activity or both. Though diet and exercise are important aspects, several other factors also play a crucial role in obesity. These factors are inadequate sleep, psychological stress, chronic pain, endocrine (hormone) disruptors, and the use of certain medications. It is unfortunate that people often forget about these when thinking of obesity.

Obesity is a complex disease and we still have a lot to learn about it. Due to these gaps in knowledge, people lean towards ideas that simply aren't correct. Unravelling the facts about obesity from the fiction will help understand and manage the disease better. It is advisable to seek expert opinion from your doctor to address obesity at an early stage.

(The writer, Dr R Santosh is a Consultant Endocrinologist at Magna code Hospital)



what's brewing?



● Anshu, Anshu and Rakshitha



● Sashi Nahata



● Bhargavi



● Shreya Reddy



Soni

Photos by SV Chary

PARTY



● Anusha



● Bindhu and Lakshmi



● Nandamuri Vasundhara Devi



● Karuna



● Lokeswari



● Monika

GLITZ AND GLAM

A kruti exhibition at the Taj Deccan hotel saw many pretty faces and fashion buffs as Sashi Nahata curated another event of fashionwear, luxury clothing, home decor, accessories, and much more! The event, which goes on till April 4, is all set to take the city on a tour of the latest trends.

VEGGIE TALES

Producer Nandamuri Vasundhara Devi formally inaugurated Pure O Natural Fruits and Vegetables' 33rd outlet in the Telugu states, at Kokapet on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, she said that fruits and vegetables will work as an elixir in keeping us healthy. "Consuming fruits and vegetable regularly would help in being fit and energetic," she said.

FUN

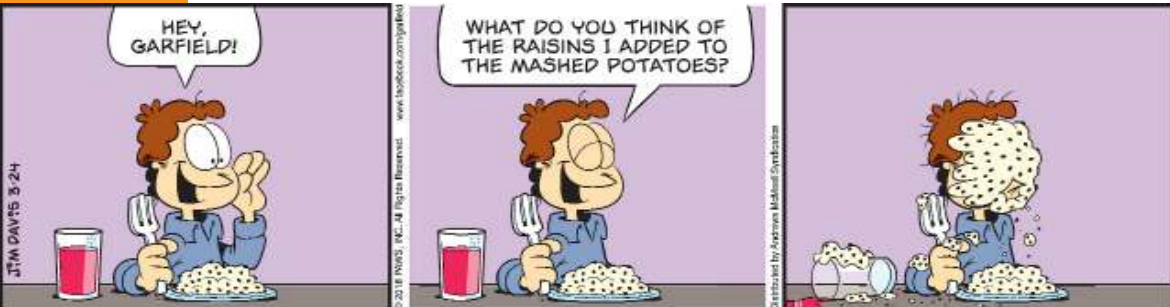
ARCHIE



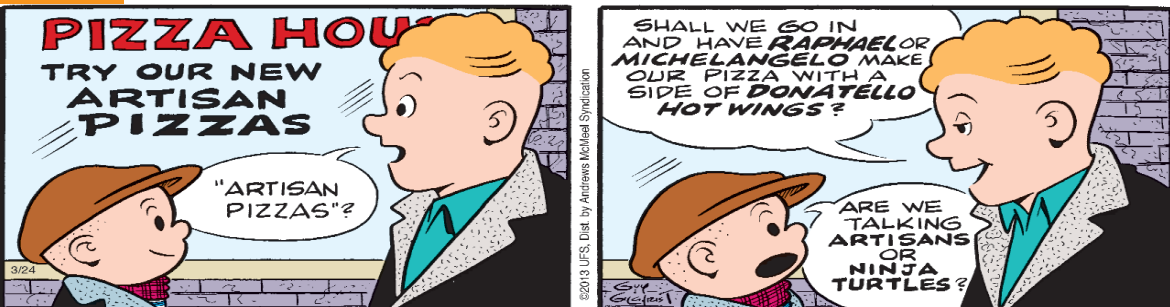
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



