

ANALYSIS 7

MAKING SENSE OF THE
POWER CRISIS DEBATE

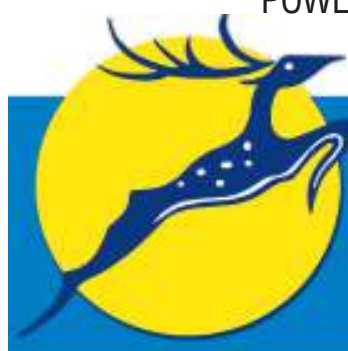
MONEY 8

INDIA EXPECTED TO SEE HIGHER
SALARY WITH 9.3% HIKE IN '22

SPORTS 12

ROHIT FINDS HIS GROOVE AS
INDIA OUTPLAY AUSTRALIA

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, OCTOBER 21, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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"NATYAM IS COM-MERCIAL, YET THOUGHT-PROVOKING"

Page 11

BE GOOD CITIZENS FIRST, THEN BE GOOD PEOPLE: NARAYANA MURTHY

Infosys co-founder Narayana Murthy said on Tuesday that being a good citizen is about treating the society as one's own. Speaking at the 10th annual convocation of the IIT Bhubaneswar in a virtual mode, Murthy underlined that the only way to eradicate poverty was to create more and more jobs with better income. "I have tremendous confidence in the power of youth, values, aspirations, energy, confidence, determination, discipline and enthusiasm," Murthy said. "That requires that you people do some hard thinking, some introspection and determination," he said.

EMPLOYEES' PROVIDENT FUND ADDS 14.81 LAKH SUBSCRIBERS IN AUGUST

Retirement fund body EPFO net added 14.81 lakh subscribers in August 2021, reflecting a growing trend in net payroll for the first five months of this fiscal. The provisional payroll data of Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) released on Wednesday highlights that it added around 14.81 lakh net subscribers during the month of August 2021, a labour ministry statement said. The data reflects a growing trend in net payroll for the first five months of the current financial year, it added. For the month of August, the net subscriber addition increased by 12.61 per cent as compared to the previous month of July 2021.

INSURANCE SCHEME FOR HEALTH WORKERS FIGHTING COVID EXTENDED

The insurance scheme for healthcare workers fighting Covid-19 has been extended further for a period of 180 days, and so far, 1,351 claims have been paid under it, the Union health ministry said on Wednesday. The current period of the policy is ending on October 20. "Since the Covid-19 pandemic has still not abated and deaths of health workers deployed for Covid-related duties are still being reported, accordingly, the insurance policy has been extended with effect from 21.10.2021 for a further period of 180 days so as to continue to provide a safety net to the dependents of health workers who are deputed to take care of Covid-19 patients," it said.

DEATH TOLL RISES TO 52 IN U'KHAND; RAIN FURY IN UP, BENGAL & SIKKIM

Six more bodies were recovered on Wednesday in rain-battered Uttarakhand, taking the death toll to 52 in the Himalayan state, while Uttar Pradesh, Sikkim, and areas of north Bengal were also pounded by torrential rainfall that caused landslides and led to closure of National Highway 10, the main road linking Gangtok with the rest of the country. Three people were killed and hundreds marooned as heavy rains lashed Uttar Pradesh's Bareilly and Pilibhit districts over the last two days. In Uttarakhand, 17 people were injured and 16, including 11 members of a trekking team, went missing in rain-related incidents.



HC allows TS govt to re-open Gurukuls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday allowed the government to reopen Gurukuls across the State. The government had urged the court to scrap its order stopping Gurukuls from opening, as examinations for first year Intermediate are due to be held.

Advocate-General BS Prasad informed the court that Covid norms will be followed while restarting the Gurukuls. The government also informed the court that many educational institutions have been opened in the State and are following Covid protocols.

In view of the reducing case-load, the court agreed to lift the stay orders and directed reopening of the Gurukuls with Covid norms.

Time to declare all-out war on ganja, drugs: KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao on Wednesday said that the time has come to declare an all-out war against drug abuse in the wake of reports about rising consumption of ganja in the State.

The State machinery should become alert before the situation turns severe, KCR said, and instructed the officers of the Police and Excise Departments to clamp down on illegal ganja cultivation and consumption.

The Chief Minister, who addressed a high-level meeting with the officials from the two Departments at Pragathi Bhavan here, said that a comprehensive plan will be prepared to wipe out ganja cultivation.

A special cell, headed by a DG-level official, would be set up to prevent ganja usage, KCR said, instructing Excise Commissioner Sarfraz Ahmed to strengthen the Enforcement and flying squad teams.



Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao chairs the review meeting on Wednesday.

Govt may cancel Rythu sops to ganja growers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao on Wednesday said that schemes like Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima should be cancelled for those indulging in illicit ganja cultivation and the government would consider cancelling RoFR pattas of those cultivating ganja.

Stating that another meeting would be convened soon where a comprehensive strategy to tackle the menace of ganja and gudumba would be finalised, KCR said that based on those using ganja, officials should nab those who were supplying the contraband.

State stares at revenue deficit of over Rs 8,000 cr

Borrowings set to cross Rs 23,000 crore by end of October

ML MELLY MAITREYI
■ HYDERABAD

Though Telangana has been posting improved revenues since July – after the lockdown imposed during second wave was lifted – the impact of Covid-19 on the State's economy is visible in over Rs 8,000 crore revenue deficit at the end of first five months of the current fiscal 2021-22. At the end of August 2021, the total revenue receipts for five months stood at Rs 43,864 crore, including tax revenue of Rs 37,591 crore and non-tax revenue of Rs 2,089 crore.

The non-tax revenue mainly came from auction of land at Kokapet and Khanameti.

The revenue expenditure for the same period was Rs 51,966 crore, including salaries, pensions and subsidies, resulting in a deficit of over Rs 8,000 crore.

The capital expenditure on development / infrastructure projects till August-end was also slow at Rs 6,762 crore as against the annual target of Rs 28,518 crore. The revenue receipts barely accounted for 25 percent of the Budget estimates for the current financial year, i.e. Rs 1,76,126 crore.

But compared to the corresponding period last fiscal, it is ahead by a growth rate of four percent as the impact of the pandemic last year was more severe.

Telangana, till August-end, raised market borrowings to the tune of Rs 20,941 crore as against Rs 45,559 crore it could raise under the FRBM norms for the entire year. The State government has notified the RBI that it will raise another Rs 2,500 crore during October.

Denied bail by special NDPS court, Aryan Khan moves HC

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A special court here on Wednesday denied bail to Aryan Khan, the son of Bollywood actor Shah Rukh Khan, observing that 'on the face of it', he was indulging in 'illicit drug activities on a regular basis'.

His WhatsApp chats also showed, prima facie, that he was in touch with drug peddlers, the court noted.

Aryan (23), arrested with a few others on October 3 after the Narcotics Control Bureau raided a cruise ship off the Mumbai coast and claimed to have seized drugs including charas, has now moved the Bombay High Court.



Covid vax for 12-18 years age group likely by next month: DPH

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With Telangana poised to touch the 3-crore doses per day mark in a day or two, Director of Public Health Dr G Srinivas Rao said that Covid vaccination for children in the 12-18 years age group might start in two to three weeks.

He urged people not to skip taking the second dose of the vaccine as over 60 percent of the Covid-19 cases in Telangana are that of unvaccinated patients, 30 percent of the infections reported are among those who have taken just the first dose and only 5 percent to 10 percent of the infections are



amongst those who have taken both the doses.

Dr Srinivas Rao said: "The first dose was administered to about 75

percent of the people while only 39 percent have taken the second. There is a stockpile of 50 lakh vaccine doses in Telangana."

He said that the 99 percent protection from the coronavirus is through vaccination. "There are 36.35 lakh people who need to take the second dose. Cases and deaths are on the rise in Russia and the UK. Everyone should take both doses" the DPH said. The DPH said that nearly 69 lakh people in the State have not yet taken a single dose.

He reminded that the time gap between two doses of Covishield has been reduced to 12 weeks.

India nears 100 cr Covid jabs mark

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As India nears the milestone of administering 100 crore Covid vaccine doses, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Wednesday appealed to all those who are eligible to get inoculated without delay and contribute in the historic vaccination journey of India.

A series of events have been lined up to celebrate the milestone of administering 100 crore Covid vaccine doses.

Mandaviya will launch a song by singer Kailash Kher and an audio-visual film at the Red Fort. "The country is close to making a vaccine century."

Sharmila begins 4,000-km padayatra

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

YS Sharmila, sister of Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and founder-president of the YSR Telangana Party, on Wednesday began her 4,000 km padayatra in Telangana covering 90 Assembly constituencies out of the total 119 in the state.

Sharmila will walk 12 km per day and address at least nine public meetings.

The march, 'Praja Prasthanam', began from Chevella near here, YSRTP sources said. "The aim of this Praja Prasthanam is to bring back YSR rule (former chief minister and her late father YS Rajasekhara Reddy) in the state. The aim is to ensure women and backward classes get



YSR Telangana Party founder-president YS Sharmila interacts with an elderly woman soon after launching her 4,000-km long padayatra from Chevella on Wednesday.

their due share in Parliament and Legislative Assemblies," she said. Party leaders have already prepared a route map targeting youth with the slogan 'Eetharam

Navathaku Nayakathwam' (new leadership for present youth) on the plank of YSR welfare rule.

Self respect vs better living in Huzurabad

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

New roads, beautified junctions, fountains, greenery and more would make anyone think twice before casting their vote in Huzurabad. The newly-laid roads and those which are being laid by the TRS government over the past couple of months would make the Huzurabad voter wonder, "Why could not Eatala Rajender, being a powerful man, get this done before?"

Dalits may even think that Dalit Bandhu is being implemented in Huzurabad because of Eatala, but the money and passbook is being

disbursed by TRS government. Holding a SBI passbook with Rs 9.90 lakh reflecting in the account, thinking of what to do next in life, voters are weighing between the person who made this happen versus the person who is capable of doing it.

Eatala is a seasoned politician who attracts crowds and people queue up to take selfies with him. In contrast, Gellu Srinivas Yadav, his main rival in the by-election, is visiting people accompanied by a handful of youngsters.

After hearing Eatala's speech, a 70-year-old in Kamalapur says

"Unfortunately for him, but he is a good guy."

And then there are a few senior citizens dancing merrily in front of Srinivas Yadav's vehicle in Kamalapur. This election cannot be judged by the number of people flanking a candidate, as there is a crowd everywhere, come rain or sunshine. People gather in the village to see what the leader has to say and these scenes are more or less similar across parties and candidates.

While one citizen gets Srinivas

GROUND
REPORT

TS getting 24% repeat investments, says KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

More than 24 percent of the investments in Telangana are from existing investors, meaning that these are repeat investments, revealed IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao on Wednesday.

The Minister's revelation came during a webinar with members of a European Business Group.

"This obviously shows that our existing investors have found the going to be so good that they are prepared to bring more and more investments into the same State of Telangana instead of looking elsewhere," KTR said.



Talking about TSiPASS, the Minister said that this policy brings about a number of path-breaking reforms, some that have never before been thought of in the country.

Most small hospitals in TS have no fire safety

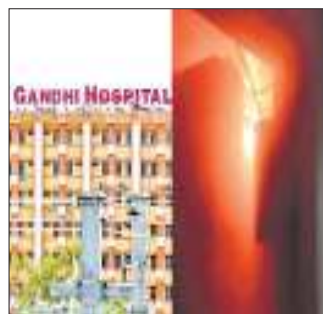
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nearly six months after Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao ordered a review of fire safety measures in hospitals, a fire was reported at the state-run Gandhi Hospital on Wednesday morning.

In April, nearly 50 hospitals across the State had been issued notices directing them to follow norms.

According to fire department officials, a majority of hospitals found to be violating norms are small hospitals.

V Papaiah, Regional Fire Officer, Central Region, said, "While all the major high-rise hospitals in the city have the mandatory No Objection Certificate (NOC), the issue is



with the smaller ones, including the ones in multi-storied buildings. These hospitals start operations without proper permissions and will be served notices if found to be in violation of the law."

YADADRI TEMPLE RENOVATION Gold offerings pour in; MEIL announces six kg

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A day after Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao became the first person to announce a donation of one kg 16 tolas of gold for the Vimana Gopuram of Yadadri temple on Tuesday, industrialists and businessmen are coming forward to make donations for the gold plating of the gopuram.

Megha Engineering and Infrastructure Ltd. (MEIL),

announced an offering of six kg of gold for the Yadadri Lakshmi Nrusimha Swamy temple on Wednesday.

MEIL director B Srinivas Reddy said that gold plating of temple gopuram was a sacred mission and they were happy to be part of it. They would either donate the gold or cash of equivalent value through cheque, he said.

Gandhi Hosp staff avert fire mishap

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A fire was detected at Gandhi Hospital at about 7.20 am on Wednesday. Fortunately, no casualties were reported.

The fire started in the ground floor switchboard and went up vertically along the electric cables to the first, second and third floor.

Gandhi Superintendent Dr Raja Rao said, "Power was

switched off immediately to that north block. Fire extinguishers were opened by our trained staff and within five minutes, fire tenders reached the spot as the fire department is there within the campus. Within 15 to 20 minutes, the fire was brought under control. There was no damage to equipment, no injuries to anybody, all are safe."

Safari Park at Hyderabad Zoo reopens for visitors
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TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwin & Krishna Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Pratipada 22:15

Nakshatram : Ashwini 16:17

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

Rahukalam : 1:27 pm - 2:53 pm

Yamagandam : 6:14 am - 7:40 am

Variyam : 11:54 am - 1:39 pm, 12:00 am - 4:43 am

Gulika : 9:07 am - 10:33 am

Good Time : (to start any important work)

Amritakalam : 8:24 am - 10:09 am

Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:37 am - 12:23 pm

HYDERABAD
WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly sunny

Temp: 30/20

Humidity: 61%

Sunrise: 6:10 am

Sunset: 05:50 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated OCTOBER 20, 2021 5:00 PM

Govt plans big to celebrate 100-crore vaccination mark

KAUSHIK GUNUGANTI
■ HYDERABAD

India is likely to achieve its 100-crore vaccination mark on October 21, according to top sources in the Union Health Ministry.

The Centre is planning to celebrate the feat of administering 100 crore Covid-19 vaccine doses by lighting up 100 monuments across the country in the colours of the National Flag.

“Altogether 100 selected

monuments across the country are going to be lit in the Tricolour to mark 100 crore Covid vaccine doses being administered in the country. We are working on it,” ASI director (monuments) NK Pathak said.

Among them were Charminar, Golkonda fort, Warangal fort and the Ramappa temple from Telangana.

In a peak at what is being planned for the day, health ministry sources revealed

that airline SpiceJet has volunteered to cover its aircraft with the hoarding of “one billion vaccines” to celebrate the vaccination milestone.

The government will be looking at running hashtags of #vaccinecentury on social media on that day.

Top government representatives will likely tweet special videos congratulating the efforts of the healthcare workers across the country. Plans are also being made to make announcements in

public transport facilities such as railway station platforms, trains and on Indian ships once the milestone of 100 crore vaccines is reached.

In addition to this, the efforts of the frontline and healthcare workers in remote areas, have been chronicled in the newly-launched book 'Sentinels of the Soil', that encapsulates stories of hardship faced by healthcare workers from various states who travelled to help propel India's vaccination drive.

State logs 191 fresh Covid cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Wednesday recorded 191 new Covid-19 cases and one death, pushing the total number of positive cases to 6,69,556 and death toll to 3,942, respectively.

A total of 162 recoveries were registered, taking the total number of recoveries to 6,61,646, leaving 3,968 active cases, a government bulletin said. The GHMC reported 49 cases followed by Karimnagar (19) and Rangareddy (13) districts.

A total of 41,682 samples were tested on Wednesday. Cumulatively, the number of samples tested was 2,71,56,065.

The recovery and case fatality rates were at 98.81 percent and 0.58 percent, compared to the national average of 98.13 percent and 1.3 percent, respectively.

Dalit Bandhu caught in TRS, BJP campaign crossfire

SNCN ACHARYULU
■ HYDERABAD

With only a week left before campaigning for the Huzurabad Assembly by-election ends, the two major contenders - TRS and BJP - are focusing on Dalits, and the promises made to the community in the past, to gain the upper hand.

