

**ANALYSIS 7**  
EXPOSING PAK'S ROLE IN TALIBAN TAKEOVER

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VIJAYAWADA, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 6, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



# the pioneer



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## VIDEO CLIP OF FARMERS BEING RUN OVER GOES VIRAL, NATION SHOCKED

A video, apparently of an SUV running over slogan-shouting farmers marching in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur Kheri, has surfaced on social media and has even been shared by Varun Gandhi, an MP of the ruling BJP. Eight people, including four farmers, were killed in the incident on Sunday. The video, being shared widely on social media, is yet to be verified by the police. It is also not clear from the visuals who is in the driving seat. Earlier today, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra tweeted the viral clip with a pointed question for Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

## LET CBI PROBE LAKHIMPUR KHERI VIOLENCE, UP LAWYERS WRITE TO CJI

The events at Lakhimpur Kheri, where farmers were allegedly mowed down by a car driven by the son of a Union minister, should be investigated by the CBI under the supervision of the Supreme Court, lawyers have written to the Chief Justice of India. In a petition, lawyers from Uttar Pradesh asked Chief Justice NV Ramana to direct the Home Ministry to ensure the filing of a First Information Report and punishment for the ministers and all those involved in Sunday's incident in which eight people lost their life.

## CHHATTISGARH CM STOPPED AT LUCKNOW AIRPORT, SITS ON FLOOR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel began a sit-in protest outside the Lucknow airport this afternoon as he was stopped by the state police amid widespread demonstrations against eight deaths on Sunday in Uttar Pradesh's Lakhimpur district, about 130 km away. Baghel said he wanted to meet Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who has been in police custody since yesterday in Sitapur. She said she was "illegally" arrested when she was on her way to Lakhimpur to meet those affected by Sunday's violence while during the UP government to keep her in custody "indefinitely".

## REPRIMANDING UNRULY STUDENTS NOT PROVOCATION FOR SUICIDE, SAYS SC

Reprimanding a student for his indiscipline would not be tantamount to provoking a student to commit suicide unless there are repeated specific allegations of harassment, the Supreme Court said on Tuesday. The apex court said that an old saying - spare the rod and spoil the child - may have lost its relevance in present days and Corporal punishment to the child is not recognised by law but that does not mean that a teacher or school authorities have to shut their eyes to any indiscipline act of a student. The top court said it is a solemn duty of a teacher to instill discipline in the students and reprimand is not uncommon.

# 'Swechha': Govt to provide sanitary napkins to 10 lakh girl students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday launched the 'Swechha' programme which aims at the health and hygiene of adolescent girls studying in government schools and colleges by providing quality sanitary napkins at free of cost.

Speaking on this occasion, the Chief Minister said that many reports stated that almost 23 per cent of the young girls in this country are staying away from attending schools and colleges during menstruation.

In order to change these circumstances, the State government has been taking measures right from improving toilets in all government institutions under the 'Nadu-Nedu' initiative to bringing the 'Swechha' programme.

He said that under the initiative, awareness on menstruation will be created for the students studying between Class 7-12, once in every



month by women teachers, ANMs and women police personnel. Apart from this, awareness on Disha app and Disha Act will also be given by the women police and Joint Collector (Aasara) will be monitoring the orientation programmes and a women teacher will be appointed as a nodal officer.

The State government will be providing quality sanitary napkins to over 10 lakh students studying

between Classes 7-12 at a cost of Rs 32 crore, where each student will be receiving 120 napkins every year.

The students will also be taught on proper disposal of sanitary pads, where separate dustbins and 6417 incinerators have been provided under CLAP programme.

The Chief Minister said that the state is leading in women empowerment, where these sanitary nap-

kins will be sold at Cheyutha shops at affordable rates.

The government initiated Nadu-Nedu and revamping all the toilets in 56703 schools and hostels by constructing them with running water facilities. In the first phase, 15,715 schools have been renovated and all the remaining schools will be completed by 2023.

Speaking on the occasion, Women and Child Welfare Minister Taneti Vanitha welcomed distribution of sanitary napkins free of cost to adolescent girls under Swechha programme and thanked Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for focusing on health and hygiene of the students. She said sanitary napkins are being distributed to 10 lakh students and a nodal officer will monitor the distribution in every school and added that branded napkins are being made available at YSR Cheyutha stores.

# Sajjala suspects TDP's hand in Mundra Port drugs scandal

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Refuting the allegations of TDP leaders as baseless, Government Advisor (Public Affairs) Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy has said that the Opposition has been planting mindless stories to irk the government.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, he slammed the Opposition leaders stating that they were making unnecessary remarks linking the Mundra Port drug scandal to Andhra Pradesh although it was denied by the State government. He said that it had become a routine for them to make allegations against the State government wherever it happened. The way the Opposition was dealing with the issue was giving rise to suspicion on TDP's involvement, as Chandrababu Naidu had a history of hoarding money abroad.

Since Lokesh was on a secret trip to Dubai, doubts were being raised



on Chandrababu Naidu's family entering into the drug business, Ramakrishna Reddy said and added that the investigation was still going on and the Central agencies would reveal the culprits soon. "Unlike in the previous government, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has been strictly working against ganja peddling and thus constituted a Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) to nab those involved. So far, almost 2.50

lakh kg of ganja has been seized since the formation of SEB," the Advisor to the government said.

Ramakrishna Reddy said that although it was going on for a long time now, the previous government had failed miserably in controlling the drug racket and made it clear that the government would take legal action over Naidu's false allegations in the heroin case.

Responding to the TDP's allegations over 'Pandora Papers', he said that a person named Alisha was an acquaintance of Chandrababu Naidu and Ganta Srinivas. Naidu had been criticising the Chief Minister with Wikileaks, 'Paradise Paper's, 'Panama Papers' and now 'Pandora Papers', just to defame him.

He alleged that an independent director of the Heritage company was mentioned in the 'Panama Papers' and observed that Naidu was capable enough to work as a consultant for international scammers with his experience.



## HC orders AP govt to pay NREGS bills

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Tuesday took up the petitions filed by 1,013 petitioners against the non-payment of the National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) bills by the State government. The High Court ordered the State government to clear all the pending bills within four weeks with 12 percent interest.

The court struck down the government's offer of a 20 percent discount in the payment of NREGS bills and court clarified that the arrears should be paid annually with 12 percent interest.

The High Court said it would not hesitate to take contempt of court action if the orders were not enforced. The court announced that it was dismissing circulars, reducing bills by 20 percent.

# DPIIT identifies 3 SEZs, one industrial park as 'Leaders'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sri City Industrial Park and SEZ, Brandix India Apparel City, Ramky Pharma City in Andhra Pradesh were among the 41 Industrial Parks that have been assessed as "Leaders" in the Industrial Park Ratings System Report released by DPIIT on Tuesday.

Sri City was ranked No. 40 among the industrial parks and is the only exception from South India as the remaining parks are from western and northern parts of the country.

Leaders are parks and zones registering highest level of performance at an aggregate level. Another 90 Industrial Parks were rated as "Challengers".

Among SEZ, Apache SEZ, Dr Reddy's, Hetero, Visakhapatnam SEZs were tagged "Challengers".

Challengers are parks and zones

registering performance level quite close to leaders but marginally lower at aggregate level. These ratings are assigned on the basis of key existing parameters and infrastructure facilities etc. As many 185 parks were rated as "Aspirers", of which 14 are from Andhra Pradesh. Aspirers are parks and SEZs that need significant intervention in future to improve their performance.

The second edition of the Industrial Park Rating System (IPRS) Report was launched by Union Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Prakash on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Som Prakash said the IPRS 2.0 Report will enhance India's industrial competitiveness and attract investments. About 98 percent of these parks are from western (Maharashtra, Rajasthan and

Gujarat) and northern (Uttarakhand) regions of the country.

At 6,637.5 lakh hectare, Andhra Pradesh is among top six states in land availability for Industrial parks.

The Minister said the report is an extension of the India Industrial Land Bank, which features more than 4,400 industrial parks in a GIS-enabled database to help investors identify their preferred location for investment.

Based on the learning from the pilot stage, the Union government started IPRS 2.0 in 2020. All States and 51 SEZs, including 29 private, participated in the IPRS 2.0 Report.

Also, 24 Private Sector Industrial Parks were nominated. Ratings have been undertaken for 449 out of 478 nominations received.

The survey involved responses from 5,700 tenants.

## LAKHIMPUR VIOLENCE

# Detained beyond 24 hours without FIR: Priyanka

Cong leaders claim drones monitoring her

PNS ■ BAHRAICH/LAKHIMPUR KHERI

The Uttar Pradesh authorities on Tuesday agreed to the demand for a second post-mortem of a farmer killed in the Lakhimpur Kheri incident after his family refused to cremate him, while mortal remains of the three others were consigned to flames at their native places during the day.

Family members of Gurminder Singh (22) of Moharia village of Bahraich had refused to cremate him till a second autopsy is done, claiming that he was shot dead. They received support from farmer leader Rakesh Tikait and Punjabi singer Sonia Maan, who arrived in the village this evening.

Senior district administration

officials confirmed that the second post-mortem of Gurminder will be conducted at the district hospital.

They said a vehicle has been sent to bring the body to the hospital post-mortem house.

A team of experts has arrived at Bahraich district police line from capital Lucknow by helicopter for the autopsy, they said.

Additional Director General of Police (Gorakhpur) Akhil Kumar and other senior civil and police officials had come to Moharia village to persuade the family to perform the last rites but when his kin and farmer leaders did not relent, a decision for a second autopsy was taken.



## TODAY

### ALMANAC

- Month & Paksham:** Bhadrapada & Krishna Paksha
- Panchangam**
- Tithi:** Amavasya 16:34
- Nakshatram:** Hasta 23:19
- Time to Avoid:** Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
- Rahukalam:** 12:04 pm - 1:32 pm
- Yamagandam:** 7:39 am - 9:07 am
- Varjyam:** 8:55 am - 10:24 am
- Gulika:** 10:35 am - 12:04 pm
- Good Time:** (to start any important work)
- Amritkalam:** 5:47 pm - 7:16 pm
- Abhijit Muhurtham:** Nil

### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

**Forecast:** ScatteredThunderstorm  
**Temp:** 32/25  
**Humidity:** 72%  
**Sunrise:** 6:07 am  
**Sunset:** 06:00 pm  
**Current Weather Conditions**  
Updated OCTOBER 05, 2021 5:00 PM



# 'Weatherman of AP' predicts 2 cyclones

SNV SUDHIR ■ VIJAYAWADA

Even as two systems are forming in the bay that may gain strength to turn cyclones in quick succession starting the second half of the current month, October appears to be the favourite season for cyclones to hit the Andhra Pradesh coast. Interestingly, among all the coastal states in the country, the Andhra Pradesh coast has witnessed the maximum cyclones in the month of October in the last 200 years.

As per the IMD data compiled by weather blogger B Sai Praneeth, who is popularly known as 'AP Weatherman', in the last 200 years, from 1891 to 2020, the majority of October cyclones crossed the Andhra Pradesh coast. Hudhud in 2014, Titli in 2018 are recent examples. Andhra Pradesh is followed by



West Bengal. Between the years 1891 and 2020, 41 cyclones and 14 severe cyclones crossed Andhra Pradesh, Odisha and West Bengal coast had witnessed 32 cyclones and 13

severe cyclones. The Tamil Nadu coast was hit by 28 cyclones and 6 severe Cyclones in the last 200 years.

"Andhra Pradesh lies along the central and south Bay of Bengal. Generally, during October, many Low-Pressure pulses coming from the West Pacific will be placed along North Andaman. The ridge placement will be towards North-West and hence almost all the cyclones make their way towards Andhra Pradesh. But here exceptions exist. If there are any western disturbances in the Himalayas, the cyclones will move towards Odisha or West Bengal coasts and if there is any ridge in the Arabian Sea, the cyclones will spin towards Tamil Nadu coast. But climatologically, October and November are two favourite months for our Andhra Pradesh," Sai Praneeth who found

a mention in Prime Minister Narendra Modi's 'Mann Ki Baat' recently told The Pioneer.

The work of 24-year-old Sai Praneeth, who has earned the reputation as a trusted weather blogger, has been appreciated and recorded in the UN-Habitat Journal published in June 2021.

With the help of coding languages Java and Python, Praneeth has written an automated code that helps him gather relevant weather data from various sites which he compiles and posts on social media handles. He has a lot of followers and subscribers on several social media platforms.

Praneeth carefully analyses and breaks down the data in simpler terms so that it helps the general public, especially farmers.

# Social media outage reminds many of the personal touch

DAVE BENNETT SILVERY ■ HYDERABAD

For some, Monday night's outage of the social media giants Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp turned out to be an opportunity that they didn't even realise they had let go.

Forced to put one's device aside, people across all age groups indulged in that much-needed human social interaction, and many rediscovered bonds and relations they had drifted apart from, without even

realising it. This was acknowledged amongst people across all age groups.

The outage of the social media apps occurred at around 9:30 pm. While most were clueless, some of the more frequent users even panicked for a while.

The initial reaction was to verify that it was not the Internet, but the three platforms, which are collectively owned by Facebook, that were down.

# Ray of hope for Kapus with the advent of hero Pawan Kalyan

**K**apu-centric politics may take the centre-stage in Andhra Pradesh for the 2024 elections, though the community per se is a divided house in the state.



20% of the total population of the state. Yet, their dominance in social structures has thrown up rulers from both the castes.

Striking while the iron is hot, actor Pawan Kalyan, having outgrown his stature as a 'part-time politician', has just appealed to the Kapu community (to which he belongs) to come forward to lead the 'social combination' that can grab the opportunity to rule the state, along with other backward and depressed classes.

At the same time, there has been some sort of dissatisfaction among people of backward & depressed classes, who constitute the majority of the population.

The electorate may face many political equations in the 2024 Assembly elections, with the battle for supremacy continuing between the YSRCP and the Telugu Desam Party.

