

ANALYSIS 7
DEVELOPMENT OF METRO:
AN EASTERN PERSPECTIVE**MONEY 8**
INDIA FACES UPHILL BATTLE TO
MEET 2030 CLIMATE TARGETS**SPORTS 11**
SOUTHEE, OPENERS BRING
NZ BACK IN GAME

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 27, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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I DIDN'T TRY TO
MIMIC
KARTHIKEYA: AHAN
ON RX100 REMAKE
Page 12**BJP WILL FORM GOVERNMENT IN
MAHA IN MARCH, SAYS NARAYAN RANE**

Union Minister Narayan Rane on Friday claimed that the BJP will form government in Maharashtra in March. Rane's statement came on a day when state BJP leaders Devendra Fadnis and Chandrakant Patil as well as NCP chief Sharad Pawar and his party colleague Praful Patel were in the national capital, sparking speculation. But leaders of the ruling Maha Vikas Aghadi pooh-poohed Rane's statement, asserting that there was no threat to the Shiv Sena-NCP-Cong government which will complete two years on Saturday. Fadnis met Union Home Minister Amit Shah in Delhi, sources said.

**INDIA BEING LECTURED ON ENVIRON
ISSUES BY DEVELOPED COUNTRIES: PM**

India is the only country that is on course to achieve the Paris Agreement goals ahead of time and yet, it is being "lectured" on environmental issues and subjected to numerous pressures by developed nations, which still harbour a colonial mentality, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday. This is the first time that he spoke on the issue since the United Nations' COP26 summit on November 13. Addressing a Constitution Day event organised by the Supreme Court, Modi said a colonial mindset still exists and these forces are putting obstacles in the path of growth of the developing nations.

**SC DIGITISED OVER 3,100 CR RECORDS
TO BROADEN ACCESS TO JUSTICE: JUDGE**

The Supreme Court has endeavoured to broaden access to justice by digitising the courts and over 3,100 crore records and also launched an e-Seva Kendra as a one-stop solution to ensure that justice is accessible to every individual, Justice D Y Chandrachud said on Friday. Justice Chandrachud, who is heading the E-committee of the apex court, referred to the access of justice to all and said the E-committee of the Supreme Court has endeavoured to broaden access to justice by digitizing the courts and over 3,100 crore records of the judiciary.

**SBI PENALISE RS 1 CR FOR DEFICIT IN
REGULATORY COMPLIANCE**

The Reserve Bank on Friday said it has imposed a penalty of Rs 1 crore on State Bank of India for deficiencies in regulatory compliance. According to the RBI, Statutory Inspections for Supervisory Evaluation of SBI was conducted with reference to its financial positions as on March 31, 2018 and March 31, 2019. Examination of the risk assessment reports, inspection report and related correspondence revealed contravention of a provision of Banking Regulation Act "to the extent the bank held shares in borrower companies, as pledgee, of an amount exceeding 30% of paid-up share capital of those companies".

AP's welfare spending rises as Capex decreases in 2019-20: CAG report

❑ Outstanding debt of State increases to Rs 3,01,802 crore

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

As being flagged by financial experts, a report by the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) has pointed out that the revenue expenditure by the State government has increased and capital expenditure that helps creation of assets and infrastructure has decreased during 2019-20. And, at the end of March 2020 outstanding Public Debt has increased by 17.20 percent at Rs 32,373 crore over the previous year. The increase in revenue expenditure is mainly attributed to the implementation of new welfare schemes such as 'Ammu Vodi' and 'YSR Nine Hours Free Supply'.

The revenue expenditure increased by 6.93 percent during 2019-20, mainly due to the implementation of new welfare schemes during the year.

The CAG also said that the outstanding debt of the State displayed an increasing trend during the five-year period 2015-20 with Rs 1,73,854 crore during 2015-16 increasing to Rs 3,01,802 crore during 2019-20 which is an increase of 73.60 percent.

This resulted in an increase of revenue deficit of the state by 90.24 percent as compared to the previous year. Simultaneously, the State government has reduced the expenditure on asset creation by 38.72 per cent over the previous year.

According to the CAG's 'State Finances Audit Report for the year ended 31 March 2020' that was tabled in the State Assembly on Friday established that the State government has also a liabil-

In a nutshell

❑ Out of the total resources of Rs 2,40,746 crore of the state government during the year 2019-20, Revenue Receipts Rs 1,11,034 crore constituted 46.12 percent
❑ Capital receipts Rs 1,16,783 crore @ 48.51 percent of total resources
❑ Net Public Account Receipts Rs 12,929 crore @ 5.37 percent
❑ Revenue receipts Rs 1,11,034 crore of the State decreased by Rs 3,637 crore @ 3.17 percent over the previous year of Rs 1,14,671 crore and constituted 11.41 per

cent of GSDP of Rs 9,72,782 crore
❑ Own tax revenues of the State consist of State GST, State excise, taxes on vehicles, Stamp duty and Registration fees, Land revenue, taxes on goods and passengers, etc
❑ Own Tax Revenue (OTR) during the year was Rs 57,601 crore and constituted 51.88 percent of the total revenue receipts of Rs 1,11,034 crore
❑ Taxes on sales and trade contributed 37.17 percent to OTR in 2019-20.

Monies spent on land, houses misclassified

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CAG also pointed out that the monies spent on land and houses allotted to the poor beneficiaries under State government's scheme as capital expenditure instead of revenue expenditure.

As per the Socio-Economic Survey Report of Government of Andhra Pradesh for the year 2019-20, the government has planned to provide house sites to all the poor and needy and also register the land along with the house in the name of women of the household, for the above scheme.

"As the land along with the house would be registered in the name of the beneficiary, the asset would belong to the beneficiary, not the state government and hence the expenditure was to be booked under revenue expenditure head," said CAG.

Supplementary budget tabled in violation of norms

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CAG said that the Government of Andhra Pradesh tabled the supplementary budget estimates for the financial year 2019-20 in the State Legislature in June 2020, that is, after the closure of the financial year and after the funds provided in supplementary estimates have been expended.

This is not an acceptable practice, as it violates the provisions of the Constitution of India, undermines the principle of legislative sanction and control over budget and encourages financial indiscipline in management of public resources, said CAG.

Sound budgetary management requires advance planning and accurate estimation of revenues and expenditure. There were instances of incurring excess expenditure or large savings with reference to provisions made during the year, which point to flaws in expenditure monitoring and control.

Borrowed funds used for debt servicing

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

According to the CAG's latest report on the State's finances that was tabled in the State Assembly on Friday, during 2019-20, the government borrowed Rs 50,027 crore from open market and other financial institutions and took loans of Rs 2,030 crore from Government of India. Apart from these bor-

rowings, the State government availed of Rs 60,371 crore as Ways and Means Advances and Overdraft from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI).

The capital receipts of Rs 1,16,783 crore constituted 48.50 percent of the total receipts of 2,40,746 crore of the state during 2019-20.

ity for off-budget borrowings of Rs 26,096.98 crore, which it has not disclosed appropriately as part of its budget documents.

"This has the impact of diluting

the public financial management and oversight role of the Legislature and placing major sources of funding of Government's crucial infrastruc-

ture projects beyond the control of the Legislature," observed CAG in its report.

The CAG report also said that the expenditure of the State was

Unprecedented water inflows due to heavy rains led to floods: CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has said that the State government has been taking all relief and rescue measures without lapses and provided compensation to affected families in the floods within one week of the calamity while the Opposition is trying to politicise the issue.

The Chief Minister told the House that Kadapa, Chittoor, Anantapur and Nellore districts were badly affected by heavy rains and floods like never before, yet the opposition parties are trying to politicise the issue and raise objections for not visiting the flood-hit areas. Responding to the criticism of him not visiting flood-affected areas the Chief Minister explained that he very much wanted to visit the affected districts, but the senior officials negated, as it could hamper the relief works since the rescue operations are need of the hour.

He stated that an aerial survey was done and the relief works are being constantly reviewed and assured to personally visit the flood-affected areas. The neigh-

bouring Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik effectively monitors such situations from his office.

He said that all the district authorities are involved in relief works and are being supervised by Ministers and elected representatives of the respective areas and all the compensations were promptly paid to the affected within a week of the damage, unlike the previous government where compensation was paid only after months together.

Responding to Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu's remarks of 'CM will come in the air, go in the air,' the Chief Minister said that it is not sensible to make such harsh statements for a leader with 40 years experience.

The Chief Minister said that the flash flood was caused due to unprecedented heavy rains in a short span of time, which led to the flooding of villages downstream of Pincha and Annamayya reservoirs on Cheyuru following a breach to its bund and stated the government is not hiding the human loss or property loss.

YSRCP to raise Polavaram in Parl

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ahead of the Parliament session, beginning November 29, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy held a meeting with his party MPs to discuss strategy and the issues to be raised and directed the MPs to raise Polavaram issue regarding the project cost escalation to Rs 55,657 crore and get it approved by the Centre.

No permission for MLAs to carry mobiles into House

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

From now on, Members of the Legislative Assembly cannot carry the mobile phones with them into the House. They need to deposit their mobile phones at the security. On the concluding day of the State Legislature session, Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram made the announcement about disallowing mobile phones into the House.

The Speaker's decision comes in the wake of a few members shooting a video of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu making a statement of walking out of the House recently.

The Speaker on that day cut the mic of Naidu due to which his statement could not be recorded. However, a few members of the House suspected to be belonging



to the Opposition TDP had recorded the event and released it to the public later.

Though members can carry their mobile phones, they are not allowed to record the proceedings of the House in whatever manner and it amounts to breach of privilege of the Assembly.

Energy dept loss due to floods pegged at 191 cr

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Energy department estimated the loss due to damage of its assets due to the floods in the Rayalaseema region as Rs 191 crore. APSDCL was successful in rectifying the affected EHT sub-stations, 33KV sub-stations and 33 KV feeders. Around 284 special teams were arranged to carry out the rectification works. As per APSDCL, 100 percent rectification works are completed.



CM lists 4 options given to aided institutions

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Referring to aided schools during the short discussion, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy said the intent of the government is to do good for the management, teachers, and students of aided institutions and to shape them into better places of learning and they are free to accept the government offer to improve the conditions prevailing in the institutions. He listed out the four options given by the State government.

The first option is to voluntarily surrender the entire institution along with assets and the existing staff which will turn the institutions into government

educational Institutions without any liabilities and financial burden on the exchequer.

The second option is the willingness to voluntarily surrender the aid in the form of surrendering all the duly sanctioned aided posts along with aided staff, but not the assets, which will make the institutions as Private unaided Educational Institutions.

The third option is in case of unwillingness to option 1 and option 2 and thereby continue to exist as a Private Aided Educational Institution as per the existing rules, regulations, and grant-in-aid code.

AP govt files affidavit in HC over repeal of Capital laws

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Special Chief Secretary to AP in Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MA & UD) department on Friday filed an affidavit in the Andhra Pradesh High Court informing that both the Houses of State Legislature passed Bills repealing the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020, as well as the CRDA Repeal Act.

It was mentioned in the affidavit that the AP Assembly passed the Bill to repeal the said laws on November 22 and the Legislative Council on November 23.

Zakia elected Dy Chairperson of Council

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MLC from Kadapa district Zakia Khanam has been elected as Legislative Council's Deputy Chairperson unanimously on Friday on the last day of the current sessions of State Legislature. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and other MLCs accompanied her to the podium and congratulated her.

Later, The Chief Minister said that he was happy to see Zakia Khanam, a homemaker from an ordinary family, becoming a member and Deputy Chairperson of the Legislative Council and added that it's a message for all minority women. He said the State government has been



striving hard for last two and half years to empower women politically, socially and financially.

Before her election Zakia Khanam paid a courtesy visit to the Chief Minister and thanked him for choosing her as Deputy Chairperson of the Legislative Council. Chief Whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy was also present on the occasion.

TODAY

ALMANAC**Month & Paksham:**

Kartik & Krishna Paksha

Tithi : Ashtami upto 06:00 AM**Nakshatram** : Magha upto 09:43 PM

Time to Avoid

Rahukalam : 09:06 AM to 10:31 AM**Yamagandam** : 01:19 PM to 02:44 PM**Variyam** : 09:10 AM to 10:51 AM**Gulika** : 06:18 AM to 07:42 AM**Amritakalam** : 07:13 PM to 08:53 PM**Abhijit Muhurtham** : 11:33 AM to 12:18 PM**HYDERABAD****WEATHER****Forecast:** Sunny**Temp:** 31 °C**Humidity:** 56%**Sunrise:** 06:33 AM**Sunset:** 05:33 PM

Updated NOVEMBER 26, 2021 5:00 PM

AP govt amends FRBM Act to enable enhanced borrowings

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Andhra Pradesh government on Friday further amended the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management Act, 2005, to enable enhanced borrowings and also allow a large revenue deficit.

On the final day of its delayed monsoon session, the state Legislature passed the FRBM Act Amendment Bill introduced by Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath.

The fresh amendments to various clauses in the FRBM Act were brought in on a day the Comptroller and Auditor General of India came out with a report on the State Finances Audit Report, pointing out that the previous amendment in December 2020 was at "variance with the projections made by 14th Finance Commission for fiscal balance".

The fresh amendment enacted on Friday enhances the



"limit the amount of annual incremental risk weighted guarantees to 180 percent of the total revenue receipts in the year preceding the current year" from the existing 90 percent.

A new clause has been inserted in the FRBM Act prescribing higher limits of revenue deficit from 2021-22 to 2025-26 financial years.

For the current year, the revenue

deficit limit has been pegged at 3.6 percent of the Gross State Domestic Product, up from 2.5 percent in 2019-20, though the actual that year was 3.17 percent.

The revenue deficit limit has been pegged at 3.3 percent (for 2022-23), three percent (2023-24), 2.7 percent (2024-25) and 2.4 percent (2025-26).

Similarly, another new clause

has been inserted, prescribing the fiscal deficit limits till 2025-26, including a 0.5 percent additional borrowing allowed for performance in the power sector.

For 2021-22, the fiscal deficit limit has been set at five percent of the GSDP.

The limit has been set at 4.5 percent for 2022-23, four percent for 2023-24 and 2024-25 and 3.5 percent for 2025-26.

Also, the amendment brought in yet another new clause to "ensure the outstanding total liabilities", excluding government guarantees" were contained within the prescribed limits till 2025-26 fiscal year.

For the current year, the limit has been set at 35.6 percent of the GSDP. It will be 36.3 percent in 2022-23, 36.1 percent in 2023-24, 35.8 percent in 2024-25 and 35.5 percent in 2025-26.

Explaining the objects and reasons behind the amend-

ments, the Finance Minister said the "damage inflicted by the state bifurcation had a disastrous impact on the economic and financial parameters".

Buggana said the disadvantages arising from the uneven division of resources (between AP and Telangana) was likely to circumscribe the long-run growth prospects of the state.

The outbreak of Covid-19 and the unprecedented measures adopted to contain its spread also had a serious impact on the state's resources, causing a substantial reduction in realisation of its own revenues.

"Horizontal devolution of Central transfers has considerably reduced in the 15th Finance Commission award. These added constraints only compounded the fiscal stress of the state," the Finance Minister noted.

Hence the amendments to the FRBM Act, he added.

Centre blames rains for costlier tomatoes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution on Friday said that the Centre has released a total Rs 164.15 crore to Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Assam, Odisha, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal under the Price Stabilisation Fund scheme to rein in skyrocketing prices of essential commodities.

Through this scheme, interest-free advances are provided to States and Union Territories for creation of State-level Price Stabilisation Fund, on a 50:50 sharing basis (75:25 in case of North East States).

As per note from the Centre, these six States have the funds and mandate to undertake necessary interventions for controlling prices of essential food commodities. "Other States have also been requested to set up the PSF for State-level interventions to control

price rise in essential food commodities", the release said.

As per the Ministry, the all-India average retail price of tomato has been on the rise from the end of September 2021 due to unseasonal rains in Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh which led to crop damage and delay in arrival from these States.

Delayed arrivals from the north Indian States was followed by heavy rains in Tamil Nadu, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka which disrupted the supply and also resulted in crop damage. As on November 25, the all-India average price of tomato was Rs 67/kg which is 63 percent higher than that of last year. Tomato price is highly volatile as slight disruptions in supply chain or damage due to heavy rains results in spurt in prices. Conversely, bulk arrival and logistics problems have the potential of creating a sit-

uation of glut in the market and resultant dip in retail prices.

The Ministry said, "As per the Department of Agriculture, the estimated Kharif production in the current year at 69.52 LMT is comparable with 70.12 LMT produced last year. Arrivals in November this year were only 19.62 LMT compared to 21.32 LMT last year. Tomato arrivals from North Indian States will start from the beginning of December itself, which will add to availability and lead to fall in prices. In December, arrival is expected to be at par with last year".

In the case of onion, the rise in prices during October 2021 has substantially subsided and the level is below that of the retail prices in 2020 and also 2019. The Ministry said, "The all-India average retail price of onion as on November 25 was Rs.39/kg which is 32 percent lower than that of the last year.

Monies spent...

Continued from Page 1

As per Government Accounting Rules, capital expenditure is incurred with the objective of increasing concrete assets of a material and permanent character and expenditure on a temporary asset or on grants-in-aid cannot ordinarily be considered as a capital expenditure. Ownership of assets is the key factor in determining whether the expenditure incurred on its acquisition can qualify to be classified as capital expenditure.

Government of Andhra Pradesh planned to construct 25 lakh houses -14 lakh in rural areas including Urban Development Authorities and 11 lakh in urban areas during the period 2019-20 to 2023-24 as part of "Navaratnalu" at an estimated project cost of Rs 61,000 crore to provide pucca houses to all eligible beneficiaries.

As part of this, the government has taken steps for acquiring land and proposed to distribute house site pattas to 25 lakh beneficiaries on July 8, 2020. An amount of Rs 3,371.60 crore has been booked as capital expenditure in Accounts for 2019-20 under YSR Gruha Vasathi scheme for this purpose.

AP's welfare spending...

Continued from Page 1

In 2019-20, welfare activities constituted 18 per cent of total expenditure in the State and around 13 percent was spent on education, sports, art and culture.

The capital expenditure (Capex) constituted 7.89 percent of total expenditure during 2019-20 and fell short of the Budget Estimates of Rs 32,293 crore by 62.09 percent. It accounted for 1.26 per cent of GSDP and decreased by Rs 7,734 crore which is 38.72 percent from the previous year. Out of the total Capital Expenditure, during 2019-20, 14.96 per cent or Rs 1,830.93 crore was funded by the Government of India.

Capex is primarily expenditure on creation of fixed infrastructure assets such as roads, buildings, etc. and is met from budgetary support and extra budgetary resources/off budget borrowings. "The decrease in capital expenditure in the State during 2019-20 points to a need to review the fiscal strategy and create the fiscal space for increased capital expenditure, which in turn, would help in

promoting and accelerating equitable growth," pointed out CAG in its report.

The State also witnessed a decrease of 3.17 percent in revenue receipts during the year 2019-20 as compared to the previous year, due primarily to decrease in collection of own tax revenue and tax transfers from Government of India.

"Committed expenditure on interest payments, pensions, administrative expenses etc., was higher than the average for General Category States (GCS) and quality of expenditure on physical infrastructure was lower than the average of GCS," said the report by CAG.

CAG observed that borrowed funds used for meeting revenue expenditure create liability for future years without creating any assets.

"It is evident that in 2019-20, 80 percent of borrowings were used to finance the deficit on the revenue account, thereby impeding asset creation in the state. Net receipts under Public Account during the year Rs 12,929 crore financed 32.58 per cent of the fiscal deficit when compared to 35.61 per cent during the previous year," said CAG report.

Supplementary...

Continued from Page 1

A majority of Controlling Officers did not explain the reasons for variations in expenditure vis-à-vis allocations, to the Principal Accountant General (A&E), which affects the accountability mechanism of Government and weakens legislative control over expanding public finances, observed CAG.

"Persistent excess expenditure over grants approved by the state legislature is violative of the will of the Legislature and needs to be viewed seriously. There has been a persistent excess over authorisation during the last five years on account of seeking Ways and Means Advances beyond anticipated levels. Government needs to estimate its resources more realistically and manage its expenditure judiciously and ensure that prior Legislative sanction is obtained for anticipated requirement of additional funds.

Despite flagging this issue every year over the last five years, the State government had failed to take corrective measures in this regard," CAG said in its report.

Borrowed funds...

Continued from Page 1

Approximately 65 to 81 percent of borrowed funds were used for repayment of debt during the period 2015-16 to 2019-20, indicating that the State is borrowing primarily for restructuring of previous debts rather than for infrastructure creation.

