

ANALYSIS 7
MISSING THE WOODS
FOR THE TREES**MONEY 8**
TECH, PLATFORMS BROUGHT FULL
BENEFIT OF SCHEMES: MINISTER**SPORTS 11**
ANOTHER TOUGH DAY
FOR INDIA

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



the pioneer

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'WANT TO REACH
OUT TO GLOBAL
AUDIENCE'

Page 12

VETERAN ACTRESS ABHINAYA SHARADE JAYANTHI DIES AT 76 IN BENGALURU

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



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

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



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

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



6 ASSAM COPS KILLED AS CLASHES ON BORDER WITH MIZORAM ESCALATE

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



No going back on decision to privatise RINL, Centre tells LS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Union government on Monday reiterated that it was going ahead with 100 percent privatisation of Vizag-based State-run steelmaker RINL.

When Hindupur MP Gorantla Madhav asked if the Centre was rethinking about privatisation of RINL, Union Minister of State in Ministry of Finance Bhagwat Kishan Rao Karad said that it will not arise.

Soon after the Cabinet Committee of Economic Affairs on January 27 gave 'in-principle' approval for 100 percent disinvestment of the government stake in



RINL, there have been protests by the workers, trade unions, by both

ruling and opposition leaders in Andhra Pradesh. Chief Minister YS

Jaganmohan Reddy had also written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Ministers concerned opposing the decision and also listing alternatives that can help a RINL turnaround.

Till December 2020, the outstanding debt of RINL stood at Rs 21,236.01 crore. A majority of the debt burden was due to the RINL's ambitious expansion plan.

RINL currently has the capacity to produce 7.3 Million Tonnes steel and had gone for plant modernisation and capacity expansion recently. This led to the plant borrowing loans from banks.



Design change led to Polavaram cost rise

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat on Monday said that vetting by Central Water Commission (CWC) has led to changes in design of some components of Polavaram multipurpose project. These include height of the upstream and downstream coffer dams, depth of foundations, grades of concrete of spillway in deep blocks, diaphragm wall cut off for the left side of upstream cofferdam, chipping in gate grooves, stop log gates grooves, second stage concretising in spillway etc.

In a written reply to a question raised by YSRC Rajya

Sabha Member V Vijayasai Reddy on change in the designs of Polavaram project head works, Shekhawat said that implementation of Polavaram irrigation project, including the planning and design of its various components, is being done by the Government of Andhra Pradesh (GoAP).

However, approval / vetting of the designs are being done by the CWC to reaffirm their conformity with the relevant codal provisions, as well as with the provisions of Godavari Water Dispute Tribunal Award, 1980.



COURTESY CALL



The Deputy High Commissioner of Sri Lanka in Southern India D Venkateshwaran is welcomed by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy during a courtesy visit to the camp office at Tadipalli on Monday. The Chief Minister welcomed Dr Venkateshwaran with a shawl and presented a statue of Lord Venkateswara.

Yediyurappa resigns, says will remain active in politics

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashadha & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Chaturthi 26:27

Nakshatram : Shatabhisha 10:13

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

Rahukalam : 3:35 pm - 5:11 pm

Yamagandam : 9:10 am - 10:46 am

Varjyam : 4:46 pm - 6:24 pm

Gulika : 12:22 pm - 1:58 pm

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 2:34 am - 4:12 am

Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:56 am - 12:48 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 33/26

Humidity: 88%

Sunrise: 5:53 am

Sunset: 06:51 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated JULY 26, 2021 5:00 PM

YSRCP seeks CBI probe into Raju, BR Naidu deal

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MPs on Monday wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi seeking a CBI probe into the alleged fraudulent transactions between BR Naidu, chairman of a media house, and Narasapur MP Kanumuri Raghu Rama Krishnam Raju, in violation of PMLA and FEMA regulations. They also met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and submitted the representation seeking CBI probe to her.

In their representation to Modi,

the YSRCP MPs said that Andhra Pradesh police have found several pieces of evidence which prima facie prove a case of money laundering and violations of provisions of FEMA.

They said that the State Crime Investigation Department, during the course of investigation in a session case registered against Raju, conducted forensics analysis of the phone of the main accused which revealed a hawala transaction of 1 million Euros.



Govt makes changes to IAS transfer orders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Monday modified certain transfer orders of IAS officers in the State. According to the new orders, Gandam Chandrudu, who was waiting for posting, has been posted as Special Secretary to Government, Minorities Welfare Department.

Special Secretary to Government, Minorities Welfare Department A Md Imtiaz has been transferred as Chief Executive Officer, SERP.



TRS, BJP try to claim credit for UNESCO tag

SNCN ACHARYULU ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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



Board B Vinod Kumar gave the credit to KCR as soon as UNESCO made its decision public. Shortly after, Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay and other leaders of his party gave the credit to Modi.

While welcoming the world heritage tag to Ramappa temple by UNESCO, Bandi Sanjay said that the efforts of the Prime Minister and Union ministers Meenakshi Lekhi and G Kishan Reddy have borne fruit.

In Covid times, Govt's net tax collection up 86% to Rs 5.57 lakh-cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"The net direct tax collection in the 1st quarter of FY 2021-2022 is Rs 2,46,519.82 crore as against Rs 1,17,783.87 crore during the same period of previous FY 2020-21 representing a growth of 109.3 per cent," Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

The net indirect tax collection in the first quarter of FY 2021-2022 was Rs 3,11,398 crore as against Rs 1,82,862 crore during the same period a year ago, representing a growth of 70.3 per cent.

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

evaders.

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

Further, more than 107 prosecution complaints have been filed under the Black Money (Undisclosed Foreign Income and Assets) and Imposition of Tax Act, 2015.

As on May 31, 2021, assessment orders under the Act have been passed in 166 cases, wherein a demand of Rs 8,216 crore has been raised.

Besides, undisclosed income of about Rs 8,465 crore has been brought to tax and a penalty of Rs 1,294 crore has been levied in HSBG cases. Undisclosed income of about Rs 11,010 crore has been detected in ICIJ (International Consortium of Investigative Journalists) cases.

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

No plan to print currency notes: FM

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has no plan to print currency notes to tide over the current economic crisis triggered by the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman informed Parliament on Monday.

To a question on whether there is any plan to print currency to tide over the crisis, the Finance Minister said, "No Sir". Many economists and experts have suggested the government to resort to printing more currency notes to support the economy ravaged by the spread of COVID-19, and protect jobs.

India's real Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is estimated to have contracted by 7.3 per cent during 2020-21, Sitharaman said in a written reply to Lok Sabha.

This contraction reflects the unparalleled effect of the pandemic and the containment measures that were taken to control the pandemic, she said.



Vote share shows faith of people in us: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Monday said that the positive vote share for YSRC has increased and that the two-year governance of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy paved the way for massive victory in the Eluru Municipal Corporation elections.

Addressing a press conference here on Monday, Ramakrishna Reddy said that it was a landslide for YSRC that swept all the 12 Municipal Corporations and won 74 of the 75

Municipalities. "These results clearly show the faith the people have in Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's governance, which took welfare to the doorstep of the beneficiary irrespective of castes, religions and parties," he said.