So, the feeling 'votes are ours but seats are others' is well-entrenched in their minds. They have always lacked a 'formidable driving force' to make visible gains politically.

The prominent Reddy and Kamma communities are considered to be the only ones with 'experience' of ruling the combined state of Andhra Pradesh.

So, unity among politically 'like-minded' sections has become a tall order, with various groups latching on to dominant political forces, particularly those of Reddys and Kammas.

But they are not in good numbers as a proportion of the population. Together they account for approximately

These sections in the Kapu community are slowly becoming vulnerable, blighting chances of the much-needed unity among them. The Kapus, Telagas, Balijas and Ontaris are considered to be one group, with common identity among them and being treated as the Kapu community in different parts

**Striking while the iron is hot, actor Pawan Kalyan, having outgrown his stature as a 'part-time politician', has just appealed to the Kapu community to come forward to lead the 'social combination' that can grab the opportunity to rule the state, along with other backward and depressed classes.**

of the state.

The Balija group in Rayalaseema is as strong as that of Kapus in coastal Andhra and they are having very strong presence in politics, though under the leadership of traditional ruling castes viz. Reddy and Kamma.

The emergence of some leaders, who also proved to be guiding force for these castes, was short-lived. Vangaveeti Mohana Rangarao, former Congress legislator from Vijayawada (East), was considered an inspirational figure for the Kapu community. He was the moving spirit behind the mammoth rally of the Kapu community organised in Vijayawada on 10 July, 1988 that saw the participa-

tion of these communities' leaders belonging to all political parties.

Former minister Mudragada Padmanabham, who had fought for quota for Kapus, was among the leaders present in the rally. Vangaveeti was then in jail and could not secure bail for attending the rally. It was clearly a show of strength for the Kapu community and the second such rally after the maiden one in Vijayawada in 1982.

After Vangaveeti's murder due to factional politics of Vijayawada in December 1988, Mudragada stepped in, thinking he could fill the void and managed to give some inspiration to the community. Yet, he is still strugg-



M D RATNA KUMAR Senior Journalist

gling to sustain the stir for Kapu quota.

The torching of train bogies at Tuni, allegedly by miscreants who had masqueraded as members of the community attending the meeting, thwarted Mudragada's plan to register the community's protest in a conspicuous manner. He was blamed for 'lack of planning'. He left the venue abruptly. Thereafter, the issues pertaining to quota for Kapus and their unity took a back seat.

Kapus, accounting for nearly 30% of the population, can be a formidable force if only

they are united. Realising this, Reddy and Kamma groups have taken 'precautionary measures' to shatter the unity in the Kapu community by patronising the same groups that are present in both YSR Congress and Telugu Desam.

Reddys and Kammas sensed danger when actor Chiranjeevi launched Praja Rajyam Party (PRP) in 2008, with the Kapu community feeling rejuvenated. But due to lack of political foresight and strategies for political survival, his party bit the dust at the hustings in 2009, despite getting 70 lakh votes and 18 Assembly seats.

Later Chiranjeevi merged his outfit with the Congress, after consulting then Congress president Sonia Gandhi. After completion of his tenure as Rajya Sabha member belonging to the Congress (thanks to the merger), he has been maintaining political silence. Observers say he could have been the front runner in the 2014 elections had he protected the identity of PRP till then.

Now there is once again a ray of hope for the Kapu

community with the emergence of hero Pawan Kalyan, younger brother of Chiranjeevi, who launched Jana Sena Party. The JSP is now friendly with BJP and is preparing to take on YSRC by aligning with like-minded parties.

Noticeably, it is essential for TDP and JSP to join hands for taking on YSRC in AP. Presently both TDP and JSP are in perplexed condition. For, in the 2019 elections, the TDP lost power to YSRC and the ruling party got 151 Assembly seats and 22 Lok Sabha seats in AP.

Pawan Kalyan's JSP could wrest only one seat and the hero himself lost the two seats he had contested to YSRC. Pawan Kalyan is once again active in politics.

Political circles feel that this time the main aim of the Kapus is to arrest the split of their votes among parties. For the community, it pays to be united; so, if TDP and JSP unite tomorrow 'for the sake of AP', they stand a chance to make an impact.

In the 2019 elections, YSRC, which bagged 151 Assembly seats, got 1.56

crores votes and the TDP got 1.23 crores votes, while getting just 23 seats. That is 23 lakh votes brought about regime change. If one adds the vote share of JSP, the picture would be even better for the Kapu community.

TDP now cannot hope to return to power if it chooses to go alone. It will have to accommodate JSP.

If these two parties clinch a seat-sharing agreement, the majority of votes from the Kapu community may go to this probable combination. Hence, Pawan has openly requested the Kapu community to come forward in leading the backward and depressed sections of society towards power.

Hence, he became the target of fierce criticism from the ruling party, which accused him of playing politics in the name of caste. Pawan pointed to the 'double standard' of YSRCP in supporting the recent bandh, after having voted for the farm bills in Parliament. He also did 'srama daan' to repair roads, thus paving the way for his own political ascent.

## Kakinada Mayor loses no-trust motion

PNS ■ KAKINADA

In what appears to be a shot in the arm for the YSRCP which has been riding high on a spree of victories, it has cornered success in getting the no-confidence motion passed against the Kakinada Mayor Sunkara Pavani of the TDP at the Special Council meeting here on Tuesday. As many as 36 members voted in favour of the motion.



Minister who is rural MLA and Dwarampudi Chandrasekhara Reddy city MLA.

Out of the 46 members who attended the Special Council meeting, 43 are corporators while three are ex officio members who include Vanga Geeta MP, Kurasala Kannababu

After obtaining the authorisation of the District Collector, Joint Collector Dr G. Lakshmiha conducted the

Special Council meeting. Among those attending, 31 are TDP corporators including 21 rebels, 8 YSRCP, two independents and two BJP rebels.

Though issued a whip by the Telugu Desam all the 21 rebels voted in favour of the no confidence while 9 others remained neutral. Similarly of the total three BJP corporators two defied the whip and voted in favour of no confidence motion while the lone loyal BJP corporator Saligrama Prasanna did not attend the meeting.

Two Independents who are sailing with the YSRCP also supported the no confidence motion. The Joint Collector

who put the no confidence motion to voting asking the members to raise their hands if supporting the motion, 36 had supported raising their hands including the three co-option members - MR, Minister and city MLA. Later the Joint collector asked the members to raise their hands if opposing the no confidence motion.

Surprisingly the 9 loyal TDP corporators kept silent while the Mayor sat quiet as the lone ranger. Since the Mayor Pavani has filed a petition in the High court claiming that the TDP rebels along with others, with the instigation of YSRCP had issued no

confidence notice to the Collector without completion of four years of her tenure as such it was unconstitutional, illegal and invalid.

The High court, after hearing the arguments of both sides, posted it to October 22 for further hearing and directed that the outcome of the special meeting convened by the collector on October 5 would be subjected to the final decision of the High Court.

Despite conducting and recording the entire proceedings of the meeting, the Joint Collector did not announce the result.

## 'Weatherman of AP' predicts 2 cyclones...

Continued from Page 1

He added that the season of cyclones varies in Indian coastal states.

Praneeth said that during April and May majority of the cyclones move towards Burma and Bangladesh. During September end, October majority of cyclones move towards North Andhra Pradesh and Odisha.

During October-end and November, most of the storms move towards Guntur, Krishna

and Godavari parts. After November, cyclones tend to move towards Tamil Nadu. In January, it will be along Sri Lanka, which is due to the shift of the Inter-Tropical Convergence Zone (ITCZ), where cyclones are born, he added.

"From monsoon to winter, the ITCZ leaves India and goes down towards the Equator. That's why, the cyclone formations drift south from Odisha to Sri Lanka," Praneeth explained.

He also said that back-to-

back cyclones may hit the Andhra Pradesh coast in the coming days.

He said La Nina and Negative Indian Ocean Dipole (IOD) may cause more convection in the Bay of Bengal giving a good boost for cyclones later this month. Praneeth added the first cyclone system may form and cross the AP coast around the third week-October-14/15. The second system may form and hit the State coast in the final week after October 21.

## 'Swechha. Govt to provide sanitary napkins to...

Continued from Page 1

She said napkins are being procured from Procter & Gamble and Niine companies and added that stocks required for October and November are already sent to schools. She reminded that the state government has been spending Rs 1,800 crore per year for Sampooran Poshana and Sampoorana Poshana Plus schemes focusing on better health for women.

Later, during the event, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy released a poster on Swechha programme.

Ministers Thaneti Vanita, Adimulapu Suresh, Alla Kali Krishna Srinivas, Women and Child Welfare Principal Secretary AR Anuradha, Social Welfare Principal Secretary K Sunitha, Tribal Welfare Secretary Kantil Dande, Health and Family Welfare Commissioner Katamaneni Bhasker, SERP CEO Intiaz, Women and Child Welfare Director (Disha Special Officer) Kritika Shukla, Sarva Siksha Abhiyan SPD Vetri Selvi, School Education Director Vadrevu Chinaveerabhadradu and other officials were present.

## Pay 8 times more for renewal from Apr 2022...

Continued from Page 1

Similarly, a fitness renewal certificate for a 15 year-plus bus or truck would cost Rs 12,500 from the current fee of Rs 1,500; while in the case of medium goods or passenger motor vehicle, it would cost Rs 10,000.

Renewal of registration for imported bikes and cars will cost Rs 10,000 and Rs 40,000, respectively.

According to the notification, these rules may be called the Central Motor Vehicles (23rd Amendment) Rules, 2021, and shall come into force with effect from April 1, 2022.

The notification said an additional fee of Rs 50 for each day of delay after the expiry of certificate of fitness shall be levied.

It also said an additional fee of Rs 200 shall be levied if the certificate of registration is a smart card-type issue.



As per the notification, in case of delay in applying for renewal of certificate of registration, an additional fee of Rs 300 for delay of every month in case of private vehicles and Rs 500 for delay of every month in case of commercial vehicles shall be levied.

Under the National Automobile Scrapage Policy launched by Prime Minister Narendra Modi in August this year, mandatory fitness testing for heavy commercial vehicles is likely to be in force from April 1, 2023, and the same will be in place in a phased manner for other categories from June 1, 2024.

## Social media outage...

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The streets of Hyderabad, that usually adorn a deserted look post 11 pm, were not surprisingly buzzing with traffic. Neighbourhoods that have a concentrated number of youngsters - either students or working professionals - were seen filled with people on the streets.

Roads on densely populated pockets like Ameerpet, KPHB and Madhapur, where a large number of youngsters reside, witnessed people out on the streets and hanging out.

Hyderabad's popular hangouts like Durgam Cheruvu, Tank Bund and People's Plaza saw a larger crowd than what is expected on a Monday night, said the police.

Eateries at Ameerpet and Madhapur were also seen brimming with a larger customer base than what is usual on a Monday night post 11 pm. The roads were filled with youngsters and

families alike in such places, all attributing to the social media outage.

Taking to Twitter on Tuesday, netizens tweeted out as to how refreshing it was to finally be rid of their obsession with those three social media platforms.

Many youngsters from the city took this opportunity to visit Hyderabad's old and famous Irani chai cafes, and post pictures of tea and samosas on Twitter. The cherry on the top for young Hyderabadis was the pleasant weather that came late in the night after a mostly hot and sultry day.

Taking pride in the invigorating experience, netizens wished that such outages were a regular thing and should happen periodically.

Termining the experience of not using the addictive apps as refreshing, users posted how the downtime was productive for them. "We were recently reading books on productivity and it suggested we turn off all

distractions like Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. We tried it last night for 6 hours and it really worked!" (sic) wrote a user on Twitter.

Users also were hoping that one such outage happens for other popular apps as well. "Manifesting a Gmail crash too on a weekday morning", "I think LinkedIn should take one for the team and also stop functioning.", "please God take slack from us too" were a few of the many lighter takes on the six-hour outage.

People were also quick to notice how lives largely revolved around those platforms.

"This glitch revealed how helpless we are to these apps. I could live without Facebook and Instagram, but for WhatsApp? It'll take a while to adjust. Truth is, we'll be fine without Mark's (Zuckerberg) apps, he needs us more," tweeted out a user pointing out the stark grim reality of today's life.

## Endowments officials visit TTD for study

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

A team of officials from Andhra Pradesh Endowments Department visited Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) on Tuesday to learn on how the temple management is successfully implementing the administrative mechanism, various pilgrim-friendly measures in its temples etc.

A TTD release here on Tuesday said that the team met TTD Joint Executive officer for Education and Health Sada Bhargavi and also participated in a meeting at the Conference Hall of TTD Administrative Building in Tirupati.

## Detained beyond 24 hours without FIR: Priyanka...

Continued from Page 1

"We don't want to conduct his last rites after a false post-mortem report," a relative said.

Sonia Mann, who has been actively supporting protests against the three central agri laws, also reached Gurvinder Singh's village and supported his family's demand.

Gurvinder's family said that Congress General Secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, who is under detention in Sitapur, talked to his father over the phone.

Maan accused the UP government of creating "pressure" through the district administration, for the family.

"The body will not be sent for last rites till a second post mortem is performed in Delhi," she said earlier.

The mortal remains of the

three other dead farmers, who were mowed down by a vehicle during a protest in Lakhimpur Kheri, were cremated at their native places.

Among the farmers killed in the Sunday incident, two each were from Lakhimpur Kheri and Bahraich and the bodies were handed over to their families after a post mortem on Monday.

The families of Lavpreet Singh (19), Nachattar Singh (65) and Daljeet Singh (42) agreed to the cremation after hours of negotiations involving police officials and farmer leader Rakesh Tikait.

Tikait was present when Satnam Singh performed the last rites of his son Lavpreet Singh in the family's agricultural field in Palia tehsil in Lakhimpur Kheri late in the afternoon.

The mortal remains of Nachattar Singh of Dhaurahra tehsil in Lakhimpur Kheri were consigned to flames by his son Mandeep Singh, who is posted in Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB).