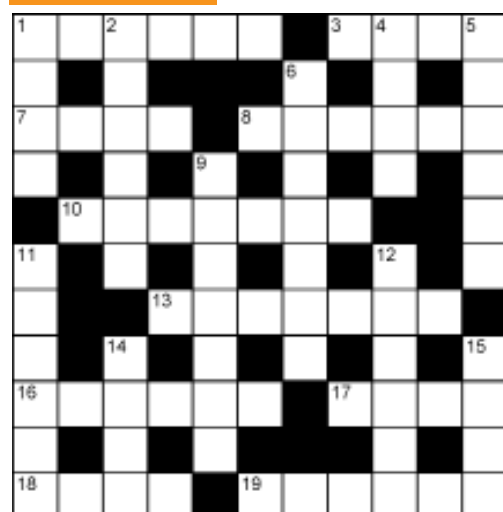
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

8	9	6		1	
6		4		9	
					8
4	9		7	1	5
7	2	5	4		1
	2				
	7			6	
5		2	7		6

Yesterday's solution

6	1	9	7	5	3	2	8	4
5	7	8	2	6	4	9	1	3
4	3	2	6	5	4	1	7	9
8	5	4	9	2	7	3	6	1
1	9	7	3	8	6	4	2	5
2	4	5	6	9	8	1	3	7
9	8	3	1	7	5	6	4	2
7	6	1	4	3	2	8	5	9

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

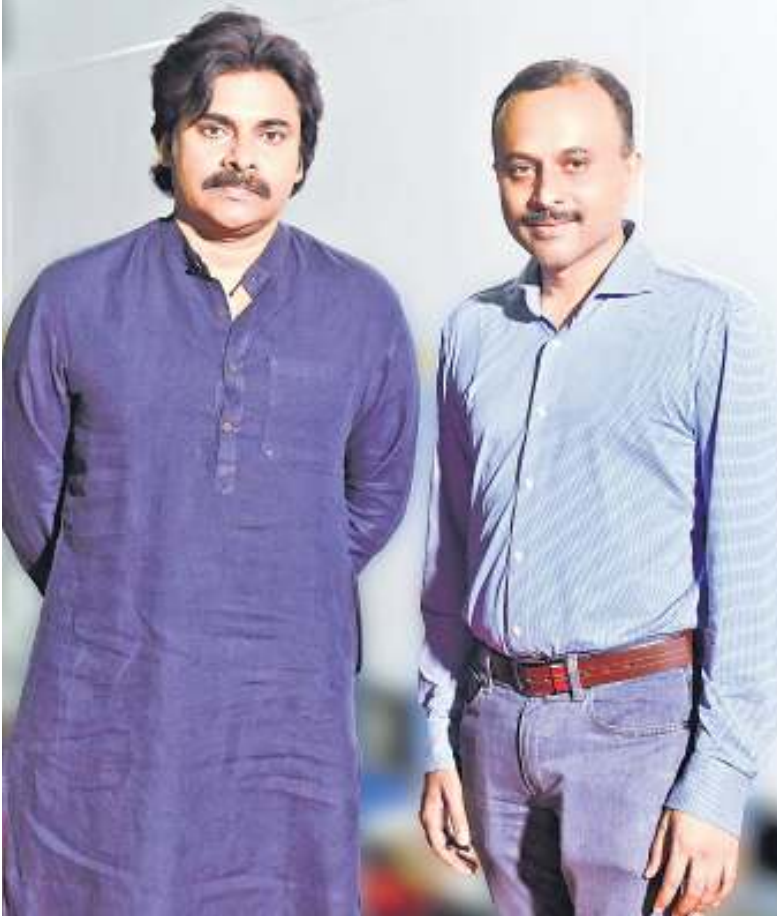
- 1 A clasp on a belt
- 3 Hint
- 7 A foot covering
- 8 Small glass ball
- 10 Very angry
- 13 Borrow books here
- 16 A large shed for an aeroplane
- 17 Leg joint
- 18 Decays
- 19 Dislike very strongly
- 6 A month
- 9 Alike
- 11 A writer of books
- 12 Medal for third place
- 14 Rope tangle
- 15 Departed

DOWN

- 1 Finest
- 2 A prickly plant
- 4 Part of the ear
- 5 Cricket team number



STAGE SET FOR INCOMING NEW BREED OF TALENT



The struggle of aspiring actors trying and waiting and failing and finally giving up is a sad reality. We know of many young talented actors coming to the film industry and struggling for opportunities and heading back to different fields with the frustration of not finding the right platform for their talent.

