

NATION 5
VENKAIAH NAIDU SUSPENDS
SIX TMC MPS FOR RUCKUS

MONEY 8
MARKETS AT FRESH HIGHS: SENSEX RALLIES
546 PTS TO SCALE 54K; NIFTY TOPS 16,200

SPORTS 11
ENGLAND ALL OUT FOR
183 ON DAY 1

VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY, AUGUST 5, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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MEHREEN SIGNS
A ROMANTIC
FILM

Page 12

NOD FOR CONTINUATION OF FAST TRACK SPECIAL COURTS FOR POCSO CASES

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved continuation of 1,023 fast track special courts, including 389 exclusive POCSO courts, as a centrally sponsored scheme for another two years. Union Minister Anurag Thakur said out of 31 States and UTs, 28 have started the scheme. West Bengal is one of the states which has not started the scheme, he said. The scheme would continue from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023 with an outlay of Rs 1,572.86 crore -- Rs 971.70 crore as central share and Rs 601.16 crore as State share, an official statement said.

AIR INDIA ACCUMULATED RS 70,820 CR LOSSES TILL MARCH 31, 2020: CENTRE

Air India has been suffering heavy losses since its merger with Indian Airlines in 2007 and it has accumulated losses of about Rs 70,820 crore till March 31, 2020, Minister of State for Civil Aviation VK Singh said on Wednesday. Financial bids for Air India are likely to be received from qualified interested bidders by September 15 this year. The Centre had invited Expression of Interests (Eols) for Air India on January 27, 2020. The last date of submission -- after multiple extensions due to COVID-19 pandemic -- of Eols was December 14, 2020.

MHA FOR DISCIPLINARY ACTION ON CBI FORMER DIRECTOR ALOK VERMA

The Union home ministry has recommended disciplinary action against former CBI director Alok Verma for allegedly misusing his official position and violating the relevant service rules, officials said on Wednesday. They said the Ministry of Home Affairs has written to the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), the nodal ministry for the CBI, to take necessary disciplinary action against Verma. The action, if approved, may include temporary or permanent forfeiture of Verma's pension and retirement benefits, the officials said.

INDIA BUILDS WORLD'S HIGHEST ROAD IN LADAKH, BEATS BOLIVIA'S RECORD

The Border Roads Organisation has constructed the world's highest road in eastern Ladakh at an altitude of 19,300 feet, the government said in a statement today. The road has been constructed at an altitude higher than the Mount Everest base camps - the south base camp in Nepal is at an altitude of 17,598 feet, while the north base camp in Tibet is at 16,900 feet. To put this in another perspective, most large commercial aircraft fly at 30,000 feet and above, so this road is at an altitude that's more than half of that.

Lovlina Borgohain, right, became only the third Indian boxer to win a medal at the Olympics when she won a bronze in the Women's welterweight event in Tokyo, while Ravi Dahiya, far right, beat Nurislam Sanayev by pinfall in the men's wrestling freestyle 57kg semi-final, assuring India of at least a silver medal, on Wednesday. India has so far won 1 silver and 2 bronze.



Jagan joins 'Koo' social media platform

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has joined Koo, a 'desi' micro-blogging and social networking platform that enables users to interact in their mother tongue with the aim of reaching people directly in their native languages.

Joining Jagan's debut on Koo, the YSR CP (@YSRCPOfficial), the office of the Chief Minister - CMO AP (@AndhraPradeshCM) and AP Digital Corporation (@APDigitalCorp) have also created their official accounts on the Indian micro-blogging platform.

Using the handle @ysjagan, JaGAN will interact with people in Telugu and English.

In a recent post from his Koo profile, a video was shared in which Jagan emphasised on the need for building sustainable hospitals that will last for generations. The people can connect to Jagan at <https://www.kooapp.com/profile/ysjagan>.

The launch of the CM's account is aimed at empowering the people of AP to communicate and interact with the Government in both Telugu and English.

3 finance dept staff suspended for leaking sensitive info

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The YS Jaganmohan Reddy government on Wednesday suspended three officials of the Finance Department after it came to light that they have been leaking "sensitive and confidential" information to a section of media about the financial condition of the state.

Finance Secretary SS Rawat issued orders suspending Assistant Secretary Nagulapati Vekateswarlu and section officers Kasireddy Varaprasad and D Sreenu Babu.

The suspension came on the back of a vernacular daily, which is often accused by the ruling YSRCP as a supporter of the main opposition TDP, publishing a series of critical reports about the State finances and debt position, especially about the government's plans to raise loans through newly incorporated APSDC.

In 2017, the then TDP government too had suspended two employees in a similar manner. The TDP government in November 2017 had suspended two section officers Thimmappa working in the Law Department and Venkatarami Reddy in the Water Resources Department on the allegations of leaking a draft copy regarding retirement age limit of government

employees to the media.

The Opposition TDP stepping up its offensive against the YSRCP government over State finances and debt position has turned into a new flashpoint in Andhra Pradesh politics.

The orders issued by Rawat said: "Government had ordered a vigilance inquiry in light of a series of news items published continuously against the government in newspapers, leading to the suspicion regarding the leakage of sensitive and confidential information, which were misrepresented and twisted to malign the government and cause undue panic among the public".

The vigilance inquiry found that Nagulapati Vekateswarlu, along with Kasireddy Vara Prasad, had passed on confidential information to Sreenu Babu, who in turn was passing the information to the media.

"Nagulapati Vekateswarlu was fully aware about the sensitivity and confidentiality of the information, but still caused unauthorised transmission of information, which primarily gives the suspicion of deliberate leakage of information, the orders said.

Dharna to stop VSP sale resonates in Delhi

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The dharna called by the Visakha Ukku Parirakshana Porata Committee at Andhra Bhavan, New Delhi drew a tremendous response on Wednesday, with representatives of all political parties, except the BJP, and trade unions taking part.

The protesters demanded the Union government to withdraw its proposal to privatise the RINL-Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

The protesters, including elected representatives of the various political parties and their affiliated unions, demanded the Centre scrap the proposed disinvestment of RINL.

The vicinity of the Andhra Bhavan resounded with slogans by the political leaders and RINL

workers.

Addressing the protesters, YSR Congress Party Parliamentary Party leader V Vijayasai Reddy assured his party's unconditional support to the agitation. He called upon the RINL unions to be prepared for the long haul and cautioned them that their protest would build tremendous pressure on the Centre considering that the General Elections are scheduled for 2024.

Vijayasai Reddy also disclosed that the YSRCP was also exploring all the means and ways to stop privatisation of RINL. "Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is very keen on the developments and the State government would fight for employees and workers of RINL," he said.

7.15 LAKH CASES PENDING IN VARIOUS COURTS ACROSS AP

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

A whopping 7,15,219 cases are pending in various courts in Andhra Pradesh as per information available on National Judicial Data Grid (NJDG) as on Wednesday.

Of these 3.2 lakh are criminal cases while 3.9 lakh are of civil nature. In the Andhra Pradesh High Court alone, the number of cases pending is 2.15 lakh.

As many as 47 cases have been pending for more than 30 years of which 21 are civil cases. Of these, 15 have been stayed and 10 cases are securing presence. There are 6,718 cases pending for more than 10 years, of which 5,467 are civil in nature and the remaining are criminal cases.

A majority of the cases have been stayed, or secured presence. While 2.87 lakh cases are original, 77,488 are execution petitions, 24,006 cases are appeals and 1,237 are applications.

As many as 22,516 marriage petitions are pending while 1,583 are cases involving juveniles. About

PARTICULARS	CIVIL	CRIMINAL	TOTAL
0 to 1 year	137941 (35.33%)	123983 (39.98%)	267775 (37.44%)
1 to 3 years	145274 (37.21%)	131882 (40.62%)	277156 (38.76%)
3 to 5 years	63337 (16.22%)	46916 (14.45%)	110253 (15.42%)
5 to 10 years	38404 (9.84%)	14834 (4.57%)	53238 (7.44%)
10 to 20 years	5235 (1.34%)	1083 (0.33%)	6318 (0.88%)
20 to 30 years	205 (0.05%)	137 (0.05%)	342 (0.05%)
Above 30 years	21 (0.01%)	26 (0.01%)	47 (0.01%)

A majority of the cases have been stayed, or secured presence. While 2.87 lakh cases are original, 77,488 are execution petitions, 24,006 cases are appeals and 1,237 are applications.



2.62 lakh cases are warrants or summons related to criminal cases.

In July alone, 47,659 cases were filed in various courts of AP while 40,106 cases were disposed of.

Troublingly, 74,822 cases were filed by senior citizens and 1,00,633 by women in AP.

No time frame has been pre-

scribed for disposal of various kinds of cases by the respective courts.

To fast track criminal cases involving elected MPs / MLAs, a special court is functional in Andhra Pradesh.

HC grants conditional bail to TDP leader Devineni Uma

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday granted conditional bail to Telugu Desam Party senior leader Devineni Umamaheswara Rao who was arrested on charges of rioting and involvement in an attack on the police at G Konduru police station last week.

On July 28, the day after his arrest, Devineni Uma moved a bail petition in the High Court.

2

WATER SHARING DISPUTE

CJI recuses after AP says 'no' to mediation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Justice of India (CJI) N V Ramana Wednesday recused himself from hearing Andhra Pradesh's plea after it said "no" to the Supreme Court's suggestion to go for mediation over dispute with Telangana which has allegedly deprived the state of its legitimate share of drinking and irrigation water from the Krishna river.

The CJI, who hails from Andhra Pradesh, had said in the last hearing that he belonged to both the states and suggested "mediation" to Andhra Pradesh and Telangana for

settling their dispute, saying it did not want to interfere "unnecessarily".

The bench, also comprising Justice Surya Kant, on Wednesday took note of the submissions of G Umamathi, the counsel appearing for Andhra Pradesh, that the state wanted adjudication of the case by the apex court bench instead of going for the mediation.

"Then let the matter be listed before another bench. We are not forcing you, if you don't want mediation. Place it before another bench," the CJI ordered.

2

Delay in clearing NREGS bills angers HC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Wednesday expressed its anger at the State government for the delay in the clearing NREGS bills.

The court was hearing a petition alleging that the government had cleared only Rs 40 crore of the Rs 1,530 crore in pending bills.

Responding to this, counsel appearing for the State government told the High Court that bills worth Rs 413 crore have been cleared and the remaining Rs 1,117 crore will be cleared in four weeks.

2

BJP got over 3 times more donations than 5 parties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP has declared donations worth more than three times of the aggregate amount for five other parties, including the Congress, TMC and NCP, according to a report by the Association for Democratic Reforms.

The report stated that the BJP also disclosed donations from the Amravati Municipal Corporation, where both the mayor and the deputy mayor are from the saffron party. The party's declarations also included land received from at least three

donors.

"The donations declared by the BJP are more than three times the aggregate declared by the Congress, NCP, CPI, CPM and TMC, for the same period (Rs 785.77 crore against Rs 228.035 crore declared by the remaining parties)," it said.

The report, prepared by the Association for Democratic Reforms (ADR), focuses on donations received by the national political parties, above Rs 20,000, during the financial year 2019-20, as submitted by the parties to the Election Commission of

India (ECI).

According to the report, the BJP declared a donation of Rs 4.80 lakh from the Amravati Municipal Corporation.

"No details of address, bank name, PAN, among others, have been provided by the party against this donation. A casual search on the internet shows that the aforesaid donor is a Government of Maharashtra local body (as mentioned on their website).

It raises questions on the legality of the contribution made by a municipal corporation which is a govern-

ing body (whose mayor and deputy mayor are from BJP) to a political party," the poll rights group said.

"The BJP declared 570 donations of Rs 149.875 crore, AITC collected 52 donations worth Rs 7.1035 crore, Congress collected 25 donations of Rs 2.6875 crore and NCP collected two donations of Rs 3.005 crore having incomplete cheque/DD details where cheque number, bank details on which it was drawn and the date on which the cheque was received/ encashed is not provided.

2

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashadha & Krishna Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Dwadashi 17:08

Nakshatram : Ardra Full Night

Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam : 1:57 pm - 3:32 pm

Yamagandam : 6:00 am - 7:35 am

Varjyam : 1:35 pm - 3:20 pm

Gulika : 9:11 am - 10:46 am

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 7:42 pm - 9:27 pm

Ahhijit Muhurtham : 11:56 am - 12:47 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 35/28

Humidity: 54%

Sunrise: 5:56 am

Sunset: 06:47 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated AUGUST 04, 2021 5:00 PM



High-income countries administered around 50 doses for every 100 people in May, and that number had since doubled, according to WHO.

Enrolment in government schools in AP up, officials praise schemes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Enrolment of students in schools has gone up in Andhra Pradesh.

During a review meeting on New Education Policy (NEP) on Wednesday, officials informed Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy that there were significant results in the education sector due to revolutionary changes like the Amma Vodi scheme, introduction of English as medium of instruction and the Nadu Nedu programme in schools.

They said the enrolment in all types of schools in the State was 72.33 lakh by 2014-15 and it had dropped to 70.43 lakh by 2018-19. They said that enrolment has reached 73.06 lakh by 2020-21 due to implementation of Amma Vodi Scheme.

The officials said the enrolment in government schools in the State was 42.83 lakh by 2014-15 and it had dropped to 37.21 lakh by 2018-19 and added that the enrolment has reached again to 43.44 lakh by 2020-21. They said the Amma Vodi scheme has played a crucial role in enrolment of students in the schools and added that accurate data has been prepared with social audits.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to ensure that



teachers are appointed in schools as per classification and maintain student-teacher ratio.

The officials stated that the schools have been classified into six categories under the New Education Policy (NEP) from PP-1 to 12th grade, where Satellite Schools will be offering PP-1, PP-2, Foundation Schools offering PP-1, PP-2, class 1 and 2, Foundation Plus Schools offering PP-1, PP-2 and classes 1-5, Pre-high schools teach PP-1, PP-2, and classes 1-7, High Schools from classes 3-10 and High School Plus have classes 3-12.

The officials explained that due to the classification, the number of schools will be increased from existing 44,000 to about 58,000.

The Chief Minister directed

the authorities to allocate teachers in accordance with this classification, duly maintaining the student-teacher ratio. The Chief Minister also directed them to take appropriate steps to appoint the required number of teachers to impart good education to the students. He stated that the medium of instruction will be English, as the students have to survive in the competitive world and directed the officials to teach Telugu as a compulsory subject.

Further, the Chief Minister said that skilled teachers will be made available in the schools, even the single teacher schools will be transformed, where different subjects will be taught by different teachers as this would also reduce the workload on teachers.

CM to launch Jagananna Paccha Thoranam today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy will be launching Jagananna Paccha Thoranam-Vanamahotsavam 2021 by planting a sapling at All India Institutes of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Mangalagiri on Thursday.

Minister for Forests and Environment Balineni Srinivasa Reddy said that the state government has brought the ambitious programme with an objective of protecting the environment and balancing the climatic conditions by planting more trees in the State. The government has planted 33.23 crore saplings in the last two years, and under this

programme, more saplings will be planted with the same enthusiasm, he said. The Minister stated that the programme was initiated to make Green Andhra Pradesh and urged the public to take part in this initiative keeping future generations in view. Further, the government is planting 75 lakh saplings under NREGA, and even taking up the initiative under Nadu-Nedu programmes. The Minister said that the government is committed to promote 33 percent greenery in line with the National Forest Policy, thereby achieving ecological balance, prioritising the conservation of forests and promotion of greenery.

A promotion channel will also be set up for qualified Anganwadi teachers. He stated that the government has been spending over Rs 16,000 crore on the NEP and Nadu-Nedu programme.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to create awareness on NEP and said to clear the

AP yet to submit fresh funding proposal for Vizag Metro

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Over two years after Korea Eximbank backed off from funding the proposed Light Metro Rail Project at Vizag, the State government is yet to submit a fresh proposal to the Centre to secure required external assistance for the project.

In fact, the State government is yet to respond to the Centre's suggestion to approach other bilateral or multilateral agencies for loan assistance for the project, after Korea Eximbank backed out.

Korea Eximbank had come forward to offer financial assistance for Vizag Light Metro Rail, but backed off due to various reasons in 2019. Later, Amaravati Metro Rail Corporation (AMRC) officials wrote to the government to initiate talks with other international financial institutions like Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) and the New Development Bank (NDB) seeking funds.

As per the initial timelines fixed, AMRC was to award the contract to the successful bidder by March 2019 and work was expected to begin immediately.

At that time, five firms - Adani Group, Tatas, Shapoorji Pallonji Group, Essel Group and IL & FS - were shortlisted and RFP was issued to them.

These five firms were to submit their technical and financial bids.

However due to the General Elections, the project timeline went awry.

The regime changed, and the new government in the State is said to have tweaked the Vizag Metro Rail plan.

It rolled out a revised plan costing Rs 20,000 crore to improve public transport by developing metro and tram corridors in Vizag.

According to the new DPR, the Metro Rail would connect the Vizag Steel Plant gate to Bhogapuram, a stretch of 76.9 km with 53 stations. As per initial plans, Vizag Metro Rail project was to have three corridors, with 42.5 km length.

Proposals were also prepared for a 60.2 km tram corridor, taking the project length to 137.1 km (including Metro and tram). It is estimated that Rs 14,000 crore would be needed for Metro Rail and Rs 6,000 crore for tram services.

"The Government of Andhra Pradesh had submitted a proposal for external financial assistance from Korea Eximbank for a Light Metro Rail Project in Visakhapatnam on Public Private Partnership (PPP) mode. The Korean side, after examining the proposal, conveyed their inability to finance the project. GoAP was, therefore, advised that the pro-

ject proposal may be posed by them to some other bilateral/multilateral agencies for loan assistance through web portal of the Department of Economic Affairs as per the extant guidelines. No fresh proposal for external assistance for the Light Metro Rail Project in Visakhapatnam has been received from GoAP in this regard," Union Minister of State for Housing and Urban Affairs Kaushal Kishore told the Rajya Sabha.

Korea Eximbank had offered to lend at an interest rate between 6.5 percent to 7 percent for a repayment tenure of 20 years with a five year moratorium.

AMRC had also appointed a financial advisor or loan arranger for the purpose.

AMRC during 2019 had embarked on an innovative PPP model to keep the Metro Rail project rolling. Under 'PPP model' for Vizag Metro, the government was to bear 51 percent of the total cost by creating civil infrastructure and the private investor was to invest 49 percent of the costs in acquiring rolling stock like rail coaches, electrification and mechanical works, Operation and Maintenance (O&M) for a prescribed period.

According to initial estimates, the total cost of Vizag Metro Rail project, excluding land, was pegged at Rs 8,300 crore.

Leaders hail boxer Lovlina for her Olympics bronze

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan on Wednesday joined the nation in congratulating boxer Lovlina Borgohain who won the Olympics Bronze medal.

Praising her hard work, grit and determination, the Governor said Lovlina has done the nation proud with her outstanding performance and the Bronze medal won by her in boxing at the Tokyo Olympics Games will be an inspiration to the youth of the country.

