

**ANALYSIS 7**  
MISSING THE WOODS  
FOR THE TREES**MONEY 8**  
TECH, PLATFORMS BROUGHT  
FULL BENEFIT OF SCHEMES: MINISTER**SPORTS 12**  
ANOTHER TOUGH DAY  
FOR INDIA

HYDERABAD, TUESDAY, JULY 27, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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'WANT TO REACH  
OUT TO GLOBAL  
AUDIENCE'

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**VETERAN ACTRESS ABHINAYA SHARADE JAYANTHI DIES AT 76 IN BENGALURU**

Veteran actress Abhinaya Sharade Jayanthi, was known for her work in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada movies, died at her residence in Bengaluru on Monday, reports news agency ANI. The actress, who was popularly known as Jayanthi, was 76. She died due to age related ailments. Mourning the actress, Telugu screenwriter Gopi Mohan tweeted: "Veteran heroine Jayanthi (76) garu, known as #AbhinayaSharadhe passed away due to health issues. She acted in more than 500 films in Kannada, Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam and Hindi. In her career spanning five decades, Jayanthi worked in over 500 films. She was among the lead actresses in the Kannada film industry from 1960 to the 80s."

**BONUS PRIZE FOR AN OLYMPIC MEDAL: 30 SECONDS MASK-FREE ON PODIUM**

Olympic athletes have received an extra incentive for winning a medal after organisers said they could remove their masks for 30 seconds for photos on the podium. Medal-winners were urged not to abuse the relaxation in the rules at the Tokyo Games, which have been marked by their strict anti-coronavirus measures after opening a year late. "The idea is to give those athletes who have been competing, when everyone else has stepped back, the chance to remove their mask for 30 seconds, staying on those steps for photos," International Olympic Committee spokesman Mark Adams said on Monday.

**\$1.4 MILLION APARTMENT, TESLA, GOLD BARS - VACCINE GIVEAWAYS GET FLASHIER**

When the Covid vaccination rollout started, the biggest material prize was an Instagramable sticker. Now in Hong Kong, you could potentially score a Tesla or even an apartment in the world's most-expensive housing market. With gold bars, a diamond Rolex and a \$100,000 shopping spree also up for grabs, Hong Kong's vaccine lotteries are easily the flashiest. Yet it's far from the only location rolling out eye-catching incentives to try and boost flagging vaccination rates. Russia's giving away snowmobiles. West Virginians can score lifetime hunting licenses and custom rifles. In Alabama, people who are vaccinated got offered a chance to drive on a speedway track.

**6 ASSAM COPS KILLED AS CLASHES ON BORDER WITH MIZORAM ESCALATE**

Six officers of the Assam Police were killed in clashes at the border with Mizoram, Chief Minister Himanta Sarma said today after another bout of violence in the volatile area. Home Minister Amit Shah has spoken to Chief Ministers of both states. Mizoram said the violence started after the Assam Police crossed the border and "over-ran" a police post at Kolasib in violation of the understanding between the police of the two states. Mizoram also said the Assam Police damaged vehicles on the national highway and opened fire on the state police.



# As people grapple with Covid, Centre's net tax collection rises 86% to Rs 5.57 lakh-cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's total tax collection in the April-June quarter grew about 86 per cent to more than Rs 5.57 lakh crore, Parliament was informed on Monday.

Out of the total amount, collection of net direct tax stood at Rs 2.46 lakh crore and of indirect tax was at Rs 3.11 lakh crore.

"The net direct tax collection in the 1st quarter of FY 2021-22 is Rs 2,46,519.82 crore as against Rs 1,17,783.87 crore during the same period of previous FY 2020-21 representing a growth of 109.3 per cent," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

The net indirect tax collection in the first quarter of FY 2021-

2022 was Rs 3,11,398 crore as against Rs 1,82,862 crore during the same period a year ago, representing a growth of 70.3 per cent.

Replying to another question, Chaudhary said the Income Tax Department takes appropriate action under relevant laws against tax evaders.

Such action under direct tax laws includes searches, surveys, enquiries, assessment of income, levy of tax, interest, penalties and filing of prosecution complaints in criminal courts, wherever applicable.



Out of the total amount, collection of net direct tax stood at **Rs 2.46 lakh-crore** and of indirect tax was at **Rs 3.11 lakh-crore**

**No plan to print currency notes: FM**

The government has no plan to print currency notes to tide over the current economic crisis triggered by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Parliament on Monday. To a question on whether there is any plan to print currency to tide over the crisis, the Finance Minister said, "No Sir". Many economists and experts have suggested the government to resort to printing more currency notes to support the economy ravaged by the spread of COVID-19, and protect jobs. India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have contracted by 7.3 per cent during 2020-21. Sitharaman said in a written reply to Lok Sabha. This contraction reflects the unparalleled effect of the pandemic and the containment measures that were taken to control the pandemic, she said.



## AP earned Rs 7.59 on every litre of petrol, TS Rs 5.77

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Andhra Pradesh earned Rs 7.59 from every litre of petrol sold by way of State taxes and Rs 5.48 from every litre of diesel sold in the last year, according to Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri.

Telangana earned Rs 5.77 from every litre of petrol and Rs 4.08 from every litre of diesel, Puri told the Lok Sabha on Monday in a written reply to a question.

He said that Madhya Pradesh levies the highest sales tax or VAT on petrol in the country, while Rajasthan has the highest tax on diesel.

Heavily taxed petrol and diesel rates have shot to their highest prices this month. Taxes, both Central and State, make up for 55 percent of the retail price of petrol and 50 percent of diesel

rates. While the Union government levies a fixed excise duty of Rs 32.90 a litre on petrol and Rs 31.80 a litre on diesel, states charge an ad valorem rate of VAT that essentially results in per litre tax going up when prices rise, and falling when rates come down.



IT Minister KT Rama Rao hands over a new ration card to a beneficiary to mark the launch of the programme at the Rajanna-Sircilla district Collectorate on Monday.

## Distribution of 3 lakh new ration cards starts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The long-awaited distribution of ration cards was taken up across Telangana State on Monday and for the first time in the country, over three lakh new ration cards were distributed simultaneously.

Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar, who launched the distribution of ration cards from Bhupalapally district along with Woman and Child Welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod, said that he was happy to be distributing ration cards as instructed by Chief Minister

K Chandrasekhara Rao.

KCR had instructed in the Cabinet meeting held in June to distribute new ration cards to the eligible. The process was completed and distribution started from Monday.

Several people had applied for new ration cards during Covid-induced crisis, and after examining all the applications, the authorities issued ration cards to 3,09,083 beneficiaries and 8,65,430 food security cards to the eligible.

## KCR tells officials to address all problems of Dalits

ML MELLY MAITREYI  
■ HYDERABAD

In an apparent move to address each and every problem of Dalits in Huzurabad constituency, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao on Monday said that along with the Dalit Bandhu scheme, all pending works of providing basic amenities and other development works will be completed.

He instructed district Collector Karnan to take up a special drive in the constituency in a week to 10 days and solve all land-related issues, including assigned lands, of Dalits.

"If there are any pending issues related to digital signature of Dalit



If there are any pending issues related to digital signature of Dalit applicants, all such issues be identified and those individuals should be called to the Collectorate so that their problems are resolved

- K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO  
Chief Minister of Telangana

applicants, all such issues be identified and those individuals should be called to the Collectorate so that

their problems are resolved," KCR instructed the Collector. Speaking at an orientation

## Yediyurappa resigns, says will remain active in politics

PNS ■ BENGALURU

After months of speculation about over his exit, B S Yediyurappa on Monday stepped down as the Chief Minister of Karnataka, coinciding with his government completing two years in office.

He termed these two years as "trial by fire", pointing out that he had to run the administration without cabinet in the initial days, followed by devastating floods and the challenge of Covid-19 management, among other issues.

The 78-year-old BJP veteran who submitted his resignation to Governor Thaaawarchand Gehlot at the Raj Bhavan here, said he quit "voluntarily".

"I had decided to resign two months ago, as we complete two

I had decided to resign two months ago, as we complete two years of our government today

years of our government today. I thought it was apt to resign now and have submitted the resignation to the Governor, and he has accepted it," Yediyurappa told reporters emerging from the Raj Bhavan.

An official notification from the Governor's office said Gehlot has accepted Yediyurappa's resignation and has dissolved the Council of Ministers headed by him with immediate effect.

2

## TRS, BJP claim credit for heritage tag to Ramappa temple

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

A day after UNESCO rightly recognised the famous Ramappa temple as a world heritage site, both the TRS and BJP have started claiming credit for the tag.

While Ministers and TRS leaders are crediting Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao for the tag, BJP leaders are claiming that it was Prime Minister Narendra Modi who facilitated the recognition.

On their part, neither KCR nor Modi claimed credit while wishing the people of Telangana and thanking those who worked hard to get the UNESCO recognition for the Ramappa temple.



TS Ministers Srinivas Goud and K Eswar, and TRS leaders like former MP and vice-chairman of

Telangana Planning Board B Vinod Kumar gave the credit to KCR as soon as UNESCO made



week, the hospital was reporting about 20 admissions per day. This has seen a sharp spike this week, with the number of patients reaching the hospital for admission surging on an average to 50 per day.

2

## Fully-vaccinated people infected by Delta variant

The Delta variant is the fastest, fittest and most formidable version of the coronavirus that causes COVID-19 the world has encountered, and it is upending assumptions about the disease even as nations loosen restrictions and open their economies, according to virologists and epidemiologists. Vaccine protection remains very strong against severe infections and hospitalizations among the unvaccinated. Evidence is also mounting that it is capable of infecting fully vaccinated people at a greater rate than previous versions, and concerns have been raised that they may even spread the virus, these experts said. "The biggest risk to the world at the moment is simply Delta," said microbiologist Sharon Peacock.

2

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

Ashadha &amp; Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

**Tithi :** Chaturthi 26/27**Nakshatram :** Shatabhisha 10:13**Time to Avoid :** Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)**Rahukalam :** 3:35 pm - 5:11 pm**Yamagandam :** 9:10 am - 10:46 am**Varjyam :** 4:46 pm - 6:24 pm**Gulika :** 12:22 pm - 1:58 pm**Good Time :** (to start any important work)**Amritakalam :** 2:34 am - 4:12 am**Abhijit Muhurtham :** 11:56 am - 12:48 pm**HYDERABAD WEATHER****Forecast:** Partly cloudy**Temp:** 29/22**Humidity:** 88%**Sunrise:** 5:53 am**Sunset:** 06:51 pm**Current Weather Conditions**

Updated JULY 26, 2021 5:00 PM



# Filibustering of Parliament shows Opposition disdain for Constitution

Even as the country is about to celebrate the 75th anniversary of its Independence, doubts have arisen whether the people's representatives have any regard for democracy or even the Constitution, if the way the parliamentary proceedings are going on is any indication.

A healthy democracy depends on the maturity of the people's representatives. Unfortunately, the Opposition parties have shown to the world at large that they are deficient in maturity.

Leaders of yore used to regard raising their voice in Parliament would mean fulfilling their constitutional duty. That's why their wonderful speeches found a suitable place in the annals of history. Their speeches reflected their perspective on various contemporary issues.

In contrast, the attitude of the present-day opposition parties indicates that the pos-

terity would not be able to learn anything – about them or their speeches.

Barring the pay and allowances of MPs, the daily expenses of running both Houses of Parliament run up to Rs 2 crore. The Opposition, which has been raising a hue and cry over the government spending Rs 20,000-crore on the Central Vista project, can say how much money it has wasted since 2014 by filibustering business in both the Houses.

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu and Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla have been expressing their inability to understand why the Opposition has been obstructing business in Parliament.

On innumerable occasions, Om Birla appealed to the Opposition benches to sit as the government was ready to answer their questions. The people have been eagerly

**The wonderful speeches of leaders of yore found a suitable place in the annals of history. In contrast, the attitude of the present-day opposition parties indicates that the posterity would not be able to learn anything - about them or their speeches.**

waiting for Parliament to solve many of the country's problems during the current crisis.

The Constitution saddled Parliament with crucial responsibilities, but the Opposition parties have no regard for its sanctity.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, addressing an all-party meeting a day prior to the commencement of the monsoon session appealed for healthy discussions in the session, saying that the government was prepared to respond to all issues to be raised by the Opposition.

But the Opposition parties started the session by barging into the Well. The opposition Members do not remain seated and have been serving notices for discussions and debates. Why are the Opposition members not willing to conduct themselves with dignity in the House stating that a notice has been served under so and so rule?

If there is force in the contention of the opposition, it will reach out to the people at large.

When the PM introduces his Cabinet colleagues to the House, welcoming them and



Y SATYA KUMAR  
BJP National Secretary

hailing their appointment is not only an established tradition but reflects cultured behaviour.

When the PM says that he inducted a record number of Ministers from weaker sections and women into his Cabinet, the Opposition members should show some respect to these sections of society. This was the least expected of them.

The Opposition parties are not able to digest the BJP's success and their rout in 2014 and are thus frustrated.

Last year, Parliament sat for only 33 days – Budget session was held for only 10 days and monsoon session was limited to just eight. Those who claim to question the government are not able to make good use of the Question Hour.

During 2015-19, only 40 percent of the Question Hour was put to good use. Several notices have been served to cancel the Question Hour daily. How can the Opposition be accountable to the people if it is not able to question the government?

What does the Opposition achieve by tweeting messages, staging dharnas and barging into the Well of the House? As people saw

through the Opposition plans, they welcomed Modi's leadership.

The government would have no alternative except getting the important Bills passed amidst pandemonium. Having wasted Parliament's time, where does the Opposition get the right to criticise the government stating that it hurried through the Bills?

Having discussed the agricultural laws with representatives of farmers' bodies umpteen times, the government still expresses its readiness for discussions and would not hesitate to amend the laws if the farmers make suitable suggestions.

Having realised that the farmers' agitation did not get countrywide support, the Opposition found a weapon in Pegasus spyware to attack the government.

When in power, the

Congress kept a tight vigil on the movements of the Opposition parties.

According to Union Home Ministry, which replied in 2013 to a question under the RTI Act, the Congress government kept tabs on 9,000 phones and 500 email accounts.

The Opposition parties have been levelling false allegations against the BJP government producing a list from nowhere.

P Chidambaram, who kept a vigil on the then Finance Minister, is out to criticise the Modi government on Pegasus spyware.

Does the Congress, which is an expert in hatching conspiracies, or any other Opposition party have any moral right to criticise Modi?

It is their foolishness that they believe people would give credence to them if they obstruct the business of Parliament.

# KCR: Dalit Bandhu is a movement, Huzurabad should take it forward

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Telangana Dalit Bandhu scheme would pave way for Dalits to choose a vocation, industry and trade of their choice with the financial assistance to be extended by the government under the scheme.

The government's intention would be to enable Telangana Dalit society develop as a business class and achieve such financial empowerment that other sections in the villages would approach Dalits for loans, KCR said addressing an orientation workshop on the Dalit Bandhu for the Dalit representatives from Huzurabad constituency at Pragathi Bhavan here on Monday.

"Dalit Bandhu is not a mere scheme but a movement and its success across TS will depend on the success to be achieved by the Dalit representatives in the pilot project to be started from

Huzurabad. Every Dalit representative should take a firm resolve for making the scheme a success," he said.

Chief Minister reiterated that the scheme would help in development of Dalits not only in Telangana but across the country and state government conceptualised the scheme to free Dalits from social and economic discrimination and strengthen their self-respect.

The meeting chaired by the Chief Minister was attended by about 450 representatives from Huzurabad and Social Welfare Minister Koppula Eswar, Finance Minister Harish Rao, MLCs Kadiyam Srihari, Gorati Venkanna, Rasamayi Balakishan, Gadari Kishore, CPI, CPI(M) national leaders Venkat, Balanarsimha, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, CMO officials, SC Welfare department Principal Secretary Rahul Bojja and other senior

officials.

It was cruel to keep Dalits with skills and talent away from the production sector and to confine women to unproductive sectors due to gender bias.

Sharing his ideas, KCR said that government would provide reservations for Dalits in fertilizer shops, medical shops, rice mills, wine shops and other areas where there would be scope for economic development. He instructed the officials to identify other potential areas for economic development and provide reservations for Dalits in those sectors.

He also suggested several other opportunities available for employment, trade and industry sectors be identified like agricultural machinery like power tiller, harvester, paddy transplantation, auto-rickshaws, tractors, poultry, tent house, dairy units, oil mills,

flour mills, cement, brick and kiln units., building material shops like steel, cement, bricks, hotels, photography, videography, cell phone shops, mobile tiffin centres, cloth emporia, furniture shops et al. The government would extend financial assistance to the eligible Dalits as per their aptitude and choice to take up any venture or self employment, he said.

In addition to the financial assistance, government in partnership with the beneficiary would set up a Dalit Protection Fund on a permanent basis and it would be managed by respective District Collectors and committee of beneficiaries.

Money would be contributed to the Dalit Protection fund every year and would be utilised for financial stability.

Telangana movement which started with one person brought tremendous pressure on the Indian political system

and achieved success and Statehood was achieved. There would always be opposing forces for every decision but goal could be achieved only when people would remain steadfast to their conviction and go forward with their mission, he said. To achieve success one would be away from middlemen and forces inimical to Dalits, he said.

KCR said that he had studied about the sad plight of discrimination shown towards a section in society through the Centre of sub-alter studies. Spirit of mutual trust and cooperation should increase among people and feelings of animosity should disappear. Police cases filed against each other in Dalit wadas should be withdrawn and whole community should stand together and that alone would propel the community forward, he said.

# Srisaillam close to FRL All projects of Krishna, Godavari basins brimming with water

**ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD**

Water level in reservoirs and projects in Krishna and Godavari basins is rising at a greater pace due to continued flood inflows as a result of copious rains in the catchment areas as well as upper reaches.

While Srisaillam project getting inflows at 3.17 lakh cusecs as on 6 pm on Monday, outflow is at 25,427 cusecs and the water level reached 871.80 as against the Full Reservoir Level of 885 ft. Its present capacity is at 149.42 tmc ft (full storage capacity -215 tmc).

With good inflows the power generation is on at Left bank hydro electric power sta-

tion. It is expected that the Srisaillam project would reach its full level in three to four days and project gates are likely to be lifted.