In Bahraich, the family members of Daljeet Singh performed his last rites.

The UP government is facing massive flak after eight people were killed in violence during a protest against the farm laws in Lakhimpur

Four of the dead were farmers who were allegedly knocked down by vehicles driven by BJP workers. The four others included two BJP workers, one driver of Union Minister of State for Home Ajay Kumar Mishra and Raman Kashyap, a journalist working for a private TV channel.

While the first three were lynched by agitating farmers, the scribe, according to his father, died after being hit by a vehicle when he was covering news of farmers' protest against the visit of UP Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya to Ajay Mishra's native place Sunday.

The UP Police has lodged a case against Union minister Ajay Mishra's son but no arrest has been made.

Additional Director General (Law and Order) Prashant Kumar announced on Monday that the government will order a probe headed by a retired high court judge and give compensation of Rs 45 lakh each to the families of the dead farmers. Their kin will also get a government job.

The injured will get Rs 10 lakh.

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EGG RATES ₹/100	
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B.HARE RAH NAIR CHIEF ENGINEER, RWS&S DEPT., VIJAYAWADA  
OFFICE No. -106/CLAD/11/2021-22 Dt: 04.10.21

# Restaurants found to be using stale meat, mixing beef in mutton dishes

VMC Commissioner warns hoteliers, meat shop owners of stringent action

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In what comes across as unpalatable news for gourmets, the food safety and sanitary officials of the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC), during a surprise check on Tuesday, found stale meat and fish stored in a popular private restaurant at Ajit Singh Nagar of the city. The officials also noticed that beef was allegedly mixed with mutton at the restaurant.

On a complaint filed by the customers that beef was being mixed with mutton in the preparation of certain dishes at the restaurant, VMC's food safety officials, led by Veterinary Assistant surgeon Dr. A Ravichand, Food Inspector Gopalakrishna, and Sanitary Inspector Srikanth, conducted surprise checks at Ajit Singh Nagar, Prakash Nagar, Payakapuram and other places.

Dr. Ravichand said that they had received complaints from people that mutton del-



icacies mixed with beef and food items prepared with stale meat were being served in a chain of hotels.

The officials also found that stale chicken was being sold at one of the meat shops at Prakash Nagar. The officials imposed a fine of Rs 4,000 on the shopkeeper and

destroyed the stale meat. The officials noticed that the freezer was stocked with stale meat along with some other food items and pulled up the owner of the restaurant.

Notices were served on the owner of the restaurant by VMC's Health department



officials and food safety officials of the VMC. They further said that the food sold in the restaurant is not safe for consumption. Synthetic colours were also used in the food to attract customers which is not good for health. Notices were served in another restaurant in Ajit Singh

Nagar for using synthetic colours. A fine of Rs 10,000 was imposed on the two restaurants for not having obtaining trading licenses.

VMC Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh said that stern action would be taken against the sale of stale meat in food items.



## Krishna Collector, CP inspect Dasara Navaratri arrangements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector J Nivas has said that all arrangements are being made for the Dasara Navaratri celebrations without causing any trouble to the devotees, following Covid guidelines starting from October 7 to 15. The Collector and the City Police Commissioner B Srinivasulu inspected the Dasara Navaratri arrangements on Tuesday. As part of this exercise, they inspected the queue line from Shaniswaralaya to Maha Mandapam and the bathing ghats.

Speaking on the occasion, Collector Nivas said that as per the prescribed time slots, 10,000 devotees would be allowed per day as was done last year. He said that sanitiser points were set up in most places in the queue lines in view of the Covid pandemic. Helicopter rides are made available for the people during the Dasara Navaratri festival to have a bird's eye view Vijayawada city.

Police Commissioner B Srinivasulu said that all arrangements are in place for the convenience of the devotees coming for darshan at the

Goddess Kanaka Durga temple. Four-tier bandobust arrangements are being made for the security of the devotees coming from various places.

The 'Annadanam' programme is cancelled in view of the Covid pandemic and food packets will be distributed to the devotees coming for darshan.

On the important day of Mula Nakshatram, additional police forces would be deployed for the convenience of the devotees to have a hassle-free darshan of the Goddess.

## Badvel by-poll: Cong fields Kamalamma

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Congress party has fielded PM Kamalamma, former MLA, to contest the by-elections in Badvel Assembly constituency in Kadapa district, according to Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (AICC) president Dr Sake Sailajanath.

In a statement here on Tuesday, he said Kamalamma hails from Porumamilla in Kadapa district and she belongs to SC - Madiga community. She worked as lecturer at Government Junior College for 30 years from 1979 to 2009. After taking VRS from the government service, she

contested as a candidate of INC from Badvel and won with a majority of 36,590 votes. Meanwhile, TDP State president K Atchannaidu announced that their party had decided not to field its candidate in Badvel reserved segment against the wife of the deceased Dalit MLA Dasari Venkata Subbaiah. Jana Sena Party (JSP) chief Pawan Kalyan had already announced that JSP would not field its candidate for the by-elections as Dasari Sudha, wife of late YSRCP MLA Venkata Subbaiah, was contesting the elections.

The BJP would contest the by-election and but is yet to announce its candidate.

## Krishna district boys and girls rugby teams selected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Rugby Association (KDRA) has conducted both boys and girls district team selections at Manikonda Zilla Parishat High School in Unguturu mandal near Vijayawada. Manikonda Primary Agricultural Cooperative Society (PACS) president Gogineni Venkateswara Babu inaugurated the selection trials and association representatives introduced players to him.

As many as 125 rugby players, including boys and girls, attended the selection trials across Krishna district. KDRA vice-presidents Murali, Venkata Rao and secretary N Chandrakala supervised the selection process.

Speaking on the occasion, PACS president Gogineni



Venkateswara Babu said that rugby is a very fast game and players should play wisely for win. He expressed happiness over conducting the selections in his village.

KDRA secretary N Chandrakala said the selected boys and girls teams would participate in the Inter-District Rugby Tournament which will be held at Gadimoga in East

Godavari district from October 11 to 13. The coaching camp would be organised at Manikonda High School, she added.

KDRA treasurer Tualasi Rao, Manikonda ZP High School headmaster Gummadi Padma Vani, PMC representatives V Sivarama Krishna, N Srinivasa Rao, VV Siva Prasad, S Ramesh, Physical Education

Teachers (PETs) G Rambabu, Y Murali and others participated. Boys Team: P Manikanta (Machilipatnam), S Mahesh (Vijayawada), H Abhilasha (Peda Avutapalli), V Venkataramana (Vijayawada), M Lakshmana Swamy (Sangamudi), U Lohith Sai (Peda Avutapalli), K Ashok (Vijayawada), B Aditha Prakash (Indupalli), MV Balaji, T Akash, K Rahul (Vijayawada) Girls Team: P Sindhu Priya (Vuyyuru), J Jyostna Rani (M Suravaram), T Harika, D Chinni (Vijayawada), A Anikitha (Nidamanuru), K Ramya (Gannavaram), Sk Sulekshma (Maanikonda), B Priyaanka (Mudunuru), B Sameera (Vuyyuru), B Udaya Lakshmi (Vuyyuru), G Ganga Bhavai (Hanuman Junction) U Srilekha (Gannavaram).

## Aides of Minister plan to grab farmer's land: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Tuesday expressed concern that the farmers' families were becoming victims of attacks, harassment and land grabbers almost on a daily basis in the State.

Lokesh said that at least one farmer was coming onto the road every day to tell the people about the injustice done to their families.

In the latest incident, the local YSRCP minister's followers hatched a plan to grab the lands of farmer Vema Reddy at Rajupalem village in Hindupur assembly constituency in Anantapur district. The ruling

party gangsters used JCBs to dig up and breach the farmer's lands.

In a statement here, Nara Lokesh slammed the minister's followers for diverting canal water through farmer Vema Reddy's lands. The officials

were not taking any action despite several complaints made to them. Videos were available as evidence of how the YSRCP leaders were causing untold misery to the

farmer's family. As part of the conspiracy to grab the lands, they were breaching the bunds and submerging them with water. Action should be initiated against the guilty before they would do greater injustice.

## Vishnu blames TDP govt for crisis in power sector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has alleged that the power sector was pushed into debts by the previous TDP government. He said that during the TDP regime from 2014 to 2019, the debts piled up to Rs 32,000 crore. The TDP government had not paid a rupee to the power distribution companies. He further lamented that cases were booked against the farmers in the state and were sent to jail during the TDP period.

Vishnu said soon after coming to power, the YSRCP government had supported the power sector on all fronts. From 2019 to 2021, the State government had released Rs 28,166 crore. He said the State government was focused on strengthening the power sector. The State government was implementing the best policies over the last two years and the policies are bearing fruit now. He said the government led by chief minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was working to reduce the burden of electricity tariffs on the people in the state.



The MLA on Tuesday said that a special technical team was set up to monitor the electricity prices in the market from time to time and grab more when available at cheaper price. The Electricity department had set up an artificial intelligence system to scientifically determine the power demand and availability in the market in the state.

Vishnu said that the imposition of true-up charges was due to the policies adopted by TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu during the previous TDP government. He reminded that not a single rupee was released by the then TDP government to the power distribution companies between 2014 and 2019 for true-up adjust-

## TDP flays move to fix meters to motors in agriculture sector

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP former MLA BC Janardhan Reddy on Tuesday accused the Jaganmohan Reddy government of placing unbearable current charges burden on the people only for the commissions and J-tax collections in the State. Janardhan Reddy said the Chief Minister was bent on harming the lives of over 50 lakh farmers by fixing meters on the agriculture motors. The common man was now afraid of switching on their fans because of the abnormally increased current charges. People were getting electric shocks just by looking at their current bills. Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said the CM and his party leaders were going to extreme

lengths in order to make easy money at the cost of the public exchequer. It was a fact that Jagan Reddy came to power by promising no hikes in current charges. But once he was in the CM chair, he started giving shock treatments so as to rule the people by striking fear in their hearts. The public were literally scared of the intimidation tactics of the ruling party leaders at every level. Janardhan Reddy said that the YCP rule has so far imposed a burden of Rs 7,500 crore on the people and farmers by hiking power tariff. In addition to this, the government has taken such policies that have caused skyrocketing prices of essential commodities. The Chief Minister has broken the backs of the common people by hiking

power charges even during the Coronavirus pandemic. The fixing of meters on motors would hang like a noose around the necks of the farmers. The TDP leader asserted that their party would continue the agitation till the Government rolled back the increased charges. During the previous Government, there were no power charges hikes during the five year term. But, the YCP media had carried out malicious propaganda at that time. The TDP would hold state wide protests against the double standards of the ruling YSRCP leaders. Janardhan Reddy expressed concern that the Jaganmohan Reddy regime's power sector policies have led to no new industries or investments coming to AP.

ment. He made it clear that neither Chandrababu Naidu nor the TDP had the moral right to speak on the power sector of the state.

Vishnu said that the Andhra Pradesh government had saved over Rs 2,342 crore on power purchases in the last two years, according to a joint report by

the Nitish Aayog and RMI. He said this was made possible by favorable approaches in power purchases in the two years between 2019 and 2021.

## Probe sought into ganja smuggling in State

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

TDP former MLA Dhulipalla Narendra Kumar on Tuesday demanded that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy stop making baseless statements against the Opposition party leaders with regard to multi-crore drug rackets operating from AP.

Narendra Kumar asked why the Government did not order detailed investigations into the involvement of Vijayawada-registered Aashi company and its associates based in Kakinada port till now. The police had not held any probe even after Rs 72,000 crore worth heroin was smuggled through Mundra port in the name of AP firm. There were reports that the ruling YSRCP leaders were getting directly involved in ganja cultivation, transportation and sale.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said that the Chief Minister was bent on covering up his failures by making misleading statements against the TDP. It was a fact that the rul-



ing YSRCP leaders were involved in the illegal activities. If the CM had any commitment, he should order a detailed probe into all the activities of the drug and ganja smuggling gangs in the State.

Dhulipalla Narendra said that the AP DGP has abdicated his responsibility to inquire into the activities of Sudhakar of Aashi company. This company's name hit headlines following seizure of heroin at Mundra port on September 20. The AP police did not make any efforts to investigate into the matter. The Vijayawada police commissioner just said the seized heroin was being taken to Delhi but not AP. He failed to explain why it was booked in the name of Vijayawada firm.

Expressing concern, Narendra asserted that there were clear indications about the involvement of top leaders in the government in the smuggling of drugs and ganja.

As per reports, ganja cultivation was going on in over 15,000 acres in East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts. Vizag ganja was stated to have high demand all over the country for its quality. The ruling party leaders were involved in this. The police were not taking action against them.

The TDP leader asked the DGP to explain why the burning of boats turned into a mystery near Kakinada port. In a recent incident, the police booked FIR saying that the fisherman died when his boat capsized. But there were reports that the boat perished in fire. The FIR did not mention the fire mishap. Many more such boat fire accidents were reported. This was happening only after the AP mafia links getting exposed following seizure of ganja in different parts of India.

## 3 criminals externed from Vja for 6 months

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a stringent action, Vijayawada Police Commissioner B Srinivasulu has externed two rowdy sheeters and one 'KD' from the city limits for six months.

In a press release on Tuesday, the CP announced that these criminals have not changed their behaviour and are posing problems to society. He announced the names of criminals and their involvement in offences. One of them Vadiyar Rajasekar alias Raju, aged 23 years and resident of New RR Pet was involved in 18 offences. He was imprisoned in various

cases and released on bail. He was externed from the city for six months.

The other one Malapolu Siva Naga Mahesh alias Mahesh, aged 20 years and a resident of Santhi Nagar under the Ajit Singh Nagar police station limits was externed from the city. He was involved in nine cases. Katla Sammulu, aged 27 years and a resident of New RR Pet, was also externed from the city. He was involved in 33 offences and went to jail several times. He was on bail. The CP said the three notorious criminals were not changing their behavior, so they were externed from the city for six months.