While the Dalit Bandhu scheme has become the most used weapon during the attacks and counter attacks, both the BJP and TRS are also reminding the voters of the past promises to prove that their rival is unreliable when it comes to implementing assurances.

The Election Commission, by staying the implementation of the Dalit Bandhu scheme in Huzurabad, has given room to the TRS to accuse the BJP of

backroom manipulations. The TRS is going to town, convincing voters that the BJP is responsible for stopping the implementation of Dalit Bandhu scheme. The BJP is countering this by alleging that the TRS is cheating the Dalit community once again in the name of Dalit Bandhu.

The BJP is reminding voters at every platform of the past assurances of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay Kumar has frequently alleged that KCR had promised before the 2014 Assembly elections that a Dalit will be made the first Chief Minister of Telangana, but did not keep his word.

Bandi Sanjay also alleged that KCR, after become the Chief Minister, assured that Dalit families would be given three acres of land but failed

to implement this promise too. To this, the TRS leadership alleges that the BJP used its clout behind the scenes and forced the Election Commission to stay implementation of the Dalit Bandhu scheme in Huzurabad.

Telangana BJP general secretary Premendar Reddy challenged the TRS to prove that any complaint was lodged with the poll panel regarding Dalit Bandhu. He said that the BJP leaders were ready to hang themselves at the Ambedkar statue in Huzurabad if the TRS charge was proven.

Bandi Sanjay also alleged that so far, not a single Dalit beneficiary has been able to utilise the funds released by the State government.

He said that the money was deposited under Dalit Bandhu scheme in the accounts of the beneficiaries, but was frozen.

Time to declare all-out war on ganja, drugs: KCR

Continued from page 1

He said that special vigil should be kept near educational institutions and also instructed that the number of check posts near the borders be increased. “Revamp communication networks and provide adequate numbers of vehicles to the teams,” the Chief Minister instructed.

A special wing should also be set up in the Intelligence department. Those who achieved good results in eradication of ganja would be given cash rewards, special promotions and other incentives, he said. KCR said Telangana Police has the reputation of the best police force in the country and its officers should study the best practices and experiences in the country in controlling ganja.

“The menace of gudamba (illicit liquor) and gambling were surfacing again in the State. Previously when playing card clubs were banned, women praised the government. Stern measures should be taken to ensure that these social maladies do not rear their head again,” he said.

The Excise and the Police departments should work in tandem to ensure even ganja seeds are not available anywhere and the State should be made free of drugs and narcotics, he said.

Earlier, the Chief Minister said the State that was achieved

Govt may cancel Rythu sops to ganja growers

Continued from page 1

Cultivation of ganja is rampant along the Andhra-Odisha Border (AOB) from where the contraband enters Telangana via Chintur and Bhadrachalam to be taken to Maharashtra and Karnataka States, officials of the Excise and Police Departments told the Chief Minister.

The officials, who attended the high-level review meeting on elimination of gudamba and ganja convened by the Chief Minister at Pragathi Bhavan here, explained the strategies being adopted for regulation of ganja in various districts.

They told the Chief Minister that to control the transport and use of ganja and other drugs, a coordinated setup was required with the Police and Excise officials of other States. Large percentage of ganja was coming to the State from other States and even in Chhattisgarh, cultivation

and supply of ganja was taking place. Among those addicted to ganja are migrant workers, auto drivers, hamalis, they said.

DGP Mahender Reddy told the officials to identify the centres that have become hotspots for ganja and take immediate steps for their regulation. Measures would be taken to coordinate with police of Visakhapatnam and Malkangiri, he said.

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar said that the joint meeting of Excise and Police department officials would help them in taking a step forward for controlling ganja supply and consumption.

The Chief Minister said that eradication of ganja and gudumba should be taken up as a serious mission and officials should go forward without compromise. “As gudumba was being prepared locally, it would be easier for the Excise Department to control it.

after a long struggle, has been progressing in all sectors and many development targets have been achieved. “Crops were being cultivated in 1.3 crore acres and the State was marching ahead of Punjab in

the agriculture sector. About 99 percent of the worldwide corporations were investing huge funds in the State thanks to excellent law and order situation and policing,” the Chief Minister said.

India nears 100 cr Covid jabs mark

Continued from page 1

To be a part of this golden opportunity, I appeal to the citizens who are yet to be vaccinated to contribute in this historic golden vaccination journey of India by getting vaccinated immediately,” he said in a tweet in Hindi.

The SpiceJet will unveil a special livery at the Delhi airport to celebrate the 100 crore vaccine milestone on Thursday.

The health minister, Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia and SpiceJet CMD Ajay Singh will be present on the occasion.

Mandaviya had earlier said that announcements will be made on airplanes, ships, metros and at railway stations when India achieves its target of administering 100 crore doses.

Celebrations will also be held at central government hospitals in the city to mark the occasion.

The total vaccine doses administered in the country crossed 99.54 crore on Wednesday, according to the 7.15 pm data from the Co-WIN portal with around 75 per cent of all adults having administered the first dose and around 31 per cent having received both doses.

“After 100 crore doses are administered, we will go in mission mode to ensure that those who have taken their first dose take their second dose too to ensure they are protected against COVID-19,” Mandaviya had said.

State stares at revenue deficit of over Rs 8,000 cr

Continued from page 1

The State had to borrow heavily in the first five months itself to fund Rythu Bandhu input assistance for about 60 lakh farmers, relief it provided for different sections of society during lockdown, including private school teachers and for the recently launched Dalit Bandhu scheme.

However, compared to many other States, recovery in Telangana's revenues in the last three months was driven

by Goods and Service Tax and rise in Stamps and Registration revenue after the upward revision of market value of land and enhancement of the stamp duty rates in July.

Though people have been paying through their noses for petrol, diesel and LPG cylinders, ironically these have been bringing additional revenue to the State exchequer through VAT whenever there is an upward revision in the petroleum prices, sometimes on consecutive days.

Incidentally, Wednesday saw yet another rise in petrol and diesel prices, taking petrol to Rs 110.46 per litre and diesel to Rs 103.56 a litre in the State capital. While the ruling TRS blames the BJP-led government at the Centre for the steep hike in prices of petrol, diesel and LPG, it itself has done precious little to ease the burden on the people in the State staring at its revenue deficit.

The significant rise in liquor sales too month on month have been bringing in additional

revenue through excise and sales tax (VAT) notwithstanding mounting criticism against the government for promoting liquor as a major source of revenue and increasing the number of liquor outlets.

In September, the State's GST revenue was Rs 3,494 crore and that of stamps and registration was about Rs 1,090 crore with spurt in real estate transactions and realty sector booming inexplicably despite the State economy yet to recover to its pre-pandemic growth rate.

Gold offerings pour in; MEIL announces six kg

Continued from page 1

Prominent businessman SV Ramaraju donated one kg of gold on behalf of Jala Vihar to Yadadri temple.

In a statement, he thanked Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao for the opportunity to be partners in the renovation of the Yadadri temple.

Praising KCR, Ramaraju said the Chief Minister in a short span of time completed several noteworthy projects like Kaleswaram, Haritha Haaram, renovation of Yadadri temple and organised sacred rituals like Maha Chandri Yagam.

“It's great idea to involve even common citizens to take part in the divine programme,” he said.

Continued from page 1

“There are many salient features in this law relating to self certification and time-bound guaranteed approvals,” he added.

KTR said that the State government has been giving priority to sectors including IT, Electronics, Life Sciences including pharmaceutical, biotech, and medical devices, Defence and Aerospace, food processing, textiles, automotive including EV, plastics and chemicals, gems and jewellery, retail, and logistics.

The Minister said that Telangana also has the highest industrial land bank in the country, and in that sense, it becomes very easy for the government to identify a suitable land parcel for

Sharmila begins 4,000-km ...

Continued from page 1

YSRTP leaders said that Sharmila will participate in a ‘Rachabanda’ programme every day during which she would have a one-to-one interaction with the people. She will visit a minimum of three mandals in every constituency.

YSRTP leaders have already chalked out an action plan to induct leaders from other political parties during Sharmila's padyatra. She will encourage the newly-inducted leaders subsequently to urge people to give her a chance.

She alleged that the state's youths are deprived of jobs pushing them into distress.

Sharmila had earlier walked more than 3,000 km as part of her padyatra during 2012-13 in undivided Andhra Pradesh in support of her brother.

Most small hospitals in TS have ...

Continued from page 1

While the Fire Department is working on verifying the status of fire safety measures at such hospitals, C Lakshmi Prasad, Director, Telangana State Disaster Response Fire Services, said, “Initially, a notice is sent when the hospital is found not to be adhering to the guidelines. If no action is taken by the hospital authorities, a second notice will be sent, followed by a third notice and then stringent action will be taken against the building and the management, including sealing of the hospital.”

Gandhi Hospital superintendent Dr Raja Rao said that the regular fire safety training and mock drill, helped in curtailing the mishap without any casualties.

Papaiah said, “The entire staff at hospitals has to be trained in basic fire safety measures. How to operate a

Gandhi Hosp staff avert fire mishap

Continued from page 1

As the power supply to the north block was cut and it may take time to restore it, the patients were shifted from to the south block.

Dr Raja Rao said that in the north block, no patient was on life support. “All were elective cases and there was no interruption / inconvenience in their treatment,” he said. Electrical technical team from TMSIDC was assessing all areas to prevent

any further short circuits and to replace the damaged cables at the earliest.

The preparedness of Gandhi Hospital staff definitely saved life and property and helped contain the fire. Dr Raja Rao said, “There is a fire outpost in the campus and fire extinguishers in all floors. Mock drill and training was given to our staff by the fire department. Everything worked out well.”

Denied bail by special NDPS court...

Continued from page 1

V Patil, special judge for the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act cases, rejected the bail pleas of Aryan Khan, his friend Arbaaz Merchant (26) and model Mumun Dhamecha (28).

The lawyers of Aryan Khan and Dhamecha moved the High Court seeking bail soon thereafter. The matter is likely to be mentioned on Thursday before Justice N W Sambre seeking urgent hearing, legal sources said.

The special NDPS Act court in its 21-page order noted that

WhatsApp chats of Aryan Khan prima facie revealed that he was “dealing in illicit drug activities on a regular basis” and therefore it cannot be said that he was not likely to commit a similar offence if released on bail.

It also held that Aryan knew that his friend and co-accused Arbaaz Merchant was in possession of drugs, and hence there was conscious possession even though the NCB had not found any drugs on Aryan himself.

Considering the prima facie involvement of the applicants/accused No 1 to 3

(Aryan Khan, Merchant and Dhamecha) in commission of grave and serious offence, this is not a fit case for granting bail, the judge said in the order. The material placed before it by the NCB showed on the face of it that section 29 of the NDPS Act, pertaining to conspiracy, was applicable, said the court. Therefore, it is not possible to record a satisfaction at this stage that the applicants have not committed any offence under the NDPS Act, the order said.

Case papers and voluntary statements of Aryan Khan and Arbaaz Merchant disclosed

that they possessed drugs for consumption and enjoyment, the court noted further.

These things go to show that accused No 1 (Aryan) was having knowledge of the contraband concealed by accused No 2 (Merchant) in his shoes, it said.

Although no contraband is found in the possession of accused No 1, six grams of charas was found in possession of accused No 2 of which accused No 1 (Aryan) was having knowledge and thus it can be said that it was in conscious possession of both the accused, the court added.

Experts in a quandary over ethical boundaries of ancient DNA research

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rapid growth of ancient DNA research and its impact on archaeology and other fields has prompted the need for developing universally acceptable ethical standards to govern such research. These discussions have led the scientific community to consider best practices for sampling of human remains and carrying out scientific analysis in a way that is aligned with the various stakeholder groups. However, appropriate approaches to working with human DNA differ across world contexts.

This has led a diverse set of 64 scholars from 31 countries who are actively involved in ancient DNA research to develop a set of guidelines. The diversity of authors has been an effort towards embracing the complexities across the world. The guidelines have been published in the science journal Nature.

Dr. K. Thangaraj, Chief Scientist from the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology (CCMB) and Director of the DBT-Centre for DNA Fingerprinting and Diagnostics, Hyderabad offered inputs from an Indian perspective

in developing the guidelines. His expertise stems from starting the ancient DNA laboratory at CCMB about a decade ago along with late Dr. Lalji Singh, former Director of CCMB. This research has shed light on the mysteries of the human skeletons found in Roopkund lake in the Himalayas and helped establish identity of Georgian Queen Ketavani buried in the St. Augustine convent in Goa, India.

“Some of the ethical issues pertaining to analysis of human remains are globally applicable whereas some differ greatly

across the world. It is, therefore, critical to articulate guidelines that are rigorous yet flexible enough to be appropriate for diverse local contexts. Our discussions with a truly international and diverse set of scholars was key to identifying principles that could be generalized,” says Dr. Thangaraj.

“Much of the writing on ancient DNA ethics has come from scholars thinking about issues that affect Native North Americans in the United States (US). US has had a terrible history of colonial exploitation of Native American tribes by people of European descent, and

descendants of the latter still have a dominant role in that country's politics. Informed by this history, earlier scholars had suggested that indigenous communities or local groups who are descendants and stewards of the ancient remains should closely decide whether and how research should go forward on these remains. They had also suggested universality of this approach on DNA studies across the world,” he explains. This can be relevant for Africa where they have a legacy of ancient remains collected in unethical ways by colonizers and often

sent abroad for research.

Dr. Thangaraj, however, has been concerned by the appropriateness of this suggestion for India. He says, “For India except regions like the Andaman Islands, it is meaningless to discuss the concept of indigeneity. Most populations have inter-bred with each other thousands of years back. Similarly, in many other parts of the world the local communities do not relate or represent the ancient populations of those regions due to migrations, socio-political conflicts and other reasons.”

“Focus on indigeneity can

also lead to divisiveness and conflict, as has been evident in Europe. Scholars there had worked for decades to deconstruct narratives that claim ownership of heritage by specific groups. These found way to justify claims to territory in the Nazi period”, he adds.

The new set of five guidelines aim to circumvent these differences in global contexts of ancient DNA research. The contributing scholars believe these guidelines are strong, universally applicable, and they have committed to the guidelines in their own work going forward.

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Dalits take out mock funeral processions of Chief Minister

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Dalits took out mock funeral processions of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in Huzurabad constituency on Wednesday accusing him of denying the benefits of the Dalit Bandhu scheme to Dalits. The protesters raised the slogan 'Down Down KCR' during the procession.

The protesters alleged that the Chief Minister made Eatala Rajender a scapegoat. They even poured milk on the portrait of Rajender and declared support for him in the Huzurabad bypoll.

The funeral processions were taken out in Gangaram village of Veenavanka mandal, Korapalli of Jammikunta and Sirisedu village of Illandakunta mandal.

KCR had promised many benefits to Dalits under the Dalit Bandhu scheme, but they



didn't get any. The CM blames Eatala Rajender for this.

The protesters demanded that KCR should tell them when they would receive the benefits of the programme. They accused KCR of giving the Dalits fake passbooks and said that the CM did not give them at least one rupee under the scheme.

"If the CM really wants to

implement Dalit Bandhu scheme, why isn't he keeping his promise," they asked and demanded that the CM implement the scheme before the elections if he has soft corner for the Dalits.

"The CM promised 2BHK houses five years ago, but the houses have not been built. Earlier, the CM promised three acres of government land for

landless Dalits, but failed to fulfil that promise, too," they said.

They pointed out that the Dalits did not approach him asking to implement Dalit Bandhu. "What should we do with the fake passbooks," they asked. "If the government gives us buffaloes, where should we keep them? We haven't got the 2BHK houses," the Dalits said.

They said the CM cannot show his face to the people, having cheated Dalits on the matters of three acres land and 2BHK houses. So, he came up with the Dalit Bandhu scheme. They cautioned the CM that it would be the Dalits who would give him a decent political burial. Meanwhile, the Dalits openly declared that they would vote for Rajender in Huzurabad by-election and, as true heirs of Dr BR Ambedkar, vowed to deal a blow to the CM.

Congress a party of jokers: Arvind

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MP Dharmapuri Arvind on Tuesday said the Congress had become a party of jokers these days in the State.

Referring to remarks made by Congress leaders against the BJP, he wondered whether the Congress party still existed in the State. Interacting with media persons here, he refuted the allegations that the BJP was behind the suspension of Dalit Bandhu scheme in the poll-bound Huzurabad constituency.

