

ANALYSIS 7 CLIMATE CHANGE AND ITS SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACT

MONEY 8 SENSEX RALLIES 393 PTS; IT STOCKS SHINE

SPORTS 11 RECORD BREAKING RONALDO

VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY, JUNE 25, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



THAKUR ANOOP SINGH SET TO SCALE BIGGER HEIGHTS

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COVID NEGATIVE 8-YR-OLD GIRL DEVELOPS MULTISYSTEM INFLAMMATORY SYNDROME

An eight-year-old girl here, who was a suspected case of Covid-19, developed multisystem inflammatory syndrome in children (MIS-C), a post-Covid complication that can manifest three to six weeks after the infection, hospital authorities said on Thursday.



SCIENTISTS SEEKS PREZ INTERVENTION TO WITHDRAW PROPOSED LDAR

The proposed Lakshadweep Development Authority Regulation of 2021 (LDAR) is highly problematic and will work against existing legal provisions that safeguard the resilience of Lakshadweep's ecology, livelihood and culture, say a group of scientists from different institutions who have worked on the islands for years.



SHABANA AZMI ACCUSES ALCOHOL DELIVERY PLATFORM OF CHEATING HER

Veteran actor Shabana Azmi on Thursday accused an alcohol delivery platform of allegedly duping her. In a Twitter post, the 70-year-old actor claimed that she was conned by Living Liquidz after she placed an order at the platform but didn't receive it.



OVER 2,000 PEOPLE IN MUMBAI FELL VICTIM TO FAKE COVID VAX DRIVES

More than 2,000 people have fallen victim to fake Covid vaccination camps in Mumbai so far, the State government told the Bombay High Court on Thursday.



After Supreme Court rap, State cancels Class X, Inter exams

Government announces High Power committee to decide on marks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday announced cancellation of Class X and Intermediate examinations in the state "keeping in view the Covid pandemic situation".

The decision to cancel the exams was taken by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at a high-level meeting with officials of the Education Department at his camp office.

The decision came within hours of a Supreme Court bench expressing its dissatisfaction over the stand of the state government in deciding to go ahead with the examinations in the last week of July, while many states in the country had decided to cancel them.

Conducting the exams had also led to a political row with the opposition TDP exerting pressure on the government to cancel them. The TDP had repeatedly said that going ahead with the exam posed a high risk to the lives of the students given



reports of possible third wave that will affect children.

TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh had also set a 36-hour deadline to the government on cancelling these exams.

On Thursday, after the meeting with the Chief Minister, State Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh told reporters that the government has decided to cancel the

examinations for SSC and Intermediate students, following the suggestions from the Supreme Court.

He said since 18 states have cancelled the examinations and are getting ready for admissions into higher classes, the court suggested that AP should not lag behind.

July 31 deadline to declare internal assessment results

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Thursday directed all the state boards to declare results of internal assessment of Class 12 examination by July 31, making it clear that each board is free to formulate its own evaluation method for students and there can't be a 'fit-all' scheme.

The court, which refused to pass directions for a uniform assessment scheme for students whose board exams have been cancelled amid the pandemic, directed the state boards to ensure that schemes are formulated and notified within 10 days from Thursday.

Modi meets J&K leadership with eye on delimitation, polls

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the government's first outreach to Jammu and Kashmir's political leadership in almost two years, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday held a crucial meeting with 14 leaders, including four former chief ministers, to chalk out the future course of action in the Union Territory.

The Prime Minister, accompanied by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Lieutenant Governor of Jammu and Kashmir Manoj Sinha, received the leaders from eight parties, including the National Conference, the PDP, the BJP and

the Congress, at his residence.

This is the first interaction between the Central leadership and the mainstream parties since August 5, 2019, when the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status under Article 370 and bifurcated it into two Union Territories, Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

Minister of State in PMO Jitendra Singh, Principal Secretary to the Prime Minister P K Mishra and Union Home Secretary Ajay Bhalla were among those who attended the meeting.

The four former chief ministers of the erstwhile state who participated in the discussions were Farooq Abdullah and his son Omar

Abdullah of the National Conference, Congress' Ghulam Nabi Azad and PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti.

Four former deputy chief ministers were in attendance too Congress' Tara Chand, People's Conference leader Muzaffar Hussain Baig and BJP's Nirmal Singh and Kavinder Gupta.

CPI-M leader Mohammed Yusuf Tarigami, Jammu and Kashmir Apni Party (JKAP) chief Altaf Bukhari, Sajjad Lone of the People's Conference, J-K Congress head G A Mir, BJP's Ravinder Raina and Panthers Party leader Bhim Singh also formed part of the delegation.



PAGE 3: Lokesh calls it a victory for students, parents, teachers

Krishna Board asks AP to stop Rayalaseema LI project work

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Krishna River Management Board (KRMB) on Thursday asked the Andhra Pradesh government to stop work on the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Project (RLIP) until the Detailed Project Report (DPR) is approved.

The Telangana State government had recently written to the KRMB, objecting to the construction of RLIP by AP. Responding to Telangana's objections, KRMB member RK Meena wrote to the AP government on Thursday.

In its letter to the KRMB, the Telangana government had pointed out that the National Green Tribunal (NGT) had in February given a report not to take up the irrigation works of Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation. Considering the Telangana gov-



ernment's appeal, KRMB member Meena sent a letter to the Andhra Pradesh government not to take up the construction works of the project without submitting the DPR. In the letter, Meena mentioned that the NGT had ordered Andhra Pradesh in February to stop work on the project. The NGT had also directed the KRMB to review and submit details of the RLIP.

He also reminded that the Andhra Pradesh government did not cooperate with the board members during their visit to the project area.

AP scheme clearly illegal: Telangana

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telangana Minister Vemula Prashanth Reddy has said that the Telangana government is taking all measures within its means to stop the 'illegal' projects being constructed by the Andhra Pradesh government.

Prashant Reddy said in response to a letter from the TS government, the Krishna River Management Board had instructed the AP government to stop works on the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project.



Post-Covid: Revenues of States on recovery path

PNS ■ MUMBAI

High tax buoyancy, led primarily by fuel taxes, and increase in grants from the Centre under the Finance Commission package will help revenue growth of states cross the pre-pandemic level in the current fiscal, provided there is no third COVID wave, according to a report.

FULL REPORT ON PAGE 8

Mekapati raises AP's concerns over Centre's proposed Ports Bill

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has raised concerns over the draft Indian Ports Bill-2021 at the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC) meeting held virtually on Thursday.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has framed the 'Draft Indian Ports Bill 2021' to modify the current management model of minor ports and a meeting of the MSDC was held on Thursday with the Ministers of the coastal states concerned to discuss the proposed Bill.

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin has already written to all the states a day before the MSDC meeting urging them to oppose the Bill in the virtual meeting.

AP Industries Minister Mekapati Goutham Reddy, who participated in the MSDC meeting, pointed out that jurisdiction and authority of non-major ports



lies with the State government and Andhra Pradesh was wary that the new Act may assume this right and the States will lose the powers to plan, develop, regulate and control non-major ports.

"This Bill also proposes changes in the basic structure in governance of ports such as changes in the roles and powers of the officials. This requires detailed examination. Andhra Pradesh govern-

ment also feels that while the proposed Bill suggests that MSDC would have recommendatory roles, in sum and substance, it says otherwise especially with respect to regulation, authority to govern, rights to develop new ports, port limits, collection of tariffs, adjudication of disputes and monitoring of functioning of state authorities," Goutham Reddy said.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Tithi : Pratipada 20:58
Nakshatram : Mula 06:40 Purna Ashadha 28:25
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 10:41 am - 12:18 pm
Yamagandam : 3:34 pm - 5:12 pm
Varjyam : 3:22 pm - 4:49 pm
Gulika : 7:25 am - 9:03 am
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritkalam : 12:04 am - 1:31 am
Ahhijit Muhurtham : 11:52 am - 12:44 pm

K'taka HC relief for Twitter India MD

PNS ■ BENGALURU/GHAZIABAD

In a relief to Twitter India head Manish Maheshwari, the Karnataka High Court on Thursday restrained Ghaziabad police, which has summoned him in connection with a probe related to the assault of an elderly Muslim man there, from initiating coercive action against him.

The single bench of Justice G Narendar said the police can examine Maheshwari through virtual mode.

"If the police desire to examine the petitioner (Manish Maheshwari), they may do so through virtual mode," the court said.

"If the matter requires consideration, we list it on June 29. In the meanwhile restraining the respondents from initiating any coercive action against the petitioner," the



court maintained.

"It is case of petitioner that he has replied to notice under section 160 of CrPC to join through virtual mode. The respondent (Ghaziabad police) taking objection to the request has turned around and issued notice under Section 41(A) virtually putting him in the shoes of accused," it observed.

Vax cuts household transmissibility by 40-50%

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Several families were infected with coronavirus, in the first and second wave, through one person.

With vaccines making their way into houses, the transmissibility has reduced even in houses.

The likelihood of household transmission was approximately 40 to 50% lower in households of patients who had been vaccinated before testing positive than in households of unvaccinated patients, as per study published in New England Journal of Medicine on Wednesday.

Most of the vaccinated patients of the study done in England had received only the first dose of vac-



cine. However the study points that the timing of vaccination was imperative as it seemed protective

at least 14 days before the positive test.

The study had a dataset of

9.6lakh non vaccinated persons who transmitted to 96898. While on the other hand of the 9363 vaccinated persons, only 567 were secondary contacts.

The results were similar to Results similar for AstraZeneca and Pfizer vaccine.

Dr Sravan Kumar, pulmonologist at government hospital said, "Vaccines are not only safe, but they also help prevent severe manifestations of Covid-19 and will help save lives.

Even one dose reduces transmissibility and now there are evidence based studies. Taking vaccination not only protects you but your family.



Model Tenancy Act 2021: Time for States to implement it now

We have heard umpteen stories narrating that the owner of so and so premises is harassing his tenant, cutting off electricity and water supply and threatening the tenant to vacate the premises. We have also heard stories of tenants not paying rent in time and not vacating premises on the expiry of the agreement period. Thus, both sides have created an environment of distrust and uncertainty. This has had an adverse impact on the growth of healthy rental business, more so in the residential sector. There is hardly anyone who can think of starting 'Renting of dwelling houses' as a secure and profitable

business. We live in a democratic republic country. It implies that we all must respect the laws of the land and in particular honour the rental agreement entered between two individuals. Why then do premises owner and tenant drag their feet in respecting the mandate of agreement entered by them? The major points of dispute are generally timely payment of rent, vacating premises on the expiry of agreement, and peaceful environment for the tenant to enjoy the rented premises. What are the underlying causes? Are there weaknesses in existing laws or in the process for adjudicating disputes?

The major points of dispute are generally timely payment of rent, vacating premises on the expiry of agreement, and peaceful environment for the tenant to enjoy the rented premises. What are the underlying causes? Are there weaknesses in existing laws or in the process for adjudicating disputes?

This Model Tenancy Act 2021 has tried to answer the above two questions and balance the rights and obligations of both the premises owner and the tenant under the agreement. Now it is time for States to enact this law in their respective States and usher in an environment that is conducive for the healthy growth of 'Renting of

premises' business. It will bring in fresh air in this very crucial and essential sector. A peep into important features of the Model Tenancy Act will answer these questions. The important features of the Model Tenancy Act that are relevant for us to understand are: Rent, Revision of Rent, Maintenance of Premises



SURESH CHANDA IAS (RETD.)
Former Spl Chief Secretary, Govt of Telangana State.

(Sections 8, 9 and 15 respectively: As per the provisions of written agreement, it will cer-

tainly reduce the scope for any dispute in future on these issues. No stoppage of Water, Electricity and common services to premises (Section 20): The Rental authority can levy fine on Premises Owner if the owner is at default and levy fine on Tenant if complaint by tenant was found to be frivolous. No eviction of tenant from premises as long as the agreement is in force and there is no default by tenant (Section 21): In case of the death of Premises owner, his legal heirs can ask tenant for vacating the premises even during currency of agreement period for bonafide personal requirement (Section 22):

Higher rent payable if premises is not vacated on the expiry of the Agreement (Section 23):- Twice the monthly rent for the first two months. Thereafter, four times the monthly rent till the premises is vacated. Premises owner must pay interest on Advance taken (for delayed period) if advance amount is not returned at the time of taking back possession of premises (Section 24). Adjudication of disputes between Owner and Tenant (Section 30, 33, 34):- Deputy Collector (Rent Authority), Additional Collector (Rent Court) and District Judge or Additional District Judge (Rent Tribunal).

Not more than three Adjournments (Section 35): Disposal of case within 90 days. Implementation of Orders of Adjudicating authorities (Section 38): Rent Court, on application, will execute the orders for delivery of possession of premises and or attaching bank accounts for recovering amount. Rent Court also can take help of the local Government and the local police to execute the orders. Civil Courts are barred from entertaining any application in so far as it relates to provisions under this Act (Section 40): The objective behind this provision is to expedite dispute resolution. Hopefully, the Rent Authority, Rent Court and Rent Tribunal will meet the expectations of citizens for quick resolution of disputes.

French firm 'Imerys' pumps in Rs 350 cr in new facility at Vizag

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Imerys, the French multinational that specialises in production and processing of industrial minerals, on Thursday said it has pumped in Rs 350 crore in its new facility in Vizag, Andhra Pradesh. The calcium aluminate plant will also serve as a distribution centre of imported ready-to-use mortars and bentonite solutions to serve the fast-growing infrastructure sector, in particular for applications such as waste water, tunnelling and civil engineering in general.



"The group invested Rs 350 crore in this new facility, which expands the group's presence in the country and enables it to serve domestic customers with solutions adapted to their local needs," the company said in a statement.

From its new plant, Imerys will supply the refractory as well as the construction market. A calcium aluminate binder with controlled chemistry and optimised mineralogy for conventional castable applications, and a calcium aluminate binder dedicated to growing demand in low-cement castables, the statement said.

The company has hired 100 people from local communities, who have been trained gradually as the commissioning of the plant was progressing. Imerys India today employs

800 people, located in 16 industrial sites and eight sales offices. In addition to the production of calcium aluminate binders, the group produces specialty solutions for ceramics, plastics, polymers and refractory products. "...the group continues to invest in growing markets and geographies. The fully remote commissioning, caused by the

pandemic, has been an incredible achievement," Alessandro D'Azza, Chief Executive Officer, Imerys, said. "Our Vizag plant helps Imerys to be closer to our customers, in addition to subscribing to the 'Make in India' drive by the Government of India to promote self-sufficiency and save foreign exchange through import substitution," said Segi

P Idicula, Imerys Vizag director.

Imerys is considered the world leader in mineral-based specialty solutions for industry, with 3.8 billion revenue and 16,400 employees.

In 2020, Imerys delivered high value-added, functional solutions to a diversified set of industrial sectors, from processing industries to consumer goods.

The group has a wealth of knowledge of applications, technological expertise and its material science know-how to deliver solutions based on beneficiation of its mineral resources, synthetic minerals and formulations. These contribute essential properties to customers' products and performance, including refractoriness, hardness, conductivity, opacity, durability, purity, lightness, filtration, absorption and repellency.

Imerys is determined to develop responsibly, in particular by fostering the emergence of environmentally friendly products and processes.

Recoveries cross 18 lakh mark, AP reports 4,981 new cases

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Covid-19 recoveries crossed 18 lakh and the number of active cases slid below 50,000 in AP on Thursday.

The state registered 4,981 fresh Coronavirus cases, 6,464 recoveries and 38 deaths in the 24 hours ending 9 am today, according to the latest bulletin.

The cumulative positives now touched 18,67,017 while the recoveries went up to 18,04,844. The overall toll stood at 12,490, the bulletin said. The active caseload in the state was now 49,683.

East Godavari reported 943, Chittoor 854 and West Godavari 593 new cases of Covid-19. The remaining 10 districts logged less than 500 cases each.

Chittoor reported 10 fresh fatalities. East Godavari and Krishna five each, SPS Nellore and Guntur four each, Srikakulam and West Godavari three each.

K'taka HC relief for Twitter India...

Continued from Page 1

Appearing on behalf of Maheshwari, advocate CV Nagesh said someone had posted a video on the Twitter platform alleging that a Muslim was forced to chant 'Jai Sri Ram' and 'Vande Mataram'.

When he refused, his beard was cut. Subsequently a notice under section 161 of the CrPC was issued to Maheshwari by email and responding to it, he said he would be ready to appear virtually.

Soon the police issued a notice under section 41(A) asking him to appear in person within 24 hours to travel from Bengaluru to Ghaziabad, which was not possible for Maheshwari, Nagesh told the court.

The court maintained that the petitioner is an employee of Twitter Communication India Private Limited han-

dling marketing and sales and not a member of board of directors to be responsible for uploading of the alleged video based on which the FIR was registered.

The Twitter India Managing Director, who lives in Bengaluru in Karnataka, was issued notice by the Ghaziabad Police on June 21 and asked to report at its Loni Border police station at 10.30 am on Thursday to get his statement recorded in the case, officials at Ghaziabad said.

"He (Maheshwari) is not coming today," Ghaziabad Senior Superintendent of Police Amit Pathak earlier told PTI.

Pathak said the Ghaziabad Police has learnt that the Twitter India MD has given a representation in Karnataka High Court in connection with the case and a decision on that is pending.

Modi meets J&K...

Continued from Page 1

"I will keep my agenda in the meeting and then talk to you," Farooq Abdullah said before the meeting started.

Asked about PDP chief Mehbooba's comments that India should initiate dialogue with Pakistan, the NC leader said, "Mehbooba ji is the president of her party. She has the right to speak. I have my own. I don't want to bring in Pakistan. I am going to talk to our own prime minister."

"If India can talk to the Taliban in Doha (Qatar), why not Pakistan," Mehbooba had said earlier.

With no agenda announced for the meeting, the leaders from Jammu and Kashmir said they have come with an open mind. "We have not been given an agenda. We will be attending the meeting to know what the Centre is offering," said Tarigami, who is also

spokesperson of the six-party People's Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD) that was formed in the aftermath of the August 2019 decisions.

Officials said the Centre is keen on holding Assembly elections in the UT as early as possible, maybe in December this year or March 2022 after the Delimitation Commission headed by Justice (retd) Ranjana Desai completes its task of redrawing constituencies in the next few months. The panel was granted one year's extension in March.