Even Nagarjuna Sagar project in Nalgonda district received inflows at 25,427 cusecs and outflow at 1,000 cusecs and the water level rose to 538 ft as against 590 ft and its present storage capacity is 185 tmc as against full capacity of 312 tmc.

Jurala project received inflows at 3.5 lakh cusecs and outflow at 3.18 lakh cusecs and irrigation authorities opened 44 gates to let out water towards Srisaillam. The storage is at 6.01 tmc against the full storage capacity of 9.6 tmc.

Meanwhile flood intensity to Godavari river has been coming down due to receding of rains in the upstream areas. Sri Ram Sagar Project has been getting inflows from upstream at 13,580 cusecs and outflow at 8,000 cusecs. The water level reached 1090 ft as against FRL of 1091 ft and its present storage capacity is at 85.91 tmc (90.31 tmc). The storage capacity of Singur increased to 20 tmc as against full capacity of 29.91 tmc. Yellampally storage capacity is at 18.2 tmc (20.18 tmc) and Lower Manair is at 22.71 tmc (24.07 tmc). The SRSP project received a total flood of 115.456 tmc during this season from upstream areas, according to authorities.

# As people grapple with Covid, Centre's net...

**Continued from page 1**

Further, more than 107 prosecution complaints have been filed under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015. As on May 31, 2021, assessment orders under the Act have been passed in 166 cases, wherein a demand of Rs 8,216 crore has been raised.

Besides, undisclosed income of about Rs 8,465

crore has been brought to tax and a penalty of Rs 1,294 crore has been levied in HSBC cases. Undisclosed income of about Rs 11,010 crore has been detected in ICIJ (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) cases.

In Panama Papers and Paradise Papers leaks cases, undisclosed credits of Rs 20,078 crore and Rs 246 crore, respectively, have been detected.

# No plan to print currency notes: FM

**Continued from page 1**

"The fundamentals of the economy remain strong as gradual scaling back of lockdowns, along with the astute support of Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission has placed the economy firmly on the path of recovery from the second half of FY 2020-21," she said. The government had announced a special economic and comprehensive package of Rs 29.87 lakh crore under AtmaNirbhar Bharat (ANB) to combat the impact of the pandemic, to revive economic growth and to bolster employment during 2020-21, she said.

# TRS, BJP claim...

**Continued from page 1**

"It was an impossible feat made possible by the sheer determination of our government, to ensure our ancient culture and heritage is recognised as superior, across the world," he said.

Krishna Saagar Rao also thanked the Union Minister for Culture G Kishan Reddy for playing his role and being a part of this national endeavour.

# AP earned Rs 7.59 on...

**Continued from page 1**

"The excise duty/cess collected (by the Union government) from petrol is Rs 1,01,598 crore and from diesel is Rs 2,33,296 crore during the financial year 2020-21 (that ended on March 31, 2021)," Puri said in a written reply to a question.

State governments, he said, levy VAT on the total amount of base price and central taxes of petrol and diesel.

The lowest VAT on petrol and diesel is in Andaman and Nicobar Islands at Rs 4.82 per litre and Rs 4.74 a litre, respectively. Madhya Pradesh levies Rs 31.55 a litre VAT on petrol - the

highest in the country, while Rajasthan charges Rs 21.82 a litre on diesel, according to Puri's reply. Rajasthan levies Rs 29.88 a litre VAT on petrol and Maharashtra charges Rs 29.55.

In the case of diesel, Andhra Pradesh levies Rs 21.78 a litre VAT, Madhya Pradesh Rs 21.68, Odisha Rs 20.93, and Maharashtra charges Rs 20.85 a litre.

The petrol retail selling price of Rs 101.54 per litre in Delhi is made up of Rs 32.90 a litre central excise duty and Rs 23.43 state VAT. In the case of diesel, Rs 31.80 a litre is central excise and Rs 13.14 is state VAT in the final retail selling price of Rs 89.87.

# Fully-vaccinated...

**Continued from page 1**

Who runs Britain's efforts to sequence the genomes of coronavirus variants, calling it the "fittest and fastest variant yet."

Viruses constantly evolve through mutation, with new variants arising. Sometimes these are more dangerous than the original.

Until there is more data on Delta variant transmission, disease experts say that masks, social distancing and other measures set aside in countries with broad vaccination campaigns may again be needed.

# Covid admissions...

**Continued from page 1**

Sources said that the discharges are low in the hospital as these chronic cases take a minimum of 3 to 4 weeks to recover.

Officials said that the state is seeing a spike in hospitalisations as there is marginal increase in cases. On Monday, the state logged 638 new infections, up from the 494 cases on Sunday. Officials attribute this spike to increased mobility and festival season. Official sources said that with Bonalu and Bakrid, there has been a spike in cases as the mask compliance came down.

Now the health department is apparently reconsidering its decision to start non-Covid services in Gandhi Hospital. No sooner did DME announce that non-Covid services will be started soon, there has been a spike in Covid cases.

On the other hand, Covid admissions in private hospitals did not see a big increase. As on Monday, 2,060 beds in government hospitals were occupied while 13,279 were vacant. As many as 675 ICU beds and 1,007 oxygen beds are still occupied while only 378 regular beds are occupied in government hospitals. On the other hand, in private hospitals in total, 1,762 beds are occupied of which 681 are ICU, 706 oxygen and 375 regular beds.

# Yediyurappa...

**Continued from page 1**

Thanking the party leaders and the people for giving him an opportunity to serve the state, he said, he had no "pressure" from the party's central leadership in Delhi, and has quit on his own "voluntarily", to make way for others to serve as the Chief Minister.

# Distribution of 3 lakh new...

**Continued from page 1**

With the sanction of new cards, Telangana has 90.5 lakh ration cards. From August, every cardholder family would get 6 kg of rice per member. A total of 2.88 crore beneficiaries would be distributed food grains at a

cost of Rs 2,766 crore a year to leave no one hungry in the State, the Minister said.

"Not only ration cards, TRS government was implementing various welfare schemes for the poor and KCR rule itself was the biggest safety net for the people," Kamalakara said.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹259
Without Skin	₹279
Broiler at Farm	₹144

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	455
VIJAYAWADA	524
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹4.55

# KCR tells officials to address all problems of Dalits

**Continued from page 1**

A profile detailing the status of Dalitwad in Huzurabad constituency should also be prepared, he told the officials.

A list of those suffering from ill health should also be prepared and submitted to the authorities to allow the government to extend free medical care to them, he said.

He also sought the details of 'Grama Kantha lands' under

the possession of Dalits in the State and measures to be initiated to give them rights over their lands.

After explaining the features of Dalit Bandhu scheme, the Chief Minister, in an interactive session, invited any other suggestions and proposals from the Dalit representatives so that these could be included under the scheme.

When asked about the view of their family members about

the scheme, the representatives responded that 'Dalit Bandhu is a boon to Telangana Dalits'.

Sammayya, a tractor driver who hails from Kishitampalli village of Veenavanka mandal said that if he was eligible for financial assistance, he would purchase a tractor and ply it independently.

Lasnakkapalli resident Dasarla Chiranjeevi told the Chief Minister that he was

working as a car driver and he would like to buy a 'Swift Dzire' car so that he could run a cab service. Pleased with the response, KCR said their choice and decisions were quite good.

Poet and MLA Goreti Venkanna said that Dalits who used to struggle for a small loan would now get free financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh to earn a decent living and it was a humane deci-

sion of the Chief Minister.

Dalit Bandhu scheme would lead to revolutionary changes in the country, Venkanna said and called upon the Dalits to utilise the scheme for their empowerment and also help others in their community. "Only then they would be able to overcome the oppression and discrimination and lead a dignified life with their head held high," he said.

**GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION** GHMC

NIT No.: 16XEE/GHMC/IV-21/0221-22 Date: 29-07-2021

**Tender Notice (Through "e" procurement)**

Tenders are called vide Nit No.16XEE/GHMC/IV-21/0221-22 (Item No. 01 to 02) Dt: 26.07.2021. Through 'e' procurement for (02) works with an estimated cost of Rs. 10.95 Lakhs. The sale of bids will open on the website "e" procurement market place from 11.00 AM on 27.07.2021 onwards. Last date for submission of bids is 30.07.2021 at 11.00 AM. Sale of bids closes one hour before the submission time. Further details can be seen on the website <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/>

EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CHANDANAGAR DIV-21, SLIP ZONE : GHMC

R.O. No. : 14091-PPCL/ADVT/21/0221-22

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA ROADS & BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT**

**e-Procurement Tender Notice**

Engineer-in-Chief (R&B), State Roads & CRN, Nit No. 1416DCE (R&B-02/EE-G/1AEE-1/0221-22, Dt-23-07-2021. Online tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for works pertaining to (a) Road & C&B comprising of 2 bridge works in Mancherial and Adilabad District & further 2 road works in Adilabad District. Tenderers can download the tender schedules from e-market place for (a) <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/> from 29-07-2021 up to 04-08-2021 at 04:00 PM onwards. The last date of receipt of tenders is on or before 05-08-2021 up to 04:00 PM for 2 bridge works in Mancherial and Adilabad District under DMFT 2020-21 and the last date of receipt of tenders is on or before 05-08-2021 up to 04:00 PM for 2 road works pertaining to Adilabad District under G.O. No. 128, T.R&B, Pt. II) Dept. of R&B, Government of Telangana. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place i.e. <http://tender.telangana.gov.in/>

Sd/- Engineer-in-Chief (R&B), State Roads & CRN

R.O. No. 4183/PC/AGENCY/ADVT/2021-22 Dt: 26-07-2021



# Maoist Martyrs Week: TS cops wary

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Since the Maoists are out to observe Martyrs Memorial Week from July 28 in Telangana-Chhattisgarh border region, the security has been stepped up in the region, especially in Godavari and Pranahita catchment areas.

The police are put on the highest state of alertness in Adilabad, Asifabad, Mancherial, Bhupalapalli, Mulug, Bhadradi, Khammam districts as the Maoists are likely to enter the state by crossing rivers.

General checking has been intensified in addition to combing in forest areas. The police are of the view that the Maoists are unlikely to cross Godavari and Pranahita rivers to enter into the state as the rivers are in spate.

In Vijayapuri Colony surroundings in Venkatapuram mandal of Mulug district, posters of Maoists appeared everywhere appealing to people to make the Martyrs' week to be observed from July 28 to August 3 a grand success.



The ideals of the martyrs should be furthered by observing the Martyrs' week in all villages. The posters also appealed to defeat the Samadhaan Prahaar of the armed forces of the enemy. The posters were purported to be issued by the Sabari Area Committee of the Maoist organisation. In view of the Maoists observing the Martyrs' Day, the DRG, STF, CRPF forces have been combing in the forest areas under Chintagupta police station limits. While combing the forest areas, a group of Maoists opened fire on the police forcing the police to retaliate leading to death of a Maoist.

## Top maoist Hunga arrested in C'garh

In a naxal related development in Chhattisgarh state, police in Sukma district arrested a naxal commander, Tiger Hunga who was said to have been involved in 17 major incidents in Kistaram. Hunga was accused of blowing up an anti-landmine vehicle in Palodi killing nine jawans and killing of a Deputy Commandant of CRPF by blasting an IED in 2020. Sukma SP, Sunil Sharma confirmed the news but was yet to make an announcement about the arrest.

## Five Maoist militia members arrested

Five members of the banned CPI (Maoist) Party militia members were arrested in the forests of Kurnapally in the district on Monday. Bhadrachalam ASP, Dr G Vineeth told mediapersons that the militia members were arrested by a team comprising Cherla police, special party personnel and CRPF 141 Bn A Coy personnel while combing the Kurnapally forest area. The arrested belong to Burugupadu village under Cherla police station limits. They were identified as Pando Iramayya, Ravva Bandi, Madivi Lakmalah, Vanjam Gangaiah, and Sodi Bhudraiah, who have been working for Maoists for some time. The militia members were carrying pamphlets and wall posters related to Maoist party's 'Martyrs Memorial Week from

July 28 to August 3, to disperse them on the road between Kurnapally-R Kothagudem villages, the ASP said. The police seized five wall posters and 30 pamphlets from the arrested militia members and registered a case against the five persons and produced them in court for judicial custody. Maoist party leaders were intimidating the tribal people to serve as Maoist village committee members and militia members and engage in illegal activities. They were recruiting minors into the militia and thus destroying their future, Vineeth said. Leaders of the banned CPI-Maoist party have become an impediment to tribal development, the tribals, especially youth should stay away from Maoists and not work for them, he added.

# CBI searches three places in AP, TS over bank fraud case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Monday said that it has carried out searches at three locations in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh in connection with a bank fraud case involving Guntur based Ind Tob International Pvt Ltd.

A CBI spokesperson here said that the agency searches came in the wake of the case it registered against Tob International Pvt Ltd, Tadisetty Venkata Rao, Managing Director, Promoter and Guarantor and Tadisetty Murali Mohan, Director and Promoter and unknown public servants.

The official said that searches were conducted at the premises of the accused at three places in Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

The official said that it was alleged that Tob International was engaged in trading of tobacco. He said that it was



also alleged that Tob International Pvt Ltd availed FB (CC&SLC) credit facilities aggregating to Rs 45 crore from State Bank of India (SBI), Specialised Commercial Branch in Guntur.

"These credit facilities were inter alia secured against hypothecation of movable assets, mortgage of immovable properties and personal guarantees."

The account became NPA on February 27, 2019 due to lower sales coupled with lower margins, losses, etc in addition to submission of inflated or manipulated stock statements and transfer of funds to the personal accounts of Directors.

"An alleged loss to the tune of Rs 19.28 crore was caused to SBI," the official added.

## HERITAGE SITE TAG FOR RAMAPPA

# 'Need to put in efforts to secure heritage site tag for many sites'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Convener of Indian National Trust for Art and Culture Heritage (Intach) M Gopalakrishna and co-convener Anuradha Reddy congratulated and thanked the ASI, Telangana State Department of Heritage and all heritage lovers for their concerted efforts in securing the coveted 2020 World Heritage Site status from UNESCO for Ramappa temple.

The 800-years-old Ramappa temple was built at Palampet during the rule of the Kakatiya Dynasty. The Kakatiyas were known for their architectural and sculptural excellence. They did pioneering work in inter-connected lake irrigation, good governance and the welfare of the people.

Intach wishes to place on record the pioneering work done by the Intach Warangal District Chapter Convener



Prof M Panduranga Rao and his team under the aegis of Kakatiya Heritage Trust headed by BV Papa Rao and former Advisor to the Government of Telangana to secure World Heritage Status for the Ramappa Temple named after its architect builder. It complimented the tireless work of the INTACH convener of Warangal District Prof M Panduranga Rao, a civil engineer and former Professor at NIT, Warangal and his team for their path breaking work.

"We should renew and redouble our efforts to follow all the suggestions of UNESCO and ICOMOS and make it an ICON of heritage conservation. All heritage lovers should now put in efforts to secure the World Heritage Site tag for many more such deserving sites and help in the preservation, conservation and protection of our rich heritage, our precious heritage sites must move from likely oblivion to universal acclaim," said Gopalakrishna.

## STAY STRONG: ORACLE

Stay strong to overcome all challenges was the message from the Oracle during Rangam, the annual ritual at the historic Ujjaini Mahankali temple here on Monday. The Oracle, predicting that the goddesses would banish hardships irrespective of its enormity, also said that people would suffer a bit due to the rains. "Let it be the people who cultivate crops or others, they will face a little difficulty, you will face a bit of hardship due to the rains. But I am there for you, the one who will protect you is me! You should stay strong," she said, when one of the priests asked her about the incessant rains and its effect on crops.

—SV Chary



## Techie booked for misbehaving with his daughter, son

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A software professional was arrested for allegedly misbehaving with his daughter and son along with his friend, police said on Monday.

The man's wife, who now stays separately with their 14-year-old daughter and 11-year-old son, filed a complaint with the police alleging that her husband along with his friend had misbehaved with their children by touching them inappropriately, they said. Though the incident allegedly happened around three years ago, it was only recently that it came to light after the woman took the children to a medical centre for counselling when they behaved 'abnormally', she said in the complaint.

Based on the complaint, a case under the POCSO Act was registered and the software professional was arrested while his friend is absconding, the police said.

# SCR slashes platform ticket price at Sec'bad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The South Central Railway has reduced the platform ticket rates in all railway stations of its Secunderabad Division. The ticket rates were earlier temporarily increased as a precautionary measure against COVID-19.

Now the platform ticket fare at all railway stations

(Non-Suburban and Suburban) of the division will be Rs. 10. The fare at Secunderabad and Hyderabad stations too will be Rs. 10.

This decision has been taken in view of resumption of unreserved express trains, the SCR said in a press release, requesting train users to cooperate and follow all COVID-19 protocols.

# TS told to announce ethanol policy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP state senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy on Monday demanded state government to announce the ethanol policy for the state to promote that industry in the state.

In a media statement, he said that several state governments have already come up with the ethanol policy and promoting ethanol production in their respective states. By not announcing the ethanol policy,

Telangana government has been denying the benefits of production of ethanol to the people of the state.

Narayana said that already states like Maharashtra and Karnataka have announced their policy and ethanol manufacturing units have come up in those states in big numbers.

He said that the national oil companies have begun blending the petrol with ethanol and procuring the ethanol from other states which have been

allowing manufacturing of ethanol. They have been procuring ethanol to use it in the petrol pumps of Telangana.

Unfortunately, the Telangana government was unable to leverage the benefits of ethanol production in the state. Though the Telangana Sugar Mills Association has requested the state government to come out with its own Ethanol Policy in 2019, no steps have been taken in that direction, Narayana Reddy lamented.

Though several industrialists have already set up ethanol manufacturing units in the state, they were unable to start the production as the state government did not give permissions and issue letter of intent.

He said that the Centre announced viability gap funding scheme for 2G ethanol bio refineries of Rs 5000 crore in 6 years in addition to additional tax incentives, higher purchase price as compared to 1G biofuels through its policy.

# University of Hyderabad gets new Vice-Chancellor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Professor Basuthkar Jagadeeshwar Rao of the Indian Institute of Science Education and Research Tirupati, Andhra Pradesh, took charge as the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad (UoH) on Monday.