Noting that, in fact, it was the BJP which made a Dalit the President of India, he said the Central government gave MUDRA loans of Rs 39,000 crore to 46.26 lakh people mostly SCs and STs.

The Congress was responsible for sending Dr BR Ambedkar into depression, and fielded candidates against him when he contested elections twice as an independent candidate.



Tiger census begins in Nallamala

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

The four-day tiger census using state-of-the-art high-sensitivity digitalised cameras began Tuesday in the Nallamala Reserve Forest under the guidance of experts.

The earlier census had concluded that the Amrabad Tiger Reserve in the Nallamala Forest had seven tigers, two cubs and 80 leopards. Local Adivasi leaders then said that their population had doubled.

Out of the 36,552 square km of forests, reserve forest comprised 3,172.26 square km and its buffer zone 446.27 square km. The rest of the forest area

was identified as low-level dense forests.

The tiger census will enumerate the tiger population in 2,760 forest beats in Atchampet, Amrabad and Nagarjuna Sagar forest divisions.

They will be divided into four blocks for enumeration. Over 324 highly trained forest personnel would enumerate the population using high-sensitivity cameras deployed at the rate of one every 15 feet.

This time the tiger census would be done with the help of an ecological mobile application, a speciality of the census this year, District Forest Officer Krishna Goud said.

The enumeration would take place in a radius of 15 km in each forest beat at the rate of five km per day. The daily enumeration report would be sent to the National Tiger Census Authority office at Bengaluru.

Earlier, the pug marks of tigers were compared to plaster of paris moulds. Now, the enumeration is being carried out using high-sensitivity cameras and an ecological mobile application, he said.

The census would be carried out taking a forest beat as a unit as part of the all-India tigers' estimation-2022 project, he added.

VHP, Bajrang Dal leaders protest attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Nalgonda district president of Vishwa Hindu Parishad Karnati Yadagiri demanded that the attacks on Hindus and Hindu temples in Bangladesh be stopped immediately and that Hindus be given protection.

On Wednesday, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and the Bajrang Dal jointly organised the burning of an effigy representing Bangladesh at the Clock Tower Center in Nalgonda town to protest the attack on Hindus and Hindu temples in Bangladesh. A funeral procession was held in the town with an effigy of Bangladesh which was later burnt.

Speaking on the occasion, Vishwa Hindu Parishad lead-



ers expressed concern that attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh and Pakistan have become routine. They said that Hindus were being forcibly converted and Hindus who are not converting to Islam are being attacked.

They alleged that around 500 houses have already been

burnt down and temples set on fire. The mandapas set up during the Durga Navratri celebrations have also been demolished.

They urged the Indian government to take immediate steps to help the Hindus of Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.



‘Work with coordination to resolve land disputes’

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

District Collector Jitesh V Patil has asked officials to work with coordination to resolve land disputes and asked the forest department officials to erect a boundary around the forest lands.

In a review meeting with revenue and forest officials held at the Integrated Collectorate Complex here on Wednesday, the district collec-

tor asked them to ensure that no land problems pertaining to Dharani portal kept in pending.

He asked them to identify government lands at Beerkuru, Domakonda, Nasrullahabad for development of Mini Bruhat Palle Prakruti Vanams. He told them to erect a green fence around the Bruhat Palle Prakruti Vanams.

The DC reviewed land disputes mandal wise.

Talasani Srinivas seeks support of caste groups for Gellu Srinivas

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav has said objective of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is to strengthen rural economy through extending support to caste-based vocations.

Addressing media along with Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar here on Wednesday, he said the Chief Minister took measures to distribute sheep units among at a cost of Rs 11,000 crore. Similarly, the State government took steps to release over 40 lakh fishlings and prawn seeds in lakes, tanks and ponds keeping in mind the welfare of fishermen.

He said that the State government of Telangana has plans to revive the past glory



to caste-based vocations.

Telangana witnessed development in seven years which it failed to see in more than seven decades, he said.

Unmindful of achievements of the state government in implementing welfare and development works, the Opposition made it a habit to

criticise the government programmes day in and day out, he said. All development works initiated in Huzurabad constituency were experienced during the tenure of the TRS government, he said. He asked the voters not to forget the CM's support and funding by the government to implement them.

Blood donation camp organised

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

In connection with the Flag Day celebrations to be held from Thursday, the police officers, staff and youth donated several units of blood at a blood-donation camp held at RCO Club in Godavarikhani.

Peddapalli DCP Ravinder, DCP Administration Ashok Kumar inaugurated the camp. In view of the 10-day Flag Day celebrations, the blood donation camp was organised on the directions of the commissioner of police S Chandrasekhar Reddy to save lives of the people by donating blood. The police officials thanked the college students and other youth who have donated blood at the camp. ACP Godavarikhani Giriprasad, Special Branch ACP Narayana, Traffic ACP Balaraj, AR ACP Sundar Rao, inspectors Ramesh Babu, Raj Kumar and others took part in the blood donation camp.

Errabelli Dayakar opens Banjara village panchayat office building

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Wednesday inaugurated Banjara village panchayat office building, built at a cost of Rs 20 lakh. He felicitated the donors who parted their land for the panchayat office building on a befitting manner.

Addressing a gathering on the occasion, he highlighted how the State government of Telangana gave village panchayat status to tribal hamlets and dwelt on Palle Pragathi programmes like development of internal roads, construction of toilets, development of village parks, plant nurseries, identifying dumping yards, electric crematoria and Rytu Vedikas and so on.

He dwelt at length on pro-farmer schemes of the TRS government like round the clock power supply to agricul-



ture sector and Minimum Support Price to various crops and Aasara pensions to various categories of people.

Later, he inaugurated the village park and plant nursery in the village and planted saplings on the premises of Banjara panchayat.

He also distributed Rs 21.48 lakh financial assistance among 32 beneficiaries, granted under Chief Minister's Relief Fund.

District Collector Ch Siva Lingaiah appealed to the vil-

lagers to work with coordination to pave the way for development of the village since the government is releasing funds for rural development under various programmes.

Additional collector local bodies Abdul Hameed, Janagoan RDO Madhu Mohan, District Panchayat Officer K Rangachary, ZP Chief Executive Officer L Vijaya Lakshmi, MPP Baswa Savitri Mallesam, sarpanch Malotu Kavita and others were present on the occasion.

Rich tributes paid to Valmiki in T'gana

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Additional Collector Narsimha Reddy has said that the life of Sage Valmiki is worth emulating as he, in spite of his origin, set standards for others with his works.

He along with local bodies additional collector Samson paid rich tributes to Sage

Valmiki by garlanding his portrait at a programme held in Collectorate here on Wednesday in connection with his birth anniversary. District revenue officer Lingya Naik, district backward classes welfare officer, revenue officials, officials of various government departments and others were present on the occasion.

Emulate Valmiki, embrace good

SANGAREDDY: Legislative Council pro-tem chairman V Bhoopall Reddy has felt that humans, giving up their bad, should tread along the good path and cited the biography of Sage Valmiki as an example how

Valmiki was transformed into a good person. To a request from Valmiki Boya Association state vice president Venkatesam, he said that he would take it to the notice of CM for construction of a Valmiki Bhavan.

CM pays tributes to martyred cops

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Wednesday paid tributes to the policemen who laid down their lives while discharging their duty. He recalled the services of policemen on the eve of the Police Commemoration Day on October 21. "Society would never forget the services of those who risked their lives for maintaining law and order,"

‘Maintain cleanliness in schools’

PNS ■ MULUGU

District Collector Krishna Aditya has asked the headmasters of tribal welfare residential educational institutions and wardens of tribal welfare hostels to keep their surroundings clean to check the Coronavirus. He also asked them to improve the educational standards of tribal students.

Addressing headmasters and wardens at the ITDA meeting hall on Wednesday, Krishna

Aditya, who is also the in-charge Project Officer of Yetunagaram ITDA, asked them to work hard to improve educational standards as the Tribal Welfare Department is providing facilities on par with corporate schools.

He asked the hostel warden to enter details of their requirements like RO plants, solar water heaters, inverters and CCTV cameras needed in hostels in the concerned registers and hand it over to the respective DTDO.

He asked them to send proposals to undertake repairs in hostels if necessary. The Tribal Welfare Department Deputy Director has been asked to check whether details of tribal welfare residential school lands are included in the Dharani portal or not.

The Collector asked them to keep the kitchen and dining hall neat and clean. He wanted the authorities to upload images of kitchens and dining halls to his WhatsApp number.



‘Quality food in govt schools, anganwadis’

PNS ■ SURYAPET

State Food Commission Chairman Thirumala Reddy said quality food should be provided in government schools and Anganwadi centers as per the new menu.

The food committee team visited Arvapally, Sitarampuram and Thimmapuram in Suryapeta on Wednesday. He also said that the government has introduced schemes to provide nutritious food to children following Covid protocols to achieve a healthy TS without malnutrition.

He said sarpanches should create awareness about government schemes among people in rural areas. Anganwadi centers in government schools were asked to see that there was no interruption in the supply of cooking gas and cooking utensils.

As part of the visit of the Food Commission team, the performance of Anganwadi Centers was examined. A five-member team inspected the quality of food provided to children, pregnant women and nursing mothers at the Anganwadi center.

Only vaccinated ryots allowed to bring their produce

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

District Collector Veera Reddy said that 143 paddy procurement centres will be set up in the district to procure kharif season paddy from farmers. They will become operational either in the last week of October or in the first week of November.

Addressing an awareness meeting held at the Collectorate auditorium here on Wednesday on paddy procurement, he asked officials to

start procurement centres and ensure that they are equipped with weighing machines, moisture measuring machines, gunny bags, tarpaulins etc.

He asked them to ensure that only those farmers who received Covid-19 vaccine were allowed to bring their paddy to procurement centres.

Out of the 143 procurement centres, the District Cooperative Marketing Societies will set up 12 procurement centres, IKP will set up 80 centres, while Primary Agricultural

Cooperative Societies will set up 51 centres.

The MSP for A grade paddy is Rs 1,960 per quintal, while the procurement price per quintal for the ordinary variety is Rs 1,940.

Civil Supplies In-charge Officer Radhika Ramani, Civil Supplies Corporation District Manager Suguna Bai, DRDO Srinivasa Rao, Agriculture Joint Director Narasimha Rao, District Supplies Officer Prasad, rice millers, Agriculture officials and others attended the meeting.



311 paddy procurement centres in Medak district

PNS ■ MEDAK

As many as 311 paddy procurement centres will be set up in the district from Thursday as paddy harvesting has begun, MLA Padma Devender Reddy and Collector S Harish said on Wednesday.

The district authorities have estimated that the total harvested paddy in the kharif season would be at least 5 lakh tonnes, they said, and asked officials to make available electronic weighing machines, gunny bags, tarpaulins, humidity measuring instruments, paddy cleaners etc at the procurement centres.

In a meeting to review arrangements for the procurement of paddy from farmers, they said that trucks

should be geo-tagged in such a way so that they can transport raw rice and boiled rice separately to mills.

The officials should furnish details of the paddy procured from each farmer at each procurement centre to Agriculture Extension Officers and officials appointed for procurement, they said. They also asked the officials to review progress every three days. They suggested two contractors for providing 800 trucks and labourers at railway mills. Farmers should be permitted to transport paddy using their own tractors. There should be separate lines for tractors and trucks at rice mills, they said, and suggested appointing officials at rice mills.

They also called for appointing special officers in mandals and wanted Tehsildars to take responsibility for coordinating with MPDOs and Mandal Agriculture Officers.

VROs should procure paddy as per the token given to farmers and take steps to send the paddy to rice mills. Additional SP Krishna Murthy was asked to ensure that farmers from other areas brought their paddy to the procurement centres.

They asked the procurement centres to keep ready tarpaulins to cover the paddy in case of rains. All officials should work with team spirit for 45 days as farmers bring paddy to the procurement centres during the period.

INDIA CORNER

Drug supplier woman held with heroin worth Rs 21.70 crore in Mumbai

The Anti-Narcotics Cell (ANC) of the Mumbai Police arrested a 53-year-old woman supplier of drugs and seized 7.2 kg heroin worth Rs 21.70 crore from her possession in Sion Koliwada area, an official said on Wednesday. The ANC sleuths nabbed the alleged drug supplier, identified as Amina Hamza Shaikh alias Lali, a resident of suburban Mankhurd, on Tuesday night, he said. The seized heroin was meant to be distributed to other drug suppliers operating in Mumbai and to Lali's customers, the official said, adding the ANC has launched the search to nab Lali's contacts. Lali was previously arrested by the Worli and Ghatkopar units of the ANC for her alleged role in supplying banned drugs in 2015 and 2018, he said. "Officials of the Ghatkopar unit of the ANC acted on specific information that Lali was smuggling a huge quantity of heroin following which a trap was laid in Sion Koliwada and she was arrested with drugs," said DCP (ANC) Datta Nalawade. An FIR was registered under sections 8 (c) and 21 (c) of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act (NDPS), he said.



ORDERS PROTECTION OF WITNESSES

'We think you are dragging your feet'; SC to Uttar Pradesh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday came down hard on the Uttar Pradesh government for its ongoing probe into the sensational Lakhimpur Kheri case, saying it thought police are "dragging" "feet" and they are required to "dispel" that impression and ensure recording of statements of witnesses before magistrates and their protection.

"We think you are dragging your feet, please dispel that impression," observed the top court, adding that the probe should not be an "unending story" and red-flagged the issue of non-recording of statements of nearly 40 prosecution witnesses, of the total 44, before judicial magistrates under section 164 of the CrPC.

"Please ask them to immediately take steps to record section 164 statements. That is the most important thing...protection to the victims as well as the witnesses," said the bench comprising Chief Justice N V Ramana and justices Surya Kant and Hima Kohli.

Statements under section 164 of the CrPC (Code of Criminal Procedure) are recorded before a judicial magistrate and they have evidentiary value. The apex court, hearing a matter about the October 3 violence in



Lakhimpur Kheri in which eight persons including four farmers were killed during a farmers' protest, was told by the state government that state-ments of four out of the 44 witnesses have been recorded by the judicial magistrate.

Ten people, including Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra, have been arrested so far in connection with the case. The bench raised the issue of filing of status report on the day of hearing with the CJI observing, "we waited till 1 AM last night for any filing. But we received nothing".

Senior advocate Harish Salve, who appeared along with advocate Garima Prasad for the state government, said the status report has been filed in a sealed cover on Wednesday because of the impression that

it was for the perusal of the court only.

"No that was not required and we have just received it now...we never said anything about sealed covers," the bench said while declining the request to hear the matter on Friday. It listed the next hearing on October 26.

It said, "Mr Salve, you said that you (police) have examined 44 witnesses and out of them, four witnesses' statements have been recorded under section 164 (before a judicial magistrate) of CrPC. Why have you not recorded the statements of other witnesses under 164."

"It is going on. The process is going on my Lordships," Salve said, adding that earlier the concern was that it appeared that police were going "little soft on the accused and now they all have been arrest-

Samajwadi Party has moved from Samajwad to Pariwarwad: PM

In a dig at the Samajwadi Party, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said it has moved away from the ideology of Ram Manohar Lohia with its leaders practising 'Pariwarwad' instead of 'Samajwad'. The prime minister made the remark while addressing a rally after inaugurating the Uttar Pradesh's fourth international airport at Kushinagar near the site of Gautam Buddha's Mahaparinirvana, besides laying foundation stones of several other projects. UP is not limited to giving maximum number of PMs but being the birth place of Lord Rama, Lord Krishna and many other legendary figures, it has a pristine history, the prime minister remarked in his address. Highlighting benefits of a 'double engine' government in UP, he said over Rs 80,000 crore has been transferred in bank accounts of farmers in the state so far. Modi also praised the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh for dealing sternly with criminals and land grabbers and also facilitating vaccination of more than 12 crore people so far.



MLA thrashes youth for questioning him

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A video has appeared on social media showing Punjab Congress MLA Joginder Pal and his security personnel thrashing a youth for asking what work the legislator had done for his village.

As the incident left the party embarrassed, Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa said on Wednesday that a legislator has to serve the people and the MLA should not have behaved in this way.

In the video, Pal, an MLA from the Bhoo assembly seat in Pathankot district of poll-bound Punjab, is addressing a group of people on Tuesday.

Then a youth, identified as Harsh Kumar, could be heard questioning the legislator as to what work he had done during his tenure.