In a separate message, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy congratulated Borgohain (69kg). "Congratulations to Lovlina Borgohain for winning the third medal for India at Tokyo-

2020. She fought the best in her category and won a medal in her debut Olympics. May you keep shining and inspire many young girls through your career ahead," Jagan wrote on twitter.

Borgohain had to stand up to a strong challenge against Surmeneli who was quite aggressive with her hooks and body shots. Borgohain made it to the history books as the 23-year-old, who started her career as a Muay Thai practitioner went on to become the third Indian boxer to win a medal. Hers is also the first Olympic medal in Indian boxing in nine years after Vijender Singh (2008) and MC Mary Kom (2012).

Meanwhile, Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu

Naidu on his twitter handle said, "She clinched a medal for India in her first Olympics! Congratulations to Lovlina Borgohain on winning the Bronze medal in boxing. I wish her many more phenomenal achievements in the future!"

Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan wrote: "I convey my heartfelt greetings to young boxer Lovlina Borgohain, who brought the third medal to the country in the Tokyo Olympics, on my behalf and Janasena Party. Even during the stage of her first steps in the international sports arena, Lovlina securing a bronze medal is infusing confidence among the young sportspersons. I hope she will achieve more medals in future."

Relief for Murali Mohan as HC stays CID notice

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Actor and Jayabheri Properties chairman Murali Mohan heaved a sigh of relief on Wednesday after the Andhra Pradesh High Court stayed proceedings in a cheating case.

The case was filed by a property owner alleging that the actor-business had cheated him. After hearing the arguments, the court stayed further proceedings in this case.

Earlier the CID issued a notice under Section 41A, ask-

ing Murali Mohan to attend the hearing on Thursday. Murali Mohan's family members filed a quash petition in the High Court against the CID notice.

Senior counsel Dammalapati Srinivas argued on behalf of the petitioners. He said it was wrong to turn a civil dispute into a criminal one. Srinivas said Jayabheri Properties had not violated the agreement with the landlord.

Following the arguments, the High Court ordered that all subsequent proceedings in the case be stayed.



RIL's PET recycle plant near Krishnapatnam port soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Limited (RIL), India's largest private sector company, is doubling its PET recycling capacity by setting up a recycled polyester staple fiber (PSF) manufacturing facility in Andhra Pradesh.

The RIL's facility will come up close to Krishnapatnam Port in Nellore district.

In a statement, the company said: "The move is part of RIL's commitment to lead the industry on a circular economy, enhance its sustainability quotient and bolster the entire polyester and polymer value chain. As a part of this endeavour, Srichakra Ecotex India Pvt. Ltd. will build and operate exclusively for RIL the new recycled PSF - Recron GreenGold and PET flakes wash-line in Andhra Pradesh".

RIL's initiative to more than double its recycling capacity to 5 billion post-consumer PET bottles will ensure India maintains over 90pc recycling rate, the company said.

It said that RIL is focusing on sustaining India's post-consumer PET recycling rate which is currently the highest in the world. RIL will empower entrepreneurs used packaging from landfills, set up recycling facilities and create wealth from waste throughout the country.

Delay in clearing...

Continued from Page 1

The High Court directed the government to submit a comprehensive affidavit including details of how much was paid to which gram panchayat.

The High Court sought from Panchayat Raj Principal Secretary GK Dwivedi the results of the vigilance inquiry pertaining to the NREGS bills.

When Dwivedi sought time, the High Court expressed anger at the principal secretary saying it was surprising that officials came to the court without getting information on the relevant matters.

With the Principal Finance Secretary remaining absent for the hearing without filing a petition, the High Court warned that if he did not appear at the next hearing, it would be deemed contempt of court.

The court adjourned the case to August 18.

Jagan joins 'Koo' social...

Continued from Page 1

The Koo accounts of the AP government Departments will also serve as a platform to educate and inform the people on the State's ongoing activities.

Welcoming the Chief Minister, Aprameya Radhakrishna, founder and CEO, Koo, said, "We are very happy to extend a warm welcome to the Honourable CM of Andhra Pradesh. His presence on the platform will help all of his followers to easily keep in touch with him and his thoughts and opinions on a daily basis."

Sharing his views, Mayank Bidawatka, Co-founder, Koo, said, "We welcome YS Jaganmohan Reddy to Koo and believe that his presence on our platform will benefit the Telugu-speaking community across the world."

As the platform gains traction, many more celebrities, thought leaders and regional parties from the State are expected to join Koo, where they can interact with people in Telugu as well as the other languages that Koo offers. Recently Tanikella Bharani, Vijayashanthi, LB Shriram, actresses Eesha Rebba and Anushka Shetty, and actor Naga Shourya also joined Koo.

HC grants bail to Devineni Uma...

Continued from Page 1

Devineni Uma's lawyer told the court that YSRCP leaders and cadres had attacked the former minister while he was inspecting alleged illegal mining activity in Kondapalli forest area in Mylavaram Assembly constituency in Krishna district. After hearing the arguments from the prosecution and the petitioner, the High Court granted conditional bail to Devineni Uma.

The former minister and 17 other TDP leaders were arrested by the G Kondur police and booked under Section 307 IPC (attempt to murder), SC and ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, rioting, criminal conspiracy and other charges.

The former minister, along with his followers, went into Kondapalli reserve forests on July 27 evening, alleging that illegal mining was being done and some ruling YSR Congress Party leaders were

behind the mining activities.

On knowing this, activists of YSRCP rushed to the spot and clashed with Devineni Uma and others. The TDP leaders alleged that Mylavaram MLA Vasantha Krishna Prasad's supporters pelted Devineni Uma's car with stones and sticks and damaged it; however, the latter managed to escape.

Police entered the scene and shifted Devineni Uma to G Kondur police station, where he staged a dharna till midnight demanding that a case be booked against Vasantha Krishna Prasad.

Krishna district SP Siddharth Kaushal said the TDP leaders created tension at the police station in a planned manner. Around 1 am, the police shifted the former minister to Nandiwada police station and dispersed the mobs. A few policemen were injured and some vehicles were damaged in the incident, the SP said.

BJP got over 3 times more...

Continued from Page 1

Thus, without the complete cheque/Demand Draft (DD) details, it would be a time-consuming process to link the donors against their donations and hence trace the money trail," the report said.

The report said the BJP declared receiving land from three donors of a total value of Rs 1.516 crore.

"The three donations are from Jhanjharpur in Bihar worth Rs 36.80 lakh, Rs 50 lakh and Rs 64.88 lakh. Apart from the names, location of donors, PAN details of one

donor, no other details have been provided like donors' address, bank details, PAN of remaining two donors, address and khasra' (plot) number of land, type of land agricultural/commercial, among others," it said.

The report added that the CPM and CPI also failed to declare the details of cheque and DD (cheque number, bank on which it was drawn and the date) for a total of 39 donations amounting to Rs 1.0786 crore and 29 donations amounting to Rs 52.17 lakh, respectively.

3 finance dept staff ...

Continued from Page 1

"Now, therefore, in exercise of the powers conferred by sub-rule (1) of rule (8) of the AP Civil Services (CC&A) Rules, 1991, Government hereby place Nagulapati Vekateswarlu, under suspension with immediate effect and he shall continue to be under suspension in public interest until conclusion of disciplinary proceedings," said the Order. More importantly, the vigilance probe found Vara Prasad's role in leaking confidential reports under circulation in the e-office much prior to approval of the competent officers.

Information regarding government guarantees was also leaked to the media, allegedly by Vara Prasad.

During the period of the orders remaining in force, the suspended officers should not leave the headquarters-Amaravati without obtaining the prior permission, the orders said.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹243
Without Skin	₹263
Broiler at Farm	₹134

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	446
HYDERABAD	496
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE (IN VIJAYAWADA)	₹4.41

COURTESY CALL



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and his wife YS Bharati Reddy call on Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan at the Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Wednesday.

CJI recuses after AP says...

Continued from Page 1

"They don't want mediation, and I don't want to hear the matter," CJI Ramana said during the brief hearing.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Centre, said the government has no objection if the CJI-led bench heard the plea of Andhra Pradesh.

"I do not have any objection, neither does the Government. We have full faith," the law officer said.

"Thank you," the CJI said while politely refusing to hear the case of Andhra Pradesh.

On August 2, CJI Ramana had said: "I don't want to hear this matter legally. I belong to both the states. If the matter can be settled in mediation, please do that. We can help

with that. Otherwise I will transfer this to another bench." The counsel for Andhra Pradesh had taken time till Wednesday for apprising the bench of the view of the state over the apex court's mediation offer.

In July, Andhra Pradesh government had moved the top court claiming that the Telangana government refused to follow the decisions taken by the Apex Council constituted under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, the directions of KRMB, and directions of government of India," it said.

"This has caused immense hardship for people of Andhra Pradesh as availability of water has been seriously prejudiced by depletion in Srisailem Dam project as well as other projects such as the Nagarjuna Sagar Project and the Pulichintala Project," it added.

upon as they were being deprived of their "legitimate share of water" due to "unconstitutional, illegal and unjust" acts of the Telangana government and its officials.

"The present petition is being moved because the state of Telangana is refusing to follow decisions taken in the Apex Council constituted under the Andhra Pradesh Reorganization Act, 2014, directions of KRMB, and directions of government of India," it said.

"This has caused immense hardship for people of Andhra Pradesh as availability of water has been seriously prejudiced by depletion in Srisailem Dam project as well as other projects such as the Nagarjuna Sagar Project and the Pulichintala Project," it added.

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Four more ESI scam accused arrested

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials arrested four more persons in the ESI scam case on Wednesday. During the course of investigation, the officials arrested the accused officer Dr Bala Ravi Kumar (A-18), the then Director, Indian Medical Service, presently working as Medical Superintendent, ESI Hospital, Vijayawada. The other accused arrested were Kancharla Srihari Babji (A-19), proprietor of Omni Medi & Omni Enterprises, Hyderabad, Kancharla Sujatha (A-20), proprietor of Omni Healthcare, Hyderabad and Bandi Venkateswarlu (A- 23), Manager of Omni Health Care, Hyderabad were arrested in Hyderabad.

According to the ACB officials, the investigation established that Kancharla Srihari Babu Babji (A-19), is the proprietor of Omni Medi, Hyderabad, a Pharmacy Distributor. He is also the proprietor of another pharma distributing company Omni Enterprises, Hyderabad



and it is learnt that it is his shell company.

Kancharla Sujatha (A-20), wife of Kancharla Srihari Babu Babji is the proprietor of Omni Health Care, Hyderabad. The above three firms are functioning in the same address at Ameerpet, Hyderabad. Kancharla Srihari Babu (A-19) established another pharma distributor company by name Legend Enterprises, Kukatpally, Hyderabad in the proprietorship of his benami K Krupasagar Reddy, Hyderabad.

The above four companies are under the control of Kancharla Srihari Babu Babji. K Srihari Babu made circular

trading among their four firms and raised the price of the products (Lab Kits) to an exorbitant rates (i.e., 50 per cent to 400 per cent excess) and supplied to ESI, AP by colluding with the then Director B Ravi Kumar, and caused wrongful gain to them and wrongful loss to the Government exchequer approximately at about Rs 35 crore out of Rs 92 crore worth supply of products (Lab kits) by Legend Enterprises and Omni Medi.

The 4 Accused will be produced before the Special Judge for SPE & ACB cases, Vijayawada for judicial custody, they said.



Kothavalasa SI in ACB Net

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) sleuths caught red-handed R Narasimha Murthy, Sub-Inspector of Police, Kothavalasa Police Station, Vizianagaram district, for accepting a bribe of Rs 15,000 on Wednesday.

On the complaint given by BV Ramu of Patha Sunkarapalem village in Kothavalasa mandal of Vizianagaram District to the DSP, ACB, Vizianagaram laid a trap and caught the SI red-handed.

As per the ACB officials, R Narasimha Murthy, SI, Kothavalasa Police Station demanded Rs 50,000 and finally insisted on payment of Rs 30,000 bribe to give station bail in Cr No 201/2021 u/s 354(d), 448, 509 & 506 IPC of Kothavalasa Police Station and took an advance bribe amount of Rs 15,000 from the complainant.

In this connection, a trap was laid on Wednesday against the accused officer R Narasimha Murthy and he was caught red-handed at his residence, while accepting the balance bribe amount of Rs 15,000. The accused officer was arrested and produced before Court of Special Judge for SPE & ACB Cases, Visakhapatnam. The case is under investigation.

VMC relocates 524 families from Krishnalanka to Ajit Singh Nagar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) authorities have relocated 524 families living in Krishnalanka to Ajit Singh Nagar in the city. These families were relocated to G+3 houses constructed by VMC on Wednesday.

Earlier, the State government sanctioned flood protection retaining wall all along the left bank of Krishna River from Kanakadurga Varadhi to Koti Nagar in the city at an estimated cost of Rs 125 crore.

To construct the said retaining wall, 524 families of encroachments were identified along the riverbank and Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had assured during the foundation ceremony that these families would be provided with houses. Accordingly, approval was given by the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department of Government of Andhra Pradesh for relocation. The houses were allotted in Ajit Singh Nagar constructed with VMC funds.



Accordingly, on Wednesday, the relocation work commenced and it would be completed in the next few days. The Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) officials such as City Planner, Chief Engineer, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Project Officer (UCD) were involved in the relocation work making

all necessary arrangements like deploying an adequate number of vehicles for transportation and amenities at Ajit Singh Nagar.

The VMC authorities are taking proper care in relocating the 524 families to Ajitsingh Nagar without any disturbances by deploying VMC staff to facilitate reloca-

tion. Municipal Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh and Mayor Bhagyalakshmi inspected the process of relocation and gave instructions to the concerned Departmental Authorities.

Sub-collector Pravin Chand also visited the location along with the Commissioner.

CID seeks info on deposits of AgriGold victims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State government has decided to pay back deposit amounts to AgriGold depositors on August 24. The CID department asked the investors who had deposited amounts ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000 in AgriGold to submit

applications in their respective Village and Ward Secretariats with required documents.

In a statement here on Wednesday, the CID stated that the depositors who had deposited amounts ranging from Rs 10,000 to Rs 20,000 can submit proofs of receipts, pay orders, bank passbooks and Aadhaar cards in their

respective Secretariats and concerned Volunteers would complete the registration process. The CID officials informed that the registration process would start on August 6 and conclude on August 12. The depositors can call toll free number 18004253875 to get further information.

VIT-AP offers fee waiver to 25 Covid-hit students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr G Viswanathan, Founder Chancellor, VIT, announced Rs 62 lakh as scholarships in the form of 100 per cent fee waiver for 25 VIT-AP students who have lost a parent who was the bread-winner of the family due to Covid-19 for the current Academic year 2021-22.

The 25 students are pursuing various engineering and non-engineering programmes.

During the Covid first wave, VIT-AP offered a building to be used as a quarantine centre and donated Rs 75 lakh to AP CM Relief Fund in two phases (25 lakh + 50 lakh) in order to aid the government's efforts in fighting against Covid-19. VIT-AP hopes that such students do not face financial difficulties and will be able to complete their study on time, said Dr SV Kota Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, VIT-AP University.

‘Let not hubbies of sarpanches call shots’

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A large number of women are getting elected to the legislative bodies, thanks to the reservation rule being followed by the government. However, the negative side of this trend is that the husbands of victorious women are actually ruling the roost at the field level in most of the cases.

Majority of the elected women representatives are

not coming into the field and their close relatives are calling the shots in the villages. They are also said to be conducting the official meetings.

While alerting the elected women representatives, Collector of Vizianagaram district, A Surya Kumari, advised them not to assign official works to their husbands and appealed to them to participate in the administration works personally. “It

is a very good sign to see a large number of women being elected to sarpanch and other constitutional posts. The victorious women should attend the official works and meetings and not transfer them to their husbands,” the Collector said.

While participating in the concluding ceremony of the training programme of the village sarpanches, the Collector said that the

sarpanch post is a constitutional one and the women representatives have to fulfil their constitutional obligations by fulfilling their responsibility to the villages.

In the present scenario, the elected representatives should plan the development works considering the available resources. The sarpanches should prepare an action plan considering the works on priority basis, she added.

King Cobra scares farmers

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A 12-feet King Cobra which appeared in casuarina orchards at Chintaluru village in Prathipadu mandal in the district has frightened the farmers.



Farmers Boddu Lovaraju and Suribabuu, who were going through the orchard to their fields, spotted the dreaded King Cobra. Farmers informed the forest officials about the snake and urged them to catch it.

Five-year-old boy drowns in Krishna

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a tragic accident, a five-year-old boy drowned in Krishna River while playing with his friends in a boat near Damuluru village of Ibrahimpatnam mandal on Wednesday.

According to information, 10 children belonging to the village went to the river to have fun in the anchored boat. Suddenly, the boat in which the children were playing tilted and the children fell into the river. The local residents noticed the mishap and immediately rescued nine children. Unfortunately, one boy aged five years and identified as Nadakuditi Anand died in the mishap. The villagers were shocked over the incident.

Secretariat employees thank CM for scrapping of CBAS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Village/Ward Secretariat Employees' Association (VWSEA) thanked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for cancelling the Credit-Based Assessment System (CBAS) exam for Secretariat employees.

VWSEA State president G Rajesh said that 1.34 lakh employees working in Village and Ward Secretariats across 13 districts of Andhra Pradesh are happy with the government's decision and thanked the Chief Minister. He said that AP Government Employees Association state president KR Suryanarayana took the CBAS exam issue to the notice of the



government, the CM Jagan Mohan Reddy immediately responded in favour of the employees.

He said that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy was working for the welfare of the government employees and further sought the CM to implement the pay scale to Village and Ward Secretariat employees who complete two years of service by October 2 this year.

Earlier, the AP government

decided not to conduct CBAS exams for the employees of Village and Ward Secretariats.

Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary, Village and Ward Secretariats, said that Secretariat employees need not worry about CBAS exam as the government had decided not to conduct it. He clarified that the Department of Village and Ward secretariats was set up on October 2, 2019 and the government decided to conduct departmental exams towards completion of probation. He said that all the 1.34 lakh employees working in Secretariats and completed two years of service need to pass the departmental examinations.

Sports & games facilities set to reopen in State

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

After a long gap, the sports and game facilities will be reopened in the State soon. With the number of Covid-19 positive cases coming down, the State government has decided to reopen all sports and games activities.

Accordingly, it has issued directions to the district administration to gear up to resume the sports and games in the districts.

Due to the massive impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, the government had shut down all sports and game facilities including swimming pools from March 23, 2020.

Trains cancelled, diverted for works in Vja division

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Several trains have been proposed to be cancelled and also a number of train services have been diverted due the commissioning of Vijayawada-Uppaluru doubling and carrying of non-interlocking works in Vijayawada division.

Accordingly, Train 08561 Visakhapatnam-Kacheguda special train leaving Visakhapatnam on August 12 and 13 will be cancelled. Similarly, Train 08562 Kacheguda-Visakhapatnam special train leaving Kacheguda on August 13 and 14 is cancelled.