## Drawing contests held as part of 'Wildlife Week'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As part of the 67th Wildlife Week, 2021 celebrations, the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Visakhapatnam conducted drawing competitions for the students of Classes 1 to Post-Graduation on the theme of 'Wildlife' on Tuesday. Children enthusiastically participated in the competitions.

About 80 students from different schools and colleges drew their favourite animals which they saw in the Indira Gandhi Zoological Park.

Dr. Nandani Salaria, Curator of the park, said that the competition inspires children towards the protection

of the environment and focuses on the need for wildlife conservation. Such competitions would be useful in bringing out creativity among children, she added.

"We conducted a 'Wildlife Photography Contest' for professional & non-professional photographers from Visakhapatnam participated and captured the beautiful wildlife of IGZP with their camera lenses. Over 20 photographers participated in this competition," Salaria said.

On October 7, the 'Run for Wildlife' event will be organised at IGZP and people of all age groups can participate in the event. No registration fee



will be charged. T-shirts & caps will be provided for the

first 100 participants. The curator also delivered a talk

on 'Wildlife Conservation' to students of Dr VS Krishna

Govt Degree College, Visakhapatnam.

# Home Minister exhorts girl students to excel in studies

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Stating that education will make women self-reliant, Minister for Home Mekkathoti Sucharitha has exhorted girls to excel in studies. The Home Minister, along with Collector Vivek Yadav, participated in the 'Swechha' programme held in the Municipal High School at Stambalagaruvu village on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Home Minister said that under the 'Swechha' programme, 10 sanitary napkins would be given to the girl students studying in Classes 7 to Intermediate at government schools and colleges. She said that the government is providing all the needed facilities to the students studying at the government schools and exhorted the girl students to excel in pursuing education. She said that Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy was committed to making Andhra Pradesh State free from illiteracy. She said that under the



'Nadu-Nedu' programme, all government schools are being renovated and toilet facilities are being provided. She emphasised upon higher education for women to scale new heights in life and achieve self-reliance.

The Home Minister asked the girls to download the Disha app which provides them security. Collector Vivek Yadav said that there are 312 upper primary schools and 569 high schools in the district and 86,901 girl students were being distributed sanitary napkins

free of cost. He said that usually children of economically weaker sections study in the government schools and the distribution of sanitary napkins to the girl students would be useful to maintain hygiene.

MLCs KS Lakshmana Rao, Kalpalata Reddy, Mayor K Shivanaga Manohar Naidu, deputy mayor Sajal and Joint Collector Rajakumari were among those who were present.

Earlier, the Home Minister and MLCs went around the photo exhibition on the development of women.

## Swechha scheme: Balineni distributes sanitary napkins to students in Ongole

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Minister for Energy and Environment Balineni Srinivasa Rao distributed sanitary napkins as part of the Swechha programme, which aims at the health and hygiene of girls studying in government schools and colleges, at a programme here on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, the minister urged the students to make use of the various initiatives designed by the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy-led Andhra Pradesh government for them. He said the government launched the Swechha programme to distribute sanitary napkins to school and college-going girls, who find it difficult to attend classes due to lack of access to menstrual hygiene products. The distribution of sanitary napkins

would reduce the number of dropouts, he hoped. "The government is renovating schools and colleges by spending crores of rupees under the Nadu-Nedu programme and introducing English as medium of instruction," the minister said.

Collector Pravin Kumar said that there are 838 schools in the district where 91,517 girls are studying. All of them would be provided with sanitary napkins. They would be given sanitary napkins during holidays also. ZP chairperson Buchepalli Venkayamma, Mayor G Sujata, MLC Potula Sunita, DEO Vijay Bhaskar, Women Welfare PD G Lakshmidevi and Intermediate Board RIO Subba Rao were among those who attended the programme.

## Family alleges attack by YSRCP activists, threatens suicide pact

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A woman and her two sons have alleged that they are being attacked by YSRCP activists and threatened to commit suicide if the culprits are not arrested.

The Dalit family that lives in Timmapuram in Yadlapadu mandal released a video urging Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for justice. The family members said that some YSRCP activists attacked them with knives three months ago and the attacks had been continuing since then.

The family members said that they met Chilakaluripet MLA Vidudala Rajani and appealed to her to save them from the ruling party activists' attacks, but she did not respond.

"We have no option other



than taking the extreme step in front of the MLAs office, if the culprits are not arrested by Monday," Birudu Ananta Babu, one of the family members, threatened. He said that he had worked hard for the victory of MLA Vidudala Rajani, but she did not respond when they

sought her help. He alleged that they had complained to the Collector, but the MLA influenced him not to take action against the attackers.

The video has gone viral in social media, creating a commotion.

## Drunk driver held in hit and run case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the hit and run case reported at Cyber Towers on Sunday, the Madhapur Police arrested the car driver involved in the road crash that killed a techie who was riding pillion. Police said that the driver was in an inebriated condition at the time of the incident.

The arrested person has been identified as K Srjuan, 24, a resident of KPHB. The 2014 Btech graduate was unemployed and was driving the car that was registered in his brother's name.

According to the police, Srjuan who was driving the car under the influence of alcohol, was at a high speed and was driving rashly, when he crashed the car into a two wheeler that had stopped at the Cyber Towers junction at Madhapur on Sunday. Due to the impact of the crash, the duo on the bike fell onto the road.

Death was instant for 22-year-old Jennifer Maria D'cruz, who sustained critical head injuries in the mishap. She was pronounced 'brought dead' at a private hospital nearby. The rider of the bike Arijay, who also received injuries, is being treated at a hospital.

## Modi leading India to development: Kanna

PNS ■ GUNTUR

BJP leader and former party state president Kanna Lakshminarayana lauded Prime Minister Narendra Modi stating that he was leading the country to development. He was visiting a photo gallery where snaps of significant events of Prime Minister Narendra Modi were put on display, here on Tuesday.

Kanna Lakshminarayana said that Narendra Modi does not behave like he is the Prime Minister of the country, but serves the nation as a servant. He has completed seven years in office, but continues to work with vigour and enthusiasm for the development of the country.

The Sab Ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikas programme launched by the Prime Minister will help to eradicate poverty by taking the fruits of development to the poor, he said.

Taking a dig at the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led government, he said that the two regional parties TDP and YSRCP have resorted to murky politics. False cases are being registered against those who question the misdeeds of ruling party leaders, he alleged. The YSRCP leaders have ignored the development of the state and are indulging in abusing the opposition leaders, he said.



## BJP stages dharna seeking solution to people's problems

PNS ■ ELURU

BJP activists, led by their State president Somu Veerajulu, organised a dharna at the Collector's office here on Tuesday demanding that the government take steps to resolve the problems of people. Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Somu Veerajulu said that the Narendra Modi headed Union government had sanctioned a large number of houses under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana scheme but the Andhra Pradesh

government had not given the houses to the beneficiaries so far. Minister Botsa Satyanarayana assured that TIDCO houses would be handed over to the beneficiaries but the assurance has not been fulfilled so far.

The BJP State president said that Bhagawan Sri Satya Sai Baba agency launched the Satyasai water scheme to provide drinking water to 250 villages in Polavaram and Chintalapudi mandals. But the scheme came to a grinding halt due to the indifference of the State gov-

ernment, he alleged.

District president Koralla Jyothi Sudhakar demanded that the government take steps to supply purified drinking water to the people living in Eluru. She said that two years ago people fell unconscious after consuming contaminated water and chemical residues were found in the potable water being consumed here.

Former MLA Ambika Krishna and Mahilamorchha state president B Nirmala Kishore also spoke.

Former ministers Ravela Kishore Babu, Shenakkayala Arun, Palapati Ravi Kumar and Eedara Srinivasa Reddy were among those who accompanied the BJP leader.

## 7 cheated by fraudsters

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On a single day, seven persons were cheated and Rs.24.87 lakhs looted by the cyber criminals As many as seven persons were cheated of Rs 24.87 lakhs in the guise of investments by cyber criminals in a day in Hyderabad. Police officials have started investigation after the victims filed complaints with the Cyber Crime Wing of Hyderabad Police Commissionerate. According to cybercrime officials, it was observed that in all investment frauds, fraudsters bank on the greed in people, mostly youngsters and home-makers.

"They successfully convince the victim to invest and assure quick and high returns, which are the only solution to financial problems. Once the money is collected, they switch off the phones and go absconding," an official said.

While this has been a common phenomena of the cyber criminals in the recent past, the cyber criminals on Monday have targeted to fleece seven persons in a single day.



## Job aspirants warned against fake agents

PNS ■ BHIMAVARAM

West Godavari Superintendent of Police Rahul Dev Sharma has warned the youth, who wish to go to Gulf countries seeking livelihood, against trusting agents.

The SP was attending the 'Basada' programme organised here on Tuesday to create awareness among those who seek jobs in the Gulf countries and give them necessary guidance. Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that lives of many people were ruined as they trusted the

agents for getting jobs in the Gulf countries. He asked the job seekers to be completely aware of the laws and the official procedures to be followed to go to the Gulf countries for jobs. The SP asked them to verify whether they were given work permit visas. He asked them to inform about the fake agents by sending a message to the WhatsApp number 95503 51100 or by calling 100. Bhimavaram Regional Passport Verification Officer MD Jabbar Beig, DSPs Veeranjanya Reddy and Dilip Kiran were among those who were present.

## Woman duped of Rs 9K on fake passport website

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A woman was duped of Rs 9000 on a fake passport site. The 44-year-old complainant from Dundigal, who wanted a passport, had recently searched

online for the Government of India, External Affairs official website to apply for one.

While searching, she allegedly came across a fake website and applied. She made payments too on the site.

Though money was debited from her account, she did not get any receipt and the slot too was not booked. Realising she was cheated, she approached the Dundigal Police and lodged a complaint.

## Gold worth Rs 58.1L seized at Hyd airport

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the second such seizure in two days, the customs officials at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad seized gold worth Rs 58.16 lakh from a passenger who arrived at the airport from Sudan on Tuesday.

Customs officials said that the female passenger, who arrived at the airport from Sudan was scheduled to travel to Dubai via Hyderabad. Upon screening at the airport, officials found four objects that were disguised as magnets, concealed in the woman's undergarments and



hand baggage. When an explanation was sought from the Sudanese passenger, who kept claiming that the objects were magnets, customs officials cut them open to reveal

gold that was hidden in the form of paste.

Investigation revealed that the gold, weighing around 1.2 kilograms was valued at around Rs 58.16 lakh. The customs officials seized the gold and registered a case.

On Monday, 388 grams of gold worth Rs 6.15 lakh was seized by the customs officials from passengers who arrived at the airport from Kuwait.

According to the officials, the duo carried gold biscuits of 128 grams and 260 grams, valued at Rs 6,15,519 and hid the biscuits in their clothes. Officials seized the gold biscuits and registered a case against them.

## 3 held for road rage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Three men were booked for allegedly attacking a biker during a road rage incident over honking horns at Jubilee Hills. Mohd Mustaq, a fish vendor from Netaji Nagar, along with his friend, Inayath Ali, were returning home.

"As the duo reached GTN Colony signal, Mustaq, who was driving, honked at three youngsters Vinay, Vinod and Bunny, who were allegedly driving their bike in a rash manner. After Mustaq asked them to drive properly, an argument broke out and the trio picked up a fight and assaulted him," police said.

## Collector inspects housing works

PNS ■ ELURU

West Godavari District Collector Kartikeya Mishra inspected the houses, which are under construction, at Kovvali village in Denduluru mandal on Tuesday.

The Collector went into the under-construction houses in a Jagananna Colony and inspected the works apart from enquiring about the quality of the materials being used and the progress of works.

Speaking on the occasion, he directed the officials concerned to expedite the construction. He said that 147 houses were sanctioned in the colony of which the construction of 44 houses had reached the base-



ment level. He directed the officials to take steps to disburse money to house owners. Eluru RDO Panabaka Rachana,

Tahsildar Nancharaiiah, and MPDO Lakshmi were among those who accompanied the Collector.

## QIS student to represent AP in national football tournament

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Turaka Mahesh Kumar, studying B. Pharmacy third year at Vengamukkapalem QIS College of Pharmacy, was selected to play in the national-level football tournament to be held in Visakhapatnam.

QIS Educational Institutions secretary & correspondent Dr. Nidamanuri Surya Kalyan Chakravarti and Nidamanuri Educational Society president Nidamanuri Nageswara Rao said in a statement here on Tuesday that B. Pharmacy student



Mahesh Kumar would represent the State in the tournament to be held in Visakhapatnam. They said Mahesh Kumar played well in the football tournament for senior men held on the ABM

College grounds. They wished that Mahesh Kumar would play well in the tournament and earn national recognition. They exhorted him to focus on his studies as well.

## Pravin, Malika review security for CM's visit

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Prakasam District Superintendent of Police Malika Garg personally inspected the security arrangements being made for the Chief Minister's programme to be held here on October 7. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy will launch the second phase of YSR Asara scheme at the PVR ground here Thursday.

The SP inspected the specially-set up helipad area at PTC Ground. The SP instructed the authorities to conduct thorough inspections by the Bomb Squad and Dog Squad in the areas where the Chief



Minister is touring. She inspected the barricade arrangements around the heli-

pad, route map for the Chief Minister's convoy, public meeting venue at the PVR ground,

dais, stall points, entrances and exits and the parking spaces for VVIP/VIP vehicles.

The SP instructed officers to set up rooftop security in the high-rise buildings surrounding the meeting venue and to tighten security to prevent unauthorised persons from approaching the dais area. The SP asked the authorities to ensure parking spaces for the vehicles of officers, chief leaders and others, and to place barricades on the roads where necessary. The SP also told officers to ensure smooth flow of traffic without any trouble.

The SP was accompanied by ASP B. Ravi Chandra, OSD K.

Chowdeshwari and DSB DSP B. Mariyadas.