In Eluru, the people as one voted for YSRC, the party having registered a 56.3 percent vote share, while the opposition TDP was limited to 28.2 percent, Ramakrishna Reddy said. He added that YSRC vote share was 44.73 per cent in 2019.



Filibustering of Parliament shows Opposition disdain for Constitution

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the Opposition parties started the session by barging into the Well. The opposition Members do not remain seated and have been serving notices for discussions and debates. Why are the Opposition members not willing to conduct themselves with dignity in the House stating that a notice has been served under so and so rule? If there is force in the contention of the opposition, it will reach out to the people at large.

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

When in power, the

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

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

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

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

Does the Congress, which is an expert in hatching conspiracies, or any other Opposition party have any moral right to criticise Modi? It is their foolishness that they believe people would give credence to them if they obstruct the business of Parliament.

Employment exchanges across AP set to enter the digital era

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Employment exchanges in Andhra Pradesh will go digital and online soon. Until now, the State has been using age-old offline software that doesn't offer any backend or interactive technologies.

Currently, employment exchanges in Andhra Pradesh are utilising offline "Arundathi" software developed in 1993 by AP Technology Services (APTS). Arundhati software uses COBOL language and UNIX-C operation system.

Now, APTS is revamping the entire system to bring good experience to jobseekers. A pilot project has been taken up in Vijayawada Employment Exchange.

APTS authorities are developing an integrated web



application to migrate and convert the old data in a portal as per functional scope of the state employment and training department.

The existing "Arundathi" COBOL/UNIX-C operational system is offline package. It is now being extracted, migrat-

ed, converted and upgraded into new portal and backend technologies like NEXTJS, REACTJS, NODEJS, DIANGO, PYTHON, NGINX SERVER, POSTGRESQL with database by the APTS authorities with new features. The proposed digitalisation

of employment exchanges in the State is going to be completed in two phases.

In the first phase, modules of all activities of employment exchanges in the Arundhati package will be extracted, converted and migrated into a new portal. Later it will be integrated with the National Career Service portal.

The new portal will offer all employment activities to jobseekers / employers through the public domain and also village and ward secretariats. In the new portal, there will also be a provision to sponsor activities and conduct job melas and fairs and basic reports.

The digital services will also offer an interface between the Department of Employment and jobseekers with periodic alerts.

In the second phase, the new portal will be integrated with other departments like industries, APSSDC, SEEDAP, educational institutions and training providers.

Employment market information, career counselling, vocational guidance, monitoring of key schemes and MIS reports will also be provided.

"As per the functional scope for developing integrated web applications for digitalisation of employment exchanges, the proposals were submitted to the government to issue administrative as well as financial sanction. The data migration of District Employment Exchange, Vijayawada is completed and the analysis on the outcome of migration of data is under process," said a senior official of APTS.

AP earned Rs 7.59...

Continued from Page 1

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

"The total excise duty/cess incidence as a percentage of retail selling on petrol and diesel is 32.4 percent and 35.4 percent, respectively, as on July 16, 2021," Puri said.

He said the revenue generated by such taxes is used for various developmental schemes of the government like road-building scheme Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY), free LPG connection programme Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana (PMUY), Ayushman Bharat and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana (PMKAY).

It is also used "to provide relief to the poor during pandemic by schemes like Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PMGKAY) under which free ration was provid-

ed to 80 crore beneficiaries during April 2020 to November 2020 and May-June 2021, free vaccination for Covid-19 etc," he said.

The relentless price rise over the last year has meant that most states gained on taxes unless they cut levies.

Andhra Pradesh gained the most - Rs 7.59 a litre on petrol and Rs 5.48 on diesel in the last year, according to Puri's reply.

It was followed by neighbouring Telangana that gained Rs 5.77 on petrol and Rs 4.08 on diesel. Madhya Pradesh gained Rs 5.65 a litre on petrol and Rs 3.65 on diesel.

Delhi gained Rs 4.94 a litre on petrol, but because it had cut taxes on diesel, its per litre revenue came down by Rs 5.69.

North-eastern states of Meghalaya, Nagaland and Assam too saw per litre revenue fall.

In absolute revenue, which is also dependent on total sales made in the state, Rajasthan saw its VAT revenue rise by Rs 1,800 crore to Rs 15,119 crore in 2020-21 over the previous year.

No plan to print currency...

Continued from Page 1

"The fundamentals of the economy remain strong as gradual scaling back of lockdowns, along with the astute support of Atmanirbhar Bharat Mission has placed the economy firmly on the path of recovery from the second half of FY 2020-21," she said.

The government had announced a special economic and comprehensive package of Rs 29.87 lakh crore under AtmaNirbhar Bharat to combat the impact of the pandemic, to revive economic growth and to bolster employment during 2020-21, she said.

The Budget announced a number of measures to support broad-based and inclusive economic development including a 34.5 per cent increase in capital expenditure and 137 per cent increase in health expenditure, she said, adding, the government announced a relief package of Rs 6.29 lakh crore in June 2021, to strengthen public health and provide impetus for growth and employment measures.

Sitharaman said, the impact of the second wave is expected to be muted given localised containment measures and rapid upscaling of the vaccination drive.

The Union Budget 2021-22, estimates India's nominal GDP growth at 14.4 per cent during the current financial year ending March 2022.

The RBI in its latest Monetary Policy Committee resolution of June 4, 2021, has projected India's real GDP to grow at 9.5 per cent in 2021-22, after accounting for the impact of the second wave as compared to its earlier projection of 10.5 per cent, she said.

Seetharaman said the RBI has announced Special three-year Long-Term Repo Operations of Rs 10,000 crore at repo rate for the Small Finance Banks, to be deployed for fresh lending of up to Rs 10 lakh per borrower to provide support to small business units, MSME and other unorganised sector entities.

Moderate tremors felt near Kurnool

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A moderate earthquake, with intensity of 4.0 recorded on the Richter scale hit near Hyderabad early on Monday. There was no loss of life or property.

The tremors were felt 156 km south of Hyderabad with a depth of 10 km, the National Centre for Seismology said. The earthquake was recorded at 5 a.m. on Monday.

"Earthquake of Magnitude 4.0, occurred on 26-07-2021, 05:00:53 IST, Lat: 16.00 & Long: 78.22, Depth: 10 Km, Location: 156km S of Hyderabad, Andhra Pradesh," tweeted the National Centre for Seismology.

According to 'AP Weatherman', an earthquake occurred near Kurnool city at 5 am due to a slide in the fault line. Minor earthquakes after a heavy rainfall are common, it said.

On Sunday, an earthquake of magnitude 4.0 on the Richter scale hit Gangtok in Sikkim.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹267
Without Skin	₹287
Broiler at Farm	₹149
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	470
HYDERABAD	496
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹4.70

YSRCP seeks CBI probe...

