

ANALYSIS 7
AFGHAN CONUNDRUM AND
THE ROAD AHEAD**MONEY 8**
IMF FORECASTS 6% GLOBAL GROWTH
THIS YEAR AS ECONOMIES REOPEN**SPORTS 11**
BACK TO
WINNINGWAYS

VIJAYAWADA, WEDNESDAY, JULY 28, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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FOR POOJA, NERV-
OUS ENERGY
IS GOOD

Page 12

**IMF CUTS COVID-HIT INDIA'S GDP
GROWTH FORECAST TO 9.5 PC FOR FY22**

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) on Tuesday cut its economic growth forecast for India to 9.5 percent for the fiscal year to March 31, 2022 as the onset of a severe Covid second wave cut into recovery momentum. This forecast for 2021-22 is lower than the 12.5 percent growth that IMF had projected in April. For 2022-23, IMF expects economic growth of 8.5 percent, larger than the 6.9 percent it had projected in April. "Growth prospects in India have been downgraded following the severe second Covid wave during March-May and expected slow recovery in confidence from that setback," IMF said.

**SENIOR JOURNALISTS MOVE SC FOR
PROBE INTO PEGASUS SPYWARE ISSUE**

Veteran journalists N Ram and Sashi Kumar have moved the Supreme Court seeking an independent probe by its sitting or retired judge into reports of government agencies using Israeli spyware Pegasus to allegedly snoop on eminent citizens, politicians and scribes. The petition, seeks investigation into the hacking of phones using the spyware saying it represented an attempt by agencies and organisations to muzzle and chill the exercise of free speech and expression of dissent in India. It also sought a direction to the Centre to disclose if it or any of its agencies obtained licence for Pegasus spyware and used it, either directly or indirectly, to conduct surveillance in any manner.

**BJP PICKS BASAVARAJ BOMMAI TO
SUCCEED YEDIYURAPPA AS K'TAKA CM**

The Karnataka BJP legislature party on Tuesday elected Basavaraj Bommai as its new leader and he will succeed outgoing Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa. According to party sources, Bommai, a Lingayat leader from North Karnataka, had the backing of the outgoing Chief Minister Yeddyurappa to succeed him. Basavaraj Bommai is the son of former chief minister, the late SR Bommai. The 61-year-old leader was Minister for Home Affairs, Law, Parliamentary Affairs and Legislature in Yediyurappa's council of ministers which was dissolved on Monday. Soon after the announcement, Bommai sought the blessings of Yediyurappa, and he was greeted by other party leaders.

**PROMOTION, RS 2 CRORE FOR OLYMPIC
SILVER MEDALIST MIRABAI CHANU**

Minister for Railways Ashwini Vaishnaw felicitated weightlifter Mirabai Chanu on Monday for winning a Silver medal in the Tokyo Olympics, and announced a reward of Rs 2 crore and promotion in the Northeast Frontier Railway. Chanu, who has returned home, has inspired billions around the world with her talent, handwork, and grit, the minister said. "It was great to meet and congratulate the pride of India and honour of Indian Rly, @mirabai_chanu. Also felicitated her & announced Rs 2 Cr, a promotion and more. She has inspired billions around the world with her talent, handwork and grit. Keep winning for India!" Vaishnaw tweeted.



CM pulls up bureaucrats, says performance of some 'very bad'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For the first time since becoming Chief Minister 26 months ago, YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday pulled up bureaucrats, saying the performance of some of them was "very bad" and "not acceptable".

He said memos would be issued to all such officers who failed to perform their assigned tasks well. "Issuing memos is a painful thing for me. It's like issuing a memo on my own performance, as your failure is my failure," Jagan remarked.

At a videoconference with district Collectors on the public grievances programme 'Spandana', the Chief Minister took the officials to task by reading out statistics on their performance, in particular reference to the periodic inspection of village and ward secretariats.



"The village and ward secretariats are our brainchild. If we don't own them, progress will deteriorate. Regular inspection is the only way to improve the secretariats' performance," the Chief Minister said.

He asked the officials how they would appreciate the people's problems if they did not conduct field

inspections.

"We are humans first and officers next. We need to first have a humane perspective. If we overlook the poor man, we have failed in our duties," the Chief Minister observed.

**Finish pending
works on
secretariats: CM**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy during the Spandana video conference on Tuesday directed authorities to finish the construction of 10,929 village secretariats, 8,585 YSR Village Clinics by September 30, 534 YSR Urban Clinics by November 15, RBKs by December 31, and start the construction works of digital libraries by August 15.

**AP didn't furnish
clarifications on
Disha Bill: Centre**

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government is yet to furnish the clarifications sought by the Centre to approve Disha Bill.

Union minister of state for home affairs Ajay Kumar Mishra on Tuesday told Lok Sabha that The Andhra Pradesh Disha (Special Courts for Specified Offences against Women and Children) Bill, 2020 has been received for assent of the President of India.

As per practice, Bills received from States for assent of President are processed in consultation with the nodal Ministries / Departments.

Accordingly, the consultation process with various Ministries / Departments concerned with the Bill has been initiated. Comments and observations received from these nodal Ministries / Departments have been shared with the Government of Andhra Pradesh for their clarifications.

The clarifications from the State government have not been received, stated Mishra.

Inquiry panel to look into charges on ABV

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government on Tuesday appointed yet another inquiry authority to look into the case related to the suspension of Additional DGP and former intelligence chief AB Venkateswara Rao.

The Government had framed charges against Venkateswara Rao and directed him to submit his written statement of defence thereon.

However, the IPS officer, while denying the allegations against him, has requested dropping of the charges.

"The Government, after careful examination of the matter, have decided to entrust the case to

Commissioner of Inquiries by appointing an Inquiring Authority for conducting a detailed inquiry under Rule 8 (2) of All India Services (Discipline & Appeal) Rules, 1969 and to appoint R P Sisodia, Commissioner of Inquiries, as the Inquiring Authority to inquire into the charges framed against Venkateswara Rao," said a GO issued on Tuesday.

Advocate Sarva Srinivasa Rao, has been appointed as "Presenting Officer" to present the case on behalf of the government before the Inquiring Authority in respect of the charges framed against Venkateswara Rao.



Raju's petition stating that the EO and staff were not following his

**Bar Councils
request V-P, CJI
to set up SC
bench in south**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chairmen of Bar Councils of southern States have met Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu and Chief Justice of India NV Ramana and requested them to set up a bench of the Supreme Court in the southern region.

A delegation of Bar Council heads of Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Kerala on Monday met the Chief Justice and the Vice-President at Delhi and submitted a representation to them in this regard.

AP readies Logistics Policy to tap potential of State's vast coastline

Govt plans logistics parks at Kakinada and Krishnapatnam

SNV SUDHIR

■ VIJAYAWADA

To improve revenue flow, the Andhra Pradesh government has decided to bring in a Logistics Policy that will help tap the potential of the 970-km-long coastline the State has.

It may be mentioned here that the State government has already unveiled plans to develop ports at Bhavanapadu, Machilipatnam and Ramayapatnam.

If sources are to be believed, the Logistics Policy will delve at length on plans to develop two Multi Model Logistics Parks (MMLPs) in an extent of 100 acres each near



Kakinada and Krishnapatnam ports. These parks will come up under PPP mode in the lands belonging to APIIC. Notably, the Union Road Transport and

Highways is conducting pre-feasibility studies to set up such a MMLP under a national policy.

HC directs MANSAS Trust EO to obey chairman Ashok's orders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Tuesday ordered that the Executive Officer and other officials of Maharaja Alak Narayan Society for Arts and Science (MANSAS) Trust to follow the orders of P Ashok Gajapati Raju in his capacity as the chairman of the trust.

The High Court gave direction while hearing Ashok Gajapati



Raju's petition stating that the EO and staff were not following his

directions, though he has been reinstated to the post of chairman of the Trust.

The High Court ordered that the Trust immediately pay salaries to the employees and suspended the orders of the Executive Officer freezing the accounts of the trust. It said the Executive Officer had no role to play in the audit of the Trust accounts, as it could be done by the district audit officers.

Stones pelted at Uma's car, TDP blames YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP senior leader from Mylavaram and former minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao was on Tuesday evening attacked by unidentified persons in G Konduru mandal.

The TDP leader was attacked when he was on his way to Gaddamanugu village under Kondapalli Reserve Forest area to look into reports of illegal mining activity there.

TDP sources say that some unidentified people attacked the TDP leader when he reached G Konduru town by pelting stones on his vehicle. The attack damaged the



window pane of the former minister's vehicle.

A few other people were also

hurt in the stone pelting. The police rushed to the spot after being informed by TDP supporters.

No 25% weightage marks for EAPCET

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Council for Higher Education on Tuesday decided to remove Intermediate weightage marks of 25 percent for the Engineering, Agriculture, Pharma admissions (EAPCET).

Higher Education Council Secretary Sudhir Prem Kumar in a statement said that this year, admissions will be based on 100 percent written test marks in

EAPCET. He said intermediate weightage marks have been removed for this year as Inter exams were cancelled due to Covid.

It may be recalled that the Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh had announced that the AP Engineering, Agriculture and Pharmacy Joint Entrance Test (EAPCET-21) will be conducted from August 19 to 25.

Earlier, EAPCET was formerly known as EAMCET.

**KRMB seeks DPRs of
all projects in the
Krishna basin**

ML MELLY MAITREYI

■ HYDERABAD

In an effort to resolve the differences between the two Telugu States over the sharing of Krishna waters, the Krishna River Management Board has sought the details of all the projects constructed, ongoing and proposed in the Krishna basin.

Veerraju arrested after protest over Tipu statue

G GOPIKRISHNA

■ KADAPA

Tension prevailed for some time in Proddatur of Kadapa district on Tuesday after BJP AP president Somu Veerraju staged a dharna at the municipal office against the installation of a statue of Tipu Sultan in the town. He was arrested for his troubles.

It may be remembered that local MLA Rajamallu Shiva Prasad Reddy recently laid the

foundation stone for the installation of a statue of Tipu Sultan on Jinnah Road in Proddatur town.

Veerraju called for a protest against the move and had toured Kadapa district for two days to build support for his dharna. He reached Proddatur on Monday night after attending a meeting at the Vontimitta Ramalayam premises.

TODAY**ALMANAC****Month & Paksham:**Ashadha & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam**Tithi** : Panchami 26/47**Nakshatram** : Puna Bhadrapada 10/45**Time to Avoid** : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)**Rahukalam** : 12:22 pm - 1:58 pm**Yamagandam** : 7:34 am - 9:10 am**Varjyam** : 8:52 pm - 10:33 pm**Gulika** : 10:46 am - 12:22 pm**Good Time** : (to start any important work)**Amritakalam** : Nil**Abhijit Muhurtham** : Nil**VIJAYAWADA
WEATHER****Forecast**: Partly cloudy**Temp**: 33/26**Humidity**: 88%**Sunrise**: 5:54 am**Sunset**: 06:50 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated JULY 27, 2021 5:00 PM

It appears as if everything in the administration of Andhra Pradesh is on in a smooth manner and the government is paying needful attention to the implementation of various welfare programmes at the behest of the person in the hot seat. Still, an eerie calm prevails in the daily routine of the government and its representatives.

Besieged by emerging vital issues, the government is believed to be closely following certain sensitive developments. Despite winning unprecedented people's mandate, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy seems to be a ruler who leaves much to be desired. The possible impacts of the outcomes of certain cases on Jagan's political career seem to have affected the wheels of administration. Even ordinary workers of YSRCP are spending nervous moments while watching anxiously the pace of investigations into various cases.

Allocation of funds for the

An eerie calm prevails in AP!



PIN POINT

multi-purpose Polavaram project; key developments in the investigation of the gruesome killing of former minister & MP YS Vivekananda Reddy, brother of late former CM YSR and paternal uncle of Jagan; and ongoing political tussle between Jagan and his own party MP K. Raghurama-krishnam Raju, who filed a petition in CBI court seeking cancellation of bail for Jagan, have definitely affected the morale of the party. Most of the Ministers too are moody because of the talk that in the impending reshuffle most of them are going to be dropped. The Polavaram project is not getting the expected attention from the Union government, which has refused to give revised rates, despite the

The possible impacts of the outcomes of certain cases on Jagan's political career seem to have affected the wheels of administration. Even ordinary workers of YSRCP are spending nervous moments while watching anxiously the pace of investigations into various cases.

revised estimated costs. It means that AP will have to meet additional financial burden of Rs. 7,192/- crore. The AP government needs Rs. 10, 500/- crore just to meet the expenses of paying salaries. The Polavaram works are getting affected also by floods in the Godavari and the confer dam, which is nearing completion, with its impact on storing flood waters on a

large scale. As a result, 27 villages are in the areas of submergence. In fact, the present government should be thankful to the earlier regime for getting seven revenue mandals of Telangana State that are in submergence area through an Ordinance issued by the central government. Otherwise, there would have been serious wrangling with Telangana State over the sub-



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

mergence. Having control over the area of submergence is considered a positive sign for the state of AP. This has forced Telangana State to give up its hopes of getting back again those seven revenue mandals. However, the ongoing tus-

se between the ruling party government and MP Raghurama is causing much embarrassment to the ruling party as the latter could establish that he had been tortured and given third-degree treatment in police custody. Raghurama highlighted the issue of an MP getting third-degree treatment in police custody by writing letters to all MPs in their respective mother tongues. So, he struck a chord with his colleagues in Parliament. Raghurama's attempt to get Jagan's bail cancelled has been countered by YSRCP MPs by demanding action against him under the Prevention Money Laundering Act.

However, the rebel MP managed to get access to RSS leadership and tried to inject the acts of the AP government against Hinduism into their

brains. As for the petition filed by the rebel MP in CBI court seeking cancellation of Jagan's bail, lawyers representing the investigative agency suddenly requested leave, citing ill-health as the reason. This has raised several eyebrows.

The gruesome killing of Vivekananda Reddy had created a sensation in Andhra Pradesh ahead of the Assembly and Lok Sabha elections in 2019.

Within no time, then principal opposition party YSRCP had accused then TDP government headed by Chandrababu Naidu of killing Viveka by instigating then minister D. Adinarayana Reddy of Kadapa district. Investigating agency CBI recently recorded a statement of the watchman who was on duty on that fateful day. He is

believed to have stated that 'supari' of Rs.8 crore had been given for killing Viveka and there was possible involvement of two prominent persons' in this sordid episode. This created a sensation, leading to wild imagination about the outcome of the CBI probe. People have noticed the transfer of the DIG rank officer who is leading the investigation and his replacement by an officer of SP rank. People are curious to know why the investigating officer was transferred at a crucial stage of the probe. The opposition has questioned the 'stoic silence' of the Chief Minister and the Director General of Police with regard to the murder of Viveka.

Viveka had faced painful moments, including 'domestic pressure' that drove him to almost 'relinquish' the Lok Sabha membership to pave the way for Jagan to contest 15 years ago. But Viveka had continued as an MP, thanks to then Congress president Sonia Gandhi!

Veerraju arrested after protest over...

Continued from Page 1

Alert to his intentions, the police tried to block Veerraju's planned protest in front of the statue site.

The BJP leader proceeded to stage a protest in front of the Proddatur municipal office. The police got wind of the protest and reached the spot.

A scuffle between the police and BJP activists followed, leading to the arrest of Veerraju.

With tension palpable, the police placed BJP leader and former minister Adinarayana Reddy under house arrest at Devagudi village before he could reach Proddatur.

Police have beefed up security in the village. Veerraju was shifted to the R&B guest-house in Kadapa district headquarters.



YSRCP MPs urge Centre to release MNREGS dues

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation of YSRCP MPs met Union Rural Development Minister Giriraj Singh and urged him to release pending MNREGS dues of Rs 6,750 crore, besides enhancement of person days from 100 to 150 and other pressing issues that are needed to be addressed.

The MPs told the Union Minister that Andhra Pradesh has topped other States in providing the highest wage employment with 18.4 crore person days for wage seekers through MGNREGS. Andhra Pradesh is not only the leading State, but leading with a huge margin as the second best State is much behind at 13.7 crore, they pointed out.

By June 30, 2021 AP had achieved a record 16.7 crore person days in MGNREGS against a target of 16 crore per-



son days, they said. The State achieved this feat within three months of FY 2021-22, leading to the utilisation of 83.5 per cent of approved labour budget, the YSRCP MPs told Giriraj Singh.

The MPs further said that in light of the same, put forward some demands and issues

which Andhra Pradesh is facing in continuing to further implement and better the lead when it comes to implementation of MGNREGS.

They sought the release of the pending first tranche to the tune of Rs. 6,750 crore.

They also requested Giriraj Singh to permit raising of new

coffee plantations under MGNREGS. They said that the programme benefits poor tribals living in the Paderu area of Visakhapatnam district. Hence, there is an urgent need to include the work of raising coffee plantations under the ambit of MGNREGS, they said.

It is pertinent to mention here that similar plantation activities like rubber etc. have been allowed in other states.

"Considering the enormous potential of coffee plantation for income generation to poor and vulnerable tribals, I request to permit raising of new coffee plantation as an area specific work in the tribal areas of Visakhapatnam district of Andhra Pradesh in the interest of the vulnerable tribal poor," said YSR Congress Parliamentary Party leader V Vijayasai Reddy.