To cater to such artists, Power Star Pawan Kalyan and T.G. Vishwa Prasad of People Media Factory LLP have collaborated to offer an opportunity and give them new life.

Pawan Kalyan Creative Works, established by the *Gabbar Singh* actor with a love for cinema and storytelling, intends to encourage new writers, storytellers and talent in making movies in multiple languages across different genres. PKCW collaborated with People Media Factory LLP to jointly bankroll 15 films. These 15 include 6 Small scale projects, 6 medium scale and 3 large scale ones.

"This coming-together of Pawan Kalyan Creative Works and People Media Factory LLP aims at materialising projects as mentioned below, apart from the exciting possibility of Mr Pawan Kalyan *garu* himself starring in a couple of them," a statement read.

Harish Pai will play a key role as an executive producer in promoting new talent that can leverage the collaboration to find potential opportunities. More details will be released soon. The representatives said that they would announce further details in due course of time.



MAKERS UNVEIL AJAY DEVGN'S poweRRRful avatar

Makers of director SS Rajamouli's *RRR*, on the occasion of Bollywood actor Ajay Devgn's birthday, treated his fans to a motion poster of the film revealing his look. Revealing the motion poster of *Roudram Ranam Rudhiram* on Ajay Devgn's birthday, the

film's official handle wrote, "Empowering his people is his defining characteristic. His strength lies in his emotion. Presenting the powerRRRful avatar of @ajaydevgn in #RRRMovie." Ajay, who turned 52 on Friday, also shared the *RRR* motion poster and wrote, "Load. Aim. Shoot. Thank you @ssrajamouli for envisioning

me in such an exciting and powerful character." Other members of the *RRR* cast — NTR Jr and Ram Charan Tej too shared the motion poster. It has been reported that Ajay will appear in flashback portions of the film. Earlier, the makers had revealed the first looks of Alia Bhatt as Sita and Ram Charan as Alluri Sitarama Raju on their respective birthdays.

RRR is set in 1920s India, and its screenplay has been written by director SS Rajamouli and his father KV Vijayendra Prasad. The film imagines the two famed 'heroes' — Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem — meeting at some point in time. *RRR* will release in October 2021 and it will clash with another Ajay Devgn starrer *Maidaan*.

VAISHNAV TEJ NEXT WITH KETIKA LAUNCHED

After the success of *Uppena*, actor Vaishnav Tej has become everyone's favourite — both for his alluring looks and his acting skills for a newbie.

It is known that the actor has a couple of projects lined up. The actor's next with *Romantic* girl Ketika Sharma has been launched in the city on Friday.

The film, supposedly a romantic family drama, is being directed by Gireesaaya of *Adithya Varma*, Tamil remake of *Arjun Reddy* fame.

Apparently, Gireesaaya wanted to cast an actress who could resonate with the youth while effortlessly fitting into the family-drama genre. We hear the director chose Ketika after chancing upon her rushes in *Romantic*.

It surely looks like Ketika and Vaishnav make for a cool pair on screen; their funny conversations and situational comedy in the film seem to add to the lightness of the breezy entertainer.

The film is being bankrolled by B.V.S.N. Prasad and will go on floors next month.



'THERE IS NO STOPPING WHEN IT COMES TO MY WORK'

Social media validation is not that important to actress Ileana D'Cruz, although she is an avid user of digital platforms. Ileana keeps entertaining her followers with regular workout posts. The actress enjoys a fan following of 13.1 million on Instagram and 2.7 million Twitter followers.

"Validation is not that important at all. I do agree on the motivation part because oddly enough posting about my workouts motivates me to workout as well. So, it makes me want to

get up and 'I should do it,' the *Julayi* actress said.

Ileana made her big-screen debut in 2006 with the Telugu film *Devadasu*. She made a name in Telugu cinema with hits such as *Pokiri*, *Jalsa*, *Kick*, and more.