Meanwhile, District Collector Pravin Kumar also reviewed the arrangements. The Collector held a meeting with the officials here on Tuesday and directed them to take steps to ensure that the programme is held smoothly.

The Collector asked the Municipal Commissioner to erect stalls and directed the MEPMA PD to make arrangements for refreshments and drinking water. The Collector along with the SP and other officials inspected the venue and helipad at the Municipal Boy's School.

INDIA CORNER

**J&K: Army conducts training workshop for VDC members in Akhnoor**

Amid spurt in infiltration attempts by terrorists from across the border, the Army on Tuesday conducted a training workshop for the Village Defence Committee (VDC) members in Akhnoor sector here, a defence spokesman said. The Army's Crossed Swords Division under the aegis of White Knight Corps organised the training workshop for the VDC members from Chauki Chaura in Akhnoor in Jammu district, he said. The spokesman said the training workshop was undertaken to interact with the VDC members, carry out physical accounting of weapons, ammunition and to provide necessary technical assistance in maintenance and upkeep of the weapons held with them. "It also involved hands on experience of firing of weapons organised under the supervision of Army," he said. He said the conduct of such interaction at this level assumes importance in view of the prevailing security situation in the Jammu region. VDC members are the first respondents to any eventuality or movement of suspects in far-flung and isolated areas devoid of the presence of Army or police, the spokesman said.



Members of various journalist unions staged a demonstration outside the Press Club of India (PCI) here on Tuesday demanding immediate release of Kerala journalist Siddique Kappan who has been charged by the Uttar Pradesh Police with terror offences. Today, we have organised this programme to mark completion of one year of Kappan being in jail. He was arrested even before going to the spot. Till date he is behind bars. We are fighting for free media. There should be no curb on media if someone is going on a spot to report," said PCI president Umakant Lakhera. "Spot and investigative reporting is dying day by day. We are appealing to the highest judiciary of the country to release Kappan and to quash the charges against him," he added. Members of the Kerala Union of Working Journalists (KUWJ), PCI and the Delhi Union of Journalists (DUJ) joined the protest. Kappan and three others were arrested by the Mathura police in Uttar Pradesh on October 5 last year when they were on their way to a village in Hathras to meet the family members of a Dalit girl who had died after being gang-raped.

**Journalists stage protest in Delhi demanding release of Siddique Kappan**

The Karnataka government on Tuesday announced an exgratia of Rs three lakh to the families of those who died after drinking contaminated water in a village in the newly created Vijayanagara district recently and also ordered an inquiry into the deaths. At least six people died and over 150 hospitalised after drinking contaminated water in Makarabbi village in Huvina Hadagali Taluk. "Our government has taken seriously people dying and falling ill after drinking the contaminated water. I have already said that an inquiry led by IAS officer Munish Moudgil will be conducted. He has to submit the report in a week," Bommai told reporters. The CM said those responsible for sewage water getting mixed with tap water, be it local officers or engineers, will face action. Expressing sorrow over the tragedy, the Chief Minister said an exgratia of Rs three lakh will be given to the families of those who died after consuming contaminated water. On three deaths due to monkey fever in Atzalpur in Kalaburagi, Bommai said he has asked the district health officers to furnish a report, based on which the relief amount will be announced.

**K'taka govt orders Rs 3 lakh ex gratia to kin of those who died due to contaminated water**

The ruling BJP on Tuesday retained the Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation (GMC) and won in two other civic bodies in Gujarat, while the Congress took away Bhanvad municipality in Devbhumi-Dwarka district from the saffron party. In the GMC, the BJP established its lead since the beginning of counting at 9 am, and eventually trumped its rivals Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) by a huge margin. The GMC poll was being seen as a litmus test for the BJP in the backdrop of its sudden and surprising decision to change the state's chief minister and the entire cabinet recently, ahead of the state Assembly polls due next year. The party had registered a thumping win in the local bodies polls held in February this year. As per the final tally released by the State Election Commission (SEC), out of total 44 seats in the GMC, the BJP won 41 seats, the Congress-two and the AAP bagged one seat. Counting of votes was also held for three other municipalities - Okha and Bhanvad in Devbhumi-Dwarka district, and Thara municipality of Banaskantha district. As per the final figures released by the SEC after counting of votes, the BJP won 20 out of 24 seats in



LAKHIMPUR KHERI VIOLENCE

**Case against Priyanka, Deependra Hooda, Ajay Kumar Lallu in Sitapur**

PNS ■ SITAPUR

With the Congress questioning the detention of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, officials said Tuesday a case has been registered here against her and 10 others under sections related to preventive detention due to apprehension of breach of peace. The case under Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) sections 151, 107, 116 (all related to preventive detention due to apprehension of breach of peace) has also been registered against Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu and party leader Deependra Hooda, the officials said.



**LOCAL JOURNALIST AMONG THE 8 KILLED IN LAKHIMPUR KHERI**

PNS ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP)

A 28-year-old journalist was among the eight people killed in the violence that erupted during a farmers' protest at Lakhimpur Kheri. Local journalists have demanded a compensation of Rs 50 lakh for the family of Raman Kashyap, who worked with a private TV channel. They have also demanded a job for his wife and immediate arrest of the accused in the case. Kashyap was a resident of Nighasan tehsil of the Lakhimpur Kheri district. Union Minister of State for Home

Ajay Kumar Mishra's village, Banbirpur, falls under this tehsil. Kashyap's family said he is survived by his wife and two children, a son and a daughter. The locals journalists held a dharna in Nighasan on Monday over his death in which his father, Ram Dulare, was also present. Dulare said that his son was covering the farmers' protest on Sunday when he was hit by a vehicle and got grievously injured. The journalist could not be traced for a while after the event and was admitted to the district hospital late on Sunday night.

GUJARAT CIVIC POLLS

**BJP wins Gandhinagar, 2 other bodies; Congress 1**

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

The ruling BJP on Tuesday retained the Gandhinagar Municipal Corporation (GMC) and won in two other civic bodies in Gujarat, while the Congress took away Bhanvad municipality in Devbhumi-Dwarka district from the saffron party. In the GMC, the BJP established its lead since the beginning of counting at 9 am, and eventually trumped its rivals Congress and the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) by a huge margin. The GMC poll was being seen as a litmus test for the BJP in the backdrop of its sudden and surprising decision to change the state's chief minister and the entire cabinet recently, ahead of the state Assembly polls due next year. The party had registered a thumping win in the local bodies polls held in February this year. As per the final tally released by the State Election Commission (SEC), out of total 44 seats in the GMC, the BJP won 41 seats, the Congress-two and the AAP bagged one seat. Counting of votes was also held for three other municipalities - Okha and Bhanvad in Devbhumi-Dwarka district, and Thara municipality of Banaskantha district. As per the final figures released by the SEC after counting of votes, the BJP won 20 out of 24 seats in



Thara, while the Congress got only four seats. The BJP retained Okha municipality by winning 34 out of 36 seats, while two seats went to the Congress. However, in a setback to the BJP, the Congress emerged victorious in Bhanvad by winning 16 out of 24 seats. The BJP, which managed to win only eight seats this time, was in power in Bhanvad since 1995. Voting for elections to the GMC and the three other municipalities took place on Sunday. Besides, bypolls to elect representatives on 104 vacant seats of various other local bodies were also held the same day. Of the total 2.8 lakh registered voters in Gandhinagar, 56.24 per cent had exercised their franchise. The voter turnout in Okha and Bhanvad was 55.07 and 62.27 per cent, respectively, while Thara had recorded an impressive 73.55 per cent turnout.

In Gandhinagar, the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) had put in a concerted effort apart from traditional rivals BJP and Congress. A total of 161 candidates contested the GMC poll, with the BJP and Congress fighting in all 44 seats and the AAP in 40 seats. In the 2016 GMC elections, both the Congress and BJP won 16 seats each out of the total 32 seats existing at that time. Both the parties then had equal chances of forming the board through a draw of lots. However, at the last moment, Congress corporator Pravin Patel switched sides and helped the BJP come to power in the civic body. The latest election was originally supposed to be held in April this year, but it was postponed in view of the high number of COVID-19 cases emerging every day at that time.

**DEMOCRACY UNDER THREAT IN THE COUNTRY: RAJASTHAN CM**

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot hit out at BJP governments at the Centre and in Uttar Pradesh on Tuesday over the killing of farmers in UP's Lakhimpur Kheri, saying democracy was under "threat" in the country. His remarks came after multiple opposition leaders were stopped from visiting Lakhimpur Kheri. Addressing a dharna at the PCC office here against the detention of Priyanka Gandhi Vadra, Gehlot said the video of the incident was sufficient to substantiate the allegation and no other evidence is needed.

**SHIV SENA CALLS FOR JOINT OPPOSITION ACTION; SANJAY RAUT TO MEET RAHUL**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With opposition leaders prevented from going to Lakhimpur Kheri, Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Tuesday called for joint action by political parties against this "oppression" and will meet Rahul Gandhi in this regard. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra who reached Lakhimpur Kheri in the wee hours on Monday was detained in Sitapur and was not allowed to enter the village where eight persons lost their lives in violent clashes on Sunday. Many other leaders from opposition parties, including the Congress, AAP, SP and the BSP, have been detained by the UP government

and prevented from going to Lakhimpur Kheri. "Lakhimpur Kheri violence has shaken the nation, Priyanka Gandhi has been arrested by the UP government, opposition leaders are being restricted from meeting farmers. There is a need for joint opposition action against oppression by the Government in UP," Raut tweeted. He also said that he will be meeting former Congress president Rahul Gandhi at 4.15 PM today to chalk out a joint opposition strategy. The Shiv Sena and the Congress, along with NCP, jointly run the Maha Vikas Aghadi government in Maharashtra, after the Sena quit the BJP-led NDA alliance in 2019.

**DU students hold protest march**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of Delhi University students held a protest march in the varsity's north campus area against violence in Lakhimpur Kheri. The Left-affiliated All India Students' Association along with other organisations held the protest march from Vijay Nagar to Arts faculty on Monday. "Students gathered in Vijay Nagar, and despite heavy resistance from Delhi Police, carried on to Arts Faculty. Students from various areas residing near the north campus joined the march.

**President's rule should be imposed in UP: RLD**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Pushing for President's rule in Uttar Pradesh, RLD chief Jayant Chaudhary on Tuesday said the entire state machinery under the Yogi Adityanath government is trying to suppress the truth of what happened in Lakhimpur Kheri and clamping down on the opposition. The Rashtriya Lok Dal (RLD) president, one of the few leaders to reach the Uttar Pradesh district where eight people,

including four farmers, were killed during a farmers' protest on Sunday, said he had to employ "guerrilla tactics" to do so. "Reaching Lakhimpur was a tough task because Yogi has put the entire government machinery to work towards thwarting the Opposition. There needs to be a separation between the state and the party which is not there in UP... from the district magistrate to state-level officials, police, it seems everyone has taken membership of the BJP,"

Chaudhary alleged in a phone interview to PTI. Chaudhary, who took 13 hours to reach Lakhimpur Kheri from Delhi, several hours more than it would take to cover the 420 km-odd distance, also met the families of some of the farmer victims to learn their story of loss. All roads to Lakhimpur Kheri, about 130 km from Lucknow, have been blocked for opposition leaders with most, including Congress' Priyanka

Gandhi Vadra and Bhupesh Baghel as well as SP chief Akhilesh Yadav, being stopped from entering the district. It is a "worrisome trend" that no one in the bureaucracy has raised questions over orders given by the political class, Chaudhary said, adding that he was surprised to hear Additional Director General, Law and Order, Prashant Kumar saying that political people are not allowed in the district. "What does that mean, do

you not have faith in the political process? Why do they fight elections if they don't have faith in the political voice? It is across the board, you see different parties... senior leaders are still in confinement. It is a shameful incident and reflects the callous attitude of the administration," Chaudhary said. Four of the eight dead in Sunday's violence in Lakhimpur Kheri were farmers, allegedly knocked down by vehicles driven by BJP workers.

**Life returns to normalcy in violence-hit Lakhimpur Kheri**

PNS ■ LAKHIMPUR KHERI (UP)

With regular traffic on roads and shops opening shutters, life slowly returned to normalcy on Tuesday in violence-hit Lakhimpur Kheri, a district shaken by violence during a farmers' protest two days back in which eight lives were lost. Security personnel stood on guard at places on the way to Tikonia village where the incidents unfolded ahead of a visit to the district by Uttar Pradesh Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Prasad Maurya on Sunday. Four of the dead were farmers, allegedly knocked down by vehicles driven by BJP workers travelling to welcome Maurya. The others, including BJP workers, were allegedly dragged out of the vehicles and lynched. Two days on, regular activities were witnessed near the Lakhimpur railway station and other market places where vendors and shops were operating as usual.

GUJARAT RIOTS

**SC to hear Zakia Jafri's plea against SIT's clean chit to Modi**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday said it would hear on October 26 a plea filed by Zakia Jafri, the wife of slain Congress leader Ehsan Jafri, challenging the Special Investigation Team (SIT) clean chit to Narendra Modi, who was the Gujarat chief minister during the 2002 riots in the state. A bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar made it clear that no request for further adjournment at the instance of the petitioner (Zakia Jafri) will be entertained on future dates. "At the request of the petitioner, hearing is deferred till October 26," said the bench, also comprising justices Dinesh Maheshwari and C T Ravikumar. "It is made clear that no request for further adjournment at the instance of the petitioner on any count will be entertained on future dates," said the bench, which granted liberty to the petitioner to file additional compilation in the matter. At the outset, senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Zakia Jafri, said this matter has suddenly come up and there are about 23,000 pages of record and they would circulate a convenience compilation. The bench said the matter was notified well in advance. "No my lords, it was suddenly notified on Friday," Sibal said, adding, it was adjourned in April this year and because of the pandemic, it did not come up. He requested the bench to list the matter on a fixed date. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta said the request on the ground of convenience compilation is being raised for the last one-and-a-half year. "There is no notice issued, there is no stay, my friend cannot possibly object," Sibal said.