BJP's J&K unit chief Raina said Thursday's interaction convened by the PM is in accordance with the wishes of heads of various political parties who have been seeking time from him for a long time.

The meeting seems to be the result of the back-channel talks held with all the parties from the union territory to chart out a roadmap.

After Supreme Court rap, AP cancels ...

Continued from Page 1

"It also ordered that all the states should declare the examination results by July 31, which is impossible in our state. So, we have decided to cancel the SSC and Intermediate examinations," Suresh said.

He also said that a high-power committee will be appointed which will look into the declaration of results and awarding of marks to the students at the earliest so that they can take up higher studies.

Earlier in the day, the Supreme Court made it clear to the Andhra Pradesh government that unless it was satisfied that there will be no fatality due to Covid, it will not allow the Class 12 board exams.

The special bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari also said that it was not convinced of the precautionary measures suggested by the State for holding the tests.

The apex court said it may also look into the aspect of compensation in case of a fatality like in many other states where Rs 1 crore is given for the death due to Covid-19.

The bench, which posed tough questions to the AP government on its decision to hold Class 12 board examinations, asked standing counsel for the state Mahfooz A Nazki to place before the court the snapshot of the file giving reasons to hold the test.

July 31 deadline...

Continued from Page 1

A bench of Justices A M Khanwilkar and Dinesh Maheshwari observed that each board is autonomous and they will have to evolve their own scheme for assessment.

"We direct all the state boards to ensure that the schemes are formulated and notified at the earliest and not later than 10 days from today and also declare the results of internal assessment by July 31, 2021, which is the time-line specified for CBSE and ICSE boards in terms of our order dated June 22," the bench said in its order.

The top court was hearing a plea which has sought directions to the states not to hold board exams

"We are not satisfied with the precautionary measures you will be taking for holding the exams. We are not convinced with the mechanism you have devised. Unless we are satisfied that you are able to conduct the examination without any fatality, we will not allow you to hold the examination," the bench said.

because of the pandemic. The bench noted in its order that counsel appearing for Haryana has submitted that a clarification be issued that respective boards were free to formulate their own schemes being autonomous and independent bodies.

"We have no difficulty in acceding to this submission," the bench said, adding: "In other words, we make it clear that each board may formulate its own scheme. However, we further make it clear that we are not endorsing the correctness and validity of the proposed schemes, to be so formulated by the concerned boards. That will be considered on its own merits, if and when occasion arises."

"We have to see the aspect of compensation in case of any fatality during the examination. Some States have given Rs 1 crore compensation for death due to Covid. We can look at things through that aspect," it said.

The top court was hearing a plea seeking directions to state governments not to hold board

exams in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

During the hearing, the court flagged its specific concern over accommodating 5,19,510 students in classrooms for the exams and said the state government says that maximum of 15 to 18 students will be in one class.

"If we go by your figure then for 15 students per class, you will need 34,644 rooms and if we take 18 students per class then you will need 28,862 rooms. Tell us from where you get all these rooms," the bench said.

It told Nazki: "Don't hold examinations for the sake of examination. It is not only 5 lakh students giving the examination, more than a lakh people will be involved in the process including 34,000 supervisors for each room. You have to think about their health and safety also."

The bench said the state should keep in mind the impact of the second Covid wave, how fast it unfolded and how it will cope if it is hit by the third wave.

"Do you have any contingency plans? If you are hit by a third wave or if there is any unwarranted situation how will you deal with it. We have not seen any such thing on your affidavit. No one is here to prove anything. You must have thought about something about the health and safety of students and teachers," the bench said. Nazki said the major prob-

lem was that in Class 10 students are given only grades and there is no mechanism to evaluate the students.

"We understand your difficulty that converting grades to marks or evaluating the students will be a problem. But every problem has ten solutions. You talk about experts. You can talk to UGC, CBSE, CISCE or other States and experts and devise a formula. Many states had problems but they have decided to cancel the examinations," the bench said.

The top court also flagged its concern that Andhra Pradesh has not mentioned a timeline for the exams or results and asked the state to specify it to avoid any uncertainty in the minds of students.

"You cannot keep things uncertain. If you want to hold the examination we want a concrete plan by tomorrow. We want to know what your Covid protocol management is and how you are going to implement it. You must know that first and second Covid waves are different and as per experts the third wave will also be different. Alerts have been sounded in Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra and Kerala for Delta variant," the bench said.

The top court asked Nazki to file an affidavit by Friday giving the complete plan and convince the court that it has the entire necessary wherewithal to deal with any exigencies.

AP scheme clearly illegal...

Continued from Page 1

Speaking to media persons here on Thursday, the Minister pointed out that the Board had ordered that without a Detailed Project Report, the construction should not be taken up. Given the instructions of the Board, it was crystal clear that the construction taken up by AP was illegal and what justi-

fication Andhra leaders would give now, he sought to know.

The National Green Tribunal had given orders earlier against the Rayalaseema LI project and now the KRMB ordered that the work should be stopped.

Responding to opposition leaders' remarks, he said the Telangana government had reacted soon after the AP gov-

ernment had issued GO on the Rayalaseema project and took it to the notice of KRMB. On July 25, 2020 they had once again taken the issue to the notice of the Board.

After February this year, they had written seven letters to the Centre and the Board, he said.

Diversion of waters by the AP government would mean

rendering great injustice to Telangana farmers, Prashanth Reddy said and demanded that the AP government stop immediately works on Rayalaseema LI and RDS Right Canal.

Prashanth Reddy said that the opposition parties in Telangana were resorting to unnecessary criticism of the State government for political mileage.

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No compromise on quality in housing for poor: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Making it clear that there should be no compromise as far as the quality was concerned, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Thursday directed officials to solve any problems in arranging water and electricity facilities required for construction of houses and to ensure that these works are completed within a week in all layouts.

The Chief Minister held a review meeting at his camp office here on progress of construction of houses, action plan on developing infrastructure facilities in Jagananna colonies and TIDCO houses.

He instructed officials to take appropriate measures to ensure that other rates, including transport charges, do not see an abrupt spike in view of the construction of houses. He said it was his dream to develop infrastructure facilities in Jagananna Colonies at a cost of Rs 34,000 crore. He reminded that there was no record that anyone in the state or country has spent



such huge money on development of infrastructure.

The Chief Minister said there should be no scope for corruption and no compromise over quality. He said officials should work with dedication to fulfil his dream. Jagan said that the goal was to provide the best living standards for the poor and the colonies being set up

under the housing scheme should not be turned into slums. "Care should be taken to ensure that they remain standard housing colonies and everyone from higher officials to lower staff should work with determination to achieve this," Jagan said.

The Chief Minister said a separate number should be allotted for complaints over the quality of works and suggestions and a board should be installed in every layout with those details. He added that the feedback should be regularly reviewed.

Reviewing TIDCO houses, the officials informed the Chief Minister that 2,08,160 units will be completed in 18 months by spending around Rs 10,000 crore.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that the works related to mapping, geo-tagging, issuing of job cards, registration were almost completed and construction of 3.03 lakh houses has already started and added that construction of 7 lakh houses will start by July 10.

They said the construction of houses that were opted to be constructed by the Government will start in the month of Sravana.

The officials said construction of the first phase of houses will be completed by June 2022 and that training camps were being organised for engineers and engineering assistants of village / ward secretariats on quality assurance.



Jawahar Reddy takes charge of TTD affairs

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Executive Officer KS Jawahar Reddy on Thursday took charge as the chairman of TTD Specified Authority while Additional EO AV Dharma Reddy took over as the convener, in the temple shrine of Tirumala.

The tenure of the chairman and members of the trust board ended on Monday following which the AP Government set up the Specified Authority.

As per GO Ms No 146 issued on Wednesday, the Specified Authority shall exercise all the powers and also perform all the functions of the Board of trustees of the TTD until further orders.

Speaking after taking charge, Jawahar Reddy said that he would take the Hindu religious campaign further and that the decisions of the governing body would be enforced.

Lokesh calls it a victory for students, parents, teachers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary and MLC Nara Lokesh on Thursday termed the decision of the State government to cancel the Class X and Intermediate examinations in AP as a victory for the students, parents and teachers after their relentless agitation.

Lokesh congratulated the students on their final victory and said that the dangerous game that the government planned to play with their lives came to an end with the cancellation of the exams.

It was after a two-month long agitation that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had relented and cancelled the exams, he said.

In a statement here, Lokesh said that he wrote a letter to the government on April 18 itself and a lot of time and energy would have been saved if the exams were cancelled at that time. The Chief Minister's adamant attitude has caused all these problems. If the exams were cancelled early like other states, students of Andhra Pradesh would also have got more time to prepare for the competitive entrance examinations, he said.



Lokesh said that the Chief Minister and his Cabinet colleagues should at least take into consideration the opinions and the justifiable demands of the opposition and the students from now on.

If the government positively responded to the agitation, it would have been spared from the serious strictures passed by the Supreme Court of India. The students and parents would also have been spared from a lot of needless stress and strain, he added.

Earlier in the day, the TDP national general secretary accused the Jaganmohan Reddy government of sticking to 'mish' and 'unreasonably stubborn' stand on the Class X and Intermediate examinations despite serious comments being passed by the courts.

Lokesh said that the

Supreme Court once again exposed the reckless stance taken by the Chief Minister. The SC bench has asked why the AP government was obstinate in wanting to hold exams even when it could not make basic minimum arrangements for the safety of students, he reminded.

In a statement, the TDP MLC strongly objected to the manner in which the Jagan regime filed an affidavit without having a clear plan for conducting the exams. "The affidavit made it clear that over 35,000 classrooms would be required to hold the exams. Would it be possible to ensure proper arrangements at all these exam venues so that there would be no risk to the students? Lokesh asked.

He recalled how the Supreme Court has expressed doubts on the intentions of the AP government. "At the same time, the court told the YSRCP government that it would have to pay Rs. 1 crore ex gratia if any of the students fall victim to the Coronavirus infection because of the exams. The Government is not changing its stand despite such cautionary comments by the court," Lokesh said.



Centre, states to jointly develop maritime sector

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday said the states should see the proposed 'Indian Port Bill' as a "development issue" rather than a political issue, stressing that the bill will facilitate optimum utilisation and management of the coastline by the Centre and maritime states.

While virtually addressing the 18th meeting of the Maritime State Development Council (MSDC), Mandaviya assured states that his Ministry will welcome all the suggestions from them to develop a comprehensive port bill, a ministry statement said.

The Minister of Port, Shipping and Waterways further said that both the Union and state governments will jointly work on the development of the maritime sector including several non-functional ports.

The objective of MSDC is to develop a national plan for the development of the maritime sector beneficial for both states and the centre and to adopt best practices for the sector, the Minister said.

The development of the country, Mandaviya said, depends on the development of the states and MSDC is the best example of cooperative federalism. "In a scattered way we can't develop, united we can achieve," he added. Stressing on the need for the 'Indian Port Bill 2021', the Minister requested state governments to see the Indian Port Bill as a development issue and not as a political issue, the statement said.

He highlighted that the 'Indian Port Bill 2021' will facilitate optimum management and utilisation of the coastline by way of participation by both the Union government and maritime states/union territories.

It pointed out that in FY 2020, the traffic handled at Indian ports is about 1.2 billion MT, which is expected to increase to 2.5 billion MT by 2030.

"On the other hand, only a few ports in India are having deeper drafts which can handle capsize vessels. In addition, there are around 100 non-functional ports distributed across the coast of India," the statement said. Noting that MSDC will advise on the planning of all ports including major ports, the statement said



several conventions pertaining to safety, security and prevention of pollution are incorporated in Indian Port Bill 2021 for implementation of all requirements stipulated in such conventions by all ports.

The statement said key items discussed during the meeting are Indian Port Bill 2021, National Maritime Heritage Museum (NMHC), Rail and Road connectivity with Ports, Floating Jetties for Marine Operations and Seaplane Operations, Sagarmala Projects and National Infrastructure Pipeline (NIP) projects.

MSDC is an apex advisory body for the development of the Maritime sector and aims to ensure integrated development of Major and non-Major Ports. MSDC was constituted in May 1997 to assess in consultation with state governments, the future development of existing and new minor Ports by the respective Maritime States either directly or through captive users and private participation.

On Tuesday, The Tamil Nadu government opposed the Draft Indian Ports Bill 2021, dealing with the management of minor ports, with Chief Minister M K Stalin writing to his counterparts of eight states including West Bengal and Kerala, calling for their objection to the proposal.

The Ministry of Ports, Shipping and Waterways has framed the draft bill to modify the current management model of minor ports.

According to the existing Indian Ports Act, 1908, the powers to plan, develop, regulate and control minor ports vest with the state governments concerned but the latest draft 'proposes to change this and transfer many of these powers to MSDC, which has so far been only an advisory body,' Stalin had said.

Muttamsetti trashes propoganda on liquor availability at tourist locations

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Rubbishing "false propoganda" reports that appeared in a section of the media on availability of foreign liquor at restaurants in tourist spots, Tourism Minister Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao said the practice is in vogue since long.

Liquor is made available at those places for foreigners and it's only to promote tourism, he stated.

Speaking to media here on Thursday, the Minister said the state government stands by implementing prohibition in phases and foreign liquor is made available at restaurants only to promote tourism across the state. He questioned why liquor is sold in star hotels at RFC in



Hyderabad and Dolphin hotel in Visakhapatnam - both owned by the owner of a media house.

Srinivasa Rao also lashed out at TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and leaders of his party for alleging that the state government is promoting liquor in the state. He said that it was

Naidu who encouraged belt shops across the state and also made arrangements for door delivery of liquor.

The Minister reminded that the YSRCP government has closed 43,000 belt shops and abolished permit rooms and decreased wine shops and bars across the state.

Srinivasa Rao said that in

Kerala, 14 percent of revenue in GDP comes from tourism while 64 percent of revenue in Andhra Pradesh comes from agriculture. The state government is planning to increase the revenue share of tourism and has allowed foreign liquor at restaurants in tourism places.

He advised the TDP and a section of the media not to politicise issues related to tourism.

The Minister said while the state government has been conducting vaccination drive successfully through newly set up village and ward secretariats and the volunteer system and earning praise from people like actor Chiranjeevi and others, Naidu and Lokesh were politicising even such praise.

Naidu demands support price for mango farmers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday slammed the YSRCP government for not taking required steps to save the mango farmers in the state from losses and debts due to lack of remunerative prices and failure of crops.

Naidu urged the YSRCP regime to rise to the occasion and immediately ensure proper support price for the mango produced in the state. "It's unfortunate that no farmer or agriculture coolie was happy in AP, which was known as 'Annapurna' (provider of food) in the country. There was no support even as the mango farm-

ers were suffering immensely due to lack of a fair price in Chittoor district," the former chief minister said.

The TDP chief stressed the need for setting up a Mango Board immediately in Chittoor district in order to initiate timely measures for the well being of the farmers. Mango prices were good during the TDP regime but now they came down under the YSRCP regime giving a rude shock to the farmers. Minister Peddreddy Ramachandra Reddy and his brother Dwarakanath Reddy colluded with the pulp industry to create more problems for the mango farmers, Naidu alleged.

Opposition, yellow media plotting against Jagan: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy on Thursday slammed the Opposition and a section of media, accusing them of conspiring against Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and the state government by spreading false information.

Speaking to media at the party central office, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said YS Jaganmohan Reddy had actively participated in many protests as opposition leader during the TDP rule and the previous government had filed cases on his speech during the protests.

Based on Supreme Court guidelines on cases against political leaders, the cases were closed after investigation by lower court and the High Court has taken suo moto cognizance on the issue. Earlier, Former Judge Rakesh Kumar has taken up these case and also made harsh comments against the Chief Minister and

the government and the Supreme Court has given stay on it.

He said it is surprising the way these revision cases were taken up and how some vested interests, which were trying to destroy YSRCP for the last ten years with the help of a section of media, money and power, are acting against it. He questioned how the information regarding these cases

leaked to some people and debates were conducted in a section of media yesterday afternoon while the cases were listed late evening in the court and added that concerted efforts are being made to conspire against the Chief Minister and YSRCP government.

The Government Advisor said more than 130 GOs were released to withdraw cases against TDP leaders including criminal cases and section 307 cases and added that cases that were filed on Giddalur MLA Ashok Reddy while he was in YSRCP and they were withdrawn immediately after he defected to TDP.

UNICEF donates oxygen concentrators, N95 masks

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A UNICEF delegation on Thursday called on Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at his camp office here and handed over 240 oxygen concentrators and N95 masks worth Rs 50 lakh for Covid patients.

The UNICEF delegation comprising Prosun Sen (Communication, Advocacy and Partnership Specialist) Dr Saleema Bhatia (Health Specialist - AP) and Grace Cancer Foundation Directors Dr Daniel, Dr Chinnababu and Dr Praveen, met the Chief Minister and handed over 240 oxygen concentrators on behalf of UNICEF and 25 concentrators and N95 masks worth Rs 50 lakh on behalf of Grace Cancer Foundation for Covid treatment. The representatives of UNICEF were accompanied by Deputy Chief Minister Amzad Basha and APSFL chairman P Goutham Reddy.

Later, speaking to the media near CM Camp office, UNICEF representatives Prosun Sen and Dr Saleema Bhatia said the state



government under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has been containing Covid effectively and UNICEF has extended its support in the fight against the pandemic.

They said they have donated oxygen concentrators and N95 masks and added that they had donated RT PCR testing machines to three hospitals (SVIMS, Tirupati, AIIMS-Mangalagiri and RIMS-Kadapa) last year.

They said 8,500 MEPMA staff members were given training under UNICEF in manufacturing sanitisers, masks, soaps

and antiseptic liquid material. They said they have created awareness on hygiene to 1,29,25,078 people across the state and added that they have distributed 1,64,379 soaps in Kurnool and Prakasam districts.

They said UNICEF has been working in coordination with the state health and medical department in developing Covid protocols and guidelines and also extending help in communication and community engagement campaigns. They said UNICEF is helping in identifying orphans whose parents succumbed to Covid and sending them to state government shelter homes.

MP inaugurates CT office building

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Narasaraopet MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu on Thursday inaugurated the newly constructed office building of the Commercial Taxes Department in Guntur district.