AP readies Logistics...

Continued from Page 1

While the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA) mandated MoRT&H to develop 35 Multi Model Logistics Parks (MMLP) across the country, initially two of them - at Vijayawada and Vizag - were to come up in Andhra Pradesh.

The Centre had chosen 15 locations that included Vijayawada to develop these parks in phase one of Bharatmala Pariyojana. The pre-feasibility studies of the remaining proposed parks were to be carried out in the second phase.

However Vijayawada location turned out to be not feasible to set up such an MMLP.

Following this, officials of the State Industries Department are on the job of preparing the Logistics Policy.

As part of the efforts by the Union government to have a central umbrella authority, Andhra Pradesh has already

issued orders establishing the State Logistics Coordination Committee with the Chief Secretary as its Chairman.

Setting up of logistics parks and the bringing out Logistics Policy came up for discussion during a review meeting conducted by State Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy on Tuesday.

It is learnt that a team from Andhra Pradesh had studied the logistics infrastructure models in place at Singapore and other countries as part of drafting the Logistics Policy.

Major and minor ports, cold storages, warehouses and transport trucks are considered the key to the state's economy, said Goutam Reddy.

The State Government also has plans to develop truck parking bays in an extent of 5 acres each along the National and State Highways that will help the trucks that transport goods. The bays will have fuel stations, parking slots, food courts and resting places for drivers etc.

Bar Councils request V-P, CJI...

Continued from Page 1

They have responded positively, Bar Council of Telangana Chairman A Narasimha Reddy said in a release here.

The plea to set up Permanent Regional Benches of the Supreme Court has been a long pending demand, they said pointing out that the Standing Committees of Parliament, Bar Councils at the State and National Level, Law Commissions have made representations in this regard.

"The constitution of

Regional Benches will reduce the number of pending cases before the apex court and reduce the time taken for their disposal," they said.

They further said that it will create more positions of judges and the law practitioners will have the opportunity to argue cases in the Apex court bench in their region.

Judges of High Courts will have enhanced opportunities for promotion, they said, adding Regional Benches will make courts of ultimate appeal accessible region-wise and this will benefit litigators and lawyers.



Finish pending...

Continued from Page 1

He alerted the officials in the wake of an active monsoon as a low pressure is expected on July 28, based on an IMD report.

The Chief Minister directed officials to take appropriate precautionary measures in the view of incessant rains and ordered to deploy NDRF, SDRF forces in Godavari districts.

He said that the hydel power generation in the Srisailem project took place even at 796 feet.

He stated that by God's Grace, excess rainfall was recorded in eight districts across the state, Chittoor district with 77 percent, Kadapa district 93.6 percent, Anantapur 82.4 percent, Kurnool 42.9 percent and Prakasham district with 25 percent registering an average of 23 percent excess rainfall across the state.

The Chief Minister also said that the Agriculture Advisory Council meetings must be held on the first Friday of every month at the RBK level, the second Friday of each month at the zonal level and the third Friday of each month at the district level, as these meetings provide a good way to implement a crop plan to cultivate crops that are in demand in the market.

Further, he instructed the officials to provide quality seeds, fertilizers and pesticides to farmers through RBKs and to keep a check on black marketing and spurious seeds by conducting regular inspections.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹267
Without Skin	₹287
Broiler at Farm	₹149

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	464
HYDERABAD	496
VISAKHAPATNAM	557
RETAIL PRICE (IN HAND)	₹4.64

Jagan pulls up...

Continued from Page 1

He reminded them that the Collectors were supposed to inspect two secretariats a week, while others like Joint Collectors, Municipal Commissioners and Sub-Collectors were required to inspect four each.

"While 1,098 field-level inspections had to be done, only 733 happened, which is only 66.75 percent. Collectors did 106 percent and JCs (secretariats) did 107 percent against the target.

These officials have done well, Jagan said. But he pointed out that three other Joint Collectors handling revenue, welfare and housing accomplished only 78, 85 and 49 percent of the target (inspections). The municipal commissioners achieved 89 percent of the target, but the Integrated Tribal Development Agency Project Officers (18 percent) and Sub-Collectors (21 percent) lagged way behind, the Chief Minister said.

"The performance of these officers is very bad. This is not acceptable. You will also get memos from the CMO. There is no other option to ensure discipline," he said.

On the occasion, Jagan once

AP allows TS to use its school infrastructure software...

Continued from Page 1

When the Telangana government decided to provide infrastructure facilities in schools across the State, it requested the Andhra Pradesh government to allow it to use the software.

The 'No Objection' from the AP government came at a time

when the two States are at odds with each other over sharing of river waters.

Incidentally, it was just two days ago that the Chairman of National Education Policy- 2020 Dr K Kasturirangan lauded the reforms being carried out in the education sector by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

CM lauds staff for Covid fight, seeks action plan on 3rd wave by Aug-end

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday lauded the efforts of village secretariat staff, volunteers, Asha workers, doctors, ANMs and district collectors in containing Covid spread.

He said that the door-to-door fever survey was conducted 13 times and the people with symptoms were identified, tested and provided treatment. The Chief Minister congratulated the government staff for putting efforts to bring down the mortality rate and in containing the spread of the virus.

Jagan discussed with district collectors and SPs a wide range of issues, including Covid, during the Spandana video conference, held here on Tuesday.

He directed the district collectors to be alert for any possible third wave and said they should be ready with a district-wise action plan by the end of August.

He asked them to increase the infrastructure facilities, biomedical equipment and oxygen beds as per the requirement and added to complete paediatric care training to staff nurses.

Interacting with the officials, the Chief Minister asserted that vaccination was the only answer to Covid-19. He said the country has been manufacturing fewer doses of



vaccine than the actual requirement and the State government has been vaccinating people as per the allocations made by the Union government.

Jagan said the impact of Covid has been decreasing gradually and the positivity rate has been reduced to 2.82 percent from 25 percent during the second wave.

The Chief Minister said that focused testing should be done through RT-PCR by identifying people with symptoms and added that tests should be conducted to whoever asks for it.

He said that '104' services should be utilised effectively, fever surveys should be conducted regularly, masks and social distancing should be

followed strictly.

In view of the decreasing caseload, a majority of the people who step out of their home are seen giving scant regard to following Covid guidelines in public places. This is at a time the State is reporting over 2,000 Covid-19 cases every day. In busy places like shopping malls, vegetable markets, super markets, tea stalls and public transport, people are seen violating Covid rules like maintaining social distance and wearing face masks.

The authorities have been regularly warning people of the impending danger, and have even been imposing hefty penalties on commercial establishments violating Covid rules. Still, very few of them seem to be following the rules.

As part of strictly implementing Covid prevention measures, the government has given police personnel to levy a fine of Rs 100 on people not wearing a face mask.

The State government has also made public a dedicated WhatsApp number for people to send photographic evidence of people and entities violating the Covid norms. This too does not seem to work as the number of people not bothering to follow the rules remains high.

On the other hand local transport like shared auto rickshaws and corporation buses are seen with more than the basic occupancy. Kaza Adinarayana, a regular visitor to the Rythu Bazaar at Satavahana College premises to buy vegetables, said that most of

Rules cast aside as third wave looms

C PRADEEP KUMAR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Despite the best efforts of the authorities, a majority of the people who step out of their home are seen giving scant regard to following Covid guidelines in public places. This is at a time the State is reporting over 2,000 Covid-19 cases every day. In busy places like shopping malls, vegetable markets, super markets, tea stalls and public transport, people are seen violating Covid rules like maintaining social distance and wearing face masks.

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On the other hand local transport like shared auto rickshaws and corporation buses are seen with more than the basic occupancy. Kaza Adinarayana, a regular visitor to the Rythu Bazaar at Satavahana College premises to buy vegetables, said that most of

the vendors and the customers are seen violating Covid rules like maintaining social distance or wearing masks. "This is because the authorities are showing slackness in this Rythu Bazaar. The pre-recorded Covid instructions keep on playing on loudspeakers in the Rythu Bazaar. By now, it has become part of the Rythu Bazaar atmosphere and no one pays attention to the recording," Adinarayana said.

He said that Rythu Bazaars pose a severe threat in spreading the deadly Covid infection in days to come if there is no proper monitoring by officials.

"Wearing a mask and not flocking in groups when visiting markets and other public places is mandatory. Market committees have been instructed to ensure all customers wear a mask. The curfew has been imposed uniformly across the state from 10 pm to 6 am, the state government has warned that heavy penalties will be levied on commercial establishments if found violating Covid-19 safety norms.

Establishments found violating the norms will be forced to remain shut for 2-3 days," says the gist of the guidelines issued by the government.

G Suman Kumar, a retired headmaster, said that the city police have been conducting checks at various places and imposing fines on people violating Section 144 and Covid rules regularly. "Acts of violence creates a sense of fear among people but since it is not visible to the naked eye, no one seems to be afraid of Covid anymore," he said.

MIG layouts to come up in land unutilised by govt bodies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Moving swiftly on developing layouts for Middle Income Groups in urban centres, the State government has decided to resume lands that were alienated to government bodies or organisations but were not put to use to develop these 'Jagananna Smart Towns'.

In order to promote planned and integrated developments of various towns by providing the basic infrastructure facilities and to address the aspirations of Middle Income Groups for quality housing by ensuring availability of residential plots with clear title and at affordable prices, the government issued certain guidelines for developing well planned MIG layouts

/ Jagananna Smart Townships.

The government with the above objective has now decided to utilise unutilised land earlier alienated in favour of government organisations, departments, Public Sector Undertakings, state government corporations, urban development authorities and urban local bodies and also lands acquired by various departments for any public purpose but not put into use for purpose of this scheme "developing well planned MIG layouts/Jagananna Smart Townships.

Accordingly, in order to speed up implementation of this scheme, government decided to delegate powers to district collectors for handing over of advance possession of

suitable vacant government lands to MA&UD Department subject to pending regular alienation.

The district collectors shall furnish details of such lands for development of Middle Income Group layouts purpose to the CCLA and government.

The collectors were further instructed not to propose any lands belonging to Endowments, educational institutions, Wakf or any other religious-related lands, environmentally sensitive and fragile areas such as, tank beds, riverbeds, other water bodies and hillocks with afforestation, any other objectionable government poramboke, community poramboke for the scheme.



Varla condemns arrest of dissenting TDP leaders

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP Politburo member Varla Ramaiah on Tuesday urged the Director General of Police (DGP) to uphold and protect the democratic right of TDP leaders to protest against the YSRCP government's "anti-people policies and discriminatory programmes".

Ramaiah decried the house arrest of Vinukonda former MLA GV Anjaneyulu on the 'flimsy ground' that he was mobilising people to express dissent against the Government's policy on garbage tax. "This kind of trampling upon the rights of the opposition leaders and dissenting voices was condemnable and in violation of the country's Constitution," he stated.

In a letter sent to the DGP here, the TDP leader termed it as unfortunate that a section of the police was brutally suppressing all forms of democratic protest, thus leaving no chance for the people and organisations to seek justice. It was alarming that the police officers were issuing notices to the TDP leaders just for giving a call for holding protests against any of the ruling YSRCP's programmes.

Ramaiah expressed concern over growing intolerance and said: "Democracy in general and democratic dissent in particular in Andhra Pradesh is under serious threat. For the past two years, any attempts by the opposition TDP to protest against the anti-people's policies of the YSRCP-led Government have been sabotaged by the police by issuing notices to TDP cadre and leaders."

Veerraju inciting religious hatred, alleges Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu on Tuesday accused BJP AP president Somu Veerraju of deliberately inciting religious hatred among the people.

"The YSRCP government is giving equal importance to all religions. After the YSRCP came to power, people of all religions have been happy under the able governance of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy," he said.

Vishnu alleged that the BJP leader was tight-lipped when the TDP government in 2016 under the direction of former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu went on a demolition spree, razing temples in the name of Krishna Pushkaralu.

Pointing out that even the Hindu Dharmik organisations strongly opposed the demolition of temples, he demanded to know why Veerraju took out any yatra and what made him take out his "Drama Yatra" of visiting various temples across the State now.

Vishnu said that many age-old historic temples were demolished in Vijayawada for Naidu's political and personal gain. "As many as 20,000 temples across the state were shut during the TDP regime and Veerraju did not care to comment as the TDP and the BJP had a political alliance," the MLA said.

He said that after the YSRCP came to power, all



temples in the State have regained their lost glory and YV Subba Reddy has taken up an innovative prestigious programme 'Gudiko Gomatha' that received huge popularity that is not being digested by Veerraju.

He said that the NDA government at the Centre did not accord TTD funds from GST exemption, even the Centre did not give permission to deposit Rs 1000 and Rs 500 currency banned during demonetisation in any bank till date.

Vishnu reminded that during the TDP regime, Naidu insulted archakas for asking their hereditary rights terming as huge demands and harassed the priests, forcing a few of them to resort to suicide. "Even witchcraft being performed in Kanakadurga temple during the TDP regime has been overlooked by Veerraju as the BJP-TDP had political alliance," stated Vishnu.

Task force sleuths nab 8 ganja peddlers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Task force sleuths on Tuesday arrested eight persons on charges of peddling ganja under the Vijayawada police commissionerate limits.

The sleuths arrested the ganja peddlers from three different places in the city – three were nabbed in Penamaluru police station limits, four from Machavaram police station limits and one was arrested from Krishnalanka police station limits. The three accused arrested by Penamaluru police were identified as Abdul Khadar (Faiaz), Ch Narendra and P Venkatadurga Prasad from home the police seized 500 gm ganja and three cell phones.

The four accused arrested by Machavaram police were identified as A Praveen

Kumar, P Bhagya Brahmendra, G Pavan Kumar and K Rohit Babu. The police seized 2 kg ganja and four cell phones from them.

Gupta Naveen Kumar was nabbed by the Krishnalanka police and the sleuths recovered 1 kg ganja and two cell phones from him.

During the interrogation the eight accused persons revealed that they purchased ganja from Sileru and Araku in Visakhapatnam district. The contraband was re-packed into small sachets and sold to persons who consume ganja in Vijayawada, according to the task force police.

The police also arrested six persons consuming ganja under Patamata police station limits. The arrested were counselled by the task force officials.

TDP decries YSRCP protocol violations in all constituencies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP AP president K Atchannaidu on Tuesday accused leaders of the ruling YSRCP of resorting to serious protocol violations and denying TDP elected representatives of their Constitutional rights in all the Assembly constituencies in the State.

Atchannaidu said that the problem was more severe in the constituencies where the TDP MLAs won in 2019. "Local YSRCP leaders were not according even minimum respect to the TDP candidates who have been elected as sarpanches, MP/MLA, ZPTC and corporators in both rural and urban areas," he said.

In a statement here, the TDP leader deplored that the ruling party leaders were deliberately violating the protocol guidelines to "continue their



political vendetta". "Officials concerned at all levels are just carrying out whims and fancies of the ruling YSRCP leaders, on the lines of the Chief Secretary, DGP and top officials dancing to the tunes of the Chief Minister and his Advisors," Atchannaidu alleged.

He alleged that the "dictatorial tendencies" of the Jagan

regime were only intensifying despite the strictures being passed by courts against its policies and programmes.

The TDP leader termed it as atrocious on the part of the Chief Minister and his party leaders to deny the benefits under the welfare programmes to the opposition sympathisers. The YSRCP leaders should realise that their non-stop suppression tactics would only create greater resentment among the public but not any fear or their surrender, he said. The TDP leader said that the ruling party was getting false cases filed against all those who were questioning the constitutional violations of their leaders at all levels. Alarmingly, the YSRCP leaders were also attacking and destroying the properties of those who were exposing their illegal activities.

Women harassed more on social media

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Women are facing harassment mostly through social media, the report released by SHE teams revealed.

From January to June 2021, SHE teams have received a total number of 2,803 complaints. Of them, 69 per cent were received through in-direct mode (most of the complaints were received through

WhatsApp) and 31 per cent through direct walk-in. Telangana Police have released the report of the last six months on Tuesday.

The majority of the cases have witnessed that the victims were harassed through social media and mobile.

At present there are 331 SHE teams working in TS. The SHE module collects daily DSR through specially designed soft-

ware and compiles the same and creates a database of the SHE Teams work.

The performance of the SHE team is monitored through a software, which will give day to day reports to the officials. Along with WhatsApp and other social media gateways, SHE team has provided a QR Code mechanism as a provision to complaint for the victims. The QR code mechanism

has come into force and as many as 40,000 QR code barcodes in Telugu, English, Urdu languages were distributed to all the districts.

Through this facility the victim can file complaints and send feedback. The barcodes have been placed in all metro trains, RTC bus depots and bus stands, inside the buses, major railway stations in Hyderabad and Hyderabad Commissi-

onerate. Until now a total of 326 complaints were received.

The Cyber Congress training programme - "CyBERHER III" is being taken up by the SHE Team with the initiation by the Women Safety Wing, as part of creating cyber awareness to the school going children, in rural and urban areas. The project is running to all the 33 districts of TS, targeting 50 schools from each district.

Decrease in Maoist violence incidents in last 3 years: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There has been a decrease in Maoist-linked violence activities in the country over the last three years, Parliament was informed on Tuesday.

