

ANALYSIS 7
POWER REFORMS — A DIS-
TANT DREAM**MONEY 8**
JULY MANUFACTURING
OUTPUT ZOOMS**SPORTS 12**
HISTORYMAKERS

HYDERABAD, TUESDAY, AUGUST 3, 2021, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

NUMBER GAME
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ADIVI SESH

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E-RUPI A FUTURISTIC REFORM: MODI LAUNCHES NEW PAYMENT SYSTEM

Prime Minister Narendra Modi today launched e-RUPI -- the government's digital payment solution meant to ensure delivery of welfare services, which, for now, will be used to push vaccination efforts. The platform will go live for the first time at a Covid vaccination centre in Mumbai. Developed by National Payments Corporation of India, e-RUPI is a cashless and contact-less instrument that's based on QR code or SMS-based e-Voucher, which is delivered to the cellphones of beneficiaries. This can be redeemed directly with the service provider.

BABUL SUPRIYO TWEAKS PLAN AFTER NADDA MEET, SAYS HE WILL 'STAY MP'

A day after he announced his decision to quit politics -- and his Parliamentary seat -- former Union Minister Babul Supriyo has rescinded on the second. The Bollywood-singer-turned-politician today said he will "continue to discharge his constitutional responsibility" without being politically active. Supriyo's re-calibrated position emerged following his meeting with BJP chief JP Nadra on Monday. On Saturday in a Facebook post announced he has decided to quit politics. He however clarified that he would not be joining any other party.

SHIV SENA WORKERS VANDALISE ADANI AIRPORT SIGNBOARD IN MUMBAI

A group of Shiv Sena workers allegedly ransacked a neon signboard with "Adani Airport" written on it near the statue of Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj close to the airport in Mumbai on Monday afternoon, a police official said. They shouted slogans against the signboard when the airport is named after Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj. Some of the workers later came on to the Western Express Highway located nearby due to which traffic movement on the city's arterial north-south road was disrupted for some time, the official said.

POWER EMPLOYEES TO HOLD PROTEST OVER ELECTRICITY AMENDMENT BILL

Power sector employees and engineers will be holding a four-day 'Satyagrah' at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi from Tuesday against the Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2021. On the call of National Coordination Committee of Electricity Employees & Engineers (NCCOEEE), power employees will hold the 'Satyagrah' against the unilateral announcement of central government to pass the Electricity (Amendment) Bill, in current monsoon session of Parliament, All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) Chairman Shailendra Dubey said here.

SC advises mediation over Krishna water dispute

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday suggested mediation to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for settling their dispute over sharing of Krishna river water, saying it did not want to interfere unnecessarily.

A bench headed by Chief Justice NV Ramana was hearing the plea of Andhra Pradesh which has alleged that Telangana has deprived it of its legitimate share of drinking and irrigation water.

"I don't want to hear this matter legally. I belong to both the states. If the matter can be settled in mediation, please do that. We can help with that. Otherwise I will transfer this to another bench," the CJI, who hails from Andhra Pradesh, observed during the hearing.

"I wish that both of you



'I belong to both the states. If the matter can be settled in mediation, please do that. We can help with that. Otherwise I will transfer this to another bench,' said CJI NV Ramana

(lawyers representing the two states) convince your governments and settle the matter. We do not want to interfere unnecessarily," said the CJI who was heading the bench also comprising Justice Surya Kant.

Senior advocate Dushyant Dave, appearing for Andhra

Pradesh along with lawyer Mahfooz Ahsan Nazki, sought time for seeking instruction.

The bench then kept the plea for further consideration on Wednesday and senior advocate CS Vaidyanathan, appearing for Telangana, agreed to this.

Rainfall in Aug, Sept to be on higher side

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rainfall during August and September, the second half of the four-month rainfall season, is likely to be on the higher side of normal, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Monday.

In another forecast for August, IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra said monsoon is also likely to be normal in the month.

Covaxin effective against Delta Plus: ICMR study

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharat Biotech's Covid-19 vaccine Covaxin (BBV152) is effective against Delta Plus (AY.1) variant of the coronavirus, according to a study published in bioRxiv by the Indian Council of Medical and Research (ICMR).

The study is a pre-print and has not been peer-reviewed.

"Here, we have evaluated the IgG antibody titer and neutralising potential of sera of Covid-19 naive

individuals full doses of BBV152 vaccine. Covid-19 recovered cases with full dose vaccines and breakthrough cases post-immunization BBV152 vaccines against Delta, Delta AY.1 and B.1.617.3," the study said.

The recent emergence of the SARS-CoV-2 Variant B.1.617.2 (Delta) variant with its high transmissibility has led to the second wave in India.

Child labour increased in TS during pandemic

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

The apprehensions of child rights activists and concerned members of the society that there would be an upsurge in child labour due to the Covid-induced pandemic appear to have proven true, going by the number of children rescued from Telangana.

As many as 300 minors, including girls, were rescued from child labour in 2020-2021, rehabilitated and mainstreamed under National Child Labour Project (NCLP).

The number of children rescued



had been witnessing a downward trend since 2018 but saw an uptick in 2021. While in 2018-19, as many as 2,137 children from Telangana were rescued, in 2019-20 the num-

ber had dropped to 935 and in 2019-20, it fell to 214 children.

Across the country, 54,894 children were rescued in 2020, this number had climbed to 58,289.

As per the data tabled in Parliament, the number of children rescued from AP saw a dip.

Minister of State for Labour and Employment Rameswar Teli told the Lok Sabha on Monday that the Covid-19 pandemic has impacted all sections of the society, including children.

12L families to get Rs 10L each through Dalit Bandhu: KCR

ML MELLY MAITREYI
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Monday made it clear that the TRS government will continue to tread on the development path and implement all the programmes it has envisioned for the State notwithstanding the desperate efforts of opposition parties to make light of its achievements and programmes.

"We are getting the support and blessings of the people and we will continue our welfare and development agenda, including the latest Dalit Bandhu," asserted KCR at Halia in Nagarjuna Sagar constituency of Nalgonda district on Monday.

He said that political leaders who had not done any good work were ridiculing 'Dalit Bandhu' as it would transform the lives of about 17 lakh Dalit families in the State. The Chief Minister added that about 12 lakh Dalit families, comprising 70 to 80 percent of the community, would get Rs 10 lakh financial assistance directly from government. "Those parties who have no intention of doing good to people either ridicule or pick holes in the government's far-reaching programmes," KCR said.

He announced that this year, Rs 1,200 crore would be spent towards Dalit Bandhu scheme on 100 families in each constituency and from next year, large scale funds would be allotted for the scheme. "No one has ever taken up such a programme and hence some were getting palpitations with the thought that if TRS government implemented the scheme, they would remain losers forever," KCR said.

CM sanctions Rs 150 crore for Nagarjuna Sagar constituency

Hence I thought a lot and decided on 'Dalit Bandhu' and this government will spend Rs 1 lakh-crore. No one demanded this scheme. I will supervise the implementation of the scheme personally and I will make a point to everyone by implementing this scheme

— K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO, Chief Minister of Telangana

Noting that Nagarjuna Sagar did not develop to the extent needed, KCR said all steps would be taken to develop the segment on par with other constituencies

Facing problems due to Centre's anti-TS stance, AP's Dadagiri: CM

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Monday came down heavily on Union government, accusing it of adopting an 'anti-Telangana stance' and also Andhra Pradesh's 'dadagiri' over sharing of Krishna River waters. Speaking at Hali in Nagarjuna Sagar constituency, KCR said, "Be it the Centre's anti-Telangana behaviour or Andhra's Dadagiri, everybody is seeing the way they are building illegal projects on Krishna. We will face problems related to Krishna water in the coming days."

KCR added: "From Paleru reservoir to Peddavevullapalli, a survey is being conducted to bring Godavari

waters. If that is complete, Nagarjuna Sagar ayacut will also be saved. We will take measures accordingly and ensure that the problem is solved forever."

The Chief Minister also for the first time reacted to the Jal Shakti Ministry issuing a gazette notification bringing 107 irrigation projects under the jurisdiction of Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards. He assured the people that the TRS government will take all measures to ensure that farmers do not face any troubles due to lack of Krishna River waters in future.



Centre releases Rs 628.6 cr under SDRF to Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union government has so far released Rs 628.6 crore under SDRF for Covid relief measures to Telangana.

During Financial Year 2020-21, an amount of Rs 449 crore was released to Telangana under the Central share of SDRF. In addition, for the financial year 2021-22, first instalment of Central share of SDRF Rs 179.60 crore was released in advance to Telangana on April 29, 2021.

Normally, the first instalment of SDRF is released in June. However, considering the immediate need of States due to Covid-19 second wave, the Union government

released the SDRF amounts without waiting for the utilisation certificate. Keeping in view the spread of Covid-19, the Union government allowed States to utilise up to 50 percent of their annual allocation of SDRF for Covid-19 containment measures.

The Centre also advised the States to use the funds to meet the cost of oxygen generation and storage plants in hospitals, procurement of ventilators, strengthening ambulance services as well as Covid-19 hospitals and Covid-19 care centres purchasing consumables, thermal scanners, personal protective equipment, testing laboratories, and testing kits.

Eatala undergoes knee surgery; wife may resume padayatra

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former health minister Eatala Rajender underwent knee surgery on Monday at a corporate hospital in Hyderabad, where he would be recuperating for at least one week.

Due to the surgery, there are question marks whether the BJP leader would ever resume the padayatra.

However, the Telangana BJP is hoping that Eatala's wife Jamuna Reddy may step into his shoes and complete the remaining leg of the padayatra.

According to sources, Jamuna Reddy may announce her decision on Tuesday, after speaking to the doctors who performed surgery on her husband's knee.

TODAY**ALMANAC****Month & Paksham:**

Ashadha & Krishna Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Dashami 12:59**Nakshatram :** Rohini 25:44**Time to Avoid :** Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)**Rahukalam :** 3:33 pm - 5:09 pm**Yamagandam :** 9:10 am - 10:46 am**Varjyam :** 4:43 pm - 6:31 pm**Gulika :** 12:22 pm - 1:57 pm**Good Time :** (to start any important work)**Amritakalam :** 10:08 pm - 11:56 pm**Abhijit Muhurtham :** 11:56 am - 12:47 pm**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 29/22

Humidity: 71%

Sunrise: 5:55 am

Sunset: 06:48 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated AUGUST 03, 2021 5:00 PM

CENTRE TO SUPREME COURT

States responsible for cases under scrapped Section 66A of IT Act

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As 'police' and 'public order' are state subjects under the Constitution, the primary responsibility for implementing the 2015 judgement which scrapped Section 66A of the IT Act lay with them and their law enforcement agencies, the Centre has told the Supreme Court.

The Centre has stated this in an affidavit to the apex court in response to a plea of an NGO, 'People's Union for Civil Liberties' (PUCIL), alleging that the steps taken by the Central government for ensuring effective implementation of the verdict "far from adequate".

Under the scrapped Section a person posting offensive messages could be imprisoned for up to three years as also fined.

In the affidavit filed before a bench headed by Justice R F Nariman, the Centre said that state law enforcement agencies

In the affidavit filed before a bench headed by Justice R F Nariman, the Centre said that state law enforcement agencies are responsible for taking action against offenders related to cyber crime



are responsible for taking action against offenders related to cyber crime.

On copious inflows, gates of Sagar, Pulichintala lifted

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With continuous inflows into the projects in Krishna basin, Nagarjuna Sagar project is almost full with water level reaching 587.3 feet as against the Full Reservoir Level of 590 ft.

With inflows at 3.13 lakh cusecs, water was being released downstream at the same rate by lifting 22 crest gates up to 10 feet. As against the full storage level of 312 tmc ft, the present storage is at 305.68 tmc ft.

Pulichintala downstream Nagarjuna Sagar is getting inflows at 3.2 lakh cusecs and the outflow was at 3.54 lakh cusecs. The water level reached 172 ft as against FRL level of 175 and present storage is at 41.24 tmc ft as against full storage capacity of 45.77 tmc ft.



The authorities opened 17 gates of the project on the Guntur-Suryapet border. As much as 8,000 cusecs is allotted for power generation. Before the gates were

lifted, people living downstream were alerted about rising water levels. The water level at Prakasam barrage also increased as the gates of Pulichintala were lifted.

Copious inflows continue to come into upstream projects of Jurala and Srisaillam.

BJP– A ray of hope for the OBCs

But no government till the present dispensation paid attention to the quota for

"Perhaps many are not aware of the fact that the self-

Those who went through biographic work on Modi are well aware that the PM hails from a OBC community and was one of eight children. His

The people of Gujarat rejected the insulting remarks against Modi and voted the BJP to power. OBC leader in Gujarat Alpesh Thakor, prior to joining the BJP in 2019, resigned from all posts in



What does the Congress offer OBCs, who constitute more than 50 percent of the country's population, except insults?

To enable these sub-castes to get more benefits, the Modi government amended Article 340 of the Constitution and appointed a commission too. Moreover, the National

Schemes being implemented by the Modi government give priority to OBCs and other downtrodden sections of society.

During its rule, the Congress protected the interests of the upper classes, landlords and investors loyal to it. The same Congress regards the BJP as a party that protects the interests of the upper castes because it is not only blind but also deaf.

CM sanctions Rs 150 crore for Nagarjuna Sagar constituency

Admitting that his promised visit to the constituency was delayed due to Covid-19 pan-

The Chief Minister also sanctioned one more lift scheme for the constituency at

Referring to 'anti-Telangana' attitude of the Centre and highhanded behaviour of AP government with regard to Krishna waters, KCR said everyone was witness to construction of illegal projects on the River Krishna and it could create problems to Telangana in the coming days. "Thus as a precaution, there was a need to link Paddaulevally tank with Godavari water of Paleru reservoir. Steps would be taken for this and a survey

Even in Hyderabad four more super specialty hospitals would be established, the Chief Minister said.

On Podu lands issue, he said as per the old Central Act, the issues of all those who were cultivating podu lands till the cut off date in the Act would be resolved and the action would be initiated soon.

"The present petition is being moved because the state of Telangana is refusing to follow decisions taken in the Apex Council constituted

If necessary, with the help of police protection, operate both the common reservoirs of Srisailem, Nagarjunasagar and also Pulichintala reservoir without causing prejudice to Andhra Pradesh, it urged.

Children in the age group of 5-8 years are directly linked to the formal education system through a close coordination with the Samagra Shiksha Abhiyan.

The projects on Godavari basin - Singur, Nizamsagar, Sriram Sagar, Mid Manair, Lower Manair, Kaddam and Yellampally have had good inflows and most of the projects are almost full. The inflows however have reduced with Yellampally getting maximum inflows at 8,178 cusecs and outflow at the same rate as the water level reached 483.46 ft as against FRL of 485.56 ft.

"Hence I thought a lot and decided on 'Dalit Bandhu' and this government will spend Rs 1 lakh-crore. No one demanded this scheme. I will supervise the implementation of the scheme personally and I will make a point to everyone by implementing this scheme," he said.

The Chief Minister said that Congress leaders had mortgaged the interests of the Telangana region under the combined State and gave misleading accounts to the people. "The TRS government on the other hand implemented Mission Bhagiratha drinking water scheme, irrigation pro-

Citing the progress of
Telangana State in the last seven

KCR recalled that Jana Reddy had once in the Assembly challenged that if the TRS government gave 24x7 quality power supply, he would also campaign for the party. "Of course he went back on his word and contested on behalf of Congress and people gave him a fitting reply," KCR quipped.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in Lok Sabha on Monday that “During Financial Year 2020-21, an amount of Rs 22,262.4 crore was released to the States under the central share of SDRF. In addition, for the financial year 2021-22, first instalment of Central share of SDRF amounting to Rs 8,873.60 crore has been

The Centre contributes 75 percent of SDRF allocation for general category of states and 90 percent for special category states including the North-eastern States, Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh and J&K.

Covaxin, a whole-virion inactivated SARS-CoV-2 vaccine used for mass immunization in the country, showed a 65.2 per cent protection against the Delta variant in a double-blind, randomised, multicentre, phase 3 clinical trial.

States re

Continued from page 1

responsible
Chief Secretaries and

West Madhya Pradesh and adjoining Rajasthan, some parts of interior Maharashtra, Jammu and Kashmir, Ladakh and some parts of Punjab and

Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh, Konkan and Goa, central Maharashtra

"The 2021 August to September rainfall averaged over the country as a whole is

The LPA of the August to

Every year, the IMD issues forecast for the second half of the Southwest Monsoon, for August and September.

The government also told the top court that it has directed the

Responding to the Centre's affidavit PUCL told the apex court that the steps taken by the Centre for ensuring effective implementation of the historic

"Don't you think this is amazing and shocking? Shreya Singhal judgement is of 2015. It's really shocking. What is going on is terrible," the bench, also

"The steps taken by the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) towards ensuring effective implementation of this Court's Judgment in *Shreya Singhal v. Union of India*... are far from adequate," the affidavit said.

Eatala launched his 300-plus km padayatra on July 19 from Bathinivari palle in Kamalapur mandal in Huzurabad constituency. He has already completed a 222 km, touching 70 villages in 12 days. However, on reaching Kondapaka village in Veenavanka village on June 30, he developed high fever, forcing a halt to the padayatra.

The doctors stated that he was dehydrated, his blood glucose levels shot up to 265 and BP dipped to 90/60. Following

This was in marked contrast to the opinion of the doctors who performed the knee surgery, who said that Eatala

According to sources, Eatala would have to rest his leg for a few months.

Due to the unexpected development, Jamuna Reddy may complete the remaining leg of the padayatra. She incidentally had stated that either Eatala or she herself would contest the Huzurabad bypoll. If she does take up the padayatra, Jamuna Reddy may be able to meet the people in the remaining villages.

