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HYDERABAD, SATURDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



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IN ARYAN KHAN DRUGS CASE, NCB QUIZES ANANYA PANDAY FOR 4 HOURS

Bollywood actor Ananya Panday appeared before the Narcotics Control Bureau here for the second straight day on Friday and was questioned for nearly four hours in connection with her alleged WhatsApp chats with Aryan Khan, son of superstar Shah Rukh Khan, arrested in a drugs case, NCB sources said. Ananya Panday has been again called by the NCB on Monday, a senior official of the central agency said. The 22-year-old actor, a new entrant in Bollywood who made her debut in 2019, left the NCB office around 6.20 pm after questioning by the NCB, they said.

SUCCESSFUL UPSC ASPIRANTS HAVE NO RIGHT TO CADRE, PLACE OF CHOICE: SC

A successful civil services aspirant has no right to be allocated a cadre or place of appointment of his choice as a candidate for the All India service he opts for serving anywhere in the country with eyes wide open, the Supreme Court Friday said. The historic judgement in the Mandal case was also referred to by the apex court to observe that the candidate belonging to the SC/ST or OBC if found suitable by the UPSC for selection on merits under general category, shall be appointed against unreserved vacancies.

JHARKHAND HIGH COURT RAPS CBI IN DHANBAD JUDGE MURDER CASE

The Jharkhand High Court on Friday rapped the CBI for filing a stereotype charge sheet in the Dhanbad judge murder case. The court also remarked that the agency seems to have worked like babus (clerks) while completing the probe and filing the charge-sheet. A division bench, while hearing the petition monitoring the investigation of Dhanbad Additional District Judge Uttam Anand's death referred to CBI's investigation as akin to 'babu-dom' as the charge sheet filed could not substantiate the charges made against the accused.

PURI SAYS TAXES ON PETROL, DIESEL FUNDING VACCINES, FREE MEALS, LPG

Amid a clamour by the Opposition for cutting taxes to soften record high petrol and diesel prices, Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri on Friday equated the move to 'axing one's own feet', saying such levies funded government schemes to provide free Covid-19 vaccines, meals and cooking gas to millions amid the pandemic. "I think this simplistic political narrative we get in India (that), 'Prices have gone up why don't you reduce your taxes'... so every time price goes up due to something else, it says you axe your own feet in the process," he told reporters.



TS reaches three crore vaccine doses landmark

Health workers on Friday helped Telangana reach the milestone of administering three crore doses of Covid-19 vaccines. It took them 169 days to vaccinate one crore people, another 81 days for the next crore doses and the third set of one crore doses was completed in just 36 days, taking the total to 3 crore doses. Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar said, "Don't think Covid-19 is gone. There is little to no risk for those who have been vaccinated. I don't know if the third wave is coming but the government is ready" He said that everyone should take both the doses. "There is no more oxygen shortage and that actions taken in Telangana were followed by the entire country as the State started vaccination of super-spreaders first," the Chief Secretary said. Director of Public Health Srinivasa Rao said that 76 percent of the targeted beneficiaries were given at least one dose. Telangana aspires to achieve 100 percent vaccination by December. The DPH said that currently 2.78 lakh doses are being administered per day on average.

Can't cancel Inter exams at last moment, says HC

The Telangana High Court on Friday gave the green signal for the conduct of Intermediate public exams from October 25 as per the schedule announced earlier. The High Court heard a lunch motion petition moved by the Telangana Parents' Association, seeking cancellation of the exams and refused to intervene in the process. Hearing a petition filed by Parents' Association seeking directions to the state government to cancel the exams, the court refused to pass any orders to stop the process of examination. It pulled up the petitioner for filing the petition at the last minute and made it clear that it can't interfere at this stage. The Association had questioned the rationale behind the government's move to conduct the exams for Intermediate first year (Class 11) when the students were already promoted to second year (Class 12). It had pleaded to the court to order the Board of Intermediate Education to cancel the exams and declare all students passed.

Onion prices not 'extraordinarily high': Centre

Retail onion prices are not "extraordinarily high" to necessitate banning export of the key kitchen staple and buffer stocks are being released to cool down the prices further, Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Friday. State governments are of the opinion that there is no possibility of sharp increase in onion prices in the coming days as domestic kharif onion production is estimated to be higher at 43.88 lakh tonne in the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) as against 37.38 lakh tonne in the year-ago period, he said. Pandey said the average onion price was ruling at Rs 41.5 per kg on October 21, much lower than Rs 55.6 per kg in the year-ago period. As per the government data, retail prices were ruling at Rs 48/kg in Delhi, Rs 43/kg in Mumbai, Rs 37/kg in Chennai and Rs 57/kg in Kolkata on Friday. Addressing the media, the Food Secretary said: "Onion prices are not extraordinarily high. The average prices are lower than last year." Asked about plans to ban onion exports, the Secretary said, "There is no such scenario. Exports are lower than last year. It is better to monitor than speculate." Market intervention has already been initiated, but the rates are not high enough to warrant immediate action, he said.

that the KRMB guidelines for operation and maintenance of Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects were not in line with the Bachawat Award. "We are baffled that the KRMB took the liberty of violating the Bachawat Award. It's clearly a case of travesty of justice," officials said.



Operation protocols for Srisailem, Nagarjuna Sagar projects violated Bachawat Award, says Telangana, seeks revision

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Ashwin & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Tritiya 27:01
Nakshatram : Kritika 21:53
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 9:07 am - 10:33 am
Yamagandam : 1:26 pm - 2:52 pm
Varjyam : 8:24 am - 10:12 am
Gulika : 6:14 am - 7:41 am
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 7:11 pm - 8:59 pm
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 22, 2021 5:00 PM

NIA nabs eight terror operatives in J&K

Eight operatives of various proscribed terror organisations were arrested Friday during multiple searches spread across six districts of Jammu and Kashmir in connection with a terrorism conspiracy case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said. The searches were carried out at 10 locations in Srinagar, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Anantnag and Baramulla districts, which also led to the seizure of electronic devices and incriminating Jihadi (holy war) documents and posters, an agency official said. With this, a total of 21 accused people have been arrested in connection with the terrorism conspiracy case which was registered on October 10. The official identified the arrested persons as Adil Ahmad War, Manan Gulzar Dar, Sobhia and Zamin Adil of Srinagar, Hilal Ahmad Dar and Shaqib Bashir of Kupwara, Rouf Bhatt of Anantnag and Haris Nisar Langoo. "The eight accused persons arrested are terror operatives of various proscribed terrorist organisations and have been instrumental in providing logistical and material support to terrorists," the NIA official said. He said the case relates to the conspiracy for undertaking violent terrorist acts in J&K and other major cities by cadres of proscribed terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al Badr and their affiliates such as the Resistance Front (TRF) and People Against Fascist Forces (PAFF). "Further investigation in the case continues," the NIA said.

Naidu to meet President after attacks on TDP offices

Telugu Desam Party supremo N Chandrababu Naidu will meet President Ram Nath Kovind on October 25 in New Delhi to submit a memorandum on the alleged attacks on some of his party offices and other issues, party sources said on Friday. Naidu also sought appointments from Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah, though they are yet to be confirmed, the sources said. The opposition leader concluded his 36-hour fast at the party's office near here. Seeking imposition of President's rule in AP, Naidu warned some police officials of facing the music when the TDP comes to power.

CBI arrests 6 for derogatory posts on social media against judiciary

The CBI on Friday arrested six persons in connection with its probe into alleged derogatory social media posts against the members of higher judiciary, officials said. The central agency had registered a case on November 11 last year against 16 people, taking over 12 FIRs on the orders of Andhra Pradesh High Court, they said. The CBI took into custody Sridhar Reddy Avuthu, Jalagam Venkata Satyanarayana, Guda Sridhar Reddy, Sreenath Suswaram, Kishore Kumar Darisala alias Kishore Reddy Darisa and Sudduluri Ajay Amruth. "It was alleged that the key personnel occupying posts of prominence in the State of Andhra Pradesh, by intentionally targeting the Judiciary, made derogatory posts on social media platform against Honourable Judges and Judiciary following some Court verdicts delivered by the Judges of High Court of Andhra Pradesh," CBI spokesperson RC Joshi said. The agency is using available channels such as MLAT (mutual legal assistance treaty), INTERPOL to collect evidence from abroad, he said. "During investigation, CBI had earlier arrested five accused and also filed five separate chargesheets against them. Investigation is continuing," he said. The CBI also got a lot of objectionable posts removed from the social media platforms, public domains, he said.

TS growth has increased urban areas: Arvind

With urban areas in the State having risen from 78 in 2015 to 142 at present, urbanisation has been quite rapid in Telangana. This is also an indication of the tremendous growth achieved in the last few years, said MA&UD Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar on Friday. "The total urban area is 3 percent of geographical area which has 50 percent of population and 70 percent of GDP comes from here. That's the kind of urbanisation happening in Telangana. Southern states are more urban. About 43 percent of Telangana's population is urban and in the next Census, this will increase. The number of urban areas in the State have risen from 78 in 2015 to 142 at present, showcasing the tremendous growth achieved in the last few years," he said. The Special Chief Secretary was addressing the second edition of the prestigious Infrastructure Summit organised by HYSEA on Friday at the HICC.



Arvind Kumar attributed Telangana's growth story due to some key factors like the pro-industry policies of the govt, law & order, cost of living

Eatala parking money in banks for distribution: TRS

TRs leaders on Friday complained to Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel that BJP candidate Eatala Rajender and his supporters in Huzurabad were opening accounts all over the constituency in various banks under different names and depositing huge sums of money for the purpose of distributing to voters on the eve of the bye-election. In their complaint, TRS General Secretary M Sreenivas Reddy, MLA Kranthi Kiran and TRS Secretary Gattu Ramachandra Rao said that this was a grave offence and a corrupt practice under the provisions of various penal laws and in contravention of Model Code of Conduct. They claimed that "strange" accounts are being opened in various banks in Huzurabad to park illegal money in these accounts. The TRS leaders said they have reliable information that Eatala and his supporters, particularly one Bhadrappa, were opening bank accounts in various banks in different names and transferring huge money into them in an organised manner with the purpose of utilising the same amounts for distribution to voters on the eve of the bye-election, scheduled on October 30.



Posters and banners at a road divider in Hyderabad on Friday, ahead of the TRS plenary.

Ahead of TRS plenary, server to lodge complaints on banners goes down

many days the servers will be down or when they would be made available to the public. Netizens pointed out that even the EV&DM profile on Twitter was locked, raising suspicion. A Prashant Mamidala said, "Until TRS plenary ends, there will be no fines. We should stop complaining about business outlets and hoardings. Common people are being harassed." Activist Lubna Sarwath tweeted, "What an anarchic scenario? What abt the waste that they are generating, plastic and non-plastic. Who gave the permission and what are the terms and conditions for this meeting? Citizens must direct the erring ministers to follow the rule of law by submitting representations to the TSHRC, to Appellate Authority (sic)." Some activists pointed out that even raising complaints has been futile. There was no mention of how

EC orders 2,000 Central security personnel for Huzurabad by-poll

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Election Commission of India (ECI) has ordered 20 companies of Central security forces for the Huzurabad Assembly by-election. Of these 20 companies, three have already reached the constituency. Each company will have 100 personnel and it is believed that all of the 2,000 Central security personnel will reach Huzurabad within a

couple of days since the election will be held on October 30. It may be mentioned here that the BJP lodged a complaint with the Election Commission alleging that the State police has been acting in favour of the ruling TRS and requested the poll panel to send Central forces to conduct the election in a transparent and peaceful manner. Considering the request of the BJP, the ECI decided to send

20 companies of Central forces for the Huzurabad by-poll. Meanwhile, Chief Electoral Officer Shashank Goel informed that another election observer will be entrusted with keeping tabs on the expenditure of candidates following complaints of indiscriminate distribution of money in the constituency. Shashank Goel stated that till date, the authorities have seized Rs 1.80 crore in unaccounted

or unexplained cash in the constituency. He said that the authorities have also seized liquor worth Rs 6.11 lakh till date. Goel reminded that the ECI has been kept informed of the developments in the constituency and hence taking decisions like extension of the model code to neighbouring constituencies in tune with the information provided by him.

Agri Minister requests farmers to cultivate urad in rabi season

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy has requested farmers to cultivate urad extensively in the Rabi season. He said the government is ready to procure urad through MARKFED totally. He also asked farmers to start sowing Urad seeds immediately as Urad's minimum support price (MSP) is Rs 6,300 a quintal. He said the government is ready to procure Urad paying more than the MSP, and will be setting up adequate procurement centers. Participating in the MARKFED governing body meeting held at the MARKFED's central office here on Friday, Singireddy said there is severe shortage of urad and urad dal. He said the state government had approached the Central government's NAFED regarding this. In response, the NAFED had given a written assurance on October 21 regarding procurement of the

state's urad crop. Singireddy also requested farmers to cultivate Fenugreek, Peanuts, Mustard, Sesame and Sunflower. Agriculture Department Secretary Raghunandan Rao, MARKFED Chairman Mara Ganga Reddy, MARKFED MD P. Yadi Reddy and others attended the meeting. Singireddy directed palm oil companies to take up the construction of palm oil companies in the districts allocated to them. He said that only then will farmers get the confidence to cultivate oil palms, he said. On Friday, Singireddy held the review meeting on the steps the state has been taking to increase oil palm cultivation at his residence at the ministers' quarters. The meeting was attended by the representatives of 11 palm oil companies, Horticulture Department Director Venkatram Reddy, OilFED MD Suresh Reddy and others. He asked officials to take

farmers on field visits to Kothagudem to create awareness on oil palm cultivation. He said that the government had decided to encourage the oil palm cultivation in the state in a big way, and hence palm oil companies have to raise quality plants in their nurseries and provide them to farmers in time. The Minister asked the OilFED MD to prepare a half an hour documentary to make farmers understand the processes involved from the sowing of oil palm seeds to oil extraction. He reviewed the setting up of company-wise nurseries, imported oil palm seed sprouts and the method of growing the same and when they will be available for planting etc. He said that he will visit nurseries soon to check the availability of oil palm plants and their quality. The Minister also thanked the Centre for reducing the import duty on oil palm seed sprouts.

Can't cancel ...

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Counsel for the government defended the decision to conduct the exams saying these could not be conducted earlier due to the pandemic situation. The court was informed that these students had not appeared for the Class 10 exams as these could not be conducted last year due to the pandemic. Counsel argued that in case the exams are not conducted for second year due to the same situation, there will be no method to evaluate them and this will affect their academic future. The move is being opposed by many students on the ground that they are already in the second year and it will not be possible to appear in the first year exams and manage the second year studies as they also have to appear in various competitive exams. The TSBE had promoted all first year students to the second year as the exams could not be conducted due to Covid-19 pandemic. The Intermediate exams are usually held in February-March. However, the Board on September 24 decided to conduct the exams for the first year and declared that 70 percent of the syllabus will be considered for the exams. A section of the students even launched an online petition demanding cancellation of the exams. Managements of private colleges also refused to cooperate in conducting the exams demanding the government to address their long-pending demands. The government, however, decided to go ahead with the exams. Education Minister P Sabitha Indra Reddy said about 4.58 lakh students will be appearing for these exams at 1,768 centres across the State. She said all arrangements were being made in line with the Covid-19 safety protocol.

Many tribal villages in state lack basic facilities: Survey

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Tribal Development Ministry has given a shock to Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Friday stating that there are no basic facilities in many tribal villages of the state. According to data published in the International Journal of Information Management, the Centre had conducted a survey on infrastructure in 1,663 tribal villages in the nine erstwhile

districts of Telangana. The survey analysed data on seven important angles and gave rankings to the villages. The survey revealed that there are basic facilities in only 21 to 40 per cent of the state's tribal villages. The state government has concentrated on health and education in these villages. Mahabubnagar district stood first place in providing facilities out of the nine districts and Adilabad came last.

Naidu to meet President after...

Continued from page 1

The TDP chief sat on the fast protesting the alleged attacks on the party's offices. YSRCP workers on October 19 allegedly ransacked offices of TDP at various places, claiming that a TDP leader made objectionable comments against Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. K Pattabhi Ram, objecting to police notices to former minister Nakka Ananda Babu, allegedly made the remarks against Jagan and subsequently was arrested.

Telangana govt committed to ideals of Komaram Bheem: KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Friday said that the Telangana State government was committed to fulfil the lofty ideals of Komaram Bheem who fought for the rights of the tribals. He said that the State government has made the aspiration of Adivasis for self-rule in their 'thandas' and 'gudems' a reality. Paying glowing tributes to Adivasis' most revered leader on his birth anniversary, KCR recalled the services rendered by Komaram Bheem. The State government has been implementing several schemes and programmes for the welfare and development of Adivasis and Komaram Bheem's birth anniversary is celebrated officially. "Jodeghat, the place from where Komaram Bheem waged his battle, was developed in all aspects," the Chief Minister said.

KCR re-election as TRS chief a formality

• 18 sets of nominations filed on behalf of the CM for TRS president post, no other candidate in fray

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A total of 18 sets of nominations have been filed on behalf of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao as the nomination process for election of TRS president closed on Friday. The nominations would be scrutinised on Saturday and as per the schedule, October 24 is the last date for withdrawal of nominations. Among those who filed nominations on behalf of KCR were Ministers, MLAs and MLCs - including his daughter K. Kavitha. With no other party leader filing nominations, it is a formality for the Returning Officer to declare KCR as the TRS

president on October 25. He has been getting elected unopposed to the post since the inception of the TRS in 2001. The party president election is conducted once in four years as per the TRS by-laws. The presidential election is followed by the party's plenary. Meanwhile, TRS working president KT Rama Rao continued meeting MLAs, MLCs, ZP Chairpersons and representatives of district and local bodies of combined Adilabad district at Telangana Bhavan on Friday. He gave his guidance for the preparation of TRS plenary, Dwi Dashabdi (two decade) celebrations of TRS and organisational restructuring of the party. KTR gave several sugges-

tions to the members about the conduct of Telangana Vijaya Garjana meeting on November 15 at Warangal. Motivating the party leaders, KTR said that from every nook and corner of the State, party workers and leaders apart from the general public should attend the public meeting. "At every village, mandal, local representatives should conduct meetings and formulate an action plan for making arrangements to enable party committee members to attend the public meeting at Warangal," he said. "It's important for the success of the party's organisational structure and to make every worker from grassroots-level to the State-level be a part of the party's programmes and agenda," KTR said.

TPCC lodges complaint with CIC against CS' note on RTI info

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana unit of the Congress has lodged a complaint with the Central Information Commission (CIC) against state Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar alleging that he had issued a note on October 13 to suppress information flow from government departments to the public. The Telangana Congress has requested the Commission to direct the CS to scrap UO Note No. 3674/GPM & AR/2021 dated 13-10-2021 immediately and to direct the State government to implement the RTI Act 2005 in letter and spirit. TPCC General Secretary Bakka Judson, who is also an AICC member, lodged the complaint with Central Information Commissioner Yashvardhan Kumar Sinha on Friday alleging that the CS send the note to all Special Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries and heads of departments asking them to instruct public information officers to obtain the orders of Special Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries and heads of departments before furnishing information to applicants under the RTI Act 2005.