**SP govt in UP created hindrances in PMAY implementation: Modi**

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Hitting out at the previous Samajwadi Party (SP) government in Uttar Pradesh, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday alleged that it had no interest in constructing houses for the poor and created hindrances in the implementation of the central housing scheme. He said before 2017, "18,000 houses were approved for Uttar Pradesh for construction under the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana but not even 18 houses were built by the previous government." "There was money, there was sanction but those who were running the government were creating hindrance as they did not want to construct houses," the PM said.

On the other hand, the Yogi Adityanath government has "completed nine lakh houses under the scheme and 14 lakh are under construction," Modi said, reeling out comparative figures. Addressing "New Urban India Conclave", Modi said his government has made three crore poor families "lakhpati" under this scheme by providing them houses. The prime minister stressed there was a massive increase in the number of houses constructed under PMAY in his regime. "More than 1.13 crore housing units have been approved in the cities and, out of these, more than 50 lakh houses have already been built and handed over to the poor," he said, adding before 2014 only 13 lakh houses were approved under the programme.

PMAY BENEFICIARIES

**MP govt to provide free sand**

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said the state government will amend its sand policy to ensure that beneficiaries of the Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojna

(PMAY) get necessary binding material free of cost to construct their houses. The chief minister made the announcement while addressing a programme at Chitrangi town in Singrauli district on Monday. "Beneficiaries of the PMAY

are facing a lot of problems due to high prices of sand. Hence, I announce that PMAY beneficiaries will get sand for free to construct their houses, and necessary amendments will be made in the state's sand policy for the purpose," Chouhan said.

**Respiratory ailments 2<sup>nd</sup> highest cause of death in India: Study**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

According to the University of Washington's Global Burden of Disease study, respiratory disease was the second highest cause of death in India after heart disease, killing 1 million Indians in 1 year. Winter brings with it an inverted atmosphere that causes respiratory symptoms, including dry cough, wheeze, chest discomfort and attacks of breathlessness. In addition to poor air quality, the COVID 19-Pandemic has also made us more aware of the importance of our lung health. According to a study published in The Lancet Global Health, there were 28.1 million cases of respiratory diseases in

India in 1990, which has increased to 55.3 million in recent years. India has 18% of the world's population but 32% of its respiratory diseases burden. Each of us has been touched by these illnesses, be it seeing our kids, parents or other near and dear ones gasping for breath. Dr Batra's Healthcare introduces OxyLung - a comprehensive lung health treatment programme which includes the Lung Function Test and Homeopathic Nebulization. The Lung Function Test - a hospital grade, accurate and scientific test that is computerized, painless, and will help patients assess their lung's strength, volume and breathing



capacity. Conventional steroidal nebulizers are known to cause side effects like a sore mouth, nose-bleeds and oral thrush (infections that can have long lasting

and damaging affects for children and adults). Dr Batra's Homeopathic Nebulizer administers homeopathic medicines in a safe, natural and side effect free way.

Patients with respiratory allergies can now breathe easy with Dr Batra's Homeopathic Nebulizer - a device that quickly administers homeopathic medicines to give faster and augmented results in a natural and side-effect free way. The nebulizer helps the homeopathic medicine reach directly to the airways to treat respiratory problems faster and more effectively. Commenting on the launch of OxyLung, Dr. Mukesh Batra, Padma Shri recipient & Founder, Dr Batra's Healthcare said, "Homeopathy has proven efficacy in treating respiratory conditions the natural way. We have always been at the forefront of bringing scientific and mea-

surable homeopathy to bring about better treatment outcomes. Our expert homeopathic specialists have curated a respiratory treatment solution that is painless, offers measurable results and gives computerized reports about your lung health. During these covid times, we aim to provide our patients with solutions that are helpful, effective and the need of the hour." With lung health being integral to survival, why wait for winter to seek a resolution. Start the journey to easy breathing today. Get a FREE Lung Function test along with the first homeopathic respiratory consultation. Visit the nearest Dr Batra's clinic or call 9167791677 today.



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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Confusion

There needs to be more clarity from the Supreme Court on people's right to protest

The ongoing farmers' protest demanding repeal of the three agricultural laws may see the Supreme Court lay down the parameters for people to exercise their right to protest. Justice AM Khanwilkar, hearing a petition of a farmers' organisation seeking permission to sit on a 'satyagraha' at Jantar Mantar in Delhi, asked how can there be a protest when the matter is *sub judice*. He meant that no reason for protest exists because the court had already stayed the three controversial laws and the Government has also assured that it will not give effect to it. Is the judge implying that people cannot exercise their right to protest when their challenge of the constitutionality of a law is being heard by the court? The second issue is that the protest is against the executive that brought in the farm laws and the demand is for repeal, while the petition is before the judiciary, which is an altogether separate constitutional body. A former Chief Justice of India, Justice SA Bobde, while hearing a PIL for suspending the farmers' protests, had said: "We clarify that this court will not interfere with the protest in question. Indeed, the right to protest is part of a fundamental right and can, as a matter of fact, be exercised subject to public order." That the court refused to interfere with the protests when it was hearing a case about the farm protests shows that the issue of *sub judice* was not in the frame of the court's thought or reasoning at that time.



Secondly, the court also clarified whether the right to protest was part of a fundamental right. Thirdly, the court clarified that the reasonable restriction on that right is that it should be peaceful. Fourthly, in February 2020, in a case related to Delhi's Shaheen Bagh protests that lasted quite some time, the Supreme Court said: "... the law is facing constitutional challenge before this court but that by itself will not take away the right to protest of the persons who feel aggrieved by the legislation." That was the clearest ruling by the court on the *sub judice* question. It is only now that the matter has been aired by the court in the farmers' protest case. Since the court wants to frame legal questions on the issue, it is pertinent to note that questioning whether a group wanting the court to check the validity of the farm laws can simultaneously protest on the same issue will lead to the interpretation that the right to protest is mutually exclusive from the right to challenge the constitutionality of a law. While awaiting the court's indulgence, it must be pointed out that the farmers' protest is for total repeal of the laws and nothing else. That means the surest way to deal with the farmers' petition is to subject the constitutionality of the three farm laws to judicial scrutiny.

## PICTALK



Women perform 'Garba' ahead of Navratri, in Surat

## Attestation parades: Good, bad and ugly

The parade at Happy Valley was strictly apolitical and secular. In contrast, the event at the Artillery Centre, Deolali, celebrated a single religion



ASHOK K MEHTA

In the salubrious climes of Shillong, I am attending the attestation and passing out parade of the 192<sup>nd</sup> batch of recruits and veterans' reunion in Happy Valley where 58 Gorkha Training Centre is nestled among pine conifers and gentle slopes luxuriating in grass. Rain can be a spoilsport as Cherrapunji, the world's biggest recipient of rain, is just around the corner. Luckily, the parade was blessed with sunshine as 256 recruits passed through an archway of *khukris* to turn into Riflemen, who will join their battalions in East Ladakh to Arunachal Pradesh and Tangdhar to Thiruvananthapuram. Young Gorkhas performed drill with Omega precision, pride and pageantry, watched over by Colonels of the two Regiments — 5 GR and 8 GR and veterans from India and Nepal. Swearing on the *Gita*, recruits from Nepal and India took the oath pledging allegiance to security and integrity of India by obeying orders from their officers and commanders as authorised by the President of India even if it involved sacrificing their lives. The foundational structure of the oath is the Constitution of India although the word 'Constitution' does not figure. What appears in the oath is 'vidhan' (legislation), not 'samvidhan'. Wonder why?

On commissioning, officers take the same oath at military academies. Army chief MM Naravane, on taking over, said "The Army will be guided by the Constitution", implying its insulation from ideas and vision of political parties, especially the ruling establishment. Pointed deviations from the military's ethics and ethos have occurred through directions of political leadership. This infringement of military values is markedly visible since the BJP came to power with its vision of turning India into a Hindu Rashtra with a military that follows its tenets. The BJP has won over the majority of the military which acknowledges the impressive emphasis by the BJP on defence and national security even if the Government will not walk the talk on funding for modernisation. The Congress by contrast was a laggard on defence reforms and transforming the



archaic military structures.

In Shillong, the flavour at the attestation parade and associated ceremonies was strictly apolitical and secular. In the commentary accompanying the parade during the carriage of the *Gita* through the rank and file of recruits was this memorable passage: "We respect equally the temple, mosque and Church. In one hand is the *Gita* and in the other, the *Quran*." These words and deeds were quite the opposite of the attestation parade of recruits at the Artillery Centre, Deolali, recently. Artillery is a mixed-class all-India regiment where soldiers are drawn from all faiths.

At this parade, surprisingly, *aarti* was recited on the parade, with recruits and soldiers clapping in unison. On a prominent boulder on the parade ground was enshrined the symbol 'Om'. Together, *aarti* and 'Om' celebrate a single religion, smacking of majoritarianism. This was the first time ever that *aarti* was sung on an official parade, attracting adverse comments on social media.

In Shillong, too, the *aarti* was sung but in its proper place, the temple, representing the faith of the single class regiment of Gorkhas from India and Nepal. Owing to the shortage



THE ARTILLERY ATTESTATION PARADE IS A CRAFTY METHOD TO INFLUENCE FAITH AND RELIGION AT THE VERY INCEPTION OF A SOLDIER'S MILITARY CAREER AND IS BOUND TO DISTURB THE SECULAR TRADITIONS OF THE ARMY

of Indian-domiciled Gorkhas, some regiments are now recruiting Kumaonis and Garhwalis till the Indian-domiciled Gorkhas can fill up their quota of vacancies. The only deviation in Shillong from regimental traditions was the introduction of 'Bharat Mata ki jai' as the decisive chant ending all formal functions even after the national anthem.

The BJP has managed to infiltrate majoritarianism and Hindutva into the military. The Hinduised version of the procedure followed at the Artillery attestation parade could be a trial balloon to codify *aarti* in other mixed-class regiments of the Army. This must have had the backing of the military establishment. So far, neither the MoD nor Army Headquarters has commented on this serious breach of Army rules and procedures for attestation parades. It is a crafty method to influence faith and religion at the very inception of a soldier's military career and is bound to disturb the secular traditions of the Army.

The Gorkha attestation parade combines every four years the reunion of veterans and their families from India and Nepal. Reunions are a perfect stimulus for bonding between the old and new. Regimental traditions, ethics

and habits are therefore preserved. Regimental spirit is the strongest elixir. While Gorkhas are relaxed about religion and many are *janjatis*, they practise their religion and faith in the battalion *mandir*. Their officers are from across India: Sikhs, Hindus, Muslims, Parsis and Gorkhas. A Sikh or Parsi Commanding Officer will lead the *mandir* parade every Sunday. The *mandir* along with the religious teacher will accompany the unit into battle.

The Artillery's attestation parade focused on Hindu religious rites in a mixed-faith unit on parade, setting a bad precedent for all-India mixed-class regiments.

While the military is on the threshold of path-breaking defence reforms, its leadership must not permit the creep of practices and procedures that will undermine its professional, secular and apolitical virtues. Politicisation will weaken the operational capacity and jointness of the Army, which is the sword arm of the nation. Discard the Deolali model; take the Shillong way.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## APEX COURT QUESTIONS FARMERS

Sir — We were baffled as to why the Supreme Court made the observations on the farmers' protests that it made. With all due respect, the riposte to its poser "What is their protest for when the farm laws are stayed?" is that it is to persuade the Government to repeal the farm laws — 'repeal' being the operative word. We need to draw a distinction between 'staying' the implementation of a law' and 'repeal of a law'. And, the two words 'stay' and 'repeal' are not interchangeable.

The farmers are not okay merely with suspending the laws for 18 months or the 'delay' in implementing the laws. The 'stay' won't make the laws any better. It is erroneous to say that the laws are not in place at the moment when they are just on hold. Sadly, recently the Supreme Court accused the farmers of 'strangling' the city with their protests. In a democratic setup, people are quite within their rights to protest against the laws enacted by Parliament. The only condition that can be set is that the protest should be peaceful and non-violent. The mere fact that a matter is *sub judice* before a court cannot strip the people of their right to protest which the country's top court itself declared a fundamental right.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

## BREATHING NOT SO HEALTHY

Sir — Air pollution levels in India are alarmingly high. Though all attention is generally focused on pollution levels in Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR) for obvious reasons, statistics have shown that most cities in India have crossed the threshold limit imposed by the World Health Organisation (WHO). Particularly the particulate pollution, or the particulate matter pollution (PM), is a cause for worry. India has exceeded the WHO's standard threshold of PM2.5 long ago. India is not the only country in harm's way; almost all leading countries of the world are struggling to keep their air clean. Smaller nations, too, are struggling badly. Transport sector is one of the biggest contributors of air pollution in India.

## DC cashed on Dhoni's slow knock



The hit-and-run game of T20 cricket is meant for going after the bowlers. Somehow, Dhoni chose the wrong way and started defending as though he was playing a Test match. Dhoni lost his wonted form from the 2019 World Cup semi-final against New Zealand in England. Even in the IPL, he was run out at a crucial moment against Mumbai Indians a couple of years back and gave away the match on a plateau. The former Indian captain has slowed

down a lot and become a challenge for his own side.

In Monday's match against the Chennai Super Kings, Axar Patel and Ravichandran Ashwin of the Delhi Capitals bowled in tandem and curtailed the CSK to just 136 runs. Delhi Capitals chased the target rather slowly and dragged the match to the last over even against such a small target. Shimron Hetmyer saved the day for the DC by smashing 28 runs off 18 deliveries and earned the victory with just two balls to spare. Delhi Capitals topped the tables thanks to its balance of spin and fast bowling. In the last match against Mumbai Indians, both Shreyas Iyer and Ashwin combined well to achieve an emphatic win over the defending champions. In all, it has been smooth sailing for the Delhi Capitals in the IPL this season with 10 wins so far.