Speaking on the occasion, Srikrishnadevarayalu said it was a pleasure to build an office for the Commercial Tax department with all the amenities in spacious premises.

He said the office, set up with all facilities, would be useful for taxpayers. He directed the officials to conduct workshops once a month for the benefit of business people.

He said the new office structure would benefit the people as all services would be made fully available. Narasaraopet MLA Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy also participated.

The event was attended by Chief Commissioner (State Taxes) Piyush Kumar, Joint Commissioner Kiran Chowdhury, Deputy Commissioners Nagajyoti, Murali Krishna, Assistant Commissioner Muthyala Rao, Joint Commissioner Omkar Reddy and others.

5-member gang of killers nabbed by Vijayawada police

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada police have arrested a five-member gang on charges of murdering at least seven elderly victims before making off with their valuables. The modus operandi of the gang was similar to the notorious Dandupalyam gang.

According to the police, the five accused used to target elderly people living alone and would rob their gold ornaments and cash after killing them.

Addressing a press confer-

ence here on Thursday, Vijayawada Police Commissioner Battina Srinivasulu said that the gang was nabbed after police arrested five persons in connection with an attempt to rob an ATM centre at Penamaluru. During interrogation, the inhuman killings came to light. He explained that the Penamaluru police registered the bank ATM robbery attempt case, collected CCTV footage and interrogated known offenders and auto-

rickshaw drivers.

The city Police Commissioner said that the gang had till now killed seven persons and looted 40 sovereigns of gold jewellery. Some of the stolen jewellery was mortgaged and the remaining sold. The gang had also conducted reconnaissance of potential victims in Kankipadu, Vuyyuru, Penamaluru, Tenali and Mangalagiri before they were nabbed by the police. "The police saved the lives of these people by arresting the gang,"

Srinivasulu said.

The arrested accused were identified as an auto rickshaw driver from Poranki named Velpuri Prabhu Kumar, 22, vegetable seller Sunkara Gopi Raju, 22, Ponamala Chakravarti alias Chakri, 21, of Tadigadapa, another auto rickshaw driver Moram Naga Durga Rao alias Chanti, 21, of Karmikanagar bankment area of Tadigadapa and painter Maddi Phanindra Kumar, 20, from Komayathoppu. Elaborating the modus

operandi, the Police Commissioner said that the five accused were auto rickshaw drivers and living in the vicinity and had become friends. Addicted to vice, they decided to make easy money by committing crimes under which they used to murder elderly people as these deaths would look like natural and there would be no suspicion.

The police during investigation found the gang has murdered Nalini 58, a woman living alone in Vishnuapuram Colony, Poranki village, Sita

Mahalakshmi 68, Tumula Centre, Poranki village, Talluri Dhanalakshmi, 58, Tadigapa and Papamma, 85, Poranki village. The family members of the deceased did not lodge a complaint with the police as there were no injuries on the bodies and they were considered as natural deaths.

The gang also murdered Nageswara Rao, 80, and Pramilarani 75, in Kanchikacherla and Mallewara Rao, a resident of Karmikanagar, Tadigadapa and stole gold jewellery.

Encourage SHG women to procure milk for Pala Velluva : Collector

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The milk procurement programme launched by Amul would become a source of income for women, especially for the Self Help Group (SHG) women and hence Jagannanna Pala Velluva programme should be implemented effectively in the district, Prakasam District Collector Praveen Kumar said on Thursday.

Addressing a video conference with the district and mandal level revenue and Animal Husbandry Department officials from the Prakasam Bhavan here on Thursday, the Collector said the state government was working with Amul to increase the revenues for women folk in the district and they could improve their income by supplying milk to Amul company.



He said the self-help groups in 216 villages and thrift women were advised to hold village-level meetings with milk producers to collect milk. About 23,000 litres of milk was collected per day in the district and as of today it has come down to 8,000 litres, the Collector said and expressed

his displeasure over the functioning of the officials at the field level.

The women volunteers and 'YSR Cheyutha' beneficiaries were advised to find out why the milk was not being procured in expected quantities. Praveen Kumar directed the officials to motivate

women at the field level. He also expressed his ire at the officials of the Animal Husbandry Department for not paying attention to the Jagannanna Pala Velluva programme.

At present, only 2,000 milk producers were selling milk to Amul and the officials should make efforts to double the number, he said and added that the Chillampudi Village Cooperative Milk Producers' Association in Marrupudi mandal earned Rs 62,000 last month.

DRO Tippee Nayak, Joint Director of Animal Husbandry Department Baby Rani, Jagannanna Pala Velluva District Nodal Officer, Dr Hanumanta Rao, Kandukur RDO Vasantha Kumar, Amul representatives and Ongole Dairy officials were present.

Surge in Covid cases again causes concern

DHV SAMBASIVARAO ■ KAKINADA

What it appears that the East Godavari district entered into the phase of Covid-3.0 as the situation was worsening again with a surge in the number of cases after June 21. Though the curfew restrictions were relaxed in the whole state, the East Godavari district was exempted from it considering no let-up in Covid cases. The health officials heaved a sigh of relief after the cases dropped down to 335 in the district from 1500 cases reported per day before June 21. But the smile did not last long as the district recorded 745 fresh cases on June 22.

Since the corona cases were below 1,000, the officials hoped that the number would come down further. Taking it for granted, the Education Department has announced to reopen the schools and colleges from July 1 if the cases



remained low as was reported on June 21.

The expectations of the official machinery turned upside down as a total of 1,171 Covid-

19 cases were registered across the district on Wednesday with five fatalities. The increase in the corona cases in 62 mandals of the district

indicates the severity of the Covid situation. The cases registered a four-time increase in just two days.

Pretending that the coronavirus was brought to control, the people have gone out of control as overcrowded markets are any indication from June 21 onwards. People started to flock to the coastal areas for buying fish and the political leaders celebrating events as there was a lull in Covid cases. As a result, the cases started rising from Wednesday.

It is feared that if the situation continues like this, the risk would be more fatal and the alarm bells would ring. The health officials admitted that the district administration should have enforced the Disaster Management Act with the cooperation of the police, at least till the end of June to bring the situation under control. Otherwise, the Covid third wave would take its toll as feared.

Tadepalli gangrape accused throwing a challenge to cops

VASIREDDY RAVICHANDRA ■ GUNTUR

The prime accused in the sensational gang-rape case at Tadepalli in Guntur district are throwing a challenge to the investigating sleuths by giving a skip eluding the police. The police had identified Krishna and Venkat as the prime accused in the case. Even five days after the ghastly incident, the police were still struggling to nab the culprits even though they have been identified. It is observed that the culprits were closely following the movements by the police and shifting their hideouts from time to time.

Meanwhile, the Opposition parties were up in the arms against the government over the incident, which took place near the camp office of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy which is considered to be a high-security zone. The pressure was mounting on the police as the Chief Minister was also serious about the matter. On the other hand, the accused were leaving no clue to the police and it indicated that the culprits were highly technical savvy. However, the police were leaving no stone unturned in the combing to track the evading criminals. Special teams have been formed to focus on their movements. A special team visited Kukkalaripalam in Chinaganjam mandal of Prakasam district, the native place of Venkat Reddy.

The police were suspecting that the two accused raped her and went towards Vijayawada on a boat and came back to Tadepalli on the railway track. They concluded that the stolen golden cell phone was pawned with the help of local youth Katari Gopi and Naresh. Both have been taken into custody and were being interrogated. The mother of one of the two accused reportedly denied the allegations and told the police that her son was not involved in the rape.

According to locals, the accused Krishna and Venkat Reddy were seen on the Tadepalli railway track on Wednesday night. The CCTV footage was also examined at the Vaddeswaram government wine shop on Thursday. The special teams also went to Venkata Reddy's hometown in Chinnaganjam of Prakasam



Krishna



Venkat Reddy



Katari Gopi



Naresh

district and his residence at Ranigari Thota in Vijayawada to catch him.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer', Urban SP Arif Hafeez said that the Tadepalli gangrape accused would not evade arrest for a too long period and exuded confidence that they would be caught soon. He explained that special teams were formed and all mea-

sures were taken to nab the culprits. To avoid the recurrence of similar incidents, tougher measures were being taken. The parents should also be vigilant towards their children and take care not allowing them to go to isolated areas. All women were requested to download the Disha App and seek protection against such incidents, he said.

VENKAT REDDY ELUDES POLICE IN PRAKASAM

PNS ■ ONGOLE

As the Vijayawada police stepped up the investigation in the sensational Tadepalli gangrape case, the police officials visited Kukkalaripalam in Chinaganjam mandal in Parichuru constituency to nab one of the accused Ramalingam Venkata Reddy alias Venkatesh in the case.

The Vijayawada police with support from the local police enquired about the accused and checked his old crime records. SI P Ankamma Rao SB ASI Rayani Madhusudhana Rao along with their staff investigated the village and gathered details about the accused. By the time the police reached the village, his house was

locked and they interacted with the neighbours. Venkat Reddy's father had left the house long back and his mother was eking out a living by selling flowers, while his sister got married to a person from Tadepalli. Venkata Reddy was reportedly staying with his sister in Tadepalli of the Guntur district.

The SI said there was no evidence that there were criminal cases against Venkat Reddy in the local police station. The local people said some policemen from Tadepalli also came in mufti and gathered details. The police tried to get information about Sher Krishna one of the accused in the rape case from the coastal villages. But, they did not get any clue about his whereabouts.

1 killed, six injured in Prakasam village clash

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Old faction feuds erupted and turned into a clash during a wedding ceremony, leading to the killing of a person and injuring several others. The incident occurred at Kamapalli village in Santhamagaluru mandal of Prakasam district on Thursday.

According to the police, Telugu Desam Party and YSRCP workers have old rivalries for since long in the village. A dispute erupted on Thursday over DJ sounds at a marriage party. One group was celebrating the marriage function using DJ speakers, while its rival group complained to the police against it.

Both groups resorted to clash assaulting each other. One person died and six others were injured in the clash. The police reached the spot and brought the situation under control.

The police identified the deceased as Lachchapogu Subbarao and the injured were rushed to Narasaraopet Government Hospital. The case was being investigated. A police picket was posted in the village to prevent any untoward incidents.

Meanwhile, the war of words between YSRCP and TDP leaders has reached a climax as the deceased Subbarao and some of the injured were said to be the TDP sympathizers. Addanki MLA Gottipati



Ravikumar said the attacks on TDP activists were a heinous act. He urged the police authorities to take steps to ensure a peaceful atmosphere in the village.



Aravind Babu visited the victims who were being treated at the hospital in Narasaraopet. He mourned the death of Lakkapogu Subbarao. The TDP leaders alleged that the police were least bothered about the

attacks on the TDP activists.

Meanwhile, Darshi DSP Prakash Rao said that the clash between the two groups in Kamapalli village was not political. He said that the incident which resulted in the death of one person was a clash between two factions for using a DJ during a wedding ceremony. He said that a case would be registered against the accused and all the persons responsible for the clash would be taken into custody as per the complaints of clashes between the two groups.

One person from Telugu Desam was killed and six others were injured in the attack by the YSRCP activists. The condition of many of the injured was said to be critical.

Collector calls for utilising 'Pedalandariki Illu' scheme

PNS ■ KAKINADA

East Godavari district Collector D Muralidhar Reddy appealed to the people to come forward to build houses in their own places as part of the state government's ambitious 'Navaratnalu- Pedalandariki Illu' programme introduced for the poor.

He inspected the construction of housing works at Biccavole village in the district on Thursday along with Anaparthi MLA Dr Satti Suryanarayana Reddy, Joint Collectors G Rajakumari and A Bhargava Teja.

He told the beneficiaries that the Chief Minister had launched the programme to distribute house-site pattas for the beneficiaries from the district under the 'Navaratnalu-



Pedalandariki Illu' scheme. The poor people should complete the houses as soon as possible in the spirit of this historic event.

Satyannarayana, DPO SV Nageswara Rao Naik, RDO Ramachandrapuram P Sindhu Subrahmanyam, Dwama PD A Venkata Lakshmi and others were present.

Anandaiah's herbal medicine to be prepared in Ongole

PNS ■ ONGOLE

The herbal medicine for the Covid pandemic would be distributed across Andhra Pradesh in collaboration with local people's representatives, said Boneye Anandaiah of Krishnapatnam in Nellore district.

Addressing a press conference at Magunta Education Bhavan in Ongole on Thursday, herbal medicine expert Anandaiah said with the help of Ongole MP Magunta Srinivasulu Reddy and his son industrialist Magunta Raghava Reddy, the herbal medicine would be prepared here and given to

everyone. He said the district was already providing herbal medicine and was lagging behind in terms of proper equipment and facilities for preparing the medicine.

Magunta Raghava Reddy said his father Srinivasulu Reddy had worked hard to make Anandaiah's herbal medicine available to the people of the Prakasam district and had invited Anandaiah to Ongole to set up a drug manufacturing unit here and people could get the medicine here itself without going to Krishnapatnam. On the occasion, Balineni Praneeth felicitated Anandaiah with a shawl.

IBM skill-build programme launched in Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

IBM skill-build programme was launched with support from CSR Box and Dalmia Bharat foundation in Vijayawada on Thursday. MD and CEO of APSSDC Bangaraju, Chairman of APSSDC Challa Madhusudhan Reddy and chairman of APSHE & VC IIIT Hema Chandra Reddy participated in the launch programme.

As part of MoU with APSSDC, the Dalmia Bharat

Foundation (DBF) has come forward to offer emerging technologies through IBM skill-build digital platform to the students of Andhra Pradesh free of cost through its CSR component in partnership with CSR Box.

Speaking on this occasion, APSSDC Chairman Challa Madhusudhan Reddy said that he has come to know that around 3,151 students were registered for this programme from third and fourth year B Tech students of



IIIT Idupulapaya. They were going to cover essential skills, professional skills and job readiness skills during the training programme, he said.

He said that as per the vision of Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy APSSDC took the initiative to develop the skills of the AP students. The programme launched now would help students, profes-

sionals, job seekers, and small businesses to build critical skills through free online courses and he urged those sectors to utilise the opportunity.

B Sanjay Kumar, DGM of Dalmia Bharat Foundation, Dr Ravi K Gujjula, CGM Technical, Gopinath B, Area coordinator, Prof K Sandhya Rani, Director of IIIT RK Valley, Sharvari Parikh, Project Associate, CSR Box Organization, Manoviraj Singh, Project Manager of IBM were present.

WOMEN EMPOWERMENT



Minister for Education Adimulapu Suresh handing over cheques to women beneficiaries under 'YSR Cheyutha' and 'YSR Zero Interest' schemes at Yerragondapalem in Prakasam district on Thursday.

CBI ex-JD turns a farmer, ploughs his farmland

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Former CBI Joint Director Vasagiri Venkata Lakshminarayana commenced ploughing the first dukku (tilling) in his leased farm at Dharmavaram village in Prathipadu mandal of East Godavari district on the occasion of Eruvaka (beginning of agricultural works) on Thursday.

JD Lakshminarayana felicitated many farmers on the occasion of the Eruvaka programme. Speaking on the occasion, he said that it would be better if farmers started working on their fields on the full moon day and the farmers were practising it as a tradition since ancient times.



Though all the business establishments had taken a break during this corona pandemic period, it was only the farmer who cultivated crops in their fields uninterrupted providing food to the people without even caring about the coro-

navirus. Stating that he has taken 12 acres of land on lease in Dharmavaram village and he was very happy to be a farmer today, JD Lakshminarayana said that he would be available to the farmers to transfer some

JD Lakshminarayana said that he would be available to the farmers to transfer some innovative techniques in the farming system. Usage of modern paddy machinery and the purchase of pesticides and fertilizers wholesale would reduce the cost to the farmers. If pesticides were sprayed by drones rather than by manpower, it would spread all over the farm and remove pests.

innovative techniques in the farming system. Usage of modern paddy machinery and the purchase of pesticides and fertilizers wholesale would reduce the cost to the farmers. If pesticides were sprayed by drones rather than by manpower, it

would spread all over the farm and remove pests. The former CBI director said the welfare of the farmer was his motto. Many farmers of Dharmavaram village participated in the Eruvaka programme.

Rahul should join hands with Pawar to bring Oppn parties together: Sena

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Shiv Sena on Thursday said Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should join hands with NCP chief Pawar to align all opposition parties together to take on the ruling BJP at the Centre.

"Gandhi attacks the Centre and its policies regularly, but that is on Twitter," an editorial in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' said.

The Sena, which shares power with the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra, further claimed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's body language has changed.

"He knows the situation in the country has gone out of his hands. Despite people's anger, the BJP and the government have confidence that they face no threat because of the weak and disjointed opposition," it said.

Pawar on Tuesday hosted a meeting of leaders of eight opposition parties, including the Trinamool Congress (TMC),



the Samajwadi Party, the Aam Aadmi Party, the Rashtriya Lok Dal and the Left at his residence in Delhi, amid heightened speculation about the possibility of a third front against the BJP.

However, leaders who took part in that discussions asserted it was a "non-political" meeting of like-minded individuals by Rashtriya Manch that was floated by former finance minister and

TMC vice-president Yashwant Sinha along with others.

The Sena editorial on Thursday said, "Rahul Gandhi should join hands with Pawar to align all opposition parties."

The tea party of opposition leaders should have been organised by Gandhi, it opined.

"Sharad Pawar can bring all opposition parties together. But then, there is a question of

leadership. If we expect the Congress to take the lead, the party is itself without a national president," the Sena said.

There is an outfit called the UPA (United Progressive Alliance-led by Congress), but does the country have a strong and organised opposition? This question is still pending, it said.

"The tea party of Rashtriya Manch at Sharad Pawar's Delhi

home showed the exact status of the opposition," it said in sarcastic remarks.

The two-and-a-half-hour meeting yielded nothing, despite being hyped by the media, the Marathi daily said.

"The (meeting) organisers said the government had no vision to solve several pressing issues being faced the country and Rashtriya Manch will provide that to the government. Because of the meeting, it came to light that there is an organisation called Rashtriya Manch founded by Yashwant Sinha," it remarked.

All those who gathered at the meeting were the ones who "prioritise discussion and debate over political action", it claimed.

The editorial further said there should be deliberation first on whether the opposition should come together only on one criteria - of opposing the BJP and Modi.

"The mountain of challenges faced by the country today is the legacy of the present government.