Judson said in his complaint that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had said on October 20 that there is political will to check corruption while addressing the CBI and Central Vigilance Commission officers. Modi had asked the CBI and CVC officers to rededicate themselves to eliminate corruption from the country, he said. Judson said the RTI Act 2005 has played a pivotal role in helping commoners to obtain information from public authorities. He alleged that the Telangana Government is resorting to unscrupulous ways to hide information from the public. He said that it started when the State government stopped uploading government orders issued by it on the web as was done earlier. Now, only trivial government orders were being uploaded. The matter was challenged in the Telangana High Court and the HC had directed the government in August 2021 to upload on the web government orders on the day they are issued. He said that now the CS has issued the note making it mandatory for public information officers to obtain the

permission of Special Chief Secretaries, Principal Secretaries and heads of departments before furnishing information to applicants under the RTI Act 2005. This outrageous UO Note contravenes the spirit and provisions of the Right to Information Act 2005, Judson said. However, the Chief Secretary is resorting to unconstitutional ways to bypass the RTI Act 2005. This is nothing but an attempt by the State government to scuttle the rights provided by the Right to Information Act 2005. It is a move by the government to curtail access to information available with public authorities and to impede transparency and accountability in the working of public authorities, Judson said. Judson said that he is requesting the CIC to intervene urgently and direct the Telangana Chief Secretary to scrap UO Note No. 3674/GPM & AR/2021 dated 13-10-2021 immediately, and to direct the State Government to implement the RTI Act 2005 in letter and spirit. This will help in eliminating corruption as pointed out by the Prime Minister, he added.

All PILs on Dalit Bandhu to be heard on Monday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court will hear all the four PILs on Dalit Bandhu on Monday. Of the four PILs, three have been filed seeking revocation of the Election Commission directive staying implementation of the scheme in Huzurabad due to the Assembly by-election while one is related to suspending the Dalit Bandhu scheme. The High Court on Friday asked the government to file a counter. The PILs have been filed by Mallepalli Laxmaiah, a social worker from Hyderabad, Dr A Chandra Sekhar, a former minister, and Bakka Judson, belonging to Golconda area in Musheerabad. In their PILs, the petitioners contended that the scheme was an ongoing one and it had no role in the Huzurabad by-election. On October 4, an NGO 'Watch Voice of People' filed a petition seeking a stay on the Dalit Bandhu scheme. The court will hear arguments on Monday even on this petition.

Ahead of TRS plenary, server..

Continued from page 1

Sai Teja of Feed the Needy said that it is an open secret that politicians don't pay fines even when they are levied and an RTI has confirmed this. Activist Harish Daga said, "We do understand that software upgrades etc. is a continuous process. Apparently there should be an ETA for the same. Meanwhile CEC should accept the complaints and can issue e-challans once the system is ready." Lawyer Neelam Bhargava said, "What a great escape! Across Hyderabad city, illegal banners erected by TRS men, most abused department but works only on the fingertips of KTR to target BJP!"

KCR may opt for road shows after EC's clarification on model code

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TRS, which was banking on Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's campaign for Huzurabad by-election to ensure the success of party candidate Gellu Srinivas Yadav with an impressive majority, has changed its strategy in the wake of recent Election Commission's clarification regarding the model code of conduct. Though TRS leaders, including Minister T Harish Rao, inspected the possible venue for the proposed public meeting of KCR at Penchikalpet in neighbouring Husnabad constituency, they

It was believed that KCR would address a public meeting on October 26 or 27 but all plans have gone awry now

are now in favour of organising roadshows for at least two days. It was believed that KCR would address a public meeting on October 26 or 27. However, after the EC made it clear that political activities related to the by-election should not be held in neigh-

bouring districts or constituencies, the Chief Minister held a teleconference with Ministers Harish Rao, Gangula Kamalakar and Koppula Eshwar, Planning Board Vice-Chairman B Vinod Kumar, TRS candidate Gellu Srinivas Yadav, MLAs and other leaders on Friday. Apparently, the Ministers suggested to the Chief Minister to hold roadshows on October 26 and 27 in Huzurabad constituency itself and he responded positively. The Ministers and local leaders would finalise the schedule for the roadshows and send it to the Chief Minister for his approval.

KRMB violating Bachawat Award...

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Until the KWDT-II (Brijesh Kumar Tribunal) water allocations came into effect, the States would have to stick to the KWDT-I Award for water allocations. According to the 'Rule Curves', Andhra Pradesh could only utilise 34 tmc ft of water from Srisaillam. However, in the last seven years - from 2014-15 onwards, the average utilisation of water by AP was clearly in violation of the Award and several times more than the permitted allocation, it said. Andhra Pradesh has been diverting Srisaillam water from Pothireddypadu Head

Regulator, Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi to outside the Krishna basin despite objections from Telangana and it was now trying to regularise that illegal diversion, the letter said. There is no catchment area for Nagarjuna Sagar and water from Srisaillam is released to fill NSP which would meet the requirements of agriculture, industry and drinking water requirements of both the States. Srisaillam is the only water source for NSP and both the projects should have an integrated Rule Curve. As per the Award, the two reservoirs should have stipulations for the carry over storage in the

Rule Curves, Rajat Kumar said in his letter. The gazette notification in principle came into effect from October 14 but unless the Telangana government formally agrees and issues a GO handing over the projects, the Board cannot take them over. In the meantime, the Board said that it would consider this as a transition period and would be focusing on capacity building and other aspects. The KRMB earlier received complaints from both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh regarding utilisation of Krishna waters. While AP complained about power generation

from Srisaillam, Telangana clarified many a time that Srisaillam was basically a hydro-electric power station and Rule Curves in respect of Srisaillam reservoir restrict consumptive use by AP only to 34 tmc ft which is the maximum drawal that could be permitted as per inter-State agreement and Planning Commission's approval, Rajat Kumar reiterated in his letter. Telangana has been representing the Centre and Apex Council for re-allocation of Krishna waters between the two States in 50:50 ratio instead of the present 66:34 between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

TS growth has increased urban areas: Arvind

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Sunil Sharma said that the State government was committed to encourage generation of renewable energy, especially solar energy, to augment conventional energy sources like thermal and hydel projects as power is key to the growth of any nation state. Sunil Sharma said that of the 17,250 MW of power generated in the State, the renewable power sources account for 4,445 MW, among the highest in the

country'. HYSEA Infrastructure Forum organises the annual event which features thought leaders and policymakers who share their expertise about future evolution of smart and sustainable infrastructure, specific to IT/ITES Industry. This year the theme of the event was 'A Quest for Legacy: The Nextgen Infra' with focus on Smart Mobility, Energy and Workplace. CBRE was the exclusive knowledge partner for the

submit this year. Earlier, welcoming the gathering, HYSEA president Bharani Aroll said, "HYSEA has been promoting many sustainability related programmes in the city and green energy is one of the key campaigns that it is driving through HYSEA Infrastructure Forum. We have had discussions with the government of Telangana and we proposed to enter into a MOU to promote usage of green power and reduce carbon footprint."

Hyderabad expected to add 30 mn sq ft office space in 3 years

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The rising office demand in Hyderabad saw a huge influx of supply, especially along the IT corridor to an extent that the investment-grade office stock of the city to double from 2016 and cross 90 million sq. ft. by the end of Q3 2021.

Continuing the momentum, Hyderabad is expected to add about 30-35 million sq ft of investment-grade business parks over the next three years, according to a report by CBRE and HYSEA on 'The Next Normal: Reimagining Hyderabad's Real Estate'. The white paper covers

topics that have become critical for the industry post-pandemic, like the emergence of new work models, initiatives reinforcing Hyderabad's future growth, environmental, social and governance practices, and future implications for occupiers and investors in the office sector.

Commenting on the announcement, Anshuman Magazine, Chairman, India and South-East Asia, Middle East and Africa, CBRE, stated, "Hyderabad's policy initiatives along with efficient urban infrastructure are expected to further aid the overall development of the region."

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T'gana nurtures industry, says KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Stating that the private sector is well taken care of in the State, Industries Minister KT Rama Rao on Friday said that the Telangana government has been setting new benchmarks in policymaking and ensuring that the industry receives the much needed support.

Addressing the PAFI's 8th National Forum-2021, KTR said, "Telangana is welcoming investments of many kinds and we believe that as a State we have been setting new benchmarks in policymaking. Telangana has ensured that wealth creators, entrepreneurs and employment generators from the private sector feel respected and at home and are treated as partners and not necessarily as investors."

To facilitate investments, the State Government has appointed young professionals who guide the investors with the



policies and infrastructure in a very professional manner. These young professionals work under the banner 'Invest Telangana' which was set up immediately after the formation of Telangana State seven years ago, said KTR.

"In the pursuit of new investors, states often over-

look the existing investors. And that's where Telangana does best.

Because we know that when you take care of existing investors, they become your biggest brand ambassadors," the Minister said.

"When you set down processes and build institutions

that outlive individuals and perceptions, it brings in predictability, comfort and policy continuity," he said.

"More than 24 percent of the investments worth around \$32 billion the State attracted in the last seven years have come from existing investors," the Minister said.

Referring to TSIPASS, he said, "We (Telangana) are the most progressive State in the country. Our policy allows self-certification and also promises 15-day clearances by statute. And if we don't deliver under the 15-day window, on the 16th day, it's deemed approved." Telangana has a large land bank of about 2,00,000 acres of industrial land available with the TSII, KTR added.

He stated that there is uninterrupted high quality power in the State and Telangana is also the second largest renewable energy producer in the coun-

try. The Minister highlighted the Telangana Academy for Skill and Knowledge (TASK) and stated that the Government would train people at its own cost, transforming them into quality human resources and also provide major employment opportunities to the locals.

The Telangana Government is also offering additional incentives to the industries which recruit local people, he said. KTR said that the State Government has been giving top 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.

FICCI Secretary General Dilip Chenoj and Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan were also present at the session.

Products made by jail inmates draw crowd at 'Mini Numaish'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Prisons Department is selling products made by prisoners, which consist of all home needs, through an outlet named 'My Nation' at Numaish, All India Industrial Exhibition. The outlet will sell articles such as steel almirahs, stools, bed sheets, towels, doormats, phenyl, acid, bakery items and kids woolen garments.

This outlet comes as a major boost to all the inmates as the learned skill helps them to lead a decent living once released from prison.

Mahender, a warden from the Cheralpally Central Prison said, "We participate in Numaish every year, exhibit the products made by the prisoners in Telangana jails. We have a lot of demand for our products in this exhibition. We also get orders from the State government of Telangana. The reason why we get many orders is that we maintain the best quality in the market."

Mahender further said that they have permanent customers who come every year to buy the products made by the jail department.



"We make prisoners learn the skill with the help of instructors so that when they go out of the prison, they will be skilled. They are also paid when an item is sold," he said.

He added that the department has around 10 stalls across Telangana. Ellaiah, who is a Cheralpally jail prisoner said, "I am in the open jail for about 4 years now and working here. In the jail,

I weave cloths and make furniture items. The money I get from creating items, I use it for my personal purposes."

Vittal, a customer from Musheerabad says that the products made here are handmade and the material used is of good quality. "They weave the products with their own hands and that is why we come here every year to buy products," Vittal said. He added that when these products are bought, it indirectly helps the prisoners.

Samantha receives legal blow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

South India's most happening actress Samantha Ruth Prabhu, who recently filed defamation cases against a couple of YouTube channels and an individual for streaming malignant content about her, has apparently received a legal blow.

Samantha had filed legal cases, which come under Kukatpally court in Hyderabad. After listening to her side of the case, the court



apparently ordered that the actress could simply seek an

apology from her opponents, rather than filing defamation cases.

"The actress can seek a word of apology from the content owners of the concerned YouTube channels, individuals and media outlets, rather than filing defamation cases on them," the court suggested, as per reports from IANS.

The court went on to school the actress and apparently indicated that celebrities share personal details on public domain

and then file defamation suits. "In court, everyone is equal before the law. There is no sense of some being high and others being low. We will hear Samantha's case as per the procedure," the court concluded.

Samantha's announcement about her divorce from Naga Chaitanya had invited unwanted comments and speculation about their relationship, and some channels went forward and linked her up with random colleagues.

Missing 6-yr-old boy found dead

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A six-year-old boy, who had gone missing from his house in Rajendranagar, was found dead in a lake on Friday, police said.

The body of Anvesh, a Class 2 student of a private school, was recovered from a lake near his house in Hyderguda under the limits of Rajendranagar police station of Cyberabad police commissionerate.

The police suspect that he accidentally fell into the lake and drowned. They shifted the body to government-run Osmania General Hospital for autopsy and took up the investigation.

According to the boy's parents, he had gone out to play in the afternoon on Thursday and when he did not return home till the evening they searched for him in the area but found no trace of him.

They subsequently lodged a missing complaint on Thursday with the police, which swung into action.

The family stays on the four floor of an apartment building in Sirimalle Colony. They suspected that somebody might have kidnapped the child when he came downstairs.

Police tried to trace the child by scanning footage from CCTV cameras in the area.

However, the child's body was found in a lake on Friday morning. A police officer said they were investigating the case.

Daughter, her boyfriend held for woman's murder

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rajendranagar Police on Friday, arrested two persons, a daughter and her partner, who are accused of killing her own mother.

The arrested persons have been identified as Muddangula Ram Kumar, 19, a resident of Chintalmet, Rajendranagar and Gogula Nandini, 20. Nandini is the youngest of three daughters of Gogula Yadaiah and Yadamma.

According to the police, Ram Kumar is a distant relative of the family and after he had gotten close to Nandini, he told her that he loved her and wanted to marry her. However, Yadaiah and Yadamma opposed the alliance and reprimanded the duo.

Realizing that they could not be together with Yadamma in the way, the accused decided to kill her to continue their relationship.

When Yadamma was alone in the house, the duo had a heated argument with her, following which, they took a chunni and used it to strangle Yadamma to death.

Following a complaint from Yadaiah, the Police booked a case and began an investigation. While the duo feigned innocence, based on suspicion, they were picked up on Thursday and during interrogation, confessed to the crime.

The chunni that was used to kill the woman was recovered while the accused were arrested and produced before a court for judicial remand.

State registers 193 new Covid cases, 1 death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana on Friday recorded 193 fresh Covid cases, taking the tally to 6, 69,932, while the death toll rose to 3,944 with one more death.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation accounted for the highest number of cases with 64 followed by Karimnagar with 20, a state government bulletin said, providing details during the last 24 hours ending 5.30 PM on Friday.

With 196 people being cured, total recoveries are at 6,62,025, leaving 3,963 active cases. Over 42,000 samples were tested today and cumulatively, over 2.72 crore samples have been tested.

Ryot killed as lorry hits bike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A farmer was killed by a rashly driven tipper lorry in a road mishap that was reported at Keesara on Friday.

The deceased person was identified as S Ram Reddy, 71, a resident of Keesara.

According to the police, Reddy was proceeding to Nagaram from Beeramguda on his two-wheeler when a lorry crashed into his bike from the rear. Due to the impact of the crash, Reddy fell on the road and died on the spot.

Passersby informed the police who arrived at the spot. The body was sent for post mortem examination. Based on a complaint from the deceased person's son, the Police registered a case under section 304 A (Death by negligence) of the IPC and are investigating the incident.

Prakash Raj alleges foul play, political involvement in polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor Prakash Raj, who was defeated by Vishnu Manchu in the recent elections of the Movie Artists Association (MAA), has alleged foul play by the Manchu family in the elections.

He also suggests that there was political involvement in the way the elections were held.

In his recent tweets, Prakash Raj had alleged that a representative of Andhra Pradesh's ruling party - the YSRCP was present at the MAA elections, who had helped Vishnu's panel to mislead everyone during the elections. Prakash Raj went further and questioned the Election Officer Krishna Mohan, on why he has been

MAA ELECTIONS



silent on the happenings. "#MaaElections 2021 .. dear Election officer Krishna mohan garu .. this is just the beginning.. give us the CC footage.. we will let the world know what happened.. how the elections were conducted #justasking", Prakash Raj's recent tweet reads.

"We already appealed for the CCTV footage from the voting

booth. You fail to give us an explanation, sir. Here are proofs that YSRCP representative, Samba Siva Rao was there at the booth on the day of MAA elections. We need answers", Prakash Raj said.

Prakash Raj also shared the details regarding the criminal charges filed on Samba Siva Rao earlier. Prakash Raj questions Manchu Mohan Babu and Manchu Vishnu, who were spotted with him at the polling booth on the day of elections.

Ever since the topic of MAA elections began, Prakash Raj and his panel members had issues with the members of Vishnu's panel.

As Prakash Raj felt that the elections were compromised, he had questioned the poll officials earlier.



'Bathukamma' fete to be screened on Burj Khalifa

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A special show on Telangana's floral festival Bathukamma will be screened on Dubai's Burj Khalifa at 9.40 PM and at 10.40 pm IST on Saturday. MLC Kalvakuntla Kavitha led Telangana Jagruthi takes the Bathukamma festival celebrations global by featuring it on the Burj Khalifa.

All arrangements are in place to showcase Telangana's Bathukamma festival to different people across the world. Elected public representatives from the State, Telangana Jagruthi members and NRIs of Telangana origin are expected to participate in the event.

UAE Government officials and Industrialists are also expected to attend the event.



ADDING ART TO STREET

The Cyber Towers flyover has already started to dazzle with myriad colours. Its beautification has gathered momentum ahead of Telangana Rashtira Samithi (TRS) plenary. Existing murals which were set up on the flyover for the Convention of Biological Diversity (CBD) and the Conference of the Parties (COP) 11 Summit in the year 2012, but were never removed or repainted. They are now finally being refurbished to reflect the new theme.

Trafficked minor girl rescued in two hours

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Kolkata girl was rescued by the Hyderabad Police on Friday after the Telangana Police was informed by the West Bengal Police about her through the Child Helpline.

A 17-year-old girl was trafficked by an accused named Santu Paramanik on October 19. A complaint was registered at the Child Help Line regarding this. They passed on the information to the Telangana Police as per technical data obtained through tracking the mobile phone of the suspect.

The Telangana Police formed a special team in the women safety wing. Coordinating with the Kolkata Police, the team searched for the girl and found her with the accused at Chikkadpally. They rescued the girl and sent her back to Kolkata.

The woman suspect was arrested and handed over at the Chikkadpally Police Station. The team used technical means to trace the trafficked child coordinating with the Kolkata Police. The local cops found the girl within two hours.



Domestic violence cases increase, but counselling remains main remedy

DAVE BENNETT SILVERY ■ HYDERABAD

Despite the police's efforts, the number of domestic violence cases being reported in the city are at a constant rate with at least 60 cases being reported in the tri-commissionerate limits of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda every month.

A rise in the number of domestic violence cases was seen since last year. Majorly attributed to the lockdown which forced people indoors, the increase in number is also a positive indicator that women are now willing to speak up and report instead of being silent

victims. However, Police seem to follow the same course of action for every case that was reported.