It was in 2012, she made her Hindi film debut with Anurag Basu's *Barfi!*. She then starred in *Main Tera Hero*, *Rustom*, *Baadshaho* and *Raid*.

"I still feel like there is so much more I could have done and there is so much more that I want to do, and there is no stopping when it comes to my work right now. There is no looking back for me. I can't imagine doing anything else. I am weirdly hungrier now for work than how I was when I started out," Ileana said.

Is there any genre, in particular, she would like to try out? "I think it's an action film. I think I should dabble in something where I am kicking serious butt," the *Aata* actress said.

"I still feel like there's so much more I could have done and there is so much more that I want to do, and there is no stopping when it comes to my work right now. There is no looking back for me. I can't imagine doing anything else. I am weirdly hungrier now for work than how I was when I started out."

Shruti Haasan on working in Covid times: I get tested very often

Actress Shruti Haasan has been juggling between Chennai, Hyderabad and Mumbai to shoot her upcoming films.

With Covid cases continuing unabated, and with places like Mumbai seeing a sharp rise, she says she is being extra cautious.

Talking about how she manages her travel schedule and being safe, the *Oh My Friend* actress shares, "I've always been used to travelling for shoots but it's definitely more chaotic during these times of Covid. I get tested often, in order to make sure I'm not a risk to others, and to follow the protocol of each state and, of course, I follow safety precautions." "I don't compromise on loads of sanitisers and masks as well! Everything else comes second," the *Yevadu* actress adds.

The actress who started the year with the Ravi Teja-starrer *Krack* hitting the bullseye at the box office, has already thrown herself into work for Prabhas' *Salaar*.

Her film with Vijay Sethupathi, *Laabam*, is also ready for release. She will also be seen in the Pawan Kalyan-starrer *Vakeel Saab*, in a guest role.



Raashi roped in as *Thank You* female lead?



Actor Naga Chaitanya, is busy shooting for his next, *Thank You* with Vikram K Kumar of *Manam* fame. The shoot of the film is going on at brisk pace, as it is to release on June 19, 2021.

Now, according to the latest update, makers of the film, who are yet to make a final announcement about the female lead, have roped in Raashi Khanna to be cast opposite Chaitanya.

A final confirmation about the same is yet to be made.

Produced by Dil Raju's banner, the romantic drama will have the two appear as young lovers. The duo earlier had played as lovers in director Bobby's *Venky Mama*, which had a decent run at the box office.

Thank You is being produced under Sri Venkateswara Creations banner. The Naga Chaitanya-starrer has cinematography by PC Sriram, B V S Ravi has penned the story, music is scored by S Thaman, and Naveen Nooli is taking care of the editing department.

Naga Chaitanya is awaiting the release of his upcoming film *Love Story* that is being helmed by Sekhar Kammula. It has Sai Pallavi as the female lead, whose song *Saranga Dariya* has gone viral.

Chaitanya will also be debuting in Bollywood where he will play a crucial role in Aamir Khan's *Laal Singh Chaddha*. Raashi Khanna, on the other hand, is busy with Gopichand's *Pakka Commercial* and a couple of Tamil films.

Tamim planning to quit one format to prolong career

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bangladesh One Day Internationals captain Tamim Iqbal is planning to quit one format of the game to prolong his cricket career, the star opening batsman revealed on Friday.

According to a report in *Cricbuzz*, the opening batsman, who missed three-match T20 Internationals series against New Zealand this week due to personal reasons, didn't specify which format he's planning to quit but added that the upcoming T20 World Cup in India is very much on his mind.

"Of course the T20 World Cup is very much on my mind and this is just six months away and I am not 36 or 37, so why not?" Tamim said on Friday.

"T20 is not out of mind. Look how I want to have my cricketing career and how I would like it to shape in my head. I know which format I want to leave early and which format I want to leave later. I know everything and I don't think that I have to disclose everything to everyone.

"When I feel that I have to let go of this format to prolong the other two, I will not push myself and carry on with that. The message is very clear, I want to play for Bangladesh as long as possible and I want to give my best for the country. I want to leave one format just to make sure I can give my best to the other two formats. It is not that I am tired of Test cricket that I am leaving or I am tired of T20 that I am leaving, it is just to make sure that I can give my best to other two formats," he said.

