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the pioneer



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VANA-
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COMBO

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CBSE CLASS 10 RESULT: 57,000 SCORE ABOVE 95%, OVER 2 L SCORE 90-95%

Over 57,000 students have scored above 95 percent marks in class 10 while those scoring between 90 and 95 percent has gone up to over two lakh, according to the CBSE. The number of students in the two categories has increased by over 38 pc and nine pc respectively since last year. The results announced by the board on Tuesday showed that the number of candidates scoring above 95 pc has increased from 41,804 last year to 57,824 this time. Similarly, the number of students scoring between 90 and 95 pc has increased from 1,84,358 to 2,00,962.

DALIT MINOR RAPE: OPPN TARGETS AMIT SHAH; DCW ORDERS INQUIRY

Opposition parties on Tuesday targeted Home Minister Amit Shah over the death of a nine-year-old Dalit girl following an alleged sexual assault, questioning the law and order situation in the national capital, even as the Delhi Police said strict legal action has been taken against the accused. The Delhi Commission for Women launched an inquiry into the incident and summoned the city police after the girl's parents alleged that she was raped and her body was forcibly cremated by a crematorium priest who had falsely claimed that she was electrocuted.

HC STRIKES DOWN TN GOVT BAN ON ONLINE GAMING OF RUMMY, POKER

The Madras High Court on Tuesday struck down a recent amendment made to the Tamil Nadu Gaming Act, passed in 1930, which imposed a ban on online gaming of rummy and poker with stakes. The court quashed the amendment made this year while allowing a batch of PIL petitions from Jungle Games India Pvt Ltd. and others. The bench declared as unconstitutional, Part II of the TN Gaming & Police Laws (Amendment) Act, 2021, which banned betting or wagering in cyberspace and also games of skill if played for a wager, bet, money or other stakes.

PENTAGON ON LOCKDOWN AFTER GUNSHOTS FIRED NEAR METRO

The Pentagon was on lockdown Tuesday after multiple gunshots were fired near a platform by the facility's Metro station. At least one person was down, according to two people familiar with the shooting, who spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorised to release information publicly. The person's condition was not known. The incident occurred on a Metro bus platform that is part of the Pentagon Transit Centre, the Pentagon Protection Force tweeted. A statement said the facility was on lockdown due to police activity.

Nearly two lakh techies working from outside Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nearly two lakh of the approximately six lakh techies in the city are working from outside Hyderabad, according to the Future of Work Models survey by HYSEA.

This factor is eventually turning out to be a major constraint in getting employees to return to working from office.

As per the survey conducted by HYSEA, nearly 91 percent of the companies have more than 25 percent of their workforce operating from outside of Hyderabad. This is more prevalent among the medium, large and very large (MLVL) companies with the average being greater than 40 percent. Among the companies with more than 500 employees, this WFO percentage is less than 5 percent.

This can be interpreted as an overwhelming majority of Hyderabad's IT / ITeS employee



base is still working from home. Companies want to bring back only 50 percent of employees, which translates to a minimum of two

lakh and a maximum of five lakh employees, in offices by March 2022.

SC grants 6 more months to inquire encounter killings of 'Disha' case accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday gave another six months to the three-member inquiry commission, headed by former apex court judge V S Sirpurkar, to file the final report on encounter killing of the four accused in the case of gang-rape and murder of a veterinarian in Hyderabad.

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana asked the lawyer appearing for the inquiry panel as to how much more time it wanted to conclude the probe.

The bench, also comprising Justice Surya Kant, referred to a similar panel, set up to inquire into the encounter killing of gangster Vikas Dubey in Uttar Pradesh, and said it has already filed the report.

Centre dashes hopes of Telugu States, says delimitation only after 2026

SNV SUDHIR ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dashing the hopes of political parties in both the Telugu states, the Union government on Tuesday reiterated that delimitation of Assembly constituencies in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will not be taken up anytime soon. These parties will have to wait till the first Census is published post 2026, which makes it feasible only by 2031.

"Section 26(1) of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 inter-alia states that "Subject to the provisions contained in Article 170 of the Constitution and without prejudice to Section 15 of this Act, the number of seats in the Legislative Assembly of the successor states of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana shall be increased from 175 and 119 to 225 and 153, respectively. As per Article 170(3) of the Constitution, the total number of seats in the Assembly of each state will be read-

justed after the first Census is published post the year 2026," Union minister of state for home affairs, Nityanand Rai told Lok Sabha on Tuesday.

Since the 16th Census exercise will be taken up this year (2021), technically the next Census will be in 2031. Now, the delimitation of Assembly segments in the Telugu states as per Centre will be taken up after the first Census report is published after 2026 which means 2031.

The next Assembly polls are slated for 2024 in Andhra Pradesh and 2023 for Telangana. Both the ruling parties in the Telugu states, the YSRCP and the TRS, hoped that the Centre will take up the delimitation of Assembly constituencies before 2024 so that they can accommodate leaders who had defected from the opposition in the extra Assembly segments that will be created due to the delimitation.



Centre asks States to increase women in police to 33 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has asked all states to increase the representation of women in police to 33 per cent so that each police station gets three women sub-inspectors and 10 women police constables.

Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai told Lok Sabha on Tuesday that five advisories were sent to all states since 2013, and the last one was on June 22, 2021, to increase the representation of women police to 33 per cent of the total strength.

AP attends, TS skips water boards' meetings

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

As expected, Telangana abstained from the KRMB, GRMB Coordination Committee meeting scheduled for Tuesday as it has already requested for a full-fledged board meeting first to resolve all its concerns.

Telangana has written to the KRMB that a full-fledged board meeting be held first as the gazette notification issued by the Centre unilaterally fixing the jurisdiction of the Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards without resolving the ongoing illegal projects by AP could have adverse impact on the river water utilisation by the States.

"Thus it would be appropriate to hold the Coordination Committee meetings for implementing the gazette notification only after discussing the concerns raised by the State," the Telangana government said.

The GRMB however requested the Telangana government to first attend the Coordination Committee meeting as it would have to give the next plan of action over the implementation of the gazette notification to the Jal

Shakti Minister as directed.

However, Telangana did not see any purpose in attending the meeting. "Without resolving the concerns and certain errors crept into the notification regarding the projects and their status, approvals from the concerned authorities, the State could not proceed further," sources said.

The KRMB also scheduled its coordination meeting on Tuesday and Telangana did not attend it on the same stand. It had requested for a full-fledged meeting of the Board first.

The Boards earlier requested the governments of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to submit all the details about projects and their approvals.

While AP government officials attended the meeting held at Jal Soudha here, they said they could not give details as they have objections on projects included by the Union Jal Shakti Ministry in the gazette notification and they would take them to the notice of the Centre.

The Coordination Committee however suggested that the details be given first and the States could take their objections to the Centre.

CBI arrests Sunil Yadav in Viveka murder case

PNS ■ KADAPA

The YS Vivekananda Reddy murder case took a significant turn on Tuesday with the arrest of Sunil Kumar Yadav by the CBI in Goa, the first arrest in the sensational murder case.

The CBI officials reportedly arrested Yadav on Monday and produced him before a court in Goa on Tuesday. Later the officials shifted him to Kadapa on a transit remand.

According to sources, Yadav was thoroughly grilled by the CBI officials before being arrested. Yadav belongs to Pulivendula town and had earlier filed a petition in the High Court alleging that the CBI was harassing him and his family members and subjecting them to third degree torture.

Later, he went absconding along with his family members.

Officials here said that Sunil Yadav would be produced before the court in Kadapa on Wednesday. Currently, he was lodged in a guest house located in the Central prison premises.

Vivekananda Reddy, younger brother of late chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy and paternal uncle of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, was brutally murdered in his residence on March 15, 2019. Viveka was an MP, MLC and had served as a minister in undivided AP.

11.8K MT food grains remain undistributed in Telangana: Centre

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Thousands of Metric Tonnes (MT) of food grains allocated under Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana remain undistributed in Telangana State.

About 11,833.00 MT under PMGKY-I, another 26,627.21 MT under PMGKY-II and still another 6,751.45 MT under PMGKY-III are yet to be distributed.

The data was shared by Minister of State for Ministry of Rural Development and Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution Sadhvi Niranjani Jyoti in response to a question raised by BJP MP Bandi Sanjay.

During the year 2020, 7.66 lakh Metric Tonnes (LMT) of food grains and during 2021, about



6.71 LMT food grains have been allocated to Telangana under the PMGKY scheme.

Jyoti said, "During the year 2020, about 322 LMT of food grains and during 2021, about 278 LMT food grains have been allocated free of cost under the PMGKY scheme to approximately 80 crore NFSA beneficiaries." Under the PMGKY, the Union

government has made allocation of food grains at the rate of 5 kg per person per month for around 80 crore beneficiaries of all the States and UTs covered under NFSA (Antyodaya Anna Yojana (AAJ) and Priority Households (PHH)) including those covered under Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) for a period of eight months (April to November 2020) and again similarly during the period May to November, 2021.

The MoS said: "It's the responsibility of the governments of the State or UT to identify eligible households / beneficiaries covered under NFSA namely Antyodaya Anna Yojana and priority households as per criteria evolved by the State or UT government concerned."

TS July revenue improves, estimated to net over Rs 8k-cr

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Though the fear of third wave of Covid-19 pandemic looms large, the easing of the pandemic situation and opening of economic activity has reflected positively on the GST collections for the month of July.

The gross GST collection of the country for July again crossed the Rs 1 lakh-crore mark to touch Rs 1,16,393 crore.

After consistently posting above Rs 1 lakh-crore for eight months, the GST collection dropped below



The net GST collection to the

State for July was Rs 2,174 crore which is certainly an

improvement over GST revenue for June of Rs 1,788 crore. The overall revenue of Telangana this month may be around Rs 7,500 crore and if non-tax revenue related to land sales is included, it may go up to Rs 8,200 crore.

According to GoI figures released for various States, Telangana's GST collection for July is Rs 3,610 crore with an increase

of 26 percent over that of last July (Rs 2,876 crore).

However it may be mentioned here that there is difference between GST revenue collected from State and the net GST revenue to the State which is much less than Rs 3,610 crore shown by the Centre which has so many other components. It will take some time to calculate the actual GST revenue realised by the State because despite the source of production, the tax on goods is realised where they are consumed.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Ekadashi 15:16
Nakshatram : Mrigshirsha 28:25
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 12:22 pm - 1:57 pm
Yamagandam : 7:35 am - 9:11 am
Varjyam : 7:57 am - 9:44 am
Gulika : 10:46 am - 12:22 pm
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 6:38 pm - 8:24 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham : Nil



AP announces Rs 30L cash award to Sindhu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Tuesday announced a cash incentive of Rs 30 lakh to badminton superstar PV Sindhu, recognising her bronze medal winning feat in the ongoing Tokyo Olympics. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy late on Monday directed officials to extend the cash award as part of the State's sports policy.

Not tar, TS to lay 127 km coir roads

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government plans to use coir to lay about 127.88 km of rural roads in Telangana.

Roads in villages of Karimnagar, Bhongir, Husnabad, Huzurabad, Nellakondapalle, Koheda, Veernapalli, Thorrur among others will be laid using coir geo-textile technology under Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana Phase-3.

Earlier in March, clearance to a proposal of nearly 105.8 km of coir geo-textile roads under Batch-2 of PMGSY-III was given to Telangana by the Union government.

Coir geo-textiles are used for improvement of sub-grade soil strength in road pavements and stabilization of side slopes apart from stopping soil erosion. Very few states - Tamil Nadu,



Madhya Pradesh, Kerala and Karnataka - have so far used this technology, and that too for less than 50 km. Now, moving a step ahead, the Telangana government plans to lay about 5 percent length of the rural roads under PMGSY-III using coir geo-textiles. In the preliminary observations by



the National Quality Monitors (NQM), coir roads were found to be performing well. It has also been found that by improving the strength of the sub-grade soil the coir geo-textile results in marginal reduction in the thickness of the granular sub-base (GSB) layer, thus reducing costs.

Home Guard gets 30 years in jail for raping minor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Botla Mallikarjuna (40), a Home Guard was on Tuesday sentenced to 30 years rigorous imprisonment for sexually assaulting a physically-challenged minor girl in October last year.

First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Suneetha Kunchala found the 40-year-old Home Guard guilty under relevant Sections of the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act, SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Amendment Act, 2015 and Indian Penal Code and sentenced him to 30 years rigorous imprisonment.

Devineni Uma's arrest may pave way for revival of the TDP

Is caste determining the recent action against Opposition TDP leaders in Andhra Pradesh? Ever since the YSRCP, led by YS Jaganmohan Reddy stormed to power in the State, there appears to be an unprecedented number of arrests of opposition leaders taking place, forcing people to think whether there is a caste factor involved.



Devineni Uma was arrested when he was trying to reach Kondapalli area of Krishna district where illegal mining is allegedly taking place. YSRCP cadres tried to block Devineni Uma and inevitably, there was some jostling, some pushing and tempers flared, if reports are to be believed.

The absence of any clarifications from the government regarding the allegations of illegal mining at Kondapalli has created an opening for the TDP and its activists believe that by arresting Devineni Uma, Jagan may have paved the way for the party's revival in the State.



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

Soon after the dust settled, the police registered a criminal case against Devineni Uma and accused him of trying to kill a ruling party functionary who also happened to be from the Scheduled Castes.

Based on his caste, police slapped the provisions of Prevention of Atrocities against SC, STs Act. Because of the serious nature of these provisions, Devineni Uma was remanded for 14 days and sent to the Central Prison at Rajahmundry.

Incidentally, three other TDP leaders and former ministers - K Atchannaidu, Kollu Ravindra and five-time MLA Dhulipalla Narendra - had been arrested before Devineni Uma on different charges and they are now out on bail.

Other, highlighted in the Assembly the 16 months Jagan spent in jail. These were seen as deliberate attempts to embarrass Jagan, that too on the Floor of the House.

The simpler explanation would be that Jagan has targeted these TDP leaders only to get back at them. But is it so simple?

It may be mentioned here that an attempt to murder charge would mean the involvement of a weapon, and

also grave injuries on the body of victim.

Though there is no presence of such material evidence, a case under Section 307 was still registered.

The day Devineni Uma was remanded and sent to Rajahmundry Central Prison, the jailor was inexplicably transferred. This led to fears of

a possible threat to his life. Meanwhile, the government did not officially assure the people that there was no illegal mining activity going on in Kondapalli.

The lack of any clarifications from the government has created an opening for the TDP and its activists believe that by arresting Devineni Uma, Jagan may have paved the way for the party's revival in the State.

It may be mentioned here that Devineni Uma's arch political rival in his constituency Mylavaram is Vasanta Krishna Prasad who won in 2019. He is believed to have business links with Jagan and present plight of Devineni Uma is probably because of Krishna Prasad.

The charges slapped on Devineni Uma have united the Kammals, who believe that the government has targeted Dhulipalla and Devineni Uma

due to their caste. Many believe that the arrests were part of a larger plan to weaken the political opponents of the YSRCP. The fact remains that Jagan has been vigorously trying to get the powerful Kamma caste on his side as its influence on the State's politics is very high.

It was with this aim that Jagan had earlier assured that Krishna district would be renamed after TDP founder NT Rama Rao, something even the TDP never considered. The YSRCP government also announced a Kamma Corporation for the welfare of the financially backward members of this caste.

Jagan also gave much importance to Vasanta Krishna Prasad, going to the extent of shifting Mylavaram constituency in-charge Jogi Ramesh to Pedana to pave the way for the arch rival of

Devineni Uma. Minister Kodali Sri Venkateswar Rao (Kodali Nani) is considered to be the face of Kammals in Jagan rule. The responsibility of galvanising support from the caste has been entrusted to Kodali Nani who has been a vocal critic of TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu.

While trying to win over influential castes like Kamma, the YSRCP government has opted to give shocks to the other errant members of that caste like Dhulipalla and Devineni Uma.

The composition is such that Kammals will dominate administrative affairs in Krishna district, irrespective of the party in power.

Devineni Uma was the guiding force in TDP rule, and its Kodali Nani now. However, the question remains - will Devineni's arrest help the TDP revive?

Nearly 2 lakh...

Continued from page 1

As per HYSEA, "The top constraint across the board for getting employees back to office turned out to be that many employees are outside of Hyderabad. This is followed closely by concern about third wave, PG hostel and other safe accommodation for returning employees, many employees still not vaccinated, and schools not reopened". Nearly 33 percent of positions have converted to permanent remote working.

According to the survey, gap between doses of Covishield vaccine is a major reason for the delay in working from office. HYSEA proposes that the government can allow the six weeks gap for Covishield to speed up vaccination. The report states, "Percentage of fully vaccinated is the key metric to bring confidence in individuals for WFO, as is the number of cases in the city/State".

Ministers visit Ramappa

'Cooperate with govt to develop temple as global tourist place'

PNS ■ MULUGU

Minister for Tourism and Culture and Archaeology V Srinivas Goud said that the state government would consider the declaration of the 'Kakatiya Heritage Tourism Circuit' on the tribal tourism circuit announced by the Centre, for the conservation of the Kakatiyan era temples in the erstwhile Warangal district including the Warangal Fort.

He along with Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Satyavathi Rathod, Vice-Chairman of State Planning Commission B Vinod Kumar, MP Kavitha, MLA D Anasuya, MLC Pochampally Srinivas Reddy and former MP A Seetharam Naik visited the Ramappa Temple, which was inscribed as the World Heritage Site by UNESCO recently, here on Tuesday.

The team has gone around the temple appreciating the architectural splendor and technical knowledge of the then Staphathis and Siplis. "The historical importance of Warangal has not come into prominence till the formation of Telangana State," said Minister for Tourism V Srinivas Goud and added that the formation of a separate State for Telangana had indeed helped to get international recognition for the Ramappa.

He said that he was on a visit to the Ramappa temple following the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao to chalk out plans for further development of the temple to attract international tourists. Dayakar Rao said that Telangana had shot into prominence on the world map with the UNESCO tag to the Ramappa temple.

Appreciating the committed efforts of the Chief Minister, Rao said that the role of retired IAS officer BV Papa Rao and Prof M Panduranga Rao, who are founding trustees of the Kakatiya Heritage Trust (KHT) was also very crucial.