Nadda slams Digvijay, Kamal Nath for 'creating confusion'

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Hitting out at senior Congress leaders Digvijay Singh and Kamal Nath over their recent statements on the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir and the coronavirus situation, respectively, BJP president J P Nadda on Thursday accused them of creating confusion in the minds of people.

Addressing a day-long meeting of Madhya Pradesh BJP's executive committee virtually from New Delhi, he said that these (Congress) leaders forget that they are actually speaking out against the country.

Referring to Singh's recent statement made in a Clubhouse chat, in which he purportedly heard saying that the decision of revoking Article 370 and reducing the statehood of J&K was "extremely sad" and the Congress party "would certainly have to have a relook on this issue", Nadda said, "You have seen what kind of excellent views he has on the abrogation of Article 370 and 35 A."



"The things that they and their prime ministers were unable to do, the determination of our prime minister (Narendra Modi) and (Union Home Minister) Amit Shah's strategy decimated Article 370 and 35A and made Kashmir an inseparable part of the country," he said.

A meeting is also underway on the Kashmir issue with the PM to discuss ways for taking Kashmir forward, he said.

"They should understand that Kashmir today is free

from Article 370 and 35 A. But (Digvijay) Singh is pained by it and therefore, indulges in different discussions in the Clubhouse on the issue," Nadda said.

Similarly, (Kamal) Nath, while criticising the BJP and the prime minister, said that India is not great, but infamous in the world, Nadda said on the Madhya Pradesh Congress chief's recent statement over the government's handling of the COVID-19 situation.



Over 2,000 people in Mumbai fell victim to fake vax drives

PNS ■ MUMBAI

More than 2,000 people have fallen victim to fake COVID-19 vaccination camps in Mumbai so far, the Maharashtra government told the Bombay High Court on Thursday.

The state government's counsel, chief public prosecutor Deepak Thakare told the court that at least nine fake camps had been held in the city till now, and four separate FIRs registered in this connection.

The state government also submitted before a bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni, a status report on the ongoing probe.

The state also said that the police had recorded the statements of 400 witnesses so far and the investigators were in the process of finding the whereabouts of a doctor, who was an accused in the

incident that took place at a housing society in suburban Kandivali, where one such camp was held.

"At least 2,053 people fell victim to these fake vaccination camps. Four FIRs have been registered in relation to these camps. While some accused persons have been identified, several unknown persons, too, have been booked in these FIRs," Thakare said.

While the bench accepted the state's report, it said that the state and municipal authorities must, in the meanwhile, take measures to get the victims tested for any ill-effects caused by fake vaccines.

"Our anxiety is, what happens to these people who were vaccinated? What were they administered and what is the effect of this fake vaccine?" the court asked, questioning the contents of the fake vaccines.

Maha BJP seeks CBI probe against DyCM Ajit Pawar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra BJP president Chandrakant Patil on Thursday demanded a CBI inquiry against state Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and Transport Minister Anil Parab in connection with cases related to senior IPS officer Param Bir Singh and former policeman Sachin Waze.

Patil was speaking at the state party convention held here. "The state BJP has passed a resolution to demand a CBI inquiry against DyCM Ajit Pawar and Shiv Sena leader and Transport Minister Anil Parab into their alleged involvement in cases related to Param Bir Singh and Waze," Patil said.

Singh was shifted from the post of Mumbai police commissioner to the Home Guards department in March this year amid the controversy over Waze's alleged involvement in the case an explosives-laden SUV found near industrialist Mukesh Ambani's house here in February.

Emotions run high as HK bids farewell to pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily

PNS ■ HONG KONG

Hong Kong residents snapped up last-edition copies of the final edition of pro-democracy newspaper Apple Daily on Thursday after it was forced to end a 26-year run amid a national security crackdown that froze the company's funds.

Apple Daily, owned by staunch Beijing critic Jimmy Lai, who is in jail, is an unapologetic tabloid that mixes pro-democracy discourse with celebrity gossip and investigations of those in power. It has been a thorn in Beijing's side for years.

Emotions ran high as supporters of the paper, which has faced an unrelenting squeeze since tycoon Lai was arrested under the security law in August 2020, queued for their last copies of the popular newspaper just after midnight.

"I couldn't sleep well for the past few nights," said Tse, 60, a former medical worker, who leaned on a cart to support herself as she queued outside a newspaper vendor in the working class district of Mong Kok.

"I hope the reporters can stay true to their faith and keep



working hard." Queues stretched at newsstands across the city after an emotional final print run at the paper's headquarters.

"Thank you to all readers, subscribers, ad clients and Hong Kongers for 26 years of immense love and support," the paper said in an online article. "Here we say good-bye, take care of yourselves."

Some staff expressed anger and frustration at the shutdown.

"(After) today, there is no press freedom in Hong Kong... I cannot see any future in Hong Kong," said Dickson Ng, 51, a designer at the paper.

Officials patted for timely passport delivery despite corona pandemic

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar on Thursday lauded all government staff involved in timely issuance of passports to citizens notwithstanding the coronavirus pandemic.

In an address at an event to mark 'Passport Seva Divas', Jaishankar particularly mentioned maintenance of "high standards" of passport services by the Ministry of External Affairs and other agencies during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Despite the pandemic, we continue to deliver passports in a timely manner and hope to reach the pre-pandemic level as soon as possible," he said. Jaishankar said the ministry has integrated 174 Indian embassies and consulates abroad with the passport service programme.

"I am happy that continuing with our global outreach exercise, the ministry has integrated 174 embassies and consulates abroad with the passport Seva programme enabling a centralised passport issuance system for our citizens in India



and diaspora abroad. We should complete the mission integration process on priority," he said.

The minister also referred to the simplification of the passport issuance process and said the ministry is continuing to look to reducing the compliance burden on citizens.

Jaishankar said some of the staff members in the central passport organisation lost their battle against COVID-19.

"I would like to convey my heartfelt condolences to their families... It has indeed been a very difficult period for all of us. Some colleagues were sick and have now recovered and rejoined work. I applaud their spirit," he said.

Lord Jagannath's bathing rituals held amid Covid restrictions, tight security

PNS ■ PURI

The annual bathing rituals of the trinity of Lord Balabhadra, Devi Subhadra and Lord Jagannath were held here on Thursday without devotees and amid strict adherence to COVID-19 protocols, officials said.

The 'Snana Yatra' is held on the full-moon day in 'Jyestha' month of the Hindu calendar, considered to be the birth day of Lord Jagannath, ahead of the Rath Yatra.

The district administration disallowed devotees from witnessing the 'Devasnana' festival for the second consecutive year in the wake of the pandemic, and beefed up security



around the 12th century shrine, imposing prohibitory orders since Wednesday night in order to ensure there is no congregation of people, the officials said. Puri District Magistrate-cum Collector Samarth Verma said the state government had made elaborate

arrangements for live telecast of the festival.

Verma said those who took part in the rituals had undergone RT-PCR tests and tested negative for COVID-19, while the servants who were present during the event were fully vaccinated.

Support needed to achieve PM's goal of corona-free villages

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has written to the newly-elected village heads seeking their cooperation in achieving Prime Minister Narendra Modi's goal of "Mera Gaon, Corona-Mukt Gaon" and also their active participation in the initiatives taken by the state government.

In a letter signed by the chief minister and sent on June 20, an appeal has been made to the village heads to help expedite the Covid vaccination campaign and check the infection effectively through the monitoring committees.

The chief minister has said Uttar Pradesh has succeeded in controlling COVID-19 by



increasing the number of tests to detect the infection and putting in place better arrangements for treatment in accordance with the prime minister's directions, an official spokesperson said here.

In the letter, Adityanath has also acknowledged the important role played by the monitoring committees constituted at the village panchayat level.

HC Judge reserves order on Mamata's recusal petition accusing him of BJP links

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court Thursday reserved its order on a plea by Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee that the judge assigned to hear her election petition against BJP leader Suwendu Adhikari recuse himself from the case as he was an "active member" of the BJP like her Nandigram rival.

Banerjee appeared before the court of Justice Kaushik Chanda through video conference, as directed by him on June 18. Justice Chanda, against whom the recusal petition has been filed, heard the matter and reserved his order. The judge did not specify the date for pronouncement of the verdict.



Banerjee had moved the high court claiming she apprehended that she may not get justice from the judge due to his alleged BJP links.

Her counsel had earlier written to Acting Chief Justice of the high court Rajesh Bindal seeking reassignment of her election petition.

Banerjee has claimed in her recusal petition that she has been made aware that Justice Chanda was an "active member" of the BJP. She said since the matter related to adjudication of an election petition where the election of a BJP candidate has been contested, it will have political ramifications. So, she prayed that the acting chief justice, who is the master of the rooster, assign the matter to another bench.

Banerjee has accused Adhikari, her former confidante-turned-rival, of committing corrupt practices in violation of Section 123 of the Representation of the People Act, 1951. She also alleged irregularities were committed in the counting exercise.

Elephant death in Chhattisgarh: 2 suspended, 3 officials shunted out

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Two forest department employees were suspended and three officials shifted out of Surajpur in connection with the death of a wild elephant in the Chhattisgarh district, an official said on Thursday.

State Principal Chief Conservator of Forest (PCCF) Rakesh Chaturvedi took the action against the five forest personnel on Wednesday for their alleged negligence in discharging their duties and not taking immediate and effective steps in the case of the jumbo's death, the public relations department official here said.

On June 11, an elephant was found dead in a forest near Darhara village under Pratappur forest range of



Surajpur. A preliminary probe into the incident indicated the animal had been struck by lightning.

As per forest officials, the decomposed carcass of the elephant kept lying at the spot for seven-eight days.

Chhattisgarh Forest and Climate Change Minister Mohammad Akbar had directed officials to take stern action into the incident.

Caregivers in crisis: Pandemic trauma persists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Caregiving is never easy. And when it's a pandemic and caregivers themselves are either unwell or at risk of contracting the infection, the stress and strain is not just compounded but also complicated in many different ways.

As the devastating second wave of the Covid pandemic dips in many parts of the country, those tasked with looking after the ill, often spouses, children or parents, are still grappling with the physical, emotional and mental strain.

In many cases, Covid patients were forced to turn caregivers for the more critical members of their family as the health infrastructure crumbled with no hospital beds, medicines or even life-saving oxygen.



Notwithstanding their rising temperatures, and mind numbing head and body aches, for weeks on end they cooked and cleaned, fed their 'patient' and took them to the washroom. And most of all stayed alert in case things went south.

"The biggest challenge of being a COVID-19 positive caregiver was staying sane in the chaos," said 34-year-old Bhushan Shinde whose father Madhukar tested positive less than a week. The isolation due to the infectious nature of the

disease and the fact that no friend or extended family could help only added to the burden.

While both started with mild symptoms like low grade fever, cough and body ache, his 65-year-old father's condition deteriorated soon after, said the Mumbai-based Bhushan.

"Initially his CT score was in the mild category, but when it increased, we decided to get him hospitalised," he said.

The most stressful period was when he had to scramble for remdesivir injections, not just for his father's treatment but also for his 83-year-old uncle and his cousin who too fell sick around the same time.

Running around frantically at a time when his body needed complete rest did not help, he said.

"With the whole rush for remdesivir, I had to keep aside my physical and mental condi-

tion and it took a toll on my body."

It's been over two months since Covid panic took over the Shinde household, but the struggle is far from over. Bhushan and Madhukar are still dealing with the challenges of post Covid symptoms.

"One day you feel good and fit and then for the next two-three days you feel sick and weak. Sometimes I feel the disease is testing my patience," he said. When the going gets tough, COVID-19 specialist Suchin Bajaj recommends caregivers remember to take a break.

"There are many cases of caregivers becoming patients, and patients becoming caregivers because they do not have a choice, and during the second wave, it was very common to see entire households getting infected.

L'dweep police interrogates Ayesha Sulthana

PNS ■ KOCHI

Filmmaker Ayesha Sulthana, facing allegations of sedition in Lakshadweep, was let off by the Lakshadweep police on Thursday after interrogation.

Sulthana was interrogated by the Kavaratti police on Sunday, Wednesday and Thursday in connection with the case registered on the basis of a complaint filed by a BJP leader in the Islands.

Emerging from the police station, Kavaratti, after nearly a three-hour long interrogation, Sulthana said,

"Everything is over. I am told that I can go back to Kochi. I will reach Kochi tomorrow or a day after."



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PAPER WITH PASSION

The Sidhus

In a cleft stick, the Punjab Congress needs to bring its house in order before the Assembly elections

The forthcoming Assembly election in Punjab is for the Congress to lose. The party's campaign for the election, scheduled for February-March 2022, is caught between the tale of two Sidhus from Patiala and their mutual political animosity. The Chief Minister, Captain Amarinder Singh, is a Sidhu though he does not use the surname which he shares with his *bete noire*, Navjot Singh Sidhu. Both are Jat Sikhs and hail from the same city of Patiala. The similarities end there as the Congress high command has realised, trying to ensure that their differences will not affect the party's electoral prospects. On paper, the Congress faces little opposition from other political parties. The Akalis have never recovered from the drubbing they got in 2017. The 2015 incident of the desecration of the *Guru Granth Sahib* weighs heavily on them. They have no defence against it and cannot wriggle out of what the Sikhs consider the ultimate sin. They have signed a pact with the Bahujan Samaj Party for the elections, but that has not made their supporters confident. The Aam Aadmi Party rests on its 2017 laurels, trying to become an influencer this time. The Bharatiya Janata Party faces the ire of the farming community in Punjab over the new farm laws. However, these parties are waiting for the Congress infighting to implode, to pick up the best pieces before the elections. Nothing is going the Congress way at present. The Captain, known for his authoritarian rule, dependence on the bureaucracy, and the habit of being aloof from party workers and



legislators, is not too popular in the State Congress unit.

He prefers war over diplomacy in dealing with his rivals, whether Sidhu, Pratap Bajwa, Ravneet Bittu and Amarinder Singh Raja Warring. Each has his pocket of influence in the State and the party and sees himself as a potential Chief Minister. The Captain faces, apart from the usual anti-incumbency, charges of nepotism and worse, a soft corner for the Akali patriarchs, the Badals. That is precisely why Navjot Sidhu raises the 2015 desecration affair, obliquely hitting out at the Captain for not being serious about pursuing the perpetrators. The party high command appears to have no love lost for him even though it is also miffed with Sidhu's frequent outbursts. The dilemma before it is whether to face the elections under Amarinder Singh, in which case it will have to pacify the rival pack of leaders. It has sent an encouraging signal to the rivals by replacing Captain's sympathiser Asha Kumari with Harish Rawat as the AICC general secretary in-charge of Punjab. The Captain, who returned to Chandigarh without meeting the leadership in Delhi, is yet to get a positive signal. The worst fear of the high command is the State unit breaking up beyond repair as elections approach. The worst move the high command can make is being openly partisan to any one side and further inflame matters.

PICTALK



A worker sanitises Diana seat as tourists visit the Taj Mahal

PTI

One world

As UP and other elections approach, India must stop looking at people through the prism of religion

We have been sensitised in our schools not to differentiate in terms of gender, caste, color, or religion. Given to read books that have moral lessons and humanitarian concerns of compassion and tolerance. It may not have embedded as deeply as it should, it does leave an imprint. When we grow up, we wash it up. Why else we turn into hate mongers, suspecting, even vengeful grown-up individuals. Then there is Ajeera. An Indian no one knows about. As it happened, she needed a job as domestic help tried her luck in a Hindu family. She was refused. She wore a Muslim identity. Burqa. Then seven years later, she turned up again. This time more practical. Throwing nothing to smack of her Muslim identity. "Namaste, looking for work." The work and payment details were done and dusted. Then something came over her, she added: "By the way, I am a Muslim." Not important if she got the job. Now, really? Does it matter? Did it ever matter? It is happening in our cultural cauldron. India. Where people came made it home and assimilated. They lived together, shared laughter and their sorrows. Of course, sometimes they fought and then forgot. Nevertheless, not like now. The schism is visible. Split is wide open. How did it all come about? Didn't we see it coming? We will never know.

No one knows when religion a personal expression for one's search for self turned into a political plot. One could ask maybe Donald Trump or Jair Bolsonaro or our Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Why even blame anyone else. We agreed. Yielded. Unthinking. We nodded in agreement everything doled out to us; started suspecting our neighbor who we knew from childhood. Aren't we all responsible for Ajeera's innocent second utterance? Are we not pushing ourselves towards dispensation we despise most ISIS, Taliban, Burmese Tatmadaw, and what have you. There is a world beyond article 370, Ram Temple, love jihad, and many other divisive issues. Would we ever go beyond them? Building a home for God who left his kingdom is a good idea. But then Ram returns to Ayodhya — Ayudh(ya) — a place where there is no conflict. In that, state Ram resides. As Rumi reminds "Out beyond ideas of wrongdoing and right doing there is a field. I'll meet you there...". And then, there is Ajeera...

When a PM's conceit dragged down India



KUMAR CHELLAPPAN

On the anniversary of the only state of Emergency that India has seen, here's a look back at the dark days and those preceding it

Certain maxims like "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it" (Spanish philosopher George Santayana) or "Those who fail to learn from history are doomed to repeat it" (British statesman Winston Churchill) get more and more powerful and relevant as the years go by.

The notes of caution issued by Santayana and Churchill come to mind on every June 25, the day in 1975, when Indira Gandhi, the then Prime Minister, declared internal Emergency and arrested all those who questioned her authority to continue in office despite the Allahabad High Court declaring her 1971 election to the Lok Sabha from Rae Bareilly null and void for using fraudulent means.

According to Shanti Bhushan, the lawyer who appeared for Raj Narain Singh, the challenger to Indira Gandhi in the 1971 election, the charges against her included using Indian Air Force planes during the campaign, employing the services of Yashpal Kapur, her private secretary, as her election agent even as he was in the Government of India service and using the symbol of cow and calf, which was deeply associated with the religious sentiments of Hindus.

Bhushan has given a vivid account of the election suit and its trial in his memoirs, "Courting Destiny". Justice Jagmohan Lal Sinha, who delivered the verdict on June 12, 1975, set aside Indira's election and disqualified her for six years from contesting elections. But the stay granted to her by Sinha turned out to be the spoilsport, says Bhushan. "If I had been in Allahabad, I would have opposed the prayer for a stay and perhaps it would have been declined and the political history of India might have been different," Bhushan writes in his memoir.