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Multiple complaints in same case add to troubles of cops

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police are scratching their heads with complaints in different police stations pertaining to the same case that are being lodged. While one case is directly lodged at the police station, the other case is lodged with another police station at the behest of the court.

One person figured as the complainant in a case lodged with one police station being figured as the accused in the case lodged with another police station.

Moreover, the civil cases are being converted into criminal cases. The conduct of the complainants is giving head ache to the police, who have to face many problems during the course of the investigation.

The general practice is complaining about incidents of crime with the police and the police registering the complaint after going through it. Depending on the seriousness of the issue, the police transfer the case to the central crime



station. Sometimes, they transfer it to CID.

The police investigate the case and submit evidence to the court. In each case, while person figures as an accused the other person figures as defendant. Sometimes, both the parties complain against each other in the same police station leading to the police registering two separate cases.

Apart from this, a new trend has begun in the city with regard to registering of the

cases. According to it, two cases are registered about the same case in two police stations. One goes to the police station directly and lodges complaint whereas another person lodge another complaint about the same case in another police station.

Both the groups are well aware of where to lodge the complaint, but hiding facts they are registering two cases. In some instances, if the police fail to register a complaint,

some of the persons are moving court to force the police to register a case.

In a recent development, a case was registered with the Banjara Hills police station, while another was lodged with the CCS.

Police officials say that both the accused and defendant should register the case only at one police station giving all the facts. If the complainant furnishes false information, action would be taken against him or her. Lodging two complaints is adding to the woes of the police. The police authorities say that the wrong doers, in spite of playing gimmicks, will have to face the legal action.

In a land dispute case, one Najib Ahmed on July 28 lodged complaint against M Pavani, Vikramdev Reddy, MAS Rayudu, G Jaganmohan, M Venkata Sivaram Reddy, Prasad, Venkata Lakshmi, Manoj Kumar Naidu, Prasanti, Venugopal Naidu and others in Banjara Hills PS at the behest of the court.

In the same case, another complaint was lodged with CCS on July 14 in connection with a land dispute in Shaikpet by Sri Sai Constructions MD Vikramdev Reddy. He complained against Najib Ahmed, Sudhakar Reddy, Krishna Reddy and some others.

It was registered by the CCS police giving it the crime number 0110/2021.

The police point out that some of the persons lodging complaint with the police stations in West zone, the complainants have been registering a civil case into a criminal case.

In Banjara Hills division, such complaints surfaced leading to the SP ordering CID probe into such cases.

There are allegations against the police that they are helping the complainants to lodge two separate cases. The police were reported to have registered a complaint after two days when a Tahsildar lodged a complaint. However, the police are responding quickly in private complaints.

Old City sports festive look

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Old City on Monday sported a festive look with several processions that were taken out by temple committees.

The procession taken out by Akkanna Madanna temple at Hari Bowli was one of the biggest held on Monday. To witness the event, several people thronged the bylanes of Hari Bowli.

Ghatam is a copper pot, decorated in the form of the Mother Goddess. The Ghatam is carried by a priest, who wears a traditional Dhoti, and whose body is smeared with turmeric. The Ghatam is taken into procession from the first day of the festival until the last day when it is immersed in water. The Ghatam is usually accompanied by beating of drums.

The festival concludes with immersion of the Ghatam. The Ghatam of Hari Bowli's Akkanna Madanna Temple leads the procession, placed atop an elephant and accom-



panied by mounted horses and models depicting Akkanna and Madanna. It ends in the evening with a glittering procession and display of much pomp and show followed by immersion of Ghatams at Nayapul.

Gajalakshmi Menaka, the 34-year-old elephant, which shot to fame after featuring in 'Baahubali' movie, was a major attraction on Monday.

The idol of the Goddess was

placed on the elephant which headed to Simhavahini Mahankali temple at Lal Darwaza from Akkanna Madanna temple.

"People who did not visit the temple can get a glimpse of the Goddess during the procession," said a person taking care of the procession arrangements. The procession was held among heavy police bandobast and para military forces.

25-year-old BDS student kills self over depression

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 25-year-old BDS student of Army College of Dental Sciences here allegedly died by suicide, police said.

The woman, a fourth-year BDS student, was found hanging from the ceiling fan in her hostel room on the college campus on July 31, her father told police in a complaint.

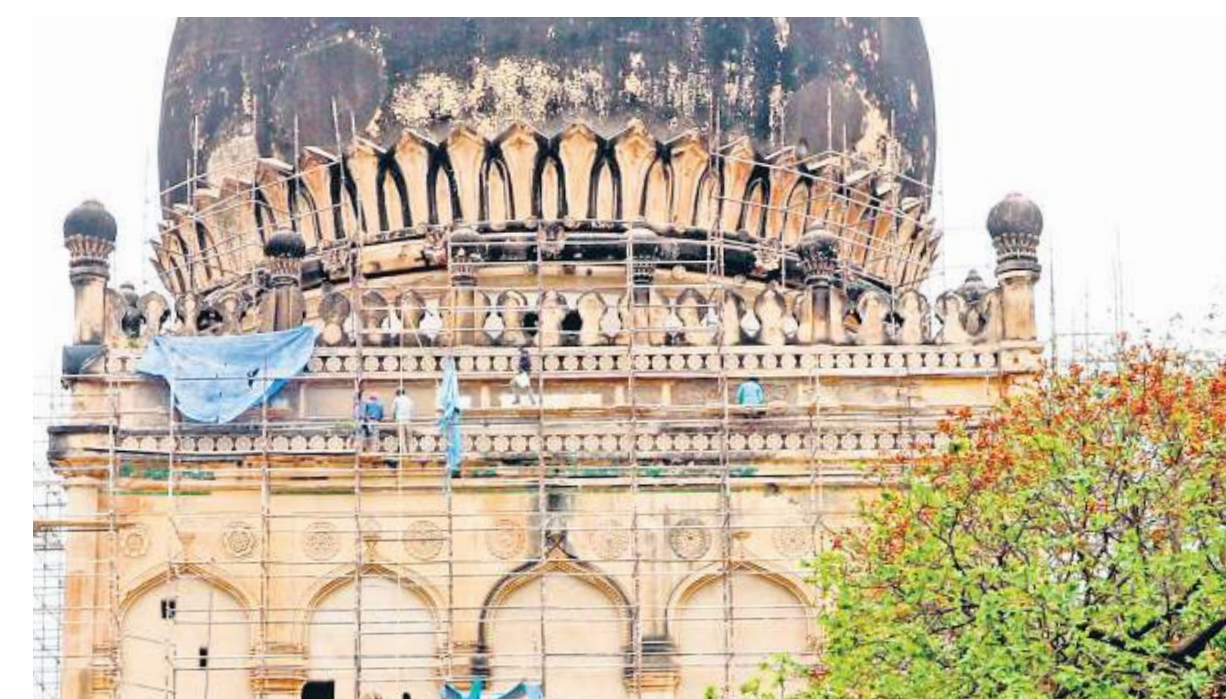
The complainant, who resides in Haryana, was informed about the death by the college staff.

He suspected his daughter might have been depressed and resorted to the extreme step.

She had secured admission in BDS in 2016-17 and was suffering from depression as she could not get admission to the MBBS course. Later she was treated by a psychiatrist and was doing well, he said.

Last week the woman's mother had spoken to her about a marriage proposal and the woman had also spoken over video call with her family members and she looked fine, her father said.

A case was registered with Jawaharnagar police station.



BRINGING BACK THE GLORY

Over 400 floral medallions were restored at the Muhammad Qutb Shah's mausoleum based on in-situ evidence found on removal of inappropriate 20th century cement. This mausoleum is being conserved by Aga Khan Trust for Culture in partnership with Telangana government.



FRIENDSHIP DAY ENDS IN TRAGEDY

Drunk driving: 1 killed, three injured as car hits boulders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Friendship day ended in a tragedy for four friends when the car they were traveling in went out of control and crashed into the boulders on the roadside at Madinaguda killing Ashritha, an engineering student studying in Canada, here on Sunday midnight. Police suspect drunk driving led to the mishap.

According to the police, Abhishek, a third year student from a business school in Shankarpally and a resident of Madinaguda, along with his friends Satyaprakash, Tharuni and Ashritha, all former college mates at a business school, had met for dinner. While Satyaprakash and Tharuni

were working in private firms, Ashritha, from Tellapur, was pursuing MTech in Canada. Abhishek picked the others from Tellapur and went to a pub in Kondapur in the night. They are suspected to have partied, where Abhishek is believed to have consumed alcohol. After having dinner, they left the place around 11:30 pm.

Police said while returning, Abhishek who was driving the car in an inebriated condition towards Kondapur, lost control of the steering wheel and went on to crash into the boulders on the right side of the road.

"After crashing, the car rolled multiple times before falling on the roadside.

Abhishek and Satyaprakash, who were seated in the front escaped with minor injuries as the airbags in the car got activated. Ashritha, who was seated on the backseat on the right side fell on the road as the door opened," said an official.

She suffered grievous bleeding injuries on the head and other parts of the body and was immediately shifted to a private hospital, where she was declared brought dead. Tharuni, who suffered grievous injuries is in critical condition. The Gachibowli police booked a case for negligence causing death and injuries against Abhishek, who is yet to be arrested.

The body was shifted to the hospital for autopsy.

26 give measurement to receive prosthetic limb

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Narayan Seva Sansthan organised a free measurement of artificial limbs, aids and appliance camp on Monday for differently-abled and needy at Esamia Bazar, Koti, in which 26 people underwent a measurement to receive prosthetic limbs.

"Prior to the Covid, NSS conducted 4,24,050 corrective surgeries, 698 artificial limb camps and has distributed 2,73,553 Wheel Chairs," president, Narayan Seva Sansthan, Prashant Agarwal.

Overall, around 3,58,197 people underwent surgeries to receive prosthetic limbs from various States in the country. The Sansthan has been working towards the upliftment of those who have been hit by the

pandemic with assistance provided through free artificial limb camps and ration kit distribution camps across India.

The NSS has lined-up a series of programmes, which will be held in many States in the coming months. The Sansthan will organise its 36th mass wedding campaign in Udaipur for 21 differently abled and underprivileged couples. The mass wedding ceremony will be conducted strictly following social distancing protocols amidst the Covid pandemic.

During the Covid pandemic and lockdowns, the Sansthan conducted several initiatives like delivery of free corona medicine kits, food distribution and free of cost ration kits across India.

Tributes pour in for designer of Tricolour Pingali Venkayya

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On Monday, Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan and other leaders paid homage to valorous freedom fighter and designer of National flag, Pingali Venkayya on his birth anniversary.

Born in 1876, the Indian freedom fighter had also been the architect behind the design of the Indian national flag. With today marking 145 years since his birth, countless netizens have taken to social media platforms to honour his contributions.

In 1916, the Gandhi ideologist had published a book with thirty possible designs that could be made into the Indian flag. For several years, he had repeatedly brought up and pushed the idea of a separate Indian flag before the Congress. Eventually in 1921, his design is believed to have been approved by Mahatma Gandhi.

Naidu said believing that the National flag alone has the power to unite the nation



and the youth should how about his efforts for the National flag and should study it. "My humble tributes to the designer of the Indian flag and great freedom fighter, Shri Pingali Venkayya, on his birth anniversary today. He was a true Gandhian and a zealous patriot. The nation will always be grateful to him for giving us the national flag. #Pingali Venkayya," tweeted the Vice-President sharing a photo.

As a soldier, freedom fighter, multilingualism, agro-mineral researcher, I aspire to be

a part of the construction of Navbharat by bringing to the forefront the youthful ideals of Venkayya's patriotic, proactive, creative ideas and modest life, he said.

Born on August 2, 1876, at Bhatlapenumarru near Machilipatnam in Andhra Pradesh, Pingali Venkayya was also known as 'Jhanda Venkaiah' and he was a staunch follower of Mahatma Gandhi.

He had studied the flags of 30 countries before making the Indian Tricolour flag.

SCR cancels 4 DEMU trains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Due to non-interlocking for doubling works between Umdanagar-Timmapur-Shadnagar on August 2, the authorities at South Central Railway have decided to cancel four DEMU trains running on the route.

To ensure the safety of the passengers, train number 07790 (Mahbubnagar to Kacheguda), 07791 (Kancheguda to Nadikudi), 07792 (Nadikudi to Kacheguda) and 07789 (Kacheguda to Mahbubnagar) scheduled on August 2 has been cancelled.

SCR completes doubling of Umdanagar-Shadnagar line

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of the Doubling and Electrification Project undertaken by the South Central Railway, the doubling of a section between Umdanagar-Shadnagar for a distance of 29.7 km was completed and commissioned on August 2. This will enhance the rail connectivity between Hyderabad and cities such as Mahabubnagar, Kurnool, Anantapur, Bengaluru, Kadapa, Tirupati, etc., towards the south. The project is being executed by the Railway PSU, Rail Vikas Nigam Limited.

The project was sanctioned for a distance of 85 km in 2015-16 at an estimated cost of Rs 774 crores. The section between Secunderabad and Umdanagar for a distance of 28 km is excluded in the above project and is undertaken as part of MMTS Phase I and II which has already been completed.

The work in Umdanagar-Mahabubnagar section is progressing at a fast pace - out of which the section between Shadnagar and Gollapalli for a distance of 29 km is completed.

Chicken lovers couldn't go 'desi' for Bonalu

Exorbitant prices, limited supply keep country chicken away from Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On account of Covid, country chicken has become scarcer. People who wished to have chicken on their dining table for Bonalu festival lunch or dinner were left disappointed because of lack of supply or at the exorbitant price.

As it was customary to have chicken during Bonalu festival, people have come forward to buy chicken, especially country chicken, even if the cost burns a hole in their pockets.

Most of the chicken centres in Hyderabad sell country chicken along with broilers and layers. But during the past one month, the chicken centres that sell country chicken complain of lack of supply from villages.

Even in villages, country chicken is being sold at Rs 350 to 400 per kg. Their prices will go up when they hit markets in Hyderabad.

Country chicken is loaded with more nutrients. The demand for country chicken has gone up in the limits of



Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC).

Moreover, the people are devouring chicken to boost

their immunity and to save themselves from Coronavirus. As a result, the demand for country chicken has gone up and a kilogram of it sells at Rs 600, said a chicken trader in Hyderabad Gafour.

The outskirts of GHMC, Karimnagar, Medak, Nalgonda, Rayalaseema districts constitute the supply line of the country chicken to the city. But people are devouring more on country chicken in villages, towns and districts, paralysing the supply to the city.

Harish Rao says none can stop TRS victory in Huzurabad by-poll

TADURU KARUNAKAR
■ HUZURABAD

Minister for Finance Tanneeru Harish Rao has challenged that no one can stop TRS from winning the Huzurabad by-elections and the party is going to come with flying colours with a thumping majority of 50,000 votes.

Addressing a meeting of the important cadre and in-charges of Huzurabad rural and town at the TRS party office here on Monday, he said the contest will only be between TRS and BJP and called upon the party workers to make TRS win the poll and gift it to Chief Minister KCR. Stating that the welfare schemes being given by the Telangana government are going to every household, Harisha Rao appealed to the workers to take these schemes to the people by knocking on their doors. The fruits of Kaleswaram have reached first to Huzurabad and water had flowed for nine months during the last summer through Kakatiya canals and the credit goes to KCR. The party



workers must sensitize the government's welfare schemes such as 24/7 power, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Beema, Kalyana Lakshmi, Asara pension, pension for people above 57 years, Dalit Bandhu and Mission Bhagiratha.

Harish Rao said ignoring the development, Eatala Rajender had benefited from the TRS in the last 17 years. He had built his houses at Kamalapur, Shamirpet, Musaipet and

Huzurabad, he said and asked why he did not build 4,000 houses for the poor though they were sanctioned.

The BJP government has failed in all spheres as they promised but failed to provide 2 crore jobs per year and deposit Rs 15 lakh into the bank accounts of every poor person. Shall we vote for BJP for increasing gas, petrol and diesel prices, he asked. He said the Telangana government has



so far given 1.32 lakh jobs and a notification will be issued soon for another 70,000 jobs.

The Minister said about 15,000 new industries have come up in Telangana till now and the state Cabinet has approved recently to provide jobs and educational opportunities even to people who have an annual income of Rs 8 lakh through EWS. Efforts would be made to bring Huzurabad and Jammikunta towns into the

growth path and an urban development committee will be instituted, he added.

Minister Gangula Kamalakar, Husnabad MLA Vodalita Sateesh Kumar, Y Sunil Rao, SC Corporation chairman banda Srinivas, TRSV student wing president Gellu Srinivas Yadav, BC Commission former member Vakulabharanam Krishna mohan Rao and others were present.

Illegal transportation of PDS rice goes on unchecked in TS

SRINIVAS KARENGALA
■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALA PALLY

The rice meant for Public Distribution System (PDS) is becoming a major source of income for middlemen and the vigilance officials, who have to check the clandestine operations, are becoming a part of the trade. As a result, the unauthorised transportation of PDS rice is going unchecked. Though the officials claimed seizure of PDS rice at one or two points, it is just a drop in the ocean. The accused is allowed to go scot-free even after they were caught with just a meagre fine. The charge is that there is no specific mechanism to stop the illegal trade.

The Telangana government is providing subsidized rice for just Re 1 to 90.50 lakh families and 2.88 crore people as part of the food security. It is spending about Rs 2,766 crore per year on the scheme. The scheme has been diluting with greedy middlemen and corrupt officials, a local social worker Rajababu Gowd said.

