

**ANALYSIS 7**  
CAIRN LOOKING FOR  
ARBITRATION MONEY?

**MONEY 8**  
INDIA WITNESSING SIGNIFICANT  
IMPROVEMENT IN UNESCAP SCORE

**SPORTS 11**  
LET THE SHOW BEGIN

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY, JULY 24, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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## US SECRETARY OF STATE BLINKEN TO VISIT INDIA FOR TWO DAYS FROM JULY 27

US Secretary of State Antony J Blinken will visit India on July 27 and 28 to discuss a range of issues including the recovery from the coronavirus pandemic and the situation in Afghanistan and the Indo-Pacific, the Ministry of External Affairs announced on Friday. It will be Blinken's first visit to India after assuming charge as and the second by a high-ranking official of the Biden administration since it came to power in January. "US Secretary of State, Antony J Blinken, will visit India on July 27 and 28," the MEA said. A statement by the US State Department said Blinken will also meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi.



## CUMULATIVE VAX DOSES ADMINISTERED IN INDIA EXCEED 42.75 CRORE: CENTRE

The cumulative Covid-19 vaccine doses administered in the country has exceeded 42.75 crore, the Union health ministry said on Friday. Nearly 38,87,028 vaccine doses have been administered on Friday, according to the 7 pm provisional report. The ministry said 18,09,954 vaccine doses were administered as first dose and 1,92,363 vaccine doses given as second dose in the age group 18-44 years on Friday. Cumulatively, 13,52,21,119 persons in the age group 18-44 years across states and union territories have received their first dose and total 57,54,908 have received their second dose since the start of phase-3 of the vaccination drive.



## NO PLANS TO SUSPEND NEET, OTHER COMMON ENTRANCE EXAMS: GOVT

The Union government does not have any plans to suspend NEET and other common entrance examinations, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar informed Lok Sabha on Friday. The National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (PG) and NEET (Undergraduate) 2021 examinations are scheduled to be held this year on September 11 and 12, respectively, she said in a written reply. The examination shall be conducted with all due precautions and following all protocols, including maintaining Covid-appropriate behaviour, Pawar said. Further, the additional protective measures for candidates and examination personnel are proposed towards the safe conduct of the exam, she stated.



## FCONG SAYS HUGE RISE IN NSC GRANT IN 2017-18, ASKS IF IT WAS FOR 'PEGASUS'

Amid the Pegasus snooping row, the Congress Friday claimed the grant allocation to the National Security Council secretariat went up to Rs 333 crore in 2017-18 from Rs 33 crore the year before, and asked if this hike was related to "purchasing" the Israeli spyware. Congress spokesperson Pawan Khera said the UPA government in 2011-12 had allocated Rs 17.43 crore to the National Security Council Secretariat in terms of grants. This amount was marginally increased to Rs 20.33 crore in 2012-13 and further to 26.06 crore in 2013-14, he said, noting that National Security Council Secretariat is largely concerned with administration and co-ordination.



# YSRCP MPs toughen stance, press Centre on State issues

SNV SUDHIR  
■ VIJAYAWADA

At a time the spotlight is firmly on the Narendra Modi government at the Centre defending itself from the Opposition attacks in Parliament on important issues like Pegasus snooping, farmers protest, vaccination strategy, Covid-19 handling and fuel price hike, what has not escaped the eye is the fact that YSRCP MPs have also now become a thorn in the flesh of the NDA regime by constantly 'annoying' and 'troubling' the treasury benches in both the Lok Sabha and the Rajya Sabha.

This is a marked departure from the YSRCP strategy of the last two years. Ever since it came to power, the YSRCP had been accused of 'soft-peddling' when it came to dealing with the Union government.

Not so anymore, if one goes by the visible targeting of the Union



government by YSRCP MPs. These MPs have started exerting pressure on the Union government like never before. Earlier, opposition parties have accused Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy of soft-peddling with the Centre due to the CBI cases he faces. But now,

YSRCP has visibly stepped up its attack using the ongoing Parliament session as a potent platform.

YSRCP MPs in both Houses have been visibly attacking the Centre with an aggression never witnessed in the last two years over issues like

finalisation of revised estimates of the Polavaram project, Special Category Status, approval of DISHA Act, privatisation of RINL or other issues of AP interest.

Since the beginning of the monsoon session, YSRCP MPs have been stalling the proceedings demanding debate and discussion on the issues related to Andhra Pradesh. In the Rajya Sabha, YSRCP Parliamentary Party leader V Vijayasai Reddy had trooped into the Well of the House several times demanding discussion on Polavaram project, SCS, RINL privatisation, Disha Bill etc.

Other Members like Vemireddy Prabhakar Reddy, Mopidevi Venkataramana, Pili Subhash Chandra Bose too tried to stall the House demanding the discussion on these issues under Rule 267. They have been serving notices daily under this particular Rule.



## As inflows surge, 70 Prakasam barrage crest gates partially lifted

**Vijayawada:** With continuous rainfall in catchment areas of River Krishna, major irrigation projects on the river are expected to get heavy inflows. The water level in major reservoirs in the upper riparian States is expected to rise in the next few days as Indian Meteorological Department predicted heavy rainfall in these states. According to Friday's report, Prakasam barrage received 61,311 cusecs of inflow, the outflow was 59,750 cusecs. For agriculture purposes, 1,561 cusec water was released from the Krishna. The total storage capacity was 3.07 tmc ft. To release floodwater from Prakasam barrage, 10 crest gates were lifted up to two feet while another 60 were lifted by one foot. Officials were alerted to evacuate the people living in the low-lying areas downstream Krishna River. Irrigation officials concerned were taking measures time and again on the outflow from the barrage, said Mangalagiri MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy.

## Over 5.19 lakh students clear Inter 2nd year

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh on Friday declared 5,19,797 students having passed the Intermediate second year, while announcing the results here.

The Minister said that the results were awarded by taking 30 percent weightage marks from Class 10 and 70 percent weightage marks from first year Intermediate.

Addressing the media, the Minister said that 5,19,797 students passed and the results can be viewed online.

Students can download their marks memos from July 26 from the website bie.ap.gov.in.

The Minister said that the State government has decided to conduct admissions into colleges online for a transparent admission process.

## Schools in AP to reopen on Aug 16

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Schools in Andhra Pradesh will open for the 2021-22 academic year on August 16, the State government announced on Friday.

The decision to reopen schools, delayed due to the ongoing Covid-19 second wave, was taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

A CMO release said the government would also come out with detailed guidelines on August 16 on the implementation of the New Education Policy-2020.

The Chief Minister would dedicate to people the government



schools refurbished under the first phase of Naadu-Nedu programme and also launch the second phase works on August 16.

Classification of schools into

six categories from PP-1 to Class 12 would be undertaken as per the NEP-2020.

Page 2: CM to launch Nadu-Nedu Phase-II on August 16

A-G defends appointment of Sawhney as SEC  
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## HC seeks info on VSP 'bidding'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday directed the Union government to file a detailed explanation on the bidding process that it intends to deploy to implement the proposed disinvestment of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

The court was hearing a petition filed by former CBI joint director VV Laxminarayan challenging the Union government's decision to privatise the Visakhapatnam Steel Plant. Counsel arguing for the Centre asked the court for one week, saying he would file a counter by August 2.

## HC directs Jagan's 'neighbours' to vacate home by Aug 6

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday issued orders not to demolish the houses in the vicinity of the residence of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, till August 6.

The High Court was hearing three House Motion petitions filed by 25 residents of Amara-reddy Colony in Tadepalli, against their evacuation and demolition of their residences by the municipal authorities.

Hearing the plea, High Court judge Justice D Ramesh directed the government that evacuation and demolition be put on hold until August 6.

## NGT tells KRMB to visit RLIS without AP

ML MELLY MAITREYI  
■ HYDERABAD

In what can be construed as a shot in the arm for the Telangana government, the National Green Tribunal's southern zone bench at Chennai on Friday directed the Krishna River Management Board to visit the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme (RLIS) project site "independent of the AP government" and submit a detailed report upon inspection of the works taken up there.

Till date, there had been no progress on the petitions filed in the National Green Tribunal, including the contempt of court petition filed by the Telangana government against the ongoing work on the RLIS taken up by the Andhra Pradesh government in violation of Tribunal's orders.

The Contempt of Court petition came up for hearing in the NGT, Chennai on Friday.

The Tribunal, in its previous order on July 12, directed the Krishna River Management Board and the Central Environment Department to visit RLIS project site and submit a report if indeed work was going on without any approvals as complained initially by the individual petitioner G

Srinivas and subsequently by the Telangana government.

On Friday, KRMB submitted an affidavit stating that the Andhra Pradesh government was not cooperating for their proposed visit to the project site. The Central Environment Department, however, did not file its response on Friday.

However, the Andhra Pradesh government on Friday submitted an affidavit against the Contempt of Court petitions denying that it had violated the NGT orders and stated that only works related to Detail Project Report had been taken up.

Telangana Additional Advocate General Ramachandra Rao then submitted to the NGT that it should send its own team to the controversial work site, considering that the AP government had not been cooperating with the KRMB.

He said that the Telangana government was ready to provide helicopter and other facilities for the NGT team to visit and inspect the project site.

However, the Tribunal again ordered the KRMB to visit the project site independent of the AP government and submit a detailed report, after carrying out an inspection of the RLIS.

## Bureaucrats shuffled; spotlight on Vizag

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government late on Friday affected transfers of several IAS officers, the significant ones being the reshuffle of officials handling crucial posts at Vizag, the soon-to-be executive capital.

Both the Vizag district Collector and VMRDA chairman have been changed.

The government swapped the posts of V Vinay Chand, Collector, Visakhapatnam district, with that of Mallikarjuna A, the Chief Executive officer of the Dr YSR Aarogyasri Health Care Trust. Accordingly, Dr Mallikarjuna will be the new Visakhapatnam district Collector while Vinay Chand will be the Aarogyasri Trust CEO.

The present VMRDA commis-

sioner P Koteswara Rao was transferred as Collector and District Magistrate of Kurnool district, and West Godavari Joint Collector K Venkata Ramana Reddy posted in his place as VMRDA commissioner.

East Godavari district Collector D. Muralidhar Reddy was transferred as Vice-Chairman and Managing Director, Andhra Pradesh Medical Services and Infrastructure Development Corporation (APMSIDC).

Vijay Rama Raju V, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, APMSIDC was posted as Collector, YSR Kadapa district replacing Chevuri Hari Kiran who was transferred and posted as Collector, East Godavari district.

## Shadow looms over Vijayawada Logistics park

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A shadow has been cast over the establishment of a Multi Modal Logistics Park (MMLP) in Vijayawada, as proposed by the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH). The Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) had mandated MoRTH to develop 35 MMLPs across the country, including one at Vijayawada and another at Vizag.

The Centre had chosen 15 locations, including Vijayawada, to develop these parks in phase-1 of the Bharatmala Pariyojana. The pre-feasibility studies of the remaining proposed parks were to be carried out in the phase-2. It is now reliably learnt that Vijayawada has been found to be 'not feasible' for setting up such a MMLP.

Union Road Transport and Highways Minister Nitin Gadkari



told the Lok Sabha recently that based on pre-feasibility studies, setting up an MMLP at Vijayawada is not feasible, currently.

About the Vizag MMLP, Gadkari said pre-feasibility study is under-

way and the land is yet to be identified.

The Centre envisaged 35 MMLPs and this proposal is being implemented by MoRTH under Public Private Partnership (PPP) on

Design, Build, Finance, Operate and Transfer (DBFOT) mode. Bidding documents like the model concession agreement and request for proposal is still being finalised.

Based on the outcome of DPR / feasibility studies and approved bidding documents, tenders will be called from companies.

According to a brief pre-feasibility assessment report prepared at the backdrop of India Integrated Transport & Logistics Summit held in 2017 at New Delhi Vijayawada is a major production and consumption centre with an annual freight flow of 160 Mn MT.

Vijayawada lies on NH-16 and the Chennai - Howrah railway line and 12 km from Amaravati Capital Ring Road project with good port connectivity and access to international airports.



# CM to unveil spruced up Nadu-Nedu schools, launch phase-II on Aug 16

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy will dedicate to the State on August 16 the schools spruced up under first phase of 'Nadu-Nedu' programme while inaugurating the second phase of the scheme on the same day. Chairing a review meeting at his camp office here on Friday, the Chief Minister discussed Nadu Nedu (education), New Education Policy (NEP) and Vidya Kanuka schemes with officials.

It was decided that the second phase of Nadu- Nedu would be launched the day the schools reopen and the government would also provide Jagananna Vidya Kanuka kit and further announce details of the NEP.

Classification of schools will be finalised according to the NEP and with regard to this, the Chief Minister directed the authorities to complete the process by August 16.



The NEP includes six types of schools from PP-1 to 12th grade. Satellite Foundation Schools will be offering PP-1, PP-2, Foundation Schools offer PP-1, PP-2 and classes 1 and 2, Foundation Plus Schools that offer PP-1, PP-2 and Classes 1-5, pre-high schools which provides PP-1, PP-2, and Classes 1-7, high schools from Classes 3-10 and High School Plus which has Classes 3- 12.

The Chief Minister said that English medium will be start-

ed from Anganwadis, which will be transformed into Satellite Foundation Schools and shall be guided by Foundation Schools to ensure best teaching available.

Foundation Schools will be set up within the radius of a km and high schools in a three-km radius, said the Chief Minister and added that there will not be a single school beyond the three-km range, bringing down the travel distance.

The government shall make the most efficient use of teachers in the NEP and change the current circumstances. Teachers who have completed B Ed and PG will be teaching 18 subjects up to Class 5, so that the students focus on learning.

Also, the ratio of students to teachers will be strictly followed, one teacher for each subject. The Chief Minister instructed the authorities to create awareness on the new policy among parents, teachers and students and stated that the new policy is in line with national standards and no school shall be closed and no teacher will be removed.

Discussing the Nadu-Nedu scheme, the Chief Minister instructed the officials that there should be no scope for corruption in 'Nadu-Nedu' works, as they were initiated with a good cause to benefit future generations.

No government in the past

thought of schools' development and there should not be any controversy in the initiative, said the Chief Minister adding that the government is spending about Rs 16,000 crore towards Nadu-Nedu and NEP.

Officials provided details on the distribution of textbooks, dictionary under Jagananna Vidya Kanuka in the wake of commencement of schools.

Meanwhile, authorities have informed that Class 10 students were promoted without conducting any exams for two years in a row and were facing issues during a few recruitments as they were considering marks.

In this regard, officials have decided to give marks to the students including 2020 batch, based on internal examinations where 70 percent marks will be awarded from slip tests and the remaining 30 percent marks on the basis of formative assessments.

## AP logs 1,747 new Covid cases, 14 deaths

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The cumulative coronavirus positives shot up to 19,50 lakh in Andhra Pradesh with the addition of 1,747 afresh on Friday. With 2,365 more patients getting cured in 24 hours, the total recoveries went up to 19,14,177.

The latest bulletin said 14 people succumbed to Covid-19 in the state in 24 hours ending 9 AM on Friday, taking the gross toll to 13,223.

The state now has 22,939 active cases, it said.

Chittoor district reported the highest number of 293

fresh cases, followed by SPS Nellore (239), East Godavari (234), Prakasam (223), West Godavari (215), Krishna (127) and Visakhapatnam (109) in a day. Three districts logged between 50 and 90 while the remaining three registered less than 50 each, with Kurnool reporting just nine new cases in a day, the lowest in a district in more than four months.

Chittoor district had four fresh fatalities, Guntur three, Krishna and SPS Nellore two each, East Godavari, Prakasam and Visakhapatnam one each in a day.



## Schools in AP to reopen on..

Continued from Page 1

The existing Anganwadis would be converted into satellite foundation schools, covering each habitation, the CMO release said.

The Chief Minister directed the Education Department officials to clearly spell out to all concerned why they were shifting to the NEP-2020.

He asked officials to create wide awareness on the benefits of NEP-2020.

## Bureaucrats shuffled;spotlight on Vizag...

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Dr M Hari Jawaharlal, Collector Vizianagaram was transferred and posted as Commissioner, R&R.

A Surya Kumari, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, AP State Civil Supplies Corporation, was posted as Collector, Vizianagaram district. G Veerapandian, Collector Kurnool district was transferred and posted as VC and MD, AP State Civil Supplies Corporation.

Sumit Kumar, Joint Collector, Srikakulam district, was transferred and posted as Joint Collector (RB&R), West Godavari district. DR BR Ambedkar, VC and MD, AP State Handloom Weavers Cooperative Society, was posted as Joint Collector (RB&R), Srikakulam district.

P Arjun Rao, Special Commissioner, Endowments, was transferred and posted as Director, Handlooms and Textiles.

Dr G Vani Mohan, Principal Secretary to Government ( Endowments ), was placed in Full Additional Charge of the post of Commissioner, Endowments.

Swapnil Dinakar Pundkar, Commissioner, Kakinada Municipal Corporation was posted as Joint Collector (RB&R), Chittoor.

M Prabhakar Reddy, who was waiting for posting, was placed at the disposal of YAT&C (Sports and Youth Welfare) Department to post him as VC and MD, Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹264
Without Skin	₹284
Broiler at Farm	₹157

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	499
HYDERABDAD	496
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹4.99

## HC directs Jagan's 'neighbours' to...

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Special GP C Suman, appearing for the government in these cases, informed the court that about 240 people had been evacuated from the area and all of them had been given compensation along with house sites. He brought to the notice of the court that if the appellants were allotted temporary houses separately, the others would also move court.

Counsel for the petitioners Srinivasa Rao denied the claim that 240 people had been evacuated and that temporary shelter would be set up in the

allotted space if 2 to 3 months were given to them.

The judge said that since the petitioners had accepted compensation, they have forfeited their rights to the area. The court directed the residents that they would be given till August 6 to vacate the houses and directed the government not to take any action till then.

Meanwhile, 11 petitioners filed a Writ Petition bringing to the notice of the court that compensation was not paid by the government to them. Responding to this, the court gave two weeks to the GP to file counters.