The State government attributed the increase in debt to its resource constraints pursuant to bifurcation of the State and inadequate assistance from Government of India. Borrowed funds should ideally be used to fund capital creation and developmental activities. Using borrowed funds for meeting current consumption and repayment of interest on outstanding loans is not sustainable, observed CAG.

The total expenditure on subsidies has increased by 169.69 pc in 2019-20 compared to the previous year. The total expenditure on subsidies was Rs 6,343 crore during the audited year which was increased by Rs 3,991 crore compared to previous year's expenditure of Rs 2,352 crore.

Mobilise addl revenue resources for welfare schemes: CAG

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The CAG in its latest report also recommended that the state government needs to make stringent efforts to mobilise additional revenue resources to fund its various socio-economic developmental schemes rather than through debt financing its revenue expenditure.

Capital expenditure needs to be increased significantly for asset creation and provide stimulus for economic growth. "State government may place on record the debt servicing capacity of the institutions before providing guaran-

tees/loans. Future guarantees/loans may be predicated on furnishing of the audited accounts of the concerned entities to whom guarantees are provided," said CAG.

The State government needs to properly disclose its off-budget borrowings by way of loans taken through Special Purpose Vehicles/ Public Sector Undertakings/ Autonomous Bodies for implementation of government schemes, to ensure transparency and accountability with regard to funding management and compliance with FRBM norms.

Energy dept...

Continued from Page 1

Speaking on the occasion of the National Constitution Day celebrations at Vidut Soudha on Friday, Energy Secretary Srikanth Nagapallli said the Andhra Pradesh power utilities always strive for the development of the State and welfare of people of the State by ensuring adequate, reliable and highest quality power supply and best consumer services to all categories of consumers.

He said that Bharat Ratna Dr. B R Ambedkar provided the best Constitution to the nation.

The Preamble of the Constitution declared India as a sovereign, socialist, secular and democratic republic and it aims to secure justice, liberty, equality to all citizens and promote fraternity to maintain the unity and integrity of the nation.

"Liberty of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship is our values and the rights of citizens under the Constitution must always be upheld responsibly," he said.

He appreciated the APSDCIL which has put all-out efforts and restored power within a record period during the recent floods in Chittoor, Kadapa, Anantapur and Nellore districts.

He further complimented Chairman & Managing Director/APSDDL, H Haranatha Rao and his team for their round-the-clock efforts during floods.

No permission...

Continued from Page 1

So far, such mobile recording was not taken seriously, but now, the present Assembly Speaker decided against allowing mobile phones into the Assembly.

Making a statement in the assembly, Sitaram said the MLAs should not bring their mobile phones into the House instead they should deposit with the security at the entrance, along with their weapons, if any, before entering the House.

He said that the usage of mobile phones would disturb the sanctity of the House and appealed to all the members to cooperate with him in implementing the decision.

Meanwhile, Assembly was adjourned sine die by Speaker Tammineni Settarum here on Friday.

The House sat for seven days from November 18 to 26 and passed 26 Bills and two resolutions. In the session, 41 star questions and two unstarred questions were answered and a CAG report was submitted.

Unprecedented water inflows...

Continued from Page 1

Elaborating on the nature's fury, he explained that at 8.30 am on November 18, the Pincha project had inflows of just 3,845 cusecs and by 8.30 pm, they increased to 90,464 cusecs. Right from 8 am, almost 51 mandals of Kadapa district received an average rainfall of 10.7 cm, and heavy rains lashed Seshachalam Hills in Tirupati and other parts of Chittoor district, which led to heavy inflows at Cheyyeru.

As the discharge capacity of Pincha is only 58,000 cusecs and the inflows are over 1.38 lakh cusecs, there occurred a breach at Pincha, where all the water gushed downstream to Annamayya project. By the wee hours of November 19, the inflows to Annamayya reservoir crossed 3.2 lakh cusecs, while its discharge capacity was only 2.17 lakh cusecs, which resulted in a breach to the project, causing unfortunate damage. He said that the officials

have alerted the villages and immediately taken over the rescue operations by shifting 400 families to safe places and providing shelter to 900 people in relief camps, saving hundreds of people with their efforts.

The Chief Minister said that four buses were stuck in the flood, where an RTC bus had fallen from Nadaluru bridge, where 10 people succumbed to death and the rest were rescued by SDRF teams. Also, 10 others died at Sivalayam which is on the banks of the river. A total of 1990 villages in 119 mandals of four districts were affected by the floods, of which 211 villages were completely inundated causing a death toll of 44 people and while 16 are still missing. He said that 1169 houses were completely damaged and 5434 houses were partially damaged.

He said that a dedicated control room was set up and food staples along with safe drinking water were supplied to 95949 families of the flood-affected

areas. Besides these, Rs 2,000 was given to each family, and an ex gratia of Rs 5 lakh was given to the kin of the deceased. Further, he stated that the government is paying compensation for the loss of 5286 livestock and organising medical camps of about 653, along with veterinary camps.

In regard to property loss, the Chief Minister said that the government is paying up to Rs 5200 for each of 5434 partially damaged houses and Rs 95,000 for each of 1169 fully damaged houses. Besides these, an addition of Rs 1.8 lakh is being sanctioned for the construction of new houses. Rs 84 crore was released for immediate use to the District Collectors. He said that crop loss enumeration is being done and soon shall take up road repair works.

The government is going to focus on the safety of irrigation projects in the State, to avoid a repeat of the Annamayya project breach-like incident, through automation by monitoring the water flows on a real-time basis.

CM lists...

Continued from Page 1

The fourth option is withdrawing the willingness given earlier to either Option 1 or Option 2 and thereby to take back the surrendered staff and run the institution as a Private Aided Educational Institutions as per the existing rules, regulations, grant-in-aid code.

He slammed the Opposition for politicising the issue for their vested interests.

Earlier, initiating the discussion, Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh said the government is giving utmost importance to education by strengthening the existing infrastructure for all government schools, by streamlining the mid-day meal programme and revising the menu, by taking up curricular reforms in consonance with the National Education Policy 2020 and also by setting up a regulatory and monitoring mechanism to streamline the functioning of schools.

YSRCP to raise Polavaram...

Continued from Page 1

After the meeting, YSR Congress Parliamentary Party (YSRCP) leader, V Vijaysai Reddy said the Centre had been meting out injustice to Andhra Pradesh and showing step-motherly treatment to the State.

At the meeting on Friday, he said that the State government had spent Rs 2,104 crore towards the project, which needs to be reimbursed by the Centre and to stress on the power, irrigation and water components of the Polavaram project. He said that six main issues that were discussed in the recent Southern Zonal

Council meet need to be raised in both houses.

Besides Polavaram, the MPs should also raise the issue of the National Food Security Act and its irrational selection of beneficiaries. The Chief Minister reminded the MPs that the Centre was yet to pay arrears of Rs 1703 crore to AP Civil Supplies Corporation, apart from Rs 4976.51 crore under the Employment Guarantee scheme.

He said that post bifurcation, Telangana state had utilised power from Andhra Pradesh and left dues of Rs 6112 crore and instructed the MPs to stress on the issue and get it cleared with interest.

In regard to Resource Gap Funding, the Chief Minister said that it was Rs 22,948 crore during the bifurcation, but only Rs 4117.89 crore was given and asked the MPs to raise the issue and get it resolved. According to the CAG report, the gap is about Rs 16,078.76 crore, if the arrears of employees PF are added it would be Rs 22,948.76 crore. Also, he asked the MPs to take up the issue of placing a cut on the current loans, in the name of over-borrowings which were taken by the previous government.

He appealed to the MPs to speak on recent flood damage in the state and seek Rs 1000 crore as immediate relief.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹200
Without Skin	₹220
Broiler at Farm	₹108

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	448
HYDERABAD	444
VISAKHAPATNAM	402
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.48

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

About 13.74 percent of the population in Telangana is poor, according to NITI Aayog's Multidimensional Poverty Index (MPI) that placed the State at 18th position.

The MPI also said that 12.31 percent of the population of Andhra Pradesh is poor and placed it at the 20th spot. As per the index, 51.91 percent population of Bihar is poor, fol-

lowed by 42.16 percent in Jharkhand and 37.79 percent in Uttar Pradesh.

As many as six districts in Andhra Pradesh are poorer than the State average.

Kurnool (20.69 percent), Vizianagaram (19 percent), Prakasam (15.63 percent), Visakhapatnam (15.1 percent), Srikakulam (14.01 percent) and Anantapur (13.24 percent) have higher percentage of population who are poor. Guntur (8.31 percent) and East Godavari (8.55 percent) regis-

tered the lowest poverty across Andhra Pradesh and are at the bottom of the index.

Data was collected from 10 erstwhile districts of Telangana and it revealed that six of 10 erstwhile districts were poorer than the State average.

Adilabad (27.43 percent), Mahbubnagar (26.11 percent), Nizamabad (21.44 percent), Medak (17.9 percent), Nalgonda (15.3 percent) and Khammam (13.75 percent) have higher percentage of people who are poor. Hyderabad

(4.27 percent) and Rangareddy (5.83 percent) have registered the lowest poverty across Telangana and are at the bottom of the index.

According to the report, India's national MPI measure uses the globally accepted and robust methodology developed by the Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative (OPHI) and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).


Importantly, as a measure of multidimensional poverty, it

captures multiple and simultaneous deprivation faced by households, the report said.

The report said that India's MPI has three equally weighted dimensions - health, education and standard of living - which are represented by 12 indicators namely nutrition, child and adolescent mortality, antenatal care, years of schooling, school attendance, cooking fuel, sanitation, drinking water, electricity, housing, assets and bank accounts.



GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
WATER RESOURCES DEPARTMENT
Tender Notice No. 25/2021-22
ap.procurement
Reverse tendering system
The Superintending Engineer, Irrigation Circle, Kurnool, Andhra Pradesh invites Bids from the interested Bidders in Reverse Tendering System for the work "Improvements to Supplimental Sugar (Sakshinagar) Project to accommodate in order water requirement for Yamunaganj Municipality". Bid or work is Rs. 3050.00 lakh. period of completion is 24 months. The tender is available from 29-11-2021 till 11.00 AM on 19-12-2021 upto 02.00 PM. For complete details visit at <https://teaprocurement.gov.in>, for enquiry contact No. 08510529458.
Sd/-
Superintending Engineer, WRD, Irrigation Circle, Kurnool
R.O.No.-521P/CL/AD/11/1/2021-22 Dt. 26-11-2021



GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
PANCHAYAT RAJ DEPARTMENT
NIT No.185 to 210/12/2021
e-Procurement Tender Notification
Online tenders are being invited to execute works (92) pertaining to roads and buildings with PADA funds in YSR district. The estimated cost of the 92 works is: Rs 1844.28 lakh. Tender schedules can be downloaded from 3 pm onwards on 27-11-2021. For details, contact the following office.
Sd/- Executive Engineer,
Panchayat Raj division, Pulivendula
R.O.No.-2165/CL/AD/11/1/2021-22 Dt. 26-11-2021

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‘Quality edu is right in AP’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Asserting that the State government has made quality education a right to the students, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy said the government has put in efforts to bring in a radical transformation of school education with a long-time objective of preparing the students of Andhra Pradesh for a global citizen with bright future.

Concluding the short discussion on ‘Education’ in the Legislative Assembly here on Friday, the Chief Minister listed out various initiatives taken up by the government in the last two-and-a-half years in education sector.

The Chief Minister said the State government had come up with ‘Right to English Medium Education’ for the bright future of the students and added that 96 percent of parents’ committees voted in favour of English-medium education.

He said the schools were categorized into six types as part of academic and administrative reforms and added that they are Satellite Foundational School (PP1 & PP2), Foundational School (PP1, PP2, Class 1 & 2), Foundational School Plus



(PP1, PP2, Classes 1 to 5), Pre High School (Classes 3 to 7/8), High School (Classes 3 to 10) and High School Plus (Classes 3 to 12). He said the government is planning for subject wise teachers from class 3 and limiting one teacher to 20 students in Class 1 and 2, implement CBSE syllabus, and other activities to enhance the efficiency of teaching to the students.

The Chief Minister said the government had spent

Rs.13,023 crore so far benefiting 44.50 lakh mothers thereby benefiting 85 lakh children under Amma Vodi scheme and added that government has taken a decision to implement the mandatory attendance of 75pc to get the benefits of Amma Vodi for this year.

He said the government had also come up with a proposal to offer laptops under this scheme for students of classes IX to XII to transform their

lives digitally. He said the state government has been spending Rs. 1600 crore annually for effective implementation of Jagananna Gorumudda Scheme and added that the programme is being monitored in real time through a mobile application called Integrated MDM Monitoring System (IMMS) and officials are personally checking the quality of food regularly.

He said the state government has given a kit consisting of 3 pairs of uniform, a pair of shoes and two pairs of socks, bilingual textbooks, notebooks, workbooks, and a school belt including a set of 3 masks under Jagananna Vidya Kanuka and added that the government has spent Rs.1,437 crore under this scheme.

Giving credit to the reforms and welfare schemes, the Chief Minister said the enrollment in both government and private schools has been increased to 72,27,000 students at present compared to 70,43,000 in 2018-19 and added the enrolment in only government schools has been increased to 44,39,000 students compared to 37,21,000 students in 2018-19 and the students enrollment has decreased from 31,14,000 in 2018-19 to 26,25,000 students at present.

MOISTURE IN PADDY

More problems in stores for farmers across AP

C PRADEEP KUMAR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Paddy farmers across Andhra Pradesh are worried as they are finding it difficult to sell their crop. The millers have warned the farmers that there should not be more than 17 percent of moisture in the paddy, or it would be rejected. The farmers across the state have appealed to the government to instruct the millers to drop that condition in view of the present weather. Most of the farmers started harvesting late this season due to back-to-back cyclones in November. Paddy is harvested in November in most of the places in the State. Even before the Kharif season harvest began, cyclones lashed the State damaging most of the crops, especially paddy.

For the past two days, the farmers have been busy harvesting as there is no rain. They are facing trouble in getting labourers as the harvest is taking place at a time the second cyclone storm wreaked havoc in many parts of the State, especially the Rayalaseema region.

Generally, farmers prefer the conventional procedure in



paddy harvesting -- cutting the paddy crop, then letting it dry for a few days, bundling and threshing the paddy heap and selling the grains that will take a weeks’ time. With repeated cyclone storms and unavailability of farm labourers, the farmers are forced to opt for mechanised harvesting that will take just a few hours. The issue with mechanised harvesting is that the grain will have more moisture, which is being objected to by the

millers. If the farmers have to sell the paddy with less than 17 per cent moisture to the millers in the present climatic condition, they should spend some money for the drying process and there are very few drying mills in the State.

M Jeevan Rao, a farmer from Krishna district, said that last year also, the cyclones troubled the farmers during harvest time. Normally, by the end of November, the

harvest will be completed as well as the sowing of the Rabi crop. But this year, the harvest is not over even in the last week of November. “The weather forecast is that there will be more rain for one or two days, which is causing big worry,” he added.

He said that the government should instruct the millers to take the paddy without imposing any condition pertaining to moisture. He said that due to lack of farm labour, he has opted for mechanised harvesting, and the grain has more than 17 per cent moisture. The paddy from mechanised harvesting should be dried for about five days to decrease the moisture to 17 percent. To get the paddy dried, it would cost about Rs 100 per bag which is an additional burden for the farmers.

Meanwhile, Telangana State officials stopped a few trucks loaded with paddy coming from Andhra Pradesh at checkpoints suspecting that the paddy was being smuggled into their State to be sold as a locally grown variety. The lorry drivers alleged that they were harassed for no reason, despite furnishing all the required documents.

District-level open table tennis tourney conducted

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

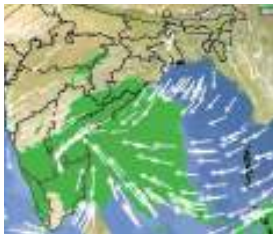
Bharatiya Vidya Bhavan’s Public School in the city organised the District Open Table Tennis Tournament in association with Visakhapatnam District Table Tennis Association on Friday. The event is an extension of its Sports Academy activities. The tournament was inaugurated by Suneel Mahanty, president, Visakhapatnam District Basketball Association. On

the occasion, he appreciated the efforts and encouragement of the management in promoting sports and games among the students. He also spoke about the importance of being inquisitive for lifelong learning.

School Correspondent, T.S.R.Prasad, Chairman, District Olympic Association and the Secretary, D.S.Varma, Vice President, Visakhapatnam District Cricket Association and D.V.S.Y.Sharma and prin-

cipal of the school Shimpy Kumari graced the programme.

The coaches, teachers and parents also attended the programme. Around 100 students from 11 different schools participated in the tournament including Siva Sivani Public School, Timpany, Little Angels, St. Anns, Sri Sarada Vidyanilayam, KV-1, KV-2, KV Waltair, Presidential, Pollock’s, Jnana Niketan and others.



Heavy rain forecast in coastal AP

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A cyclonic circulation lies over Comorin Area and adjoining Sri Lanka coasts and strong northeasterly winds are prevailing over the Tamil Nadu coast and south coastal Andhra Pradesh at lower levels.

Under its influence light to moderate fairly widespread rainfall is very likely over Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and scattered to fairly widespread rainfall over coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam, Rayalaseema in the next four to five days.

Isolated heavy rainfalls are very likely over coastal Andhra Pradesh and Yanam and Rayalaseema from November 27. Fishermen are advised not to venture into the sea from November 27 till December 2.

Meanwhile, a low-pressure area is likely to form over the south Andaman sea around November 29. It is likely to become more marked and move west-northwestwards during subsequent 48 hours.

Floods damage: Horticulture crops over 35,437 ha damaged

PNS ■ GUNTUR

As per preliminary reports received from the district officers, horticulture crops in 35437.88 hectares were damaged due to floods, heavy rains and winds in the State in November.

Major crops affected are onion, banana, chilli, tomato, turmeric and chrysanthemum flowers. Minor damage was noticed in crops like mango, coconut, pomegranate, betelvine, sapota, guava, tapioca, watermelon and muskmelon.

Horticulture Assistant Director M Ratnachari said here on Friday that onion crop in 6465.80 hectares, banana in 3125.19 hectares, chilli in 14756.84 hectares, tomato in 1772.80 hectares, turmeric in 1200.20 hectares, flowers in 1926.33 hectares and vegetables in 4200.33 hectares were destroyed. Crops like papaya, mango, sweet orange, acid lime, betelvine, guava and coconut were damaged in 1987.69 hectares.

He said that onion crop was in various stages from transplanting to harvesting in Prakasam, YSR Kadapa, Chittoor, Anantapur and Kurnool districts. The crop was lodged, inundated and submerged in the flood and rain water. The assessment of loss is progressing. The banana



crop was destroyed in YSR Kadapa, Ananthapuram, Kurnool and SPSR Nellore. The crops in most places were in the harvesting stage.

Chilli in the flowering stage were damaged in Guntur, Chittoor, Nellore, Ananthapuram, Kurnool, YSR Kadapa and Prakasam districts. The tomato crop suffered severe damage and it was in the harvesting stage in Chittoor, Anantapur and Kurnool districts. The turmeric crop was affected in 1200.20 hectares in Kadapa district where the crop was in corn formation stage.

Vegetables including okra, brinjal and tapioca were in Nellore,

Prakasam, Ananthapuram, Kadapa, and Kurnool districts. Flowers like chrysanthemum, marigold and lily cultivated in Chittoor, Ananthapuram and Kadapa districts were also destroyed. They were in the budding stage at most of the places.

Due to heavy rains, winds and rainfall received from November 19, horticulture crops in 35437.88 hectares inundated in eight districts -- East Godavari, Guntur, Prakasam, Chittoor, Nellore, Ananthapuram, Kadapa and Kurnool. An amount of Rs 57.55 crore is required for the restoration of the horticulture sector, the Assistant Director added.



Bhuvaneswari responds to ‘inappropriate comments’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Nara Bhuvaneswari, managing trustee of NTR Memorial Trust, on Friday expressed her gratitude to one and all for taking out protests against the ‘inappropriate comments’ made against her in the AP Legislative Assembly. Bhuvaneswari, daughter of NTR and wife of TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu, said she could never forget how everybody supported her and responded as if the humiliation was caused to their own mother or sister or daughter.

In a statement here, NTR’s daughter said: ‘Our mother and father raised us with values since our childhood. Everybody should strive for promoting ethical values in society. Help should be extended to all those who are in pain and suffering.’