Minister of State for Home Affairs Nityanand Rai provided a datasheet along with his written reply in Lok Sabha to state that while there were 833 incidents of Left Wing Extremism (LWE) violence in 2018, they came down to 670 in 2019 and further decreased

to 665 last year. The corresponding official deaths in these incidents too came down from 240 (2018) to 202 (2019) and 183 in the last year.

In all these years, the highest number of LWE violence incidents and deaths took place in the central Indian state of Chhattisgarh, the data showed.

Incidents of damage to property in Naxal violence, it said, also came down to 47 last year from 64 in 2019. However, 60 such incidents were reported in 2018.

There are 10 LWE-affected states – Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chhattisgarh, Jharkhand, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Odisha, Telangana, West Bengal and Kerala.

"There has been a decrease in Naxal activities in the country in the last three years," the minister said. Rai added that in order to improve mobile connectivity in these areas, 2,343 mobile towers have been installed and "further sanction" has been accorded for installation of 4,072 additional towers.

Rs 2,205 cr to develop roads across the State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Principal Secretary (Transport and R&B) MT Krishna Babu on Tuesday said that the government was going to spend Rs 2,205 crore for the development of roads across the State.

Speaking to the media at the R&B office here, he said that steps were being taken to complete the said works in the coming two years. The government is aiming to develop 9,000 km of major roads and officials were told to release details of funds allocated for the ongoing works.

The transport PS said that last year, Rs 932 crore was spent



on the development of roads in the State, of which Rs 417 crore was spent on state highways

and Rs 515 crore on major district roads. Around Rs 380 crore worth bills were sanc-

tioned till January, out of Rs 600 crore spent in the previous year. Steps are being taken to clear the pending bills on a priority basis and the department has urged the Finance Department to release funds accordingly.

Krishna Babu said that to bring confidence among the contractors, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had directed the Department to obtain loans from banks and pay bills directly to the contractors. "Negotiations are underway with five major banks in this regard. Three banks have come forward to lend money to pay the bills.

Besides that, the cess coming to the state through petrol and diesel sale will be diverted to the Andhra Pradesh Road Development Corporation (APRDC)," he said.

He said that around Rs 410 crore was sanctioned in the 2020-21 Budget and works taken up with Rs 160 crore are in different stages of completion. In the next 10 days, the government will release the pending funds to the Department. A chief engineer was appointed as a nodal officer to monitor the condition of the roads and develop them on a priority basis, Krishna Babu said.

Veligonda regulator leaks, floodwater enters tunnel

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Flood water leakage from the head regulator into the first tunnel of the Veligonda project has become a headache for officials. The Krishna waters were flowing through the tunnel before the construction of the project was completed. The first crucial tunnel in the project, which is being constructed, was recently completed.

A head regulator was also constructed at Kollam Vagu to connect the tunnel to the Krishna river. It has two gates. The flood water was entering the tunnel through the gates. It needs to be repaired.

Authorities said work on the second tunnel was halted due to leakage. The first tunnel with a diameter of 7 m was completed and the head regulator was set up at Kollam Vagu with two emergency gates with a height of 6.1 m and a width of 3.5 m.



Project engineering officials estimated that the water leakage was caused by a rubber seal not being properly installed to fill the gaps between the regulatory doors. Over the last four days, the flow at Kollam Vagu has increased due to heavy floodwater inflow into Srisailem Reservoir from the catchment

areas. This caused water to flow into the first tunnel due to leakage at the gates. Authorities were pumping water with motors but the water flow was not slowing down. Due to leakage, water reached the front gate of the first tunnel at Dornala Mandal Kottur. As a result, the locomotive train, sheds, and machinery were sub-

merged in water.

Project officials said measures were being taken to curb leakage on warfoot basis. They said a team of experts was repairing the door leaks at the Kollam Vagu Head Regulator. Minister Adimulapu Suresh, who came to know about the Veligonda project water leakage through the authorities, prepared to inspect the project and postponed the visit. Former Markapuram MLA Janke Venkata Reddy visited the project and inspected the flow of machinery in the tunnel and spoke to the authorities.

TDP leaders reacted to the flow of water into the first tunnel of the Veligonda project. Former Markapuram MLA Kandula Narayana Reddy, Giddalur former MLA Muthumula Ashok Reddy and Y Palem TDP in-charge Guduri Erikisan Babu inspected the floodwater in the project.

Minor girl sexually harassed by father

PNS ■ KAKINADA

In a shocking incident, a man allegedly sexually harassed his 11-year-old daughter at Choppella village in Alamuru mandal.

Dishsa DSP Sunkara Murali Mohan told the media on Tuesday that the grandmother of the 11-year-old victim lodged a complaint with the Alamuru mandal police station complaining that his son was sexually harassing his daughter.

The mother of the victim has been working in Dubai and her paternal grandmother went to Hyderabad in search of livelihood. The accused lives with his three children at Choppella village. The victim telephoned and informed her paternal grandmother that her father was misbehaving with her during nights.

GUDA likely to be abolished

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Is the Godavari Urban Development Authority (GUDA) making way for the Kakinada Urban Development Authority (KUDA) and Rajahmundry Urban Development Authority (RUDA)? Such a development appears to be imminent with the State government announcing the setting up of KUDA and RUDA and appointing separate chairmen for them. The villages located within 25 km limits of Kakinada and Rajahmundry cities would be incorporated in the KUDA and RUDA.

While Kakinada was already announced to be a Smart City, Rajahmundry Municipal Corporation (RMC) is also heading towards the same status.

With KUDA and RUDA coming into existence, the GUDA would be devoid of responsibilities, and eventually the government will issue a GO abolishing it. The erstwhile Telugu Desam Party (TDP) government had set up the



GUDA with the aim of developing cities and panchayats in the district.

Significantly, recruitment of new staff for GUDA has not been taken for the last few months. Some officials and staffers were sent to the GUDA from other departments on deputation and they would be transferred to the KUDA and RUDA, official sources said.

Except for some parts of Konaseema and Agency, all the areas would be brought under the jurisdiction of KUDA and

RUDA. Sources said that the government is likely to abolish the GUDA by issuing a GO.

Kakinada was already accorded a Smart City status but Rajahmundry is yet to be accorded the same. After being accorded the Smart City status to Rajahmundry, its chairman would be appointed. The setting up of KUDA, RUDA and Kakinada and Rajahmundry Smart City corporations has made the existence of GUDA questionable and the government is likely to abolish it, sources added.



Disha alert saves woman waiting for late night bus

PNS ■ ONGOLE

In a swift action, the Prakasam district police have rescued a woman waiting for a bus late in the night.

According to police, a woman named M Pavani from Pamuru made an SOS call to Disha app at 11.18 p.m on July 26 and told that her daughter Sireesha started off from her grandmother's home in Edduwada village in Chilakaluripet mandal and reached Ongole at 7.30 p.m on the same day.

While waiting for a bus to Pamuru, she found that there

was no vehicle at that time and informed her parents about it. Her parents asked her to board the Kanigiri bus but she took the Kandukur bus when there was no bus to go to Kanigiri at the time. Her parents then called her several times but found that her mobile was switched off. Immediately, they called the police on the Disha app.

The staff at the Police Control Room in Ongole immediately responded and conveyed information to the Kandukur police who swiftly responded and rushed to Kandukur RTC depot,

searched the surroundings of the bus depot and found the girl in the bus stand. The police later handed her over to her parents safely. The girl's parents thanked the police for taking immediate action to protect her.

Prakasam district SP Malika Garg appreciated the police control room staff and Kandukur police personnel. She said that extensive awareness programmes being conducted on Disha app across the district were yielding good results. Disha app was a great weapon in the hands of women at risk, the SP added.

Girl abducted by Maoists manages to escape in EG

PNS ■ KAKINADA

A minor girl belonging to Venkatapuram village in the Agency area of East Godavari district has been kidnapped by Maoists of Charla-Sabari Dal, according to Chintoor ASP G Krishnakant. The incident took place on May 17 but came to light only on Tuesday. Dal members Aruna, Geeta, Rajesh and Chuluka threatened the girl's parents with a gun and took the girl away. The ASP said that the girl was kidnapped to serve the sick Maoist leaders who were being shifted from one place to another in the forest.

The parents of the minor girl lodged a complaint with the Chintoor police on May 25. The girl, who fell ill, managed to escape from the Maoists on May 22 and approached Chintoor CI Yuva Kumar seeking protection. The girl was treated at the Chintoor Area Hospital for high fever.

The girl was later handed over to her parents on Tuesday in the presence of Chintoor Tahsildhar as her health condition improved.

CM on spree of increasing taxes: Lokesh

PNS ■ PEDDAPURAM

TDP National general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Tuesday slammed Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for 'drowning' the people in the middle of the ocean by 'going on' increasing taxes instead of increasing welfare pensions and benefits as per his election promise.

Lokesh called it a 'dirty Government' that has imposed tax even on the garbage in the name of user charges. House tax was increased along with RTC fares, current charges, cement prices, petrol and diesel rates. Like a 'mayala fakir' (evil sorcerer), the CM made huge pre-election promises to go on increasing welfare pensions. But, after coming to power, he only went on increasing financial burdens on the State and on all sections of its people.

Nara Lokesh visited East Godavari district and unveiled statues of Sri Potti Sriramulu and NTR at Peddapuram Assembly headquarters town.

Addressing the people on the occasion, the TDP MLC said that the Jagan Reddy regime cancelled Anna Canteens, Chandranna Beema and so on in the past two and half years without any concern



for poor people. The general public were not only afraid but also seething with anger against the unjust and deceitful rule.

Lokesh told the TDP activists and sympathisers that their leader Chandrababu Naidu was indeed feeling pain for not being able to give more time to the party cadres during 2014-19. At that time, there was a pressing need to focus on development of the newly created Andhra Pradesh that was in great financial and socio-economic difficulties. There was a deficit of over Rs. 16,000 crore. Naidu had to strive hard to balance welfare and development. This created some distance with the cadres which would not be the

same next time.

Exuding confidence, Nara Lokesh asserted that the TDP would form the next Government in 2024 when it would pay back many times more to all those YCP leaders and officers who were implementing Raja Reddy constitution ruthlessly now. Chandrababu Naidu considered whole AP as his own family in the previous regime. But now, the ruling party was targetting and harassing the TDP leaders for no valid reason.

Mr. Lokesh turned emotional at some points and vowed that he would personally ensure that punishments many times more would be given to those who persecut-

ed the TDP leaders now. The TDP activists were being implicated in false cases and being murdered. If the Chandrababu regime adopted a tough line, Jagan Mohan Reddy would not have been able to come out of his home in the previous rule.

Lokesh termed it pitiable that the Government was striking constant fear in the hearts of poor people by threatening to stop their meagre welfare benefits. The ruling party volunteers were being used to remove ration cards of all those who tried to protest against the Government's wrong policies. The YSRCP leaders were barking like dogs but the TDP cadres would fight back like lions.

Recalling the services of great personalities, Lokesh said that Potti Sriramulu would remain an inspiration for his supreme sacrifice for the sake of the Andhra race. NTR showed the prowess of the Telugu people to the whole country and the world. Within a record time, NTR formed the party, came to power and implemented Rs 2 kg rice, equal property rights to women and political empowerment of the backward classes and weaker sections.

SHORT TAKES



Ex-MLA of Vinukonda arrested

GUNTUR: Former Vinukonda MLA GV Anjaneyulu was on Tuesday arrested for staging a protest in Vinukonda town against the tax levied on garbage by the government. Initially, the police obstructed him at his house but later he sat on the road in front of his residence and raised slogans against the government. Then, he joined the party ranks and staged a protest in front of the Vinukonda Municipal Office. The police forcibly arrested him and took him to the station. TDP ranks had a heated argument with the police when the latter tried to arrest Anjaneyulu. Anjaneyulu warned that the struggle would continue till the tax on garbage was lifted.

Postal Adalat on August 18

AMARAVATI: Postal Pension Adalat of the 8th Circle of Andhra Pradesh Circle for the half-year between December 31 and June 30 will be held at 11 a.m on August 18 through a video conference at the Office of the Chief Postmaster General, AP Circle in Vijayawada. According to a press release, grievances relating to pension, gratuity and allied matters filled in the prescribed Grievance Registration form may be sent to Assistant Accounts Officer (A/c), Accounts Branch, Office of the Chief Postmaster General, A.P.Circle, Vijayawada so as to reach on or before July 31. The grievances received after July 31 would not be considered for this Adalat, the press release said.

Central team inspects PDS



ONGOLE: The Central team conducted inspections at Pakala, Pallepalem and Jarugumalli villages of Prakasam district. GS Sharma, a member of the Central Government Food Security Act, 2013 Monitoring Committee,

inspected the implementation of the Public Distribution Scheme rice in the villages at the field level. The records of Shop No. 22 dealer Chinta Lakshmi in Pakala village were inspected and the quality of rice was checked. The committee members expressed satisfaction over the manner in which the distribution was taking place. Committee members Nirmal Chittoora, Mangilal Chimfa, DSO ASA Sankaran, Enforcement DT Raghavendra Bhupathi, Ramanarayana Reddy, G Ramesh, R Vasudeva Rao, RSI Sujatha and Panchayat Secretary Sheikh Saidu were present on the occasion.



TIDCO houses ready to be handed over to beneficiaries

PNS ■ ELURU

Legislator Grandhi Srinivas has said that the TIDCO houses are being readied for the distribution to the eligible beneficiaries. The MLA held a review meeting at the camp office in Bhimavaram with the municipal and TIDCO officials on Tuesday. Speaking on the occasion, the MLA said that in the coming days, the TIDCO housing colony would become like a small township as over 50,000 people would live there, the MLA said.

He said that as part of providing amenities to the TIDCO colonies, a drinking water reservoir would be constructed and tap connection would be given. Sub-stations were being constructed to supply electricity to the houses, he said.

Srinivas said that BT roads were being constructed for the TIDCO housing colonies, adding that the houses would be handed over to the beneficiaries and housewarming ceremonies would also be organised.

Municipal Commissioner M Shyamala, TIDCO DE Papa Rao and JE Purnachandra Rao were among those who were present.



Durga Temple Executive Officer D Bharamamba accords a traditional welcome to Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram, who visited the temple along with his family, in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

Take advantage of Agri Nano Tech webinar: V-C

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Vice-Chancellor of Adikavi Nannaya University, Prof. Mokka Jagannath Rao, has called upon the students to take advantage of the national webinar on 'Agri Nanotechnologies and Dielectric Materials' organised by the Department of Physics.

Unveiling the brochure of the national webinar at the universi-

ty on Tuesday, he said that the webinar on "Agri Nanotechnologies and Dielectric Materials" is being organised on August 4 under the auspices of the Department of Physics, Adikavi Nannaya University College of Science and Technology.

Acharya NG Ranga Agriculture University, Tirupati, Principal, Scientist Dr TNNKV Prasad and Geetham School of

Sciences Hyderabad Assistant Professor Dati Viswam would be the speakers at the webinar, which would be chaired by Dr S Rajyalakshmi, Lecturer, Department of Physics.

The event was attended by Registrar Prof. T Ashok, Principal Dr K Rameshswari, Convener Dr N Rajyalakshmi as well as Co-Convener Dr Y Sushmapriya and V Rajasekhar.



An extraordinary academic feat by an 'ordinary' priest

PNS ■ KAKINADA

He is an ordinary working at Sitaramachandra Swamy temple at Lingamparthi village in Yelweswaram mandal of East Godavari district. But, he has done an extraordinary feat. Meet V S R Gopal whose passion for higher studies has led him to complete nine post-graduate courses.

Gopal inherited the priesthood from his ancestors. However, the responsibilities of his priesthood has failed to deter him from pursuing higher studies. He has so far completed M.Sc (Psychology), MA (Philosophy), M.Com, MA (English), MA (Telugu), MA (Politics), M.A (Economics), M.LiSc (Librarian) and M.Ed. He has done the PG courses at Andhra University and Acharya Nagarjuna University in Distance Education mode.

He was offered many jobs by various institutions for his extraordinary educational qualifications. He was also selected for a job in the Psychology department of the Government General Hospital in Kakinada.

"I have set a goal of completing six more graduation



courses. My family has been in the priesthood profession for seven generations and has spreading the Hindu 'dharma' and I would like to continue the same," he told this correspondent.

Gopal has gained proficiency in Psychology and many people consult him daily. He continues his priesthood duties from 5 am to 1 pm and 4 pm to 8 pm every day at the Sitaramachandra Swamy temple. His wife did double MA while his son is studying 10th class.

He has won the appreciation of many people for obtaining several PG degrees while pursuing his priesthood and publicising the Hindu dharma.

Gopal has gained proficiency in Psychology and many people consult him daily. He performs his priesthood duties from 5 am to 1 pm and 4 pm to 8 pm every day at the Sitaramachandra Swamy temple. His wife did double MA while his son is studying 10th class.

Health Ministry seeks details on issue of fake Covid tests from States

The Union health ministry has sought details on the issue of fake Covid tests from states, Minister of State for Health Bharati Pravin Pawar informed Rajya Sabha on Tuesday. Uttarakhand has reported instances of fake Covid tests, Pawar said in a written reply to whether the government is aware that several private firms have been found to be involved in fake Covid tests racks endangering people's lives. The ministry was also asked about details of such states where such instances of fake tests have been reported. As reported by the state of Uttarakhand, FIRs have been registered against the firms involved, Pawar said. Police investigation against all laboratories involved is underway and they have been debarred from further testing in the state and all payments have been withheld, the minister said.