It is alleged that the PDS rice is crossing the state borders and a owner of the rice mill set



up near the Sironcha taluq in Maharashtra another side of the Godavari river is the mastermind in the illegal transportation of rice. Tens of vehicles and autos are transporting PDs rice from Telangana to Maharashtra. But, even the officials have no clue about the illegal trade as they don't take any steps to curb the transportation.

According to the eye-witnesses account, the PDS rice is transported to Maharashtra in the wee hours from 5 to 20 every month. The scammers have an agent network in every village in Karimnagar, Peddapalli, Manchiryal, Jayashankar Bhupalapally

Mulug, Warangal rural and Mahabubabad districts. They are approaching the beneficiaries to buy directly from them by paying Rs 7-9 per kg as against its actual price of Re 1. The PDs rice collected in the villages is being transported clandestinely with autos and DCM vehicles. An agent on the condition of anonymity said the agents in Maharashtra are paying Rs 16 per kg as they are gaining double the profit in the illegal trade. The local people are turning into PDS agents to make money. So, the illegal trade is flourishing everywhere in Telangana. The response from the police to curb the illegal trade is minimal.

Decks cleared for Rs 300-cr hospital

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

All is set for construction of a super-speciality hospital in Mahabubnagar as Minister for Sports, Excise, Cultural and Tourism Srinivas Gowd on Monday handed over the site of the old collector office to the Medical and Health department.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister Srinivas Gowd said Mahabubnagar will be developed as a medical hub. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has taken steps to build an integrated building complex in every district to house all the offices in one place. As part of it, a new Collector office is coming up in Mahabubnagar town. Proposals have been prepared at a cost of Rs 1 crore to set up a children's hospital in the old Collector office when Ronald rose was the district Collector.

He said later, he spoke to the Chief Minister to build a super-speciality hospital at Rs 300 crore by dismantling the

old collector office building and he agreed. He thanked the Chief Minister for sanction the hospital.

He said there is already one government hospital in Mahabubnagar and the people of the combined district will be benefited from the new super-speciality hospital. A lift facility will be arranged for the patients directly entering the hospital from the bus station. Earlier, people used to rush to Osmania and NIMS hospital in Hyderabad from the district and there are instances where the patients died during the journey with the breakdown of ambulances, he said.

Srinivas Gowd said foundation stone will be laid for the hospital by calling tenders soon. District Collector S Venkat Rao, district SP R Venkateswarlu, GGH superintendent Dr Ramkishan, DM&HO, municipal chairman KC Narsimhulu, vice-chairman Ganesh, Tahasildar Parthasaradhi and others were present.

TS tops in paddy cultivation surpassing Punjab: Sabitha

PNS ■ RANGAREDDY

Telangana has surpassed Punjab in paddy cultivation and the state has created a record by producing three crore tonnes of paddy with the effective measures taken by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in the state, Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy said on Monday.

She inaugurated Rythu Vedika buildings at Begumpet and Gummadavelli Thanda panchayats at Rs 22 lakh in Kandukuru mandal of Maheswaram Assembly constituency on Monday along with MLC Surabhi Vanidevi and district rythu Bandhu convenor Vangeti Lakshma Reddy. She also laid the foundation stone for a CC Road and underground drainage works to be taken up at Rs 12 lakh at Gummadavelli Thanda.

Speaking on the occasion, Sabitha Indra Reddy said The Telangana government is depositing Rs 686 crore into



the bank accounts of farmers under the Rythu Bandhu scheme in the district and Rs 15,000 crore in the state. About 2536 farmers received Rs 126 crore towards Rythu Beema in the district and about 10,940 farmers have been benefited so far under the loan waiver in the district, she said adding that Chief Minister KCR took a decision to waive loans up to Rs 50,000 from August 15 onwards. About 20,000 farmers may get benefits in the dis-

trict. The Education Minister said Chief Minister KCR is striving to complete Palamuru-Rangareddy project like Kaleswaram to provide irrigation water.

The Chief Minister's commitment was to provide irrigation water to every acre of land in the Telangana state. About 19,165 acres will get irrigation water in the Maheswaram constituency if the Palamuru-Rangareddy project is completed, she added.

Raja Singh offers to quit if special package declared for Goshamahall

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MLA from Goshamahall T Raja Singh has said that he is ready to tender resignation to his MLA position if Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao announces a package to his Assembly constituency.

He said that the Chief Minister will remember SC, ST, BC and minorities only ahead of by-elections.

He announced special packages to win the Huzurabad by-poll.

The people are demanding their respective MLAs in social media to tender resignations for the sake of packages, he said, requesting the Chief Minister to announce the package to SC, ST, BC and minorities of Goshamahall constituency. "I am ready to tender resignation if the Chief Minister announces a package for the constituency", he said.

SC woman alleges ostracisation

PNS ■ NARSAPUR

A woman who belonged to the Mala community of Scheduled Caste lodged a complaint with the Narsapur police against the village elders for ostracizing her from the caste. Mucherla Anuradha of Narsapur filed a complaint with the police that some persons have boycotted her from the caste.

She told reporters on Monday that some village elders of her caste have pressurized to take back the civil case filed by her in a dispute. She said she does not know the reason either for not taking the case back or not obeying their orders, they declared that she has been ostracized from the caste. If anyone talked to her, they will be levied Rs 25,000 fine and 25 slaps with chapals. She said they prepared an agreement to this effect and she was forced to sign on the agreement papers. They have also taken signatures from some other people of the same caste. Apart from ordering



the social boycott, they are also resorting to physical attacks on her, she alleged.

In her complaint, Anuradha said how far it is fair to impose caste, ostracizing and she feared that there is a threat to her life from her caste people. When asked SI Gangaraju said they have registered a case as per the complaint given by Anuradha. Action will be taken after a thorough investigation into the case, the SI added.

Sanjay padayatra postponed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana BJP Chief and Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar's padayatra has been postponed to August 24 from earlier announced August 9.

BJP state general secretary Gujjula Premender Reddy said the party earlier decided that Bandi Sanjay Padayatra will be from Charminar Bhagyalaxmi Ammavari Temple from August 9 onwards. Padayatra was planned for 55 days for 750 km and ends on October 2 with a public meeting in Huzurabad

where the by-poll is due.

However, the party postponed the Padayatra to August 24 due to the ongoing Parliament monsoon session and in view of important bills to be passed in the Parliament, he said. Sanjay postponed his padayatra because the party issued a whip to their MPs stating that the MPs have to attend ongoing monsoon Parliamentary sessions without fail. Speaking to the media at the state BJP office on Monday, Premender Reddy has described G Kishan Reddy's elevation as Cabinet Minister as an honour

to the Telugu people. He also stated that there would be Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy's 'Ashirvada Yatra' after the Parliament session. As part of Ashirvada Yatra, Kishan Reddy would visit two Telugu states. The party high command has directed the Union Ministers to visit other than their own Lok Sabha constituencies first. Following the directions of the party high command, Kishan Reddy will tour Tirupati, Vijayawada, and Bhadrachalam directly going there from Delhi after the Parliament session.

Hyd Congress plans strategy for Muslims

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad City Congress Committee (HCCC) Minorities Department Chairman Sameer Waliullah on Monday informed that a fresh strategy was being chalked out to re-connect the party with the minority communities in Hyderabad.

The problems of Muslims, Christians and other minority communities in Telangana have multiplied under the TRS regime, he said.

Bonalu is symbol of TS culture: MLA

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

Joy and religious fervour marked the celebrations of Bonalu in Patancheruvu on Monday as the devotees took out a procession with vehicles carrying food to be offered to the Goddess. GMR Yuvasena led the procession from Mahankali temple which was flagged off by legislative council chairman Bhupal Reddy and local MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy on Monday.

MLA GMR surprised the devotees by dancing with



Teenmar steps. Special prayers are offered to the Goddess on the occasion. Speaking on the

occasion, MLA Mahipal Reddy said Chief Minister KCR has declared the Bonalu festival as

an official affair after the Telangana state is formed. The Bonalu festival is being celebrated across the world and it is a symbol of the Telangana culture and tradition.

Later, the MLA participated in the Bonalu at Edu Gulla Pochamma temple and Yadavas Bonalu. Corporator Mettu Kumar Yadav, CI Venugopal Reddy, former Corporator Sankar Yadav, TRS senior leaders Adarsh Reddy and Yadagiri Yadav, Market committee director Ashok and others were present.

Indravelli Congress meet facing rough weather amid AHPS threat

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Congress has been making serious efforts to make the Indravelli public meeting a big success. The party leaders are striving at ground level. Leaders like Mulugu MLA Seethakka and former MLC Premasagar Rao and others have shouldered responsibility in this regard.

However, the party has been facing troubles since the announcement of the Indravelli public meeting proposed to be held on August 9 from inside and outside the party. The AICC programme implementation committee chairman A Maheshwar Reddy has been opposing the venue from the beginning of its announcement. He alleged that the party didn't consult him before announcing the venue as it appears that he was not happy with the TPCC



chief A Revanth Reddy in this regard. He had a heated argument with Revanth in the meeting held on July 31.

On the other hand, the Telangana party is also facing problems from the tribals, who made it clear that they will obstruct the Congress' proposed Indravelli public meeting. Rumours are agog that the party leaders have been provoking the tribal organizations like Adivasi Hakkula Porata Samithi. However, Seethakka made it clear that the party will conduct the meeting in August at any cost. She said that the party admitted that the firing at Indravelli during the Congress regime was a mistake. But the party will go ahead accepting its mistakes and then only it will do good things for the people. The Indravelli meeting is for the sake of tribals and Dalits only, Seethakka said.

who went to Indravelli to examine the arrangements of the public meeting, faced objections from the Adivasi Hakkula Porata Samithi. However, Seethakka made it clear that the party will conduct the meeting in August at any cost. She said that the party admitted that the firing at Indravelli during the Congress regime was a mistake. But the party will go ahead accepting its mistakes and then only it will do good things for the people. The Indravelli meeting is for the sake of tribals and Dalits only, Seethakka said.

Rains help aquaculture thrive in Telangana

A CHANDRASHEKHAR RAO
■ SANGAREDDY

As all the major water bodies reached to its brim level, the Telangana government is planning to develop fisheries to provide a livelihood to the fishermen and other caste-based crafts. With the launch of Mission Kakatiya, almost all the village tanks have regained their last glory and ponds and check-dams received heavy inflows with torrential rains lashed for the past fortnight.

The projects like Rangana yaka Sagar, Konda Pochamma reservoir have reached their brim level with Godavari waters. The officials of the Fisheries Department are making preparations for releasing fish seeds in the tanks and reservoirs. The combined Medak district has 3,794 tanks and 737 fishermen societies with 45,051 members. The officials have taken steps to release 13 crores of fish seeds this year.

The Telangana government is striving to achieve a blue revolution by developing the fish-



eries sector in all the districts by supplying fish seeds as all the tanks and ponds are full of water following heavy rains battered in the season. All the reservoirs in the Kaleswaram project also received a heavy flow of floodwaters.

The government aims to provide a livelihood to fishermen, Mudiraj and the fish rearing families in Siddipet district and convert it into an ideal district in the state. Minister T Harish Rao has issued directives to the fisheries officials to release fish seeds min all the ponds and village tanks. The process of tenders has already commenced releas-

ing fish seeds in the district.

A total of 3.72 crore fish seeds had been dropped in Ranganayaka Sagar, Konda Pochamma, Tapaspalli and Thotapalli reservoirs across the district last year and the district has yielded 17,745 tonnes of fish products.

Plans are afoot to drop 4.13 crore fish seeds in Sanigaram mid-level irrigation project apart from 1,472 tanks and reservoirs in the district this year. Siddipet has about 278 fishermen cooperative societies with 20,351 fishermen members. The officials believe that they would get a year-long livelihood.

In Medak district, there are 1,636 tanks which are managed by 270 fishermen societies having 15,700 members. The fisheries officials are making arrangements to release 5.33 crore fish seeds in 1,636 tanks as against last year's 4.23 crore fish seeds in 1,211 tanks. The tanks and check-dams are overflowing in the district and apart from it, Pocharam and

Vanadurga projects are full to their brim.

In Sangareddy district, the number of tanks and ponds are less compared to Siddipet and Medak. The district has 686 tanks and about 189 fishermen societies are active with 9,000 fishermen as members.

The projects Narinja, Singuru and Kalpaguru and check-dams have received waters to their full level. The officials made ready 3.45 crore fish seeds to release in the projects. The fish seeds will be released in a week in the combined Medak district. The development of the fisheries sector is amazingly moving forward across the erstwhile Medak district.

Details of district-wise fish seeds to be released in ponds, tanks below.

DISTRICT-WISE TANKS & FISH SEEDS

DISTRICT	TANKS	FISH SEEDS (Cr)
Siddipet	1,472	4.13
Medak	1,636	5.33
Sangareddy	686	3.45
TOTAL	3,794	12.91

INDIA CORNER

Maha rains: Over 18,700 families affected in Mahad, Poladpur in Raigad

A total of 18,751 families in Mahad and Poladpur talukas in Raigad district were affected by flooding and other rain-related incidents on July 22 and 23, a district official said on Monday. As per the survey done by the state revenue department, 18,000 families belong to Mahad and 751 to Poladpur, while 562 farmers have also incurred losses due to flooding, he said. "While 30 houses in Mahad and eight houses in Poladpur are fully damaged, the number of partially damaged homes stands at 8,121 in Mahad and 552 in Poladpur. A total of 28 cattle shelters were destroyed. So far, 3,082 families have received relief from the state government by way of rice, wheat and kerosene" the official said. He informed that the number of survey teams of the revenue department in Mahad stood at 48, with 30 of them stationed in the non-town areas of the taluka. A release from the Maharashtra State Electricity Board said 1,078 transformers in 345 villages were damaged during the heavy rains that the area witnessed recently, of which 261 had been repaired.



Need to work on permanent solution to flood crisis in Maha: Thackeray

With heavy rains last month causing deluge in parts of Maharashtra, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Monday said there is a need to devise a "permanent solution" to the frequent flood crisis in the state and take some stringent steps towards it. The chief minister reached the flood-hit Sangli district in western Maharashtra where he visited Bhilwadi, Ankalkhop, Kasbe-Digraj and various other areas to take stock of the situation, and reviewed steps taken by the administration towards flood management. "We have to work on two fronts - providing immediate relief to people affected by floods, and that work is going on. The administration acted in advance and evacuated people to safety," he said. "Besides providing immediate relief, we will have to work on a permanent solution to the frequent crisis of floods in the region and for that, we will have to take some stringent steps," the CM said. Thackeray said if some constructions are causing obstacles to the natural flow of water, they need to be removed.



Spurious pesticide manufacturing unit busted in Delhi, two held

The Delhi Police have busted a spurious pesticide manufacturing plant in the national capital's Mundka area and arrested two men, officials said on Monday. The arrested accused, Mohan Lal and Aman, had rented two godowns at Hiran Kudna village two months ago for manufacturing the fake pesticides. They had made an initial investment of Rs 9 lakh, they said. A complaint was received from the representative of a pesticide manufacturing company alleging that someone was infringing the firm's trademark by producing spurious products in its name, the police said. A raid was conducted on July 30 and a large quantity of spurious material bearing the names of several companies was found stacked at the manufacturing plant in Mundka, they said. Deputy Commissioner of Police (Outer) Parvinder Singh said Mohan Lal, Aman, Vijay and Rajender were engaged in manufacturing and selling spurious pesticides and fungicides with the branding of different companies. They also used to sell seeds of different crops treated with these fake pesticides. Fake raw material found at the plant and machinery used for manufacturing these spurious products was seized, he said.



Continued Opposition protests over Pegasus force adjournment of LS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day as opposition members continued their protest over the Pegasus spyware controversy and other issues on Monday.

Before Ram Devi, who was in the Chair, adjourned the proceedings till Tuesday morning, the House passed the General Insurance Business (Nationalisation) Amendment Bill with voice-vote. When the House re-assembled at 3.30 PM, the opposition members continued their protest as Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said she wanted to respond to the concerns raised by the Leader of the Congress party, Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury.

As the din continued, the minister sought passage of the bill, and the House approved it by a voice vote.

The proceedings of the House were first adjourned till noon, then till 2 PM and again till 3.30 PM as an unrelenting opposition refused to end its protests.



RS proceedings adjourned till Tuesday morning

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day as Opposition MPs continued their protest over the Pegasus snooping row and other matters.

When Rajya Sabha reassembled at 3.36 pm, the government moved two Bills for consideration, but Opposition members, some of them carrying placards, kept raising slogans in the Well of the House.

Bhubaneswar Kalita, who was in the Chair, tried to pacify the protesting members, but in vain. As sloganeering continued, he adjourned the proceedings for the day. The House will reconvene at 11 AM on Tuesday.

Rahul calls for Oppn meeting over Pegasus row

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the ongoing stalemate in Parliament, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has invited leaders of opposition parties to a breakfast meeting at the Constitution Club on Tuesday to chalk out a joint strategy on the Pegasus snooping issue.

Sources said the meeting is being held to forge unity among the opposition ranks on the issue. All opposition MPs and floor leaders of various parties have been invited for the meeting. The opposition has been demanding a discussion in Parliament on the Pegasus row and its leaders have been giving adjournment notices everyday. The government has been saying that the opposition is creating a "non-issue" and the IT minister has already given a reply in both Houses of Parliament.

HM trying to find solution to tensions: Guv Haribabu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid tensions between Assam and Mizoram over the recent border clash, Mizoram Governor K Haribabu met Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday and said the Centre is trying to find a solution to the issue.

Meanwhile, BJP MPs from Assam, including Union Minister Sarbananda Sonowal, are also meeting the prime minister in the afternoon.

Babu is scheduled to meet Home Minister Amit Shah later in the afternoon. Talking to reporters in Parliament after meeting the prime minister, Babu said the incident was "very unfortunate".