MR Jayanthi | Mumbai

However, kneejerk reactions like banning old vehicles or firecrackers for a short period will not suffice. Basic pollution levels are to be consistently tackled throughout the year. Apart from transport, industry and energy, household pollution and agricultural pollution are indeed grave to be ignored. All the State Governments should address these throughout the year. Fuel consumption has to be regulated. The consumers are driven by logistics and economy — the Central and the State Governments should address these issues and save the habitat before it's too late.

Ganapathi Bhat | Nagpur

## DIRTY POLITICS BEHIND NEET

Sir — Tamil Nadu CM MK Stalin is reported to have written to 12 non-BJP CMs seeking their support to fight against the National Eligibility cum Entrance Test (NEET) for medical admissions so that the students from rural areas and marginalised sections do not find it hard to obtain admissions. The statistics released reveal that nearly 16 lakh students from Tamil Nadu have written

NEET. Further, there has been no demand for the repeal of NEET from other States, including the 12 non-BJP States. Except for Tamil Nadu, there were no reports of NEET-induced deaths from other States. Even in Tamil Nadu, almost all students have reckoned with the reality of NEET, as could be seen from the number of candidates who appeared for NEET this year.

Since it is the political leaders who cry foul about the NEET and not the candidates, one cannot but adduce motives. And this assumes significance as most of the engineering and medical colleges are owned by the political leaders. The fact that the NEET mode of test will tilt the scales of admissions whereby colleges will be deprived of income from 'other sources' seems to be the sole reason for this demand for repeal from the political leaders. Therefore, the fight against NEET is politically motivated.

VS Jayaraman | Chennai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

Lucknow is known for 'pehle aap, pehle aap' but this is the time to say 'pehle aap' to technology.



Prime Minister — Narendra Modi

At a time when Taliban was emerging, many have received training from Afghanistan to spread militancy in Bangladesh.

Bangladesh Prime Minister — Sheikh Hasina

I gravitate towards edgy and disruptive scripts and 'Andhadhun' was a combination of everything that is fresh, unique and path-breaking.



Actor — Ayushmann Khurrana

We're going to be missing Ben and Jofra, but there are some real match-winners in our side.

England batsman — Jos Buttler

Let the byelections get over first, then only we will discuss caste-based census. Till then, leave it.



Bihar Chief Minister — Nitish Kumar

## Cough, cough!

It's that time of the year again when Delhi suffocates due to smog and pollution

*Dilli ki sardi* is infamous; yes, for its biting cold but especially for the pollution and smog that hang heavy in the air. After what seems like a respite from the COVID-19 pandemic, the Capital might again be headed for its annual date with the much-dreaded winter spell of smog and all the accompanying ailments. According to a March 2021 report by a Swiss organisation, IQAir, Delhi happens to be the world's most polluted Capital city and the 10th most polluted city overall. Smoke from *paraali* (paddy stubble) burning in the NCR as well as harmful fumes and particles trapped in air only worsen the conditions. With little means to expel the toxic elements, Delhiites are forced to gasp for breath. Despite the severity of the situation, no significant progress has been made for decades. The brief implementation of the "odd-even" rule by the AAP Government, which the Supreme Court correctly tagged as a "half-baked solution", was never a practical solution in the long run. Also, the monthly efficacy report of the "first" smog tower installed in Delhi's Connaught Place area is due later this month.

In view of the prevailing situation, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has announced a 10-point "winter action plan" to make the air "breathable" this winter. It includes decomposer for *paraali* as an alternative to burning, keeping a check on construction and demolition sites under the anti-dust campaign, levying a hefty fine on burning waste, ban on crackers, likely installation of more smog towers and setting up India's first e-waste park for safe recycling and disposal. The next few weeks will foretell what all these measures end up in. Meanwhile, playing his old tune, Kejriwal alleges that the Central and the Governments of the neighbouring States did not take efficient steps against stubble burning which leads to air pollution in Delhi but the question remains did he equip Delhi enough? Kejriwal's basket of promises to woo Punjab voters ahead of the Assembly polls also did not mention anything about *paraali*. It's a question worth pondering that if he makes successful inroads into Punjab, would he deal with the situation there as sternly? He had said that the Pusa Decomposer was a perfect foil to stubble burning and hoped that "2020 would be the last year to suffer from air pollution"; now how that works out is to be breathed!



## FIRST COLUMN 20 YRS OF NATIONAL REAWAKENING

Modi era: The tectonic shift in Indian politics and governance



VIJENDER GUPTA

Born poor but rising to become Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi's life journey defines the power of Indian democracy. It was not mere chance that propelled Modi to the highest office but the consequence of years of hard work, service and sacrifices that prepared him for the long journey ahead. On October 7, he would complete 20 years as an elected head of government. The two decades of the Modi era stand out for the tectonic shift they have brought about in Indian politics and governance. As Chief Minister of Gujarat, he faced innumerable challenges but tackled them with steely determination and compassionate zeal. The first was the devastation caused by the earthquake in Gujarat. He took that as an opportunity to lay the foundation to transform Gujarat into a world-class investment destination. During his tenure as CM, Modi introduced governance reforms focused on deepening inclusion and enhancing accessibility through technology. Under the 'SWAGAT' initiative, he would interact with people once



a month to resolve their issues. He would be joined by senior officers through video conferencing to ensure quick resolution of people's grievances. The programme was recognized by the UN as one of the best initiatives to enable people to reach the government through technology. After assuming prime ministership, Modi launched a multi-purpose and multi-modal platform PRAGATI (Pro-Active Governance And Timely Implementation). In each session, PM reviews the status of projects and schemes to resolve any lacunae.

As CM, he began spending three days every year in villages where literacy rates were low and encouraged people to send girls to school. The push for girl child's education was further supported by his move to build separate toilets for girls in school on a massive scale. He launched the Jyotigram Yojna to push for a complete overhaul of the power sector in Gujarat. He set the target of 1000 days for 100 per cent electrification in all villages. In 2006, Gujarat was declared the first state to achieve 100 per cent village electrification. Post 2014, PM Modi found a bigger canvas to implement his vision for social transformation, making 'Jan Andolan' an integral part of his governance model. From Swachh Bharat Mission to India's fight against Covid-19, his unique style of connecting with the masses is prevalent in all his flagship schemes and initiatives. On every front, Narendra Modi has walked the talk, both as the CM and now as the PM. From the time he took oath as the CM, he shunned politics of divisiveness and spoke of development for all. In Vibrant Gujarat Summit catapulted Gujarat as a cynosure of global investors, 'Make in India' affirmed India's position in the global supply chain. During the pandemic, India displayed its rising prowess as it expanded its manufacturing capabilities to produce and export PPE kits, N95 masks and even came to the world's rescue exporting essential medical supplies to those in need. In a post-pandemic world, global chains are being restructured and India finds itself in a sweet spot, having a government that is primarily focused on creating a conducive environment for manufacturing sector to flourish. As CM of Gujarat, Narendra Modi spent considerable amount of time in understanding the gaps within the system as well as the ground realities. He deep dived into every aspect of governance, only to bring out the most innovative, technology driven, holistic solution to overcome years of inertia that impeded progress. He put in practice more than a decade of learning as he took office at the Centre. It is his 'tapasya' of 20 years that is leading to a national reawakening to see India's rise as a global powerhouse.

(The writer is a BJP MLA, Delhi Assembly, and former Leader of Opposition, Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)

# Exposing Pak's role in Taliban takeover



RAKESH K SINGH

The ISI provided refugee cards to Pakistani citizens of Pashtun origin and facilitated their recruitment in the Afghan national defence forces

The swift takeover of Afghanistan by Taliban was a culmination of cunning and conspiratorial moves by Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), outsmarting the American leadership on the one hand and planting its jihadi cohorts in the ranks of the Afghan national defence forces on the other, without an inkling of its designs to the allied forces or the Afghan government.

In 2001, when the first edition of Taliban was ousted in Afghanistan post 9/11, the US forces did not have their boots on the ground immediately. Their only option was to conduct air strikes but it needed domination on the ground to capture and control the territory. So, the US entered into an agreement with anti-Taliban groups who would capture the ground and hand it over to the American forces.

From its bases in the CIS countries, the US air force conducted airstrikes at Taliban bases situated across the territories controlled by the anti-Taliban forces. The latter would then capture and hand over these aerially attacked areas to the Americans.

The anti-Taliban forces had a pre-condition: Hand over power in Afghanistan to the military grouping once the American objectives, including killing Al Qaeda boss Osama bin Laden, were achieved.

However, the US put a rider that power cannot be shared or handed over to an armed group but can only be done in a democratic manner. The US ensured that Hamid Karzai was made President of Afghanistan in 2004.

To enter the governance mechanism put in place by the US, the armed groups formed political fronts that were headed by the insurgents. However, the US did not accept the insurgents as the leaders and put Karzai at the helm of affairs. All the insurgent groups opposed to Taliban accepted the leadership of Karzai who was from the royal lineage of Afghanistan with historical influence in the erstwhile Ottoman Empire.

For capturing Taliban-controlled territories, the anti-Taliban groups told the US that they do not have enough fighters to capture all of Afghanistan and sought recruitment to ramp up their strength. But the US could not have allowed recruitment of fighters.

At this stage, a second agreement between the US and such groups was reached for the raising of an armed force. Such insurgent groups were also allowed to join the officially raised armed forces and also recruit soldiers. The training support and weapons supplies were to come from the US.

Between 2003 and 2005, the scheme of raising the armed forces continued and a one-lakh-strong force was formed. The anti-Taliban groups then told their US partners that this number was not enough as the Taliban too had a similar number of fighters. They wanted the Afghan national armed force to be doubled.

However, every insurgent group oppos-



THE ISI'S MOVE ENSURED FREE TRAINING AND WEAPONS TO ITS MEN DEPLOYED IN THE AFGHAN REGULAR FORCE WAITING FOR THE FINAL MESSAGE FROM THE ISI TO ACT ON ITS DESIGNS. AT LEAST 50,000 SUCH PAKISTANI MEN WERE PLANTED IN THE TALIBAN. THESE MEN WERE TRAINED IN THE US AND ALLIED COUNTRIES, INCLUDING INDIA

(The writer is Special Correspondent, The Pioneer. The views expressed are personal.)



ing Taliban had an area of specific influence and one lakh more candidates were not available for recruitment. These groups could manage to recruit 50,000 men to join the ranks of the Afghan national defence force. This resulted in the Force's strength reaching 1.5 lakh.

The Afghan government then allowed recruitment of another 50,000 men from areas other than those under the control of the insurgent groups backing the Kabul government, saying the move will boost employment. The US acquiesced.

During 2005 and 2010, the Afghanistan government held recruitment camps in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region of Pakistan populated by the Afghan refugees.

The idea was that the candidates from this region would have knowledge of the area and serve to contain the Taliban there. However, no background checks were made and recruitments were based on vetting by respective leaders of the various tribes they belonged to.

"In the process, the then Afghan government committed two mistakes, one being recruitment from an area in Pakistan and the other being lack of background checks of the candidates. Due to these two faults, the ISI got a breathing space for manipulation," said counter-terrorism expert and an Afghanistan watcher Ajmal Sohail.

The ISI fabricated and provided refugee cards to Pakistani citizens of Pashtun origin and facilitated their recruitment in the Afghan national defence forces. The ISI move ensured free training and weapons to its men deployed in the Afghan regular force waiting for the final message from the ISI to act on

its designs. At least 50,000 such Pakistani men were planted in the Taliban. These men were trained in the US and allied countries including India where they were exposed to the military training infrastructure, Sohail further said.

To register their presence, the Pakistanis on the rolls of the Afghan army conducted drone strikes on the fellow Afghan army men which was widely known as Green Beret attacks. This continued for two-three years between 2010 and 2014. Subsequently, the American forces identified the game plan of ISI and stopped such attacks, he said.

The ISI-Pakistan army combine also launched operations against Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) that was opposed to it. This pressured the TTP cadres to flee to Afghanistan where they were targeted by the ISI's plants in the Afghan national defence forces. These 50,000 Pakistanis became influential in strategic planning.

Now, the ISI launched yet another propaganda warfare claiming that the Afghan army, being a blue-eyed boy of the international community, may attack the Pakistan army. The Pakistani propaganda gained credence and was aimed at strengthening the Taliban in the area.

The Afghan army again requested for recruitment of another one lakh personnel in its ranks for which the US agreed. By this time, the Afghan army had become both complacent and corrupt, experts said. The US provided the funding and weapons but the recruitments never took place. So, out of the three-lakh-strong Afghan army, 50,000 men were planted by the ISI and another one lakh was never

recruited. Out of the remaining 1.5 lakh Afghan army, a significant number of them were compromised by ISI's men in the Afghan army ranks, they said, adding this was the reason for Afghan forces melting quickly in the face of Taliban onslaught in August.

Having created a significant threshold of strength, the Taliban launched aggression early last year before the talks for the peace deal with the US began. The direct negotiations between the US and the Taliban led the Pakistan government to declare that it will not recognize the outcome of the talks.

Subsequently, tripartite meetings between the US, Pakistan, and Taliban were held in Doha for negotiations on the contours of the troops' withdrawal. Since the US had decided to withdraw its troops from Afghanistan, it was cornered and signaled an end of India's influence in Kabul. As part of the deal with the Taliban, the US would hand over bases to whichever side between the Taliban and Afghan national army wins.

"The ISI machinations for 10-15 years ensured both weapons and resources to the Taliban besides men trained by the US and its allies in its ranks. These factors helped the Taliban in capturing territory rapidly within a matter of just 10 days as against the Pentagon estimate of Kabul falling to the Taliban in 18 months," Sohail said.

In this backdrop, calls by American lawmakers for a US Congress report on the nexus between Pakistani agencies and Taliban leading to the fall of Kabul to the hardline group is more than timely.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

THEIR VEHICLES HIT THE FARMERS, WHICH LED TO THEIR DEATHS. HE (AJAY MISHRA) MUST RESIGN AND THE ACCUSED MUST BE ARRESTED.