Climate change is most critical challenge before humanity: President

President Ram Nath Kovind on Tuesday said that climate change is the most critical challenge before humanity and global warming is making its impact everywhere. Addressing the 19th convocation of the Kashmir University here, he also hoped that the centres for glaciology and Himalayan biodiversity at the varsity will show the way to the world in fighting climate change. "Climate change, as you are aware, is the most critical challenge before humanity in this century. Global warming is making its impact everywhere, but nowhere is it more felt than in the fragile eco-system of the Himalayas," the president said. He said the University of Kashmir has added another feather to its cap with the setting up of two centres that are of high importance. "One is devoted to glaciology and the other to Himalayan biodiversity documentation, bio-prospection and conservation. There is also the National Himalayan Ice-Core Laboratory. I am confident that these two 'Centres of Excellence' and the laboratory will help Kashmir and also show the way to the world in combating climate challenges and nurturing nature," Kovind said.



Teary homecoming: Mirabai Chanu breaks down on meeting mother

It was an emotional homecoming for newly-crowned Olympic silver-medallist Mirabai Chanu, who broke down on meeting her mother here on Tuesday before being felicitated by Manipur chief minister N Biren Singh at the airport. Much like the reception at the Indira Gandhi International Airport on Monday, Chanu was met with media frenzy at the Bir Tikendrajit International Airport here. A stringent training regimen after the 2016 Rio Games had limited Chanu's visits to home for the past five years. Chanu, who won the silver medal in the women's 49kg category on Saturday, was seen hugging her mother Saikhom Ongbi Tombi Leima and her father Saikhom Kriti Meitei with tears rolling down her face as security guards formed a ring around her. The now famous gold earrings, shaped like the Olympic rings, that Chanu sported at the Games were a gift from her mother who sold her own jewellery for them five years ago ahead of the Rio Games in the hope of bringing the weightlifter luck.



Pegasus snooping 'most important' for IT panel: Tharoor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliamentary panel on Information Technology will question government officials on allegations relating to suspected phone tapping of politicians, journalists and others using Pegasus spyware, the committee chairman and senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor said on Tuesday asserting that it is the "most important issue" for many members.

The 32-member Parliamentary Standing Committee on IT is scheduled to meet on Wednesday, for which the listed agenda is "Citizens' data security and privacy", according to a notification issued by Lok Sabha Secretariat. The panel, which has the maximum members from the ruling BJP, has summoned officials from the Ministry of Electronics, Information and

Technology and the Ministry of Home Affairs. An international media consortium has reported that over 300 verified Indian mobile phone numbers were on a list of potential targets for surveillance using Israeli firm NSO's Pegasus spyware. Opposition leaders including Rahul Gandhi, two union ministers -- Prahlad Singh Patel and Railways and IT Minister Ashwini Vaishnaw, business-



man Anil Ambani, a former CBI chief, and at least 40 journalists are on the list on the leaked database of NSO. It is, however, not established that all the phones were hacked.

"The subject of Citizens Data Privacy and Security is an approved agenda item of the committee and it was under this item that we had earlier discussed the Pegasus issue in November-December last year. So it's a continuing issue. There would be other questions as well, as this is not necessarily the only issue. But, for many of us in the committee this is perhaps the most important issue," Tharoor told PTI a

day before the panel's meeting. Since the beginning of the monsoon session on July 19, both houses have seen repeated disruptions as opposition parties have been demanding a Supreme Court-monitored judicial probe in this matter. "Parliament is not functioning because of this issue. People are anxious to find out about this and we are definitely likely to have questions for the government officials attending the meeting.

We are going to see what the answers are," he said. Meanwhile, the TMC-led government in West Bengal has set up a Commission of Inquiry to probe allegations of snooping on politicians, officials and journalists. Leaders from all parties have been maintaining that the entire opposition is united on this matter and they want a discussion on the Pegasus snooping issue in Parliament.

Mamata meets Cong leaders Kamal Nath, Anand Sharma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Tuesday met senior Congress leaders Kamal Nath and Anand Sharma here. This is the first of her series of meetings with senior political leaders in the national capital after her assembly poll victory in Bengal. Nath, after meeting the Trinamool Congress (TMC) supremo, said he had come to congratulate Banerjee for her victory in the recent assembly elections. "We have not discussed any strategy. That will be discussed by the leader of our party. We just discussed the current situation and the issue of rising prices," the Congress leader told reporters. Nath said Banerjee's victory in the assembly polls has sent a message across the country. Later, Banerjee met Sharma. During the meeting, Sharma is



reported to have told her that there cannot be a non-BJP front without the Congress as it is a national political party with a pan-India presence. Banerjee will be meeting another Congress leader and Rajya Sabha MP Abhishek Singhvi in the evening.

Sources said the Banerjee's visit, is part of her efforts to cobble up a national front against the BJP. She will also be meeting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Banerjee is slated to meet Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Wednesday evening.

RSS leader's son ends life after cops beat up his mother

PNS ■ BAGHPAT (UP)

A 22-year-old man ended his life by hanging after his mother was allegedly roughed up and their house ransacked by police, following a brawl at a Covid vaccination camp in Ranchhad village here. Superintendent of Police, Baghpat, Abhishek Singh said 10 policemen of Binauli police station have been relieved of their duties and attached to police lines. Akshay, a son of a local RSS leader, had taken his mother (62) to a vaccination centre to get her vaccinated against COVID-19 on Monday. He wanted to get her the jab first instead of standing in queue, citing her age. This led to an altercation with police, his family members said.

NHRC members probing post-poll violence share ties with BJP: WB govt

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The TMC government in West Bengal has alleged in an affidavit filed before the Calcutta High Court that the NHRC committee which probed incidents of post-poll violence in the state "was fraught with bias against the ruling dispensation". The affidavit, submitted to the court on Monday, also claimed that members of the panel share close ties with BJP leaders. Criticising the Mamata Banerjee government, the NHRC panel, in its report placed before the high court recently, has underscored that "the situation in the state is a manifestation of law of ruler instead of rule of law". It recommended CBI probe into "grievous offences like murder and rape". Contradicting the findings of the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC) panel --



which was set up by its chairman on the order of the court -- the affidavit submitted by the TMC government said, members of the committee "have close association with the Bharatiya Janata Party and/or the central government". "The formation of the commit-

tee and the purported field teams are fraught with bias against the ruling dispensation in the state of West Bengal. "It will be evident that the committee has been deliberately constituted to spearhead a witch hunt against the entire state machinery in West Bengal," the

affidavit maintained. The matter is scheduled to be taken up for hearing on Wednesday by a five-judge bench of the high court, presided by Acting Chief Justice Rajesh Bindal. The state government, in its affidavit, has further claimed that the "NHRC" chairperson has abused the process of this honourable court and appointed only those members who are interested in conducting a hatchet job against a democratically elected government." It said that such members who have an "inherent bias" against the ruling dispensation were chosen and accordingly "predisposed to give a negative report" on the law-and-order situation. Under such circumstances, the credibility of the panel to investigate in an "unbiased and neutral manner" is questionable, the state government pointed out.

SC asks HC to decide appeals of convicts within four months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming it a "hard case of unduly long incarceration", the Supreme Court has asked the Allahabad High Court to make an endeavour to dispose within four months the appeals filed by two life convicts, including one from Bangladesh, who have in custody for over 30 and 15 years. The apex court directed the state to file paper book in the pending separate appeals within two weeks as per the high court rules, if the convicts have not done so, so that these matters may proceed for hearing. "We request the high court to make an endeavour to dispose of the criminal appeals within four months from the date of filing of additional paper book by the state," a bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna said. The apex court passed the order on a plea filed by two convicts, serving life terms in sepa-



rate murder cases, seeking bail on the ground that they have already undergone custody of over 30 and 15 years respectively and their appeals against conviction are pending before the high court. The two convicts, in their plea filed through advocate Rishi Malhotra, have said that deprivation of personal liberty without ensuring speedy trial in not consistent with Article 21 (protection of life and personal liberty) of the Constitution. During the arguments, the counsel appearing for the state, said that one of the petitioners is a foreign national and as per the state policy, he cannot be released prematurely. The counsel said trial in a separate case for alleged offence of attempt to murder is pending against the second petitioner. He argued that both the petitioners can move the high court for relief and the apex court can ask the high court to decide these matters within a time frame.

Harappan-era city Dholavira inscribed on UNESCO list

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Dholavira, a Harappan-era metropolis, in Gujarat has been inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, the organisation said on Tuesday. "Dholavira: A Harappan City, in India, just inscribed on the @UNESCO #WorldHeritage List. Congratulations!" UNESCO tweeted. The ongoing 44th session of the World Heritage Committee of the UNESCO has already given India a new world heritage site in the form of the Rudreswara/ Ramappa Temple in Telangana, which dates back to the 13th century. Gujarat so far has three world heritage sites -- Champaner near Pavagadh, Rani ki Vav in Patan and the historic city of Ahmedabad. This session of the World Heritage Committee is being chaired from Fuzhou in China and is being held online. It started on July 16 and will end



on July 31. The 44th session omibines current work, and issues left outstanding since last year, when the annual meeting was postponed due to COVID-19. "It gives immense pride to share with my fellow Indians that #Dholavira is now the 40th treasure in India to be given @UNESCO's World Heritage Inscription. Another feather in India's cap as we now enter the Super-40 club for

World Heritage Site inscriptions," Culture Minister G Kishan Reddy said in a tweet. Today is a proud day for India, especially for the people of Gujarat, he said. "Since 2014, India has added 10 new World Heritage sites -- one fourth of our total sites. This shows PM @arendramodi's steadfast commitment in promoting Indian culture, heritage and the Indian way of life," Reddy tweeted.

MP: Mandsaur spurious liquor death toll rises to six

PNS ■ MANDSAUR (MP)

The death toll in the spurious liquor incident in Madhya Pradesh's Mandsaur rose to six on Tuesday with the death of three more men during treatment, officials said. Four others are undergoing treatment at various hospitals. "Three more men, two of them 40-year-old and another 35-year-old, died during treatment at different hospitals," said Piplia Mandi police station in-charge OP Tantwar. He said those undergoing treatment had reportedly purchased liquor from a dhaba (roadside hotel) and a liquor outlet. Earlier, three persons died at Khakhrai village in the Mandsaur district on Saturday and Sunday after consuming liquor purchased from a local grocery shop. The exact cause of their deaths was not yet clear.

Hundreds died due to O₂ shortage during 2nd wave: BJP MLA

PNS ■ HARDOI

A BJP MLA here claimed that "hundreds of people died" due to lack of oxygen during the second Covid wave, days after his party's Union government told Parliament that states did not report such deaths. BJP's Gopamau MLA Shyam Prakash wrote this on the Facebook wall of journalist Anand Mishra, who had posted newspaper cuttings of letters of some MLAs, in which the issue was raised. "You have told the truth, I agree with you, hundreds of people died in agony due to lack of oxygen. No one can see the pain of lakhs of families, including that of MLA Rajkumar Agarwal," the MLA said. Agarwal, a BJP MLA from Sandila, had lost his son during the second coronavirus wave and had alleged negligence on the part of the hospital. Shyam Prakash, however, on Monday told reporters that he had not written about



Uttar Pradesh when he made the comment on the Facebook wall of the scribe. The Union government had last week told the Rajya Sabha that no deaths due to lack of oxygen were reported by states and UTs during the second COVID-19 wave. "All states and UTs report cases and deaths to the Union Health Ministry on a regular basis. However, no deaths due to lack of oxygen have been specifically reported by states and UTs," Minister of State for Health B. Praveen Pawar had told Parliament in a written reply to a question. Earlier too, several BJP leaders had complained of mismanagement during the second coronavirus wave, with even former Union minister Santosh Gangwar writing to CM Yogi Adityanath about the situation in his Bareilly constituency. He said officials don't take calls and government health centres send back patients for "referrals" from the district hospital.

IIT, IIM researchers claim breakthrough in sensing 'carbon risk'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Higher carbon footprint of companies gives higher returns to investors in the short term but could lead to heavy losses in the long term as governments impose regulations on greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, according to a new mathematical analysis conducted by researchers from IIT Guwahati and IIM Bangalore. The team from the two top institutions has established a relationship between the carbon footprint of companies and the potential risks of investing

in these firms. The researchers did an extensive data analysis of over 200 of the largest listed companies in the American market and the findings have been published in arXiv, a curated research-sharing platform maintained by a team at the US-based Cornell University. To assess the carbon footprint of the companies, direct GHG emissions of the companies and purchased GHG emissions (in power consumption or heat) were considered. According to the three-member team, as the world looks to move towards a sus-



tainable future and economies everywhere try to reduce their carbon footprint, the future of companies that rely on excessive emissions of greenhouse

gases remains uncertain. The researchers found that most of these companies (71.6 pc) had shown a decline in their carbon emissions in the

2016-2019 period. "It was found that carbon footprint had a positive correlation with the size of companies and revenues. However, the correlation with expenses was found to be slightly less than that with revenue, which they attribute to the higher expenses of switching to renewable energy sources," said Siddhartha Pratim Chakrabarty, professor at Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Guwahati. "On analysing the data of annual stock returns, along with data of GHG emissions and other financial data (rev-

enue, debt, and book value, among others), it was found that there exists a 'carbon risk premium' in the stock returns, which means in the short term, higher carbon emissions are found to be inflating the price of the stocks. "It was found that a higher carbon footprint gave higher returns to investors in the short term," he said. In the past couple of years, Chakrabarty said, there has been a lot of research in climate finance and the existence of a carbon risk premium has been confirmed independently by many researchers worldwide.

Several BJP leaders had complained of mismanagement during the second coronavirus wave, with even former Union minister Santosh Gangwar writing to CM Yogi Adityanath about the situation in his Bareilly constituency.



Upheaval

India should wait and watch and resist global pressure to move into Afghanistan

It will mean a massive turnaround in India's Afghanistan policy to send its soldiers into the war-torn neighbouring country. No current indication warrants such an approach even though friendly external powers want India to play an active, hard role in Afghanistan. The situation is similar to the one where the Quad members (the United States, Australia, India and Japan) would like India being their active spearhead in containing China. In the western theatre, China has planned joint action with Pakistan to fend off the threat of terrorism in Afghanistan even though the Afghan media has created a perception that Pakistan is aiding the Taliban. Still, China's articulation may convince the West to prefer pulling India into the neighbourhood war. India, thus, already has its hands full trying to ensure that it is not forced into taking sides. India has clarified it is not "aware" of any "invitation" to be part of the American initiative through Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Pakistan or the Russia-US-China grouping on Afghanistan. The relationship between Kabul and New Delhi is shaped by the strategic partnership between the two countries signed in October 2011. It is the basis for their strategic efforts "against international terrorism". India's role is limited to training and equipping Afghan national security forces and executing capacity-building programmes. To go beyond this point will mean freshly assessing its Afghanistan policy that so far translated into India keeping itself out of the conflict but contributing to capacity building with an external power — the Iran-Russia front initially and, later, the United States — maintain-



ing stability. This policy allowed India to keep away from the Taliban. In the present scenario, however, the Taliban are forcing themselves to be at the centre-stage in Afghanistan, making it impossible to arrive at a resolution without involving them. The situation persuades all parties to decide what kind of contact to have with the Taliban. The other complication is, which of the factions of the Taliban to contact? There is the faction that depends on Pakistan's support while another faction attempts to carve its political space with help from sections in the Middle East. Thirdly, what exactly would a country like India talk to the Taliban about when Pakistan-based terror outfits that are intent on destabilising India are said to be assisting the Taliban in Afghanistan? India will get a fair idea of where the United States, which is in the last stages of withdrawal from Afghanistan, stands on the question of stability in the region when its leadership meets visiting Secretary of State Anthony Blinken. India missed a first-hand briefing on the ground situation in Afghanistan because of the cancellation of the visit of the Afghan Army chief. The situation is not such that India can come to an informed decision about its future action. The external powers are still in the process of firming up their own positions and roles. Till then, India's job is to wait and watch and resist international pressure to move in.

PICTALK



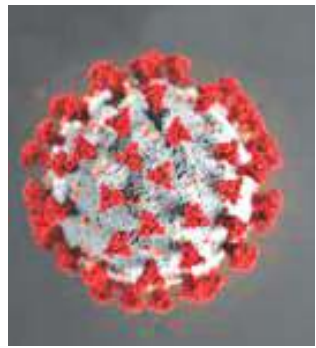
A pet monkey enjoys tea from a plastic cup collected from a roadside garbage box, in Kolkata

PTI

Zapping the virus

In what may be a breakthrough against Corona's spread, a laser device will kill the virus in 50 msecs

Even as the Novel Coronavirus fast mutates into new, deadlier variants since being discovered nearly one-and-a-half years ago, virologists and scientists are scurrying to keep pace and finding more potent ways to eliminate it. According to latest reports, a new laser device has been created in Italy that is apparently capable of obliterating the pernicious virus present within a structure's boundary walls. Work on the machine project, developed by the scientists of the United Nations in collaboration with the scientists of an Italian tech company, the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology, and Altec K-Laser, a local company that makes laser equipment, respectively, was started last year when Italy was reeling under the COVID-19 pandemic. How does the instrument work? It's quite simple, really. In the device, the air is passed through a laser beam that kills viruses and bacteria. And it is already getting noticed and winning accolades, too. "This device has completely changed the way I think about laser technology. It kills viruses in 50 milliseconds," claims Serena Zakinya, the head of the Cardiovascular Biology Group at the International Center for Genetic Engineering and Biotechnology.