When a security man of the legislator held his arm to lead him away from the event, Joginder Pal could be heard asking the youth to come and speak to him.

Amarinder Singh an 'opportunist', betrayed Punjab: Randhawa

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Deputy Chief Minister Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa hit out at Amarinder Singh on Wednesday, calling him an "opportunist", a day after the former chief minister announced he would launch his own political outfit.

Randhawa also accused Singh of betraying Punjab for the last four and a half years.

On Tuesday, Amarinder Singh said he would soon announce his own political party and was hopeful of a seat arrangement with the BJP if the farmers' issue is resolved in their interest.



The two-time chief minister added that he will not rest until he secures the future of "my people and my state".

Reacting to this, the deputy chief minister said, "Captain Amarinder Singh is an opportunist leader who only thinks about himself, his family and his friends."

Referring to Singh's meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah last month, Randhawa asked he did not attempt to resolve the ongoing farmers' stir. He also blamed Amarinder Singh for the enhancement of the BSF's jurisdiction in Punjab. "He (Amarinder Singh) says Punjab is a border state.

'Meghalaya Gov's claim about me being Roshni Act beneficiary false'

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Wednesday asked Meghalaya Governor Satya Pal Malik to withdraw his purported comments that the former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister was a beneficiary of now-abandoned Roshni scheme, failing which legal action will be taken against him. "False & unsavoury utterances of Satya Pal Malik about me being a beneficiary of Roshni Act is highly mischievous. My legal team is preparing to sue him. He has the option to withdraw his comments, failing which I will pursue legal recourse," Mehbooba said in a tweet. Mehbooba shared a video in which Malik, who was the last Governor of Jammu and Kashmir state, is purportedly seen claiming that National Conference leader Farooq Abdullah, his son Omar Abdullah and Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) chief Mufti has got plots of land under the Roshni scheme. The Roshni Act was brought in by the Farooq Abdullah government with the aim of granting proprietary rights to occupants of state land in lieu of charges. The money thus generated was to be used for setting up hydroelectric power plants in the erstwhile state.



BJP ruined India's economy in last 7 years: Sachin Pilot

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Attacking the Centre over inflation, fuel price hike, unemployment and other issues, former Rajasthan deputy chief minister and Congress leader Sachin Pilot on Wednesday said the government has "cheated" the country in every sector.

Addressing a Dalit sammelan at Chaksu near Jaipur, Pilot said that in the last seven years, "the BJP government ruined the economy, unemployment reached a historic peak, petrol, diesel and LPG cylinder have become expensive and inflation skyrocketed".

He also unveiled a statue of Dr B R Ambedkar on the occasion.

Pilot alleged that the government rubbed salt into the wound by bringing the three agricultural laws. The laws have been facing protests all over the country for a year, the Congress leader said.

He said wherever possible, the Congress and its government in the state will give full opportunity to the Dalits to progress. Pilot also expressed hope that a member of the community will be inducted as a cabinet minister in the state government in place of Master Bhanwar Lal Meghwal, who died last year while he was the social justice and empowerment minister.

The former deputy chief minister said Meghwal, who died due to brain hemorrhage,



worked for Dalits and raised their voice.

"He was a cabinet minister in our government. The place is now vacant and I have full faith that the All India Congress Committee (AICC) and the (Rajasthan) government will soon offer cabinet rank to a member of the Dalit community," Pilot said.

This was the first occasion when Pilot, who revolted against the leadership of Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot last year, has said anything about the cabinet. The demand for a cabinet reshuffle in the state is being raised for the past several months.

Without naming anyone, the Congress leader warned those who do politics and seek votes in the name of Dr Bhimrao Ambedkar but have no attachment with him.

"Those who did not used to

see Ambedkar, Sardar Patel are worshipping them for votes and power. They are doing it under your pressure. This should not be forgotten. These people are experts in hypocrisy, they have no attachment to Ambedkar, but when votes have to be taken and when it comes to rule and throne, then they can worship anyone. They are 'Behrupriye' (impressionist)," he said.

Chief Minister Gehlot, AICC General Secretary Ajay Maken and Rajasthan Congress president Govind Singh Dotasra were also invited to the programme organised by Chaksu MLA Ved Prakash Solanki, who is considered close to Pilot. These invitees, however, gave the event a miss.

Gehlot was busy in a meeting to review seasonal diseases.

Pilot said these leaders were invited but they could not attend due to different reasons.

"I know our party and government is engaged in the work of development and welfare of Dalits," he said.

Recently, Gehlot and Pilot had travelled together in a helicopter along with Maken and Dotasra to address public meetings in Vallabh Nagar (Udaipur) and Dhariawad (Pratapgarh) assembly constituencies where bypolls are being held on October 30. It was the second occasion when they travelled together after last year's Rajasthan political crisis.

AIADMK petitions Governor for action against DMK

irregularities in civic polls

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The opposition AIADMK on Wednesday petitioned the Tamil Nadu Governor R N Ravi seeking action on the ruling DMK for its alleged irregularities in the recently held civic body elections in nine districts of the State.

AIADMK co-coordinator and former Chief Minister K Palaniswami, who led a delegation to petition the Governor at the Raj Bhavan here, said legal action would be initiated on former Chief Minister late J Jayalalithaa's confidante V K Sasikala for claiming to be AIADMK's



general secretary. Speaking to reporters after submitting the petition, Palaniswami, who is the Leader of the Opposition in the Assembly, accused the ruling DMK of indulging in irregularities during the con-

duct of the local body elections, and said his party's plea for a free and fair poll went unheeded.

"We gave a detailed representation to the Governor explaining how the DMK had murdered democracy and reduced the Tamil Nadu State Election Commission (SEC) to the stature of a puppet in the party's hands. We demanded action on the party," Palaniswami said. He alleged his party candidates who won by a whisker were announced as losers while their contenders, the DMK candidates, were declared elected.

Chhattisgarh: 77 fall ill after consuming food at weekly market

PNS ■ RAJNANDGAON

Seventy seven people, most of them children, fell ill after consuming various food items at a weekly market in a village in Chhattisgarh's Rajnandgaon district, a health official said on Wednesday.

The market was held on Tuesday in Gatapur Kala village under Thelkadih police station area limits, Rajnandgaon's chief medical and health officer Dr Mithlesh Chaudhary said.

As per preliminary information, these people had consumed 'gupchup' (pani puri-a spicy snack) and other food items.

Huge cache of weapons recovered on border

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Police and the BSF have recovered a huge cache of weapons near the India-Pakistan border in the Khemkaran area of Tarn Taran district, an official said on Wednesday.

In a joint operation, the Counter Intelligence wing of the Punjab Police and the Border Security Force (BSF) recovered 22 pistols, 44 magazines and 100 rounds of ammunition, the police official said. One kg of heroin was also recovered, he added. They were packed in a black kit bag concealed in a paddy field, the official said.

Officiating Director General of Police (DGP) Iqbal Preet Singh Sahota said police received secret information that a huge consignment of



arms and heroin had been concealed, following which the Counter Intelligence wing in Amritsar was sent to the spot and a search operation was planned with the BSF authorities.

During the preliminary investigations, it has come to light that as "conceal and clear" has been the most practised modus operandi of Pakistani smugglers, this consignment was placed by them in Indian territory across the fence and it was supposed to be retrieved by their Indian associates, according to an official statement.

Delhi to pay Rs 50K payout per hectare

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday announced a compensation of Rs 50,000 per hectare to farmers whose crops have been damaged due to unseasonal rains.

Speaking at a press briefing, he noted that revenue officials are conducting a survey of the damaged crops and it will be completed within two weeks.

"The compensation at the rate of Rs 50,000 per hectare will be provided to the farmers afterwards in around two months," he said.

The CM underlined that the Delhi government is committed to helping the farmers and that it also paid compensation to them in the past at Rs 50,000 per hectare which is the highest in the country.

"Farmers of Delhi need not get distressed over damaged

crops, their son stands with them. Ever since AAP came into power in Delhi, we have made sure that the farmers do not feel helpless," Kejriwal said.

A delegation of farmers had recently met the chief minister seeking help of the government in view of crop damage due to rains.

"This is not a mere announcement. Take your son's word for it and we will ensure that all farmers get compensated," the CM said.

The AAP national convener further said district magistrates (DMs) and sub divisional magistrates (SDMs) have been directed to complete the surveying of damaged crops in two weeks. Afterwards, the compensation amount will be credited to the accounts of the affected farmers in 1-1.5 months, he said.

SW monsoon to withdraw completely from Oct 26

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The southwest monsoon will withdraw completely from the entire country around October 26, paving the way for the commencement of the north-east monsoon, the India Meteorological Department (IMD) said on Wednesday.

After its late withdrawal from northwest India, the southwest monsoon remains active over some parts of the country.

The southwest monsoon withdrawal line currently passes through Kohima, Silchar, Krishnanagar, Baripada, Malkangiri, Nalgonda, Bagalkote, and Vengurla.

Conditions are becoming favourable for further withdrawal of the southwest monsoon from remaining parts of northeast India, the entire north Bay of Bengal, remaining parts of West Bengal and Odisha, some parts of the central Bay of Bengal, parts of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, entire Goa, some



more parts of Karnataka and some more parts of central Arabian Sea around October 23, the IMD said.

"With likely setting in of northeasterly winds in the lower tropospheric levels over the Bay of Bengal and extreme south Peninsular India, the Southwest Monsoon is likely to withdraw from the entire country around 26th October 2021. Simultaneously, the Northeast Monsoon rains are also likely to commence over Southeast Peninsular India from around 26th October 2021," the Met

department said.

The northeast monsoon brings rains over Tamil Nadu, parts of Kerala, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Puducherry and Andhra Pradesh.

The withdrawal of the southwest monsoon from northwest India commenced on October 6. The retreat was the second-most delayed withdrawal of the southwest monsoon since 1975. The southwest monsoon withdrawal from northwest India in 2019 started on October 9.

Over 1,300 people rescued from flood-affected Uttarakhand: NDRF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has rescued more than 1,300 people from flood-affected areas of Uttarakhand and enhanced its rescue teams from 15 to 17, the federal force said on Wednesday. At least 46 people have died in rain-related

incidents in the state so far. The Kumaon region of the hill state has been severely hit by heavy rains, leading to razing of houses, washing away of some bridges and leaving many trapped in the debris. "So far, NDRF rescuers have evacuated more than 1,300 stranded people from Udhm Singh Nagar and Nainital.

Situation still serious: Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday expressed sympathy for the Uttarakhand flood victims and urged people to follow safety norms as the situation in the state was still serious. He also asked Congress workers to extend all possible help in the relief work in the flood-hit state. "My condolences

to the Uttarakhand flood victims. The situation is still serious. Do follow the safety norms. My appeal to my Congress colleagues is to extend all possible help in the relief work," Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. At least 34 people have lost their lives in the Uttarakhand floods that hit the hill state after flash floods inundated several towns.

Nainital tourists venture out, respite from rain after two days

PNS ■ DEHRADUN/NAINITAL

Tourist town Nainital was returning back to normalcy on Wednesday after being battered by rains which cut off the place from the rest of Uttarakhand, inundated its roads and kept visitors confined to their hotel rooms. The Kumaon region, under which Nainital falls, has been the worst hit by the rains which began Sunday night, killing at least 46 people in the state as houses collapsed and bridges were washed away by swollen rivers. Union Home Minister Amit Shah was scheduled to visit the state capital Dehradun on Wednesday evening to take stock of the situation.

FIRST COLUMN

REVAMPING THE EDUCATION SECTOR

The new education policy aims at providing premium yet affordable education to all



DEVENDER SINGH ASWAL

Eyebrows were raised when a member of the Kasturirangan-led committee, set up recently to revise the National Curriculum Framework (NCF) and lay down the broad guidelines for school syllabus and textbooks, said that the existing curriculum in schools dwells "too much on defeats", and that "in the light of new facts, history should be rewritten". The member, an ideologue, also remarked that textbooks should talk about the "fighting spirit" of rulers such as Maharana Pratap in battles against foreign invaders. When Dr Muri Manohar Joshi, HRD Minister in the Vajpayee government, caused some revision in the school text books, it was considered by the left-wing as saffronisation of the syllabus. The revision of the extant NCF has been necessitated by the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020. It is not new or novel. It was last revised in 2005, and earlier in 1975, 1988 and 2000. The NEP, the first education policy of the 21st century, aims to address the many growing developmental imperatives of India. The NEP envisages revision and revamping of all aspects of the education structure, including its regulation and governance and to create a new system aligned with the aspirational goals of the 21st century and the SDG4, while building upon India's great traditions and value systems. The NEP unambiguously says that 'the pursuit of knowl-



edge (Jnan), wisdom (Pragya), and truth (Satya) was always considered in Indian thought and philosophy as the highest human goal. A member of the National Steering Committee entrusted the task of drafting the NCF, and a right-wing ideologue, has hinted at re-writing history and the text books 'in the light of new facts' of history. The precise mandate of the steering committee is to develop the NCF within the mandated remit. The NEP speaks, among other things, of incorporating local content and flavour as the students must know about their past, immediate surroundings and topography, India's civilisational heritage, constitutional values, so as to develop the spirit of critical thinking and enquiry. The Policy advocates multilingualism, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and promotion of life-long opportunities for all by 2030 by incorporating rapid changes in the knowledge landscape in the globalised world. The aim is to promote India as a global study destination by providing premium education at affordable costs so as to help 'restore its role as a Viswa Guru'. Evidently, the founding fathers of our republic laid the foundation of a civic nation, and not an ethnic nation by crafting a republican democratic Constitution, solemnly affirming to secure to all its citizens: justice, liberty, equality and fraternity-assuring the dignity of the individual. When one speaks of India's civilisational heritage and the need for inculcating the spirit of enquiry and scientific temper, the following Vedic hymn flashes across the mind — 'Whether God's will created it (the universe), or...Only He who is its overseer in highest heaven knows, Only He knows, or perhaps He does not know.' In a steering committee of 12 eminences in diverse fields of knowledge, there may be initial difference of opinion but when they talk together, deliberate, build consensus, they will surmount parochial considerations and develop the national curricular framework in perfect accord with the hallowed provisions of the NEP 2020, staying clear of the potential carping criticism of the extreme left or the radical right, by not harking too much on the past. Of course, we must analyse the past — without being its prisoner — in the context of the present for the purpose of building a resurgent India by laying the foundation of a sound, secure and holistic school education system to meet the aspirational needs of the 21st century.

(The writer is former Additional Secretary, Lok Sabha, and member of the Delhi Bar Council. The views expressed are personal.)

Making sense of the power crisis debate

For import-dependent India, it is costlier to import longer haul Australian coal than shorter haul Indonesian coal which is getting diverted to China



SUBHASH C PANDEY

A barrage of news about rising electricity consumption, rising international price of coal and shortage of coal with power plants have raised fears of an impending power crisis. There are 135 coal-fired power plants with total installed capacity of about 202 GW meeting about 70 per cent of electricity supply. On October 7, more than half of these plants had coal stocks of less than three days. 16 small plants with total capacity of 17GW had no coal stock. Low coal stocks with thermal power plants does not mean shortage of coal in the country.

Here is the big picture; facts that speak for themselves. There is absolutely no shortage of power if people are willing to pay its price, both in terms of cash and health.

International Energy Agency has highlighted that energy demand has shot up worldwide as economic activity picks up post-pandemic. During April-September 2019, India's electricity consumption was 68100 crore units (kwh). It fell down 62500 crore in April-Sept 2020, mainly during the lockdown months of April-May 2020. However, electricity consumption during April-Sept 2021 jumped to 71500 crore units, more than the pre-covid level even though there was a distressing second wave in April-May 2021 and the tour/travel/hospitality industry is not yet back to pre-covid level. Air/rail travel is not fully restored.

Increase in electricity demand is a positive sign indicating economic recovery. Increased coverage of households with access to electricity connection have brought new electricity consumers in the market. Growing digital economy also contributes to rising demand. A welcome surge in electricity demand has raised supply concerns, especially, as all indications are further increase in electricity demand in coming months.

Since 2013, total primary energy consumption in India has been the third highest in the world after China and the US. Total power generation capacity in India has increased from 243 GW in March 2014 to 320 GW in March 2017 to 388 GW in August 2021. Out of this, 202 GW is coal/lignite fired thermal power, 46 GW is from large hydroelectric projects, 45 GW from Solar and 40 GW from Wind power. Renewable energy capacity is about 37 per cent of total and India will reach 40 per cent renewable energy capacity well before 2030 as per target accepted under 2015 Paris Climate Change agreement.