According to a statement issued by the UoH, his areas of specialisation are molecular basis of genome dynamics, computational biology of genomes and protein active sites, cellular physiology and metabolism -- fields in which he has made fundamental contributions.

Appointed as UoH vice chancellor for a period of 5 years or up to the age of 70 years whichever is earlier, Rao's appointment comes after Prof Appa Rao Podile demitted the office of the Vice Chancellor on June 7 this year.

Prior to his stint at IISER, Rao spent several years at TIFR, Mumbai, heading the programmes of Mechanism of Genome Dynamics and Cellular Adaptations

Laboratory there.

Apart from his research in the domain of biology, he is also interested in dissemination of scientific knowledge and outreach activities. He has to his credit 130 publications with 1371 citations.

Rao graduated with a BSc from Nizam College and MSc from Osmania University, Hyderabad, winning gold medals in both. He then obtained his PhD from the Indian Institute of Sciences, Bengaluru, in Biochemistry. He went on to do his postdoctoral work at Yale Medical School, serving as a research scientist for seven years. On his return to India, he worked at TIFR for several years.

A Fellow of all the three National Academies in India, and the Sir JC Bose Fellow of the Department of Science & Technology, India, Rao is a Chief Member and an advisor on various committees. He has won many awards and fellowships and is the Chief Editor of the Journal of Biosciences, a flagship journal of the Indian Academy of Sciences and Springer Nature, combined.

## HMWSSB closes two more gates of Himayat Sagar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply and Sewerage Board on Monday closed two more gates of the Himayat Sagar. Presently, only one out of 17 gates is open.

Five gates were lifted after the water levels began rising on July 20 to drain the flood water into Musi. The HMWSSB said in a press release said that as the inflow of water from upstream into the water body areas had dipped, two more gates of the reservoir were closed. The Board had on Sunday closed two gates, now leaving only one gate open.

On Monday, the water level at Himayat Sagar was recorded at 1,761.75 feet against the FTL of 1,763.50 feet. The reservoir capacity is 2.97 TMC and the water level is 2.56 TMC. The inflow stood at 400 cusecs while the outflow was maintained at 343 cusecs. Meanwhile, at Osman Sagar, the water levels were recorded as 1,786 feet against the FTL of 1,790.00 feet. The reservoir capacity is 3.90 TMC and the water level is 3.008 TMC. All the gates of the Osman Sagar, which had seen its gates being opened after a decade on July 22, have been closed.

# JUDAs boycott duties at Chest Hospital

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Junior doctors at Government Chest Hospital on Monday boycotted their duties protesting against assault on a second year medico Dr N Krishnan by relatives of a patient on Sunday.

The protesting doctors are demanding that the State government should deploy SPF personnel at all the teaching colleges. Baring emergency services, all other medical services including OPs, ward duties and elective surgeries were boycotted by medicos on Monday.



The members of Telangana Junior Doctors Association have condemned the attack and demanded immediate

deployment of SPF at all the teaching hospitals. Dr Krishnan from the department of Pulmonology,

Osmania Medical College, was attending to a 52-year-old patient at Chest Hospital when at least seven to eight relatives allegedly attacked him and later dragged him outside the ward for another round of beating.

Following the incident, Dr Krishnan lodged an FIR at SR Nagar police station on Sunday evening. The members of TJUDA and other associations have maintained that they would intensify protests in case the culprits are not arrested at the earliest.

# Telangana logs 638 fresh Covid cases, three deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 638 new Covid infections and three fatalities on Monday taking the cumulative number of deaths to 3,787 and the total number of positive cases to 6,41,791. The number of active cases in Telangana, as on Monday was 9,325.

On Monday, authorities conducted 1,14,105 Covid tests of which results of 1,100 samples were awaited. A total of 715 individuals have recovered with a recovery rate of 97.95 per cent on Sunday. So

far, a total of 2,14,30,024 Covid-19 tests have been conducted in the State out of which 6,41,791 have tested positive and 6,28,679 persons have recovered.

The Covid positive cases reported from the districts included four from Adilabad, 33 from Kothagudem, 59 from areas under GHMC, 28 from Jagtial, seven from Jangaon, five from Bhupalpally, one from Jogulamba Gadwal, two from Kamareddy, 65 from Karimnagar, 62 from Khammam, two from Asifabad and nine from Mahabubnagar.

# Jubilee Hills Housing Society to wage legal battle

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Jubilee Hills Housing Society president Bollineni Ravindranath on Monday alleged mudslinging on the present governing body intentionally and clarified that the society goes ahead as per the general body meeting decisions and society by-laws.

He condemned the allegations accusing the society of having sold 365 square yards of site without the approval. He clarified that the site reserved for parks and other plots was encroached during the regime of the previous governing body. The governing body reserves the right to sell the cross bits,



plots with no proper dimensions as per the by-laws to neighbouring plot owner. The general body adopted a resolution in 2005.

He dared the vested interests that level false allegations against the governing body to realise the facts before they

open their mouth and said that there was no registration of the plot, which was alleged to have been sold out to someone else.

Responding to the request from a plot owner Parvati Devi, a member of the society, for allotment of a triangular plot adjacent to her plot, the

society discussed it at the general body meeting and took a decision. All the registrations of the housing society plots carried out since 1969 were registered not according to the market value of the site but at the government fixed price of the site. However, it came to the notice of the society that some of the plots were sold below the price of government valuation. Some plots have been sold out at Rs 13 per square yard. The society ordered an enquiry into this. He said that the controversial site was sold as per the government rate.

He dismissed Suresh Babu's allegations that the site was sold

out at Rs 7.5 crore were made out of mala fide intentions. The police registered the case against the society without seeking the society's clarifications. He said that the society would wage legal battle on the issue.

The probe into the allegations of irregularities by the previous governing body is under way. Some of the cases are under litigation, while some other cases are being probed by CID. The society is studying the irregularities by the previous governing body. After digitalising the records, a White Paper on the corruption by the previous governing body would be released, he clarified.



# World Heritage Site recognition to Ramappa brings cheers

PNS ■ MULUGU

The UNESCO conferring World Heritage inscription to the historic Rudreswara temple, famously known as Ramappa temple, in Mulugu district of Telangana, has brought immense cheer to different sections - political leaders, heritage activists and common people who hope that the monument would now get international fame.

State Women and Child Welfare Minister Satyavati Rathod, MLA D Anasuya alias Sitakka, other leaders and public representatives visited the temple and performed puja on Monday in the wake of it getting the World Heritage tag.

Rathod, who walked around the temple premises, said she would take all the possibilities for developing the temple to the notice of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

The temple, around 200 kms from Hyderabad, would witness amazing development following the recognition from UNESCO, she said. The state government would further develop the 800-year-old Kakatiya era temple premises and provide all amenities to those visiting the temple, she said. Mulugu district Collector S Krishna Aditya said that the UNESCO tag is a recognition to the district and to Telangana, he said.

He said tourism would get a boost in the region and that the



temple would attract international tourists.

The temple has seen a sudden surge in tourist arrivals on Monday morning (a day after UNESCO conferring the World Heritage inscription), the Collector said.

The main temple was restored, but besides that there are other structures which need to be focused upon, he added.

The ASI would, obviously, now focus on improving their infrastructure (restoration, restructuring), he said.

Infrastructure at the temple premises has been improved recently and the state government is willing to spend more funds on the temple, he said.

Founder-trustee of Kakatiya Heritage Trust (KHT) and former IAS officer B V Papa Rao,

who pursued the matter and also attended a meeting with UNESCO officials in 2019 in Paris, said it was a decade long journey for them that culminated with the UN body declaring the Ramappa temple as a World Heritage Site on Sunday.

He recalled that the then Culture Minister (in undivided AP) J Geeta Reddy formed a committee in 2010 with KHT as the coordinator.

KHT's efforts gained momentum with the formation of Telangana (in 2014) and the Trust has started a nomination campaign in 2016, said Papa Rao, who served as an advisor to the Telangana government.

Ramappa temple could become India's nomination to UNESCO in 2019 with CM

Chandrasekhar Rao taking it up with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he said.

Papa Rao, who explained the various developments in the efforts to get UNESCO recognition to the temple, said the inscription is only a milestone but not the end of the journey.

The recognition on the world stage is a matter of pride for Telangana citizens.

"As a native of Warangal, I feel proud," said D K Reddy, a resident of Warangal. Ramappa temple is around 60 km from Warangal. Besides Chief Minister Chandrasekhar Rao, state Congress president and MP A Revanth Reddy and state BJP president and Lok Sabha member Bandi Sanjay Kumar hailed the UNESCO recognition of the temple.

## Food security is given priority: Minister

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The Telangana government is giving priority to food security to the poor people and as part of it, about 3.09 lakh new ration cards were sanctioned in the state, Minister for Excise, Sports, Cultural and Tourism Srinivas Gowd said on Monday. The Minister distributed new ration cards to 4,211 beneficiaries here on Monday at a function held at Sudarshan Convention Centre. He said ration cards will be issued to all the eligible people and people who are not received the new ration cards could apply online. Stating that there is good yielding of crops in the state following the rains, Srinivas Gowd said Mahabubnagar will be developed as a beautiful city and ration cards, pensions and houses will be given to the poor people. The government is striving for the development of all sections of people and as part of it Asara pensions, Kalyana Lakshmi, Shadi Mubarak, free power, Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Beema schemes have been implemented. Five residential schools will be set up at Rs 100 crore in Mahabubnagar apart from Gurukul schools, KGBVs and BC hostels. The Minister said efforts will be made to supply water to all the lakes through the Palamuru-Rangareddy LI scheme to improve the prestige of Mahabubnagar district. Zilla Parishad Chairperson Swarna Sudhakar Reddy, Additional Collector Seetharama Rao, Local bodies Additional Collector Tejas Nandalal Pawar, municipal chairman KC Narasimulu, DCCB vice-chairman Venkataiah, municipal vice-chairman Tati Ganesh, MPP vice-president Anitha and others were present.

## KCR stands as big support

PNS ■ GADWAL

New ration cards are distributed to the people at Paradise Function Hall at Gadwal on Monday. Participating as a chief guest, MLA Bandla Krishnamohan Reddy said Chief Minister KCR stood as a big support for Telangana people and about 1224 new ration cards have been sanctioned to the eligible people in Gadwal constituency. He gave away new ration cards to the people. He also disbursed Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak cheques to 122 beneficiaries.

The MLA said Chief Minister KCR introduced



many welfare schemes to all sections of people without any political bias. KCR has a strong determination to make available quality rice to all the people of the state what he was consuming. The nice quality rice is supplied to Rs 1 per kg to the poor people through

ration cards by buying it Rs 28 per kg. Along with rice, edible oil, red gram, salt, sugar and wheat flour are also supplied to the people, the MLA said.

Zilla Parishad chairperson Saritha, Additional Collector Sri Raghurama Sarma and others were present.

## Welfare schemes to all: MLA

PNS ■ PATANCHERU

The only government in the country to provide welfare schemes to everyone from just born to the old people is the TRS government in the country, MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy said on Monday.

The MLA distributed new ration cards and Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak cheques to the beneficiaries at a meeting held at GMR Function Hall here on Monday. Legislative Council Chairman Bhupal Reddy participated in the programme as a chief guest. The MLA distributed 757 new ration cards and Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak cheques worth Rs 1.12 crore.

The MLA expressed pleasure that 2,222 ration cards have been sanctioned for



Patancheruvu constituency which highest in the district. He extended wishes to the officials and leaders for getting sanction the ration card to all the eligible people in the segment. If anyone left, they can apply for the new ration card and the new ration card-holders could take ration

from August 1 onwards.

District Civil Supplies officer Srikanth Reddy, RDO Nagesh, MPP Sushma Venugopal Reddy, ZPTC Supraja Venkat Reddy, market committee chairperson Harika Vijay Kumar, corporator Mettu Kumar Yadav and others participated.

## Ration cards for all eligible people

PNS ■ NARSAPUR

Telangana Mahila Commission chairperson Suneetha Lakshma Reddy said every eligible person will be given a ration card. She distributed new ration cards to the beneficiaries along with MLA Madan Reddy at a function hall in Narsapur on Monday.

She said 1,275 new ration

cards have been sanctioned in the Narsapur constituency and appealed to the people to apply for the ration cards if they are eligible. She said the Telangana government is continuing the welfare schemes even in critical times.

District Collector Harish, Additional Collector Ramesh, Labour Welfare chairman Devender Reddy and others were present.



## Singareni Collieries Board approves raising retirement age to 61 years

PNS ■ JAYASHANKAR BHUPALAPALLY

The Board of Directors gave a green signal to raise the retirement age to 61 years for workers and employees of Singareni Collieries Company Limited following the instructions of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, Singareni Chairman and Managing Director N Sridhar said on Monday.

He said the Board at its 557th meeting held on Monday agreed to raise the retirement age. Along with Singareni directors, the representatives of the state and Central government participated in the board meeting.

It may be recalled that Chief Minister KCR had issued orders increasing the retirement age from 58 to 61 years for all state government employees in March this year. He also suggested the same should be implemented in Singareni. He directed at a review

meeting with the Singareni region people's representatives and Singareni CMD on July 20 to increase the retirement age to 61 years.

The Board agreed to increase the retirement age from March 31 onwards and it would benefit 43,899 employees and workers in Singareni. About 39 officials and 689 workers, who retired between March 31 and June 30, will be reinstated. Sridhar has directed the concerned officials to prepare proper guidelines and age limit will also be implemented in the Singareni educational institutions.

So far, recruitment of workers on compassionate ground is applicable only for sons and unmarried daughters of the

employee. On the request of the workers, the Board approved it to married or divorced daughters, who are dependent on the retired employees and also single women.

The Board also gave its approval to take up social activities under CSR at Rs 60 crore during the financial year 2021-22. It also approved to purchase of necessary machinery and contract works for various mines.

Construction of two new roads is approved at Rs 60 crore during the financial year 2021-22. It also approved to purchase of necessary machinery and contract works for various mines.

RGOC-5 incline at Ramagundam and the change of designation for mining officials who have first-class mine manager certificate are also approved. The gender restrictions as per the employees' rules during the recruitment of Executive and

NCWA posts have been removed and it allowed to apply for the jobs. As per the State government's request, the Board agreed to allocate 201 vacant plots of 85 sq yards each in the rehabilitation colony to the evacuees of National Highway expansion at Nanpur colony in Srirampur area.

CMD N Sridhar chaired the board meeting and State Finance department Chief Secretary Ramakrishna Rao, State Fuel Department secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultanania, Central Coal Department PSL Swamy, Deputy Secretary Ajithish Kumar, Western Coal Fields chairman and MD Manoj Kumar, Singareni Director (Operations) S Chandrasekhar, Director (Finance, Projects & Planning, personal) N Balaram, Director (E&M) D Satyanarayana Rao and Company Secretary Sunitha Devi participated in the board meeting.



## War of words between Komatireddy and minister Jagdeesh Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chaos took place in the distribution of new ration cards sanctioned by the state government as tempers ran high when Komatireddy downed the mike of Minister G Jagdeesh Reddy while he was addressing the gathering at the distribution of ration cards at Choutuppal town on Monday. The Congress activists staged a protest alleging that the officials didn't follow protocol in the meeting organized for the distribution of ration cards. Even local MLA Komatireddy questioned Minister Jagdeesh Reddy about how the officials will conduct the programme without giving information to the local MLA. Komatireddy also asked

the Minister to solve the problems prevailing in Munugode constituency besides introducing the government schemes.

In the process, Jagdeesh Reddy continued his speech, however, Rajagopal Reddy questioned him. War words continued between the MLA and the Minister. On the other hand, the TRS and Congress activists raised slogans leading to chaos. Tension prevailed for some time when Jagdeesh Reddy expressed anger over Komatireddy. Komatireddy left the meeting in a huff.

It may be recalled that a similar incident had happened in Nalgonda between Minister Jagdeesh Reddy and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy a few months ago.

## Over 1,000 gelatine sticks, 3000 detonators seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Police have seized huge quantity of explosive materials like detonators and gelatine sticks from an abandoned building in neighbouring Vikarabad district on Monday, a day after a 19-year-old shepherd was injured in a mysterious blast at his house.

As many as 3,000 detonators, 1,160 gelatin sticks and 800 metre electric wire stored in the building at Peddemul was seized, a police official told PTI.

The shepherd has been undergoing treatment at a state-run hospital here and his condition remains critical, the official said.

Police said they suspected that he suffered injuries due to explosion of a detonator which he allegedly brought from the abandoned building.

During the course of investigation police seized the explosives.

## Take back Govt lands from ineligible people: MCPI (U)

PNS ■ WARANGAL

A massive rally was taken out under the leadership of the Marxist Communist Party of India (United) in Warangal on Monday demanding taking back government lands from the ineligible people.

The MCPI(U) leaders alleged that the state and central governments which came to power by promising that they will work for the people's welfare,

are issuing GOs to hand over the government lands to the corporate companies.

MCPI(U) national general secretary Maddikayala Ashok called upon the people to spearhead agitation to protect the lands which have to be reached to the poor people. It is only possible to get back the lands with the movement and the red flag will extend support to the people in the agitation, he added.

The rally was taken out from Ekasila park to the Warangal district Collector office demanding reverting the lands sanctioned to the ineligible persons by abolishing GO 13. The activists demanded the KCR and Modi government should implement the promises made to the people.

Later, a meeting was organized under the chairmanship of the joint secretary of the party Ramesh.



## TRS doors not yet opened for Mothkupalli

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) has not yet opened the doors to former Minister Mothkupalli Narasimulu to admit him to the party. Mothkupalli resigned to BJP, alleging that BJP did not recognise his services and did not give proper recognition. He feels that BJP has insulted him.

Mothkupalli joined the BJP last year after the Telugu Desam party suspended him following his harsh criticism against the party leadership. He also demanded to merge the Telangana Telugu Desam party into TRS.

Though he joined the BJP, he is not active. Recently Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao held an all-party meeting to discuss the Dalit Bandhu scheme.

BJP has boycotted this meeting, but Mothkupalli attended.