## Ban on plastic sticks used in candies, ice-cream from NY

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Candy sticks and ice-cream sticks made of plastic may get phased out from January 1, 2022, the Centre informed Parliament on Friday.

Responding to a query on the phasing out schedule of single-use plastic, Minister of State for Environment Ashwini Choubey said as per the draft notification issued earlier this year, manufacture, import, stocking, distribution, sale and use of some of the identified single-use plastic items are proposed to be prohibited by January 1, 2022.

Earbuds with plastic sticks, plastic sticks for balloons, plastic flags, candy sticks, ice-cream sticks, polystyrene (thermocool) for decoration are proposed to be phased out by January 1, while single-use

plastic (including polystyrene and expanded polystyrene) items – plates, cups, glasses, forks, spoons, knives, straw, container and container lids, trays, plastic/PVC banners less than 100 microns and stirrers are expected to be phased out by July next year.

Single-use plastic items expected to be phased out by September 30 this year include carry bags made of virgin or recycled plastic less than 120 microns in thickness and non-woven plastic carry bag less than 60 GSM, the minister informed Lok Sabha, adding that the provisions shall not apply to commodities (including carry bags) made of compostable plastic material.

The MOEF had issued a notification containing draft provisions on March 11, 2021 for amending Plastic Waste

Management (PWM) Rules, 2016, inter alia prohibiting the use of identified single-use plastic items by 2022 for public consultation.

Replying to another query on the steps taken to strengthen the implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016 and also to reduce the use of identified single-use plastic items, the minister said the states/UTs have been requested to constitute a special task force under the chief secretary or the administrator.

"Already, 14 states/UTs have constituted the special task force till date. A national level task force has also been constituted by the ministry for taking coordinated efforts to eliminate identified single-use plastic items and effective implementation of Plastic Waste Management Rules, 2016," he said.

## Over 5.19 lakh students clear...

Continued from Page 1



70 percent weightage marks from all subjects of first year Intermediate exams.

He said that the Chief Minister approved the report and directed the release of results. He explained that of the 5,19,797 students who were declared passed, 5,08,672 were regular and the remaining 11,125 were private students.

The Minister said that the government has decided to conduct improvement exams for students not satisfied with the present marks. He said that

## NGT tells KRMB to visit...

Continued from Page 1

It postponed the next hearing to August 9.

Meanwhile, TS government sources said that they had been requesting KRMB to complete the inspection and submit a report at the earliest. "No doubt it is an emotive issue and activists and people will come out to give their views. But it is the responsibility of the AP government to provide protection to the KRMB team for completing their task as directed by the Tribunal. Only then the truth will come out".

"We are hopeful of progress as the Tribunal categorically directed the KRMB again to inspect the RLIS site and give its report", they said.

Telangana has been opposing AP's RLIS, on the ground that it was being illegally constructed.

## Tiger spotted on Srisailam-road

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Some pilgrims have reportedly spotted a tiger in the surrounding areas of the Rajiv Gandhi tiger project on the Srisailam - Hyderabad highway on Friday. The pilgrims said they heard the roars of a tiger from the bushes at Vatavarlapalle village. The passengers who spotted the tiger feared and rushed into their vehicles.

The number of leopards and tigers has been increased in the recent past in the Nallamala forest area under the limits of the Rajiv Gandhi tiger project area. The local people said the wandering of wild animals is on the rise of late. However, there are no instances of attacking humans in the vicinity of the area.

The villagers said it became a common sight for them to have tigers, leopards, bears and other wild animals and no one will harm them. They also go silently even if they observe people.

The forest officials admitted that the presence of wild animals like tigers, leopards and bears has been found and there are some instances where they attacked cattle in some areas. But, they never attacked humans. Usually, tigers drive other animals away from their territory for safety. Moreover, they wander miles together.

The tiger project is extended to thousands of kilometres from Mannanuru ghat road to Srisailam surrounding areas in the Nallamala forest. It became routine for the wild animals to enter villages and roads.

## HC seeks info on VSP 'bidding'

Continued from Page 1

The court then responded by directing the Union government to file a counter. The court also asked counsel appearing for the Union government to give an explanation on the bidding process.

Responding to this, counsel for the Centre assured the court that there was no such bidding process. The court then adjourned the case till August 2.

Earlier on March 30, Lakshminarayana had moved the High Court praying for a direction to set aside the decision of the Union Government to privatise the VSP, saying it was unconstitutional. He was

## Shadow looms over Vijayawada...

Continued from Page 1

Around 150 acres of land has also been earmarked in Malavalli, located in Krishna district. The land parcel, a part of Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) industrial area has been acquired and is in possession of APIIC.

As per the assessment report, construction period for MMLP at Vijayawada would be 18 months in each phase with about capital expenditure of about Rs 865 crore and construction cost would come around to about Rs 770 crore. It was assessed that the occupancy rate would be 35 percent in the first year going up to 65 percent in the last year of operations for the first phase of development with an expected Internal Rate of Return (IRR) of 16 percent in 30 years.

Notably, Vizag already has a multi modal logistics park being operated by Concor. The Concor MMLP, developed in a 108 acre land parcel in Viman Nagar opposite the Vizag airport, began operations from February 2017.

referring to the decision of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) of the Centre on January 27 to privatise Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Ltd. (RINL), corporate entity of Visakhapatnam steel plant.

He also sought a direction to the Centre to take alternative measures for the revival of RINL and protect the steel plant, call for the records with regard to the feasibility and proposals for allotting captive mining leases of iron ore to the steel plant which would be a great strength bringing down the cost of manufacturing steel by RINL by a good 50 percent and enable it to continue to run profitably.



## Godavari in spate, projects get inflows

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

With incessant rains across Telangana and extensive rains in Maharashtra and upper riparian states, the Godavari River is in spate with the water level rising steadily at Bhadrachalam.

Ministers in the districts in the catchment areas of the Godavari and Krishna rivers are constantly monitoring the situation as directed by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

State Transport Minister Puuvada Ajay Kumar and Women and Child Welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod monitored the situation in Bhadrachalam and Mulugu districts and coordinated with the respective District Collectors.

An alert was sounded for Godavari basin as the IMD has predicted heavy rainfall over the next two days.

Meanwhile, the intensity of flood inflows into the Sri Ram Sagar Project continued at 2.15 lakh cusecs and the outflow at 2 lakh cusecs, while the present storage capacity is at 84.29 tmc ft as against full storage capacity of 90.31 tmc ft.

On Thursday, 35 gates of SRSP were opened as the water level in it reached almost its capacity and on Friday 33 gates were lifted to

let water flow downstream.

Sripada Yellampally received inflows at 4.78 lakh cusecs and the outflow was at 4.78 lakh cusecs, with the water level reaching 480.32 ft as against FRL of 485.56 ft. The present storage level is at 15.88 tmc, as against the full capacity of 20.18 tmc.

Singur project in Sanga Reddy continued to get inflows on Friday at 4,385 cusecs and the outflow was at 386 cusecs. The present storage capacity is at 20 tmc, as against the full storage capacity of 29.91 tmc at FRL of 1717. The present water level at the project is 1,711 feet.

In the Krishna basin, Jurala continued to get heavy inflows at 1.5 lakh cusecs and the outflow was at 1.59 lakh cusecs. The storage level on Friday was at 6.46 tmc, as against full capacity of 9.66 tmc.

Water level at Tungbhadra touched 1,623 ft as against 1,633 ft and the present storage capacity is at 67.18 tmc (full capacity 100.86 tmc).

Srisailem reservoir received inflows at 1.57 lakh cusecs and the outflow was at 31,783. The water level reached 848.6 ft as against FRL of 885 ft. The water storage is at 77 tmc, against the full capacity of 215.81 tmc.

Pulichintala is almost filled to the brim with the storage capacity at 43.6 tmc, as against 45.77 tmc.





# A-G defends appointment of Sawhney as AP poll panel chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Advocate General S Sriram on Friday justified before the Andhra Pradesh High Court the appointment of former Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney as the State Election Commissioner, saying that it was in line with the Constitution.

The A-G put forth his arguments on a petition filed against the appointment of Sawhney as the State Election Commissioner. Sriram said that senior and retired IAS officers were chosen and appointed as SEC by other States also as they have vast experience. "On the other hand, there is no rule that retired and senior IAS officers should not be appointed to the SEC," the A-G said.

He said that the Chief Minister's letter to the Governor indicatively informs about the litigation of the exercise of appointments and the pending SLP in SC, while suggesting three names is not inconsistent with the scheme of the Constitution.

The Governor did not limit his consideration only to those names and applied an objective parameter amongst 11 officers to come to the conclusion that Sawhney was the right person for the job and thus it cannot be kept as a challenge, the A-G said.

"It cannot be contended by



the petitioners that only by reason of Nilam Sawhney having been appointed as an adviser to the Chief Minister, her neutrality is under question. In all the Constitutional appointments and appointments to neutral office, any appointment is required to be based on suitability of the officer in the opinion of the Governor. Neutrality and performance of an independent officer are matters to be determined after the completion of the appointment of that officer," the A-G said.

Answering the question as to why only the names of IAS officers were nominated for the post of SEC and why he not even mentioned the names of those from other sectors to the

Chief Minister, Sriram said: "The Chief Minister contacted me before writing a letter to the Governor proposing the names for the SEC appointment. The post of SEC is an administrative matter within the constitutional framework. In addition to past appointments, the method currently followed by other states is examined," he said.

The AG suggested that the former IAS officers were the right ones for the SEC appointment. "I have suggested that it is not illegal to consider former IAS officers," he said.

In the matter of Quo Warranto, when there is no specific disability or lack of eligibility pointed out in respect of the present SEC, it would be

untenable for the petitioner to seek a writ of Quo Warranto on the grounds of assumed lack of neutrality which is beyond the scope of writ of Quo Warranto which is sought by the petitioners, he said.

It was brought to the notice of the court that it is under the Constitutional scheme, entirely within the discretionary space of the Chief Minister to decide on appointment of the suitable advisors to advice on various issues which would be involved in the policymaking of the Government and the same is not contrary to any of the provisions of the Constitution or any Legislation and it has also been in continuation of the past conventions and appointment of advisors per se and that space will have to be conceded to the Chief Minister in the existing scheme of the Constitution.

As regards the role of the respective advisors, it was brought to the notice of the court that it is not to assume that advisors in the past have not been addressing the media and in fact they have been only in the media all through in the past. The present challenges and the present circumstances in the state cannot be judged with reference to any past situation and therefore no advisor could be considered unnecessary or a burden on the exchequer.



## RINL starts supply of steel for Pedalandiriki Illu project

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

RINL, the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant, has said that the government of Andhra Pradesh has placed the order for the supply of around 2,000 MT of steel as a first consignment.

AP Housing Corporation Limited placed its first order for their steel requirement for the use in the prestigious project of housing named "Navaratnalu-Pedalandiriki Illu".

The truck carrying the first consignment of Vizag Steel products was flagged off from RINL stockyard at Vijayawada. RINL officials handed over the consignment of steel to the AP State Government officials at Denduluru.

RINL CMD DK Mohanty said, "It's a moment to cherish and it is just the beginning of RINL's share in this prestigious project of the State government, which will build more than 30 lakh houses in next few years in two phases of 15 lakh each requiring more than 7 lakh tonnes of steel in each phase. RINL is aiming for a major share in this project."

# Naidu invites Jagan to join ongoing agitation for VSP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national president and former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday extended his party's total support to the 'Save Visakha Steel' agitation and reiterated that his party's Legislators would be ever ready to resign from their posts for the sake of protecting the prestigious steel plant in the port city.

In a letter to the convenor of the Visakha Ukku Parirakshana Porata Committee, Naidu said that their continued struggle for saving the steel plant despite many hurdles and hindrances was laudable.

"It was important that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and his party should join the steel plant agitation and lead it from the frontline," Naidu said.

The TDP termed it as heart warming to see the consistent and united protests being carried out against privatisation of the Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), commonly known as Visakha Steel, under Visakha Ukku Parirakshana Porata Committee.

The RINL Steel Plant, Visakhapatnam, was achieved through a long drawn struggle



by the Telugu people who, in the 1960s, rose above region, religion and caste to unite for the cause under the slogan 'Visakha Ukku-Andhrula Hakku' (Visakha Steel - birthright of Andhras).

Recalling the sacrifices made by steel plant agitators, Naidu wrote: "In spite of many hurdles, the steel plant was built and dedicated to the nation in 1992. Since the plant had accumulated losses to the tune of about Rs 4,000 crore by 2000, there was a proposal to privatise the plant by the then Government under Atal Behari Vajpayee. Upon the request of the then Government of Andhra Pradesh and my per-

sonal request, the Government of India provided a restructuring package of Rs 1,333 crore, which helped to turn the plant profitable."

Naidu said that he would pledge his complete support to the struggle to save Visakha Steel Plant under the leadership of Visakha Ukku Parirakshana Porata Committee.

Simultaneously, it was imperative that the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh had to join, support and lead the struggle from the forefront. "Only our collective and united struggle will save the steel plant from the privatisation move," Naidu wrote.

## Hasan appointed V-C of national Urdu university

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Renowned Persian scholar Syed Ainul Hasan has been appointed as the new Vice Chancellor of the Maulana Azad National Urdu University (MANUU) in Hyderabad.

According to a communication received from the Ministry of Education, the President of India, in his capacity as the visitor of MANUU, is pleased to appoint Professor Hasan as the VC, the varsity said in a statement. Hasan will be the fifth VC of the university located in the heart of Hyderabad's IT district and will serve for five years.

A Professor of Persian and Central Asian Studies in the Jawaharlal Nehru University, he was also the Dean for its School of Language, Literature



and Culture Studies. Hasan is also the President of All India Persian Scholars Association. With more than 34 years of teaching experience, he guided 87 research scholars and also authored 13 books.

As a visiting professor, he travelled to Rutgers State University, New Jersey, US under the Fulbright programme. He is a specialist in the field of Indo-Iran, Indo-Arab relations and comparative literature.

## Krishna SP launches 'Everyday Spandana'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna district SP Siddharth Kaushal on Friday launched 'Everyday Spandana', the first in the State.

Revealing details of the programme, the SP said that the move will enable people in need to reach out to the administration much more easily. A wall poster with a helpline number was unveiled on the occasion.

Kaushal said that earlier, Spandana programme was held every Monday as per the directions of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. However, taking a step forward, the spandana programme will be held daily from 12 noon to 1 pm and grievances will be received from complainants. "Efforts will be made to resolve the issue and do justice to the victims within 24 hours. In all, a dozen complaints will be received every day," the SP



said. He said that not only people coming from various parts of the district, but also the natives of Krishna district who have settled in other States and countries can contact the helpline to get resolution to their grievances. People who want to submit

their grievances can contact on 9182990135 using WhatsApp while the phone number for the control room number is 08672-254200.

Complaints from people staying in other States and countries will be heard once every week via video conference.

Kaushal said the people can directly contact him to get their problems resolved and assured that the police force was there to help everyone and instructions are given to the officials to serve better. He said that by conducting spandana daily, long pending cases will also be resolved.

AR Additional SP Satyanarayana, Special Branch DSP Dharmendra, City DSPs Masoom Basha, Bharat Mathaji, Rajiv Kumar, Murali Krishna, AR DSP Vijay Kumar, Special Branch city inspectors and sub-inspectors were present.

## KCR woos Eatala's aide with plum post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Friday issued a GO appointing the close aide - Banda Srinivas - of former health minister Eatala Rajender as Chairman of the Telangana State scheduled castes development corporation.

He belonged to Huzurabad in Karimnagar district and belongs to the Madiga community. He as a student leader took part in several social activities. He worked at a different level when in Congress and was Karimnagar district



secretary of the student wing. He was also a hockey player.

He is working as Huzurabad Hockey Club president and vi

ce president of Karimnagar district hockey club.

Earlier, he held the posts of Huzurabad agricultural market committee director, district telecom board member. He was elected MPTC from Huzurabad twice. Responding to a call given by K Chandrasekhar Rao, he joined the TRS in 2001. He took an active part in the movement for Telangana.

He was the Huzurabad mandal president of the TRS. TRS district secretary, TRS state joint secretary. He takes an active part in party and government programmes.

## PD Act Invoked against human trafficking offenders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner of Rachakonda Mahesh Bhagawat has invoked PD act against two human trafficking offenders on Friday, who were arrested on June 15 at Saroornagar.

Chandana Naga Ravi Raja and his wife Chandana Sunitha were used to procure girls from Andhra Pradesh and ran a clandestine business of brothel houses at Saroornagar.

## Cong demands nation-wide audit of Covid deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AICC national spokesperson Dr Dasoju Sravan demanded the NDA Government to conduct a nationwide audit of Covid-19 deaths to assess the actual figure of people who died due to coronavirus and

associated co-morbidities to ensure that the families of the deceased receive Rs 4 lakh compensation as directed by the Supreme Court.

Sravan urged the Centre not to depend on states for Covid deaths assessment as state governments .

"The Minister announced in Parliament that Centre will arrive at the actual number of Covid deaths based on the reports from states. The Congress condemned the decision and urges the Centre to conduct a nationwide audit of the Covid deaths on its own," he said.

## Mothkupally parts ways with BJP, TS TDP former leaders may follow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP may experience shock after shock in near future. Already, former TDP MLA and Mahabubnagar BJP president Erra Shekar joined the Congress meeting TPCC Chief A Revanth Reddy by quitting the BJP.

On Friday, former Minister from TDP Mothkupally Narsimhulu also announced his resignation to the BJP. Mothkupally not only quit the BJP but also stated that many leaders joined BJP from other political parties are not happy in the BJP.

Already another former TDP leader and former Minister E Peddi Reddy had opposed Eatala Rajender's entry into BJP.

According to sources, the TRS and Congress are seriously trying to attract E Peddi



Reddy towards them. Peddi Reddy has not yet made his mind to quit the BJP, however, Peddi Reddy has been looking towards the TRS only.