It was to facilitate her continuation in office that Indira declared the Internal Emergency. She was persuaded to do so by the members of her "kitchen cabinet" that included



Congressmen and the CPI under the garb of pseudo intellectuals. Having lived through that period, one can easily say that Indira, who had a landslide win in the 1971 election, had squandered the public goodwill through acts of corruption and favouritism.

Discontentment was brewing among people. They had understood their folly behind slogans like "Garibi Hatao". The voters across the country wanted quality rice, wheat, pulses and employment that would help them realise their dreams. Our politicians propagated the wrong brand of socialism, wrote eminent jurist Nani Palkhivala in an article (*Socialism: Its kernel and its shell*) way back in 1972. "Socialism means different things to different people, and to some people it means no more and no less than Cabinet rank," wrote Palkhivala.

Public resentment was at its peak against Indira and her cartel of select politicians who never had any mooring among the electorate. Slogans like "Indira is India and India is Indira" coined by the then AICC president Dev Kant Barooah reverberated across



THE CHARGES AGAINST INDIRA INCLUDED USING THE IAF PLANES DURING THE CAMPAIGN; EMPLOYING THE SERVICES OF YASHPAL KAPUR, HER PRIVATE SECRETARY, AS HER ELECTION AGENT EVEN AS HE WAS IN GOVERNMENT SERVICE

the country, thanks to serviles in *Akaashvani* and the obliging media. Civil rights were suspended and the judiciary was turned into a scarecrow. The worst kind of press censorship was introduced. The *All India Radio (Akaashvani)* became *Indirawani* or *All Indira Radio*.

The CPI, which bemoans that democracy is in danger in India, was hand in glove with Indira to suppress and oppress dissidence of any kind. C Achutha Menon, party leader, was the Kerala Chief Minister with Congress support. What we witness now is a replay of the days of Emergency. Court jesters and sycophants would never take India to the position of a developed country. International honours accorded to top political leadership are nothing other than a ploy to retard the country's progress. The same "well-wishers" finance all disruptive forces to foment riots and chaos across the country.

The problem with Indira was her fear for people around her whom she feared of toppling her from power. Leaders like K Kamaraj, Morarji Desai, Chandrashekhar, Sidharth Shankar Ray, Jagjivan Ram,

Lalit Narayan Misra and Biju Patnaik were all competent.

We had Jayaprakash Narayan, whom people addressed as Lok Nayak at the time, to rekindle the passion for democracy and honesty in our hearts. But as we approach the golden jubilee of Internal Emergency, what we see in the national political arena is a replay of what was witnessed in the early 1970s. There is not a single leader who can inspire the youth. Politics has become a big-time business with State chieftains of national parties getting caught with their *veshtis* down! Not merit or competence, but the ability to sing paean in honour of the supreme matters.

When Indira was defeated in 1977, a widely respected politician (we had a few of them then) was heard telling "Indira is not even Rae Bareilly". The lady failed to learn her lesson even after the bitter experiences of Emergency. A leader starts fearing her/his colleagues when s/he loses self-confidence. Need any proof?

(The writer is a senior journalist working as a Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

TIME TO BE ON THE HIGHEST GUARD

Sir — This is in reference to COVID after the third wave has been discovered in Madhya Pradesh. At least three cases were found in Bhopal and two in Ujjain. That itself is bad news for all. One lady died due to the third wave of COVID in Ujjain; that's really horrifying. We must be on guard against the third wave because we saw in the second wave of COVID how many people lost their lives, now the third wave is about upon us, so we have to be aware but we must keep in mind that only vaccination can save our lives.

The lady who died in Ujjain was not vaccinated and her husband is vaccinated; that's why he was not infected. If we follow the COVID protocols and other related guidelines, then we are safe. Our lives depend on all our family members, and vice versa.

Aman Raghuvanshi | Ujjain

CRICKET CHAMPIONS OF THE WORLD

Sir — Two years after their heartbreak in the World Cup final at the Lord's, New Zealand returned to the English soil and emerged triumphant, (when India's Virat Kohli could only look on and applaud as Ross Taylor flicked the winning runs through the leg-side and hundreds of topless New Zealand supporters erupted), an eight-wicket victory over India meaning Kane Williamson's men were crowned the inaugural World Test Champions (WTC) at the end of a dramatic sixth day that stirred the senses.

Anyway, the Kiwis have beaten India... a couple of weeks after beating England in a series for the first time since 1999. It's called quality by the Black Caps, first bossed England and then bulldozed India. In the first ever World Test Championship final, if the 6ft 8in right-arm Jamieson who sent a match seemingly destined for a draw and a shared title hurtling towards its memorable victory won the Man-of-the-final, then it also a fitting farewell to Kiwis wicket keeper BJ Watling, who retires from all forms of cricket, dislocated his finger early in the day, but continued keeping.

Unite in the COVID-19 fight



It is gratifying to note that after months of speculation, the Government has finally assumed control of the vaccination policy. The revised vaccination drive, which commenced on June 21, 2021, with 86 lakh people receiving the jab on the first day, is a positive development.

The recent Government advisory on INSACOG's report on the new variant, called Delta Plus or B.1.617.2.1 or AY.1 with K417N mutation, is a timely reminder to remain cautious. We must not lower our guard against the virus, as several cases of this mutant have been reported not just from Maharashtra, Karnataka, MP and Kerala but also from nine countries. It has been

known to evade immune response, raising concerns about the efficacy of existing vaccines.

There is unanimity among the epidemiologists of the world regarding booster doses which can provide long-term immunity against the Novel Coronavirus. With the virus mutating at a faster pace, several developed countries are considering to administer booster doses to their population next year. The Indian Government, too, must not lose sight of this latest development and devise policies to strengthen the immunity of its citizens. Many virologist and experts opine that in order to ascertain the progress, characteristic of the variant, a new test developed in England which is faster and cheaper than the whole genome sequencing process must be.

We cannot afford to repeat the mistakes of the second wave. This time around, early warnings by the Health Ministry should be seen as a wake-up call to take preventive measures beforehand. As COVID-19 caseload shows a declining trend, there should not be premature declaration of victory over the virus until the entire population is vaccinated.

Vijay Singh Adhikari | Nainital

But for Virat Kohli, this is the third failure in big ICC events after the 2017 Champions Trophy and the 2019 World Cup. He comes across as a jinx for India and might just have one more shot, which is the T20 World Cup this year, and failing to win that could warrant some changes in the team hierarchy.

This is the result for those who have been involved with New Zealand cricket, it's the culmination of hard toil for over two decades. Virat Kohli & Co. got the prize money of 5.94 crore Indian rupees.

Well done! Kudos, New Zealand! Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee | Faridabad

ONDRIYA ARASU

Sir — The Tamil Nadu Chief Minister's reiteration that the DMK Government will continue to use the term "Ondriya Arasu" (Union Government) to refer to the Government formed with a majority in the Lok Sabha jibes with his party's long-held views on Centre-

State relations. Maanila Suyatchi, Mathiyil Kootactchi which means 'autonomy to the State and federalism at the Centre' has been an article of faith with the DMK since its inception. It is in sync with the causes of democracy and decentralised power.

The terms 'Centre' and 'Central Government' denote concentration of power in the hands of one political authority or centre and imply 'control' and 'subservience'. In contrast, the terms 'Union' and 'Union Government' denote devolution of power to States, which serves the cause of grassroots or participatory democracy better and acts as an antidote to secessionism too. India is a vast and diverse country with people disparate in region, race and religion, as so kaleidoscopically displayed during Independence Day and Republic Day parades.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

SOUND BITE

Banta sent a letter to Aviation Minister: Sir, it is my humble request that the new airport in Navi Mumbai be named 'Bantacruz' since my brother has already one airport named after him 'Santacruz'.



Civil Aviation Minister — Hardeep Singh Puri

Folks, this (gun violence) shouldn't be a red or blue issue... It's an American issue.

US President — Joe Biden

We all have to resume work and I am ready to resume work. My injuries have healed.

Actor — Rahul Dev

I think he deserves to go around the cricket grounds in New Zealand and for people to acknowledge him.

New Zealand ex-keeper — Ian Smith

It is learnt that Covaxin is still not approved by the WHO, creating problems for those trying to go abroad.

West Bengal Chief Minister — Mamata Banerjee

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

UNITE TO PREVENT THE THIRD WAVE

Leaders across the political spectrum should spread vaccine awareness



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The new vaccine policy of the Union Government, after many twists and turns, got off to a thumping start with nearly 82 lakh citizens getting a vaccine shot in a single day. The role played by State Governments, many of whom have realized the potential of vaccination to ensure getting the economy back on track, cannot be underplayed. The zeal they showed in driving the vaccination exercise in a 'mission mode' is commendable. The second good news amid nearly three months of gloom and pandemic-stricken psyche is the constantly reducing number in active Covid cases across the country, providing relief to the stretched healthcare system.

These two developments along with a limited unlock process and the upcoming festival season could bring a ray of hope for prosperity and growth for all enterprises. Early signs of revival in FMCG sales and signals emerging from auto manufacturers and real estate developers indicate a healthy bounce-back. However, it is also the time for extreme caution and to try to be ahead of the shape-shifter virus before it strikes back with vengeance. India has managed to provide at least one jab of the vaccine to nearly 30 crore citizens. This means a vast majority of the population is still at risk. The nature of the war against the virus is as strong as the last vulnerable citizen. The challenge is to quickly ramp up vaccination and overcome vaccine hesitancy. These two issues are interrelated, as one of the reasons for India's reluctance to place bulk orders of vaccines in the global markets was a second thought on the need for vaccines towards the beginning of this year. The government correctly launched the vaccination programme with the most vulnerable segments of the population and front-line healthcare workers. However, somewhere in the high decibel election campaign and the frenzy of religious gatherings the message of and the need to vaccinate all was lost. The result was a disaster with fatal consequences including for many senior government officials.



The issue of vaccine hesitancy is a matter of concern as reports indicate that rural India is resisting attempts to take the jab. While urban India is queuing up in front of vaccine centers, there are numerous reports of the rural folk literally running away from them. This is where the role of the state governments and local administration kicks in. The government can devise strategies for dispelling myths about the vaccine and persuade its grassroots employees to spread vaccine awareness. The local village influencers have their roles cut out too. The reality is that many of the states are now ruled by personality-driven chief ministers who would like to share the political dividends of free vaccination with the Union government. A clever sharing of optical space between the Centre and the States, providing ample opportunities for both to achieve their political goals while ensuring the safety of the citizens, can be a milestone. After all, a single central team of vaccinators no matter, how large, will not be able to reach the stated target of one crore vaccinations per day without the local leaders' help. The problem gets more acute in rural areas where various pressure and caste groups create a system of opaqueness for an initiative to save lives. The governments have ample evidence in the past of vaccinating nearly 17 crore children every week which led to the eradication of polio in the country. Lessons from the past would come in handy in vaccinating another 70 crore citizens of the country against COVID-19.

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

Climate change and its socio-economic impact

Climate change and poverty are part of a vicious cycle. The inability of the vulnerable sections to effectively mitigate climate change-induced impacts make them worse off



SIMI MEHTA RIA MOHAL

In South Asia, India has a huge role to play in the field of climate change, given the enormity of its industrialisation levels. In the 1970s and 80s, we had little clue about how climate change would impact India but one thing was amply clear that unequal development patterns between developed and developing countries and greed were the biggest polluters — eloquently voiced by then Prime Minister of India, Indira Gandhi.

As years passed, the Indian position at the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) revealed its domestic interests: Developing countries should not be bound by emission reduction requirements unless they were provided with the necessary financial and technological assistance to lower their GHG emissions and, such provisions to curb GHGs would not come at the expense of their development trajectories.

Gradually, sound economic growth of the country catapulted India into taking the leadership role, when in the COP-21 Summit, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the establishment of the International Solar Alliance (ISA). Visionary actions such as these can help bend the rising curve of global warming, provided they are implemented both nationally and globally. The overall objective of ISA, with its current 121 member countries located in the sunbelt — those between the Tropics of Cancer and Capricorn — is to work tirelessly in making solar energy available at affordable costs to all. This would require scaling up solar energy projects to meet growing energy demands and combat climate change.

The World Bank has released a report, 'Turn Down The Heat', on the likely impact of rising temperatures on agricultural production, water resources, coastal ecosystems, and cities. The report projected future scenarios in a world warmer by 2-degree and 4-degree Celsius.

According to their findings for India, extreme heat events will occur more frequently and cover larger areas than before. Western and Southern India are likely to shift to high climatic regimes, with cities reeling from the 'urban heat island' effect. The Global Climate Risk Indices for the past few years has ranked India as the worst-affected country due to heatwaves.

Secondly, dry years will become drier and wet years will become wetter, making the summer monsoon extremely unpredictable. It will trigger massive losses in agricultural production. Environmental extremes and meteorological events like tropical storms, cyclones, tornadoes, river floods, landslides, wildfires, and droughts are becoming common. Recently, the estimated loss due to damages from cyclones Tauktae (west coast) and Yaas (east coast) is to the tune of \$5 billion, including infrastructure, electricity grids, agricultural lands, houses, and losses of precious human lives. Previous years have had other devastating cyclones like Amphan, Titli, and Gaja. Drought years have led to massive declines in agriculture production. There are estimates that agricultural yields will start falling by the 2040s.

Thirdly, glaciers in the Himalayan ranges have been retreating. Alterations in glacial caps will affect the downstream population of the Indus, Ganges and the Brahmaputra plains.

These direct implications of global warming-



A GENDER AUDIT IS NEEDED OF BOTH MICRO- AND MACRO-PLANNING AND PROGRAMME IMPLEMENTATION, PROVIDING A PLATFORM FOR WOMEN FARMERS, COMMUNITY WORKERS, STUDENTS AND YOUTH WORKING ON ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES. THERE IS AN EQUAL NEED TO STRENGTHEN CLIMATE AND GENDER EQUALITY AGENDAS BY ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION OF ADIVASI AND DALIT WOMEN AND FEMINIST EXPERTS

(The writer is a Simi Mehta is CEO and Editorial Director, Impact and Policy Research Institute (IMPRI) and Ria Mohal is a researcher at the Institute. The views expressed are personal.)



induced meteorological and hydrological changes will have their bearing on the society and economic growth of India. Climate change and poverty are part of a vicious cycle as each entity reinforces the effects of the other. Climate change threatens to disrupt natural resource systems, thereby adversely impacting populations (farmers, fisherfolks, and Adivasi communities) dependent on these ecosystems. The inability of the vulnerable sections to effectively mitigate climate change-induced impacts makes them worse off.

The prime impact is on agricultural production and food security. The yield of the wheat crop has already peaked in India. Rising water scarcity, sea-water intrusions and rising temperatures will threaten crop yields, jeopardize food security, and make India dependent on food imports. Crop failures and increased infestation of pests and insects are commonplace. It would not be an extrapolation to link farmers' suicides to climate change.

is also reeling under malnutrition and child-stunting. Increasing temperatures will enhance vector-borne diseases such as malaria and diarrheal infections — the prominent causes of child mortality — declining worker productivity, rising cardiovascular diseases, and deaths.

Changes in rainfall patterns and glacial melt will impact water security. Irrigation facilities for crop production along with rising demand from population growth will lead to water shortages. Cities like Chennai have already witnessed this form of insecurity, suffering extreme flooding in 2015, while the year after the city suffered from acute water shortages. Also, water shortages will impact sanitation facilities — an essential prerequisite for the health of a country.

Hydel power plants may undergo an erratic supply of electricity generation due to the reduced flow of rivers. Thermal plants of India that guzzle up freshwater supplies may also face electricity generation issues.

Water-sharing is already a contentious issue in South Asian politics. Water scarcity may further add to the pressure. Declining agricultural productivity and reduced farm incomes may result in heavy migration, either rural-urban or even transboundary. Such large-scale migration of people referred to as climate refugees may generate conflicts.

With the loss of forests and ecosystems such as mangroves and coral reefs, several ecosystem product provisioning will decline. These include medicinal plants and herbs. Ecosystem services provided by forests and mangroves such as climate moderation, water filtration, and clean air may reduce due to global warming-induced climate change.

The vulnerability of the people in India and South Asian countries is because of lower coping capacities that become further embossed because of low per capita incomes, social inequality, and poverty. A study by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) pointed out that South Asia is expected to lose five per cent of its working hours due to heat stress by 2030, corresponding to 43 million full-time jobs.

Non-economic losses refer to those losses which are not commonly traded in the markets but bear high relevance to those affected. These include loss of life and sea-level rise leading to losses in

biodiversity and cultural heritage. Thus, there is a need to integrate these non-economic losses into decision-making processes to reduce the losses ex-ante. For these, historical analogs, remembrance and recognition, and oral histories provide valuable insights for UNFCCC's science-policy interface.

The way forward is to first provide the rural population of India with access to fossil-fuel-free clean energy to meet the basic energy demands of cooking, heating, and lighting. Two, eliminate the burning of agricultural waste and instead use the crop residues to produce renewable biomass fuels for energy and compost feedstock for healthy soils. Three, phasing out of diesel fuels by 2030 would prove to be effective in declining carbon dioxide emissions.

Four, need to accelerate soil's natural ability to absorb atmospheric carbon dioxide from the air through better land management. It would not only remove carbon dioxide from the air but also enhance soil quality and increase the yields of crops like rice and wheat. Five, a massive climate education program to educate high school and college students and foster indigenous knowledge on climate change. Six, a gender audit is needed of both micro- and macro-planning and program implementation, providing a platform for women farmers, community workers, students, and youth working on environmental issues.

There is an equal need to strengthen climate and gender equality agendas by encouraging the participation of Adivasi and Dalit women and feminist experts in climate change.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

AS FAR AS WE ARE CONCERNED, SHE (PRIYANKA) IS THE CAPTAIN AND SHE IS LEADING US. I HOPE SHE WILL TAKE A DECISION AND LET US KNOW. — CONGRESS LEADER SALMAN KHURSHID



IN THE 2022 UP POLLS, THE BJP WOULD WIN EVEN MORE SEATS THAN BEFORE TO BE HELD UNDER... CM YOGI ADITYANATH'S STEWARDSHIP. — BJP VICE-PRESIDENT (UTTAR PRADESH) AK SHARMA

Embracing circular economy in cooling technologies

It is essential to transit towards the circular economy opportunities with the practice of three 'R's — reuse, reduce, recycle

The need for thermal comfort will be inevitable in the coming weeks ahead, as the mercury is expected to scorch the past 40 degrees Celsius in the major cities and towns across the country. The rising global average temperatures have affected the climate around the world and particularly India being a tropical country is experiencing increasing cases of heat-stressed regions.