As a significant precautionary measure, keeping the areas within the boundary walls free from infection has proved to be a major challenge during the pandemic. A virus-free environment within the boundary walls has become a necessity to prevent the spread of the virus. However, there are Doubting Thomases, too. Some scientists say that the laser-based technology will not be safe to kill the virus. A study published in the *Journal of Photochemistry and Photobiology* in November linked laser-based devices to the risk of cancer. But the equipment's manufacturers have assured that there is no truth in these reports. They believe that the laser emanating from it never comes in contact with the human skin, so there is no risk of developing cancer. Claiming that it is a recycled product, the Altec founder has said that "our device uses nature against nature". But the one drawback is that though viruses and bacteria can be eliminated in the air, the laser won't be effective if they fall to the floor or any surface. The company, having already bagged a patent for this device which can also be installed in the air-conditioning unit, now plans to take it to the international market.

When politicians pass the buck to military



ASHOK K MEHTA

After decades-long wait, Modi 2.0 appointed Gen Rawat as the CDS in 2019 but the Defence Planning Committee fell short of groundwork

Before the monsoon session of Parliament, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh invited two former Defence Ministers for a briefing. He did not dirty his hands but asked the CDS and COAS to brief them. In the UK, it would not happen. Politicians pass the buck to the military. Expectedly, the Army and Air Force have clashed over the transformational reforms underway. CDS Gen Rawat described the IAF as an extension of artillery and a combat support service. Air Chiefs have been kept out of the loop during the 1965 and 1971 wars, reflecting mistrust of IAF which is about air power required for "shaping the battlefield". But boots on the ground are essential.

Rewind: Gulf War I (1991) lasted 44 days; 38 days of aerial bombardment and four-day land offensive. In Bosnia (1995), air power alone won the war in 17 days. Kosovo (1999), air war was 78 days with no ground offensive. The Afghanistan campaign (2001) lasted 65 days with 11 days of ground operations. The Iraq war (2003) lasted 21 days of air and land battle. In Sri Lanka, the IAF performed its modest role effectively. The IAF's sterling performance though was the Balakot bombing — politically and strategically a turning point, marking the threshold of counter-terrorism response. The omission in employing IAF in 1962 was part of the political and military fiasco. Still, IAF insecurities arising from jointness, including rotation of three-star slots by merit, have to be addressed to achieve unification to obviate IAF Chief having to ask the Army Chief to requisition in writing that air support was required during Kargil.

The CDS traces its history to Admiral Mountbatten when he sounded Prime Minister Nehru about its utility. After the 1971 war, Prime Minister Gandhi had informed Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw he would become CDS but nothing came of it. The CDS was resurrected by a 2001 GoM containing 100 recommendations, most of which were implemented except CDS. When an attempt was made to appoint CDS, Air Chief Marshal OP Mehra accompanied by a posse of former Air Chiefs met the President and blocked the enterprise. In 2002, a



CDS actually appeared on the horizon: His office was prepared in South Block, Guard of Honour rehearsed by Delhi Area and NDTV announced Adm Sushil Kumar's elevation. But between the cup and the lip was a slip. The Naresh Chandra Task Force in 2013 revived the CDS in its less truculent avatar: Permanent Chairman Chiefs of Staff Committee. But Defence Minister AK Antony sat on the proposal. It was not until Christmas Day 2019 that Modi 2.0 Government issued a gazette notification appointing Rawat as "primus-inter-paraes-CDS" — tasking him to implement jointness by January 2023. A Department of Military Affairs was also created under MoD. Appointing a CDS has been an article of faith for the BJP.

Two questions arise from the reform process. First, did GoI do the necessary thinking and research — and who did it — before issuing the gazette notification? Why were the known historical IAF insecurities not addressed by the political authority? Unfortunately, the newly minted Defence Planning Committee under NSA AK Doval merely issued a charter of work to Rawat without the DPC doing any groundwork. Clearly such an epic transformational exercise should have begun by launching an SDRS (Strategic Defence and

THE LACK OF CONSENSUS (WHICH ALL MILITARIES HAVE HAD TO OVERCOME) EMERGED CLUMSILY LAST MONTH DURING A SEMINAR IN WHICH BOTH RAWAT AND AIR CHIEF MARSHAL BHADRAURIA SPOKE. IT WAS ONE OF THE UGLIEST PUBLIC SPATS BETWEEN A SERVICE CHIEF AND THE CDS

Security Review), preferably an Integrated Review, on the lines the UK did in March this year followed by enunciating a National Security Strategy. The DPC conveniently left the thinking to CDS, ignoring the inevitable repercussions.

I recall UK Defence Secretary Michael Heseltine explaining to me on the back of an envelope at RCDS London in 1984 how he had rewired the CDS system for unification and whose implementation he ordered in the face of revolt from Service Chiefs. The reforms were ordered top-down without passing the buck.

Modi had announced the appointment of CDS from Red Fort in 2019. The Government simply issued a fiat to CDS on jointness despite knowing opposition to it. This lack of consensus (which all militaries have had to overcome) emerged clumsily last month during a seminar organised by Global Counter-Terrorism Council in which both Rawat and Air Chief Marshal Bhadrauria spoke. It was one of the ugliest public spats between a service chief and CDS, which has triggered an ill-informed debate. The remedial measure of an Experts Committee headed by CDS with Vice Chiefs of single services for more consultation and discussion is a bad idea: the medicine worse than the mala-

dy. The Defence Minister ought to have intervened and done a Heseltine.

The IAF's concerns including integrated use of air power have to be addressed, given that IAF has only 30 fighter squadrons. Appointments of CDS and Combatant Commanders of other joint/integrated/unified commands and organisations be made by merit and not in Robin's turn. The concepts of air-land and tri-service battles have to be revised and updated. Joint Professional Military Education should become mandatory for promotion to flag rank. An equivalent of US Goldwater-Nichols Act 1986 will ensure jointness to diminish inter-service rivalry. India was a pioneer in integration through Joint Services Wing/ National Defence Academy/ Defence Services Staff College/ National Defence College. But long ago, the political class responsible for defence of India stopped thinking, leaving it to the military to self-reform. The politician is required to do and say more than "giving a befitting reply".

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander, IPKF South, Sri Lanka, and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SEERS SHOULD SHUN POLITICS

Sir — It looks that from Punjab to Karnataka, it is the season of change and a show of assertion by the central leadership of political parties to set their house in order, their sights trained on the upcoming elections. The 78-year-old, four-time Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa who had won his current term by engineering defections and toppling the Congress-JDS Government in 2019, has quit.

To date, Yediyurappa and the BJP have remained synonymous in Karnataka and now he, despite being the only mass leader the BJP had in the State and in the entire south, has now resigned. His exit leaves the BJP without an experienced leader to helm the Government. While the RSS wants to move away from caste equations by picking national organising secretary BL Santhosh, a Brahmin, many in the State BJP are against ignoring the Lingayat community that has been the BJP's mainstay all these years.

The hard fact is that the party cannot do without the support of the Lingayat community, particularly its influential mutt heads. But what is most unfortunate is that the effect of what the seers in Karnataka have said openly has the effect of dividing people on the basis of caste lines and community. If these seers are keen on a life in politics, they should drop the pretence of renunciation and contest elections.

JS Acharya | Hyderabad

INTERSTATE BOUNDARY ISSUE ERUPTS

Sir — The interstate boundary issue in north-eastern States is a perennial problem and six personnel of the Assam Police died at the border with Mizoram while defending the constitutional boundary of the State. The incident came less than two days after Home Minister Amit Shah met with the northeast CMs to resolve the interstate boundary disputes.

Border conflicts have occurred intermittently since Mizoram was carved out of Assam as a Union Territory in 1972 and got Statehood in 1987. Six Assam police personnel were killed in an exchange of fire with their Mizoram counterparts after the

SC view on beggars heartening



As an imminent third wave of COVID-19 looms large, the Supreme Court refused to take an "elitist" view to ban begging and issued notices to the Centre and the Delhi Government on a petition seeking vaccination and rehabilitation of beggars in the wake of the pandemic in India. According to the apex court, no one would like to beg if not for poverty. It observed that people are generally compelled to beg to eke out elementary livelihood due to the lack of education and employment. As it was a socio-economic problem, beggars could not be stopped from begging, it added.

The Supreme Court has made the right

observation regarding beggary in India. On the other hand, many factors are involved in beggary. But it is a fact that beggars are driven by poverty. However, it must be understood that the state of very poor people in the country is equal to that of beggars. As there is no proper enumeration of beggars, it is difficult to deal with the problem. Wandering beggars in the time of the COVID pandemic pose risk to the public. They must not be deprived of their right to COVID testing and vaccination. They must be rehabilitated and vocational training must be provided to them. Also, education must be provided to their children.

In spite of the advancements made by India in different sectors, beggary continues to be a social problem. As the country is striving to achieve world standards in every field, socio-economic measures are needed to solve the begging problem. A comprehensive programme must be developed for this. Philanthropic approach to beggary must be replaced with therapeutic and rehabilitative work.

Venu GS | Kollam

protracted border row between the two northeastern States took a violent turn. The clashes at the border town of Vairengte also left at least 60 persons from Assam injured. The incident comes less than two days after Union Home Minister Amit Shah held a meeting with the Chief Ministers of the northeast in Meghalaya's capital Shillong for resolving the interstate boundary disputes. However, Assam also harbours border disputes with Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya and Nagaland.

Krishnan Subramaniam | Ghaziabad

PUNISH THE CORRUPT POLITICIANS

Sir — During the election campaign season earlier, the leaders of the DMK accused the then AIADMK Government and its Ministers, including then Chief Minister E Palaniswami, of rampant corruption. They even submitted a memorandum to the Governor seeking action against those "corrupt" leaders. They also

assured the electorate that if elected to power, they would initiate serious action against all the Ministers and officials found to be involved in corruption and other malpractices leading to them amassing wealth disproportionate to their known sources of income.

As assured, the DMK Government has commenced action and the recent raids conducted by the DVAC at the residence and more than 20 business places connected to former Transport Minister MR Vijayabhaskar are part of the exercise which, we believe, is going to be a continuing process henceforth. The Government that has started in the right earnest to fix the corrupt should not succumb to any pressure from any quarters, go ahead with the raids and investigations and see that the corrupt get exemplary punishment.

Shalini Gerald | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Your (Sidhu's) win is my win and our win is the party's win. We need to work together in the interest of the State and its people.



Punjab Chief Minister — Amarinder Singh



Our role in Iraq will be... continue to train, to assist and to deal with ISIS but we're not going to be, by the end of the year, in a combat mission.

US President — Joe Biden

I think it's super delicious. It's tasty and when you compare it to everything else, Indian food competes really well.



MasterChef Australia winner — Justin Narayan



I feel like my attitude wasn't that great because I don't really know how to cope with that (Olympics) pressure.

Four-time Grand Slam winner — Naomi Osaka

Social evils begin in the mind... The fear of social stigma should deter people from demanding or giving dowry.



Kerala Governor — Arif Mohammed Khan

FIRST COLUMN THE GLOBAL MINIMUM TAX

Companies will have to pay a minimum tax regardless of the jurisdiction they operate from



KINNARRY THAKKAR

It was a historic event when 130 nations representing over 90 per cent of global GDP agreed to a global minimum tax (GMT) of possibly 15 per cent on corporations for a two-pillar solution to address the tax challenges arising from the globalisation and digitalisation of the economy. These countries are part of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) which has been working towards preventing tax base erosion and profit shifting by companies that setup their businesses in low-tax jurisdictions to avoid payment of higher taxes. Nothing can prevent companies from engaging in such arrangements but the tax authorities became part of a global race to the bottom to compete which jurisdiction could lower their corporate tax rate most to check revenue leakage. The outcome was a double whammy: Companies still avoided taxes by locating in the jurisdictions that won this race and consequently, the tax authorities kept losing on their revenue collections. The digital companies felt the negative impact



strongly as their headquarters would be in a low-tax jurisdiction and consumers all over the world; they would thus pay tax only in the low-tax jurisdiction thus hurting the tax revenues of all other jurisdictions. To overcome this problem, several countries levied a digital services tax and collected a percentage of revenue from corporations on certain transactions. In India, an equalisation levy of six per cent for 'any specified service' provided by a non-resident in some cases and of two per cent on a non-resident e-commerce operator subject to certain criteria is presently applicable. Such measures are adopted in retaliation of the tech giants exploiting the tax treaties or doing 'treaty shopping' that puts a hole in the coffers of the State.

As a result, there is a strong consensus to make the companies pay a minimum amount of tax irrespective of the location in which their businesses are headquartered. This will deter the companies from designing a complex web of corporate layers for shifting their tax base to low-tax jurisdictions and avoid tax in the country of consumption. The solution to the problem of Base Erosion and Profit Shifting (BEPS) was enunciated by OECD that provided for a framework in a pillar-wise approach as mentioned below. Pillar one proposes the reallocation of taxing rights in the jurisdictions where customers and/or users are located. Pillar two presents a global anti-base erosion mechanism to stop the shifting of profits to low tax or no-tax jurisdiction facilitated by new technologies and ensure a minimum level of tax being paid by multinational enterprises. The proposed rules aim to annihilate the idea of shifting profits by leaving no added advantage for the corporations in doing so. This will also encourage positive competition among companies by creating a level playing field that is otherwise distorted by the ability of only a few big international corporations to setup businesses in tax havens. The G-20 and the EU have supported this framework, but countries like Barbados, Estonia, Ireland, Hungary, among others, which are tax havens or low tax jurisdictions, have not signed up to the deal for various reasons. The proposed rules shall override the present digital services tax. Also, laws such as the global intangible low-taxed income (GILTI) of the US to discourage profit shifting shall have to be aligned with the proposed inclusive framework. The proposed regulation is a giant step towards an efficient global system of taxation. Concerns of all stakeholders must be considered and addressed to formulate and implement an effective policy framework. The G-20 meeting this October will decide on the agreement and its implementation plan. The rules may take effect in 2023.

(The writer is Professor and Head, Department of Commerce, University of Mumbai, Mumbai. The views expressed are personal.)

Afghan conundrum and the road ahead



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

The responses can range from total to moderate military support or maybe a combination of various strategies but India won't certainly be indifferent

The Taliban taking over Kabul or establishing a parallel regime in Afghanistan will involve the issue of legitimacy via its recognition. Strongly related to this, the message from Russia to India is clear, "it's up to India to analyse the situation and go ahead according to the current realities". The new strategic alignment of Pakistan-China-Russia is already in a process that will have a destabilising effect on the countries of South and Central Asia. With these developments, India might then have to rethink beyond its traditional strategies.

In this context, the entire debate would shift upon India's decision for the Afghan forces and the strategic developments that might follow. India might decide to help the Afghan Air Force with the Strategic Partnership Agreement (2011) being the main guiding principle. The responses can range from total military support to a moderate one or maybe a combination of various strategies, but certainly, the Indian government will not be indifferent because security is at stake.

Irrespective of the decision that would be taken, certain challenges are coming up for the government. An increase in cross-border terrorism with new forms of hybrid warfare, a sharp increase in drugs and human trafficking, especially affecting Punjab, Rajasthan, Gujarat, and Maharashtra, and an increase in the propaganda warfare by the adversary working in tandem with the existing and the emerging Violent Non-State Actors (VNSA). The fate of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan is also in jeopardy. All these challenges are inter-linked. An India-centric approach is required to deal with them.

First, at the diplomatic level, even though Russia might look to stand with Pakistan, strategic overlaps with Russia can be used for the furtherance of India's interests. As we understand that geopolitics is neither black nor white, how well the current strategic agreements are used to extract leverages would depend upon the government apart from the developments that will follow. India should exercise its strategic leverage with Saudi Arabia and other Islamic countries to tighten its noose around Pakistan in the future. The role of OIC in the coming few days would be of immense importance to India. The policy of exposing and isolating Pakistan should continue at a regional and international level. There can be no better platform than FATF and UNGA.

There is also an opportunity for India to reinvigorate its strategic relations with Iran and find new commonalities to cooperate. Iran's initial euphoria of the US exit may soon end as it might find the Taliban committing atrocities on the Shia minority in Afghanistan. Many hardliner clerics in Tehran have still not forgotten the 1998 killings of Iranian diplomats.

The upcoming refugee problem in the wake of the establishment of an Islamic emirate is going to open up new challenges for



INDIA SHOULD STRENGTHEN ITS DEFENCE SYSTEM THAT IS CAPABLE OF RETALIATING TO THE EMERGING HYBRID WARFARE TECHNIQUES THAT ARE REDRAWING THE BATTLE LINES. TURKEY AND CHINA ARE THE MAIN SUPPLIERS OF DRONES TO PAKISTAN. COLLABORATIVE THREATS EITHER IN A PROXY WAR OR A MILITARY CONFLICT CANNOT BE RULED OUT

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal)



Iran. The Taliban have already taken control of Islam Qala, a military post on its border with Afghanistan. Here, an opportunity for India is open. It is through an independent Iran policy that India can deepen its strategic stronghold. Another geopolitical twist, a positive one, can be a possibility if pursued. Given the geographical proximity of India to both Afghanistan and Iran, the dynamics of the situation are well understood. The US has to accept the region's geopolitical realities. History is full of examples of states having multiple allies who probably don't see eye to eye.