"The home minister is trying to defuse the tension and he is trying to find the solution. Both chief ministers (of Assam and Mizoram) have committed that peace will be restored," he said.

At least six Assam Police personnel and one civilian were

killed and more than 50 people injured, including the police chief of the district of Cachar, in a fire-fight between the police of the two states on a disputed stretch of their boundary, near Dholai in Cachar district on July 25.

Tension along the border with Mizoram in Cachar and Hailakandi districts of Assam have been escalating since October 2020 with frequent incidents of burning of houses and encroachment of land.

RS lauds Sindhu's bronze

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha on Monday congratulated badminton ace P V Sindhu for winning a bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics, saying that she has scripted history by becoming the country's first woman to win two individual Olympic medals.

When the House met for the day, Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu congratulated Sindhu for her gritty performance on behalf of the House and himself.

The members responded by thumping tables when references were made to Sindhu and her family.

"With her spectacular performance, Sindhu has scripted history by becoming the first Indian woman to win two Olympic Medals and that too in successive editions," Naidu said. "This feat of Sindhu highlights the consistency at international levels that are expected of our sportspersons in the international arenas."

Born in a family of

sportspersons, Sindhu took to badminton when she was just 12. She along with her father used to travel 120-km daily for training, he said.

"Personally known to me, I have been witness to her hard work, perseverance and sheer dedication towards her passion," Naidu said. "It is appropriate to take note of the role of Sindhu's parents and family in her spectacular rise and achievements in badminton that brought her laurels for our country," he added.

'Minorities have to be treated as weaker sections'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Minorities (NCM) has told the Supreme Court that minorities have to be treated as the "weaker sections" in the country, where majority community is so "predominant".

The NCM said despite the safeguards provided in the Constitution and the laws in force there persist amongst the minorities a feeling of inequality and discrimination.

"In a country like India where the majority community is predominant, the minorities have to be treated as the weaker sections within the meaning of Article 46," the NCM said in an affidavit.

In 40-page affidavit, it stated that "numerically smaller or weaker classes are bound to be suppressed and overpowered by the dominant majority groups" if special provisions and schemes were not framed by the government.

The submission was made in an affidavit filed in response to a petition which said welfare schemes cannot be based on religion.

Article 46 states that "The State shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker sections of the people, and, in particular, of the Scheduled Castes and the Scheduled Tribes, and shall protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation."

The NCM also contended that it was founded with objective to integrate minority in the main stream to improve their social and economic status.

It also clarified that it does not administer any scheme nor provides grant to any community and in fact it is the government which runs schemes for them.

Earlier, the Centre had told the top court that welfare schemes for religious minority communities are "legally valid" which aims to reduce the inequalities and does

not violate the rights of members of Hindus or other communities.

"It is submitted that the schemes being implemented by the Ministry are to reduce the inequalities among the minority communities and to improve the level of education, participation in employment, skill and entrepreneurship development, reducing deficiencies in civic amenities or infrastructure.

"The schemes are not in contradiction to the principles of equality as enshrined in the Constitution. These schemes are legally valid as they are only enabling provisions so as to achieve inclusiveness and do not suffer from any infirmity. The support given to disadvantaged/underprivileged children/candidates of minorities through these schemes cannot, therefore, be faulted with," the affidavit had stated.

The Centre schemes were not framed by the government. The submission was made in an affidavit filed in response to a petition which said welfare schemes cannot be based on religion.

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SC dismisses plea of rape survivor to marry assaulter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Monday dismissed the plea of a rape survivor from Kottiyoor, Kerala, who moved the Supreme Court seeking permission to marry her assaulter - a defrocked priest who is now undergoing 20 years imprisonment.

The top court also dismissed a separate plea of the defrocked priest seeking bail on the ground that he wanted to marry the survivor, who was a minor at the time of rape had given birth to a child.

A bench of Justices Vineet Saran and Dinesh Maheshwari told the former priest, "The high court has taken a decision consciously and we would not like to interfere with its finding."

It told the victim that she may knock on the door of trial court with her plea to marry the former priest.

Advocate Amit George, appearing for the former priest, said the high court had passed sweeping directions in the case with regard to the marriage, which is a fundamental right.

The bench asked George what is the age of the victim and the former priest to which he replied that he is 49, while the rape survivor is around 25.

HC expects street vendors to get vaccinated to avoid Covid 3rd wave

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Monday said it is expected that street vendors will take proactive steps to get vaccinated so that the third wave of COVID-19 could be avoided and the national capital is not faced with a surge as witnessed recently.

The high court also asked Delhi government to consider in a right perspective the issue of allowing more weekly markets to operate as there is a strata of society which only purchases things from these markets since they

cannot afford other shops.

Presently, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Delhi government has allowed weekly markets to open but only with 50 per cent of vendors and one market in each municipal zone.

"It is expected that DDMA will consider this aspect in its right perspective. It is also expected that street vendors will also take pro-active steps to get vaccinated so that we can avoid the third wave and the NCT of Delhi is not faced with a surge as faced

recently," Justice Rekha Palli said.

The court made it clear that it was not asking the Delhi government to allow all weekly markets to operate and the authorities shall consider the issue and then take a decision.

It also observed that the government can put conditions so that there is no crowding at these markets.

The court issued notice to the Delhi government and asked it to file reply to the petition by Saptahik Patri Bazar Association which has challenged the author-



Woman trampled to death by tusker in Odisha

PNS ■ BARIPADA

A 60-year-old woman was trampled to death by a wild elephant at a forest in Odisha's Mayurbhanj district on Monday, police said. The incident happened at the Tiakati forest in Badampahad range of the Rairangpur forest division, they said. Sukhi Baskey went to the forest to collect mushrooms when the tusker attacked her, Range Officer Ramakanta Majhi said. The woman died on the spot, he said.

6 held in Gujarat for tonsuring widow, man over alleged affair

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Four men and two women were arrested in Gujarat's Sabarkantha district for allegedly tonsuring a 30-year-old widow after accusing her of being in a relationship with a married man, police said on Monday.

The incident took place in Sancheri village near Himmatnagar town, some 116 kilometres from here, on July 30 and the six accused were held on August 1, a day after an FIR was

registered, Sub Inspector PP Jani of Gambhori police station said.

"Vadansinh Chauhan, Rajuji Chauhan, Kalusinh Chauhan, Rakeshsinh Chauhan, Surekha Chauhan and Sonal Chauhan were arrested for assaulting a woman with an intent to outrage her modesty, criminal intimidation and rioting. They had accused the victim of having an affair with a married man who has four children," Jani said.

The victim, in her complaint,

said a man who she knew and was married to the sister of the one of the accused, had offered her a lift on his motorcycle when she was returning after some bank related work on July 30.

Four of the accused stopped them near Raigadh village and beat them up, and later took the duo to Sancheri where all six accused hit them and tonsured the widow as well as the man who had offered her a lift, police said quoting the complaint.

Jaishankar likely to attend swearing-in of Iranian Prez

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar is likely to represent India at the swearing-in ceremony of newly elected Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi in Tehran on August 5, people familiar with the development said on Monday.

Raisi, a hardliner and known to be close to Iran's Supreme Leader Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, won the presidential election in June by a landslide.

India has already accepted an invitation by Iran for the event, which is likely to be attended by leaders and representatives of a number of countries.

Last month, the external affairs minister called on President-elect Raisi during a stopover at the Iranian capital on his way to Russia.

Jaishankar also held extensive talks with his Iranian counterpart Javad Zarif in Tehran covering a range of key issues including the fast-evolving situation in Afghanistan.

His visit to Iran coincided with Iran's hosting of an intra-Afghan dialogue in the country.

Newly discovered frog species named after plant geneticist

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Researchers from the University of Delhi have named a newly discovered frog species from Western Ghats region after the former Vice Chancellor and renowned Indian Plant Geneticist Prof Deepak Pantali.

University of Delhi researchers Professor S D Biju and Dr Sonali Garg on Monday said they have just discovered a new species of frog belonging to the family Dicroglossidae from the globally recognised Western Ghats biodiversity hotspot and it has been named as "Minervarya Pantali".

The discovery was made during a comprehensive study on a considerably large, common, yet

a confusing group of Indian frogs genus Minervarya (common name: Minervaryan frogs), carried out over a period of nearly 10 years, they said in a release.

The new species was identified based on multiple criteria, such as external morphology, DNA and calling pattern.

The study has also resolved the identity and taxonomic status of all known members of the genus from Peninsular India, in addition to clarifying the geographical ranges of species and providing numerous new distribution records based on morphological and genetically identified samples from a vast region.

The findings are published in a scientific article titled 'DNA



Barcoding and Systematic Review of Minervarya Frogs (Dicroglossidae: Minervarya) of Peninsular India: Resolution of a taxonomic conundrum with description of a new species' in the

international journal Asian Herpetological Research.

"It is a great privilege to name a frog species after Prof Deepak Pantali, the former Vice Chancellor of University of Delhi, in appre-

ciation of his tremendous support and encouragement for setting-up of the Systematics Lab at University of Delhi where research leading to the discovery and description of nearly one-fourth of all known Indian amphibians has been carried out," says Prof Biju, under whose leadership the current study was published.

Biju established the Systematics Lab in 2006, and is the Head of the Department of Environmental Studies and former Dean of the Faculty of Science at University of Delhi. The new species, named Minervarya Pantali, is endemic to the southern Western Ghats, the release said.

"We discovered it from wayside

vegetation at multiple localities in Kerala and Tamil Nadu, while surveying amphibians during the monsoon season. This species is also among the smallest known Minervaryan frogs, which is probably one of the reasons it was overlooked until now," says Dr Garg, the lead author of the study and a postdoctoral researcher at University of Delhi.

This study and the authors were funded by University of Delhi; Department of Science and Technology; Government of India; Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Government of India; Critical Ecosystem Partnership Fund, USA and Global Wildlife Conservation, USA, the release said.

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PAPER WITH PASSION

Power play

Ignoring Indian protests, Pakistan is trying to legitimise its occupation of Gilgit-Baltistan

In what India claims is a violation of its natural right over Pakistan-occupied Gilgit-Baltistan, the Imran Khan Government gives shape to a law to award the region the status of a 'provisional' province. Khan had made that promise last November. This is an attempt by Islamabad to legitimise its illegal occupation by applying the provisions of Pakistani law and the election commission to the region. India has lodged a strong protest over the decision, asserting once again that Gilgit-Baltistan, along with the entire Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, is an integral part of India by virtue of its legal accession. The region, or the provisional province which it may soon be, is of immense strategic importance to India, Pakistan and China. It is Pakistan's only territorial frontier with China. It meets China's Xinjiang autonomous region at that point. It is also a land route between the two provinces. The China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) passes through it. Its neighbours also give Gilgit-Baltistan a vantage location: Afghanistan is to its west, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir to its south, and Jammu and Kashmir to the east. Till a decade ago, it was a nameless region — merely called Northern Areas — and administered from Islamabad, unlike Pakistan-occupied Kashmir with its own Constitution and Assembly. That changed with the Gilgit-Baltistan (Empowerment and Self-Governance) Order of 2009 that introduced the legislative Assembly in the region in place of the Northern Areas Legislative Council.



The reason why Pakistan never annexed the region is because it did not want to weaken its international

case for a plebiscite in Kashmir by annexing Gilgit-Baltistan or, for that matter, Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. It hopes that if ever a plebiscite is held, the votes in Gilgit-Baltistan would become vital to influencing the result. This explains why the region's provincial status is 'provisional'. India has begun to assert afresh its right over the region since Prime Minister Narendra Modi referred to it in his Independence Day speech in 2016. Previously, Indian Parliament passed a resolution in 1994 re-affirming its right over the region. In 2017, the British Parliament also asserted that Gilgit-Baltistan, under Pakistan's control, belongs to India. Gilgit is crucial to China's expansion of its land trade routes across the Himalayas. Without the control of Gilgit, the Gwadar port that establishes a direct access to the Indian Ocean via the CPEC is of little value to China. The whole idea of China's \$46 billion CPEC is to have surface transport and pipeline connectivity between Gwadar and Xinjiang via Gilgit, extending China's sphere of influence to Gilgit-Baltistan and right up to Hormuz Strait. Even as Pakistan makes the region a province, it cannot deny that it ceded control over the region to China and the Chinese Army. The latest development poses a challenge to India's claim to the whole of Jammu and Kashmir and brings closer home the threat of China's presence in Gilgit. Pakistan has made its move and the ball is in India's court now.

PICTALK



People bathe at Prabhatpuri Ka Khola waterfall after monsoon rains in Jaipur

PTI

The Kerala crisis

After the distinction of being the first COVID-free State, Kerala is now caught deep in the quagmire

Kerala wakes up every morning to an eerie silence. The State was the first to declare itself free of COVID-19 on the 100th day of diagnosing the first pandemic case in the country. But the last week saw Kerala diagnosing 20,000 new cases per day with an average Test Positivity Rate of 13. The death toll is surging at an unprecedented rate. When Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan declared on May 8, 2020, that the State was COVID-free, Kerala rejoiced, and sang paeans to former (and then) Health Minister KK Shailaja. But it did not take long for the façade of the success of the "Kerala model" to collapse. "Kerala was known for its good healthcare system at low cost. The colonial masters and the Royal Family of Travancore, who were the rulers till 1947, have to be feted for this. The State's good climate and availability of pure water and air had laid a strong foundation for an excellent public health infrastructure," says Dr SS Lal, an internationally renowned expert on contagious diseases. He has been alerting



the authorities about the danger which they were going to face. But the doctor says that the policymakers had become prisoners of their own image.

The Government failed to co-opt the services of private hospitals, where 80 per cent of the State's doctors are employed. The Kerala Government Medical Officers Association's plea to appoint 1,000 doctors on a war footing fell on deaf ears. The unscientific lockdown rules and the failure to operationalise the existing infrastructure worsened the situation. The RTI probes have revealed that the authorities suppressed details about 7,000 COVID-19 related deaths. There were instances of COVID patients committing suicide in these hospitals because of the failure of the authorities to attend to them. An interesting point is the fewer number of cases being reported from Idukki and Wayanad, the districts atop the Western Ghats, apparently because of the hardworking lifestyle of the people there. Vijayan's decision to bring in personalities like filmmaker Adoor Gopalakrishnan and a bishop as members of a committee to advise the Government on how to tackle the COVID menace evoked laughter. No wonder, the State is adding 50 per cent of the new patients to the daily national tally. It once again underlines the fact that we should have the right people for the right job even during the pandemic.

Politics and the military don't gel

It would be in the interest of the political establishment to desist from politicising the military, lest it creates an uncontrollable monster

The former President of the United States, Donald Trump, has always had the reputation of being a man of questionable moral and ethical integrity with close connections to the radical right. Yet, there were those who voted for him in 2016 because they genuinely believed that he was the lesser of the two evils, and strongly felt that only an "outsider" like him was capable of draining the "Washington Swamp", a phrase alluding to the seemingly all-pervasive corruption surrounding the Washington power elite. They would certainly have been disappointed by his insipid performance as President, especially the extent of his chicanery and selfishness. These have been laid bare in a recent book by two Pulitzer Prize-winning *Washington Post* journalists, investigative staff writer Carol Leonnig and former White House Bureau Chief Philip Rucker, on Trump's final year in power, titled "*I Alone Can Fix It*". A fitting sequel, and as perceptive and illuminating, is "*A Very Stable Genius*".

One of the most fascinating aspects of their latest book pertains to the manner in which the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Mark Milley, responded to President Trump's brazen attempts to overturn the election results by peddling his "Big Lie" that the elections had been "stolen" by the Democrats resorting to widespread fraud. Despite his legal challenges being summarily dismissed, he continues to peddle these allegations to this day. There can be little doubt that his incitement of his supporters culminated in a violent but abortive attempt on January 6 to disrupt proceedings at Capitol Hill to formalise the election results.

Prior to this, one may recall, General Milley had been excoriated by military veterans, politicians and the media for having unwittingly dragged the military into politics by being present, in uniform, at Trump's infamous "Bible photo op" at the St John's Church, immediately after peaceful protestors had been forcefully evicted while demonstrating for racial equality. Indeed, that he then went on to tender a public apology for his error of judgement speaks volumes of his forthrightness, integrity and



strength of character.

He then initiated action to ensure that the military was not dragged into the political sphere, despite Trump having appointed his own lackeys to key positions within the Pentagon. If the authors are to be believed, he went so far as to compare Trump to Hitler and refer to the January 6 insurrection as the "Reichstag Moment" for the US. On Trump's attempts to cling to power through force, he reportedly told his colleagues in the Joint Chiefs: "They may try, but they're not going to f@###g succeed... You can't do this without the CIA and the FBI. We're the ones with the guns."

His actions have lessons that our military leadership would do well to imbibe. It is inconceivable that our senior military hierarchy can, or ever will, adopt such a confrontational attitude towards the leadership of a democratically elected Government, whatever be the provocation, or however unconstitutional be their actions. The aloofness displayed by the military during the 1977 Emergency is a case in point. True, there have been the likes of General Thimmayya, Field

IT IS INCONCEIVABLE THAT OUR SENIOR MILITARY HIERARCHY CAN, OR EVER WILL, ADOPT SUCH A CONFRONTATIONAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS THE LEADERSHIP OF A DEMOCRATICALLY ELECTED GOVERNMENT, WHATEVER BE THE PROVOCATION, OR HOWEVER UNCONSTITUTIONAL BE THEIR ACTIONS

Marshal Manekshaw and a few more of that vintage who have displayed spine and opposed Government directions, but these have been few and far between, and restricted only to professional matters within their purview. Moreover, till recently, the military's senior leadership has been quite circumspect in ensuring that its actions were completely unbiased, apolitical, secular and within constitutional parameters. In fact, it was their adherence to such behaviour that made the military the most popular and respected institution within the country.