Referring to the comments in the House, Bhuvaneswari said nobody should resort to any activities that would undermine the personality or respect of others. She prayed that nobody else should be subjected to the kind of insult that was caused to her.

TDP blames sand mafia, YSRCP leaders for floods

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The TDP politburo presided over by the Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu blamed the sand mafia and ruling YSRCP leaders for preventing timely releases of floodwaters that led to breaches to Pincha and Annamayya projects resulting in destruction in 6 villages in Rajampet in Kadapa district.

Addressing a press conference here, TDP politburo member Kalva Srinivasulu said their party discussed wide-ranging public issues and multiple failures of the Jaganmohan Reddy regime. The Government machinery miserably failed in the latest floods. During the visit of Chandrababu Naidu, local people narrated how they would have suffered if the NGOs, philanthropists and local leaders did not extend help.

Listing out the demands made by the TDP politburo, Srinivasulu said that the YCP Government should increase crop compensation in flood-hit areas to Rs. 25,000 each for groundnut and paddy, Rs. 30,000 for banana and so on. At least Rs. 1 lakh assistance

Local people narrated how they would have suffered if the NGOs, philanthropists and local leaders did not extend help.

should be given for house collapses and Rs. 25,000 assistance for each handloom worker’s family.

The TDP politburo demanded Rs 25 lakh ex gratia for each death in floods and Rs 1 lakh for seriously injured persons. Chandrababu Naidu would write a comprehensive letter to the Chief Secretary on the need for flood relief.

The TDP leaders demanded a white paper on the financial situation in the wake of ‘alarming observations’ made by CAG on the decreasing revenues and financial mismanagement in Andhra Pradesh. The CAG passed worrisome comments based on a comparison of revenues during 2018-19 and 2019-20. The CAG also commented on how the AP regime was undermining the legislature in its bid to mismanage State finances.

Unanimous election of 11 YSRCP MLC nominees just a formality

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The 11 YSRCP candidates are all set to be elected unanimously to the Legislative Council under the local area authorities’ quota. With this, YSRCP’s strength in the Legislative Council will go up to 32 after the due procedure on their election is completed and they take oath.

An official announcement in the form of a notification from the poll notification is awaited. An independent candidate who was in fray from Anantapur local bodies’ quota

had withdrawn his nomination on Friday, the last day to withdraw the nominations.

Due to lack of strength, TDP didn’t field its candidates.

Indukuri Raghu Raju of Vizianagaram, Varudhu Kalyani and Vamshi Krishna Yadav of Vishakhapatnam, Anantha Babu (East Godavari), Talasila Raghuram and Mondithoka Arun Kumar (Krishna), Ummareddy Venkateswarulu and Murugudu Hanumantha Rao (Guntur), Thumati Madhava Rao (Prakasam), Barath

Krishna (Chittoor), Y Siva Rami Reddy (Anantapur) are the eleven candidates who will be elected unanimously.

As per the schedule released by the poll authorities the notification was issued on November 16 and the last date for nominations was November 23. Scrutiny was conducted on November 24 and the last date for withdrawal of nominations is November 26.

The polling was to be held if necessary on December 10 and the counting of votes was to take place on December 14.

Vijayawada rly division celebrates Constitution Day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

South Central Railway, Vijayawada Division, celebrated National Constitution Day all over the division on Friday. Shivendra Mohan, Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada Division, read out the Preamble of the Constitution along with D Srinivasa Rao, Additional Divisional Railway Manager, Infrastructure and M Srikanth, Additional Divisional Railway Manager, Operations and other Branch Officers and staff who assembled.

After reading out the pream-

ble Officer’s witnessed the address of Ram Nath Kovind, President of India and Narendra Modi, Prime Minister of India on the eve of 72nd Indian Constitution Day. Constitution Day (Samvidhan Divas) is celebrated in India on 26 November every year to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India by the Constituent Assembly of India on that day in 1949. The Constitution came into effect on 26 January 1950.

The Government of India declared 26 November as Constitution Day in 2015, in

tune with the 125th birth anniversary of Dr. BR Ambedkar, the architect of the Indian Constitution. Carrying this initiative forward, the Union Government decided to celebrate the 72nd Anniversary of the adoption of the Constitution of India on 26th November 2021.

As part of the celebration of Constitution Day, Staff and Officers at Stations, Workshops and Depots of the Division read out the preamble today. Many of the staff also participated in the Read Preamble and Quiz on Indian Constitution contest

through MyGov.in the portal. Display of banners and posters on Constitution have been displayed at Railway stations/trains to bring awareness on the Constitution Day amongst the passengers.

GR Sudheer Kumar, Sr DPO, P Bhaskar Reddy, Sr DCM, E Santharam, Sr DEN, Co-ord, S Muni Reddy, Sr DEE, Maintenance, R Viswanath Reddy, Sr DSTE, J Sekhar Babu, Sr DEE, TRD, M Ravi Kiran, Sr DME, K Sridhar, DEN, East, \ Nusrat M Mandrupkar, PRO Other Branch Officers and Staff participated.



Sharpen focus on welfare of weaker sections: Collectors

PNS ■ ONGOLE / KADAPA / GUNTUR

The Collectors of Prakasam and YSR Kadapa districts have emphasised upon the need for laying more focus on the uplift of weaker sections and reiterated that the government is committed for the welfare of underprivileged sections.

Indian Constitution Day programmes were held in Ongole, Kadapa and Guntur on Friday. In Ongole, Collector Pravin Kumar, SP Malika Garg, Mayor G Sujata and JC J Venkata Murali paid tributes to the architect of India Constitution Dr. B R Ambedkar by garlanding his statue on the occasion of Indian Constitution Day on Friday.

Later, Collector Pravin Kumar held a review meeting with the officials of social, tribal, backward, minority and physically disabled and social welfare hostels. He administered a pledge with the officials that they would work drawing inspiration from the Constitution.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that the SCs and STs constitute 28 percent of the district's total population and they would be educated on the welfare schemes being implemented by the government to benefit them.

The Collector said that the



Prakasam District Collector Pravin Kumar and SP Malika Garg paying tributes to architect of Indian Constitution Dr. B R Ambedkar on the occasion of Constitution Day. (Right) YSR Kadapa District Collector V Vijaya Rama Raju garlanding the statue of Dr. B R Ambedkar in Kadapa on Friday.



children of SCs and STs should not be away from education. He asked them to avail the Jagananna Vidya Deevena and Vasati Deevena schemes to pursue education. He directed the officials to ensure that there would be no dropouts from schools. He said that medical check-ups should be conducted to the children who are staying in the social welfare hospital.

In Kadapa, Collector V Vijaya Rama Raju paid tributes to Dr. B R Ambedkar by garlanding the statue here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, he called upon all to

protest the Indian Constitution and abide by the principles of the Constitution. The Collector said that the Indian Constitution was dedicated to the Nation on November 26, 1949. SC Corporation ED Dr. H Venkata Subbaiah, RDO Malola and a host of officials participate in the programme.

In Guntur, MLC Lella Appi Reddy paid tributes to Ambedkar by garlanding his portrait in the YSRCP state office in Tadepalli today. Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Indian Constitution is as holy as the

Bhagavad Gita, Bible and Quran. He said that Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy is pursuing the ideology of Ambedkar. AP has earned a reputation in protecting social equality. Many steps were taken by the Jaganmohan Reddy government to eradicate poverty and uplift of underprivileged sections, he claimed.

MLA Dr. M Nagarjuna, MLA Dr. M Jaganmohan Rao and Navaratnala programme Executive vice-chairman Narayanamurthy and a host of other leaders took part in the programme.

Farmer records selfie video before ending life

PNS ■ ONGOLE

A young farmer committed suicide while recording his actions with his mobile phone at Perikapalem village in Ponnaluru mandal.

Police said here on Friday that the deceased, Kunku Venkateswarulu (34), had a three-and-a-half-acre farm and leased out some more land. He borrowed money from private moneylenders to raise the crop.

However, he incurred a huge loss due to rains. Unable to bear the pressure being mounted by the moneylenders, he consumed pesticide. He recorded himself consuming the poison after narrating his pathetic tale, and the video clip went viral on social media.

The family members shifted Venkateswarulu to a private hospital in Kandukur, but he died on Friday. The deceased is survived by his wife and two children. A pall of gloom descended over the village following the suicide of the young farmer. The police registered a case and shifted the body for post-mortem.



Sand mafia interests protected at people's cost: Manohar

PNS ■ NELLORE

Janasena political affairs committee chairman Nadendla Manohar alleged that the officials gave importance only to protect the interests of sand mafia in lifting the crest gates of reservoirs, disregarding the lives of people.

Addressing party workers here on Friday, Manohar said that a lot of delays took place in lifting crest gates to release heavy inflows downstream. The officials had given importance to protecting the interests of the sand mafia in lifting the crest gates resulting in the floods creating havoc destroying villages.

The officials utterly failed in floodwater management. Many people were killed and huge property losses took place in Chief Minister Jagan

Mohan Reddy's native district YSRKadapa but he had not visited the affected areas personally so far.

Manohar said that the 68-year-old Tamil Nadu Chief Minister had been in the people and monitoring relief operations for the last few days but the young AP Chief Minister did not show such interest to visit the affected areas and infuse confidence among the victims.

"The government machinery has miserably failed in protecting the people and extending relief to those in the flood-affected areas. The Minister and MLAs have not been seen in the affected areas. Only voluntary organisations and some individuals are extending help to the flood victims", he slammed.

Mr. Manohar appreciated the Janasena activists for extend-

ing help to the flood victims. He handed over Rs 5 lakh insurance cheque to a bereaved family.

Earlier, the Janasena leader visited some of the flood-affected areas in the Nellore district on Friday. He visited Janardhan Reddy Nagar colony, Bhagat Singh Nagar colony in Kovur constituency and saw the inundated house sites given to the poor. He video graphed the inundated house sites. He interacted with the victims and knew their ordeals.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Jagan Reddy government deceived people in the name of Jagananna colonies and house sites for the poor. He alleged that irrigation tanks were converted as house sites and they were sold the land to the government itself, he flayed.



144 kg of marijuana seized, five arrested

PNS ■ ELURU

The police seized 144 kg of ganja while being transported in a lorry illegally at Chebrole, and arrested five persons.

At a press conference here on Friday, Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma said that on a tip-off, the police team conducted checking of vehicles on the directions of sub-divisional police officer O Dilp Kiran.

The police found 144 kg of ganja, worth about Rs.8.64 lakh, concealed in a specially made secret chamber in the lorry. It was being transport-

ed to Coimbatore in Tamil Nadu from Visakhapatnam. Of the five persons arrested, two belong to Coimbatore and the remaining three persons are from AP.

The SP said that one of the accused, Anaparti Ramana, procured the ganja from Visakhapatnam Agency areas and sold it to Prem Kumar and Dhamodharan of Coimbatore. The SP said that in 2021, the WG police seized a total of 13,058 kg ganja, arrested 129 persons and seized 38 vehicles. The SP appreciated Chebrole SI K Swamy and other police personnel.

Man arrested for sexual assault on minor boy

HYDERABAD: The Chilkalguda Police on Thursday booked a 24-year-old man under POCSO Act for allegedly sodomising a minor boy in Parsigutta of Chilkalguda on Wednesday. According to the police, the accused person identified as Sathish, 24, a resident of Madhura Nagar Colony, who works at a shop in Parsigutta, noticed the boy playing in front of his house and took him to a nearby spot by luring him with a chocolate. He overpowered and sexually assaulted him, following which the boy ran to his house nearby and informed his parents. The parents of the victim have lodged a complaint with police, who have taken the accused into custody.

Rich tributes paid to Ambedkar

PNS ■ ONGOLE

On the occasion of the 72nd Constitution Day of India, Prakasam District SP Malika Garg paid rich tributes to the chief architect of the Indian constitution Dr. B.R. Ambedkar by garlanding his portrait at the District Police Office.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP said, "We celebrate the Constitution Day every year on November 26 to commemorate the adoption of the Constitution of India. The Constitution was adopted by the Constituent Assembly on November 26, 1949, giving equal rights to all the people of the country."

The SP called upon everyone to realise the need to carry out their responsibilities and to uphold constitutional values while enjoying their constitu-

tional rights. The SP said that the role of the Police Department was important in the protection of the Constitution and the police should provide responsible services in establishing peace and security, crime control and protection of the fundamental and constitutional rights of the citizens.

Later, the SP administered the constitutional pledge to officers and staff at the District Police Office. Similarly, SHOs, CIs, DSPs and police personnel of all police stations in the district made the pledge along with students and the public.

OSD K. Chowdeshwari, AR ASP Ashok Babu, DSB DSP B. Mariyadas, AR DSP K. Raghavendra Rao, DPO AO K. Sulochana, SB-2 CI N. Srikanth Babu, RI Haribabu, police staff and DPO staff were present on the occasion.



Centre wants AP govt to transfer land for Tribal varsity

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ravi Shankar, Secretary to the Government of India, Ministry of Human Resources Development, Department of Higher Education on Friday wrote a letter to Satish Chandra, Special Chief Secretary, Andhra Pradesh state government, on the establishment of Central Tribal University at Vizianagaram district. He said that he would meet the Site Selection Committee (SSC) for the establishment of the Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh (CTUAP) and convey the approval of the Central University for the establishment of the said university at Chinnu Medapalli Revenue village and Marrivalasa village in Vizianagaram district.

In his letter, he requested Satish Chandra to initiate necessary action for the transfer of the identified land in the name of Central Tribal University of Andhra Pradesh at the earliest.

1,208 cases of crime against women settled

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In all, 1,800 cases of crime were registered against women from June 15, 2020, to 24 November 2021 in Vijayawada city after B Sreenivasulu, Commissioner of Police, assumed charge. As many as 1,208 cases were settled and 592 cases are under investigation.

According to a press note, out of the 1,800 cases, 423 cases were reported in the West division, 108 in the South division, 285 cases in the North division, 355 cases in the Central division and 228 cases in the East division.

Under POCSO Act, 64 cases were registered from June 15, 2020, till date. Charge sheets were filed in 52 of them while four were referred. Nine cases are yet to be settled. During this period, 43 rape cases were registered and charge sheets were filed 29 of them. While four of them were referred cases, 10 were yet to be finalised. A total

of 1,908 cases were registered under the Gaming Act and Rs 1.38 crore cash was seized, the press release said.

The press note said a total of 23,876 petty cases are reported within the limits of the Vijayawada Commissionerate while the conviction was given in 14,326 cases and 9,550 cases are under trial.

Under the MV Act, 4,06,086 cases were registered in 2020 and a fine of Rs 6.18 crore was collected while 6,54,873 cases were booked in 2021 till date and Rs 11.95 crore was collected.

As many as 338 cases were filed over gutka smuggling and 538 persons were arrested. In this connection, 64.61 lakh gutka sachets worth Rs 5.6 crore, and 38 vehicles were seized.

Many cases were registered in connection with arrack and illegal liquor transportation by the Vijayawada police, the press note added.

Vignan student gets plum job

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A student of Vignan's Foundation for Science, Technology & Research (Deemed to be University) has got a lucrative placement at an annual salary of Rs 15 lakh.

In-charge Vice-Chancellor Dr. K V Krishna Kishore said that Sripathi Vamsi Krishna, studying fourth-year engineering, got a lucrative job at the multinational company Sysco-Tech Systems. He has been offered Rs 15 lakh annual salary. Vamshi Krishna has come from a rural background but excelled in academic activities including participating in campus recruitment training programmes and completing various courses including NPTEL.

Vignan has offered him a 50 percent discount in the university fees. Vignan institutions chairman Dr. Lavu Rathaiah congratulates Vamshi Krishna.

Bankers asked to sanction loans for TIDCO houses

PNS ■ ELURU

District Collector Kartikeya Mishra asked the bankers to sanction loans for the beneficiaries of TIDCO houses.

Addressing the special DCC bankers meeting, the Collector said that West Godavari has stood in number one position in sanctioning loans to TIDCO beneficiaries.

He told the bank officials that so far Rs 36.36 crore has been sanctioned by various banks to 1879 people in our district. He said that the bank loans should be extended to all those who are eligible. He pointed out that some banks were lagging behind in lending and those banks should sanction all loans. He warned that action would be taken against the banks that did not comply with SLBC regulations. He said some private sector banks were lagging behind in granting loans.

The said action would be taken against these banks if they had not yet started granting loans.

He said the target was to dis-



burse loans of Rs 880 crore to the CCRC card farmers this year and so far Rs 197 crore has been extended to 43,525 CCRC cardholders. The Collector said that Rs 671.47 crore was set as a target to disburse loans to 67,147 rural self-help groups for the year 2021-22 but so far Rs 760.88 crore had been disbursed to 28,104 self-help group women so far. He said that Rs 123 crore

was set as a target to disburse loans to 4,100 self-help groups in urban areas and Rs 128.76 crore had been extended so far to 2358 self-help group women. Joint Collectors Dr. B R Ambedkar, Suraj Ganore, DCC convener and Union Bank of India regional head I Satyanarayana Murthy and lead district manager S A Venkateswara Rao were among those who present.

Illicit liquor brewing dens raided

PNS ■ ELURU

The police have destroyed 4,600 litres of fermented jaggery wash following raids on illicit liquor brewing dens in Prathikalanka village and seized the equipment used for the purpose.

On the direction of Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma, Special Enforcement Bureau

Additional SP C Jaya Ramaraju and Assistant Commissioner Srinivasa Chowdry, the SEB team led by SEB Superintendent Aruna Kumar went to island villages located in Kolleru Lake on country boats and conducted the raids. The SEB team found illicit liquor being distilled at the isolated areas in the island villages.



S'chalam land row: Justice still eludes villagers

Continued from Page 1

The YSRCP government has formed a high-power committee to solve the issue without affecting the residents of Pancha Gramalu (the five villages). However, due to various reasons, the committee has failed to do so.

The high-power committee led by the Minister for Endowments and comprising elected representatives and senior officials from all the departments concerned yet again met in Amaravathi on Thursday night. After the meeting, the YSRCP heavy weight and Rajya Sabha member V. Vijaya Sai Reddy said that the committee discussed the issue elaborately and decided to put an end to the over-three-decades-long dispute.

During his marathon padayatra, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan

Mohan Reddy had promised the villagers to settle the decades-old burning issue soon after coming to power. However, due to various reasons including the COVID-19 pandemic, the high-power committee could not meet.

During its first meeting, the high-power committee had proposed to give about 600 acres of land to Simhachalam Devasthanam as an alternative for facilitating regularisation of temple land, occupied by the residents of five villages surrounding the temple.

"Pancha Gramalu" stands for Purushothapuram, Vepagunta, Adavivaram, Gopalapatnam and Cheemalapalli villages belonging to the Simhachalam Devasthanam. However, in 1997 the then TDP government issued orders for regularisation of the lands levying an additional 70 percent on the gov-

ernment price. Later, the orders were suspended by Y S Rajasekhara Reddy and assured the villagers to settle the issue with modifications. The Congress governments during 2009-2014 completely neglected the issue, while the TDP government in 2014-19 failed to solve it.

Over 35,000 families having title deeds for their lands are now in a catch-22 situation. The government banned land registrations and even mortgage of properties in the five villages. It means that they have sufficient records and pay GVMC taxes and power bills, but still have no right over the property. They pin their hopes on this land to find money for their children's education and marriage. They trusted the Jagan Mohan Reddy Government, but in vain.

The high-power committee

discussed four major points in the meeting. The government would request the court to dispose of the case at the earliest. According to the records, 12,149 people are residing in the five villages and the demand is to regularise their occupations. A large number of houses have been damaged and for repairs, the owners seek permission from the Devasthanam. The committee has decided to give permissions for repairs and to construct extensions to the houses and has given a report to the government in this regard. The committee has also decided to construct a massive compound wall fixing the boundaries of the Devasthanam lands, at a cost of Rs.20 crore, Vijaya Sai Reddy told the media last night.

However, the residents of the five villages have termed the meeting just a waste of time.

INDIA CORNER

SC seeks Centre, Rakesh Asthana's replies on NGO's plea against him

The Supreme Court on Friday agreed to hear the plea of an NGO challenging the Delhi High Court order which upheld the Centre's decision to appoint senior IPS officer Rakesh Asthana as Delhi Police Commissioner. A bench of Justices D Y Chandrachud and A S Bopanna issued notice to the Centre and Asthana and sought their response on the plea of the NGO, the Centre for Public Interest Litigation The NGO has filed a writ petition and an appeal against the appointment of Asthana as Delhi Police Commissioner four days before his superannuation on July 31 Advocate Prashant Bhushan, appearing for the NGO, said that they have filed the appeal as directed by the top court on November 18 Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for Centre and Senior advocate Mukul Rohatgi, representing Asthana said that they would file their replies in two weeks.