According to sources, Peddi has been waiting for the assurance from the TRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao.

On the other hand, BJP leaders—from Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay to former governor Vidyasagar Rao, have been convincing Peddi Reddy

to stay in the party. However, Peddi Reddy may quit the party if he gets an assurance from the TRS party.

Besides these developments, former TDP leaders, who were in the BJP now, are getting ready to follow suit Mothkupally to quit the BJP and join their former colleague KCR's party TRS. The leaders like Boda Janardhan and Chada Suresh Reddy were unhappy with the treatment they were getting in the BJP. They were bemoaning to their close associates that the BJP is not using their experience and not giving due respect to them. According to sources, former minister Mukesh Goud's son Vikram Goud is also not happy with the BJP.

Most of the leaders joining BJP from other political parties are in a suffocating feeling in BJP.

## Improved health infra has saved many lives, says Guv

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark the completion of two years in office, Governor Biswabasan Harichandan on Friday said that the improved health infrastructure in the State, evident by ramped up testing, increased hospital beds, improved oxygen supply, availability of medicines, recruitment of additional health staff etc, saved lives of many Covid-19 patients.

Harichandan recalled his visit to Ramannagudem village in Bapulapadu mandal of Krishna district and his interaction with the farmers on organic farming being done there in a big way and said Andhra Pradesh can certainly become 'Arogya Andhra Pradesh' with widespread cultivation of organic farming all over the State.

He said by encouraging tree plantation and voluntary blood donation during his visits to the State Universities, a message was conveyed to the stu-



dent community on environmental consciousness.

Harichandan said as president of the AP State Branch of Indian Red Cross Society, he felt proud that the branch has a Guinness World Record by signing maximum number of volunteers for blood donation in a single day, which is an achievement in itself.

"Even though many functions and programmes could not be organised at the Raj

the fight against Covid-19, the Governor said that their loss cannot be replaced. "Central and State governments have come to the rescue of children orphaned by Covid-19 by extending a helping hand for continuation of their education and to look after their well-being till they become adults," said the Governor.

He also said Andhra Pradesh government has been in the forefront in vaccinating more number of people and even created a record by administering over 13 lakh vaccine doses to eligible people in a single day.

Harichandan referred to his participation in the Governors' Conference on the 'Role of National Education Policy 2020 in transforming Higher Education' chaired by President Ram Nath Kovind and the follow up conference held with the Vice-Chancellors of State Universities, wherein he emphasised the need for implementation of NEP 2020 in its

true spirit and that Andhra Pradesh should become a role model in the country in implementation of NEP 2020.

He appreciated the resilience shown by the people of Andhra Pradesh in the face of adverse situations posed by Covid-19 and for following the guidelines issued by authorities from time to time.

The Governor also appreciated the untiring efforts of the doctors, healthcare workers, Red Cross volunteers, voluntary organisations, police personnel, sanitation workers etc, in preventing the spread of Covid-19 and protecting the lives of people and the society.

Harichandan appealed to the people of the State that as new variants of Covid-19 are emerging by the day, the people should remain guarded at all times and continue to follow the Covid-appropriate behaviour of wearing mask, maintain social distance and get themselves vaccinated as early as possible, if not already done.





# Pending paddy arrears push ryots into debts in E Godavari

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The failure of the Civil Supplies department in payment of money to the paddy farmers for their produce is pushing the farmers into debt traps in East Godavari district.

The farmers in East Godavari district had taken up paddy cultivation in 1.60 lakh hectares and they had yielded 13 lakh metric tonnes of paddy produce. The Civil Supplies department has procured 8 lakh metric tonnes of paddy from the farmers.

As per the government norms, money should be disbursed to the farmers within 72 hours after purchase of the paddy produce. The officials had taken the bank passbook and Aadhaar card from the farmers stating that the money



would be e-transferred but they failed to do so till date.

In East Godavari district alone, Rs 1,300 crore arrears accumulated. The farmers have not been paid money for their paddy produce since May 29.

Talking to this correspondent, a paddy farmer Nalla Annavaram said that the farm-

ers invested huge money on purchasing pesticides, fertilisers and seeds to cultivate paddy crop. Besides, they had spent money on hiring labourers.

"We have borrowed money for investment to raise paddy and the interest is growing.

Even after two months, we have not been paid our money.

We have been to the paddy purchase centres and Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) every day for our money," he lamented.

A woman farmer Peddireddy Mahalakshmi said that the officials promised to the farmers that the money would be disbursed within 72 hours but even after 45 days the money had not been paid.

Significantly, Janasena party chief K Pawan Kalyan issued an ultimatum to the government to disburse money to all paddy farmers by the month-end. If the government failed to do so, he himself would come into the streets on the issue, he warned.

The ultimatum of Pawan Kalyan has raised hopes of paddy farmers that they would receive their money soon.

## Minor boy stabbed to death

PNS ■ GUNTUR

In a gruesome incident, a teenage boy, who was studying in Class 10, was stabbed and he succumbed to injuries while undergoing treatment at a private hospital on Friday. Irate parents of the boy and relatives staged a dharna in front of the police station.

Police said that a group of boys played volleyball at Muppalla village on July 20 during which the deceased

Pathani Afridi and Sk. Subhani clashed.

Subhani informed his family members about the incident. When Afridi was going home, Sk. Pedabaji picked up a quarrel with him. In a fit of rage, Sk. Pedabaji stabbed the boy indiscriminately. A profusely bleeding Afridi was shifted to a private hospital in Narasaraopet. While undergoing treatment, the boy died on Thursday.

The police registered a case on

the complaint of Afridi's father Pathan Ayub. The police arrested the accused Sk Peda Baji.

Meanwhile, the irate parents and relatives of deceased Afridi staged a dharna with the body in front of Muppalla police station. They demanded that the police hand over the accused. Following the dharna, the traffic on the Sattenapalli-Narasaraopet road was disrupted and hundreds of vehicles got stranded on either side of the road.



## 260 kg ganja seized, five arrested

PNS ■ KADAPA

The police arrested five persons and seized 260 kg ganja while being illegally transported. Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Superintendent of Police KK N Anburajan said that on a tip-off, the Chinna Chowk police conducted checking of vehicles and found 260 kg of ganja

being transported in a car.

The ganja was neatly packed in several boxes and was being transported from Visakhapatnam to Kadapa. The police seized 260 kg of cannabis, Chevrolet Tavera car, Rs 3,850 cash and arrested Radi Ramu (22), Chitikala Teja (20), Kottapalli Nageswara Rao (35), Sunkireddy Ranga Reddy (55)

and Kavati Nelakanteswar (25). The SP said that Ramu, Teja, and Nageswara Rao, belonging to Visakhapatnam, formed a gang along with Ranga Reddy and Nelakanteswar to sell ganja in the town.

The gang targeted the college students and was selling ganja cigarettes to them. The arrested persons would be produced in

court, he said.

The SP asked the parents of college students to be cautious about their children and keep an eye on their habits. He appreciated the police personnel for making the arrests and seizure of ganja.

Chinna Chowk Inspector K Ashok Reddy and Sub-Inspector G Amarnath Reddy were present.

## RBKs will provide all facilities to farmers: District Collector

PNS ■ KAKINADA

East Godavari District Collector D Muralidhar Reddy has said that the Rythu Bharosa Kendras (RBKs) are being developed in such a manner that they can provide facilities, including fertilisers, seeds and marketing to the farmers.

The Collector said that e-Crop booking is coming up with updated technology in East Godavari district to register crops.

The Collector on Friday inspected the e-Crop booking system at Achyutapuram village in Pedapudi mandal in Anaparthi constituency, along with Joint Collector G Lakshmi and MLA Dr.Satti Suryanarayana Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that as per the directions of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, every RBK



is being developed to provide marketing facilities, seeds and fertilisers. He said that Agriculture Advisory Council meeting would be held on every first and second Friday in a month and asked the farmers to avail the facility.

The Collector said that the details of extent of land a farmer is taking up cultivation and which crop the farmer is raising would be registered in e-Crop system. Later, the Collector inspected the construction works of

Kaikavolu drainage at Achyutapuram. The officials explained to the Collector about the ongoing works.

The Collector observed the spraying of pesticide with a drone to remove water hyacinth in the drainage.

Trainee Collector Gitanjali Sharma, district agriculture JD Vijay Kumar, RDO AG Chinni Krishna, AD A Padmasri and other officials accompanied the Collector.

### SAKAMBARI DEVI AVATAR



Goddess Rajyalakshmi, presiding deity of Sri Prasanna Chennakesava Swamy temple in Ongole, decorated in vegetables, leaves and flowers

## Water level at Dowleswaram Barrage likely to rise today

PNS ■ KAKINADA

East Godavari District Collector D Muralidhar Reddy has said the water level at Dowleswaram Barrage in East Godavari district is likely to rise by Saturday evening and Sunday morning in the wake of rising Godavari water level at Polavaram due to heavy rains.

speaking to the media here on Friday, the Collector said, "With this in view, we are setting up control rooms at Revenue divisional centres and mandal centers along with the District Collector's Office and



monitoring the situation from time to time. Necessary relief measures have been taken accordingly," he said.

The Collector disclosed that the BC Welfare Minister Chelluboina Venugopal

Krishna would tour the flood-prone Agency area on Saturday. The Collector explained that at present there is no loss of life or property in the district and all precautionary measures are being taken.



### ITDA Srisailam PD calls on Collector

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Integrated Tribal Development Authority (Chenchu) (ITDA) Project Director B Ravindra Reddy has called on district Collector Pravin Kumar here on Friday. He explained to the Collector the living conditions of Chenchu tribe people. He discussed with the

Collector about ROFR land development, allocation of land for house sites to Chenchu community people, providing potable water and medical facilities. The Collector asked the ITDA Director to prepare a report on the problems of Chenchu community and the requisite approvals would be sanctioned at the earliest.

### EG gearing up to face third wave: ZP CEO

PNS ■ KAKINADA

East Godavari Zilla Parishat CEO CONVV Satyanarayana has said that all steps are being taken to face the third wave of Covid-19 in the district.

The CEO worshiped Sri Venkateswara Swamy at the temple located at Chadalavada village in Peddapuram mandal on Friday.

Talking to reporters, he said that the WHO and Union Health Ministry had cautioned that the third wave might affect children. "All precautionary measures are being taken to face the pandemic. Arrangements are being made to provide treatment to Covid patients at all Primary Health Centres," he informed.

## Congress flays razing of houses near CM's residence

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Andhra Pradesh Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) official spokesperson Sk. Saïda condemned the demolition of houses at Amarareddy Nagar, located adjacent to the Chief Minister's residence in Tadepalli and demanded that the government provide houses to them.

Addressing a press conference at Podili on Friday, he described the demolition of houses, belonging to the poor and downtrodden, as heinous and unjust. He said that the officials had taken up the demolition drive at the Amarareddy Nagar colony citing houses being located in the high-security zone as a reason.

"As many as 320 families have been living in the colony for the last 40 years. All are poor and daily wagers. Out of the 320 families, 276 have been allocated house sites at Jagananna colonies but 44 families were not allocated houses stating that they did submit proper documents," he said.

The Congress leader deplored that the house of a woman V Sivasri was demolished as she questioned the government's unjust and arbitrary demolition drive.

Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, during his paday-



atra when he was leader of the Opposition, hugged and kissed women and appealed to them to give him one chance and they had given him a chance. Now under his leadership, the houses of the poor were being razed to the ground, he slammed.

Sk Saïda lashed out at Jagan Mohan Reddy saying he had begun his governance with the demolition of Rs.8 crore worth of Praja Vedika convention centre. The Congress leader demanded that the government provide houses to the residents of the colony.

## Rich tributes paid to Tilak, Azad

PNS ■ RAJAHMUNDRY

Adikavi Nannaya University Vice-Chancellor Prof. Mokka Jagannatha Rao has exhorted the students to emulate great personalities in the country.

The birth anniversary of freedom fighters Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak and Chandrasekhar Azad were held on Friday in the university campus and the Vice-chancellor paid tributes by garlanding their portraits.

Speaking on the occasion, Registrar Prof. T Ashok, Principals Dr. V Persis and Dr. K Subba Rao were among those who took part in the programme.

he recalled that Tilak and Chandrasekhar Azad had sacrificed their lives for the freedom of the country. "Many great persons had sacrificed their lives for the country and we all should pursue their ideals. We should strive for the betterment of society and development of the nation," he said.

Registrar Prof. T Ashok, Principals Dr. V Persis and Dr. K Subba Rao were among those who took part in the programme.



### SHORT TAKES



### SP urges girl students to download Disha app

**ELURU:** West Godavari District Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma has asked girl students to download Disha app on their mobile phones for their own protection when they are in trouble. The SP participated in an awareness programme on Disha App held at the C R Reddy Engineering College campus here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, the SP explained to the girl students that the Disha App was formulated to provide them protection whenever they were in trouble. He asked the students to download the app in their mobile phones and avail the facility. The SP told the girls that the police would reach them within eight minutes if they press the SOS button. He asked the girl students to send a message to 95503 51100 to his Whatsapp or dial 100 or 112 for immediate help. DSP Dr. Kiran, ARD SP Krishnam Raju, CIs Ch. Kondala Rao, and Adi Prasad were among those who were present.

### 3-day 'Pavitrotsavams' end at Kapileswara Swamy temple

**TIRUPATI:** The three-day annual 'Pavitrotsavam' concluded with 'Maha Poonahuti' at the Sri Kapileswara Swamy temple at Tirupati on Friday. The purification rituals are performed every year to ward off the ill effects of certain acts done inadvertently by the temple staff or the visiting devotees. Due to Covid restrictions, the festival was observed in Privacy (Ekantam). 'Pavitra Samarpana' rituals were performed on Friday, as part of which 'Abhishekam', 'Maha Punahuti' and 'Pavitra Samarpana' were performed by the temple priests on the occasion. In the evening, 'Asthnam' was performed to the processional deities (Panchamurthis). Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Deputy EO Subramanyam, temple Inspector Srinivas Naik and temple priests (Archakas) participated in the rituals.

### Ramayana recitation programme from July 25 to Aug 23

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), as part of its spiritual mission, has embarked upon another recitation programme, "Sakala Karya Siddhi Ramayana Parayanam" from July 25 to August 23 in Tirumala. The main aim of the recitation (Parayanam) is that all living beings should lead a peaceful and prosperous life and all the activities which came to a standstill due to the Covid pandemic across the world, should resume without any further interruptions and disturbances.

The Ankurarpanam for this 30-day-long spiritual programme will be performed in Dharmagiri Veda Vignana Peetham on Saturday. The Ramayana shlokas from some of the important chapters of 'Balakanda', 'Ayodhyakanda', 'Aranyakanda', 'Kishkindakanda', 'Sundarakanda' and 'Yuddhakanda' will be recited everyday in Vasanta Mandapam at Tirumala between 8:30am and 10am.



### WELCOME TO PRAKASAM



Ongole Mayor Gangada Sujatha and Corporators Vemuri Bhavani, Peddireddy Niyanta Kumari and Pasupuleti Vijayalakshmi, Yanamala Nagaraju and Gangavarapu Praveen Kumar formally met the newly-appointed SP of Prakasam district Malika Garg on Friday.

## Collector inspects works to combat Covid at GGH

PNS ■ KAKINADA

As East Godavari is a large district in terms of population and area, Covid-19 positive registration is high.

Though currently, the number of cases is on the decline, the people must abide by Covid rules, according to Muralidhar Reddy said.

On Friday, the Collector, along with Joint Collector Kirti Chekuri, visited the maternity

ward at the Kakinada Government General Hospital as well as the neonatal treatment centers with the doctor.

On the occasion, the Collector told the media that Covid positivity was declining and the people should not be careless.

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has been monitoring the work being carried out at the Government hospital in view of the third wave

alert.

He said that all necessary steps were being taken to counter the third wave and the work on GGH would be completed by August 1.

Kakinada General Hospital was preparing 200 beds for the third wave.

He said arrangements were being made for the Kakinada GGH to accommodate patients coming from the district as well as other districts.

The Collector said that all necessary arrangements were being made to face the third wave.

The Collector, along with GGH Superintendent R Mahalakshmi and a team of doctors from Department of Paediatrics, Neonatal Care Centre, Nursing Station, ICU, Special Care Zone, Neonatal Intensive Care Units, inspected the works at GGH.





## INDIA CORNER

### Ajit Pawar speaks with Rajnath Singh over Maha flood situation

Maharashtra deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar on Friday spoke to Defense Minister Rajnath Singh on the worsening flood situation in the state. Singh assured the help of defense forces in the rescue and relief operations, a statement by Pawar's office said. Army and Navy teams have already been deployed in the state. Maharashtra Relief and Rehabilitation Secretary Aseem Gupta has been appointed as the nodal officer for coordination with the Defense Ministry, the statement added. District guardian ministers and local elected representatives have been asked to stay put in the flood-hit districts till the situation is normal. Raigad guardian minister Aditi Tatkare, Ratnagiri guardian minister Anil Parab, Sindhudurg guardian minister Uday Samant, Satara guardian minister Balasaheb Patil and all MLAs from these areas have been asked to remain available to participate in and oversee the rescue and relief operations, the release said. Heavy rains are battering the coastal Konkan and parts of Western Maharashtra for the last two days.

# Don't indulge in politics over Covid vax: Mandaviya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Friday appealed to Opposition parties not to play politics on the issue of COVID-19 vaccines and asserted that everyone should work together to ensure people are vaccinated against coronavirus.

Responding to supplementaries during Question Hour in Lok Sabha, the minister said the government is still in talks with US company Pfizer with respect to making its vaccine available in India.

"There should be no politics on the issue of COVID and vaccination. The prime minister has said this several times," Mandaviya said in response to a question asked by Shiv Sena MP Rahul Shewale.

"I will also not want to indulge in politics on this issue but I want to present the facts," he said, adding that the prime minister till date has held over 20 meetings and discussions with the state governments and chief ministers.

He said some opposition-ruled states raised the issue that health is a state subject and they should



be taken into confidence.