Similarly, Train 02717 Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada special and the train 02718 Vijayawada-Visakhapatnam spe-

cial trains on August 13 and 14 will be cancelled. Train 07239 Guntur -Visakhapatnam special train leaving Guntur on August 12, 13 and 14 and Train 07240 Visakhapatnam-Guntur special train leaving Visakhapatnam on August 13, 14 and 15 stand cancelled. Train 02831 Visakhapatnam-Lingampalli special leaving Visakhapatnam on August 12, 13 and 14 and train 02832 Lingampalli-Visakhapatnam special leaving Lingampalli on August 13, 14 and 15 have been cancelled. Train 07479 Tirupati-Puri special train leaving Tirupati on August 7, 9, 10, 11 and 13 will run in diverted route via Vijayawada, Eluru, Nidadavolu and does not touch Gudivada, Kaikuluru, Akividu, Bhimavaram

Town and Tanuku. Train 07480 Puri-Tirupati special train leaving Puri on August 6, 8, 9, 11, 12 and 13 will run in a diverted route via Nidadavolu, Eluru and Vijayawada instead of its scheduled path. Train 07481 Tirupati-Bilaspur leaving Tirupati on August 8 and 12 and train 07482 Bilaspur-Tirupati leaving Bilaspur on August 7 and 10 will run in diverted route Trains, including 08519 Visakhapatnam-Lokmanya Tilak leaving Visakhapatnam on August 12 and 13, Train 07016 Secunderabad-Bhubaneswar special leaving Secunderabad on August 13 and also train 07015 Bhubaneswar - Secunderabad special leaving Bhubaneswar on August 13 will run in diverted route via Vijayawada, Eluru and Nidadavolu.

New APUA chief vows to work for development of Urdu language

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Newly-appointed Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh Urdu Academy (APUA), H Nadeem Ahmad, assumed charge on Wednesday. Nadeem Ahmad, reiterating the need for protection of Mother Tongue, said he would work for the development of Urdu schools and colleges.

Nadeem Ahmad thanked Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy for appointing him as APUA Chairman. He said that Jagan Mohan Reddy is the only CM in the country who is following the principles of BR Ambedkar and Jyothi Rao Phule to provide social justice to SC, ST, BC, Minorities and other suppressed communities. He said that there were some practical problems in Urdu



medium education so he would work towards resolving those issues with the cooperation of CM Jagan Mohan Reddy. He stated that APUA would work to popularise Urdu among younger generations and develop Urdu as a World Class language in true spirit.

Amzath Basha and Minister Srinivasa Rao felicitated

Nadeem Ahmad and Muslim elders blessed him in which AP Minority Corporation Chairman Sk Asif, MLC Md Karimunnisa, Kadiri MLA Siddha Reddy, MLC V Rajagopal Reddy and other leaders participated in the programme.

Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha said that educa-

tion is the best weapon for development, hence the Minorities should acquire the best education for personal and community development. He further said that Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy giving top preference to the development of suppressed communities including Minorities and explained that CM Jagan recently gave 12 nominated chairman posts of various corporations to Minorities which is a history in the State.

Welcoming the appointment of new chairman of APUA, Amzath Basha said that the academy would work towards providing the best education in Urdu medium.

Endowments Minister Vellampalli Srinivas Rao was also present.

75 hospitals in Vizag geared up to meet Covid third wave challenge

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As many as 75 hospitals have been identified to offer medical services in view of the Covid-19 third wave alerts in Visakhapatnam. The administration has also geared up to attend the medical emergency to the children as the agencies have been alerting that the third wave impact would be more on the children below 15 years.

The district administration of Visakhapatnam has geared up to combat Covid-19 third wave.

A review meeting was convened by Minister for Tourism M. Srinivasa Rao on Wednesday. All MLAs and district-level police officers were present at the meeting.

Addressing the media after



the meeting, the minister said that 21 lakh people were vaccinated and the process is still going on. To ensure 100 per cent vaccination in the district, the officials were directed to complete the process on priority. With the alerts from various agencies on the Covid-19 third wave, the officials were directed to implement the pandemic guidelines strictly, the

minister said.

The administration would conduct various awareness programmes to control the spread of Covid-19. The Army recruitment would be conducted as per the schedule from August 16 by taking Covid-19 preventive steps, the minister said.

During the review meeting, the minister enquired about

the facilities and resources to attend the Covid-19 third wave. Availability of the oxygen beds, isolation centres, medicines and fees charged by private hospitals were also reviewed. Collector Dr. A Mallikharjuna said that a Rs 10,000 penalty would be imposed on the shopping malls, if any customer found roaming about without a mask. The police were directed to ensure the Covid-19 guidelines in the public areas. As many as 75 hospitals were to ensure Covid-19 third wave treatment in the district.

A total of 3,370 beds and 582 ventilators were kept ready to attend the next phase of Covid. In view of the child care, 100 beds were kept ready at KGH, VIMS and Chest hospital, the Collector informed.

Four Guntur MLAs in race for berth in Jagan Cabinet

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The YS Jagan Mohan Reddy government has completed 26 months in office. The Chief Minister announced that the State Cabinet would be rejigged after two-and-a-half years. He also made it clear that new inductions into the Cabinet would be taken up based on the performance of the existing ministers in the past two-and-a-half years.

Political sources said that the intelligence officials are preparing reports on the performance and efficiency of ministers and the report would be submitted to the Chief Minister. After analysing the report with the senior leaders, the Chief Minister will decide who should be dropped from the present Cabinet and whom to be inducted into his Cabinet.

With only a few months left for the completion of two-and-a-half years of tenure for the present Cabinet, the MLAs in the district have started lobbying in a big way to get a berth in the Cabinet. Some MLAs in



Chilakaluripet MLA Vidudala Rajani



Mangalagiri MLA Ramakrishna Reddy



Sattenapalli MLA Ambati Rambabu



Vemuru MLA M Nagarajuna

the district are in the race for Cabinet berth and they are Chilakaluripet MLA Vidudala Rajani, Mangalagiri MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, Sattenapalli MLA Ambati Rambabu and Vemuru MLA M Nagarajuna.

Ambati Rambabu is said to be close to Jagan Mohan Reddy. His followers are optimistic of being inducted into

the Cabinet in the reshuffle. The followers of Meruga Nagarajuna are hopeful of a ministry post to him in the SC quota.

The present Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharita may be dropped.

Jagan Mohan Reddy promised to Alla Ramakrishna Reddy to take him into Cabinet if he defeated Nara Lokesh.

Marri Rajasekhara was also assured of a Cabinet berth if Vidudala Rajani was elected, according to YSRCP sources.

Leaders in 2019 hoped that the MLAs would be taken into Cabinet but they were excluded. However, some YSRCP leaders said that Alla Rama Krishna Reddy's brother A Ayodhya Rami Reddy was sent to Rajya Sabha so that Rama Krishna Reddy may not be taken to the Cabinet. YSRCP leaders strongly believe that Jagan Mohan Reddy would definitely consider the names of Vidudala Rajani, Ambati Rambabu, Meruga Nagarajuna and Alla Ramakrishna Reddy for Cabinet berths.

The aspirants have begun their lobbying for the minister post. Meanwhile, YSRCP senior leaders made it clear that efficiency, capability and performance are the only criteria to be inducted into the Cabinet. YSRCP leaders said that the Cabinet reshuffle would take place during the last week of October or in November.

Prakasam Collector directs officials to be prepared to face Covid 3rd wave

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar has directed the official machinery to be prepared to face the third phase of Covid-19.

The Collector held a review meeting here on Wednesday on the preparedness with the nodal officers as well as government and private hospital management to face the third phase of Coronavirus.

The Collector directed the officials to arrange 3,368 beds for the Covid patients across the district. He asked them to take steps to provide a ventilator facility to beds in GGH.

He enquired about why oxygen beds were not provided at CHC in Giddalur. The Collector asked the officials to complete 169 works at private and government and private hospitals. He expressed anger over officials for carrying works in a tardy manner.

Pravin Kumar instructed the officials to keep all hospitals ready at the earliest. He also expressed dissatisfaction over arranging only 65 per cent ICU beds. The Collector expressed unhappiness over



Prakasam district occupying the 12th place in the fever survey and fever clinics maintenance.

He said all officials should work efficiently to keep the district top. The officials informed the Collector that '104' staff were not working as per the assigned duties. He directed the officials to suspend those who do not work. The Collector was told that the Covid cases were being registered in 127 hospitals in the district.

The Collector said the ANMs should monitor the

patients who are in quarantine. 'At present, there are 701 Covid-19 patients in 13 hospitals while 1,405 patients are in isolation,' the officials apprised the Collector. The Collector asked the officials to set up 871 Covid care centres.

The officials informed the Collector that cases had been registered against 63,979 people for roaming on the roads without wearing masks and collected Rs 63,97,887 from them as fine. Total fine of Rs 45 lakh was collected from shops for violating Covid protocols.

The officials told the Collector that special training was imparted to the ITI students in installing oxygen cylinders and pipelines.

The officials said to the Collector that 79 PHCs were provided with oxygen concentrators and 21 PHCs would be provided soon.

Joint Collector (Secretariats development) T S Chetan, hospital preparedness nodal officer M Venkateswara Rao, DMHO Dr P Ratnavali, DCHS Dr Usharani and ZP CEO Devananda Reddy were among those present.

Viveka murder: Sunil produced in court, remanded



PNS ■ KADAPA

The CBI produced Sunil Yadav before the court in Pulivendula on Wednesday and the court sent him to 14 days judicial remand in the YS Vivekananda Reddy murder case. He was shifted to the Kadapa Central Prison.

The CBI officials asked the court for judicial custody of Sunil Yadav and the court is to deliver its verdict on Thursday. The CBI officials arrested Sunil Yadav on Tuesday in Goa and produced him before the court in Goa.

He was the first person to be arrested in the sensational Vivekananda Reddy murder case.

Sunil Yadav used to work in a sand reach. He befriended Uma Shankar Reddy, who used to look after the agriculture fields of slain Vivekananda Reddy. Uma Shankar introduced him to Vivekananda Reddy and his family.

The SIT officials and the CBI officials grilled Sunil Yadav, his parents and brother Kiran Kumar several times. The CBI detained Sunil in New Delhi for one month and

questioned him. Then he approached the High Court complaining that the CBI was harassing him in the name of questioning.

Later, Sunil Yadav was shifted to Goa and he did not cooperate with the CBI officials. The CBI arrested him as an accused in the Viveka murder case. Sources said that some more persons could be arrested by the CBI in the coming days.

The CBI officials are questioning Yerra Gangi Reddy, who is said to be a close associate and driver of Dastagiri.

'Dial your SP' receives huge response

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Guntur Rural SP Vishal Gunni said that the 'Dial Your SP' programme has received an overwhelming response from the general public.

The SP told the media here on Wednesday that 20 grievances were received in the 'Dial Your SP' programme.

The Guntur police launched the programme for the first time in the State. Most of the grievances received on Wednesday were disputes between wife and husband and those related to property, the SP said.

He said that a seven-month pregnant woman called him and explained the problems which she was facing. An elderly woman complained to the SP that his son was harassing her for property.

"Those who cannot come to the SP office could inform their grievances to the SP in the 'Dial Your SP', the SP said. The SP said that visible policing was set up to take immediate action against those who frighten people after consuming liquor. He asked the general public to avail the programme to get their problem resolved. People can dial 8866268899 or 8688405050 and talk to the SP.

iTDP digital forum to help victims of govt 'misrule'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Wednesday warned of a severe backlash from all sections of the society if the Jagan Mohan Reddy government would go on perpetrating its 'lawless rule' to harass the innocent public and the Opposition activists.

Lokesh asserted that the time had come for everybody to rise and fight back against the cheap gangs and mobs of the ruling YSRCP leaders. There should be a collective effort and joint struggle among all the victimised sections to put an end to the chaotic



regime of Jagan Mohan Reddy and to his factionist Raja Reddy constitution.

In a statement here, Nara Lokesh asked how long this archaic YSRCP rule would go on filing false cases and making fake arrests of all those who questioned the suppressive policies of this CM. In this backdrop, the victimised sections may take the help of the iTDP digital forum and its services.

Anybody can inform the atrocities of the YSRCP workers and the erring police to the WhatsApp link provided in the website <https://itdpblog.com/> for getting all the necessary help.

Lokesh called upon the iTDP activists to stand by the side of the suffering people and individuals under the oppressive 'Tughlaq Reddy' misrule. Immediate moral and legal support should be rushed to the victims of this ruthless regime in every possible way.

The unlawful Raja Reddy constitution should be thrown into the dustbin and the country's long approved laws should be brought back into effect in AP.

Jyothi Sri arrest a dark day for AP women: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Mahila AP president Vangalapudi Anitha on Wednesday accused the Jagan Mohan Reddy government and the AP police of resorting to non-stop harassment of women and social media activists instead of correcting their 'anti-people' policies. Anitha condemned the detention of a young woman named Jyothi Sri in the police station till late night in the name of investigation into her social media posts. The Chief Minister and his advisors were obviously scared and terrified of



the rising unpopularity of their rule on social media. In a statement here, the TDP leader termed it yet another dark day for women that the AP police went on to misuse their power to detain a young woman at night for no valid reason. The police officials did not

even consider the safety of her little children and harassed her at the police station till midnight. Anitha asked whether the CM, his co-accused leaders and officers were bent on sending all critics of their regime to jail since they themselves got imprisoned in the past. Obviously, Jagan Mohan Reddy seemed to be implementing the 'Jagananna 14 Days Remand Programme' for all those who questioned his Government's harmful policies. Under this, all dissenting voices including the aged people, youth and women were being thrown into jail.

CI faces music for taking part in rave party

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Top police officials have taken serious note of a Circle Inspector participating in a rave party and suspended him.

Circle Inspector Venkateswarlu participated in a rave birthday party during which he consumed alcohol and danced with girls, which appeared in the media. Sources here on Wednesday said that the higher police officials expressed anger at the CI for taking part in a rave party, ignoring Covid protocols.

Interestingly, the CI was suspended for indiscipline earlier also when he was working as an SI. The police held 25 persons who took part in the rave party and registered cases under Section 294.



cial to modernise the railway station in the town. Railway VML Manager Surappa Srinivas, Tahsildar AV Ramana Rao, Municipal

Commissioner M Shyamala and YSRCP leaders K Nageswara Rao and Kolli Prasad accompanied the

MLA.



SP inaugurates Disha help desk at bus station

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Superintendent of Police M Ravindranath Babu inaugurated the Disha police station help desk in the APSRC complex here on Wednesday.

Interacting with women and girl students, the SP sensitised them on how to download the Disha app and make use of it.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that top priority is being given to provide protection to women. Stringent action is being initiated against anti-social elements.

DSPs K Bhima Rao, S Murali Mohan, Murali Krishna Reddy, M Rambabu, Ambika Prasad, CIs Ramachandra Rao, Rajasekhara and RTC Complex manager Bhaskar Rao were among those present.

SP suspends 3 constables for indiscipline

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district Superintendent of Police Malika Garg on Wednesday suspended three police personnel, including a head constable on indiscipline charges.

Head constable Sambaiah was found lying on road in uniform in a semi-unconscious state in Kandukur after consuming liquor. The SP suspended the constable soon after coming to know about it. The head constable was earlier transferred for consuming alcohol while on duty but he did not mend his ways and give up his drinking habit, Kandukur DSP K Srinivasa Rao said.

Another constable Sharif was suspended for indulging in anti-social activities at Lingasamudram. Similarly, an Armed Reserved constable Prasanna Raju was also placed under suspension as he was caught red-handed while playing cards at Vetapalem.

MLA performs Yajurveda Samhita Yagam

PNS ■ ONGOLE

MLA Manugunta Mahidhar Reddy participated in the Yajurveda Samhita Yagam at Janardhan Swamy Kalyana mandapam in Kandukur on Wednesday. The MLA performed the Yagam invoking the Gods to bestow prosperity and health on the people of the constituency. The priests blessed the MLA. Kandukur agriculture yard chairman Ganesham Shirisha Gangareddy, Janardhan Swamy temple chairman R Brahmanandam, advocate M Jagadish and Agriculture Market committee director G Manohar were among those who participated in the spiritual programme.



Collector opens cashew processing unit

PNS ■ KAKINADA

East Godavari District Collector C Harikiran, along with MLA Nagulapalli Dhanalakshmi and ITDA Project Director Pravin, inaugurated a cashew seed processing unit at Rampachodavaram on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the processing unit was set up at a cost of Rs 25 lakh of VKVK funds. He said that 20,000 farmers are raising cashew crop in 66,000 acres in Rampachodavaram Agency division. Efforts would be made to establish more such units in six mandals. The Collector inspected

the unit and the machinery.

The Collector said that in the present Covid pandemic situation the setting up of cashew seed processing unit is a good sign as it would help generate employment. The government is working with the welfare of the poor and the downtrodden in mind. The government is extending thousands of crores of rupees under the Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) to farmers, fishermen, students and others.

Rampachodavaram Sub-Collector Katta Simhachalam, Velugu Assistant Project Director Chinna Srinivasa Rao were among those present.



INDIA CORNER

MAN ARRESTED IN UP FOR COMMENTS ABOUT RSS CHIEF

A young man has been arrested for making alleged objectionable comments about RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat on a WhatsApp message in Sambhal district of Uttar Pradesh, a police officer said on Wednesday. A case was registered against the man under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and he was arrested based on a complaint filed by the district coordinator of the RSS-backed student organisation Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the officer said.

"Vishal Maurya of Ganesh Colony here made some objectionable comments about Bhagwat. A complaint was filed by ABVP district coordinator Akash Kumar stating that his comments hurt their feeling and that the youth also misbehaved with him," Superintendent of Police Chakresh Mishra said. The man's mobile phone has been seized and a detailed probe into the matter is underway, the officer said.

PRIYANKA GANDHI SLAMS YOGI GOVT OVER DOCTOR'S KILLING

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Wednesday attacked the Yogi Adityanath dispensation over the killing of an Ayurvedic doctor in Sitapur, saying the security system for the common people is in a poor state and the Uttar Pradesh government is not doing anything except indulging in false propaganda. "In Sitapur, UP, a doctor was hacked to death by criminals who stormed his clinic," she said. "Such incidents are creating fear in the minds of the people of the state. The security system for the common people is in such a poor state and the government is not doing anything except indulging in false propaganda," the Congress general secretary said in a tweet in Hindi. Munendra Pratap Verma, an Ayurvedic doctor who ran his own private clinic from his home in Mudrasan village, was attacked by accused Achchey Lal Verma with a sharp-edged weapon multiple times on Tuesday, police said. The doctor's father who was present at the time also suffered injuries while trying to save his son. The doctor died on the spot, they said.

CABINET NOD TO SAMAGRA SHIKSHA SCHEME FOR SCHOOLS

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved continuation of the 'Samagra Shiksha Scheme' for school education for another five years, Union ministers Dharmendra Pradhan and Anurag Thakur told reporters that the scheme would continue from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2026. Education minister Pradhan said the scheme would be called 'Samagra Shiksha Scheme 2'. A financial outlay of Rs 2,94,283.04 crore, which includes central share of Rs 1,85,398.32 crore has been made to implement the scheme. It will cover 1.16 million schools, over 156 million students and 5.7 million teachers of government and aided schools, according to details shared by the government's principal spokesperson on Twitter. The scheme also moots access to quality education with an equitable and inclusive classroom environment with a greater focus on imparting skills among the students.