In an incident from KPHB last month, an estranged husband had set ablaze both of his wife's parents. His wife, who noticed the bottle of kerosene in his hand, locked herself in the bedroom. The man then poured kerosene on his in-laws and set them ablaze. Following a complaint, the man was arrested. Preliminary investigation into the incident revealed that the woman had filed a harassment case against the man and the couple had sought separation two years ago.

However, owing to the tardy and lengthy judicial process, the matter was still in court and the couple were undergoing court ordered counselling.

When a domestic violence case is reported to the police authorities, irrespective of the severity of the case, the case is referred to the SHE teams or to the BHAROSA centres who deal with the case on a more slow approach. The couples in dispute are recommended to undergo counselling sessions with the help of professionals and then are made to reconcile.

While officials tend to follow the same steps for almost every case, it is a matter of concern



when the same is being done for serious offences including when section 498a (dowry harassment) of the Indian

Penal Code (IPC) is also involved. In another case reported at Chilkalguda, despite the woman filing a

case under section 498a, the husband was not arrested or at the least, detained. The couple were simply sent to the court and then the court ordered counselling while the wife continued to face harassment from him. According to the section, the accused should be arrested immediately. However, contrary to the law, officials try to reconcile them irrespective of their individual interests. "Is this done to increase the stats of the department?" asked a victim while speaking to The Pioneer.

Despite Telangana reporting a dip in crime reported against women according to the

National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data for 2020, the State still topped the list among southern States by recording the highest number of atrocities against women and in the overall list, Telangana is among the top 10 States with the highest number of crimes against women.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Rashmi Singh, a private psychologist, attributed the rise in reporting of cases to women being encouraged to come forward and take a stand. "The Police have done a good job of encouraging women to come forward and complain through various means like whatsapp,

dial 100, walk-ins, etc. However, more needs to be done and strict action needs to be taken against the accused to ensure that women can trust officials more" said Rashmi. While each case has to be dealt with in a unique manner, counselling is not always the go-to solution, added the psychologist.

In its bid to add on to women's safety, the Telangana Police are on the verge of launching an exclusive call centre dedicated to women's grievances. However, a lot has to be done to improve the process in which cases are dealt with.

Raids fail to check ganja cultivation

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

In spite of the police seizing ganja from peddlers, ganja cultivation is going on in the remote parts of undivided Medak district bordering Maharashtra and Karnataka where it has good demand. Exploiting the helplessness of farmers, ganja smugglers and middlemen have been encouraging farmers to cultivate ganja along with crops like maize, red gram and cotton. The remote villages and tribal hamlets of Narayankhed, Zaheerabad and the Andole constituencies of Sangareddy district and Regode, Alladurg and Chilipichched mandals of Medak district have become favourite places for ganja cultivation. According to reports, the farmer is paid between Rs



2,000 and 3,000 per kg of harvested ganja leaves, while the farmer gets paid Rs 5,000 to 6,000 per kg to cultivate the crop. On October 20, Excise officials apprehended three youths for transporting ganja. Similarly, a youth was arrested while selling ganja on the

outskirts of Gangapur on the Medak-Ramayampeta Main Road. Earlier, on July 26, three persons were nabbed and 350 grams of ganja was recovered from them. On August 13, 301 grams of ganja was seized from a person. Annually, Excise officials destroy ganja

plants worth several crores, yet the illegal cultivation and smuggling of ganja is going on. Some traders, before the kharif season, identify remote villages and tribal hamlets for the cultivation of ganja and enter into an understanding with farmers to raise ganja as an inter-crop in maize, cotton and red gram fields. Besides Maharashtra and Karnataka, the narcotic substance enjoys good demand in cities like Hyderabad. Ganja is finding its way into these markets through the agents of smugglers and is sold for Rs 4,000-6,000 a kg. The State government of Telangana has threatened to stop benefits from the Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bima schemes to those who cultivate ganja, which has become the bane of youth. Joint raids by

the Excise and police have seen no let up in the situation. The peddlers find a huge market among youth and industrial workers. Their modus operandi is to sell ganja in small packets through paan shops. Some have been conducting their business through WhatsApp groups. Excise officials have identified that the Peddagutta Thanda in Kamareddy district is supplying ganja to Medak district. Medak district Excise Superintendent M A Razak said the department is keeping tabs on ganja cultivation and sales as per the CM's directions. The department is keeping a watch on habitual criminals and their activities. He appealed to the people to tip off about ganja cultivation and sale by calling 9440902738.

'We won't leave land-grabbers'

Our focus is on enabling people to easily access municipal services at all levels. The main aim is overall development of urban local bodies, including greenery and beautification, under the Pattana Pragathi programme launched by the state government. If any new unauthorised constructions on government lands are observed or brought to our notice, the task force will take action, says Abhilasha Abhinav, Additional Collector (local bodies) Mahabubabad District, in an interview to *The Pioneer's* correspondent Srinivas Gundooji. She has made a mark as an efficient administrator in just two months. She says *The Pioneer* is presenting quality news and information. The organisation is maintaining media values in presenting news, articles, and special stories in the right perspective.

What steps are being taken to develop municipalities?

People need a lot of municipal services in their daily life, be it for birth certificate, sanitation, drinking water, or other requirements. Our aim is to make it easy for citizens to access municipal services at all level. We are keen on the overall development of urban local bodies, including greenery and beautification, under the Pattana Pragathi programme launched by the state government.

People who have been residing in assigned lands in the district for 10-20 years fear demolition of their houses by the state government. Could you clarify the government position on this?

The district task force, formed with members of Municipal, Police, Revenue and R & B staffers, will take action on any new unauthorised constructions in assigned, government lands in the district. It is very clear that if any new unauthorised constructions are observed in government lands, action will be taken by the task force.

It is alleged that politicians have grabbed a total of 4,000 acres in the district headquarters. Why is the government not taking action against such land-grabbers?

Land survey is conducted every year. If we ourselves come across cases of land-grabbing, we take action. If any individual complains about



the municipality have been sanitized and which ones have not been sanitized, so as to ensure complete sanitation. We need to beautify the Nizam cheruvu in Mahabubabad. Two to three lakes will be improved and beautified. We are in the process of identifying some space for building badminton and volleyball courts.

Why has Mission Bhageeratha scheme not provided taps so far in some of the suburban colonies? What are you going to do about this?

The work is under progress. Within a short period, the rest of the works will be completed and water is sure to reach those suburban colonies too.

What struggles have you faced to reach this position? What is your advice to Civil Services aspirants, especially girls?

I faced many struggles, but I really loved to face them because of my passion to become an IAS officer. Every individual who wants to become an IAS officer or anything else should relentlessly pursue their passion. Only then they will have the energy to achieve success in their chosen field. I strongly believe that no coaching centre is required for UPSC. Civil Services aspirants can get the information they require from the library, internet and the like. People feel that UPSC exam is tough. But in reality it is easy if preparation goes well in a proper manner.

Police arrest 2 ganja peddlers

PNS ■ WARANGAL

In a joint operation, the Task Force sleuths and Inthezargunj Police arrested two inter-state drug peddlers and seized 32 kilograms of dry ganja worth Rs 3.20 lakh on Friday. The accused persons were identified as D Mani Kumar, 21, and B Bichiya, 34, both residents of Chennaraopet village in the Warangal. According to police, a woman identified as Maheshwari procures ganja at agency area in Visakhapatnam and hands over to the accused, who transports ganja in train and supply it to peddlers for double price in Maharashtra. Following a tip-off, the Task Force sleuths and Inthezargunj Police nabbed the accused persons at Warangal railway station and seized the contraband. The police arrested two persons and the women is absconding, said Warangal CP Dr Tarun Joshi.

Drone technology to identify illegal hemp cultivation in TS

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

On directions from Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and Director General of Police Mahender Reddy, the Ramagundam Police Commissioner S Chandrasekhar Reddy asked district police officials to deal with the drug smugglers with a heavy hand. He asked the police officials to identify ganja cultivation in rural areas using drone technology.

Addressing the officials of the commissionerate and the officials of Komrum Bheem Asifabad through zoom technology on Friday, he said that Peddapalli, Mancherial, Komrumbheem Asifabad districts, besides the Ramagundam commissionerate, to take steps the places free from ganja and other narcotics. He asked the officials to keep a strict vigil on users, smugglers and producers of narcotics and invoke the pro-



visions of PD Act against them and get tough with them. The CP expressed concern over the future citizens becoming addicted to ganja, drugs, gambling and committing crimes not knowing what they are doing.

Right from home guard to the top official in the police department should take a serious view of the narcotics problem. He asked the police to create a network in villages to keep tabs on those who indulge in anti-social activities. The police officials should

visit villages under their jurisdiction to find out the life style of the youth, their habits.

If anyone is found growing ganja plants either at their home or in fields should be arrested under the PD Act. District Collector is authorised to issue orders to take back the assigned lands if the beneficiaries of the land are found raising Ganja plants, he said adding that if ganja plants were found in agricultural lands the land owner would not get benefit under Rythu Bandhu.

Call for strict action against drug peddlers

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Superintendent of Police Vishnu S Warriar has called for strong action to crush the drug mafia and suggested strengthening the police information network for that. He asked the police to check vehicles crossing the inter-state border.

With focus on nabbing ganja peddlers, he wanted the police to maintain cordial ties with the public. He asked the police to deploy dogs to detect narcotic drugs. The Superintendent of Police also called for invoking the PD Act against ganja smugglers and to ensure their speedy trial.

Addressing police officials in the district through video conference, he asked officials to take strong action against anti-social elements and to ensure that habitual criminals who peddle ganja are punished. He asked cops to show no leniency towards ganja smugglers whatever their position might be.



Minor fire breaks out in ATM kiosk

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Fire broke out in a State Bank of India automated teller machine (ATM) kiosk in the district's Sadasivapeta town on Thursday night.

However, the Blue Colts police on duty near the ATM kiosk got the flames doused immediately with the help of the fire brigade.

The SBI's Branch Manager thanked the Blue Colts for saving the Rs 15 lakh stored in the ATM from the fire.

Gang behind Rs 52 lakh ATM fraud in TS busted

PNS ■ MAHABUBABAD

Police in Telangana's Mahabubabad district on Friday arrested five employees of a cash management firm for a Rs 52 lakh fraud and for trying to cover up the crime by setting an ATM ablaze.

The police busted the gang during the investigation into the fire in Axis Bank ATM. The accused had made the officials believe that the money was gutted in the fire.

The police, who conducted an investigation, found that the accused staged a drama to make officials believe that the cash was burnt in the fire. The incident had occurred last week in Mahabubabad town.

The investigations revealed that the accused had hired a person to set the ATM afire and promised to pay him Rs 2 lakh.

Police found involvement of an eight-member gang in the case. Five of them were arrested while search was on for three other accused.

Police also recovered Rs 6.70 lakh cash from the accused. Documents of two plots worth Rs 23 lakh were also seized from them.

A police officer said the accused while loading cash in ATMs were keeping some money with them. Main accused Nagarjuna alone was involved in swindling Rs 42 lakh during the last few weeks.

Harish: Centre gave nothing for welfare schemes in state

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

There is no Central contribution in the TRS Government's schemes for the poor, Finance Minister T Harish Rao said here Friday. He added that the BJP is spreading lies in Huzurabad to mislead the public.

Addressing a press conference here, he asked the BJP to seek votes by explaining to the people what the BJP would do for them if it wins in Huzurabad. Spreading lies instead of that is butchering democracy, he said.

Turning the tables on the BJP, he sought to know from the Modi Government how much black money it had recovered and how much of it has been deposited in the bank accounts of the public. The BJP did not create even two lakh jobs per annum even though it promised two crore jobs, Harish said.

The Girijan University, the integral railway coach factory and the steel plant at Bayyaram in Telangana promised in the States' Reorganisation Act-2014 is yet to materialise, he



said. While in the TRS, Eatala Rajender had accused the BJP of being anti-farmer, but after joining the party he is praising it to the sky, he said.

As Health Minister, Rajender had accused the BJP of not supplying medicines to treat Covid patients and had also claimed that there was no supply of ventilators and PPE kits, but now he says that there is no greater party than the BJP, Harish Rao said.

The Centre earned Rs 3,72,970 crore as tax from petroleum products in 2020-21, against the Rs 99,068 crore in 2014-15, he said, adding that

the total revenue of the BJP Government in the last seven years from petroleum products is over Rs 10 lakh crore.

Quoting Eatala Rajender's statement that the Centre had not given even Re 1 as contribution to the KCR kit when he was Finance and Health minister, Harish said he had now changed tack saying that the Centre's contribution to each kit was Rs 5,000.

Contrary to the claims of Eatala Rajender, Rs 25.69 crore has been credited in the bank accounts of SHG women towards interest-free loans, he said.



Minister hands over land to TSIIIC for processing zone

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Turning a new leaf in the development of Mahabubnagar district, the Minister for Excise, Dr V Srinivas Goud, and Energy Minister G. Jagadishwar Reddy handed over land identified to set up a food processing zone to the Telangana State Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation (TSIIIC).

TSIIIC Zone Manager D. Ravi was handed over the land documents on Friday to kick off the food processing zone development works.

The food processing zone will be located in Hanwada revenue limits near Mahabubnagar. Rice mills, godowns, agriculture and

allied processing units will also be set in the zone.

The area under paddy cultivation has increased enormously during the past four years and the yield from other crops too has increased significantly. Besides paddy cultivation, farmers are now inclined to take up the cultivation of many new crops too, Dr Goud said. The government has set up Rythu Vedikas to sensitise farmers on new methods of cultivation and new farming technologies, Dr Goud said.

The food processing zone will also help increase the area of cultivation under other crops too. It will provide more jobs to youth and pave the way for the development of allied industries.

DC: Model Code of Conduct will be in force in entire Karimnagar

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

District Collector RV Karnan has warned the representatives of Huzurabad by-election contestants and independent candidates that the model code of conduct will be in force in the entire Karimnagar district if the contestants are found campaigning even in neighbouring district it would be added to their election expenses.

Polling on October 30 begins at 7 am and concludes by 7 pm. Those who are standing in queue before 7 pm will be given tokens and allowed to exercise their right to vote, he said. Polling agents should reach



polling booths by 6 am on the day of polling, he said asking all to adhere to Covid rules.

At the end of the polling, the EVMs would be sent along with proper security to the reception centre in Karimnagar, he said asking the polling agents to come to the reception centre. In their presence, the EVMs should be stored in strong rooms. All

contestants, their agents and counting agents should have received two doses of the vaccine, he said.

Those who have received only single dose would be allowed to take part in the polling process if they submit Covid negative report from the RT-PCR tests 72 hours prior to the polling and counting process. If they did not receive at least one dose of the vaccine, if the candidate or election agent or driver or counting agent would be allowed for polling and counting provided they submit RT-PCR report to authorities 48 hours prior to the polling or counting.

'Controversial' appointments in TU cancelled

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

As heated arguments were witnessed in Executive Committee Members' Meeting of Telangana University (TU) over the irregular appointments made by the former Vice-Chancellor, the appointments made via outsourcing agencies have been cancelled.

At the meeting held in city, Commissioner of Collegiate Education & Technical Education Naveen Mittal and the EC members of TU raised objections and condemned the indifferent attitude of former Vice-Chancellor Prof. Sambaiah, who sent wrong signals into society by making appointments via outsourcing agencies.

Forest and Revenue officials told to work in coordination

PNS ■ MULUGU

Mulugu, Bhupalapally, Warangal and Mahabubabad districts have more forests, she said, seeking information about the tribes living there. The district administrative machinery should work sincerely to prevent encroachment of forests. She asked the district administrative machinery to work responsibly to enforce government orders.

She sought information about the extent of title deeds given under the ROFR Act to Podu cultivators and how many had benefited and how many more should be given title deeds. The CM is thinking of ways to render justice to Podu cultivators, she said.

The government has asked Agriculture Department officials to furnish details of those who derive benefits from the two schemes. Accordingly, the officials have been going about the villages to gather details. The officials will prepare a list of those who are not eligible to seek benefits from one of the schemes and submit it to the government for action.

Across the state, at least over 40,000 are not eligible to get benefits under one of the two schemes. Many have been availing benefits under the

Choose between Aasara pensions and Rythu Bima: Government to beneficiaries

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

In a unilateral decision, the state government is learnt to have asked people to choose between Aasara pensions and Rythu Bima scheme.

The government has asked Agriculture Department officials to furnish details of those who derive benefits from the two schemes. Accordingly, the officials have been going about the villages to gather details. The officials will prepare a list of those who are not eligible to seek benefits from one of the schemes and submit it to the government for action.

Across the state, at least over 40,000 are not eligible to get benefits under one of the two schemes. Many have been availing benefits under the



two schemes citing age of 60 in Aadhaar card and 59 in voter ID card, causing a severe dent to the state exchequer.

Speaking about the enumeration, the Agriculture Department officials said that they have got orders to submit reports from the field-level about those who receive benefits under the two schemes. They said that those who receive Aasara pensions are not

eligible to get benefits under Rythu Bima.

However, toddy tappers, weavers, widows, physically-challenged persons and single women are exempted from the survey.

Those who receive benefits under Rythu Bima have reduced their age to 57 and applied for Aasara pensions. They are worried over the fate of their applications.

All set for Inter exams

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

All arrangements have been made to conduct intermediate first year examinations from October 25 at 167 examination centres.

A first-aid centres with drugs and sanitisers have been provided at examination centres, which are fitted with CCTV cameras.

The examination centres will be sanitised one hour prior to the exam and one hour after the examination. Covid protocol will be strictly followed at all the examination centres. The examination will be held from 9 am to 12 noon daily. The education department has asked the RTC to run special buses to exam centres. The district administration has ordered closure of photocopy centres near the examination halls.

Arrangements in place for PECET

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Mahatma Gandhi University (MGU) officials have made all arrangements for the Telangana Physical Education Common Entrance Test (TSPECET) to be conducted for admissions to DPED and BPED courses.

As many as 5,054 candidates across the state have applied to take part in physical events. As of Friday evening, 4,479 hall tickets had been downloaded, of which 1,855 were for DPED and 2,624 for BPED.

While 575 candidates are yet to download their hall tickets.

INDIA CORNER

Gujarat CM launches 7th phase of Seva Setu to mark Shah's birthday

Gujarat Chief Minister Bhupendra Patel on Friday launched the seventh phase of the state-wide Seva Setu programme from a village near Ahmedabad on the occasion of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's birthday. The programme was organised in Manipur village of Sanand taluka in Shah's constituency to mark his 57th birthday. The chief minister also visited a residential school and a girls' hostel for poor children in Sanand taluka and celebrated Shah's birthday with students, an official release stated. Under the Seva Setu programme, locals get documents and certificates, such as income certificates, widow pension, caste certificates and duplicate ration cards, at their doorstep without having to visit government offices. Instead of giving a speech, Patel distributed certificates and other documents to some of the beneficiaries and interacted with them to understand their issues, the release stated. Patel later reached Dadagram Ashram School, a trust-run residential school for poor children, near Sanand town to celebrate Shah's birthday with them.