Continued from Page 1

"The proof of hawala transactions referred to as Angadia can be found in the phone messages between Raghu Rama Krishnam Raju and BR Naidu, chairman of the news channel. Both are A1 and A2 in the case respectively. The chat conversation tells us about a transfer of 1 million Euros to OCB bank account 501189518301 from Wells Fargo account number 51700263205 proving money laundering and making a case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act 2002 and Foreign Exchange Management Act 1999," said the YSRC Parliamentary Party leader V Vijayasai Reddy in the letter written to Modi.

He also attached some annexures with details of the alleged messages between Raju

and BR Naidu.

Vijayasai Reddy said that in one of the annexure pages, it is clear that there is a transaction of a certain 3 which is the amount in crore through hawala with a promise of giving the balance after a day.

"Raghu Rama Krishna Raju messaged BR Naidu that one has been paid and ten have to be paid. Making this transaction of a total of Rs 11 crore. This 11 crore can be traced to the conversation on page 5 which has given details of a transfer of 1 million Euros roughly amounting to Rs 11 crore," said Vijayasai Reddy.

During their meeting, the YSRCP MPs also urged Nirmala Sitharaman to accept revised cost estimates of Polavaram project and also accord Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh.

No going back...

Continued from Page 1

Owing to the unfavourable steel cycle globally, the company was making losses since 2014-15 and was finding it difficult to service the debt.

VSP showed good performance between 2002 and 2015, earning profits with positive net worth. The plant pragmatically turned around in 2002 after being reported to BIFR as a sick company.

RINL's net worth also plummeted to Rs 3,271.79 crore by 2019-20 from Rs 9,873.20 crore in 2015-16.

To make RINL turn-around financially, Jagan suggested that the short term loans along with long-term loans could be converted into equity taking off repayment pressures and interest burden.

Govt makes changes to...

Continued from Page 1

He was also relieved from the full additional charge of the post of Director, Appeals, Office of the Chief Commissioner of Land Administration. The Chief Commissioner of Land Administration shall make necessary internal arrangements for the post of Director, Appeals.

Swapnil DinakarPundkar, who is under orders of transfer as Joint Collector, Chittoor, was retained as Commissioner, Municipal Corporation, Kakinada.

The services of P Raja Babu, Chief Executive Officer, SERP were withdrawn from the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department and posted as Joint Collector, Chittoor district.

Stuck in mire, four kids drown in Vizag

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a shocking incident, four children died after they were trapped in the mire in Pedderu rivulet on Monday.

The children who had gone along with a woman to Pedderu rivulet to enjoy themselves were stuck in the mire at L Gavaravaram village under V Madugulu police station limits in Visakhapatnam district.

The children have been identified as N Mahender (7), V Venkata Jhansi (10), V Gouthami Sharmila (7) and V Jahnavi (11).

The police said the woman, identified as V Raja Kumari, took the four children, including her daughter Jhansi, to the

water-body to wash clothes. While she was washing clothes, the children who were playing in the water entered a deeper spot and were stuck in the mire.

On seeing the children struggling in the water, people at the spot attempted to save them, but their efforts proved futile as the four children drowned.

V Madugula police led by Sub-Inspector Y Tarakeswara Rao rushed to the spot and retrieved the bodies from the water.

The police confirmed that the children were caught in the mire. The police registered a case under Section 174 of CrPC (unnatural death) and began investigation.

Vote share shows...

Continued from Page 1

Hailing the landslide victory of YSRCP in the urban body elections, Ramakrishna Reddy expressed confidence that the party will win any election, as people were on their side since they were happy with the good governance of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. He said that the same results will be seen in the MPTC and ZPTC results.

Ramakrishna Reddy said the election process was completed under difficult pandemic conditions in spite of being held up due to the political conspiracies of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu. He said that people had rejected Naidu in 2019, by confining his party to just 23 seats and were not ready to fall for him again. He stated that the TDP had made vicious moves

knowing that they cannot win over YSRCP.

Ramakrishna Reddy also refuted the articles published by a section of media on irregularities taking place in Amaravati region and clarified that it was all part of TDP's false propaganda against the government. He said that Naidu failed to do justice to the farmers who gave up their lands for the capital region and did not even bother to widen the Karakatta road, the primary connectivity to the capital.

Ramakrishna Reddy said that it was Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, who increased the annuity term from 10 years to 15 years along with pension amount. He said that the Chief Minister had mooted widening for karakatta road, which will become a major road link to the Amaravati region.


Design change led to Polavaram cost...

Continued from Page 1

Shekhawat also said that the Government of India is providing 100 percent reimbursement of the remaining cost of the irrigation component of the project for the period

starting from April 1, 2014, to the extent of the cost of the irrigation component on that date.

Due to the changes in design, estimates for head works have gone up from Rs 5,535.41 crore to Rs 7,192.02 crore, he said.

**GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT**

e-CTN No. 11/EE(NH&CRF)/DEE3/AE/2020-21 **DI: 23.07.2021**
S.No.1. **Description:** 15 Number of Works Online tenders are invited through "e" procurement platform for 15 works under Central Road Infrastructure Fund Scheme in Vizianagaram District-2 works , West Godavari district-3 Works, East Godavari district-3works, Krishna district-3works, Nellore district-2 works, Prakasam district-2 Works,Srikakulam district-1 work (2nd Call). **Value of Works in crores:** Costing between Rs 12.00 crores to Rs 40.00 crores. **Last date and time of receipt of tenders:** 18.08.2021@ 3 30 PM. Further Details can be seen at e procurement market place @ tender.apeprocurement.gov.in for **CHIEF ENGINEER (R&B)**
DIPR R.O. No. : 1104/CLADVT/11/2021-22 **DI:26/07/2021** **NATIONAL HIGHWAYS & CRF**

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Jagan tells officials to expedite, monitor agriculture infra works

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Monday directed officials to start the second phase of work of infrastructure facilities in agriculture and allied sectors and complete them in the stipulated time.

“Monitor the progress of work regularly,” the Chief Minister told a review meeting on projects regarding development and strengthening of infrastructure facilities in agriculture and allied sectors.

He reviewed issues related to multipurpose centres, custom hiring centres, food processing, fishing harbours, bulk milk cooling centres and it was estimated to cost around Rs 16,236 crore for these works.

Multi Purpose Facility Centres (MPFCs) are being set up at RBKs to facilitate farmers by providing 15 types of infrastructure facilities including dry storage, drying platforms, godowns, horticulture infrastructure, primary processing centres, assaying equipment, Nadu Nedu works in market yards and E-marketing? and the estimated cost for all these works is Rs 2930 crore.

Community hiring centres are being set up at RBK-level and farm mechanisation high-tech high value hubs at constituency level.

The state government has set up 3,250 community hiring



centres in the first phase and under the second phase, a similar number will be set up by September. Also, 500 harvesters and 85 hubs will be set up. As part of the third phase, 4,250 community centres, 535 harvesters and 85 hubs will be set up by December.

A total of 10,750 community hiring centres, 1,035 combined harvesters and 175 hubs will be set up at an estimated cost of around Rs 2,134 crore.

The Chief Minister said the machinery will be available to farmers through community hiring centres, shortage of labour issue will be decreased and agriculture implements will be made available at low prices. He asked officials to increase skills among farmers on maintenance and usage of

agriculture machinery and added to introduce those courses in ITI and polytechnic education.