NIA raids house of ex-MLA's son over alleged ISIS links

PNS ■ MANGALURU

Officials of the National Investigation Agency (NIA) carried out raids at the residence of the son of former Ullal MLA B M Idinabba near here on Wednesday morning. The officials, who arrived at dawn from Bengaluru, began their investigation forthwith, police sources said.

Idinabba's son, B M Basha, resides in the house with his family. The raid has been conducted on the basis of the suspicion that the family has links with the Syria-based terrorist organisation, ISIS.

A team of 25 officials in four cars arrived at Mastikatte in Ullal early this morning. Police personnel from the city have been providing protection. It is suspected that the daughter of Basha had gone missing from Kerala several years back and had joined ISIS. Basha is into the real estate business here. Two of his sons stay abroad. His family members had allegedly subscribed to the YouTube channels pertaining to ISIS and is said to have a soft corner for the outfit, the sources said.

Venkaiah Naidu suspends six TMC MPs for ruckus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday suspended six TMC MPs for the day for carrying placards while protesting along with other opposition MPs over the Pegasus spying issue. Just as witnessed since the start of monsoon session, slogan-shouting TMC and other opposition MPs trooped into the well of the House, some holding placards, to demand a discussion on the issue of Israeli-made, military-grade Pegasus spyware allegedly being used to snoop on opposition leaders, government critics and journalists. Naidu took exception to the placards, which had anti-government slogans, before adjourning the proceedings of the House till 2 PM.

He first asked members to go back to their seats and then threatened to invoke rule 255 against those holding placards. As the members refused to budge, he ordered that those "disobeying the chair and raising placards shall leave the House under rule 255."

He, however, did not name anyone and said Rajya Sabha Secretariat will give the list.



RS too adjourned

The Rajya Sabha proceedings were adjourned till Thursday amid continuous protests by opposition parties over the Pegasus snooping controversy, and issues of farm laws and price rise. However, the Upper House passed the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which seeks to encourage smaller airports to expand air connectivity to relatively remote and far-flung areas. The House

passed the bill after a brief discussion amid protest and sloganeering by the opposition over various issues, including the Pegasus snooping controversy and farm laws. The Lok Sabha had passed the Airports Economic Regulatory Authority of India (Amendment) Bill, 2021 on July 29. When the Upper House assembled after a 15-minute adjournment at 2:56 pm, the opposition continued to protest.

LS adjourned till Thursday amid opposition protests

Lok Sabha proceedings were adjourned for the day on Wednesday after the passage of two bills, amid vociferous protests by the opposition over Pegasus snooping allegations and other issues. As soon as the House met again at 3:30 pm, Rajendra Agrawal, who was chairing the proceedings, took up the Coconut Development Board (Amendment) Bill, 2021, which was moved by Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. However, the opposition members continued their protest on the Pegasus snooping row as well other matters. Amid the din, Tomar moved the bill, saying the proposed legislation will benefit coconut farmers in different states. Soon thereafter, the bill was passed without debate even as the opposition objected to the hasty approval to the bill.

Delhi government to order probe into death of Dalit girl

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the Delhi government will order a magisterial inquiry into the death of a nine-year-old Dalit girl following an alleged sexual assault.

The chief minister also announced a compensation of Rs 10 lakh for the family of the girl.

"Our girl cannot come back. The injustice done to the family is unfortunate and cannot be compensated, but the government will give Rs 10 lakh to them and order a magisterial inquiry into the matter," he told reporters after meeting the family.

"There is a need to strengthen law and order in Delhi. I appeal to the central government to take firm steps in this direction," he said.

In a tweet, the chief minister said that the government will appoint top lawyers to ensure the guilty is punished. The parents of the girl accompanied by hundreds of locals were staging a protest near the site of the incident in Old Nangal area in southwest Delhi, demanding capital punishment for the accused.



The girl lived with her parents in a rented house in front of a crematorium. On Sunday at around 5:30 PM, she went to get cold water from a cooler at the crematorium after informing her mother, her parents said.

Around 6 PM, the crematorium's priest, Radhey Shyam, and two-three other people, known to the girl's mother, called her there and showed her daughter's body claiming that she got electrocuted while getting water from the cooler. There were burn marks

between her left wrist and elbow, and her lips were also blue, according to police.

It was alleged the priest and the others dissuaded her mother from making a PCR call, saying police will make a case out of it and during the post-mortem, doctors will steal the girl's organs, so it was better to cremate her.

Police had on Monday said that based on the statement of the victim's mother, rape charges have been added in the FIR. Four people, including the priest, have been arrested.

Ruckus in Assam Assembly over boundary clash with Mizoram

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam assembly witnessed pandemonium on Wednesday as ruling and opposition members engaged in heated exchanges over the boundary clash with Mizoram, forcing the Speaker to adjourn the House for 40 minutes.

The entire opposition, comprising Congress, AIUDF, BPE, CPI(M) and Independent MLAs, rushed to the Well of the House demanding a neutral probe either by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) or the National Investigation Agency (NIA) and showed placards with slogans such as 'give protection to border residents'.

In a rare instance, ruling BJP legislators also rushed to the Well of the House to counter the opposition's allegations.

Members of the two sides, separated by the desk of the assembly secretary, pointed fingers at each other and banged the desk several times.

Speaker Biswajit Daimary tried to pacify both sides in



vain and finally adjourned the House for 40 minutes.

Earlier, Congress MLA Kamalakhy Dey Purkayastha raised the issue as a Point of Order and informed the House that problems started with Mizoram from October 2020.

"We had given a letter to the Union government informing it about the issue. Even after that, why did personnel of Assam Police die? Whose fault was this?" he said. Replying to

the question, Parliamentary Affairs Minister Pijush Hazarika said that Assam and Mizoram are not two different nations, but two neighbouring Indian states.

"We have to solve our problems through dialogue and the process has already started. But I would like to inform the House that 34 people died in their (Congress) tenure (in inter-state clashes) since 1974," he said.

1,948 arrested, 34 convicted under UAPA

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 1,948 people were arrested and 34 others convicted under the stringent anti-terror law Unlawful Activities Prevention Act (UAPA) in 2019, the Rajya Sabha was informed on Wednesday, Union Minister of State for Home Nityanand Rai said this in a written reply to DMK member Tiruchi Siva's question about the total number of people imprisoned under the UAPA in the country at present.

Covid severity decreasing in Kerala, says Health Minister

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Despite a high number of daily positive cases, Kerala Health Minister Veena George on Wednesday said the severity of the COVID-19 pandemic was decreasing in the state. The number of patients seeking treatment at hospitals and those needing ICU support has dwindled, she said during the Question Hour session in the Assembly.

"The hospital occupancy

and ICU occupancy have decreased in the state now a--days. That means, the severity of the disease is decreasing," George pointed out.

The Health Minister also said the department is now assessing the impact of 'break-through infection' and 'reinfection' among people. "We are examining whether people are experiencing vaccine breakthrough

infection (a COVID case that occurs in someone who is fully vaccinated) and reinfection (a person, who was infected and recovered, is infected again)," she said.

As per a recent survey conducted by the Health Department, the reinfection rate has decreased remarkably.



Dalit minor rape: Rahul meets victim's family in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday met the family of the nine-year-old Dalit girl who died here following an alleged sexual assault and asserted that he is with them on the path to justice and "will not back down even an inch". After meeting the victim's family, the former Congress chief said the family is demanding nothing but justice and is saying that they are not getting it and need all the assistance in this.

"I told them that Rahul Gandhi is standing with them till they get justice and will not back down even an inch," he told reporters after meeting the parents of the victim.

Asked with whom does the responsibility lie in the case, Gandhi said, "I only know that it is my job to help them." Later, in a tweet in Hindi, he said, "Her parents' tears are saying only one thing - their daughter, the daughter of this country, deserves justice. And I am with them on this path to justice."

Pushkar launches first earthquake early warning mobile application

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami on Wednesday launched the country's first earthquake early warning mobile application 'Uttarakhand Bhookamp Alert' developed by IIT Roorkee.

Launching the lifeguarding mobile app at the secretariat here, Dhami said considering Uttarakhand's vulnerability to earthquakes, people should be informed about the availability of a mobile application like this.

The application is available in two versions, compatible with both Android and iOS platforms. The project was sponsored by the Uttarakhand State Disaster Management Authority.

Guj disburses loans to self-help groups

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The Gujarat government on Wednesday disbursed Rs 140 crore in interest-free loans to 14,000 women's self-help groups under the Mukhyamantri Mahila Utkarsh Yojana (MMUY), a state government scheme launched last year for financial upliftment of women.

Chief Minister Vijay Rupani made the announcement at Vadodara on the occasion of "Nari Gaurav Diwas", organised as part of the nine-day celebrations for the completion of his five years in office.

The scheme was launched by the state government in September last year with a target of covering 10 lakh women (10 per group) and giving them Rs 1,000 crore in interest-free loans by the end of December 2022, Rupani said.

"Today, we will be depositing Rs 140 crore in the bank accounts of 14,000 women's self-help groups that have over 1 lakh members. This is a first-of-its-kind scheme in the country that provides collateral and interest-free finance to women's groups so that they can set up small businesses and contribute to their family's income," the chief minister said in his address.

Claiming that the MMUY is better than the micro-finance model promoted by Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, Rupani exuded confidence that other states will also adopt the scheme for the economic upliftment of women. The Gujarat government's focus is to ensure that women lead in all sectors and perform better than men, he said.

C'garh govt to buy paddy to serve elephants

PNS ■ RAIPUR

As Chhattisgarh's northern region continues to witness human-elephant conflicts, the state forest department is planning to procure paddy and serve it as fodder to jumbos in forests on a pilot basis in a bid to prevent them from entering human settlements, a senior official said.

Elephants generally stray into villages in search of food. Hence, providing them fodder away from human settlements can help reduce the incidents of man-animal conflict, the official said on Tuesday.

However, the opposition BJP in the state criticised the forest department's move, saying it seems the project has been made for "committing corruption".

As per the Chhattisgarh gov-



ernment records, 204 people were killed in elephant attacks while 45 jumbos died in the state in last three years - 2018, 2019 and 2020.

During this period, 66,582 cases of elephants causing damage to crops, 5,047 cases of

damage to houses and 3,151 cases of damage to other properties were also reported.

Human-elephant conflicts in the state's northern region has been a major cause of concern since the last one decade. The menace has fur-

ther spread its footprint to some districts in central part of the state in the last few years.

Surguja, Raigarh, Korba, Surajpur, Mahasamund, Dhamtari, Gariaband, Balod, Balarampur and Kanker districts in the state have been mainly affected by the menace.

"Elephants generally stray into villages in search of food, including paddy, and destroy houses and crops. Such incidents also cause loss of lives. Providing them fodder away from the human habitats can help reduce man-animal conflicts," state Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (Wildlife) PV Narsingh Rao told PTI.

Therefore, the department has decided to keep piles of paddy in forests at some distance away from villages which may distract elephants from

entering the human settlements, he said.

"Initially, it will be done on a pilot basis in some villages and based on the behaviour of elephants, it will be replicated in other areas," the official said.

For the procurement of paddy, the forest department has communicated with the Chhattisgarh State Cooperative Marketing Federation (MARK-FED), and once it will be supplied, the concept will be implemented, he said.

According to MARKFED officials, the agency, which buys paddy from farmers at minimum support price, has offered to supply paddy to the forest department at Rs 2,095.83 per quintal, and has provided the names of storage centres from where the consignments can be collected.

The right way?

Kerala is reporting quite a high number of COVID cases but the reasons are genuine

For a couple of months now, the focus of pandemic watchers was on Kerala and the State has consistently reported the highest share of nationwide, fresh COVID-19 cases. Even on Tuesday, the State's numbers went past 23,500, the highest single-day count recorded by any State in the last eight weeks and grabbing a 56 per cent share in the national figure. The current test positivity rate in the State stands at 11.8 per cent. However, when it comes to the more alarming issue of the R-number — it indicates how many persons one COVID-19 patient can infect — Kerala has company. Eight States and Union Territories returned the reproduction — number of 1.2, meaning that one patient is infecting more than one person. Nine other States have an R-number of 1. The greater the ability to infect fresh persons, the greater is the transmissibility of the virus. The number of cases does not give the real picture. The R-number does that job. The more dangerous the variant, like the Delta Plus variant, the faster the transmissibility. Contract tracing will show the speed of transmission. The combination of testing and contact tracing alone can show if the case trajectory is reaching a problematic level in a region in the country. It is high time the Government accords testing and contact tracing as much primacy as vaccination. The jabs, it must be noted, do not necessarily stop new infections but only mellows their intensity.



Unfortunately, except Kerala, no other State or Union Territory is doing extensive testing and neither the national COVID task force nor the Union Health Ministry has insisted on it as yet. It is in this context that the Kerala example should be emulated by the rest of India. The latest sero survey has recorded low seropositivity of 44 per cent for Kerala as against the national average of 68 per cent. That means the majority of the State's population has remained protected from the virus. Considering that a majority of Kerala's population is urban, the achievement is all the more impressive. Secondly, the State conducts the most COVID-19 tests daily, the figure hovering around 1.4 lakh. A record 1.96 lakh tests were conducted on July 28. The State Government concentrates the testing in localities with high positivity. As a result, there is a high incidence of positive cases. In the absence of heavy testing, it cannot be said that other States reporting fewer fresh cases are safer. Thirdly, reports suggest the Delta variant entered Kerala later than the rest of India and that could explain the current surge in cases. Kerala has also managed to keep the fatality rate far lower than the national average despite the high number of daily cases. As of Tuesday, 39.9 per cent of the State's population is vaccinated. The Kerala model will be complete if the R-number is brought down, contract tracing is increased and localised lockdowns are brought back into force.

PICTALK



People flout social distancing norms at a weekly market, in Mumbai

PTI

The middle path

The Govt and the Opposition would do well to sit together and thrash out their differences

The continued disruption of Parliament is not unexpected. The scale and implications of the Pegasus snooping scandal are so overwhelming that it would have been naive to hope that the Opposition will not use it as a handle to corner the Government. The relations between the Opposition and the ruling BJP have steadily worsened over the alleged misuse of Central probe agencies. The last nail has been the fact that several Opposition leaders are on the list of those whose phones may have been compromised by Pegasus infections. Still, one would have expected that the two sides would find a middle path and Parliament will dutifully take up its legislative business. But sadly, neither side is ready to blink and the country has to witness yet another round of Parliament logjam, the type of which has become routine over the years. From the Opposition's point of view, the demand for a debate on the scandal is justified. After all, Parliament is the right forum where such an issue that poses a grave threat to India's democracy, should be discussed and debated even if the Government were to altogether reject the demand for a probe into the matter.

However, the Government feels that it owes no such favour to the Opposition because it allegedly wants to use the scandal as an opportunity to unite with an eye on the upcoming Assembly polls and presidential elections next year, and the Lok Sabha polls in 2024. Amid such distrust, it will be futile to hope for resumption of Parliament proceedings any sooner, though strategically the Opposition may agree to debate on issues like inflation, fuel price hike and the economic situation — issues that could help it corner the Government. The Pegasus scandal has become a glue to unite the Opposition and those wanting to uproot the Modi Government are working overtime to bring the Opposition on one platform. The unprecedented Opposition unity has emboldened them to stick to the path of confrontation, something which the Government can afford only at the cost of making people further sceptical about the very purpose of the existence of our democratic institutions. It's time both the ruling dispensation and the Opposition leaders sit down and find a middle path to restore the dignity and relevance of the legislature as one of the strongest pillars of our democratic institutions.

India tells Pak to vacate all its areas

Pakistan has coercively been occupying areas in Gilgit-Baltistan that belong to India since the princely State's accession to India in 1947

India has rejected the "cosmetic exercise" of the recent elections in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Traditionally, the ruling party in Pakistan wins elections in PoK and the incumbent ruling party, Tehreek-e-Insaf, won these elections. India lodged a strong protest with Pakistan last week, saying that such exercises can neither hide illegal occupation of the areas of the then princely State of Jammu and Kashmir by Pakistan, comprising about 35 per cent of its total area, nor the grave human rights violations, exploitation and denial of freedom to people in these occupied areas. India has called on Pakistan to vacate all the Indian areas under its illegal occupation since 1947, on which it has no *locus standi*. By virtue of accession of the ruler of the then princely State Maharaja Hari Singh to India in 1947, sovereignty of the whole erstwhile State lies wholly and solely with India.

The time appears to have come for Pakistan to introspect deeply and reflect on its illegal actions in these illegally occupied parts of now Union Territories of J&K and Ladakh. Steeped in abject poverty and backwardness, this illegally occupied area is still considered to be the most neglected area in South Asia. Despite violent protests by people at every stage, Pakistan has illegally, forcefully and through underhand means changed frontiers and composition of these areas beyond recognition. After illegally occupying the areas following an aggression on the then princely State, Pakistan established an administrative structure in the occupied area named as Azad Jammu and Kashmir Government. Even though with a nominal legislature, the Government there continues to be under strict control of Pakistan Government.

During the late 1970s, Pakistan started to take steps to bifurcate the subsequently extended occupied area in two parts, one it had already named as Azad J&K and the other as Northern Areas, comprising Gilgit-Baltistan, which it had deemed to be a separate geographical entity to be administered federally by Pakistan. The Northern Areas is mostly inhabited by Shia Muslims and Pakistan also initiated steps for demographic change in the area.



This resulted in violent protests by the people. Even the so-called Azad J&K Government protested tooth and nail this bifurcation and also instituted a suit in its court. But so great was Pakistan's urge to keep the fruits of aggression and to extend the borders of Pakistan illegally that it ignored all opposition and continued to resort to illegal means, including torture, to make it a federally administered area with nomenclature as Northern Areas.

Earlier too, in utter disregard for law and territorial integrity and sovereignty of India, Pakistan had ceded Shakasgam track territory in this illegally occupied Northern areas to China when Sino-Pak Frontier agreement was signed in 1963. It has also since annexed Chitral, Hunza and Nagar and other territories in or around Northern Areas including Puniyal, Ishkoman and Yasin which formed a part of the then princely State or were under its suzerainty at the time of its accession to India.

Pakistan again changed the status of Northern Areas on May 21, 2018, when it promulgated the Gilgit-Baltistan Order replacing its earlier 'empowerment and self-government' order of 2009. Under the new order, all powers exercised by Gilgit-Baltistan Council were



AFTER ILLEGALLY OCCUPYING THE AREAS FOLLOWING AN AGGRESSION ON THE THEN PRINCELY STATE, PAKISTAN ESTABLISHED AN ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE IN THE OCCUPIED AREA. WITH A NOMINAL LEGISLATURE, THE GOVERNMENT CONTINUES TO BE UNDER THE PAK GOVERNMENT'S CONTROL

given to the Assembly. But the Council was retained as advisory body for federal functions with regard to the Northern Areas. Thus legislative powers on key subjects are vested in the Prime Minister of Pakistan and not in the elected Assembly.