"Many said Health is a state subject, states said we also need permission to buy vaccines. We said that we have no problem with this. The states said that we want to go out for tender to buy the vaccine. Modi ji said that we are ready to do whatever help is needed," the Health minister said.

He said accordingly, the states were allowed to buy 25 per cent and 25 per cent by the private (sector). The Centre was to procure 50 per cent for the people.

"For the 25 per cent, states

issued tenders and we said we will provide all possible help. The suppliers were limited and the Indian government too was holding talks," he said.

Many issued global tenders. But there were only two Indian companies which had started vaccine manufacturing, the Serum Institute of India (Covishield) and Bharat Biotech (Covaxin), Mandaviya said.

He added that Moderna has registered in India and taken permission. Johnson and Johnson has tied up with Biological E and work

### Any attempt of booth-capturing, bogus voting should be dealt with iron hands: SC

Any attempt of booth capturing or bogus voting should be dealt with iron hands because it ultimately affects the rule of law and democracy, the Supreme Court said on Friday while dismissing an appeal of a man convicted for rioting at a poll booth in Jharkhand. Referring to its earlier verdicts, a bench of Justice D Y Chandrachud and Justice M R Shah said freedom of voting is part of freedom of expression. "The essence of the electoral system should be to ensure freedom of voters to exercise their free choice. Therefore, any attempt of booth capturing or bogus voting should be dealt with iron hands because it ultimately affects rule of law and democracy," the bench said. The apex court said the secrecy of casting votes is necessary for strengthening the democracy. Observing that in elections to the Lok Sabha and state legislatures maintenance of secrecy is a must, the bench said in democracies where direct elections take place it is important to ensure that voter casts his vote without fear and being victimised if his vote is disclosed.



### Rahul Gandhi should submit his phone for probe: BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Friday dared Rahul Gandhi to submit his phone for investigation if he believes it was tapped, and asserted that no one's phone has been tapped illegally by the Modi government.

BJP spokesperson Rajyavardhan Rathore told reporters that the Congress is determined to stall Parliament for one reason or another after being rejected twice by people in Lok Sabha polls of 2014 and 2019.

Amid a row over the suspected Pegasus snooping, Gandhi had said earlier that all his phones were tapped.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah allegedly used the Pegasus spyware against India and its institutions, and "the only word for this is treason," Gandhi charged. Rathore said everybody has the right to what they want in a democracy.

Gandhi should submit his phone to probe agency, and investigation will take place as per the Indian Penal Code (IPC), he said.

### 3 cases registered for violation of HC order on animal sacrifice for Bakri Eid

At least three cases have been registered so far against people who violated the Bombay High Court's order by offering animal sacrifice at temporary slaughterhouses for Bakri Eid in Bhiwandi of Maharashtra's Thane district, an official said on Friday. The three offences have been registered under sections 188 (disobeying order issued by a public servant), 429 (mischievous by killing, maiming cattle) among other provisions of the IPC, Cruelty to Animals Act, Maharashtra Police Act and Disaster Management Rules, at Shanti Nagar and Narpoli police stations, the official said. The Bombay High Court had earlier set aside an order issued by the commissioner of the Bhiwandi Nizampur Municipal Corporation (BNMC) permitting the setting up of 38 temporary slaughterhouses for offering animal sacrifice for Bakri Eid. The court had stated that these temporary spaces were not licensed slaughterhouses and hence, could not be allowed to operate, as the ritual can take place only at designated, pre-licensed slaughterhouses, in accordance with law.



### PEGASUS SNOOPING ROW

## Oppn MPs protest in Parliament; demand SC-monitored probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Several Opposition MPs, including Congress' Rahul Gandhi, on Friday protested against the government inside Parliament complex over the Pegasus snooping issue and demanded a Supreme Court-monitored judicial probe into the matter.

Besides Gandhi, a host of senior Congress MPs like Leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge, party's leader in Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury, KC Venugopal and Shashi Tharoor, DMK's Kanimozhi and Shiv Sena's Priyanka Chaturvedi, were present during the protest in front of Mahatma Gandhi's statue inside Parliament complex.

Carrying a banner which read "#PegasusSnoopGate We demand Supreme Court Monitored Judicial Probe", the MPs raised slogans like "ye jasoosi bandh karo (stop this spying)".

Opposition parties have stalled proceedings in Parliament alleging the union government's involvement in the alleged snooping following reports that nearly 300 mobile phone numbers including of journalists, activists, opposition leaders from India and even of union ministers figured in a list of potential

snooping targets by Israel's NSO group which sells its Pegasus spyware only to "vetted" governments and government agencies.

The government and the ruling BJP have dismissed the Pegasus Project reports as concocted and evidence-less.

The media reports have been published by The Wire in collaboration with 16 other international publications including the Washington Post, The Guardian and Le Monde, as media partners to an investigation conducted by Paris-based media non-profit organisation Forbidden Stories and rights group Amnesty International.

### CENTRAL VISTA AVENUE REDEVELOPMENT

## 'Only 22 heritage trees relocated'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Only 22 heritage trees had to be relocated because of the Central Vista Avenue redevelopment project, the government informed Parliament on Friday.

The redevelopment project of the Central Vista -- the power corridor of the country -- includes the revamping of the three-km-long Rajpath from the Rashtrapati Bhavan to India Gate. It also envisages a new triangular Parliament building, a Common Central Secretariat and new residences for the prime minister and the vice president.

Responding to a question in Lok Sabha on the relocation of



trees to the Badarpur Eco-Park, Union Environment Minister Bhopender Yadav said according to information received from the Central Public Works Department, "only 22 number of trees have been relocated from the Central Vista Avenue to the eco-park, Badarpur, and there is no other proposal to relocate trees

from the Central Vista Avenue to Badarpur".

He said there is a proposal to plant 10 saplings for every tree uprooted or removed, and the compensatory plantation will be done at the Badarpur Eco-Park, Badarpur.

On another query on census of trees, Yadav said, "As per available information, no tree census has been conducted in the recent past."

"However, the Forest Survey of India (FSI) carries out sample plot based regular inventory of trees in forests and outside forests in the country under its National Forest Inventory Programme," he said.

### Venkaiah flays tearing of copy of Minister's statement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha Chairman M Venkaiah Naidu on Friday described the snatching and tearing of the copy of the IT Minister's statement in the House as an assault on the country's parliamentary democracy.

Expressing anguish over the frequent disruptions in the House after the laying of papers, Naidu made a passionate appeal to members to allow the smooth functioning of the House so that more meaningful discussions like the one on COVID-19 issue could be held.

He also posed several questions to the members to ponder over the developments that have taken place in the House.

Referring to the statement of IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw on the Pegasus spyware issue, Naidu said he had made it clear in the business advisory committee meeting that members may seek clarifications which would have enabled them address their concerns in the matter. "But unfortunately, the proceedings of the House hit a new low with the papers being snatched from the Minister and torn into pieces and thrown in the air. Such actions are a clear assault on our parliamentary democracy," he said in the House.

## Bhabha Atomic centre scientist develops superabsorbent cotton to tackle oil spills

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The city-based nuclear research institute BARC on Friday said it has developed a cotton-based superabsorbent which will help tackle oil spills on water.

The cotton is highly efficient super-hydrophobic or water disliking and also super-oleophilic or oil liking, and has been developed using radiation technology, an official statement said.

"There is no absorbent currently available that can remove floating oil from water surface and sediment oil (underwater) simultaneously," A K Mohanty,

the director of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, said.

He added that the 'superabsorbent cotton' was developed by Sudhendu Ray Chowdhury, a scientist working BARC's Isotope and Radiation Application division. The innovation has already received a national award from the Union Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilisers in 2019.

One gram of the material can pick up a minimum of 1.5 kg of oil from water media which can be collected by simple squeezing or compression from the superabsorbent cotton, it said.

The cotton is biodegradable



and can be used up to 50-100 times, it added.

The statement said the material was developed by bio-inspired molecular-scale surface engineering through tuning of

surface roughness or topography and surface energy with the help of radiation assisted covalent integration.

The cotton can be deployed to remove toxic organic liquids such as benzene, toluene, ethylbenzene, chloroform, dichloromethane, tributyl phosphate (TBP), triphenyl phosphate (TPP) from industrial or municipal waste water, the statement said.

It can also be used for separation of various oily solvents in industry or laboratory setups and cleaning of solid surfaces in oil stations and spillage on road.

### Covid-19 patient dies after hospital collects his sperm

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

A day after a Vadodra-based private hospital collected the sperm of a COVID-19 patient as per the Gujarat High Court's directions following a plea filed by his wife, the man died. The lawyer of the man's wife gave this information on Friday. The 32-year-old man was on life support at Sterling Hospital as he was suffering from multi-organ failure following coronavirus infection.

### Porn films case: Court extends Raj Kundra's custody

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A court in Mumbai on Friday extended till July 27 the police custody of businessman Raj Kundra in a case related to alleged creation of pornographic films and publishing them through some apps. Kundra, husband of actor Shilpa Shetty, was arrested on the night of July 19 by the city police's crime branch after being booked under relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act.

### Rlys lost 2,903 employees due to Covid-19: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Railways has lost 2,903 employees due to COVID-19, minister Ashwini Vaishnaw informed Parliament on Friday. In a written reply in the Rajya Sabha, he said settlement of dues has been made with families of deceased Railway employees in 2,782 cases. "Indian Railways has a policy for giving appointment on compassionate ground to dependents of Railway servants who lose their lives in the course of duty or die in harness or are medically incapacitated.

## Priests body demands representation in management of temples, writes to Modi

PNS ■ MADHURA

Representation of the Akhil Bhartiya Tirth Purohit Mahasabha in the management of temples and religious places should be made mandatory, the priests' body urged Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday.

"Instructions may be given for the representation of Akhil Bhartiya Tirth Purohit Mahasabha in the management of temples and religious places," Mahesh Pathak, National President of the body said in a letter to the prime minister.

The tirth purohits are facing harassment from the administration, Pathak said as he highlighted the alleged neglect of tirth purohits of Uttarakhand

Twelve smart cities with cultural, religious and ancient backgrounds are currently being developed in the country. Since the officials are not familiar with the traditions, culture and ancient back-

ground of the cities, the basic purpose of the renovation is defeated, Pathak said.

To overcome the problem, constitutional representation of the mahasabha would not only prove to be a boon but the local administration too would get a shot in the arm by getting expert opinions, he said.

It is expected that the prime minister would consider the suggestions given in the letter and give an order for the representation of the body in the matters related to tirth, temples, culture and religion to retain the basic character of religious places that

would inspire the next generation.

At present, the tirth purohits are facing harassment from the administration, Pathak said as he highlighted the alleged neglect of tirth purohits of Uttarakhand who are deprived of their ancestral rights.

However, the priests' body chief thanked Uttarakhand Chief Minister Pushkar Singh Dhami for taking prompt action on his letter and appointing a high power committee to decide the future of Devasthanam board.

The body of priests had on July 19 wrote to Dhami, demanding decommission of the board.

## J&K police shoots down drone carrying IED material in Jammu, uncovers terror plot

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Jammu and Kashmir police averted a cross-border terror plot by shooting down a drone carrying improvised explosive device (IED) material weighing five kg in the border belt of Jammu district on Friday, officials said.

Following information about a drone flying over the border belt of Kanachak along the International Border (IB), a quick reaction team (QRT) of the police swung into action and shot it down using anti-drone strategy in the early hours, they added.

"At about 1 am, the drone



made a low flight to release the payload (IED), when it was shot down," Additional Director General of police (ADGP) Mukesh Singh told reporters here.

He said the drone was carrying a payload of five-kg IED material in a semi-assembled state and only wires had to be connected to it to trigger a blast.

According to a preliminary analysis, the flying object was a hexa m-copter with six wings and had a GPS device and a flight controller, the officer said. "A possible IED blast has been prevented," he added. There is a one-digit difference in the serial number of this drone and the drone shot down in Kathua last year, which points towards the fact that terrorist organisations across the border such as the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) and the Jaish-e-Mohammad (JeM) have acquired flight controllers and are sending drones with arms and IEDs to the Indian side, the ADGP said.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Castle in the air

The Delhi High Court has told political leaders that they must honour the promises they make

It took 89 pages of a Delhi High Court judgment to tell politicians holding high positions in Governments that they cannot go on making promises to people and not honour these. The judgment, in a case relating to a promise made by Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, sends the message that it is important to bridge the gap between law and morality and let the authorities, who are either elected to public positions or who hold positions of power, realise that they “are answerable to the people, especially once they undertake or agree to do or not to do a particular thing” and that the citizens would expect that the Government would implement the promises made. The judgment, by Justice Prathiba M Singh, opens with a telling comment that reflects the mood of the society: “The saying ‘Promises are meant to be broken’ is well known in the social context.” The judgment unambiguously says that promises made by the Government or its officials are “judicially enforceable” if these are broken. The judgment reminds the political leaders of things enshrined in the business of governance but forgotten in the melee of politics. One is that good governance requires the said trust to be maintained between those who govern and those who are governed. Two, the sustenance of this trust coupled with the legal certainty of an assurance given, cements the relationship between the citizen and the Government.



Three, citizens repose a lot of trust in a promise made by those who hold Government positions and an assurance given is like an undertaking that is compatible with public duty. One powerful conclusion is derived from the judgment: Once a representation is made by a high-ranking official, it comes within the scope of its authority. It will have a far-reaching impact on the Indian polity which is used to most politicians in power resorting to populism as forethought and governance as an afterthought. A cursory glance through a day's newspapers will throw up scores of promises made by elected representatives of the people that are meant to remain unfulfilled. The present case relates to some poor labourers petitioning the court that Kejriwal should be asked to fulfil his promise of paying the house rent on their behalf if they were unable to pay it because of COVID-19 exigencies. Kejriwal did make that promise in March 2020 but did not pursue the matter further. The court correctly observes, in the context of the case, “that ‘puffing’ which may be permissible in commercial advertising, ought not to be recognisable and permissible in governance”. The judgment is a serious caution to politicians for whom people are merely voters, not citizens. There are millions of political and electoral promises that remain ignored because there is no law to punish politicians, in power or seeking to be in power, who routinely evade accountability. The judgment should prod those in power to desist from playing with people's legitimate expectations.

### PICTALK



Jab-seekers wait in a queue to receive the COVID-19 vaccine, at a district hospital in Noida

PTI

## Glitz and guts

The Tokyo Olympics have started. Only blood, sweat and tears will lead to glory

The greatest sporting spectacle in the world has begun in Japan, even though under the scary shadow of the pernicious SARS-Cov-2 virus. Over the next two weeks, the best athletes from around the world will compete in 33 sports and 46 disciplines. As always in the 125-year modern history of the Olympics, the global audience will be wowed by the superhuman performances of the athletes, wondering how some



people — with the same number of limbs, developed more or less in the same proportion and living on the same planet as us — can achieve the seemingly unattainable or near-impossible. But, put in a nutshell, that's what the Games are about. However, never before in the history of the modern Olympics have the Games ever been organised in an odd-numbered year even though these have survived boycotts, natural calamities and man-made wars. Another first is that no spectators would be present inside stadia, thanks to the raging COVID-19 pandemic. Think about it, the world's biggest sporting stage, and not a single soul to cheer

the athletes, say, the fastest woman and man on Earth? In a way, it's poignant.

Focusing on India, a total of only 20 Indian athletes from seven sports (besides six officials) participated in the opening parade on Friday evening. India is being represented by more than 125 athletes in this instalment of the Olympics, with the overall contingent size being 128 members. The parade number was deliberately thinned owing to COVID-19 concerns and the deputy chef de mission had already made it clear that the athletes who have competitions lined up on Saturday — primarily, archery, hockey, shooting and badminton — would stay away from the opening ceremony festivities. From the men's hockey team, only captain Manpreet Singh participated in the event as he was India's flag-bearer along with pugilist MC Mary Kom when Team India proudly walked out into the stadium at number 21st as per the Japanese alphabetical order. The expectations of 130 crore Indians must be weighing heavy on the Indian contingent as it tries for the first time ever to take its medals tally into double digits. So far, our best showing was in the 2012 London Olympics, where Indian athletes managed to scoop up six medals, though none of them was gold. Hopefully, things will turn better this time around. Meanwhile, let the Games begin!

# The human-animal conflict on the rise

There's an urgent need to stop designating animals as 'vermin' as it takes the protective shield of the wildlife Act away from animals



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

A practice that continues despite strong and reasoned opposition is that of proclaiming species of wild animals as “vermin” and thus putting them out of the ambit of the protective umbrella of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972, the principal instrument for protecting wild animals in India. The wild boar and nilgai have been proclaimed as vermin in Uttarakhand, the nilgai and boar in some districts of Bihar, and the rhesus macaque in parts of Himachal Pradesh.

The Act does not define the term “vermin” in terms of what it connotes. It just states in Section 62: “The Central Government may by notification declare any wild animal other than those specified in Schedule I and Part II of Schedule II to be vermin for any area and for such period as may be specified therein and so long as such notification is in force, such wild animal shall be deemed to have been included in Schedule V.” Animals included in Schedule V can be freely hunted.

The Central Government declares an animal as vermin following requests from State Governments and the ground which has been invariably cited is that it causes damage to crops and poses a danger to human life. There have no doubt been cases in which the Centre has withheld permission. The fundamental question, however, is whether there should at all be a provision for designating an animal as “vermin”.

There are several reasons for asking this. For one thing, an article by Anupam Chakravarty, Rajeshwari Ganesan and Rajit Sengupta, published under the heading ‘Enemies of the state?’ in the *DownToEarth* on June 15, 2016, cites animal rights groups as saying that the drive for killing them underway was based on popular perception rather than data. The country had no data both on the populations of animals proposed to be killed and the extent of crop damage they were supposed to be causing. The article stated that, in fact, Uttarakhand's proposal on the basis of which the Centre permitted the killing of wild boars, clearly said, “There is no scientific survey or census of the wild boar population that has



been carried out. However, since the crop damage caused by wild boar is increasing, the wild boar is estimated to be overpopulated.”