"Now the responsibility of the Central and State governments is to make this a tourism hub and the local people should also cooperate in acquiring the required land. The temple owns 27 acres of the land," Minister Errabelli said and sought the cooperation of the farmers who own the lands near the temple. Rao also assured that the farmers of Palampet village would be given suitable compensation for their lands. Water Resources Association Chairman V Prakash Rao, Warangal Mayor Gandu Sudha Rani and other officials were present.

'CM, PM two sides of same coin'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Malkajgiri MP and TPCC Chief A Revanth Reddy alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and Prime Minister Narendra Modi were actually two sides of the same coin and hence the TRS MPs didn't attend the meeting of leaders of the opposition parties, organised by Rahul Gandhi. He said that Rahul Gandhi conducted a meeting of opposition parties and decided to wage a war against the BJP's anti-people, anti-farmer policies in the coming days.

Revanth alleged that the TRS didn't attend this important meeting adopting a pro-

AP government stance on water disputes. He said that the AP Chief Minister's attitude towards the usage of water of the Krishna and the Godavari rivers would turn Telangana into a desert. He said that the central government had set up river management boards for Krishna and Godavari water. He said that Chief Minister KCR, who announced that TRS would wage a war against Delhi, never asked his MPs to pull up the central government during the Parliament sessions. It had been proved once again that Modi and KCR were not different from each other when it came to matters related to Rahul Gandhi, in fact they were twins, he said.

Speaking to the media on Tuesday, Revanth Reddy floated an open question for the Telangana BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar. Why Bandi Sanjay postponed his padayatra, he asked. He wanted to know whether Union Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy was not the reason for the postponement of Bandi Sanjay's padayatra. He alleged that Kishan spoke to the Prime Minister and made the PM stop Bandi Sanjay's padayatra.

The TPCC chief said that TRS Rajya Sabha member J Santhosh Kumar, along with five other TRS MPs, had met the Prime Minister on the very first day of the Parliament's monsoon session.

CBI arrests Sunil Yadav in Viveka...

Continued from page 1

Expressing dissatis faction on the tardy investigation on the murder case, the daughter of deceased Vivek ananda Reddy approached the high court and finally the probe of the case was handed over to the CBI.

The CBI officials began the investigation on June 7 and continued for 58 days. The CBI grilled the watchman of Viveka's house Rangaiah in the Jammalama dugu court and recorded his statement on July 23. Yerra Gangireddy, who was close an associate of Viveka and driver Dastagiri are under the scanner of CBI officials.

AP announces Rs 30L cash...

Continued from page 1

The policy offers a cash reward of Rs 75 lakh to gold medal winners, Rs 50 lakh for silver medal and Rs 30 lakh for bronze medal.

The Chief Minister had given a cash incentive of Rs 5 lakh to each of the three sports persons, Sindhu, R. Satwiksairaj and women's hockey player Rajani Etimarpu before they left for

the Japanese capital. During that time, the Chief Minister also gave a copy of the government order allocating two acre land to Sindhu to set up a badminton academy in the port city Visakhapatnam.

Sindhu is an employee of the Andhra Pradesh government. After her Rio Olympics exploits in 2016, former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu gave her a job of

deputy collector. Coming to the cash incentive, Rs 30 lakh doled out now by the current AP government pales in comparison to the cash incentives she received after winning a silver medal in the 2016 Olympics.

Back then, the Telangana government handed out an incentive of Rs 5 crore to Sindhu while the AP government gave Rs 3 crore and a plum government job as well.

Not tar, TS to...

Continued from page 1

Minister of State in the Ministry of Rural Development Sadhvi Niranjan Jyoti told the Lok Sabha on Tuesday: "Cost of a road depends on the Schedule of Rates (SOR) of the State and local conditions. For those areas where coir is locally available, use of coir geotextiles in road pavements is economical compared to the traditional methods of soil stabilisation, especially when traditional material may not be

SC grants 6 more months to inquire...

Continued from page 1

The commission was headed by former Supreme Court judge B S Chauhan and had concluded that there was no evidence to suggest that the encounter of Dubey was staged. Referring to the inquiry into the Hyderabad encounter killings, the bench sought to know from lawyer K Parameshwar the reason for the delay in concluding the inquiry.

The lawyer said the commission has to hear from over 130 witnesses in the matter and the COVID situation contributed to the delay as well. "Ok. Six months," the bench ordered. The Sirpurkar

panel was set up on December 12, 2019 to inquire into the circumstances leading to the encounter and was to submit the report in six months.

The other members of the commission include former Bombay High Court judge Rekha Sondur Baldota and ex-CBI director D R Karthikeyan. The term of the inquiry panel has now been extended thrice. It was extended in July 2020 for the first time for six months. While appointing the panel, the top court had stayed the proceedings pending in the Telangana High Court and the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) in the case and had sought an SIT report, saying

no other authority shall inquire into the matter pending before the commission till further orders.

It had ordered that security to the three-member commission shall be provided by the Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and the six-month deadline for submission of the report by the commission shall start from the first day of hearing and it shall have all the power under the Commission of Inquiry Act for conducting inquiry into the December 6, 2019, encounter deaths. The top court had noted that "conflicting versions about the incident demand an inquiry to uncover the true facts". It

had directed that the panel would sit at Hyderabad and all the expenses including for the secretarial staff would be borne by the Telangana government. Further, the state would render all assistance required by the commission. Two petitions were filed in the Supreme Court, one by lawyers G S Mani and Pradeep Kumar Yadav, and the other by advocate M L Sharma, seeking independent investigation against the police officers concerned.

The PIL, filed by Mani and Yadav, claimed that the alleged encounter was "fake" and an FIR should be lodged against the police officers involved in the incident.

Centre asks States to increase...

Continued from page 1

Rai said all the state governments have been requested to create additional posts of women constables and SIs by converting the vacant posts of male constables.

"The aim is that each police station should have at least 3 women sub-inspectors and 10 women police constables, so that a woman help desk is manned round the clock," he said replying a written question.

The Ministry of Home Affairs sent the advisories to states on April 22, 2013, May 21, 2014, May 12, 2015, June 21, 2019 and June 22, 2021.

TS July revenue...

Continued from page 1

In April, the GST revenue was Rs 2,697 crore and Rs 1,628 crore in May. The GST revenue was affected in May and June due to imposition of lockdown from May 12 to June 20.

The State's other sources of revenue such as Stamps and Registrations registered good income in July and realised Rs 1,200 crore. One of the reasons for this was people who were aware of the impending revision of land market value and registration charges from July 22, opted for registrations.

Even after new rates came into effect, registrations which witnessed lull initially for a few days resumed to normal levels.

The State's borrowings too have been on the rise given the rise in welfare and health infrastructure spending by the State after the second wave of pandemic.

Though the State notified the RBI it will raise Rs 6,000 crore in the second quarter (July to September) from the market, it raised Rs 3,000 crore in July itself taking its total market borrowings to Rs 16,500 crore for Financial Year 2021-22.

AP attends, TS skips water...

Continued from page 1

However AP officials took a stance that they would follow the decision of their State government.

The Boards said that hereafter Coordination Committee meetings would be held frequently. The gazette notification was issued following disputes between the two Telugu States over start of work on Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation scheme by Andhra Pradesh to lift water from Pothireddy canal which was widened to draw more Krishna water than permitted. However, AP said it was not

constructing the project but only doing a survey for the DPR and refused inspection by the KRMB. Then it had written to the Centre that it should take over the projects in Krishna basin and monitor them. But the Centre surprised both the States by bringing all the projects-old, proposed projects and awaiting approvals and ongoing projects in both Krishna and Godavari basins under the purview of KRMB and GRMB and notified their jurisdictions. This, in a way, took away the autonomy of the States to operate these projects for releases to drinking water,

irrigation and power generation. Telangana soon wrote a letter expressing its objections to the gazette notification while AP welcomed it.

The Jal Shakti Ministry wrote to the chairpersons of both the Boards on July 28 to prepare a time-bound action plan for implementation of provisions in the notification.

The GRMB then constituted a coordination committee with Engineers-in-Chief (Irrigation), Engineers-in-Chief (Administration), Genco and Transco officials of both AP and Telangana States and scheduled a meeting on August 3.

Centre dashes hopes of Telugu States, says...

Continued from page 1

The Centre's efforts on delimitation of constituencies in Jammu and Kashmir following its re-organisation have renewed the hopes of the political parties in this part of southern India.

The TRS especially was more vocal about the delimitation and its supremacy. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao also wrote to Centre reminding the provisions of AP Reorganisation Act that entails delimitation of assembly segments and urging it to expedite the process.

Months after the 2018 December polls, 12 out of the 18 Congress MLAs had defected to TRS. The two MLAs of TDP in Telangana too joined the ruling party.

In Andhra Pradesh, though they have not officially joined the ruling YSRCP, at least five TDP MLAs have disassociated themselves from the opposition party and have been sailing with the ruling party.

Given the scenario, delimitation of the Assembly segments is important to both TRS and YSRCP. It is also equally important to BJP which is looking at expanding

its base in both the Telugu states. However, the Centre appears to be not in a hurry in this aspect. As per the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, the Assembly seats have to be increased from 175 to 225 in AP and from 119 to 153 in Telangana. Undivided Andhra Pradesh had 294 Assembly segments. After bifurcation in 2014, these 294 constituencies were split between the two States with AP getting 175 and Telangana the remaining 119.

The proposed increase in the strength was calculated at the time of bifurcation and mentioned in Section 26 of the

AP Reorganisation Act. According to the Act, "delimitation of the constituencies may be determined by the Election Commission" based on this formula.

As per the laid down procedure under Article 82 of the Constitution, the Parliament enacts a Delimitation Act after every Census. Once the Act comes into force, the Union government constitutes a Delimitation Commission which will demarcate the boundaries of the constituencies. The last Delimitation Commission was set up in 2002.

AP doesn't want...

Continued from page 1

The Telangana government also complained that AP was lifting water from Pothireddy canal was also widened to lift more than allocated water and divert it to other outside Krishna basin. The KRMB team's visit itself is happening following National Green Tribunal's order to inspect the site and submit a report. When the KRMB said the AP government was not cooperating, it again insisted that the team should complete the inspection.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹233
Without Skin	₹253
Broiler at Farm	₹128

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	429
VIJAYAWADA	524
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.29

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NT No. 17/SE/SLP/GM/C-2021-22. Date: 03.08.2021

Name of work: Construction of RCC Box drain, obstruction of Multipurpose function hall & Strengthening and resurfacing of BT road in Circle-19 & Circle-20. SLPZ, GPMC. (3 items)

Estimate Amount / ECV (Rs. in Lakhs): 445.00 Lakhs. Start Date / Last Date & Time for Receipt of Bids: 05.08.2021 @ 2:00 P.M. 12.08.2021 @ 2:30 P.M. Name & Address: Officer Cell No. SE, SLPZ, GPMC Cell No. 7331186658

SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SERILINGAMPALLY ZONE: GPMC

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT

'e' PROCUREMENT NOTICE

NT No.07/2021-22. DE: 28.07.2021

No. of Works: (11). Name of the Works: A-31 to A-41/Rural roads under the jurisdiction of P&SI Section, West Godavari for the year 2021-22, and other civil works under grant. Total Estimate Cost: Rs.98.53 Lakhs. (1) Issue of bid documents: 03-08-2021 to 17-08-2021 up to 3:00 P.M. (2) Last date and time for submission: 17-08-2021 up to 3:30 P.M. (3) Date of opening of bid after: 17-08-2021 @ 4:00 P.M. Further details can be seen at 'e'procurement market place at www.'e'procurement. Phone No.9440819395

Sd/- Executive Engineer, R&B Division, Khammam.

Drunk driving: Timings of bars, pubs serious cause for concern

G RAVI KIRAN
HYDERABAD

Special awareness drives, police checks, imprisonments, hefty fines could not prevent drunk driving offences, which are the cause for several road accidents during the night in Hyderabad.

Despite the efforts of the Police Department to stop the menace, drunk drivers are killing innocent people.

In the last six months, over 1,000 persons were taken to court for drunk driving.

While the police officials are planning to identify the reason for the issue and measures to avoid these accidents, a case was booked on Sunday, where a drunk driver caused a road mishap in which a girl died. Recently, another youngster was booked in a hit and run case, which was later changed to drunken driving offence. He



drove the car in an inebriated state and hit an autorickshaw causing the death of another youngster.

The death of Ashritha, who died in the accident that happened on Sunday, has alerted all the residents on the issue of drunk driving.

Doctors point out that the timings of the pubs and bars are main cause of these accidents.

the nerve system will not cooperate to do work after drinking. Most of the youngsters think that they can control themselves, their confidence of driving in inebriated state leads to accidents. The empty roads after midnight will give them lenience."

DCP (Traffic) of Cyberabad Vijay Kumar has denied any difference between day and night. "Driving after drinking leads to accidents, irrespective of the time," he said.

Explaining that there are strong acts and we are taking stringent action against the drunk drivers, he said that the courts are not able to proceed with all the cases in time.

"Courts are unable to complete the cases due to their limitations during the Covid situation and even after that. This year we have filed 22,000 cases, but only a few cases have proceeded in the courts.

If a person was caught drunk driving today, then he should be punished tomorrow, else there would be no seriousness on acts." He has quoted a broken window theory of criminology. "Even a small issue should be solved with a serious act in a short span of time. Otherwise, they would take it in a lighter way, and the acts will lose their significance."

As there is no immediate punishment, the residents are not taking the offence to a serious note. They are treating it similar to a petty case. If they take it seriously, they will plan accordingly like closing the party early or arranging a sober driver, he explained.

All together, people should take drunken driving as a serious crime and should avoid it. And the state government should take action on the timings of the bars and pubs.

Arrangements in place for Eamcet; no entry if late even by one minute

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Candidates who are appearing for the TS EAMCET-2021, which will be held between August 4 and August 10, will not be allowed into the test centre if they are late even by a minute. They must also take necessary precautions from Covid like sanitisation of hands, wearing face masks and maintaining physical distance while travelling to the test centres, said EAMCET Convenor, Dr A Govardhan.

The Convenor has advised candidates to visit their allotted test centres at least one day prior to the test so that they won't have to search for the location on the day of the entrance test.

The engineering stream (E) of EAMCET will be conducted in six sessions on August 4 (forenoon and afternoon), August 5 (forenoon and afternoon) and August 6 while the exam for AM (agriculture and medical) stream will be conducted in three sessions on



August 9 (forenoon and afternoon) and August 10 (forenoon). All the forenoon sessions will be from 9 am to 12 noon while afternoon sessions will be held from 3 pm to 6 pm.

A total of 2,51,606 candidates, which includes 1,64,962 for Engineering and 86,644 for AM stream, have registered for EAMCET. Overall, there are 105 test centers for the candidates out of which 82 are in

Telangana while the rest of the 23 are in Andhra Pradesh.

Candidates are prohibited from carrying the electronic gadgets like mobile phones, calculators, watches etc. The parents/guardians (if any) who are accompanying the candidates are requested to stay away from the test center to avoid the gathering/crowd from commencement of exam till the exam is over.

DRUNK DRIVING MISHAP Victim's friend, owner of Snort pub arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two days after a 23-year-old Engineering student Ashritha was killed in a drunken driving accident in Kondapur while out celebrating Friendship Day with friends, three people including the manager and owner of Snort Pub were arrested by the Cyberabad Police on Tuesday.

Abhishek Devarapalli, 21, who was driving the car, was arrested for culpable homicide not amounting to murder, while Praneesh Herli, 44, the manager of the Snort pub and the pub owner Chaganala Suryanath, 33, were arrested for violating rules and supplying liquor even after the police department banned supply of liquor on Sunday and Monday on account of Bonalu.

A case was registered under various sections of the IPC and Motor Vehicles Act at the Gachibowli police station. The police official said that



Abhishek drove the vehicle under the influence of alcohol and at high speed in a reckless manner, knowing clearly that it was highly dangerous and can cause serious accidents.

The co-passenger of the car, Sai Prakash, let Abhishek drive while drunk there by abetted in drunk driving.

Abhishek, Herli and Suryanath were arrested on Tuesday and remanded in judicial custody for 14 days.

34-yr-old techie ends life due to work pressure

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A software engineer allegedly committed suicide due to work pressure in Chandanagar here on Tuesday.

The 34-year-old victim Anil Kumar, was found hanging from a ceiling fan at his apartment in Chandanagar.

According to sources, he was fed up with frequent telephone calls from the office besides allocation of excessive work.

Anil Kumar, a native of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh was working for the Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) in Gachibowli area of Hyderabad for the last few years and was staying with his wife Jyothi and a four-year-old daughter Mallika in an apartment.

On receiving a complaint by the victim's wife, police registered a case and took up investigation.



The areal view of the Annapurana reservoir (Ananthagiri) at Kaleshwaram

Check posts to prevent illegal trade of cattle

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To execute constant vigilance over the illegal transportation of cows, the Rachakonda Police have set up check posts in coordination with the GHMC's Animal Husbandry Department at the entrance of Malkajgiri Division, at Ghatkesar Police Station limits and at Chengicherla in the limits of Medipally near a Kabela.

The illegal transportation of cows could be prevented with round the clock vigilance at the check posts. Smugglers were arrested and the cases were registered in Malkajgiri Division. Action against cow vigilantes would be taken immediately.

Because of the continuous vigil of the Police at Check posts and collecting the intelligence well in advance and acting timely, the occurrence of major incidents reflecting on communal law and order could be prevented, the Rachakonda Police said.

Five pseudo cops nabbed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Police arrested five persons for looting money from people acting as police officials.

The accused identified as Syed Ikramuddin, 24, Imamuddin Saif, 19, Ayan Khan, 19, Ameer Wajid Ali, 21, and Syed Asif, 22, all residents of Old City have been sent to remand. While the complainant was going to his work at Yaukपुरa, the accused arrived on bikes and introduced themselves as police and asked him to show his room snatching his mobile from his hands. The scared complainant showed his room, from where the accused took away cash from his trunk box and warned not to approach the police.

Sindhu returns to warm reception

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The only Indian woman to win two Olympic medals, shuttler P V Sindhu on Tuesday received a warm welcome on her return to the country after claiming a bronze at the Tokyo Games.