After the meeting, Mothkupalli praised the Dalit Bandhu scheme introduced by CM KCR and also said that it will encourage Dalits to stand with KCR in the Huzurabad bye-election.

As the BJP leadership viewed it seriously, Mothkupalli resigned to BJP. He wants to join TRS, but the party leadership is reportedly not much interested in Mothkupalli.

The party leaders told CM KCR that it is better not to admit Mothkupalli into the party. In the past Mothkupalli criticised Congress and TDP leaderships and now he did the same in BJP. If he is taken, one day he may repeat the same and it will be an unnecessary headache to the party, they reportedly suggested.



State Civil Supplies Corporation Chairman Mareddy Srinivas Reddy offering special prayers at Sri Kethaki Sangameswara Swamy temple at Jhurasanga in Zaheerabad constituency on Monday. DCMS chairman Sivakumar is also seen.

### WORSHIP FOR GRACE



INDIA  
CORNER

## Maha: Tulsi helping farmers earn more in Aurangabad

A group of 16 farmers from Aurangabad in Maharashtra are earning anything between Rs 70,000 to Rs 1.83 lakh per year after planting 15,000-18,000 Tulsi saplings on one acre of non-irrigated land each. The group took up the planting of Tulsi or Holy Basil, a mainstay of almost every religious occasion as well as innumerable home remedies, some three years ago in Kekat Jalgaon, Kutbheda and Dawarwadi following an MoU with a Bengaluru based pharmaceutical firm facilitated by NAAM Foundation, farmer Sandip Kakde said. "We planted some 15,000 to 18,000 saplings per acre. The plants have to be reaped three to four times a year and sent in crushed form to the Bengaluru firm. Tulsi cultivation needs no manure or pesticides, as well as very little water, and helps us earn anything between Rs 70,000 to Rs 1.83 lakh per year," Kakde told PTI. The circle agriculture officer of Paithan taluka said farmers opting for plants such as Tulsi, with have several uses, was a good move to earn more, and needed to be encouraged.



## Kerala HC orders release of man who served 18 yrs in jail in 14 different cases

After spending over 18 years in prison serving the jail terms awarded to him in 14 different criminal cases one after the other, a 61-year old convict finally got relief with the Kerala High Court directing that he be released forthwith. The man was arrested in 2003 and was in prison ever since and if the high court had not intervened he would have ended up serving around 30 years in jail for offences like theft, housebreaking, lurking house trespass by night, etc. The man had pleaded guilty in all the 14 cases and as a result he was convicted in all of them, between 2007 to 2010, and was awarded varying jail terms for periods ranging from 6 months to 5 years which added together came to 30 years and six months. However, as the crimes were committed at different periods of time and were pending before different trial courts, none of them exercised the discretion they had under the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) to order that the sentences would run concurrently, the high court noted in its judgement.



## Search ops called off in landslide-hit Taliye village; 31 missing to be declared dead

The Raigad district administration on Monday called off the search operations for 31 missing people in Taliye village which was ravaged by a massive landslide after heavy rains last week. So far, 53 people have died in the village and five are injured, while 31 people are still missing and they will be declared dead following the due process, district Collector Nidhi Chaudhari said. The village, located in Mahad taluka of Raigad in Maharashtra's Konkan region, witnessed the deadliest landslide last Thursday after heavy rains, flattening several houses in the area. The collector said the decision to call off the search operations was taken after seeking opinion of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) and the disaster response forces of the state and neighbouring Thane district. "The rescue operations have ended officially. We have withdrawn our teams from Taliye. The 31 missing will be declared dead following the due process...relatives of the missing people demanded closure of the operations since yesterday," the collector said.



# Higher Education panel Bill being drafted, says Pradhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Education is in the process of drafting a bill for establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India (HECI), the Lok Sabha was informed on Monday.

The information was shared by Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan in the lower house.

"The Ministry of Education has announced the National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 on 29 July, 2020 after obtaining approval of Cabinet. The NEP envisions setting up of a Higher Education Commission of India as an umbrella body with four



independent verticals to perform distinct functions of regulation, accreditation, funding,

and academic standard setting," he said in a written response to a question.

"Accordingly, the Ministry is in the process of drafting a Bill for establishment of the Higher Education Commission of India," Pradhan added.

The Higher Education Commission of India, envisages replacing autonomous bodies like the University Grants Commission (UGC), All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE) and National Council for Teacher Education (NCTE).

The National Education Policy 2020 recommended setting up of the HECI as a single overarching umbrella body for higher education, excluding medical and legal education.

# Yediyurappa's constituency Shikaripura shuts down to protest his resignation

PNS ■ SHIKARIPURA

Hours after Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's resignation on Monday, Shikaripura, the assembly constituency in Shivamogga district which he has represented seven times, was shut as a mark of protest by his supporters.

Expressing sympathy with Yediyurappa, traders voluntarily shut down their business establishments as the BJP supporters staged a demonstration in the town. Roads were deserted as Yediyurappa's supporters hit the streets raising slogans and put up his cut-outs to show their solidarity with him.

The workers also denounced the BJP leaders for compelling the Lingayat strongman to resign



without allowing him to complete his term. Yediyurappa resigned earlier on Monday.

He thanked the BJP leaders for giving him an opportunity to serve as Chief Minister for two years, despite completing 75 years of age.

He had also said that a few of his MLAs were unhappy with him.

## It's too early for political obituary for Yediyurappa

PNS ■ BENGALURU

There seems to be no "closure" for B S Yediyurappa, the BJP's "comeback man" in Karnataka, as he could never complete a full term in office, despite becoming the Chief Minister four times, surmounting odds. It's also too early to write a political obituary of the 78-year old Lingayat strongman and the 24X7 politician, the face of the party in the State for decades. From the humdrum existence as a government clerk and a hardware store owner to becoming the chief minister four

times, Yediyurappa has navigated the choppy waters of politics with the consummate ease of a seasoned oarsman. In a repeat of sorts, it is a "cut short" tenure for the rarely smiling and ever grim-looking Yediyurappa as he is stepping down less than two years ahead of the end of the current tenure, ascending to power, exactly two years ago after a murky legal battle and weeks of political drama. For the architect of the BJP's first ever government to the south of Vindhyaas, age is being seen as a primary factor for his exit from the top job.

## NCERT will conduct National Achievement Survey in schools

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Achievement Survey (NAS) to assess learning achievement of children in government and private schools will be conducted by NCERT in November, Union Education Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Monday. The survey was last conducted in 2017 for classes 3, 5 and 8 and in 2018 for class 10. The information was shared by Pradhan in response to a written question in Lok Sabha about whether any study or survey has been conducted to evaluate the quality of school education of

the country, especially keeping in view the recent increase in online classes. "The National Council for Educational Research and Training (NCERT) conducts periodic national sample surveys to assess learning achievement of children in classes - 3, 5, 8 and 10. The National Achievement Survey (NAS) 2017 was held on 13th November 2017 for assessing the competencies of children at the grade levels 3, 5 and 8 from across 701 districts covering all the 36 States and UTs and covered 22 lakh students from 1.10 lakh schools," he said. "NAS (2017) was administered in different subject areas such as Languages,

Mathematics, EVS/Science and Social Sciences in the government and government aided schools. Similarly, NAS for class 10 was also conducted throughout the country on February 05, 2018," he said. The minister noted that the learning levels of 15 lakh students in 44,304 schools across 610 districts in 34 states and UTs were assessed in five subjects -- English, Mathematics, Science, Social Science and Modern Indian Language (MIL). "Further, it has been decided to conduct the next round of National Achievement Survey across the country in November 2021," he added.

## BJP govt should be ousted instead of changing CM, says K'taka Cong

**BENGALURU:** The Congress in Karnataka on Monday demanded the ouster of the BJP government in Karnataka instead of the party finding a replacement for Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa who has resigned. Alleging that the BJP government in Karnataka was "illegitimate as it was born out of defection and corruption, the main opposition party wondered whether changing the face would also change the government's 'diabolical character'." There

is no benefit for the common man if one corrupt CM is removed to make another corrupt as CM. Instead the whole BJP party, which is responsible for the miseries of people, should be ousted," former Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, who is Leader of Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly, tweeted. Reacting to Yediyurappa's resignation, he said "the power politics" in BJP is unfortunate when people are suffering due to natural calamities.

"Crops have been destroyed in many districts due to floods & 9 people have lost their lives. It is unfortunate that the representatives of the govt are busy in power politics instead of helping the people in distress," the Congress stalwart said. The Congress national general secretary and party's Karnataka in charge Randeep Singh Surjewala alleged that the malady is with BJP's corrupt government and appalling maladministration in Karnataka, for it is an illegitimate govt-

ernment born out of 'defection and corruption'. "Will merely changing the face change the diabolical character of BJP Govt synonymous with mal governance & decay," Surjewala said in his tweet. "The ignominy, torment & insult being heaped upon Sh. B S Yediyurappa by Modi ji, dictating him to tender his resignation, makes him PMs latest victim and member of the 'forced retirement club'," Surjewala tweeted. In his reaction to Yediyurappa's resignation,

## Orange alert for heavy to very heavy rainfall in 13 MP districts

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Monday issued an 'orange' alert on the fourth consecutive day predicting heavy to very heavy rainfall in 13 districts of Madhya Pradesh.

The alert is valid till Tuesday morning and comes at a time when most parts of the state have been experiencing rain for the past four days. The orange alert is for heavy to very heavy rainfall and thunderstorms accompanied by lightning in isolated places in Gwalior, Shivpuri, Guna, Ashok Nagar, Datia, Sheopur, Morena, Bhind, Rajgarh, Agar-Malwa, Neemuch, Mandasaur and Tikamgarh, said PK Saha, senior meteorologist with IMD's Bhopal office.

"It is the fourth consecutive orange alert we have issued since Friday. Rainfall might abate on Tuesday as the low-pressure area over northwest MP has weakened. However, the associated cyclonic circulation over north-west MP still persists and an east-west trough was running along 25 degrees north latitude. Therefore, rain activity might be confined to the northwest of MP, including Gwalior and Chambal divisions," he told PTI.

The official said another spell of good rainfall is expected by the end of July as a low-pressure area is likely to form over the north Bay of Bengal on July 28.

"Almost all of MP received rainfall in the last 24 hours. Jaora in Ratlam district received the highest rainfall of 260 mm rainfall in west MP in a 24-hour period ending at 8:30 am. Chhatrapur city received the highest rainfall of 42.4 mm in east MP during this period," he said.

Alerts issued by the Met department are colour-coded from green to red. While 'green' stands for no warning, a 'yellow' alert advises authorities to be updated on the situation.

# WB sets up inquiry panel to look into snooping row

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday said her government has formed a two-member inquiry commission to look into allegations of snooping on politicians, officials and journalists using Israeli spyware Pegasus.

The decision to form a panel, with retired judges as its members, was taken at a special cabinet meeting chaired by the chief minister during the day.

"We thought the Centre would form an inquiry commission or a court-monitored probe would be ordered to look into this phone-hacking incident. But the Centre is sitting idle... So we decided to form a 'commission of inquiry' to look into the matter," she said at a press conference here.

Former chief justice of Calcutta High Court Jyotirmay Bhattacharya and ex-Supreme



Court judge Madan Bhimrao Lokur are the two members of the government-constituted commission.

"Names of people from West Bengal have figured on the Pegasus target list. The Centre is trying to snoop on everyone. The commission will find out details about this illegal hacking," the CM added.

A massive political row erupted in the country and other parts of the globe after media reports claimed that the Pegasus spyware was used to infiltrate phones and conduct surveillance on political leaders, government officials and journalists.

# ‘Only govt ‘unconcerned’ about snooping charges is that of India’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid reports that French President Emmanuel Macron spoke with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett on the Pegasus snooping allegations, senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Monday attacked the Centre, saying the only government that is "unconcerned" over the issue is that of India.

French President Macron has spoken to Bennett over reports that Morocco's security forces may have used the Pegasus spyware to snoop on his cellphones. Macron telephoned Bennett on July 22, and asked him to ensure that "the issue was being taken seriously", Israel's Channel 12 has reported.

Reacting to the reports, Chidambaram tweeted, "President Macron of France called PM Bennett of Israel and demanded to know full information about alleged use of Pegasus spyware to hack phones in France, including



the President's."

PM Bennett promised to come back with the "conclusions" of their own investigations, the former home minister said. "The only government that is unconcerned is the Government of India!" Chidambaram said.

Is it because the government was fully aware of the snooping and does not need any

more information from Israel or the NSO Group, he asked.

Chidambaram on Sunday had said the government should either call for a joint parliamentary committee probe into the Pegasus snooping allegations or request the Supreme Court to appoint a sitting judge to investigate the matter.

In an interview with PTI, he had also demanded that Prime Minister Narendra Modi make a statement in Parliament clarifying whether there had been surveillance or not.

Last week, an international media consortium reported that over 300 verified mobile phone numbers, including of two ministers, over 40 journalists, three opposition leaders besides scores of businesspersons and activists in India, could have been targeted for hacking through the Pegasus spyware of the Israeli firm NSO Group.

The government has been denying all Opposition allegations in the matter.

## Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrated with wreath-laying ceremony

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Kargil Vijay Diwas was celebrated at all military stations of the South Western command of the Indian Army on Monday to commemorate India's victory over Pakistani forces in 1999.

South western Army Commander Lieutenant General AS Bhinder laid a wreath at 'Prerna Sthal' in Jaipur to pay trib-

ute to the soldiers who laid down their lives in the service of the nation, defence spokesperson Lt Col Amitabh Sharma.

He said the Army commander greeted all ranks of the command on the occasion and exhorted them to remain vigilant. In 1999, the Indian armed forces defeated attempts by Pakistan to capture strategic heights in Kargil. It was named 'Operation Vijay'.

## Rahul Gandhi pays tributes to Kargil martyrs

**NEW DELHI:** Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Monday paid tributes to the soldiers who laid down their lives in the Kargil War, and said the country will always remember their supreme sacrifice. In 1999, the Indian armed forces defeated attempts by Pakistan to capture strategic heights in Kargil. It was named 'Operation Vijay' (victory). On the occasion of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Gandhi tweeted,

## Mamata pays tribute to Kargil martyrs

**KOLKATA,** As the nation observed the 21st anniversary of Kargil victory, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Monday paid tributes to the soldiers who had laid down their lives during the war. She said that India will remain indebted to them forever.

## Venkaiah Naidu pays tribute to war heroes

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Monday paid tributes to the heroes of the 1999 Kargil War, recalling their valour and sacrifice. 1999, the Indian armed forces defeated attempts by Pakistan to capture strategic heights in Kargil. It was named 'Operation Vijay' (victory). "On Kargil Vijay Diwas, I join the nation in remembering our armed forces' saga of valour & gallantry.

# Tharoor seeks SC judge-monitored probe into Pegasus snooping allegations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Monday demanded a Supreme Court judge-monitored probe into the Pegasus snooping allegations and indicated that opposition parties would continue to disrupt Parliament's proceedings until the government agrees to a debate on it.

He alleged that it appears that the government used public money for snooping for its "selfish political interests".

Last week, an international media consortium reported that over 300 verified mobile phone numbers, including those of two ministers, over 40 journalists, three opposition leaders besides scores of businesspersons and activists in India, could have been



targeted for snooping through the Pegasus spyware of the Israeli firm NSO Group, which only sells the hacking software to "vetted" governments and government agencies. The government has been denying all opposition allegations in the matter.

Speaking to reporters in the

Parliament complex after the Lok Sabha was adjourned, Tharoor said, "We want the government to agree to a debate on the issue, but it is not ready. What we are saying is that if you (government) do not agree to this and answer our questions, then why we should allow you to transact your business."

He said other issues like price rise and contentious farm laws are also important for the opposition but the Pegasus row is a priority.

Both Houses of Parliament have transacted little business since the Monsoon session began on July 19 as opposition parties have forced adjournments with their protests over a number of issues with the Pegasus row being the main one.

Tharoor also made light of IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's

statement on the issue in both Houses, saying he just shared his "Mann Ki Baat" without listening to the opposition.

Vaishnaw had termed the snooping stories a bid to malign India, claiming that there is "no substance" to this sensationalism.

The parliamentary panel on information technology led by Tharoor is likely to question top government officials, including from the home ministry, later this week on Pegasus snooping allegations, according to sources.

The 32-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on Information and Technology is scheduled to meet on July 28. The agenda of the meeting is "Citizens data security and privacy", according to a notification issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat.

## ISRO ESPIONAGE CASE

# Interim protection from arrest to two ex-cops

PNS ■ KOCHI

The Kerala High Court on Monday granted interim protection from arrest to two former Kerala police officers in a case registered by the CBI for various offences, including criminal conspiracy, kidnapping and fabrication of evidence, in connection with arrest and detention of scientist Nambi Narayanan in the 1994 ISRO espionage matter.

Justice Ashok Menon gave the relief to the two officers after CBI sought adjournment till next week in the joint anticipatory bail plea moved by S Vijayan and Thampi S Durga Dutt, a lawyer associated with the case said.

Central government counsel Suvin R Menon, who appeared for the CBI, also confirmed the order and said that the court also directed that if the two former police officers are arrested, they be released on bail on furnishing a bond of Rs 50,000 with two sureties of the like amount.

The interim order will be in effect till the next date of hearing on August 2, he said.

The two were part of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) which arrested the scientist and two Maldivian nationals -- Mariyam Rasheeda and Fouziyya Hassan -- in the ISRO espionage case in 1994.

## Modi hails performance of Indian wrestlers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday hailed the performance of Indian wrestlers at the World Cadet Championships in Budapest.

"Our sportspersons continue to make us proud. India wins 13 medals, including 5 Golds at the World Cadet Championships in Budapest," Hungary. Congratulations to our team and best wishes for their future endeavours," Modi tweeted. Union Youth Affairs and Sports Minister Anurag Thakur also lauded the "remarkable performance" by India at the World Cadet Championships. The World Cadet Championship is an event where greco-roman, freestyle and women wrestlers in the world aged 16 and 17 years old compete.