Morocco is working on opening a consulate in Bengaluru

Morocco's Ambassador to India, Mohamed Maliki on Friday said his country is working on opening a consulate in Bengaluru, as part of a plan to increase its presence in India. A high-level trade delegation from the Kingdom of Morocco, led by Maliki, is on a six-day visit to India, beginning with Bengaluru, to increase bilateral trade between two countries, through 'Morocco Now' - the national brand that promotes investments and exports, a release said. In Bengaluru, the delegation will engage in a series of meetings with the Government of Karnataka officials, industrialists and other professionals, it said, adding that 'Morocco Now' roadshows will also be held in Mumbai and New Delhi with a series of similar meetings in these cities as well.



Mughal Road in Agra is now 'Maharaja Agrasen Road'

The Mughal Road in Agra city has been renamed as 'Maharaja Agrasen Road', Agra Mayor Naveen Jain said on Friday. The road has been renamed on demand of the followers of Maharaja Agrasen who live nearby the road in Kamla Nagar locality here, said Jain. On Thursday, the name of the 'Sultanganj Ki Pulia' was also changed to 'Vikal Chok', he said. The Mughal Road name change was announced in presence of Maharaja Agrasen followers and locals, the Mayor said. "There was a request to change the name of Mughal Road to Maharaja Agrasen by the followers of Maharaja Agrasen. A majority of these followers live nearby the road in the Kamla Nagar area through which the road passes," Jain told PTI. "After a demand to rename the road came, a proposal was passed by the executive committee of the Agra Nagar Nigam on September 27. After that the members of the house passed the proposal," he said.



CBI gets sanction to prosecute retired High Court judge in graft case

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has got the sanction to prosecute retired Allahabad High Court Judge Justice S N Shukla in a corruption case for allegedly favouring a private medical college in his orders, officials said.

The CBI had applied for a go ahead from the Central government to prosecute the retired judge on April 16 this year, in accordance with the Prevention of Corruption Act, they said.

With the government now giving its nod, the CBI can proceed with a chargesheet against the retired judge.

Besides Justice Shukla of the Lucknow bench of the Allahabad High Court, the agency had also named retired Chhattisgarh High Court judge I M Qudusi, Bhagwan Prasad Yadav and Palash Yadav of the Prasad Education Trust, the trust itself and private persons Bhavna Pandey and Sudhir Giri in the FIR, they said.



The CBI does not need sanction to prosecute Qudusi as he was a retired judge at the time of the alleged offence and acting in the capacity of a private person. Shukla joined the Allahabad High Court on October 5, 2005 and retired on July 17, 2020, according to the High Court website.

Justice Shukla, who was heading a division bench in the high court, had allegedly defied the categorical restraint orders passed by an apex court bench led by the chief justice of India to permit private colleges to

admit students for the 2017-18 academic session.

Then CJI Dipak Misra had taken note and constituted a three-member in-house committee to look into the allegations.

The committee, comprising Madras High Court Chief Justice Indira Banerjee, Sikkim High Court Chief Justice S K Agnihotri and Madhya Pradesh High Court Judge Justice P K Jaiswal, had concluded there was sufficient substance in the allegations contained in the complaint

against Justice Shukla and that the aberrations were serious enough to call for initiation of proceedings for his removal.

After getting the report, Justice Misra in 2018 had asked Justice Shukla to resign or seek voluntary retirement but he refused to do so following which judicial work was taken away from him.

On March 23, 2019 Justice Shukla wrote to then CJI Ranjan Gogoi seeking permission to start his judicial work in the Allahabad High Court. Justice Gogoi then wrote to the prime minister to remove Justice Shukla.

When the CJI writes to the president and the prime minister for removal of a high court judge, the Rajya Sabha chairperson appoints a three-judge inquiry committee in consultation with the CJI under the provisions of the Judges (Enquiry) Act, 1968 to look into the allegations.

However, the process could not be completed.

The CBI booked Justice Shukla with other accused in December 2019 under Section 120B of the IPC (criminal conspiracy) and provisions of the Prevention of Corruption Act.

After filing the FIR, the CBI conducted searches at multiple locations in Lucknow, Meerut and Delhi, officials said.

It is alleged that the Prasad Institute of Medical Sciences was debarred by the Centre from admitting students due to substandard facilities and non-fulfilment of the required criteria in May 2017, along with 46 other medical colleges that were also debarred on similar grounds, the officials said.

The decision to debar was challenged by the trust before the Supreme Court through a writ petition, they added.

Subsequently, a conspiracy was hatched by those named in the FIR and the petition withdrawn with the court's permission.

Tributes paid to martyrs on 13th anniversary of 26/11

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Floral tributes were paid on Friday to the martyrs who laid down their lives while fighting terrorists who attacked Mumbai on November 26, 2008.

Maharashtra Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar and state Home Minister Dilip Walse Patil paid their respects at the memorial at the police headquarters in south Mumbai.

The martyrs' memorial has been relocated from the original site at Police Gymkhana in Marine Drive to the police headquarters at Crawford Market because of the ongoing work on the Coastal Road project, an official said.

Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, who is recuperating in a Mumbai hospital after spine surgery, also remembered the 26/11 martyrs. In a tweet, Thackeray said the terror attack was a clear example of the "cowardly mindset" of terrorists.



The 13th anniversary event of the deadly terror attack was attended by a limited number of people in view of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Family members of some of the martyred police personnel also paid tributes at the memorial.

Tributes were also paid at Cama and Albless Hospital, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus and near the Gateway of India, some of the places in south Mumbai that were targeted by the terrorists

during the 26/11 attack. Homage was also paid at Girgaum Chowpatty.

Banners and hoardings of martyrs were put up at various locations in south Mumbai, where floral tribute was paid by common citizens. As a mark of gratitude, people were seen offering flowers to the on-duty security personnel at the Gateway of India.

Police were deployed at various key locations in the city as a precautionary measure.

Cong issues whip to party MPs on presence in Parl

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress issued a three-line whip on Friday to its MPs, asking them to be present in both houses of Parliament on Monday, when a bill to repeal three farm laws will be brought.

The opposition party has also asked its MPs to support its view and remain present in Parliament from 11 am onwards.

The winter session of Parliament begins on November 29 and the government will table a bill to repeal the three farm laws.

"Some very important issues will be taken up for discussion in the Rajya Sabha on Monday, November 29, 2021. All members of the Congress party in the Rajya Sabha are requested to kindly remain present in the house from 11 AM onwards till the adjournment of the house on Monday, Nov 29, 2021 without fail and support the party stand," the whip issued by Congress leader Jairam Ramesh to the party members in the Upper House



A similar whip was issued for the Lok Sabha MPs of the Congress by party leader K Suresh.

Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge has also written to the leaders of various political parties, urging them to participate in a meeting of opposition parties on Monday to draw synergy in the opposition strategy in Parliament.

The ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) has already issued a whip to its members in the Rajya Sabha, asking them to remain present in the House on the first day of the session.

Speaker decries Oppn's absence at Constitution Day event in LS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing "pain" over opposition parties boycotting the Constitution Day event organised by the Lok Sabha Secretariat on Friday, Speaker Om Birla said staying away from such non-partisan events held by Parliament is not good for the health of democracy.

Around 15 opposition parties, including the Congress, boycotted the programme organised by the Lok Sabha to celebrate the Samvidhan Samman Divas.

Besides the Congress, the Samajwadi Party (SP), the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP), the Communist Party of India (CPI), the Communist Party of India (Marxist), the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK), the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), the Shiv Sena, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), the Trinamool Congress (TMC), the Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD), the Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) and the Indian Union Muslim League (IUML) stayed away from the event.

Speaking to reporters after the programme, Birla said, "This culture of boycotting non-partisan events, which are of national interest, is not



good for the health of democracy."

He said he will sit with the representatives from the opposition parties and discuss how it can be ensured that all political parties attend such events.

"I am deeply hurt as the presiding officer of the Lok Sabha that several political parties boycotted the event organised by Parliament to commemorate the Constitution Day," Birla said. He found it strange that the parties boycotting the event did not even inform him about their decision.

"If they had some issues, they should have discussed it with me. I would have tried to resolve their issues so that they could attend the event," the Lok Sabha speaker said.

The people of the country expect Parliament to function in an orderly manner

and all political parties should try to ensure that the House runs smoothly, he added.

Arrangements were made for Leader of Opposition in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury and his counterpart in the Rajya Sabha Mallikarjun Kharge -- both from the Congress -- to sit on the dais. It was also intimated to both leaders.

Speaking at the event, Birla said the Constitution is like a modern version of the Bhagavad Gita that motivates every Indian to work for the nation.

"The Constitution of India is like a modern version of the Gita for us that motivates us to work for the nation. If each one of us commits to working for the country, we can build 'Ek Bharat, Shreshtha Bharat'," he said. Birla further said the Constitution upholds the unity and dignity of the citizens of the country and it is the moral duty of every citizen to preserve it.

"Symbolising the collective consciousness of the countrymen, this holy book empowers us with rights and also determines our duties towards the country.

India asks Pak to expedite 26/11 trial

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India cannot forget the wounds of the Mumbai terror attacks, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Friday on the 13th anniversary of the dastardly strike even as a senior diplomat of the Pakistani High Commission was summoned to convey that Islamabad must ensure expeditious trial in the case.

In a note verbale handed over to the diplomat, the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) also asked Pakistan to abide by its commitment to not allow territories under its control for terrorism against India.

In a video message released by the MEA on the 26/11 attacks anniversary, Modi, paying homage to the victims, said today's India is combating terrorism with a "new policy and new ways".

"I pay homage to all those who died in the Mumbai attack. Many brave police personnel were also martyred in the strike. I also pay homage to them. India cannot forget the wounds of the Mumbai attack. Today's India is combating terrorism with a new policy and new ways," the prime minister said. In a statement, the MEA said a note verbale reiterating

India's call for an expeditious trial in the Mumbai terror attack case, and calling on Pakistan to abide by its commitment to not allow territories under its control for terrorism against India was handed over to the Pakistani diplomat.

"It is a matter of deep anguish that even after 13 years of this heinous terror attack, the families of 166 victims from 15 countries across the globe still await closure, with Pakistan showing little sincerity in bringing the perpetrators to justice," it said in a statement.

The MEA asserted that the terror attack was planned, executed and launched from Pakistani territory.

"We once again call on the government of Pakistan to give up double standards and to expeditiously bring the perpetrators of the horrific attack to justice," it said.

"This is not just a matter of Pakistan's accountability to the families of the innocent victims who fell to terrorists, but also an international obligation," the MEA said.

It said India will continue to make every effort to seek justice for the families of the "victims and the martyrs" of the attack.

'Projects tendered during Cong rule will be part of inquiry'

PNS ■ DAVANGERE (KTKA)

Karnataka Chief Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Friday said that projects tendered during the Congress' tenure will be included in the inquiry he has ordered into the charges of corruption levelled by the state contractors association, as he termed the grand old party's demand for President's rule in the state as "ridiculous".

Bommai on Thursday had ordered an inquiry into the charges of corruption levelled by contractors association in their letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, even as a Congress delegation met Governor Thaaarchand Gehlot, urging him to recommend imposition of President Rule in the state, alleging "failure of constitutional machinery". In their letter to the Prime Minister in July, the Karnataka State Contractors Association had claimed harassment by ministers, elected representatives and others, accusing them of demanding up to 30 per cent of the tender amount for approving a contract and 5-6 per cent towards release of 'Letter of Credit' against pending bills.

Thousands throng Singhu border to mark stir anniversary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hundreds of tractors bedecked with lights and posters rolled through the Singhu border protest site as loud Punjabi and Haryanvi songs filled the air on Friday to mark one year of the protest against the three farm laws that the government is set to formally withdraw.

Farmers flaunting colourful turbans, sunshades, long beards and twirling moustaches danced on tractors, distributed sweets and hugged each other to mark the occasion that seemed like a festival.

Thousands of them have flocked to the site over the last few days, buoyed by the government's announcement to repeal the farm laws, to mark the completion of one year of a dogged protest that saw a long dusty patch of the Delhi-



Karnal road between Delhi and Sonapat turn into a makeshift town with bamboo huts and all the basic amenities one could think of. Children and elderly, men and women, carried flags of

their farmer unions and raised slogans of victory "Inquilab Zindabad" and "Mazdoor Kisan Ekta Zindabad" amid passionate non-stop beating of drums.

The assembly area near the

centrestage saw a large gathering resembling the early days of the protest.

The attendees included businessmen, lawyers and teachers among others, who belonged to families of farm-

ers. Sarender Singh (50) from Patiala, who has spent six months at the protest site managing crowd near the centrestage, said, "It's a special day. It's like a festival. It's after long that such a large number of people have gathered here."

The special day called for a special breakfast. "Aaj jalebi, pakode, kheer aur chole poori bane hain," he said.

On Friday morning, farmers held special prayers to pay tributes to those who died during the course of the protest.

Lakhan Singh (45) from Barnala in Punjab was protesting against the farm laws at the Delhi-Haryana border when he lost his father early this year.

"It would have been better had he been here today. But I know his soul will be at peace

now," Lakhan said.

Bhagwan Singh (43) from Mavi village in Patiala lost his friend Najar Singh (35) in the seventh month of the protest and burst into tears remembering him.

"My friend, the sole breadwinner of his family, left behind three small daughters and elderly parents. We miss him," he said.

Farmers remembered how they walked and cycled for days to reach the site of the protest a year ago and kept the fire burning despite the government "trying to scuttle the movement".

Kirpal Singh (57), who reached the Singhu border December last year, showed an injury mark on his right leg he got from police baton.

"Batons, barricades, treats, nails... nothing could stop us. We won't" he said.

India, Russia '2+2' talks on Dec 6

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov and Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu will visit India to hold the inaugural '2+2' ministerial dialogue between the two countries on December 6, the Russian embassy has said.

Lavrov and Shoigu will hold the talks with External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh. Russian President Vladimir Putin is also likely to visit India around December 6 to hold summit talks with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

"On December 6, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov together with Defence Minister Sergey Shoigu will hold talks in

New Delhi with their Indian counterparts S Jaishankar and Rajnath Singh," a spokesperson of the embassy said. He said it is expected that the ministers will have in-depth discussions of the key regional and international issues including the situation in the Asia-Pacific region and developments in Afghanistan and Syria. Russia refers to the Indo-Pacific as Asia-Pacific.

The spokesperson said the two sides are also expected to exchange views on interaction within the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) and Russia-India-China (RIC) trilateral.

"In future, consultations in this format are intended to be organised on a regular basis, alternately in Russia and India," the spokesperson said.

Cash cow

India is far from joining the top milk-exporting nations because of its large domestic demand

This Friday was the birth centenary of India's Milk Man, Verghese Kurien. He was the brain behind 'Operation Flood' and made dairy farming India's biggest self-sustaining industry and the largest employer in the rural sector. With an annual production touching 200 million tonnes, India accounts for over a fifth of the world's milk production. The per capita availability of milk is around 400 grams a day against the world's average of 300 grams. The sector's respected brand is Amul, which stands for Anand Milk Union Limited, managed by the Gujarat Cooperative Milk Marketing Federation that played a pivotal role in the 'White Revolution'. The Milk Man left behind him a proud legacy, but he would, as a man used to look far and ahead, notice several uncanny challenges and controversies facing the dairy sector. India is still far away from joining the ranks of milk exporting nations because much of the production caters to its large domestic demand. India may be self-sufficient in milk production, but only 10 States produce over three-fourths of the total milk. Only nine States compete with the national average when it comes to the per capita availability of milk. Most States still lack a healthy dairy cooperative network. Most farmers in these States do not get remunerative prices. Steps are needed to enhance their return on investment. Take the quality of cows, for example. The yield from indigenous cows is much lower than that of exotic crossbred cows. Crossbreeding is the answer and the country took baby steps only



in 2019 through the Nationwide Artificial Insemination Programme. However, crossbreeding has to first tackle the sensitive issue of India's renewed interest in the socio-cultural and nationalist affinity towards cows and dairy products which has created a political movement for promoting indigenous breeds.

In India, like in the United States, farm animals like cows have a central place in the Indian way of life, politics and culture. The United States has a vast legal framework concerning milk whereas the Indian constitution has a clear provision on cattle welfare. For separate reasons, cows are enmeshed in both countries in exclusionary politics, reflecting existing differences between religious communities and ideologies. The right of farmers to sell ageing cows for slaughter is caught in a Hindu versus Muslim debate, ignoring the role slaughter plays in preserving the species by replacements with younger stock and protecting farmers' livelihoods. A Government move to introduce milk instead of eggs in the mid-day meal scheme in schools has generated debates over milk versus egg and vegetarianism. Currently, milk and dairy products are stuck in a double controversy, with People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) asking Amul not only to switch to vegan milk but also stop cruelty to animals in the dairy industry. And around the corner is another issue with the potential to raise a 'white' storm: including milk in the public distribution system because the poor also have a right to drink milk.

PICTALK



Women make bamboo baskets to sell on the eve of Hosto Silpo Mela, in Kolkata

PTI

Intolerance

More than 70 years since Independence, we as a nation haven't grown up enough to grow together

Where are we going? What have we become? Is this what we've learnt from Hinduism; a religion that teaches tolerance and harmony towards all? What has happened in Gurugram recently yet again proves that we, as a nation, have missed the whole humane point. Certain right-wing Hindu groups on Friday interrupted Muslims while the latter were offering *namaz* (prayers) at a designated open site in Gurugram's Sector 37, leading to tensions yet again. This is not the first time that communal hatred has erupted in Gurugram; several sectors of the region have been witnessing disruptions for the last few months and barely any measures were taken. The Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha in Gurugram, however, had opened its doors for the Muslims to offer their Friday prayers but *namaz* could not be offered in any of the gurdwaras. The right-wing groups creating a hostile environment for the people of a particular community or religion will only drag the country back to square one, from where it all began. Chanting 'Jai Shri Ram' and 'Bharat Mata ki Jai' at those offering *namaz* only shows vulnerability, and continuing the *namaz* despite the chants shows sanctity.

Just a couple of days back, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath — while making a veiled attack on the Samajwadi Party — had said that the nation has to decide "if the sweetness of sugarcane will grow or the followers of Pakistan's founder MA Jinnah will cause mischief" in the State. Training his guns at the Opposition, he made a passionate case to prove that UP was moving ahead on the path of development. Samajwadi Party chief Akhilesh Yadav had earlier in the month equated Jinnah with Mahatma Gandhi, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru, saying that all of them had helped India achieve Independence. The incumbent Chief Minister was apparently peeved over the recent developments involving Akhilesh that involved his meetings with Aam Aadmi Party leader Sanjay Singh and Apna Dal's Krishna Patel as part of his apparent attempts to cobble up alliances with relatively smaller parties to challenge the BJP in the upcoming Assembly elections which are due in the first quarter of 2022. Besides, there are indications that the Samajwadi Party would like to reach out for further alliances. That's all fair game in electoral politics but the moot point here is that votes or the voters should not be mobilised by stirring the communal pot.

Can't expect the Taliban to change

The restrictions are vague and vulnerable to varying interpretations, which would give the Taliban ample opportunity to crack down on anyone



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

It increasingly seems that the Taliban's second innings in power is headed to being a clone of its first (1996-2001). Women had been shorn of all basic human rights — to work, education and even healthcare, during the Taliban's previous tenure. They could also not appear in public unescorted by a "close" male relative — husband, father, son or brother — and wrapped from head to foot in a burqa. Men were deprived of all sources of entertainment and amusement and imprisoned in a life full of taboos. A savage criminal justice system was in place with public executions and punishments like amputation for theft.

Indications that it will be the same this time as well are emerging gradually as restrictions are imposed. The latest, according to the AFP and BBC, are the new "religious guidelines" issued by the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice. These direct Afghanistan's television channels to, among other things, stop showing plays and soap operas featuring women actors. Women journalists and presenters have been ordered to wear Islamic *hijab* on the screen. Films showing Prophet Mohammad or other revered figures are not to be shown, nor should films considered against the principles of Sharia — or Islamic law — and Afghan values. Comedy and entertainment shows that insult religion or may be considered offensive to Afghans are also forbidden from being shown.