The Chief Minister asked them to display the details of machinery with rental details in RBKs and to take the suggestions from Farmer Advisory Boards in this regard. He directed them to set up community hiring centres with relevant equipment in areas where milk production is high.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that 33 seed cum millet processing units will be set up in the state – at least one unit in each Lok Sabha constituency and more units depending on requirement. Land identification to set up these units has been completed, they said.

Fish processing units @ Rs 4k-cr

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

At the review meeting on Monday, the officials informed Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy the progress of work related to setting up fish and prawns processing units, pre processing units, fishing harbours, fish land centres and aqua hubs and it was estimated around Rs 3,997 crore for all these works. The State government will set up 10 processing units, 23 pre-processing units and 100 aqua hubs with a total of 133 units in the aqua sector and a plan was prepared to launch processing centres in September 2022.

The officials said fish landing centre works were almost completed in Manchineelapeta and efforts are being made to set up fish landing centres at Chintapalli, Bheemili, Rajayapeta and Kothapatnam and to set up floating jetties in 20 locations. The Chief Minister directed the officials to develop minimum infrastructure facilities in the

existing 340 fish landing centres. The officials said construction was in progress on four fishing harbours. To this, they were asked to start work soon in the remaining four harbours.

The State government is planning to set up secondary food processing units, micro food processing enterprises, quality testing labs, skill development and incubation centres and seeds cum millet processing units under AP Food Processing Centre with an estimated cost of Rs 2,961 crore. The Chief Minister said the state government has procured many crops except paddy and cotton with an expenditure of Rs 6,200 crore to benefit farmers. He said measures are being taken to strengthen food processing policy to support farmers. The state government has decided to set up organic dairies and animal husbandry custom hiring centres at RBKs level with an estimated cost of Rs 22.25 crore and the works will start in September.



Kargil heroes remembered

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On the 22nd anniversary of Kargil Vijay Diwas, Eastern Naval Command (ENC) paid homage to India's brave hearts who laid down their lives fighting for the country.

Director General Naval projects, Vice-Admiral Sreekumar Nair, Vizag City Police Commissioner Manish Kumar Sinha, and INS Circars Commanding Officer Commodore Rahul Gokhale paid homage to the brave hearts of Kargil War in a solemn wreath-laying ceremony at ‘Victory at Sea’ War Memorial Visakhapatnam on Monday.

A 50-man Guard of Honour was paraded on the occasion. The guard performed the ‘Salami Shashtra’ and Vice-Admiral Sreekumar Nair



placed the floral wreath.

While the bugler sounded the ‘Last Post’, a two-minute silence was observed.

The nation remembered the supreme sacrifices of the martyrs of the Kargil war when

India successfully recaptured the covertly occupied few outposts inside the Line of Control on this day 22 years ago. Ever since Operation Vijay victory, July 26 is celebrated as ‘Kargil Vijay Diwas’ every year.

Webinar on conservation of mangroves ecosystem held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark the International Day for Conservation of Mangrove Ecosystem 2021, the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam organised a webinar on the theme on Monday.

Eminent speakers Anant Shankar, District Forest Officer, Visakhapatnam and Dr Ravi Shankar Thupalli, independent international mangrove management consultant, spoke about various important benefits of mangroves in our ecosystem.

Anant Shankar spoke about the work done by the AP Forest Department in conservation of mangroves in Godavari delta and Krishna river delta.

“Mangroves are rare, spectacular ecosystems on the boundary between land and sea. These extraordinary ecosystems contribute to the wellbeing, food security, and protection of coastal communities worldwide.

They support a rich biodiversity and provide a valuable nursery habitat for fish and crustaceans. Mangroves also act as a form of natural coastal defence against storm surges, tsunamis, rising sea levels and erosion,” speakers at the webinar said. These webinar sessions will create an awareness and responsibility among the public about our ecosystem and reasons behind their need of conservation, said Dr Nandani Salaria, IFS, Curator, IGZP, Visakhapatnam.

Global Tiger Day painting competition

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

On July 29, ‘Global Tiger Day’, the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park, Visakhapatnam will organise an online painting competition on the theme of ‘Tigers and Their Habitat’.

The painting competition will be held in three categories – Students of Classes 1 to 5 will be in Category 1, Classes 6 to 10 in Category 2 and Intermediate and above will be in Category 3, said Nandani Salaria, the zoo curator. In these categories, anyone can participate in this painting competition.

There will also be an online quiz on tiger for anyone to participate through a link <https://bit.ly/3kXMhe4> or participants can log on to www.vizagzoo.com on July 29 from 10 am to 5 pm.



Later in the day, a webinar on tiger conservation will be organised by Andhra Pradesh Forest Department, hosted by IGZP, Visakhapatnam in which

tiger conservation initiatives will be talked about by various senior officials of the state and centre as well as NGOs.

“We are conducting these programmes to create awareness among the people about conservation of tigers,” said Dr Salaria.

All participants will get certificates of participation and the winners will receive gifts. Entries of painting competition should be sent to the below given email id events.igzp@gmail.com on or before July 31.

For more details one can contact T Ch V Ramana, Public Relation Officer 9441130894 or Assistant Curator IGZP 9440810213.

Govt joins hands with GAME Alliance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh announced the potential inclusion of Nayaka Unnatvam curriculum Entrepreneur Mindset Development Programme in all government schools across the State for Grade 9-12.

Samagra Shiksha has established partnership with GAME Alliance to bring onboard lead implementer Udhyan Learning Foundation along with programme partners Aflatoun, MakerGhat and Reap Benefit.

This programme was launched and inaugurated by the Minister at an event hosted by the Samagra Shiksha. The Minister shared his vision and said that the Chief Minister and the entire team want to ensure all of the 45,000 Government schools make a difference in the lives of thousands of students.

“That difference will not be made by status quo or by doing what we have been traditionally doing, but by thinking differently and inculcating differential thinking in students,” Suresh said.

He said that programmes like NaayakaUnnatvam will ignite the spark in teachers, especially the 42 teachers who are selected to participate in the pilot to think differently and become the torchbearers for this program.

M Srinivas Rao, CEO, GAME, said that the programme aims to nurture the younger generation to be ready to pursue their potential by activating 21st Century skills to groom mindsets of grit, self-belief, and fiduciary balance. “As we step into the new normal, it is imperative that youth imbibe entrepreneurial qualities to help them stand-out as job creators and not seekers, in a fiercely competitive professional world. In this direction, the partnership with the Government of Andhra Pradesh is critical to our approach of making entrepreneurship aspirational and a top career choice for the youth,” he said.



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“If motorists wear substandard helmets, it will be deemed as helmetless driving and fines will be imposed. Widespread checks are being done,” the DTC said.

Cases will be filed on people selling poor quality helmets. Two-wheeler showrooms should sell ISI 4051-2015 mark helmets to customers, he said.