'Punjab govt has not compensated cotton farmers hit by pink bollworm'

AP leader Raghav Chadha alleged on Friday that Punjab Chief Minister Charanjit Singh Channi was indulging in just photo opportunities and that his government has failed to fulfil the promise of compensating the farmers whose cotton crop was destroyed due to pink bollworm infestation. "Channi believes in lights, camera, but no action," he said. Cotton crop on more than one lakh hectare land has been destroyed due to the pest attack, Chadha, who is the Aam Aadmi Party's Punjab co-in-charge, told a news conference here. Chadha said that Channi had nearly a month ago met the affected farmers in Bathinda region and promised them that the state government would compensate them for the huge damage caused to the cotton crop due to the pest attack. The chief minister did not honour his promise to compensate even those farmers with whom he got pictures clicked, which were later used by the government for publicity purposes across the state to give an impression that the present dispensation was farmer-friendly, the AAP leader alleged. During the conference, Chadha repeatedly referred to Channi as a "dramebaaz chief minister" who only likes the camera glare and the limelight without delivering on ground.



AASU stages protest against fuel price hike in Assam

The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) staged a 'satyagraha' across the state on Friday in protest against the rising prices of petrol, diesel, LPG and essential commodities. Holding banners, placards and cut-outs of LPG cylinders, members of AASU raised slogans, seeking measures to arrest the spiralling prices of essential goods. AASU chief adviser Dr Samujjal Bhattacharjee, during the protest outside the organisation's headquarters in Guwahati, told reporters, "Both Assam and central governments have completely failed to control price rise. There is a food, civil supplies and consumer affairs department, which is making no effort to halt surge in prices, despite knowing that citizens are getting badly affected." All sections of people are suffering due to this steep price hike of LPG, petrol and diesel "but the government is not concerned", the AASU chief adviser claimed. "The students' union had no option but to come out on the streets to observe 'satyagraha' and register protest against the anti-people attitude of the government," he added. During the day, the outfit held similar agitations in all district headquarters.



Over 104.5 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses provided to states, UTs: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 104.5 crore COVID-19 vaccine doses have been provided to states and union territories so far, the Union health ministry said on Friday.

Over 11.65 crore balance and unutilised vaccine doses still available with states/UTs, it said.

The vaccination drive has been ramped up through availability of more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to states and UTs for enabling better planning by them, and streamlining the vaccine supply chain, the ministry said.

A total of 1,04,58,46,415 vaccine doses have been provided to states and union territories so far through the government of India (free of cost channel) and through direct state procurement category, the ministry said.

SIT chief probing Lakhimpur Kheri violence transferred

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Friday transferred DIG Upendra Kumar Agarwal, heading the SIT probing into the Lakhimpur Kheri violence, to Gonda but will continue to supervise the investigation.

While transferring Agarwal to Gonda from the UP PHQ, the state police headquarters made it clear that it was a routine exercise and he will continue to head the Special Investigation Team set up to probe into the October 3 Lakhimpur Kheri violence in which eight people, including four farmers, were killed.

Agarwal is a 2005-batch IPS officer of the Uttar Pradesh cadre. As per the UP PHQ's transfer notification,

'Will continue to head probe'



five other IPS officers too have been given new postings.

When asked about Agarwal's transfer, UP Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar told PTI that he will continue to lead the

SIT team investigating the Lakhimpur Kheri case. Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Mishra's son Ashish Mishra was arrested by the SIT after 12 hours of grilling on October 9. Besides the minister's son, 10 others

too have been arrested in this case so far.

After an intensive and extensive, nine hours of questioning, DIG Agarwal had on October 9 said Ashish Mishra has been arrested for not cooperating in the investigation and making evasive replies to police queries. An FIR was lodged at the Tikonon police station on October 3 over the Lakhimpur Kheri violence. Besides, Agarwal five other officers who have been transferred include Aayodhya IG Sanjeev Gupta who has been posted as IG (Law and Order) with Allahabad IG K P Singh taking over his place in the temple town.

Singh's place as Allahabad IG was taken over by Rakesh Singh.

If govt does not want tribunals, abolish Consumer Protection Act: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expressing displeasure over delay in appointments in the Districts and State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission, the Supreme Court on Friday said if the government does not want the tribunals then it should abolish the Consumer Protection Act.

A bench comprising Justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh said it is unfortunate that the top court is being called upon to examine and see that vacancies in tribunals are filled up. "If the government does not want the tribunals then abolish the act... We are stretching our jurisdiction to see the vacancies are filled in. Normally we should not spend time on this and the posts should be filled. Unfortunately, the judiciary is called upon to see that these posts are manned. This is not a very happy situation," the bench said.

The top court was hearing a suo motu case on the inaction



of the governments in appointing president and members/staff of Districts and State Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission and inadequate infrastructure across India. The apex court in its order directed that the process of filling up vacancies in the State Consumer Commissions as per its earlier directions must not be impeded by the judgement of the Bombay High Court which had quashed certain Consumer Protection Rules.

As the hearing commenced, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appointed

as amicus curiae in the case, apprised the court about judgement passed by the Bombay High Court at Nagpur Bench quashing certain Consumer Protection Rules. He said the Centre introduced the Tribunal Reforms Act in violation of the apex court judgement in the Madras Bar Association case. Additional Solicitor General Aman Lekhi, appearing for the Centre, said the government is in the process of filing an appeal against the Bombay high court order which quashed certain provisions of Consumer Protection Rules.



'India's vax programme science-born, science-driven, science-based'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after India crossed the milestone of 100 crore vaccine doses, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said the country's vaccination programme was "science-born, science-driven and science-based", and asserted that it had been ensured there was no "VIP culture" in the drive.

In an address to the nation, the prime minister said there is confidence in the country today. From various strata of society to the economy, at every level and everywhere, there is "optimism, optimism and optimism", he said while also emphasising that people should not drop their guard during the festive season and continue with Covid appropriate behaviour such as masks.

Experts as well as national and international agencies are very positive about India's econ-

omy with Indian companies not only getting record investments but employment generation also taking place, Modi said.

Along with record investment in start-ups, record start-up unicorns are also being developed, he said.

Modi said it is a matter of pride for all that India's vaccination programme has been "science-born, science-driven and science-based".

From the development of vaccines to inoculation, science and science-based approach have been involved in all processes, he asserted.

Taking a dig at critics of his government, the prime minister recalled that some people had asked how the 'taali-thaali' initiative and lighting of 'diyas' at the start of the pandemic would help eradicate the virus. The initiatives, he stressed, were a reflection of people's participation and unity.

Govt indulging in doublespeak over 'Made in India' slogan: Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday accused the government of doublespeak over the 'Made in India' slogan, which he dubbed as a mere 'jumla' (rhetoric).

His remarks came after Foreign Secretary Harsh Shringla expressed concern over the growing trade deficit with China as India's trade with it grew by 49 percent in the first nine months of this year.

"The Usual Doublespeak. #MadeInIndia #Jumla," he said in a tweet.

He also tagged a media report that said the trade with



China grew by 49 percent with Shringla red-flagging the deficit.

The report said in the first nine months of this year, India's trade with China

touched USD 90 billion, an increase of 49 percent.

The trade, however, remains unbalanced with a large trade balance in favour of China, Shringla had said.

Mufti targets J&K admin over seizure of two-wheelers in Kashmir

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

PDP president Mehbooba Mufti on Friday said the seizure of a large number of bikes by police in Kashmir was a "collective punishment" and a means to "snatch" the livelihood of the youth. Ahead of Union Home Minister Amit Shah's likely visit to Kashmir this weekend, many riders have alleged that their two-wheelers were seized by police without even checking the documents and they were asked to collect their vehicles after October 26.

West Bengal's power to withhold consent to CBI probe not absolute: Centre to SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has told the Supreme Court that West Bengal's power to withhold consent to the CBI is not absolute and the probe agency is entitled to carry out investigations that are being carried out against Central government employees or have a pan-India impact. The Centre submitted an affidavit in response to a lawsuit by the West Bengal government



which alleged that the CBI is going ahead with the investigation in post-poll violence cases without securing the pre-requisite nod from the state under

Priyanka to kick off 'Pratigya Yatra' from Barabanki

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary and Uttar Pradesh in-charge Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will flag off three 'Pratigya Yatras' from Barabanki on Saturday to take to the people various resolutions adopted by the party ahead of the 2022 assembly elections. On the occasion, she will elaborate on the seven



led by former MP Pramod Tiwari, while the Barabanki-Bundelkhand route will be led by Punia and former Union minister of state Pradeep Jain Aditya.

the media here on Friday. The three yatras going in different routes -- from Barabanki to Bundelkhand, Saharanpur to Mathura and Varanasi to Rae Bareilly -- will be taken out from October 23 to November 1, he said.

The yatra on the Varanasi to Rae Bareilly route covering the Awadh region will be led by former MP Pramod Tiwari, while the Barabanki-Bundelkhand route will be led by Punia and former Union minister of state Pradeep Jain Aditya.

Uttarakhand: 2 more missing trekkers found dead, death toll reaches 7

PNS ■ UTTARKASHI (UTTARAKHAND)

Two more members of an 11-strong trekking team which had gone missing have been found dead taking the death toll to seven, while a search was underway for the remaining two, officials said here on Friday.

Two members of the team had been rescued alive on Thursday. They are injured and being treated in Harsil and Uttarkashi, an official said.

They had gone missing on a trek to Chitkul in Himachal Pradesh via Harsil in Uttarkashi.

Search and rescue teams from Uttarkashi spotted five bodies of trekkers on Thursday, while two members of the team were found dead by a rescue team in Himachal Pradesh, Uttarkashi district disaster management officer Devendra Patwal said.

A search is on for the two missing members of the team on a war footing with the help of a helicopter, Colonel Rajendra Prasad of 9 Bihar Regiment said.

The team consisting of eight trekkers -- one from Delhi and the rest from West Bengal -- and three cooks went missing on a trek to Chitkul recently.

Security forces defuse 2 suspected box-type IEDs

PNS ■ JAMMU

Security forces on Friday detected and defused two suspected box-type improvised explosive devices (IEDs) in Poonch district of Jammu and Kashmir, officials said. They said the two small boxes were detected in Bhatta Durian Forest during a joint search operation by the army and police.

The boxes were suspected to be IEDs and were destroyed in-situ, they said. This is a third instance of IEDs being detected by troops in J&K since Thursday.

APP makes case for tripartite fuel supply pact

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Association of Power Producers (APP) on Friday made a case for a tripartite fuel supply agreement among electricity generating firms, coal companies and railways to fix responsibility amid the ongoing dry fuel shortage at thermal power plants.

The suggestion was given by a delegation of APP to Union Power Minister R K Singh in a meeting on Friday.

Singh met a delegation of the Association of Power Producers (APP) on Friday to hear their concerns and suggestions on the current issues, APP said in a statement.

APP suggested the "Ministry of Power may push for a tripartite fuel supply agreement to be signed between the generators, coal companies and railways, in



order to clearly delineate responsibilities and obligations of each party and put in place an equitable penalty mechanism for all stakeholders to ensure balanced distribution of risks".

The Association also said the Union minister was in an agreement point made by APP and asked it to send in a memorandum, so that the power ministry could also write to the states and other stakeholders.

It also asked the minister to ensure adequate liquidity for the generators by way of timely payments by the power distribution companies (discoms). "With regard to the payment liquidity issues, he (the minis-

ter) urged the IPPs (independent power producers) to sit with the CPSU (central public sector undertaking) generators and come to a common agreement to start regulation of power to the defaulting States, in order to avoid the current practice of selective payments being made to certain generators," the APP stated.

The APP has also suggested providing a remedy for the current imbalanced contractual provisions for coal procurement. Under this, the generators have a stringent and unavoidable obligation of always making full payment in advance for the coal, while the coal companies and Railways have much lighter or even nil obligation to ensure that the desired quantity and quality of coal reaches the generators.

'Some broadcasters exploiting a-la-carte pricing of TV channels'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator TRAI Friday said some broadcasters are "exploiting" the freedom available for a-la-carte pricing of TV channels and warned that it will keep a "strict watch" on them and not shy away from taking action in the "larger interest" of consumers and the sector.

With an increase in TV channel subscription rates "impending", the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said in a statement that the new tariff recently announced by "these leading broadcasters" reflects their intention to raise the prices of

driver and popular channels. Driver channels include general entertainment channels (GEC) and sports channels.

The telecom regulator, however, did not name any broadcaster. "Moreover, a sustained misleading campaign is being run to create an impression that the impending price increase is due to the NTO 2.0 (new tariff order and broadcast regulations)." "It is being publicised that any/every consumer who opts top GEC channels or sports channels will end-up paying an extra amount of Rs 100," the TRAI said.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

Jab half done

The 1 billion vaccines is a big milestone but our fight against the virus is just half way through

A billion vaccinations are done in India. That is a gigantic achievement. Only two countries in the world can claim the record. The other country is China. It reached the one-billion mark in June and the two-billion mark in September. As India celebrates the billionth dose, there is also the realisation that the job is half done. Just under a billion more doses will ensure that the country's adult population gets fully vaccinated. India's eligible adults need over 1.8 billion doses. Anything less than that is unacceptable. Seventy-five per cent of India's adult population — over 707 million people — has received one dose. Seventy more days remain till December 31. Twelve million doses a day are needed to fully cover the entire adult population in this period. There could also be about 70 million "vulnerable" adults above 45 yet to get even a single dose. Next, come the children. Over 35 per cent of the population is in the group of 0-14 years. Over 41 per cent of the population accounts for children under 18. India needs 26 crore to vaccinate children in the 12-17 age group. A similar number of doses are needed for children below 12.



Amid the celebrations, a note of caution is necessary. The first issue is the supply of vaccines. Most of the billion shots have come in the last two or three months. The vaccine roll-out that began in January did not pick up pace for the first half of the year because of the short supply of vaccines and teething problems with the supply chain. The Government

needs assurance from the vaccine suppliers that the pace of supply will not slacken now. The Government wants to complete the programme by this year-end. That means the speed of vaccination has to be phenomenal. It will be a bigger logistical challenge. The Government has also to counter the usual hitches like vaccine hesitancy and vaccine complacency. Reports still come in about health workers trying to convince people, mostly in the interior rural areas, to take the vaccine. Reports also talk about people, in both urban and rural areas, being careless about taking the jabs. Thousands of people are also missing their second dose because of overcrowded vaccination centres or the centres being far away from their homes. The Government is tackling this problem by reaching vaccines to far-off places via drones. A tougher task that faces the Government is when to vaccinate the children. Emergency use authorisation has been given for some vaccines but peer-reviewed human trial reports are yet to be studied and the vaccines released for use. The biggest worry would be about vaccinated parents in the rural areas visiting the vaccination centres again for their children's sake. Also, the Government has to decide if paediatricians should be allowed to vaccinate children as well. That can speed up the process.

PICTALK



An Army personnel during a workshop, in Rajouri district

Kashmir dilemma is deeply rooted



PRAFULL GORADIA

To overcome the gulf in Kashmir, everyone should understand one another so that the Government does not keep going round the mulberry bush

A Kashmiri acquaintance recently described the situation in Kashmir as a continuation of the Indo-Pak conflict by proxy. The soft locals fear that their Valley will soon be filled with outsiders, whereas tougher Kashmiris look at the abolition of Article 370 as an opportunity to prolong the fight.

At least from the time of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan of Aligarh fame, the belief that the British dispossessed Siraj-ud-Daulah of Bengal, Tipu Sultan of Mysore and Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh, has lingered. The feeling is also that when the British Crown left India, it should have the courtesy to "return it to us". Homeland and New Medina was the cause of Partition. This was also MA Jinnah's decoy for British ears in 1946-47.

Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad firmly opposed the partition of India because in a hundred years, India would have had a Muslim majority. In 1983, a Pakistani journalist visited Tehran to interview Iran's religious dictator Ayatollah Khomeini, in connection with the celebrations around Pakistan Day, namely March 23. The interviewer's final question was: What did Khomeini *sahib* think of Qaid-e-Azam Jinnah? The Ayatollah's answer was: He was a brilliant man but could have benefited from vision. He should have been patient and his community would have gotten the whole of India, not merely its crumbs. But then, Jinnah was not a *momin* but a recently minted coin.

It is true that until 1935, Jinnah was widely called "the ambassador of Hindu-Muslim unity", a term coined by Sarojini Naidu. In his presidential address on the eve of proposing the Pakistan Resolution in 1940, Jinnah said, "We know that the history of the last 1,200 years has failed to achieve unity and has witnessed India always divided into Hindu India and Muslim India. Muslim India cannot accept any constitution which must result in a Hindu majority Government; in combination with democracy, it would be a Hindu Raj which Muslims, cannot tolerate."

The Qaid's other contention



was that "Muslims are not a minority. Muslims are a nation according to any definition; they must have their homeland, their territory and their State."

Dr BR Ambedkar wrote in his 1941 reply to Jinnah's resolution: No one has expressed shock at the thought of separating Karnataka from Andhra, what then is there to be shocked in the demand for the separation of Pakistan? If it is disruptive in its effect, it is no more so than the separation of Hindu provinces such as Karnataka from Maharashtra, or Andhra from Madras. Pakistan is merely another manifestation of a cultural unit demanding freedom. There is nothing new about the resolution which merely resuscitates the scheme which was put forth by Mohammad Iqbal in 1930. Mr Rahmat Ali gave it the name Pakistan. After Iqbal, there is nothing new in linking the northwestern provinces.

"Uncannily, there is nothing new in outing together many districts of Bengal and Assam into one province. Viceroy Curzon had done it in 1905. The British or the Anglo-Indian was not a nation; Indians referred only to the people of India."

"French Orientalist Joseph



COULD IT BE THAT THE GOVERNMENT IN DELHI AND THE GOVERNOR IN SRINAGAR ARE UNABLE TO RELATE TO THE KASHMIRIS WHO ARE OF A DIFFERENT FAITH?

Renan has written that a nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. The Doctor continues: "The Hindus draw their inspiration from the *Ramayana* etc; whereas the Muslims derive their inspiration from the Quran and Hadith'. Thus, the things that divide and the things that unite, in Ambedkar's opinion, there is no argument against the claim for partition if they insist upon it.

The Doctor quotes Lord Acton's phrase that Pakistan is a soul wandering in search of a body. Ambedkar went deep into the subject and showed that the Indian army then was dominated in numbers by Muslim Punjabis, but their pay and perks were indirectly paid for by the Hindu provinces. He concluded by writing that in any case it is better to have the enemy outside the borders rather than inside.

To go back to the Kashmir problem, could it be that the Government in Delhi and the Governor in Srinagar are unable to relate to the Kashmiris who are of a different faith? They begin with God, move on to the Prophet and then to the scripture. On the other hand, we do not have a single authoritative book or Prophet, but are believers in karma. Their way

of thinking, in the lingo of logic, is called deductive, which begins with a premise and ends with a logical conclusion, top down. Our faith is inductive and begins with ground realities to move upwards till it reaches a conclusion. A few scholars realise the huge gulf between the two categories of faiths, Abrahamic and Eastern.