There were protests against this order not only in the area, but at many places in Pakistan. This reform package was seen as a precursor to attempts by Pakistan to make this area as its fifth province as also to change its demographic composition.

This perception was confirmed when last year Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan announced that the territory will be given provisional provincial status. Again in violation of international law and sovereignty of India and amid strong protests by people in PoK, Pakistan permitted China to run the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor project which passes through this Gilgit-Baltistan territory. Even the UN Economic and Social Commission for Asia Pacific in its report in May 2017 stated that the CPEC project could create geo-political tensions with India and lead to further instability in the region. Though reportedly prepared at the request of the Chinese Government, the report also pointed out concerns about its social and environmental safeguards. Provision

of provisional provincial status to Northern Areas by Pakistan appears to be an attempt to lend legal cover to the much-criticised CPEC project which runs through Gilgit-Baltistan, an Indian territory.

India has already strongly protested against this yet another severe illegality of Pakistan. Last week, the Indian MEA rejected a reference to CPEC in a recent Pakistan-China joint statement. It said that the CPEC lies in Indian territory illegally occupied by Pakistan and that India resolutely opposes it. With regard to reference to J&K in the joint statement, the MEA spokesperson said that the UTs of J&K and Ladakh are an integral and inalienable part of India.

Obviously, if Pakistan still chooses to continue with its illegal actions and material changes in J&K and Ladakh under its illegal occupation, that will mean continued violation of sovereignty and territorial integrity of India. This will lead to more instability in the region. For overall development, India desires peace with Pakistan, but Pakistan's action could lead to one more war over Jammu and Kashmir which could be far more dangerous.

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



JL KOUL JALALI

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

INDIAN WOMEN MAKE US PROUD

Sir — The brilliant performance put up by Indian women athletes sets them apart at the Tokyo Olympics. Although India's total medal tally is modest, the contributions of women athletes is commendable. The silver by Saikhom Mirabai Chanu in weightlifting, a bronze by badminton star PV Sindhu, a bronze by Lovlina Borgohain in boxing and the women's hockey team's spectacular performance which enabled them to enter the semifinals, all these show that women athletes of India have a bright future in international sports events.

When we think about the social discrimination and gender inequality that women face in India, theirs is indeed great achievement. It must be understood that of the 15 Olympic medals that India has won since 2000, women have won seven. Considering that India ranks 112 out of 153 countries in the Global Gender Gap Index 2020, women's achievement is so great. Given the fact that women in general and professional women in particular face gender discrimination and prejudice in India, their achievement is tremendous when compared with that of men. Indian women's achievement at the Tokyo Olympics is certainly an inspiration for prospective women athletes in the country and for women in general who want to prove their expertise in different fields.

Venu GS | Kollam

CREATE JOBS FOR A BETTER FUTURE

Sir — Candidates at job interviews after the lockdown will have an additional challenge at hand. It could be a fresher graduating out of a college or people at different stages of their career seeking a job either for better prospects or as a fall-out of unfortunate job loss due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The first challenge is that there may be fewer jobs for them to grab. Too many candidates may be chasing too few jobs. How does a candidate stand apart in such a situation?

Apart from evaluating candidates for their fitness for the job, the companies

Slum children need special care



A holistic approach is to be taken in case of street children and there must be a concrete scheme for the uplift of children as help will not come from heaven as in *Slumdog Millionaire*. We want to protect the children from COVID-19 but what is the use if they die of hunger instead unless timely help is not given. The family cannot even apply for a ration card as they do not have any residence proof or any identity documents. The Government has plenty of schemes for slum redevelopment, but most of these are on paper. Importantly, sanitation is not on the agenda. Clean atmosphere and

civic amenities can make them healthy children.

The way things are, there is no collective vision; no rules either. Nearly 60 per cent live in slums in most of the metro cities, but a good chunk of the municipal corporation's agenda is devoted to gardens, roads, parking and so on; the slums don't feature. In our lopsided system of political representation, slum dwellers have been relegated to a vote bank. They are patronised, and encouraged to live in deprivation. Poor sanitation and environment, contaminated drinking water and crowded conditions all make the matter worse. Everyone is talking about Swachh Bharat, but how many toilets have been constructed in slums under this project? The politicians always look at how many votes they can garner in an area. They don't look at problems like housing or their poor living environment. Even yearly allotment of funds to MPs or MLAs can help out the cause of slum children in the best way possible.

CK Subramaniam | Navi Mumbai

are going to evaluate them on how they coped with the uncertainties posed by the pandemic. In one way, this is actually a great opportunity for both candidates and companies. Companies will look for in the candidates the ability to adapt to uncertain conditions. Candidates can stand apart from others if they prove that they can think and act differently in such uncertainties. Facing pay cuts, job losses and rising costs, many people grit their teeth and made the most of an extremely rough year. This, then, is as good as it gets. It is time to create more jobs opportunities.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

PUNISH THE SAVAGES OF DELHI

Sir — Shocked to know that a Dalit girl was sexually assaulted and murdered in Delhi and Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's Government will order a magisterial inquiry instead of an CBI investigation. The Chief Minister announced a compen-

sation of ₹10 lakh for the girl's family. But the girl cannot come back. The fact of the matter is that there is a need to strengthen law and order in Delhi and the Union Government must take firm steps in this direction.

The Delhi Government must appoint top-notch lawyers to ensure that the guilty are punished. The victim's parents, accompanied by hundreds of locals, staged a protest near the site of the incident in Old Nangal area, southwest Delhi. The police, based on the statement of the victim's mother, added rape charges to the FIR. Four people, including the priest of a nearby crematorium, have been arrested. It is high time all the four accused must be severely punished in the shortest period of time and their trial must be in a fast-track court.

Bhagwan Thadani | Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

The flood is manmade, the unprecedented release of water from the Damodar Valley Corporation dams is responsible for the situation.



West Bengal Chief Minister — Mamata Banerjee



We've other options if US President Joe Biden continues to ignore the country's leadership.

Pakistan National Security Adviser — Moed Yusuf

You don't sleep the entire night and then record this early in the morning. And you don't get sleep coz it's Kishore da's birthday.

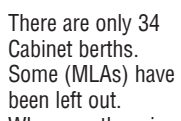


Actor — Ayushmaan Khurrana



It will not stop with this. There will be many more successes going forward. Definitely, I will play in Paris.

Indian shuttler — PV Sindhu




There are only 34 Cabinet berths. Some (MLAs) have been left out. Whenever there is an opportunity, the party will give them responsibilities.

Karnataka Chief Minister — Basavaraj Bommai

FIRST COLUMN

AN INNOVATIVE INSTITUTION

SWIFT bridges financial inequalities by offering financial services to the underprivileged



GOBHANU SASANKAR KORISEPATI

An Indian student has developed an innovative microfinance concept for women, inspired by Bangladesh's Grameen Bank — the world's largest microfinance institution — which made banking more accessible to the poor. SWIFT- Sustaining Women in Financial Turmoil — was formed in September 2020, when its founder, Gobhanu Korisepati, launched a microfinance social business platform. He spent over three months in an internship with Grameen Bank to learn the logistics. SWIFT was founded to bridge financial inequalities in India by making financial services accessible to the underprivileged. The need was felt because he witnessed the complexities accompanying traditional loans such as mandatory collateral and proof of income firsthand and found that financial services tend to discriminate against the poor directly. The institution is based on an adapted version of micro-finance that best targets women who lack access to financial services. It brings women financial stability and human dignity by




providing them micro-loans to start their entrepreneurial adventures. A loan can change the life of any individual, especially for a woman coming from an underprivileged background. To date, SWIFT has loaned to over 1000 women, working with a focus on sectors such as agriculture, clothing, and food services. The largest loan SWIFT has lent individually is worth ₹20,000. The borrower is a young woman, Magali, and the loan helped her buy wholesale fabric, thread, elastic, yarn, and maintain her sewing machine. The loan was unique as it was aimed at reaching vulnerable populations in an isolated region. SWIFT's many loans are targeted to help the women who need it the most, and they have been successful in lending over ₹19 lakh so far. Another borrower from SWIFT is Meela, a rural farmer who aspired to be an entrepreneur, and the loan provided the perfect opportunity to do so. Meela has a family of three and a monthly household income under the poverty line. By providing her a loan, SWIFT helped her buy seeds and fertilizers to increase agricultural production. SWIFT currently selects the needy based on criteria that are constantly being adapted to fit the best interests of Indian women.

The criteria currently considered are based on the community impact a loan would have: how many people the loan can positively affect and risk evaluation factors, loan duration, and repayment schedule. It is important to note that SWIFT does not charge any interest on the loans as its goal is only to better the livelihoods of the borrowers and their communities. When asked how SWIFT has raised funds, Gobhanu says that SWIFT is fortunate enough to have gained a following on social media platforms and its website (swiftmfi.org), which primarily allocates its funding addition to local fundraisers such as bake-sales and charity games. What makes SWIFT unique from other charities is that it is run directly by children. A few months after founding SWIFT, Gobhanu sought out help and was overwhelmed by the support of youth he could find online. Today the SWIFT team consists of over 20 high school students who donate their time and efforts to make the world a better place. SWIFT is also currently inculcating the habit of microfinancing throughout schools as the organization believes that financial literacy is a fundamental step for India's development. Gobhanu says that his vision is for SWIFT to reach developing and developed nations worldwide, not just India. In the coming years, he hopes to create a sustainable student-run organization that works to create equality of opportunity for marginalized communities.

(The writer is a student from Andhra Pradesh and founder of the SWIFT initiative. The views expressed are personal)

Maldives and Indian relationship

There have been a few untoward incidents that led to the Maldivians harbouring anti-India sentiments



PK VASUDEVA

(The writer is retired Senior Professor, International Trade and Member, Vivekananda International Foundation, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

The MDP believes that the anti-India campaign run by Azaan is a well-funded, tailor-made, and intricately choreographed political campaign to bring ties between the Maldives and its closest ally, India, to breaking point. The reason for the 'India out' campaign was the military presence in the Maldives, which according to the locals, is a threat. The 'India out' campaign started in 2020 and spread across social media like a wildfire. The co-founder of the Dhiyares media, Shifxan Ahmed, clarified that they had only one issue - about the Indian military presence. It is not the first time that an anti-India campaign had reared its ugly head. Back in 2013, when the Progressive Party of Maldives (PPM) was in



power, international relations between India and Maldives took a hit. PPM, led by Abdulla Yameen Abdul Gayoom, had tilted towards the Chinese. To please the Chinese, the Yameen government indulged in anti-India slogans and policies. Researcher Dr. Gulbin Sultana, an analyst at Manohar Parrikar Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), shares the same sentiment about the anti-India rhetoric of 2013. But even if the Yameen government had a biased that

favoured the Chinese, they engaged in an India-first policy as well. There have been a few untoward incidents that led to the Maldivians harbouring anti-India sentiments. The first incident was when India gifted two Dhruv Advanced Light Helicopters (ALF) in 2010 and 2015. These helicopters were to be operated by Indian officers and to be used for ocean search and rescue operations, airlifting patients across the islands, and Maritime weather surveillance. They were based in Addu atoll and at Hanimaadhoo but the pro-China stance of the Yameen government let it interpret them as proof of the Indian military's growing presence in the Maldives. In 2016, when the agitation reached its peak, the Yameen government requested

India to take back their choppers and the defence personnel. The Indian refusal to take back the choppers added fuel to the fire. In 2018, Ibrahim Mohamed Solih came to power and scrapped agreements that proscribed the use of choppers and he extended the stay of Indian personnel stay in the Maldives. Solih's friendly stance towards India and its choppers again fuelled anti-India sentiments in the Maldives. The Maldivian government believed in keeping terms of contracts about defence, sovereignty, and national security secret. Some groups of people interpreted this secrecy as a threat to democracy. The domestic players in the Maldives opposed agreements with India because of this lack of transparency. According to Maldivian law, any agreement has to be tabled in Parliament and needs parliamentary approval. It is only after the approval the government can engage in bilateral treaties. But the Solih government, in the name of national security, does not share any data with Parliament. The idea of keeping everything under wraps in the name of national security angers the people and fuels protests. The second incident was the signing of Sifvaru-Uthuru Thilafalhu (UTF) harbour project agreement between India and the Maldives in 2021, under which India will be developing a Maldives National Defence Force Coast Guard Harbour. This project was initiated under the Yameen government. The dockyard is an atoll located near Malé, the cap-



AMRITA BHINDER

Youth and radicalism: Search for cannon fodder

The so-called movement for Khalistan checks all the necessary boxes to be an 'ideal' issue for agencies like Pakistan's ISI to attack India

William Faulkner's observation that "the past is never dead, it is not even the past" holds for issues that enemies of India exploit to fuel unrest. The resurgence of the talk surrounding 'Khalistan' indicates how those interested in harming India never stop sowing seeds of discontent. For any strife to continually 'catch the fancy' of the people, it has to appear personal and immediate. Such issues can find easy access in India with many societal, caste, religious, and sectarian fault lines. The abundance of youth is a bonus for those looking to take advantage. The radicalisation of youth to be used as cannon fodder is commonplace across strife-driven regions like in Syria where the social unrest originated from college campuses. The JNU protest is another illustration where sloganeering against a fee hike soon transformed into a demonstration of whatever was the 'flavour of the month protest'

The so-called movement for Khalistan checks all the necessary boxes to be an 'ideal' issue for agencies like Pakistan's ISI to attack India. It is well-documented that ISI pumped monetary and arms resources and provided a haven for extremists who propagated the demand for a separate State of Khalistan.

In the last few years, long-standing issues like left-wing extremism or Islamist terror are being called out or are past their sell-by date. The significant churn in the United States and Australia, and the United Kingdom against Chinese influence in college campuses has shaken things up. The crackdown by Saudi Crown Prince Mohammed Bin Salman in 2017 on Islamist terrorists unleashed significant changes in how Jihadist terror operated across the globe. Vowing to galvanise an Islamic military coalition that aimed to counter "terrorism and extremism," Mohammed bin Salman led a series of high-level meetings of an alliance of Muslim nations against terrorism funding and the day-to-day disruption of al-Qaida, the Islamic State, and like-minded jihadists. In this atmosphere, global entities that benefit from strife, such as the military-industrial complexes, need to fan new issues to survive.

One of the reasons why Khalistan is a red-flag issue unlike ever before is the global support that has come its way in the recent past, with significant ramifications. In a recent Club House chat, a young person of Indian origin based in Europe and dedicated to the Khalistan cause claimed that the movement aimed at the physical separation of Punjab from the Indian union in less than two generations. The support for the separatist elements of the Khalistan movement, especially amongst the second-generation Punjabi youth based in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States, has gained momentum as it ostensibly seeks to correct a historical wrong. However, the danger has increased manifold due to a suc-



KHALISTAN WAS NEVER A DOMESTIC ISSUE, AND THE SOONER THE AVERAGE INDIAN REALISES THAT IT HAS THE POTENTIAL TO CHANGE THE WORLD, THE FASTER WE CAN COUNTER IT. THE REASON THAT WE CANNOT TAKE ALL OF THIS TO BE AN OVERSTRETCHING OF ONE'S IMAGINATION IS STARING US IN THE FORM OF A SIMPLE FACT — THE WORLD HAS SHIFTED FROM 'CONVENTIONAL WARFARE' TO THE UNCONVENTIONAL

(The writer is a lawyer and columnist. The views expressed are personal.)



cessful shift in the perspective. The anti-Sikh pogrom of 1984 is not attributed to Congress but the 'Indian State'. As a result, the Khalistan issue now targets the Indian government and propagates a 'revolt' as the only way out. This status transition is strategically designed and it would be foolish to think otherwise. It is similar to the Israel-Palestine issue and the desire of vested parties to replicate the model where a narrative would constantly stoke fires of how the Indian state has unleashed a flurry of horrors upon the ordinary citizens of Punjab. The narrative-building machinery is also in place, with socio-cultural events such as literary jaunts with authors and think tanks disseminating ideas and information to that end. One can see how global concepts such as critical race theory, a 40-year-old idea that believes racial division to be a social construct instead of a personal bias, are promulgated locally. The ongoing farmers' protest is a testimony to the same, where a broad idea - farmers opposing the three laws - has been rejigged to make it region-specific - how the state has primarily targeted the farmer of Punjab. The Khalistan issue is also being pitched as a shared narrative at a global level, claiming to echo the sentiments of the Sikh community, even though the citizens of Punjab rejected the very idea of a separate State. The local view is routinely, and even vehemently, dismissed on public platforms and social media by radicalised elements based outside of India. While

Indians wave off the issue as bunkum or pointless wishful thinking of a handful of wavered NRI youth, global media picks on that point of view and furthers it. The physical or virtual protests also have many Pakistan-sponsored implants disguised as Sikhs. The cycle is then completed when such news is peddled for domestic consumption as the local view that an authoritarian government has suppressed. The propagators of Khalistan are quick to portray Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the all-powerful fascist responsible for the subjugation of Punjab, even though the actions of the current Indian government tell a completely different story. In 2018, a Delhi court awarded the first death penalty to two persons in the 1984 anti-Sikh riots in the cases that were probed and re-opened by the Special Investigation Team (SIT) set up by the Modi government in 2015. In 1994, the two had gotten away due to lack of evidence, and their conviction became possible only due to the evidence provided by the BJP state government. The Khalistan issue is a testing ground for other pan-India strifes that can be used against the country. It is in tandem with a 2016 Pakistan Senate recommendation to the then Nawaz Sharif government to play up caste and religion issues in India to curb India's global influence. A 13-member committee of the Senate, Pakistan's equivalent to the Rajya Sabha, asked the government to talk about 'Dalits, unhappy Muslims, and encourage those opposing Prime Minister Narendra Modi' to destabilise India. It also made some tactical recommendations to "hire International lobbyists and strategic communication firms and reactivate Pakistani community living abroad to change the global narrative". The narrative-building efforts to push Khalistan or any exploitable local fault line to the forefront as a global agenda cannot be ignored or undermined. One is reminded of how the US attack on Iraq in 2002 also resulted from a complex narrative-building exercise. India's stature as a geopolitical player on the global stage has only increased in the recent past. Whether it is Asia or the Indian Ocean Region, India's significance is now key to shaping the world as it has also emerged as a natural counter balance to China. This reality does not suit traditional foes such as China and Pakistan and their new supporters, namely, Turkey and Iran. Rest assured, any narrative that thwarts India would be ready to pick for them. Khalistan was never a domestic issue, but its play has only increased, and the sooner the average Indian realises it has the potential to change the world, the faster we can counter it. The reason that we cannot take all of this to be an overstretching of one's imagination is staring us in the form of a simple fact - the world has shifted from 'conventional warfare' to the unconventional. While we might not comprehend the severity of unconventional warfare, it surely is at play around the world by those interested in it.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

WHY IS THE GOVERNMENT AFRAID OF DEBATING ON PEGASUS IN PARLIAMENT? WHAT DO YOU WANT TO HIDE? — AIMIM CHIEF ASADUDDIN OWAISI



WITH CHECKS AND BALANCES IN PLACE, ILLEGAL SURVEILLANCE IS NOT POSSIBLE. THOSE REPORTS HAVE NO FACTUAL BASIS. — ELECTRONICS AND IT MINISTER ASHWINI VAISHNAV



Markets at fresh highs: Sensex rallies 546 pts to scale 54K; Nifty tops 16,200

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex rallied 546 points to finish above the 54,000-mark for the first time on Wednesday, tracking strong gains in financial stocks amid positive cues from global markets.