Although coal-based power plants contribute only to 52 per cent of installed electricity generation capacity, these plants meet almost 75 per cent of total electricity demand. So even though we have made impressive gains in expanding solar power, we are still largely dependent on coal for electricity. Our domestic production of coal is about 730 MMT and we annually import over 300 MMT. Electricity sector accounts for about 2/3rd of total coal consumption.



SINCE 2013, TOTAL PRIMARY ENERGY CONSUMPTION IN INDIA HAS BEEN THE THIRD HIGHEST IN THE WORLD AFTER CHINA AND THE UNITED STATES. TOTAL POWER GENERATION CAPACITY IN INDIA HAS INCREASED FROM 243 GW IN MARCH 2014 TO 388 GW IN AUGUST 2021

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



India is the second largest coal consumer after China. International prices of coal have risen recently for two reasons. Sharper increase in gas prices mean that countries are increasing dependence on cheaper coal-based thermal plants.

China is facing increased electricity demand in post-pandemic economic recovery and in a trade war with Australia, China stopped coal imports from Australia, one of the major exporters of coal.

Coal makes up nearly 60 per cent of China's energy consumption. Increased coal/power demand from China has set coal prices soaring high and many coastal power plants depending on (previously cheaper) coal imports are now switching to domestic coal in India.

For import dependent Indian power producers, it is costlier to import longer haul Australian coal than shorter haul Indonesian coal that is increasingly getting diverted to China. The net result of all this is higher demand for coal, higher price for coal and resultant financial stress on power generating companies.

There have been temporary supply disruptions (monsoon-related) in coal mining and transportation. The coal supply position is steadily improving but there are basic issues to be addressed to ensure long term health of the power sector which is victim to populism. Coal supply is a temporary problem. There is enough coal and production/transport will increase once monsoon woes are over. But the real issue of financial distress on power generating companies remains. Power generating companies owe about ₹20,000 crore to Coal India Limited alone.

Thermal plants are expected to have stock of 20 days requirement

but many power producers don't have money to stock coal because they have themselves not been paid by discoms for power supplied. Discoms are cash starved because tariffs don't cover all costs, many consumers don't pay their bills or delay payment. Power theft and leakage through unmetered supply continues to be rather high. This is all reflected in discoms inability to pay to power producers.

Power producers give 45 days' credit to Electricity Distribution companies (discoms). If the dues are not cleared in 45 days, outstanding dues are called 'overdues' liable to charge of penal interest.

On 17 October, 2021, discoms owed an overdue amount of ₹98,067 crore to power generation/transmission companies. Nearly ₹23,310 crore is payable to public sector thermal power generating companies (NTPC, etc.) Around ₹51,899 crore is payable to public sector thermal power generating companies (maximum amount payable to a single company is ₹25,611 crore, to Adani Power). Around ₹17,980 crore is payable to renewable power producers and ₹4,877 crore is payable to PowerGrid.

If coal companies have to recover ₹20,000 crore from power utilities, will it make sense for them to produce more coal and supply on credit? If power producers are not getting paid for power supplied, will they not reduce production? Does it make sense for them to improve plant load factor and produce more electricity to supply on credit? That is the real problem.

The discom reform scheme UDAY ended in 2019-20 with most of the states failing to meet their stipulated targets. On July 1, the Centre has launched a new scheme of 'Reforms-based and Results-linked,

Revamped Distribution Sector Scheme' to provide conditional financial assistance to discoms for strengthening of supply infrastructure. The scheme with total outlay of ₹3,03,758 crore will involve Central government budget support of ₹97,631 crore by 2024-25. All existing power sector reform schemes namely DDUGJY, IPDS, PM-KUSUM scheme would be subsumed into this new umbrella program.

Among the many contemplated reforms is a measure to create separate feeder for agricultural electricity supply, expansion of network of solar run irrigation systems. Other pending electricity reforms are removal of cross subsidies and open access, introducing competition by allowing consumers choice of electricity supplier.

States are presently administering two types of cross subsidy arrangements. One is between high-end and low-end household consumers and the other is between household consumers on one hand and industrial/commercial consumers on the other.

There are just too many consumer categories and tariff lines - slabs and fixed charges, making electricity pricing quite complex and non-transparent. On top of tariffs fixed by 'independent regulators', States levy electricity duty (as it is not subsumed in GST) which ranges from 0-70 per cent for certain categories of consumers.

Cross-subsidy burden on industry is problematic because it adversely affects cost competitiveness — manufacturing and exports and resultant job creation. It is frustrating that these reforms are getting delayed and deferred. Any myopic politics will sap the nation of energy in the long run.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

RAHUL GANDHI IS A DRUG ADDICT AND A DRUG PEDDLER. I DO NOT SAY THIS, IT HAS APPEARED IN NEWS REPORTS.
—KARNATAKA BJP PRESIDENT
NALIN KUMAR KATEEL



KATEEL MIGHT HAVE CONSUMED SOME DRUGS SEIZED FROM THE ADANI PORT, WHICH IS WHY HE IS MAKING SUCH REMARKS.
—AICC GENERAL SECRETARY
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Women officers in the armed forces

There is no doubt that officers and other ranks have to undergo a sea change in their thinking process and attitude to accept gender equality

The recent Supreme Court judgement directing the Government to open the portals of the National Defence Academy for women has finally paved way for across-the-board gender equality in the armed Forces. Eligible women will now be permitted to appear for the NDA Entrance Examination for the first time and the sky will be the limit for their career aspirations. This will now enable women to join all available combat or non-combat branches of the three services.

Notwithstanding the above judgement, women have always had their presence in the armed forces, though in a limited role like that of doctors in all the three wings of the armed forces. It



RAVI CHANDER KOCHHAR

(The writer, a retired Rear Admiral, is Group Pro Vice Chancellor & OSD (HR), Amity University, Uttar Pradesh. The views expressed are personal.)

has, however, been almost three decades when women entered many other branches where only men dominated once.

The women officers in Indian armed forces have come a long way and have adapted well with the changing times. However, it is incumbent on the services to be accommodative in assimilating women in all domains — be it combat, administration, engineering or medical. Therefore, the onus is still upon the male-dominated armed forces to recognize the power of women officers and facilitate them to achieve their full potential.

I still fondly remember, whilst I was in command of INS Vikrant in 1992, when the first batch of women officers



reported onboard for initial sea training for Short Service Commission in the Indian Navy. The lady officers were very enthusiastic and took keen interest in the training. Normally when officers join for sea training, they all live on the ship throughout their training. In this case as there were no separate arrangements onboard for their stay, the ship was in harbour and they would come in the morning and leave in the

evening. Throughout their training they exhibited their skill levels, adaptability, physical fitness and mental alertness to match with standards laid down for men.

These young lady officers were quick on the uptake and always enthusiastic to learn the service ways. They were happy with the training but had one observation — why they could not stay onboard. It was explained to them that as of now the arrangements onboard ships are for men, especially living spaces and washrooms. Whilst they all understood the existing constraints, they were keen to know when ships will have women's quarters as well. I recollect my reaction to that was 'when a child is born, he/she first learns to

crawl, then stand and only thereafter runs. I can only say that the time has come for all of them to run.

On the lighter side, many of those young lady officers found their soul mates amongst the naval officers during their initial service career and thereafter, lived happily ever after. Being from the same service the understanding between the partners also proved to be of higher quality, essential for marital harmony. In short it is a win in situation, as both the partners know each other's service conditions and do not take long to settle.

I can only say that the day has come when the idea of women joining armed forces had taken shape and has now evolved to women getting

permanent commission and entering areas dominated by men like fighter pilots, combat units and serving onboard ships and sailing on operational missions.

There's is no doubt that officers and other ranks have also to undergo a sea change in their thinking process and attitude so as to accept gender equality and when required, take orders from women officers in command. Having said that, women must also remember that they are getting into new fields and must tread with caution and never hesitate to take guidance from men who have been holding the fort for a much longer period.

By the way in the US Navy, for the first time, a woman officer has recently

been appointed to command a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier. I have no doubt it is only a matter of time when we will have lady officers in command of combat units and move shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts.

Indian history is replete with examples of women in command of combat troops, like 'Rani of Jhansi' and many others who have led troops in battle and given a befitting reply to the enemy. It was only somewhere along the time when we lost the plot and armed forces became the forte of men alone.

At the end, I can only say, 'Welcome to Indian armed forces, brave Ladies, you are indeed the pride of India.'

India expected to see higher salary with 9.3% hike in '22

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Higher salaries in India are making a comeback with 9.3 per cent hike being expected in 2022, from 8 per cent in 2021, and with companies planning to give employees larger raises as they face mounting challenges of attracting and retaining employees, according to a report.

Salaries are projected to see a median salary increase of 9.3 per cent next year compared to the actual median salary increase of 8 per cent in 2021, according to the 'Salary Budget Planning Report' by global advisory, broking and solutions company Willis Towers Watson.

India's projected salary increase is the highest in Asia-Pacific for the next year as optimism returns over improved business outlook in the next 12 months, the report added.

The Salary Budget Planning Report is a bi-annual survey conducted online between May and June 2021, with 1,405



companies across sections of industries from 13 markets in Asia-Pacific, including 435 companies in India.

The report further showed that a majority (52.2 per cent) of companies in India have projected a positive business revenue outlook for the next 12 months, up from 37 per cent in the fourth quarter of 2020, which point towards a much-anticipated economic recovery.

This translates into increased hiring across businesses with 30 per cent of companies planning to hire in the next 12 months, the report said adding that this is almost three times more than 2020.

The report also showed that a large part of hiring across sectors is likely to happen within critical functions such as engineering (57.5 per cent), information technology

(53.4 per cent), technically skilled trades (34.2 per cent), sales (37 per cent) and finance (11.6 per cent), and these jobs will command a high salary.

In addition, attrition rates in India, both voluntary and involuntary, have been lower compared to other countries in the region, the report stated.

The voluntary attrition rate was 8.9 per cent and involuntary attrition rate was 3.3 per cent, it added.

"Increased business optimism is clearly translating into higher salary budgets and increased hiring activity. The pandemic was a watershed moment in the way organisations plan their people spend," Willis Towers Watson Consulting Leader India, Talent and Rewards, Rajul Mathur said.

He added that while talent attraction and retention remain a challenge, the core employee value proposition will now need to go beyond just competitive salaries and increasingly focus on a wider range of ben-

efits, wellness, upskilling and the overall employee experience.

"This trend is likely to reshape the people spend and total rewards philosophy in India going forward," Mathur added.

Meanwhile, the report showed that the high-tech sector is expected to see the highest salary increase at 9.9 per cent in 2022, followed by the consumer products and retail sector at 9.5 per cent and manufacturing at 9.30 per cent.

In terms of proportionate increase over last year, the high-tech sector again tops with a projection of almost 1.9 per cent increase from 2021, it stated.

"COVID-19 accelerated the digitalisation process across industries including automation and artificial intelligence. These developments, along with the high-tech sector's early adoption of the remote working model, have positively impacted the sector's salary projections.

Gross NPAs of banks may decline to 6.9 pc by March 2022: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Gross non-performing assets (NPAs) and net NPAs of banks are likely to decline to 6.9-7 per cent and 2.2-2.3 per cent, respectively, by the end of March 2022 as compared to 7.6 per cent and 2.5 per cent, respectively, as of March 31, 2021, according to a report by rating agency ICRA.

GNPAs and NNPA's stood at 8.6 per cent and three per cent, respectively, as on March 31, 2020.

"The GNPAs and NNPA's are expected to further decline to 6.9-7 per cent and 2.2-2.3 per cent by March 2022, which will continue to be a relief for the bottomline (profit) of lenders," the credit rating agency said in the report.

The fresh NPA generation rate (or slippages) remained elevated during the second wave in absence of regulatory relief such as moratorium, it said.

The gross fresh slippages during the April-June 2021 quarter stood at Rs 1 lakh crore (annualised slippage rate of 4.1 per cent) compared with Rs 2.5 lakh crore or 2.7 per cent dur-



ing FY2021.

The agency expects this to remain elevated at Rs 0.7-0.8 lakh crore (2.8-3.2 per cent) during Q2 FY2022 but moderate to Rs 1.1-1.2 lakh crore (2-2.4 per cent) during H2 of this fiscal as the impact of second wave wanes.

Of the total restructured loan book of Rs 2 lakh crore for the banks as on June 30, 2021, the restructuring under the first coronavirus wave is estimated at 51 per cent of the total restructuring of Rs 1 lakh crore, while restructuring under the second wave is estimated at 31 per cent of the total restructuring or Rs 0.6 lakh crore, it said.

The agency's Vice-President (financial sector ratings) Anil Gupta said that considering that 30-40 per cent of the loan

book was under moratorium during Q1 FY2020 across most banks, the loan restructuring at two per cent of advances after the second wave is a positive surprise and much lower than our earlier estimates.

"Despite the positive headline numbers, we continue to be watchful of the asset quality, given the elevated levels of the overdue loan book and for the performance of the restructured loan book," Gupta said.

As per ICRA's estimates, the public sector banks (PSBs) may not need the capital budgeted by the government for FY2022 even with enhanced capital requirements. However, it provisions for any unforeseen events and shall provide confidence to banks as well as investors and credit growth.

MONEY MATTERS

Decision on Air India will give new energy to aviation sector

With Air India set to be acquired by Tata group, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday said the decision on the national carrier will give new energy to the country's aviation sector. His comments come weeks after Tata group emerged as the winning bidder for Air India paving the way for disinvestment of the loss-making carrier. In an address after inaugurating the Kushinagar International airport, Modi said the decision on Air India will give new energy to the aviation sector of India. Tata group has emerged as the winning bidder for Air India, and on October 11, a letter of intent (LoI) was issued to the group. Earlier this month, the government accepted an offer by Talace Pvt Ltd, a unit of Tata group, to pay Rs 2,700 crore cash and takeover Rs 15,300 crore of Air India's debt.



NBCC gets projects worth Rs 300 cr in Haryana, Raj

State-owned NBCC (India) Ltd has bagged orders worth nearly Rs 300 crore for project management consultancy in Haryana and Rajasthan. In a regulatory filing, NBCC said the company has been awarded the work order for engagement as Project Management Consultant (PMC) for construction of phase III of BPS Government Medical College, Khanpur Kalan, Sonapat, Haryana. The total cost of the project is Rs 285 crore approx. subject to the revision as per Haryana Schedule Rates (HSR) 2021 plinth area rates," the filing said. In a separate filing, NBCC informed that it has been awarded the work order for engagement as an independent engineer for operations, management and development of Jaipur International Airport. NBCC is the PMC for providing independent engineer services amounting to Rs 12.40 crore, inclusive of all taxes except GST, it added.



Gold imports to rise further in coming months: GJEPC

The country's gold imports are expected to grow further in the coming months on account of peak demand due to festive and wedding seasons, Gems and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) said on Wednesday. Gold imports, which have a bearing on the current account deficit, zoomed to about USD 24 billion during April-September 2021. The council said that the imports have witnessed a fluctuating trend during the last six months and have come at par with the statistics of the pre-covid years. Gold imports in May (12.98 tonnes) and June (17.57 tonnes) 2021 were severely hit by the second devastating Covid wave that resulted in nationwide lockdowns and paralysed several industries for a brief period including gem and jewellery, it added. The imports, it said, picked up in August which recorded the second-highest gold imports of 118.08 tonnes.

Jio gains 6.49 L mobile users in Aug; Airtel adds 1.38 lakh

India's largest telecom operator Reliance Jio gained 6.49 lakh mobile users in August leading the subscriber addition tally, ahead of Bharti Airtel which added 1.38 lakh users, according to the TRAI data released on Wednesday. In contrast, Vodafone Idea lost 8.33 lakh subscribers during August, although its losses were less than July. Jio continued to outpace rivals in subscriber gains, adding 6.49 lakh wireless users in August, as its mobile base swelled to 44.38 crore. Sunil Mittal-led Bharti Airtel onboarded 1.38 lakh users during the month, taking it overall wireless subscriber count to 35.41 crore. Vodafone Idea lost 8.33 lakh mobile subscribers in August as its wireless users count dipped to 27.1 crore, according to data released by Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI).