The Abrahamic method of approaching the issue would be to shoot and kill, whereas the Eastern way would be to worry about the relationship between the two sides after the bullets and battles. This explains that we are an ancient civilisation and at the same time, have taken nearly 75 years to get down to grappling with the problem.

India and Pakistan were born as independent countries at the same time. Yet look at the difference in the distance covered by the two countries. To overcome the gulf in the Kashmir Valley, everyone should understand one another so that the Government of India does not keep going round and round the mulberry bush.

(The writer is a well-known columnist, an author and a former member of the *Rajya Sabha*. The views expressed are personal.)

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BLOCKING ROADS IS NOT THE WAY

Sir — The Constitution gives us the right to protest, but unorganised protests make life of commoners difficult. Roadblocks cause traffic problems and as a result, the public suffers. This also leads to excess fuel consumption and ultimately more pollution. Road is public property. Therefore, it should be used in the same way. The method of agitating the public by blocking the roads is wrong. To get the attention of the Government, roads are blocked. But, the protestors don't care that the public is suffering unnecessarily.

Just like the protesters have questions, the common people also have a question, why are people being harassed by blocking the road through this movement? Delhi is a busy city and the police have to always be on their toes. In such a situation, there is an agitation by blocking the road. This puts a lot of pressure on the police. The public will not have difficulty when protests are staged in a more organised and peaceful way. It is the duty of the protesters to take care of this. Now, the Supreme Court has told the farmers what is right. The apex court said that the farmers have the right to protest but they cannot block the roads and the farmers must abide by the decision.

Jayesh Rane | Mumbai

TOO EARLY TO CELEBRATE

Sir — It is definitely a milestone that India has administered 100 crore doses so far, but not a moment to celebrate as only 30 per cent of the population is fully vaccinated. Approximately 88 crore additional doses are needed to fully vaccinate the adult population. Even so, India must stand-up and salute all scientists, doctors, frontline workers as well as vaccine manufacturers, in making India proud with vaccine development and administering the same to a billion people. Hats off to all.

But, how a publicity lover, power hungry Government, will not take the credit for it as the Assembly polls are coming closer? As a second country after China, India crossed the billion vaccines mark, but the way India used its resources

Remembering Shammi



ous hits and superhits like — Jaanwar, Bad Tameez, Bluff Master, Prince, Rajkumar, Professor and *Brahmachari*, Pagla Kahin Ka, Latt Sahib and dozens more. Even the songs picturised on Shammi Kapoor were largely sung by Rafi Sahib in Shammi Kapoor's signature style.

Shammi Kapoor was awarded thrice by the Filmfare — twice as Best Actor for *Brahmachari* and *Vidhata* (supporting), besides the Lifetime Achievement Award. Born as Shamsheer Bahadur Singh, Shammi Kapoor was born on October 21 in 1931 and left for his heavenly abode in August, 2011. Ironically, this iconic star, besides another departed taller and handsome Joy Mukerji and by God's grace living legend Biswajit, is still awaiting, though posthumously, an official acknowledgement of his unmatched acting flair! His younger brother Shashi Kapoor was conferred with the Padma Bhushan and Dadasaheb Phalke Awards in 2011 and 2015 respectively.

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

to drain for upgrading or boosting the image of Prime Minister Narendra Modi is not worth it. Israel, which has a record of administering double dose to the entire population, has never drained its resources to boost the image of their political leader. The truth is that we could have been here in July; only if the Government had been proactive. By not vaccinating sooner, it has hurt India's economy too.

Bidyut K Chatterjee | Faridabad

KASHMIR SITUATION CAUSE FOR CONCERN

Sir — Is the situation in Kashmir snowballing into a major national problem? Otherwise, how would one explain the former J&K Governor Satya Pal Malik's contention that everything was normal during his tenure and things have changed drastically overnight. Is the abrogation of Article 370 slowly repulsing with renewed vigour from the natives or is it a ploy from neighbouring country, not to speak of new developments in

Afghanistan, or is it a spontaneous revolt from among Kashmiris to assert their rights or combination of all the three that is pushing the Indian Government to a corner?

It is during such a time of crisis that an acute need arises for cooperation of all political parties to douse the embers of communal disharmony and friction between locals and non-locals as India is a free country where people can live as they wish without any feeling of alienation. Only a multi pronged approach of following a democratic process of listening to all and acting thereupon, duly protecting human rights of the people may lead to a semblance of return to peace. More all party meetings where '*doodh ka doodh aur paani ka paani*' should be discussed threadbare with a give and take approach to reach a viable solution.

D Nagarajuna | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

Rivals meet

Cricket fans are in for a treat as India, Pakistan come face to face after 2019

Cricket between India and Pakistan is a different ballgame altogether, especially if it's a World Cup game. The stakes are high, the spirit is fierced and, of course, a sense of rivalry prevails during the game. Having said that, the ICC T20 World Cup 2021 is already off the mark and the two sides will go head-to-head come Sunday, at the Dubai International Stadium, the UAE. Though both the teams have already played one warm-up match each, the real heat will come out when they collide on October, 24. This comes as hope for the Pakistan Cricket Board which earlier took jolts when New Zealand in September pulled out of a limited overs game just minutes before it was set to start off. The New Zealand Cricket said they were abandoning their tour of Pakistan following a Government "security alert". A few days later, England, too, cancelled their men's and women's teams white-ball series in Pakistan, citing security concerns. The setbacks were disheartening for the Pakistani cricket fans too. Therefore, the T20 World Cup seems to be the only platform for



Pakistan to represent itself, after its whining about India at the UN General Assembly 2021.

Pakistan has never tasted success against India in the T20 or ODI World Cup and it would certainly look forward to changing that. The two teams have not faced each other since the 2019 ODI World Cup. The Pakistan captain Babar Azam is often compared with his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli and how they stand against each other would be worth the watch. However, ahead of the match, there was strong uproar against the India-Pak match in view of the terrorist attack on Indian Army personnel in the Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir on October 11. Several politicians including Union Minister Union Minister Ramdas Athawale, AAP leader Atishi Marlena and former Olympian Pargat Singh strongly called for the cancellation of the match against Pakistan. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi targeting the Government said, "Our nine soldiers died in J&K, and on October 24 India-Pakistan T20 match will happen". But apparently, the match cannot be called off under the International Cricket Council's (ICC) commitments. If the idea is to send a "strong message" to Pakistan or Pakistan-based terrorist groups, pulling out of a match will not help. Rather, the leaders should build pressure on the Government to wipe out the terrorist hideouts. That would send a strong message. That would be the solidarity the martyrs deserve.

SOUND BITE

Nitish Kumar is afraid of facing the people of the State. That is why he travels in helicopters to campaign in the election.



RJD leader — Tejashwi Yadav

The countries that were fighting there (in Afghanistan) for 20 years bear primary responsibility for what is happening there.



Russian President — Vladimir Putin

Being an athlete and playing sports has played a tremendous role in shaping my personality.



Actor — Deepika Padukone

I'm obviously backing Team India to win the match but personally, I believe no team should be taken lightly.



India cricketer — Ajinkya Rahane

When you buy petrol and diesel, remember that the Modi Government has earned Rs 23 lakh crore through tax.



Congress general secretary — Priyanka Gandhi



FIRST COLUMN THE BREXIT IS NOT A 'FANTASTIC DEAL'

A new crisis is bubbling up as the Northern Ireland part of the Brexit deal is falling apart



GWYNNE DYER

International treaties are serious business. A lot of time and effort goes into negotiating them, and they become part of international law. It's very rare for a politician to say, only a couple of years after negotiating a treaty, that his country always felt it was "a little bit provisional and open to review." That was Lord David Frost, who is still described as Britain's chief Brexit negotiator two years after Brexit happened. (That's because he is still trying to renegotiate it.) At the time he called the Brexit treaty an "excellent deal" and Prime Minister Boris Johnson hailed it as a "fantastic deal", but that was before the 2019 election. A new crisis is bubbling up now because the Northern Ireland part of the deal is falling apart. It could trigger a British trade war with the European Union and a return to real war in Northern Ireland, but the deal is falling apart mainly because the Conservative-led British government was lying when it agreed to it in 2019. Boris Johnson was new in office in 2019 and desperately needed to 'get Brexit done'. Only then could he call an election and hope to win a majority in Parliament. So, he made an agreement with the EU on post-Brexit trade relations, especially regarding Northern Ireland, that fell far short of what his government actually wanted. Dominic Cummings, who was Johnson's right-hand man until he lost an internal power struggle a year ago, explained



last week why he and a few allies got Johnson to sign a document they had no intention of honouring. "We wriggled [through the negotiations with the EU] with the best option we could," Cummings said, "and intended to get Johnson to ditch the bits we didn't like after whacking (Labour Party leader Jeremy) Corbyn" in an early election. And so, it came to pass.

The Conservatives buried Corbyn in a landslide in the December 2019 election, and the United Kingdom finally left the EU in January 2020 — or rather, most of it did. The 'bits we didn't like' mostly had to do with Northern Ireland, which for customs purposes remained in the European Union. Why? When the agreement was signed both the UK and the Irish Republic were members of the EU, so the border between them could be opened: no check-points, no movement controls, no customs duties. That allowed Nationalists to come and go as they wished and think of themselves as Irish citizens, while Loyalists could go on believing they lived in the United Kingdom. Now, there would continue to be complete freedom of movement for people and goods throughout Ireland, while goods coming into Northern Ireland from the rest of the UK would go through EU customs checks at the Northern Irish ports. Which brings us to the present. There have been serious delays in the way the customs controls work in the Northern Irish ports, and the EU has just offered to exempt about half the affected food and medicines from all checks. That was an olive branch, but Johnson just raised a new demand: that the European Court of Justice no longer have jurisdiction over possible violations of the treaty. And Lord Frost has threatened to 'suspend' the treaty entirely if the EU does not give in. EU authorities suspect that Johnson is seeking an excuse to blow up the treaty so that he can scapegoat the Europeans for the ensuing trade war and renewed war in Northern Ireland. Matters are getting worse in the UK on a number of fronts, and he needs a distraction. Would he really do that? He probably doesn't know yet himself.

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

Germany expects new Chancellor by Xmas

Despite being hailed as winner of this election, Scholz faces a difficult situation as he has to negotiate with two more parties to form a Government



VOLKER LENNART PLÄN

Germany's federal elections have delivered the suspense promised by the polls: a close race between the two grand old parties (the Union, i.e., CDU & CSU combined and the Social Democrats, SPD) and a fractured mandate in which none of the political parties represented in the German Parliament (Bundestag) can form the government on their own. Although the winner of the elections, SPD, is currently an ally in Angela Merkel's "Grand Coalition", it has been traditionally as well as ideologically an arch political rival of the conservative "Union" — the party alliance of CDU (now commonly known as "Merkel's Party") and CSU which together stand as the second winner.

The SPD beat the Union by a slim margin of less than one per cent (25.7 per cent vs 24.1 per cent). Yet the difference feels monumental to Germany's national political landscape: for the first time in almost 20 years, the SPD ended the race ahead of the Union.

The main reason for the result may be found in the loss of the "Merkel factor". Her immense popularity among the vast spectra of voters from moderate to left led to the Union's successive electoral victories. But with her departure as Federal Chancellor, this unifying factor vanished. And with it a certain cohesion within the party. Merkel herself did little to build a second line of leadership and empower a successor to lead the Union and win the upcoming elections. Her only endorsement went unsuccessful when Annegret Kramp-Karrenbauer succeeded her as head of party (CDU) in 2018 but did not stand up to the party's expectations. She had to make way in early 2021 for the current chancellor candidate Armin Laschet.

The unclear mandate throws up three possible scenarios for government formation: A renewal of the incumbent Grand Coalition finds no friends within the parties nor the public and has since been ruled out. This leaves Union or SPD only the option of taking on board two of the smaller parties to form a governing majority in the German Bundestag. Any coalition with the right-wing populist party AfD had been ruled out beforehand by all four.

Both Union and SPD derive the equal claim to form the next government. It is not the 0.8 percent lead that gives the SPD the advantage in taking the reins. In the past days, the Union found itself increasingly engaged in negative debates about consequences from the historically bad election results while the SPD managed to reinforce its public perception of a winner. Their light improvement — still their third-worst result in the history of Germany's post-war elections — lets the party and their chancellor-to-be Olaf Scholz shine.

Despite being hailed as winner of this election, Scholz faces a difficult situation as he has to negotiate with two more parties to form a majority government in the Bundestag.



GERMANY IS A LEADER IN THE EUROPEAN UNION (EU) AND SEES ITS FUTURE AT THE HEART OF IT. ACCORDINGLY, OTHER EU MEMBER STATES ARE EAGERLY AWAITING THE IMMINENT OUTCOME OF THE COALITION TALKS. LARGER DECISIONS SUCH AS THE FREE TRADE AGREEMENT NEGOTIATIONS MAY BE POSTPONED UNTIL THEN

(The writer is Resident Representative, Hans Seidel Foundation India. The views expressed are personal.)



The two parties that find themselves in a position as unusual as convenient are the Green Party and the FDP (Germany's Liberal Party). The Greens emerged with their best ever result of a Federal Election, largely fuelled by their political stance on climate change. Conversely, the Liberals (FDP) openly favour the Union for a government as they see more ideological overlap with their economy-focused politics. It is this divergent ideological positioning, which led to FDP and Greens meeting first for initial talks to iron out differences and explore common grounds. There can be no Government without the support of these two smaller parties. All in all, Germany is readying up for a new era of three-party coalition.

Now the country witnesses that the CDU — stately centre of power for 50 years in the past — finds itself discussing internal consequences of their election result. Despite gaining almost the same number of seats as that of the SPD, the party faces calls from within that the disappointing result would not suffice as mandate to form a government and too, criticism of the common chancellor candidate, Armin Laschet. The party is sledging its own (elected) candidate while he is engaged in coalition talks with the Greens and Liberals. With the impaired bargaining position, the Union would find it challenging to deliver sufficient arguments to convince Greens and FDP to join a so-called Union-led "Jamaica Coalition" (dubbed for its colour combination of the black,

green and yellow parties). Instead, the country is preparing for a so-called "traffic light" — coalition of Red (SPD), Yellow (FDP) and Green.

On last Sunday, both SPD and Green Party received the blessing from their respective party committees to go ahead with negotiations to form the next German Federal Government. The FDP is expected to follow suit. Seen as the "odd man out" earlier in the three-way-coalition, their charismatic leader Christian Lindner was quick to preempt doubts about the party's agreement to go ahead with the talks. This is seen as the main obstacle removed. The unanimity among the three new partners is not perceived without scepticism: in 2017, the FDP withdrew from three-way-talks (on a "Jamaica coalition" with CDU/CSU and Greens) at an advanced stage. This time, however, the Union of CDU and CSU does not seem to pose an attractive alternative anymore.

The ensued discussion initially centred around personnel: Public polls (before the election) displayed a considerably higher popularity of the CSU party head and Chief Minister of the Free State of Bavaria — Markus Söder — as compared to Laschet. Söder's candidacy was rejected by the CSU's much larger sister party CDU (of which Laschet is a member). While many in the party expect Söder to run for Chancellor in 2025, the main focus is now on reconciliation, renewal and display of unity. At a party summit of the Union's youth organisation, a new path was already declared before the new government

is formed: Merkel's party will accept the unusual risk in opposition rather than risk the "experiment" of heading a potentially unstable three-party-government under a weakened leader. It would not befit the self-concept of a party whose roots of success lie in stability. It has now four years to shed off the weight of the Merkel persona. Sacrificing its top candidate Laschet, who is incumbent Chief Minister of Germany's most populous state North Rhine-Westphalia, is a price the Union seems to be willing to pay.

The rift within CDU and CSU is an unwelcome damper for the Liberals' hope to form a conservative-liberal government again after the Merkel II cabinet (2009-2013). It leaves the FDP with little hope to play a larger role in the upcoming government. Having scored 11.5 percent in the elections, the traditional role of providing the Deputy Federal Chancellor and Foreign Minister will fall to the Green Party — regardless of which party will lead the government.

Germany is a leader in the European Union (EU) and sees its future at the heart of it. Accordingly, other EU member states are eagerly awaiting the imminent outcome of the coalition talks. Larger decisions such as Free Trade Agreement negotiations may be postponed until then. Additionally, it might take months (as it did in 2017) for the parties to come to an agreement. With a general understanding among all three parties underway, Germany could have a new government and Federal Chancellor by Christmas.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

ONLY A HANDFUL OF PEOPLE TRAVEL IN FOUR-WHEELERS AND USE PETROL. AT PRESENT, 95 PER CENT PEOPLE DON'T NEED PETROL.
— BJP LEADER
UPENDRA TIWARI



THE MINISTER SAID THAT PEOPLE DO NOT NEED PETROL. THE TRUTH IS THAT 95 PER CENT OF THE PEOPLE DO NOT NEED THE BJP.
— SAMAJWADI PARTY PRESIDENT
AKHILESH YADAV

Private players crucial in defence manufacturing

The corporatisation of the Ordnance Factory Board has to be seen in the overall context of improving India's military industry capability

India has to make its armed forces self-reliant — 'Aatmanirbhar'. The Army accounts for more than half of the total defence budget of India, with most of the expenditure going into the maintenance of cantonments, salaries and pensions, instead of critical arms and ammunition.

On February 1, 2020, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman earmarked ₹4,71,378 crore for the Ministry of Defence (MoD). Of the total allocation, ₹3,23,053 crore was provided for the Defence Services Estimates (DSE) and Defence Research and Development Organisation (DRDO). The balance allocation is distributed between defence pensions and MoD (Civil). Representing a growth of 9.4 per cent,



PK VASUDEVA

(The writer is former Senior Professor, International Trade and Member, Vivekananda International Foundation. The views expressed are personal.)

MoD's overall allocation translates into an increase of ₹40,367 crore. This raises the question, how would this increase affect India's defence and modernisation in particular?

This budget is just 1.7 per cent of the GDP, which is just not sufficient for the modernisation of defence forces keeping in view the threat perception from China and Pakistan.

India emerged as the second-largest importer of arms transferred between 2016-20, with a share of 9.5 per cent of global arms imports. To make India self-reliant, the Ordnance Factory Board (OFB) has been split into seven government-owned corporate entities to help improve self-reliance in defence preparedness. Business in the



seven new entities started from October 1, 2021. These new companies are: Troop Comforts Limited (TCL); Yantra India Limited (YIL); Gliders India Limited (GIL); India Optel Limited (IOL); Advanced Weapons and Equipment India Limited (AWE India); and Armoured Vehicles Nigam Limited (AVANI).

The companies now have an order book of ₹65,000 crore. These orders were already in the pipeline and

were just shifted to the new entities. These companies have complete functional autonomy and the interests of the employees are fully protected.

According to Defence Minister Raj Nath Singh, "It is to transform the Ordnance Factories to improve expertise in product range; profitable and productive assets; ensure self-reliance; enhance cost effectiveness and improve quality and increase competitiveness."