Reigning world champion Sindhu, who had won a silver at the Rio Games five years ago, walked out of the Indra Gandhi International Terminal amid a round of applause from the airport staff. She was flanked by security officers and wearing a face mask. The star Indian shuttler was received by Badminton Association of India (BAI) general secretary Ajay Singhania, along with other officials of the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

Sindhu and her Korean



coach Park Tae-sang were also felicitated by Singhania at the airport.

"I am very happy and excited of course, everybody congratulated me and I am thankful to BAI and everyone for supporting and encouraging me. It is an exciting day and happy moment," Sindhu said.

By winning the bronze on Sunday, Sindhu became only the second Indian and first women athlete from the country to bag two Olympic medals.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad defeated China's He Bing Jiao in the bronze medal play-off.

Woman killed in road mishap

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman died after she fell from the scooter on which she was riding pillion at Lakdikapul here on Tuesday morning.

The woman who is yet to be identified was proceeding from Khairatabad towards Nampally when the mishap occurred.

According to the police, when the scooter reached near Lakdikapul, she fell from the running scooter and was run over by a truck which was coming from behind. She suffered grievous injuries and died on the spot.

The Saifabad police booked a case and are investigating.

DOGS POISONED IN AP VILLAGE

Killing of 300 stray dogs is gruesome: Animal activists

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Animal activists of Telangana while expressing anger over the alleged killing of 300 dogs with poisonous injections, by panchayat officials in West Godavari district here, demanded justice for the voiceless on Tuesday.

The activists said that the laws be made stringent and be implemented strictly. They opined that most of the village panchayat officials are not aware that it is crime to kill stray dogs.

Prasad, a senior animal activist who has been serving animals for the last 10 years reacted to the incident by calling it a gruesome act.

"The Panchayat authorities, despite knowing the law have done such a gruesome act. These culprits must be punished as per law," he demanded.

"This act that took place in Lingapalem village is an extremely inhuman act and should have been dealt with in an ethical way," said Shyamala, another Animal activist.

Gautam Abhishek, another animal activist, associated with Ashraa foundation for animals, said that some people have been behaving in a very inhuman manner towards street animals and added that instead of finding a root cause and ways to deal with stray ani-

mals, these people are just killing these animals.

He said, "Instead of killing the authorities might have tried and found out the root cause and ways on how to deal with stray animals."

He added that the animal volunteers and activists must step forward and make sure that such incidents don't take place even at the rural level.

Another animal activist Ravi, "This is absolutely unfortunate and this has to be addressed as soon as possible by the government. Animal activists and lovers are trying their best to warn the panchayat officials not to do such acts."

Plywood shop gutted in major fire accident

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A major fire broke out in a plywood shop in the industrial area in Nandigama on the city outskirts on Tuesday. No casualties were reported and a short circuit is suspected to have led to the fire.

The incident occurred at 6 am and the local residents who noticed the fire and flames

from the shop, alerted the police. "A force of 20 personnel both from the fire department and police reached the spot and started fighting the fire. Three fire engines and an earth mover, were rushed and the fire was doused in an hour," said official adding inflammable material in the shop were damaged resulting in thick smoke.

New Mahankali PS inaugurated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The newly constructed building of Mahankali Traffic Police Station at Secunderabad was inaugurated by the Minister for Home Mohammad Ali on Tuesday. Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav, MLC Surabhi Vani Devi have participated as guests of honor. The Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad Anjani Kumar, Additional Commissioner of Police (Crimes) Shikha Goel and others have attended the programme. Speaking on the occasion, Mohammad Ali said that the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has strengthened the police system in Telangana, after the formation of the state.

"We are setting up traffic police stations in a modern way and the establishment of the traffic automatic signal system is giving good results," he said.

TS receives 48% excess rainfall during 2021-22

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has received 48 per cent excess rainfall during the Water Year 2021-22.

The Ground Water Department monitored water levels during July this year through 1063 Piezometers (monitoring stations) covering all the mandals from 33 districts of the state, the officials of the department said here on Tuesday.

During the water year 2021-22, Telangana received rainfall of 535 mm against 361 mm of normal rainfall up to July 31, 2021 and it ranges from 263 mm (Nagarkurnool District) to 769 mm (Nirmal) and thus there is a 48 per cent excess rainfall received during this period as compared to normal annual rainfall during July-2021.

Twenty nine districts - Bhupalpally, Nagarkurnool, Sangareddy, Medak, Suryapet, Vikarabad,



Adilabad, Hyderabad, Nalgonda, Mababubnagar, Kamareddy, Mahabubabad, Komaram Bheem, Medchal, Jogulamba, Karimnagar, Nizamabad, Khammam, Jagityal, Nirmal, (Gadwal), Warangal(Rural), Rangareddy, Jangaon,

Warangal (Urban), Yadadri, Sircilla, Wanaparthy, Siddipet, Narayanpet received (21 to 105 per cent) excess rainfall and remaining four districts received Normal rainfall (10 to 16 per cent).

The average groundwater levels in the state during July 2021 is 6.07 meters below ground level (m bgl) and it varies from 2.57 m bgl (Warangal Rural) to 13.79 m bgl (Medak).

Out of the 33 districts, in 11 districts, the average water level is c 5 m bgl, in zo districts between 5-10 m bgl and in the remaining 2 districts it is >10 m bgl.

A net rise in groundwater level of 3.19 m is observed during July 2021 as compared to July -2020 (by 30 per cent) and the rise is observed in all districts. A minimum rise of 0.01 m is observed in Mancherial district and maximum rise of 8.61 m in Rangareddy district.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA (Women Development and Child Welfare Department)
District Society of the T.S. Society for Protection and Empowerment of Women Children, Hyderabad District

No. 12208/2018 Dated: 31.07.2021

Applications are invited from eligible candidates for the following vacancies on contract basis which are vacant under "T.S. Society for Protection and Empowerment of Women Children, Hyderabad District" O/o the District Welfare Officer, WCD&SC Hyderabad District. S.No. 1 Name of the Post: District Child Protection Officer (DCPO) (No of Vacancies) 01 Remuneration Rs. 33,250/- P.M. 2. Social Worker (Female) (No of Vacancies) 01 Remuneration Rs. 14,326/- P.M. 3. Counsellor (Worker) (No of Vacancies) 01 Remuneration Rs. 8,000/- P.M.

The eligible criteria and prescribed application form for the posts announced can be seen on the website: <http://www.tgscw.org>

Candidates desiring to apply can download the application form and submit the filled in application along with the educational certificates and experience certificates to the District Welfare Officer, WCD&SC, Hyderabad, Collector's Premises, Old Collector's Buildings, Nampally, Station Road, Abids, Hyderabad 500 061. Ph: 040-23232355. Availability of application forms on the website from 08.08.2021. Last date for receipt of applications: 29.08.2021. Note: This office reserves all rights to cancel this notification without assigning any reasons. R.D. No: 452-SPCL-48/MCD/11021-22 Dated: 08-08-2021 District Welfare Officer, WCD&SC Hyderabad

Over 60 villages face tough time as TSRTC services remain suspended

A CHANDRASHEKHAR RAO SANGAREDDY

The Telangana State Road Transport Corporation is not running its bus services to many villages in undivided Medak district on the grounds of poor occupancy ratio. As a result, the bus services to many villages have remained suspended leaving the people at the mercy of private transport operators.

In fact, the RTC is accused of not running bus services in spite of all villages have road facility.

There are eight RTC bus depots in undivided Medak district with a total fleet strength of 374. In addition, the number of buses under hire with the RTC is 297.

In fact, there are 60 villages in undivided Medak district to which the RTC suspended the bus services.

Therefore, citizens in the rural parts of Telangana would have to risk their lives travelling in auto rickshaws, jeeps and other vehicles. Currently, the RTC is running its bus ser-



vices only on main routes. In spite of the private transport operators are active in rural Medak district, the RTC is still popular among the villagers.

The poor occupancy ratio is attributed to the failure of the state government to provide basic amenities to the RTC. The RTC operating buses only on the main routes is making a mockery of its motto to run a bus service to every village. The RTC, apparently with a

view to earn profits, is ignoring the villages to operate bus services.

The RTC should conduct awareness programmes for the villagers to increase the revenue of the RTC.

The Covid caused a dent to the RTC revenue. The RTC accumulated losses per month reached Rs 9 crore per month in the second wave as against only Rs 2 crore in the first wave. Of the 297 buses under hire with the TSRTC, only 55

buses are operational.

The RTC authorities say that the government has not yet its green signal to run Palle Velugu buses - rural bus services of the TSRTC.

The RTC is spending Rs 40 per km, as against its earning of Rs 33 per km. The loss per km is put at Rs 7.

The RTC could not run buses to some of the villages as schools and colleges in the villages have remained closed.

Palle Velugu buses running

over 12 lakh km are regarded as scrap. If the chassis of the buses, that crossed 10 lakh km, develops cracks, the RTC shelves the buses. Under the current prevailing situation, the RTC has no option to operate even the shelved buses. The RTC has no enough fleet strength to operate in revenue making routes, the RTC has to lose revenue. Moreover, the RTC is not encouraging to acquire new buses as it is running under losses.

According to RTC regional manager Rajasekhar, the RTC is running bus services to villages that are just 2 km away from the main road. On account of Covid, many buses on hire with the RTC remained suspended. The RTC losses have reached Rs 9 crore every month.

The authorities are checking the condition of buses from time to time. While the revenue from passenger bus services has come down due to Covid, the RTC cargo bus services are contributing to the revenue of the RTC, he clarified.

SI arrested for 'raping' trainee policewoman in Mahabubabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



A Sub-Inspector of Police in Mahabubabad district of Telangana was taken into custody on Tuesday for allegedly attempting to rape a 29-year-old woman trainee SI, police said.

The Warangal CP Tharun Joshi has directed Mahabubabad district SP to arrest Maripeda Police Station SI Srinivas Reddy and file a case against him following the complaint of the Maripeda woman trainee SI against SI Srinivas Reddy that he had raped her. Tharun Joshi made it clear that the department would initiate action against the SI if he was found guilty after interrogation.

This move came on Tuesday after the Telangana Mahila Congress activists on Monday staged flash protest before the DGP's office and the Home Minister's office against the incident of woman trainee SI under the leadership of Sunitha Rao. Later, they submitted a memorandum to the DGP and the Home Minister. They demanded that the DGP and the Home Minister took

up inquiry into the incident and dismissed SI Srinivas Reddy immediately.

However, tension prevailed for some time when the Mahila Congress activists tried to enter into the DGP's office to submit the memorandum. The police obstructed the Mahila Congress activists from entering the DGP's office. Then the Mahila Congress activists entered into a verbal argument with the police. After submitting their memorandum in the DGP office they met the Home Minister Mahamood Ali and submitted their memorandum to Mahamood Ali.

According to details obtained, woman trainee SI lodged a complaint with the

Warangal CP Tharun Joshi that SI Srinivas Reddy raped her on Monday midnight after taking her to forest. She, along with her family members, lodged her complaint with the CP. She made it clear that she would tender her resignation if she failed to get justice. She said that she had been staying in a room in Maripeda. SI Srinivas Reddy came to her room and asked her to come to participate in an important operation.

Then she immediately went along with SI Srinivas Reddy in his vehicle, driven by him. There was no one else in the vehicle. Later, he took her to a nearby forest and raped her, she alleged.

Stringent measures in place to keep Delta variant at bay

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

District Collector RV Karnan has made it clear that the district administration put stringent measures to prevent third wave of the Covid and to keep the Delta variant of the Coronavirus at bay.

Disclosing this to media along with Police Commissioner T Satyanarayana here on Tuesday, he said that the tests at the PHC level have been increased and special camps have been set up in villages where Covid positive cases are high to run the tests. At least 20 primary contacts of each Covid positive person are being traced.

Of the 8.35 lakh Covid tests conducted so far, 60,000 tested positive, with a recovery rate of 97 per cent. He put the total active cases in the district at 2,400. Daily, on an average 8,000 to 9,000 Covid tests are done in the district with 1 to 2



per cent of them testing positive. The RT-PCR tests are being done at district headquarters government hospital, which draws people from Siricilla, Jagityal and Peddapalli districts to get tested. In all, 1.7 per cent of the total 2.4-lakh tested from July 1 to Aug 1. In villages with more than five Covid cases, isolation centres have been set up. Gangadhara, Kottapalli, Saidapur, Chigurumamidi, Choppadandi, Veenavanka, Huzurabad mandals account for more and more cases, he said. Police Commissioner

Satyanarayana warned people of imposing a fine of Rs 1,000 for failure to wear masks. In police commissionerate limits, 50 teams have been constituted to identify people not wearing masks. Cases would be filed against those who repeatedly fail to wear masks.

If anyone is found violating the Covid protocols, the police would not take a lenient view of them, he cautioned.

Additional Collector Shyam Lal, Deputy DMHO Sudhakar Reddy and others were also present.

Chief Minister for Vasalamarri today

PNS ■ BHONGIR

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will be visiting his adopted village Vasalamarri in Yadadri Bhongir district on Wednesday.

Chief Minister visited Vasalamarri village on June 22, hosted a community lunch and partook lunch with the villagers and unveiled his plans in a meeting after the lunch about his plans to transform the village into Bangaru Vasalamarri.

He also appointed Yadadri district Collector Pamela Satapath as special officer and wanted all the data and profile about every family in the village, their living conditions, qualifications and vocation to plan development programmes. KCR had then told the villagers that he would visit Vasalamarri at least 20 times and would interact with them informally to understand their problems and aspirations and plan suitable programmes.

'Cultivate oil palm in 50K acres'

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

ZP chairperson Roja Radhakrishna Sarma on Tuesday appealed to elected people's representatives to take steps to fulfil the target to cultivate oil palm in 50,000 acres in the district in six months.

He wanted the MPPs, ZPTCs to take steps to cultivate the crop in at least 1000 acres in each and every mandal of the district.

Speaking at the general body meeting at Reddy Sankshema Bhavan here, she appealed to the doctors and other medical personnel to discharge duties



punctually even without supervision.

Roja said that the state government allotted 2BHK houses to the homeless poor in the most transparent manner. She

asked the government authorities to complete the houses which are in various phases of construction as early as possible. She said that the enrolment of students in govern-

ment schools during the Covid period has increased. She appealed to the teachers to conduct online classes living up to the expectations of the parents of the wards.

She asked the horticulture department officials to encourage oil palm and sericulture cultivation in the district with the participation of the elected people's representatives.

District Collector P Venkatrami Reddy said that there are perceptible changes in all spheres of activity in the state prior to formation of Telangana and after statehood to the region.



Minister gives Rs 15 cr Bonalu funds to temples

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Minister for Education Sabitha Indra Reddy said that the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao released Rs 15 crore for celebration of Bonalu and on Tuesday handed over the cheques to representatives of various temples.

She distributed cheques for Rs 11 lakh to temples in Maheshwaram Assembly constituency.

The Minister said that the state government allocated Rs 1.98 crore to 349 temples in Ranga Reddy district for celebrating Bonalu. She said that the funds have been allocated to temples in Maheshwaram, Serilingampalli, Rajendra Nagar, LB Nagar in Ranga Reddy district but come under the purview of the GHMC. Last year, Bonalu festival could not be celebrated on account of Covid. This year, the festival is being celebrated on a grand scale, she said.

Army man-turned criminal arrested

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

The district police have nabbed a former army man-turned-criminal at the bus stand here while he is on the run to Vijayawada along with looted money and gold ornaments, the additional SP V Srinivasulu told newsmen here on Tuesday.

The accused person was identified as Mahesh of Challapalli village of Kataram mandal of the district.

The police nabbed him at the bus stand and recovered from him a gold necklace, 181 gram anklets, 25 grams of fancy silver article and Rs 2,10,000 in cash.

The most wanted culprit was arrested on the basis of a complaint lodged by Dodda



Srinivasa Reddy of Moranchapalli village of the district.

The Additional SP said that he joined Indian Army in 2004. At that time, he had an illicit affair with a woman belonging to Kesamudram. In an altercation with the woman in 2011, he murdered her at her residence in Kesamudram. In the case, he was sentenced to undergo jail. While he was out on bail, he relapsed into crime.

Since his release on bail in 2011, he committed various robberies in Chelapur, Godavarikhani, NTPC, Karimnagar, Chennur in Mancherla district, Hanmakonda, Ramagiri, Manthani police station limits and went to jail several times.

He also committed robberies in Kataram and Koyyuru recently. The police are on the look out for him at several places in the state.

CI Vasudeva Rao spread dragnet for him on a tip off that he was spotted at the bus stand here trying to flee the place along with the booty stolen from Moranchapalli. The police managed to catch hold of him.

The Additional SP appreciated CI Vasudeva Rao, SIs Abhinav, Naresh and police constables.

Call to sensitise people on personal hygiene

PNS ■ PEDDAPELLE

District Collector Dr Sangeeta Satyanarayana on Tuesday directed government authorities to take steps to sensitise people on personal hygiene.

He was addressing a coordination meeting on the implementation of pilot programme Kishore Swastha in the district.

On the directions from Indian Institute of Health and Family Welfare Director Alugu Varshini the pilot programme is being implemented in the district for the benefit of girls in the age of 10-19 years as part of the Rashtrreeya Kishore Swastha programme.

The district was chosen to implement the project to prevent sexual harassment of the girls and to ensure their menstrual hygiene.

Expressing happiness over the district being chosen to implement the pilot project, he said that many children are not able to express their problems because of Covid and undergoing a lot of tension. As part of the pilot project, lady teachers

would be chosen from high school and Upper primary school and the target group of girls would be imparted training on personal hygiene, ill-effects of child marriage and so on. First the intelligent students at the village level would be chosen for imparting training, later the students would, in turn, train the other students.

Telangana logs 591 new Covid cases, 2 deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 591 new Covid infections and two fatalities on Monday taking the cumulative number of deaths to 3,807 and the total number of positive cases to 6,45,997. The number of active cases in Telangana, as on Monday, was 8,819.

On Monday, authorities conducted 1,07,472 Covid tests of which results of 1,154 samples were awaited. A total of 643 individuals have recovered with a recovery rate of 98 per cent on Monday.