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
NIT No. 14/EES/RRNR/GHMC/2021-22. Dated: 20-10-2021
Name of the Work: For (3) No. of Work "Engaging of Labour for ALD & Spraying of Disinfection in L.B. Nagar Zone and Supply and Delivery of foldable M.S. barricading stands in Saranagar Circle-5" Estimate amount in (Rs in Lakhs) : 39.35. Last Date & Time for receipt of bids: 25-10-2021 @ 3.01 PM. Name & Address Officer Cell No. Sri V Harith, Executive Engineer, Saranagar Circle-5, GHMC (M) 9689630377, for further details can be seen at e-procurement @http://www.e-procurement.telangana.gov.in
R.O. No. : 11044-PP/CL/AGENCY/NIT/1/2021-22. EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, SARANAGAR CIRCLE-5, GHMC.

Southern Power Distribution Company of Telangana State Limited
Chief General Manager/Metro Zone/ Hyderabad
2nd Extension -Tender Specification No. EMZ-53/21-22 & 01-07/2021-22
Tender Notice No. CGM-MZ-06/21-22 (Paper Notification)
Tenders are invited from the eligible agencies for 1) 2nd extension of e-Tender for the work of "Laying of 11KV 3x185 Sqmm XLPE LG cable surrounding Channarayana Channarayana Pedestrian Project (CPR) in Channarayana Division of Hyderabad South Circle under T&D Improvement works and 2) 2nd Extension of open tender of Maintenance of Secunderabad Division (Reserved for SC Category).
Any further information in this regard can be viewed from the website of www.tender.telangana.gov.in and www.southernpower.co.in
Sd/- Chief General Manager, Metro Zone, Hyderabad.

High oil prices will undermine global recovery, warns India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India, the world's third-largest energy consumer, on Wednesday warned that high oil prices will undermine global economic recovery, and nudged Saudi Arabia and other OPEC nations to work towards affordable and reliable supplies.

Petrol and diesel prices have shot up to record highs across the country after relentless price increases since early May.

"If energy prices remain high, global economic recovery will be undermined," Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri said at the India Energy Forum by CERAWeek.

International oil prices had crashed to USD 19 per barrel in April last year as demand evaporated with most nations clamping lockdowns to control the spread of coronavirus. The demand recovered this year as vaccination against the infection revived economies world over.

International benchmark Brent crude has since rallied to USD 84 per barrel.

This, he said, has made fuel expensive and stoking fears of inflation.

Puri said India's oil import bill has climbed from USD 8.8 billion in June 2020 quarter to USD 24 billion this year



because of a spike in global oil prices.

"India believes energy access has to be reliable, affordable and sustainable," he said adding economic recovery after a devastating pandemic has been fragile and it is further being threatened by high prices.

India, which imports almost two-thirds of its oil needs from West Asia, has told crude oil producers, including the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC), that high oil prices will hasten the transition to alternate fuels and such rates will be counter-productive for the producers.

Puri has in recent weeks flagged the issue of high oil prices to Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Kuwait, Qatar, the US, Russia and Bahrain.

He conveyed India's strong

preference on responsible and reasonable pricing, which is mutually beneficial for consumers and producers.

Puri said volatility in international prices is not just hurting India but also industrialised nations.

While the world has begun the transition towards cleaner fuels such as electric-powered vehicles and hydrogen, most nations are still dependent on oil to fuel their economies. And high oil prices will hurt demand recovery.

India is 85 per cent dependent on imports to meet its oil needs and relies on overseas shipments to meet 55 per cent of the gas needs.

It is the only nation in the world that is seeing growth in oil demand on a sustained basis and without it the producers will also suffer.

Jubilant Foodworks profit jumps 58 pc to Rs 120 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Jubilant Foodworks Ltd on Wednesday reported 58.11 per cent jump in consolidated net profit at Rs 119.82 crore for the second quarter ended September 30, 2021 driven by continued strong momentum in delivery and takeaway channels.

The company, which operates popular fast food chains such as Domino's Pizza and Dunkin' Donuts among others in India, logged a profit of Rs 75.78 crore in the year-ago period, Jubilant Foodworks Ltd (JFL) said in a regulatory filing.



Revenue from operations in the second quarter stood at Rs 1,116.19 crore as compared to Rs 816.33 crore in the same period a year ago. The growth in revenue from operations was

Hari S Bhartia in a joint statement said, the second quarter saw a strong all-round performance with revenue, profitability and store growth numbers hitting record highs. "The new investments announced during the quarter will help steer the company towards its goal of becoming a multi-brand, multi-country business driven by technology and will create significant value for all stakeholders," they said.

The firm had announced key strategic investments "in line with its stated goal of building a multi-brand and multi-country food business powered by technology".

Global stocks mixed after Wall St rise, weak Japanese trade

PNS ■ BEIJING

Global stock markets were mixed Wednesday after Wall Street advanced on strong corporate earnings and Japanese exports weakened.

London and Shanghai declined while Tokyo and Frankfurt advanced. The future for Wall Street's benchmark S&P 500 index was off less than 0.1% after five days of gains.

"Market sentiment remains decidedly positive," said Jeffrey Halley of Oanda in a report.

Investors watched for inflation updates from Britain and some other European governments amid concern central banks might feel pressure to hike interest rates sooner than planned or roll back stimulus.

In early trading, the FTSE 100 in London lost less than 0.1% to 7,210.74. The DAX in



Frankfurt rose 0.2% to 15,552.62 while the CAC 40 in Paris declined less than 0.1% to 6,667.52.

On Wall Street, the future for the Dow Jones Industrial Average was up less than 0.1%.

On Tuesday, the S&P 500 rose 0.7% to within 0.4% of its Sept. 2 all-time high. The Dow and the Nasdaq composite advanced less than 0.1%.

The Nikkei 225 in Tokyo

gained 0.1% to 29,255.55 after government data showed September exports fell 3.9% compared with the previous month. The Kospi in Seoul shed 0.5% to 3,013.13 while Sydney's S&P-ASX 200 advanced 0.5% to 7,413.70. India's Sensex opened less than 0.4% higher at 61,469.75. New Zealand and Bangkok advanced while Singapore declined.

Wall Street's gains Tuesday

were propelled by tech and health care stocks.

Johnson & Johnson, the biggest maker of health products, rose 2.3% after reporting strong quarterly earnings and raising its profit forecast for the year. Apple Inc rose 1.5% and software maker Adobe gained 2.1%. Investors worry disruptions to manufacturing supply chains and shipping due to the coronavirus pandemic may depress corporate profits or push up inflation. Procter & Gamble fell 1.2% after saying it will raise prices amid higher commodity and freight costs. Surging energy prices are rising concerns about a supply crunch that might hold back an economic recovery. Also Tuesday, the Commerce Department reported that US home construction fell 1.6% in September.

Sensex tanks 456 points; Nifty slumps below 18,300

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The BSE Sensex slumped 456 points on Wednesday, tracking losses in index majors Reliance Industries, Infosys and ICICI Bank as market participants continued to book profits at high levels.

The 30-share index ended 456.09 points or 0.74 per cent lower at 61,259.96. Similarly, the NSE Nifty dropped 152.15 points or 0.83 per cent to 18,266.60.

Titan was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding around 3 per cent, followed by HUL, NTPC, Bajaj Finserv,

L&T and PowerGrid. On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, SBI, IndusInd Bank, Bajaj Finance and Axis Bank were among the gainers. Almost all sectoral indices ended in the red although PSU banks were seen bucking the trend with investors cherry-picking for value in that pocket, he noted.

Further, he said the street is taking note of the cost pressures emanating from higher input costs in companies that do not possess the pricing power. Bourses in Hong Kong and Tokyo ended with gains, while Shanghai and Seoul were in the red.

HELPING YOUNG INDIA UNDERSTAND SEXUALITY

AMITHA GHATTI

Sexuality and reproduction, despite being important aspects of a healthy life, are often considered taboo and discussed in hushed tones in India. Only a very unimpressive number of people today are aware of their sexual, reproductive health, and rights. But thanks to organisations like Reckitt, a consumer goods company, things seem to be changing. The organisation started a programme about Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights (SRHR), to educate people, especially children, on the topic.

We got in touch with Ravi Bhatnagar, Director of External Affairs and Partnerships for South Asia, Reckitt. He who launched this program to teach children of ages 10-19 about the changes they will face as adolescents, shares, "The programme is focused on deepening the impact by equipping thousands of adolescents and young people with a curriculum, available in both offline and e-learning mode. This would help them make informed choices and grow to be healthy adults."

Called The Birds and Bees Talk (TBBT), supported by 'Durex', its core principles are — awareness, consent, protection, equity, and inclusion. The programme focuses mainly on the slogan — Healthier lives, healthier people. From the foundations of wellness and infant nutrition, to the fundamentals of a



hygienic home, its global brands help people live healthier and happier lives. "We aim to transform the lives of 40,00,000 adolescents in northeast Indian states like Sikkim, Arunachal Pradesh, Nagaland, Meghalaya, Manipur, and Mizoram. Northeastern states have a higher risk of HIV, making it the main reason to start there. The project will not only teach children topics relating to health but also leverage their richness in music, art, and culture and ensure that knowledge is not limited to physical classes," Ravi tells us.

Reckitt's social initiatives are centered around the principle of 'leaving no one behind', and addresses 8 of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) taking an initiative in health, hygiene, sanitation, self-care, and inti-

mate wellness. The programme covers 50% of districts in India that are affected by poor socio-economic indicators and 23 states and union territories, and has launched flagship programmes in school hygiene education, maternal and child health, hoping to leave an impact through innovative means.

On an interesting note, Ravi reveals that once they complete the 'The Birds And Bees Talk' programme, they will launch something called 'Birds And Bees Buzz', on the digital ecosystem to ensure the Covid pandemic does not delay the education and development process. He adds, "It is an e-learning platform to give sessions to teachers and students across the state to take part in the programme. The program has a mix of different elements like multimedia, AI-based chatbots called 'HeloJubi', workshops, and webinars. There are videos used to communicate about age-appropriate behavioural change."

On a concluding note, he informs that they used murals to convey messages and raise awareness by strategically showcasing them on Khuman Lampak Sports Complex, the biggest sports complex in Manipur!



Making internet safe for young India

RACHEL DAMMALA

One of the many problems that the pandemic brought was the exposure of children to the big bad world of the internet. Schools rightly couldn't have waited and wasted an academic year fearing their students' future, but couldn't risk their health either, and so, were forced to take the online route.

But the solution to the problem at hand brought even worse problems of children discovering the best and the worst of the internet. From videos and gaming to social media and the dark web, suddenly pre-teens had access to it all, and an unfortunate few fell prey to notorious cyber-criminals.

To counter this, Rupesh Mittal, a young man from Hyderabad, who set up a charity called Cyber Jagrithi to raise awareness about cyber safety in our society, with four other people,



Rupesh Mittal

decided it was time to step in help.

"The use of digital devices has become a part of children's lifestyle today, and in such a society, it is very necessary to live vigilantly. We notice that young people are constantly engaged in digital media, especially on social media and other networks. Once online education started, we started receiving more and more complaints from schools and parents about the screen time of their



Ligi Tony

wards. They fear the worst happening with such exposure. That's when we started rolling out webinars to various organisations and schools, talking to students about various guidelines, their digital footprint on the internet, internet ethics, and more," Rupesh tells us.

Citing an example of how use of social media at a young age with no parental control could be damaging, Rupesh tells us, "Youngsters are under the impression that being faceless on the

internet can give them the freedom to do all that they can. Right from silly comments, immature abuses, to threats, stalking, and extortion, all these have become more common during the pandemic. Many have become easy prey to such crimes. Through these awareness campaigns, we teach students various online ethics, what language to use, how to be careful, because privacy is, unfortunately, a myth."

The organisation also tells these students about how their digital footprint will make or break their future, because today, everybody looks them up online to discern how good or bad a particular candidate is, before hiring them. He adds, "When we have children playing games on the internet constantly, especially violent ones like PUBG and COD, we can't be surprised when they nature becomes more aggressive by the day. This is a very real and big concern for parents, and they fear coming across as controlling and possessive when they confront their child about such behaviour. That's where we come in, and counsel and teach these young kids as a guide and friends."

The campaigns focus on cyber values for children, parents and youth by spreading awareness on digital safety, juvenile law, digital parenting, awareness on cybercrime, privacy on social media, and awareness on sniffing fake news. It was launched in a multi-fold manner, where several deliverables like live webinars, informative videos, flyers, surveys, polls, and a bunch of interesting competitions like poster making and crosswords along with many others were done to make the whole program a very entertaining a ride along with being informative.

Talking about the timely help by such organisations have been providing, Ligi Tony, a student counselor, lauds the efforts of such an organisation, saying, "Children have suddenly been exposed to things on the internet, and they have, over time, grown addicted to it. Gaming, especially, has made things worse. Today, being ethical on the internet is a major life skill and children need to be specifically taught about it. The organisation also made children aware of the POCSO e-box so they know they can always raise a complaint about any such issues, or when they see such red flags."

A mother of a nine-year-old who is grateful for such an initiative, talks about how her parenting has gotten easier and less controlling after such a webinar: "Like all parents, I too, was worried about my child using a phone at such a young age. We can't help but let her use the phone because her classes, notes, coordination — all require a phone. But after such awareness campaigns, both she and I have learnt so much about being safe on the internet. The awareness program creates a very healthy and interactive platform for youngsters to discuss cyber security with experts in the field without having any hesitation. It has been helping many students in becoming more aware of the risks involved in online surfing and help them to secure themselves more in the online world. Parenting controls awareness definitely leads to better handling of the situation."



OWN A BUSINESS AND SEE THE CHANGE

Continuous and effective growth, motivated management and risk education are some of the goals of an entrepreneur. And, for landing up with loads of other benefits that will take the brand to newer heights then the franchise model is just apt for them. Dedicated a budget especially in a franchise could be a boon for the company as it automatically sets the expansion for the brand. Besides it, the model also helps you to establish your brand by collaborating with a popular company that already has a huge customer base. Franchising also cuts down the cost of the newbie brands' advertising, marketing and other sales effort

besides providing the training and support so that they can enter the market with confidence. Over a period of time, franchise has evolved as a successful entrepreneurial model. It is often leveraged by both parties to gain professional growth. Here are some of the ways in which franchising can enable to attain entrepreneurial aims with effortlessness:

Capital acquisition

It has been seen that the most prominent roadblock for a small business is poor access to capital. In such cases, franchise provides some advantages because it is an alternative form of capital acquisition. Startups or small brands are turning to franchises because franchises

offer them the assurance of expanding their business without the cost of equity or risk of debt. Franchise not only provides funds to open a unit but also allows the company to grow by making use of the resources of others. This is how franchisors can expand their business without registering any debt.

Speed of growth

There is always a constant fear running in the minds of entrepreneurs, who have developed something innovative, that their product will soon be replaced by some other entrepreneurs' uniquely innovative product in the same category. So, till the time they are ruling the market, they should be reaping the benefit as much as they

can. For attaining the same, franchise is the best. Opening a single unit takes time. Franchising allows brands to fight with much larger businesses so they can saturate markets before the latter can respond.

Reduced risk

It is the responsibility of the franchisee to provide assistance in purchasing any inventory, hiring any employees, and taking responsibility for any working capital. Therefore, it reduces many potential risks of franchisors, which might have faced while setting up a business. Franchisors are largely out of any liability including purchasing any inventory, hiring any employees, and taking responsibility for any working capital.

Moreover, the expense of becoming a franchisor is far less than the cost of opening one more location or entering one more market, thereby starting up risk of a business is greatly reduced.

Increased profitability

Franchise organisations run in a highly profitable manner because they are leveraging the benefits of staff and ease of supervision. Franchisors completely depend upon franchisees to take on the responsibility of location selection, local marketing, training, hiring, human resource functions and lease negotiation. So, the net result signifies that attaining a franchising model is any day profitable.

(The author, Mr. Gaurav Dabas, is the Director of WK Life, a premier multinational corporation in London.)

SHORT TAKES

Student develops Covid warriors' app

Aryan Singh Saluja, a Class 12 student of Delhi Public School Nacharam, Hyderabad, has developed a novel app called, 'Covid Warriors' to extend succour to the government staff, by thoroughly sanitising and disinfecting government offices and workspaces in the state capital, as per WHO Guidelines, free of cost. This will aid the hapless staff including the frontline warriors, who have to weather difficult work conditions in the call of duty.