Further, experience shows that once killing is permitted, villagers or designated hunters have frequently not followed the methods prescribed. An example is the case in Kerala where a pregnant cow elephant died following several days of intense agony after she had bitten on a pineapple filled with explosives. Enquiries revealed that the pineapple was intended to kill a wild boar which, as a species, had been declared “vermin”. Also, such a barbaric way of killing was not permitted even in the case of wild boars.

State Governments have doubtless laid down restrictions on the methods and guidelines governing killings — such as only rifles and pistols to be used and no killing of injured animals running away to forests, and hunting only after receiving permission from the forest department concerned and the village *pradhan*. But who is to ensure compliance? The fact is, methods that are not permitted are often used. These include laying out live wires



THE LOSS OF THE VEGETATION THEY FEED ON FOLLOWING THE DESTRUCTION OF THEIR HABITATS THROUGH ENCROACHMENT BY EXPANDING HUMAN SETTLEMENTS, ROADS AND INDUSTRIES, AS WELL AS DROUGHTS AND FOREST FIRES, HAS DRIVEN THEM TO AGRICULTURAL FIELDS FOR FOOD

for animals to be electrocuted, trapping them for murder and poisoning them. There is no guarantee that animals other than those declared as “vermin” would not come into contact with such wires or consume the poison.

The argument that State forest department personnel should watch out for the transgressors and deal harshly with them hardly holds water. It would take a very large number of people and vehicles for doing that. Given that most forest departments have to make do with numerically inadequate staff, deployment on such an errand would leave them with very few people to carry out essential functions like curbing poaching and preventing illegal felling of trees. The result may be a serious diminution of protected species like elephants (for tusks), rhinos (for their horns) and tigers for their body parts which are sought for the manufacture of so-called aphrodisiacs.

Apart from the fact that declaring an entire species of wildlife as vermin is contrary to the spirit and content of Article 51 A (g) of the Constitution which enjoins upon both the Government

and all citizens to show compassion to all living creatures, animals can hardly be blamed for damaging standing crops and attacking people. The loss of the vegetation they feed on following the destruction of their habitats through encroachment by expanding human settlements, roads and industries, as well as droughts and forest fires, has driven them to agricultural fields for food.

Humans do not realise that their own predatory exploitation of nature is increasing areas of human-animal conflict and making non-human species extinct at the rate of 3,000 a year. In this process, they are also destroying the environment and the conditions that have made human life possible. They need to realise that they are not the lords of the universe and must live in harmony with the world around them, including plants and animals. The Greek sophist Protagoras' famous aphorism “Man is the measure of all things” needs to be amended to read, “Humans are the preservers and protectors of all things.”

(The author is Consulting Editor, *The Pioneer*. The views expressed are personal.)

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### OPPN MUST PLAY ITS CARDS WELL

Sir — This has reference to your editorial on ‘*Rallying forces*’ (July 23). “I will win Bengal with one leg and Delhi with two legs,” claimed Didi. NCP leader Sharad Pawar has ruled out to be the consensus presidential candidate with an eye on the Prime Minister's post in case of a fractured mandate in the 2024 general election. The coming together of the Opposition leaders is a mirage. Though they have different ideologies, every State's prominent Opposition leader has an eye on the Prime Minister's chair. It was a failed attempt for them earlier in 2019 too. They have to really unite, sinking their differences, to fight the BJP.

Furthermore, the coalition form of Government is a failure in our country. Corruption always compromises strict and honest adherence to the coalition dharma. To be fair to it, the BJP has no serious corruption charges against it in the past seven years of its rule. But the ruling party has failed to arrest the fuel price hike, spurt in the prices of essential commodities, handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Pegasus expose is embarrassing it now. The Opposition does not put in a strong effort to highlight the Government's shortcomings and misses. But it disrupts Parliament, thus wasting the taxpayers' money, which won't help these leaders. Moreover, even a united Opposition lacks a leader of mass appeal at the national level.

Sravana Ramachandran | Chennai

### LESSONS FROM BHAGEERATHI AMMA'S LIFE

Sir — At the age of 107 years and India's one of the first recipients of the prestigious Nari Shakti Puraskar by the Union Government for her exceptional contribution towards women's empowerment, Kerala's “oldest learner” Bhageerathi Amma is no more. Famous as Akshara Muthashi, or Literacy Grandmother, Bhageerathi Amma inspired many by passing the Level Four equivalency examinations at the age of 105, conducted by the State-run Kerala State Literacy Mission (KSLM) in 2019. Prime Minister Narendra Modi had

## The Govt has only bombastic claims



More than 4,15,000 people died owing to COVID-19 (thereby leaving at least 16,00,000 family members in insoluble grief, many of them turned orphans or lost the sole bread-earner), hundreds succumbed to the “Long March” and millions found themselves jobless with many of them compelled to kill themselves. But how disgracefully do the who's who of the BJP and the Union Government boast about their “impeccable fight” against COVID and “glorious victory” over the pandemic! So when the party's top leadership asserts that the Pegasus expose is nothing but an “international design” to “defame” the country because of the “success” it had against COVID, it is extremely hard to resist bouts of laughter.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

also spoken about her during his 62nd episode of his *Mann Ki Baat* programme. In her examination at Kollam, she came out with flying colours with 205 out of a total of 275 marks and full marks in mathematics. As she went on till 107 years of age, she had recently began preparing for her Level Seven exam through digital classes, but one sorrow remains that Amma left without fulfilling the dream of passing the 10th standard equivalency exam. Bhageerathi Amma was one of the few learners in the world who taught others that age is no bar in education. Amma, you are still living in our hearts. May your soul rest in peace and may your movement find success!

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

### PINARAYI MUST CLEAN UP HIS CABINET

Sir — It refers to the editorial, ‘*A stitch in time*’. When Kerala Chief Minister

Pinarayi Vijayan can take the tough decision of not inducting former Health Minister KK Shailja in his Government (while it is to be noted that she was one of the best performing Minister in the last five years) after creating history of sorts in the last 45 years by winning back-to-back elections and retaining power, then he should not have had any issue in ousting Forest Minister AK Saseendran. Ultimately, Pinarayi Vijayan is in the early days of his second term in succession and he should not allow the Opposition parties any issue on a platter that the latter could use to criticise him. Moreover, when he is not at the mercy of other parties for his Government's survival, then there is no reason for him to not act strictly and set a strong precedent.

Bal Govind | Noida

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

I am an Opposition leader and I raise issues of public. This is an attack on that. This is an attack on the voice of the people.

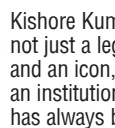


Congress leader — Rahul Gandhi



I denounce that the (US) State Department is exercising offensive and humiliating pressures on European countries.

Cuba's Foreign Affairs Minister — Bruno Rodriguez



Kishore Kumar is not just a legend and an icon, he is an institution. He has always been a beacon of inspiration for me.

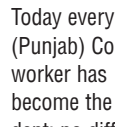


Actor-singer — Ayushmann Khurrana



During our playing days, both foreign and Indian coaches were given equal opportunities. The same can be followed now.

Former Indian football striker — IM Vijayan



Today every (Punjab) Congress worker has become the president; no difference between leader and workers.



Punjab Congress' new president — Navjot Singh Sidhu



FIRST COLUMN

RAGHURAJPUR  
PATTACHITRA

Painting murals to welcome tourists  
back to their village



RAKHI GHOSH

After a gap of nearly six months, Abakash Nayak, 54, a seasoned Pattachitra artist of Raghurajpur, the nationally acclaimed heritage village in Odisha's Puri district has picked up his brush, but this time to paint on the walls of his house. He is painting Lord Ganesh on one wall and Ardhanariswara (a traditional form of Lord Shiva and Parvati) on another. "I am happy like the rest of the artists of Raghurajpur village that we are being asked to paint murals to decorate the walls of our houses. Once the lockdown will ease and tourists will start returning to our village, they will witness the fresh look of the village," he said. The artists of this village have been sitting idle with no work at hand since March last year after the nationwide lockdown was announced. Recently, the State government declared financial assistance of ₹10,000 to each of the 150-odd families to decorate the walls of their houses with Patta paintings, bringing smiles to their faces. In Raghurajpur



crafts village, almost all family members are involved in Patta painting, sculpture work, and paper masks. Patta paintings are made on a piece of cloth known as Patta, or on a dried palm leaf which is first covered with a mixture of gum and chalk. Over the prepared surface, colourful and intricate pictures of gods and goddesses, and scenes from mythological scriptures are painted. The village saw no tourists after March 2020. In November, some tourists started visiting, but the second wave of the Covid-19 pandemic in February spread among the artists. Banamali Maharana, a Shilpiguru awardee, recalls the times when visitors could see all the family members doing artwork, sitting on the porch of their houses. "We are artists... How are we supposed to pick up spade leaving paint and brush?"

The male members mainly do the painting work, while women prepare traditional colours, the base of the paper mask, and other additional work. Some women have also started Patta paintings. Earlier, they would earn between ₹15,000 and ₹20,000 per month. With overseas buyers, they would earn a little more. Now incomes have drastically dropped. Initially, they managed to make ends meet through loans but money lenders have now stopped giving them money. A few "kind-hearted" art lovers help them out financially. In 2019, Cyclone Fani devastated this artisans' village. All the artwork were damaged. When they began to restart their art, the coronavirus struck. Some started selling vegetables, some opened "paan" shops, or started working as daily wage labourers. But the second wave put paid to these efforts too. Villagers are at present getting vaccinated to fight the virus. "Once unlock happens, the tourists will start coming to our village again. Our vaccination will send a message of reassurance to these tourists," said villager Jitendra who believes that the government should also arrange a vaccination drive for the artists. Raghurajpur is now preparing to welcome tourists with murals on walls. The Department of Language, Literature and Culture in association with Odisha Lalit Kala Akademi has come up with an innovative idea to encourage and support the artists. Each family will receive ₹10,000 as financial assistance while the best five will be awarded after being selected by a special committee. Meanwhile, the younger generation is exploring selling the artwork online. Many have also shifted to the virtual mode to teach Pattachitra-making online. They want the government to train them and arrange for a platform to sell their products to e-commerce companies.

(The writer is an independent journalist from Odisha. The views expressed are personal.)

# Cairn looking for arbitration money?

Cairn Energy has submitted a detailed series of proposals to the Indian Government for settlement of the case



SHIVAJI SARKAR

On the very same day that Prime Minister Narendra Modi effected a massive reconstitution of his council of ministers, India got in the shock in the form of a French court freezing residential properties belonging to the Indian government in Paris following a retrospective tax dispute with British power and energy giant Cairn Energy.

The decision will impact 20 properties valued at Euro 20 million (₹177 crore), as part of a guarantee of the debt owed to Cairn that exited India a few years ago. The company with a market capitalisation of £755 million (about ₹7,800 crore) - has filed cases in several countries to pursue the unpaid international arbitration award of \$1.7 billion (₹12,750 crore). The company also filed cases in New York, seeking judicial confirmation that Air India can be classed as the alter ego of the Indian state and thereby jointly liable for the arbitral award.

The French court decision is unfortunate as it is feared it can start a new diplomatic conflict and it also impinges on the sovereignty of the country. It might create an image that India can be taken lightly by MNCs and other private players.

And that is what exactly happened. A case similar to Cairn is that of Devas Multimedia, floated by ex-ISRO executives. It had entered into a deal with ISRO's Antrix Corp. and the National Company Law Tribunal said the 2005 spectrum lease deal was fraudulent. Deutsche Telekom later picked up its stake.

Devas moved an arbitration tribunal saying that its multi-million-dollar investments lost value because of the annulment. In 2020 the tribunal awarded Devas \$1.2 billion. It is now seeking payment from India (now stayed by Supreme Court) in a New York court, asking Air India to pay the amount or forfeit its property, including planes, cargo handling, equipment, and artwork.

In both cases, the authorities in India bungled in pursuing the case. In the case of Cairn and Devas, they moved the courts in Germany and The Hague even as the Indian arguments on jurisdiction and criminality in two arbitrations under Bilateral Investment Treaty (BIT) under India-Mauritius and India-Germany agreements were lost.

Cairn and Devas have chosen flagship Air India planes and its prime property as a pressure tactic to force India into payment negotiations. Trying to seize planes or property to realise unpaid dues may be an extreme tactic but there are precedents. Aircraft are valuable, mobile, and relatively easy to sell. A few years ago, US hedge fund Elliott Capital Management seized an Argentine naval vessel to collect on bonds on which the country defaulted in 2001.

The Cairn matter is one of the irrational tax system. The company is in dis-



THE FRENCH COURT'S DECISION IS UNFORTUNATE AS IT IS FEARED IT CAN START A NEW DIPLOMATIC CONFLICT AND IT ALSO IMPINGES ON THE SOVEREIGNTY OF THE COUNTRY. IT MIGHT CREATE AN IMAGE THAT INDIA CAN BE TAKEN LIGHTLY BY MNCs AND OTHER PRIVATE PLAYERS

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



pute with the government over a 2014 retrospective tax demand. The income-tax department seized a 10 per cent stake in Indian operations that Cairn was trying to sell. After a long dispute, it went for international arbitration and Cairn won the \$ 1.7 billion award.

The issue of high taxation, as recently mentioned by President Ramnath Kovind, retrospective tax, and confusion on predating taxes is an unresolved quagmire. There is an OECD move to have a global minimum tax on corporates at 15 per cent or higher. The UPA government introduced the controversial retrospective tax in March 2012. The NDA II was expected to correct it after 2014 but the bureaucratic system continued with the supposed oddity.

The Supreme Court of India on January 20, 2012 ruled in favour of Vodafone overturning a 2010 decision of the Bombay High Court which ruled that Vodafone was liable to retrospectively pay \$2 billion income-tax because Indian capital gains taxes (CGT) applied on the share transfers between two non-resident entities.

But the smitten tax officials took a different route to circumvent the SC ruling with the introduction of the retrospective tax in March 2012, allowing the government to levy CGT — a move that was piloted by former finance minister Pranab Mukherjee in 2012.

In March 2018 the then finance minister, the late Arun Jaitley, said that the decision to tax Vodafone retrospectively by UPA was erroneous and also that the "present government will not be going down that path". On July 18,

2014, he had said that India would not levy any tax with a retrospective effect that creates an additional burden. But Jaitley made no move to repeal the 2011 law.

The statements of Jaitley and Prime Minister Narendra Modi pledging not to use retrospective taxation to overturn on Cairn Energy were used by a three-member tribunal at the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague on December 20, 2020, to rule that the 2006 reorganisation of Cairn Energy's India business before listing on local bourses was not "unlawful tax avoidance" and ordered the tax authorities to drop the tax demand. This did not happen due to bureaucratic audacity.

Cairn has moved for implementation of the arbitration award in several jurisdictions on different continents, including the US, the UK, Canada, Singapore, Mauritius, France, and the Netherlands as the company intends to focus on high-value assets. Cairn has submitted detailed series of proposals to the Indian government for settlement of the case. The NDA government is now opposing its stand apparently under pressure of officials.

It rattles India. Would the country lose its flagship aircraft carrier and other prime assets? Technically it may be so but authorities say that they are yet to receive a notice or communication from the French court and the government would vigorously defend its case. It translates into more litigations as well as negotiations. Director of Cairn's corporate communication David Nisbet says that the company is keen on an agreed settlement with India and keep the

trust of its shareholders.

So, it has identified \$70-billion worth of Indian assets to retrieve the \$1.7 billion award. However, an international company knows that while it is important to contest governments, it also needs their goodwill to be in business.

The government is also in negotiations since January 2021, even before the present French order was flashed. It may give Cairn Energy one of the surrendered oilfields — Ratna R-series — in the Arabian Sea that was taken away from Essar-Premier Oil in 2016 instead of an arbitration payment. Cairn had spudded the biggest inland oil wells in Barmer, indicated in a survey by NGRI. It exited the country after it was given ₹10247 crore retro-tax demand. Apparently, the government wants that the biggest oil company with one of the lowest operational costs come back to India to shore up its image as also create a show window for the international investors.

It is also looking at the other option of giving it the Barmer oilfield. Vedanta, which now operates the field, has so far has not agreed to the government conditions for extending its contract. Under Vedanta, Rajasthan oilfields have seen a steady decline in output. Cairn has protested against the high \$9 cess per barrel on the oil produced.

The bureaucrats had the issues mired in a web. A political decision to annul retro-tax under Prime Minister Narendra Modi can ensure that a Cairn, Vodafone, Devas, or Vedanta is not repeated and bureaucrats do not muddy the waters.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

NARENDRA MODI AND AMIT SHAH USED THE PEGASUS SPYWARE AGAINST INDIA AND ITS INSTITUTIONS, AND THE ONLY WORD FOR IT IS TREASON.

— FORMER CONGRESS PRESIDENT

RAHUL GANDHI



THE CONGRESS IS DETERMINED TO STALL THE HOUSE FOR ONE REASON OR ANOTHER AFTER BEING REJECTED TWICE BY PEOPLE IN 2014 AND 2019.

— BJP SPOKESPERSON

RAJYAVARDHAN RATHORE

# Rejuvenating agricultural marketing through cooperatives

Farmer aggregation is necessary to organise them, reduce transaction costs and enable members to share information & take collective decisions

Agricultural and allied activities continue to be the backbone of the Indian economy supporting the livelihood of 60 per cent of the population and contributing 1/6<sup>th</sup> of GDP. It used to account for more than half of GDP in 1951.

Half of the arable area continues to depend on the monsoon for irrigation. The proportion of gross irrigated area to total cropped area could increase from 31 per cent in 1984-85 to only 45 per cent, as per the agriculture census of 2010-11. The total operated area under agriculture decreased from 16 crore hectares in 2010-11 to 15.8 crore hectares in 2015-16.