The restrictions are vaguely worded and vulnerable to varying interpretations, which would give the Taliban enforcers ample opportunity to crack down on anyone they consider to be an offender. This has already been happening with musicians. While, unlike during Taliban's first innings, music has not been banned, musicians are being harassed. Their establishments are being raided and instruments broken. They live in fear. Many of them are trying to leave the country. There is a growing feeling that music is set to disappear from the lives of Afghans. It would be a tragedy if this hap-



pens. Afghanistan has a vibrant tradition in music, influenced by Indian and Iranian classical music. Besides, it has had a thriving pop music scenario marked by the syncing of electronic instrumental and dance beats with more traditional rhythms.

The justice system also appears to be set to return to what it was under the Taliban's first innings. On September 25, 2021, corpses of four men, alleged kidnappers killed in a shootout with policemen, were hung in public areas at several places in the city of Herat to convey, in the words of the province's deputy governor, Mawlawi Shir Ahmad Mujahir, the "message" that kidnappers would not be tolerated. That this was not an aberration is clear from the fact that it happened just after Mullah Noruddin Turabi, one of the founders of the Taliban and the head of the dreaded Department for the Promotion of Virtue and the Prevention of Vice, which had savagely enforced the draconian rules and laws prevailing during the Taliban's earlier rule, had told the AP's Kathy Gannon during an interview that the punishments administered then will return, though these may not be carried out in pub-

NOTHING MAKES THE TALIBAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN MORE OMINOUSLY CLEAR THAN THE SHUTTING DOWN OF THE MINISTRY OF WOMEN'S AFFAIRS AND THE REINCARNATION OF THE MINISTRY FOR PROMOTION OF VIRTUE AND PREVENTION OF VICE

lic. "Cutting off hands is very necessary for security", he had said, adding that it had a deterrent effect.

The media is under severe pressure. The 11-point guidelines announced by Qari Muhammad Yusuf Ahmed, the interim director of the Government Media and Information Centre, on September 19, 2021, include directives against publishing matters in conflict with Islam or insulting to national personalities and instruct journalists to produce news reports in coordination with the Government media office. The announcement, a requiem for media freedom, comes in the wake of sustained attacks on journalists and other forms of pressures on them, which have sent many into hiding and effectively closed down 153 media outlets since the Taliban came to power.

The plight of women, it increasingly seems, may be the same as during the first Taliban regime. Not one of them was included either in the first set of 33 ministers in the caretaker Government announced on September 7, 2021; nor in the second one of 44, announced on September 21, 2021. The Taliban spokesman Zabiullah Mujahid

held out the possibility of women being included later but suggested no time frame. The Taliban's record during its present incarnation in power does not hold out much hope. The order not to telecast IPL matches because of the presence of women in the audience, the Kabul Mayor's ordering of women — with the exception of those whose jobs could not be done by men — to stay at home, the reopening of secondary schools with boys and not girls, the order by the Taliban-appointed vice-chancellor of the Kabul University barring women from the campus as long as "a real Islamic environment is not provided for", are instances which reflect an attitude towards women which does not augur well for the future of their rights under the present dispensation.

Nothing, however, makes the Taliban Government's attitude towards women more ominously clear than the shutting down of the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the reincarnation of the Ministry for the Promotion of Virtue and Prevention of Vice, in the building it had occupied.

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

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

FARMERS ARE TAKING IT TOO FAR

Sir — Last week, the Prime Minister in his address to the nation had politely and apologetically said that the Government could not make the farmers understand the benefits of the contentious three farm laws which were passed last year and as a result, these laws were being repealed. In over seventy years of Parliamentary history, no Prime Minister has ever apologised in such a humble way as PM Modi did. Many Opposition leaders have been claiming it as their victory as their concerted and persistent efforts have borne fruits.

My personal opinion is that the Government should not have withdrawn these laws as the farmers would further up the ante with their neo demands, and it has come true. The farmers, without applauding PM Modi for his bold and magnanimous stand, have added five more demands to their lone remaining demand of MSP guarantee. Almost all the Opposition parties are backtracking from their main demand of rescinding the three farm laws, to which they had said, "if these bills are not withdrawn, no going back to home." Not only this, the recalling of these bills has opened a Pandora's box for the withdrawal of other bills such as the Article 370 and the CAA. The Government should deal with troublemakers by not accepting any more demands.

Sagar Singh | Muzaffarnagar

INDIA'S FIRST VIRTUAL SCIENCE LAB

Sir — Recently, Union Minister Dr Jitendra Singh launched India's first virtual science lab for children under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) Jigyasa program. The target audience of the lab will be students from class 6-12. The primary vision of the lab is to provide quality research exposure to school students to drive their scientific curiosity. It will enable curiosity-driven research-based concepts, encourage higher-order thinking skills and promote entrepreneurship.

In this inspirational science lab, students will have fun and carry out exper-

Indian Navy gets a new beast



After the valuable commissioning of INS Visakhapatnam earlier on Sunday, here, on Thursday, adding the teeth to India's naval prowess, INS Vela, the country's fourth Scorpene-class submarine, was delivered to the Indian Navy after more than two years of sea trials. The delivery of the attack submarine, which was launched in May 2019, is seen as a major shot in the arm for the Indian Navy in terms of strength and capability. The INS Vela will be seen as another 'Atmanirbhar' success story in the field of submarine manufacturing. The INS Vela, built

in India by Mazagon Dock Shipbuilders, Mumbai in collaboration with the Naval group, France, is equipped with cataclysmic weapons and advanced technologies which are capable enough to monitor and counter enemy movement in the waters.

This is the second major induction in the Indian Navy within a week. The delivery of four submarines — Kalvari, Khanderi, Karanj and now, Vela, will reaffirm India's presence amongst an elite group of countries with the capability to design and build submarines with advanced stealth and combat capabilities. It is a proud moment for the country which proved that India is no longer dependent on other countries when it comes to protecting its waters. However, at the same time, we must remember that while the Pakistani Navy is far behind ours, the Chinese Navy is much more sophisticated and has more than 60 submarines while India doesn't even have half of it. It's time to equip the Indian Navy with more such beasts.

Shivesh Patidar | Ujjain

iments. It will help connect students with scientists across the country. It is also in tune with the National Education Policy (NEP), where students are allowed to choose any subject of their choice. It is an open source platform and students will be able to access content in regional languages. Science and research webinars will be performed to connect with more students across the country. This will enable students to learn theoretical concepts with practical experiments and presentations.

Vishal Patidar | Ujjain

CHILDREN ARE NOT PARENTS' 'ASSETS'

Sir — The Coronavirus pandemic has given rise to a vicious cycle of loss of jobs and decreased income. Professionally independent men and women were on the backfoot when the pandemic was at its zenith. Their woes have spilled over. Reduction in income and increased expenses pushed families to a corner. An exponential increase in child labour hap-

pened during the pandemic. Even as schools are opening doors, children are being "protected" by their parents in a different way — through disguised child labour.

The youngsters "employed" in their own family enterprises are being pressured to stay put by their parents. Forced labour is being disguised as "training and assisting" by parents. Almost two years and counting, following the pandemic, "well trained" children are being seen as assets by parents for their occupation. This is not to say that it was the pandemic that solely bred pressure labour. COVID-19 may have augmented parents' proclivity for forcing their children into family businesses. It may not appear as exploitation in the literal sense but the damage it does to the overall personality of the child is indescribable.

Ganapathi Bhat | Akola

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

Mamata Banerjee means what she says and says what she means. In Indian politics, that is a rare quality.

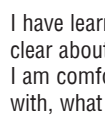


BJP leader — Subramanian Swamy



As we give thanks for what we have, we also keep in our hearts those who have been lost and those who have lost so much.

US President — Joe Biden



I have learnt to be clear about what I am comfortable with, what works for me and what doesn't.

Actor — Lara Dutta



I am honoured to accept this role (Test captain) ahead of what will be a massive Ashes summer.

Australian fast bowler — Pat Cummins

The way Kangana Ranaut is abusing everybody...she is hurting the sentiment of various communities.



NCP leader — Nawab Malik

FIRST COLUMN

KILLER DRONES:
DEATH FROM ABOVE

You can shoot down quadcopters, of course, but they are small and fast-moving targets



GWYNNE DYER

Commercially available quadcopter drones carrying small amounts of explosives are “the most concerning tactical development since the rise of the improvised explosive device in Iraq,” US Marine Gen. Kenneth McKenzie Jr., senior US commander for the Middle East, said last February. But now drones are political weapons as well, and it will get worse. Two weeks ago, three quadcopters flew into the heavily fortified ‘Green Zone’ in Baghdad to attack the home of Iraqi Prime Minister Mustafa al-Kadhimi. Two of the drones were shot down, but the third dropped explosives that blew in Kadhimi’s front door, injured at least five guards, and wounded the prime minister’s wrist. If he had died, he would have been the first senior politician killed by a drone, but that honour will have to go to someone else. Long-range, million-dollar drones have been killing people remotely for a more than a decade, but those are big aircraft making big explosions and they usually avoid densely populated urban areas. They won the war for Azerbaijan against Armenia last year, which was their first decisive use in a ‘conventional’ war. But now we are seeing something quite different. General Mackenzie explained: “I’m talking about



ones you can go out and buy at Costco right now for \$1,000.” If you have some people who are good at making improvised explosive devices, then buy yourself a clutch of drones big enough to carry two or three kilos each and you can go into business right away.

The golden age of political assassinations, dormant for a century, is probably on its way back in. You can shoot down quadcopters, of course, but they are small, fast-moving targets. They can be launched in large numbers, and they can avoid detection until the last moment by staying low amid the urban clutter. If they are actively guided you can jam the signal, but if they are following a pre-programmed flight path using GPS there’s no signal to jam. They’re also untraceable. Even if you find the bits after the thing exploded, there will be no markings on the pieces that let you trace it back to the person who bought it. What caused the recent unpleasantness in Iraq was that Khadhimi’s party won the right to form the new Government in the October election, while the pro-Iranian militias lost two-thirds of their seats in parliament. It was a surprisingly fair election, but the militias automatically claimed foul. (They even borrowed Trump’s slogan: “Stop the Steal”.) On 5 November stone-throwing militia supporters marched on the Green Zone to protest. The police opened fire, dozens of people were injured, and at least one demonstrator, maybe two, died. The drone attack on Kadhimi’s house, ‘safe’ inside the Green Zone, came just two days later. It’s inevitable that this technique will spread rapidly far beyond Iraq, and that politicians and other prominent public figures will be vulnerable to it in every country, even the well-run ones. They will need more security than before, perhaps much more, and even that will not guarantee their safety. And there may be one more step in this dance. It’s not normally a good idea for a killer drone to be in direct radio contact with the person who launches it, but if that person has access to face-recognition software it might be possible to make remote attacks outdoors on individual people with relatively little ‘collateral damage’. Is nothing safe? Of course not. It never was, really. Kings needed food-tasters to avoid being poisoned; presidents and prime ministers just need different kinds of protection.

(Gwynne Dyer’s new book is ‘The Shortest History of War’. The views expressed are personal.)

Development of Metro: An eastern perspective



PRADYOT KUMAR CHATTERJEE

There has been no proper techno-economic and socio-economic study for planned expansion of Metro rail in the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah

India conceived a plan to provide about 97 km of mass rapid transit network (metro rail) on two north-south and one east-west routes in Kolkata sometime in the late sixties. This was the first major planned urban mass rapid transit system under Ministry of Railways.

In the next decade, a bold step to start construction work on the predominantly underground North-South (N-S) line began with Cut and Cover technology at considerable inconvenience to surface traffic in a city. The era of metro rail began in India in 1984 with the commissioning of a three-kilometre stretch.

The next planned MRT system came almost 25 years later in New Delhi. The first line went into operation in 2002. With this the era of participation of central and state governments in setting up of the Metro rail system began and subsequently MRT services were planned for Bengaluru and Chennai. Since then, the Metro has expanded to several cities.

Today in India, around 760 km. of Metro Rail system is in operation and nearly 580km. is under construction. Of the five most populous states, UP, Maharashtra and Madhya Pradesh have a much larger share of Metro system in multiple cities. Only Kolkata features in the Metro map West Bengal. Populous states like Bihar lag behind with the Metro project only recently taking off in Patna. States like Telangana, Karnataka and Gujarat having lesser populations have larger route kms. per capita. The development of Metro rail system has been mostly concentrated in Western and Southern states besides Delhi-NCR. Eastern states like Bihar, West Bengal, Assam, Odisha have lagged behind.

Transportation has long been viewed as a means of energizing and sustaining economic growth, generating employment, and fostering holistic development. Unlike other sectors, the demand-supply gap cannot be bridged by increasing imports, but only through capacity-building. It is this unique feature which makes transportation the backbone of a nation’s development and improved quality of life. However, with the ever-increasing population and growing urbanization, the stress on transportation is increasing, which is adversely affecting the environment, seamless travel of people, and asset life deterioration. A balance needs to be maintained for inclusive and environmentally sustainable growth to ensure a better livelihood and right to life, a constitutional right.

Rail-based mass transit system is by far more efficient and climate friendly. It reduces transport congestion on road and associated pollution. Any congested city with large transport volume is ideal for the provision of Metro.

Though Kolkata was the first city to have metro rail, no further metro project was sanctioned for any eastern states till recently when metro rail was sanctioned for Patna and Guwahati.

Kolkata with high population density



TRANSPORTATION HAS LONG BEEN VIEWED AS A MEANS OF ENERGISING AND SUSTAINING ECONOMIC GROWTH, GENERATING EMPLOYMENT AND FOSTERING HOLISTIC DEVELOPMENT. UNLIKE OTHER SECTORS, THE DEMAND-SUPPLY GAP CANNOT BE BRIDGED BY INCREASING IMPORTS, BUT ONLY THROUGH CAPACITY BUILDING

(The writer is a retired railway professional and an independent consultant on Metro railway. The views expressed are personal.)



and only six-eight per cent of road space deserves Metro rail as a means of Mass Rapid transit. Congested roads not conducive to building the Metro along roads poses a great challenge to planners.

Kolkata Metro was set up before any guidelines or policy on MRTS was issued by the Ministry of Urban Development and is the only system that is under direct control of the Ministry of Railways.

There has been no proper techno-economic and socio-economic study for planned expansion of Metro rail in Kolkata to overcome travel issues of citizens in the twin cities of Kolkata and Howrah. In 75 years since independence only two road bridges have been added across the river Ganges which are miles apart unlike cities like London, Paris, Moscow, et cetera, that have extensive underground rail and road networks criss-crossing the rivers that pass through the cities.

It is unfortunate that no planning of rail-based transport system for urban conglomerates like Asansol — Durgapur, Siliguri-Jalpaiguri, which have proximity to fairly busy airports like Bagdogra and Andal has been conceived.

Metro rail projects in Kolkata have always suffered for one reason or the other and 36 years after the first Metro started in Kolkata, only 32.25 km of one N-S line and seven km of East-West line is commissioned. Around 28 km of routes can be added in next two-three years with the likely commissioning of Phoolbagan-Howrah Maidan (9.34 km), Noapara-NSCBI airport (6.87 km), Joka-Majerhat (7 km) and New Garia-Ruby (5 km) sections.

This will leave around 36 km more to be completed on the Joka-Esplanade and New Garia-NSCBI airport lines which may take four or five years. Another about 25 km. route where the Metro was sanctioned a decade ago for expansion on the northern fringes of the city is yet to take off with no funds sanctioned.

Kolkata and Howrah need metro systems with increased frequency and faster travel to reduce dependency on road transport to provide seamless travel to citizens. The suburbs of Kolkata need to be brought into the Metro map to reduce dependence on suburban rail and road.

Apart from routes under construction or planned, Kolkata needs more east-west and north-south routes with interchange facility and a ring route on its outer periphery. Some of the routes that could benefit a large population with metro connectivity can be: Extension of E-W metro to Uluberia; New East-West route from Shalimar to Jadavpur covering west and south kolkata

Extension of N-S route to sonarpur; New North south route from Bally to Garia-IIM/Joka in south; Extension of Joka-Esplanade route to Diamond harbour.

The feasibility of the various options needs to be explored critically.

Two important projects sanctioned a decade back, Baranagar-Barrackpur and NSCBI Airport-Barasat, which can serve a large population, are presently on hold due to civic issues. These need to be revived using modern technology.

We need to rope in top-class technical expertise wherever available to find ways and means to overcome the constraints.

Project delays lead to cost and time overrun and citizens are denied the benefits. These projects will considerably ease pressure on land routes and as such, a final decision by stakeholders cannot be delayed.

Besides, the Metro rail system in places like Siliguri-Jalpaiguri area including Bagdogra Airport, Durgapur-Asansol area including Andal Airport, Kalyani-Krishnanagar-Shantipur-awadip area need to be planned now to address the congestion due to sectoral urbanization and developing industrial conglomerates.

It takes at least 8-10 years for a project from planning stage till it sees the light of the day if all goes well at every stage. The state must identify routes and areas to be served and quality DPRs need to be prepared identifying possible routes through established agencies like RITEs, DMRC with clear Right Of Way. Duly approved DPRs can be basis for generating demand at the centre with prioritizing projects.

The stake holders need to remove bottlenecks for expeditious completion of sanctioned works. It is the common man who will reap the benefits of such state of art infrastructure.

Metro rail contributes tremendously on environment front, generates carbon credits, reduces greenhouse gas emissions. It has huge potential to generate solar power and contribute towards India’s dream of fulfilling its target for alternate energy.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

PUNJAB TOPPED THE COUNTRY IN SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE NPGI SURVEY. PUNJAB WAS ABOVE DELHI ON ALL FIVE PARAMETERS. —PUNJAB EDUCATION MINISTER PARGAT SINGH




I’M READY FOR AN OPEN DEBATE. PARGAT SINGH SHOULD COMPARE THE 10 BEST GOVERNMENT SCHOOLS OF PUNJAB WITH DELHI’S. —DELHI EDUCATION MINISTER MANISH SISODIA

It’s time to think seriously about defecation

We have to make efforts to ensure environmental cleanliness so that when we look around, we see and feel cleanliness in both visible and invisible things

There is a saying, “out of sight out of mind”, that means we forget about things we don’t see. It’s the same thing with sanitation and hygiene. As long as the filth or faeces is visible to our eyes, we are concerned about it, but as soon as it’s flushed, we stop thinking about what happened to it faeces, whether it was properly disposed of or covered up ostentatiously. It happens because either we are careless or we lack correct information.

Now take the example of septic tanks built in cities, how many of us know about the ‘sanitation value chain’? How many of us know how to make the correct septic tank, what is the right design and measurement? How many of us are aware that to keep the

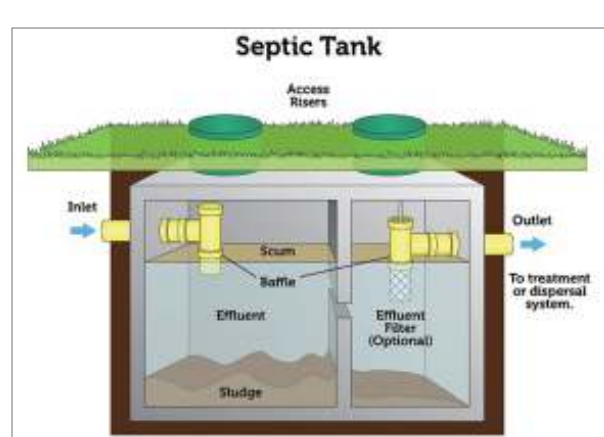


SHISHIR CHANDRA

(The writer is Programme Coordinator, WaterAid India. The views expressed are personal.)

septic tank working smoothly and effectively, the septic tank should be cleaned every 3 to 5 years? How many of us know that due to the lack of regular cleaning of the septic tank, the sewage treatment process in the septic tank stops and untreated septage causes health problems? How many of us know that untreated septage from the septic tank goes into small and big rivers through drains and contaminates rivers?

All we know is that we flushed the toilets and the excreta was out of sight, now whether it has gone to the septic tank, went to the drain or river, what difference does it make to us? In many cities sewer treatment plants or faecal sludge treatment plants are in the process of being



built, and in cities where they exist, they are insufficient. So, the question arises whether we are even aware of this issue, the environmental problems it causes, and if we want to understand and play a part in this.

Generally, in urban areas or even in villages nowadays, the septic tank is nothing but a container without any proper process or method for sewage treatment and it is safe in the long run. Local builders and contractors are also not

concerned with how the structure should be. The owners understand it as a big-room like structure under the ground built as a septic tank for which they do not have to worry for 30-50 years.

Cleanliness cannot be achieved by making rules and regulations. We can definitely control it temporarily but ‘behaviour change’ is the solution. It should become a mass movement.