National Olympiad on Practically app

Practically, an experiential learning app, tied up with the Entrepreneurship Cell (E-Cell) of IIT-Bombay, for the fifth edition of Eureka! Junior. It will host a National Entrepreneurship Olympiad on the app on October 31, 2021. The test will be divided into three tracks — Classes 6 to 8, Classes 9 & 10, and Classes 11 & 12. The top 2 winners across the three tracks will be rewarded with Practically scholarships worth up to 1.5 lakh rupees. They will also get an overall cash prize of 15,000 rupees from E-Cell, IIT Bombay.

Odissi dance workshop by Aruna Mohanty

Culminating the dance workshop series themed around Celebrating Devi on a high note, the National Centre for the Performing Arts(NCPA) announces a 3-day Odissi workshop by one of the finest Odissi dancers - Aruna Mohanty. The workshop will be conducted virtually from October 22-24 and will also have noted scholar and dancer Rahul Acharya speaking on the influence of Tantra in the temple tradition of Puri. For details, contact: 8879114939/ 9819002515

Paradise's 20th restaurant near Charminar

Charminar and the world's favourite biryani Paradise share a common address with the opening of its Omni Channel Restaurant catering to Dine-in, Take away and Delivery of Paradise at the iconic site of Charminar. Guests can now enjoy their biryani while dining at the restaurant and marvel at the spectacular view of Charminar from where they are seated.

Celebrate Diwali with Hollywood premieres

This Diwali, 'Flux Firecrackers' on &flix brings to you an exciting lineup of cinema that is sure to add the much-needed cheer this festive season. Join Luke Skywalker's peaceful and solitary existence with *Star Wars: The Last Jedi* airing this Thursday at 9 PM only on &flix. The adrenaline-pumping line-up will also feature other popular hits such as *Resident Evil*, *Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle*, *Salt and the Drunken Master*, among many others!

Satisfy your fusion cravings at Anna Native

Anna Native introduces the one-of-a-kind south fusion food to the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. Conveniently located at the prime neighborhood in Sainikpuri, Secunderabad, guests will be able to enjoy fresh and high-quality authentic south Indian dishes items from their extensive menu like sabudana vada, roasted tomato chutney, golichina kodi wings, curry leave chutney, mokka jonna sheek kebab, roasted tomato chutney, kali mirchi kodi kebab, soybean, and batani yellow pulao, bhuna yata nalli biryani, and Anna Native freshly brewed mango delight!

Festive hampers by 45th Avenue

Experience the timeless flavours of traditional Indian sweets with a deliciously healthy twist with exclusive Modern Indian Fusion Sweet and sugar-free option from the house of 45th Avenue, perfect for your festive gifting solution. The ongoing sale at 45th Avenue, Jubilee Hills, ends on November 10.

In high spirits

For many of us, a celebration is incomplete without some good old wine and whisky. Pernod Ricard India has a wide variety of spirits in their portfolio ranging from Wines and Champagne to Single Malt Whiskies and Gin. So this festive season, indulge yourself, and also gift these to your hosts at the next Diwali party in town!



● Spandana Pali



● Kaashraf



● Varun, Dheeraj and Viraj



● Aditi



● Krisha

PARTY

Photos by SV Chary

ICE CREAM DREAMS

The Ice Cream Bakery launched its third outlet in the city at PG Road in Secunderabad! Film actress Spandana Pali launched the new outlet along with models, who all enjoyed some delicious ice cream at the store. The brand offers 28 flavours of ice cream, and all of them are made with 100% natural ingredients!



DINNER'S ON THE LUCKY WINNER

Actress Varshini Sounderajan of *Shambo* fame, along with Habeeb, the General Manager of Bajaj Electronics, announced the winner of the Lucky Draw. The winner took home a cash prize of Rs. 20 lakhs from their store in Punjagutta, Hyderabad.



● Sashi Nahata



● Saloni and Shriya



● Lekha



● Surabhi



● Vineela

ELITE EXPO

The Aakriti Elite Exhibition took place this week at Taj Krishna, showcasing exquisite saris, designer apparel, jewellery, bridal wear, lifestyle accessories, home decors, kids wear, and much more, in 100 stalls. Renowned fashion designers, and the best artisans across Kolkata, Bombay, Bangalore, Ahmedabad, Madhya Pradesh, Delhi, and Hyderabad, were brought in by organiser Sashi Nahata.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



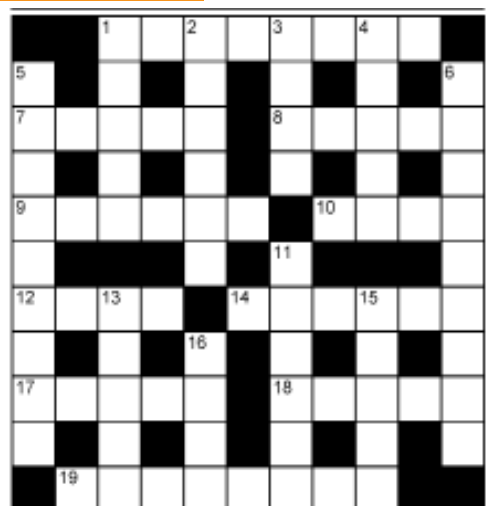
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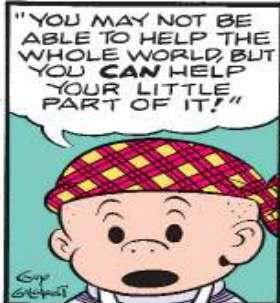
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 1 A water sport
- 7 After eighth
- 6 Worship
- 9 Hurt someone's feelings by being rude to them
- 10 Fewer
- 12 This metal goes rusty
- 14 A fruit
- 17 A large serving spoon
- 18 Book name
- 19 Someone in jail
- 4 Rope loop
- 5 Not able to be seen
- 8 Read this daily
- 11 Cardboard box
- 13 Command
- 15 Change
- 16 Untidy shambles

DOWN

- 1 Musical pieces for the voice
- 2 Breathe in
- 3 A ditch around a castle



SRIRAM RETURNS TO T'WOOD WITH ASALEM JARIGINDI

K RAMYA SREE

Asaalem Jarigindi, an independent film based on real-life incidents, is coming to theatres tomorrow. This film marks the comeback of the *Okariki Okaru* star Sreekantha aka Sriram.

The film, directed by cinematographer-turned-director NVR, bankrolled by K Neelima under the banner of Exodus Media, has Sanchita Padukone playing the leading lady. Set in the backdrop of a village, *Asaalem Jarigindi* is a suspense love story that encompasses love, suspense and action.

The Pioneer catches up with Sriram ahead of the film's release for a chat about the film, the making of it, and more.

Starting off with what made him come on board this project, Sriram was quick to take the name of his director NVR. He says, "Raghava (NVR) is a good director and a good narrator. I was fascinated by the way *Asaalem Jarigindi* story was narrated to me. When I heard the story, I knew this was going to be a compact project

and that there will be a lot of restrictions. I also knew that there will be honest efforts from the team as the entire crew was passionate about making films. That got me convinced. Moreover, Raghava and I share a good understanding. We were able to do things nice and faster, and bring good vibes to the film. That said, I also wanted to do more Telugu films. "To be very honest, I have a lot of love for Telugu cinema. Although I'm doing a lot of projects in Tamil, if anyone from the Telugu industry believes in me and wants to do a film with me, I would reach out to them personally. More than economics, for me, it is about being part of such a project," adds the *Adavari Matalaku Ardale Verule* actor.

After Love Story, *Asaalem Jarigindi* is

another film that is set against the backdrop of rural Telangana and Sriram plays a man from there and is to deliver dialogues in Telangana dialect. When asked if it was difficult dubbing for himself, maintaining the Telangana slang, he shares, "I live in Chennai and the Teluguites who live here are not fluent in their own native language. Similar is the case with me. When I dub for my Telugu films, I am sometimes corrected on how a certain word is to be pronounced, and I do it. That is all about it. I speak Hyderabad Telugu which more or less has Telangana dialect and it made my work easier. Being a Hyderabad was an advantage for me to dub for this film. I cannot read or write Telugu because of the CBSE background I come from and my second language was Hindi. Our director would bring dialogues of 3 to 4 pages. There was so much learning from the film. Also, this was one of the fastest movies made in recent times," shares the actor who worked in films like *Nanban*, *Adavari Matalaku Ardale Verule*, and *Lie*.

It's not just about the language, the entire shooting of this project was a learning process for Sriram. Having shot in the rural districts of Telangana, Sriram says he is happy to have got a chance to travel to these villages he hasn't been to before,

despite being a native of Hyderabad. He thanks his producer Johnson, and director Raghava, for believing in him.

"Although initially everyone was apprehensive if I will be able to manage the travel from Chennai to Hyderabad for the film's shoot, by the end of our schedule, everyone was surprised that I wrapped up my schedule real quick and in single takes," giggles Sriram adding that the film's unit wanted him to do more Telugu cinema after working with him for this film. About this, he answers, "I will do Telugu cinema if I am given an opportunity." For Sriram, the pleasant, lyrical-rich music is something he loved the most about the film, which is a perfect balance of romance, superstition, fiction, and more.

Asaalem Jarigindi has new-bee Sanchita Padukone playing the leading lady. Heaping praises for her work, Sriram shares, "Sanchita is a very genuine, hardworking person. Though she didn't know the language, she put in all her efforts. There were a lot of constraints while making this film — like shooting in extremely hot weather, working without breaks sometimes, but she managed to handle everything with ease. Locations sometimes were not compatible for a woman, still, she managed and I really appreciate that about her."

When asked why one should watch this film, Sriram says it is for the genuine efforts put by the team and that he is confident the film will be entertaining.

Meanwhile, the *Dhada* actor has another Telugu film called *10th Class Diaries*, which was launched by director Krish. Avika Gor, Srinivas Reddy, Nasser, and Himaja will be seen playing some key roles in the film.

Like everyone, even the film industry fell prey to Covid-19 and Sriram wants people to promote movies and watch films in theatres to support the movie industry.



"Natyam is commercial, yet thought-provoking"

K RAMYA SREE

Natyam, a film based on classical dance, is exciting a certain set of audience as it is all set to hit big screens tomorrow. The film, starring popular Kuchipudi dancer Sandhya Raju, is directed by short filmmaker Revanth Korukonda.

Ahead of the film's release, Sandhya, who will make her acting debut with *Natyam*, shares, "Dancing has been my passion since I was a child. I chose this project with the idea that I could get even closer to people through this film."

Sandhya is someone who eats, breathes, and sleeps dance and for someone like her, doing a full-length film was no less than a roller-

coaster ride. On being asked why she chose to do a full-length film, she shares, "I have not known about the world of cinema, have not been exposed to it even as a child. All I knew was dance. Many great films were made on dance, and it's only about moving your legs and arms. Our director's idea of telling a story through it is seen in this film. This dance film is thought-provoking."

She adds that the film will show the relationship of a guru with his disciples: "We show the boundaries that exist for classical dancers. What is the difference between western dance and classical dance? *Natyam* is the name

of the village. The superstitions that surround it are also shown in the film. It is like a commercial movie."

The film is gaining everyone's praise, especially from veterans. Recently, even Vice-president of India, Venkaiah Naidu appreciated the team's efforts.

Speaking about her passion for dance, she shares, "As a kid, I was sent to various schools by my parents and I ended up staying at a dance school for 10 years, watching the training of Vempati Chinsatya *garu*. That's when I decided to dedicate my life to arts. I come from an eCommerce background, my parents wanted me to take care of our factories but my heart beats for dance. My family members never let me down. Even after the wedding, they stood by me like an anchor."

Designed to arouse interest even for those who are not in touch with classical dance, music director Shraavan provided excellent music for it.

This is her first film and she donned the role of a producer and an actor.

Sharing how she managed to do both, Sandhya said, "Being an actress seemed very difficult. I have been working with the production team, the location team, and all the departments. I could not be anywhere like just the heroine. It seemed very difficult to finish the movie and catch up to the theater."

"Acting in front of the screen is different from a dance performance. The director has already told me how to be in front of the camera. The story, the character, those words, must be understood, and acted upon. The camera does not just capture our faces, it also captures the feelings within us. The camera has that power," adds she.

When asked if she is willing to do more films, Sandhya says she doesn't want to do commercial movies. "I will do a film if I come across a good story and character. I will play roles that have the potential to win a national award. I'll take up roles that will inspire girls to want to lead a film."

Sukumar to film Arya 3 with Vijay Deverakonda



Sukumar, who is currently busy with Allu Arjun and Rashmika Mandanna's upcoming flick *Pushpa*, a high-budget action drama, being made in two

parts, is already gearing up for his next and it is with the current heartthrob of Indian cinema — Vijay Deverakonda.



According to the latest reports, Sukumar will take up this project as soon as he wraps up *Pushpa*.

Soon after that, Sukumar is to kickstart the pre-production work of his upcoming movie, which is touted to be the sequel to Sukumar's most-hyped anthology — *Arya* and *Arya 2*. The new movie is to be titled *Arya 3*, it is heard.

Both *Arya* and *Arya 2* had Icon star Allu Arjun. While everyone expected Allu Arjun to play the

lead in *Arya 3*, it seems like Sukumar is keen to rope in *Arjun Reddy* actor Vijay Deverakonda as his hero.

Sukumar has already announced his next film with Vijay Deverakonda, which is to be bankrolled under the banner Falcon Creations sometime back, but it was not announced if this will be *Arya 3*. An official confirmation is yet to be made.

Meanwhile, Allu Arjun and Sukumar, who delivered the two greatest hits in Telugu — *Arya* and *Arya 2*, have come together for their third film *Pushpa*.

Pushpa, being a pan-India film, has a huge hype around its release, which is scheduled for December 17. On the other hand, Vijay Deverakonda is all set for his upcoming movie *Liger* to hit the screens soon. Ananya Panday acts as Vijay's female lead in this Puri Jagannadh directorial.

SEETA MANOHARA SRI RAGHAVA LAUNCHED FORMALLY WITH A PUJA



Seeta Manohara Sri Raghava, a film starring yesteryear actor Haranath's grand nephew Virat Raj in the lead role, has been launched formally with a puja ceremony on Wednesday at Ramanaidu

Studios in Hyderabad.

While director Anil Ravipudi gave the first clap, the camera was switched on by veteran producer A M Rathnam. Suresh Babu too, was present at the launch. The film directed by Sudhakar T on Vandana Movies banner, is tipped to be a lively youthful entertainer.

Durga says this film will be a mass entertainer. "It is a clean family entertainer. Salaar music director Ravi Basur's music will be one of the highlights of the movie. Action sequences will be composed by *RRR* fame King Solomon. I thank Sudhakar Reddy and I am sure we will succeed in fulfilling all expectations that are on us."

The film is said to hit the big screens by early 2022.

Samantha files defamation cases against YouTube channels

Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who recently announced her separation from Akkineni Naga Chaitanya, stood up for herself in these tough situations. She has now filed defamation cases against some YouTube channels for streaming malignant content about her.

Suman TV, Telugu Popular TV, and a few more YouTube channels will receive legal notices from Samantha, for defaming her image on their respective channels. Also, Samantha has apparently filed a legal notice against an advocate named Venkat Rao, who had allegedly spoken about Samantha's marital life and had alleged that she had affairs.

Post her divorce from Naga

Chaitanya, Samantha has been the talk of the town, while she is being targeted by internet bullies.

In the wake of all the negativity, Samantha had released a personal note asking others to stay away from her as she is not going to allow any kind of negativity to break her. Apparently, neither her ex-husband Naga Chaitanya, nor his father Nagarjuna stood by her in these struggles. On the work front, Samantha has a couple of interesting subjects she would start shooting for soon, while she is also taking her personal space to cope with the recent tumult in her life.



K3 KOTIKOKKADU TO RELEASE ON NOV. 12

Kannada film *Kotigobba 3* is all set to release in Telugu on November 12 with the title *K3 Kotikokkadu*.

The movie casts Kiccha Sudeep, Madonna Sebastian and Shraddha Das are in the lead roles along with P. Ravi Shankar, Aftab Shivdasani, Nawab Shah, Danish Akhtar Saifi, Sudhanshu Pandey are seen in supporting roles. Telugu theatrical rights bagged by Good Friends banner and Devendra DK. The music is composed by Arjun Janya while cinematography is done by Shekhar Chandru and editing by Goran Ivanovic.