With succession not based on primogeniture, population explosion has resulted in frag-



SUBHASH C. PANDEY

(The writer is former Special Secretary, Ministry of Commerce and Industry, GOI. The views expressed are personal.)

mentation of landholdings. Total operational holdings increased from 13.8 crore in 2010-11 to 14.6 crore in 2015-16. The average size of an operational holding declined to 1.08 hectares in 2015-16 from 1.15 hectares in 2010-11.

Small and marginal farmers suffer from the absence of economies of scale, access to information, and their inability to participate in the price discovery mechanism. Their participation is restricted by poor vertical and horizontal linkages, limited access to the market, and poor information flow along the value chain. The challenge now is to optimize benefits through effective and efficient means of aggregation models.

Farmer aggregation assumes significance due to



the shift of Indian agriculture towards high-value commodities as a result of the growing importance of the agri-food market caused by liberalization, globalization, improved purchasing power, demand for safe and quality food, and expansion of niche markets.

Integrating small farmers with agricultural markets is a big challenge. Many forms of farmer producer organizations have been experimented with like cooperatives, self-help

groups, Farmer Producer Companies, and commodity interest groups to aggregate farmers to help them benefit from economies of scale and to link them to the markets.

Contract farming and direct marketing are other institutional interventions that can be undertaken by organised groups of farmers. I have come across even Whatsapp groups being used to connect farmers and consumers, bypassing middlemen and getting better prices for farmers. A Farmer Producer Company (FPC) seems to be the most useful for the aggregation of small farmers. The FPCs offer more benefits compared to other formats of aggregation. Its members are able to leverage their collective strength and bargaining power to access financial and non-

financial inputs and services and appropriate technologies leading to a reduction in transaction costs. They can tap high-value markets and enter into partnerships with private entities on equitable terms.

The performance of cooperatives has been generally poor with the exception of cooperative sugar factories and dairy cooperatives in Maharashtra and Gujarat. Amalsad cooperative Society for sapota and farming cooperative Gambhira in Gujarat, MAHAGRAPHES in Maharashtra, HOPCOMS and CAMPCO in Karnataka, Mulkanoor women's cooperative groups in combined Andhra Pradesh, etc., have performed well. These successful models could not be emulated elsewhere in the

country. In Budget 2019-20, the government announced new central sector schemes to facilitate the formation and promotion of 10,000 new Farmer Producer Organisations (FPOs) and handholding of each FPO for five years from its aggregation and formation.

Rainfall deficit, unseasonal rains, floods are natural and continuing risks. Agricultural production has increased but productivity is generally lower than international benchmarks. Water-use efficiency is particularly low. Some progressive farmers are de-risking themselves by diversifying their produce. However, many relatively well-off farmers continue with water-guzzling crops like rice and sugarcane in water-defi-

cient regions. How to incentivize farmers to move away from the over-production of cereals (particularly rice and wheat)? How to go about agricultural diversification to boost oilseeds, protein, and fruits/vegetable production? These are policy challenges.

Rejuvenation of our agricultural sector needs appropriate diversification and value-addition and loosening of outdated controls on agricultural markets. It is hoped that protests against the farm laws - misguided or mischievous or partly both - abate soon and a sensible farmer leadership works on connecting farmers with FPOs. Farmers' apprehensions about the entry of big corporates can be addressed if they become members of the FPOs.



DIGITAL & SUSTAINABLE TRADE FACILITATION

# India witnessing significant improvement in UNESCAP score

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has seen a "significant improvement" in the UNESCAP's Global Survey on Digital & Sustainable Trade Facilitation with a 90.32 per cent score.

After evaluation of 143 economies, the Survey 2021 has highlighted India's significant improvement in the scores on all five key indicators -- transparency, formalities, institutional arrangement and cooperation, paperless trade and cross-border paperless trade.

India has scored 90.32 per cent in the global survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation. This is a remarkable jump from 78.49 per cent in 2019.

Under the transparency indicator, the country scored 100 per cent in 2021, up from 93.33 per cent in 2019. The score for 'paperless trade'



improved to 96.3 per cent in 2021, from 81.48 per cent in 2019. The score in the institutional arrangement and cooperation indicator improved to 88.89 per cent, from 66.67 per cent in 2019.

In a statement, the Finance Ministry said that India has seen "significant improvement"

in the score in United Nations' Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation.

The Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) has been at forefront of path breaking reforms under the umbrella of 'Turan' Customs to usher in a Faceless, Paperless and Contactless Customs by way of

a series of reforms, it said.

"This has had a direct impact in terms of the improvement in the UNESCAP rankings on digital and sustainable trade facilitation," the ministry added.

The Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP) serves as the

United Nations' regional hub promoting cooperation among countries to achieve inclusive and sustainable development.

Further, during the Covid19 pandemic, Customs formations have made all efforts to expedite Covid-related imports such as Oxygen related equipment, life-saving medicines, vaccines etc. A dedicated single window COVID-19 24\*7 helpdesk for EXIM trade was created on the CBIC website to facilitate quick resolution of issue(s) faced by importers, the finance ministry said.

The Global Survey on Digital and Sustainable Trade Facilitation is conducted every two years by UNESCAP. The 2021 Survey includes an assessment of 58 trade facilitation measures covered by the WTO's Trade Facilitation Agreement. A higher score for a country also helps businesses in their investment decisions.

## Textile Ministry likely to get Cabinet nod for MITRA scheme

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The textile ministry is in the process of obtaining approval of the Union Cabinet for the proposed Mega Investment Textiles Parks (MITRA) scheme, under which seven such parks will be set up in the country over the next three years, Parliament was informed on Friday.

Minister of State for Textiles Darshana Jardosh said the scheme was announced in Union Budget 2021-22.

"Ministry of Textiles is in the process of obtaining approval of the Cabinet for the proposed scheme. Once, the proposed scheme is approved and modalities are finalized, the details of location, government funding structure etc. will be decided," she said in a written reply to the Lok Sabha.

In a separate reply, the minister said during the pandemic, CCI (Cotton Corporation of India) procured 20.72 lakh bales valuing Rs 5,615 crore from 4 lakh cotton farmers.

However, during the entire cotton season 2019-20, CCI



made a record procurement of 105.15 lakh bales (equivalent to around 546.80 lakh quintal kapas) and an amount of Rs 28,500 crore was disbursed to around 21.50 lakh cotton farmers directly into their bank accounts, she said.

"During current cotton season 2020-21 (October 1, 2020 to September 30, 2021), CCI opened more than 450 procurement centres in all cotton

growing state. CCI continued its procurement of cotton under MSP operations since beginning of season to avoid the eventuality of distress sale by farmers and has procured 91.89 lakh bales so far (equivalent to around 482 lakh quintal kapas)," Jardosh said.

CCI disbursed an amount of Rs 26,700 crore to around 19 lakh cotton farmers, she added.



## Sensex ends 139 pts higher

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex rose 139 points on Friday following gains in ICICI Bank, ITC and SBI amid a largely positive trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE index ended 138.59 points or 0.26 per cent higher at 52,975.80, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 32 points or 0.20 per cent to 15,856.05.

ICICI Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising over 3 per cent, followed by ITC, SBI, HCL Tech, Axis Bank, Bajaj Finserv and Tech Mahindra.

On the other hand, L&T, HUL, Reliance Industries and NTPC were among the laggards. Domestic market traded range-bound but extended

gains moderately on sustained rebound in financials, said Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities.

"Improved prospects of credit growth rebound with visible pickup in economy and comfortable valuations bode well for financials. However, it was not a broad-based rally as midcap and smallcap indices lagged as profit booking was visible in many counters," he noted.

A sharp recovery in global markets along with buying on dips propelled domestic equities to see sharp rebound in the last two days, Modi added.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai and Hong Kong were in the red, while Seoul ended with gains.

## Gold climbs Rs 256; silver jumps Rs 662

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Friday rose Rs 256 to Rs 46,698 per 10 gram amid supportive global trends, according to HDFC Securities.

The precious metal had in the previous trade closed at Rs 46,442 per 10 grams.

Silver also jumped Rs 662 to Rs 66,111 per kg, from Rs 65,449 per kg in the previous trade.

In the international market, gold was trading in the green at USD 1,808 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 25.33 per ounce.

HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Gold prices continued its upside on Friday after gaining above USD 1,800 on Thursday evening session with fall in US treasury yields."



## Timely refund by online retailers must be a criterion: Nasscom

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rationalising obligations in line with activities of relevant entities, and limiting fallback liability of online retailers to ensuring timely refund to consumers are among the recommendations suggested by Nasscom to the proposed e-commerce rules.

The IT industry body on Friday said its recommendations on the proposed e-commerce rules "focus on strengthening consumer protection, ensuring that the obligations are proportionate to the underlying risks and are unambiguous".

The draft e-commerce rules released by the government on June 21 propose to ban fraudulent flash sales and mis-selling of goods and services on e-commerce platforms. Appointments of chief compliance officer/grievance redressal officer are among the key amendments proposed under the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020.

Nasscom said some of the



proposed amendments "appear to be beyond the scope of the Consumer Protection Act 2019 (COPA19) and are instead a subject matter of either the Competition Act, 2002 or the Information Technology Act, 2000...in our submission, we undertook a clause-by-clause review of the proposed amendments and suggested the way forward".

The government on Monday extended till August 5 the deadline for public comments on pro-

posed amendments to the Consumer Protection (E-Commerce) Rules, 2020. Earlier, the last date for public comments on the draft e-commerce rules was July 6.

Some of the recommendations include removal of the word 'own' from the definition of an e-commerce entity.

"This is with the aim of excluding from the scope those technology entities that own the digital platform and license/provide it to e-commerce companies.

## Rupee pares early losses, settles 6 paise higher at 74.40/USD

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian rupee pared early losses to close 6 paise higher at 74.40 against the US dollar on Friday following gains in the domestic equities.

At the interbank forex market, the domestic currency witnessed heavy volatility. The local unit opened weak at 74.55 a dollar and touched a low of 74.58 in morning trade.

The local unit recovered later and touched a high of 74.37 during the day. It finally closed at 74.40 against the American currency, registering a rise of 6 paise over its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled at 74.46.



## Biocon Q1 net profit declines 35 pc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Biotechnology major Biocon has reported a 35.39 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit at Rs 108.4 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2021 mainly on account of its share of loss in associate startup entity Bicara Therapeutics Inc.

The company had posted

a net profit of Rs 167.8 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, Biocon said in a late night filing on Thursday.

Consolidated revenue of the company stood at Rs 1,807.8 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was Rs 1,712.1 crore for the same period a year ago, it added.

## Persistent to hire 2,000 freshers in FY-2022

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Mid-sized IT player Persistent Systems is looking to hire 2,000 freshers in 2021-22 and will recruit lateral entries as per business growth, a senior official said on Friday.

The company also flagged concerns about pressures on attrition returning back in the information technology industry as the business sees an overall improvement due to greater focus on digitalization.

The Pune-based company had reported a 68 per cent growth in its June quarter net at Rs 151.2 crore late on Thursday.

"We will be hiring 2,000 freshers in FY22 and will hire laterals as per the business growth," the company's chief financial officer Sunil Sapre



told PTI over a call.

Its chief executive Sandeep Kalra said typically a fresher is trained for six months before being put on a project.

Sapre said in the last three quarters, it has hired 4,200 people, which included 3,500 lateral hires, and added that the

fresher to lateral hires ratio will not be the same any more.

Kalra said sequential pressures are being observed on the attrition front as it happens whenever the business environment is good in the sector. "There will be pressure on the talent side," he said.

# Today is a big day for us, a new 'Day Zero': Zomato CEO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Zomato made a stellar debut on Dalal Street, its Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal said this was a big day. Shares of the firm listed at nearly 53 per cent premium in its debut trade against its issue price of Rs 76. With this rally, its market valuation went past the Rs 1-lakh-crore mark on BSE.

Earlier in the day, he also said in a blog post, "Today is a big day for us. A new Day Zero. But we couldn't have gotten here without the incredible efforts of India's entire internet ecosystem."

In the blog titled, "Letter from Deepi", he said he was a firm believer in India, and where the country will be in the future, adding that "India is a tough market to operate in, but



if you are building to succeed in India, you are already an exception."

He believes Zomato and Swiggy are two of the best food delivery apps in the world today. "We have a long way to

go before we can call ourselves world class by our customers' standards, but we are determined to get there."

Zomato's over 10-year journey has not always been smooth. It has lived through

many ups and downs - something not every company has the privilege of living long enough to do, he added.

"...We have found ourselves managing times of crisis on different occasions in much the

same way - impatiently staying focused on the long term, executing relentlessly, and committing ourselves to doing the very best we can do today," Goyal said.

Even in its hardest times, the company has had half of its tech/engineering team work on long-term initiatives, he added.

"We are going to relentlessly focus on 10 years out and beyond, and are not going to alter our course for short term profits at the cost of long term success of the company," Goyal said.

The tremendous response to the company's IPO, "gives us the confidence that the world is full of investors who appreciate the magnitude of investments we are making, and take a long term view of our business," he added.

They say it takes a village to raise a child, and Zomato is no exception, he said, noting that hundreds of people have selflessly played a part in making Zomato what it is today.

He also thanked the investors who have stood by the company through thick and thin.

"Jo's prolific growth has set all of us up for unprecedented scale. Flipkart, Amazon, Ola, Uber, Paytm - have also over the years, collectively laid the railroads that are enabling companies like ours to build the India of the future," Goyal said.

Zomato stands proudly and humbly on the shoulders of giants, and thanks everyone for giving it, and so many other startups, the opportunity to look ahead into the future, he added.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Maruti Nexa completes 6 yrs with cumulative sales of 14 lakh units

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) on Friday said its premium sales network Nexa has crossed 14 lakh sales milestone in six years of coming into existence. With the first showroom in 2015, Nexa has touched the imagination of young and aspirational customers and the



testimony to this is that nearly half of the customers are under 35 years of age, the auto major said. Nexa has attracted first time buyers, which makes up to nearly 70 per cent of its total sales, it added. MSI currently has over 380 Nexa outlets spread across about 234 cities in the country. "Driven by innovation, Nexa marks the first initiative by an automobile company to go beyond selling cars and create new formats of car buying experiences," MSI Senior Executive Director (Marketing and Sales) Shashank Srivastava said in a statement. With over 380 showrooms across the country, the premium sales network has helped the company attract a new set of customers who were earlier not considering a Maruti Suzuki vehicle, he added.

### Govt approves 792 private food processing projects

As many as 792 projects out of 818 have been approved for setting up food processing industries by the private sector, with approved grants-in-aid of Rs 5,792 crore so far, the government informed Parliament on Friday.



"Government has been consistently encouraging and incentivising increased private sector investment for the overall development of the food processing sector of the country to promote value addition in agricultural and allied sectors and reduce wastage," Minister of the State for Food Processing Industries Prahlaad Singh Patel said. The minister in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha also said the government has recently taken three major initiatives in order to further increase private sector participation in the sector. Firstly, the government has approved a Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme for the food processing sector with an outlay of Rs 10,900 crore to support the creation of global food manufacturing champions and support Indian brands of food products in international markets.

### Exports rise 45 pc during July 1-21: Comm Min data

The country's exports grew 45.13 per cent to USD 22.48 billion during July 1-21 on account of healthy growth in sectors such as gems and jewellery, petroleum and engineering, according to the provisional commerce ministry data. Imports also rose 64.82 per cent to USD 31.77 billion in the said period, leaving a trade deficit of USD 9.29 billion. Exports of gems and jewellery, petroleum and engineering during July 1-21 stood at USD 424.5 million, USD 923.33 million and USD 551.4 million, respectively, the data showed. Imports of petroleum, crude and products rose by about 77.5 per cent to USD 1.16 billion. During the period, exports to the US, UAE and Brazil increased by 51 per cent to USD 493.24 million; 127 per cent to USD 373.36 million; and 212 per cent to USD 144.5 million, respectively.



### Sebi consent not mandatory for compounding of offences

The Supreme Court Friday held that the consent of the market regulator Sebi is not mandatory for the compounding of offences under section 24A of the Sebi Act but taking views of the expert body is necessary. A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and M R Shah said though Sebi is not conferred with any authority to veto a decision for proceeding in trial offences, it is a regulatory and prosecuting agency and the Securities Appellate Tribunal (SAT) and the courts must obtain its views since it is an expert body. The apex court said eliciting views of Sebi is necessary in the interest of the stability of the securities market and protection of investors. "Before taking any decision to compound an offence punishable under section 24A of the Act or the court must obtain views of Sebi for furnishing guidance to its decision. These views unless manifestly mala fide must be accorded high degree of deference. The court must be wary of substituting its own wisdom on the gravity of the offence or the impact on the markets while discarding the expert opinion," the bench said.





# Almonds, a saviour for youngsters with prediabetes

Over the last 40 years, the number of people living with diabetes globally has quadrupled and this upward trajectory is particularly steep in India. Indians have the highest annual progression to type 2 diabetes from pre-diabetes (about 14-18%), which calls for lifestyle interventions to help reverse this trend.

When it comes to snack choices, almonds may be one easy — and tasty — dietary strategy. A new study showed that almond snacking helped improve glucose metabolism in adolescents and young adults in India with prediabetes.

This randomised controlled clinical trial aimed to determine the effect of almond consumption on factors of metabolic dysfunction including blood glucose, lipids, insulin, and selected inflammatory markers in adolescents and young adults (aged 16-25 years old) with prediabetes, who resided in Mumbai, India. The study was a randomised, parallel trial of 275 participants (59 male, 216 female) with impaired glucose metabolism (prediabetes). At the start of the study, participants' weight, height, and waist and hip circumferences were measured, and fasting blood samples were taken. Participants also underwent a glucose tolerance test and their lipid profiles were assessed.

The almond group (n=107) ate 56 grams (about 2 one-ounce servings, or ~340 calories) of unroasted almonds every day for three months and the control group (n=112) consumed a savory snack with the same number of calories. The consumption of almonds as snacks was tested in the almond group, while the control group consumed a savory snack that is commonly consumed by this age



group in India. Both the almond and savory snacks accounted for ~20% of participants' total calorie intake.