So far, a total of 2,21,97,450 Covid-19 tests have been conducted in the State out of which 6,45,997 have tested positive and 6,33,371 persons have recovered.

City Mayor Gundu Sudha Rani and others took part in the programme.

Students lay siege to Minister's residence

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

In response to a call given by the Progressive Democratic Students' Union (PDSU), a group of over 100 students on Tuesday laid siege to the house of Minister for Excise V Srinivas Goud protesting against the delay in state government issuing job notifications.

They said that it was unfortunate that the state government did not take into reckoning the suicides of the unemployed for want of the issue of employment notifications to fill various posts in government departments. They said that not a single notification was issued even seven years after TRS coming to power in the state.

They said that the state



government implements welfare schemes like Dalit Bandhu and filling vacancies in government departments just before the bi-elections.

Incidentally, by-elections to Huzurabad are around the corner following ouster of Eatala Rajender from State Cabinet leading to his resignation from the TRS.

Tension prevailed as part of the protest programme, during which the police and the students had to elbow each other.

Later, the police took the students into custody and whisked them to Mahabubnagar Rural police station.

Ministers seeks report on amenities at Bal Sadan

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The Cabinet sub-committee, appointed by the state government, comprising Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Satyavathi Rathod on Tuesday visited Bala Sadan in Subedari and inspected the conditions there. The Minister interacted with the authorities there to enquire about the welfare of the

inmates.

They had break-fast along with 52 inmates of the Bal Sadan, district Collector and Warangal Mayor.

They spoke with the children enquiring them about the break-fast being served

to them and what is their choice for break-fast.

Later, they spoke with officials and reviewed the facilities there.

What more measures should be implemented to improve the living standards of the orphans taking shelter in the

Bal Sadan? They urged the authorities of the children's home to submit a report in this regard soon.

In the recent Cabinet meeting, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao wanted the state government to take full responsibility of the orphans in the state, provide security to their lives and perform marriages to girl inmates



INDIA CORNER

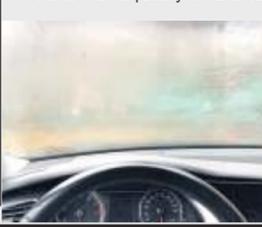
Maha sanctions Rs 11,500 crore for flood victims, infra repair

The Maharashtra government on Tuesday sanctioned a sum of Rs 11,500 crore for providing immediate assistance to rain and flood-affected people and to carry out repair works of infrastructure damaged in the deluge last month. In a statement, the government said apart from providing immediate relief, a part of the Rs 11,500 crore package will be spent on repair works and taking some long-term measures to address issues related to flood prevention and mitigation. The state disaster management department made a presentation before Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on the recent floods and heavy rains after which the Maharashtra cabinet sanctioned the financial assistance, it said. Districts such as Raigad, Ratnagiri, Satara, Sangli and Kolhapur were badly affected due to floods and extremely heavy rainfall that pounded these districts from July 21 to 23. More than 200 people lost their lives in rain-related incidents like landslides and over two lakh people were forced to leave their homes.



Rajasthan: 3 children die after two vehicles swept away in water currents

Three children died after two vehicles were swept away in strong water currents following rains in Rajasthan's Sawaimadhopur and Tonk, police said on Tuesday. In the first incident on Monday night, two children drowned in a drain after their car was swept away in strong water currents in Sawaimadhopur district. According to police, Pappu Lal along with his three sons and a relative was travelling in a car and tried to cross the drain despite high water level. The car swept away in water. Ramjilal, his elder son and the relative were rescued while bodies of his two minor sons—Man Singh (13) and Raunak (9)—were found stuck in bushes on Tuesday, police said. In a similar incident in Rajasthan's Tonk on Tuesday, an ambulance carrying a woman's body was washed away in strong currents following rains, which killed her 12-year-old son. Her husband is also missing. The incident took place near Siras village when the ambulance going from Jaipur to Tonk carrying the body of Geeta Devi (42) was washed away in strong water currents, Barauni SHO Datar Singh said.



Over 93,000 cybercrime cases reported in 3 years: Govt tells LS

Over 93,000 cases of cybercrimes were reported in the country between 2017 and 2019. Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai also said that 46 cases of cyber terrorism have been reported in the country during the same period and the FIRs were registered under Section 66F of the Information Technology Act, 2000 related to cyber terrorism. According to the data published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the cybercrime cases registered in 2017, 2018 and 2019 were 21796, 27248 and 44546 respectively, he said in a written reply to a query. The minister said the Indian Computer Emergency Response Team (CERT-In) is serving as the national agency for responding to cybersecurity incidents as per provisions of Section 70B of the Information Technology Act, 2000. The CERT-In receives inputs from its situational awareness systems and threat intelligence sources about malware infections in networks of entities across sectors. Whenever any incident comes to the notice of CERT-In, it issues alerts and advisories to the entities concerned and sectoral Computer Emergency Response Teams (CERTs) for remedial measures, he said.



Lok Sabha passes Essential Defence Services Bill amid opposition protests

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Lok Sabha passed the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021 on Tuesday amid protests by opposition members over various issues that led to the proceedings being adjourned for a third time till 4 PM.

As the House reconvened at 2 PM, Speaker Om Birla asked the protesting members to go back to their seats and said that he would give them a chance to speak. However, the opposition continued their protests over the Pegasus snooping controversy and the contentious farm laws.

Amid the din, the Essential Defence Services Bill, 2021 was passed. The proceedings were then adjourned till 4 PM. In the morning when the House assembled at 11 am, the opposition members came to the well and started sloganeering through the alleged snooping and demanding scrapping of the three farm laws enacted last year. When questions relating to agriculture and farmers' welfare came for discussion during the Question Hour,



Birla asked the protesting members to raise farmers-related queries in the House. "I wanted you to question the minister with regard to farmers' welfare, but you are engaging in sloganeering which is not acceptable... You don't want to discuss farm issues..." Birla said. However, members from opposition parties continued their sloganeering.

Speaker Birla after allowing the Question Hour to continue for about 40 minutes amidst the protests, adjourned the House for 20 minutes till 12

noon. When the House re-assembled at noon, the opposition protests continued.

Senior MP Bhartruhari Mahtab, who was in the chair, first allowed the papers related to various ministries to be laid in the House.

He also announced that the adjournment motion moved by a few members were rejected by the Speaker.

As the protests continued, Mahtab appealed to the opposition members to go to their seats so that the House can function normally.

Rajya Sabha passes Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill

The Rajya Sabha was adjourned for the day on Tuesday amid continuous protest by opposition parties over their demand for a discussion on the use of Pegasus spyware, farmers' agitation against farm reform laws and other issues. However, the House passed the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021 with a brief discussion amid the ruckus created by opposition parties. As soon as the House resumed after lunch at 2 pm, BJP member Bhubaneswar Kalita in Chair asked Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman to move the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (Amendment) Bill, 2021. Soon after, the opposition members started their protest and trooped into the Well of the House and remained there throughout. They also continued sloganeering.

The chair called Amar Patnaik (BJD) to initiate the debate on

the bill. Thereafter, Banda Prakash (TRS), M Thambidurai, K Ravindra Kumar (TDP) and V Vijays Reddy (YSRCP) participated in the discussion on the bill amid continuous protest by opposition members. John Brittas (CPI-M) also rose to participate in the debate, but then started taking out issues like snooping, saying that the democracy is in danger. After the brief debate by a few members, the bill was moved for passage in the House and it was passed with voice vote amid the din by the opposition. Referring to the behaviour of opposition members, Sitharaman said it was unacceptable that they disrupted the members from participating in the debate and surrounded them in a threatening fashion. She also expressed her dismay over opposition members throwing pieces of paper on the chair, disrespecting the House.

Editors Guild moves SC seeking SIT probe into Pegasus snooping

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Editors Guild of India has filed a plea in the Supreme Court seeking that a special investigation team (SIT) be set up to conduct probe into the reported surveillance of journalists and others allegedly by the government through the use Israeli firm NSO's Pegasus spyware.

The guild's petition has stated that journalists are tasked with enforcing the public's right to be informed, accountability and to an open and transparent government.

The guild's members and all journalists have the duty of holding all branches of government accountable by seeking information, explanations and constitutionally valid justifications for state action and inaction, it said.

To be able to fulfil this role, freedom of the press must be safeguarded, it said.

Journalist Mrinal Pande is a co-petitioner in the case.

"Freedom of the press relies on non-interference by the government and its agencies in reporting of journalists, including their ability to securely and confidentially speaking with sources, investigate abuse of



power and corruption, expose governmental incompetence, and speak with those in opposition to the government," the plea said.

The guild submitted that citizens of India have a right to know if the government is infringing upon the limits of their authority under the Constitution and what steps have been taken to safeguard their fundamental rights.

The plea stated that all attempts to seek accountability and enforce Constitutional limits through Parliamentary processes have been stonewalled. "Through their intransigence, the Respondents

have deliberately avoided public debate on this issue and have provided obfuscated answers, forcing the Petitioner to approach this Court," the plea said.

The guild has sought a court-appointed and monitored SIT to investigate every aspect of the alleged use of Pegasus by the Government of India and against Indian citizens, especially journalists.

It has challenged the constitutional vices of electronic surveillance, hacking and use of spyware, and the existing legal architecture for surveillance, in light of the gigantic leaps in technology and surveillance capabilities.

230 killed due to political reasons in 3 years, LS told

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 230 people were killed in various parts of the country for political reasons between 2017 and 2019, Lok Sabha was informed on Tuesday. Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said those who were killed for political reasons include 49 in Jharkhand, 27 in West Bengal and 26 in Bihar.

While 99 people were killed in the country for political reasons in 2017; 59 were killed in 2018; and 72 in 2019, he said in written reply to a question. Among the political murders between 2017 and 2019, a total of 24 such cases were reported in Karnataka and 15 each in Kerala and Maharashtra, he said.

Inefficient ration delivery did not fully benefit poor: Modi

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The scope and budget of cheap ration schemes rose since Independence but the effect it should have had on the poor remained limited due to ineffective delivery systems and selfish elements, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday.

Over the years, food storage kept increasing, but starvation and malnutrition did not decrease in that ratio, Modi said, after a virtual interaction with the Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY) beneficiaries in Gujarat.

The PM-GKAY food security scheme is helping lakhs of poor people during the coronavirus pandemic, Modi said.

Free ration is being distributed to lakhs of families under the scheme and it has helped lessen the worries of poor during the pandemic, he said.

Modi said the government used new technology to make the food grain delivery system to the poor more effective.

"After independence, almost every government had talked



about providing cheap food to the poor. The scope and budget of cheap ration schemes increased year after year, but the effect it should have had remained limited. The country's food reserves increased, but hunger and malnutrition did not decrease in that proportion," he said.

"Some sickness came into the system, some selfish elements entered. To change this situation, after 2014, work started in a new way, and help of new technology was taken to remove crores of fake benefi-

ciaries and link ration cards with Aadhaar card and encourage digital technology in government fair price shops," he said. Modi said empowerment of the poor is a top priority of his government. "Today, the country is spending lakhs of crores on infrastructure, but at the same time, it is also setting new benchmarks to improve the quality of life of the common man," he said.

The government is making efforts to provide all possible help to citizens during the pandemic, he said.

New India's towering self-confidence reflects in Olympics, says PM

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Elated by the performance of Indian players in the Tokyo Olympics, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday said new India's towering self-confidence was getting reflected in each game as the conviction and confidence of the country's players are at their peak. This time, the highest number of Indian players have qualified for the Olympics. We must not forget the fact that we have achieved it while fighting the worst pandemic of the last 100 years. There are sports in which our players have qualified for the very first time," Modi said in a virtual address.

He was taking part in a Gujarat government's event of distributing free ration to the poor. The event, held in Dahod, was part of the nine-day long celebration of Chief Minister Vijay Rupani's five years in office.

Modi in his speech said, "Our players haven't just qualified, they are giving their best performance too. New India's towering self-confidence is reflecting in each game. Our Olympics players and teams are giving a tough fight to their competitors having better rankings. The conviction and confidence of Indian players are at their peak."

He said the Indian players are more confident because of the transparency in the system and the identification of right talent.

Par panel to visit Ladakh and J&K from Aug 17

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A parliamentary panel chaired by Congress leader Anand Sharma will be on a five-day visit to the Union territories of Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir starting August 17 to examine the administration and development of the region and review the working conditions of central police forces, sources said on Tuesday.

The visit by the MPs comes nearly two months after Prime Minister Narendra Modi met top leaders of Jammu and Kashmir on June 24. It was the first high-level interaction between the Centre and political leaders from J-K after August 5, 2019, when the Centre revoked the special status of Jammu and Kashmir and bifurcated it into two union territories.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee on Home Affairs will visit Leh, Srinagar and Jammu from

August 17-21, according to the communication shared by the Rajya Sabha Secretariat with the committee members.

The agenda of the visit will be to examine the subject 'Administration, Development and People's Welfare in the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh'.

"The Committee will also review the working conditions of three Central Armed Police Forces namely Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP), Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and Border Security Force (BSF)," the communication reads.

The majority of the members of the committee are from the ruling BJP. As many as 14 leaders including Congress' Ghulam Nabi Azad, National Conference's Farooq Abdullah and Omar Abdullah; PDP's Mehbooba Mufti and J-K Apni Party's Altaf Bukhari attended the meeting with Prime Minister Modi.

Over 16,000 students still waiting for CBSE class 10 results

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 16,000 class 10 students will have to wait longer for the result as their marks tabulation is still under process, according to the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE).

The board announced the results for class 10 on Tuesday. However, the scores of 16,639 candidates have been held back.

The CBSE has not yet given any timeline for the announcement of these results. "Either the data regarding marks of certain subjects was not available for these students or there were some calculation errors by the schools which were rejected by the portal for preparation of results.

4 more Indian firms may start vax production by Oct

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Tuesday said in Parliament that four more Indian pharma firms are expected to start anti-coronavirus vaccine production by October-November that will accelerate the inoculation drive.

During the Question Hour in the Rajya Sabha, Mandaviya said India has administered 47 crore doses of vaccine so far and the Centre is making efforts to inoculate the entire country at the earliest.

Even 7 to 9 per cent of the doses that remain unutilised by private hospitals are being used by the government vaccination centres, he added.

Mandaviya was speaking amid a din in the house over the Opposition's demand for a discussion on the Pegasus issue and the farm laws.

"Vaccination drive is going on smoothly... It will get more accelerated in the coming days with the ramping up of pro-



duction by four more Indian companies," the minister said. The government expects that by October-November, four more Indian pharmaceutical companies will start production of indigenous vaccines that will help meet the domestic demand, he said.

Biologicals E and Novartis vaccines will also be available in the market in the coming days, while Zydus Cadila will soon get an emergency-use

nod from an expert committee, the Union Health Minister said.

At present, two companies (Bharat Biotech and Serum Institute) are supplying the vaccine to the government. Sputnik vaccine is also available and production of which has begun, he added.

To a query by BJD member Amar Patnaik about the vaccine rollout plan for 12-18-year-old and the need for a

No recommendation so far on mixing Covid vaccines: Govt

No recommendation has been made so far on mixing anti-coronavirus vaccines, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Friday. COVID-19 vaccines have been developed recently. Therefore, scientific evidence about mix and match studies of different vaccines is still evolving, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar said in a written reply. To a question on

the issue, she said no recommendation has been made so far to mix the first and second doses of Covid vaccines by the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization or the National Expert Group on Vaccine Administration for COVID-19. There is no specific recommendation from the World Health Organization

presently on mix and match of vaccines, the minister added. She was responding to a question on whether one can mix first and second doses of COVID vaccines and administer them to people who need it and whether any studies have been carried out or is there any scientific evidence that such mixing would not have any adverse impact on people.

third or fourth dose, Mandaviya said. "The government's target is to vaccinate the entire population at the earliest and constant efforts are being made to achieve this."

Unlike BCG (bacille Calmette-Guerin) and polio vaccines that came to India

much later after its launch in other parts of the world, the vaccine against coronavirus was made available in India at the same time in the world due to the efforts of the Narendra Modi government, he said.

The prime minister took steps, supported scientists and

companies to ensure vaccines were available in the country at the earliest, the minister said.

"Thus vaccination drives began in India which has administered 47 crore doses so far, the maximum in the world. We are going to accelerate it further in the coming days," he said.

PM to invite Olympic contingent to Red Fort on August 15

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will invite India's Olympic contingent to the Red Fort as special guests on August 15 when he will deliver his eighth straight independence day speech.

Official sources said Modi will also invite them to his residence for interaction.

India has been represented by a 228-strong contingent, including over 120 athletes, at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

Watch out!

COVID-19 third wave is almost here, so the Govt must take hard decisions right away

Researchers at the Indian Institutes of Technology in Hyderabad and Kanpur predict the third wave of the COVID-19 pandemic may hit the country as early as this month. They soften the punch, claiming the wave might be much smaller, peaking in October and at its worst reporting 150,000 infections a day. Compared to the second wave that saw over four lakh new cases a day, the predicted surge of the third wave would certainly be smaller. The issue is whether the country needs a preventive lockdown in August, and what would be the economic implications of such a decision. The clamour about a third wave began ever since the second wave began to abate in July. Thereafter, the States adopted a gradual unlock. As of date, most restrictions have been lifted in the country, except containment zones in some districts with higher positivity rates. Educational institutions are on the verge of re-opening in most States while, in some others, they have been functional for nearly a fortnight. The public transport systems have 100 per cent occupancy rates though they are restricted in cities like Mumbai. The urban, semi-urban and rural commercial and industrial enterprises are back to normal. There is general confidence in the country after the fourth sero survey claimed that antibodies are present in over two-thirds of the population. Add to that the number of recovered people who have antibodies and only 40 crore people are said to be susceptible.