Unfortunately, while the bulk of our military remains apolitical and secular, the actions and public statements of the Chief of Defence Staff, General Bipin Rawat, have created perceptions that the military's senior leadership has become excessively politicised. Then there is the fact that some very senior officers have taken the plunge into active politics immediately on shedding their uniform.

While some within the ruling elite may see this turn of events as advantageous to their ideological cause, and in fact encourage this shift within the military hierarchy

through the process of "deep selection", as some allege, they may well be biting off more than they can chew. If there is anything to learn from history, it is that once the military gets sucked into politics, it will not be satisfied acting as a mere handmaiden of those in power. As General Milley so eloquently put it, they are the ones with the guns! We just need to look closely at our own neighbourhood for examples.

It would be in the interest of the political establishment to desist from politicising the military. Creating an uncontrollable monster, that will go on to bite the hand that feeds it, is nothing but sheer stupidity. The Government and the legislature would do well to put rules in place that prevent members of the military and even the Civil Services from joining politics without an appropriate cooling-off period. That would go a long way in insulating them, especially the military, from politics.

(The writer is a military veteran, who is a Visiting Fellow with the Observer Research Foundation and Senior Visiting Fellow with The Peninsula Foundation, Chennai. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HAS DELHI LOST ITS WARMTH AND DIL?

Sir — Nowadays, we often hear about the northeastern people being harassed in the national Capital. These unfortunate incidents pain me somewhere because I have always regarded Delhi as my second home. I was there for the most part of my early childhood, from 1994 to 1999. Since my father used to travel frequently, my mother and I were in a quarter which we can term "Mini India" as there were people from various States.

We used to exchange our local food with their delicacies. The aunties would 'kidnap' me to take me along on their evening walks and sometimes to *mandirs*, gurudwaras and mosques. My mother, who would go to the bazaars alone, never faced any untoward incident; in fact she was helped by people with her bags. What has happened to the Capital now? Has it been hijacked by hooligans? Delhi earned the title of "*Dilwalo ki Dilli*" for a reason but such incidents are bringing shame to it and to the real '*Dilwalas*' of Delhi. I urge the Government to be more strict on this front so that our northeastern people keep feeling safe and loved, like my family did in the national Capital.

Noopur Baruah | Tezpur

BEWARE OF THE THIRD COVID-19 WAVE

Sir — India will witness another alarming rise in COVID-19 cases in the middle of August with the third wave peaking, and nearly 1,50,000 infections a day is the worst scenario. A study by a group of researchers led by Mathukumalli Vidyasagar and Manindra Agrawal at the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in Hyderabad and Kanpur predicts that if the third wave occurs, it will hit us sometime around the middle or end of August and continue increasing till October.

This peak can be of two types. If the variant is more infectious, the peak can be more like the first wave. If it is not that infectious, the cases will not be that high. India reported 40,134 new cases of COVID-19 and 422 deaths in the last 24

Kerala must not be vilified



The State of Kerala continues to detect over 20,000 COVID-19 cases daily through more than 1.5 lakh tests. There seems to be no let-up in the furious spread of the Delta variant of the virus in the State. Yet, the campaign against the State Government's COVID management using the pretext of the latest surge needed to be contested. Though Kerala's overall tally of 34.11 lakh cases accounts for 10.76 per cent of the total cases reported in the country, the death toll of 16,837 is 3.96 per cent of the total number. Against the country's fatality rate of 1.34 per cent, Kerala's is

hours, as per the Government on Monday. The total number of cases currently stands at 3,16,95,958 and the death toll at 4,24,773. The number of active cases in the country is 4,13,718. Less than 50,000 daily new cases have been reported in 36 days, which is the result of sustained and collaborative efforts by the Centre, the States and UTs.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

CAST IN HAPPY BRONZE

Sir — After missing the glorious chance of bagging the gold, Pusarla Venkata Sindhu settled for the bronze medal with a clinical performance at Tokyo Olympics 2020. PV Sindhu fixed her hair, shuffled her feet thrice, leaned forward and muttered "come on" as she took up the challenge and settled for a bronze. She took a deep breath before letting the shuttle sail over the net. The point ended with a thunderous cross-court smash, and she let out a scream.

0.49 per cent, indicative of its success in saving lives. The State has succeeded in keeping the fatalities low through early detection, timely hospital admission and better medical care. Lives do matter more in God's Own Country.

A new study conducted by the researchers in India, Canada and the United States has put India's real death count between 31 and 34 lakh. The studies have also found that the actual death toll in Kerala is 1.4 times the official figure. Computed on the estimate of the uncounted deaths, the national fatality rate would be 9.78 per cent of the total cases reported and Kerala's would come to 0.69 per cent. The shortage of oxygen or non-availability of a hospital bed or ventilator, or shortage of a life-saving drug has never been the cause for any death in the State until now. Pampa, the holy river, has been flowing serenely; it never had to bear the sorrow of carrying bloated, abandoned dead bodies. The Kerala model of COVID-19 management has been successful in saving countless lives.

Haridasan Rajan | Kozhikode

She had scaled the mountain of expectations, beating China's He Bingjiao 21-13, 21-15 to clinch the Olympic bronze medal. She is now the first Indian woman to clinch back-to-back medals at the Olympics. Sindhu had her Chinese opponent scrambling around the court and a couple of authoritative shots put the Indian 11-8 ahead and she never looked back.

In the end, Sindhu's power and guile proved just too much. Bingjiao began to engage Sindhu in longer rallies in the second game to control the tempo of the game, but the Indian was prepared. She finished points early and derived great success from her ferocious forehand cross-court smashes. Thus, Sindhu cast her name in bronze in a fierce battle for supremacy.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

I have directed the Assam Police to withdraw the FIR against K Vanlalvena, Hon'ble MP, Rajya Sabha, from Mizoram.



Assam Chief Minister — Himanta Biswa Sarma



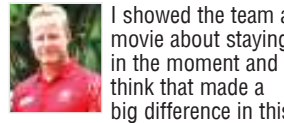
What is their (Taliban militants') change? They have become more cruel, more oppressive, more non-Muslim.

Afghanistan President — Ashraf Ghani



When it comes to trolling, it is at times scary how a nameless, faceless individual could say anything about anybody without getting caught!

Actor — Tiger Shroff



Indian women's hockey coach — Sjoerd Marjine



The BJP's end is near and those who cast an evil eye on the party headquarters, will be found floating in the Worli gutters.

Shiv Sena president — Uddhav Thackeray

FIRST COLUMN

EDUCATION IS NEXT CALAMITY IN MAKING

The current learning gap and reduced social skills can lead to a widening knowledge gap



SHUBHANG RATHI

There is a calamity in the making in the field of education, especially school education, in the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic has affected every stake holder, be it the parents, teachers, students, and school administrators. Innovative ways and technical tools are being developed to make students come close to get the feel of classroom teaching. According to *Azim Premji Foundation*, more than 60 per cent of children cannot access online education and around 90 per cent of students with disabilities are unable to participate in online classes. Delhi-based NGO, Child Fund India, says as many as 64 per cent of children in rural India are facing the prospect of being dropped out of school. For students, the biggest challenge is the absence of physical interaction with peers and teachers. Primary school students cannot even comprehend what is happening to them. Not only are learning standards affected, physiological pressure on senior students is becoming immense. There



is little physical activity because local parks and school playgrounds are also shut. Students in X, XI and XII are irritated about the new methodology of exam evaluation. For parents, it is challenging to teach different concepts and methods to their children every day. Parents are juggling between house chores, office work, and handling the education needs of their children. One parent of my school said: "If this year it is online classes, I am shifting back to my village as I am here in the city only for my children's studies." Parents who have suffered financially due to COVID-19 are taking extreme steps to cut down on education expenses. Unfortunately, it is also their first response, resulting in a heavy blow to the child's future. For teachers, the biggest challenge is teaching by using technology and understanding students' body language. Old and experienced teachers face issues related to online teaching. Teachers are dissatisfied with learning outcomes after putting in extra effort.

I see a calamity coming: Many students have left any formal form of studying in 2020-21. Something needs to be done to rectify the situation. For instance, when we return to work after a gap of 10 days, we feel we have to start work from scratch even though we have been doing the same work for the past several years. Imagine how will a child in the 5-10 age group cope with a break of over 18 months and still attain previous academic levels? Even though we have the infrastructure to teach children, what we lack is continuity. It might become difficult for students to remember the past concepts and relate them to the new ones. It is a challenging task to bring the students back to their previous academic levels. There is already a fear of many small schools closing down because of the spiraling running costs. The administrators are bogged down by unpaid fees in spite of the Supreme Court's verdict. The current learning gap, reduced social skills, and poor handling by educators can lead to a widening knowledge gap of students when offline classes commence again. This can create an educated but unskilled and incapable workforce in the future. We are also looking at an education divide between the rich and the poor and urban and rural. We require the government's intervention to come up with a plan to allow students to visit their schools once or twice a week while continuing their online classes. A hybrid model to clear doubts and reduce the physiological pressure of the students will be most welcomed by schools.

(The writer is the owner of a private school in Morena, Madhya Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

Power reforms — a distant dream

Unshackling of discoms will take away the leverage parties enjoy to serve their populist goal of giving cheap/free power to people at election time



UTTAM GUPTA

Since last year, there have been several announcements regarding the reformation of power distribution companies (discoms). They include the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020, Reforms-Linked, Result-Based Scheme for Distribution (RLRBSD), and a special loan of ₹90,000 crore (subsequently raised to ₹130,000 crore) to discoms in 2020, and the new draft National Electricity Policy, 2021.

The key reform measures included (i) developing an efficient market for electricity distribution; (ii) de-license the distribution business, bring in competition, and give the consumer power to choose supplier (or "open access"); (iii) direct benefit transfer (DBT) of subsidy; (iv) putting a cap on the hike in power tariff; (v) linking payments by discoms to letter of credit (LoC); (vi) denying grants or loan to loss-making discoms, etc.

An overwhelming share of power generated by PSUs such as the National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), etc., independent power producers (IPPs), besides generating stations of State electricity boards (SEBs) is procured by discoms (these are mostly owned and controlled by State governments) under power purchase agreements (PPA). Most of these PPAs are long-term contracts up to 25 years. A mere five per cent of the electricity is traded.

The State governments order discoms to sell electricity to some preferred consumers, viz., poor households and farmers, either at a fraction of the cost of purchase, transmission, and distribution, or even free. On the units sold to these groups, they incur colossal under-recovery. This is aggravated by aggregate technical and commercial (AT&C) losses - most of it is plain theft. In flat tariff allowed to IPPs/PSUs under a cost-plus formula (under the PPAs) adds to the revenue shortfall.

A deadly cocktail of these three factors contributes to persistent and increasing losses of discoms. In 2015-16 it was ₹52,000 crore, ₹17,000 in 2017-18 (this reduction has to do with a massive bail-out given in November 2015 under Ujwal Discom Assurance Yojana), ₹30,000 crore in 2019-20, and ₹58,000 crore in 2020-21. In this backdrop, let us analyze the reform measures: (i) A pre-requisite for the development of an efficient market for electricity distribution is that a major chunk of power should be available for sale in the open market. But, with 95 per cent of electricity tied to PPAs, that too long-term, this is unthinkable.

About (ii), considering that the entire distribution network — transmission lines, feeder lines, transformers (that caters to households), industries, etc. — is owned and controlled by discoms, any talk of letting in private entities is a misnomer.

As for 'open access', a provision was made even under the amended Electricity Act (2003). Under this policy, to be imple-



BY FIXING THE SURCHARGE AT A HIGH LEVEL AND NOT BOTHERING TO REDUCE IT (AS MANDATED UNDER THE ACT), THE STATE GOVERNMENTS ENSURED THAT POST-SWITCH, THE EFFECTIVE COST OF POWER TO THE CONSUMER — TARIFF CHARGED BY THE NEW SUPPLIER PLUS OAC — IS HIGHER THAN WHAT THEY PAY TO SEBs. THAT RENDERED THE SWITCH UNECONOMICAL

(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)



mented within five years of its enactment, i.e., by 2008, the choice was given to the bulk consumers (having consumption more than 1 megawatt) to choose their supplier. But another provision in the Act required such customers to pay an 'open access surcharge (OAC)' to the concerned SEB they wanted to leave.

State governments used this lacuna to the hilt to shield the SEBs who are prone to charging exorbitant tariffs from industries. By fixing the surcharge at a high level and not bothering to reduce it (as mandated under the Act), they ensured that post-switch, the effective cost of power to the consumer — tariff charged by the new supplier plus OAC — is higher than what they pay to SEBs. That rendered the switch uneconomical.

They have not even spared the Railways which spends over ₹12,000 crore annually on the purchase of electricity. Under the Railways Act, it is allowed to distribute and supply power and is a "deemed" licensee as it is buying electricity for its consumption and is exempt from payment of the surcharge. Yet, it has to pay OAC as States will not give 'NOC' - a requirement for availing exemption.

Coming to (iii), under DBT, the State Government gives subsidies directly to the target beneficiaries, even as discoms fix tariff in a manner as to fully recover their cost of purchase, avoiding, and distribution, thereby wheeling any under-recovery on such sale. They also need not charge more from industries and businesses which they have

to do under the present regime to cross-subsidize supplies to preferred users. With direct cash transfer, discoms can be freed from state control which will help them reduce costs including by reining in theft. Under this regime, it will also be easier to implement 'open access'.

Despite these positive spin-offs, the Union Government has not shown the gumption to implement the DBT. In fact, following strong protests from farmers' leaders on its inclusion under the Electricity (Amendment) Act, 2020, it has even promised that the status quo will continue. If the existing system of supplies at heavily subsidized tariff or even without charge to farmers has to continue, then, logically, the same should apply on supplies to households as you cannot have two different methods of delivering subsidy to different sections of the society. So, there is no hope of the DBT ever seeing light of the day.

As for (iv), discoms can recover only up to 15 per cent of under-recovered power supply cost from other consumers. Simply put, if their under-recovery from supplies to farmers/households is say, 'X', then they will be allowed to recover only 0.15X by hiking tariff on supplies to industries and businesses. This will end up further bloating the losses of discoms (though industries will face a modest hike in tariff vis-à-vis the existing scenario of no cap). But this will not prompt them to set their house in order all the more when they know that eventually, the Government will bail them out.

As for (v), under the LC

arrangement, the banks guarantee that a buyer's payment to a seller will be received on time and for the correct amount. If the buyer is unable to pay, the bank will be required to cover the full or remaining amount, which, in turn, it will recover from the buyer using all available legal means. Here, the buyer being the discom - owned by the State - it will be a daunting challenge for the bank. As for (vi), denial of loan to loss-making discoms will not make them feel the heat as experience shows that help reaches them by hook or crook.

To conclude, measures such as those mentioned under (iv), (v), and (vi) are merely cosmetic while the political brass does not have the gumption to act on other measures — as discussed under (i), (ii), and (iii) — which are real reforms. This is because it will require the unshackling of discoms and that will take away the leverage that all parties currently enjoy to serve their populist goal of giving cheap/free electricity to the people who matter at election time. No wonder that we hear proclamations about reforms only to justify mammoth capital infusion whenever discoms need salvaging.

Under UDAY (2015), discoms were given a package worth ₹400,000 crore but are still saddled with under-recovery of ₹0.42 on every unit of electricity sold and a debt of about ₹450,000 crore as on March 31, 2021. Under RLRBSD, the government will be spending another ₹300,000 crore but with no hope of trimming under-recovery. The vicious cycle will continue.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THESE PEOPLE (CONGRESS) WERE THE JAMES BOND OF SPYING (WHEN IN POWER). THEY SPIN A WEB OF SPYING WHEN IN GOVERNMENT.
— UNION MINISTER
MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI



NO GOVERNMENT ALLOWS OTHERS TO SNOOP ON ITS PEOPLE, BUT THIS WAS ALLOWED TO AN ISRAELI COMPANY. IS SECURITY OF THE COUNTRY SAFE?
— CONGRESS LEADER
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE



Thirty years later, 'reform' yet to happen

Liberalisation was not voluntary but was egged on by global lenders who would not lend without a firm Indian commitment on 'reforms'

Thirty years and India is still waiting for the dream to become real. The liberalization of the economy in 1991 is erroneously taken as being limited to divesting government assets and holdings in industry.

Liberalisation was not a voluntary decision but was nudged by major lenders, the IMF and World Bank, who threatened to stop lending without a firm commitment to "reforms". The country went through a foreign exchange crisis in the late 1980s and 1990s and family jewels were pawned because forex reserves plunged to unexpected lows. In July 1991, the RBI pledged 46.91 tonnes of gold with the Bank of England and Bank of Japan to raise \$400 million to meet its international obligations. The



SHIVAJI SARKAR

(The writer is a senior journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

reforms that meant losing government assets to the private sector started with a "bang" but did not bring the private sector to par with the government. The reforms initiated by the then finance minister, Manmohan Singh, were not a roaring success but a piece of confusing policy that has dumped subsequent governments into a policy quagmire.

While liberalizing the society from licence-permit raj was welcomed, the process of doing so gradually became complicated. Changes were made in industrial policy, monopolies law was annulled, import licensing was abolished, India joined WTO and TRIPS, quantitative restrictions on import of manufactured goods and farm products were removed, and current



account convertibility was introduced, business processes were eased, and the GST was introduced.

But disinvestment of public assets caught all attention. Every government took pride in selling assets or being seen doing that. Still, the private sector is suspect in the eyes of the bureaucracy.