Throughout the duration of the study, participants were monitored to ensure they were compliant in eating their snacks. At the end of the study, participants completed dietary intake assessments and the same measurements and blood tests were performed again.

In the almond group, HbA1c (a measure of long-term blood sugar control that also serves as a diagnostic criterion for prediabetes and diabetes) decreased significantly compared to the control group. Improving blood sugar levels at the prediabetes stage may help prevent or delay the development of diabetes. Additionally, almond consumption reduced total cholesterol and "bad" LDL-cholesterol signifi-

cantly compared to the control group, while maintaining "good" HDL-cholesterol levels.

There were no changes in measures of weight, height, waist, or hip circumferences or biochemical markers nor macronutrient intake between the almond group and the control from the start to post-intervention. Inflammatory markers (TNF- $\alpha$  and IL-6) decreased in the almond group and increased in the control group, but this was not a statistically significant result. Fasting blood glucose levels were significantly reduced in the control group compared to the almond group post-intervention. In the almond group, FG:FI ratio (fasting glucose: fasting insulin) decreased while it increased in the control group but was not statistically significant.

"Lifestyle changes including improved nutri-

tion and exercise targeted at teens and young adults have the potential to halt the progression from prediabetes to type 2 diabetes. Results from this study show that the change does not have to be a major one — simply including a twice-daily snack of almonds can make a difference. The study results are very promising in showing how almonds improved total and LDL-cholesterol levels and reduced HbA1c levels in just 12 weeks of consumption," said principal investigator, Dr. Jagmeet Madan Ph.D., Professor and Principal, Sir Vithaldas Thackersey College of Home Science (Autonomous), SNDT Women's University (Mumbai).

Further research is needed to investigate the effects of almond consumption on the same measures in other age groups and of different

ethnicities.

This research joins another study investigating the potential role of almond consumption in younger people. Researchers at the University of California Merced, in a study funded by the Almond Board of California, demonstrated that for those college students who skip breakfast, a morning snack of almonds can be a smart option. Among predominantly breakfast-skipping college freshmen (73 males and females, 18 to 19 years old), including a morning snack — either of almonds or graham crackers — reduced total cholesterol and improved fasting blood sugar levels, but the benefits were greater with almonds. Those who snacked on almonds better preserved "good" HDL-cholesterol levels and improved measures of blood sugar regulation over the 8-week study.

# AI to monitor, identify sleep disorders soon

Researchers from the UK's prestigious University of Sheffield have developed artificial intelligence which they say can effectively monitor a person's snoring levels and identify sleep disorders.

The AI, developed by Professor Guy Brown and Dr Ning Ma from the University's Speech and Hearing Research Group, can monitor a person's snoring levels and identify sleep disorders such as sleep apnoea, the university said in a press release.

The technology is being commercialised through a new app - SoundSleep — available on iOS devices and soon to be available on Android, it said. Currently, the app uses Sheffield AI to enable people to monitor the sounds they make while sleeping through their smartphones. The app records and tracks snoring levels and provides nightly reports to help people discover the causes, factors, and solutions. However, the Sheffield team has now developed the AI to be able to diagnose sleep apnoea caused by sleep disorders, the release said.

Sleep disorders affect people across the globe, with approximately 2.5 million people in the UK suffering from sleep disorder conditions, including obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA). Sleep apnoea causes a person's breathing to stop and



start while they sleep and they may also make gasping, snorting, or choking noises, wake up a lot and/or snore loudly. Without treatment, the condition can lead to high blood pressure, a higher chance of having a stroke, depression, mood swings, difficulty concentrating at school or work, and an increased risk of having a serious accident due to tiredness.

Sleep disorders such as sleep apnoea are usually diagnosed in specialist sleep clinics, but these can be expensive and also disruptive for patients as they usually have to wear a range of devices that can feel uncomfortable or invasive. Many sufferers of sleep disorders

are not identified until other medical problems become apparent, meaning that they are less likely to make lifestyle changes that could improve their condition without the need for treatment.

To address these challenges, the University of Sheffield researchers launched a project to enhance the AI they had already developed for SoundSleep so it can identify sleep disorders from the sounds people make while sleeping.

This more sophisticated AI will soon be added to the app so that people can monitor their sleep and identify sleep disorders using their smartphones in their own homes, the release said. The app could also help them make changes to their lifestyle or bedtime routine to help them get a better night's sleep, according to the university press release.

"We understand that finding that secret to a good night's sleep can seem stressful and confusing, so what we are trying to do with our research is use the latest, state-of-the-art artificial intelligence to help people get to the bottom of what is preventing them from getting a good night's sleep as easily as possible," Dr Ning Ma, Research Fellow in the University of Sheffield's Department of Computer Science, said.


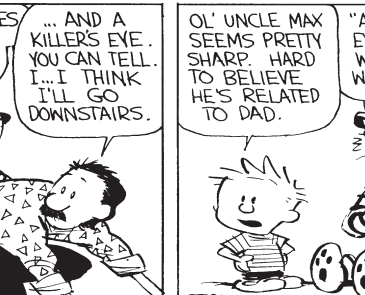



## FUN



ARCHIE





CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD




NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

6 Snapshot

8 Bees make this

10 Exchanges for money

13 Make

14 Hair in ring shapes

17 Smashed to pieces

19 People who work in libraries

9 Of exactly the same size

11 Go in

12 A month

15 Bones in your chest

16 A line of sewing where cloth is joined

17 The edge around the top of a container

18 A noise made by a pig

DOWN

1 Part of your face

2 Don't go

3 Birds lay these

4 Many animals have one of these behind them

5 Spoke very quietly

7 A person in a laboratory mixes these together

SOLUTION:

T	U	N	N	E	L	O	P	E
R	A	R	E	T	U	T	T	L
N	R	O	G	A	N	D		
A	N	I	L	D				
S	S	I	G	A	O			
W	A	T	E	R	S	T	E	L
R	A	G	S					
U	R	A	N	I	S			



# HYDERABAD IS A CHANGEMAKER, TRENDSETTER

SHIKHA DUGGAL

An individual with innovative solutions to society's most pressing social, cultural, and environmental challenges, Nayonika Roy hailing from Ranchi, has worked for women's rights and safety under the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Delhi and MV Foundation, Hyderabad. Ambitious and persistent, she's tackling major issues and offering new ideas for systems-level change in our city through 'Soch for Change'.

She who moved to the city of Hyderabad to pursue her higher studies in the year 2016, barely knew would impact the lives of so many people across the city. Simultaneously, the instant lure that the city was offering her made her decide to stay here for a lifetime thereafter. "I love Hyderabad, I have always hated huge cities because of their lack of culture. But Hyderabad is that one city that makes me feel like a small-town girl while also giving me the comfort of a metropolitan city. Moving to a new home here was very exciting! Many who have never lived in a big city have had the desire to eventually succumb to the lure of city life, and find themselves living in a much more concentrated area than they experience in the suburbs. I, for one, feel the big city life is not for everyone, nonetheless, Hyderabad made me feel like one of its own," says the outspoken young woman.

Even though city living has its inconveniences, it makes up for these inconveniences with all that it has to offer. Hyderabad having a major cultural center that has vibrant art and music scenes, a wider variety of food, several places of interest such as museums,



events like concerts, and a diverse population with a shared experience of living — all this made the changemaker stay back! "My ideas about the city were mostly positive. When I was moving here, I was told about its famous Biryani, the rich street food that actually made my inner foodie scream its lungs out, and of course the pearl stores. My heart goes with the food, and in no way do I feel that the city could have ever offered me more.

Biryani is not the only delicacy that this ancient city has to offer. The land of Nizams doesn't let its food lovers down, it stands out for its unique creations and beloved

contributions to the culinary world," she adds.

Nayonika encountered many new faces every day. Meeting and talking to new people who have had very different life experiences than hers, gave her a refreshing and new perspective. Going back to her remembrance of where she's from, she tells, "I was born and brought up in Ranchi. I have spent eighteen years of my life there.

For the last eight years, I have lived in Cuttack, Hyderabad, and Delhi, but Hyderabad is my most favourite city to live in. I consider this to be my home! It is a city that makes me feel safe, I got my first job in this city

and it is the place where I decided to stay independent and make a living. Every city is made by the people who live there.

Hyderabad is different because of this exact reason. People are friendly here and they go beyond their capacity to help each other out." There is always something to do in this city which keeps people of all different interests from getting bored. A lively nightlife, different types of food to try, shows of all types, landmarks, parks, festivals, games, and so much more. If you're a visual or performance artist or a musician, opportunities are aplenty!

Whenever she thinks about

Hyderabad, Shilparamam is what fills her thoughts. She recalls, "I was in my tenth grade when I first visited the city. I was on a government scholarship for dance, and we had our seven days' workshop at Shilparamam. This place remains very close to my heart. In the last couple of years, I have performed at Shilparamam several times and the stage and the place hold too many memories. In 2018, when I started working with Voice 4 Girls at Hyderabad, I applied for the Day of Girl Challenge conducted by the British Deputy High Commission. That year I was chosen as the winner from Telangana! It definitely would not have happened if I was not in Hyderabad!"

Nayonika feels the city is more welcoming than many people believe it to be, and if you go to the same places and do the same activities, you will quickly meet new people who have similar interests and came to live in the city for the same reasons as you. "One of the most important people that I met here in Hyderabad is the Anusha Bharadwaj, Executive Director of the Soch for Change NGO, who has not just been a strong mentor to me but has also always lend me a friendly ear through all the times I was feeling low and was away from home. At times, working in the social sector can turn out to be immensely difficult, as it's not just about the work that you do but also about how your work impacts other people in the community."

She who routinely works in such a big city knows that commuting is a hassle. Because it has more people and neighbourhoods, traffic is likely to occur which makes navigating through the city more difficult for her. But ultimately, she considers this city to be a pot full of emotions that have always led her on to a beautiful path!



## SONA MOHAPATRA MAKES HER TIMES SQUARE BILLBOARD DEBUT

On the heels of the release of her latest single *Aise Na They*, artist and producer Sona Mohapatra made her debut appearance on the Times Square Billboard in New York!

The track *Aise Na They* has been composed by Ram Sampath with lyrics by Amitabh Bhattacharya and distributed by Paris-based music distribution and marketing service Believe. The song's narrative revolves around a relationship that has lost its fizz, but a sense of optimism is infused in the track through the lovely sound of the hills with pop-rock blended with ethereal flutes and tingling mandolins.

As part of this feat, she has been handpicked for the Spotify Equal campaign and will lead the Indian leg of the global campaign for the entire month of July. Her single will feature all this month on the Equal playlist as she joins other global artists such as are Meryl (France), Bowklylion (Thailand), Nadin Amizah (Indonesia), and Anikv (Russia) from the roster of Paris-based leading independent digital music distribution and artist services company, Believe.

Artist and producer Sona Mohapatra said, "To be woken up in the middle of the night to see photographs of my face on a billboard covering a skyscraper in one of my favourite cities New York was a surreal feeling. To be one of the first independent musicians to be given this place is a pop-culture milestone because it paves the way for artistic expression of various hues and colours free from cookie-cutter formulas in musical mainstream success. I have been consis-

tently releasing original music for many years, have fought many battles for IP and residuals for artists and it has been exhilarating, exhausting too but now, with my indie label Omgrown Music partnering with a global name like Believe, I truly feel optimistic about the future of the music scene in India and more so for other independent voices like mine. To celebrate this achievement, I am dropping a single *Ek Din* — *Manhattan Memories*, a *diltod*, heartbreak love song which would be a perfect companion for a long highway drive or a dance party! We are slowly coming out of a very tough time together as a society but this phase in India has been the very best for independent music releases without the big banyan tree of Bollywood taking away all the media and audience attention with its big promotional budgets! This billboard is a validation of that constant hustle of never giving up on the power of music and self-belief. My allies have stood by me through thick and thin and I am grateful for their belief!"

Launched globally earlier this year to celebrate female talent across the world, the Spotify Equal campaign aims to put the spotlight on women in music across the world. The initiative features specially curated playlists across 50 countries while the Spotify Equal global playlist features music from selected artists from across the world.

Every month, the streaming platform announces new artists for the campaign, all of whom are featured in this playlist, and on the cover of their respective, local playlists.

*The Pioneer* strikes up a conversation with the composing duo, Naren Chandavarkar and Benedict Taylor, against the backdrop of their rising star.

When we watch a film or a show, while our eyes are focussed on the screen, there is a lot more to process than what meets the eye. We are sure you noticed how, with the rise of OTT platforms, elaborate song and dance sequences have taken a backseat to make room for intricate storylines, among other things. However, can you imagine a film/series which does not feature a catchy tune?

Currently, Naren Chandavarkar and Benedict Taylor — the Indian-British composer duo behind enthralling background scores for hits such as *Uda Punjab*, *Paatal Lok*, *Newton*, *Ship Of Theseus* and *That Girl In The Yellow Boots* — seem to be hitting all the right notes in the industry. London-based Benedict, trained in the viola and the violin, performs and produces classical, contemporary, and improvised music, while Naren, who resides in Mumbai, has his base rooted in



another stringed instrument, the guitar.

Recently, they made headlines for their work on Amit Masurkar's *Sherni*, headlined by Vidya Balan, which won accolades not just for its hard-hitting performances and gripping narrative but also for its haunting background score. Just a fortnight after the release of the film, the pair were in the news for their work on the score for *Hungama Hai Kyon Barpa* from Ray, an anthology based on the works of Satyajit Ray. Going through their itinerary, we knew we had to talk to them before they get any bigger than they already are.

Not much is known about how their collaboration came to be and when we ask them Benedict shares that ever since they were introduced to each other by another musician, Salome Rebello, they got along really well. "It wasn't one definite moment that initiated our alliance. We both floated the idea

in different contexts... about trying different things we were interested in that had come up in conversation. The first instance I remember was Benedict coming in to join the rehearsal for a play we were developing. We workshopped viola and acting improv together and it went incredibly well. This led to more conversations and here we are today," adds Naren, with a smile.

Indeed, the conversations led to an official collaboration in 2010 for Anurag Kashyap's *That Girl In Yellow Boots*, but how did that happen?

Naren reveals, "I had worked on the music for a theatre piece Anurag had produced, *The Skeleton Woman* by Kalki Koечlin and Prashant Prakash. He heard the music and asked me to score the film. As soon as he did, I asked Benedict if he'd like to work on it with me."

While most of us have adapted (more or less) to the WFH culture over the past year in light of the pandemic, the two have been

working remotely all along. And they have been doing it splendidly.

Known for stitching their genre-bending music according to the director's vision, Benedict says that it is just how they work. "We embark on a voyage of discovering new sounds, playing with different elements, with each project. However, it has to be said that we enter the realms of the unknown with our working styles in place — which we've spent time refining — and with those foundations, we can then work individually with each director to realise his/her vision of what the music should be like," he reveals. Naren goes on to add, "With each project, our process changes slightly with the director we work with. However, our journey always starts by gaining clarity on what role music needs to play in the film and what we instinctively feel usually works. It is always about finding musical solutions to the right questions. There is trial and error but it's directed in a specific direction with the hope of

finding what we're looking for."

When we ask them if they have any favourites that they regard as the cream of the lot from their growing repertoire of composition, Benedict has a very fitting response, "Impossible to pick one, as you take a great deal from each project. In any project, there are always elements you're thrilled with and things you'd like to change, but that's the nature of the work. Plus, importantly, every project is so different. If I listen to *Paatal Lok* one day, Ray the next, and Tryst the day after, I'll be entering drastically different worlds, all of which serve a certain purpose."

As we wrap up our conversation, Naren shares that both of them spend time making their own music. "While Benedict produces a lot of singles and albums, we are currently working on a body of work as a duo for release outside of the scoring arena," he tells us.

We don't press for more information since there is no doubt they have a nice surprise in store for us.





The Tokyo Olympics were declared open in an eerily empty stadium on Friday after defying a year's pandemic delay and lingering coronavirus threats that will make them perhaps the most unusual Games in history.

Japan's Emperor Naruhito made the announcement against the backdrop of thousands of vacant seats at Tokyo's 68,000-capacity Olympic Stadium, after Covid-19 forced organisers to ban spectators at all but a handful of venues.

"I declare open the Games of Tokyo," said the monarch, wearing a white surgical mask.

The stripped-down ceremony, simplified to reduce coronavirus risks, unfolded in front of fewer than 1,000 VIPs and several thousand athletes.

A reduced parade of about 5,700 athletes, far lower than the usual numbers, filed into the stadium, not all of them socially distanced but all wearing masks.

International Olympic Committee president Thomas Bach acknowledged the Games would be "very different from what all of us had imagined."

But "today is a moment of hope," he said in an address.

The 16-day Games, with 339 Gold medals across 33 sports, have a surreal air after the pandemic compelled organisers to make this the first Games with virtually no spectators.



## INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 24 (ALL TIMES IST)

TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
05:00 AM IST	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Rifle Women's Qualification	Apurvi Chandel & Elavenil Valarivan
06:00 AM IST	<b>Archery:</b> Mixed Team 1/8 Eliminations	Deepika Kumari & Pravin Jadhav
06:30 AM IST	<b>Hockey:</b> Men's Pool A	New Zealand vs India
07:15 AM IST	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Rifle Women's Final	
07:30 AM IST	<b>Rowing:</b> Lightweight Men's Double Sculls Heat	Arjun Jat Lal & Arvind Singh
	<b>Judo:</b> Women 48 kg Elimination Round of 32	Shushila Devi Likhambam
08:30 AM IST	<b>Table Tennis:</b> Mixed Doubles Round of 16	Sharath Kamal & Manika Batra
08:50 AM IST	<b>Badminton:</b> Men's Doubles Group Stage	Satwiksairaj & Chirag Shetty
09:00 AM IST	<b>Tennis:</b> Men's Singles First Round	Sumit Nagal
09:30 AM IST	<b>Badminton:</b> Men's Singles Group Stage	B Sai Praneeth
	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Pistol Men's Qualification	Abhishek Verma & Saurabh Chaudhary
10:20 AM IST	<b>Weightlifting:</b> Women's 49kg Final	Saikhom Mirabai Chanu
12:00 PM IST	<b>Shooting:</b> 10m Air Pistol Men's Final	
12:15 PM IST	<b>Table Tennis:</b> Women's Singles Round 1	Manika Batra
01:00 PM IST	<b>Table Tennis:</b> Women's Singles Round 1	Sutirtha Mukherjee
03:54 PM IST	<b>Boxing:</b> Men's 69kg - Round of 32	Vikas Krishan
05:15 PM IST	<b>Hockey:</b> Women's Pool A	Netherlands vs India
LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK		



## After struggles, sacrifices & success, Indian shooters eye Olympic glory

**Tokyo:** Entering the Tokyo Olympics on the back of an unprecedented run that began sometime after the inexplicable meltdown in the Rio de Janeiro Games, Indian shooters bagging a medal or two, or even three to four, is a tangible reality.