# Healing touch

Amid fierce competition, Olympics is about the message of inclusivity to all humankind

The Olympic Games have sent out a message for the second time running, first from Rio in 2016 and now from Tokyo, that it is not all about winning, it is also about belonging. The message comes from just 29 sportspersons who represent 82 million people currently Stateless or displaced from their homes and living as refugees across the world. They now have a voice and a platform after the International Olympics Committee (IOC) decided that refugees should get the opportunity to pick up their lives' threads through sport. The IOC invited 10 refugee athletes to the Rio Olympics representing the Refugee Olympic Team. The figure went up by nearly three times to 29 in Tokyo, a telling reminder that the number of refugees is growing at a similar pace. If these athletes are able to take part in the Olympics, it is because they are no longer worried about persecution or hunger.



They have homes though far away from home, are safe and secure, and enjoy all rights and freedom. However, the frustration of a refugee status hurts them. "One day, one time, if my country settles down, maybe I will go back and represent my country." That is the dream of refugee Paulo Amotun Lokoro, who is competing in 1500 metres in Tokyo. The South Sudanese former cattle herder fled to Kenya to escape a civil war.

Afghan Nigara Shaheen left for Pakistan as an infant and has encountered abuses and life threats from both countries but refuses to allow her past to destroy her dreams of a medal in judo. Syrian swimmer Yusra Mardini became a world headline in 2015 when she and her sister decided to flee Syria and both had to swim for their lives in the Mediterranean when the dinghy in which they were escaping took water. Swimming saved her life then and is now the sport she banks her dreams on. Between 2015 and the present day, the rallying call of the IOC has not translated into the world relaxing their policies on refugees. Japan, for instance, where the current Games are being held, is said to have granted asylum to less than one per cent of the refugees and asylum-seekers who applied in 2019, despite having the third-largest economy in the world. In contrast, Germany, which ranks fourth among top economies, accepted nearly 53 per cent of the refugees in the same year. Syrians, Afghans, Rohingyas and Africans contribute the maximum number of refugees in the world today. However, very few countries have kept their borders open. In some countries where they managed to arrive, they face discrimination or are considered as threats to national security. Refugee Olympian Angelina Nadai Lohalith has the last word: "We hope others see we are just normal people like them." The Games seek to convince the world community that the refugee problem cannot be wished away by donating dollars but resolved by first recognising it as a human issue.

## PICTALK



A man feeds birds by the lake at Sefton Park as the warm weather continues, in Liverpool, England

# Taking stock

India's sporting fortunes in the global arena have taken a severe dip since the golden days of yore

Sunday's 7-1 drubbing of the Indian hockey team at the hands of Australia in Tokyo Olympics proves that the country is miles behind in the race for a medal in the global arena. Mirabai Chanu's silver medal in weightlifting notwithstanding. If Indian athletes manage to win a medal in the track and field events at Tokyo, it would be a miracle. Our hopes and dreams are chiefly centred on badminton and tennis players, besides boxer Mary Kom. The country which finished fourth in 1956 Melbourne Olympics football does not figure in the first six even in Asia. The Indian Soccer League has not only failed to revive the game, it has destroyed whatever interest remained among the fans. There are no prestigious football tournaments or teams anymore. Till the 1980s, we had a few reputed football teams and annual fixtures. A State like Kerala hosted seven all-India tournaments and outstation teams used to set the ground ablaze with quality games. Delhi was the venue of the world's second oldest football tournament, the Durand Cup, and the DCM Trophy drew teams from abroad, too. Who can forget Shimla Youngs, a local team that beat the Calcutta giants?



There were no 24X7 news channels; fans across Kerala and Tamil Nadu would ring up the offices of All India Radio and newspapers late evening to know the match results. Similarly, Bombay had Rovers Cup and all street hawkers would pack their belongings by 3 pm to rush to the Cooperage Ground to catch the action. Ironically, the fall of India's hockey started the day the country won the 1975 World Cup in Kuala Lumpur. Though India bagged the gold medal in the 1980 Moscow Olympics, it was no achievement since the US and its allies did not send their teams to the USSR. India pocketed the gold medal by beating Poland, a country which had no prowess in the game of hockey. Take a look at the number of medals won by India in the last 12 Olympic Games before bidding to host the 2036 Games. The event is hardly 15 years away and there is no possibility of the country graduating to the big league by then. Sporting events should never be held for the contractors and event managers to amass money. Sporting events are serene and sacred and not money-spinners.

# The reforms of 2015 are fructifying now

Three Big Bang reforms Prime Minister Narendra Modi had envisaged in 2015, which were scoffed at then, have registered exponential growth



BINDU DALMIA

While Modi 1.0 achieved an 80 per cent plus last-mile delivery rate in welfare and social sector schemes monitored through the skilful use of technology, in this article I want to specifically assess the turnaround of three mega financial inclusion and employment-generating goals that were set during Modi 1.0, which are beginning to fructify and gather momentum in 2021. All three were scoffed at by critics, whether it was weeding out a parallel economy through demonetisation, or Modi's propagation of becoming a self-creator of jobs through 'Startup India', or giving a push to 'Skill India' in mission mode.

**The PM had prioritised a trifold vision in 2015:** To target the elimination of a parallel economy by transiting to digital payments, which has accelerated the booming fintech services sector; creating a facilitatory ecosystem to propel 'Startup India' which is now witnessing a frenzied boom in the IPO space; thirdly, to 'Skill India' in order to be future-ready with the pace of innovations. By mid-2021, all three reforms have witnessed exponential growth, particularly the first two, which got a fillip due to digitisation post-COVID.

**Universalising digital banking leading to financial inclusion:** Targeting a \$5trillion economy and a New India is not achievable without the financial inclusion of the urban and rural poor. Hence, it was imperative to include the unbanked population so that they had easier access to formal credit, savings and insurance. "The basic tenets of financial inclusion were to bank the unbanked, secure the unsecured, and fund the unfunded." The pandemic has accelerated the push towards digital payments, which is a means of achieving financial inclusion.

Tech-based lending was also not feasible without access to credit history of consumers, as the underbanked lacked a borrowing track record. Nor was extending loans to MSMEs possible for those who lacked collaterals. The JAM trinity of Jan Dhan, Aadhaar and the mobile ecosystem that was set in place in 2015 has facilitated the scale, volume and delivery of digital financial services to the extent that by June 2021, India's payments systems are now processing more than 150 million transactions that amount to ₹4.5 lakh crores each day on an average. The efficiency of digital payments in direct benefit transfer (DBT) is also evident, with ₹53 lakh crores being paid out digitally across 319 Government schemes in FY'21.



Today, as banks partner with fintechs, they draw in more 'new-to-credit' micro enterprises into the formal banking system, being able to approve loans in seven minutes as compared to seven days to the rural consumer. Prior to these interventions, extending financial services to rural India was an unviable proposition for banks because of the high cost of servicing remote locations, poor credit demand and the small-ticket size of financial transactions.

**'Skill India Mission':** Skill India was a smart initiative launched by the Government in 2015 to provide market and industry-relevant skills for the workforces so that they are job-ready by 2022. In order to become globally competitive and raise per capita productivity and per capita incomes, we needed to create opportunities for well-paying jobs for the



THE YEAR 2021 HAS BEEN A BLOCKBUSTER ONE FOR THE STARTUP INDUSTRY IN INDIA, WITH 16 MEMBERS JOINING THE UNICORN CLUB IN JUST SIX MONTHS AND BROWSERSTACK, ZETA AND MOGLIX BEING AMONG THE RECENT ENTRANTS

millions of under-skilled workers keen to transition from farming to the services or the manufacturing sector.

By June 2021, it is encouraging that more than 1.25 crore people are being skilled, re-skilled and up-skilled annually under the PM's flagship scheme of 'Pradhanmantri Kaushal Vikas Yojana'. As the PM said, "Only a skilled person will grow in today's world, as no longer can learning stop with earning."

**The exponential growth of the Startups universe:** The PM in 2015 had said that "India should be known as a nation of job creators and not job seekers", thereafter setting in motion an enabling environment by improving on the Ease of Doing Business parameters and providing easier access to credit in order to encourage entrepreneurship and startups. Just as demonetisation triggered the growth of fintech startups like Paytm in 2017, similarly the pandemic accelerated the adaptation to diverse tech-based startups ranging from sectors like education, beauty, retail, food delivery aggregators, e-commerce, e-healthcare, and so on.

These innovative entrepreneurs had gained a first-mover-advantage by mastering the art of navigating through

a VUCA world (of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity) by being resilient to the changing dynamics in the marketplace as they went on to alter existing business models and design product offerings that addressed altered consumer needs that provided ease-of-living solutions. Today, startups are creating 1.3 times more jobs than the Old Economy, having paid almost twice the amount of taxes compared to non-funded companies.

The year 2021 has been a blockbuster one for the startup industry in India, with 16 members joining the unicorn club in just six months and BrowserStack, Zeta and Moglix being among the recent entrants, while the league of deacons valued at over ₹10 billion comprises the likes of Byjus, Zomato and Paytm.

Tech-startups are expected to further expand to 150 unicorns over the next three years. Meanwhile, the global investor community remains buoyant on the startups space as India emerges as the third largest and fastest growing unicorn hub of the world.

(The writer is an author, columnist and Chairperson, NCFIL, at NITI Aayog. The views expressed are personal).

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### YEDIYURAPPA'S EXIT A SETBACK

Sir — While Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa's resignation at this stage was uncalled for, the interference by the Lingayat Swamis has also vastly damaged his continuation. The credit for opening the BJP Government's account in South India goes to Yediyurappa. He proved that he could make or mar the BJP's prospects when he formed the Karnataka Janata Party (KJP) and came in the way of the BJP taking power ahead of the 2013 Karnataka Assembly election. The BJP's vote share was divided, consequent to which the Congress Government headed by Siddaramaiah came to power.

But realising that he has no future with the KJP, he disbanded it and crawled back to the BJP, grabbing power by dislodging the JDS-Congress Government. Yediyurappa was implicated in a denotification case and lost ground to Sadananda Gowda to succeed him, followed by Jagadeesh Shettar. The party recently put pressure on Yediyurappa to submit his resignation. Yediyurappa has to be remembered for increasing the superannuation age of Government employees from 58 years to 60 years.

KV Seetharamaiah | Hassan

### MANOJ JHA HAS A VALID POINT

Sir — The Rajya Sabha's RJD member Manoj Jha has aptly highlighted the irony of India following the indirect tax regime in a country where a large number of people live in poverty. He should be congratulated for underscoring a fact that has been kept hidden from public knowledge. He said: "This is a welfare State, isn't it? When a poor man buys a bar of soap, he is as much a taxpayer as are Adani and Ambani." Indeed, indirect taxes are insensitive to inequality. This is the reason why in most modern welfare States, unlike India, direct taxes constitute the lion's share of the total tax collections.

In India, the poorest of the poor have to pay the same amount of indirect tax as their creamy counterparts when they buy anything from salt to slippers and from food to medicine. If we calculate the percentage of tax payment on one's total income, a poor man's contribution to tax and tax-related expenditures is surprisingly more than a rich person. While direct taxes depend on the taxpayers' ability to pay, indirect taxes are blind to their economic status. High indirect taxes can exist only on luxury goods; essential items should either have zero tax or a maximum of one-two per cent.

### Monsoon fury and flooding



The monsoon rainfall provides the "elixir of life" free of cost; it commingles with the regenerative powers of nature, and it is a boon to farmers. But, of late, it has tended to become an extreme weather event and turn into a disaster. The flooding has become alarmingly frequent over the years. It is not entirely natural; it is partly natural and partly man-made. Visuals of submerged houses, inundated roads and crops, collapsed buildings and bridges across the country give an idea of the scale of the flood havoc. Despite the NDRF's best efforts to rescue as many people as possible, the floods have claimed over 200 precious lives. Many persons categorised as "missing" may also

have lost their lives. Human factors accentuate vulnerability to disasters. Impoverished people are especially vulnerable to disasters like floods. Most of the deaths were due to the precarious structures used as dwellings in areas prone to landslides and other flood-related mishaps. Increasing extreme weather conditions cannot be looked at in isolation from human mismanagement of resources and the wide disparity in consumption between the rich and the poor. Ill-considered and unsustainable economic development and concomitant or consequent carbon emissions, deforestation, soil erosion, failure to preserve natural water bodies and construction of big dams destroy nature's delicate checks and balances which, in turn, result in extreme weather events like flooding.

Studies show that global warming is a major factor in the occurrence of heavy rainfall, resulting in uncontrollable flooding. Steps should urgently be taken to achieve the goals of protecting lives from extreme weather events and reducing the carbon footprint to stabilise the earth's temperature.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

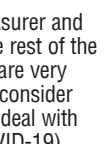
## SOUND BITE

The Government says our farmers are happy with the farm laws and those who are sitting on protest are terrorists.



Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi

The Treasurer and I and the rest of the Cabinet are very open to consider how we deal with the (COVID-19) situation as it further evolves.



Australian Prime Minister — Scott Morrison

I have got my first shot of the vaccine and once I get my second shot, travelling will be much easier.



My job is to control the middle overs and I was very happy I did that and I just backed myself. There has been nothing on my mind.

Indian leg-spinner — Yuzvendra Chahal

I will not suggest any names. It is the prerogative of the BJP high command to choose the new Chief Minister.



Karnataka ex-Chief Minister — BS Yediyurappa



FIRST COLUMN

THE MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION IN GANGA

Microplastics are now the prime pollution content at Varanasi, Kanpur and Haridwar



KOTA SRIRAJ

The Ganges, the most revered river in India, is fast becoming a tragic casualty of callous anthropogenic pollution. In the last decade, pollution levels, especially faecal coliform bacteria, in the Ganges have been mounting- the impact of 400 million people living on its banks. Samples collected at Varanasi have repeatedly shown coliform levels 100 times more than the prescribed limit. The pilgrim city with one million population releases 200 million litres of untreated human sewage into the Ganges every day. The Ganga Action Plan was a ray of hope that promised to help clean up the river but that proved to be a mirage. The Plan launched by the government amid much fanfare failed to rein in the pollution thanks to widespread corruption, lack of required technical expertise, and the poor government will. These issues were further exacerbated by the absence of support from the native, religious bodies, and environmental planning. The result was the failure of yet another attempt to cleanse the river



that was overburdened with the sins of human pollution.The World Bank report on the state of water resources in India estimates that the health costs of water pollution in India would amount to three per cent of India's GDP and nearly 80 percent of the nation's illnesses and one-third of the deaths would be attributable to water-borne diseases. The Ganges is precisely confirming the predictions. Even as the people, the government, and the river itself battle with the overbearing levels of pollution, a new study by an NGO,Toxic Links,has found that the microplastic levels in the Ganges have zoomed and according to the report's findings, the Ganges now has the dubious distinction of having the world's highest concentration of microplastic pollution for a major river. Microplastics are less than 5 mm in size and now occupy the prime pollution content in the Ganges at Varanasi, Kanpur, and Haridwar. The report has found the extreme use of plastics in religious offerings to the river to be behind this mega spike in microplastic content in the river water. This rise in plastics has serious implications for the environment and humans alike.

The presence of ethylenevinyl, polyacetylene, and polyamide in microplastics have dangerous implications for human health and can cause toxicity through oxidative stress, inflammatory lesions, and increased uptake or translocation. Several studies have also demonstrated the potentiality of metabolic disturbances, neurotoxicity, and increased cancer risk in humans due to sustained exposure to or ingestion of microplastics. As rivers are essential lifelines for humans and a source of irrigation for agriculture, there is a need to stop our rivers from becoming "microplastic hotspots". This will protect not only river water biodiversity but also human health. Given the seriousness of the microplastic pollution affecting the Ganges, the government must undertake immediate remedial measures to curb this form of pollution. It is critical to study and adopt the best practices currently being followed across the world to control microplastic spread in water bodies. The first step is to ban single-use plastics and secondly, there is a need to adopt cutting-edge technologies such as the membrane bioreactor technology whereby fibres are used to treat wastewater to filter out microplastics. Similarly, nanocellulose membrane filters are being developed to take the battle against microplastics in water to the next level. With these exciting developments already taking place in the world, India cannot afford to be left behind and must take the initiative and adopt these technologies on the home front and save the precious river and water bodies from the menace of microplastics.

(The writer is an environmental journalist. The views expressed are personal.)

# Missing the woods for the trees

The thrust of the proposed pesticides Bill should be on incentivising innovators to invest in R&D and bring new crop protection solutions



UTTAM GUPTA

A major factor that could make or mar the Modi government's mission of doubling farmers' income has to do with the loss of anywhere between 10 and 30 per cent damage to crop production due to pests and disease. The use of pesticides is the most effective way of stemming these losses.

The manufacture, import, distribution, and use of pesticides is regulated under the Insecticides Act, 1968, its main objective being 'to prevent risk to human beings or animals and for matters connected therewith'. The government wants to replace this with a new law. The Pesticides Management Bill, introduced last year, was referred to a Standing Committee on June 3, 2021.

The key provisions are (i) regulation of pesticide prices; (ii) prescription-based purchase of pesticides; (iii) ensure manufacturers' accountability for pesticide 'safety' and 'quality' in the entire supply chain including use and disposal; (iv) compensation to farmers for any loss caused by pesticide use; (v) review of pesticides' safety and their ban if risky; (vi) pesticide export not permitted if banned in India; (vii) punitive provisions include heavy penalties and imprisonment.

The Registration Committee set up under the Act registers every pesticide after scrutinizing the formula, chemistry, claims of efficacy, safety to human beings and animals, specifying the precautions against poisoning, and any other functions.

An applicant wanting to register a new product for the first time in India is required to generate data to demonstrate its safety and efficacy in Indian conditions in addition to the millions of dollars spent globally on toxicity and chemistry studies. At present, there are over 250,000 registrations corresponding to only 280 registered pesticide molecules, i.e., close to 900 per molecule.

A manufacturing license from the state, the notified authority under the Act, is not difficult as it is by and large given without checking for basic facilities, including quality control.

The result is an unmanageably large number of pesticide manufacturing units, currently over 1,400. This has made way for the entry of non-serious players who have little regard for quality and standards and the result is a proliferation of spurious and sub-standard products which could be nearly a third of the total quantity - worth ₹20,000 crore — in the domestic market.