Even if at a slow pace, the number of fully vaccinated people is going up. However, a sense of complacency is also there, with a casual approach to following the safety protocols. Would the IIT prediction of a smaller third wave make the people and the Governments much more complacent? The Government's approach in the first two waves was reactive. In the last two months, it appears to have organised itself, sprucing up medical infrastructure and otherwise preparing to face a fresh wave. The Government needs to take a few decisions right away. One, at what point would the restrictions be re-imposed, before or after the fresh wave hits the country? The argument is that if everybody is anticipating a third wave, why open up businesses, offices, institutions and schools only to close them down in a while? Two, can the decision on restrictions be deferred till experts confirm whether the vaccination and the presence of antibodies have blunted the impact of fresh infections? The argument is, what if the Delta Plus variant, considered more dangerous and easily transmissible, leads the third wave? Three, with schools about to re-open and the children under 18 not vaccinated at all, would not they be most susceptible to the third wave? The pandemic task force advising the Government needs to look at these concerns on a priority basis. The wave prediction exercise can continue but not at the cost of not knowing how to come out of the predicament.

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PICTALK



School students at an open-air class for those who can't afford smartphones and internet, in Baramulla PTI

Humanity

Sporting events show us the way to lead a full, meaningful life outside of the playing arena, too

We have grown up hearing "Kheloge kudoge, hoge kharab...". However, worldly experience has since shown us that the basic sense of humanity stands at a much higher pedestal than education, knowledge and wisdom; also, that it can be gained out of a confined classroom and in spaces as vast and cut-throat as the Olympics. There is nothing more uplifting and inspiring as seeing a person helping a vanquished opponent. Let the body be bruised and defeated, but not the spirit, nor the soul! The latest essay in this life lesson comes from the men's high jump finals event at the Tokyo Olympics. Italy's Gianmarco Tamberi and Qatar's Mutaz-Essa Barshim gave a gold-worthy performance, clearing 2.39 metres with zero failed attempts. The referee gave them the option for a jump-off, to which Barshim asked if they could share the gold medal (Tamberi had the short straw in the sense that he was injured by then). So they shared not only the yellow metal but also the jubilation of each other's nation. This was the first time since 1912 that a gold medal was shared in athletics.

Cut to 1936 Berlin Olympics: Silver claimants Shuhei Nishida and Suet Oe cut their medals in half to create two new "medals of friendship" of half silver, half bronze. There are moments galore when sportspersons have stopped to lend a shoulder to their crashed competitors. Like this runner at a mega event paused for another runner, who had taken a wrong detour in a marathon and so lost seconds, before following him to the finish line. He could have easily grabbed a medal but he said: "My mother wouldn't have approved of that." This is the spirit that the world needs to imbibe, especially in the times of the pernicious COVID-19 virus, when it is important for all to survive for each one of us to live. Nobody can live in isolation. Like the ancient theorem of "vasudhaiva kutumbakam", we swim together or we sink together; there is no other option, there is no room for greed or upmanship. To sum it up, Tamberi said: "He is one of my best friends, not only on track but outside of it, too. This is a dream come true. It is the true spirit, the sportsman spirit, and we are here to deliver this message." Well said. Let's go, world!



Uttar Pradesh under Yogi is making waves

From being derided as a 'Bimaru' State since Independence, it has come a long way and is now attracting significant investment



PRAFULL GORADIA

India's largest State Uttar Pradesh and also its most vibrant, politically speaking, has moved in the field of development the fastest. Be it in the layout of highways, appointments to Government services, providing employment to the State's vast population, increasing investments, law and order, encouragement to tourism and pilgrimage as well as expanding the small and medium enterprises sector, Uttar Pradesh is making waves.

All these years since Independence, one has never heard that the largest State of the country had ever moved significantly in the area of development. It is surprising that New Delhi did not bother; perhaps ignoring the fact that UP is one-fifth of India. If, therefore, UP leaps in progress, the country races ahead in terms of development. Evidently, for the powers-that-be in India's rajdhani, UP was treated as a bank of 84 Lok Sabha seats (80 now) and a sure-shot ticket to parliamentary majority at the Centre, but nothing more. In fact, the head of a former ruling dynasty was reported to have voiced an opinion in favour of keeping Uttar Pradesh backward fragmented as that alone could help maintain this particular dynasty maintain its hegemony on power at the Centre!

Uttar Pradesh today, in 2021, is a vastly changed place. From the backwaters of most economic indices, the State today has moved to becoming India's second richest in terms of gross state domestic product (GSDP), which for the State stands at \$268 billion (financial year 2020-21 figures), behind only Maharashtra now. This, under Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, has been an achievement that has been clocked despite the ravages of COVID-19. In the ease of doing business, a crucial global benchmark anywhere, UP, which languished at 16th position in the country in 2016, has moved up to the second rank among Indian States.

Law and order, the most important prerequisite for any developmental activity to flower, was never a strong suite in Uttar Pradesh before Adityanath took over. Any economic or capital investment in the State remained



a dream. The scenario after Yogi's coming to office in March 2017 is a sharp contrast. Over the past four and a half years, 137 criminals have been liquidated in police action, while close to 3,000 criminals were injured; nearly 37,000 accused have been booked under the Gangster Act and over 500 under the National Security Act. The Yogi administration has also hit criminals hard by targeting their finances; in the Government's drive against the mafia, their illicit property worth approximately ₹1,580 crore has either been attached or demolished. Along with action against the mafia, Adityanath has also provided protection to witnesses.

Vastly improved law and order has begun to pay off in the realm of development. Here, too, figures speak for themselves. The State's industrial development data reveals that over the years, UP has received investment proposals worth ₹66,000 crore from both foreign and local investors. The administration has been acting quickly on these proposals. More to the point, companies from Japan, Canada, Germany, Hong Kong, the UK, the US and South Korea are lining up to invest in UP; one



UTTAR PRADESH TODAY, IN 2021, IS A VASTLY CHANGED PLACE. FROM THE BACKWATERS OF MOST ECONOMIC INDICES, THE STATE TODAY HAS MOVED TO BECOMING INDIA'S SECOND RICHEST IN TERMS OF GROSS STATE DOMESTIC PRODUCT, WHICH FOR THE STATE STANDS AT \$268 BILLION

company has even returned from China to set up operations in Agra. It is also significant that Yogi's Government is ensuring that the flow of investment is not restricted to the bigger cities, it is being channelled to smaller towns like Etah, Amroha, Mirzapur, and so on.

Yogi has adopted an investor-friendly policy. Apart from the fresh proposals for investment, MoUs worth ₹4.68 lakh crore have been signed at investor summits, of which 371 proposals worth close to ₹3 lakh crore are already functional, generating employment for up to 5 lakh people. Here, one must mention the work being done by the State Government on the defence industrial manufacturing corridor, which has already drawn in up to 14 MoUs. The aim is to transform UP into a hub of capital-intensive manufacturing, which the defence industry invariably entails.

Farmers, a community very much in the news these days, have much to be happy about under Yogi's rule. Development schemes and programmes for their long-term success also need the health of the rural economy to be robust. And the rural economy, of course, includes farmers. Adityanath's transparent

policy of wheat and paddy purchase, as also his continuous supervision of purchase centres, has been successful. Take paddy, for instance; the State Government has purchased a record 60 lakh metric tonnes of the crop against a slated target of 55 lakh metric tonnes. Payments made to the State's farmers have been touching new records as well. The Chief Minister has accelerated his efforts to double the income of the State's farmers. Nearly ₹33,000 crore have been transferred to the accounts of about 3 crore farmers under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi Yojana, plus separate transfers under crop insurance schemes. The modernisation and expansion of 20 sugar mills in the State, along with the reopening of the Pipraich, Munderwa and Ramala sugar mills, is a significant milestone in the administration's agriculture policy. Uttar Pradesh under Yogi is clearly not the "Bimaru" State it was once derided as, under earlier dispensations that only milked the State politically.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the Rajya Sabha. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIA'S DAUGHTERS ARE CREATING HISTORY

Sir — India's performance in the Tokyo Olympics so far has been in the name of India's daughters. The journey started with Mirabai Chanu's silver medal, progressing further with PV Sindhu's bronze medal and then women's hockey team defeating Australia to reach the semifinals for the first time.

It seems that the daughters of this country have taken the responsibility of making the country proud; this is the changing identity of India. Sushil Kumar was the first Indian to set a record of winning two medals in two consecutive Olympics. He is still the only player to win two Olympic medals in men's individual events. Sushil Kumar won bronze and silver medals at the Beijing Olympics 2008 and the London Olympics in 2012, respectively, when he won in the 66-kg freestyle category. So, in the same vein, the women's hockey team has made it to the semifinals for the first time by defeating Australia. Many congratulations to PV Sindhu! She has given the country a chance to be proud, and we hope the women's hockey team will do the same.

Devanand Ray | Delhi

THE GOVERNMENT VS THE OPPOSITION

Sir — The conditions seem to be ripe for the Opposition to intensify its attacks on the Modi Government and mount a fresh challenge to its misrule. The Opposition is at its most vibrant and exudes confidence. It uses issues like the mishandling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the unprecedented fuel price hike, the new farm laws and the Pegasus phone hacking scandal as rods to beat the Government with. The blows seriously hurt the Government as the concerns raised by the Opposition over these issues are shared by the general public.

The current climate of opinion is tilted in favour of the Opposition. The cycle rally by the Opposition MPs, led by Rahul Gandhi to protest the runaway price hike of petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders, obviously struck a chord with the common people. Fuel price hike that has now

No kneejerk reaction, please



Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) leader and Meghalaya Minister Sanbor Shullai is urging people of his State to eat more beef than chicken, mutton and fish. This is not the first such instance in the Christian-dominated Meghalaya. In 2017, Bernard Marak, a BJP leader from Garo Hills, had promised to reduce the price of beef if his party was elected to power in the Meghalaya Assembly. People are fully aware, as a Hindu party, of the BJP's problem with beef and cattle slaughter. But here also the BJP has played some give-and-take regarding banning both the sale and consump-

tion of beef or even cattle slaughter in the majority of the BJP-ruled States, and has made exemptions in its crusade against beef (in Goa and the northeast).

On the poll trail, Prime Minister Narendra Modi accused the UPA Government of promoting a "pink revolution", slaughtering our "mother cow" and exporting meat. Interestingly, India continues to be the world's largest exporter of beef, 70 per cent of it buffalo meat. In the current economic condition, Sanbor Shullai is urging the State's people to eat more beef because it is cheaper than chicken and fish and is a staple for the poorer communities. Why not, when Swami Vivekananda himself points out: "There was a time in this very India when, without eating beef, no Brahmin could remain a Brahmin; you read in the Vedas how, when a Brahmin, a king or a great man came into a house, the best bullock was killed; how in time it was found that as we were an agricultural race, killing the best bulls meant annihilation of the race. Therefore, the practice was stopped."

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

become unaffordable for many people is no sign of *acheche din*.

The Pegasus issue has put the Government on the defensive. Its adamant refusal to agree to a 'structured' debate on the issue in the presence of the Prime Minister and a probe by a JPC or a sitting Supreme Court judge has deepened suspicions. The Government cannot just wish Pegasus row away by just dismissing it as a "non-issue" or as a "manufactured issue". Illegal snooping is a serious issue; its chilling effect on the right to free speech is obvious. Modi has described the disruptions in Parliament as an "insult to democracy". It is within his power to end them by acceding to the just demand of the Opposition.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

EVEN ALLIES ARE CRITICISING GOVT

Sir — Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar became the first NDA ally to echo the Opposition's demand for a probe into the

sensational Pegasus snooagate and discussion in Parliament. All this is happening due to the misuse of modern technology.

At a time when the BJP is busy stonewalling a Parliament debate on Pegasus, saying IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw has already made his statement in both Houses, Nitish Kumar's divergent position has set the cat among the pigeons. The Opposition wants the presence of either Prime Minister Narendra Modi or Union Home Minister Amit Shah during the debate. In recent weeks, Nitish Kumar has not aligned himself with the NDA on important issues like caste census. Even the appointment of Munger MP Rajiv Ranjan alias Lalan Singh as the JD(U) president was seen as an attempt to nibble into the BJP's core traditional Bhumihar vote bank in Bihar.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

If the Opposition is demanding a probe in the Pegasus phone tapping case, it is a serious issue. The Government should initiate an inquiry.

Former Bihar Chief Minister — Jitan Ram Manjhi

An imported, hasty peace process not only failed to bring peace but created doubt and ambiguity among Afghans.

Afghan President — Ashraf Ghani

It (*Girls Will Be Girls*) is a fresh and feminist story, and I believe Shuchi is a new voice in Indian cinema.

Actor-scriptwriter — Richa Chadha

This is not only my first Olympics, but also my first championships. I am so excited to represent my country at this level.

American equestrian rider — Jessica Rae Springsteen

The salary of Delhi's MLAs hasn't increased since 2011 and the Delhi Government had requested the MHA that it should be at par with MLAs of other States.

Delhi Chief Minister — Arvind Kejriwal



FIRST COLUMN CITIZENS, MSMEs IN LOAN DEFAULT CRISIS

Several loans are linked as individuals unable to pay one loan take recourse to the other



SHIVAJI SARKAR

There is more to the COVID-19 menace as it leads to a dreadful rise of a whopping ₹66-lakh crore in personal loan defaults in the country. This is in addition to the accumulated MSME debts of ₹2.26 lakh crore. Several individuals are facing auctions by banks and financial institutions. The MSMEs are facing temporary or permanent closure and yet seeking more loans to survive. Personal debts stand at ₹27.86 lakh crore and people are finding it difficult to repay. Another ₹14.64 lakh crore accounts for individual housing loans, ₹2.38 lakh crore in vehicle loans, credit card dues total ₹1.02 lakh crore. People are also unable to repay education loans of ₹62,720 crore and loans against jewellery worth ₹62,221 crore. The education, housing, and jewellery loans are often linked to each other, as individuals unable to pay one loan take recourse to the other. Often, none of them is fully repaid, revealing the poor economic status of the loanees. The people also suffer from high taxation. Most of them, except for a small segment, are income-tax payers. As



their deposits are being eroded by tax deduction at source (TDS) on meagre interest earnings, the national crisis deepens. Many of them compromise on their food intake. The debts are affecting the banking, FIs, and non-banking (NBFC) sectors. There are calls for a drastic income-tax reduction. If that happens, it can help many sectors coming out of difficult situations and help banks reduce their NPAs. Fitch Ratings indicate the NBFCs facing near-term pressure as "non-performing loans (bad loans) are likely to rise as renewed activity restrictions have impaired borrower repayment capacity". The woes of individuals, small businesses, and others surviving on small incomes may multiply as banks and financial institutions plan tough recovery drives.

The lending institutions may start auctioning their pawned gold, vehicles, and other assets just as the festival season begins. This might mar festivities and create societal and political problems. The FIs put off selling or auctioning the collaterals during the pandemic but now they are finding their survival difficult and some like HDFC and Axis are indulging in allegedly unethical means to shore up their cash books. Both these banks have been penalized for this. The ICIICI is mulling the auction of pawned jewellery and vehicles. Jewellery loans indicate that households are in dire straits and rising numbers of suicides could be linked to people's deteriorating financial conditions. The fall in sales of FMCG goods sells or vehicles also reflects the worsening situation. The political thinkers are yet to mull over this grave situation. MSME minister Nitin Gadkari told the Rajya Sabha about a Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) study on the pandemic impact on micro-units under the PM Employment Guarantee Programme (PMEGP) revealing that 88 per cent of the beneficiaries were "negatively affected" by the pandemic. The private insurance sector is in a shambles. The sale of the LIC banks and LIC to the private sector cannot be a welcome step as it further adds to the deterioration of the economy and leads to bigger job losses. The entertainment, cinema included, and education sectors are also in deep crisis. Many cosmetic programmes, incentivisations, loans, and even direct benefit transfers, surprisingly, are not boosting the economy. The economic contours have to change, free from Manmohanomics, and a new economy needs to be conceived with discussions with all stakeholders and political parties. The post-demonetisation downfall has to be stemmed for the country to become an effective power. It has to begin with empowering the individual in real financial terms, including a cut in taxes.

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

Street-connected kids in pandemic's shadow



SURINA NARULA

It is time to improve the quality of life of street-connected children who continue to be one of the most vulnerable sections of the society

The multiple and complex challenges we face today because of the COVID-19 pandemic have fallen hard on children who live, work, or play in the streets and are known as street-connected children. For them, it is often impossible to follow the basic guidelines to "stay at home" and "wash your hands". It is also difficult for them to access food, water, and medical services if they fall ill. In addition, they are at risk of being detained for being out during the lockdown or curfew.

The authorities say they are providing help. For example, the Delhi Commission for Protection of Child Rights has been distributing food to street-connected children and vulnerable families in the Indian capital. In other cities too, local governments and charities have been doing the same.

However, the situation with street-connected children on the ground is very different. Sanjay Gupta works with street-connected children through CHETNA (Childhood Enhancement Through Training and Action), a grass-roots Indian NGO. He says that the scale of the problem is daunting and that many children are invisible because they live away from the main roads and in areas that are not accessible. He wants essential service passes to be made for his workers during COVID lockdowns as they work round the clock to try and reach these children whom the government cannot reach.

The Consortium for Street Children (CSC) is an international global network with more than 150 organisations, researchers, and practitioners across 135 countries that have been working since 1990 to protect the rights of street-connected children and making their voices heard at key forums. In its early days, the biggest challenge CSC faced was getting acknowledgement of the very fact that street-connected children exist. In the 1990s, many governments did not acknowledge them or recognise who they were. In many countries with dictatorial governments, they were actually shot to 'clean the streets'. It took a lot of persuasion and pressure on governments through diplomats in the UK to stop such practices. Being one of the founders of CSC, I had personally attended a lot of these meetings for securing funding and holding workshops with the police in Latin America to stop treating these children with such cruelty among other issues.