The Centre, in May 2020, had announced increasing the FDI limit from 49 per cent to 74 per cent under the automatic route in the defence sector. The government has been emphasising boosting indigenous defence manufacturing. The Ministry has set a goal of a turnover of ₹1.75 lakh crore

in defence manufacturing by 2025 that included an export target of ₹35,000 crore worth of military hardware.

Despite these initiatives, India's military industry capability shows a sorry picture and the private sector is still not being treated as a partner in India's quest for higher self-reliance. A GE 404 engine from the US powers the much-hyped indigenous Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), while the radar is sourced from Israel. The Kaveri engine development by the Gas Turbine Research Establishment (GTRE) has been an unmitigated disaster. German MTU engines power the Main Battle Tank (MBT), the showpiece indigenous tank. Despite the hike in FDI, the inflow has only been \$300

million from April to September 2020; largely due to the number of caveats for allowing 76 per cent FDI.

The Kalam Committee assessed our Self Reliance Index (SRI) in 1993 as 30 per cent, with a road map to increase it to 70 per cent in a decade's time. The committee had identified a number of critical subsystems like the focal plane array, passive seekers, stealth, AESA radar, RLG and carbon fibres where India's design and development quality needs to be ramped up. Weapons, propulsion and sensors remain the main bugbears of India's design capability in the DRDO and India's SRI has not inched forward.

Technology transfer has been India's major policy mosaic to build major systems

and platforms since 1963 (in the aftermath of the MiG-21 aircraft). HAL has been producing Sukhoi Su-30 on the basis of technology transfer documents from Russia. Similar is the story of the T90 produced in the Avadi tank factory.

The major problem afflicting the OFB is not the lack of autonomy or accountability but the wherewithal to improve capability. Its corporatisation has to be seen in the overall context of improving India's military industry capability, self-reliance quotient, design capability in critical systems and quality, time and cost-effectiveness and involvement of private players in defence manufacturing as partners in tandem with OEMs and design houses.

Protection of customer interest non-negotiable: Dy Guv of RBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Emphasising on the need to create a culture of responsible governance in the NBFC sector, RBI Deputy Governor M Rajeshwar Rao on Friday urged shadow banking players to give utmost importance to protection of customers as it is 'non-negotiable'.

Recalling incidents of the coercive recovery practice by some of the players, the Deputy Governor said, such developments spurred by purely commercial considerations have dented the credibility of the whole system which flourishes and thrives on trust.

"My ask here is that we should not compromise on the ethos of the finance for mercurial or ephemeral gains. These gains would anyway accrue to the institutions over the long term if and when it is built on an edifice of trust and mutual benefit," he said at the NBFC Summit organised by CII.

Observing that RBI is inundated with the complaints of



harsh recovery practices, breach of data privacy, increasing fraudulent transactions, cybercrime, excessive interest rates and harassment, he said, protection of the customers is 'non-negotiable'.

"To us at RBI, any regulatory move has always, the larger public interest as its core theme and we have been doing our best having regard to public interest in general for the financial system. Putting in place an elaborate grievance redressal machinery, an RBI Ombudsman scheme, Fair

Practices Code, etc. are pointers in this direction," he said. More recently, he said, the Scheme for Internal Ombudsman (IO) has been extended to NBFCs on a selective basis. The IO at the apex of the NBFCs' internal grievance redressal mechanism, shall independently review the resolution provided by the NBFC in the case of wholly or partially rejected complaints.

However, regulatory measures alone may not suffice, he said, adding, protecting customers against unfair, decep-

ive, or fraudulent practices has to become top priority of every entity and permeate the organisation culturally and become a part of its ethos.

"Customer service would mean, amongst many other things, that a customer has similar pre-sale and post-sale experience, she/he is not disadvantaged vis-à-vis another customer because he or she approached the financial entity through a different delivery channel, and he or she has a right to hassle-free exit from the contractual obligation."

Macrotech plans to raise up to Rs 4k-cr: funding platform for data centres, parks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Realty firm Macrotech Developers Ltd plans to raise up to Rs 4,000 crore through issue of securities for future growth and is also considering setting up a funding platform along with global investors to develop data centres and industrial & logistic parks.

Mumbai-based Macrotech Developers, which markets its properties under Lodha brand, got listed on stock exchanges in April this year after raising Rs 2,500 crore through an initial public offering (IPO).

"Company intends to raise up to Rs 40 billion of growth capital in the next 12 months," Macrotech said in its investors presentation.

On Thursday, the company's board of directors approved the proposal of raising funds up to Rs 4,000 crore by way of further issuance of securities, subject to shareholders' approvals.



Petrol, diesel prices hiked for third consecutive day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel prices on Friday touched an all-time high across the country after rates were hiked for the third consecutive day by 35 paise per litre each.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 106.89 a litre and Rs 112.78 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 103.63 a litre, while in Delhi, it costs Rs 95.62 per litre.

This is the third consecutive day of the price hike. There was no change in rates on October 18 and 19, prior to which prices were hiked by 35 paise per litre each on four straight days.

While petrol has already hit the Rs 100-a-litre mark or more in all major cities of the country, diesel has touched that level in over a dozen states and is treading towards that mark in places from Srinagar to Chennai.

Diesel costs Rs 99.49 a litre in Srinagar, while it is priced at Rs 99.92 in Chennai.

Prices differ from state to state, depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Petrol price has been hiked on 19 occasions since September 28, when a three-week-long hiatus in rate revision ended. In all, prices have gone up by Rs 5.7 a litre.

Diesel rates have been increased by Rs 7 per litre in 22 hikes since September 24.

Prior to that, the petrol price was increased by Rs 11.44 a litre between May 4 and July 17. The diesel rate had gone up by Rs 9.14 per litre during this period.

Money Matters

Bank of India opens first-ever branch in Ladakh

Bank of India on Friday extended its operations to the Union Territory of Ladakh by opening its first-ever branch here with its top official asserting that the bank is fully committed to extending its banking services to the people living in far-flung areas of the country. This was the 5,086th branch opened by a bank in the country and abroad, and is fully computerised and digitised with a facility of E-Gallery to provide 24x7 banking to the residents of Leh. "The bank is fully committed to extending its banking services to the people living in the far-flung areas of the country."

Hindustan Zinc Q2 net profit rises 4 pc to Rs 2,017 crore

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd on Friday reported a 3.9 per cent rise in its net profit at Rs 2,017 crore for the quarter ended September 30, on the back of higher revenue from operations. The company had posted net profit of Rs 1,940 crore in the year-ago period, Hindustan Zinc Ltd said in a regulatory filing. The revenue from operations in the July-September quarter increased to Rs 5,958 crore, from Rs 5,533 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said.

Global shares mostly higher after S&P 500 hits new high

PNS ■ LONDON

Shares were mostly higher in Europe on Friday after a mixed session in Asia.

Benchmarks rose in Paris, London, Tokyo and Hong Kong. Shares fell in Shanghai and Seoul.

An official newspaper, the Securities Times, and other state media said China Evergrande Group made an overdue bond payment on Friday. Evergrande wired \$83.5 million to account for a bond payment that was due Sept. 23, the reports said. The company's Hong Kong-traded shares gained 4.3%.

The property developer's struggle to reduce its 2 trillion yuan (\$310 billion) of debt to comply with tighter official curbs on borrowing has prompted fears a default might trigger a financial crisis.

The news of the payment followed Evergrande's announcement a day earlier that it was running into difficulties selling assets to alleviate its liquidity crisis and that a plan to

Sensex falls 102 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex declined 102 points on Friday, tracking losses in ITC, Maruti and Infosys amid mixed cues from global markets.

The 30-share BSE index fell 101.88 points or 0.17 per cent to 60,821.62.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty shed 63.20 points or 0.35 per cent to close at 18,114.90.

ITC was the top loser in the Sensex pack, slipping over 3 per cent, followed by Maruti, Infosys, NTPC, HCL Tech and Tata Steel.

added 0.4% to 7,220.57. The future for the S&P 500 was nearly unchanged while the future for the Dow industrials gained less than 0.1%.

On the other hand, HDFC, Bajaj Auto, IndusInd Bank, Kotak Bank, Titan and Axis Bank were among the gainers.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Seoul and Shanghai ended in the red, while Hong Kong and Tokyo settled with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading with gains in mid-session deals.

Meanwhile, the rupee slipped 3 paise to close at 74.90 against the US dollar.

International oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.52 per cent to USD 85.05 per barrel.

Kant: India can become world's edtech capital

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Niti Aayog CEO Amitabh Kant on Friday said India can become the edtech capital of the world, with the private sector playing a key role and the public sector acting as a facilitator.

Speaking at a virtual conference of Public Affairs Forum of India (PAFI), Kant also said India needs to significantly improve its learning outcomes, and technology can help the country leapfrog in a big way.

"I am confident that India can become the edtech capital of the world with the private sector playing a key role and the public sector acting as a facilitator," he said.

"Relying only on physical infrastructure will not be sufficient," he noted.

According to the Niti Aayog CEO, the Indian edtech ecosystem has great growth potential.

"But more importantly, the country will progress, students will learn, and learning outcomes will improve," he said, adding that comprehensive edtech architecture will help with better access to education, especially to disadvantaged groups.

The new national education policy of India was responsive to the clarion call to integrate technology at every level of instruction, he added.

Also speaking at the event, Byju's founder and CEO Byju Raveendran said through edtech, there is an opportunity for students to learn, but India can also become a global talent pool for teachers.

"We talk about the democratic dividend on the one hand, but if they don't have access to education, it's not of much use."

"On the other hand, if we do provide it, it's a huge opportunity for India," he said.

Demand for spices increased since Covid pandemic: Commerce Min

PNS ■ KOCHI

The demand for spices has increased since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out last year and several studies have been carried out especially on the medicinal properties of Indian spices, said Diwakar Nath Mishra, Joint Secretary (Plantation) of Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

Mishra was delivering the keynote address at an International Buyer Seller Meet (IBSM) organised by the Spices Board in association with the Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, UAE on a virtual platform with specific focus on spice exports.

The global online event was held on Wednesday and inaugurated by Sandeep Kumar Bayyapu, IFS, the Deputy Chief of Mission, Embassy of India, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
KHAMMAM DISTRICT GAZETTE
EXTRAORDINARY PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY
FORM VII
(See Sub-Rule (1) of rule - 25 and Section - 18(1) of the Act-31/2013)
Collector / Joint Collector / Revenue Divisional Officer, Khammam (JA)
DECLARATION
Gazette No. A3/20/2021 dated: 20.10.2021
Collector, Khammam R.No. G1.018/2019 dated: 14.10.2021
RDO, Khammam R.No. C1/2415/2016 dated: 29.09.2021
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana that a total area of Acs. 0.14 (one land) is required in Police Village of Kurumanchi Mandal of Khammam District for public purpose, namely for construction of pump house for Bhadrak Ramakrishna LRT Irrigation Scheme and the following declaration is made under Sub-Rule (1) of Rule 25 and Section 18 (1) of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act, 2013.
Therefore, declaration is made that piece of land measuring, more or less Acs. 0.14 (one standard measurement) under acquisition for construction of pump house for Bhadrak Ramakrishna LRT Irrigation Scheme in Police Village of Kurumanchi Mandal of Khammam District of whose detailed description is as follows:
SCHEDULE
VILLAGE: PALAR MANDAL: RESUBDIVISION: DISTRICT: KHAMMAM
Sl. No. Sy. No. Type of Land Area (Acres) Name and Address of the interested person Boundaries Survey/Title No. / Party
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
1 190A PWD Dry 0.14 B. Sridhar Ram Kumar S/o. Ramji Nayak (PWD) E. Sy. No. 190 N. Sy. No. 190 W. Sy. No. 207 S. Sy. No. 207 NIL
TOTAL Acs. 0.14
This declaration is made after verifying the objections of persons interested (no objections) as provided in Rule 15 of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 (Act No. 30/2013). As none of the parties are opposed under this land acquisition, therefore the parties which are likely to be displaced due to this land acquisition are to be treated as "Nil".
Mines of Coal, iron-ore, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired are not needed.
A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the District Collector, Khammam and Land Acquisition Officer/Revenue Divisional Officer, Khammam on any working day.
Sd/- Land Acquisition Officer/ Revenue Divisional Officer Khammam Sd/- Additional Collector Khammam Sd/- District Collector Khammam
DIPR R.O. No: 747/LA/PP/Adv/Pub/2021-22

Sebi proposes capping ISINs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to boost liquidity in the corporate bond market, Sebi on Friday suggested further capping the number of ISINs for such bonds issued on a private placement basis.

ISINs code, which has 12 characters, is used for uniquely identifying securities like stocks, bonds warrants and commercial papers.

"Given that issuers are presently not utilising even half of the maximum ISINs allotted to them, it is felt that further capping of ISINs will not only reduce the fragmentation across the bond market and enhance liquidity premium but also help both issuers and investors alike," Sebi said in a consultation paper.

Accordingly, it has proposed to further restrict the number of ISINs maturing per financial year for corporate bonds issued on a private placement basis.

The regulator has suggested that 6 ISINs maturing per financial year should be allowed for plain vanilla debt securities as compared to 12 at present. Also, it has proposed to put a cap of 5 ISINs for structured debt securities. In addition, it has been proposed to put a cap of 6 ISINs for the capital gains tax debt securities by the



authorised issuers under the Income Tax Act.

The current limit is 12. The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) has sought comments from the public on the consultation paper till November 21.

The issuers have represented that capping of ISINs and re-issuing bonds in the same ISINs have aided them in better projection of cash flow requirements and thus enabling them to effectively carry out their ALM requirements, according to the consultation paper.

Non-tariff barriers to trade need to be studied: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Friday said there are lot of non-tariff barriers that need to be addressed and wherever India will find unfair treatment to domestic industry, it will have to take reciprocal action.

Non-tariff barriers to trade are restrictive practices which create impediments in smooth flow of imports and exports.

The minister said India is negotiating free trade agreements with several countries including the UK, UAE and Australia and young talents from IIFT can help in achieving the transformational agenda for India's international trade.

On the country's exports, Goyal exuded confidence that the country will achieve the USD 400 billion target for this fiscal.

Nykaa IPO to open on Oct 28; sets price band of Rs 1,085-1,125/ share

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

ESN E-Commerce Ventures Ltd, which runs online marketplace for beauty and wellness products Nykaa, has fixed a price of Rs 1,085-1,125 a share for its Rs 5,352-crore initial public offering, which will open on October 28.

The three-day initial public offering will conclude on November 1, according to the red herring prospectus (RHP).

The IPO comprises a fresh issue of equity shares worth Rs 630 crore and an offer for sale (OFS) of 41,972,660 equity shares by promoter and existing shareholders, it added.

Earlier, the fresh issue size was Rs 525 crore.

Those selling shares in the OFS are -- promoter Sanjay Nayyar Family Trust and shareholders -- TPG Growth IV SF Pte Ltd, Lighthouse India Fund III, Limited, Lighthouse India III Employee Trust, Yogesh Agencies & Investments, J M Financial



and Investment Consultancy Services and some individual shareholders.

As per the information available with the BSE on Friday, the price band has been fixed at Rs 1,085-1,125 a share for the IPO. At the upper end of the price band, the initial share-sale is expected to fetch Rs 5,352 crore.

The company received Sebi's go-ahead on October 11 to launch the initial share-sale. Going by the draft papers, the company plans to use the proceeds from the IPO for

expansion, by setting up new retail stores and establishing new warehouses.

It also plans to retire some of its debt, which should bring down interest costs and further shore up its profitability.

In addition, the company is planning to deploy the proceeds of the IPO for marketing and promotional activities, to focus on strengthening its 13 owned brands such as Nykaa Cosmetics, Nykaa Naturals and Kay Beauty, along with establishing and promoting new brands.

53% of firms exposed to supply chain attacks

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Acronis, the global leader in cyber protection, has released its annual Cyber Readiness Report this week, providing a comprehensive overview of the modern cybersecurity landscape and the key pain points faced by businesses and remote employees worldwide amid the global pandemic. Acronis' research from last year revealed more than 80% of global companies admitted they were not prepared to transition to remote work - exposing key vulnerabilities businesses must quickly plan and implement solutions for.



Based on findings from this year's independent survey of 3,600 IT managers and remote employees at small and medium-sized companies in 18 countries across the globe, the report states that 53% of global companies have a false sense of security when it comes to

supply chain attacks. Despite the globally recognized attacks on trusted software vendors, like Kaseya or SolarWinds, over half of IT leaders believe that using "known, trusted software" is sufficient protec-

tion - making them an easy target. Three out of 10 companies report facing a cyberattack at least once a day - similar to last year; but this year, only 20% of companies reported not getting attacked - a drop from 32% in 2020, meaning that the attacks are increasing in volume. The most common attack types reached record-high levels this year, including phishing attacks - that continue to grow in frequency, and are now the top attack type at 58%. Malware attacks are also increasing in 2021; detected by 36.5% of companies this year - an increase from 22.2% in 2020. However, this year was the year of phishing; the demand for URL filtering solu-

tions has grown 10 times since 2020 - with 20% of global companies now recognizing the danger phishing presents to their business. Despite growing awareness of multi-factor authentication (MFA), nearly half of IT managers (47%) are not using MFA solutions - leaving their businesses exposed to phishing attacks. According to these findings, they either see no value in it or consider it too complex to be implemented.

In response, organizations worldwide have begun to prepare for the growing threats - but for every step companies are taking, cybercriminals have already taken three. The demand for antivirus solutions

has grown by 30% - from 43% last year to 73.3% in 2021. However, companies are just discovering that standalone antivirus solutions no longer work against modern threats: we saw the demand for an integrated backup/disaster recovery with antivirus solutions more than double - from 19% in 2020 to 47.9% this year.

Demand for vulnerability assessments and patch management grew significantly: from 26% in 2020 to 45% this year. This can be attributed, in part, to the increased volume of vulnerabilities exposed this year in critical and in-core software deployments such as Microsoft Exchange servers, Chrome browsers or Apache web servers.

Linking Hyderabad and NRIs across the world

SHIKHA DUGGAL

One might think that the only way to measure progress is by time, milestones and goals reached, but the progress of Jay Reddy, founder of VitreosHealth and Chairman of Click2Clinic, has been matchless. Disregarding the outward image of what he thought he is supposed to be, he chose to pursue what he wanted and needed.

Take a look at his destiny, from studying in Hyderabad Public School to currently serving on the board of the Hyderabad Public School (Ramanthapur) Alumni as the co-chair of their entrepreneurial program, life has come a full circle for him. "Born and raised in Hyderabad, after my schooling finished, I moved to IIT Delhi and then returned to my city to associate with HCL Communications. Post that, I pursued my MBA abroad! Then came a time in 2000, when I willingly left the corporate world and began my

own entrepreneurial journey," he shares.

Even though he shifted to the USA, he never lost touch with Hyderabad. Calling the city a new cosmopolitan world that is true to its nature, he says he still sees many migrating to this city with each passing day, and he believes it is not only for the myriad opportunities the city has in place for them, but also because of how

is on local markets! "Schools are realising this and Hyderabad Public School is one of the firsts to introduce this exclusive entrepreneurial program for children. We want youngsters to look at entrepreneurship as not risk-taking but like a ladder towards another passion that one can explore," he continues.