This sort of regulatory architecture is a losing proposition for all stakeholders. The 'Me-too' registrants neither have any knowledge nor interest in 'stewardship', that is, educating farmers about proper and scientific use of new crop protection technologies. As a result, the farmers are unable to utilize their full potential. Worse still, the use of spurious products inflict huge crop losses and damage the soil. The above maladies ought to have attracted the



THE ACCOUNTABILITY AND COMPENSATION PROPOSALS ARE FAR-FETCHED. NO DOUBT, THE MANUFACTURER HAS TO BE HELD RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY COMPROMISE ON QUALITY OR THINGS GOING WRONG AT THE PRODUCTION, PACKAGING, TRANSPORTATION, STORAGE OR DISTRIBUTION STAGES BUT ONCE THE SALE HAS TAKEN PLACE, THE BALL SHIFTS TO THE FARMER'S COURT

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



attention of our lawmakers and solutions found. Instead, the PMB has provisions that will make the system more unwieldy.

With reference to price regulation, as it is, the innovator or originator of the new technology suffers heavy losses with so many manufacturers (up to 100 in some cases) selling the product to the same set of farmers. They are unable to recoup the huge investments made in developing, conducting studies (to seek registration), and 'stewardship'. On top of it, if the government also starts controlling the MRP, as contemplated under the PMB, it will further erode their incentives to invest in R&D.

Requiring farmers to buy pesticides only after obtaining a prescription, say, from an agriculture expert shows little understanding of the dynamics of pesticide use. When large swathes of fields are attacked by pests (like a locust attack that happened last year), if a farmer has to wait for a prescription, the pests would have devastated the crop before the pesticide was procured.

The accountability and compensation proposals are far-fetched. No doubt, the manufacturer has to be held responsible for any compromise on quality or things going wrong at the production, packaging, transportation, storage, and distribution stages but once the sale has taken place, the ball shifts to the

farmer's court. If the farmer has not properly followed the instructions clearly written on the packets and accompanying leaflets, it would be unfair to hold the manufacturer accountable.

Referring to the review of pesticides' safety clause, the provision for a periodic review of the safety and efficacy of pesticides in use already exists in the Insecticides Act.

In 2013, an expert committee was set up to study the continued use of a total of 66 pesticides. Based on its recommendations (the report submitted in 2015), the government banned 18 pesticides in 2018. For another 27 pesticides, the Ministry for Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare issued a draft order in May 2020 to ban their manufacture, usage, and storage. It is now past the middle of 2021 but that order is yet to be implemented.

The proposal for disallowing the export of a pesticide banned in India is illogical. Whether to allow the use of a product in the importing country (exports from India are meant for use in that jurisdiction only), has to be based on an assessment of its 'safety' and 'efficacy' in that territory. For this purpose, the fact whether it is registered or used in India or banned is irrelevant.

Finally, the bill provides for penalties and a jail term for violating provisions of the Act. Such

criminalization of an offence could put genuine manufacturers to great risk particularly when the existing system of sample collection is "faulty".

Instead of trying to micro-manage the industry (this is what the bill seeks to do), the thrust of the law should be on (a) incentivizing innovators to invest in R&D, bring new crop protection solutions, and fast-track their registration; (b) rein in "Me too" registrations by granting a period of exclusivity to the original registrant during which further registrations would not be allowed; (c) enforce strict quality control at all levels in the supply chain; (d) end the scourge of spurious pesticides.

The law should clearly specify time lines in all critical areas such as grant of registration, license for manufacturing, distribution and sale, analysis of the sample, review of pesticides for deciding whether to continue their use, etc. It should enforce accountability on all stakeholders including enforcement agencies such as license officers, sample analysts as well as farmers.

The process of enacting the law also needs to be time-bound. Work on the PMB started over two decades back — an earlier version of the Bill was introduced by the UPA regime in 2008 and it languished till 2015 when the Modi government took it on board. Now, we have a fresh draft - PMB (2020).

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

I HAVE DECIDED TO RESIGN. NOBODY PRESSURED ME TO RESIGN. I DID IT ON MY OWN SO THAT SOMEONE ELSE CAN TAKE OVER AS CHIEF MINISTER.  
— KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER  
BS YEDIYURAPPA



THE BJP DOESN'T HAVE THE CAPABILITY TO RULE THE STATE; THIS GOVERNMENT HAS COMPLETELY FAILED. COME, LET'S GO FOR POLLS.  
— KARNATAKA CONGRESS CHIEF  
DK SHIVAKUMAR



# Nipun Bharat: Laying the foundation for a learning society

The Mission is expected to lay the foundation of an Atmanirbhar Bharat through a learning society, where kids are able to realise their potential

The NIPUN (National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy) Bharat Mission launched by the Ministry of Education on July 5, 2021, marks an important landmark in the implementation of the National Education Policy 2020. The NEP signalled a paradigm shift by basing the edifice of the education system on foundational learning. It asserts that the policy would become infructuous if children do not acquire the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy by Grade 3 in mission mode.

This is the key for them to progress to 'Read to Learn' and then, 'Learn How to Learn'. Such empowered individuals become lifelong learners and will help lay the foundation for



MANEESH GARG

(The writer is Joint Secretary, Ministry for Education, Government of India. The views expressed are personal.)

a knowledge-based learning society. The foundational years in school are crucial for providing a firm and reliable foundation for learning and nurturing young people to develop competencies so that they can adapt to different situations in the real world.

The vision of the Mission is to create an enabling environment to ensure the universal acquisition of foundational literacy and numeracy so that by 2026-27, every child achieves the desired learning competencies in reading, writing, and numeracy at the end of Grade 3. The mission will cover the learning needs of children in the 3-9 age group. The key components of foundational language and literacy are oral language development, phonological awareness, print awareness,



ness, decoding, vocabulary, reading comprehension and fluency, writing, and engaging with a wide variety of books and other reading materials.

Foundational numeracy means the ability to reason and to apply simple numerical concepts in daily life problem-solving. The major aspects of foundational numeracy are pre-number concepts, awareness of the numeration system, conventions needed for mastery of mathematical techniques such as the use of a base 10 system to represent numbers, measure-

ment, using standard algorithms to perform operations of addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division on numbers and apply these to their day-to-day activities in different contexts, understanding of shapes, spaces, and patterns.

The framework for NIPUN Bharat has been evolved through extensive consultations with expert bodies, national and international studies, and with the states and UTs. It covers key technical aspects of foundational literacy and numeracy as well as the administrative aspects for setting up an effective implementation mechanism at the national, state, district, block, and school levels.

The NEP 2020 focuses on the holistic development of the child. There are different

domains of development. Hence, three developmental goals have been identified—Children maintain good health and well-being (HW), Children become effective communicators (EC), and Children become involved learners and connect with their immediate environment (IL).

The NIPUN Bharat also marks another paradigm shift in education insofar as it lays down, for the first time, the national learning targets and aims at the universal achievement of those. The targets make for easy understanding and measurement by all stakeholders as to what the children are supposed to achieve starting from Balvatika (age 5-6 years) to Class 3, in the areas of oral language, reading, writing, and numeracy.

For example, a child in the age group of 5-6 years is expected to be able to read simple words comprising at 2-3 alphabets, while a child in class 1 (age 6-7 years) should read small sentences consisting of at least 4-5 simple words. A child of class 2 (age 7-8 years) should read 8-10 sentences with simple words with appropriate speed (approximately 45 to 60 words per minute correctly), comprehension, and clarity. Similarly, a child of class-3 (age 8-9 years) is expected to read at least 60 words per minute. Also, the students should be able to follow the instructions given in the text and answer simple questions based on their understanding of the text.

The Mission will focus on providing access to foundational years of schooling, teacher

capacity building, development of high quality and diversified student and teacher resource/learning material, and tracking the progress of each child in achieving learning outcomes. A child able to achieve these basic language and numeracy skills by Grade 3 can better follow class room transactions, which will help in improving learning outcomes in later grades, reduce drop-out, and higher school completion rates, leading to a more productive contribution from them towards the society.

Thus, the NIPUN Bharat mission is expected to lay the foundation of an Atmanirbhar Bharat, through a learning society, where children are able to realize their full potential as future citizens, leaders, workers, innovators, and entrepreneurs.



# Tech, platforms brought full benefit of schemes: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Use of technology as well as platforms such as MyGov has enabled full benefits of the government programs and schemes to reach the masses, bringing about unprecedented change and inclusive development, Minister for Electronics and IT Ashwini Vaishnaw said on Monday.

Addressing an event to mark seven years of citizen engagement platform, MyGov, Vaishnaw said India's youth too is reaching out proactively with its ideas and suggestions to the government through MyGov, and added that the platform is now entering its eighth year with renewed vigour.

Efficient use of technology and platforms has enabled the poor and the marginalised to fully benefit from various government schemes, transforming their lives and bringing economic and social inclusion, he said.



Mobile phones, biometric ID Aadhaar, focus on domestic manufacturing, rapid internet penetration, digital payments, e-marketplace, and many other schemes and programs have brought unprecedented changes in the lives of people, and paved the way for inclusive development, Vaishnaw added. MyGov -- which is based on inclusive development -- has connected people from the remotest parts of the country

and has given them the chance to have a voice in making government policies, he said. Launching the 'MyGov UP chapter', Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath noted that the use of technology has brought in more transparency and ensured that government schemes and their benefits reach the masses. In UP, the power of technology, epos machines in fair price shops, and state government

portal, has led to increased efficiencies, and 15 crore people are getting full benefit of the Public Distribution System (PDS) system.

Technology not only improves the lives of people, but plugs leakages and helps in tackling corruption, he said.

He observed that UP has moved ahead swiftly on all parameters of development, and harnessed technology effectively, for the benefit of people.

Speaking on the occasion, Minister of State for IT, Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that MyGov is not just a tech tool but, in fact, a powerful medium to strengthen participatory governance.

Lauding the achievements of MyGov, Chandrasekhar exhorted the platform to further expand its base of nearly 2 crore users, to enable more and more people to engage with the government in multiple languages and from remotest corners of the country, over the coming years.

Sensex slips 123 pts; Nifty ends below 15,850

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex declined over 120 points on Monday, tracking losses in index heavyweights Reliance, SBI and HDFC twins amid a largely subdued trend in global markets. The 30-share BSE index ended 123.53 points or 0.23 per cent lower at 52,852.27, while the broader NSE Nifty slipped 31.60 points or 0.20 per cent to 15,824.45.

SBI was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding over 1 per cent, followed by Reliance Industries, Tech Mahindra, M&M, L&T, Bharti Airtel, IndusInd Bank and HDFC.

On the other hand, Bajaj Finserv, UltraTech Cement, Sun Pharma, Titan, Tata Steel and Kotak Bank were among the gainers.

Indian markets started marginally in red following negative Asian market cues as China tech and education shares plunged and Singapore's manufacturing output declined 3 per cent in June on a seasonally adjusted, month-on-month basis.

# Banks and financial institutions have \$100 bn in realty exposure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Banks and other financial institutions have an exposure of USD 100 billion to real estate sector, of which 67 per cent are safe while the remaining loans are under pressure or severely stressed, according to real estate consultant Anarock.

"At least 67 per cent (or approximately USD 67 billion) of the total loan advances (USD 100 billion) to Indian real estate by banks, NBFCs and HFCs is currently completely stress-free," Anarock Capital, a subsidiary of Anarock, said in a statement on

Monday. Another 15 per cent (about USD 15 billion) is under some pressure but has scope for resolution with certainty on at least the principal amount.

"USD 18 billion (or 18 per cent) of the overall lending to Indian real estate is under 'severe' stress, implying that there has been high leveraging by the concerned developers who have



either limited or extremely poor visibility of debt servicing due to

multiple factors," the statement said.

Anarock Capital said the overall contribution of non banking financial companies (NBFCs) and housing finance companies (HFCs), including trusteeships, towards the total lending to Indian real estate is at 63 per cent.

Individually, banks have a share of 37 per cent, followed by HFCs at around 34 per cent, and NBFCs 16 per cent.

Around 13 per cent loans have been given under trusteeships. According to Anarock Capital, banks and HFCs are much better placed with 75 per cent and 66 per cent of their lending book in a comfortable position. "Not surprisingly, nearly 46 per cent of the total NBFC lending is on the watch-list," the statement said.

About 75 per cent of the total lending to Grade A developers is safe. "This presents a comfortable outlook because out of the total loans given to real estate, more than USD 73 billion is given to Grade A builders," the statement said.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Rupee drops by 2 paise to 74/\$, snaps winning streak

The rupee slipped by 2 paise to close at 74.42 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday, snapping its three-day gaining streak amid a muted trend in domestic equities. Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as investors are awaiting cues from the US Fed's policy decision due this week. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 74.43 against the dollar and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.40 and a low of 74.52 during the session. The local unit finally ended the day at 74.42, down 2 paise over its last close. On Friday, the rupee had settled at 74.40 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.22 per cent to 92.70. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 123.53 points or 0.23 per cent lower at 52,852.27, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 31.60 points or 0.2 per cent to 15,824.45.



### Byju's acquires Great Learning for \$600 mn

Edu-tech major Byju's on Monday said it has acquired Singapore-headquartered Great Learning for USD 600 million (about Rs 4,466 crore), and will invest an additional USD 400 million to strengthen its position in the professional and higher education segment. The development comes just days after Byju's had announced the acquisition of US-based digital reading platform Epic for USD 500 million (around Rs 3,729.8 crore), and an additional USD 1 billion (about Rs 7,459.7 crore) investment in the North American market. Byju's has acquired Great Learning - a global player in the professional and higher education segment - in a transaction valued at USD 600 million comprising cash, stock and earnout, a statement said. Byju's, which has 100 million registered students on its flagship learning app, has earmarked an additional USD 400 million of investment into this segment towards accelerating Great Learning's growth, it added.



### ICICI Bank shares hit 52-wk high post Q1 earnings

Shares of ICICI Bank on Monday gained over 1 per cent and touched 52-week high on the bourses after the company's June quarter net profit zoomed 52 per cent. The stock rose by 1.29 per cent to Rs 685.40 -- its 52-week high -- on the BSE. At the NSE, it gained 1.30 per cent to Rs 685.45 -- its 52-week high. ICICI Bank's June quarter net profit zoomed 52 per cent to Rs 4,747.42 crore, driven majorly by lower provisions but reported an increase in stress from the retail loans segment. On a standalone basis, the second-largest private sector lender by assets posted a net profit of Rs 4,616.02 crore for the reporting quarter, up by 77 per cent when compared with the national lockdown-hit April-June period of FY21. The earnings were announced on Saturday. The gross NPAs came at 5.15 per cent against 4.96 per cent in the quarter-ago period and 5.46 per cent in the year-ago period.



### Tea Board asks producers to sell 50 pc through auctions

The Tea Board India has asked all producers to sell 50 per cent through public auctions, prompting companies to urge the supervising body of the industry to keep exports out of the purview of the order. In a recent circular on Tea Marketing Control Order (TMCO), 2003, the board said routing 50 per cent of the produce through auctions will bring stability in the price realisation process. It also said if any producer does not comply with the order, strict action will follow. Reacting to the order, Rudra Chatterjee, managing director of Luxmi Tea, which manufactures premium Darjeeling tea like Makaibari, said it should not be made applicable for exports and value-added tea (packet tea). Whole-time Director of McLeod Russel, Azam Monem, said the directive has been in existence and organised producers have been adhering to it. "The genesis of the Tea Board order is to bring small tea growers (STG) in its fold. STGs account for 50 per cent of the total production in the country," he said.



# Banks NPAs decline to Rs 8L-crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Non-performing assets (NPAs) or bad loans of banks have declined by Rs 61,180 crore to Rs 8.34 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2021, as result of various steps taken by the government, Minister of State for Finance Bhagwat K Karad said on Monday.

Scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) were carrying NPAs worth Rs 8.96 lakh crore on their balance sheet at the end of March 2020.

"Primarily as a result of transparent recognition of stressed assets as NPAs, gross NPAs of SCBs, as per RBI data on global operations, rose from Rs 3,23,464 crore as on 31.3.2015, to Rs 10,36,187 crore on 31.3.2018, and as a result of Government's strategy of recognition, resolution, recapitalisation and reforms,



have since declined to Rs 9,33,779 crore on 31.3.2019, Rs. 8,96,082 crore as on 31.3.2020, and further to Rs 8,34,902 crore (provisional data) as on 31.3.2021," he said.

Karad in a written reply to the Lok Sabha said COVID-19 Regulatory Package announced by RBI permitted lending institutions to grant a

moratorium of six months on payment of all instalments falling due between March 1 and August 31, 2020, in respect of all term loans and to defer the recovery of interest for the same period in respect of working capital facilities.

Replying to another question, Karad said, gross NPAs of public sector banks (PSBs)

# Govt says 16,527 firms struck off during April '20 to June '21

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 16,527 companies were struck off from official records during the period from April 2020 to June 2021, according to official data.

Minister of State for Corporate Affairs Rao Inderjit Singh on Monday informed the Lok Sabha that pursuant to provisions of Section 248 of the Companies Act, 2013, "during April 2020 to June 2021, name of total 16,527 number of

companies were struck off from the register of companies". Under Section 248, a company can be struck off the official records subject to certain conditions. These include instances where the Registrar of Companies has a reasonable cause to believe that companies are not carrying on any business or operation for two immediately preceding financial years and have not made any application within such period for obtaining dormant

company status.

In written replies, the minister said that terms 'shut down' or 'closed unit' or 'corporate unit' are not defined under the Act. "As per the records maintained in the MCA portal, number of companies which are running in profits during the financial year 2019-20 is 4,00,375 and number of companies which are running in losses during the financial year 2019-20 is 4,02,431," Singh said.

# Auto component industry revenues to grow by 20%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian auto component industry is expected to post 20-23 per cent revenue growth in the current fiscal aided by strong exports and recovery in the domestic market, as per rating agency Icra.

The growth would however be on the low base of the last two fiscals and will look optically strong because of the exceptionally weak first half of the financial year 2020-21.

"For the full year FY2022, we expect a revenue growth of 20-



23 per cent aided by growth across segments and commod-

ity pass through, albeit on a low base." "However, headwinds

such as sharp increase in commodity prices, supply chain disruptions partly arising from semiconductor shortage and premium freight expenses are expected to weigh in industry margins in FY2022, partially offsetting benefits arising from improved operating leverage," Icra Vice President and Sector Head Ashish Modani said in a statement.