After scaling its lifetime peak of 54,465.91 during the session, the 30-share index ended 546.41 points or 1.02 per cent higher at a record 54,369.77. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 128.05 points or 0.79 per cent to its all-time peak of 16,246.85. It touched a lifetime intra-day high of 16,290.20. HDFC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, surging around 5 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, ICICI Bank, SBI, HDFC Bank and Axis Bank.

On the other hand, Titan, Nestle India, Ultratech Cement and Sun Pharma were among the laggards. Domestic equities extended gains with benchmarks Sensex and Nifty scaling fresh high mainly on the back of sharp rebound in heavy-

- January 21, 2021: Touches the momentous 50,000-mark in intra-day trade
- February 3: Closes above 50,000 for the first time
- February 5: Crosses 51,000-mark in intra-day trade
- February 8: Ends above 51,000-level
- February 15: Rallies above 52,000-mark
- June 22: Reaches 53,000-level in intra-day trade
- July 7: Closes above the 53,000-mark for the first time
- August 3: Market capitalisation of BSE-listed companies jumps to a record high of Rs 2,40,04,664.28 crore
- August 4: Sensex goes past the 54,000-mark for the first time in intra-day trade, also closes above this mark



The BSE benchmark has gained 6,618.44 points or 13.86 per cent so far this year.

weight financials, said Binod Modi, Head - Strategy at Reliance Securities. He noted that financials were the sole driving force for the market rally,

which was triggered after better-than-expected June quarter performance reported by SBI. The country's biggest bank posted a 55 per cent rise in

standalone net profit at Rs 6,504 crore for the first quarter of the financial year, helped by decline in bad loans. Further, positive cues from global equi-

ties also lifted sentiments, Modi stated. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended with gains, while Tokyo was in red.

SC seeks replies of 11 States for clearing dues to sugarcane ryots

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday sought responses from the Centre and the eleven sugarcane-producing states including Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra on the PIL filed by a former parliamentarian seeking implementation of a mechanism providing payment of dues of farmers within 14 days from supply of sugarcane to the mills.

A bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and Justice Surya Kant took note of the submissions of senior advocate Anand Grover, appearing for Maharashtra's former Lok Sabha MP Raju Anna Shetti, that the sugarcane suppliers be paid their dues within 14 days of the supply across the country as envisaged by an order of the Allahabad High Court.

"Issue notice. List it after three weeks," the bench said after Grover pointed out cases of states which have been defaulting in big way in ensuring the payment to the farmers.



As per the UP Sugarcane Supply Act, it is mandatory to pay the cane growers their dues within 14 days and interest on the amount if not paid dues within the stipulated time period. Besides the Centre, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, the top court also issued notices to Punjab, Uttarakhand, Haryana, Gujarat, Bihar, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu.

It also sought responses from four sugarcane purchasing firms and they are Bajaj Hindustan Sugar Limited, Indian Sugarmills

Association, Cane Agro Energy (India) Limited and Indian Sucrose Ltd. Shetti, in his PIL, has sought the setting up of a mechanism for payment of price of sugarcane produce to the cane farmers "in order to avoid accumulation of such dues and preventing the farmers from falling in the vicious cycle when a mill is declared sick and their dues of sugarcane produce remained unpaid during the process of resolution or liquidation of sugar mill leading to deterioration of condition of farmers."

Govt holds stakeholder consultations to explore development, says Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is presently holding stakeholder consultations with states, central ministries, and technical institutions to explore the development of freight smart cities in the country," Goyal said. Replying to a question on ONDC, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said it is an initiative aiming at promoting open networks for all aspects of the exchange of goods and services over digital or electronic networks. "ONDC is expected to make e-commerce more inclusive and accessible for consumers. Consumers can potentially discover any seller, product or service by using any compatible application or platform, thus increasing freedom of choice for consumers," Parkash said.



State governments have been requested to identify cities for development as freight smart cities, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha. He said that one of the inputs during stakeholder consultations has been to start with a list of 10 such cities, which has not yet been finalised. "The government is presently holding stakeholder

consultations with state governments, central ministries, technical institutions, etc. to explore the development of freight smart cities in the country," Goyal said. Replying to a question on ONDC, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said it is an initiative aiming at promoting open networks for all aspects of the exchange of goods and services over digital or electronic networks. "ONDC is expected to make e-commerce more inclusive and accessible for consumers. Consumers can potentially discover any seller, product or service by using any compatible application or platform, thus increasing freedom of choice for consumers," Parkash said.

SCI shares tumble 3 pc after earnings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shares of Shipping Corporation of India Ltd (SCI) on Wednesday dipped nearly 3 per cent after the company reported a decline in consolidated net profit for the first quarter of the current fiscal.

The stock went lower by 2.62 per cent to Rs 109.55 on BSE. On NSE, it dipped 2.40 per cent to Rs 109.65.

State-owned SCI on Tuesday reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 158.51 crore for the first quarter of the current fiscal. The company had clocked a consolidated net profit of Rs 336.87 crore in the corresponding period a year earlier, according to a regulatory filing.

Its total income declined to Rs 1,048.47 crore in the latest June quarter as against Rs 1,178.43 crore in the year-ago period.



SpiceJet, Go First have not paid Rs 2.7 cr for using runway: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

SpiceJet and Go First airlines have not paid approximately Rs 2.74 crore for using the Ahmedabad airport's runway till June 1 this year, Minister of State for Civil Aviation V K Singh said on Wednesday.

Go First was previously known as GoAir. The Indian carriers have taken a big financial hit due to the travel restrictions since March 2020 amid

the coronavirus pandemic.

In his written reply to a question in Rajya Sabha, Singh said that the number of private companies, which includes international operators, that used the runway of the Ahmedabad airport during the last three financial years is 500. "A total of Rs 9,252 by Air Odisha Aviation Private Limited, Rs 1.23 (approx.) by Go Airlines India Ltd, Rs 3,964 by Karnavati Aviation Pvt Ltd,

Rs 1.51 crore (approximately) by SpiceJet Limited, Rs 4,083 by Supreme Transport Organisation and Rs 1.14 lakh (approximately) by Thai Air Asia have not been paid for using the runway of Ahmedabad airport till June 1, 2021," he stated.

All Indian airlines have taken measures -- such as cutting salaries and firing employees -- since March 2020 to conserve their cash flows.

BharatPe raises \$370 mn funding led by Tiger Global, valuation touches \$2.85 bn

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BharatPe on Wednesday said it has raised USD 370 million (about Rs 2,745.8 crore) in funding, led by Tiger Global that has pushed the merchant payment and lending service provider's post-money valuation to USD 2.85 billion.

The series E round included a secondary component of USD 20 million, a statement said. Staff holding vested employee stock option plan (ESOPs) have been given full liquidity in the secondary, it added. "The round, led by Tiger Global, also saw new participation from Dragoner Investment Group and Steadfast Capital," the statement said.

Five out of the seven existing institutional investors participated in the round - namely Coatue Management, Insight Partners, Sequoia Growth, Ribbit Capital and Amplo, it added. Ashneer Grover has been elevated to Co-founder and Managing Director, while Suhail Sameer has been appointed as the CEO. "We now have USD 0.5 billion cash on books and are extremely well capitalised to deliver on

our mandate to build India's first truly digital bank. Rarely does one witness the original thesis play out without any pivot," Grover said. BharatPe will remain maniacally focused on lending as the core business and small merchants as our primary target segment, he added. "At BharatPe, we have a high performing team

attracted to our focussed execution, growth potential and culture of meritocracy.

I am happy to appoint Suhail Sameer as the CEO in recognition of stupendous business growth he has delivered during the last 1 year and his ability to lead from the front," Grover said.

Sameer will also be part of the board of directors.



SBI net profit in Q1 surges 55% to Rs 6,504 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's biggest bank SBI on Wednesday posted a 55 per cent rise in standalone net profit at Rs 6,504 crore for the first quarter of the current financial year, helped by decline in bad loans.

The lender had reported a net profit of Rs 4,189.34 crore in the April-June quarter of 2020-21. The operating profit of the bank increased 5 per cent to Rs 18,975 crore from Rs 18,061 crore in the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal.

However, interest income of the bank declined marginally to Rs 65,564 crore as against Rs 66,500 crore at the end of June 2020. Net interest margin too slipped to 3.15 per cent as against 3.24 per cent at the end of first quarter of last year.

The bank's gross non-performing assets (NPA) of the total advances declined to 5.32 per cent at June-end from 5.44 per cent at June-end last year.

Similarly, net NPAs also declined to 1.7 per cent in June 2020 against 1.8 per cent a year ago.



Dalmia invests about Rs 80 cr in 2 projects

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dalmia Nisus Finance has invested around Rs 80 crore in two real estate projects in Chennai and Bengaluru being developed by Puravankara Ltd and Shriram Properties and is in process of closing three more investment of Rs 125 crore.

Dalmia Nisus Finance Investment Managers LLP, an alternatives manager, has invested this amount from its Real Estate Credit Opportunities Fund - I (RECOF - I). Dalmis Nisus is the joint venture fund of Nisus Finance headed by industry veteran Amit Goenka and the Gaurav Dalmia Group. These maiden investments are part of the Rs 500 crore RECOF-1 Fund that primarily invests into structured credit and mezzanine investments across the residential space in India. RECOF-1 fund had announced its first close in March 2020.

Gaurav Dalmia, Chairman, Advisory Board of the Fund said, "On a long-term risk adjusted basis, real estate structured capital remains a very attractive asset class."

Amit Goenka, Managing Partner and CEO of the Fund, said this is a unique time for capital pools to maximize on the opportunities within the real estate sector. "We are excited about our investment with the Puravankara Group and Shriram Properties and believe that in the current environment, top deck players like these will continue to show extraordinary growth and performance," he added.

"Our investments are uniquely structured to create a win-win with our investee companies while significantly mitigating idiosyncratic risks. Our investors will generate a significant alpha due to the uniqueness of our structure and partnership," Goenka said.

MONEY MATTERS

Tata drives in Tiago NRG with price starting at Rs 6.57 lakh

Tata Motors on Wednesday said it has expanded the Tiago range with the launch of a new sporty trim, Tiago NRG, with price starting at Rs 6.57 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). The new sporty version of the hatchback comes with high ground clearance, bigger tyres, body cladding and roof rails to give it a SUV look. The Tiago NRG is powered by 1.2 litre petrol powertrain (86 PS power) which comes mated to five speed manual and AMT (automated manual transmission) transmission. The model has a four star safety rating by Global NCAP. "Truly energetic just like its name, the NRG fits well with the growing trend of bringing to market more SUV like vehicles. It is not only strong on the exterior but is feature-loaded & stylish in the interior, and is an absolute pleasure to drive with enhanced abilities to take over rough terrains," Tata Motors Vice-President (Sales, Marketing & Customer Care) Rajan Amba noted. Crowning the Tiago range, the NRG will continue to help the company increase its brand presence, he added.



Indian service sector stuck in contraction territory: PMI

India's services sector remained in contraction territory for the third straight month in July, as business activity, new orders and employment declined further largely due to the COVID-19 pandemic and local restrictions, a monthly survey said on Wednesday. The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index rose from 41.2 in June to 45.4 in July, but was stuck in the red due to subdued demand conditions amid the COVID-19 crisis. In Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below 50 denotes contraction. "The current COVID-19 environment continued to weigh on the performance of the service sector that is so crucial to the Indian economy. July data was somewhat disappointing, with incoming new business and output falling solidly over the month, but there was at least a slowdown in rates of contraction," Pollyanna De Lima, Economics Associate Director at IHS Markit, said.



Suzuki Motor Guj to scale down production this month

Suzuki Motor Gujarat (SMG), a 100 per cent subsidiary of Japan's Suzuki Motor Corporation, will scale down production activity this month at its Ahmedabad-based manufacturing plant due to semiconductor shortage, Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said on Wednesday. SMG, which supplies cars exclusively to MSI, has also decided to scale down production to single shift at some manufacturing lines in the plant. "Owing to the semiconductor shortage situation, the company has been informed by its contract manufacturing company, SMG, that production will be partially impacted in this month," MSI said in a regulatory filing. SMG will tentatively not carry out production on the three Saturdays (August 7, 14 and 21) this month, it added. In addition, some of the production lines at SMG plant may see temporary reduction from two-shift to one-shift working, MSI noted.



Gold gains Rs 123; silver zooms Rs 766

Gold in the national capital on Wednesday rose by Rs 123 to Rs 46,992 per 10 gram amid gains in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 46,869 per 10 grams. Silver also zoomed Rs 766 to Rs 66,926 per kilogram from Rs 66,160 per kilogram in the previous trade. "Spot gold prices for 24 carats in Delhi rose by Rs 123 with recovery in COMEX gold prices," according to HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst (Commodities), Tapan Patel. In the international market, gold was trading in the green at USD 1,815 per ounce, while silver was flat at USD 25.71 per ounce.



About 53K startups benefitted from DPIIT as of July

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 52,732 startups have been benefitted from the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) startup recognition initiative as on July 21, 2021, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

'Startup India' is a flagship initiative of the government which aims at building a strong ecosystem for nurturing innovation and startups in the country. A 19-point Startup India Action Plan was

launched in January 2016 which paved the way for the introduction of a number of policy initiatives. "A total of 52,732 startups have taken the benefit of DPIIT startup recognition, as on 21st July 2021," Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

In a separate reply, he said so far nine incubators have been sanctioned Rs 30 crore under the Startup India Seed Fund Scheme (SISFS). In another reply, he said the government



is working on setting up a Single Window System for clearances and approvals of industry in the country.

"This will eliminate the need for investors to visit multiple platforms/offices to gather information and obtain clearances from different stakeholders. This will also provide time-bound approvals and real-time status updates to investors," he said.

Replying to a question on gold, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Anupriya Patel said that Gold

Dore can be imported by refineries against a licence issued by the Directorate General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) with Actual User condition.

"DGFT has not issued import licences to any government company in the last three years," she said. In another reply, she said bilateral trade between India and Pakistan, including through ICP (Integrated Check Post) Attari, remains suspended as a result of unilateral measures taken by Pakistan in August 2019.

One step at a time

Pratik Sud advises caution against exerting yourself too much after recovering from Covid-19

Exercise is an important part of recovery after falling prey to Covid-19. As the number of Covid-19 positive cases is on the rise, remember that irrespective of how restless you may feel after being restricted to your home, if you were stricken by the disease, you should take it easy and remember that it is only natural to take some time to achieve the fitness level you possessed before you got infected. Generally, doctors recommend a break of three-six months, even after the symptoms subside, depending on the severity of the infection in the patient. Provided below are some guidelines to ease your transition to the active lifestyle you once led.

Always warm up

before and cool down after exercising. Begin with breathing exercises and mild walking. You will be shocked to see how you gasp for breath even after walking for 100 metres.

Wear comfortable clothes that circulate air to help you breathe normally. Also, wear comfortable shoes for free movement.

Eat healthy and nutritious food in sufficient quantities an hour before the exercise. Forget about dieting post-Covid19 illness.

Staying hydrated while recovering from the illness is imperative. Ensure that you drink ample water before and after exercising.

Don't exhaust yourself by exercising in hot weather. Try working out early in the morning or in the evening. If by chance you can't work out in the morning, then meditate during the afternoon, but don't indulge in rough workout sessions.

At the same time, avoid exercising indoors with the air conditioner on. Extreme cold weather can leave you breathless which can lead to an uneven flow of blood in the vessels and stressed muscles.

Doctors claim that weakness can last up to six months after recovering, depending on a person's immune system and energy levels. If your friend can run 20-25 laps of the field post-recovery, doesn't mean

that your body can also tolerate the same.

Immediately stop working out if you experience any of the following symptoms:

- Nausea
- Dizziness or lightheadedness
- Breathlessness common while exercising. However, stop if the breathlessness worsens and doesn't subside even after resting
- Excessive sweating
- Tightness in the chest area
- Increased pain especially in the arms and jaw

The moment you experience any uncommon symptoms, you should stop exercising and contact your doctor immediately. There is no harm in discussing the symptoms with your fitness expert as well. Remember, medical staff and doctors are there for our assistance.

The best way to start exercising is by warming up. Mild exercises can loosen the muscles and increase blood flow. This will help in exercising properly without any room for injuries, soreness or uneasiness in the body.

Few exercising tips that can loosen muscle and increase strength

Warm-up exercise
Roll your

shoulders slowly to loosen the

muscles and increase blood flow. You need to roll them

clockwise and anti-clockwise five times consecutively. Continue this motion for five minutes.

Fitness exercise

We all have marched during the school graduation ceremony, so, it will not be difficult to march on one spot for 10 minutes. You can also

walk/run up and down the staircase for 10 minutes. It helps in improving breathlessness.

Strength exercise

Stand facing the wall and raise both hands and place your palms on it. Now push yourself towards the wall, against the force and then return to your position.

This exercise helps in building strength in arms and joints.

Start with mild exercises. Gradually, increase the frequency, intensity and duration of your workout at your ease. This is the best way of challenging yourself by increasing one level further.

Breathlessness is normal while exercising, but too much of it can be harmful and should be addressed immediately. Increase the intensity of your workouts according to your tolerance.

Fatigue and extreme pain can be signs of over-exertion. It is advised to work out with a fitness expert so that if you feel breathless or are in extreme pain, s/he can provide you with emergency assistance.

(The author is the co-founder of Synqfit, a one-stop solution for your home workouts.)



Marc Kaplan shares how new-age social media platforms are providing users with a revamped experience

Currently, most of the prominent social media platforms have become vehicles that proliferate negativity, drive divisiveness, and enable cyberbullying. While they each have standards for behaviour outlined for all to see, they are at best inconsistently applied, and at worst completely ignored. The sites have become so toxic that not a day goes by where many regular users are not exposed to some level of negativity. People regularly report the loss of interactions with friends, family and colleagues online.

The call for reform has been side-stepped by these companies. The likes of key social media platforms have held up the freedom of expression flag in their defense, though many believe this is just a way to justify a business model that is lucrative to them and their shareholders. There is little doubt that extreme societal damage has been done from these platforms' unwillingness to make meaningful changes to address these issues. To date, the conversation has largely been about the issues with these platforms. However, now is the time for solutions. It is time to

No to negativity

bring about a more positive way to interact online where members can connect in a safe and secure environment openly and freely.

Various new-age networking platforms are focus sing on improving online forums while making concerted efforts to mitigate negativity and cyberbullying. Their sole aim is to bring about a social revolution that counterbalances the online negativity and toxicity that is perpetuated, enabled and perhaps unknowingly supported by major social media platforms today.