DRDO to fund centres working on defence

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Dr G Sateesh Reddy, chairman, DRDO said that the Defence Organisation will encourage incubation centres that work on defence-related problems with fresh B Tech graduates with financial assistance of up to Rs 1 crore. Further, if the fresh graduates could rope in an industry as a partner, they would provide a financial assistance of up to Rs 10 crore.

During the meeting with Prof D Narayana Rao, Pro Vice-Chancellor, SRM University, Dr Sateesh Reddy said that DRDO has also started M Tech programmes in Defence Technologies jointly



with select universities.

As part of this programme, students will complete the course work in the university and in the second year, they can do their project work in the DRDO labs. DRDO is also interested to support long-term projects with the universities under the directed research programme which



would be supported by it for the long-term of two or three decades.

Prof Ranjit Thapa made a presentation on the Computational Materials Genome project to Dr Sateesh Reddy. He

emphasised the importance and significance of the project and how it is useful to accelerate the design, development and discovery of new functional materials many times as fast and at a fraction of cost

compared to the existing traditional methods.

Prof Rao said that Dr Sateesh Reddy assured collaboration with the SRM University-AP on a few projects that are relevant to the needs of DRDO.

Fines for wearing inferior quality helmets too: Police

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Reminding that selling and wearing of substandard helmets would attract fines, Additional DCP T Sarkar and DTC M Purendra on Monday said that all motorists should wear only ISI 4051-2015 mark headgear while driving two-wheelers.

Addressing the gathering at an awareness programme organised by an NGO on helmet use, Sarkar said that the government has made use of helmets mandatory for the

safety of motorists. Driving a two-wheeler without a helmet attracts a fine and legal action, including revocation of the driving licence, he pointed out.

The Additional DCP said that second-rate helmets are being sold in the market and the buyers should make a note of it before buying. He said that selling substandard helmets is a crime and the police department frequently conducts raids on such stores and imposes hefty fines.

DTC Purendra said the government has made wearing

Residents complain of polluted water supply in Kakinada city



PNS ■ KAKINADA

Despite Kakinada city being accorded Smart City status, the municipal corporation officials have failed to provide clean and purified drinking water to the citizens. Drinking water is getting polluted in some localities including Divisions 2, 7, 12 and others. The denizens of the areas complained that they were getting drinking water through municipal taps and a foul smell was coming from the water. It is suspected that the drainage water was leaking and merging into potable water pipes.

The lackadaisical attitude of municipal officials in taking steps to supply purified drinking water is said to be the reason. "Since the people of the city have lost trust on the purity and safety of drinking water, being supplied by the municipal corporation, they are buying potable water from private mineral water plants," a group of denizens in Division 2 told this correspondent. Taking advantage of the situation, private mineral water plants which have mushroomed in the city are fleecing people. The drinking water, which the private mineral

water plants are supplying is of poor quality. Since there is no alternative to the denizens, they are forced to buy the water. Talking to this correspondent, some people said that since they are getting brown-coloured and stinking water, they are forced to buy potable water from private units. The municipal corporation officials do not have any control on the private mineral water plants, they alleged. The people of the city demanded that the municipal corporation officials take steps to supply purified drinking water.

Prakasam boy earns Ph.D from IIT Patna

PNS ■ ONGOLE



Desireddy Sasidhar Reddy of Mokshagundam village under Bestavaripeta mandal in Prakasam district has secured a doctorate from IIT Patna. The son of local headmaster Desireddy Raghunath Reddy and Vijaya Lakshmi Devi, Sasidhar has carried out seven experiments on sunlight. He has applied for creative rights for three novel experiments. Prominent persons in the village and teachers congratulated Sasidhar and wished him to extend services to Indian students.

'CM committed to safety of women'

PNS ■ GUNTUR

State Women's Commission (SWC) Chairperson Vasireddy Padma, who visited rape victims at the Guntur GGH on Monday, said Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was taking several measures for the safety of women. She said the Disha law was already being enforced effectively. Padma visited the victims of rape in different parts of the district at Government General Hospital, Guntur. She assured the family members that the government would be supportive in all possible ways. She said the government was providing assistance to both the families of victims. She expressed concern over recurrence of such incidents. She also said that the doctors were providing better medical treatment to the victims and would send them



home in perfect health. She said steps would be taken to ensure that the accused were severely punished. She further said police were instructed to deal harsh-

ly with those who mistreat women. Women's Commission member K Jayasri Reddy and Hospital Superintendent Dr Prabhavati participated in the programme.

SHORT TAKES

Central team happy with PDS



KAKINADA: The Central team that is inspecting the implementation of the Public Distribution System (PDS) in East Godavari district has found that the ration is being distributed to 16.5 lakh cardholders every month through a well-planned and well-organised system. The Central team noted that the secretariat system is playing a key role in the process. The Union Ministry of Food and Public Distribution has appointed CDECS in Jaipur as a Third Party Monitoring Agency for a comprehensive review and evaluation of the implementation of the National Food Security Act - 2013. K Girija Shankar, Senior Consultant, Ministry of Education and CDECS team leader Ravi Parikh toured the district. On July 25 and 26, Kakinada Rural and Karapa mandals as well as various mandal level stockpoints and FP stores in Kakinada Urban area were inspected. Members of the team talked to the ration cardholders and found out how the commodities were being received. Later, in a special meeting held at the Collectorate on Monday, they explained the details of the visit to In-charge Collector Dr G Laxmisha, and the Assistant Collector, Gitanjali Sharma. The meeting was attended by Civil Supplies District Manager E Lakshmi Reddy, DSO P Prasad Rao, Social Welfare Department JD J Rangelakshmi Devi, BC Welfare Department DD K Mayuri, ICDS PD Satyavani and officials from various departments.

2,000 Covid test kits handed over to DM&HO



ONGOLE: Prakasam District Red Cross Chairman Prakash Babu and Vice-Chairman Dr Venkateswara Reddy handed over 2,000 Covid test kits to District Medical Officer Ratnavali at the Prakasam Bhavan Spandana Hall under the directions of District Joint Collector TS Chetan. The test kits were donated by the Singapore Red Cross Society. Chetan lauded the role of the Red Cross in Covid services. Chairman Prakash Babu said a Covid test centre would soon be inaugurated at the Ongole Red Cross building.

Eluru Mayor, Dy Mayor to be elected on July 30



ELURU: The election to the Mayor and the Deputy Mayor posts will be held on July 30, according to West Godavari District Collector, Kartikeya Mishra, here on Monday. Addressing the media, he thanked all party leaders, the officials from Revenue, Police, Eluru Municipal Corporation, staff and the media who made the counting peaceful and successful.

VENKANNA DARSHAN FOR JUDGE



Andhra Pradesh High Court Judge Justice J Umadevi, along with her family members, visited Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple at Vadapalli in East Godavari district on Monday. Temple Administrator Mudunuri Satish Raju welcomed the guests with temple tradition. After Swamy's darshan, Vedic scholars blessed the Judge. Later, 'Prasadam' and a portrait of the Lord were handed over to her.

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind honours Covid warriors



PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

Activists and volunteers of various NGOs, who have rendered invaluable services during the second wave of Coronavirus pandemic, were on Monday felicitated under the auspices of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and Students Islamic Organization (SIO) here on Monday.