The rating agency noted that commodity prices were expected to remain at a multi-year high in the first half of the financial year 2021-22 before

softening in the second half of the financial year.

"Despite the strong revenue growth and consequent benefits from operating leverage expected, these headwinds are expected to weigh in on margins," Icra said.

Modani noted that its interaction with large auto component suppliers indicated a cautiously optimistic approach towards CAPEX plans for the financial year 2021-22, with investments expected to be largely funded by internal accruals.



# 2<sup>nd</sup> wave may lead to reassessment of economic growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The deadly second wave of Covid-19 may lead to some reassessment of India's economic growth rate in the current fiscal but the long-term prospects for the country continue to remain robust, Aditya Birla Group Chairman Mangalam Birla has said.

The silver lining, however, was the lesser severity of disruptions to production and supply chains during the second wave of the pandemic than during the first wave, said Birla in the latest annual report of group firm UltraTech Cement Ltd.

Moreover, a pick-up in vaccination would support faster normalisation of mobility levels and of related economic



activities, the veteran industrialist added.

While the government is thus far stuck to its estimate of around 11 per cent GDP growth in the fiscal through March, rating agencies such as

Moody's as well as Asian Development Bank (ADB) have already cut growth estimates. "Continued accommodative monetary policy of the RBI and the expected increase in capex from the

government are factors that will support growth recovery," said Birla while addressing the shareholders of UltraTech.

In addition, global growth prospects provide an opportunity for exports as an additional strong driver of growth, he added. "The longer-term prospects for the Indian economy continue to be robust," he said. "Various initiatives, including privatisation of public sector enterprises, monetisation of assets, implementation of National Infrastructure Pipeline, targeted investment incentives through the Production-Linked Incentives Scheme and the new Labour Code are likely to spur a virtuous cycle of investments and growth in the medium term," he added.

According to Birla, the Indian economy was "firmly on the path of recovery" in the second half of FY21, and then was hit by a rather unexpectedly virulent second wave of COVID-19. "That caused a severe strain on healthcare facilities in many parts of the country, leading to localised lockdowns and a fall in mobility to levels seen a year ago," he said adding "this may lead to some reassessment of growth estimates for FY22".

While talking about the global situation, the Aditya Birla Group chairman said in response to the pandemic, central banks resorted to strongly supportive monetary policies in most developed economies, causing interest rates to go down to record lows.

# Import duty on masur dal cut to zero

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre on Monday reduced the import duty on masur dal to zero and also halved the Agriculture Infrastructure Development Cess on the lentil to 10 per cent, in a bid to boost domestic supply and check rising prices. A notification in this regard was tabled in the Rajya Sabha by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

The Minister said that the basic customs duty has been reduced from 10 per cent to nil on lentils (masur dal) originated in or exported from countries other than the US.





## LIGHTS, CAMERA, OTT!



Amit Khanna

### ness of cinema?

Media and entertainment are among the early adopters of the digital format. Internet-based news, music, film and gaming websites are hugely popular. Since the last few years, Over The Top streaming audio-video services are a ubiquitous source of engagement. As broadband, wired and wireless spread and internet access becomes faster and convenient, there is no doubt a lot of entertainment will be through multiple screens — from the smartphones to large screen digital displays in public spaces. Indians are already spending up to five hours a day with different devices. Customisation and curated content on demand is the new mantra. However, legacy media like newspapers, radio, broadcast TV and theatre cinema are not going away soon. Within this decade, the number of people accessing various media via internet will overtake the conventional formats. We will increasingly consume multiple media through multiple devices, often simultaneously.

### How has the idea of entertainment take shape and evolve in ancient India?

India has the oldest tradition of entertainment and performing arts. The extended Indus Valley Civilisation was culturally rich. The Vedic Age saw the first pan-Indian civilisation stretching from 2,000 BCE to 500 BCE. Ramayana and Mahabharata, arguably the most ancient surviving texts in the world, have numerous tales of various means of entertainment — from dancing and music to drama and theatre. A lot of our entertainment still carries imagery and sounds from these periods. Samaveda is the first known text about music. Natya Shastra is the oldest treatise on music, drama and dance.

The Navrasa, expression of nine human emotions defined in it, still are followed by performing artists today. Raga-based Indian classical music including Dhrupad has existed for over two millennia. Plays by Kalidas and Mudrarakashasa by Visakhadatta are the

and National School of Drama, which are still the fountainhead of our culture, were set up. This was also the time of giants like Ravi Shankar, Bismillah Khan, Ali Akbar Khan, Dagar Brothers, MS Subbulakshmi, Bhimsen Joshi, Balasaraswati, Birju Maharaj, and many others. The popularity of gramophone records and radio spread classical music far beyond the courts and palaces to music conferences and concert stage. All India Radio was one of the cornerstones of post-Independence India. The decade also saw the spread of newspaper chains. The fifties also were a great decade for films led by filmmakers like Satyajit Ray, Bimal Roy, V. Shantaram, Mehboob Khan, Raj Kapoor, Guru Dutt, SS Vasan and others. While the trinity of Dilip Kumar, Dev Anand, Raj Kapoor reigned in the north, MGR, NTR, Shivaji Ganesan were the stars in the south. Nargis, Madhubala, Meena Kumari, Nutan and Vyjayanthimala were the nation's heartthrobs.

### How is OTT impacting the busi-

oldest surviving in the world. Temple dances of ancient India were the precursor of classical dance forms like Bharatanatyam, Kathakali, Mohiniyattam and Odissi. Another repository of ancient culture is the nearly 3,000-year-old Sangam literature in Tamil with vivid description of various arts practised in the region. India saw many foreign invasions beginning with Alexander who, for example, brought in Hellenic influence to our arts. Similarly, Mauryas, Guptas, Kushans, and Islamic rulers in medieval India, notably Mughals, left their imprints on India's multi-hued culture. A lot of contemporary entertainment shows the confluence of ancient Indian arts and Middle-Eastern, Persian and Central Asian forms.

### How do you visualise the future of entertainment in India?

Indians love films. However, we are a terribly under-screened country. We have only nine thousand screens approximately compared to other countries. More than half the films produced in India never get released in cinema theatres on account of shortage of screen time. India will perhaps add more new screens in the next ten years, still woefully inadequate. So, while more people may, in the years to come, watch their favourite movie through the net, millions will still through the multiplexes. Whatever the medium, cinema is the womb of stars and screen icons will continue to influence popular trends.

SHIKHA DUGGAL

While film industries across the world have suffered heavily on account of Covid-19, most have managed to get at least a few big releases out since the outbreak in 2020. The south industries, especially Telugu and Tamil, have seen a few releases, including successes like *Master*, *Vakeel Saab*, *Uppena* and *Jathi Ratnalu*. Now, with theatres closed, OTT platforms have become the port of call for many Indian film pro-

ducers! Amit Khanna, producer and a chronicler of the history of entertainment, talks about the past, present and future of cinema.

### What are the most unique features of the Indian entertainment industry?

It has to be its diversity and depth. While Indians have assimilated several strains of global cultures, its essence remains what it was 2,000 years ago. Every region has a treasure trove of folk songs, dances and theatre forms.

Modern India is the largest film producing country in the world and among the top three in broadcasting, print and digital media.

### Which was the most glorious decade for films in post-Independence era?

The 1950s are important from many standpoints. Jawaharlal Nehru laid the foundation of cultural institutions that is Sahitya Akademi, Sangeet Natak Akademi and Lalit Kala Akademi. Indian Council for Cultural Relations

## Your monsoon food guide



and spicy foods are consumed which can lead to water retention and unhealthy body fat percentages. However, it is important to realise, that a season cannot put a break to your fitness goals. Therefore, it is imperative to follow the optimal level plan of fitness which comprises of:

Eating a balanced diet comprising of complex carbohydrates, lean protein and omega 3 fatty acids

Adequate water and sunshine

Regular exercise

Good state of mind- that comes from eating healthy, exercising and spiritual health.

Water retention guidelines:

Keep hydration status high. Thirst is the last indication of the body being dehydrated. If you are well hydrated, you should be urinating about once every 1.5-2 hours.

Add green tea and dan-

delion tea to the plan-

natural diuretics

Parsley and asparagus in food preparations- natural diuretics

Consume calcium rich foods like eggs, low fat milk and milk products and green leafy vegetables

Most importantly avoid table salt.



Monsoon comes with its own sets of concerns. While building on immunity has been the topic of discussion for the past one year, monsoons tend to affect the immunity and the body is susceptible to health issues and prone to infections.

Mumbai based Nutritionist and Lifestyle Educator Karishma Chawla shares a Monsoon food guide and how one can include the right foods to boost one's immunity this season and keep them warm.

Sharing a few guidelines as here under:

1. Add immune booster foods
2. Keep hydration levels high.

3. Add garlic, turmeric in daily foods to enhance immunity

4. Add a probiotic—yogurt in the diet

5. Include warm foods like protein — lean meats (egg whites and chicken) and fibre — fruits and vegetables to keep the body warm

6. Indulge in seasonal fruits

7. Avoid raw foods

8. Wash vegetables well before cooking

9. Make sure to have your multivitamin and antioxidant supplements everyday

10. Make sure to have omega 3 supplement everyday

### To do or not to do?

With monsoon comes the unwanted cravings and refined foods, salty



On the occasion of IVF day, Anu Test Tube Baby Centre, one of the most renewed clinic in the Telugu states, had various words of advice to give to young couples. The clinic aimed to educate and spread awareness in society.

Today all over the world nearly 1 in 6 couples are childless. Though infertility is not considered a disease, the problem and its treatment are associated with several moral, ethical, and social issues.

What was a 5 – 10 % success rate initially for fertility treatments has now touched 40 – 45 % after so many years of struggle. IVF has become a major treatment option and over the last 43 yrs, technical advances have made IVF simpler, safer, and accessible.

Today, the IVF procedure is helping millions of such couples all over the world. This was a gift to the world from Robert Edwards and Dr. Patric Steptoe of Bourn Hall Clinic, UK.

World IVF day marks the birth of the first test-tube baby in the world in the year 1978.

"We have seen two generations of IVF babies in the last 27 yrs and delighted to see even IVF babies having natural pregnancies and normal deliveries. It is also noticed that IVF babies are no different in their mental and physical abilities from naturally conceived babies. However, All Fertility treatments including IVF have limited success rates and all fertility treatments fail more often than they succeed. This is true even in the case of the best of the IVF Centres in the World including ours. There is nothing like a 100% success rate. This is what a couple needs to know as most have very high expectations and a negative result devastates them. Failure of treatment results in a lot of emotional upheavals and sometimes marriage breakdowns. Loss of life because of infertility as such or of failed treatments is the most feared tragedy. It is important that a couple need to be psycho-

## Making a baby, not a child's play

logically strong and completely aware of limitations to prepare for failure," the doctors share.

### Can one prevent infertility in a couple?

All over the world infertility seems to be raising both in men and women. It is now known that the sperm count in men is declining. It dropped from 100 million/ml 4 decades ago to less than 50 million/ml today in many men. Interestingly over the last 3 decades, we observed in our clinic that the total number of eggs in the ovary even in young women is also declining. Thus, both in men and women the sperms and eggs produced are becoming less and less. This seems to be unavoidable and not preventable.

### However, there is a significant number of preventable causes.

- Sexually transmitted diseases: Unnecessary termination of pregnancies.
- Avoiding pregnancy for a long time after marriage by women for various reasons like careers. It is better to get

pregnant when one is young. Approximately, 1/3rd of couples with female partners 35 years or older, will have problems conceiving.

- Infectious diseases like Mumps which can sometimes result in infertility in Men
- Occupational hazards including using Laptops in the wrong way
- Smoking, alcohol, drugs
- Obesity and lack of exercise

### On this IVF day the message the doctors wish to convey to youngsters is:

- If possible avoid postponing pregnancy and plan for pregnancy early
- Avoid terminating pregnancies
- Do not think that freezing and storing your eggs and using them later is "fertility insurance"
- Have lifestyle changes as needed
- Any given day, a natural pregnancy at a right time is better than the best of fertility treatments with their associated expenses, stress, and loss of time.





Deepika Maheshwari



Anika Khara



Anusha



Smita



Harsha



Komal



Madhuri



Neha



Riya Gupta



Siddhi

PARTY

CULT MENTALITY

Carrying their motto, "Empowered women empower women," Women Business Cult had another productive formal meet at The Platinum in Banjara Hills, Hyderabad. Club founders Anika Khara and Deepika Maheshwari hosted the busy event that saw the attendance of many entrepreneurs, businesswomen and more empowered change-makers.

Photos by SV Chary

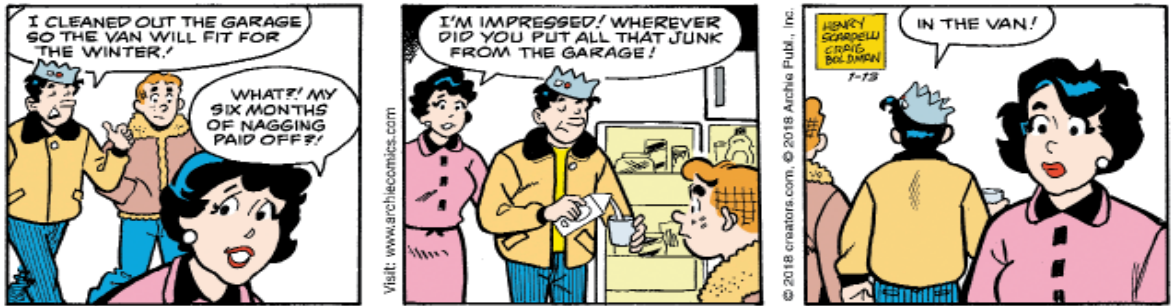


CELEBRATING TELANGANA


To admire and adore the sprightly Bonalu festival, Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre hosted a special brunch on Sunday, and will hold another the coming weekend too! The place was decked up in traditional marigold décor. Special performances by people of various age groups were the highlight of the celebrations. Apart from traditional cuisine, and showcasing the scintillating flavours of Hyderabad and Telangana, NHCC added Asian, Indian, Western cuisines, Ice Cream Teppanyaki live stations, and a unique Egg Station with a wide variety of selections along with chat counters!

FUN


ARCHIE




CALVIN AND HOBBS




GARFIELD




REALITY CHECK




NANCY



SPEED BUMP



GINGER MEGGS



CROSSWORD

1		2		3		4
5						6
7				8		
9						10
11						
12		13		14		15
16						
17						18
19						

ACROSS

1 Tiniest

7 A fish in rivers and lakes

8 Stick this on an envelope

9 Having a meal

10 Shout

12 Seeds in an apple

14 Opposite of weak

17 Precise

18 Nips with the teeth

19 Half of twenty-eight

DOWN

1 Fire a gun

2 Pretending

3 Mislead

4 Frighten

5 Tried

6 Say you are sorry

11 A building where a horse is kept

13 A keyboard instrument

15 Frequently

16 A light in the night sky

SOLUTION

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

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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



# ‘WANT TO REACH OUT TO GLOBAL AUDIENCE’

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia, one of the prominent names in the South film industry, has been testing waters in Bollywood but has not been able to achieve the same fame and name she garnered among Telugu audiences.

After being featured in some Bollywood films like *Himmatwala*, *Entertainment*, *Humshakals* and *Tutak Tutak Tutiya*, the actress says she has seen a lot more successful films in the South.

Asked between south or Bollywood films which one is the most difficult to headline, Tamannaah said, “I saw a lot more successful films in the south and it just is very simple. The industries work in exactly the same fashion. There is no

difference in the work. At the end, wherever you get success that place accepts you a lot more right?”

The 31-year-old actress, who has starred in many southern blockbusters including the *Baahubali* franchise, aspires to reach out to a global audience.

“I feel I got that in and received that kind of love and fan following in the south and I aspire that with the kind of work I am doing, I will be able to reach out and continue to reach out to a more pan-India and hopefully, global audience.”

The actress, who was recently seen in the web-series *November Story* on Disney+ Hotstar VIP, is now gearing up for the Telugu remake of the Hindi thriller *Andhadhun*.

The Telugu version is being directed by Merlapaka Gandhi.



## NANI WRAPS UP Shyam Singha Roy shoot

Natural star Nani has wrapped up shooting for his upcoming supernatural thriller film *Shyam Singha Roy*.

Taking to twitter and his Instagram handles, the actor, who is awaiting the release of *Tuck Jagadish*, posted a picture from the film's set where his back is towards the camera. He captioned the image: "Shoot done. With a great team comes the great outcome. Post production begins. #ShyamSinghaRoy."

A tweet from the banner Niharika Entertainment's official account read: "With a great star, there forms a supportive team to Make an epic film. Special Thanks to you Dear Natural. @NameisNani garu."

According to reports, the actor will be seen playing a Bengali man and will be seen romancing actresses Sai Pallavi and Krithi Shetty. *Shyam Singha Roy* is directed by Rahul Sankrityan. It also stars Malayalam actress Madonna Sebastian.



## Pawan-Rana resume shooting Ayyappunum Koshiyum remake

The most awaited remake of Pawan Kalyan started its fresh schedule on Monday. The remake of *Ayyappunum Koshiyum* original Malayalam movie has been creating a craze among the fans of Pawan Kalyan. Moreover, the film is a multi-starrer with Rana playing a lead role alongside Pawan Kalyan.

Due to Covid, the schedule has been delayed. Even after Pawan Kalyan's political activity, the unit had to wait until

today. At last, they were able to resume shooting today, and the schedule may run continuously with good acceleration. The director Sagar Chandra has planned the schedules accordingly.

The script for this remake was penned by Trivikram Srinivas, which has led to more hype for this film. Music was composed by S. Thaman and a folk song was planned, which will be sung by Pawan Kalyan himself. The film is being produced by Naga Vamsi under the banner Sithara Entertainments.



## CHATRAPATHI HINDI REMAKE IS AN ADVENTURE

It is an adventure. An adventure with a huge risk involved in it. The film *Chatrapathi*'s Hindi remake in Hindi, that too with Bellamkonda Srinivas, is a big adventure for the producer Dr. Jayanthi Lal Gada. Bellamkonda Srinivas was seen as a hero in eight films. From the beginning he had been getting negative remarks on his acting skills.