Even though Tamim made it clear that he plans to go down the road of quitting one of the three formats, he remained tight-lipped about which format it would be that he gives up early.

"If I want to play for five to six years then it is very difficult for me to play three formats. Normally if you see the international cricketers around the world you will see they don't retire from all the formats at one go.

"They let go of one format and then they play the other two formats and then they retire. What I want to say is that the same thing is for me if I feel now or say six months or year or after two years... if I feel that I have to let go of one format, I will let go of one format.

"I don't want to indicate anything as I said it can be ODIs, Tests or T20s. I will play those two formats where I can contribute to the team and let go that format where I feel that I have nothing much to give," said Tamim.

Babar ton trumps van der Dussen's

Pakistan go 1-0 up in three-match ODI series after final ball win in 1st ODI

AFP ■ CENTURION

Pakistan skipper Babar Azam struck his 13th One Day International century as his side narrowly beat South Africa by three wickets off the final ball of the match in the first ODI at Supersport Park on Friday.

Asked to bat first by Pakistan, the Proteas found themselves in trouble early on, slumping to 55-4, following the cheap dismissals of Quinton de Kock (20), Aiden Markram (19), Temba Bavuma (1) and Heinrich Klaasen (1). Rassie van der Dussen and David Miller steadied the ship and patiently batted South Africa back into the contest with a 116-run partnership.

Miller fell for 50 but Van der Dussen kicked on to reach his maiden ODI century with Andile Phehlukwayo adding a valuable 29 down the order before he departed.



When I went in, I just want to play to my strengths. I was hoping to get a partnership with Imam and we got a big one
— BABAR AZAM

Not the result we were looking for, but a good game of cricket. We were tested in all departments, and tested to our limits. A good start to the series, but we have areas to improve in
— TEMBA BAVUMA

Van der Dussen struck a few more big blows as the Proteas posted 273-6 in their 50 overs with the right-hander finishing unbeaten on 123.

Kagiso Rabada made a brilliant start with the ball for the Proteas by bowling Fakhar Zaman for only eight.

Azam, though, joined Imam-ul-Haq in the middle and together the pair batted Pakistan into a commanding position with the captain playing some truly spectacular shots.

Both players surpassed their half-centuries and continued to frustrate the South African bowlers as pressure began to build on the hosts.

Azam went on to his 13th ODI ton before Anrich Nortje finally broke the 177-run partnership with the breakthrough of Azam, who departed for 103.

Nortje led the Proteas fightback with the ball and pressured the Pakistan batsmen with a number of short deliveries, which yielded the further wickets of Imam-ul-Haq (70), Danish Aziz (3) and Asif Ali (2).

All of a sudden Pakistan were in a spot of bother themselves at 203-5, but wicketkeeper Mohammad Rizwan, brought visitors back into the contest.

Rizwan and Shadab Khan absorbed the pressure and applied themselves with a couple of boundaries. The two batsmen stood firm to bring up a 50-run partnership of their own for the

sixth wicket.

Phehlukwayo provided a big glimmer of hope when Rizwan was caught by Rabada for 40. Requiring only three from the final over, the Proteas all-rounder removed Khan, who batted well for his 33.

Phehlukwayo kept South Africa in the contest, and just one run was required from the final ball of the innings. But Faheem Ashraf put through the covers to get his team over the line.

Boucher looks at positives from IPL bound players missing Pak series

PTI ■ KARACHI

South Africa head coach Mark Boucher sought to dwell on the positives from his IPL-bound players missing the Pakistan series, saying it will help their T20 World Cup preparation in India and also allow him to test his team's bench strength.

Five top South African players including Quinton de Kock, Kagiso Rabada, Lungi Ngidi, David Miller and Anrich Nortje will be available only for the first two ODIs against Pakistan before they fly to India to

begin their quarantine period ahead of the IPL beginning April 9.

"There are pros and cons of these players missing matches in this series but we have known this for sometime because the BCCI and CSA have a long standing agreement to release players for IPL and the scheduling didn't quite work out because of the Covid-19 situation," Boucher told a virtual press conference.