Abdul Karim Mujahid, Assistant Secretary of State,

Jamaat-e-Islami Hind, was the chief guest at the function at Iqra Madrasa in Bhimavaram of West Godavari district.

Speaking on the occasion, Mujahid lauded the branches of Jamaat-e-Islami Hind and SIO, Bhimavaram, for providing free medicines and oxygen at home to patients affected by Covid during the second wave of the pandemic and setting up a doctor consultancy over the phone.

He said that doing a wonderful humanitarian service like transporting patients to various hospitals in the district through the free ambulance service as well as burying the victims of Covid rising above caste and religion was truly an invaluable service.

As many as 27 young men, who rendered their invaluable services as Covid warriors, were honored and mementos were presented to them. Recipients of the honour include Sheikh Umar, Sheikh Khaza, Sheikh Chand Basha, Afsar, Naveed, Mujahid, Hussain, Basha, Fayaz, Chand Basha, Imran, Haji and other young men.

The event was attended by Jamaat-e-Islami Hind town president Sheikh Askari, members Mahboob Pasha, Sheikh Imtiaz, Sheikh Jani, activists Muhammad Irfan, Syed Akram, Akbar Hussain, Khadar Basha, Rizwan, Riazuddin, Shahidin, Nusrat and SIO members participated.

School sanitation workers stage dharna for payment of wages

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The sanitation workers of government schools staged a dharna in front of the District Education Officer's (DEO) office here on Monday demanding disbursement of their wages as per the GO 22. The CITU extended solidarity with the workers. The agitators raised slogans demanding disbursement of their wages and later submitted a representation to the DEO. Speaking on the occasion, district CITU president M Veeralakshmi said that the sanitation workers had cleaned the toilets, premises of schools and classrooms for nearly five years.



But, they were paid wages only for two years. Veeralakshmi said that the government had issued GO 22 stating that Rs 6,000 would be paid to sanitation workers with retrospective effect from February, 2021. But, now the government says that it would pay only Rs 1,000, she alleged and added that though the school stu-

dents did not attend the classes they had attended the Nadu-Nedu scheme works on the school premises.

Later, Assistant Director Nageswara Rao met the agitating sanitation workers and assured them that their problems would be taken to the notice of the Commissioner of the Education department. He informed the agitating women that the Commissioner agreed to pay Rs 1,000 now and Rs 5,000 later. Sanitation workers' association leaders Satyanviti, Devi, Lakshmi, Anusha, Venkatalakshmi, Ratnam and Nukaraju were among those who participated in the programme.

Resolve public issues swiftly, SP Garg tells police officials



PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam district SP Malika Garg has directed the police officers to take steps for redressing the complaints received through 'Spandana' programme and ensure that quick justice is done to the victims.

She was speaking at the 'Spandana' programme at the District Police Office here on Monday. The complainants from across the district submitted their grievances. The district SP spoke face-to-face with the complainants, enquired about their problems, assured them that she would thoroughly look into their problems and ensure justice is delivered to them.

The SP directed the police officials concerned to take appropriate

action in regard to various complaints submitted to her. She also asked them to provide speedy justice to the complainants as per the law and to submit a report to her on the 'Spandana' complaints from time to time.

The SP told the staff that some of the complainants, who came to the DPO, were elderly people and were unable to walk. The complaints of such people should be heard patiently and politely so as to give them a sense of confidence that prompt justice would be done to them. The 'Spandana' programme received a total number of 91 complaints from all over the district. Additional SP B Ravi Chandra, OSD K Chowdeswari, DSB DSP B Mariyadasu, SB-II Inspector N Srikanth Babu, IT Core SI K Ajay Kumar and other staff participated.

Spandana resumes in E Godavari

KAKINADA: The Spandana programme, which was stopped due to the Coronavirus pandemic, was resumed here on Monday. The programme was held in the District Collector's office premises in which the officials heard the grievances of people and had taken representations from them. The Spandana programme was stopped in April, 2020 in view of the Coronavirus outbreak. As Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy directed the officials to resume the Spandana programme, the officials held it today, officials told this correspondent. Joint Collectors Dr Lakshmi Shah, B Rajakumari, DRO Ch Sattibabu and BC Corporation ED Chinta Subbalakshmi were among those who were present.

Vendra sworn in as DCMS Chairman

PNS ■ ELURU

Deputy Chief Minister and Health Minister Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas has said that the West Godavari District Cooperative Marketing Society (DCMS) should provide necessary services to farmers.

The minister, addressing a meeting after swearing in ceremony of DCMS new chairman Vendra Venkata Swamy and new governing body, said that he was happy that Vendra Venkata Swamy was taking over the chairmanship as per the directions of Chief



Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. He urged the new directors to work hard to take the organisation forward with its assigned responsibilities. The minister said selling all

chemical fertilisers, pesticides, quality seeds, etc. required by the farmers at prices lower would be beneficial to the farmers in the nearby villages. He said the procurement of

paddy and maize through the depots of District Cooperative Marketing Society Ltd, Eluru, would benefit all farmers.

The Deputy Chief Minister said that the Chief Minister had given more priority to the farming sector to keep all farmers happy. The CM, who had set up Rythu Bharosa Kendras with the aim of making the lives of farmers better, is the role model for all states.

Denduluru MLA Kotharu Abbaiah Chowdhury, MLC Koye Moshe Raju, former MLC Meka Sheshu Babu, Umabala and others participated.

SAVE MANGROVES



Pradeep Kumar, Chief Conservation Officer of the State Forest department, released a poster on the occasion of the World Mangrove Day at Guntur on Monday. He said if 33% of the land is forested, the species will have enough air to breathe, water to drink and the soil for proper growth of crops. The event was attended by Chief Wildlife Officer Rahul Pandey, C Selvam and others.

West Godavri Collector assures all help to Polavaram displaced



PNS ■ ELURU

West Godavari District Collector Kartikeya Mishra on Monday visited the Koida and Koruturu villages in Velerupadu mandal, which was merged in Andhra Pradesh. He visited the houses of the villagers and patiently asked them for details of the problems faced by them. The Collector offered chocolates and biscuits to the children and had fun with them.

District Collector Kartikeya Mishra said the government would

extend full support to the Polavaram settlers and solve their problems. He visited Koida and Koruturu villages along with other district officials to learn about the flood-affected villages in the Godavari basin in the district by visiting the stretch from Velerupadu to Polavaram in a boat. On the occasion, the Collector said that he would extend his support to the settlers in the flood-hit areas. He urged them to go to the rehabilitation centres prepared by the government and be accommodated in all respects, he assured. The

villagers were given vegetables, onions and water sachets.

The villagers told the Collector on the occasion that the ration and essential commodities were being handed over by the officials. He was asked to hand over the solar lanterns to them. Replying to this, the Collector replied saying that it would be arranged by them. The package, as announced by the government, would also make payments, urging people living in flooded villages to move to rehabilitation centres.

He said the houses would be allotted to the displaced and they would be relocated there. He said the bill would be passed by the government on Thursday and payments would be made soon.