With the unprecedented global rise in temperatures, the decade 2010-2020 has been recorded as the hottest decade, according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration. These certainties are portents of global warming and its associated climate change threats affecting



GAURAV PHORE SHANMUGANATHAN K

(Shanmuganathan K is Associate Fellow and Gaurav Phore is Research Associate at Earth Science and Climate Change Division, The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI). The views expressed are personal.)

the livelihood of 7.9 billion people across the world. In India, a recent study conducted by The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) revealed that the urban heat island effects due to industrial agglomeration in Ib Valley in Jharsuguda, Odisha have led to a steady build-up of heat in the region over the years resulting in higher nighttime temperatures.

Cooling has now become a developmental need and is no longer a luxury anymore. Thermal comfort providing optimum human comfort conditions plays a crucial role in the productivity and quality of life. A strategic document titled 'India Cooling Action Plan (ICAP)' was released in March 2019. The action plan strategizes the country's cooling-



related challenges, opportunities, and social benefits over the next 20-year horizon.

With the increasing urbanization and economic growth, the demand for cooling is anticipated to increase manifold in the coming decades. The growing demand puts massive stress on the energy demand, consumption, and its associated greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. A Rocky Mountain Institute (RMI) report has revealed that India will share a

fourth (1.12 billion units) of global room air conditioners by 2050. These findings plainly indicate that there is a massive need for raw materials, energy, and resources to cater to the country's unprecedented cooling demand.

The rising peak power demands are putting a strain on the DISCOMs. In July 2019, Delhi clocked an all-time high demand of 7,409 MW. Of this, almost 50 percent was due to cooling loads of air-conditioners, coolers, and fans.

These environmental challenges can be addressed through super energy efficiency as a resource, passive design techniques to reduce cooling load, promoting environment-friendly refrigerants, and the introduction of

renewable-based cooling technology options. Embracing circular economy in cooling is echoed as a strategic option towards the transition for a sustainable cooling scenario. The World Economic Forum (WEF) defines a circular economy as "an industrial system that is restorative or regenerative by intention and design". It replaces the end-of-life concept with restoration, shifts towards the use of renewable energy, eliminates the use of toxic chemicals, which impair reuse and return to the biosphere, and aims for the elimination of waste through the superior design of materials, products, systems, and business models, the definition says.

Only nine percent of 92.8 billion tonnes of minerals, metals, and fossil fuels entering the economy are re-used annually. The rest 91 percent falls in the spectrum of circular gaps and its closing would be a fundamental step in alleviating the climate risks. The circular economy-related studies reveal that around two-thirds of global emissions are released during the extraction, processing, and manufacturing of goods and services and the remaining one-third pertains to its transportation and logistics.

Anticipating the country's thriving, cross-sectorial cooling infrastructure developments and its associated energy and emission impacts, it is essential to transit towards the circular

economy opportunities with the practice of three 'R's — reuse, reduce, recycle.

Raising the AC temperature by one degree Centigrade can lead to an average saving of six percent of electricity consumption. Additionally, efforts are on reducing the cooling load in buildings through passive design without compromising on thermal comfort. Super energy-efficient five-star appliances which consume 40 percent less electricity are being popularised.

The reduced electricity consumption scenario directly complements minimal consumption of resources, primarily the burning of coal at power generating units and its associated greenhouse emissions.

Revenue of States set to cross pre-pandemic level this fiscal

PNS ■ MUMBAI

High tax buoyancy, led primarily by fuel taxes, and increase in grants from the Centre under the Finance Commission package will help revenue growth of states cross the pre-pandemic level in the current fiscal, provided there is no third COVID wave, according to a report.

Given the higher prices of fuels, revenue from this segment is set to grow 50 per cent to 30 per cent in the current financial year from 20 per cent it clipped last fiscal, even though the overall volume will fall, Crisil said in a report on Thursday. The tax on fuels constitute 10 per cent of the revenues of states.

Revenue of the top 10 states had plunged 600 basis points (bps) last fiscal but is set to exceed the pre-pandemic level this financial year, driven by higher tax buoyancy, rise in sales tax collections from petroleum products coupled with increase in grants following 15th Finance Commission recommendations, it said.

The assessment is based on projections for 10 large states -- Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana, Rajasthan, West Bengal, Madhya Pradesh, and Kerala -- which account for almost 70 per cent of the aggregate gross state domestic product.

The key revenue components of the states are central taxes (25 per cent), state GST (21 per cent), central grants (17 per cent), sales tax from petrol and alcohol (13 per cent). Non-tax revenues, excise duty, stamp duty and others make up the rest.

It can be noted that despite petrol crossing the Rs 100 mark in many states and also diesel in some places, the Centre and the states have not lowered the taxes on these fuels.

In fact, almost 65 per cent of the retail prices of these fuels are made up of VAT as petroleum products

are not under the GST. Aggregate Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections, which account for a

fourth of the states' revenues, have recovered well in the fourth quarter of FY21 as economic activity sprung back. The momentum continues this fiscal, with April and May collections averaging Rs 0.93 lakh crore (April being the highest ever at Rs 1.41 lakh crore), marking an 11 per cent growth over fiscal 2020 so far, it said.

While the second wave of the pandemic may moderate GST collections in June and July, Crisil said it expects a recovery in GST mop up to the pre-pandemic levels by August.

Following its parent S&P Ratings cutting the GDP forecast earlier in the day to 9.5 per cent, Crisil also slashed its growth forecast to 9.5 per cent.

That combined with the Rs 10-13 per litre increase in central excise duty imposed last year will increase the taxable value of fuel for levy of sales tax, which accounts for 10 per cent of states' revenues, the report said. Most of these 10 states had hiked sales tax on fuel sales by 6-7 per cent or Rs 1.5-1.8 a litre last fiscal.

Consequently, the agency expects sales tax revenue for the states to increase 30 per cent this fiscal from fiscal 20 levels, even as fuel volume remains 2-3 per cent lower than the pre-pandemic levels. Crude price is likely to average USD 70 per barrel this fiscal.

In addition to own taxes, the states have a share of the central taxes, which forms a quarter of their overall revenues. While the proportions are determined by the Finance Commission, the overall kitty is linked with GDP growth. This kitty, which declined 9 per cent last fiscal, should recover to pre-pandemic levels with a growth of 9-10 per cent this fiscal, in line with the Union Budget.

Another factor that will provide a fillip to the states' revenues is sales tax. The price of crude has jumped to USD 70 a barrel from USD 60 on average in fiscal 2020, leading to higher petrol and diesel prices.



PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reliance Industries Ltd has raised a record Rs 3.24 lakh crore in capital from stake sale in units, rights issue and asset monetisation, its chairman Mukesh Ambani said Thursday.

Addressing shareholders, he said the company raised Rs 3,24,432 crore capital through the sale of stake in digital unit Jio Platforms and retail venture, rights issue and asset monetisation.

"RIL raised USD 44.4 billion -- largest-ever capital raise by any company in a year globally. This capital raise is a strong vote of confidence by global investors in India's growth potential," he said.

Reliance raised Rs 3.24 lakh-cr capital through equity sale, rights issue, asset monetisation

Rs 75K cr for clean and green energy
PNS ■ MUMBAI

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani on Thursday announced a Rs 75,000 crore investment in setting up four 'Giga' factories to make solar photovoltaic cells, green hydrogen, batteries and fuel cells over the next three years. He said Reliance will set up 100 GW of solar power generating capacity. "We plan to build 4 Giga Factories to manufacture and integrate all critical components of new energy ecosystem -- solar photovoltaic module factory, energy storage battery factory, electrolyser factory," Ambani said.

'JioPhone Next to be affordable smartphone'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Industries Chairman Mukesh Ambani on Thursday announced 'JioPhone Next', a power-packed affordable smartphone that has been jointly developed by Jio and tech titan Google. JioPhone Next will be available from September 10, and will be the most affordable smartphone globally, Ambani said while addressing RIL's annual general meeting.

MONEY MATTERS

Piaggio reopens two-wheeler dealerships across India

Piaggio Vehicles on Thursday announced the reopening of its two-wheeler dealerships across India, which had shut operations due to a massive increase in the coronavirus infection cases between April and mid-May across the country. The decision to reopen the dealerships comes following the announcement of the lockdown opening guidelines from authorities, Piaggio Vehicles Pvt Ltd (PVPL) said in a release. PVPL is a wholly-owned subsidiary of the Italian auto major Piaggio Group. Its India product portfolio comprises iconic Vespa, and Aprilia scooters besides small commercial vehicles. "We have been working together with our dealers in navigating through the second wave of COVID-19. Also keeping in mind the possible anxiety of our customers during the lockdowns we have announced an extension of original equipment warranty and free service that expires during lockdown period," said Diego Graffi, Chairman and Managing Director, Piaggio India.



SBI Card, Fabindia co-branded contactless credit card launched

SBI Card has joined hands with lifestyle retail chain Fabindia by launching contactless co-branded credit cards to cater to the premium segment customers. The new co-branded contactless credit card combines the best in class rewards points on retail spends with the value back on varied spending categories, thus addressing overall spending needs of premium cardholders, SBI Card said in a release on Thursday. Fabindia SBI Card comes in two variants -- Fabindia SBI Card Select and Fabindia SBI Card. "Introduction of the new Fabindia SBI Card further bolsters our premium portfolio, reinforces our commitment to enable our customers to embrace digital payments and contribute to the country's digital economy," Rama Mohan Rao Amara, Managing Director & Chief Executive Officer, SBI Cards and Payment Services (SBI Card) said.



Mankind inks pact with BDR Pharmaceuticals for Covid drug

Mankind Pharma on Thursday said it has inked a pact with BDR Pharmaceuticals for distributing Baricitinib, a drug that is used in COVID treatment. The product, which would be sold under the BARIKIND trademark, has received restricted emergency use approval for use in combination with remdesivir in the treatment of COVID, the drug firm said in a statement. Under the partnership, BDR Pharma will be manufacturing and marketing the product under a royalty free, limited and non-exclusive voluntary license from Eli Lilly and Company. Mankind Pharma will be distributing the same, it added. Baricitinib has received restricted emergency use approval for use in combination with remdesivir for treatment of suspected or laboratory confirmed coronavirus disease (COVID) in hospitalised adults, requiring supplemental oxygen, invasive mechanical ventilation, or Extracorporeal Membrane Oxygenation (ECMO).



Zydus Cadila gets USFDA nod to market generic sclerosis drug

Drug firm Zydus Cadila on Thursday said it has received tentative approval from the US health regulator to market Fingolimod capsules, used in the treatment of multiple sclerosis, in the American market. The company has received tentative approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) to market the product in the strength of .25 mg. Zydus Cadila said in a statement. Earlier, in October 2020, the Ahmedabad-based group had received approval to market the Fingolimod capsules in the strength of .5mg. Fingolimod is an immunomodulating drug.



Gold falls Rs 93; silver gains Rs 99

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Thursday dipped by Rs 93 to Rs 46,283 per 10 grams amid rupee appreciation, according to HDFC. Silver, however, gained Rs 99 to Rs 66,789 per kg, from Rs 66,690 per kg in the previous trade. HDFC Securities Analyst Tapan Patel said, "Spot gold prices for 24 karat in Delhi were down by Rs 93 reflecting overnight weakness in COMEX (New York-based commodity exchange) gold prices and rupee appreciation."

Sensex rallies 393 pts; IT stocks shine

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex rallied 393 points on Thursday, tracking gains in Infosys, TCS and HDFC Bank amid a positive trend in global markets.

The 30-share BSE index ended 392.92 points or 0.75 per cent higher at 52,699. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 103.50 points or 0.66 per cent to 15,790.45.

Infosys was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising over 3 per cent, followed by TCS, Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech and Asian Paints.

On the other hand, Reliance Industries, Bharti Airtel, PowerGrid and SBI were



among the laggards.

According to Binod Modi, Head-Strategy at Reliance Securities, benchmarks recov-

ered sharply mainly led by sharp rebound in financials and IT.

Improved prospects of sustained earnings recovery and recent weakness in rupee also augur well for IT stocks, he said, adding that favourable cues from global markets also aided sentiments.

Further, RIL AGM was in focus today in second half of the session, and investors seemed to be in a profit booking mode, he noted.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended with gains. Equities in Europe were trading on a positive note in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 0.16 per cent higher at USD 75.31 per barrel.



Rupee gains for second straight day

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee gained for the second straight day and closed 9 paise higher at 74.18 (provisional) against the US dollar on Thursday, supported by a rally in domestic equities and weaker American currency.

At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened at 74.20, and hit an intra-day high of 74.16 and a low of 74.25.

It finally finished at 74.18, higher by 9 paise over its last close. On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 74.27 against the US dollar.

"It's the very quiet session for the forex market as participants waiting for Fed speakers comments and Bank of England's policy decision. Indian rupee along with other Asian currencies stayed calm and traded in small range," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

Deadline extended for shareholders to submit documents for share sale

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Digital payments and financial services firm Paytm has extended the deadline for shareholders, employees and former employees to submit their documents by June 30, if they wish to sell their shares in the planned initial public offering of the company.

One 97 Communications, which operates services under the Paytm brand name, is



planning an initial public offering of its equity shares which is contemplated to include a fresh issue of equity shares by the company and an offer-for-

sale of equity shares by the existing shareholders of the company.

In a notice to its shareholders Paytm said "in the interest of providing additional time to our shareholders, due to the on-going situation, to process all the documentation shared and dispatch them to us, we are extending the last date to submit documents for participation in the Offer from June 22, 2021 to June 30, 2021."

Petrol nears Rs 99 per litre in Chennai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol price in Chennai neared the Rs 99-a-litre mark on Thursday after fuel prices were increased again on firming international oil rates.

The price of petrol was hiked by 26 paise per litre and that of diesel by 27 paise a litre, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers. The increase took rates across the country to fresh

highs. In Delhi, petrol hit an all-time high of Rs 97.76 a litre, while diesel is now priced at Rs 88.30 per litre.

Fuel prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes such as VAT and freight charges. And, for this reason, petrol has crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in nine states and Union territories -- Rajasthan, MP, Maharashtra, AP, Telangana, Karnataka and other states.

BMW drives in 5 Series sedan in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

German luxury carmaker BMW on Thursday said it has launched an updated version of 5 Series sedan in India with price starting at Rs 62.9 lakh (ex-showroom).

Locally produced, the model comes with one petrol trim (BMW 530i M Sport) priced at Rs 62.9 lakh and two diesel variants (BMW 530d M Sport and BMW 520d Luxury Line) tagged at Rs 63.9 and Rs 71.9 lakh, respectively.

The new version of BMW 5 Series comes with various updates like remote-control parking, head-up display, reversing assistant, parking assistant and gesture control, among others.

"For 50 years, the BMW 5 Series has enjoyed an unrivalled position globally and has set the benchmark in sheer driving pleasure. This iconic business athlete has now evolved to be younger and smarter," BMW Group India President Vikram said.

Sebi to come out with framework for SPACs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital market regulator Sebi is planning to come out with framework on special purpose acquisition companies (SPACs), which will enable listing of startups on domestic stock exchanges, sources said on Thursday.

The regulator is expected to put in place guidelines in this regard next week, they added.

SPACs or blank cheque companies are formed to raise capital in an initial public offering (IPO) with the purpose of using the proceeds to



identify and merge with a target company. SPACs are usually formed by private equity funds or financial institutions, with expertise in a particular industry or business

sector, with investment for initial working capital and issue related expenses. Such companies have recently become popular in the US. There has been increasing

demand that SPACs should be allowed in India as well.

Under the framework, Sebi may put in place a separate set of regulations on SPAC, whereby detailed listing rules would be provided for such firms. This would include a minimum threshold size for an IPO, sources said.

The regulator is expected to provide qualifying criteria for sponsor to ensure only seasoned and sophisticated individuals, with senior management level business and public company experience are allowed as a sponsor for an IPO through a SPAC vehicle.

Most people likely to travel this year post unlock

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A majority of people have shown keen interest to travel this year after easing of lockdown restrictions, with 69 per cent respondents keen to resume travel in 2021 and 31 per cent in 2022, according to a joint survey by travel service providers Thomas Cook India and SOTC.

The survey was conducted this month by the two companies and covered 4,000 customers across India's tier-1 to III towns, including top-8 metro cities.

It also included mini-metros like Pune and key tier-II and III markets of Jaipur, Indore, Tiruchirappalli, Madurai, Nagpur, Surat, Baroda, Bhubaneswar, Lucknow, Chandigarh, Mysore,



Coimbatore, Visakhapatnam, Guwahati and Patna.

Eighteen per cent of the respondents were ready to travel immediately after unlock and 51 per cent within 3-6 months, according to the survey report, titled "Third

Holiday Readiness Report'.

When it comes to destinations, there is demand for domestic and international, although domestic was higher at 54 per cent and international at 46 per cent.

In India, Kashmir, Leh-

of respondents were willing to increase spends to ensure higher levels of health and safety on their holiday, and 62 per cent respondents preferred to travel with family/friends; 20 per cent as couples/solo and 18 per cent in a vaccinated group.

Thomas Cook India President and Country Head (Holidays and MICE) Visa Rajeev Kale said, "Indian consumers continue to display strong travel desire with a noteworthy 69 per cent keen to travel in 2021. Equally important are consumer concerns on health-safety (70 per cent), uncertainty (19 per cent) and need for refundable/zero cancellation products (81 per cent)."

MICE stands for meeting, incentives, conferences and exhibitions.

GMR Infrastructure on Thursday said its promoter GMR Enterprises Pvt Ltd has pledged 2.4 crore equity shares in favour of KJL Plasticizers Ltd.

The shares were pledged by the company on Monday, GMR Infrastructure said in a regulatory filing.

"2,40,00,000 equity shares of GMR Infrastructure Ltd have been pledged by the company in favour of KJL Plasticizers Ltd on June 21, 2021," the filing noted.