When talking about sanitation, there is a need to go beyond just the construction of toilets. Faecal Sludge Management has been called the missing and ignored component of the sanitation as safe management of faecal sludge requires more than just access to a toilet and use of a mere septic tank. Improving city-

wide urban sanitation is complex as it must consider both on- and off-site systems, encompass the entire service chain, serve different customers and be acceptable to a broad range of stakeholders.

As much as it is the responsibility of the government and the government machinery, it is our responsibility also to understand the problem. The population is yet to be fully persuaded to change the age-old practice of defecating in the open, construct proper septic tanks, get into the habit of scheduled desludging and not neglect basic sanitation practices. We also have to be aware of the correct structure and design of the septic tank, in how many days it is necessary to empty the septic tank, who is the con-

cerned authority to contact to get the septic tank emptied. We also have to monitor that solid waste from the septic tank is disposed of properly and not put in the drain or open ground. Single houses which do not have any drainage channels should have a soak-pit system unless the local panchayat or municipality makes some other concrete arrangement. Every effort has to be made to avoid waterlogging, whether through pit or by planting trees that absorb water or by applying other environmentally friendly methods.

We have to make efforts to ensure environmental cleanliness so that when we look around we see and feel cleanliness in both visible and invisible things.

RBI for no cap on promoters' stake in pvt banks for 1st 5 yrs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

An internal working group of the Reserve Bank on the ownership and corporate structure of private sector banks has favoured allowing promoters to maintain any percentage of holding in the first five years-- more than the present minimum of 40 per cent now favoured -- and then capping it at 26 per cent after 15 years of operations.

According to the RBI's current norms, a promoter of a private bank needs to pare holdings to 20 per cent within 10 years, and to 15 per cent within 15 years.

Releasing the report on the ownership guidelines and corporate structure for private sector banks, the Reserve Bank on Friday explained the cap on promoters' stake in the long run of 15 years may



be raised from the current levels of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the

bank.

On the mandated lock-in period for promoters' initial shareholding, the report

favours no changes in the extant instructions related to initial lock-in requirements, which may continue as a minimum of 40 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank for the first five years.

They favour the continuation of the extant stipulation on the 40 per cent holding for the first five years to ensure that the promoters maintain skin in the game and credibility of the control of the promoter group till the business is properly established and stabilised. It will also ensure that the promoter remains committed to the bank in the formative years, providing it necessary strategic direction.

The report also says there is no need to fix any cap on the promoters' holding in the initial five years as the existing licensing guidelines have

not mandated any cap on promoter's shareholding in the first five years as initially, it may be challenging for a new bank to raise capital from external sources or investors. So allowing them to hold a higher stake will enable the promoter to infuse additional capital, as and when required.

The cap on promoters' stake in the long run of 15 years may be raised from the current levels of 15 per cent to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank. This stipulation should be uniform for all types of promoters and would not mean that promoters, who have already diluted their holdings to below 26 per cent, will not be permitted to raise it to 26 per cent of the paid-up voting equity share capital of the bank.

MONEY MATTERS

Tarsons Products shares list with nearly 6 pc gain

Shares of life sciences company Tarsons Products on Friday listed with a premium of nearly 6 per cent against its issue price of Rs 662. The stock listed at Rs 700, a gain of 5.74 per cent against the issue price on BSE. It further jumped 22.05 per cent to Rs 808. On NSE, it listed with a premium of 3.02 per cent at Rs 682. The initial public offer of Tarsons Products Limited received 77.49 times subscription earlier this month. The Rs 1,023.84-crore IPO had a price range of Rs 635-662 per share. Tarsons Products is engaged in designing, developing, manufacturing, and supplying a diverse range of quality labware products used in laboratories across research organisations, academic institutes, pharmaceutical firms, diagnostics companies and hospitals. It manufactures a range of quality labware products that help advance scientific discovery and improve healthcare.



Investors' wealth tumbles over Rs 4 L-cr as markets plummet



Investors' wealth tumbled Rs 4.48 lakh crore during day trade on Friday with the BSE benchmark plummeting 1,488 points tracking weak global trends. The 30-share benchmark index tumbled 1,488.01 points during the day to 57,307.08. The market capitalization of BSE-listed tanked Rs

4,48,223.31 crore to Rs 2,61,18,730.57 crore during the day. "Equity markets have plunged almost 2 per cent amid the emergence of a new, highly mutated COVID-19 variant. The EU announced a temporary ban of flights from South Africa and few EU countries are already under full lockdown scenario. "Thus, there is fear of this new variant spreading to other countries which might again derail the global economy," said Hemang Jani, Head of Equity Strategy & Senior Group VP, Broking & Distribution, Motilal Oswal Financial Services. Tata Steel, HDFC, IndusInd Bank and Maruti were the biggest laggards, tanking up to 4.2 per cent. The BSE midcap and smallcap indices were trading up to 2 per cent lower.

Gold climbs Rs 570; silver zooms Rs 190

Gold prices in the national capital rallied by Rs 570 to Rs 47,155 per 10 grams on Friday in line with gains in metal prices in the global markets and a fall in the rupee against the US dollar, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 46,585 per 10 gram. Silver also jumped Rs 190 to Rs 62,145 per kg from Rs 61,955 per kg in the previous trade. The rupee depreciated by 16 paise to 74.68 against the US dollar in opening trade on Friday. In the international market, gold was trading with gains at USD 1,808 per ounce and silver was flat at USD 23.70 per ounce. "Gold prices traded higher with spot gold prices at COMEX trading 1 per cent up at USD 1,808 per ounce on Friday. The softer dollar and fall in US bond yields have supported gold prices to trade up."



Vedanta promoters pledge shares to raise Rs 6,000 cr



Holding companies of Vedanta Ltd have raised USD 800 million (about Rs 6,000 crore) by pledging shares in the company, according to a stock exchange filing. Promoter group firms pledged 242.26 crore or 65.18 per cent shareholding in Vedanta Ltd in three facility agreements to raise the money, a Vedanta Ltd's filing showed. In the first financing deal, Twin Star Holdings Ltd entered into an agreement with Standard Chartered Bank, London to avail of an aggregate amount of USD 400 million. In the second, Vedanta Netherlands Investments BV secured USD 150 million from Standard Chartered Bank, London. Vedanta Resources in the third facility raised USD 250 million from Standard Chartered Bank, Hong Kong. "The borrowers and guarantors in the aforesaid Facility Agreements are part of the promoter and promoter group," Vedanta said in the filing. As part of the pledge, the promoter group entities are not permitted to create any encumbrance over any assets held by them unless certain conditions are fulfilled. Also, Vedanta Resources Limited and its subsidiaries are required to retain control over Vedanta Ltd or own more than 50% of the issued equity share capital.

Global stocks sink after South Africa finds virus variant

PNS ■ BEIJING

Global stocks and oil prices tumbled Friday after South Africa found a fast-spreading coronavirus variant and the European Union proposed suspending air travel from southern Africa.

London's benchmark fell by an unusually wide margin of 3.3 per cent at the opening and Tokyo lost 2.5 per cent. Shanghai, Frankfurt and Hong Kong also declined. Wall Street futures fell.

Some European countries already tightened anti-virus controls this week after their own case numbers spiked. Austria imposed a 10-day lockdown, while Italy restricted activity by unvaccinated people. Americans were advised by their government to avoid Germany and Denmark.

The 27-nation EU proposed the travel suspension to member governments after South Africa said the variant was spreading in its most populous province.

Britain banned flights from South Africa and five nearby countries.

"Investors are likely to shoot first and ask questions later until more is known," Jeffrey Halley of Oanda said in a



report.

In early trading, the FTSE in London fell to 7,067.17 and the DAX in Frankfurt lost 3.3 per cent to 15,391.00. The CAC in Paris plunged 4 per cent to 6,789.13.

On Wall Street, the future for the benchmark S&P 500 future lost 1.6 per cent. That for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was off 2 per cent.

In Asia, the Shanghai Composite Index lost 0.6 per cent to 3,564.09 and the Nikkei 225 in Tokyo declined to 28,751.62. The Hang Seng in Hong Kong tumbled 2.7 per cent to 24,080.52.

The Kospi in Seoul lost 1.5 per cent to 2,936.44 and Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 fell 1.7 per cent to 7,279.30.

India's Sensex retreated 2.2 per cent to 57,499.50. New Zealand and Southeast Asian markets also declined.

Wall Street's benchmark

S&P 500 closed up 0.2 per cent on Wednesday. US markets were closed Thursday for a holiday and were due to reopen Friday for a shortened trading session.

Investors already were more cautious after Federal Reserve officials said in notes from their October meeting released this week they foresaw the possibility of responding to higher inflation by raising rates sooner than previously planned. Investors worry central bankers might feel pressure to withdraw stimulus earlier than planned due to stronger-than-expected inflation. The Fed said earlier it foresaw keeping rates low until late next year.

Financial markets had been encouraged by strong US corporate earnings and signs the global economy was rebounding from last year's history-making decline in activity due to the pandemic.

Framework to resolve cross-border insolvency

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is preparing to come out with a cross-border insolvency resolution framework based on the UNCITRAL model law and is proposed to be made applicable for both corporate debtors as well as personal guarantors to such debtors.

The corporate affairs ministry, which is implementing the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC), has sought comments on the draft framework till December 15.

Broadly, cross-border insolvency process pertains to those debtors having assets and creditors overseas.

According to the ministry, the need for having robust institutional arrangements to deal with cross-border insolvency issues has gained momentum in various jurisdictions, particularly under the aegis of UNCITRAL Model Law, during the last few decades.

The UNCITRAL Model Law on Cross-Border Insolvency, 1997, is the most widely accepted legal framework to deal with cross-border insolvency issues. The law provides a legislative framework that can be adopted by countries with modifications to suit the domestic context of the enacting jurisdiction.

India needs national disaster pool to hedge natural disaster risks: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

With the incidents and severity of natural calamities rising by the year, a report has called for creating a national disaster pool, as the country is amongst the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

India ranks third, after the US and China in the number of natural disasters since 1900, with 756 natural disasters such as landslides, storms, earthquakes, floods, droughts etc. During 1900-2000 there were 402 disasters and 354 during 2001-21.



Since 2001, a total of 100 crore people have been impacted and nearly 83,000 lost lives due to these disasters. If the

Bank of India (SBI) said in a note on Friday.

Between 1991 and 2021, only around 8 per cent of the total losses are covered in the country, so, there is around 92 per cent protection gap during this period.

Early intervention is needed to close the protection gap, which are in all lines of insurance and the only way out is a public-private solution by creating a national disaster pool to hedge natural disaster risks, Soumya Kanti Ghosh, the group chief economic adviser at SBI said in the note.



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India must substantially alter its current trajectory if it has to deliver on Prime Minister Narendra Modi's climate targets for 2030, Fitch Solutions said on Friday.

Modi at the COP26 announced India by 2030 will increase its non-fossil fuel power generation capacity to 500 GW, generate 50 per cent of its power from renewable sources, reduce its total carbon emission by 1 billion tonnes and bring down carbon intensity of its economy by 45 per cent.

"India now faces the challenge of balancing strong economic growth with a sharp deceleration in its CO2 emissions," Fitch Solutions said in a note. "India must substantially alter its current trajectory, if it is to deliver on its commitments. Based on the current state of play, the country will fall far short of its climate objectives."

As of 2020, coal, oil and natural gas accounted for 55%, 28% and 7% of the primary energy mix, respectively.

"By 2030, we estimate they will account for a respective 45%, 33% and 8%. That is, their total share will fall from 90% to 86%, with a decline in coal largely offset by a rise in oil and gas.

"Admittedly, we have proxied renewables growth with the growth in renewables power generation. Given that renewables look set to grow more rapidly outside of the power sector (e.g. in biofuels and hydrogen), we have likely understated their share in the overall energy mix in 2030. However, growth will occur from such a very low base that the impact will likely be marginal," it said.

Stating that the strongest prospects for displacing fossil fuels are in the power sector, Fitch said the targets are likely to be missed in absence of a step change in the sector.

"Our analysts currently forecast nuclear, hydropower and non-hydropower renewables generation capacity to reach 314GW by 2030, with

their share in total generation rising to around 30%. Both would then fall shy of their targets, of 500GW and 50%," it said.

A number of headwinds in the form of supply chain bottlenecks, limited domestic manufacturing capacity and broader delays to project developments will likely continue to weigh on growth, it said.

In the transport sector, the easiest abatement options lie in the road transport segment. Currently, EVs account for less than 0.05% of the total vehicle fleet, with limited domestic EV options and a lack of charging infrastructure among the key barriers to growth. But both the central and state governments are expanding incentive schemes to increase the production and sales of EVs.

Sebi mulls overhauling preferential allotments

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi on Friday proposed relaxing pricing norms and lock-in requirements to make it easier for companies to raise funds through preferential allotment of shares.

In addition, the regulator has proposed allowing pledging of shares allotted to promoter or promoter group under preferential issue during the lock-in period.

The pricing formula for allotment of shares under preferential issue should be the Volume-Weighted Average Price (VWAP) of weekly highs and lows for 60 trading days or 10 trading days, whichever is higher, the watchdog said in a consultation paper.

At present, the pricing for-

mula in a preferential allotment is the VWAP of the last two weeks or the last 26 weeks, whichever is higher.

Moreover, any preferential issue allotment resulting in change in control should be done following a reasoned recommendation from a committee of independent directors, according to Sebi.

The consultation paper also comes against the backdrop of PNB Housing Finance's proposed allotment of preference shares to US-based Carlyle Group and a clutch of other investors hitting a roadblock.

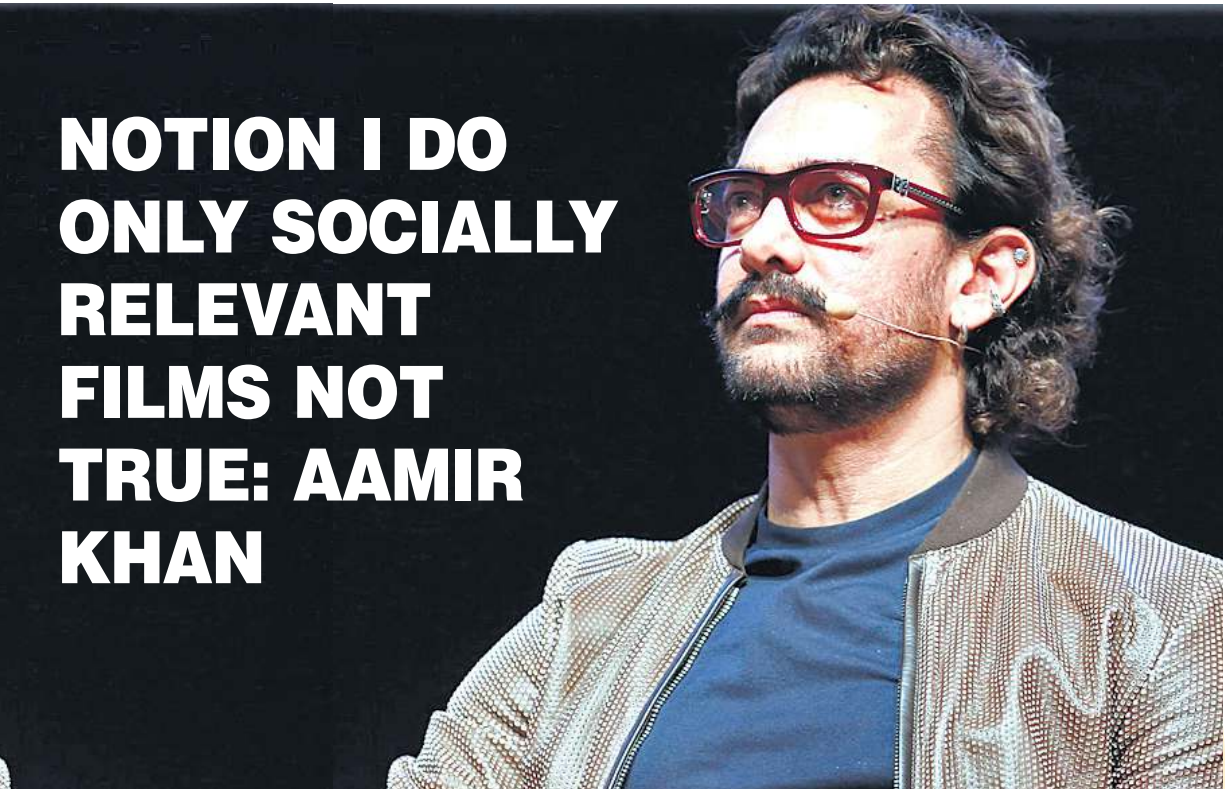
Sebi had questioned PNB Housing Finance's rationale behind the fixing of the issue price, among other aspects, in that deal which was later shelved.

Climate activists block Amazon UK warehouses on Black Friday

PNS ■ LONDON

Climate activists are blockading Amazon warehouses across the UK on Friday in an attempt to pressure the e-commerce giant on one of its busiest days of the year to improve working conditions and end business practices that hurt the environment.

At Amazon's distribution center in Dunfermline, Scotland, about 20 Extinction Rebellion members strung banners across the entrance road that said "Make Amazon Pay" and locked themselves together, stopping trucks from entering and some from leaving.



NOTION I DO ONLY SOCIALLY RELEVANT FILMS NOT TRUE: AAMIR KHAN

Actor and filmmaker Aamir Khan on Friday said his primary job was to entertain people and the notion that he took interest only in socially relevant films was not true.

Addressing the annual session of Indian Chamber of Commerce (ICC) on a virtual platform, Khan also said that he usually follows his gut instinct, which have sometimes prompted his choice of films.

"It is not true that I take up only socially relevant films. My primary job is to entertain people. May be I gravitate towards socially relevant films. I just follow my instinct, gut," he said. Khan, often referred to as 'Mr Perfectionist', has acted in and directed several films which carry social messages, including *Taare Zameen Par*, *Three Idiots* and *PK*, all of which have been box office successes.

The superstar further said that he gets attached to the story of a film during the shoot.

"I, however, keep no preconceived notion. I am very open," he stated.

Referring to *Lagaan*, which won accolades at home and abroad, he said the script had inspired him. The movie had narrowly missed the Oscar in 2002 to Bosnia's *No man's Land*, but the actor said, "I have no regrets. It was a wonderful experience. The film was hugely appreciated all over the world, not just in the US."

"One should not take awards seriously. I was not interested in the award," he maintained. Khan, who is also the founder of NGO Paani Foundation that deals with watershed management in Maharashtra, said he devoted his time to films and the organisation.

"I have been trying to keep a two-year gap between my films. But due to Covid-19, that plan has been affected," he pointed out.

Talking about the NGO, he said water crisis is a key issue in Maharashtra.

"As communicators, we decided to do something about it. We are trying to address water crisis in Maharashtra. For that, the villagers will have to come together. The foundation does not finance. It only teaches good practices," he added.

Khan will be seen next in *Laal Singh Chaddha*, set to release next year.

what's brewing?

My feelings for Hawkeye have only deepened: Jeremy Renner

It's been a decade since Jeremy Renner took on the role of Hawkeye and the actor says he is grateful for all the experiences that came his way while playing the character in multiple Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) films.

Renner played Clint Barton aka Hawkeye, an expert marksman and archer, for the first time in 2011's *Thor* before becoming one of the central figures of the MCU with *The Avengers* (2012).

Since then, the 50-year-old actor has essayed the role in *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, *Captain America: Civil War* and *Avengers: Endgame*, earning his own dedicated army of Marvel fans.

Now, he returns with the character for Disney+ Hotstar series *Hawkeye*, which also stars Hailee Steinfeld as Kate Bishop. "My feelings for this character have only deepened. This series is a great way to express the character, over the six hours and I was very grateful for that. My daughter realises what the heck I do for a living, really grateful for that. This will be the first thing she's ever seen me do."

"I love the life experiences that it's bestowed upon me. And very blessed for that and for the friendships and life experiences that I got around the globe," Renner told *PTI* in a group interview over Zoom. *Hawkeye*, which started streaming on Disney+Hotstar from Wednesday, is set two years after the events of *Avengers: Endgame*.

It follows Barton who must partner with Kate Bishop to confront enemies from his past as Ronin in order to get back to his family in time for Christmas.

Renner, whose impressive acting resume also include critically-acclaimed movies such as *The Hurt Locker*, *The Town*, *Arrival*, *The Wind River* and two *Mission: Impossible* movies, said the show allowed him to venture into uncharted territories with the character.

"Personally, with this series, I got to explore different sides of him and be able to share with fans because the fans are really the ones that make this happen. I'm very thankful and happy to explore all these other kinds of fun sides and darker sides."