These modern social networking platforms enable people to give and receive guidance for free and the members help each other in achieving their respective goals. These targets could be related to fitness, career, health, parenting, hobbies, personality development, or any other topic.

These platforms are a community where like-minded people and those who share common interests and goals come together to support each other and render a helping hand to each other. The members in such a scenario can interact and engage one-on-one amongst like-minded individuals or other communities across the globe instantly and seamlessly. They are devoid of ads, negativity, fake news, trolling, and cyberbullying and work beyond the popularity contest approach of garnering maximum likes and shares.

New-age networking platforms leverage the power of content moderation, identity verification, and technology

mix to come up with state-of-the-art community-enabled solutions that help resolve all the associated issues. People with real identities facilitate an increased level of trust, credibility, and safety amongst the members and prefer platforms that provide a safe and protected environment where their privacy is secured.

Trust, respect and genuine connections form the core of these social networking platforms and they are leaving no stone unturned to ensure that their community is free from negativity and toxicity. All they want is to leave a positive impact on the members' lives.

These new-age networking platforms don't function as the usual social media platforms but rather lend a helping hand to solve the problems faced by people in the social space. They aim to come up with a new social contract so that people can interact quickly, easily, and instantly with each other. They are aware that negativity, divisiveness, polarisation and fake news rule the social media space today. However, they wish to take a bold stance and bet on the goodness of the people. They desire to uplift each other rather than tearing each other down. The broader vision of these new-age platforms is to normalise a different online experience and provide an alternative way to spend your time online which is positive, interactive, engaging, and fosters connections!

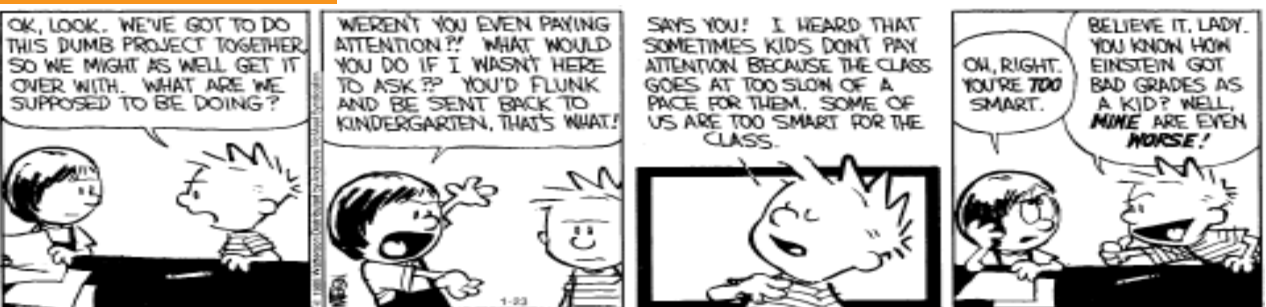
(The author is the co-founder & CEO of ChekMarc, a social platform that enables impactful one-on-one connections.)

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



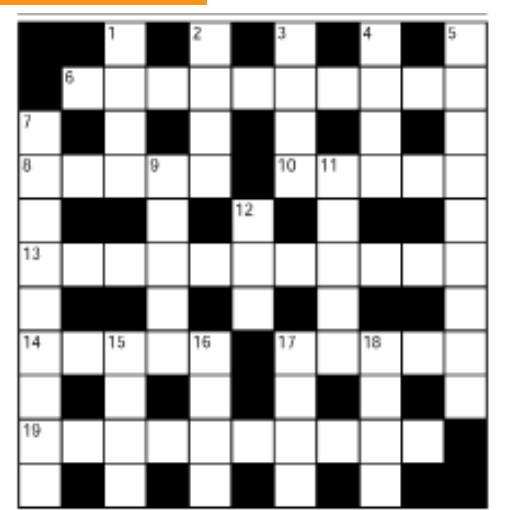
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



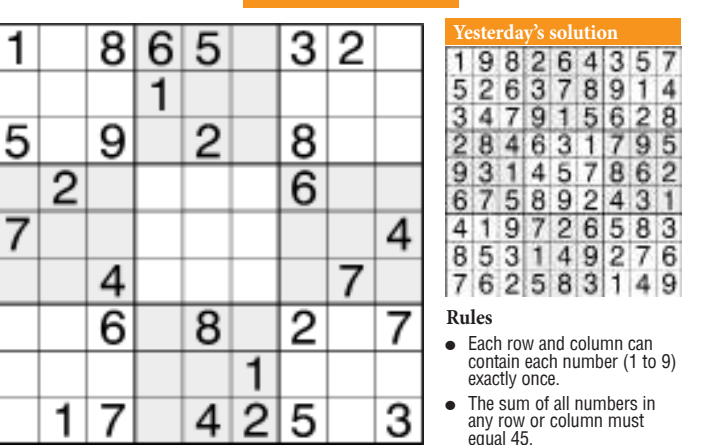
CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU



ACROSS

- Someone who writes for a newspaper or magazine
- Rome is the capital of this country
- Listen to music on this
- Thinking over
- A hairdresser works here
- Window pane material
- Giving reasons for
- Talked over
- A looped rope used by a cowboy
- A month
- Unusual
- These surround the mouth
- Tidy
- Firearms
- A female relation

DOWN

- A long seat
- A large group of soldiers
- Not favouring one person or another
- Discover
- The most powerful



GIVING BACK TO OUR ELDERLY

At a time when people have been finding it tough to fend for themselves, Rs. 15 lakh have been raised by an NGO to support elderly, writes RACHEL DAMMALA.

Times today are tough, people are being laid off, being paid meagre salaries, and many others, have been incurring losses. The pandemic has made lives worse for those most vulnerable, those that are trying to hold on to the last bit of everything they have left.

While common people themselves have trouble looking after themselves and their own, here's a heart-touching story of how Jesus Christ Charitable Trust, an NGO in Challapalli, in these unprecedented times, found help in strangers who came forward to bail the out.

This NGO is aiming to raise funds of Rs. 18 lakhs to save the shelter started by J Rama Mohana Rao. The shelter is home to more than 30 senior persons, widows, and even street dwellers. After facing a massive financial crisis during the Covid-19 lockdown, Rao is raising funds through the crowdfunding platform ImpactGuru.com to save the shelter. The fundraiser has done

immensely well and has so far raised over Rs.15 lakhs.

Rao started the shelter with the aim to provide a peaceful, dignified lifestyle to the elders and homeless who were either abandoned by their family or had no place to live. The trust shelters them, cares for their well-being, provides therapy (if necessary), and even counsels individuals who are hooked to harmful behaviours.

The residents are also provided with good meals, a clean place to live, and the promise of a better life, all of which are provided at no cost.

"These are abandoned older people with no other place to live. People who have been saved will spend the remaining of their lives here. Many people have breathed their last here, and I have administered their final rites. They cannot be abandoned on the streets again. And I need people's help to rescue their only home," J Rama Mohana Rao explains the importance of the fundraiser.

The shelter gained immense love and support from the society. Many people from the surrounding communities would come to the foundation to contribute clothes, blankets, and medications, as well as spend time with the people housed there.

However, the foundation has not received any visits since the lockdown. There's more! Today, the landlord demands that the owners evacuate the property. The lonely older folks, on the other hand, have nowhere to go and the cost of saving this shelter home is Rs. 18 lakhs.

"This place doesn't belong to us. This used to be a vacant place which belongs to someone else. J Rama Mohana Rao sir started this Ashram here with his permission. But now, they are demanding extra money and want us to leave the place. In that case we will not have any shelter to cover us. If that happens, we have to live on the streets, at bus stands, and rail-



way stations. We will have no one to look after us. Our kids have abandoned us. We want to live these last few years peacefully. Please help us provide justice for this," cries an 80-year-old resident.

"A little assistance can help in saving the roof of the people residing in the shelter and every donation has the potential to do wonders," Rao tells us.

He has been requesting people to support his cause and help him save the roof of the people residing in the shelter.



More and more people have been donating, you can

tribute to their cause at ImpactGuru.



HOW TWITTERATI IS CHEERING FOR OUR OLYMPIANS

With the first full week of the Tokyo Olympics now in the books, here are some fresh insights about the topics, trends, and talents that have kept Indian audiences on Twitter talking over the past week.

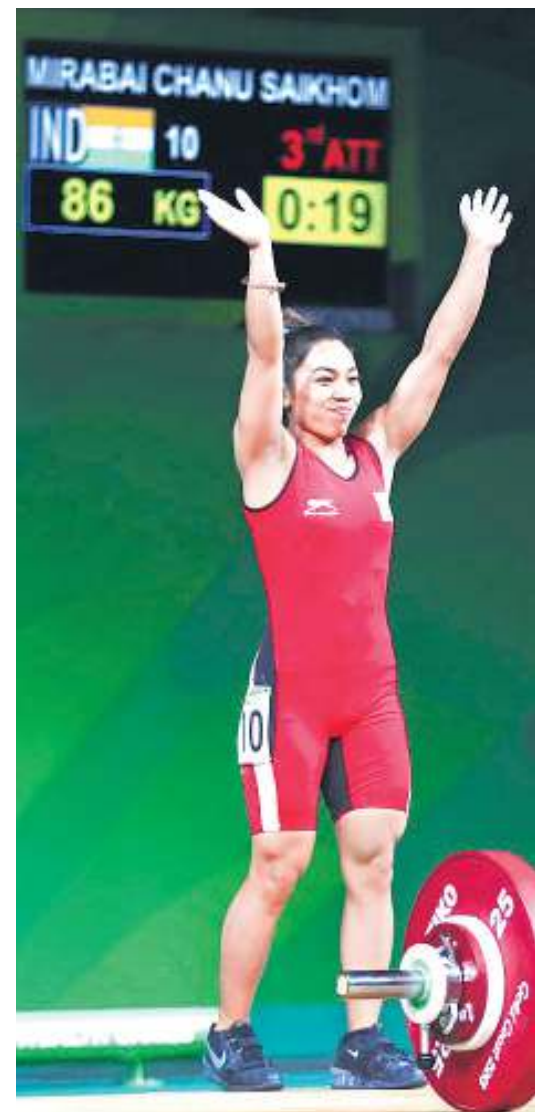
The biggest trend we're seeing is that women athletes are leading the way, led by Mirabai Chanu (@mirabai_chanu), P V Sindhu (@Pvsindhu1), and other top names. Mirabai Chanu's tweet has been the most Retweeted Tweet of the Games by the Indian audience thus far, while P V Sindhu is the athlete with the most India mentions during the Games. Apart from her, Lovlina Borgohain (@LovlinaBorgohai), Mary Kom (@MangteC), Deepika Kumari (@ImDeepikaK), and Atanu Das

(@ArcherAtanu) were most mentioned in tweets. The sports that were most talked about include Boxing, Olympic Weightlifting, Badminton, Olympic Field Hockey, and Tennis. Clapping hands, second-place medal, first-place medal, thumbs up, and sports medal emojis were the top 5 most used on Twitter.

Not to forget the hashtags that were most used: #Tokyo2020, #Olympics, #Cheer4India, #TokyoOlympics and #TeamIndia.

Women athletes are topping the Twitter charts globally too.

The three athletes with the most global mentions on Olympics conversations are: Brazilian skateboarder Rayssa Leal, American gymnast Simone Biles and Brazilian gymnast Rebeca Andrade.



AFTERMATH OF COVID ON BONE AND JOINT HEALTH



Covid had a significant impact on bone and joint health and has resulted in increased complications in the joints. In general, bone health has been neglected in the Indian healthcare system.

According to many studies, more than 80% of the Indian population is Vit-D deficient. During the pandemic, due to lockdowns, people have been confined to their houses and were not properly exposed to sunlight, and it further aggravated Vit D deficiency.

Lack of physical exercise has led to increased obesity issues in people, which in turn, raised joint

problems. Due to decreased mobility during lockdowns, there were increased complaints about muscle and bone pains.

On the other side, due to over usage of steroids during Covid, there was a rise in the incidence of conditions like Osteoporosis and Avascular necrosis of joints. Steroids decrease bone mineral density and predispose for weak bones.

Along with that, steroids decrease blood supply to bone and joints and result in the development of Avascular necrosis in joints. The hip is most commonly affected by this condition.

On the alarming side, there has

been a surge in bone and joint infections post the lockdown. Immunity is at compromise with high steroid usage; thus, patients are more prone to infections.

Here's how one can tackle bone and joint issues and keep fit:

Healthy diet:

Diet rich in calcium, Vit D and C and proteins are important for maintaining good bone and joint health.

Calcium-rich foods like milk, cheese, and other dairy products are key for bone health. If you are not exposed to sunlight properly then we need to supplement with Vit-D tablets/syrups.

Regular exercise:

Exercise is a most key factor in keeping our bones and joints healthy. Exercising at least 4 days a week will improve strength and overall fitness. Regular exercises will improve joint movement, strength, and flexibility of muscles. Strength training and weight-bearing exercises are the best ways to build healthy bones and muscles.

Maintaining healthy weight:

Keeping our weight within the normal range of BMI (body mass index) is very important for preventing joint damage. Being overweight puts joints at high risk for

early arthritis, as being overweight will increase stress over joints.

Avoid smoking:

Smoking decreases blood supply to bones and makes them weak.

Avoid alcohol consumption:

Heavy alcohol decreases bone density and also interferes with absorption and regulation of calcium and vitamin D, thus increasing the risk of osteoporosis.

(The writer, Dr Gopi Krishna Reddy G, is a Consultant Orthopaedic and Joint Replacement Surgeon at SLG Hospitals).



TOKYO
TIMELINE

WEDNESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- Athletics:** Neeraj Chopra qualified for final by topping qualification round in men's javelin throw. Shivpal Singh finished 12th in group B qualification and 27th overall in men's javelin throw; failed to advance to final round.
- Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain lost to Busenaz Surmeneli of Turkey 0-5 in women's 69kg semifinal.
- Golf:** Aditi Ashok at tied second and Diksha Dagar at tied 56th after round 1 in women's individual stroke play.
- Hockey:** India lost to Argentina 1-2 in women's semifinal.
- Wrestling:** Ravi Kumar beat Oscar Eduardo Tigreros (Colombia) in first round, beat Georgi Valentinov Vangelov (Bulgaria) in quarterfinals, beat Nurislam Sanayev (Kazakhstan) in semifinal of men's freestyle 57kg.
- Anshu Malik lost to Iryna Kurachkina (Belarus) in first round of women's freestyle 57kg; will play in repechage round.
- Deepak Punia beat Ekerekeme Agiomor (Nigeria) in first round, beat Zushen Lin (China) in quarterfinals, lost to David Morris Taylor (USA) in semifinals of men's freestyle 86kg; will play for Bronze medal.

IN ACTION TODAY

- Athletics:** K T Irfan, Rahul Rohilla and Sandeep Kumar in men's 20km race walk event. (01:00 pm)
- Golf:** Aditi Ashok and Diksha Dagar in women's individual stroke play round 2. (04:00 am)
- Hockey:** India vs Germany in men's Bronze medal match. (07:00 am)
- Wrestling:** Vinesh Phogat vs Sofia Magdalena Mattsson (Sweden) in women's freestyle 53kg. (08:00 am)
- Anshu Malik vs Valeria Koblova (ROC) in repechage round of women's freestyle 57kg. (second bout after 07:30 am start)
- Ravi Dahiya vs Zavur Uguev (Russian Olympic Committee) in men's freestyle 57kg final. (ninth bout after 02:45 pm start)
- Deepak Punia in men's freestyle Bronze medal match. (11th bout after 02:45 pm start)

Live on SONY TEN & SIX Network

PTI ■ CHIBA

Ravi Dahiya on Wednesday became only the second Indian wrestler to qualify for the title clash at the Olympic Games, when he sensationally turned around the 57kg semifinal bout by pinning Kazakhstan's Nurislam Sanayev but Deepak Punia was left to fight for Bronze medal after he lost his semifinal, here on Wednesday.

Before Dahiya, Sushil Kumar was the only Indian to make the Gold medal bout at the 2012 Olympics in London where he had settled for a Silver.

The fourth seeded Dahiya trailed 2-9 after Sanayev effected a few 'fitley' (leg lace) but as the clocked ticked away, Dahiya regrouped and got hold of his rival with a double leg attack that resulted in a 'victory by fall'.

"I had no business conceding that much lead against Sanayev. I am not happy with it," Dahiya told *PTI* when asked about his inspiring achievement.

It just shows the kind of standards the Indian from Nahri village in Haryana has set for himself.


"I have beaten Sanayev twice before, so I knew I can pull it off despite trailing by a

WRESTLER

RAVI

ENSURES

4TH MEDAL



Ravi Dahiya reacts after win against Kazakhstan's Nurislam Sanayev during the men's 57kg freestyle semifinal @Tokyo2020hi

hugue margin. I was assured inside, but I should not have conceded lead and made it a close fight. That was pretty bad of me," he said.

"I still have some unfinished business to do. I came with a target here and that is not complete yet (winning Gold)."

In the final on Thursday, Dahiya will face reigning world champion Russian Zavur Uguev to whom he had lost in the 2019 World Championship semifinals.

Despite a huge deficit, the 23-year-old Dahiya did not



India's Deepak Punia, top, and China's Lin Zushen in action on Wednesday **AP**

him thrice to log six points in a jiffy.

Suddenly, Dahiya's lead was gone and he was staring at a defeat but his superior stamina and technical prowess was still at work. The remaining one minute was enough for him to turn the tide and he did it in style.

He got hold of Sanayev with a double leg attack and then gripped him tightly with the Kazakhstan wrestler's back on the mat and finished the bout with a mighty 'pin'.

A dominant Dahiya had won both his previous contests on technical superiority en route the final.

Dahiya outclassed Colombia's Tigreros Urbano (13-2) in his opener and then

outwitted Bulgaria's Georgi Valentinov Vangelov (14-4).

While Dahiya was a live-wire on the mat, Deepak Punia (86kg) made good use of a favourable draw to reach the semifinals but lost to the formidable American David Morris Taylor. He will now fight for Bronze on Thursday against the winner of the repechage round between Myles Amine and Ali Shabanau.

It was always going to be a herculean task for Deepak to trouble the American, the 2018 world champion and the reigning Pan-American champion.

It was hardly a contest as Taylor effected one move after another to win by technical superiority in the first period itself.

Deepak could make only one move on counter attack but the American did not give the Indian any chance to convert that into points.

The 22-year-old Deepak had earlier got past Nigeria's Ekerekeme Agiomor, the African championship Bronze medalist by technical superiority and then prevailed 6-3 over China's Zushen Lin in the quarterfinal.

Anshu Malik, on the other hand, lost her opening 57kg bout to European champion Irina Kurachkina but since the Belarus wrestler has

reached the final, the 19-year old Indian has got a second chance to be in medal round.

She will now compete in the repechage round on Thursday and if she wins, she will also fight for Bronze.

Dahiya will now be only the fifth Indian wrestler to win an Olympic medal.