The role of the UN has to be called upon as sincere joint efforts are required. India should first approach the UNSC and in case of conflicting interests, the task of maintaining normalcy and peace should be discussed in the UNGA. Having an understanding that there would be a lack of unanimity in the UNSC to protect Afghanistan and its people, India cannot let the region be sucked into chaos and anarchy. For this, sooner or later, India has to take the lead for an "emergency special session" of the UNGA. This session can be called by India and its allies under Resolution 377A (V) that provides for a 'Uniting for Peace'. India must remind the international community of its primary duty to maintain peace and security and should request recommendations to act collectively to restore the peace of the region under a unified command. The UN has provisions in case the UNSC fails to "discharge its responsibilities".

All the international legal issues

such as re-arming and unlawful diplomatic recognition to the Taliban, suppression of the human rights of women, children, and religious minorities, and diversion of fundamentalists should be discussed in the UNGA to expose countries like Pakistan. This will also set the tone for India's leadership and the expansion of the UNSC. Additionally, to secure the lives and dignity of Hindus and Sikhs in Afghanistan, the government may think of evacuating them at the earliest before a full-fledged war breaks out.

Second, at a tactical level, hybrid warfare against India will deepen and broaden. New weapons and tactics utilised by the proxy militia will call for measures that favour coercive policies. For instance, the use of drones and rockets by terror groups to avoid casualties in physical attacks has already been initiated. To counter such an emerging threat, India can expand the horizons of its 'offensive defence'. It may incorporate the policy of 'deterrence by denial' through disallowing the terrorists to assemble and execute attacks against India. Of course, it has its own risk of substantial escalation when states are using VNSA. The evolving strategic communication and the military-civil interface through the media to let the world know about India's political will, intentions and interests will surely play an important role.

India should strengthen its defence system that is capable of retaliating to the emerging hybrid warfare techniques that are redrawing the battle lines. Turkey and China are the main suppliers of drones to Pakistan. Collaborative

threats either in a proxy war or a military conflict cannot be ruled out. Here, a two-way approach may be adopted. Apart from strategic purchases of anti-drone platforms from the allies such as the US, Israel, France, and Germany, long-term collaboration may be pushed forward to counter the asymmetric warfare. AI is another thrust area. For instance, the US alone has around 140 projects based on AI, the knowledge of which is available in the public domain. This can be of immense help to the Indian forces. Simultaneously, indigenous R&D in defence manufacturing especially in AI technologies should be boosted for surveillance and tactical capabilities.

There are various new areas of AI that India has not yet explored. These include bio-inspired surveillance systems, AI face recognition cameras in sensitive areas, tools using AI algorithms to counter cyber-attacks, and overlook security issues such as indoctrination, sale of narcotics, and small arms through the darknet. All these measures will help the forces and will ensure efficiency in the changing times. However, the focus on AI and other technologies should not distract the government from developing new warfare platforms such as anti-submarine warfare capabilities and short-range tactical weapons to defeat the conventional threats for there are possibilities for simultaneous provocations on the border. Given the current scenario and the shifting sands, India has to strive for itself and there is no one better than India to think about the national interests.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

DURING FESTIVALS AND GAIETY, DO REMEMBER THAT CORONA IS NOT YET GONE FROM AMIDST US. YOU DON'T HAVE TO FORGET CORONA-RELATED PROTOCOLS.
— PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI



HAD YOU UNDERSTOOD THE COUNTRY'S 'MANN KI BAAT', SUCH WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN THE STATE OF VACCINATIONS. #WHEREAREVACCINES
— CONGRESS LEADER
RAHUL GANDHI

Yediyurappa out, but still crucial for BJP in Karnataka

If the BJP high command handles him well, BSY, being a mass leader, could still mobilise the Lingayat vote for the party

July 26 happened to be the second anniversary of Chief Minister Yediyurappa's rule in Karnataka. However, it turned out to be an occasion for an emotional farewell speech after he announced his resignation. Though BSY, as he is known in the State, resisted pressures, the high command had decided that it was time for a younger leader to take over.

Yediyurappa is now 78 and well over the party's prescribed age limit of 75 years to hold public office. He will not lead the party in the next assembly polls in 2023, as he would be over 80 by then. Karnataka is the southern gateway for the BJP. It has become the third pillar along with Congress and JD



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

(Secular) and Yediyurappa had a big role in that.

Unfortunately, though he came to power four times, he has not completed a single term. BSY quit reluctantly as the high command had worked out his exit plans with minimum damage to the party.

Incidentally, the RSS, too, wanted a younger leader to take over. Karnataka has produced many important RSS leaders - from RSS chief, the late K. S. Sudarshan, HV Seshadri to present-day leaders like Dattareya Hosbole, B.L. Santosh, and C.R. Mukund.

Yediyurappa has been an asset as well as a liability to the party. BSY was a shrewd manipulator who knew how to snatch power from the



opponents, be it the Janata Dal coalition or Congress. He was adept at using age-old tricks of defection and lure of money. Even in the 2017 polls, the BJP did not get a simple majority. To keep BJP out, the Congress and the JD(S) formed a government with the JD(S) leader H.D. Kumaraswamy as Chief Minister. Yediyurappa pulled down this government in 2019 and became the chief

minister for the fourth time.

Why is Yediyurappa important for the BJP? First of all, there is no Lingayat leader to match him in the state, either in Congress or the JD(S). The BJP also did not develop the second rung of leadership.

Secondly, crucial caste politics favour him. Lingayats are the State's single-most significant community, (17 percent). Of the 500 mutts in the state, most are headed by Lingayats, followed by Vokkaliga mutts. The community can tilt the balance in as many as 90-100 of the State's 224 assembly constituencies. The seers, who received support financially and otherwise from the chief minister, openly supported BSY.

The Lingayats traditionally supported the Congress but moved away in the seventies only to return briefly. But they withdrew their support after Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi abruptly sacked popular Lingayat chief minister Veerendra Patil. In the 1994 assembly elections, the community voted against Congress. This was the time when BSY emerged as the face of the Lingayats. Barring 2013, the BJP always had more than 30 Lingayat MLAs in the House - 32 in 2004, 39 in 2008, and 38 in 2018.

Yediyurappa has risen from the RSS ranks and been a seven-term MLA between 1983 and 2013. He joined the RSS when he was barely 15 and cut his political teeth in the Jana Sangh. A mass leader

who installed the first BJP government in South India in 2008, BSY continues to have his own place in the State, despite the corruption charges, nepotism, and voices of dissent.

His meteoric rise in Karnataka was checked in the wake of a land scam that cost him the chief minister's job. He walked out of the BJP in 2012 to float his outfit, the Karnataka Janta Paksha (KJP), which dealt a severe blow to the BJP in the 2013 assembly elections.

The return of Yediyurappa consolidated the Lingayat vote base again in the 2014 general elections. While dealing with him, the BJP leadership had to keep this in mind. For the fourth time, he took over as the chief minis-

ter in July 2019 after engineering defections of 18 MLAs from Congress and the Janata Dal (S). By then he had already crossed 76 years and like before, was facing corruption and nepotism charges from his party detractors.

With the chief minister drumming up support from the mighty Lingayat mutts, the BJP cannot ignore BSY because holding Karnataka is critical for the party before the 2023 Assembly polls or the 2024 General elections.

BSY's innings may be over but if the BJP high command handles him well, being a mass leader, he could still mobilize the Lingayat votes. His successor has a tough job ahead, taking everyone along in a state where factionalism always prevailed.

IMF forecasts 6% global growth this year as economies reopen

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

The International Monetary Fund is sharply upgrading its economic outlook this year for the world's wealthy countries, especially the United States, as COVID-19 vaccinations help sustain solid rebounds from the pandemic recession. But the 190-country lending agency has downgraded its forecast for poorer countries, most of which are struggling to vaccinate.

Overall, the IMF said Tuesday that it expects the global economy to expand 6% this year — a dramatic bounce-back from the 3.2% contraction in the pandemic year of 2020. The IMF's forecast, unchanged from its previous estimate in April, would mark the fastest calendar-year global growth in records dating to 1980.

Beneath the worldwide number, however, a gap between the vaccine haves and have-nots is widening. The

IMF expects advanced economies to grow 5.6% this year, an upgrade from the 5.1% it forecast in April, fueled by the swift recovery of consumers and businesses. But it downgraded its 2021 forecast for emerging market and developing countries to 6.3% from its April forecast of 6.7%.

Advanced economies, in which close to 40% of the population has been vaccinated, are largely reopening after last year's COVID-19 lockdowns. But in developing and emerging market countries, the vaccination rate is just 11%.

Moreover, the governments of poorer countries cannot match the outpouring of government spending that rich countries have been using to propel their economic recoveries.

The United States is expected to register 7% growth this year, a sharp reversal from last year's 3.5% drop and an upgrade from the 6.4% growth the IMF had forecast for 2021 back in April.

President Joe Biden's ambitious spending plans are expected to fuel growth this year and next.

The IMF predicts that the U.S. economy will grow 4.9% in 2022, up from the 3.5% it projected

three months ago.

The 19 European countries that share the euro currency are forecast to grow 4.6% collectively this year, versus last year's 6.5% contraction. Japan, which endured a 4.7% drop in economic growth in 2020, is expected to expand 2.8% this year. But the 2021 forecast for Japan marks a downgrade from what the IMF expected in April, reflecting a resurgence of COVID-19 cases earlier this year.

In the developing world, the outlook for China, the world's second-largest economy after the United States, was marked down to 8.1% after the government scaled back spending and investment.

Despite the brighter outlook for major economies, the outlook across the world has been clouded by uncertainty over the delta variant of the coronavirus and the uneven progress of vaccination campaigns.

India among top 10 countries in pharma, healthcare: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is among the top 10 countries in pharma and healthcare sector with exponential growth recorded in the last five years, according to a report by Sagacious IP, a global IP research and consulting firm.

The report stated that patents with Indian publication having Indian priority grew from 2,548 in 2015 to 7,399 in 2020. Such numbers are indicative of increased patent filing activity by Indian companies and MNCs with research centres based in India. The pharma and healthcare sector has also seen massive growth in global patent filings in the last five years, from over 24,000 in 2015 to over 1,50,000 in 2020.

In terms of the origin of patent applications in the pharma sector globally, India is among the top 10 countries, followed by Italy, Australia, Taiwan and Sweden. The applications originating from India are majorly filed in the US, European Parliament and



APAC region. The top Indian filers who filed patents in India during the last five years (2015-2020) include the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), ITC Life Sciences, Lovely Professional University, Colgate Palmolive (India), Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) Limited, IIT Bombay, Cadila Healthcare, Lupin, Amity University, and Wockhardt Limited, the report said.

CSIR, a research institute, leads in these filings. Among companies, ITC (ITC Life Sciences and Technology

Centre) is on top. The report stated that pharmaceutical companies face major challenges dealing with IP rights and the competition provided by the generics. Further, the biggest challenge in developing approved drugs is the long time spent in research and the investments required for the same.

Also, due to increased awareness and digital connectivity, self-medication has been rampant, which does not go down well in terms of returns on R&D and IP investments in drug discovery.

IFFCO Kisan Sanchar Q1 cattle feed sales up 30 pc to Rs 49 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IFFCO Kisan Sanchar on Tuesday said its cattle feed sales rose by 29.73 per cent to Rs 49.13 crore in the first quarter of the current fiscal amid strong demand notwithstanding the COVID-19 pandemic.

Cattle feed sales stood at Rs 37.87 crore during April-June quarter of the 2020-21 fiscal, the company said in a statement.

In terms of volume, cattle feed sales grew 28.24 per cent to 24,756 tonne from 19,303 tonne in the said period, it added.

"We are glad to announce that we could mark a commendable growth number with our cattle feed business in Q1 even though we witnessed a hard time in the market, hit by the second wave of COVID-19 during April-June 2021," IFFCO Kisan Sanchar National Sales Head Ganesh Dash, said.

The business started picking up in June as coronavirus cases were declining and the



company sold 10,000 tonne of cattle feed in the said month alone, he said.

Dash said the rise in sales was due to increase in awareness among farmers about use of quality cattle feed.

He also said IFFCO kisan cattle feed is manufactured with high quality standards and as a result the company is receiving good response across the country. In its first full year of operation in 2020-21 fiscal, the company had sold 1 lakh tonne of cattle feed valuing Rs

160 crore.

The Delhi-based company entered into the compound cattle feed business on a pilot basis in the 2019-20 fiscal. It contributes about 30 per cent of the total business of IFFCO Kisan and is a major focus of growth for the company.

IFFCO Kisan, which currently sources cattle feed from several third party manufacturers, is looking to further widen its tie-up and also consider setting up its own feed manufacturing facilities.

Institutional bidders lap up HUDCO shares

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government's offer for sale of HUDCO shares to institutional investors was over-subscribed on Tuesday.

Of the base issue size of over 9.90 crore shares, institutional investors put in bids for over 12.59 crore shares, or 1.27 times, till 2.30 pm, according to the NSE data.

Bidding will continue till close of the market hours.

The government is selling up to 8 per cent stake sale in HUDCO at a floor price of Rs 45 apiece. Institutional investors are bidding on Tuesday, and bids would open for retail investors on Wednesday. The sale of over 16.01 crore shares, or a total of 8 per cent stake, would fetch around Rs 720 crore to the exchequer. The OFS comprises a base issue size of 5 per cent stake or over 11.01 crore shares, with an option to retain over-subscription of 2.5 per cent or over 5 crore shares.



Gold down Rs 123, silver falls Rs 206

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Tuesday dipped Rs 123 to Rs 46,505 per 10 grams amid weak international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 46,628 per 10 gram.

Silver also went lower by Rs 206 to Rs 65,710 per kg, from Rs 65,916 per kg in the previous trade. In the international market, gold was trading lower at USD 1,795 per ounce

and silver was flat at USD 25.16 per ounce. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said, "Overall gold prices traded under pressure trading below USD 1,800, as traders and investors are being cautious ahead of the US FOMC meeting." Motilal Oswal Financial Services Vice-President Navneet Damani said, "Gold prices were steady, pinned below the key USD 1,800 level, as investors turned cautious ahead of this week's US Federal Reserve meeting outcome."

Rupee slips 5 paise to close at 74 against \$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slipped by 5 paise to close at 74.47 (provisional) against the US currency on Tuesday as the dollar strengthened in the overseas markets and the domestic equity indices closed with losses.

Forex traders said the rupee is trading in a narrow range as investors are awaiting cues from the US Fed's policy decision due on Wednesday and month-end rebalancing.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local unit opened at 74.36 against the dollar and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.35 and a low of 74.54 during the session. The local unit finally ended the day at 74.47, down 5 paise over its last close. On Monday, the rupee had settled at 74.42 against the US dollar.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's

strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.12 per cent to 92.76.

"The Indian rupee stuck in a small range with thin volume ahead of month-end adjustment. Risk-averse sentiments, stronger dollar, lower US real interest rate, and weaker Chinese yuan weighed on the Indian rupee. Though, rupee remained resilient among Asian currency baskets in today's trade following strong dollar inflows in primary markets," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities. On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 273.51 points or 0.52 per cent lower at 52,578.76, while the broader NSE Nifty declined 78 points or 0.49 per cent to 15,746.45.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude advanced 0.39 per cent to USD 74.79 per barrel in futures trade.

Global markets sink ahead of Fed update on economy

PNS ■ BEIJING

Global stock markets declined Tuesday as investors looked ahead to a Federal Reserve report for an update on when US stimulus might start winding down.

London and Frankfurt opened lower while Shanghai and Hong Kong declined. Tokyo advanced.

On Monday, Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index rose to a new record, shrugging off worries about the spread of the more contagious delta variant of the coronavirus.

Investors awaited the Fed report Wednesday for signs of the central bank's level of concern about inflation and when it might start rolling back easy credit and other economic stimulus. Minutes of the Fed meeting in June showed board members discussed how and when they might reduce monthly bond purchases that inject money into the financial system.

"We expect Jay Powell to reiterate that the tapering discussion is underway, but that it's too soon to reveal a specific



date," Danielle DiMartino Booth of Quill Intelligence said in a report.

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London lost 0.9% to 6,961.11 and the DAX in Frankfurt was off 0.9% at 15,471.67. The CAC 40 retreated 0.7% to 6,534.16.

On Wall Street, the S&P 500 future was off 0.4% and that for the Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.5%.

On Monday, the S&P 500 and Dow both gained 0.2%. The Nasdaq composite added less than 0.1%. In Asia, the

Shanghai Composite Index lost 2.5% to 3,381.18 as data-safety and other enforcement actions weighed on Chinese internet and other companies. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong tumbled 4.2% to 25,086.43, pulled down by China shares.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo advanced 0.5% to 27,970.22.