The former South African wicketkeeper batsman said one of the pros was that the players will be playing the IPL in India where the World T20 is

scheduled later this year.

"I think their appearances in the IPL going into the World T20 will help us," said Boucher.

"Playing in a good strong competition against top strong opposition who they are likely to face in the World T20 they are going to get first hand information about the different venues, opposition we expect to meet up in the World event.

"Look at it positively they are not going on holidays and it also gives us an opportunity to have a lookout over other guys in the fray," he added.

Indian players want to play in The Hundred, claims Morgan

PTI ■ KOLKATA

England's white ball captain Eoin Morgan, who also leads Kolkata Knight Riders in the IPL, claims that a lot of Indian players are interested in being a part of his country's ambitious *The Hundred* league as well as other franchise events around the globe.

Morgan also urged the game's administrators to have a roadmap for the next 10 years to ensure that top players are not forced to choose a lucrative private league career over International cricket.

"Just having conversations out here about *The Hundred*, I know that there are Indian cricketers out here who would love to play in *The Hundred* and other competitions around the world," Morgan told *Sky Sports* during an interaction but did not take any names.

"They love travelling and experiencing new conditions and cultures, and they would add huge value to a tournament like that," he added.

The Hundred is a franchise-based 100-ball cricket event that was supposed to



start last year in England. However, the Covid-19 pandemic led to its postponement to this year.

Morgan said the ICC is not doing enough to accommodate the countries which are losing players to private leagues.

"My biggest worry is that the game isn't changing and accommodating the pace at which it is growing.

"It is definitely an area of concern and one that needs improvement going forward because you play against countries and some aren't able to

play their best XIs because they are competing against big leagues around the world," Morgan told former England skipper Nasser Hussain during the chat.

Morgan cautioned ICC that in another decade's time, the franchise leagues will take over International cricket.

"Whoever is in charge needs to think about what that looks like in 10 years' time because if they don't manage it, franchise leagues around the world will become more dominant."

Iyer to go under the knife on April 8

Mumbai: India batsman Shreyas Iyer is set to undergo a surgery on April 8 for his shoulder injury which had ruled him out of the last two ODIs against England and the entire IPL.

The 26-year-old Iyer had suffered the injury during the first ODI when he dived on a drive hit by

Jonny Bairstow off pacer Shardul Thakur.

He looked in tremendous pain as he left the field clutching his shoulder.

"Shreyas will get operated on April 8 for his shoulder injury," a source in the know of things said.

Iyer is likely to be out of action

for a minimum of four months. He had signed up with Lancashire but now is unlikely to play for the English county side in their one-day tournament starting on July 23.

"You know what they say, the greater the setback, the stronger the comeback. I shall be back soon," Iyer had tweeted last week.

PTI

Like players, umpires too have form: Nitin Menon

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Nitin Menon, who showed remarkable accuracy in his debut series as an ICC Elite Panel umpire, feels pressure situations bring the best out of him and like cricketers, he too wants to make most of this purple patch.

The 37-year-old from Indore was inducted into the ICC elite panel of umpires in the middle of the Covid-19 pandemic in June last year but had to wait till this February for his first major assignment.

With the pandemic forcing the ICC to appoint local umpires in a bilateral series, Menon officiated in all four Tests between India and England besides three of the



five T20s and three ODIs. By the end of it, he was showered with accolades for his stellar performance.

Speaking about that grueling experience, Menon, who is now quarantining in

Chennai ahead of the IPL said: "The last two months have been great. It gives one great satisfaction when people notice and appreciate your good work. This series was always going to be a very challenging one because of the hype associated with it — a place in the World Test Championship final at stake, both teams coming back from impressive overseas wins, challenging pitches to officiate on.

"As for the white-ball series, it was between the two top-ranked teams in the world. Taking all these factors into consideration, I am pleased that we did well as an umpiring team," said only third Indian in the ICC elite panel after S Venkataraghavan

and S Ravi.

As world's two top teams fought it out in the middle, Menon was an epitome of calmness. Out of the 40 referrals taken against his decisions during the series, only five were upheld. More importantly, only two decisions were overturned out of 35 referrals taken against his lbw decisions.