It took many years to get the term "street-connected children" accepted and included in common parlance - it is now widely used to describe children who depend on the streets for their survival. It does not matter whether these children have parents or some kind of support outside the street situation; it is important to understand that once they are on the streets, they are vulnerable. Along with these workshops and conferences over the past 20 years, CSC has also been working on long-term goals of making street-connected children visible on global platforms



WE MUST TAKE URGENT STEPS TO BETTER PROTECT CHILDREN IN THE COMING MONTHS AND YEARS. A COORDINATED, CONSOLIDATED EFFORT IS REQUIRED FOR THIS AND ALL SEGMENTS OF THE SOCIETY MUST BE PART OF THE RECOVERY PROCESS. THIS IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR CHILDREN IN STREET SITUATIONS. WE CANNOT AND MUST NOT LEAVE THEM BEHIND

(The writer is the Co-founder of Consortium for Street Children and The DSC Prize for South Asian Literature. The views expressed are personal.)



by pushing policy interventions that address the discrimination these children face on a daily basis by empowering them and improving the quality of their lives.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is the most widely ratified international human rights treaty that promises to protect and fulfill the rights of every child. There was never any mention of street-connected children in this convention. After many consultations with NGOs and street-connected children across the world, CSC finally managed to convince the UN to include a general comment on street-connected children in this convention. This comment gives all those working with street-connected children a high-level tool to hold their governments accountable for not adhering to the Convention on the Rights of the Child. In the words of the UN: "The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child provides authoritative guidance to States on developing comprehensive, long-term national strategies on children in street situations using a holistic, child rights approach and addressing both prevention and response in line with the Convention on the Rights of the Child." The obligation of States towards children in street situations is defined quite comprehensively in this comment. This is already being implemented in a small number of countries.

While global alliances like CSC and the efforts of local grassroots community organizations and non-government bodies attempted to improve the lives of these children,

the present reality is that the COVID-19 pandemic has suddenly and severely deteriorated their condition. The need for rebuilding much more resilient societies and frameworks that protect and empower them could not be more vital than it is now. We must take urgent steps to better protect children in the coming months and years. A coordinated, consolidated effort is required for this and all segments of the society must be part of the recovery process. This is particularly important for children in street situations. We cannot and must not leave them behind and must ensure that all children are being counted and included in our visions of the future. In other words, we must have policies and laws that ensure that street-connected children are guaranteed the same rights as every other child, so that they can live with dignity, safety, and security. The pandemic threatens to set back the realisation of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which go to the heart of children's rights, their well-being, and their development. We must act urgently to avoid this. As responsible citizens, we can identify the NGOs in our area working with these children and provide help in kind or cash as we see fit, guide them and participate in their outreach activities. In the meantime, we also need to put pressure on our governments and policy makers to implement the general comment related to street-connected children in more countries. The Consortium for Street Children, with generous funding

from Abbvie, has been providing crucial support to street-connected children and has helped them access the services, information, and legal protection they need throughout the pandemic. It has provided safe shelters, access to safe food, water, and information on how to stay safe from the virus when the street is the home. Its member partners have collaborated with local governments to come up with innovative strategies to provide basic healthcare facilities, hospital care, essential medicines, and mental health counselling to street-connected children during the outbreak of the pandemic.

In India, Abbvie has partnered with CHETNA along with two other organisations and provided relief packages including dry food, health/hygiene kits, and basic supplies to 750 families of street-connected children who have been hardest hit by the lockdowns or are at the highest risk from COVID-19. These relief packages are making a difference on the ground as each package can sustain a family of six for two weeks. CHETNA has also provided educational support and materials to 300 children for remote home learning.

While international networks like the Consortium for Street Children and NGOs like CHETNA are making a tangible difference, the time has now come for each one of us to contribute in our spheres of influence to improve the quality of life of street-connected children who continue to be one of the most vulnerable sections of the society.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

NOBODY IN THE GOVERNMENT IS LISTENING. SO WE HAVE DECIDED TO GET TOGETHER; THE OPPOSITION IS UNITED.
— CONGRESS LEADER
MALLIKARJUN KHARGE



THE CONDUCT OF THE OPPOSITION IS AN INSULT TO PARLIAMENT AND THE CONSTITUTION... (CERTAIN) COMMENTS ARE DEROGATORY.
— PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI

Mamata's Opposition unity Delhi errand

Her strategy is to first unite the Opposition parties, then find a suitable narrative acceptable to all and finally think of a leader

West Bengal chief minister Mamata Banerjee made a whirlwind trip to Delhi last week, for another attempt to unite the opposition parties. She met all the right people and made adequate noise about the eluding opposition unity. Will she be able to succeed where others have failed? She is all but ready to challenge Prime Minister Narendra Modi in the 2024 polls.



KALYANI SHANKAR

It is not her first attempt to unite the opposition. She tried to forge a third front ahead of the 2019 general elections but did not succeed. The Opposition bloc also lacked a face to pit against Modi. Above all, without Congress, there cannot be a government, arithmetically.

This time Mamata has

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

started early, almost three years before the next Lok Sabha polls. "Nothing can be done by a doctor who comes after the patient has died. The patient can be saved if treatment is given on time. Now is your time. The more time you waste all the more the situation will worsen," Banerjee said. She wants to expand her winning slogan "Khela Hobe" as a national slogan.

No doubt, after winning West Bengal for the third time in a row, Mamata Banerjee's stature has gone up. She has dropped enough hints to show that she is now ready for a national role. It is to prepare for this role she came to Delhi. Her poll strategist Prashant Kishore prepared the ground before her arrival. Mamata declared that "regional parties



will lead the nation, we will not bow down before anyone anymore, the time has come".

One of the biggest challenges before the opposition is to show a united face against the BJP before the 2024 polls. There are too many regional chieftains claiming to be the face of the opposition. Mamata has belled the cat once again.

Mamata also understands now that without Congress, there can be no opposition front. Arithmetically, it is difficult to form a government.

To soften the Congress, she met Sonia Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi during this trip.

Though Congress is the oldest national party and has ruled the country for long, it presently faces too many problems. They include a leadership crisis and a weakening party organisation. Sonia Gandhi has taken a backseat due to health reasons. In 2004 she went from one party leader to the other and united the heterogeneous opposition block successfully. Her son Rahul

Gandhi is still not ready.

The second problem is that the regional satraps are not keen to accept Rahul as their leader. Congress is not willing to consider any regional chief as the leader. Some parties like the BJD, Samajwadi Party, and Bahujan Samaj Party are neutral. That is why it is not easy to visualize a united opposition emerging before 2024.

Mamata has set off speculation whether she could be the catalyst to unite the opposition parties. She has good relations with many regional satraps. They include Sharad Pawar of Nationalist Congress Party, Odisha chief minister Naveen Patnaik, Telangana chief minister K.Chandrashekar Rao, besides Andhra Pradesh chief minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy, and Delhi chief minis-

ter Arvind Kejriwal.

During her current visit, Mamata seems to have made up her mind to project herself as a mature leader who can be courteous to a bitter political enemy. This was evident when she called on the Prime Minister. The photograph showing Mamata greeting the Prime Minister with folded hands and a bowing Modi has gone viral.

In her interaction with the national media also, she spoke along similar lines. She kept the media guessing with her one-liners. She said, "I think all these will happen automatically... I am hopeful" and "I will not lead, the country will lead... We are all followers", etc.

In her speech, Banerjee took her winning slogan

"Khela Hobe" (Game On) to the national stage and declared that "Khela" would happen in all States before the 2024 elections. This slogan is to underline that it is possible to defeat the BJP.

The opposition sees a possibility of building up a narrative before the next Lok Sabha polls and the upcoming Assembly elections in many States. She said: "In politics, there are times together for the sake of the country. This is that time."

Whatever may be the outcome, Didi is determined to be in the game. She has defined the fight as the country versus Narendra Modi. Her strategy is to first unite the opposition parties and then find a suitable narrative acceptable to all and think of a leader later.

STATE-OWNED DISCOMS

NITI Aayog pitches for greater operational, financial autonomy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government think tank Niti Aayog has pitched for greater operational and financial autonomy for state-owned discoms, saying for a state-owned utility to succeed, there should be a clear separation between utility and state.

In a report titled "Turning Around the Power Distribution Sector", Niti Aayog said the performance of state-owned discoms is also determined by the ability of the respective State Electricity Regulatory Commissions (SERC) to revise tariff frequently and adequately.

"...For a state-owned utility to succeed, there should be a clear separation between utility and state. The utility should have operational and financial autonomy. Good corporate governance practices, including the use of independent directors, can help ensure such separation," it suggested.



It pointed out that there can be a variety of distribution franchisees, from models that are essentially outsourcing revenue collection to taking care of all distribution functions in a defined area.

"In rural areas, private investors might not find it attractive to become licensees, but a franchisee model might be attractive," it said.

Noting that discoms have a monopoly in their area of functioning, the think tank suggested that delicensing distribution can introduce competition and enable retail choice for customers.

"This reform can be challenging and should be accompanied with careful market design.

Releasing a report titled "Turning Around the Power Distribution Sector", Kumar said the report examines many important reforms such as the role of the private sector in distribution, power procurement, regulatory oversight, integration of renewable energy, and upgradation of infrastructure.

"A healthy and efficient distribution sector is essential,

Efficient distribution essential for improving ease of doing biz

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog Vice Chairman Rajiv Kumar on Tuesday said a healthy and efficient distribution sector is essential for improving the ease of doing business, and for improving ease of life.

Whether for improving the ease of doing business, or for improving the ease of life," an official statement said, quoting Kumar.

The report is co-authored by Niti Aayog, RMI and RMI India.

According to a statement, Niti Aayog member V K Saraswat said that this report presents policymakers with a menu of reform options to put the distribution sector on the track of efficiency and profitability. Most power distribution companies (discoms) in India incur losses every year - total losses are estimated to be as high as Rs 90,000 crore in FY2021, as per the statement.

Markets hit fresh highs; Sensex zooms 873 pts, Nifty scales 16K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Equity benchmark Sensex skyrocketed 873 points to a fresh closing peak while the Nifty finished above the 16,000-mark for the first time on Tuesday, driven by gains in index heavyweights HDFC, Infosys and TCS.

The 30-share BSE index ended 872.73 points or 1.65 per cent higher at its lifetime high of 53,823.36. The broader NSE Nifty rallied 245.60 points or 1.55 per cent to record 16,130.75.

Titan was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 4 per cent, followed by HDFC, Nestle India, IndusInd Bank, UltraTech Cement and Bharti Airtel.

On the other hand, Bajaj Auto, Tata Steel and NTPC

were the laggards.

"Bulls pulled off the 16,000 mark on the Nifty effortlessly buoyed by positive news flow on GST and export data as domestic fund houses poured Rs 280 billion during the first four months of the current fiscal," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

The journey past 16,000 quite clearly has been led by the retail investors who have allocated more into equities

Even as FIIs sold worth Rs 95 billion during this period, he noted.

"The present rally is all the more significant since it provides enough opportunities to the new investor coming in now as several pockets of the economy still offer value going forward," he added.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended with losses, while Seoul was positive.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading with gains in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude advanced 0.47 per cent to USD 73.23 per barrel.



India's peak power demand hits record of 200570 MW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's peak power demand hit a new record of 200570 MW in the month of July, a 17.6 per cent increase over the same month a year ago.

The country witnessed the highest ever demand for power at 12:01 hours on July 7, 2021. This demand of 200570 MW was 17.6 per cent higher than 170545 MW in July 2020 (on 2nd at 22:21 hours), a power ministry statement said.

This was brought out in the system operations highlights

for July 2021, put out by the Power System Operation Corporation Ltd (POSOCO), the ministry said.

The report also noted that average energy consumption per day recorded in July 2021 stood at 4049 MU, 10.6 per cent higher than in July 2020 (3662 MU).

The 'Maximum All India Energy Met' (power supplied in a day) also touched an all-time high. It was recorded at 4508 MU (million units) on July 7, 2021, which was 14.7 per cent higher than 3931 MU on July 28, 2020.

Bank of India Q1 net profit falls 15 pc to Rs 720 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bank of India on Tuesday reported a 14.7 per cent decline in net profit at Rs 720 crore for the June quarter.

The bank had posted a net profit of Rs 843.60 crore in the year-ago period. However, the net profit was up sequentially from Rs 250.19 crore recorded in the three months ended March 2021.

In the first quarter of the current fiscal, the lender's total income was down at Rs 11,698.13 crore. In the year-ago period, it stood at 11,941.52 crore, according to a regulatory filing.

The bank's gross Non-Performing Assets (NPAs) fell marginally to 13.51 per cent of the gross advances at the end of June this year from 13.91 per cent in the same period a year ago.

GST officers detect Rs 7K- cr tax evasion in June; recover Rs 1K- cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

GST officers have detected tax evasion of Rs 7,421 crore in the April-June period of the current fiscal, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary gave details of the total tax evasion detected in GST in the last 3 years. In 2019-20, 10,657 cases of evasion, involving Rs 40,853.27 crore were detected. Recovery was Rs 18,464 crore.

In 2020-21, Rs 49,384 crore worth GST evasion was detected in 12,596 cases. Recovery stood at Rs 12,235 crore.

In the current fiscal up to June, 1,580 cases of Goods and Services Tax evasion involv-

ing Rs 7,421.27 crore were detected, and Rs 1,920 crore recovered in April-June 2021. Chaudhary said the GST interface for the taxpayers is on a digital platform and software-based to be used for payment of tax and to comply with the requirements of law and procedure by taxpayers.

"However, tax evaders are known to commit fraud even on electronic platforms by way of misrepresentation," he said.

Besides, the evasion may be committed intentionally and at times non-payment of tax may happen due to human error. However, no evasion of tax has been reported due to a failure in the CBIC back-end system, Chaudhary added.

The minister further said to prevent tax evasion, various validations have been built in the GSTN/CBIC system to weed out tax evaders.



Auto component industry optimistic on growth in '22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The auto component industry is cautiously optimistic about growth prospects in the current fiscal amid various challenges like an increase in raw material cost and logistics continuing to hinder a smooth recovery, industry body ACMA said on Tuesday.

The industry, which saw its turnover declined by 3 per cent in the last fiscal, also remains cautious regarding a third wave of the COVID-19, which could again put pressure on the performance.

"With the economy progressively returning to normal and as vehicular demand picks up, we are cautiously optimistic about the performance of the industry for this year," Automotive Component Manufacturers Association of India (ACMA) President Deepak Jain told reporters in a virtual press meet.

The challenges on the front



of availability of semiconductors, escalating prices as also the availability of raw materials, challenges in logistics -- including non-availability and high prices of containers, among others, continue to hinder a smooth recovery, he noted.

"We are also wary of the third wave of pandemic and hope that the current revival in

demand will be a sustained one. We are optimistic that the lessons learnt in managing the first two will stand us in good stead in managing the third one as well," Jain said.

He added that the industry is looking at sustained growth in order to initiate investments, which have been on hold for the last few years, owing to various challenges.

Need to devise new formula for states' borrowings

PNS ■ MUMBAI

States are increasingly borrowing higher by making ambitious GSDP projections and hence, there is a need for a new formula to define the loan caps, economists at the largest lender SBI said on Tuesday.

Its chief economist Soumya Kanti Ghosh said the Finance Commission had recommended that borrowings by states should be linked to the size of the GSDP, but the states have developed a tendency where they project higher GSDP projections in budgets to borrow more during a year. West Bengal, Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Chhattisgarh, Uttar Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and Rajasthan have borrowed higher than 3 per cent of their actual GSDP in FY21 or fiscal years before it, the report said, adding that the trend is getting broad-based.

Gold slips by Rs 31; silver tumbles Rs 372

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices in the national capital dipped marginally by Rs 31 to Rs 46,891 per 10 grams on Tuesday, in line with weak global trends and on rupee appreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 46,922 per 10 grams.

Silver also tumbled Rs 372 to Rs 66,072 per kg, from Rs 66,444 per kg in the previous trade. The Indian rupee opened on a flat note and

inched 4 paise higher to 74.30 against the US dollar in early trade on Tuesday.

"Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi fell by Rs 31 in line with weak COMEX (New York-based commodity exchange) gold prices and rupee appreciation," according to HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel.

In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,810 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 25.34 per ounce.



Depreciation bias on horizon; Rupee likely to test 76 level

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian rupee is likely to test 76-76.50 levels as a relatively strong greenback, boiling crude prices and COVID headwinds deepen the depreciation bias for the domestic currency, according to experts.

One of the significantly-hit Asian currency in recent months amid uncertain economic times, rupee is expected to see a consolidation in the vicinity of the current level before being pulled towards the depreciation bias.

While the equity market has been surging with occasional blips, the rupee has mostly been weak against the US dollar in recent months. If the domestic currency fell 2 per cent against the greenback,



the slump was much lower at around 0.18 per cent in July.

Experts are of the view that the short term outlook for the USD-INR pair remains bearish, with prospects of 73.50 mark.

On long-term trajectory, the domestic unit is likely to skew towards 75.50-76 level and could even test the 77-mark by year-end, they opined.

Some of the major factors

that are going to dictate the trend for the rupee going forward include the Federal Reserve's outlook on rates and recovery of the US economy and the Joe Biden administration's stance towards China.

"The US Fed in its last policy meeting was hawkish but the central bank member's stance on inflation, growth and the bond tapering programme going forward could trigger volatility for the greenback," said Gaurang Somaiya, Forex and Bullion Analyst at Motilal Oswal Financial Services.

On the domestic front, RBI policy statement together with the trajectory of the fund inflows into India will provide cues for the rupee movement. Inflation, which is on the high-

er side of RBI's expectation band, will be another factor going forward.

"In the last quarter, a surge in crude prices contributed to higher inflation and further rally in global crude oil prices could start to pinch the overall import bill of India," Somaiya said.

According to Jateen Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst at LKP Securities, in the longer run the trend will be weak for rupee, on the back of the dollar index stabilising above USD 90. Higher crude prices and COVID delta variant, which has resulted in partial lockdowns globally, will also not help the domestic currency.

Further, market participants will keep a close watch for any announcement on the bond

tapering by the US and a faster American recovery could lead to a stronger dollar, a scenario that will weigh on emerging market currencies.

Sugandha Sachdeva, Vice President - Commodity and Currency Research at Religare Broking Ltd said the Indian rupee has seen a steep correction since June amid the surge in crude oil prices to multi-year highs and the strength in the US dollar index as the Fed took a hawkish tilt in its June policy meeting.

Muted actions by the FIIs in the past couple of weeks have also led to currency depreciation. Moreover, the threat of the fast-spreading delta variant of COVID has raised concerns about the economic recovery of emerging economies like India.

MONEY MATTERS

Adani Ports Q1 profit jumps 77 pc to Rs 1,342 crore

Adani Ports and Special Economic Zone Limited (APSEZ) on Tuesday reported a 77.04 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 1,341.69 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal. The country's largest integrated logistics player had clocked a consolidated net profit of Rs 757.83 crore in the corresponding period a year earlier, according to a regulatory filing. Its total income rose to Rs 4,938.43 crore in the latest June quarter as against Rs 2,749.46 crore in the year-ago period. The company's total expenses during the quarter under review increased to Rs 3,464.88 crore from Rs 1,805.24 crore in the same period a year ago.