Being the son of a producer, with himself producing some films until now, he hasn't much of a success from any film until now. In his last film *Rakshasudu*, he received some positive remarks for his acting skills. The hero who is yet to make his mark in Tollywood, is gearing up for his debut in Bollywood, which is a big one.

Even Director Boyapati Srinu and director Teja couldn't manage to give a hit film with him, despite having good emotional drama and action oriented scripts. *Jaya Jaya Janaki Nayaka*, and *Sita* are both good stories but haven't seen success.

One wonders how V.V.Vinayak is expecting a hit in Bollywood. The film *Chatrapathi* gave people goosebumps in the first half. The last one hour of the story revolves around family, an emotional drama, where the film lacks grip. But, due to S.S.Rajamouli's magic and Prabhas' action, the film became a big hit.

Taking this story to Bollywood with a hero like Bellamkonda Srinivas, the unit is sure taking a big risk.



## PRAKASH RAJ LAUNCHES FIRST LOOK OF NAA VENTA PADUTUNNA HINNODEVARAMMA



Naa Venta Padutunna Chinnodevadamma film's first look and motion picture were launched by actor Prakash Raj on Monday at Hyderabad. Debutant director Venkat Vandela expressed his gratitude towards Prakash Raj for launching the first look of his film. Speaking on this occasion, Prakash Raj said that "the title is touching my heart. I wish great success for this film. I wish all the actors and technicians who are making their debut with this film, all the luck and love. They would have a bright future for sure. I am all for these types of good moviemaking."

Producers Mulleti Kamalakshmi, Gubbala Venkateswara Rao thanked Prakash Raj for launching the motion picture and expressed their happiness for producing such a film.

## Veteran actress Jayanthi passes away

Veteran actress Abhinaya Sharade Jayanthi (76) died at her residence in Bengaluru on Monday. The actress died due to age-related ailments.

Telugu audiences know her as Mahalakshmi with memorable songs like "Maa Intilona Mahalakshmi Neeve" played alongside senior NTR in *Kondaveeti Simham* movie. She is well known for her sentimental dialogues like "Chitikedu Pasupu Chitikedu Kumkuma".

She was known for her work in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada movies. She has worked in over 500 films from 1963 to 1980. She was one among lead actresses in Kannada and has played female lead roles with Kannada Super Star Raj Kumar in almost 30 films. She was born in January 1945 in Ballari, Karnataka. She made her



debut with YR Swamy's 1963 film *Jenu Goodu*. Later, she played lead roles with MG Ramachandran, Muthuraman and Jai Shankar in Tamil. Jayanthi essayed many characters in Telugu films. Her role in *Pedarayudu* as the sister of Rajanikanth had received good applause. Stars from all south Indian industries have been pouring out tributes to her.



# ANOTHER TOUGH DAY FOR INDIA

## MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Hockey:** India women's lose 0-2 to Germany in Pool A fixture.
  - **Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal beats Tigao Apolonia 4-2 in round two. Manika Batra loses to Sofia Polcanova 0-4 in round three. Sutirtha Mukherjee loses to Yu Fu 0-4 in round two.
  - **Boxing:** Ashish Kumar loses to Erbieke Touheta 0-5 in round of 32.
  - **Swimming:** Sajan Prakash finishes 24th in Men's 200m Butterfly.
  - **Fencing:** C A Bhavani Devi beats Nadia Ben Azizi 15-3 in table of 64 but loses to Manon Brunet 7-15 in table of 32.
  - **Archery:** India lose to South Korea 0-6 in quarterfinals after win against Kazakhstan 6-0 in pre-quarterfinals.
  - **Tennis:** Sumit Nagal loses to Daniil Medvedev 2-6 1-6 in men's singles second round.
  - **Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty lose 2nd group stage match, still in with a shout to reach QF. Sai Praneeth's campaign is over even before his 2nd match.
  - **Shooting:** Angad Vir Singh Bajwa finishes 18th and Mairaj Ahmad Khan 25th in the men's skeet event.
- IN FOCUS TODAY**
- **Shooting:** 10m Air Rifle and Pistol events.
  - **Hockey:** India vs Spain (Men's)
  - **Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal vs Ma Long.
  - **Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty vs Ben Lane/Sean Vendy.
  - **Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain vs Nadine Apetz.

## BHAVANI MAKES HISTORY

First-ever fencer to represent India at the Olympics also became first to win a bout but goes down fighting in 2<sup>nd</sup> round

**Tokyo:** India's first ever fencer in the Olympics, C A Bhavani Devi, lasted two rounds at the Games, her historic maiden appearance ending with a loss to world number three Manon Brunet in the women's individual sabre event on Monday.

The 27-year-old began her campaign with a confident 15-3 win against Tunisia's Nadia Ben Azizi but bumped into Rio Olympics semifinalist Frenchwoman Brunet in the next round, which she lost 7-15.

"I did my level best but couldn't win. I am sorry...Thank you so much I will come back much stronger and successful at Next Olympics with all your Prayers," she tweeted thanking her coaches, the Government and her family for backing her.

Bhavani said she committed mistakes against Brunet but will take the result in her stride.

"I didn't fence well in the first half but in the second half I tried to change something but it was too late. I am happy I fenced with one of the top fencers in the world," Bhavani



Nadia Ben Azizi of Tunisia, left, compete against India's Chadalavada Anandha Sundhararaman Bhavani Devi in the women's individual round of 64 Sabre competition on Monday

said of her contest vs Brunet.

The sabre is the fastest of the fencing competitions in which opponents can slash anywhere above the waist. The fencer who touches the 15 point-mark first is declared the winner.

In the other two events — foil and epee — only the tip of the sword can be used to target the opponent. The Chennai fencer said she has gained valuable experience from her Tokyo outing, which will help her in future challenges.

"It is my first Olympics and it could be better but I am okay with the experience I had from this Olympics. It will be a learning experience for me to improve myself. From here onwards, I will be living my dream as an Olympian."

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:30 AM	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Saurabh Chaudhary & Manu Bhaker Yashaswini Deswal & Abhishek Verma Subject to qualification
06:15 AM	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	
06:30 AM	<b>Hockey:</b> Men's Pool A Match	India vs Spain
07:30 AM	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team Medal Rounds	
08:30 AM	<b>Badminton:</b> Men's Doubles Group A Match	Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty
08:35 AM	<b>Table Tennis:</b> Men's Singles Round 3 Match	Achanta Sharath Kamal
08:45 AM	<b>Sailing:</b> Women's Laser Radial 5 & 6	Nethra Kumaran
09:45 AM	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 1	Elavenil Valarivan & Divyansh Panwar Anjum Moudgil & Deepak Kumar Subject to qualification
10:30 AM	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Qualification Stage 2	
10:57 AM	<b>Boxing:</b> Women's 69kg Round of 16	Lovlina Borgohain
11:20 AM	<b>Sailing:</b> 49er Men's Race 1,2 & 3	KC Ganapathy & Varun Thakkar
11:45 AM	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team Medal Rounds	
		<b>LIVE ON SONY TEN &amp; SIX NETWORK</b>

## Sharath advances but women challenge ends

**Tokyo:** India's leading player Sharath Kamal overcame a sluggish start to beat Portugal's Tiago Apolonia in the men's singles second round while the women challenge ended with Manika Batra and Sutirtha Mukherjee losing to their superior opponents here on Monday.

The 39-year-old Sharath struggled in the first game but pulled himself up just in time to win 2-11, 11-8, 11-5, 9-11, 11-6, 11-9 in 49 minutes.

Later in the day, Manika's impressive campaign in the women's singles came to an end with a 0-4 loss to 10th seed Sofia Polcanova in the third round.

The star Indian player, who had stunned world number 32 on Sunday, did not have the game to challenge the attacking left-hander from Austria.

The only Indian left in the fray, Sharath, faces reigning Olympic champion Ma Long of China in the third round on Tuesday. Arguably the greatest player of all time, Long has won every singles title in the sport, and is the reigning world champion as well.

However, with the way the 32-ranked Sharath played against his 59th-ranked opponent, it has given him immense confidence going into the round of 32 match against the Chinese.

"He is yet to play (with bye in the first two rounds). So, there will be pressure on him. Like I have said earlier, I have never felt better about my game."



Achanta Sharath Kamal competes during the table tennis men's singles second round match against Portugal's Tiago Apolonia



Manika Batra in action during her table tennis round 3 match against Austria's Sofia Polcanova on Monday



Sutirtha Mukherjee

Hopefully, I can challenge him," said Sharath.

Sutirtha Mukherjee also lost her second round match to Portugal's Yu Fu in straight games to crash out of her maiden Olympics. The 98th-ranked Indian who showed remarkable grit for a come-from-behind win over Sweden's Linda Bergstrom, looked completely off-colour to lose 3-11, 3-11, 5-11, 5-11 in a 23-minute affair against the world number 55.



Germany's Sonja Zimmermann, right, battles for the ball against India's Vandana Katariya (16) and Neha Neha, left, during a women's field hockey match

## Poor execution costs India

**Tokyo:** The Indian women's hockey team fought valiantly but poor execution proved to be its undoing on Monday, leading to a 0-2 defeat at the hands of Germany, a second consecutive setback for the side at the Tokyo Olympics.

After the 1-5 drubbing at the hands of world No 1 Netherlands, the Indians lifted their game but it was not enough to get past world No 3 and Rio Games Bronze-medallists Germany in their second Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium.

The team was guilty of wasting a lot of opportunities, including a penalty stroke by Gurjit Kaur in the third quarter while luck also didn't favour the Rani Rampal-led side.

Skipper Nike Lorenz (12th minute) and Anna Schroder

(35th) were the goal scorers for Germany, who registered their second win on the trot having beaten Great Britain 2-1 in their first match.

Indian will play Great Britain in their next pool match on Wednesday.

### INDIA VS SPAIN

On Tuesday, the men's hockey team would be desperate to rebuild a shattered morale when it takes on a lower-ranked Spain in its third Pool A match.

After a fighting 3-2 win over New Zealand in their campaign opener, the Indians were completely steam-rolled 1-7 by world No 1 Australia in their second game and now the team would like to get back into winning ways against world No 9 Spain.

## Indian archers fail to get past Korean hurdle

**Tokyo:** Indian archers bowed out of the team events on Monday after failing to get past the mighty Koreans for a second time in the Tokyo Olympics.

Two days after the mixed team was knocked out by Korea in the quarterfinals, the men's trio of Pravin Jadhav, Atanu Das and Tarundeep Rai succumbed in straight sets against their formidable opponents in the same round of eight stage.

South Korea went on to win the title by smashing Chinese Taipei 6-0.



Indian Tarundeep Rai in action

The twin blow exposed India's pathetic shooting in the ranking round on Friday when all the male archers finished outside top-30, handing them tough draws.

Their first-ever Olympic medal hope in archery is fading fast as they will brace for a tougher road ahead in their respective round of 64 individual matches beginning Wednesday.

The Indian men's team, which won a Silver at the last World Championships in 2019, started the day at the Yumenoshima Park with a lot

of promise, downing Kazakhstan 6-2.

But the Korean team of London 2012 champion Oh Jin Hyek, Kim Woojin and 17-year-old Kim Je Deok — the youngest archer at Tokyo Olympics — proved to be too strong against for the Indians.

In pursuit of a sixth men's team title from nine Olympics, the Korean men's team enjoyed a flying start, shooting 10 perfect 10s from 12 arrows while missing only two in the first two sets to apply early pressure.

India were let down by

Guatemala City World Cup Gold medallist Das who failed to repeat his brilliant show earlier against Kazakhstan. He could not find a single 10 in the three sets.

The Indians responded well in the third set, with a series of four 10s, but Das faltered with an 8 in the last arrow, as Korea enjoyed two near-perfect rounds.

Olympic debutant Jadhav, on the other hand, was brilliant with five 10s, while veteran Rai, in his third Games appearance, also stepped it up with three 10s.



Ashish Kumar, left, exchanges punches with China's Tuoheta Erbieke

## Ashish ousted

**Tokyo:** Indian boxer Ashish Chaudhary (75kg) paid for an underwhelming start as his maiden Olympic appearance ended with an opening-round loss to China's Erbieke Touheta on Monday.

The 27-year-old went down 0-5 in the bout, which could have been way closer had he turned it up a little bit earlier.

The boxer was caught on the back-foot in the opening round and lost it unanimately to the busy Chinese, who used his jab to good effect.

Ashish raised his game in the second round to give a better account of himself with more attacks but once again, the lack of clear and precise punches hurt his cause as the Chinese excelled in dodging him on most occasions.

He went all out in the final three minutes and managed to trouble Touheta despite a cut beneath his left eye.

The judges also scored unanimously in his favour but the Chinese had the decisive lead which gave him the victory.

## Satwik-Chirag lose to world No 1

**Tokyo:** The Indian men's doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty suffered a straight game loss to world number one Marcus Gideon Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo of Indonesia in their second Group A match on Monday.

The world number 10 Indian duo could never get into any kind of rhythm and lost 13-21, 12-21 in 32 minutes against the top seeded team. It was their ninth defeat to the Indonesian pair in as many meetings.

Sukamuljo and Gideon are now at the top of the group, while Satwik and Chirag are on the second spot. The Indians will look to beat England's Ben



Satwiksairaj Rankireddy & Chirag Shetty play against Indonesia's Marcus Gideon & Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo during their men's doubles group stage match

Lane and Sean Vendy, who had also suffered a defeat against the famed Indonesians.

World number three Chinese Taipei pair of Lee Yang

and Wang Chi-Lin, the fourth team in Group A, also notched up a win against the English duo earlier in the day to stay in contention.

## Nagal hammered out by Medvedev

**Tokyo:** Sumit Nagal was blown away by world number two Daniil Medvedev's thunderous strokes and serves in the men's singles second round as India's tennis challenge all but ended at the Tokyo Games on Monday.

The Russian did not even need his 'A' game as he cruised to a 6-2, 6-1 win in just 66 minutes against 160th ranked Nagal at court 1 of the Ariake Tennis Centre.

The gap between a world class Medvedev and Nagal, who is still

struggling to play the ATP Tour events regularly, was pretty clear.

It is highly unlikely that India will be able to field a team in mixed event, the entries for which will be announced on Tuesday.

The cut is likely to be around 50 and combined ranking of the Indian players Nagal (144) and Mirza (9) is 153.



Sajan Prakash swims in a heat during the men's 200-meter butterfly

## Sajan fails to reach semis

**Tokyo:** Indian swimmer Sajan Prakash failed to qualify for the men's 200m butterfly semifinals at the Tokyo Olympics after finishing fourth in Heat 2 on Monday.

Prakash, who clocked a personal best of 1:56:38 in Italy last month to breach the A mark for Olympic qualification, could only manage 1:57.22 to finish 24th among 38 swimmers. The top-16 progressed to the semifinals.

Prakash will compete in the 100m Butterfly on Thursday.

The other Indians at the Olympics, Maana Patel and Srihari Nataraj, have already exited the competition.

## Olympic Silver-medallist Mirabai returns home

**New Delhi:** Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu returned to the country on Monday after her superb Silver medal-winning performance at the Tokyo Olympics, walking into sheer chaos after stepping out of the airport where social distancing went for a toss.

Chanu walked out of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, flanked by security and clad in a face shield and mask.

"Happy to be back here in amidst so much love and support. Thank You so much," she tweeted after landing.

Inside the airport, the 26-year-old was greeted with chants of *Bharat Mata ki Jai* by the staff present there and felicitated by officials of the Sports Authority of India among others.

Once out, the young star was mobbed by the waiting media, leading to a melee and had to be completely enveloped by security personnel as she made her way through.



Mirabai Chanu arrives at the airport in New Delhi on Monday



Neeraj Chopra poses for photo before he departs for Tokyo

## Manipur to appoint Chanu as ASP

**Imphal:** Manipur Chief Minister N Biren Singh on Monday announced that weightlifter Saikhom Mirabai Chanu, who won Silver at the Tokyo Olympics, will be appointed as the Additional Superintendent of Police in the state police department.

The state Government would also reward her with ₹1 crore, the Chief Minister said.

The Olympian who won the Silver medal in the 49 kg category will hold the designation of Additional Superintendent of Police (Sports), Singh said.

The Manipur Government has also decided to establish a world-class weightlifting academy in the state soon, he added. Judoka L Sushila Devi will also be promoted from the rank of

constable to sub-inspector, Singh said.

All participants of the Tokyo Olympics will be handed a sum of ₹25 lakhs, he announced. At least five athletes from Manipur, including Chanu, Devi and boxer Mary Kom, are representing the country at the ongoing Tokyo Olympics.

## Rifle, pistol shooters gear up for mixed events

**Tokyo:** The Indian shooters are keeping their fingers crossed for the squad's young guns who will try to end the medal drought in the Tokyo Olympics in the 10m air pistol and air rifle mixed team events here on Tuesday.

On Monday, India's Angad Vir Singh Bajwa finished 18th while his senior compatriot Mairaj Ahmad Khan ended 25th in the men's skeet event, failing to make the six-man finals by some distance.

In the 10m air pistol mixed team event, the formidable pair of Saurabh Chaudhary and Manu Bhaker will fancy their chances after a terrific run in recent years, during which they dominated almost all major competitions.

Abhishek Verma and Yashaswini Singh Deswal will be the other Indian team participating in the event.



Divyansh Singh Panwar and Elavenil Valarivan will represent India in the 10m mixed rifle team event with Deepak Kumar and Anjum Moudgil being the other team.

A total of 20 pairs will take part in the 10m air pistol qualifications with the challengers coming from Russia, Iran, China, France and Serbia.

The 10m mixed rifle event will see participation from 29 pairs with the biggest challenge expected to come from Hungary, Russia, USA, China and Germany.

In the first qualification round of both the events, there will be three series of 10 shots for each team member while in the second, members of the top eight pairs of the first round will shoot two series of 10 shots.

In both the pistol and rifle events, the team with the higher combined score of single shots fired by each team member on command gets two points with one point awarded for a tie. The first team to reach 16 points with a difference of two, wins.