It is still a mystery why a partial opening up was considered revolutionary. India is still not free of its socialist

mindset and a preference for government control on the pretext of "concern for people's welfare".

The "reforms" worked a bit. But the pandemic impoverished 80 crore people. Growing joblessness during the lockdown pushed the middle class to the edge of poverty. This is reflected in the slow growth of the GDP. In 2020-21, India's economic growth slowed and contracted by 7.3 per cent, the NCAER says.

Liberalisation in 1991 was followed by a series of ₹7 lakh crore scams - Harshad Mehta to Ketan Parekh, UTI, LIC (about ₹2 lakh crore), and a series of banks, leading to a JPC probe. The top scams are coal allocation (₹1.86 trillion), 2G spectrum (₹1.76

lakh crore), Waqf Board land (₹1.5 lakh crore), Commonwealth Games (₹70,000 crore), Telgi stamp (₹20,000 crore), Satyam (₹14,000 crore), and Hawala scandal (₹100 crore).

Scams of such magnitude had never happened since Independence. Every divestment deal was also questioned. While the large private houses acquired these assets with loans from public sector banks, it also opened up an era of high bank losses (NPAs) particularly after the Lehman meltdown in 2007-08. The RBI Financial Stability Report (FSR) says despite banks writing off ₹23,786 crore loans in 2019-20, enabling the PSU banks to show lower NPAs, banks could go into severe stress as it fears the NPAs may

escalate to 16.2 per cent by September 2021 as borrowers are saddled with unpaid dues.

Repeated reorganization and mergers of banks have not boosted confidence. The latest move to sell four major banks and LIC is not being seen as a happy event. Many buyers could be from the list of 50 major defaulters.

Since 1991, government assets worth ₹3.63 lakh crore were divested. During 2014-19, ₹2.79 lakh crore worth assets were divested. The target set for 2020-21 is ₹2.1 lakh crore. The money received is adjusted in budgetary expenditure and is not known to have been used for building assets.

In 2016, demonetization shook the economy. The cash flow was severely hit, affecting

sales of goods and commodities. People's purchasing power collapsed, delaying the post-pandemic industrial, real estate, and market recovery. It might lead to years of moderate to slow post-pandemic growth and that means a severe resource crunch. Thirty years since the reforms, the power sector is in a mess again and agriculture remains the mainstay of the economy.

Have we made progress? Prime Minister Narendra Modi says his government is working for a targeted \$5-trillion economy. But former PM Manmohan Singh says that the future economic path is tougher than in 1991. Either way, the country must bite the reforms bullet and recast its policies keeping in mind growth in the next 30 years.

July manufacturing output zooms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector activities witnessed the strongest rate of growth in three months in July amid improved demand conditions and easing of some local COVID-19 restrictions, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 48.1 in June to 55.3 in July, pointing to the strongest rate of growth in three months.

In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion while a score below 50 denotes contraction.

"It's encouraging to see the Indian manufacturing industry recover from the blip seen in June. Output rose at a robust pace, with over one-third of companies noting a monthly expansion in production, amid a rebound in new business and the easing of some local COVID-19 restrictions," said Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit.



Lima further noted that "should the pandemic continue to recede, we expect a 9.7 per cent annual increase in industrial production for calendar year 2021."

On the recruitment front, there was a marginal increase in employment in July that ended a 15-month sequence of job shedding.

"Although marginal, the rise in employment was the first since the onset of COVID-19. With firms' cost burdens continuing to rise, however, and signs of spare capacity still evident, it's too early to say that such a trend will be sustained in coming months," Lima said.

On the inflation front, there was a softer but still sharp

increase in input costs. Output charges rose only slightly, however, as several companies absorbed additional cost burdens amid efforts to boost sales. "Policymakers will welcome evidence that inflationary pressures are starting to abate. Firms signalled the slowest increases in input costs and output charges for seven

months. "Hence, we expect the RBI to keep interest rates unchanged in its August meeting as it continues to support growth," Lima said.

The RBI is scheduled to announce its bi-monthly monetary policy review on August 6 at the end of the three-day meeting -- August 4-6 -- of its Monetary Policy Committee (MPC).

Experts believe, amid fears of a third wave of coronavirus pandemic and hardening of retail inflation, the Reserve Bank is likely to maintain status quo on interest rate and watch the developing macro-economic situation for some more time before taking any decisive action on monetary policy. The survey further noted that, Indian firms foresee output growth in the year ahead, with the end of the pandemic and rising sales expected to support the upturn.

"The overall level of positive sentiment rose from June's 11-month low, but remained historically subdued as some companies were concerned about the path of the pandemic," the survey said.



No proposal under consideration to waive farmer loans, says Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Monday said there is no proposal under consideration to waive loans of farmers, including Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe farmers. In a written reply to the Lok Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat Karad said the Centre has not implemented any farm loan waiver scheme since 'Agriculture Debt Waiver and

Debt Relief Scheme (ADW-DRS), 2008'.

"There is no proposal under consideration of the Government of India to waive off the loans of farmers including Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes farmers in the country," the minister said.

Karad also listed major initiatives taken by the government and the Reserve Bank of India to reduce the debt burden of farmers and for welfare

of the people engaged in agriculture, including those belonging to Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes.

He cited schemes like interest subvention for short-term crop loans of up to Rs 3 lakh, RBI's decision to raise the limit for collateral-free agriculture loan from Rs 1 lakh to Rs 1.6 lakh, and direct income support of Rs 6,000 per year to farmers under Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi.

MONEY MATTERS

Bliss GVS Pharma gets GMP certificate for Palghar facility

Drug firm Bliss GVS Pharma on Monday said it has received good manufacturing practice (GMP) certificate from the Ministry of Industry & Trade of the Russian Federation for its facility in Palghar in Maharashtra. The Russian GMP certificate is for the company's manufacturing unit in Palghar in compliance with the requirements of the rules of Good Manufacturing Practice, Bliss GVS Pharma said in a regulatory filing. "Russia being a key member of Eurasian Economic Union, this GMP approval opens the access for Bliss GVS to Russian Pharmaceutical market along with other member CIS countries," Bliss GVS Pharma Managing Director Harsh Sharma said. The company intends to launch products in Gynaecology, Urology, and Anti-Haemorrhoidal segments across these markets, he added. Shares of Bliss GVS Pharma closed at Rs 126.80 per scrip on BSE, up 17.84 per cent from its previous close.



Ashok Leyland sales up 81 pc at 8,650 units in July

Hinduja Group flagship firm Ashok Leyland on Monday reported 81 per cent increase in total vehicle sales at 8,650 units in July. The company had sold 4,776 units in July 2020. Total domestic vehicle sales stood at 8,129 units last month as against 4,283 units in the year-to-date period, registering an increase of 90 per cent, Ashok Leyland said in a statement. Medium and heavy commercial vehicles (M&HCV) sales in the domestic market were at 3,473 units last month as compared to 1,500 units in July 2020, it added. Light commercial vehicle sales in the domestic market last month stood at 4,656 units as against 2,783 units in the same month last year, the company said.



TVS registers 10 pc growth with sales of 278,855 units

TVS Motor Company registered a growth of 10% with sales of 278,855 units in July 2021 as against sales of 252,744 units in the month of July 2020. Two-Wheeler Total two-wheelers registered a growth of 8% with sales of 262,728 units in July 2021 as against sales of 243,788 units in July 2020. Domestic two-wheeler registered sales of 175,169 units in July 2021 as against sales of 189,647 units in July 2020. Motorcycle registered sales of 138,772 units in July 2021 as against sales of 106,062 units in July 2020. Scooter sales of the Company registered 74,351 units in July 2021 as against sales of 78,603 units in July 2020. The Company's total exports registered a growth of 65% with sales of 103,133 units in the month of July 2021 as against 62,389 units in July 2020. Two-wheeler exports registered a growth of 62% with sales of 87,559 units in July 2021 as against sales of 54,141 units in July 2020. The demand in the export market continues to be robust, and container availability is improving.



Policybazaar files Rs 6,017.5 crore IPO papers with Sebi

PB Fintech, which operates online insurance platform Policybazaar and credit comparison portal Paisabazaar, has filed preliminary papers with market regulator Sebi to raise Rs 6,017.50 crore through an initial public offer (IPO). The IPO comprises a fresh issue of Rs 3,750 crore worth of equity shares and an offer for sale (OFS) of Rs 2,267.50 crore by existing shareholders, according to draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). As part of the OFS, SVF Python II (Cayman) will sell shares worth Rs 1,875 crore, Yashish Dahiya will sell shares worth Rs 250 crore and some other selling shareholders will also offer shares. The firm may consider raising around Rs 750 crore by way of a private placement of equity shares ahead of the IPO. Proceeds of the fresh issue will be used towards enhancing visibility and awareness of the company's brands to look for new opportunities to expand growth initiatives to increase the consumer base including offline presence.



Birla offers to hand over VI stake to government

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Aditya Birla group Chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla has offered to hand over his stake in debt-laden Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) to the government or any other entity that the government may consider worthy to keep the company operational.

The billionaire businessman made the offer in June in a letter to Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba.

According to official data, VIL had an adjusted gross revenue (AGR) liability of Rs 58,254 crore out of which the company has paid Rs 7,854.37 crore and Rs 50,399.63 crore is outstanding.

VIL alongwith Bharti Airtel had approached the Supreme Court for correction in the government calculations but their plea was rejected.

In the letter, Birla, who holds around 27 per cent stake in VIL, said investors are not willing to invest in the company in the absence of clarity on AGR liability, adequate moratorium on spectrum payments and most importantly floor pricing regime above the cost of service.

Without immediate active support from the government on the three issues by July, the financial situation of VIL will come to an "irretrievable point of collapse," Birla said in the letter dated June 7.

Construction of 6L housing units valued at Rs 5 L-cr facing delay

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Construction of over six lakh homes valued at over Rs 5 lakh crore is either fully stuck or delayed across seven Indian cities as of mid-2021, as per a report by a realty consultant released on Monday. These units are in projects in seven cities, which were launched on or before 2014, the report by Anarock Property Consultants said.

The report classified 1.74 lakh homes valued at Rs 1.40 lakh crore as "totally stuck" and added that two-thirds of these units are priced below Rs 80 lakh. It said the government's



SWAMIH fund has come to the rescue of several projects but did not specify the exact help tendered by the scheme. Delhi-National Capital Region leads the chart with

Markets march higher on global cues

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks opened the week with robust gains on Monday as strong corporate results, supportive macro-economic data and a bullish trend overseas turbocharged sentiment. Auto stocks were propelled by recovery in July sales numbers, while IT counters also saw brisk buying.

The 30-share BSE Sensex rallied 363.79 points or 0.69 per cent to finish at 52,950.63, while the broader NSE Nifty surged 122.10 points or 0.77 per cent to 15,885.15.

Titan was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 3.25 per cent, followed by M&M, Reliance Industries, Axis Bank,

TCS, Maruti and Infosys. HDFC gained 0.88 per cent after the country's largest mortgage lender reported a 31 per cent jump in its consolidated net profit at Rs 5,311 crore for the June quarter.

On the other hand, Tata Steel, Bajaj Finserv, Bajaj Finance, NTPC, Dr Reddy's and HDFC Bank were among the laggards, shedding up to 1.66 per cent. Domestic equities recovered sharply as positive cues from global equities and strong rebound in auto supported benchmarks, said Binod

Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities.

Further, modest recovery in financials, IT and pharma also supported market, he said, adding that realty stocks were in focus after sharp improvement in property registrations in Mumbai for July, while decent improvement in monthly auto sales volume

aided original equipment manufacturers (OEMs). He noted that most key sectoral indices traded in green, while volatility index broadly stood flat.

On the macroeconomic front, India's manufacturing sector activities witnessed the strongest rate of growth in three months in July amid improved demand conditions and easing of some local Covid restrictions, a monthly survey said on Monday. The seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) rose from 48.1 in June to 55.3 in July -- the strongest rate of growth in three months.

"Tracking global sentiments, vibrant domestic sectors like realty, auto, IT and chemicals provided an edge to Indian equities. Recovery is seen in July auto sales and an improved outlook for real estate due to a surge in property registrations helped these sectors to trade higher. "USD 1 trillion infrastructure spending package in the US provided better prospects to the core economy, aiding global markets to start the month on a strong footing," said Vinod Nair.



NHAI's borrowing rises to Rs 3.06 L-cr in March

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The total borrowing of National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) increased to Rs 3,06,704 crore in March 2021 from Rs 74,742 crore in March 2017, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Replying to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari said Since 2017, NHAI has availed external borrowing to the tune of Rs 3,000 crore.

The minister informed that the amount of interest paid by NHAI in 2020-21 was Rs 18,840 crore.

He also said that as of



date, there are 140 arbitration cases pending before various arbitral tribunals, wherein an amount of Rs 91,875.70 crore of the contractors/ concessionaires claims and Rs 44,600 crore of NHAI's counterclaims is involved for adjudication.

Rupee gains 8 paise to close at 74.34 against \$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained 8 paise to close at 74.34 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, supported by a firm trend in domestic equities and a weak American currency. Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as investors are awaiting the RBI's monetary policy meeting outcome for further cues.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened at 74.38 against the greenback and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.30 and a low of 74.43.

High GST, acquisition cost slowing down car demand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

High cost of acquisition due to a variety of reasons, including higher GST than all other major countries, is slowing down car demand in the country and unless the Centre and states take steps to reduce it, the industry is unlikely to experience reasonable growth, according to Maruti Suzuki India Chairman R C Bhargava.

Addressing shareholders in the company's Annual Report for 2020-21, he said after the devastating second wave of the coronavirus pandemic hitting the first quarter of FY22, the performance in the next three quarters will largely depend on how effectively people get vaccinated and observe safety protocols.

"In March 2021, we were quite optimistic about the outlook for FY2021-22. The suddenness and ferocity of the second wave of the pandemic was a surprise to all, and led to



lockdowns and restrictions in most parts of the country," he wrote.

Production and sales again dropped and the recovery that had started in the previous quarter suffered a set-back. Q1 sales were limited at 3,53,600 units, Bhargava added.

Emphasising that the future outlook hinges on how the virus is contained, he said, "The performance in the next three quarters largely depends on how effectively all our citizens follow the government's advice to get vaccinated and observe safety protocols."

Bhargava further said, "If we can avert the third wave, or substantially reduce its effect, and there are no further waves, economic activities and sale of cars can improve significantly over what was achieved last year." He also attributed the slowing down in the demand of

cars to "largely because the cost of acquisition by consumers has increased due to various reasons like regulatory changes, depreciation of the rupee, increase in cost of raw materials and taxes imposed by State governments".

"The GST on cars, based on the past rates of excise duty, is much higher than the GST (or equivalent) in all other major countries of the world. It is unlikely that the car industry will experience reasonable rates of growth unless the central and state governments consider how to reduce the initial acquisition cost of car," Bhargava asserted.

Yet, Maruti Suzuki India Managing Director and CEO Kenichi Ayukawa said in the second half of 2020-21 there was growth after a big contraction in Q1 due to COVID-19 as "the demand for cars also followed the path of economic recovery". "The demand for cars was driven by pent-up

demand, increasing customer preference towards personal mobility and a good demand from non-urban markets," Ayukawa wrote in his address.

On the road ahead, he said, "Although the country is navigating through tough times, its economic prospects appear to be promising over the medium term. With support from SMC in terms of relevant products and technologies, the company will continue to work on all the enablers to cash-in on the opportunities."

Moreover, SMC, in its recent mid-term plan, indicated to offer relevant products such as Utility Vehicles (UV) to strengthen MSI's product lineup, promote the penetration of hybrids and introduce EVs, Ayukawa added.

"The partnership between Suzuki Motor Corporation and Toyota Motor Corporation will help the Company in gaining access to hybrid technology," he said.

OTT TRUMPING TV?

SHIKHA DUGGAL

OTT platforms in India are growing rapidly in terms of subscribers mainly due to digital media; the youth, especially, have led to the increase in OTT viewership. In fact, the drop in prices of smart phones has also enabled a large chunk of the population to gain more access to online platforms. However, all of this had a substantial impact on the television industry.

On one hand, there was the pandemic delaying the production of television programs while on the other hand, there was the boom of OTT content that lured every consumer to actually switch to key OTT players for unsullied content! From negative impact on revenues to employment issues, both — struggling actors as well as the established ones — had to face evils at that point in time. With digital revolution on our heads, will television take an exit from the backdoor? Telugu television actor Syed Anwar, known for his roles in serials like Mr Mallanna, shares, “Every medium has its own spectators; it has taken years to build that. TRPs are key evidence here, that our audiences haven’t gone down. Currently, many shows, at the moment, are gaining immensely high TRP, it shows viewers are definitely hooked onto television masala, despite the arrival of OTT. Other than *Aha Video*, I don’t think there is another medium that our telugu audiences will shift to, in terms of sitcoms. Telugu television serials or reality shows run purely on the number game, OTT may have a dissimilar approach, but we’re inclined towards the indispensable form of content. Absolutely, societal changes are happening but that can be adjusted online. For example, the star group has both its satellite channel and OTT platform. Every subject also draws some cons with it. OTT has probably turned out to be a boon for many of us. Now, we have the alternative of a new medium to explore our acting abilities. Another instance I would like to highlight is the petty politics that occur amid local television industries. I don’t think that will be the case with online streaming platforms, with commitment to only one channel because you’re the lead there when it comes to TV! It’s a fortune, if my show runs for more than five years straight, will I be able to discover more characters on television at the same time? I’ll have to think about it.”