Minister KT Rama Rao inaugurated the state-of-the-art free palliative care facility Sparsh Hospice at Khajaguda. Spread over 60,000 square feet, the facility has been developed at Rs 15 crore and Jay Reddy is serving as the US Trustee and Strategic Advisor for it. Commenting on the same, he says, "I'm interested in investing in the healthcare sectors too, where the Covid pandemic has exposed many holes in the sys-



home settings. It is a huge and emerging market. I am helping Sparsh to raise funds in the US. Having this unique care unit is only in the top three cities of India and Hyderabad is one of them now."

Jay is confident that if you try something new in Hyderabad and it works here, it's surely going to work anywhere else in India too. Different people with different intellects come together and insinuate something grand like this! "The city is not just growing in business, it's growing at an equal pace with art and entertainment. This recent development is surely going to attract many more NRIs since it's devoted to cancer patients. It's also going to install the whole concept of 'Dignity of Death' in a

refurbished manner. We must embrace the last stage of death. I will not be just raising capital but we want more awareness too." Not being able to forget those moments of success where Jay used to celebrate it at the Tank Bund and to now, since he's so well-off, the celebrations taking place at the Falaknuma Palace — it makes him feel pleasant. The last time he was here, he got to see the new Durgam Cheruvu Bridge and he calls it a landmark development for the city. As he signs off, he talks about the one thing that he can never tire of — taking a pleasant stroll in Jubilee Hills where it's covered with a canopy of green trees, a slope-like road, and sombre silence.



HYDERABOND



hospitable Hyderabad is to its visitors.

"For people like us who would like to begin afresh, this place offers them not just fresh, but active talent too. Youngsters can rule in here! There's this ongoing joke among our people in the US that whenever there's the advent of new technology, Hyderabad is the first one to begin coaching classes for it," he giggles.

As he serves as a board member for HPS, he could witness how education has been blossoming every day in the city. He says it feels good to see entrepreneurs being encouraged here, with the city turning into a consumer-oriented society. There are new companies and the focus

Considering Hyderabad to be a home away from home for many, according to the entrepreneur, the outlook of the people and their acceptance make the city stand out amongst others. Very recently, the city has added another new development to its kitty which is being praised across the country. IT

tem and offers many challenging opportunities to fix them. I see homeware to be a useful system in the healthcare sector in India, particularly to provide disease-specific, episode-based chronic care in

Quick home makeover for Diwali



The end of the year brings with it an array of festivals

to look forward to and enjoy. It is this season that makes us want to revamp our humble abodes to welcome the festivals we grew up admiring.

While it takes a lot of effort to turn a house into a home, from furniture placement to wall colours to the sort of flooring you choose to the type of ceilings you have, all of these factors and more are only heightened during the festive season to revitalise your properties and make them festive ready. However, most of us avoid home renovation projects because they are time-consuming and inconvenient. But with the correct planning and creative interior design ideas, homes can be transformed completely for the much-anticipated time of year. Interior design that meets your needs, preferences, and budget is crucial, but you must not forget certain key parts of your living space in the process. The ceiling is one such crucial element.

Ceiling, the essential 5th wall: Most of the time, ceilings are disregarded. When it comes to decorating or redecorating any interior space, the attention is usually on the walls and floors. While it's necessary to have things done to your liking, ceilings also play an important function in calming the atmosphere in your home. Ceilings contribute to the total wow effect by helping to build unique, exquisite, and awe-inspiring homes. Many people are opting for designer artificial ceilings to lend an aesthetic touch to the fifth wall. They have a significant impact on the appearance of any interior. Currently, builders, real estate developers, and even architects emphasise the use of 'designed false ceilings' from the beginning of the design process.

The ceiling ally: As a homeowner, substantially redesigning your interiors may appear to be a costly undertaking. However, given today's techniques for completing the work, re-designing your ceiling will not break the bank. However, you'll need a reliable partner in your renovation project. Saint Gobain Gyproc for this has developed whole catalogues to suit your mood, budget, and deadlines, giving your ceiling a new appearance in just 7 days. The cost of a Gypsum Ceiling depends on not one but four parameters - design option, cost of installation, transportation, and labor charges. After calculating everything, you can assume that the cost can lie between Rs. 60 - 100 per square feet in general. Of course, this entirely depends on the interior designers that you are approaching. Gyproc also provides the right guidance to choose the optimum design for your living space. All this at reasonable and affordable pricing. As a result, when it comes to ceilings, Gyproc can be your most trusted ally.

Beyond the aesthetics: When it comes to designing ceilings using gypsum boards, you

have a lot of alternatives to select from. You can experiment with different shapes for your ceilings to add drama to your living space. It will enhance the beauty of your property by providing an attractive finish. Designer ceilings have numerous benefits in addition to their aesthetic appeal. They optimise your air conditioning usage and reduce those inflated summer electricity bills. For example, if your room is 12 x 12 sq. ft. and your false ceiling is one foot below the actual ceiling, it will cut down 12 x 12 x 1 cubic space that would otherwise have needed to be cooled by the AC, reducing your energy bill. Other advantages such as uniform light distribution, concealed wiring, and pipes, customising the theme/mood of rooms can be achieved with the help of false ceilings. Gyproc, a renowned name in the business, offers a wide range of options for wall décor and false ceilings.

These false ceilings are composed of lightweight, durable materials such as gypsum that can endure at least two decades of normal use, are easier to install, and come in a variety of designs.

Having been stuck at home for nearly two years now, the importance of home decor has gained more relevance than ever.

With the second festival season in a row being spent at home, our homes need the change to welcome festivities and offer the sign of new beginnings. The right change in decor for this festive season could just be the answer to that. So, incorporate this quick fix for the festivities and bring to life the awaited festivities.

How architecture is helping people live sustainably

The Olympics have brought back bittersweet memories of the stadium's controversy. And Kengo Kuma's stadium, which was ultimately completed, has left us with many unresolved issues. "Are we overdoing architecture? — is the most pertinent question. Do we require iconic buildings or buildings that are contextual, long-lasting, and include local communities? There's no doubt about that.

As a career, architecture has a lot of potentials. It is also a rewarding experience. That is why our country's design dynasties are seeing an influx of second-generation architects. True, the novel Coronavirus and lockdowns have altered our way of life. It has an impact on architectural design as well, with people opting for sustainable buildings rather than famous structures. The Indian economy has been hampered by the pandemic's spread, which has resulted in occasional lockdowns since last year. People are gradually gravitating towards green and sustainable living, however on a much smaller scale.

In residential settings, there is a growing demand for green and efficient energy solutions. A tremendous spike in demand for inexpensive homes in suburban areas is being driven by the need for more living space. People are relocating from cities to the suburbs because it offers them more indoor and outdoor space at a lower cost. Because of Covid-19 worries, more activities are taking place inside the home, which needs greater room for living, leisure,

career/job work, working out, school, and other purposes.

Sustainable housing has the potential to address issues such as climate change, global warming, and a shortage of green space in urban areas.

Green buildings decrease carbon emissions, energy and waste, and conserve water through sustainable architecture, construction, and operations.

Nowadays, architects and designers should look to renovate old projects to make them sustainable features. Renovating a project is not an easy task. More often than not, you tend to overlook



is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 13 percent from \$10.55 trillion in 2020 to \$11.92 trillion in 2021, according to The Business Research Company's new market research report, "Architectural, Engineering Consultants, And Related Services Global Market Report 2021: Covid-19 Impact And Recovery." The increase is primarily due to companies reorganising their operations and recovering from the impact of Covid-19, which had previously resulted in restrictive containment measures such as social distancing, remote working, and the closure of commercial activities, all of which created operational challenges.

At a CAGR of 6%, the market is estimated to reach \$14.91 trillion in 2025. The market for architecture and engineering services is likely to be driven by an increase in demand for ecologically safe and certified structures.

(The writer, Tripat Girdhar, is the Principal Architect of The Design Studio.)

ARCHITECTS AND DESIGNERS SHOULD LOOK TO RENOVATE OLD PROJECTS TO MAKE THEM SUSTAINABLE FEATURES. CLEARLY DEFINING TIMELINES AND PLANNING THE NITTY-GRITTY AT THE VERY BEGINNING IS KEY TO SUCCESSFULLY MANAGING A HOME RENOVATION.

and adhering to a budget amidst the excitement of creating those perfect spaces. Clearly defining timelines and planning the nitty-gritty at the very beginning is key to successfully managing a home renovation. Rather than making newly affordable and environmentally efficient buildings, we as designers and architects should look at rebuilding projects and old monuments. The architectural, engineering consultants, and related services market

what's brewing?



PARTY



● Archana Naidu



● Kavita



● Sapna and Purnima



● Shami



● Aruna

TALKING HEALTH

Commemorating World Menopause Awareness Month at Ankura Hospital for Women and Children in Mehdiapatnam, many doctors and socialites participated in the event named 'Let's talk about menopause'. The informative session was appreciated by many.

Photos by SV Chary

LISTINGS

GRAPE STOMPING & CAKE MIXING BRUNCH

Sunday brunches are an excellent time to try our hands at novel, and interesting things. The Novotel Hyderabad Convention Centre

near Hitec City is offering just that, with grape stomping and cake mixing activities. Be there at 12:00 pm this Sunday for a unique experience.

10 YEARS OF EXCITING CONTENT

It's going to be a star-studded celebration at the Zee Telugu Kutumbam Awards 2021, which will go on from October 23-31. It will be memorable with

breath-taking performances amidst glitz and glamour. The event will be telecasted on October 31, 6:00 PM onwards only on Zee Telugu and Zee Telugu HD.

T-Series, Gulshan Kumar come together for *Bull* with Shahid Kapoor



After the cult success of *Kabir Singh*, producer Bhusan Kumar will now collaborate with producers Amar Butala and Garima Mehta for *Bull*, an action film starring Shahid Kapoor. Set in the 1980s, the film is inspired by real-life events and marks the debut of director Aditya Nimbalkar, who has worked extensively with filmmaker Vishal Bharadwaj. The principal photography is slated to begin in 2022. Bhusan Kumar, Managing Director, T-Series shares, "We're all set to bring the audience an action extravaganza with our second collaboration with Shahid after *Kabir Singh*. I'm elated that my association with Amar Butala and Garima Mehta could hold the key to great cinema." Shahid Kapoor adds, "*Bull* is a full-blown action film inspired by real events from the life of Brigadier Bulsara. It is a privilege to play a paratrooper who leads his boys through a historic and selfless mission that has now become iconic for its precision and bravado. The opportunity to play a paratrooper is exhilarating and truly an honour."

Association, shares "We dedicate this film to men in uniforms and our soldiers who brave through unimaginable turmoil to guard this great nation's sovereignty. Shahid will be seen in an exciting avatar. This is also our first association with T-Series and I look forward to it."

Gulshan Kumar and T-Series presents *Bull*, a Guilty By Association production starring Shahid Kapoor, with story and screenplay by Aseem Arora and Parveen Shaikh. The film is directed by Aditya Nimbalkar and produced by Bhusan Kumar, Krishan Kumar, Amar Butala, and Garima Mehta. It is slated to hit the floors in 2022.

Amar Butala, Partner, Guilty By

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

- 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

- Use these on envelopes
- Icy
- A scented flower
- Hot remains from a fire
- Got away from
- A month
- A hole in a hill for a train
- Birthday present
- Scraps of material
- A funny play or film
- The leader of an empire
- Looked at
- Quicker
- Make up your mind
- Cosy
- Don't go

DOWN

- Certain
- Help
- Finished
- Plates



K RAMYA SREE

'PRABHAS NAMA'

Prabhas, who is now at top speed in terms of his career, has his hands full till 2025! Currently ready to entertain the audience and fans with five movies, the actor will appear in five different genres. Most importantly, the whole of 2022 is going to be the year of 'Prabhas Nama'. Prabhas has had a long history of experimentation when it comes to his films. The actor gave 5 years to *Baahubali* series and didn't take up any film or ad or any other pro-

ject during that time. With *Saaho*, Prabhas took on a totally new avatar for his character. In the past as well, Prabhas has gone to great lengths to make sure his work has been top-notch, and this is the reason fans love him



so much, and are looking forward to the surprise that their star has planned for them.

Apparently, his birthday is celebrated as Global Prabhas day! On his birthday today, Prabhas has planned a special surprise for his fans.

However, fans have not one but two reasons to rejoice as his film *Radhe Shyam*'s new teaser is all set to come out today! The film has been much anticipated because it marks Prabhas' return to the romantic genre after a decade.

The star is known for always bringing something new to the screen as an offering to his fans and this occasion is no different.

The Pioneer takes a look at what Prabhas has in offing in the coming years.

Radhe Shyam preparing a love story

Radhe Shyam will be to theatres on January 14, 2022, where Prabhas will be seen as a lover boy. The film, being produced by UV Creations and directed by Radhakrishna, has a great love story. The already released *Radhe Shyam* posters and the glimpses video have received rave reviews across the country. The film's teaser will release today.

A source close to Prabhas and Radhe Shyam unit has shared, "Prabhas and the movie fans will be treated with something new. An English teaser of the film with subtitles in multiple languages of *Radhe Shyam* is set to be unveiled, the highlight of the teaser is the fact that Prabhas himself will say the dialogues in English, it won't be a narration or a background voice. This is something no one has done before and it will surely leave fans wanting more. If there is someone who could pull this off, then it is pan-India star Prabhas himself!"

Mass and action entertainer Salaar

After *Chhatrapati*, Prabhas will be seen in the movie *Salaar* as a mass action entertainer, which will also be released in 2022. *KGF* series director Prashant Neil is preparing the film as a high voltage action enter-

tainer. *Salaar* will be a movie that will give a full kick to the fans of Rebel star Prabhas.

Prabhas donning the role of Sri Rama for the first time

Prabhas is starring in a mythological film for the first time in his career. Leading production house T-Series is all set to present the *Ramayana* in 3D to Indian cinema audiences under the title *Adhipurush*. Director Om Prakash Routh has been given the responsibility to helm the project. Prabhas is going to appear as lord Ram in this film.

Science fiction mixed with action for Project K

Nag Ashwin, the director who has won a national award with *Mahanati*, has prepared a sci-fi story called *Project K* for Rebel star Prabhas. *Project K* will give a visual treat to Prabhas' fans on the big screen. Bollywood beauty Deepika Padukone will be paired opposite Prabhas in the film and Big B Amitabh will be seen in another pivotal role.

A first-of-its-kind story with Spirit

Director Sandeep Reddy Vanga has penned a unique story for Prabhas, titled *Spirit*. The pan-India film is going to release in 8 languages!

'I'm a very cool guy in real life'

K RAMYA SREE

Naga Shaurya's last *Aswathama* was a damp squib at the box office and the actor has pinned all hopes on his next *Varudu Kavalenu* starring Ritu Varma.

Produced by Sithara Entertainments, the film marks the directorial debut of Lakshmi Sowjanya and the film is scheduled for theatrical release on October 29. The trailer of the film was unveiled last night in Hyderabad at a grand event which had in attendance actor Rana Daggubati.

The film is all about the institution of marriage and the drama revolving around it. Responding to some questions posed by onlookers and social influencers who attended the trailer launch event, Naga Shaurya said, "I'm a very cool guy in real life. I'm okay even if my future wife is dominating. At the same time, I won't adjust in all the matters. I know very well when to speak for myself."

When asked what the toughest part about making this film was, he says, "I have reduced 16 kilos of my weight after my previous film. This is the change you will see in me in *Varudu Kavalenu*. It is a classic film where family audiences will enjoy it to the core."

The story of *Varudu Kavalenu* was pitched to Naga Shaurya during the success meet of his film *Chalo* and the actor promised to do a film with Lakshmi Sowjanya right then. Sharing more details about the movie and its team, Naga Shaurya shares, "After hearing the entire story, I decided that the movie is going to be a big hit. Even just on paper, the movie is a hit. I'm sure the movie will be a big hit on big screens as well. Initially, I thought it was a small movie, but with the addition of a prestigious banner like Sithara Entertainments, the film has become bigger. Producers Chinna Babu *garu* and Naga Vamsi *garu* are very passionate. They understand the cinema well. They don't confine the budget to a film

based on the hero. They provide a budget for the film based on its story and the scale required for the story. Chinna Babu *garu* is a true filmmaker. He knows best what a film requires. *Varudu Kavalenu* caters to all sections of audiences. The film is well balanced such that both family audiences and the youth would enjoy it thoroughly. The film has really shaped up well. The final output is very good and we're all quite confident of the film's success. All the characters in the film really look fresh."

He goes on to thank Ganesh Ravuri for his appealing dialogues. "The credit for showing me handsome on-screen goes to our cinematographer Vamsi Pachipulusu. His camera work is so nice that I fell in love with myself after watching him on screen. Music composer Vishal Chandrasekar has delivered good tunes. Director Sowjanya *akka* has made it so easy and comfortable for me. She has loved the film a lot. Finally, her dreams are turning into reality with this movie."

Speaking at the event, Rana Daggubati said, "Naga Shaurya means 'good guy'. The proverb that comes to one's mind about Shaurya is 'Ramu is a good boy'. *Varudu Kavalenu* is a great title and it is apt for Shaurya. Even if one doesn't reveal the hero's name, looking at the title, one will expect Naga Shaurya to be the lead of the film. Theatres are back. Movies are back. Naga Shaurya is also back with *Varudu Kavalenu*. I wish all the best for the entire team. Today, I didn't come here as a guest. I came for my *Bheemla Nayak* producer Naga Vamsi. I came straight from the shooting location. I'm sure he will score success with *Varudu Kavalenu* too."

Apart from the lead cast, the film also has Nadiya, Murali Sharma, Vennela Kishore, Praveen, Rangasthalam Mahesh, and others playing key roles.



Gaami gains Allu Arjun's praise

We have recently reported that the title of Vishwak Sen's next has been announced to be *Gaami*, which will also star actress Chandini Chowdhary as the female lead. Vishwak who was seen as an Aghora in the recently released *glimpse*, grabbed the attention of the movie lovers, and now he garnered appreciation from icon star Allu Arjun too. The actor took to Twitter and heaped praises on the

teaser and the film's team: "GAAMI Title Announcement. Just came across this intriguing glimpse. I wholeheartedly appreciate the entire team. I went through the credits, most of the team very young and fresh. I really felt very happy to see new age film makers rise. And I truly appreciate UV creations for their passion to bring something new all the time (sic)."