GMR pledges 2.4 cr shares in favour of KJL Plasticizers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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OIL PULLING: MIRACLE OR MYTH?



powder, the products work as brilliant solutions to our immunity problems. With an unmatched assortment, unbiased service from experts, and innovation, Shweta strives to build a healthier and happier planet, reduce and prevent disease, pain, and suffering caused due to malnutrition and improper food habits in our communities and everyday lives. It is proving to change the way a person heals. "Considering the current situation, it is becoming very difficult to maintain our health and carry on with our lives without worrying. We believe that this will help everyone achieve their fitness goals and help in keeping their immunity intact," she shares.

BENEFITS

- ❖ The main benefit is improved oral hygiene.
- ❖ It is also known to help in teeth whitening.
- ❖ Ayurveda recommends you detox your body frequently, and oil pulling helps with that.
- ❖ It kills harmful bacteria in your mouth.
- ❖ Might help to prevent cavities.
- ❖ Reduces headaches.

Oil pulling, a trend that is catching on at record speed, is not a novel method. It is an ancient ayurvedic practice mentioned in the Indian medical texts of Charaka Samhita and Sushruta Samhita. It dates back to the period between 4th century BC and 2nd century AD. It is also known as Kavala Graha and Gandusha. Celebrity Dietician Shweta Shah tells you more about the technique, its benefits, and whether it is a miracle or a myth!



generates antioxidants that can damage the cell wall of bacteria and other pathogens, killing them. It is very important that the oil is spat out, and not swallowed, so that the toxins are eliminated.

An entrepreneur, a change maker, celebrity dietician, nutritionist, and

a master curator of healthy and amazingly delicious delicacies, she also added another feather to her cap by launching NutroLife! It is a must-have essential during the pandemic. From having multivitamin tablets, effervescent powder, effervescent tablets, chewable tablets to natural

product, you have to use a natural oil. The oil has to be swished in the mouth for about 10 to 15 minutes, which enables it to remove toxins from teeth and gums.

Oil pulling can activate enzymes in the saliva that absorbs toxins, and these toxins are then removed via the tongue. It is believed that oil pulling



How to better aid your child's cognitive development

When babies are more than a year old they start to recognise colour, smell, fragrance, and texture in their surroundings. This development in their recognition and understanding of the senses is the first stage of cognitive development. Cognitive development focuses on their brain development - how a child thinks, feels, explores, interacts, acquires knowledge, and how they apply this knowledge through choice and evaluation to their surrounding environment. It is the development of knowledge, skills, and problem-solving, which help children to think and understand the world around them.



environment works. On the other hand, answering their questions indicates that they have a keen interest in learning about the world around them and also represents their thought process. As Margaret Mead quotes "Children must be taught how to think, not what to think". **Offer choices:** Offer options to your child such as "Would you like to wear a blue t-shirt or a black t-shirt", "Would you like to eat fruits or yogurt" or "Would you like to colour or play a game". Allow your child to make basic decisions will help him feel more independent and learn to make confident decisions that affect his day.

help their children learn faster and better:

Hobbies: Find hobbies and new activities to do that require your child to use their hands. This helps regain control over their mind. For example, building blocks, lego, and for the infants' rattles, squeeze toys and teething toys are good options.

Expose them to puzzles: Puzzles play a role in developing the physical skills - hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, problem-solving - critical thinking, judgment, visual-perceptual skills, and memory), and the basic concept and skills - shape recognition, concentration, goal setting, patience.

Singing and reading to your child: Regular reading and singing help promote memory and word identification. It also helps create a trustworthy bond between each other which positively contributes to enhancing cognitive skills.

Ask and answer questions: Ask your child questions like "What do you think would happen if" or "What might happen if" which helps them learn how to problem-solve, come up with solutions to the questions, and better understand how their

It is said that a child's primary learning takes place during their first ten years, where they rapidly develop their motor (physical), language and communication, cognitive, and social/emotional skills. Different cognitive skills are acquired as a child meets certain developmental milestones, but a child of any ability will benefit from activities that promote active learning. Children possess and demonstrate all the main types of learning; including statistical learning, learning by imitation, learning by analogy, and causal learning. Therefore, it is of utmost importance for parents to nurture their child's cognitive development in the areas of memory, concentration, attention, and perception by actively incorporating simple activities into their day-to-day routine. It helps lay down the foundation for academic success as well as personal life. Here are some ways in which parents can

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



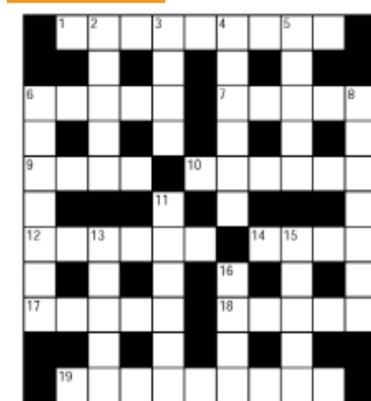
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

- Not sure
- Grape plants
- Get to
- Utters
- Choose
- A passenger's document
- Accompanying
- Less wet
- Finished
- A big, important church
- Called in on
- Emerged from an egg
- Look everywhere for
- Porcelain
- New Delhi is the capital of this country
- No longer alive

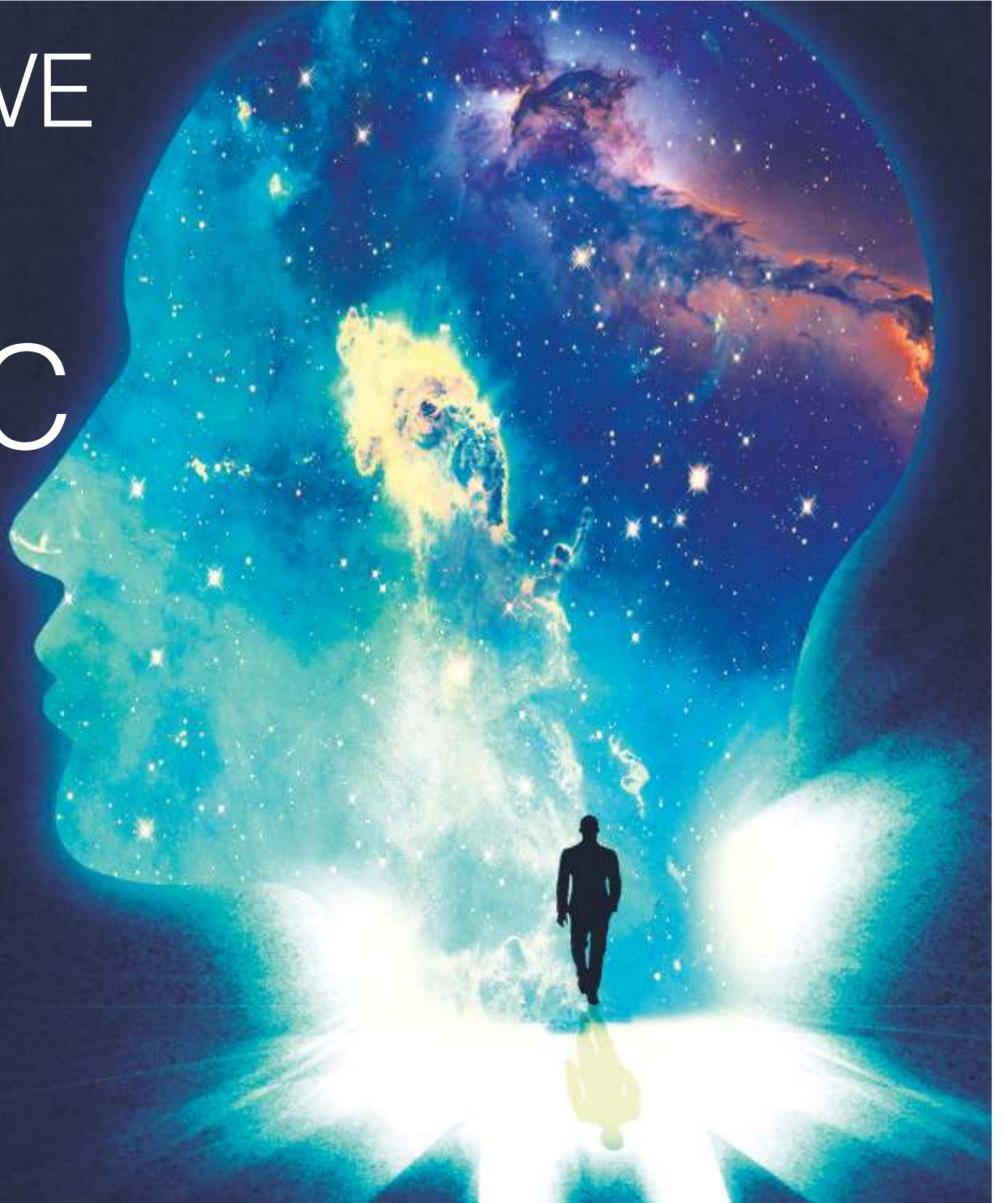
DOWN

- A nursemaid for children
- A compass direction
- This has a bull's-eye
- Mirror reflection



ADAPT TO A POSITIVE MINDSET IN THE PANDEMIC

The pandemic has prompted people to take to meditation for dealing with anxiety. *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL introduces you to Theta Healing which has become the new favourite of many.



Did you know that the practice of meditation has increased by nearly 3,000 per cent this year around the world, according to a recent report by a fitness company! In a review of more than 200 studies, researchers found that mindfulness meditation was especially effective in reducing stress, anxiety, and depression. In fact, more people are turning to meditation apps as a way to feel calm in the midst of the novel coronavirus pandemic. But amid all this, have you ever tried 'Theta Healing'? Life strategist Arpita Bhandari claims that 'Theta Healing' develops natural intuition by changing the brain wave cycle to the theta waves with the intention of exploring how emotional energy affects a person's health. A process of meditation created by Vianna Stibal in 1995, she says it is one of the most effective techniques to heal mind, body, and spirit. "Root of all thoughts, emotions, feelings, and behaviour is the communication between neurons in the brain which are called brainwaves. Our brainwaves change according to what we're doing and feeling. There are five types of brainwaves — Beta, Alpha, Delta, Theta, and Gamma. Theta is a reduced state of consciousness that allows you to access your most creative yet deeply relaxed state of mind and its frequency ranges from 4-8 Hz," she explains.

Structural and functional brain changes have been demonstrated in the brains of people with a long-term traditional meditation practice. The introduction of mindfulness and meditation practice during this pandemic had the potential to complement treatment and is a low-cost beneficial method also that provides support with anxiety for all. From healthcare workers feeling overwhelmed, patients with pre-existing anxiety, people with substance abuse managing their own addiction, caregivers having an additional burden of care with loss of lives, household people living in pressured environments, children losing the structure provided by school, older people being cocooned away — we're facing so many challenges, yet, despite this despair, there is a form of healing that's been rising for the sense of community which wants to move towards mindfulness.

"I was very inclined towards spirituality even as a child and I still remember teaching myself the Mahamrityunjay mantra on my own at the age of 8. My journey started in a true sense at the age of nineteen when I did my first transformational program called the landmark forum that taught me the art of non-judgment and holding grievances. I am an advanced theta healer and a strong believer in the powers of the creator of all that is. It teaches us to be grounded wherein we can visualise roots coming down and out of one foot and going down to the core of mother earth who in turn holds us firmly through the day. Alongside, it gives us a sense of cutting attachment with people and situations

who are sapping energies, in turn, affecting our physical, mental, and aural space," profoundly speaks Sonali Bhasin Kumar, a renowned healer, and spiritual guide.

According to an American naturopath, there are seven planes of existence! These levels of existence build a framework to show the importance of the creator of all that is. Practitioners and instructors of the theta healing technique are open to everyone, regardless of the person's origin or religion. Theta healing can also reduce HIV and the naturopath believes it can make an amputated leg grow back. At the same time, the former life strategist believes, "It is a meditative process that creates physical, psychological and spiritual healing using the theta brain wave — a state of mind between wakefulness and sleep. Many ideas, thoughts, inspiration arises in this meditative state and it is this brain wave that is used to access the subconscious. Our subconscious mind is the seat of our intuition, creativity, faith, inspiration, and manifestation. Theta healing technique trains our mind and body which allows us to clear limiting beliefs, negative experiences, repeated patterns and negative emotions that enables us to live life with a positive attitude."

When the founder of theta healing first visited India, she said that in India, people call god by different names but ultimately they connect with a higher energy. She believed the healing worked better if they are a believer otherwise she tries to explain the healing through the exchange of energy when one visits her. She narrated when once a doctor friend of hers actually measured her brainwaves when she was meditating using an EEG machine.

The doctor discovered that the founder was in a deep theta brainwave state! Hence, with various methods of healing creeping into our mainstream culture, use this practice and manage your stress well.

BENEFITS OF THETA HEALING:

- ◆ Teaches us the best technique for self resolution by introspecting daily to make us aware of our feelings and emotions.
- ◆ Keeps us in the centre in the midst of all that happens around us in our relationships, self, and work life.
- ◆ Helps us to go deeper into our subconscious mind to uproot the underlying concerns that are, knowingly or unknowingly, causing a block in the present.
- ◆ Helps to identify our true feelings, emotions and to express them with ease.
- ◆ Helps to realise and resolve our rooted concerns or traumas or memories of the past.

Extending a helping hand

Dr Malini Saba shares some valuable inputs on how to assist your friend in dealing with anxiety



It is fine to be scared and worried from time to time. In fact, these are defence mechanisms that often help us stay away from potential danger. However, there is another category of fear that surpasses the normal degree and can often seem irrational to those around us.

Those who exceed such levels are often subjected to anxiety and need the support of their loved ones.

If your friend is undergoing anxiety, here are 10 small ways you can help them.

Recognise the signs

Anxiety disorder is one of the most common mental disorders among young Indians. Recognising the symptoms can help you keep an eye out for a friend and catch the issue early on. Some of the symptoms include:

Physical symptoms

- ◆ Lightheadedness
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Diarrhoea
- ◆ Fatigue
- ◆ Emotional instability
- ◆ Chronic worry
- ◆ Fearful subjective to everything
- ◆ Overgeneralising
- ◆ Anxious behaviour

- ◆ Frustration and irritability
- ◆ Self-doubt

Don't force acceptance and confrontation

The last thing you need to do is put an anxious person in the middle of a storm. While it is good to help them with self-realisation, pushing somebody when they are scared can further damage their mental health.

Show you are concerned

It is difficult to watch your friend deal with the underlying chaos beneath the anxiety. While a professional is more adept to pull them out of their condition, as a friend, you can show your support and express your concern explicitly. Having said that, maintain the delicate balance between concern and interference. -Take them seriously -Their fears and anxiety may seem irrational to you.

However, it is as real as it can be for them and they need to know that you are not going to reprimand them for their problems. Refrain from saying phrases like 'it's just a phase', 'this does not seem to be such a big deal', or 'snap out of it'. Your acknowledgement will offer them some peace of mind, allowing them to feel secure about having someone who understands them.

Leave the diagnosis to professionals

Unless you are a licensed professional, refrain from googling symptoms and cures for anxiety and suggesting them to your friend. This will only increase their vulnerability and they will end up shutting themselves down to you. Help them talk to you by showing them your support. You can accompany them to therapy sessions and help them through the process but no

psychological advice.

Validate their behaviour

This might be a reiteration, but those with anxiety are always self-doubting and have low self-esteem. There is often a desperate call for attention and you must validate your friend's behaviour. What might be a normal occurrence to you can be very stressful to them which requires you to be sensitive to their thoughts. It is important to remember that validation requires a very healthy dose of patience as well.

Help them find support

During such difficult times, it can be hard for your friend to find the right professional support. You can help them find an appropriate resource. Do a deep dive research, talk to the local medical community and support groups to help your friend through these tough times.

Be there for them

This is not said enough but sometimes, your friend only needs you to be there. This is a simple yet uncommon practice that should be done more often, especially by those who are closest to the affected person. This applies to everyone with

anxiety disorders since their mental health varies on different factors associated with their specific lives. The best you can do for your friend is to be there for them.

Epitomise calmness

Your friend needs to know that their support system is strong and calm. Since they need someone to rely on, you as a friend have to propagate calmness and help them take control of emergencies. For instance, in case of panic attacks, you should sit them down gently and ask them to breathe slowly, talking them out of their panicked state until they regain control or you get professional help.

Respect their space

Don't let their anxiety become a spectacle. Your friend is already undergoing a personal crisis, it is important that you respect their space and do not allow others to encroach on their grounds as well!

Final takeaway

Anxiety is no laughing matter. By offering everyday encouragement, love and support to your friend, you can help them tide through some tough times.

(The author is the founder and chairman of various philanthropic organisations.)



RECORD BREAKING RONALDO

Cristiano equals Ali Daei's all-time record of 109 international goals, surpasses Klose for most goals (21) by a European player at Euros & WC combined with brace in 2-2 draw against World Champions France

AFP ■ BUDAPEST

Cristiano Ronaldo scored two penalties to equal the all-time international goalscoring record and help holders Portugal edge into the last 16 of Euro 2020 with a 2-2 draw against France in Budapest on Wednesday.

Portugal will face the world's top-ranked side Belgium in the first knockout round in Seville on Sunday.

Fernando Santos' men moved through as one of the four best third-placed sides, for the second straight Euro, from Group F behind France and Germany.

Ronaldo gave his side the lead just after the half-hour mark with his first spot-kick, before France hit back through Karim Benzema's two goals either side of half-time.

But, with Portugal heading out as it stood with Hungary leading Germany, Ronaldo helped win and then scored their second penalty with half an hour remaining.

The 36-year-old's fifth goal of the group stage extended his record tally of Euro goals to 14 and drew him level with former Iran striker Ali Daei, in his 178th International match.

World champions

France will next take on Switzerland in Bucharest on Monday.

The first real chance of the game fell to France forward Kylian Mbappe after quarter of an hour, but the 22-year-old's wait for a Euro goal was extended by Rui Patricio's parried save.

But it was Portugal who made the breakthrough, as they

were awarded a 31st-minute penalty as France goalkeeper Hugo Lloris tried to punch the ball away, but instead caught Danilo Pereira in the face, leaving the Portugal midfielder needing treatment on the pitch.

Ronaldo stepped up to score his fourth goal of the tournament, sending Lloris the wrong way.