The audience is hungry, they constantly want entertainment



Meghna Raami



Kaushik

fitting around their increasingly hectic lives. Now, the concept of television may have become an old practice for many, but popular television artist Kaushik of *Aadadhey Aadharam* fame resolutely believes that even today, people in South India wait till Friday for the episodes to finish and

then are very curious to know what’s going to happen in the episode that airs on Monday episode!

“Are the rural audiences used to something like *Amazon Prime Video*? Nope. ETV and Gemini are the channels they can easily access and relate to! OTT could be damaging the business of the movie indus-

try a bit, but for home-makers, watching television is a still must activity, while going about their chores.

What the television industry can do is take a diverse content route because many a time, today’s population gets sick of the similar ‘saas-bahu’ saga. We’re seeing television channels up north, trying out new concepts, we must too! That’s more relevant these days; we should take a break from showing women as ‘damsels in distress’ or the vamps that we see. That doesn’t happen in real life! Television will always hold a place in everyone’s hearts.”

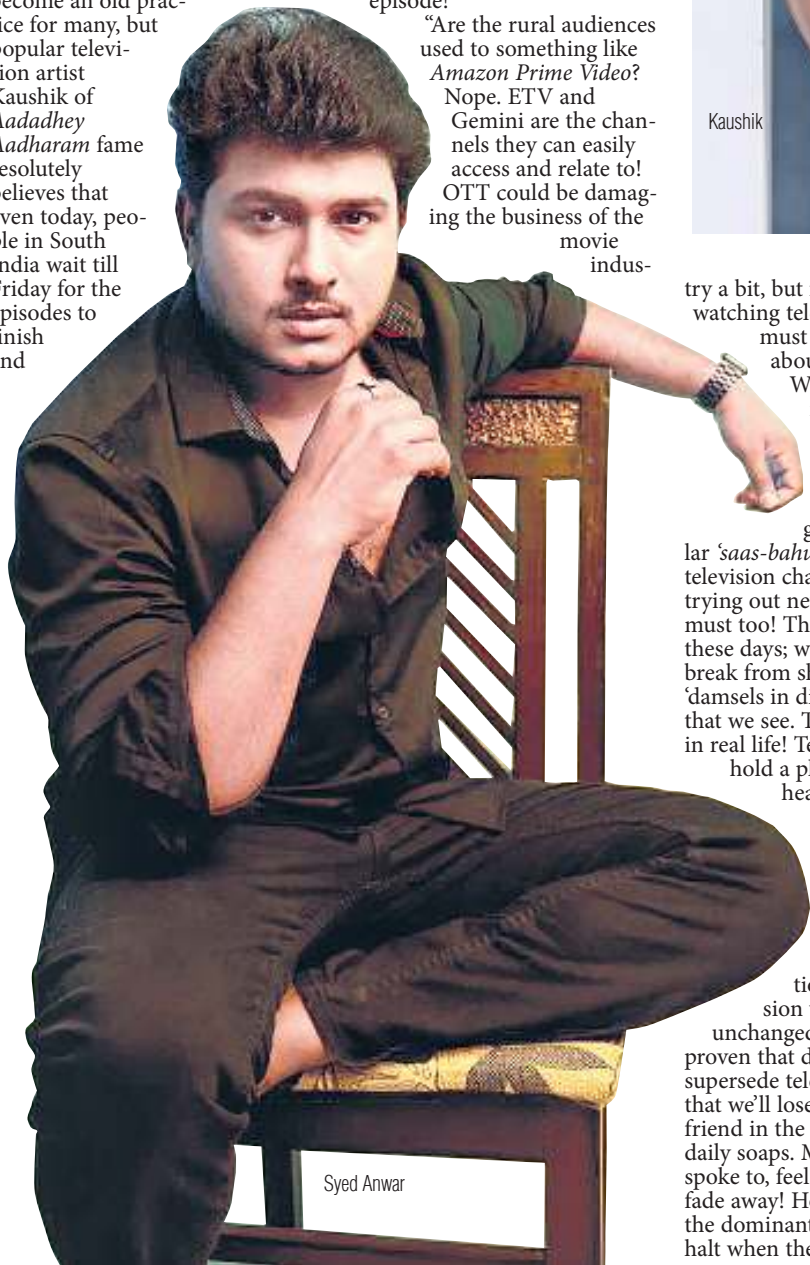
Even though, in this digital world, where we have the flexibility of consuming content anywhere and anytime, the relationship with television will always remain unchanged. It’s not totally proven that digital content will supersede television content and that we’ll lose our good old friend in the form of television daily soaps. Mostly, the actors we spoke to, feel that TV cannot fade away! However, we did see the dominant medium come to a halt when the pandemic tried to

destroy the lives of television stars.

Actress Meghna Raami of *Kalachakram* fame informed, “One more lockdown, trust me, we would have been on the roads. According to me, our daily soap actors are also daily wage workers and we couldn’t have survived another lockdown. I’m only preparing to be extra cautious on the sets and outside, too. I got my parents and myself vaccinated, focussing on having healthy food and being responsible when I’m heading out to work. I blame the sheer negligence and stupidity of people for the surge in the cases earlier. Honestly, we were serious and cautious for only a few days after the lockdown. We were given Covid-19 insurances, sanitisers, masks and what not! But throwing the masks all around, neglecting sanitisers and other safety protocols, being overconfident and then blaming the government will not help.”

It may appear that the audience is moving away from television, however people in the business believe that’s not the case. In fact, according to a recent report, there has been a massive television audience base while the lockdown was on.

Therefore, one may switch between apps but chances are they’ll return to their television sets.



Syed Anwar



Good parenting can put smoking at bay

We’ve always known through experience that good parenting and opinion-shaping can ensure children grow to be responsible adults, and keep away from harmful habits. A recent study has confirmed something very similar. Children who set goals for their future and those with strong parental support are less likely to use e-cigarettes and other tobacco products, revealed a study by UPMC Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh and the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine physician-scientists.

The research suggested that strategies to prevent youth vaping may be different from what works to dissuade youth from smoking cigarettes. “The use of e-cigarettes by young people is at epidemic proportions, with 27 percent of youth surveyed saying they’d vaped in the last 30 days,” said lead author Nicholas Szoko, MD, a fellow in the Division of Adolescent and Young Adult Medicine at UPMC Children’s.

“And a lot of the traditional methods we think of for counselling youth on the dangers of tobacco and drug use may not apply to vaping. Paediatricians and parents need a better understanding of what motivates adolescents to eschew e-cigarettes,” added Szoko.

Szoko and his colleagues analysed anonymous questionnaires administered in partnership with the Allegheny County Health Department and completed by 2,487 high school students in Pittsburgh Public Schools. The surveys asked questions to ascertain if and how often the students used e-cigarettes or other tobacco products, and to determine if any of four “protective factors” validated by previous research were associated with a lower likelihood of vaping or smoking.

In the study, positive future orientation and high levels of parental monitoring were both linked with a 10 percent to 25 percent lower prevalence of recently or ever vaping, compared to peers with lower scores on those protec-



tive factors. There was no link between social support or school connectedness and the use of e-cigarettes. All four protective factors were associated with a lower prevalence of smoking or use of other tobacco products, but none were linked to intent to quit using tobacco products. This suggests that once young people begin to use tobacco, quitting may be more difficult to promote. The researchers note that these findings should be explored to develop improved youth tobacco prevention efforts, but that it isn’t surprising that the results for vaping weren’t exactly the same as for smoking.

“E-cigarettes are positioned and marketed differently than tobacco cigarettes. They’ve been popularised as tools for smoking cessation, and previous research has found the various flavors and trendy ads for vaping are attractive to youth,” said Szoko. “We also know that vaping primes adolescents to transition to smoking cigarettes and other substance use. So, it stands to reason that we may need different approaches to keep kids from vaping, than we use to stop them from smoking,” added Szoko. Senior author Alison Culyba, M.D., PhD, M.P.H., assistant professor of paediatrics, public health, and clinical and translational science at Pitt, noted that frameworks already exist to help clinicians use future orientation and encourage parental monitoring when providing health care to young people, which bodes well for developing e-cigarette intervention programs to strengthen these protective factors. “And we can help parents to navigate their roles as their children become pre-teens and teens and help encourage open conversations with their kids about what they’re encountering,” concluded Culyba.

GREENER ROOFTOPS TO KEEP THE COOL QUOTIENT HIGH

YAMINIKRISHNA
BANDLAMUDI

With the increasing concern of global warming and environmental destruction, the citizens of

Vijayawada, especially women, are enjoying embracing greener lives and are rushing to nurseries to bring their favourite plants home. They prefer to grow gardens on their rooftops that resist heat, bring shade, and even provide food, medicinal benefits, and if not anything, beauty for sure.

According to experts, growing plants on the terrace will control about 5 to 8 degrees celsius heat.

“Growing plants is just like bringing up kids. Neglecting the plants even for a few days doesn’t fetch. Especially terrace gardening demands utmost care and a systematic way of growing plants. Two major reasons for the present generation to opt for a terrace garden are, to save



space and grow organic food. People’s outlook towards this has drastically changed. Earlier, people would fear water sinking into the roofs but now, one can repurpose flower boxes, sand, and planter boxes. You can hang these on an existing railing or just set them on the floor. It’s better to not use ordinary garden soil in these planter boxes, use either quality potting mix or compost-rich soil. Fertilising is the major factor to

improve productivity but it varies according to plants: peppers and tomatoes are heavy feeders, whereas green leafy vegetables do not need much fertiliser. A terrace vegetable garden will take care of your family’s need for veggies like Tomatoes, Cucumbers, Radishes, Beans, Potatoes, Onions, Carrots, Beetroot, Lettuce, Garlic, Chillies, Peppers, and Melons,” informs Adi Lakshmi, plant-lover, and professor at Velagapudi



Sidhartha Engineering College, in Vijayawada. Gardening is a good exercise for both physical and mental health. The beautiful look your terrace will have is just an added bonus. The benefit of cooling makes everything better. Plants and the clay in the soil absorb heat from the sun which increases the heat inside, expanding its rays on the terrace of your home, or the other commercial buildings. Various kinds of arrange-

ments help block heat and offer shade — shade net, shell designs, wall embossing, a pond, lawn, toy house, rock shell work as heat resistants. “It was I that introduced Vijayawada to Heliconia, a rare plant that I got all the way from Kolkata twenty years ago. Initially, I started growing it in a pot. As that didn’t work, I planted it beside the compound wall and it did well. It grows up to 12 feet. It attracted quite a few viewers. I’m also



growing 100 bonsai plants in my garden. I used to maintain a huge terrace garden before my retirement. I’ve been a member of ‘Harita Priya’ and ‘Udyanavana Premikulu’ associations of Vijayawada. Gardening has always served as a stress buster for me,” says retired Ophthalmologist, Dr Krishna Rao, a passionate lover of plants.

Usually, people buy rectangular or square-shaped frames filled with mud which helps plants grow better on the terrace. One can also use old shelves, and racks to keep pots, or buy pot holders, and put them around the corners of your home. In the vertical spaces, you can grow herbs to enhance the taste of salads and cuisines. You can also

grow a lot of flowers to appease ornamental views. They add such peace and calm to people in the home and those who visit too. Without personal care and interest, nobody can tend a roof garden well. To develop the roof garden, one will have to shell out anywhere close to 1 or 5 lakhs, depending upon the kinds of plants and interests one has. However, start with planting in simple containers — big and small, build raised beds, or cover your terrace with proper soil beds like traditional gardens. If you choose to build a fully planted green roof then you need to ensure your rooftop will not cause any potential damage to the building,” shares Kandula Sarada Vani, a landscape designer based in Vijayawada. If you are looking for a stylish way of growing a terrace garden, raised beds are a great option to start with. The raised bed on the terrace does not differ fundamentally from those you see in a regular garden. If you fill the raised bed with soil, consider preventing voles and pests from entering the bed. To make fertile soil, mix quality garden soil, ripe compost, and manure. Probably the most significant advantage of a raised bed is the height and width on the terrace.



● Meenal



● Dharma



● Nabha Natesh



● Gowthami



● P Himaja



● Hepsiba



● Meghana



● Jayakannan



● Bhavana

PARTY

Photos by SV Chary

JAIL BREAK

Another of the novelty experience-based restaurants in the city is here for foodies to enjoy! Gismat Mandi, a favourite chain of many, launched the second jail-themed restaurant earlier this week in Ameerpet! Tollywood actress Nabha Natesh lit up the place with her presence as visitors enjoyed the experience.

FOODIES' PARADISE

A concept dining restaurant that experiments with many cuisines, Flechazo, is now open for those seeking new tastes at Road no 2, Banjara Hills! The grand launch of the restaurant was hosted by many who were all praise for the beautiful interiors and impressive food.

FUN

ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY

Nancy debuted in the comic strip Fritzi Ritz by Ernie Bushmiller in 1933. Fritzi adopted her orphaned niece, who soon became the star. The strip's name changed to Nancy in 1938. We're ringing in the New Year with the history of Nancy!



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5	
6			7		8
9			10		
12	13			14	15
17				16	
19					

ACROSS

- 1 Not sure
- 6 Meadow
- 7 A measuring stick
- 9 The colour made by mixing black and white
- 10 Nearly
- 12 Say again
- 14 A hired car
- 17 A feared sea creature
- 18 Telling fibs
- 19 Carried on

DOWN

- 2 A female relation
- 3 Comes to a finish
- 4 An animal with a shell
- 5 A house made of snow

SOLUTION

T	H	I	N	K	I	N	G
E	O	N	I	L	I	P	
S	C	A	R	F	C	I	S
C	S	A	K	H	O		
A	C	T	I	N	G	S	T
L	I	P	I				
A	R	C	H	F	U	N	N
T	A	N	L	O	L		
O	L	I	V	E	L	A	R
G	R	A	S	E			
P	O	R	I	D	G	E	

NUMBER GAME MATTERS TO ADIVI SESH

Actor Adivi Sesh, known for giving hits like *Kshanam*, *Evaru*, and *Goodachari*, is currently gearing for the final touches of his upcoming bilingual film *Major*. The actor, who has so far had a string of commercial successes, feels money matters of any film are important to a certain extent.

Major is a biographical drama based on the life of 26/11 martyr Sandeep Unnikrishnan. Reports have suggested that the film's international rights and satellite rights have been sold at a whopping amount already.

"For me, numbers matter as much as it reflects on how you keep your producers safe. Today, I am an actor because some producer chose to bet on me. I think a film begins with the producer and ends with the audience. For the audience to see that end product, it takes a producer to

bet on you," Sesh shares. Reacting to *Major*'s money game, Sesh adds, "*Major* is made on large scale and a much bigger budget than my previous films.

I am happy that the sales on which the film is doing are on par, if not better, and are safeguarding the emotional and financial investment. Beyond that, the number game doesn't interest me."

Once he finishes shooting for this bilingual film, he will dive straight into the shooting of *Hit 2*, post which the much-awaited sequel to *Goodachari* should get rolling.

The 2018 action thriller *Goodachari* had made Sesh's game stronger.

Ever since, movie buffs have been eager for the sequel to release, with some even guessing where M. Gopi (Sesh)'s mission goes next.

While the internet is afloat fan theories, Sesh, who is also the writer for

the film and its upcoming sequel, does not feel any pressure of writing the story in any kind of hurry. Do these theories about *Goodachari 2* affect how he shapes up the story? He answers, "The Indian audience largely tends to call films either commercial or noncommercial. I don't know if *Goodachari*, in any way, is a mystery film. If you look at *Kshanam* or *Evaru*, I look at those more as mystery and suspense.

Goodachari for me is like a spy franchise. It's sort of like a fun action film. So, I don't feel any sort of pressure for *Goodachari 2*." *Major* is being made in Telugu and Hindi and will be dubbed in Malayalam.



Rakshasudu 2 to be made with Rs 100 cr

Bellamkonda Sreenivas and Ramesh Varma's *Rakshasudu* was released in 2019 and minted huge money at the box office. Nearly two years after its release, producer Koneru Satyanarayana announced *Rakshasudu 2* with the same director.

On Monday, the producer revealed that *Rakshasudu 2* will be made at a mammoth budget of Rs 100 crore. "The idea of *Rakshasudu 2* is as good as the first one. It will have many more commercial elements than the first one and also be more thrilling. *Rakshasudu 2* will be on par Hollywood films. We are going to make it on a pan-India level and will be casting a very big hero in the second part," Producer Koneru Satyanarayana said.

"We are going to make it with a budget of 100 Crore and will entirely be shot in London. The film will have many action elements," Koneru Satyanarayana added.

The producer is currently making *Khiladi* with Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja which is again directed by Ramesh Varma.

Koneru Satyanarayana was supposed to remake *Rakshasudu* in Bollywood but Covid-19 played a spoilsport. "Akshay Kumar has approached us to give the rights to Pooja Films and we readily gave away the rights as we felt he would be perfect for the role. Since we could not do the film, we gave away the rights. Ramesh Varma will be making his Bollywood debut with the movie," he told.



Pushpa's first song to be out on Aug 13

Tollywood music icon Devi Sri Prasad turned 42 on Monday. The composer is currently busy rendering tunes for his dear friend Allu Arjun's pan-India film *Pushpa*, directed by Sukumar. The director-composer duo has struck gold 7 times in the past.

On Monday, the birthday boy DSP announced the release of the first single of *Pushpa* and details of the song. The first song will be released on August 13. As the film follows the life of a smuggler from tribal people, the glimpse of the song sounds much like a primitive tribal music-based song.

"5 Languages, 5 singers & One Rocking Tune by @ThisIsDSP Icon Staar @alluarjuns"

#PushpaFirstSingle on AUG 13th, (sic)" tweeted the makers. *Pushpa* is set to release in five languages.