KD Jadhav had become India's first wrestler and also the first individual Olympic medalist when he won a Bronze during the 1952 Helsinki Games.

After that, Sushil Kumar enhanced wrestling's profile by winning a Bronze at 2008 Beijing Games and bettered the colour of the medal by claiming a historic Silver in 2012 at London Olympics that made him India's only athlete with two individual Olympic medals for nine years.

The feat then has now been matched by shuttler PV Sindhu. In the same 2012 Olympics, Yogeshwar Dutt won a Bronze.

Sakshi Malik became the first Indian woman wrestler to win an Olympic medal when she took a Bronze in 2016 Rio Olympics.

This Tokyo edition could well be a watershed Olympics for Indian wrestling with both Vinesh Phogat and Bajrang Punia also in contention for a medal.

Lovlina ends with Bronze

Tokyo: Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) signed off with a Bronze medal in her debut Olympic Games after a comprehensive 0-5 loss to reigning world champion Busenaz Surmeneli on Wednesday, bringing an end to the country's campaign in the sport here.

Up against quite literally a bully in the ring, Borgohain was completely out-punched by the Gold medal favourite Turkish boxer, who produced a thoroughly dominating performance.

Borgohain also coped a one point deduction in the second round for not paying attention to the referee's instructions despite a couple of cautions.

"I don't know what to say. I could not execute what I had planned. I could have done better," Borgohain said after the loss.

The Indian's start was not all that bad as she stood up to the strong challenge but she came undone after Surmeneli got down to connecting her vicious hooks



India's Lovlina Borgohain, right, exchange punches against Busenaz Surmeneli of Turkey during their women's welter weight semifinal boxing match **PTI**

and body shots.

The third round was especially punishing for Borgohain, who faced two standing eight counts during the bout.

Surmeneli was unrelenting in all three rounds after being unsettled only slightly in the opening few seconds when Borgohain tried to keep her at long range and struck only counter-attacking straight hits.

Another heartbreak in hockey

Tokyo: A brave Indian women's hockey team put up a gritty performance but it was not enough to secure a maiden Olympic final berth as it lost 1-2 to world No 2 Argentina in a hard-fought semifinal on Wednesday.

India still have a chance to win the Bronze medal as they will take on Great Britain in the third-fourth place play-off match on Friday.

The Indians fought valiantly and gave Argentina a run for their money by taking the lead in the second minute through a penalty corner conversion by Gurjit Kaur.

But the Las Leonas bounced back strongly with skipper Maria Barriounevo's (18th, 36th minutes) twin strikes from penalty corners to secure the hard-fought win.

The Netherlands will play Argentina in the final on Friday.

The bunch of 18 fearless and determined Indian women had already done the unthinkable when they stunned three-time champions Australia 1-0 on Monday to enter the Olympic semifinals for the first time.



Indian players react after defeat against Argentina in the semifinal match **PTI**

India has learnt to bounce back from losses: Marijne

Tokyo: The Indian women's hockey team has learnt to bounce back from losses, said coach Sjoerd Marijne, adding that the defeat to Argentina in the Olympic semifinal is history as the side focusses on claiming a historic Bronze.

"We came here to win a medal and still there's one (available). It's now about recovery, about the mindset. The good thing is, it's not always good that we lost a lot

in the past but we also have learned to deal with the losses," Marijne said after the match.

"So it's okay, what can we improve on from this match?"

The Dutchman feels India failed to grab their opportunities against Argentina, which eventually made the difference. "In these matches it is about taking your opportunities. Argentina did that better than us. With the PC, the

injection was not always perfect, the trapping was not good and then you can't play exactly the PC you want," he said.

"I can't be angry with the girls or be mad because we don't play these kind of matches so much. It's a whole new experience and you also have to learn how to play these matches. It's all about taking your opportunities. "The intensity we showed in the last quarter, that was really good."

Neeraj into the final with one attempt

Tokyo: Medal contender Neeraj Chopra became the first Indian javelin thrower to enter the finals of the Olympic Games with a stunning throw of 86.65m in his opening attempt that put him on top of the qualification round on Wednesday.

The 23-year-old kept India's hopes of an elusive Olympic medal from athletics alive by earning a direct entry into the finals to be held on Saturday as he sent the spear well past the qualifying mark of 83.50m in his first attempt.

However, Shivpal Singh, failed to make the final cut with a below-par best throw of 76.40m, which he came up in his first attempt, to finish a lowly 12th in the Group B qualification which featured 16 athletes.

Competing in his first Olympics, Chopra took just a few seconds to make the final round. He topped the Group A contest as well as the two qualifications rounds and left the javelin arena after his first throw.

"I am at my first Olympic Games, and I feel very good. In warm-up my performance wasn't so good, but then (in the qualifying round) my first throw had a good angle, and was a perfect throw," Chopra said after his event.

Chopra is, however, under no illusion that the final will be a totally different contest where the world's best will go for podium finish.

"It will be a different feeling (in the finals), since it is my first time in the

Olympics. Physically we (all) train hard, and are ready, but I also need to prepare mentally.

"I will need to focus on the throw, and try to repeat this (performance) with a higher score," said the youngster who came into the Olympics with the fourth best throw (88.07m) this year.

Chopra's performance on Saturday will go down as one of the best performances by an Indian in the Olympics, as he finished ahead of Gold medal favourite and 2017 world champion Johannes Vetter of Germany.

Vetter, who had earlier said that Chopra will find it tough to beat him in the Olympics, struggled in his first two throws before crossing the automatic qualification mark with a 85.64m final throw.

The 28-year-old towering German, who came into the Olympics after having seven monster throws of over 90m between April and June, was lying at a dangerous seventh position after his first two throws but eventually qualified for the final at second overall behind Chopra.

Pakistan's Arshad Nadeem, who had won a Bronze medal when he topped the 2018 Asian Games in Indonesia, topped Group B to earn an automatic qualification to the finals with a second round throw of 85.16m.

He qualified for the finals at overall third behind Chopra and Vetter. **PTI**



Aditi placed 2nd ahead of big names

Tokyo: Indian golfer Aditi Ashok got off to a brilliant start at the Olympic Games, carding a four-under 67 in the opening round for a share of the second spot at the Kasumigaseki Country Club on Wednesday.

Aditi, who caught the golfing world's attention five years ago at the Rio Olympics, shared the position with World No 1 Nelly Korda.

She was one shot behind the leader, Madalene Sagstrom of Sweden, who shot 66.

"I think I played better than I expected today because I had a lot of hybrids into the greens, so I didn't really expect to be like 5-under through 17," Aditi said.

Aditi may well have had a share of the lead but for a bogey on the 18th hole.

While Sagstrom shot a bogey free five-under 66, Aditi



had five birdies against one bogey and that on the closing hole.

She was placed well ahead of some big names in women's golf, including the formidable defending champion, Inbee Park (69).

India's other entrant in the

field, Diksha Dagar (76) had a rough start in her maiden Olympics as she had five bogeys and no birdies to lie at the tied 56th spot.

The 60-player field will play 18 holes each day and there will be no cut, so all players get to play 72 holes. **PTI**

Manpreet & Co aim to end India's 41 years medal drought

Tokyo: A demoralising semifinal defeat behind it, the Indian men's hockey team would need an error-free performance from its defence to secure an Olympic medal after 41 years when it takes on Rio Games Bronze-winner Germany in the third-fourth place play-off match on Thursday.

The Indian defence will have to pull up its socks and avoid repeating the same mistakes which it made against Belgium if they desire to stand on the podium here.

The onus is on the likes of Harmanpreet, Rupinder, Surender Kumar, Amit Rohidas and star goalkeeper PR Sreejesh will have to be on their toes to come out triumphant against the might of Germans.

The Indians also need to

avoid unnecessary tackles in front of their circle.

Going by rankings, there is hardly anything to differentiate between the two sides as India are currently on third place and Germany on fourth. But Germany would be a tough nut to crack. Having lost 1-3 against Australia in the semifinals here, the Germans would be determined to prove a point.

Having failed to secure the Gold medal here after two successive yellow metals in 2008 and 2012 Games, the Germans had to settle for a Bronze in Rio 2016 and they would be determined to at least return with a podium finish from here.

In the Olympics, both the sides have faced each other 11 times recording four wins each and three games ending in draw.

India vs Pak on Oct 24

New Delhi: The marquee T20 World Cup clash between arch-rivals India and Pakistan in all likelihood will be held on October 24, which is a Sunday, even though the ICC will be releasing the official schedule of the tournament in few days.

"As of now, Sunday, October 24 looks the likely option as the first week's Qualifying round matches starting October 17 will be held in Muscat, Oman," a source privy to developments in the ICC board said.

"So when the main round robin fixtures are played, it is better to start with an Indo-Pak game which will have the best TRP," India and Pakistan are slotted in Group 2 along with the WTC winners New Zealand and Afghanistan. **PTI**

TTFI to issue show cause to Manika

New Delhi: Table Tennis Federation of India on Wednesday decided to issue a show cause notice to star paddler Manika Batra for her refusal to take national coach Soumyadeep Roy's help at the Tokyo Olympics.

Though Manika's coach Sanmay Paranjape was given access for training sessions in Tokyo, he did not have the accreditation to enter the field of play and a request to upgrade his access card was denied. In a show of protest, Manika had refused help from designated team coach Roy during her singles matches.

"Before she boarded the flight to Tokyo, she very well knew that her personal coach did not have field of play access. Therefore, she should not have acted the way she did. "We will issue the notice tomorrow and Manika will have 10 days to respond and based on that we will decide what action to be taken further," TTFI secretary general said. **PTI**

England all out for 183 on Day 1

PTI ■ NOTTINGHAM

England were all out for 183 in their first innings against India on the opening day of the first Test here on Wednesday.

Having reached tea at 138 for four, England lost their remaining six wickets for just 45 runs in the day's third and final session.

Skipper Joe Root made 64 off 108 balls, even as the others failed miserably to stand up to the Indian pace bowling attack.

For the visitors, Jasprit Bumrah picked up four wickets for 46 runs, Mohammed Shami had 3/28, while Shardul Thakur bagged 2/41.

England scored 77 runs in 25.2 overs bowled in the afternoon session for the loss of two wickets, after scoring 61 in the first session.

The pitch had enough for the pacers in the first hour of play with the ball swinging and seaming around.

With India going in with four pacers, Shardul Thakur came into the side but the one



Indian players celebrate after England batsman Jonny Bairstow was declared out on Day 1 of first Test **AP**

spinner picked was Ravindra Jadeja, who didn't bowl in the first session.

Dropping premier spinner R Ashwin was a big call as he had been well prepared for the series opener with his prepara-

tion including a county game.

Earlier at tea, Joe Root and Jonny Bairstow frustrated Indian bowlers with solid Test match batting in challenging conditions before Mohammed Shami broke their 72-run stand by dismissing

thwart their attempts.

Shami was finally able to break their threatening stand by having Bairstow leg before at the stroke of tea. Shami got one to jag back in and India reviewed the umpire's decision successfully. England scored 77 runs in 25.2 overs bowled in the afternoon sessions for the loss of two wickets.

India had their tail up early on in the session when Shami had Dom Sibley caught at short mid-wicket in the third over post lunch. Shami made Sibley fall into a trap set for him with the full ball on his pads which the England opener flicked it straight to KL Rahul, leaving the hosts at 66 for three.

Bairstow joined Root in the middle and they ended up batting the rest of the session.

While the Indian pacers kept asking questions with the ball constantly moving around, Root seemed to find answers more often than that not. He played with soft hands and close to his body, and was quick to latch on to the loose balls.

TRIVIKRAM TO LAUNCH PK'S SON —AKIRA

Pawan Kalyan's son Akira is going to be launched by director Trivikram Srinivas. Though there is no official statement yet, as per the sources, it is confirmed that Trivikram will be the debut film of Akira.

As we know, Pawan Kalyan and Trivikram Srinivas are the thickest of friends. Pawan Kalyan's upcoming movie in which his character is named 'Bheemla Nayak' is also by Trivikram practically, for it was written by him, Director Sagar Chandra is helming the project. The film is the official remake of the Malayalam hit film *Ayyappanum Koshiyum*. It also stars actor Rana Daggubati.

Pawan Kalyan has arranged for a martial arts trainer for Akira. Akira has been living with his father at Pawan Kalyan's house at Jubilee Hills, where he's



undergoing various forms of training. Recently, Renu Desai had posted a video of Akira practicing martial arts on her Instagram account.

Fans of Pawan Kalyan are more than happy to know that Akira is going to be launched by Trivikram. Everybody believes that Trivikram's movies will be the perfect script and screenplay for Akira's entry. So with Trivikram heading the project, fans believe Akira is on the right path.



'I am bitten by NTR's energy'

Filmmaker SS Rajamouli's *RRR* starring Ram Charan and Jr NTR has been receiving a growing hype across the country for its ensemble cast and the director himself. *RRR* is the much-anticipated film of 2020, which is gearing up for the grand release on October 13. The period drama will see Bollywood actress Alia Bhatt star opposite Ram Charan while international actress

Olivia Morris is paired opposite Jr NTR. *RRR* is being bankrolled by DVV Danayya, the film is being made on a budget of more than Rs 350 crores. Earlier, it was also heard that Kichcha Sudeep has been roped in to play the role of a police officer in Jr NTR and Ram Charan starrer *RRR*, but later the actor refuted the rumor. Recently the *Eega* actor showered accolades on Jr NTR by saying, "I have worked with

Megastar Chiranjeevi, and with due respect to him and others, I consider Jr NTR my favourite, as I am bitten by his energy which is palpable."

Kichcha Sudeep is a popular name in Tollywood as he was seen in Rajamouli's directorial ventures *Eega* and *Baahubali: The Beginning*. He also played the important role in the Megastar Chiranjeevi starrer *Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy* co-starring Nayanthara and Tamannah Bhatia.



MEHREEN SIGNS A ROMANTIC FILM

F2 girl Mehreen Kaur Pirzada recently announced that she will be seen in more and more films now and has started lining up several projects. According to the latest news, Mehreen signed another breezy entertainer.

Mehreen will be pairing with Havish in this film under the direction of G. Karthik Reddy. Karthik earlier came with films like *Adda* and *Voter* in 2013 and 2019 respectively. The film is touted to be a romantic entertainer and has a unique screenplay. A source reveals that the characterisations are novel and story-based and informed that the fictional entertainer has interesting twists in the script with a novel screenplay. Script work for the project has neared completion and the film will go on floors at the earliest. Mehreen is currently starring in *F3*, the sequel to *F2*, under the direction of Anil Ravipudi, and *Manchi Rojuju Vachchayi* under the direction of Maruthi.

Hareesh Peradi, Vikram Vedha join *Mishan Impossible*



Taapsee Pannu is making a comeback to Tollywood after many years with *Mishan Impossible*, directed by Swaroop RSJ of *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya* fame. The film will see the *Jummandi Naadam* actress playing an unconventional role of a bounty hunter. *Mishan Impossible* produced by Niranjan Reddy and Anvesh Reddy, has Malayalam actor Hareesh Peradi in the role of an antagonist, it is learnt.

Hareesh Peradi is a popular face for Tamil audiences as he was seen in Vikram Vedha. He was also seen in *Sulthan*, directed by Bakkiyaraj Kannan and co-starring Karthi and Rashmika Mandanna. In Tollywood, he was seen in Mahesh Babu and Rakul Preet Singh starrer *Spyder*, where he played the role of CBI Head Officer.

N M Pasha is on board as the associate producer for *Mishan Impossible*. Mark K Robin is the music composer, while Deepak Yeragara is taking care of the cinematography department for the project and the editing is by Ravi Teja Girijala.

On the work front, Hareesh Peradi will be seen playing important roles in Malayalam movies *Muddy* and *Bheeshma Parvam*, which will hit the theaters this year.

tollywood

Acharya likely to release on Oct. 1, before *RRR*

Mega Star Chiranjeevi's upcoming film *Acharya* is going to hit the screens before *RRR* itself! The film may be released on October 1, 2021. The unit, we hear, is almost sure about this date. SS Rajamouli's *RRR*, starring stars NTR Jr and Ram Charan Tej, is going to release on October 13. Just two weeks before that, *Acharya* is going to say hello to Telugu audiences.

Currently, *Acharya* is in its production phase, with shooting underway in Kakinada, Andhra Pradesh. The film will complete its shoot within the next four weeks, and some post-production works have already started. By the third week of September, everything will be ready, sources tell us.

Apart from Chiranjeevi, Mega Power Star Ram Charan, Kajal Agarwal, Pooja Hegde, and others will be seen playing key roles in the movie.

Koratla Siva is hoping to give another hit with this film. Mani Sharma has composed the music and the two songs that have released have been received with great applause. The movie reportedly revolves around a middle-aged Naxalite-turned-social reformer who launches a fight against the Endowments Department over misappropriation and embezzlement of temple funds and donations. Presented by Surekha Konidela, the film is produced by Chiran himself, and Niranjan Reddy under their Konidela Production Company and Matinee Entertainment respectively.



Digu Digu Digu Naaga hits over a million views

The first lyrical single from the upcoming film *Varudu Kavalenu*, which has actor Naga

lyrics, and especially, Shreya's vocals. Along with the lead cast Naga Shaurya and Ritu Varma, *Varudu Kavalenu* has Nadia, Murali Sharma, Vennela

Shaurya in the lead, has been titled *Digu Digu Naaga*. The song has been picturised on actress Ritu Varma that shows her in a vintage avatar. The lyrics have been penned by Anantha Sriram that has composed by Vishal Chandrashekar and sung by Shreya Ghoshal. The remake folk song has already crossed a million views within hours of its release. Fans have been raving about the



Kishore, Praveen, Ananth, Pammi Sai, Ranga sthala Mahesh, Kireeti Daamaraaju, Vaishnavi Chaitanya, and Siddique Shah will be seen playing important roles. On the technical front, Ganesh Kumar Raavuri wrote the dialogues, Vamsi Patchipulusu handled the Cinematography, Vishal Chandra Shekhar has composed the music, while Naveen Nooli oversees editing. Suryadevara Naga Vamsi is producing the film under the Sithara Entertainments banner.

ARJUN REPLACED BY JAGAPATHI BABU IN *SVP*



The latest update from *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* is that Action King Arjun has been replaced by Jagapathi Babu. Due to the Covid situation, the actor's dates have become difficult to be adjusted to the film's schedule and thus had to walk out of the project. He, right now, has his

hands full with a couple of Kollywood films. Understanding his trouble, Arjun has been replaced by Jagapathi Babu, who is a close friend to Arjun.

Jagapathi Babu had played father to Mahesh Babu in their previous film *Srimanthudu*. Now *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* will have the two share screen space again. Jagapathi Babu has proved himself as a villain with a stylish look in films like *Nannaku Prematho*. The character in *SVP* too, we hear, is going to be similar.

The makers of *SVP* are going to release the film's teaser on August 9, on the occasion of Super Star Mahesh Babu's birthday. Fans are eagerly waiting for it. The makers recently announced the release date to be January 13, 2022. Thaman has composed music for the film that is being directed by Parasuram.