Nykaa files initial public offering papers with Sebi

E-commerce beauty company Nykaa has filed preliminary papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to raise funds through an initial share sale. The initial public offering (IPO) comprises fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 525 crore and an offer for sale of 4,31,11,670 equity shares by the selling shareholders, according to draft red herring prospectus (DRHP). Those selling shares in the OFS include TPG Growth IV SF Pte Ltd, Lighthouse India Fund III, Limited, Lighthouse India III Employee Trust, Yogesh Agencies and Investments and J M Financial and Investment Consultancy Services and Sanjay Nayar Family Trust. Proceeds of the fresh issue will be used towards investment in certain subsidiaries -- FSN Brands or Nykaa Fashion -- to set-up new retail store, capital expenditure, repayment of debt, to enhance the visibility and awareness of its brands and general corporate purposes. Founded in 2012, the company is a digitally native consumer technology platform, delivering a content-led, lifestyle retail experience to consumers.



Fixing floor prices critical amid financial stress: COAI

Industry body COAI on Tuesday contended that floor price fixation is absolutely critical and need of the hour, given the 'major financial stress' in the telecom industry. The association -- whose members include Bharti Airtel, Reliance Jio and Vodafone Idea -- said floor prices need to be fixed for data only for an interim period, say two years, and that voice calls and tariffs can be excluded from this. "In the last few years, fixation of floor prices has become a critical issue and is need of the hour today with telecom industry going through major financial stress," S P Kochhar, director-general of Cellular Operators' Association of India (COAI), said in a statement. Despite the financial constraints faced by them during the pandemic, the telecom service providers continued to plough in significant investments and provide seamless network connectivity to Indians, COAI argued.



Godrej posts Rs 17 cr profit in Q1; bookings down 68 pc

Realty firm Godrej Properties on Tuesday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 17.01 crore for the quarter ended June even as its sales bookings fell 68 per cent to Rs 497 crore. The Mumbai-based company had posted a net loss of Rs 19.26 crore in the year-ago period. Total income rose to Rs 261.99 crore in the first quarter of this fiscal from Rs 195.66 crore in the corresponding period of the previous year. According to an investors' presentation, the company sold properties worth Rs 497 crore during April-June 2021, down 68 per cent from Rs 1,531 crore in the year-ago period. In the last fiscal year, Godrej Properties clocked sales bookings of a record Rs 6,725 crore, which was the highest among all listed real estate entities. Godrej Properties is the real estate arm of business conglomerate Godrej group.



Hyderabad

the pioneer

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Wednesday
August 4, 2021

One of the biggest victims of careless exploitation of nature and its resources by humans has been found to be marine life. Wildlife filmmaker Akanksha Tiwari talks *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL about something that has spelled doom for many fish — ghost nets.



MARINE LIVES' GHOSTLY FOE

for Conservation of Nature estimates that at least eight million tons of plastic are discarded in our oceans each year, comprising eighty percent of all marine debris from surface waters to deep-sea sediments. The impact of such debris on marine life is enormous! And, ghost nets make this problem even worse. "The waters around India are characterised by the presence of trawl nets from big fishing vessels, gill nets, and purse seine nets.

These are made of non-biodegradable materials and when these are discarded in the sea, they become a ghost net that entangles marine life. Often, fishing nets become brittle with exposure to seawater, sunlight, salt, air, etc. These either snap off, or fishers cut them away," the filmmaker tells us.

Akanksha then visited multiple fish landing sites where fishermen put up their catch for sale, to

understand the multiplicity of marine species. She was stunned at what she saw! Caught in ghost nets lay adult sharks and ray fish, she couldn't bear to think of what these fish underwent and suddenly finding a plastic covering upon them from whose clutches they simply couldn't escape. "Many people who work at the seas were troubled by this. I met fisherpeople who often tore open their nets to set free such species. Of

course, fishermen can incur fines and legal repercussions if protected marine species are found in their nets. Some states offer them rewards too! But I also found fishing communities that worship turtles and whales with great sincerity and wanted them to live free. Yet, their commitment alone cannot solve the ghost net problem," she adds.

By catching slow-breeding marine creatures, the filmmaker thinks we're wiping

out their juveniles and pushing them towards extinction. This is also prevalent through deep-sea mining or the discharge of toxic effluents into oceans or the ever-growing extraction of seafood. She further says, "It's no exaggeration to say that at this rate, we will soon confront waters that are dead. The repercussions are enormous for us! As we dismember this canvas, we are literally ending our own oxygen supply. Although, even in such dark water times, I found glimmering hope. Committed divers were frequently exploring marine zones to rescue animals trapped in these ghost nets, diving companies were cleaning up the local waters. On the ground level, nature lovers were routinely reporting ghost net sightings! In fact, many environmental NGOs have been organising regular beach clean-ups. But according to me, we also need far more stringent regulations to prevent the expansion of this ghostly foe against marine life."

A workshop on circular economies and waste disposal changed Akanksha Tiwari, a wildlife filmmaker's entire perspective. They were discussing the problem of plastic nets that is plaguing the beaches. The

sarpanch of a village asked her to join underwater divers and study 'ghost nets'. Wondering what that is? They're the discarded fishnets cluttering up land and sea! The filmmaker was intrigued and thus began her journey. She filmed in Goa and Pondicherry over

the next three years. She spoke to fishing industry workers, some marine biologists, conservationists, divers, and, tourism groups, etc. Slowly, she began to hear the cries of those most directly impacted by ghost nets — the marine beings! The International Union

K RAMYA SREE

Chandana Segu, a name predominant in Telugu, Tamil, and Kannada Television and film industries, is making a comeback to Telugu screens, after years, with *Swarna Palace* on Zee Telugu.

The actress-model, popular for her performance in the 2013 daily soap *Varudhini Parinayam*, where she played the titular role of Varudhini, was widely admired by the telly audiences. Since then, she has become a household name in Telugu families.

The actress, who initially wanted to become a singer, jumped professions and tried her hand at multiple professions before finally sticking to acting.

Acting is not all that she wants to do. Chandana shares with *The Pioneer*, "Honestly, I never knew I would be an actress. I always wanted to be a singer. Everything was interconnected in my life. Because I sang, I started dubbing. From dubbing, I went on to host shows and from there on, an actor. They are all connected. If you ask me what I want to do other than acting, I want to be an entrepreneur. Within a couple of years, I would like to have my own firm and build my own brand and kingdom."

Chandana recently played a cameo in the popular show *Suryakantham*. She also played a lead role in the Tamil supernatural thriller *Nandini 2* which is being dubbed into Telugu as *Jyothi*. When asked what she loves the most about her profession, she says, "According to me, the best part of my work is that you get to play differ-

MASTER OF MANY TRADES

ent roles. When acting is your passion, you involve yourself so much in that role that you actually get to live out that role. You can live with many such characters. You can be a doctor, singer, and who not!"

Chandana, who will next be seen as Kundana in *Swarna Palace*, plays a very strong and bold woman for whom, self-respect is of utmost priority. Just like the character, the actress is known for speaking her heart out. She doesn't mince words when she talked about how she wants to eradicate the 'casting couch' in the glittery tinsel town.

Being a lead actress in six projects at such a young age and building a successful path for herself in the highly competitive world is not all that easy. Wonder how she manages to be on the top list every time she is on screen? This is what Chandana has to say: "Everybody is unique in their own way. A few are extremely good-looking, a few are extremely good performers. Everyone has their strengths and weaknesses. I would never consider anyone as my competition; I would always compete with myself so I can get better with each passing day, and

make myself better than yesterday. I am my own competitor."

Being in the limelight, actors and actresses are easy targets for online trolling and abuse. But Chandana, as she says, is lucky to have not been a target of any such kind of online abuse or hatred that is hurtful. But she has her own way of dealing with mental health.

She shares, "People in the limelight face a lot of mental health issues, as the industry we are in is not stable and we all have to go through several ups and downs. That is going to bother us a lot. I keep my mental health stable by meditating and chanting." She adds, "I also don't give too much attention to social media. I just try to be myself and do not put any effort to prove myself to anyone in any way. I'm someone who is always away from controversies."



Once in a while, try some fry

Who doesn't love indulging in some fried food? Anyone who says otherwise is lying to themselves.

Whether they're crispy fries, potato chips, chicken nuggets, fried chicken, *pakodas*, *bhajiyas*, samosas, vada pavs, or any other crispy, fried delights, we all can honestly admit to having craved these golden-brown delights at some point or the other. Unfortunately, most of us have hang-ups when it comes to these tasty delights, out of fear of being unhealthy or worse, putting on weight.

However, a recent post by Chef Ranveer Brar sheds light on the importance of cooking in this manner in a place like India, where oven arent as common, and frying helped to preserve food for longer. He advises indulging in them every once in a while. Sharing an image of fried goodies, the celebrity

Chef captioned, "It would be unfair not to talk about these crispy delights and the queues they generate the world over — whether it is the southern American fried chicken or the Italian Fritto Misto, the English fish-n-chips, our very own pakoras or the Japanese tempura. Frying has given us lip-smacking food the world over." He added how cooking with oil in a certain way creates contrasting textures. "Being a chef, I am familiar with viscosity and the temperature that hot oil generates to give the food the richness, the crunch and a contrast of texture that is otherwise not possible. However, to explore frying and its evolution in the Indian context, during one of my travels, I spoke to eminent food historian Dr Pushpesh Pant, and he put things quite in perspective. Fried food allows cooking at up to 190°C. With oven not being a common

medium of cooking in India, and water being a source of health insecurity, frying was the only medium to preserve food for a longer time."

The chef also continued with how such food works great for travellers, adding, "Safari' food or the cuisine of the traveller, still, is pickled delicacies like *achaari gosht* and fried food like *mathris* and their kin. It is unfair to completely negate the relevance of fried food across all food cultures in general and our food culture in particular. This method of cooking has been obsessively targeted as a sole reason for ill health in India, leaving out key details like the quality of fat and the temperature of frying."

He concluded with the best advice, "Sit in your living room window with hot tea and pakoras, eat less but eat for sure, because sometimes, nothing beats good fried food."

what's brewing?



● Aby Dominic and Varshini



● Tanya



● Priya Murthi



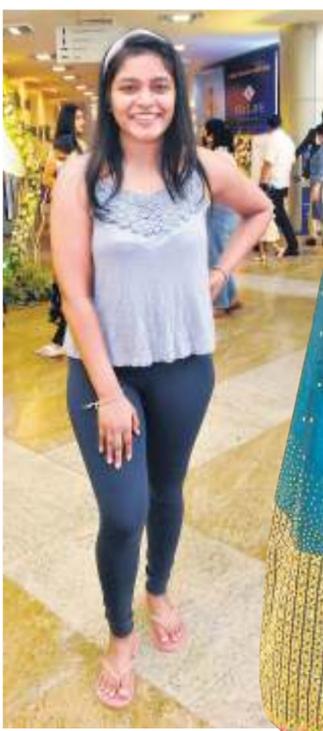
● Nikita



● Ritu



● Archana



● Madhu



● Madhuri



● Simron and Kashish

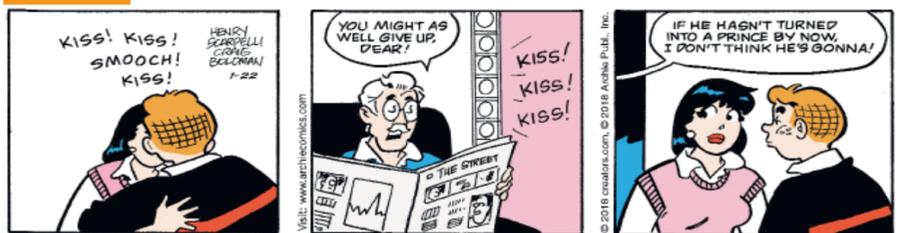
GLITTER ALERT
 Actress Varshini, model Archana Ravi, and Tanya Subramanian turned up the heat at the launch of the HiLife exhibition at the Novotel HICC earlier this week! Celebrities and models were all over the exhibition, taking in a wide range of designer wear, jewelry, and decor.

Photos by SV Chary

PARTY

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



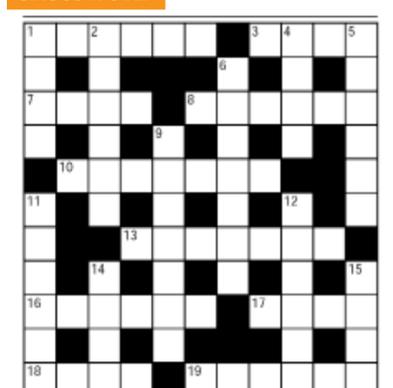
REALITY CHECK



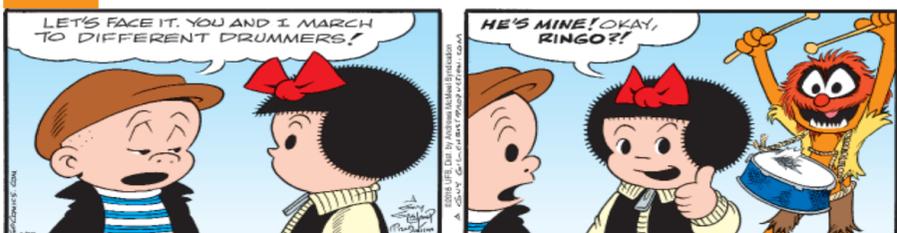
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A precious metal
- A game played with clubs
- A holder for picked flowers
- Just about
- Where Danes live
- Took no notice of
- A season
- Young woman
- Make music with the voice
- Wanting food
- Airborne
- The room you spend most time in
- Picture in your mind
- People invited to dinner
- Using needle and thread
- This metal goes rusty
- Stuff used by potters

DOWN

- Rescue
- Use your ears
- Yours and mine

SOLUTION

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

GINGER MEGGS





PUSHPA COMING THIS CHRISTMAS!

The first part of icon star Allu Arjun's upcoming pan-India film *Pushpa* will hit the theatres country-wide on Christmas this year, the producers announced on Tuesday.

Titled *Pushpa: The Rise*, the multilingual action-thriller also features Rashmika Mandanna and National Award-winning star Fahadh Faasil.

The makers had earlier announced that *Pushpa: The Rise* would have a theatrical release on August 13 with the second part bowing out in 2022.

However, the first part was postponed

due to the second wave of the Coronavirus pandemic.

Producers Naveen Yerneni and Y Ravi Shankar of Mythri Movie Makers said in a joint statement that the team is thrilled to showcase the film to fans. "Pushpa is an action-packed story that has moments that tug at the heart and filming it has been a joyride. The film has already created a lot of buzz among the audiences and we are thrilled to announce that the first part will get a Christmas release this year. We can't wait for the fans to watch it and shower their never-ending love to the entire team of *Pushpa*. We have decided to release the second installation of the movie to release in the year 2022," they

said.

Written and directed by Sukumar of *Arya* fame, the film will be released in Telugu as well as Tamil, Hindi, Kannada, and Malayalam languages.

Pushpa: The Rise chronicles the red sanders heist in the hills of Andhra and depicts the convoluted nexus that unfurls in the course of the narrative of a man who is taken by avarice.

Faasil, known for starring in acclaimed movies like *Malik*, *Joji*, *Kumbalangi Nights*, *Trance*, and *Super Deluxe*, plays the antagonist in the film opposite Arjun.

The film is being produced by Mythri Movie Makers in association with Muttamsetty Media.

Radhika, Kushboo, and Urvashi onboard *Aadavallu Meeku Joharlu*

Actor Sharwanand and Rashmika Mandanna-starrer *Aadavallu Meeku Joharlu*, directed by Kishore Thirumala, a romantic family entertainer, welcomed onboard three senior actors of the industry. The movie unit released posters of the three actors — Radhika, Kushboo, and Urvashi. After many years, Radhika and Urvashi will be seen in a straight Telugu film. With the arrival of these three senior heroines, the audience pinned many expectations on the movie.

"Commenced shooting for a new telugu film. And what can be more fun than to start with some yummy homecooked food by our hero @ImSharwanand n sharing laughter with my 2 favorites @realradikaa #oorvashi #funtimes #Hyderabad. (sic)," tweeted actor-politician Khushboo Sundar.

While Kishore Tirumala's last film *Red* received a mixed response, sources state that the makers are confident of this film impressing all kinds of audiences. Currently, important scenes featuring both the lead actors are being canned in Hyderabad. The film is expected to hit screens by next year.



Sukumar donates 18 lakhs to his school

Ace Telugu film director Sukumar donated Rs 18 lakh to build two new classrooms in the humble government school at Mattaparru village — where he studied decades ago, in Andhra Pradesh's East Godavari district.

"When I left my job and started my journey in films, my father gave me immense support. It is because of his support

that I am able to establish a name for myself in this industry," said Sukumar. Also, the school's building has been named after Tirupati Naidu, the director's father.

Sukumar also assured to look after Mattaparru village and take the lead in rural development. Looking at the classrooms where he had studied, the director reminisced about his childhood. The director was delighted to receive the framed record of his schooling from his teacher.



NAGARJUNA TRYING TO REVIVE HIS CAREER

Nagarjuna was a successful hero. But now he is not the busiest hero anymore. His recent hits have only been *Manam*, *Soggade Chinni Nayana*. Other than these, he didn't taste a perfect hit in the last ten years. Nag had become busy with different business models other than movies. On the other hand, his contemporary Venkatesh is working on several projects, and with the recent hit *Narappa*, he seems like he is here to stay longer. Mega Star

Chiranjeevi too, is planning several films, with big directors.

Now, Nagarjuna is also planning to rise again and revive his career. Though his most recent film *Wild Dog*, that released in April, didn't do well, it did manage to get a good number of views on OTT.

Currently, he is working on an action thriller movie with director Praveen Sattaru of *Garuda Vega*

fame. Fans of Nagarjuna are pinning their hopes onto this film. We hear that the film may hit the screens after October. Another film *Bangaraju*, which is a sequel for *Soggade Chinni Nayana* is most likely to be released during Sankranti in January 2022.