Following RRR's *Dosti*, this song *Odu Odu Aadu* from *Pushpa* will also feature the vocals of five different singers in the five languages. Benny Dayal, Shivam, Vishal Dadlani, Vijay Prakash, and Rahul Nambiar will croon the song in Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam respectively.

This song will be aired in all five languages on August 13. Last month, the *Pushpa* star Allu Arjun has surprised DSP with a lovely name board of neon lights. The stylish star might have gifted him after hearing the *Pushpa* soundtrack. Fans are eagerly waiting to lend ears to the first single.



RRR team flies to Europe

SS Rajamouli has nearly wrapped up the shooting of his period drama *RRR*, except for one song.

A few days ago, the production house DVV Entertainment shared an update about the movie's filming. The makers also announced that lead actors Ram Charan and Jr NTR have completed their dubbing portions in two languages. According to the latest report, the team of *RRR* left for East Europe on Monday to shoot the final song.

RRR is a pan-Indian film

that is being made on an extravagant budget. Producer DVV Danayya is said to have spent Rs 300 crore on the film. *RRR* also stars Alia Bhatt, Ajay Devgn, Samuthi Rakani, Olivia Morris, Alison Doody, and Ray Stevenson. The upcoming much-hyped movie is a fictional story set in the 1920s pre-independent era and it is based on the lives of two celebrated freedom fighters — Alluri Sitarama Raju and Komaram Bheem. The first song *Dosti* released on Sunday clocked 20 million views in just a few hours of its release.

Love Story gets a new release date

Akineni Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi starrer, *Love Story*, directed by Sekhar Kammula, has postponed its release in theatres multiple times and it was made clear that the film will release only on the big screens. After *Thimmarusu* and *Ishaq*'s positive response, the latest we hear is that the makers of *Love Story* have locked the release date. As

the theatres have reopened across the state, the makers of *Love Story* are planning to release the film on September 10. An official confirmation regarding the same is yet to be made. *Love Story* is produced by Amigos Creations in association with Sree Venkateswara Cinemas. The teaser of Sekhar Kammula's directorial venture *Love Story* was released on January 10, and it has received an

overwhelming response from movie lovers. *Saranga Dariya*, a Telangana folk song from the film has achieved a unique feat. The peppy fold number has crossed 100 million views on YouTube. *Love Story* also stars Posani Krishna Murali, Rao Ramesh, Rajeev Kanakala, Devayani, Easwari Rao, Satyam Rajesh, and Thagubothu Ramesh in important roles.

SETHUPATHI-SUNDEEP KISHAN'S OFF-SCREEN ROMANCE



Vijay Sethupathi and Sundeeep Kishan have teamed up for an exciting project, to be directed by Ranjith Jeyakodi. The two are coming together for a big-ticket pan-India film and amidst the excitement, Sundeeep Kishan shared a few photos with Vijay Sethupathi that have taken social media by storm. One can see Sundeeep Kishan giving Vijay a tiny adorable peck on the cheek and we cannot get enough of their picture. Sharing the photos, Sundeeep tweeted, "The Big Brother Love...The one and one 'Makkal Selvan' @VijaySethuOffi Loading Soon..." The film will reportedly be presented by The Family Man makers Raj Nidimoru and Krishna DK, and produced by Bharath Chowdary.



TOKYO TIMELINE

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hockey:** India beat Australia 1-0 in women's quarterfinal.
- **Athletics:** Dutee Chand 7th and last in women's 200m Heat 4; fails to qualify for semifinals. Kamalpreet Kaur sixth in women's discus final with a best throw of 63.70m.
- **Shooting:** Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar 21st and Sanjeev Rajput 32nd in men's 50m rifle 3 positions qualification; fail to qualify for final.
- **Equestrian:** Fouaad Mirza 25th in eventing jumping individual qualifier; 23rd in final.

IN ACTION TODAY

- **Athletics:** Annu Rani in women's javelin throw Qualification Group A. (5:50am)
 - **Hockey:** India vs Belgium in men's semifinal. (7:00am)
 - **Wrestling:** Sonam Malik vs Bolortuya Khurelkhuu (Mongolia) in women's 62kg. (8:30am onwards)
- Live on SONY TEN & SIX Network

PTI ■ TOKYO

A brave and determined Indian women's hockey team etched its name in the history books by entering the Olympic Games semifinals for the first time, stunning three-time champions and world No 2 Australia 1-0 in an intense last-eight tie here on Monday.

A day after the Indian men's team entered the Olympic semifinals following a 49-year gap, the world No 9 women's side also produced a phenomenally gritty performance to make it way into the last four.

Drag-flicker Gurjit Kaur rose to the occasion when it mattered and converted India's lone penalty corner in the 22nd minute to surprise the Australians.

"We are so happy, it is the result of hard work that we put in for several, several days. In 1980, we qualified for the Games but this time, we made the semifinals. It is a proud moment for us," Gurjit said after the match.

"This team is like a family, we have supported each other and found support from the country as well. We are very happy," she added.

But the Indians, determined to prove a point, produced a strong and brave performance to eke out the narrow win over the Hockeyroos.

How much it meant for the team and Indian hockey in general could be gauged from the

HISTORYMAKERS

In a first, Indian women's hockey team enter Olympic semifinals with a stunning 1-0 win over Hockeyroos



Indian players celebrate after Gurjit Kaur (jersey No 2) scores India's only goal against Australia during women's hockey quarterfinal match

@Tokyo2020hi

A movie on self-belief & staying in the moment did trick: Marijne

Tokyo: Watching a movie on self belief after three consecutive losses rebuilt the Indian women's hockey team's shattered morale and helped it to 'aim for the clouds', the side's Dutch coach Sjoerd Marijne revealed on Monday after Rani Rampal and Co entered their maiden Olympic semifinals here.

The Indian team bounced back tremendously in the tournament after successive losses and Marijne said the movie helped psychologically ahead of the must-win pool game against Ireland but did not reveal its name.

"The difference is believing in ourselves and believing in their dreams and then it's about going back to reality focussing on your past. I think that is the main thing and that's what we did," Marijne said after upsetting Australia in the quarterfinals.

"If you lose you don't stop

believing and that's what I told the girls. The most important thing is to stay in the moment. I showed them a movie and that movie is about being in the moment and I think that was really helpful. Against Ireland we kept on referring to that movie," he said.

He said all he asked the team to do was to aim for the highest.

"In India you must think big and that's what I said to the girls. If you aim for the high-est, for the clouds, you will fall on the highest mountain. If you aim for the mountain you will fall on the ground," he explained.

"We went for the clouds and I said whatever happens after it doesn't matter, but that's where we have to aim for."

India captain Rani Rampal too credited the movie for the turnaround of fortunes. PTI

emotions that were on display

after the final hooter went off.

The players screamed, hugged each other, and got into a huddle with their Dutch coach Sjoerd Marijne with tears of joy rolling down their faces.

India's best performance in the Olympics came way back in

the 1980 Moscow Games where

they finished fourth out of six teams. In that edition, women's hockey made its debut in the Olympics and the sport was played in a round-robin format.

The Rani Rampal-led side will play Argentina in the semi-final on Wednesday.

Kamalpreet finishes 6th in discus final

Tokyo: Discus thrower Kamalpreet Kaur finished a creditable sixth in her first Olympics in a rain-interrupted final while sprinter Dutee Chand ended her campaign on a disappointing note by failing to qualify for the 200m semifinals here on Monday.

The 25-year-old Kaur, who has qualified for the final as second best on Saturday, was never in the running for a medal in the eight rounds of competition which was interrupted by rain for more than an hour.

Her best throw of 63.70m in the third round saw her finished at sixth and equal 2010 Commonwealth Games Gold medalist Krishna Poonia's performance in the 2012 London Olympics.

Throughout the competition, Kaur looked nervous and short of confidence as she lacked international exposure. She has taken part in World University Games in 2017, her lone international competition.

It was a tough competition for all the participants as rain started pouring down towards the end of the second round and a few throwers taking their attempts in spite of slippery circle.

Rain stopped after an hour but the humidity seemed to have affected the throwers' performance and they have to be cautious as the approach area to the circle was wet.

With her right shoulder heavily

strapped, Kaur began with a 61.62m effort before fouling her next attempt. That put her under pressure and on the verge of being eliminated as she was ninth just before her third throw.

But she gave her best and came up with a 63.70m, that saved her and put her in the sixth position as the bottom four out of the 12 finalists were eliminated after three rounds.

Not much changed in the position of the throwers in the final three rounds. Kaur fouled the fourth throw and then had a 61.37m in her penultimate attempt before sending the discus out of sector in the final one.

American Valarie Allman took the Gold with a first round throw of 68.98m while Kristin Pudenz (66.86m) of Germany and reigning world champion Yaime Perez (65.72m) of Cuba won the Silver and Bronze respectively.

In the morning session, sprinter Dutee ran her season's best in 200m but that was not enough for a semi-finals berth as she made a disappointing exit from the Olympics after finishing last in her heat race.

The 25-year-old clocked 23.85 seconds to finish seventh and last in Heat 4 and 38th overall out of 41 competitors.

Tokyo: Handling the immense burden of expectations would perhaps be the key when the Indian men's hockey team takes on world champion Belgium, aiming to secure a place in the Olympic finals and with it, a medal for the first time in 41 years here on Tuesday.

With 11 Olympic medals, eight of them Gold, in its kitty, India has a rich history in the Games and the Manpreet Singh-led side seems on course to resurrect that glorious past.

The Indians achieved the semifinal slot by beating Great Britain 3-1 in the quarterfinals on Sunday, and are now in touching distance of a medal.

The Graham Reid-coached current side knows very well that another good outing against Belgium on Tuesday would etch its name in the history books in golden words no matter the colour of the medal.

The Indians are on a four-match winning streak after the 1-7 drubbing against Australia

Belgium stand b/w India & final



in their second pool match and come Tuesday, Manpreet and his teammates would look to continue the momentum.

But it would be easier said than done as in Belgium, India face a tough opponent, which has improved leaps and bounds in the last few years.

Besides being current world champions and world No 2 side, Belgium are also the reigning European champions.

Going by rankings, however, there is hardly anything to separate between the two sides as India are currently

ranked third in the world.

The recent head-to-head record also favours India.

India and the Red Lions played each other three times in 2019 during their tour of the European nation and the Asian side came out victorious in all the matches. India

Sonam to begin India's wrestling campaign



Tokyo: Young Indian wrestler Sonam Malik was on Monday placed in the challenging bottom half of the women's 62kg draw, where she will open her Olympics campaign against Asian Silver medalist Bolortuya Khurelkhuu from Mongolia.

The 19-year-old will be the sole Indian wrestler in action on Tuesday. Relatively new to the big stage, every single bout will be a test of character for Sonam, who qualified for the Tokyo Games by making the final at the Asian Qualifier in April in Almaty.

Khurelkhuu is more experienced than Sonam and has stood on the podium on both the occasions she took the mat this season but the Indian is not intimidated.

Sonam came into Olympics after recovering from a right knee injury that did not let her fly to Russia for training in build-up to the Games.

"I am fine. There is no pain in my knee. It's neither tough nor easy draw for me," Sonam, who earned a name for herself by defeating Rio Bronze-medallist Sakshi Malik four times, said after the draw ceremony.

If Sonam manges to cross the first hurdle, she will most likely find 2018 world champion Taybe Mustafa Yusein from Bulgaria in the quarterfinals.

The draw is such that the repechage route may open up for Sonam if she does not go deep on her own. PTI

Mirza 23rd in individual eventing



Tokyo: Equestrian Fouaad Mirza on Monday finished a creditable 23rd in eventing after he became the first Indian to reach the final of the event here on Monday.

Mirza and his equine Seigneur Medicott sneaked into the top-25 in the morning to make the jumping finals and become the first Indian to do so.

In the final, Mirza incurred

12.40 penalty points for an overall 59.60 that included the points from the three rounds of qualifying events — dressage, cross country and jumping.

It was a creditable performance for the 29-year-old Bengaluru rider Mirza, who was the first equestrian to qualify for the Olympics since Imtiaz Anees in Sydney 2000.

Mirza started off the three

qualifying eventing rounds with a spectacular dressage round by taking the ninth place on Saturday.

On Sunday, Mirza picked up 11.20 penalty points in the challenging Sea Forest Cross Country Course to be placed 22nd.

Mirza and Seigneur finished the cross country run in just over eight minutes after starting a bit late owing to a technical issue.

In the final qualifying event, Mirza knocked two fences in the jumping round to incur eight penalty points en route to finishing 25th with an overall 47.2 penalty points.

The final was once again a jumping round where the top 25 competed.

Germany's Julia Krajewski won the Gold in the event, making her the first female Olympic champion in eventing's history. PTI

Shooters finish without medal

Tokyo: Indian shooters Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar and Sanjeev Rajput failed to qualify for the finals of the men's 50m rifle 3 positions event at the Tokyo Olympics here on Monday.

Tomar finished 21st in the qualification while Rajput was placed in 32nd position at the Asaka Shooting Range as the Indian shooting team returned without a medal for the second straight time at the Olympics.

Only the top 8 athletes qualify for the final.

Tomar shot a total of 1167 with 63 inner 10s in the qualification over the stages of kneeling, prone and standing, while Rajput, appearing in his third Olympics, aggregated 1157 with 55 inner 10s.

The cut was made at 1176. With this, Indian shooters failed to win a medal for a second successive Olympics. PTI

I was blank, my coach was in tears: Sindhu after win

Tokyo: Reigning world champion P V Sindhu on Monday said she was completely blank after winning a second successive Olympic medal and it took her a while to realise the enormity of her historic achievement in the ongoing Games.

The 26-year-old Indian on Sunday etched her name among the all-time greats after winning badminton's women's singles Bronze medal to add to the Silver she won at Rio de Janeiro five years back.

"...I was blank, my coach was literally in tears, it was a big moment. I hugged him and said 'Thank you'. I didn't know what to do for 5-6 seconds, I shouted, so all emotions came together at that moment," she said during a virtual press conference.

In the third-place play-off, Sindhu beat China's He Bing Jiao. The win came after a painful loss in the semifinals to world No 1 Tai Tzu Ying.

Sindhu said coach Park Tae-sang's encouragement helped her to recover from the semi-final loss and claim the Bronze for the country.

"After semis, I was really sad, I was in tears but my coach said it is not over yet. There were mixed emotions, if I should be sad or happy but Park told one thing. He said 'there is a lot of difference between a fourth position and a Bronze' and that really hit me," she said.

"I went with the mindset that I have to give my 100 percent and get that medal."

A lot of questions were raised when Sindhu



PV Sindhu hugs her coach Park Tae-sang after winning women's singles badminton Bronze medal match

PTI

decided to move out of the Pullela Gopichand Academy and train at the Gachibowli indoor stadium which had bigger halls similar to the

Park felt pressure after being assigned to train Sindhu

Tokyo: His phone hasn't stopped buzzing ever since P V Sindhu claimed the Bronze medal at Tokyo Olympics but India's foreign badminton coach Park Tae-sang says he did feel 'little pressure' after being suddenly asked to train the star shuttler for the Games.

The 42-year-old from South Korea was initially

venue in Tokyo.

Sindhu said it was one of the best decisions, especially since drift played a role during the Games at the Musashino Forest Plaza.

"Yeah, from the beginning there was no controversy, I mean, we had this opportunity to play in conditions similar to Olympics, so from February we have been playing there, it has really helped us because drift played a big role and I learnt a lot in Gachibowli, I learnt to control the shuttle better.

"It had international standard courts with air conditioners, which was important. So I feel it was the best decision..."

hired to train the men's singles players but started working with Sindhu after the abrupt departure of Kim Ji Hyun, following the World Championship in 2019.

"I'm really happy because this is the first time my player has got a medal in my coaching career," Park, who competed at the 2004 Athens Olympics before taking up

coaching the national Korean team, said during a virtual press conference.

"When I first started teaching Sindhu, she was already a big Olympic star. I felt little pressure but I tried. My Korean players also didn't get an Olympic medal, so I thought I can try to get her a Gold. We failed but Bronze is also a very big medal. PTI

GOPI SIR CONGRATULATED, SAINA 'NO'

P V Sindhu said she received congratulatory message from chief national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand but she has not got any such gesture yet from senior shuttler Saina Nehwal.

Asked if she received any communication from Gopichand and Saina after her win, Sindhu said: "Of course, Gopi sir wished me congrats. That's all. I haven't seen the social medal. I am slowly replying to everybody.

When further probed, Sindhu said: "Gopi sir messaged me, Saina no. We don't talk much, so..."

Concussed Mayank out of 1st Eng Test

Nottingham: India's opening batsman Mayank Agarwal was on Monday ruled out of the first Test against England after being concussed by a short ball from teammate Mohammed Siraj during a training session here.

While facing Siraj, Agarwal saw the ball thudding into his helmet when he took his eyes off a short delivery.

The first Test starts here on Wednesday.

"Opening batsman Mayank Agarwal was hit on the helmet while batting during India's nets session at Trent Bridge in Nottingham on Monday," BCCI secretary Jay Shah was quoted as saying in a media release.

"The BCCI Medical Team assessed him, and a concussion test was conducted. He has shown signs of concussion and is ruled out of the opening Test against England. The 30-year-old is stable and will remain under close medical observation," Shah further stated.

When vice-captain Ajinkya



Mayank Agarwal leaves the field after he gets injured during nets

@BCCI

Rahane was asked about the fitness of all players, he did say that Agarwal sustained a head injury.

"Mayank Agarwal got hit on the head. The medical team is looking after him. All others are fit," Rahane told mediapersons.

After being hit by Siraj's delivery, Agarwal was seen in some discomfort as he removed the helmet and sat on the ground with physio Nitin Patel attending to him. He was then seen pressing the back of his head while leaving the nets, escorted by Patel. PTI