Allu Arjun reminisces Allu-Akkineni bond

After *Love Story*, the recently released *Most Eligible Bachelor* is the current talk of the Telugu film industry. The film's unit is diving deep into the success of the film. Presented by mega producer Allu Arvind under the banner of GA2 Pictures, the film, directed by Bommarillu Bhaskar, has Akhil Akkineni, Pooja Hegde as the lead pair.

The success meeting of the film was a glamorous event with the who's who of Tollywood gracing the event and sharing kind words about the film.

One such prominent guest of the night was Icon star Allu Arjun who couldn't stop praising the film. Beginning his speech by congratulating Akhil for scoring high with *MEB*, the *Pushpa* actor appreciating Akhil, said, "For me, Akhil is just like my younger brother and I am elated that Akhil has to his credit a big hit like *MEB*. Akhil's dancing and fighting skills gave this film those extra points."

The Allu family's association with the Akkinenis dates back to the 1960s.

Commenting on the same, Allu Arjun said, "From our grandfathers to our fathers to our generation, our journey with the Akkineni family has been very special and this bond will continue for years to come."



"Bunny Vasu got another big hit. I have not seen him work so hard lately. The whole team worked very hard and gave us all a memorable film. The film proves that if a good film is made, people will come to the theaters. Thank you to the Telugu audience for making it such a big success," concluded the actor.

Rohit finds his groove as India outplay Australia

PTI ■ DUBAI

India fine-tuned their T20 World Cup preparations with a convincing nine-wicket win over Australia in their final warm-up game here on Wednesday but the sixth bowler's slot remained a worry as even Virat Kohli rolled his arm over going into the tournament proper.

Captaining the side with Kohli only taking the field to bowl, Rohit Sharma (60 retired off 41) showed sublime touch alongside opening partner K L Rahul (39 off 31) as India chased down Australia's 152 for five in 17.5 overs.

Suryakumar Yadav (38 not out off 27) came at number three in Kohli's absence and got valuable time in the middle which should boost his confidence going ahead.

Hardik Pandya (14 not out off 8) came at four to finish the game and he did it with a clean hit over the bowler's head.

Another plus for India was seasoned pacer Bhuvneshwar



Australia's Marcus Stoinis looks on as India's Rohit Sharma and KL Rahul run between the wickets during the Cricket Twenty20 World Cup warm-up match between India and Australia in Dubai, on Wednesday

AP

Kumar finding rhythm after a poor outing against England. India had also beaten England in their earlier practice game.

The batting department looks more or less settled and the five specialist bowlers also inspire confidence but the same can't be said about the extra bowling option with Hardik not bringing his all-round skills to the table at the moment.

"Hardik is coming along pretty well, but it'll be a while before he will start to bowl. He hasn't started bowling, but he should be ready by the start of the tournament," said Rohit at the toss for the warm-up match against Australia.

The team management is hoping he will be ready to bowl during India's World Cup campaign which begins with the marquee clash against Pakistan on Sunday.

Skipper Kohli kept things tight with two overs of medium

pace but to expect him to do the job in high-pressure scenarios would be asking for too much from him.

India conceded 58 runs off the last five overs and that is something they would like to improve on.

After losing the toss, India put up a decent bowling effort. Rohit mentioned at the toss that Kohli, Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami were rested from the game but the skipper took the field to bowl a couple of overs in which he conceded 12 runs.

India had Australia on the mat at 11 for three after Aaron Finch opted to bat first. David Warner's barren run continued after a failed attempt at a reverse sweep had him trapped in front off Ravichandran Ashwin.

With his very next ball, Ashwin got rid of birthday boy Mitchell Marsh who played for the turn which wasn't there only to edge it to the first slip.

Hardik expected to bowl when Indian T20 WC campaign begins: Rohit

PTI ■ DUBAI

India vice-captain Rohit Sharma on Wednesday said that all-rounder Hardik Pandya is expected to be "ready" to bowl when the team starts its T20 World Cup campaign here on Sunday. Rohit, who is leading the side in the warm-up game against Australia as Virat Kohli has been rested, said the team needs a sixth bowler during the showpiece.

"Hardik is coming along pretty well, but it'll be a while before he will start to bowl. He hasn't started bowling, but he should be ready by the start of the tournament," said Rohit at the toss for the warm-up match against Australia.

"We have quality in the main bowlers, but you need an option for a 6th bowler," he

added. India play Pakistan in their opening match here on Sunday. Pandya's fitness is a concern heading into the tournament as he did not bowl at all in the IPL. The team management has repeatedly stated that Pandya's bowling is crucial for the team's balance. Besides Kohli, pacers Jasprit Bumrah and Mohammed Shami were also rested from Wednesday's warm-up game.

"We want to make sure that we get the 6th bowling option, some options in the batting order as well, we'll try all those things today," Rohit said.

"We wanted to bat first as well, just wanted to try and get runs on the board." India had beaten England by seven wickets in their first warm-up game on Monday, riding on a 24-ball 51 from KL Rahul.



do. Steve Smith (57 off 48) and in-form Glenn Maxwell (37 off 28) tried to break the shackles with a 61-run partnership.

While Maxwell used his reverse sweep to good effect, Smith kept himself busy by rotating the strike.

T20 World Cup window

12 YR OLD DESIGNED SCOTLAND T20 WC JERSEY

Dubai: Scotland beating teams such as Bangladesh in the ICC T20 World Cup was never unthinkable. But what is difficult to believe is that the team's striking dark blue and purple-coloured jersey has been designed by a 12-year-old girl. Rebecca Downie is the young designer and she has been cheering her team, which proved to be the most impressive in the first week of the tournament. The team chose the design from over 200 entries from school children across the country. The jersey is based on the colours of Scotland's national emblem — the thistle.

'IF WE DON'T GET RESULTS, WE SEARCH FOR SCAPEGOATS'

Karachi: Former captain Misbah-ul-Haq said that there will be no improvement in Pakistan cricket unless it changes its culture and stops hunting for scapegoats. Speaking for the first time after his sudden resignation as head coach last month, Misbah said "cosmetic surgery" will not change anything in Pakistan cricket as the problems are deep rooted in the system. "The problem is that in our cricket we only look at results and we don't give time or have patience for planning ahead and improving the system," he said on 'A-Sports' channel.

Namibia beat Netherlands, keeps them in hunt for Super 12

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

In a sensational display of power-hitting, David Wiese conjured up a 66-run knock to fashion Namibia's six-wicket win over the Netherlands in a crucial first round Group A game of the T20 World Cup here on Wednesday.

Wiese's maiden international half-century changed the pace of the game in matter of minutes as runs flew thick and fast after he took charge at the crease and in the process added 93 runs with skipper Gerhard Erasmus (32) for the fourth wicket. Chasing 165 to stay alive in the competition, debutants Namibia were stuttering at 52 for three after nine overs but Wiese single-handedly sank the Dutch side.

His onslaught on the spinners, especially the monstrous straight sixes, was a treat to watch as the Dutch bowlers were guilty of putting the balls in the slot for Wiese to clobber.

And even if the pacers drew the length changed a bit back, the 36-year-old Wiese had enough power to muscle the ball around for big shots.

He raised his fifty in just 29 balls, with a six off rival skipper Pietar Seelaar. His 40-ball unbeaten knock was adorned with five



sixes and four shots to the fence. Erasmus too timed the ball beautifully and got boundaries with ease in his 22-ball knock

that had four fours and a six. The victory has kept Namibia in hunt for the Super-12 stage and now need to beat

Ireland in their final game in the first round.

They had lost to Sri Lanka in their opening match.

The Netherlands now have lost both their games and their chances to make it to the next stage are quite low.

Earlier, opener Max O'Dowd (70) struck his second consecutive half-century and shared a 82-run stand with Colin Ackermann (35) to help the Netherland post a competitive 164 for four.

O'Dowd, who had hit 51 against Ireland in the previous match, expressed himself freely, going after the bowlers. At times he played uppish shots, not exactly in control but still kept finding the gaps to keep the scoreboard going.

It should be spinners' World Cup, says Rashid Khan

PTI ■ DUBAI

The ICC T20 World Cup will belong to the spinners, Afghanistan's star leg-break bowler Rashid Khan has asserted, and said they can beat any team if they bat well in the showpiece. Since being picked up by IPL team Sunrisers Hyderabad as an 18-year-old in 2017, ace leg-spinner Rashid has emerged as T20 cricket's leading wicket-taker in this period with 333 scalps and is wanted by franchises across the world.

Appearing in his second T20 World Cup, Rashid feels spinners are always "effective" on pitches at three venues in the UAE, where the Super 12s, the



semi-finals and final will be played.

"Conditions here are always good for spinners and it should be spinners' World Cup," Rashid was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo.

"Doesn't matter how wickets are prepared here, it is always helpful for the

spinners. Spinners will play a huge role in this World Cup.

"As we have seen in the IPL, spinners have brought back their team in the game. I feel that will be same in the World Cup as well. The best spinners will bring their team back in the game and win it."

Rashid feels Afghanistan, who are in Group 2 along with India, Pakistan and New Zealand, would need to do "lots of hard work" considering all their opponents in the Super 12s are "good players of spin".

Afghanistan have played 14 T20Is at the three venues in the UAE and have won all of them.

PTI ■ ODENSE

Young Lakshya Sen thumped compatriot Sourabh Verma in straight games to enter the second round but it was curtains for Saina Nehwal at the Denmark Open Super 1000 tournament here on Wednesday. Lakshya, who had finished runners-up at Dutch Open last Sunday, dished out a superb performance to outclass national champion Sourabh 21-9 21-7 in 26 minutes.

The 20-year-old from Almora, who had failed to make the cut for the Sudirman Cup and Thomas Cup Final after losing his only match in the trials, is likely to clash with second seed



and Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen of Denmark next.

London Games bronze medalist Saina, who had retired midway through her first match at Uber Cup Final due to a groin injury, couldn't match Japan's world no 20 Aya Otori and lost

21-16 21-14 in the opening round.

The Indian doubles players had a dismal outing as apart from Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa, none of the others could put up a fight in their respective matches.

While Satwik and Ashwini's gallant battle ended with a 17-21 21-14 11-21 loss to China's Feng Yan Zhe and Du Yue in mixed doubles, Meghana Jakkampudi and Poorvisha S Ram lost 8-21 7-21 to Indonesian combination of Nita Violina Marwah and Putri Syaikhah in women's doubles. Commonwealth Games bronze medalists Ashwini and N Sikki Reddy also went down 17-21 13-

21 to second seeded Korean pair of Lee Sohee and Shin Seungchan.

Lakshya had claimed five titles in 2019 before COVID-19 forced the suspension of the BWF calendar.

On Wednesday, the world no 25 Indian was up against Sourabh, an opponent against whom he had lost twice in the past but it made no difference as Lakshya dished out a dominating show to blow him away.

He led 7-2 early on and never looked in trouble as he reeled off seven straight points from 13-7 to grab seven game points. Sourabh saved two before Lakshya pocketed the opening game.

"Leading into pre-season I really wanted to give the Ashes a crack but in the end I haven't had the preparation I would have liked heading into the coming season," Pattinson was quoted as saying by cricket.Com.Au in a statement.

"If I was to be part of the Ashes I would need to do myself and my teammates justice. I didn't want to be in a position of battling with my body when you need to be 100 per cent fit and ready to go at any time. That would not be fair to myself or the team."

"It was then I felt that instead of trying to play at the very highest level, knowing I have only got three or four years of cricket left, I would focus more on Victoria, helping the young guys develop, perhaps some cricket in England and spending more time with my family."

Messi scores 2 goals to rescue PSG



AP ■ PARIS

Lionel Messi scored twice in quick succession, including an exquisite Panenka-style penalty, to rescue Paris Saint-Germain as it rallied to beat Leipzig 3-2 in the Champions League after being dominated for long spells.

Messi equalised in the 67th minute on Tuesday, poking home from close range after goalkeeper

Peter Gulacsi tipped his first shot onto the post. He then sent Gulacsi diving to the left before dinking the ball softly down the middle for his third goal since joining PSG from Barcelona.

They have all come in the Champions League, with Kylian Mbappe setting up the first two and winning the penalty for Messi's winner against Leipzig in the 74th minute.

Mbappe pointed straight at Messi to tell him he could take the spot kick.

"It's normal, it's about respect," Mbappe said.

"He's the best player in the world. I've always said it's a privilege to play with him."

It was the 34th time that Messi scored at least two goals in a Champions League game, bringing the Argentina captain's total to 123

goals in the tournament. He remains second to longtime rival Cristiano Ronaldo on 137.

Mbappe then took a penalty in the fourth minute of stoppage time, awarded following a video review for a foul on right back Achraf Hakimi, but he blazed it well over.

PSG is atop Group A with seven points, one more than Manchester City. Leipzig is last with no points.

Mbappe opened the scoring with a ninth-minute goal. But after that, the visitors took control by pressing high up the field and forcing panicky PSG into numerous errors.

"(Were we) lucky, no? You make your own luck," Mbappe said. "But of course, it was difficult, Leipzig played well. We had some low spells which were perhaps a little bit too low."

Striker Andre Silva equalised in the 28th and midfielder Nordi Mukiele volleyed in powerfully in the 57th, with left back Angelino setting up both with his deft left foot.

"Leipzig have a good team, full of confidence," PSG winger Julian Draxler said. "They caused us some problems, but we ruthlessly exploited the room we were allowed."

PSG was missing forwards Neymar and Mauro Icardi, which gave Draxler a rare start alongside Mbappe and Messi in attack. Neymar has a sore adductor while Icardi was excused for family reasons.



Olympic flame arrives in Beijing amid boycott calls

PT ■ BEIJING

The Olympic flame arrived in Beijing on Wednesday amid calls from overseas critics for a boycott of the Feb. 4-20 Winter Games.

Beijing's Communist Party Secretary Cai Qi, the top official in the Chinese capital, received the flame at a closely-guarded airport ceremony.

Beijing successfully hosted the Summer Olympics in 2008, although the event failed to produce the more open political and social environment in China that many had hoped for.

Activist groups disrupted the flame lighting ceremony in southern Greece on Monday, accusing the International Olympic Committee of granting legitimacy to rights abuses in China.

IOC officials have said they are committed to seeing the competition go ahead and that rights issues are not part of their remit.

Speaking in the ancient stadium of Olympia, IOC President Thomas Bach said the Games must be "respected as politically neutral ground."

Activists on Tuesday said human rights in China have deteriorated since 2008, claiming that the Summer Games "emboldened" China.

SINGLES

BENZEMA ABSENT FOR BLACKMAIL TRIAL

Versailles : Real Madrid forward Karim Benzema wasn't present Wednesday for the opening of his three-day trial for involvement in an alleged attempt to blackmail former France teammate Mathieu Valbuena over a sex tape. The 33-year-old Benzema's legal team told the court in Versailles that professional obligations made it "impossible" for him to attend. Valbuena's lawyer said he deplored the absence. Benzema played for Madrid in Kyiv on Tuesday against Shakhtar Donetsk in the Champions League. Madrid plays again Sunday against Barcelona in the Spanish league. Four other people accused of attempted blackmail in the case were present in court.

AKEAL HOSEIN REPLACES FABIAN ALLEN

Dubai: Left-arm spinner Akeal Hosein was on Wednesday approved as replacement for an injured Fabian Allen in the West Indies squad for the ongoing ICC T20 World Cup. The Event Technical Committee of the tournament has approved Hosein as a replacement for Allen, the ICC said in a statement. Hosein, who has played nine ODIs and six T20Is, was picked after Allen was ruled out due to an ankle injury. Hosein was a reserve as per the allowance for teams to travel with extra players in view of COVID-19 quarantine requirements.

OLYMPIANS HEADLINE NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Hisar: Olympians Simranjit Kaur (60kg) and Pooja Rani (81kg) headline a strong field for the National Women's Boxing Championship, which will double up as a selection trial for the world championships, starting here on Thursday. The tournament, which is being conducted in association with Haryana Boxing Sangh, will see participation of more than 320 boxers from 36 States/UTs/Boards from across the country. Apart from Simranjit (60kg) and Pooja (81kg), who is the reigning Asian champion, 2019 World Championships bronze-medallist Jamuna Boro (54kg), defending champion Pwila Basumatary (60kg) and Asian Championships bronze medalist Jaismine (60kg) will be seen presenting strong challenges.