The film's shooting was scheduled from the 20th of this month.

After this, Nagarjuna is looking to work with to do the films in the direction of successful directors like Koratala Siva and others.



WILL SIVA NIRVANA-DEVARAKONDA COMBO WORK OUT?

Siva Nirvana, who has proved his skill at love and emotional stories, is now all set to do a film with Vijaya Devarakonda. The actor has now become an action hero with *Liger*, which is yet to be released. Earlier, he's done films like *Geeta Govindam*, a love, and emotional entertainer. But after *Liger*, his image will be portrayed differently. Hence, everybody is very curious to know if Siva Nirvana will make the film in his own style or will change it according to Vijay Devarakonda's image post *Liger*. Nirvana's debut film was *Nimmu Kori*, which was a different concept in the backdrop of love, has received good appreciation from the audience. Even Nani has scored well with this film.



Siva's next, *Majili*, which was another big hit, was based on an emotional drama. Though Samantha stole the show, Naga Chaitanya scored a hit after a long gap, with this.

Now, Siva Nirvana is waiting for his third film *Tuck Jagadish* to release. As per the sources, *Tuck Jagadish* does have a touch of action. If it becomes a success, the audience may expect a wonderful film with the combination of Siva Nirvana and Vijay Devarakonda.

Vijay Devarakonda is also expecting a decent hit. He has big hopes for *Liger*. After *Geeta Govindam*, he didn't get a hit, though he bagged a huge following among the youth.



SR KALYANAMANDAPAM KICKSTARTS PROMOTIONS

Team SR Kalyanamandapam kickstarted its promotions in a unique way. The team boarded a metro train in Ameerpet and invited the public to watch the film releasing on August 6 in theatres. Directed by Sridhar Gade, this film is inspired by true events and also stars Sai Kumar, Tulasi, Srikanth lyengar, Tanikella Bharani, Arun, Anil, Bharat, and Kittayya in significant roles apart from the lead pair Kiran Abbavaram and Priyanka Jawalkar.



TOKYO
TIMELINE

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

● **Athletics:** Tajinder Pal Singh Toor finished 13th in men's shot put qualification group A, fails to qualify for final.
Annu Rani finished 14th in women's javelin throw qualification group A, fails to advance to final.
● **Hockey:** India lost to Belgium 2-5 in men's semi-final, will play for Bronze medal.
● **Wrestling:** Sonam Malik lost to Bolortuya Khurelkhuu (Mongolia) after 2-2 scoreline in first round of women's freestyle 62kg event.

IN ACTION TODAY

● **Athletics:** Neeraj Chopra in men's javelin throw Qualification Group A. (05:35 am)
Shivpal Singh in men's javelin throw Qualification Group B. (07:05 am)
● **Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain vs Busenaz Surmeneli (Turkey) in women's 69kg semifinal 1. (11:00 am)
● **Golf:** Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar in women's individual stroke play round (05:55 am onwards)
● **Hockey:** India vs Argentina in women's semi-final. (03:30 pm)
● **Wrestling:** Ravi Kumar vs Oscar Eduardo Tigreros (Colombia) in men's freestyle 57kg. (4th bout after 08:00 am start)
Anshu Malik vs Iryna Kurachkina (Belarus) in women's freestyle 57kg. (5th bout after 08:00 am start)
Deepak Punia vs Ekereke Agiomor (Nigeria) in men's freestyle 86kg. (8th bout after 08:00 am start)
Live on SONY TEN & SIX Network

'Need to focus on Bronze medal match'

Indian men's hockey team dream of Olympic Gold end with 2-5 defeat against world champions Belgium in semis; will play Germany for third place tomorrow

PTI ■ TOKYO

The 2-5 loss to Belgium in the Olympic semifinals on Tuesday is disappointing but Indian men's hockey team captain Manpreet Singh and star custodian P R Sreejesh said the side has no time to dwell on the heartbreak as it has to refocus for the Bronze medal play-off on Thursday.

The eight-time winners of Olympic Gold, the last of which came way back in 1980, fell short against world champions Belgium, losing 2-5 in the semifinals here on Tuesday.

"It is really hard for me right now because we came with a winning mindset, but unfortunately we didn't win the match. Now we need to focus on our next Bronze-medal match and we need to work and we need to get the medal," Manpreet said after the loss.

"It's a great honour for us reaching the semifinal after a long time, but now I think we need to focus because the next match is going to be really important for us. At least we should win a Bronze medal for the nation," he added.

The skipper said having toiled hard for the last five years to reach this level, India deserved a better result on Tuesday.

"It's always been hard work and togetherness. This team has been together for the last four or five years. We have worked



Indian players wait for a video referral decision that resulted in a penalty stroke against them during their men's hockey semifinal match with Belgium at the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo on Tuesday

really hard to be reaching this level. We deserve better, and unfortunately we couldn't get it today."

Sreejesh agreed with his skipper and said the loss against Belgium is a thing of the past now and the team needs to focus on returning home with a medal from here.

"Disappointed, but you don't have time to worry about that. You need to forget about that and think about the future. Now we still have a chance to

win a medal and that's more important for us than crying at this time," he said.

"It's more important for us to think about the future, watch the match, think about where we lost, where we committed the mistakes, rectify that, and move on," added.

Senior India defender Rupinder Pal Singh too feels that all is not lost in the ongoing Games for them.

"Of course it's heartbreaking for us, reaching the semi-

final after 41 years and we were here to win a Gold medal. That was our aim, but we lost today. The great thing is we have a chance to finish third in the next game so we will focus on that," he said.

Rupinder believes a medal from Tokyo will be big for the sport back in the country.

"If we win that, it's going to be for us only. Of course there are a lot of people behind this and supporting us. But we are going to win for us first and then

Women's team face Argentina in semis

Tokyo: A historic feat already achieved, a rampaging Indian women's hockey team would aim for more glory when it takes on mighty but beatable Argentina in the semifinals of the Olympic Games here on Wednesday.

A bunch of 16 fearless and determined Indian women did the unthinkable when they stunned three-time champions Australia 1-0 on Monday to enter the Olympic semifinals for the first time.

Come Wednesday, the Indian women would look to surpass the achievements of their more-admired male counterparts here by reaching their first-ever Olympic final.

By virtue of their performances here, the Indian women's team also got a major boost when it jumped to seventh in world rankings, their best-ever ranking.

But in world No 2 Argentina, the Indian women will up against tough opponents who are hungry for Olympic success after missing out in Rio five years back.

(everyone else). That's a great motivation, too," the tall drag-flicker said.

Rupinder credited team's self belief for its success in Tokyo.



Indian players celebrate after win over Australia

The Indian defence, led by goalkeeper Savita, had a brilliant outing against the Australians, stoutly defending their 22nd minute goal to register the narrow win.

The likes of Gurjit, Deep Grace Ekka, Monika and Udita will have to come up with similar efforts to stop the Las Leonas, who will be eyeing their maiden Olympic Gold here.

The Argentina women

have won two Silver medals at the 2000 Sydney and 2012 London Games but a Gold has eluded them.

And they are on course for the yellow metal after reaching the semifinals for the first time since 2012, stunning 2016 Olympic Bronze medallist Germany 3-0. But having registered three wins on the trot after as many losses, the momentum is in India's favour.

converting good chances. "We need to work hard for the next game."

India will face Germany, in the Bronze medal play-off match on Thursday.



India's Sonam Malik, left, and Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu compete during the women's 62 kg freestyle wrestling match on Tuesday

Sonam's Olympic debut ends in 1st-round defeat

Tokyo: Young Indian wrestler Sonam Malik's Olympic debut ended with a first-round defeat on criteria against Mongolia's Bolortuya Khurelkhuu in the 62kg category after the former had adopted a defensive approach on Tuesday.

The 19-year-old led the bout 2-0 but the reigning Asian Silver medallist Khurelkhuu effected a take-down move with just 35 seconds left in the contest to level the score.

The score remained 2-2 till the end but since it was the Mongolian who scored the last point with her move, she was declared winner on criteria.

The Mongolian was later outplayed by Bulgaria's Tayeb Mustafa Yusein, the second seed and 2018 world champion, the result spelling the ouster of the Indian wrestler. "Sonam was definitely a

better wrestler than the Mongolian but she made a mistake by being over defensive. That was a mistake. Nevertheless, she has got big-stage experience," Sonam's coach Ajmer Malik said.

RAVI, DEEPAK GET GOOD DRAW

Indian wrestler Ravi Dahiya on Tuesday got a good draw as he will open his 57kg campaign against Colombia's Tigreros Urbano and going by form, he should not face much difficulty in reaching at least the semifinals.

In the men's freestyle 86kg, Deepak Punia is pitted against Nigeria's Ekereke Agiomor, the African championship Bronze medallist.

Meanwhile, the 19-year-old Anshu Malik has got a difficult opener as she has drawn European champion Irina Kurachkina. PTI

Sindhu one of India's greatest Olympians: Thakur

New Delhi: Sports Minister Anurag Thakur on Tuesday hailed PV Sindhu as a sporting icon and one of the 'greatest Olympians' the country has ever produced after she returned to the country to a warm reception following her Bronze-medal winning feat at the Tokyo Games.

The 26-year-old from Hyderabad was accorded a warm welcome when she returned to India on Tuesday.

"PV Sindhu is amongst India's greatest Olympians. She is India's icon, inspiration and has caught the imagination of every Indian who dreams of playing for the country," Thakur said after felicitating Sindhu and her Korean coach Park Tae-Sang here.



Union Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur felicitate Tokyo Olympics Bronze medallist PV Sindhu on Tuesday

"Her incredible achievement — that of winning two Olympic medals in two consec-

utive Olympic Games will inspire a generation of budding athletes." PTI

Thompson-Herah wins 200m to complete 2nd sprint sweep

Tokyo: Jamaica's Elaine Thompson-Herah made Olympic history in Tokyo Tuesday, blazing to victory in the 200 metres to complete an unprecedented women's sprinting 'double-double'.

Thompson-Herah, the 2016 Olympics 100m and 200m Gold medallist who successfully defended her 100m title on Saturday, bagged a record fourth individual Gold after storming home in a blistering 21.53sec.

Thompson-Herah's time was the second fastest in history after Florence Griffith Joyner's world record of 21.34sec set at the 1988 Seoul Olympics. AFP

Brazil vs Spain in final

Tokyo: Spain will play reigning champions Brazil in the Olympic men's football final after Marco Asensio's superb extra-time winner on Tuesday secured a 1-0 victory over host nation Japan in Saitama.

The Real Madrid winger came off the bench as a substitute and curled in a terrific strike in the 115th minute, sending Spain through to a first Olympic final since they finished runners-up at the 2000 Games in Sydney.

Japan will take on Mexico in Friday's Bronze medal match. Mexico lost 4-1 on penalties to Brazil in Kashima following 120 goalless minutes. AFP



Brazil players celebrate after win



Simone Biles poses with Bronze medal

Biles wins Bronze on balance beam at Olympic return

Tokyo: Simone Biles' nightmare Olympics concluded with the US gymnastics superstar returning in the beam final on Tuesday, declaring "I did it for me" after taking Bronze behind Chinese teenager Guan Chenchen. It was Biles' first taste of competition in Tokyo since dramatically standing down during the women's team final, struggling with the 'twisties'.

"I was just happy to be able to perform regardless of the outcome. I wasn't expecting to walk away with the medal, I was just doing this for me," said Biles. "I did this for me and me only. I just went out there and had fun." After also withdrawing from the first three apparatus finals in the uneven bars, vault and floor, she said she had only been cleared to compete in the beam on Monday night. "We almost missed the deadline!" she disclosed, adding: "Just to have one more opportunity to compete at the Olympic Games meant the world." AFP

Lovlina chases historic final berth

Tokyo: A medal already secured, Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) will be in pursuit of history when she takes on reigning world champion Busenaz Surmeneli of Turkey in the Olympic semifinals here on Wednesday, aiming to become the first ever Indian boxer to advance to the Games final.

The 23-year-old from Assam, who started her career as a Muay Thai practitioner, has become only the third Indian boxer to ensure a podium finish at the showpiece after Vijender Singh (2008) and M C Mary Kom (2012).

Hers is also the first Olympic medal in boxing in nine years and the aim now is to reach where none before her has reached, the finals.

"Since the bout is in the afternoon, we have been training in the afternoon everyday for the past two days," national coach Mohammed Ali Qamar said

Borgohain has shown remarkable composure for a debutant at the sport's biggest extravaganza. And it is this poise that might do the trick for her against the imposing opponent from Turkey, who is seeded top in the draw. Surmeneli is also 23 and has collected two Gold medals this year internationally. Borgohain is no novice either and has secured two world championship Bronze medals so far in her career.

on the eve of the crucial fight. "As for Lovlina, all that needs to be conveyed in terms of strategy has been conveyed to her and she is ready. These two have never faced each other before so it is an uncharted territory for both of them," he added.

"She is very upbeat and confident about a good performance and I am sure she will deliver."

The boxer herself seemed pretty clear about her path ahead after the semifinal win over former world champion Nien-Chin Chen on the Chinese Taipei.

"Medal to bas gold hota hai, let me get that first," she had said after the historic triumph which ensured that the nine-strong Indian boxing team that came here has at least one medal to celebrate.

Borgohain has shown remarkable composure for a debutant at the sport's biggest extravaganza. And it is this poise that might do the trick for her against the imposing opponent from Turkey, who is seeded top in the draw. Surmeneli is also 23 and has collected two Gold medals this year internationally. Borgohain is no novice either and has secured two world championship Bronze medals so far in her career.

Toor, Rani fail to reach finals

Tokyo: Asian record holder shot putter Tajinder Pal Singh Toor and javelin thrower Annu Rani failed to qualify for the events following below-par performances at the Olympics on Tuesday.

The 26-year-old Toor, who was expected to at least make the finals, failed to live up to the expectations as he could only manage one legal throw of 19.99m, in his first attempt, to finish 13th out of 16 competitors in qualification.

Competing with a heavily bandaged shoulder, his next two throws were fouls. Every participant gets only three attempts in the qualification round.

The below-par show meant that Toor made an exit even before the start of second qualification.

Those who cleared 21.20m or at least 12 best performers from the two

qualifying rounds made the final cut.

Toor had qualified for Olympics with a personal best of 21.49m and had managed to achieve that, he would have been an automatic qualifier to the finals.

In the women's javelin throw, national record holder Rani was even worse as she finished 14th and last in qualification A with a best third round throw of 54.04m, which was well below her personal best of 63.24m. Rani, who qualified for the Olympics on the basis of her world rankings eventually ended at 29th and last after the two qualifying rounds.

Her two other throws were 50.35m and 53.19m.

Those who breach the automatic qualifying mark of 63m or at least 12 best performers make it to the finals.

Warholm shatters WR

Tokyo: Norway's Karsten Warholm shattered the world record to claim Gold in an epic 400m hurdles on Tuesday as Germany's Malaika Mihambo soared to victory in the long jump.

The 25-year-old stormed over the line in an incredible 45.94 seconds, slicing a massive 0.8sec off his own world mark of 46.70 set in Oslo last month.

Long-time USA rival Rai Benjamin pushed Warholm hard in the home straight and took Silver in another blistering time of 46.17sec, the second fastest in history.

It was the dramatic final act of an entertaining morning session on day five of the athletics competition that produced a Gold for German long-jumper Mihambo in a classic duel with 2012 Gold medallist and four-time world champion Brittney Reese of the United States. AFP

India brace for tough English Test

PTI ■ NOTTINGHAM

The toughest four months of Virat Kohli's eventful leadership career start here on Wednesday when his strategic acumen will be tested while selecting a perfect Indian combination to take on a good England side in the first Test of a five-match series.

Kohli announced his playing XI for the World Test Championship final against New Zealand couple of days before the game and drew flak for not respecting the conditions.

However, on Wednesday, he will have to think overtime about the balance of his squad with a long tail, often bushy with runs, and just two openers — one untested (Rohit Sharma) but very capable and another supremely talented (KL Rahul) but highly reluctant starter.

Rahul, with 2000 plus Test runs, looks a logical choice to partner Rohit after Mayank Agarwal's concussion but the



England captain Joe Root, left, and India skipper Virat Kohli meet with the trophies prior to the first Test between England and India at Trent Bridge in Nottingham

1st Test, Day 1
Live from 3:30pm IST
SONY SIX NETWORK

lack of Hardik Pandya and the utility of two specialist spinners does come into the question. Rahul's hundred in the last First-Class game and adequate preparation time would keep him in good head space. He was also in fine form during the intra-squad match and perhaps would fancy the idea of game time irrespective of his slot rather than wearing a red India bib and carrying

Singh Dhoni being captain in two of them.

Kohli was a part of the 2014 team when it lost 1-3 and the then vice-captain had a torrid time with the bat.

He came back determined in 2018, scored truckloads of runs but a poor team choice at the Lord's and one bad batting session in Southampton meant that under him, India lost 1-4.

As the Indian captain walks out with his band of men against a side that has two artists of red Dukes at work in James Anderson and Stuart Broad.

The veterans will be complemented by one of the world's fastest bowlers in Mark Wood and a smart apprentice in Ollie Robinson.

The job for Kohli and his seasoned top-order would be easier said than done on a grassy Trent Bridge pitch.

SQUADS

India: Virat Kohli (c), Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane, Hanuma

Vihari, Rishabh Pant (wk), R Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Axar Patel, Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma, Shami, Siraj, Shardul Thakur, Umesh Yadav, KL Rahul, Wriddhiman Saha (wk), Abhimanyu Easwaran. **England:** Joe Root (c), James Anderson, Jonny Bairstow, Dom Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Haseeb Hameed, Dan Lawrence, Jack Leach, Ollie Pope, Ollie Robinson, Dom Sibley, Mark Wood.

'LEAVE PUJARA ALONE'

India captain Virat Kohli wants critics of Cheteshwar Pujara's batting to leave him alone as he strongly believes that it is up to individuals to figure out the 'drawbacks' in their game. Pujara is India's second highest Test run-getter in the current team after skipper Kohli with 6000 plus runs (6267) in 86 matches but has often been accused of playing an ultra-defensive game which increases pressure on batsmen who follow.