ITDA PO O Anand, Jangareddygudem RDO Prasanna Lakshmi, SE (RWS) V Ramaswamy, DSO N Subbaraju, Velairupad Tahsildar Chellanna Dora, Polavaram Tahsildar Sumathi, DSP Latha Kumari, district officials of various departments accompanied the Collector.



INDIA CORNER

Maha: Tulsi helping farmers earn more in Aurangabad

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



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

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



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

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



Higher Education panel Bill being drafted, says Pradhan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Yediyurappa's constituency Shikaripura shuts down to protest his resignation

PNS ■ SHIKARIPURA

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

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

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



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

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

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

It's too early for political obituary for Yediyurappa

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

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

NCERT will conduct National Achievement Survey in schools

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ BHOPAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

WB sets up inquiry panel to look into snooping row

PNS ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



the President's."

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kargil Vijay Diwas celebrated with wreath-laying ceremony

PNS ■ JAIPUR

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

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

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

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

Rahul Gandhi pays tributes to Kargil martyrs

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

Mamata pays tribute to Kargil martyrs

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

Venkaiah Naidu pays tribute to war heroes

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

Tharoor seeks SC judge-monitored probe into Pegasus snooping allegations

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

Speaking to reporters in the

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

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

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

Tharoor also made light of IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw's

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

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

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

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

ISRO ESPIONAGE CASE

Interim protection from arrest to two ex-cons

PNS ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

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

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

Modi hails performance of Indian wrestlers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

FIRST COLUMN

THE MICROPLASTIC POLLUTION IN GANGA

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



KOTA SRIRAJ

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



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

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

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

Missing the woods for the trees

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



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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



Nipun Bharat: Laying the foundation for a learning society

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

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

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



MANEESHA GARG

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Tech, platforms brought full benefit of schemes: Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sensex slips 123 pts; Nifty ends below 15,850

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



either limited or extremely poor visibility of debt servicing due to

multiple factors," the statement said.

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

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

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

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

MONEY MATTERS

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

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



Byju's acquires Great Learning for \$600 mn

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



ICICI Bank shares hit 52-wk high post Q1 earnings

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



Tea Board asks producers to sell 50 pc through auctions

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



Banks NPAs decline to Rs 8L-crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

Kilitch Drugs starts production of anti-bacterial drug at Ethiopia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Kilitch Drug India on Monday said it has started production of cephalosporin injectables, used for the treatment of a variety of bacterial infections, at its Ethiopian manufacturing facility.

The company had started its greenfield project in Ethiopia in 2018 to build a world-class injectable plant, Kilitch Drug India said in a regulatory filing.

For the product, the plant has a total capacity of 26.4 million vials yearly while Ethiopia is having a demand for 16 million vials, it added.

"Africa always has been our focus market for our products. We have started this manufacturing plant to cater to the African markets directly as there very few injectable manufacturing plants in the whole continent and in turn help the people of Africa," Kilitch Drugs Chairman and MD Mukund Mehta said.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

company status.

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

Auto component industry revenues to grow by 20%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



23 per cent aided by growth across segments and commod-

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

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

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

softening in the second half of the financial year.

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

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



2nd wave may lead to reassessment of economic growth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



activities, the veteran industrialist added.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Import duty on masur dal cut to zero

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Vin Diesel on casting John Cena as Jakob in *F9: The Fast Saga*



Hollywood actor and producer Vin Diesel has opened up on casting former wrestler and actor John Cena in the ninth instalment of the *Fast & Furious* franchise.

In the movie, Diesel's Dominic Toretto and Michelle Rodriguez's character Letty are content with a quiet family life. But Dom's past comes back, resurfacing old wounds. Cena plays Jakob, Dom's brother.

Why was Cena chosen for the role of Dom's brother?

Diesel said: "I'm multi-cultural, so you could have picked anyone to be my brother. As we were developing the story, it was great fun to be able to revisit a past that pre-dates the first film. Once we started getting into casting, that's when the anxiety set in, that's when it was, like, 'it could go any of a million different directions!'"

The 54-year-old star said there was "actual anxiety".

He added: "There are so many great, talented actors, but who would be right to play that type of archetype, that type of

character that has to do so much in this film, because it's a very intense role, all the while representing what our collective idea of a Toretto to be?"

The actor also added how at one point he thought Pablo, played by late actor Paul Walker, had sent Cena to play Jakob.

Diesel said, "I had already been a fan of who he is and his work ethic and maybe a week earlier I was watching Ferdinand with my kids... We love John Cena! He walked into my Dom shrine and I was kind of in Dom state of mind, so it wasn't too hee-hee ha-ha. He was walking into a sacred place."

"And we talked about why this franchise is so sacred and what goes into it. And how, if you come into this franchise, you have to be willing to put everything on the line."

Diesel added: "That day, I posted on Instagram, without talking to anyone, a video of him and me and I said, 'thank you Pablo'. Because at that moment, I thought, my brother Pablo (Paul Walker) had sent him to play Jakob."

F9: The Fast Saga hits theatres in August.

Jenna Ushkowitz, David Stanley are married

Glee star Jenna Ushkowitz and David Stanley have tied the knot.

According to Brides magazine, the couple got married on Saturday in an outdoor ceremony here.

"We were elated and so grateful that we didn't have to push our wedding and that we got to have the day of our dreams. It was such a gift that we were able to share it with our friends and family," Ushkowitz told the publication.

The 35-year-old wore a strapless gown by Netta BenShabu and Kinsley James Couture Bridal, while Stanley opted for a tuxedo from Hugo Boss.

The wedding was attended by 104 guests, which included the couple's family and close friends.

"Having our closest family and loved ones there (safely) was a priority for us. By setting the expectation from the get-go that we had to limit guests, we



were able to focus our planning and ensure that we could stay flexible in case any element of the day needed to change," Ushkowitz added.

The duo, who has been together for over three years now, had announced their engagement in August last year, to everyone's surprise.

Showtime reveals title of *Dexter* reboot, announces premiere date

The upcoming revival of crime drama mystery TV series *Dexter* has been officially titled *Dexter: New Blood* and will air on November 7, the premium cable network Showtime has announced.

According to The Hollywood Reporter, Showtime also released the trailer of the reboot during a Comic-Con at Home session on Sunday.

The 10-episode revival,

which picks up a decade after the original show's finale, will see Michael C Hall return as the titular character Dexter Morgan, a conflicted blood-spatter expert for the Miami Police Department who moonlighted as a serial killer. After faking his death in the 2013 series finale, Dexter started life anew as a lumberjack. In *Dexter: New Blood*, the viewer will find him living in Iron Lake, New York, under an assumed name

and running a sporting goods store — which affords him ample access to a variety of knives, his weapon of choice.

Besides Hall, returning cast members also include Jennifer Carpenter and John Lithgow.

Writer Clyde Phillips, who oversaw the first four seasons of the series before departing the series, is also returning as showrunner.

Phillips and Hall are attached to executive produce the revival alongside



John Goldwyn, Sara Colleton, Bill Carraro, Scott Reynolds and Marcos Siega, the latter of whom will direct six of the 10 episodes. Siega previously helmed nine episodes of

the original series. Clancy Brown, Julia Jones, Alano Miller, Johnny Sequoyah, Jack Alcott, and David Magidoff are the new additions to the cast.