The DRS, especially the umpire's call, once again was a big talking point through out the series.

In a normal scenario, Menon won't get to officiate in back to back games over two months. So, how did he cope up with high pressure scenarios match after match?

"I believe umpiring is all about mental toughness. More the pressure better is the focus. If we can give our best performances when we are under pressure, that is the true reflection of how strong we are mentally.

"It's not new for me to officiate in back-to-back matches, thanks to the amount of domestic cricket organised in India. Even in the IPL, we do around 14-16 games without a break, so all this experience has really helped me in this series. Like players, umpires also have form. I always feel that when in good form, I should do the maximum number of games without any break," said Menon, who played two List A games for Madhya Pradesh and comes from a family of umpires.

Liverpool look to recover lost ground

Arsenal vs Liverpool
Live from 12:30am IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Jürgen Klopp has challenged Liverpool to salvage their troubled Premier League season with a late bid to finish in the top four. Klopp's side are languishing in seventh place and sit five points adrift of fourth-placed Chelsea in the race to qualify for next season's Champions League.

The Reds' win over Wolves before the international break was only their fourth Premier League victory since Christmas during a spell in which they lost eight times.

With just nine games remaining — starting with Saturday's trip to Arsenal — Liverpool boss Klopp knows his team have no margin for error.



Roberto Firmino, left, and Fabio Carvalho arrive for Liverpool training. Firmino/Instagram

"We don't have a lot of points to waste any more but we have a tough programme on top of that, not only in the Premier League but the Champions League as well," Klopp said on Friday.

"We will not hesitate, we will just go for it and hopefully we can do that on Saturday.

"It is always a challenge for teams after the international

break, with players coming back from their countries having played different systems and different match plans.

"We have one session to bring it all together again and that's a challenge but we are used to it. We know whatever we want for the rest of the season we can only get it if we win football games, and the first one is at Arsenal."

Klopp has Roberto Firmino back from a knee problem but the form of Diogo Jota, who scored the winner at Wolves and found the net three times in two World Cup qualifiers for Portugal, may keep him out of the side.

"Diogo is in a good moment, he was before he left and showed that again in the international break," Klopp said.

"Yes, these are the rare benefits of an international break from a club point of view but it is good."

AFP ■ MIAMI

Bianca Andreescu reached her first Bfinal since winning the 2019 US Open title while world No 1 Ashleigh Barty bucked the upset trend at the Miami Open on Thursday to set up a blockbuster clash.

In the men's draw, second seed Stefanos Tsitsipas was stunned by Hubert Hurkacz while Andrey Rublev rolled on to the semi-finals, ending the giant-killing run of Sebastian Korda.

Australia's Barty fired 27 winners in a 6-3, 6-3 victory over fifth-seeded Ukrainian Elina Svitolina to return to the title match of a tournament she won when it was last held in 2019. Canada's Andreescu won her fourth straight three-setter to beat Greece's Maria Sakkari 7-6 (9/7), 3-6, 7-6 (7/4).

But Greece's Tsitsipas was left trying to explain a "self-explosion" after he squandered a commanding lead in a 2-6, 6-3, 6-4 quarter-final loss to 26th seed Hurkacz of Poland — the latest in a string of upsets that saw men's top seed Daniil Medvedev and No 3 Alexander Zverev bow



Bianca Andreescu acknowledges the crowd after win. AP

out along with women's No 2 Naomi Osaka.

Tsitsipas admitted it was a crushing outcome in a tournament where the absences of superstars Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer and his own recent solid form seemed to offer him a chance to shine.

"I felt like it was my opportunity," Tsitsipas said. "I feel like there was more space for me to show something greater. It's a very disappointing loss.

"It was there, everything was under control. And suddenly, I don't know, self-explosion."

In the semis, Hurkacz will face Russian fourth seed Andrey Rublev who won a rain-interrupted quarter-final with a 7-5, 7-6 (9/7) victory over unseeded Sebastian Korda.

The 23-year-old Rublev advanced to his first Masters 1000 semi-final by beating Korda in straight sets in a night match, putting an end to Korda's inspired Miami run by blasting five aces and winning 85 percent of his first serve points in the one hour, 42 minute match.