Besides, the show also cements a lot of things that audiences already know about Barton, Renner added.

"I liked the sense of humour and it's also with the different characters that are introduced in the show. They bring up different sides of him, which I think are really great. I love starting out in this world as not in superhero mode and with the end of the world scenario, which is nice. It's like you get a cup of coffee first and enjoy the day and then the aliens come. So it's kind of a nicer introduction. And I can tell that it widens the lens here a little bit."

Renner also praised Steinfeld, one of the emerging stars of Hollywood, and said he was glad to have her as his partner-in-crime. "I love, appreciate, respect and admire Hailee for her intelligence, her skillset, and courageousness. I adore her kindness towards her family and her connection to her family. I love to witness her expression of her spirit through art. I think she's a tremendous actress and I got to work with her. And so it was pretty amazing to witness," he said.

Hawkeye has been created by Jonathan Igla and co-directed by Rhys Thomas and filmmaker duo Bert & Bertie.



Vishal Furia reveals why Nushratt Bharuccha was perfect choice to play Sakshi in Chhorii

Vishal Furia's upcoming horror thriller, *Chhorii*, is only a few days away from its global premiere exclusively on Amazon Prime Video. *Chhorii* which features Nushratt Bharuccha in the lead is the story of the monsters that Sakshi (Nushratt) has to deal with, and much more. The tension builds with every scene leaving audiences with a pressing question to be answered — Will Sakshi be able to save herself? With *Chhorii* being the official remake of the critically acclaimed Marathi Film *Lapachappi*, filmmaker Vishal Furia, who directed the 2018 film, revealed how he found the perfect actor in Nushratt for this role.

Throwing light on the process, Vishal Furia said, "The character of Sakshi had to be somebody who looked like a girl-next-door, who is very relatable and a person who will definitely win this fight from the moment we see her on-screen. Nushratt fits all these parts extremely well because she looks like a girl next door. Her physicality is this tiny, petite girl. So that really helped because then, she looked like a victim, like somebody who could be intimidated in a certain way, or who could get scared in certain scenarios. And then when such a character rises against all odds, to fight against evil, and somehow conquers it, does the story becomes more powerful. So yes, Nushratt did fit all of those departments perfectly when it came to the character."

Adding more to this Vishal said, "The kind of hunger I saw in Nushratt and also the will to give everything for this particular role, she has that thing in her. And that is what is required in a horror film especially for a film like *Chhorii*, that is emotionally and physically very draining. It takes away a lot from the actor and really tears that actor apart. So, you need that kind of hunger, and that kind of will to succumb to this genre and to this kind of filmmaking. And I thought she was ready for it, and she was hungry for it, and that was very important. So yeah, she was perfect for this role."

Slated to stream on 26th November 2021, on Amazon Prime Video across 240 countries and territories worldwide, 'Chhorii' also features actors such as Mita Vashisth, Rajesh Jais, Saurabh Goyal, and Yaane Bharadwaj.



Bryan Adams tests positive for Covid-19 for second time

Canadian musician Bryan Adams has once again tested positive for coronavirus.

The 62-year-old singer tested positive soon after arriving in Milan, Italy ahead of the unveiling of the 2022 Pirelli calendar, which he photographed.

This marks the second time the singer has caught the virus in the past month.

"Here I am, just arrived in Milano, and I've tested positive for the second time in a month for Covid. So it's off to the hospital for me. Thanks for all your support," Adams wrote on Instagram on Thursday. The singer also shared pictures of him at the Milan Malpensa airport and in an ambulance.

Adams also tested positive for Covid-19 on October 30 when he had to pull out from his scheduled appearance at Tina Turner's Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony.

The singer was to perform a medley of songs including *It's Only Love*, which is a duet between Adams and Turner from his 1984 album.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



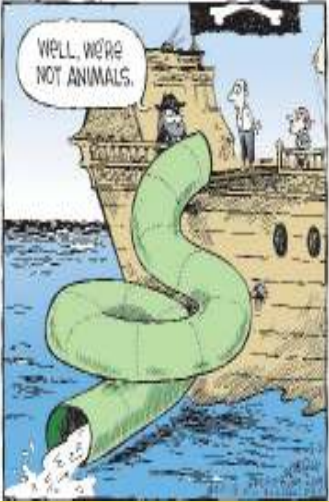
GINGER MEGGS



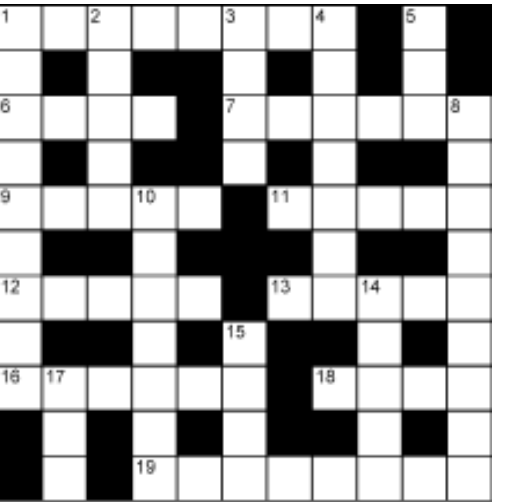
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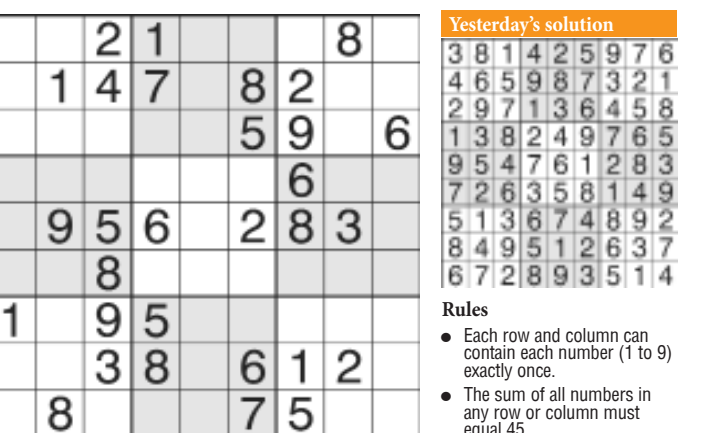
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



ACROSS

- The lightest gas
- Bore a hole with this tool
- Bang this in with a hammer
- A hole in your nose
- Tell a fib
- A type of spotted dog
- Egg centres
- Cook in this room
- Very unkid
- Leaves out
- The first letter in the Greek alphabet
- A make relation
- A hired car
- A famous French emperor
- Finish

DOWN

- A special holiday for a couple just married





THE TALE OF AN O.U. 'CANTEENWALA'

SHIKHA DUGGAL

What makes Osmania University's canteen Hyderabad's most beloved cafeteria? One of its former employees CH Venkatesh's love for the students there! The worker was associated with the canteen since his childhood; it was just a year ago that he had to leave the premises due to his worsening health conditions. Venkatesh cannot walk anymore, he is on treatment nonetheless his spirits are still so high that he only believes in *mehnat ki kamai*. "I had a beautiful tenure at the university; it's been some time since I am non-occupant now. My wife is the sole bread-winner for the house at the moment. My health condition is deteriorating, I cannot walk at all," he tells us. Working for hotels seems to be his true love. At the age of eight, he came to Hyderabad along with his parents and since then he



worked for multiple Hyderabad hotels. In fact, his wife is also currently associated with a hotel in the city and meets the family's needs from it. His food memories with the Osmania University made him happy on the phone call, he recalled how every kind of student with a plentiful mood used to come to

him to buy eateries! "They respected me, used to call me 'Venkatesh Sahab'. I was illustrious for my 'masala pallis'. I miss working for the university. At the moment, to whichever hospital I go for treatment the only consideration they have is whether I'll be able to afford the treatment or not. That has put me into a

dilemma about my future, I have three daughters to look after," adds the *canteenwala*. He hit off with the food business from the word go! After a couple of stints at other hotels, he opened his own 'bandi'. He is truly a Hyderabad at heart now! He toasts the old and celebrates the new in different ways. What has

made him a much-loved 'canteenwala' is in the way he takes pride in his work. He continues, "While I had just held the string of work here, my parents expired. My brother and I don't talk anymore. I luckily formulated my own family. Apart from my wife's income, we also get our allotted ration from the government so we

try to adjust to that." Altogether, he devoted a total of 15 years to the food business. He knew that no matter where the students come from, they will always be fond of local food in the college and hence he indulged in that. Churning out fresh meals for the students gave him his share of happiness. None of the students had to ever fret about their next meal because Venkatesh was always ready to serve. "I had multiple operations post my leg injury; it's not getting any better. Unfortunately, my life is centered in my home only away from my food business. I miss Landscape Garden from the university. While working for the university, I saw many older celebrities coming to promote their films. All of this has been my fondest memories," he concludes the interview with a proud smile.

JUST SIT TIGHT!

Popular rap-star 'KARMA' embarks on his new musical journey from Hyd. He talks to *The Pioneer* about his love for music, current music circuit, among others

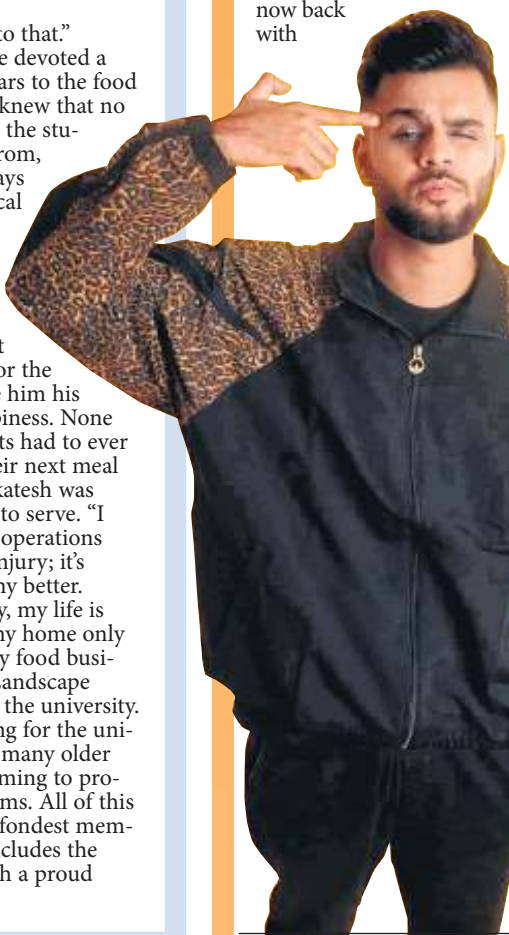
SHIKHA DUGGAL

It's no surprise that Vivek Arora, who goes by the stage moniker KARMA is one of the most emerging talents in the Indian rap fraternity. Utilising his ancestry, culture, and naturally gifted music flair to constantly surprise his fans across the sub-continent and beyond with a refreshing soundscape with every release, he is now back with

could ever ask for," he adds. A fusion of hardcore rap and commercial tunes, the album features a plethora of heavyweight artists such as Shah Rule, Deep Kalsi, Ikka, King, Encore ABJ, Raftaar, KR\$NA. Surprisingly, many of them will join the musician on his India tour. KARMA delivered breakneck flows, hard-hitting beats, and slick punch lines. He navigates through the themes of legacy, ambition, loyalty, and duplicity. Each of his tracks captures moments in his life and career, from suffering setbacks to rapping and hustling his way up in the competitive Indian hip-hop scene. He continues, "Performing with other artists gives you confidence; it is all about reception too. The rap scene is sprouting. Back in the days when we used to tell people about rapping, they used to look at us like we were talking about some alien technology. Now everybody knows who a rapper is! Everybody is accepting the fact that it's also an art, brands are also approaching us which is encouraging."

So fond of Eminem, the rapper signifies how the world is certainly aware of his rapping flair but Karma is connected to the life story he carries! His songs gave him the much-needed motivation when Vivek was rather going through his lows. With the release of his debut album, KARMA proves that he is an unstoppable force in the music industry. He states, "Most of these tracks are from a lot of different times in my life. But most importantly this is a dedication to a very emotional turning point in my life when I was just a starry-eyed kid with big dreams and I had to go through the pain of losing my father suddenly and shoulder my entire family's responsibility. I'm so happy to have been able to launch myself in an industry that is cutthroat. Today if my father was alive, he would be the happiest person on the planet to see how well his son has blossomed and how I've pursued my childhood dream."

Kalamkaar India Tour. As part of the tour, the rapper is coming to the city of Nizams too. His maiden album titled 'M.Y.P. - MADE YOU PROUD' is a perfect indication of what's brewing in the pipeline, sonically, for the teenager! "Current music circuit is so cosmic, everyone is making different sounds and everybody is grabbing a different kind of audience. Particularly in India, there is cult hip-hop following going on and the only thing that can help you navigate your projects into that scene is by having street credit. And by that, I mean that you need to be skilled and talented. But it is also very important that the audience should accept you first hand," tells Vivek. The Kalamkaar signee, who also happens to be a music composer and a singer-songwriter has dedicated the 13-song debut showcase to his late father, who he lost when he was 10 years old! "Lockdown gave me some time to rethink the process and return to music after it was kind of electrifying. My album, 'Made you Proud' is a tribute to my late father. When I wrote my earlier song 'Believe', I felt something was off my chest, and that's when I decided that my first album should be a tribute to my late father who despite having limited pay-cheques and resources gave me everything I



Almonds, the best nuts for diabetes

How well can almonds turn out to be a good treat to us? Many are most of the time concerned that almonds are fatty! Are they really? When it comes to snacking, or to help you push through the morning slog, what you choose to eat is an almond! A new study funded by the Almond Board of California, showed that a morning snack of almonds helped keep blood sugar levels more stable and trimmed the number of calories eaten over the course of the day. Almonds carry a lot of nutrition, well showcased in the studies also now! In this study, participants ate either at least 42.5g of unroasted almonds or a calorie-matched sweet biscuit snack. Do not overdo it of course, but the almonds are sure to carry the best weight management intentions. This study had a randomised crossover design, where each participant completed the study eating the almond snack and then repeated the study eating the biscuit snack on a separate day, or vice versa, with a washout period between each treatment. On the test day, participants ate a



standardized breakfast. Two hours later, they ate their assigned snack food. Blood glucose and appetite ratings were measured at baseline and at 15 or 30-minute intervals after they finished eating. Two hours after the snack, lunch was offered to participants, who ate as much or as little as desired and consumption was recorded. Participants then recorded their food intake for the remainder of the day. These little nutrition chunks are super satisfying! Results showed that the blood sugar response was lower among participants after the almond snack versus the biscuit snack. Sheela Krishnaswamy, Nutrition and Wellness Consultant remarked, "Type-2 diabetes is currently one of the major health concerns in India. One of the primary causes for this is the increase in consumption of unhealthy calorie-rich snacks like biscuits. Substituting these snacks with almonds may help in keeping blood sugar levels in check - as seen in this study group of healthy adults. Almonds are packed with nutrition such as fiber, protein, monounsaturated fats making it a healthy addition to the diet." So, make yourself some snack baggies with almonds right away!

A CURE TO ANIMAL HOMELESSNESS!

When all of us come together, we can always make sure that there is a family for every pet and help keep pets in the loving homes they want. Mars Petcare India on Friday, with leading animal welfare experts, released the first-ever 'State of Pet Homelessness Index' at the Habitat Centre, New Delhi. This is the first methodological measure of pet homelessness, identifying contributing factors in India! By promoting something like giving a home to the homeless animals, the index also helped in forming the three pillars so that one can look at various factors influencing pet homelessness. These are all pets wanted; cared for and welcomed that encompasses the various aspects of a stray dog and cat management! From reproduction control programs, animal sterilisation, cultural attitude towards stray animals, breeding practices, shelter adoption, the low number of vets that are available, the cost of owning a pet in India, and a strong stand against animal cruelty - all were discussed. No animal must lose a home due to any prejudices, lack of housing, or access to pet services. It is not fair on them! The index also revealed that an estimated 80

million homeless cats and dogs in India are living in shelters or on the streets. Despite an increase in pet ownership during the Covid-19 pandemic, India figures show that during the lockdown two-thirds of pet parents had a newfound appreciation for their pets and six in 10 people felt encouraged to adopt one. Shashanka Ala, Deputy Commissioner, Karol Bagh Zone, Municipal Corporation of Delhi, shares, "Pet homelessness came to the fore even more due to the pandemic and the lockdown. The need for a solution is

more important than ever now. The State of Pet Homelessness Index is a step in the right direction. The Municipal Corporation of Delhi will support and associate with initiatives that will help reduce pet homelessness." shelters. In addition, relinquishment levels are higher in India than on a global level with half of the current and previous owners

stating they have relinquished a pet in the past. About 34% said they have abandoned a dog on the streets, and 32% have abandoned a cat. There is a clear and desperate need for a more coordinated effort to address the challenge of pet homelessness in India! Foster families can play a huge role in rehoming, providing temporary homes for lost/injured pets, and also taking the burden off the few, resource-starved shelters in India.



SOUTHEE, OPENERS BRING NZ BACK IN GAME

PTI ■ KANPUR

Tim Southee bowled an incisive morning spell to take five wickets which was then brilliantly complemented by openers Will Young and Tom Latham as New Zealand dominated India to reach 129 for no loss on the second day of the opening Test here on Friday. The only highlight for India in an otherwise disappointing day was Shreyas Iyer's (105 off 171 balls) debut hundred.

Playing his 80th Test match, Southee (5/69) took his 13th five-wicket haul on an unresponsive track to send India packing for 345 after they started the day at 258 for 4.

Young then held centre-stage in his fourth Test appearance as he looked composed and unperturbed during his unbeaten knock of 75 off 180 balls.

Latham (50 batting off 165 balls), the seasoned campaigner, survived three on-field decisions (two leg before and one caught behind), negated by DRS, and decided to frustrate the two Indian spinners with a gritty defensive game. The Green Park track became better for batting on the second day and the turn that was on offer was minimal. The variable bounce wasn't also there for the better part of the 57 overs that they batted.

Since it was slow turn, the Black Caps duo mostly plonked their front-foot and neutralised the turn. And when they played on the back-foot, there was enough time to manoeuvre on both sides of the wicket.



Both were able to adjust on the back-foot against Ravindra Jadeja (14-4-28-0) and Ravichandran Ashwin (17-5-38-0), both of whom didn't look threatening on the day.

Also what made it worse for India was that hardly any delivery kept dangerously low, which could have brought the leg-before into the equation.



The most disappointing of all was Axar Patel (10-1-26-0), whose accuracy on the leg stump line was of little or no value and it was once again proved that without assistance from the track, he is not even half the bowler that he is with some help from surface.

Young, in particular, got as many as 12 boundaries while Latham helped himself to four hits to the fence.

While Indian spinners can come back on the third day if the pitch considerably deteriorates but New Zealand would like to take the game deep by getting somewhere close to India's first innings total and take it from there.

In the morning, Iyer became the 16th Indian cricketer to score a hundred on Test debut but the home side's lower-middle order caved in meekly save Ashwin (38 off 56 balls), whose counter-attacking effort took

them close to 350.

The credit for that went primarily to Southee (27.4-6-69-5), who was tirelessly bowling an extended spell of more than 10 overs from one end, causing extensive damage. The seasoned campaigner's 13th five-wicket haul came in his 80th Test.

Resuming on his overnight score of 75, Iyer followed the great Gundappa Vishwanath in reaching the milestone at this ground.

Ashwin did the bulk of scoring in the morning session as India added only 87 runs, losing six wickets in the process.

Southee was on target with the second new ball first up as he sent back Ravindra Jadeja (50) on his overnight score.

He used the width of the crease cleverly to trouble Jadeja and got the ball to move from length which was too much for the lower-order players to negotiate. Wriddhiman Saha and Axar Patel nicked at those deliveries that moved away at drivable lengths. Sensing that he is now batting with the tail as Saha (1 off 12 balls) is no longer a batter on whom one can repose his faith, Iyer hit a flurry of boundaries but the best shot was a cover drive off Kyle Jamieson (22.2-6-85-3) which took him to 96.

A glide towards wide of third man off Jamieson got him a double and the moment that every batter dreams of.

Paine takes mental health break from cricket



AP ■ MELBOURNE

Former Australia Test cricket captain Tim Paine is set to miss the first Ashes Test and is taking an indefinite mental health break from the game. The news comes a week after Paine tearfully quit as captain after revelations of a scandal involving the sending of inappropriate texts to a female co-worker in 2017.

Cricketer Australia said on Friday that Paine advised them he would be "stepping away from cricket for a period of time."