Malaika, Milind, Anusha to judge *Supermodel Of The Year 2*



Bollywood personalities Malaika Arora, Milind Soman and Anushka Dandekar will be seen as judges in the second season of the reality show *Supermodel Of The Year*.

Malaika said: "I've always been in awe of the grit and passion the women of today possess, and MTV Supermodel of the Year

sets the foundation for these talented ladies to showcase their individuality in the most impressive form. With the first season being an absolute rollercoaster for us, the second one is sure to be a notch higher."

The actress says the second season will be a treat for the eyes for all the fashion fanatics.

With *#UnapologeticallyYou* as the theme, the show has conversations

around stereotypes and questions preconceived notions around an individual and their choices.

Milind shared: "Being a supermodel is all about putting your best out there and embracing all that is unabashedly you. We saw that come alive in the first season of the show and were stunned by the confidence, poise, and grace in each one of the contestants. With the dynamic

world of fashion bringing in new trends and styles, it will be interesting to see how the young women of today stand out of the crowd and lead by example."

Milind added that the stakes will be higher this season.

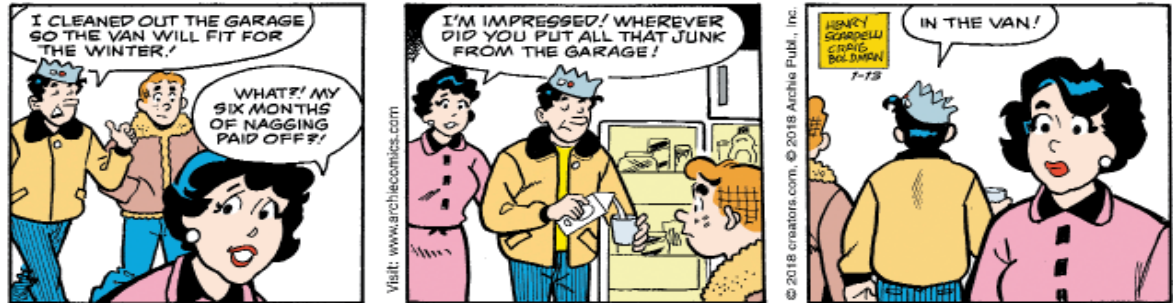
Anusha says she has always believed that fashion and beauty is more than just stylish outfits and a perfect face.

She shared: "It can be a powerful way to feel inspired and present the most authentic version of yourself. The best thing about fashion and beauty is that you can express yourself through your style and personality regardless of where you come from, and we strive to follow the same mantra with *Supermodel of the Year*."

Supermodel of the Year Season 2 is slated to premiere in August on MTV.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



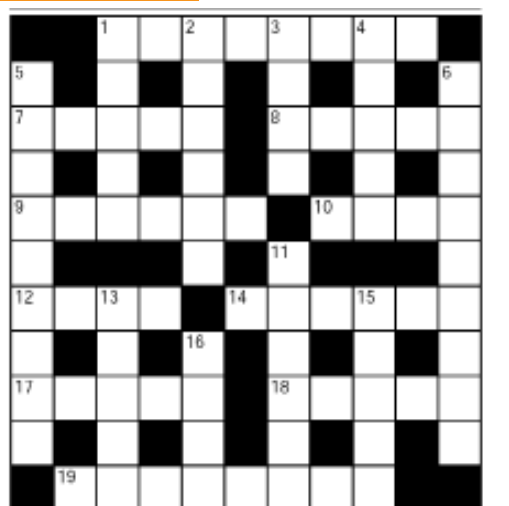
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 1 Tiniest
- 7 A fish in rivers and lakes
- 8 Stick this on an envelope
- 9 Having a meal
- 10 Shout
- 12 Seeds in an apple
- 14 Opposite of weak
- 17 Precise
- 18 Nips with the teeth
- 19 Half of twenty-eight

DOWN

- 1 Fire a gun
- 2 Pretending
- 3 Mislead
- 4 Frighten
- 5 Tried



LIGHTS, CAMERA, OTT!



SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

How is OTT impacting the business of cinema?

Media and entertainment are among the early adopters of the digital format.

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

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

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

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



Amit Khanna

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

How do you visualise the future of entertainment in India?

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

Your monsoon food guide



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

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

Adequate water and sunshine

Regular exercise

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

Water retention guidelines:

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

Add green tea and dan-

delion tea to the plan-

natural diuretics Parsley and asparagus in food preparations- natural diuretics

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

Most importantly avoid table salt.



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

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

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

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

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

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

Making a baby, not a child's play

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

Can one prevent infertility in a couple?

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

However, there is a significant number of preventable causes.

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

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

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

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

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

ANOTHER TOUGH DAY FOR INDIA

MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

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

IN FOCUS TODAY

●**Shooting:** 10m Air Rifle and Pistol events.
●**Hockey:** India vs Spain (Men's)
●**Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal vs Ma Long.
●**Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy-Chirag Shetty vs Ben Lane/Sean Vendy.
●**Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain vs Nadine Apetz.

BHAVANI MAKES HISTORY

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

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

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

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

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



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

said of her contest vs Brunet.

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

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

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

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

Sharath advances but women challenge ends

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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



Sutirtha Mukherjee

Hopefully, I can challenge him," said Sharath.

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



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

Poor execution costs India

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

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

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

Skipper Nike Lorenz (12th minute) and Anna Schroder

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

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

INDIA VS SPAIN

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

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

Indian archers fail to get past Korean hurdle

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

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

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



Indian Tarundeep Rai in action

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

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

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

of promise, downing Kazakhstan 6-2.

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

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

India were let down by

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

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

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



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

Ashish ousted

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

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

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

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

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

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

Satwik-Chirag lose to world No 1

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

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

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



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

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

World number three Chinese Taipei pair of Lee Yang

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

Nagal hammered out by Medvedev

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Sajan fails to reach semis

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

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

Prakash will compete in the 100m Butterfly on Thursday.

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

Olympic Silver-medallist Mirabai returns home

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

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

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

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

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



Mirabai Chanu arrives at the airport in New Delhi on Monday



Neeraj Chopra poses for photo before he departs for Tokyo

Manipur to appoint Chanu as ASP

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

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

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

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

constable to sub-inspector, Singh said.

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

Rifle, pistol shooters gear up for mixed events

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

'WANT TO REACH OUT TO GLOBAL AUDIENCE'

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Telugu version is being directed by Merlapaka Gandhi.



NANI WRAPS UP Shyam Singha Roy shoot

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

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

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

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



Pawan-Rana resume shooting *Ayyappunum Koshiyum* remake

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

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

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

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



CHATRAPATHI HINDI REMAKE IS AN ADVENTURE

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

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

big one.

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

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

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



PRAKASH RAJ LAUNCHES FIRST LOOK OF NAA VENTA PADUTUNNA HINNODEVARAMMA



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

Veteran actress Jayanthi passes away

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

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

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



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