VAR CONTROVERSY

France drew themselves level in controversial circumstances in first-half stoppage time.

EURO 2020 KNOCKOUTS



Goal-rettzka comes to rescue Germany

AFP ■ MUNICH

Leon Goretzka came off the bench to rescue Germany's Euro 2020 campaign with a late equaliser as a nerve-shredding 2-2 draw against Hungary in Munich on Wednesday sent them through to the last 16.

Captain Adam Szalai gave Hungary a shock early lead and although Germany drew level through Kai Havertz in the second half, the Hungarians went back in front almost immediately through Andras Schaefer.

With six minutes left, Goretzka fired home a crucial equaliser to set up a blockbuster tie against England at Wembley on Tuesday, eliminating Hungary who finished bottom of Group F.

The match build-up had been dominated by UEFA's refusal to allow the city of Munich to light the Allianz Arena in rainbow colours in solidarity with Hungary's LGBTIQ community.

UEFA and the Government of Hungary came under a hail of criticism after Budapest's new anti-LGBTIQ law and the football body's refusal to light the Munich stadium.

Germany got off to the worst possible start when Szalai ghosted in between centre-backs Mats Hummels and Matthias Ginter to head Roland Sallai's superb cross past Manuel Neuer.

Delighted travelling Hungarian fans celebrated wildly as their German counterparts looked on in silence.

Hungary taking the lead with just 11 minutes gone sparked Germany into action as Hummels hit the crossbar, then Ginter fired straight at visiting goalkeeper Peter Gulacsi.

A cloudburst over north Munich soaked the Allianz Arena pitch as Germany poured forward in a desperate search for an equaliser.

The euphoria felt across the country after Germany's spectacular 4-2 win over Portugal just four days previously had suddenly evaporated.

But the hosts drew level on 66 minutes when Gulacsi failed to catch a Joshua Kimmich free-kick, Hummels headed the ball on and Havertz nodded into an empty net.

The joy in the German ranks was short-lived as Hungary regained the lead straight from the restart.

A long ball found Szalai, who lofted a pass over the defence where Schaefer got between the scrambling German defenders to head past an onrushing Neuer.

The crucial second German equaliser was down to two substitutes.

Teenager Jamal Musiala's cutback found his Bayern Munich team-mate Goretzka, who set up Timo Werner for a blocked shot.

But the rebound dropped to Goretzka who smashed the ball into the back of the net to avoid a humiliating group-stage exit.

Benzema delighted to lift 'pressure'

AFP ■ BUDAPEST

Karim Benzema said he was delighted to score his first goals for France since 2015 against Portugal on Wednesday, as there was 'a little pressure' on him across the country.

The Real Madrid striker was brought back for Euro 2020 by coach Didier Deschamps after a five-and-a-half year exile from international football over his alleged role in a blackmail plot.

Benzema failed to score in his first four matches since returning for France, who won the 2018 World Cup without him.

But he netted a first-half penalty in the final Group F game against Portugal before slotting in a second to end his long wait. "A lot of joy, a lot of pride," he said to *BeIN Sports*. "I think everyone was waiting for it. There was a little pressure on me from all over the country but I'm a footballer, a professional — I need that pressure."



A 2-2 draw on Wednesday sent France through as group winners. Deschamps' men will face Switzerland in the last 16 on Monday in Bucharest. "He (Benzema) was looking for that."

Kohli hints at overhaul of Test side

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

India skipper Virat Kohli has indicated an overhaul of his Test team after the stunning loss to New Zealand in the World Test Championship final here, saying that "right people who have the right mindset to perform" will be brought in following a reassessment.

After his side lost the WTC Final by eight wickets in Southampton on Wednesday with batting being a major let-down, the Indian captain didn't take any names but expressed his displeasure at some players for not showing enough 'intent' to score runs.

Senior batsman Cheteshwar Pujara managed 8 off 54 balls in the first innings and consumed 35 balls for his first run. He then scored just 15 runs off 80 balls in the second essay.

"We will continue to reassess and continue to have conversations around what are the things required to strengthen our side and not follow or fall prey to certain patterns," Kohli said at the post-match conference.

"It can be safely assumed that some of the seniors will be on borrowed time and only a stellar performance in the five-Test series against England in August can secure their futures."

"We will not wait for a year or so and have to plan ahead. If you see our white ball team now, we have great depth and guys are ready and confident. Same thing needs to be done with Test cricket."

"You have to reassess and replan and understand what dynamics work for the team and how we can be fearless. Bring in right people who have right mindset to perform," the skipper added.

For the current management, a 50 off 80 balls is of more value than a 15 off 80 which can put unnecessary pressure on batsmen coming after someone with an ultra-defensive mindset.

Kane Williamson scored seven runs in a session during the first innings but when it mattered, he scored a half-century of 80 odd balls during final session of the Test match.

"I think evolving with the game and improving yourself with the game is very important and when you have been a top side for few years in a row, you don't want to suddenly drop your standards..."

"We will certainly take those decisions and have those conversations and in near future," the skipper looked visibly hurt and in a mood to take some tough calls in near future.

He also spoke about finding ways to score runs against quality attacks like that of New Zealand. India scored only 217 in the first innings and were all out for 170 in the second effort.

"We definitely need to work out better plans on understanding how to score runs. We have to stay in sync with the momentum of the game and not let the game drift away too much. I don't think there are any technical difficulties as such," he asserted.

Virat calls for World Test final to be played over 3 matches

Southampton: Echoing the views of head coach Ravi Shastri, India skipper Virat Kohli has said that the best Test team in the world should be decided by a best-of-three final and not a one-off game like it was in the inaugural edition.

India were able to bounce back to win the series against Australia and England but couldn't do so with the World Test Championship final, a one off game against New Zealand which ended with Kohli's men losing by eight wickets.

"Well, look, firstly, I'm not in absolute agreement of deciding the best Test side in the world over the course of one game, to be very honest," Kohli said in the post-match press conference.

"If it is a Test series, it has to be a test of character over three Tests, which team has the ability to come back into the series or totally blow away the other team."

"It can't just be a pressure applied over two days of good cricket and then you suddenly are not a good Test side anymore. I don't believe in that."

Shastri had advocated a three-match finale before the team departed for England earlier this month. **PTI**

Kane credits his 'bits & pieces' cricketers for WTC triumph

PTI ■ SOUTHAMPTON

New Zealand captain Kane Williamson saluted the commitment of his star-shorn side as he savoured the 'special feeling' of winning the inaugural World Test Championship mace by beating India, relying on "bits and pieces to stay in games and be competitive".

With the World Test Championships triumph, the 'nice guys' of world cricket showed that they don't always finish last. The win over mighty India has also made up for the heartbreak of successive ODI World Cup final losses in 2015 and 2019.

Williamson termed their final win over India as the 'pinnacle' but stopped short of calling it the country's biggest achievement in the game.

"I've been part of (New Zealand cricket) for a short while, it's a very special feeling, the first time in our history we've come away with a world title," Williamson said in post-match press conference.

"We've had 22 players over the last two years, and they've all played their part and the support staff and the guys who



Kiwi pacers Trent Boult (18) and Tim Southee, second from right, give winners medals to teammate Kyle Jamieson, left, and Neil Wagner, right. **BLACKCAPS**

AFP ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Brazil continued their winning romp through the Copa America on Wednesday, eking out a controversial 2-1 victory against Colombia after struggling most of the match to answer a magnificent bicycle-kick goal by Luis Diaz.

The 11th-hour win gave the Selecao a perfect nine points from three matches in the South American championships, and extended their current winning streak to 11 matches.

However, the victory was steeped in controversy: Brazil's second-half equalizer, a Roberto Firmino header, was preceded by a Neymar pass that glanced off Argentine referee Nestor Pitana.

Colombia heatedly argued afterward that play should have been stopped, but Pitana, who refereed the 2018 World Cup final, ruled the goal valid after checking the video.

11 wins in a row

Firmino, Casemiro on target in Brazil's 2-1 comeback win against Colombia



"It's sad that with all the effort we made against one of the best teams in the world, we lost the match on a call like that," said Juventus' Cuadrado. "A referee with that much international experience, who's refereed at the World Cup,

Jos powers Eng to big win

Cardiff: Jos Buttler saw England to a comfortable eight-wicket win in the first T20 International against Sri Lanka at Sophia Gardens on Wednesday as the hosts went 1-0 up in a three-match series.

Sri Lanka were restricted to a modest 129/7 after winning the toss, with leg-spinner Adil Rashid taking 2-17 from his four overs and Sam Curran 2/25 from three overs.

Only Dasun Shanaka with 50 off 44 balls really threatened England's attack.

But a target of 130 proved well within the range of England, the world's top-ranked T20 side, as they won with 17 balls to spare.

Buttler thrashed eight fours and one six in his innings and shared an opening stand of 80 with Jason Roy.

"The thing about batting in partnerships is it allows you to try and sit in and keep Roy back on strike," said player-of-the-match Buttler, whose innings was labelled a 'masterclass' by England captain Eoin Morgan.

"I think it was a fantastic performance from the boys, early wickets in the power play always keep you in the game," added Buttler after his ninth half-century in just 20 T20 innings opening for England.

Morgan, speaking to *BBC Radio*, was pleased by an all-round display that augurs well for England's prospects in October's T20 World Cup.

"It's a great way to start a series that's so condensed," he said. "The bowlers really did set the tone, so full credit to them."

"In the chase, Roy and Buttler at the top of the order are a quite formidable pair, and when they play in the fashion that they can be quite intimidating." **AFP**



PIONEER EXCLUSIVE

THAKUR ANOOP SINGH SET TO SCALE BIGGER HEIGHTS

Thakur Anoop Singh, who will be seen as the leading antagonist in the Ravi Teja starrer *Khilaadi*, is all set to strike his debut in Bollywood with the popular franchise *Singham 3*. From playing the famous character of *Dhritarashtra* to winning a gold medal in a bodybuilding contest in Bangkok, he's here to take upon showbiz with versatile roles. In the years that followed, Thakur has appeared in a couple of interesting Telugu films and projects, including *Winner, Rogue, Aachari America Yatra, Naa Peru Surya Naa Illu India!* The actor is a trained pilot-turned model who earned the title of Mr World in 2015.

If the once-outsider boy is getting to be a part of exciting projects now, it is only after years of struggling to get auditions, trying to get in touch with the right people in the industry, and making ends meet in a city which was not home but today is.

Reward or award?

I feel it's incredible to be able to play so many lives in one body! This could have only taken place in front of camera, isn't it wonderful? I believe the fandom's love and acceptance is the most beautiful reward one can receive while awards will follow. What I do is imagine the example of a lion from the jungle who is unaware he's being shot by a camera, who's just no less than a beast. Similarly, on camera, I just try to live similar characteristics eliminating other thoughts apart from the situation, the dialogues and who am I cast opposite.

Is he frightened to be in showbiz?

Yes, I am. I'm afraid of being too comfortable and then getting stuck in only one genre of films or performances. I believe, as an actor, I really do get to play many versatile roles in my career ahead that's when I can justify my capabilities too.

I never thought of doing one thing I am good at and then avoid everything else like the plague, which shows in the way I took an exemplary leap from television to films. I am open to variations, don't make me congenial.

Novel talent and the dis-

persed limelight

The entertainment industry is such a place that is ready to welcome any talent who can click with the audience. It has enough space for the ones willing to work even harder on a consistent note and is patient enough. Yes, it takes several years to stand still in the industry but not many are willing to stay still for long. My only competition is me! The industry definitely makes room for small town underdogs with a lot of ambition, they cross over into the mainstream and become gatekeepers in turn. It's becoming more accountable and accessible to honour merit and talent democratically.

Working in Tollywood

Tollywood is quickly speeding its way to the top! They have deadlines to meet, the shooting process is so brisk. The crew is very professional. I am striving to do something finer with every role I grab. Of course, there's a lot of uncertainty as of now but the challenges, the faith, and the determination to make it big in this industry through my work is what is

Ravi Teja, I decided to go for a complete makeover! Chopped my long hair that I had been sporting in every film for five consecutive years! The audience is the best critic I have — I believe in refraining naysayers by infiltrating my awesomeness with their judgments, if any. I learn, inculcate, and move on.

OTT - the new boost for entertainers

There were plat-

forms of televisions and films, now there's OTT, another platform that is giving us opportunities to showcase our talent on a global level. Whether it was Pratik Gandhi in *Scam 1992* or Jaideep



influencing me every day to choose to work in the south.

Bagging a film opposite Ravi Teja

I was looking for something extraordinary when I read a script, if I don't find a unique element, I tend to then add something to the character with the help of the director to make it stand out as an impactful one. For instance, when I bagged the role of an antagonist opposite

Ahlatwaj in *Paatal Lok* — outrageous performances, I must say! As far as censorship issues are being raised, I feel it won't affect the content drastically but yes, I hope they don't censor it to an extent where the content loses its idea behind the creation. The moral policing of shows shouldn't rob the platform of its differentiating factor, while at the same time OTT players can be sensitive to the socio-political climate around us.



VARUDU KAAVALENU, NARUDI BRATUKU NATANA SHOOTING RESUME

Sithara Entertainments, a well-known film production company that is producing Naga Shaurya's *Varudu Kaavalenu*, and Siddu Jonnalagadda's *Narudi Bratuku Natana* resumed its shootings on Thursday in Hyderabad.

The final schedule of the *Varudu Kaavalenu* starring Ritu Verma alongside Naga Shaurya has resumed, where a song is being filmed under the supervision of Shekhar master.

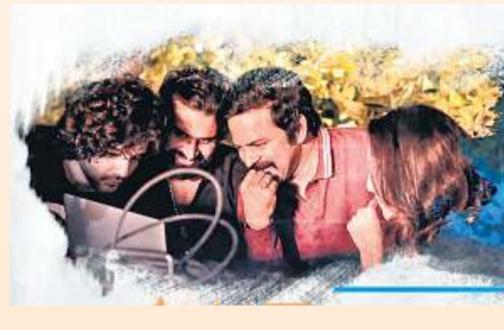
The filmmakers are confident that the story, narration, songs, emotions, and performances of the actors and actresses will entertain audi-

ences from all walks of life.

Nadia, Murali Sharma, Vennelakishar, Praveen, Anant, Kiriti Damaraju, Rangasthala Mahesh, Arjun Kalyan, Vaishnavi Chaitanya and Siddiksha will be seen playing some key roles in the film.

Meanwhile, the shooting of *Narudi Bratuku Natana* too resumed in Hyderabad starring Siddu Jonnalagadda and Nehashetti.

Director Vimal Krishna, a debutant, says that this film is a new generation romantic love story. Prince, Brahmaji and Narra Srinivas will be seen playing key roles in the film.



Suresh Productions steps into music arena

Telugu Cinema's oldest and prestigious production house, Suresh Productions has started a new journey and is into the music streaming industry. Making an official statement, Suresh Productions aims to serve as a platform to produce refined music, and become an undaunted musical powerhouse with SP Music.

"With its immense contribution to cinema for over 50 years, Suresh Productions is now all set to take it up a notch and foray into the musical space with the



launch of Suresh Productions Music. Music has always been at the heart

of our films and we recognise the need to distinctly celebrate as its own. Carrying forward the legacy of Suresh Productions, SP Music aims to serve as a platform to produce refined music, and become an undaunted musical powerhouse," read the statement.

Certainly, there is a vacuum in the Telugu music industry and SP Music with its all logistics can fill the gap. With music streaming now has come more digital things, SP Music should also explore more opportunities and make Telugu music flourish to new heights.



MAA elections:Prakash Raj ANNOUNCES PANEL

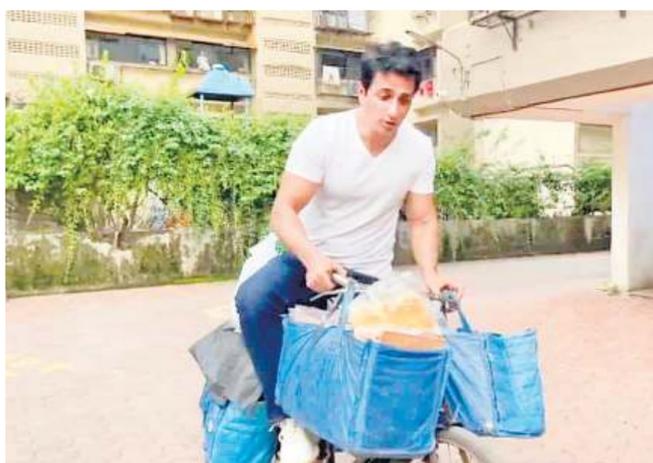
For the last one week, Movie Artist Association (MAA) elections have been drawing a lot of attention and ire. For the first time, hero Manchu Vishnu has stepped into the MAA poll battle and straight away aimed for the President's role. Former MAA President and actor Mohan Babu has entered the scene to gather support for his son. For this, Mohan Babu met Superstar Krishna recently and urged his support.

After Vishnu's entry, versatile actor Prakash Raj joined the battle, and the Mega camp i.e. Chiranjeevi and Naga

Babu are backing Prakash Raj for MAA President's role.

Not just this, Jeevitha Rajasekhar too is contesting for the President's role!

The latest is that on Thursday, Prakash Raj released a list of his panel members. His panel members include, Srikanth?, Banerjee, Saikumar, Tanish?, Pragati, Anasuya, Sana, Anita Chaudhary, Sudha, Ajay, Naginidu, Brahmaji, Raviprakash, Samir, Uttej, Bandla Ganesh, Yedida Shriram, Shivareddy, Tarzan, Suresh Kondety, Khayyum, Sudigali Sudhir, and Govindarao, Sridharrao, among many others.



Sonu Sood sells eggs, bread on a cycle

Actor and philanthropist Sonu Sood was seen selling eggs, bread, chips, and daily grocery items on a cycle, calling it *Sonu Sood ki Supermarket* in his latest video on social media. The gesture was meant to promote small businesses. Sonu posted a video of him on a cycle with the grocery items on Wednesday night. In the video, he

says "You don't need to go to a mall to buy grocery items", adding that the most important supermarket is ready to deliver your daily items on your doorstep. He stressed the importance of buying from the local vendors as he said: "This market is a hit."

He captioned the video, "Free home delivery. 1 bread free with every 10 eggs #supermarket #supportsmallbusiness."