The Kospi in Seoul rose 0.2% to 3,232.53 after economic growth moderated to 0.7% over the previous quarter in the three months ending in June, down from previous quarter's 1.7%.

Sensex drops 273 pts; Nifty slips below 15K

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex tumbled over 273 points on Tuesday, tracking losses in index majors Reliance Industries, Dr Reddy's and Axis Bank amid a massive selloff in Chinese markets.

Despite opening on a positive note, the 30-share BSE index turned red to end 273.51 points or 0.52 per cent lower at 52,578.76, while the broader NSE Nifty fell 78 points or 0.49 per cent to 15,746.45.

Dr Reddy's was the top loser in the Sensex pack, plunging over 10 per cent, after the company reported a 36 per cent decline in consolidated net profit at Rs 380.4 crore for the quarter ended June 30, 2021, on account of higher expenses.



Higher Q1 tax mop-up shows economy on recovery path: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Increased tax collection in the first quarter of this fiscal shows that the economy is on the recovery path, Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary said on Tuesday.

Net direct tax collection in the April-June quarter of the current fiscal is over Rs 2.46 lakh crore, as against more than Rs 1.17 lakh crore during



the same period of the previous fiscal. "Reasons for increase in the collections include revival of economic

activities and positive sentiments among taxpayers during this current financial year, leading to increased income estimates and higher advance tax payments in the first quarter of the FY 2021-22 as compared to the corresponding period of FY 2020-21," he said in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha.

Net Indirect Tax revenue collection in the first quarter of

FY 2021-22 is Rs 3.11 lakh crore, he said. "The increased tax collection as reported in the first quarter of the current financial year as compared to the same period previous financial year shows that the economy is on the recovery path. Higher tax collection would enable Government in increasing public expenditure, which would have a positive impact on GDP," Chaudhary added.

Torrent plans capex of Rs 10,000cr in 5 years

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Three billion Torrent Group, has drawn up a Rs 10,000 crore capital expenditure plan spread over the next five years including Rs 5,000 crore investment in Tamil Nadu, a topcompany official said on Tuesday.

The company earlier in the day launched 25 CNG stations in Chennai and Tiruvallur districts which was formally

inaugurated by Chief Minister M K Stalin through the virtual mode.

The company has set up its City Gate Station (or the Mother Station) at Vallur near Ennore in Tiruvallur district through which piped gas supply can be made to over 33 lakh residences.

The City Gate Station would also feed the 25 CNG stations that were inaugurated on Tuesday.

UCO Bank net profit jumps over 4-fold to Rs 102 cr

State-owned UCO Bank on Tuesday posted over four-fold jump in its net profit to Rs 101.81 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, as bad loans fell significantly. The bank had reported a net profit of Rs 21.46 crore in the same quarter of the previous fiscal. Sequentially, the net profit rose 27 per cent from Rs 80.03 crore in the March 2021 quarter. The total income during Q1 FY22 increased to Rs 4,539.08 crore, against Rs 4,436.57 crore in Q1 FY21. UCO Bank said in a regulatory filing. However, it was down from Rs 4,936.75 crore in the preceding March quarter. Interest income during the quarter fell 2.5 per cent to Rs 3,569.57 crore, while income from other sources rose 25.3 per cent to Rs 969.51 crore. The Kolkata-headquartered lender trimmed its gross non-performing assets (NPAs or bad loans) significantly to 9.37 per cent of the gross advances as of June 30, 2021, as against 14.38 per cent at June-end 2020.

Sanofi India reports Q2 net profit at Rs 178.3 crore

Drug firm Sanofi India on Tuesday reported a net profit of Rs 178.3 crore for the second quarter ended in June. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 136.3 crore for the corresponding period of the previous financial year. Sanofi India said in a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations of the company stood at Rs 789.1 crore for the quarter under consideration. It was Rs 710.5 crore for the same period a year ago, it added. "On account of Ankleshwar manufacturing facility transfer to Zentiva, export sales reduced in the current period and accordingly the export sales performance for the quarter and period ended June 30, 2021, is not comparable with quarter and period ended June 30, 2020," Sanofi India said.



The Suicide Squad to release in select cities in India including TS

Studio Warner Bros Pictures will release *The Suicide Squad*, directed by James Gunn, in select Indian cinema halls on August 5, according to a release issued Tuesday.

The DC superhero action adventure stars Margot Robbie, Idris Elba, John Cena, with Sylvester Stallone and Viola Davis among others.

Action fantasy feature *Mortal Kombat*, another Warner Bros Pictures title that was released on April 23 in Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, will now open in select cities on this Friday, July 30.

Warner Bros' horror mystery *The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It*, starring Patrick Wilson and Vera Farmiga as real-life paranormal investigators Ed and Lorraine Warren, is also slated to be released in select cities on August 13.

After a decline in Covid-19 cases in some



parts of the country, states like Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, Gujarat, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have permitted the resumption of operations in cinema halls. Theatres in Delhi opened on Monday at 50 per cent occupancy.

Kamal Gianchandani, CEO of the theatre chain PVR Pictures, said he is happy that the studio has come up with a slate of

films to release in Indian theatres after a slump in the cinema exhibition industry due to the pandemic-induced shut-down.

"It is heartening to know that Warner Bros. Pictures have announced the release dates of *Mortal Kombat* on July 30, *The Suicide Squad* 2 on August 5 and *The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It* on August 13.

"Many states have given

permission for cinemas to re-open and the release of these movies in three consecutive weeks in multi-languages and multi-formats would surely give a boost to the industry by inducing movie goers back to the big screen to enjoy these amazing films," Gianchandani said in a statement.

These three and new Hollywood titles will help kickstart the exhibition industry that has been fac-

ing "severe headwinds for the last 5 Quarters", said Rajender Singh Jyala, Chief Programming Officer, INOX Leisure Ltd, the multiplex chain.

"We would like to thank Warner Bros. Pictures for laying out such a stellar line-up," he added.

Devang Sampat, CEO of the movie theatre chain Cinepolis India, said the company is excited to welcome back their patrons to the cinemas.

"To make their welcome a bit more special, Warner Bros. Pictures and Cinepolis will be greeting patrons with back to back releases like *Mortal Kombat*, *The Suicide Squad* and *The Conjuring: The Devil Made Me Do It* which have proven to be successful in the overseas markets.

"Safety of our patrons and employees is paramount and at Cinepolis we have ensured that 100% of our staff has been vaccinated already, thus providing a safe environment to all our patrons and employees," Sampat said.

Pornography case: Raj Kundra remanded in 14-day judicial custody

Mumbai court on Tuesday remanded businessman Raj Kundra in 14-day judicial custody in a case related to alleged creation of pornographic films and publishing them through some apps.

Kundra, husband of Bollywood actor Shilpa Shetty, was arrested July 19 by the Mumbai police crime branch under sections of the Indian Penal Code and the Information Technology Act.

He was produced before a magistrate's court here at the end of his police remand on Tuesday.

The court sent him in judicial custody for 14 days.

Kundra moved the court for bail and his plea was kept for hearing on Wednesday.

The crime branch earlier told the court that Kundra had plans to sell 119 adult films to a person for USD 1.2 million.

The police claimed that during



the probe into the case, it was found that Kundra set up Armsprime Media Pvt Ltd, which, through London-based Kenrin Pvt Ltd, bought 'Hotshots' app to upload objec-

tional videos on social media. The police also claimed to have found 51 obscene videos — 35 with Hotshots logo and 16 with BollyFame logo, during searches at the office of the accused.

Eva Longoria to direct, produce single-camera comedy in the works at ABC

Hollywood star Eva Longoria is set to direct and produce a single-camera Mexican comedy set at ABC network.

Being developed by Grace Parra Janney and Josh Bycel, the series is described as a multi-generational comedy about an upper middle class family handling grief, identity, and a reevaluation of their roles following the death of the family's patriarch.

According to Variety, the untitled series is inspired by Janney's own large Mexican American family in Texas.

Longoria executive produces under her Unbelievable Entertainment banner along with Ben Spector.

"I've been a huge fan of Josh's work since our time together on *Telenovela*" and Grace and I share similar 'Texican' backgrounds. At Unbelievable we are always pushing to tell real and authentic stories so I'm particularly proud to share one that is not unlike my own family's experience," Longoria said.

20th Television will produce the show.



Vikrant Massey, Radhika Apte to topline crime thriller Forensic



Actors Vikrant Massey and Radhika Apte will feature in the lead roles in

upcoming crime thriller film *Forensic*.

Backed by Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt Ltd. and Mini films,

the movie will be directed by Vishal Furia, the makers said in a statement.

The project reunites Furia and Massey after the

critically-acclaimed season one of Disney+ *Hotstar* show *Criminal Justice*.

Massey, who most recently featured in Netflix hit *Hasen Dillruha* and comedy drama *14 Phere*, said *Forensic* has an intriguing script.

"I have always believed in the story being the front-runner for a film and when director Vishal Furia, narrated the script to me, I was intrigued as an actor and as a member of the audience," the actor said.

Apte said *Forensic* hits "all the right notes" and she is confident that the movie will click with the audiences.

"I am looking forward to start this project and work with a talented co-star like Vikrant and our director Vishal who has such a clear and interesting vision for this film," she added.

Furia said the team hopes to deliver an entertaining, edge of the seat thriller to the audience.




"I am so humbled by the fact that two powerful actors like Vikrant and Radhika are on board. They are kind of performers who elevate the material they have been given. And I am so grateful to my producers for the support they have shown on me. I am truly working with a dream team and together we aspire to make a dream film for the viewers," he said.

Deepak Mukut of Soham Rockstar Entertainment Pvt. Ltd will produce the movie in collaboration with Mansi Bagla and Varun Bagla under their banner Mini Films. Hunar Mukut will serve as co-producer.





Forensic will go on floors later this year.

FUN




ARCHIE






CALVIN AND HOBBS






GARFIELD




NANCY




GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD

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

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- The person next door
- Ships tie up here
- Someone in a play
- A drawer for money in a shop
- Precious stones
- A hard safety hat
- A stopper for a bath or sink
- A thick soft quilt used as a cover for a bed
- A sheep's babies
- A country in South America

DOWN

- A letter sent from one computer to another
- Birthday present

SOLUTION

A	H	C	O	G	A
T	R	O	U	T	T
E	A	T	I	N	G
P	I	P	S	T	R
I	S	T	R	O	N
T	A	S	E	A	T
E	N	A	L	E	S
F	O	U	R	T	E
F	O	U	R	T	E

City responds well to mental health 'Fist Bump' initiative



vention is better
than cure!

TUESDAY HIGHLIGHTS

●**Hockey:** India beat Spain 3-0 in Men's Pool A Match.
●**Badminton:** Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty beat Ben Lane and Sean Vandy (Great Britain) 21-17, 21-19 in Men's Doubles Group A Match.
●**Boxing:** Lovlina Borgohain beat Nadine Apetz of Germany 3-2 in Women's 69kg Round of 16 Bout.
●**Table Tennis:** A Sharath Kamal lost to Ma Long (China) 7-11, 11-8, 11-13, 4-11, 4-11 in Men's Singles Round 3 Match.
●**Shooting:** Saurabh Chaudhary/Manu Bhaker and Yeshahswini Deswal/Abhishek Verma fail to qualify for medal round in 10m Air Pistol Mixed Team event.
●**Rowing:** Elavenil Valarivan/Divyansh Singh Panwar and Anjum Moudgil/Deepak Kumar fail to qualify for medal round in 10m Air Rifle Mixed Team event.
●**Sailing:** Nethra Kumanan 32nd and 38th in Race 5 and 6 in Women's Laser Radial.
Vishnu Saravanan 23rd and 22nd in Race 5 and 6 in Men's Laser.
KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar 18th in Race 1 in Men's Skiff 49er.

IN FOCUS TODAY

●**Hockey:** India vs Great Britain (Women's)
●**Badminton:** P V Sindhu vs NY Cheung (Hong Kong) and B Sai Praneeth vs M Caljouw (Netherlands).
●**Boxing:** Pooja Rani vs Ichrak Chaib (Algeria).
●**Rowing:** Arjun Lal Jat and Arvind Singh in Men's Lightweight Double Sculls Semifinal 2.
●**Archery:** Tarundeep Rai vs Oleksii Hunbin (Ukraine).
Pravin Jadhav vs Galsan Bazarzhapov (Russian Olympic Committee).
Deepika Kumari vs Karma (Bhutan).



India's Mandeep Singh (11) celebrates after Rupinder Pal Singh, right, scored against Spain during men's field hockey match on Tuesday

AP

Back to winning ways

Tokyo: Dragflicker Rupinder Pal Singh scored a brace as the Indian men's hockey overcame a demoralising defeat in the previous match to cruise past Spain 3-0 and inch closer to a quarterfinal berth at the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday.
Drubbed 1-7 by Australia in their last match, India produced a spirited performance against world No 9 Spain and scored through Simranjeet Singh (14th minute) and Rupinder Pal Singh (15th and 51st) to record a comfortable win in their third Pool A match at the Oi Hockey Stadium.
India, ranked fourth in the world, had earlier defeated

New Zealand 3-2 in their opening fixture. Spain, on the other hand, are yet to register a win in the competition.
Spain drew 1-1 against Argentina before losing 3-4 to New Zealand.
The Indians will next play reigning Olympic champions Argentina on Thursday.
For any team it is always tough to recover from a morale-shattering loss within a day, but India looked more organised and sorted against Spain on Tuesday.
Despite the win, India's chief coach Graham Reid said the team needs to work upon a lot of grey areas, like conceding penalty corners, ahead of their remaining matches.

INDIA'S SCHEDULE ON JULY 28 (ALL TIMES IST)		
TIME	EVENTS	ATHLETES
06:30 AM	Hockey: Women's Pool A Match	India vs Great Britain
07:30 AM	Badminton: Women's Singles Group Match	PV Sindhu
07:31 AM	Archery: Men's individual 1/32 Eliminations	Tarundeep Rai
08:00 AM	Rowing: Men's Doubles Sculls Semifinals	Arjun Lal Jat & Arvind Singh
08:35 AM	Sailing: 49er Men's Race 2,3 & 4	KC Ganapathy & Varun Thakkar
12:30 PM	Archery: Men's individual 1/32 Eliminations	Pravin Jadhav
02:14 PM	Archery: Women's individual 1/32 Eliminations	Deepika Kumari
02:30 PM	Badminton: Men's Singles Group Match	B Sai Praneeth
02:33 PM	Boxing: Women's 75kg Round of 16	Pooja Rani
LIVE ON SONY TEN & SIX NETWORK		

"Better result today, but a lot of things to work on from an improvement perspective. The fact that we gave too many corners, that's always a concern when that happens. But the team did really well in

terms of defending," he said.
"The first quarter was played very well, we could move the ball really well and it was exactly what we planned to do. We struggled a bit in the second and third quarters."

Women need to create and grab chances

Tokyo: Enduring a forgettable campaign, bottom-placed Indian women's hockey team can't afford squandering any more chances if it fancies upsetting defending champions Great Britain on Wednesday.
After a 1-5 drubbing against world number one the Netherlands, the Indians players lifted their game by leaps and bounds to give third-ranked Germany a run for their money before losing 0-2 in their next Pool A match.
But two consecutive defeats have definitely pegged the side back. India created a lot of scoring opportunities against Germany but finishing was lacking from the forward line. On one occasion, Vandana Katariya was denied by the goal post too.
But not converting the penalty stroke was a huge miss.
However, the Rani Rampal-led side can take a lot of heart from its performance against the Germans given that it kept the intensity and fight intact till the final hour.

With two defeats from as many games, the Indian women are currently lying at the bottom of the six-team Pool A, which is being headed by Netherlands, followed by Germany, Britain, Ireland and South Africa.
But these are still early days with three matches each remaining for all the teams. Top four sides from each pool of six will qualify for the quarterfinals.
Ranked 11th in the world, India stand a chance to make the quarterfinals but for that to happen they will have to outplay seventh-ranked Ireland and South Africa, who are placed 16th.



Indias Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty play against Britains Ben Lane and Sean Vandy during their mens doubles group play stage match

PTI

Chirag-Satwik exit despite win

Tokyo: Indian shuttlers Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy emerged victorious against the England pair of Ben Lane and Sean Vandy in their final Group A match but still missed out on qualifying for the quarterfinals at the Tokyo Olympics on Tuesday.
Ranked 10th in the world, the Indians beat world number 18 team 21-17, 21-19 in a 44-minute Group A men's doubles match at the Musashino Forest Plaza.
However, they couldn't make it to the knockout stage as they finished third in the Group A behind top-ranked Indonesian team of Marcus Gideon Fernaldi and Kevin Sanjaya Sukamuljo and world number three Wang Lee and Chi-Lin Wang of Chinese Taipei.
"We knew the moment Lee Yang/Wang Chi-Lin won,

we don't stand a chance. They won in two games and we won in three. It is quite sad. Unfortunately, even after winning two matches in the group, we don't go through. But that is badminton and have to live with it," said Chirag.
All three teams finished on same points with two wins each and when the number of games won was considered to identify the qualifiers, the Indians lost.
Chirag and Satwik's straight game loss to the Indonesians on Monday cost them dear.
Moments before the Indian pair stepped on the court, Lee and Wang had completed a three-game win over Sukamuljo and Gideon in the preceding group match, rendering the result of India's contest against Britain inconsequential.