All of the 15 shooters are capable of winning medals, but few are seen as sure shot to secure podium finishes in the events that start on Saturday.

One among them is the highly-skilled Saurabh Chaudhary, who will have a few Olympic and world champions standing in his way to glory at sport's biggest showpiece.

Alongside Abhishek Verma, Chaudhary will be part of the first competition day action in the men's 10m air pistol event.

But before that, the fate of Apurvi Chandel and Elavenil Valarivan — in the women's 10m air rifle event — will be decided. A good outing for either of them means India will have won their first medal in these Games.

Both Chandel and Elavenil will enter the competition with plenty to look forward to, despite the occasional blips here and there. The 21-year-old Elavenil, world number 1 and considered one of the country's finest rifle shooters after some fine performances since breaking into the senior team, will certainly fancy her chances.

On the second competition day, India will have the sensational Manu Baker and the hard-working Yashaswini Singh Deswal representing the country in the women's 10m air pistol competition.



The women's 10m pistol event has attracted maximum number of entries but that should not worry the two Indian shooters given their skills and consistency over the years.

In the men's 10m air rifle event, India will have the teenaged Divyansh Singh Panwar and the experienced Deepak Kumar, with the former especially seen as a strong contender after his superb run of form since breaking into the

senior team in 2019.

If these eight participants fire on the first two days, India can expect a handful of medals at the Games, which will make up for returning empty-handed from the 2016 Rio Games.

In the middle and towards the end of the shooting events too, India have in its ranks strong contenders in the form of Rahi Sarnobat, Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar, Anjum Moudgil, Tejaswini Sawant and the seasoned Sanjeev Rajput, besides the two skeet shooters in Mairaj Ahmad Khan and Angad Vir Singh Bajwa.

The likes of Sarnobat, who has won a Silver and Gold in the ISSF World Cups in New Delhi and Oisjek, Croatia respectively, world number one in 10m air rifle Divyansh Singh Panwar and Aishwary Pratap Singh Tomar are all gunning for medals. PTI

## Mirabai favourite to open India's account

**Tokyo:** Former world champion Mirabai Chanu will be in focus for her high medal-winning chances at the Tokyo Olympics as the Indian hopes to exorcise the ghosts of a disappointing Rio Games and write a new chapter in the country's weightlifting history.

Competing in the 49kg category, Chanu is being considered a sure shot medal prospect for India as her personal best of 205kg is only second to China's Hou Zhihui's effort of 213kg in the eight-woman field.

The hype is similar to the one five years ago in Rio, where Chanu could manage only one lift from her six attempts and thus could not get an overall total in

women's 48kg event.

The diminutive Manipuri will desperately hope for a different script this time round, one that involves a podium.

While Chanu will have one eye on her competitors' barbells, the 26-year-old's main battle will be with herself. In recent times, her performance in the snatch section has often proved to be her downfall in important competitions.

Chanu has managed to match Zhihui, the favourite to win the Gold, in the clean and jerk category, but her personal best of 88kg in snatch pales in comparison to the Chinese lifter's world record effort of 96kg.

Even USA's Delacruz Jourdan Elizabeth has a better personal best — 89kg — than the Indian, while Aisah Windy Cantika of Indonesia had managed to pip Chanu to win a Bronze in the snatch section at the Asian championship in April.

It is expected that Chanu will try to better her world record lift of 119kg in the clean and jerk category, should the competition demand it.

Interestingly, Chanu has set the highest entry weight of 210kg, which is five kilograms more than her personal best, followed by Zhihui (205kg), who had lifted 213kg (96g+117kg) at the Asian championship. PTI

## Indian archers brace up for Korean challenge

**Tokyo:** World No 1 Deepika Kumari was inconsistent but the male archers' performance was simply underwhelming in the Olympics' ranking rounds, prompting a rejig of India's mixed pair combination on a topsy-turvy day at the Yumenoshima Park on Friday.

The Koreans, who stayed away from all International competitions in the build-up to the Olympics since 2019, reigned supreme, including a top-three finish in the women's section where young sensation An San shattered a 25-year-old Olympic record.

The Indian men's team of Atanu Das, Pravin Jadhav and Tarundeep Rai, however, did not post particularly impressive scores and just about managed to sneak into top 10 in the team rankings.

Deepika slipped from fourth at the halfway mark to finish ninth with 663 points which was way below her best International ranking score of 686. "I feel my performance was good as well as bad...It was in between I would say," Deepika said.

Deepika's biggest challenge is likely to be in the last-eight where she might run into San who is making her Olympic debut. "I want to show my best performance here and I will show that in my next rounds," Deepika vowed to come back strong.

In fact, there will be Korea in waiting for the Indians in the quarterfinals of both men's team and mixed pair competition.



The mixed team, is the country's best bet to win an elusive Olympic medal in archery.

India had identical rankings of ninth in both men's team and mixed pair competitions.

Deepika will not partner her husband Das after the top Indian male archer slipped behind Olympic debutant Jadhav.

Jadhav was the best among the Indian trio with 656 points for a 31st place finish, three points ahead of Das, while Rai, in his third Olympics appearance, took the 37th spot among 64 archers.

India had the option to send entries of Das and Deepika, who recently won a Gold medal together at the Paris World Cup, but the federation went ahead with Jadhav based on his current form.

"Simply put, we picked Jadhav based on his current form, it's no rocket science," Archery Association of India official Virendra Sachdeva, who

is accompanying the team said. In all likelihood, the Indian mixed pair team would run into top seed Korea in the quarters after overcoming eighth-ranked Chinese Taipei.

Placed in the same half as India, top seed Korea will open their main event against 16th ranked Bangladesh.

The men's trio's combined performance was just enough to finish inside top-10 as they totalled 1961 for a ninth place finish in their first Olympic appearance since London 2012.

The Indian men's team might run into top seed Korea, who got a bye into the quarters, should they beat eighth-ranked Kazakhstan in the opening round.

In individual section, Jadhav will face 34th ranked Galsan Bazarzhapov of Russia, Das will take on Deng Yu-Cheng of Chinese Taipei, while Rai's opening challenge will be against Ukrainian Oleksii Hunbin. PTI

## Hockey teams start campaign

PTI ■ TOKYO

The men would be seeking to reclaim a glorious past, while the women would be aiming to script some history of their own when the two Indian hockey teams begin their Olympic campaign on Saturday with expectations from both at a high.

Men will be up against eighth-ranked New Zealand, followed by the women's clash with the Netherlands. With a current world ranking of four, the Indian men's are considered a bright medal prospect this time around in Tokyo.

### ALL EYES ON VIKAS

The seasoned Vikas Krishan (69kg) will open India's boxing campaign on Saturday against local favourite Sewonrets Quincy Mensah Okazawa.

He will be the lone Indian boxer in action on the opening day of boxing competitions at the Ryogoku Kokugikan arena.

## Can paddlers do the unthinkable again?



**Tokyo:** The Indian table tennis contingent produced an unthinkable performance at the Asian Games, considered as 'mini-Olympics' by the players. Three years down the line, can they pull off another miracle at the Tokyo Games?

Asian Games may have the presence of continental powerhouses like China, Korea and Japan but the Olympics are a different ball game altogether.

Nevertheless, India exceeded all expectations to win a men's team Bronze and mixed doubles Bronze in Jakarta, ending the country's medal drought at the Asian Games, but getting close

to even one medal here would be a gargantuan task.

Before the paddlers arrived in Tokyo, the only little hope was in the mixed doubles category but an opener against the world number one duo from Chinese Taipei has made the challenge a lot tougher for A Sharath Kamal and Manika Batra.

Sharath along with G Sathiyan has also been handed a tough draw in the men's singles competition.

The 20th seed is drawn to meet reigning champion Ma Long in round three provided he clears the second round (first round bye) in his fourth

## Tennis players need miracle to go deep

**Tokyo:** Indian tennis players need no less than a miraculous performance to get close to the medal rounds as an under-prepared team of Sania Mirza and debutant Ankita Raina faces a tough Ukrainian challenge in the opener while Sumit Nagal has got a tough draw in the singles competition.

Mirza, who is making a record fourth Olympic appearance, and debutant Raina are going into the Olympics without playing a single competitive match together this year, which is far from ideal preparation. They will open their campaign against Ukraine's twin sisters Nadiia and Lyudmyla Kichenok.

In the men's singles, Nagal is extremely lucky to get an entry into the Olympics but his recent performances do not inspire confidence and he faces Asian Games champion Denis Istomin in his first round. There is a possibility of him getting past the 34-year-old Uzbek but the Indian may next face world number two and Australian Open runner-up Daniil Medvedev from Russia and that could be end of the road for him. PTI

The unseeded Manika is expected to beat Britain's Tin-Tin Ho in the first round and is drawn to meet 20th seed Margaryta Pestoska in the second. Sutirtha, world number 98, plays 78th-ranked Linda Bergstrom from Sweden in the opening round. PTI

## Rain break does the trick for SL

**Colombo:** India's young batsmen paid for their profligacy and inexperience as Sri Lanka's spinners made best use of a rain break to dismiss the visitors for a lowly 225 in 43.1 overs in the third and final ODI here on Friday.

With the series pocketed, India coach Rahul Dravid rejigged the bowling line-up along with a couple of changes in the batting order, but it was evident that the lack of game awareness became their undoing on the day.

The rain-break at the end of the 23rd over, which reduced the game to 47-overs per side, helped the home team. The pitch suddenly had a bit of freshness and the ball would both grip and skid, making life easier for the spinners, who rocked the middle-order.

The latest trend of young batters not being able to cope up with slow bowlers was on show as the middle-order looked clueless against left-arm spinner Praveen Jayawickrama (3/59 in 10 overs) and off-spinner Akila Dananjaya (3/44 in 10 overs), who, in his second spell, blew away the lower middle order with turn and bounce.

However, Prithvi Shaw (49 off 49 balls) dazzled with his breathtaking array of strokes, while Sanju Samson again made batting look easy in his run-a-ball 46.

They added 74 runs in 13.2 overs and one can't fault anyone who was dreaming of something big as the duo injected life in a dead rubber.



However, after skipper Dasun Shanaka got one to skid and trapped Shaw, Manish Pandey's (11 off 19 balls) inclusion brought about a break in momentum.

Samson was in no mood to relent but an upish inside-out check drive was plucked by Avishka Fernando at extra-cover, like a fruit from the tree.

Post the break, when India resumed at 147 for three, the spinners suddenly started getting more turn and the rain had spiced up the pitch. PTI



# Akhanda climax set in a temple in Tamil Nadu



**A**khanda, Balakrishna, and Boyapati Srinu's crazy combo's third movie is on shooting mode. The latest schedule of the film is said to be shot at a temple in Tamil Nadu. Currently, the actor is shooting for the climax fight at the temple itself. Stunt master Shiva has designed the climax fight and the unit opined that it would be a highlight episode for the film like his previous stunts in *Simha* and *Legend*, which were massive hits. Fans of Balakrishna

Nandamuri are eagerly waiting for *Akhanda*. The teasers released so far have received tremendous responses from fans. Expecting a hat-trick of hits, Boyapati and Balakrishna are working hard for this movie. Balakrishna himself didn't have a big hit after *Legend*, so fans are can't wait for *Akhanda* to break that.

Srikanth, Pragya Jaiswal, and Poorna will be seen playing key roles in the film. S.Thaman has composed music for the film that is being bankrolled by Miriyala Ravindar Reddy of *Jaya Janaki Nayaka* fame.



# tollywood

## RADHE SHYAM INCHING TOWARDS COMPLETION

**A**ctress Pooja Hegde, who will soon be seen in the multilingual love story *Radhe Shyam*, alongside actor Prabhas, says that the film has almost finished shooting. The film, which is directed by Radha Krishna Kumar has treated fans with only a teaser so far. Sharing details on *Radhe Shyam*, the actress said: "We are almost towards the end. We have around a week or 10 days' worth of shoot left, and then we will wrap. Once shutters open and things are good to go, the producers will decide when they want to release it." This is the first time Pooja has been paired opposite Prabhas. While the actress is tight-lipped about her role, she is excited to be part of a love story. "I don't know if I can talk about the role right now. Maybe closer to the release, I can. The film is a very mature love story, I would say. It's quite interesting to see Prabhas do a romantic film after so many films filled with action. I myself don't think I have done a proper love story in a long time. So, it's exciting for me," she says. Pooja has been doing her bit for society through her charity table organisation All About Love, for almost a



year now. Talking about launching the organisation, Pooja says: "It has been in the making for a long time. I have always been giving back on a personal front, in whatever way I could. I wanted to create a culture, where you donate a percentage of income and give back to society with love. I have set aside a certain percentage for charity. It's something I want to push people to do in whatever they can. I think any act done out of love can really change someone's life and that is what the name All About Love, is about." Pooja has projects in Hindi, Telugu, and Tamil film industries. In Bollywood, she will be seen alongside Salman Khan in *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* and Ranveer Singh's *Cirkus*. In Telugu, she will be seen in *Radhe Shyam*, and will be seen sharing screen space with Vijay in the much-awaited Tamil film *Beast*.



## Tuck Jagadish likely to release on August 13

**N**atural star Nani-starrer *Tuck Jagadish*, whose release had been postponed owing to the Covid induced lockdown, is said to hit the big screens on August 13. Though there is no official announcement yet, the buzz is that *Amazon Prime Video* has locked the deal for Rs 40 crores. The discussion about whether the movie can be released in theatres and OTT at the same time is currently on. Distributors are in two minds, given pulling the crowds to theatres to crowds amid the pandemic not being a small thing. But in the

view of the producers, releasing both will be a profitable one. Within a few days, we are told, an official statement will be made by the producers. Along with Nani, Jagapati Babu, Ritu Varma, and Aishwarya Rajesh constitute the lead cast in the film. S.Thaman has given the music for the film. After super hit movies like *Ninnu Kori*, and *Majili*, director Shiva Nirvana is eagerly waiting for his third film *Tuck Jagadish* to hit screens.



## Sharath Marar to produce Naga Chaitanya's OTT debut



**S**harath Marar, entrepreneur and producer in the Telugu film industry, who has produced movies like *Sardar Gabbar Singh*, *Badri*, and many others, and also the owner of South Parade, which mostly dealt with commercials on the small screen, is now all set to

work with Akkineni Naga Chaitanya, according to the latest buzz. We have already reported that Naga Chaitanya is soon going to make his digital debut. Sources say that Naga Chaitanya's OTT project will be an original film and it will be bankrolled by Sharath Marar. Reports have been



coming in that both have been discussing several scripts for the actor's OTT debut. They finally zeroed in on a script and it is said to be a sensitive one. On the other side, currently, Naga Chaitanya is busy shooting for his Hindi film *Laal Singh Chadda*, which has Aamir Khan and Kareena Kapoor in the lead roles.

## Allu Arjun surprises Ghani team

**S**tylish Star Allu Arjun has surprised the team of *Ghani* starring Varun Tej. In the film directed by Korrapati Kiran, Varun Tej will be seen as a boxer, whose shoot has already begun. On Friday, the Icon star made a surprise visit to the sets of *Ghani* to cheer his cousin, actor Varun Tej and his elder brother Allu Bobby, who is one of the producers for the film. Allu Arjun took interest in inquiring about the progress of the film. Director

Korrapati Kiran has shown him a few videos and Bunny was extremely impressed by them. Earlier, the motion picture was released, and fans felt it was like a 'feast.' Jagapathi Babu, Upendra, Suniel Shetty, and Naveen Chandra are playing key roles in the film. Saiee Manjrekar is playing the female lead role opposite Varun Tej. She has played lead roles in Salman's *Dabaang 3* and Adivi Sesh's *Major*. She is better known as the daughter of Bollywood director and actor Mahesh Manjrekar.



## Rangamarthanda, a test for Krishna Vamsi

**C**reative director Krishna Vamsi, we hear, is coming up with an emotional and family drama with his next project. *Rangamarthanda* is going to resume shooting in a few days. The makers are planning to release the film in August itself. We're told that *Amazon Prime Video* is already in talks with the producer. This movie is a remake of *Nata Samrat*, a Marathi movie, that had Nana Patekar play the lead role. The film has got received huge applause in Marathi. But the story is an emotional drama, just like K. Viswanath's movie, and was focused on a stage artist's life. Nana Patekar is an artist, who plays

Shakespeare's dramas in the film. The question now is, how will Krishna Vamsi deal with this subject, for he is known to make action entertainers. Will he be able to change his orientation to Viswanath's mode? A confident film unit say that though it is a family drama, it will have Vamsi's touch. Prakash Raj is reprising Nana Patekar's role, while Ramya Krishna plays his wife. Comedian Brahmanandam, Dr Rajasekhara's daughter Sivamika, Anasuya, Rahul Sipligunj, and others will be seen essaying key roles in the film. Moreover, Maestro Ilayaraja gave music to this film! As we know, the songs of Krishna Vamsi's films were musical hits despite the fate of those movies. After *Chandamama* (2007), Krishna Vamsi hasn't been able to get his perfect hit, only *Govindudu Andarivadele* was able to make some mark after that. So Rangamarthanda will be a test for Krishna Vamsi for sure!