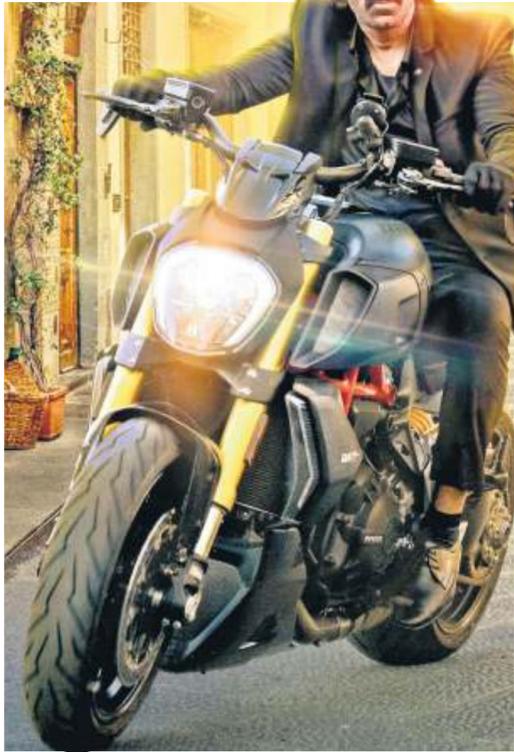
Gaami is helmed by debutant Vidyadhar Kagita and bankrolled by Karthik Sabareesh.



NATYAM WINS VENKAIHAH NAIDU'S APPROVAL



Natyam, a self-produced film starring Sandhya Raju, a popular classical dancer, hit theatres on Friday. The film, directed by Revanth Korukonda, produced under the banner of Nishrinkala Film, opened to a positive response. The film won Vice President Venkaiah Naidu's praise on Friday. Congratulating the film and the team, Venkaiah Naidu shared on his social media, "*Natyam* is a beautiful film starring Kuchipudi dancer Mrs. Sandhyaraju in the lead role. This film is discovering the greatness of 'Natyakala' and I want everyone to watch this film."



Ravi Teja's Khiladi moves to Dubai

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja and director Ramesh Varma's action entertainer *Khiladi* is nearing completion. Produced by Satyanarayana Koneru, the film features Meenakshi Chaudhary and Dimple Hayathi as female leads.

The team flew to Dubai to shoot a song on the three lead actors. Yashwanth master is supervising the choreography of the song scored by Devi Sri Prasad. The shoot has already begun and apart from Dubai, the song will also be canned in Mascot.

Ramesh Varma is putting in extra effort to offer a thrilling ride to the audiences in theatres. Sujit Vaasudev and GK Vishnu are the cinematographers.

Ravi Teja plays a dual role in the film produced by Bollywood production house Pen Studios in association with A Studios.

Srikanth Vissa and music director DSP's brother Sagar wrote the dialogues for the film, while Srimani penned lyrics and Amar Reddy is the editor of the film.

Regina faces netizens' heat

Actress Regina Cassandra is always known for speaking her heart out in any situation and is

very bold with her choices and opinions. Recently, the *Evaru* actress endorsed a whisky brand for which she faced netizens' wrath. After she posted a picture with the whisky bottle on her social media, netizens bombarded her comments' section asking her to turn down the post and not promote alcohol openly in public. The actress' post read, "From anchoring when I was 9, to working in commercials and then films. It's a journey that I'll treasure for life. I also cherish the all-new Signature Premier Whiskey that is beauti-

fully crafted by nature! #MySignatureSip is a true treasure."

To the post, one of them replied, "As per the Indian ministry of health, there have been some alcohol advertising Laws and you can not post directly on social media like this. Please remove it before someone reports it (sic)."

Another said, "Article 47 of our constitution prohibits Alcohol. To improve the public health this act is mandatory. You and me, the third person who has been reading this is also public. On this covid crisis this type of alcohol beverage promotion is not giving any good message to our society."

Alcohol sales will not affect even if it was not comes in advertisement. You can do lot other jobs

for people's health." "Is this Permissible now to openly promote Alcohol?" read another comment.

Another user calling her post 'stupid', wrote, "What message she is giving to their fans. Drink Whisky as it shows her journey in Industry. Stupid just for money promoting alcohol."

Some did come in support of the actress, but on condition to also promote things like 'Don't drink and drive'. One user wrote, "Kindly also add #EitherDrinkNoDrive and #DontDrinkAndDrive please." So far, the actress has not responded to any of these comments.



SKY IS THE LIMIT



Suriya's recently released *Soorari Pottru*, dubbed into Telugu as *Akasame Nihaddura*, won the Sony Music South Top Performing Album in Tamil and Telugu. Fans of the films are elated and the topic is now trending on Twitter.

Sindhu loses in quarters

PTI ■ ODENSE

Returning to action after a break, India's double Olympic medallist P V Sindhu on Friday bowed out of the Denmark open badminton tournament after losing in straight games to world no 8 Korean An Seyoung in the women's singles quarterfinals here.

Playing her first tournament since winning the bronze medal at the Tokyo Olympics in August, Sindhu couldn't match her fifth seeded young Korean rival, going down 11-21 12-21 in 36 minutes.

Sindhu had also lost to An Seyoung in straight games the last time they clashed here two years ago in their only career meeting.

The reigning world champion, who had taken a break to rejuvenate after a hectic Olympics campaign, just couldn't find a way across the attacking game of the Korean, who was always a step ahead during the contest.

An Seyoung made a



superb start and took just six minutes to grab a massive seven-point lead at the break with Sindhu unable to find a crack in the Korean's game.

The Indian tried to control the net but committed few unforced errors with the Korean showing great athleticism to return everything thrown at her.

The Korean dominated the forecourt and played some exceptional shots, including a few diving forehand returns, to lead 16-8. In the end, Sindhu netted to give 10 game points to the Korean, who sealed the opening game when the Indian erred again.

Sindhu tried to change her tactics by playing high lifts

but she was not disciplined enough and after trailing 7-8 at one stage, she slipped to 8-11 at the break.

It was a one-way traffic after the interval as An Seyoung jumped to 20-10 in a jiffy. Sindhu saved two match points before committing another error.

On Thursday night, India's

Sameer Verma notched up a stunning straight-game win over world no.3 Anders Antonsen to storm into the quarterfinals but it was curtains for Lakshya Sen at the Super 1000 tournament here.

World No 28 Sameer, who had qualified for the World Tour Finals in 2018 after winning three titles, produced a sensational performance to outwit local hero Antonsen 21-14 21-18 in a 50-minute men's singles battle.

The 27-year-old from Madhya Pradesh will lock horns with 33-year-old Tommy Sugiarto, a bronze winner at the 2014 World Championships. However, it proved to be too daunting a task for Lakshya to match Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen as he thrashed the Indian 21-15 21-7 in a lop-sided second-round contest.

Coming into the match with a dismal 1-5 head-to-head count, Sameer showed great athleticism and tactical acumen to down Antonsen, a silver medallist at the 2019 World Championships.

Mentors can't do much, it's players who have to perform : Gavaskar

PTI ■ DUBAI

A mentor can only help as much because it is the players who will have to go out there and perform the "actual task", the legendary Sunil Gavaskar said on the appointment of Mahendra Singh Dhoni as the Indian team mentor for the T20 World Cup.

India will play Pakistan on Sunday in the Super 12s and Gavaskar feels that in this format Virat Kohli's team can't be termed clear favourites.

"Mentor can't do much," Gavaskar told Aaj Tak.

"Yes, he can help you prepare in change room as its a fast-paced game and if needed, help you tweak the tactic."

"May be speak to batters and bowlers during time-out, so the move to employ Dhoni is a good one but Dhoni will be in the change room and its the players who have to perform the actual task in the middle. How they handle pressure would determine what the result will be," Gavaskar said during the event.

Gavaskar feels Kohli will feel lesser pressure now that he has



decided to quit captaincy in the T20 format.

"When you become a captain, you can't just think about yourself, he has to speak to a batter who is going through a bad patch or discuss strategies with a bowler.

"Amid all this, one tends to neglect his own form. When you don't have that pressure, you can focus on your own game. I think it will be good for Virat that after T20 World Cup, he doesn't have to think about responsibilities.

"So he can focus on his own

game and score as many runs as possible," he added.

Gavaskar, one of the most respected voices in world cricket, also pointed out that India's failure to win knock-out games in global tournaments has been primarily due to the faulty team selections.

"India's problem in big matches has been team combination. If they would have got final XI selection right in knock out games, they would have had less problems. At times, your thought process is different," he said.

"In knock-outs and finals, you should bat first, put runs on the board, whatever you put, 140 may be, the other team has to score and it's not always easy to score at seven runs per over in international cricket," he explained.

In T20 cricket, Gavaskar has found one flaw with the Indian batting and that's losing momentum between over 7 and 12.

"India's batting weakness has been in the overs after Powerplay, between 7 and 12. After 7 overs, we start struggling.

Erasmus, Wiese take debutants Namibia to Super 12s of T20 WC

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Gerhard Erasmus led from the front with a well-crafted unbeaten fifty to guide debutants Namibia to a historic eight-wicket win over Ireland in the first round Group B match and qualification spot in Super 12s of the ICC T20 World Cup here on Friday.

Erasmus (53 not out off 49 balls) guided Namibia's chase of 126 in the company of David Wiese, who made an unbeaten 28.

Namibia made a quiet start to their chase. Boundaries were hard to come by for Namibia batters as they dealt mostly in singles and twos. Their struggle can be gauged from the fact

that they found the fence only four times in the first 10 overs, scoring 49 for one.

Needing 77 off the last 10 overs, Erasmus and Zane Green (24) shared 48 runs for the second wicket to keep Namibia in the contest.

The duo played sensibly and brought down the equation to 55 off 42 balls and with nine wickets in hand, Namibia were clear favourites to win the contest.

But Green failed to clear Kevin O'Brien at mid-off to make the contest interesting.

After his two wickets with the ball, Wiese came to Namibia's rescue by hitting Craig Young for back-to-back sixes in the 15th over to bring



down the equation to 33 off the last five overs.

Needing 21 off 18 balls, Erasmus lofted off-spinner Simi Singh over the long-off boundary and then struck two

boundaries in the 19th over off Craig Young to finish off the chase in style with nine balls remaining.

Namibia have joined Sri Lanka in the Super 12s from

Group A.

Earlier, asked to bowl, Namibian bowlers made a strong comeback after Ireland made a brisk start to restrict them to a modest 125 for eight.

Ireland started brightly with Paul Stirling (38) and Kevin O'Brien (25) sharing 62 runs off just 44 balls for the opening stand.

But Namibia pulled things back by removing both the openers in quick succession as Ireland slumped to 67 for two in 8.4 overs.

After the opening partnership, Ireland innings literally fell apart as, barring skipper Andy Bilbirnie (21), no other batter could reach dou-

ble-digit score.

The dismissal of Gareth Delany pegged back Ireland considerably as their batters found it difficult to keep up the scoring rate, reaching just 95 runs for the loss of three wickets at the end of the 15th over.

Bilbirnie tried his best to lift the innings but he also struggled to rotate the strike against some incisive bowling by Namibia in the second half of the innings, picking up six wickets by conceding just 54 runs in the last 10 overs.

Ireland's problems were compounded when left-arm pacer Jan Frylinck snared two wickets in the 16th over -- first Bilbirnie LBW and then Curtis Campher.

T20WorldCupwindow

PANDYA WILL BE AN IMPACT PLAYER FOR INDIA: RAHANE

Dubai: Star all-rounder Hardik Pandya will be an impact player for India in the ongoing T20 World Cup, India Test vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane said, urging the side to rally around the injury-ravaged cricketer whose role as a bowler is uncertain due to fitness issues. There has been a lot of debate regarding Pandya's inclusion in the squad as he did not bowl in the recently-concluded IPL. The team management has, time and again, stressed on the importance of his bowling to the side's overall balance.

I AM READY TO BACK WARNER'S ABILITY: FINCH

Abu Dhabi: Australia captain Aaron Finch is ready to back the "ability and judgement" of his out-of-form opening partner David Warner, hoping that he would come out all xames here, are 0, 2, 0, 1. "I am backing Davy's ability and judgement," Finch said on the eve of the South Africa game. "If you look at his World Cup history, it's bloody good and would he like more runs? Absolutely. He is one of the greatest players Australia has ever produced and I have no doubts that come game one, he will be absolutely fired and ready to go," the skipper added. Finch said that his recovery from a knee injury had been quicker than expected.

F1 title fight could take big swing

AP ■ AUSTIN

The US Grand Prix is not a must-win race for Lewis Hamilton, and the seven-time champion brushed off such a suggestion even as he trails Max Verstappen in the title fight and his rival should be favored at Mexico City in the next round.

Verstappen is a two-time winner in Mexico City, where Formula One races Nov. 7 and the Red Bull team has been dominant. But up first is Sunday's race at the Circuit of the Americas and Hamilton, who calls COTA his "happy hunting ground" because he's won five times in Texas, trails Verstappen by six points in the standings.

"It's important to win every race somehow, you know, maximizing our points, that's our goal over these next six races,"



Hamilton said Thursday.

"It's going to be incredibly difficult and there will be moments where we can perhaps edge (Red Bull) out. I don't like to assume that Mexico is not going to be strong but they are usually very strong in Mexico."

Formula One returns to North America its next two rounds for the first time since the start of the pandemic.

Races in Austin and Mexico City were canceled last year, and Montreal is set to return next year for the first time since 2019.

The series comes back now with a thrilling title fight between upstart Verstappen and the superstar Hamilton. He clinched his 2015 and 2019 titles at COTA and Hamilton has won in five of F1's eight races at the track.

Verstappen, a seven-time winner this season, hasn't won at COTA but has been good. His sensational drive in the rain to fourth as a 17-year-old rookie with Toro Rosso in 2015 unveiled his potential as a championship contender.

He finished second in 2018 and third in 2019, but now he and Red Bull are in the championship lead.

Teammates could play a huge role Sunday. Valtteri Bottas drove his Mercedes to victory ahead of Verstappen in Turkey two weeks, and won in Austin in 2019 from pole position.

PTI ■ LONDON

The fifth and final Test between India and England, which was suspended due to a COVID-19 outbreak in the visitors' camp last month, was on Friday rescheduled to July next year.

The England and Wales Cricket Board announced that the game has been moved to Edgbaston from Manchester and will be part of India's white-ball tour. The match will be held from July 1.

"With India leading the series 2-1, the concluding fifth match will now take place from July 1, 2022, at Edgbaston, following an agreement between the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI)," said the ECB in a statement.

"Ticket holders do not have to take any action as all tickets will remain valid for the equivalent rearranged matchday at their host venue.

"Host venues will communicate the new fixture details to ticket purchasers and the options available to them, including the timeframe for requesting a refund if they are not able to attend the new match day," the ECB added.

Last month, BCCI President Sourav

Fifth Test between India and England rescheduled to July 2022



Ganguly, in an interview to PTI, had made it clear that the rescheduled match would be an extension of the series and not a standalone game.

"We want the series to be completed as this will be our first series win (in

England) since 2007," Ganguly had said. India were leading 2-1 when the match was called off after the visiting players refused to step on to the field following positive COVID-19 cases among its support staff, including head coach Ravi

Benzema faces verdict in blackmail trial

AP ■ VERSAILLES (FRANCE)

A French court trying an alleged blackmail case involving Real Madrid forward Karim Benzema and four other defendants expects to render its verdict on Friday.

Benzema hasn't been attending the trial that opened Wednesday in Versailles and is scheduled to wrap up Friday. He is charged with complicity in the alleged attempt in 2015 to blackmail France teammate Mathieu Valbuena over a sex tape thought to have been stolen from his mobile phone.

Prosecutors asked Thursday that Benzema be fined 75,000 euros (\$87,000), the maximum allowed on the charge, and be given a suspended 10-month jail term. The law allows for a maximum of 5 years imprisonment.

The four other defendants are being tried on charges of attempted blackmail.



AP ■ LONDON

Arsenal hosts Aston Villa after a tepid start to the season that's been summed up by drawing the last two matches to sit 12th in the Premier League after eight games.

It took Alexandre Lacazette's late equalizer to grab a point against Crystal Palace on Monday and the forward will now be pushing for a start against Villa. The 30-year-old Frenchman has played only 72 minutes in the league so far.

There is no new contract on offer with his current deal expiring at the end of the season. Bukayo Saka could miss Friday's game after being forced off at half-time on Monday after being kicked on the calf. Villa is in 13th place with 10 points.

Osasuna goes for its fourth straight victory in the Spanish League when it hosts Granada. A win would leave the team tied on 20 points with leader Real Sociedad ahead of the weekend matches.

Osasuna hasn't won four in a row in the league since 2010. It won four of its last five matches, with the only setback a home loss against Real Betis. Granada is just outside the relegation zone with six points from eight matches.

It beat Sevilla in its last game for its first win of the season after going winless in its first seven matches. Granada is winless in its last six away games in the league.

Arsenal hosts Villa



lost three of its past four matches, drawing the other, and is in 17th place, above Genoa and Cagliari on goal difference alone.

Spezia is only a point ahead after last week's win over bottom-place Salernitana snapped a run of three straight losses. Torino is just two points above the relegation zone but has faced Lazio, Juventus and Napoli recently.

Mainz hosts Augsburg with

both teams looking to turn around wretched recent form. Mainz won three out of its first four league games this season, but none of the four since, and has dropped to 11th.

Augsburg is 16th, hasn't won any of its last three games and has the unwanted record of joint-fewest goals scored with four from eight games.

Last-place Saint-Etienne is

looking for its first win this season against Angers. The 10-time champions have just four points from 10 games and were routed 5-1 by Strasbourg in their previous game last week.

Saint-Etienne will be without suspended midfielder Zaydou Youssouf and has several doubtful players, including goalkeeper Etienne Green and right back Yvann Maçon.

SINGLES

JAISMINE EASE INTO SECOND ROUND OF WNB

Hisar: Asian Championship bronze-medallist Jaismine and defending champion Pwilo Basumatary of Assam advanced to the second round of the 60kg category with convincing victories in the Women's National Boxing Championships here on Friday. Representing Haryana, Jaismine comfortably beat Chhattisgarh's Rajbala by the unanimous 5-0 verdict in her opening round, while Basumatary out-punched Karnataka's Theertha Lakshmi at the St Joseph's International School here.

SAMEER TO ENTER QUATERFINALS

Odense: India's Sameer Verma notched up a stunning straight-game win over world no.3 Anders Antonsen to storm into the quarterfinals but it was curtains for Lakshya Sen at the Denmark Open Super 1000 badminton tournament here. World No 28 Sameer, who had qualified for the World Tour Finals in 2018 after winning three titles, produced a sensational performance to outwit local hero Antonsen 21-14 21-18 in a 50-minute men's singles battle on Thursday. The 27-year-old from Madhya Pradesh will lock horns with 33-year-old Tommy Sugiarto, a bronze winner at the 2014 World Championships

AMATEUR AVANI WON HERO WDGTN SEASON

Panchkula: Amateur Avani Prashanth won her second title of the season as she held off the seasoned Amandeep Drall by a shot to win the 11th leg of the Hero Women's Pro Golf Tour here on Friday. Avani and Amandeep played even par rounds, which helped the former stay ahead to emerge victor at the Panchkula Golf Club. Avani totalled 2-under 214, while Amandeep aggregated 1-under 215. Three players, Pranavi Urs (76), Jahnavi Bakshi (73) and Vani Kapoor (73) were tied for third place at 4-over 219. Seher Atwal (75) was sixth at 221 and Rhea Jha (73) was seventh. Saaniya Sharma, amateur Kriti Chowhan and Hitaashee Bakshi occupied the eighth to 10th places.