Sharath goes down fighting

Tokyo: Sharath Kamal matched the legendary Ma Long stroke for stroke in the first three games before making a third round exit from the table tennis competition on Tuesday, ending India's medal-less yet impressive run at the Tokyo Olympics.
Following the unprecedented gains made from the 2018 Asian Games, where India won a table tennis medal for the first time ever, the performance of Sharath and Manika Batra in the round of 32 added significantly to the sport's growing popularity.
They both achieved a first by



reaching the third round at the Summer Games.
A less tougher draw in mixed doubles, in which Sharath and Manika were seen as medal contenders, as well as in the men's singles could have seen the Indians scaling new heights.
The way 39-year-old Sharath played against Long has convinced him to think about competing in his fifth Olympics in Paris.
He fought tooth and nail in the first three games against the reigning Olympic and world champion Long before going down 7-

11, 11-8, 11-13, 4-11, 4-11 in 46 minutes.
To have a player like Long under pressure in itself is a significant achievement for the seasoned Indian.
"It was the best three games and probably the best match and best tournament I ever played," Sharath said.
The Chinese great too acknowledged that Sharath made it tough for him.
"It was a tough match. Of course at the Olympics every match, no matter the opponent, no matter the country, it's always tough," said Long.
"I did prepare for difficulties. The third game was crucial. After gutting it out the last two games were better," he added.
With Sharath's defeat, India's challenge ended in table tennis as Manika, Sutirtha Mukherjee and G Sathiyam had already exited the singles competition.

Lovlina makes QFs

Tokyo: Indian boxer Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) advanced to the quarterfinals in her debut Olympic appearance on Tuesday, defeating German veteran Nadine Apetz in a closely-fought last-16 stage bout.

Borgohain, the lone Indian boxer in action on the day, prevailed 3-2 over her rival who is 12 years her senior. Both the boxers were making their Games debut and the Indian became the first from her nine-strong team to make the quarterfinal stage.
The 23-year-old showed great poise in a tense contest to triumph by the thinnest of margins. She claimed all the three rounds on split points.
The 35-year-old Apetz was the first German woman to qualify for a boxing event at the Olympics. She is a two-time world championship Bronze-medallist and a former European champion.



Germany's Nadine Apetz, left, looks for an opening against Lovlina Borgohain during their 69kg boxing match

AP

Borgohain is a two-time World and Asian championships Bronze-medallist and will next face Chinese Taipei's Nien-Chin Chen on July 30, who is seeded fourth.
A win in the upcoming contest would assure Borgohain of at least a Bronze medal at the mega-event.
On Wednesday, Asian champion Pooja Rani (75kg) will square off against Algerian youngster Ichrak Chaib.

Osaka eliminated

AFF ■ TOKYO

Japan's Naomi Osaka suffered a 6-1, 6-4 defeat to Marketa Vondrousova in the third round of the Tokyo Games on Tuesday, crushing her dreams of winning Olympic Gold at home.
Osaka, who lit the Olympic cauldron during the opening ceremony, struggled in an error-strewn display under the centre court roof at Ariake Tennis Park and was knocked out in 68 minutes.
Vondrousova, ranked 42nd, will go on to face Spain's Paula Badosa or Nadia Podoroska of Argentina.
Meanwhile, Stefanos Tsitsipas advanced to the third round of the Olympics men's tennis tournament on Tuesday as he avenged last month's Wimbledon loss to Frances Tiafoe.
The Greek third seed downed American Tiafoe 6-3, 6-4 under the centre court roof at Ariake Tennis Park, where all play on outside courts was delayed an hour by morning drizzle.
Tsitsipas, who is also entered in mixed doubles with Maria Sakkar, will play France's Ugo Humbert or Miomir Kecmanovic of Serbia for a spot in the quarter-finals.
Also Novak Djokovic added another medal event to his program by entering the mixed doubles draw with Serbian partner Nina Stojanovic.

INDIAN CAMPAIGN OVER

The Indian tennis team's campaign at the Tokyo Olympics officially ended on Tuesday as Sania Mirza and Sumit Nagal could not make the cut for the mixed doubles event due to their low combined ranking of 153.
The entries were to be finalised on Tuesday morning and the cut was expected to be between 50-60. The Indians did not even have faint hopes of getting into the easiest of tennis events at the Games.
Only 16 teams play the mixed doubles event and thus winning just two matches can get a team in the medal round.
Nagal was blown away by Daniil Medvedev in the men's singles competition, while the women's doubles pair of Sania Mirza and Ankita Raina lost its opener from a winning position.



Sailors Vishnu, Nethra at 22nd & 33rd spot

Enoshima: Indian sailors Vishnu Saravanan and Nethra Kumanan finished way behind the leaders as they ended at 22nd and 33rd spot in the respective events after six races in the Tokyo Olympics here on Tuesday.
Saravanan finished 23rd and 22nd in the fifth and sixth race in the men's laser event while Kumanan was 32nd and

38th in the two races of the women's laser radial event held at Enoshima Yacht Harbour on Tuesday.
Four more races and medal race remain in the competition and the India duo were far behind in the rankings.
Each event consists of a series of races. Points in each race are awarded according to position: the winner gets one

point, the second-placed finisher scores two and so on.
The final race is called the medal race, for which points are doubled. Following the medal race, the individual or crew with the fewest total points is declared the winner.
The medal races of both the women's laser radial and men's laser will be held on August 1 after 10 races each.

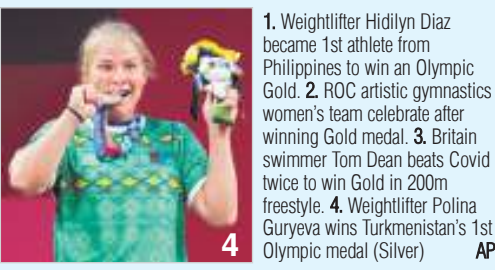


Indias KC Ganapathy and Varun Thakkar compete during the 49er men's race of the sailing event at the Enoshima harbour on Tuesday



Carissa Moore of US celebrates winning Gold medal in the women's surfing competition

AP



1. Weightlifter Hidilyn Diaz became 1st athlete from Philippines to win an Olympic Gold. 2. ROC artistic gymnastics women's team celebrate after winning Gold medal. 3. Britain swimmer Tom Dean beats Covid twice to win Gold in 200m freestyle. 4. Weightlifter Polina Guryeva wins Turkmenistan's 1st Olympic medal (Silver)

AP

Ind-SL 2nd T20I postponed to Wed as Krunal tests Covid +ve

PTI ■ COLOMBO/NEW DELHI

The second T20I between India and Sri Lanka in Colombo on Tuesday was postponed by a day after Indian all-rounder Krunal Pandya tested positive for Covid-19, forcing him out of the series with seven days of isolation.
However, all his eight close contacts, who were isolated, have tested 'negative' in the RT-PCR tests and will be available for the postponed game which is being held on Wednesday.
As per Sri Lanka's health safety protocols, Krunal will not be able to travel back to India with other members of the contingent on July 30 as he will now have to undergo mandatory isolation and obtain a negative RT-PCR report.
The third and final T20 is scheduled to be held on Thursday.
"Krunal is symptomatic with cough and throat pain.

He is obviously out of the series and will not be able to return with rest of the squad," a BCCI source tracking the developments in Colombo said.
"However the good news is that all his eight close contacts who were identified by the BCCI medical officer (Dr Abhijit Salvi) have tested negative."
For now, the three-match series is on as even if there are a couple of more cases, the Indian team has enough players with negative RT-PCR reports to field a team.
Krunal, who tested positive on Tuesday morning, has already been quarantined.
India are travelling with a 20-member squad plus four stand by net bowlers.
Now, there will be back-to-back matches on Wednesday and Thursday provided there aren't any more players testing positive to affect the balance of the sides which will lead to cancellation.
The team of Chaudhary and Bhaker totalled 380 across



Pant bats in nets

Durham: Ahead of the gruelling five Test match series against England, the Indian Test team led by skipper Virat Kohli, had a centre wicket training at the Durham Cricket Club here on Tuesday.
Aggressive wicket-keeper Rishabh Pant, who had joined the Test team after recovering from Covid-19, also batted in the nets.
"TeamIndia back at it and having a centre wicket training at Durham Cricket Club ahead of the five-match Test series against England," the BCCI said in a tweet.

FOR POOJA, NERVOUS ENERGY IS GOOD



Actress Pooja Hegde currently has multiple projects announced and rolling in the Tamil, Telugu and Hindi film industries. The actress says that being part of big budget films and high expectations from fans make her nervous. However, her reasons to feel jittery change with every industry. The actress also feels that having a non-filmy background affects how she looks at every film.

"When you come from a non-filmy background, the whole thing is whatever film you have, becomes like a golden treasure. It's like you have found treasure and you need to make the most of the role you have been given in the film, and hope that it helps you in capturing people's attention. Unfortunately, I am a classic example of an over thinker but I think ner-

vous energy is good," shares the actress. From Allu Arjun, Mahesh Babu, Junior NTR, Akshay Kumar to now Salman Khan, Vijay and Prabhas, Pooja has worked with the most bankable actors in the film industries across India.

Does having popular co-stars affect her craft? "I think it would affect my craft because a lot of acting is reacting. So, when they bring in their years of experience, it kind of helps me understand my craft more, it helps me may be perform better," she says.

"It's also about learning other things, which are not directly related to acting like tips about the way they lead their lives. For me, it's always about learning something new, besides acting also. So, it's always been a mix of everything and it has made me a better actor for sure."

In Bollywood, Pooja will be seen alongside superstar Salman Khan in *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali* and with Ranveer Singh in *Cirkus*. In Tollywood, she has *Radhe Shyam* alongside Prabhas and in Tamil, the actress will be seen with Vijay in *Beast*.

Talking about how she deals with these expectations which come with taking big leaps with her choice of films, the actress says: "Does it make me nervous? Yes. I think with every industry my reason of nervousness changes. With Telugu now, with 'Radhe Shyam', my role is fantastic. There is a lot of scope for me. So, with Telugu, I want to know how the audience thinks I perform. So, my nervousness is that I give my heart and soul into my performance for this film."

The actress, who made her film debut with Tamil film *Mugamoodi* (2012), eventually went on to give many blockbusters in Telugu films too. She made her Hindi debut with director Ashutosh Gowariker's *Mohenjo Daro*.

Further elaborating on what kind of nervousness she feels with Hindi and Tamil industry, Pooja says, "With *Cirkus* and *Kabhi Eid Kabhi Diwali*, I feel that I have so much to show to the Hindi audience of who I am and that is something, which is making me nervous. With Tamil, the nervousness if very different because it's a new market for me and now I am going back after many years. So, the nervousness is different."

PAN-INDIA CONCEPT DIVIDING TOLLYWOOD?

The pan-India concept has been shooting up like a trend in Tollywood. Actors are looking to work only for pan-India projects these days. This situation has become a trouble for middle level or big directors who stick to narrating local flavoured stories. Only few directors of Tollywood are in a row of pan-India movie making. All others are going to lose star actors' films. Even Koratala Siva, Trivikram Srinivas are under pressure to change their style to make a

pan-India films. Business dynamics of pan-India is going to rule the dynamics of directors too.

Jr. NTR is doing films with big directors like Prashant Neel and Sukumar. Koratala Siva is also not an option for pan-India films. Ramcharan is doing a film with Shankar, which is a pan-India movie. Allu Arjun is working on Pushpa as a pan-India project with Sukumar. Mahesh Babu's next film will be with Trivikram and then with Rajamouli.

Recently, Tollywood has witnessed young directors

like Hanu Raghavapudi, Sudheer Varma, Anil Ravipudi, Sampath Nandi and Maruthi. These directors may not have chances to work with star actors in this era of pan-India movies. This situation will work out in favour of middle level heroes like Nani, Sharwanand, Nikhil, Nithin, Nagashourya and Satyadev.

The directors, who won't be able to get star actors for



their films will choose to work with other actors and the industry may soon be divided into two — pan-India and non-pan-India films.



MIDNIGHT RUNNERS COMING THIS AUGUST

Midnight Runners, a South Korean action film is being remade in Telugu, with Sudheer Varma helming the project. Actresses Regina Cassandra and Nivetha Thomas will be playing lead roles in this film. The story is about two cops under training who chase a kidnapper gang. While the original

film had male leads, the Telugu remake will have female leads. This film started shooting in March itself but due to the second wave of Covid, it had to be stalled. With shoot not resumes, the team is confident of its release in August! Sudheer Varma, who is an expert in taking up such kinds of stories, is expecting a hit with this film. His last film

Ranarangam with Sharwanand didn't get him much success. *Swamy Rara, Dochey* and *Kesava* have made a good impact, but post these, Sudheer Varma lacked success.

The subject is a favourite one for Sudheer Varma and producers Suresh Babu, Thati Sunitha and Hunue Thomas, are confident with the film in the former's hands.

RRR set to release first song

SS Raja mouli's magnum opus *RRR* is just two months away from its release and fans are already getting excited. The team of *RRR* too has been teasing fans with BTS videos, much to everybody's interest! The latest news now, is that music composer MM Keeravani has roped in superstar singers from across India for a multilingual song in the upcoming film. The song titled *Dosti* has been sung in Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi. Keeravani has enlisted the services of musicians Hemachandra, Anirudh Ravichander, Amit Trivedi, Yazin Nizar, and Vijay Yesudas to sing the song in different languages. The first song from the movie, which is written and directed by SS Rajamouli, is all set to release on August 1 at 11 am. The makers of the film have announced that the music rights of *RRR* have been bagged by T-Series and Lahari Music. PEN Studios has bagged the theatrical distribution rights across North India and the worldwide electronic rights for all languages.

The song release is part of the producers' ongoing promotional campaign for *RRR*, which is set to open in cinemas worldwide on October 13. Earlier, the filmmaker

released the footage showing the massive efforts that went into bringing to life Rajamouli's vision.

"It is one of the biggest films we are partnering on. As a viewer, I have always admired SS Rajamouli's body of work and revered MM Keeravani's music. I'm thrilled to be associating with *RRR* because it's the biggest film that will release this year. The music is outstanding and I'm sure the audience will love it, too," said Bhushan Kumar, head honcho of T-Series. We know that the production of *RRR* had to face a slew of problems, including interruptions in the shoot on multiple occasions, owing to the injuries suffered by Ram Charan and Jr NTR, the lead stars of the film. The outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic and the subsequent lockdown made shooting and post production works difficult, and the project has to be delayed by over a year. Earlier this month, with the release of the behind-the-scenes video, the filmmakers confirmed that *RRR* will hit the screens as announced on October 13. The announcement has brought much-needed relief to the Indian film industry, which is struggling to get back on its feet since last year. *RRR* is expected to restart the engines of the box office business again.



Navarasa trailer wows fans

The trailer of the much-awaited anthology *Navarasa* spearheaded by Mani Ratnam and filmmaker Jayendra Panchapakesan was dropped on Tuesday. The film is all set to premiere on Netflix on August 6. The anthology is an amalgamation of nine short films based on nine 'rasas' or human emotions — anger, compassion, courage, disgust, fear, laughter, love, peace and wonder.

As soon as the trailer dropped, netizens expressed their joy on social media. The trailer was re-shared and reposted by netizens.

Talking about the anthology, Mani Ratnam said, "Emotions may be momentary but some of those moments stay with us for life. Emotions are part of every day of our lives and yet some of these can change the course of our lives. This is what makes *Navarasa* interesting. Though at most times there is more than

one emotion in play, often it is one that takes control of our mind and soul and spurs us into action. *Navarasa* is a collection of nine stories born out of nine such emotions. Some of these pivot in a moment. Some take shape from deep-rooted feelings. *Navarasa* showcases them all." As the project is also intended to support film workers in Tamil cinema impacted by the pandemic, Jayendra Panchapakesan added, "We are extremely happy and proud of our colleagues in the industry, directors, actors and technicians, who have created engaging, exciting stories from these nine emotions or the classical 'rasas'. The films are directed by — Arvind Swami, Bejoy Nambiar, Gautham Vasudev Menon, Karthik Subbaraj, Karthick Naren, Priyadarshan, Rathindran R. Prasad, Sarjun and Vasanth S. Sai.

Sonu Sood: Small businesses are the backbone of India



making 'rotis', the actor has been urging people to support local businesses as he feels they are the basic backbone of our country.

Talking about the same, Sonu said, "Small businesses are the basic backbone of our country. I have always tried to promote small businesses as they need support. Many small businesses are unable to sustain their daily livelihood. I try and help them out whenever I get to see someone put in their hard work and trying to make an honest day's living out of it."

"I come from a very small town and I know how hard these people work in order to make their small businesses successful. By pushing them forward, we can help the nation's economy, as these small businesses are grassroot-level companies and work out of the rural heartlands of the country. So it always feels good to help them out," he added. On the work front, the actor will feature in upcoming projects like the Hindi historical drama film *Prithviraj* and the Telugu action drama *Acharya*.



For the past few weeks, actor and social worker Sonu Sood has been actively campaigning on social media with the hashtag #supportsmallbusiness. Sharing videos where he can be seen playing a bread and eggs seller on a bicycle, a milkman or a 'dhaba' owner