"We recognise that this is an incredibly difficult time for Tim and his family and are committed to supporting them," Cricket Australia chief executive Nick Hockley said in a statement.

"We respect and under-

stand Tim's decision to have a break at this time to focus on his and his family's well-being."

Paine's teammates were hoping for the wicketkeeper to play on December 8 — his 37th birthday — when Australia's five-test series against England begins in Brisbane. As of Thursday, the veteran was scheduled to join the test squad this weekend.

Paine was called up and set to bat in Tasmania's one-day match against Western Australia on Friday, giving him a chance to play five consecutive days of cricket after a low-key return via the state's second XI.

But Cricket Tasmania (CT) said Friday that Paine would not take his spot in the side.

"Following discussions over the last 24 hours, Tim Paine has advised Cricket Tasmania that he will be taking a leave of absence from all forms of cricket for the foreseeable future," CT said in a statement.

"Cricket Tasmania will continue to support Tim and his family both professionally and personally over the summer."

Likely wicketkeeper replacements for Paine in the test side are Alex Carey or Josh Inglis.

He is not bowling so can we call him all-rounder? asks KAPIL ON HARDIK

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Legendary former India captain Kapil Dev on Friday asked whether Hardik Pandya can be called an all-rounder given that he has not been bowling as much as the role demands.

A vital cog in India's scheme of things in white-ball cricket, the flamboyant Pandya bowled in just two matches in the recent T20 World Cup where India went out in the group stage itself.

He is also under fire for not revealing the extent of his several fitness issues and was dropped from the home T20 series against New Zealand, which India won 3-0.

"He has to do both the jobs to be considered an all-rounder. He is not bowling so can we call him all-rounder? Let him bowl, he has come out from the injury," Kapil said at the Royal Calcutta Golf Course here. "He is an extremely important batter to the country, for bowling he has to play a lot more matches, perform and bowl and then we will say," added India's first World Cup-winning captain.



captain. Kapil also predicted that Rahul Dravid the coach will be a bigger success than the immensely accomplished Dravid the cricketer.

Dravid began his new innings as the Indian team's head coach in the ongoing series against New Zealand, a post he has been given till the 2023 ODI World Cup in India.

"He's a good man, a good cricketer. He will do a better job as a coach than as a cricketer because in cricket nobody has done better than him. I'm just keeping my fingers crossed," Kapil said. Dravid earlier served as the head of National Cricket Academy and was also the coach of India's Under-19 and A teams, nurturing several young talents who went on to represent the country with distinction.

Shreyas Iyer 16th Indian to slam 100 on Test debut

PTI ■ KANPUR

Shreyas Iyer on Friday became the 16th Indian batter to take a hundred on his Test debut, joining an illustrious list which includes the legendary Lala Amarnath, Gundappa Viswanath, and BCCI president Sourav Ganguly among others.

The elegant right-hander, who hails from Mumbai's Worli area, achieved the feat in the ongoing first Test against New Zealand on the second day of

the match at the Green Park Stadium here. Iyer scored 105 off 171 balls, striking 13 fours and a couple of sixes during his brilliant effort.

He was dismissed by Tim Southee. He became the second batter after Viswanath to score a hundred on his Test debut at Kanpur.

The 26-year-old is also the third Indian to score a hundred on debut against New Zealand.

Arjan Kripal Singh, who achieved the feat in 1955, and Surinder Amarnath, who

THE ILLUSTRIOUS LIST			
1	Lala Amarnath v England 1933	9	Pravin Amre v South Africa 1992
2	Deepak Shodhan v Pakistan 1952	10	Sourav Ganguly v England 1996
3	Arjan Kripal Singh v New Zealand 1955	11	Virender Sehwag v South Africa 2001
4	Abbas Ali Baig v England 1959	12	Suresh Raina v Sri Lanka 2010
5	Hanumant Singh v England 1964	13	Shikhar Dhawan v Australia 201
6	G Vishwanath v Australia 1969	14	Rohit Sharma v West Indies 2013
7	Surinder Amarnath v New Zealand 1976	15	Prithvi Shaw v West Indies 2018
8	Mohd Azharuddin England 1984	16	Shreyas Iyer v New Zealand 2021.

scored a hundred against the Black Caps on his debut in 1976, are the other two Indians

to have achieved the same. Iyer is also the third Mumbai player after Rohit

Sharma and Prithvi Shaw to slam a hundred on Test debut.



Sindhu fights her way into Indonesia Open semifinal

PTI ■ BALI

India's two-time Olympic medal-winning shuttler P V Sindhu came back from a game down to beat South Korea's Sim Yujin and enter the semifinals of the Indonesia Open Super 1000 tournament here on Friday.

The men's doubles duo of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty later beat Malaysia's Goh Sze Fei and Nur Izzuddin 21-19 21-19 in straight games to also make the semifinals of the tournament, making it a great day for the Indian contingent.

Third seed Sindhu, the reigning world champion, had to toil hard to get the better of Yujin 14-21 21-19 21-14 in the quarterfinal that lasted an hour and six minutes.

The Indian will play second seed Ratchanon Intanon of Thailand, who got the better of Japan's Asuka Takahashi

21-17 21-12 in another women's singles quarterfinal match, in her last four clash of the USD 850,000 event. It was not smooth sailing from Sindhu against Yujin.

The Indian started confidently racing to a 7-1 lead before the Japanese pocketed six straight points to draw the first game level.

But once Yujin took a slender 11-10 lead at the break, she didn't look back and won the game comfortably to grab the early momentum.

The Japanese continued in the same vein in the second game and matched Sindhu stroke for stroke till the first seven points before the Indian upped her game.

Sindhu displayed better control and authority over her strokes and engaged her rival in long rallies to surge ahead 14-8 before Yujin fought back.

Sindhu used her vast experience



and held her nerves to draw the contest level.

In the decider, Sindhu enjoyed the early exchanges to race to a comfortable 11-4 lead but the Japanese secured seven consecutive points to make it 11-11. Sensing trouble, Sindhu took her game to the next level just at the right time to outwit her rival and seal the match in her favour.

The combo of Satwik and Chirag took 43 minutes to win their men's doubles quarterfinal against the Malaysians.

The other Indian in fray, B Sai Praneth, will play Olympic champion and former world No.1 Viktor Axelsen of Denmark in the men's singles quarterfinals later in the day.

Praneeth, world no.16, staved off a spirited fight from France's world no 70 Christo Popov, claiming a 21-17 14-21 21-19 win in a gruelling second round match on Thursday.

West Ham, Rangers, Lazio win; Celtic exit



AP ■ LONDON

Celtic's chances of progress in the Europa League were ended by a late Bayer Leverkusen rally to lose 3-2 in Germany on Thursday as Real Betis, Lazio and Galatasaray secured their places in the knockout stages.

Leverkusen had already qualified but made sure of top spot in Group G and a place in the last 16 thanks to two goals in the final eight minutes at the Bay Arena.

Robert Andrich headed the hosts in front before Josip Juranovic equalised from the penalty spot.

Jota's sweet strike 11 minutes into the second half had Celtic on course for their first ever win on German soil. But Andrich smashed home his second of the game between Joe Hart's legs before Moussa Diaby beat the former England international from the edge of the box. Celtic are

assured of dropping into the Europa Conference League in the new year, but cannot now catch Betis, who beat Ferencvaros 2-0 to guarantee second in the group. Lazio and Galatasaray will face off in two weeks' time for top spot in Group E after securing qualification in style.

The Italians were 3-0 winners over Lokomotiv Moscow, who are set to lose head of sports and development Ralf Rangnick to Manchester United according to reports.

Ciro Immobile scored two second half penalties before Pedro Rodriguez rounded off the scoring. Galatasaray hold a three-point lead at the top of the group after ending Marseille's chances of progress in a 4-2 thriller in Istanbul. West Ham's fine return to European football continued with a 2-0 win over Rapid Vienna despite David Moyes naming a much-changed line-up.

Indian team announced for Asian Champions Trophy

PNS ■ NEW

Delhi Hockey India on Friday named the 20-member Indian Men's Hockey Team for the upcoming Hero Men's Asian Champions Trophy which is scheduled to be held between December 14- 22, 2021. Defending Champions India begin their campaign on the opening day against Korea (Dec 14).

In this edition, they will battle it out against Korea, Japan (Dec 19), Malaysia (Dec 18), Pakistan (Dec 17) and hosts Bangladesh (Dec 15) in the single-pool tournament for top honours.

The Semi Finals will be played on 21 December followed by the Final on 22 December.

The Indian team will see Manpreet Singh captain the side along with Harmanpreet Singh who will be his deputy.

The team includes goalkeepers Krishan B Pathak and Suraj Karkera. India's defence will see Harmanpreet Singh lead the charge along with Gurinder Singh, Jarnanpreet Singh, Nilam Sanjeev Xess, Dipsan Tirkey, Varun Kumar and Mandeep Mor.

With this line-up India will have four options for dragflyck.



Pakistan takes 4 early wickets vs Bangladesh in 1st test

AP ■ CHATTOGRAM

Pakistan bowlers used some variety to take four wickets in the first session of the first test against Bangladesh on Friday, leaving the home side in trouble at lunch. Fast bowlers Shaheen Afridi and Hasan Ali, medium pacer Faheem Ashraf and offspinner Sajid Khan shared the four wickets to leave Bangladesh at 69-4 after Bangladesh captain Mominul Haque opted to bat first after winning the toss.

Liton Das was batting on 11 with Mushfiqur Rahim on 5 at the break.

Saif Hasan hit Ali for two boundaries in the second over to give a hint of a good start for Bangladesh. But his opening partner Shadman Islam struggled against Afridi, who moved the ball well, but Saif grew with confidence, driving the left arm pacer through mid-off for four.

Afridi broke through in the next delivery when Saif fended a short delivery to short leg for 14.

Shadman also fell for 14, as Hasan had him leg-before after leaking runs in his opening spell.

Khan gave the side a big breakthrough when he reviewed successfully to dismiss captain Mominul Haque for 6. Najmul Shanto then followed him, giving a straight catch to point for 14 as Bangladesh crumbled under pressure.

India face Poland in must-win match in Junior Hockey WC

PTI ■ BHUBANESWAR

Their campaign might be back on track following a massive win over lowly Canada, but defending champions India are still not out of the woods and would need to beat Poland in their final Pool B match to qualify for the quarterfinals of the FIH Men's Junior Hockey World Cup here on Saturday.

The Indians, one of the pre-tournament favourites, were given a rude shock in their opener when France stunned them 5-4.

The defeat dealt a massive blow to India's campaign and put paid to their hopes of topping their pool.

With one win and a defeat, India are currently placed second in Pool B ahead of Poland on goal difference. France, who have a perfect record till now, are set to top the pool. This means that in

the quarterfinals, India face the prospect of running into European giants and top seed Belgium, who are likely top Pool A.

Given the scenario, complacency has no place in the Indian scheme of things if they wish to defend their title.

The Indians were slow to get off the blocks in the tournament and lacked intent and purpose against France, leading to their loss.

But against Canada on Thursday, the hosts roared back and looked more organised. From here on, India will need to win every match to reclaim the title, a fact which chief coach Graham Reid is well aware of.

"...But we can't do anything about that now (loss against France). If we have to win back-to-back titles, we will have to beat every team henceforth," Reid had said.



I DID'NT TRY TO MIMIC KARTHIKEYA: AHAN ON RX100 REMAKE

SHIKHA DUGGAL

Debutant actor Ahan Shetty, son of the popular Bollywood actor Suniel Shetty is here to re-define the meaning of passionate-cum-intense romance with the remake of Telugu superhit *RX100* starring Karthikeya Gummakonda and Payal Rajput in the lead roles. Titled *Tadap*, Ahan with the film, is gearing to similarly settle the way in the hearts of all, just the way Karthikeya did with his per-

formance. It is that unconditional love that he is aspiring to gather for him to stay in this industry. Professionally trained in martial arts, the actor told *The Pioneer* exclusively that he didn't have to struggle at all to fit into those action scenes. Instead it was nature's fury that tried causing hin-

dance on the sets of

Tadap.

What if this film works for Ahan, what if he is rushed with so many offers — bringing all the 'what ifs' together, he clarifies, "I am not anxious, instead I am all keyed up for the release. The shooting has been going on for more than two years now. I am enormously focused on my beginnings in the film fraternity. I'll be choosing my scripts very wisely from now-onwards. I want to do only content-driven cinema. I am already being labeled as an action-hero; it is giving me the lot of confidence."

Ahan tells us that it is not a typical love story, it's the same character as Karthikeya but with two different personalities and this really posed a challenge to him.

Ishana

essayed by Ahan has two different personalities, one is fun and loving and second is very angry and aggressive. He had to juggle between the two. "It is a belief in our industry that for the first film, the script chooses the actor and not vice-versa. I fell in love with the character instantly. The two individualities came as a boon for me, I was able to showcase a range of emotions," adds the very hopeful actor.

Tara and Ahan's chemistry in the movie has also created a lot of buzz on social media. Although they got down to it seamlessly in front of the cameras, Ahan says that he was a bit nervous before the scene.

"Actually, a funny thing happened to us. Milan sir gave us a scene from *The Dirty Picture*. Initially, my hands were shivering, but we got so close for the scene that later, performing emotional scenes went well. Tara and I became comfortable with each other." With so many romantic sagas streaming online, Ahan feels audiences will go out with multiple perspectives about him from the theatres. Some may term him as the ultimate hero; others may call him the desperado. He likes to have that split opinion, he wants to be remembered.

When the trailer of *Tadap* released, it was a known buzz that all the female



fans were fixated on Ahan's debut.

On the Telugu remake philosophy, he says, "It was imperative for me to keep certain emotions the way they were from *RX100*. Karthikeya did full justice with 'Shiva' character in the Telugu version. I re-watched the whole movie, yet didn't try to mimic Karthikeya. One must know how to differentiate between Shiva and Ishana." He has had a gala time shooting in Mussoorie for two months, although there were times when nature was trying to take over in unexpected ways. Scenes where he had to shoot bare-chested were getting so difficult with the temperature dropping to minus!

Concluding the interview on the endearing bond he shares with his dad, he recalls, "Dad (Suniel Shetty) never gave me any filmy advice. His character in *Dhakkan* inspires me a little. His love and fervor for Shilpa ma'am in the film is what I tried to platform with my co-star Tara Sutaria. In his personal life, he is a sensible man to be around! I could derive excellence from both of his personalities for my debut movie which makes me happy."

Samantha signs global film; to play a bisexual

Actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu who was recently spotted at Annapurna Studios to dub for her next *Shakunthalam* made an exciting announcement about her next on Friday.

The *Oh! Baby* actress has signed a global film titled *Arrangements of Love*, to be directed by BAFTA-winning Welsh director Philip John, whose credits include *Downton Abbey* and *The Good Karma Hospital*.

In this film, Samantha will play a progressive bisexual Tamil woman, coming from an orthodox family.

She is strong-minded and a funny force, who runs her own detective agency.

Arrangements of Love is an adaptation of the best-selling 2004 novel of the same title by Indian author Timeri N. Murari by John and British Sri Lankan actor Nimmi Harasgama, who played the female lead in Deepa Mehta's *Funny Boy* and is a series regular on *The Good Karma Hospital*.

The actress who auditioned for the role recently posted a picture with the veteran filmmaker Philip John on her social media and captioned the image: "A whole new world... I last auditioned in 2009 for Ye Maya Chesave. 12 years later, and auditioning again, I



felt the very same nervousness. I guess it's not every day you get to audition for a BAFTA award-winning, critically acclaimed director of your most favourite series *Downton Abbey*. "Jumping for joy that you picked me sir Philip John... Thank you Sunitha Tati and Guru Films for the opportunity. Can't wait to start this exciting journey," she wrote.

Speaking to *Variety*, the actress said, "A whole new world opens up for me today as I start my journey with *Arrangements of Love*, which has such an

endearing and personal story."

"I am excited to work with Philip John, whose projects I have closely followed for many years, being a big fan of *Downton Abbey*. I am looking forward to collaborating with Sunitha once again and I hope for only more success than we previously had with *Oh! Baby*. My role is a complex character and it will be both a challenge and an opportunity for me to play it. I cannot wait to get on set," she said.

The film is expected to commence shooting in August 2022.

Suresh Productions to release Mohanlal's Marakkar in Telugu

Malayalam superstar Mohanlal's upcoming big-budget film, *Marakkar: Arabia Samudra Simham*, has completed all formalities including censor and it is now all set for theatrical release on December 3. The film, directed by Priyadarshan, is touted to be the most expensive Malayalam film. Tollywood's leading production and distribution house Suresh Productions owned by Suresh Babu will be releasing *Marakkar* grandly in Telugu states, announced the makers on Friday.



Janani brings in real emotions of RRR

SS Raja mouli's upcoming magnum opus *RRR* starring Jr NTR and Ram Charan in the lead roles, will open in theatres in January 2022.

We have already reported that the film's run time is said to be over three hours. On Friday, the makers of the film released *Janani* song, which is tagged as the 'Soul Anthem' for *RRR*, as it brings in the real emotion of the movie.

The video opens with a heart-welcoming note by the music director MM Keeravani.

"*RRR* throbs with many pulse-pounding moments. Underlying all those spectacular sequences is one consuming emotion that elevates them. Giving musical form to the beat of that very heart was one of the most fulfilling experiences-MM Keeravani", his note reads. While the visuals of *Janani*, impress the viewers with the grandeur and the emotion imbibed in the song, the soul-touching music takes it to another level.

The lyrical song opens with the visuals of Ram Charan wearing a sepoy uniform, while his terror-stricken eyes convey the pain. NTR's tears in the next segment stir the souls, as his helpless eyes convey many things.

As the focus shifts on Ajay Devgn, Shriya Saran shares the scene with him. "Sarojini, I am nothing by my fight for freedom. You are a fragment of it," Ajay Devgn says, as Shriya silently collects the dirt, fallen from his feet, to preserve for the rest of her life. The rest of the video portrays some heartbreaking visuals from the war field, which sums up the soul of the song-*Janani/Uyire*.

"*Janani* is just the beginning of the emotional journey envisaged by @ssrajamouli Garu. #RRR Soul Anthem out on November 26th. MM Keeravani garu's soulful composition will tug your heart-strings. Stay tuned to *RRR* Movie (sic)," Ram Charan had tweeted earlier, indicating that the song is one of the highlights from the upcoming visual grandeur.

On the other hand, it is reliably learned that the makers of *RRR* are

planning to release the theatrical trailer of the movie during the first week of December.

Set in the pre-independence era, the film is directed by S S Rajamouli, while DVV Danayya of DVV Entertainments bankrolls the movie. Musical score is by M M Keeravani.

NTR, Ram Charan, Ajay Devgn, Alia Bhatt, and Olivia Morris will be the important faces, while Samuthirakani, Ray Stevenson, and Alison Doody are also part of the *RRR* cast.

RRR is to hit the screens on January 7, 2022.

Amazon Prime bags Acharya's OTT rights

Acharya is one of the most-awaited films of Telugu cinema as it will see Megastar Chiranjeevi and Ram Charan sharing screen space after a long time. The movie is being made at a whopping budget of around Rs 140 crore.

Reports are coming that Amazon Prime Video has acquired the post-theatrical digital streaming rights of the Koratala Siva directorial venture. Chiranjeevi and Koratala Siva's film *Acharya* will be made available for streaming on Amazon Prime Video several weeks after its theatrical release. The shoot of the film is going on at a brisk pace and it is in the last leg of production.

However, no official confirmation has been made regarding the same. Chiranjeevi plays the titular role in

Acharya. Kajal Aggarwal will play the film's leading lady. Pooja Hegde, Sonu Sood, Jishu Sengupta, Posani Krishna Murali, and Ajay will also be seen in crucial roles in the film.

On the other hand, Regina Cassandra will be seen shaking legs with Chiranjeevi in a special song.

Karthikeya visits Tirumala

The newly-wed couple — actor Kartikeya and Lohitha Reddy — visited Tirupathi on Friday and took the blessings of Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy along with family. The *RX100* fame got married to his longtime girlfriend Lohitha Reddy on November 21 in Hyderabad.



Pooja Hegde takes up GIC

Taking up Tollywood actor Sushanth's challenge, Pooja Hegde, who is in Hyderabad shooting for her next, planted a sapling at Ramoji Film City on Friday.

After the plantation, she

asked Bollywood actors Akshay Kumar and Ritesh Deshmukh to continue the plantation chain. The actress who is happy to take part in the Green India Challenge requested her friends and family to promote this noble initiative by Rajya Sabha MP J Santosh Kumar.