— SAMAJWADI PARTY CHIEF  
AKHILESH YADAV



NEITHER I NOR MY SON WERE PRESENT AT THE SPOT. WE ARE READY FOR A PROBE. THE CULPRITS WHO PLANNED THIS WON'T BE SPARED.

— MoS (HOME)  
AJAY MISHRA TENI



# The 'grand old party' is now on ventilator?

The Gandhi siblings bet on the wrong horses; the result is that there is more confusion and chaos in the party

Years ago, a visionary Congress leader predicted that the ordinary party worker would save the party for their survival when they find their leaders ineffective. It looks as if that moment has come now. The party is gasping for breath, and it needs oxygen from solid leadership, but that is what is lacking. So, the worker has to substitute with small doses.

However, the idea that a party that is barely breathing can be suddenly ready to take on the ruling BJP at the next general election is almost short of a miracle. There are too many ifs and buts, but it is possible with strong leadership. What is important is also to save Congress from itself. Congressmen often say that Congress can be defeat-



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

ed only by congressmen.

Suffering from factionalism and erosion, the Grand Old Party is now on a ventilator. It is unable to function without the Gandhi family or with them. The vacuum at the top has encouraged the regional satraps to question the national leadership. The party has not been able to raise its head since the 2014 defeat. The southern states stood with her when the Indira Gandhi-led Congress was decisively defeated in the 1977 Lok Sabha polls. Even the south has deserted the party now. Currently, the party is in power only in three states -- Chhattisgarh, Punjab and Rajasthan. It is a coalition partner in the governments of Jharkhand and Maharashtra. The brutal truth is that



the party is absurdly out of touch with the new political landscape. Worse, instead of looking forward, it is looking backwards. It is trying to be everyone's party while actually, it is no one's party. Leadership crisis is also now manifest in a battle of generational change. That brings us to the

question of whether the Grand Old Party will survive with so much drama happening in the Congress-ruled states. In all three, the Gandhi siblings have encouraged rebels against incumbent chief ministers with their own favourites.

Punjab is a classic example. This was one state where the party could have won easily. Punjab chief minister Amarinder Singh has been shown the door unceremoniously, leading to instability in the state.

The doomsayers predict that the party will disappear from the political scene sooner than later. However, Congress may not die so soon. If there is a congressman in every village, even the last of them, the party will live

with diminished status.

That does not mean that the party is not facing an implosion. Ironically, the threat to Congress is now from Congress rebels and not from the ruling BJP. What has added to the problems of Congress is defections and desertions by influential leaders like Jyotiraditya Scindia, Jitin Prasad, and Sushmita Dev -- all of them from Team Rahul. Rahul's judgment of men and matters has completely gone wrong. His experiments to restructure the party also have gone awry. The Gandhi siblings bet on the wrong horses; the result is there is more confusion and chaos in the party.

Given these circumstances, a revival of the Congress is going to be not

smooth. But there can still be room for Congress as a national party. This would be when it can find its ideological moorings, draw inspiration from its past, move in step with the millennials, and find an acceptable narrative. For all these, good leadership is needed. Sonia Gandhi could bring the party to power twice in 2004 and 2009 but she has almost retired. The Gandhi siblings have not shown their vote-catching capacity. They want to emulate their grandmother Indira Gandhi without her leadership qualities.

The Gandhis know the problem but do not have a strategy to counter BJP. They have been told they only have to sit tight, and power will automatically come to

them as there is no other alternative. The change has to come from within. The family has to consult others before making any decisions. After all, there are top policy-making bodies like the Congress Working Committee which could meet more often. Senior leaders are either dumped or fading away. Starting February next year, assembly elections will be held in 16 states over two years. Of the 16 states, BJP has a direct stake in nine and alliance governments in three. The Congress has three and TRS one. The assembly elections would set the pitch for the 2024 Lok Sabha battle. Congress is the only other horse in the race for national power, never mind how distant.

# Benchmarks Sensex, Nifty build on gains as RIL, IT stocks shine

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty defied gravity for the second straight session on Tuesday as energy, IT and banking counters witnessed brisk buying amid mixed global cues.

The 30-share BSE Sensex opened weak but gained momentum in afternoon trade to finish at 59,744.88, up 445.56 points or 0.75 per cent. On similar lines, the broader NSE Nifty surged 131.05 points or 0.74 per cent to close at 17,822.30.

IndusInd Bank topped the Sensex gainers chart with a jump of 4.60 per cent, followed by Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries, HCL Tech, Titan, Asian Paints and TCS.

Index heavyweight Reliance Industries and the IT pack accounted for most of the benchmark's gains.

In contrast, Sun Pharma, PowerGrid, ITC, UltraTech Cement, Tata Steel and Nestle India were among the laggards, slipping up to 1.36 per cent.

The market breadth was in favour of the bulls, with 20 of the 30 index components closing in the green.

Indian markets on Tuesday ended in positive zone led by energy, IT, oil & gas and power indices. The rising crude oil and gas prices have been positive for the upstream oil & gas

companies. Reliance Industries, ONGC and Oil India will benefit most from ongoing higher energy prices," said Arijit Malakar, Head - Research (Retail), Ashika Stock Broking Ltd.

Anticipation of strong Q2 FY22 earnings from Indian IT sectors also uplifted market sentiment, he added.

Domestic equities opened on a weak note as investors turned cautious due to a weak closing of the US market, said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

"However, upbeat mood of the European markets which rebounded after the US tech based sell-off helped the Indian market to regain momentum," Nair noted. On the

macroeconomic front, India's services sector activity continued to expand in September, supported by favourable underlying demand amid the easing of COVID-19 restrictions, but lost some momentum from August's 18-month high level, a monthly survey showed.

The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index fell from 56.7 in August to 55.2 in September, but remained well above its long-run average.

Sectorally, BSE oil and gas, energy, telecom, power, tech and IT indices surged as much as 3.23 per cent, while realty, healthcare, metal and FMCG ended in the red.

Broader BSE midcap and small cap indices climbed up to 0.54 per cent. Asian market

were subdued as high energy prices and the liquidity crisis at China Evergrande Group weighed on sentiment. Bourses in Seoul and Tokyo ended with losses, while Hong Kong was positive. Shanghai was closed for holidays.

However, stock exchanges in Europe were trading with gains in the afternoon session, propped up by tech stocks.

Meanwhile, international oil benchmark Brent crude rose 0.47 per cent to USD 81.64 per barrel.

The rupee fell 13 paise to close at 74.44 against the US dollar on Tuesday, weighed by the strengthening of the greenback in the overseas market and rising crude oil prices. Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market on Monday as they purchased shares worth Rs 860.50 crore, as per exchange data.

## Rupee slips 13 paise to close at 74.4 against US\$

The rupee fell 13 paise to close at 74.44 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday weighed down by the strengthening of the greenback in the overseas market and rising crude oil prices. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened on a weak note and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.41 and a low of 74.63 against the US dollar in day trade. The local unit finally settled at 74.44 a dollar, down 13 paise over its previous close. On Monday, the rupee had settled at 74.31 against the US dollar. "The Indian rupee depreciated for seven out of last eight days and plunged to a twelve-weeks low. Local currency remained under pressures as crude started trading above USD 78 barrel along with rally in dollar index," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst, HDFC Securities.

# WTO estimates merchandise trade volume growth at 10.8%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The World Trade Organization (WTO) has projected that the global merchandise trade volume will grow 10.8 per cent this year, higher than 8 per cent estimated in March.

Growth should moderate as merchandise trade approaches its pre-pandemic long-run trend and supply-side issues such as semiconductor scarcity and port backlogs may strain supply chains and weigh on trade in particular areas, the WTO said.

"The WTO is now predicting global merchandise trade volume growth of 10.8 per cent in 2021—up from 8 per cent forecasted in March—followed by a 4.7 per cent rise in 2022," it said.

It added that the large annual growth rate for merchandise trade volume in 2021 is mostly a reflection of the previous year's slump, which bottomed out in the second quarter of 2020.

"Due to a lower base, year-on-year growth in the second quarter of 2021 was 22 per cent, but the figure is project-



ed to fall to 10.9 per cent in the third quarter and 6.6 per cent in the fourth quarter, in part because of the rapid recovery in trade in the last two quarters of 2020," it said.

Reaching the forecast for 2021 only requires quarter-on-quarter growth to average 0.8 per cent per quarter in the second half of this year, equivalent to an annualized rate of 3.1 per cent, it added.

It also said that risks to the forecast remain on the downside, but the relative importance of those risks is difficult to gauge.

"They include spikes in

inflation, longer port delays, higher shipping rates, and extended shortages of semiconductors, with supply-side disruptions being exacerbated by the rapid and unexpectedly strong recovery of demand in advanced and many emerging economies," it said.

The pandemic itself presents potentially even bigger risks to world trade and output, particularly if more deadly variants were to emerge, the WTO said adding the highly contagious Delta variant has already prompted governments to reinstate some containment measures.

# Raymond forays into commercial realty

PNS ■ THANE

Raymond Realty on Tuesday announced plans to build one million sq ft commercial space here and specified that it will focus on the asset-light joint development of projects going ahead.

The company, which demerged from the textile major parent and has a sizeable tract of inherited land parcel in Thane, will build one million square feet of commercial space. It will include over 8 lakh sq ft of premium space to be rented out to companies, while the remainder will be a high street shopping space, its chief executive Harmohan Sahni said.

Sahni made it clear that the company is not targeting the IT-ITeS sector for the commercial space, but added that there is a lot of scope for getting such space rented out because Thane is the home to talent. The company is eventually aiming to get 20 per cent of its revenues through rent it receives, Sahni said, adding an exit will also be considered over a period of time.

The idea is to create commercial space in a way that propeles the demand for residential housing as well, Sahni said



while announcing a premium residential unit spread over 1 million sq ft adjacent to it.

It can be noted that ever since shutting down its textile production at the facility, the company is already developing 3 million sq ft residential space, and 70 per cent of the launched space has already been booked.

Gautam Hari Singhania, Chairman and MD of Raymond, said people doubted the textile company's ability to build and sell houses initially and assured that it will stick to the December 2022 deadline of delivering homes.

Meanwhile, Sahni said that while there is a lot of scope for development at the land parcel in Thane, the company will be focusing on undertaking joint development projects on the residential side, where it will tie-up with a landowner and construct a facility with a revenue potential of up to Rs 2,000 crore each.

# Vedanta eyes government stake in HCL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mining giant Vedanta Group will look to bid for buying the government's stake in Hindustan Copper Ltd as when the state-owned firm is put up for privatisation, its billionaire founder Anil Agarwal has said.

He said that the company is doing its due diligence for the same. "Yes we are looking (at) Hindustan copper. We are doing the due diligence...The dates have not come...As soon as they announce the date, things will be much more exciting and people will start believing that the process is going on in India," Agarwal said when asked whether he is looking at participating in the government's disinvestment process.

The previous government, a few years back, "has taken away this asset from us. They have already announced that they are in the process of working, because they want to have the best relationship with the Indian government...I hope that in very short time, we will get back this asset and we are going to invest a lot of money into this to make it modernise and create employment there," he said.

## MONEY MATTERS

### Mahindra & Mahindra adds two variants to SUV XUV700

Mahindra & Mahindra on Tuesday announced addition of two new variants to its newly-launched SUV, XUV700, in both manual and automatic transmission with diesel engine. The seven-seater two new variants, AX7 Luxury MT and AX7 Luxury AT+AWD (All-Wheel Drive), are priced at Rs 19.99 lakh and Rs 22.89 lakh, respectively, Mahindra & Mahindra (M&M) said in a release. It also said these prices will be applicable for the first 25,000 bookings, which are slated to commence from October 7. The company, however, has not yet announced the date for commencement of deliveries of its latest SUV. Prior to its launch, the automaker had unveiled a new brand identity, including the logo, for its SUV portfolio. The company is offering XUV700 in two series - MX and AdrenoX (AX). The XUV700 prices starts at Rs 11.99 lakh.



### MGL hikes CNG, PNG prices by Rs 2 each

Following the steep 62 per cent hike in prices of domestically produced gas announced by the Centre last week, Mahanagar Gas has increased the retail price of compressed natural gas (CNG) and piped natural gas (PNG) by Rs 2 each with immediate effect. Given the massive increase in supply side cost, the company is constrained to increase the base price of CNG by Rs 2/kg and domestic PNG by Rs 2/SCM in and around Mumbai, MGL said in a statement on Monday. Noting that the re-gasified liquefied natural gas price is also at a historical high now, MGL said these combinations have resulted in a significant increase in the cost of gas being procured by it. This has forced the firm to pass on the price revision on a progressive manner as the rate hike from the supply side is too large to be passed on at one go, it added.



### Sloggi forays into Indian mkt, to open 10 stores by 2022

International bodywear brand Sloggi has forayed into the Indian market and plans to expand its retail presence through franchise partner Solar Group. Sloggi, a brand from the house of Swiss underwear maker Triumph International, eyes to achieve 10 per cent market share in the next two years, a statement said. It has plans to open 10 stores pan India by 2022. As per its strategy, it will focus on tier-2 cities along with key metros. Commenting on the launch Triumph India and Sri Lanka Commercial Director Santhosh Sivaramkrishnan said by expanding its operations, the company aims to explore the potential of this market segment in India. "We have already witnessed exponential growth here with our parent brand Triumph," he added.



### Zoomcar sets up office in SFO ahead of US listing next year

Car sharing marketplace Zoomcar on Tuesday said it has opened an office in San Francisco ahead of its US listing next year. The new office in the US will further bolster Zoomcar's push to create a global car-sharing platform and prepare the company for its broader global marketplace, a statement said. "Recently appointed CFO Geiv Dubash based in San Francisco will be instrumental in helping Zoomcar with future capital markets transactions, including potential listing in public markets," it added. Zoomcar has expanded to Southeast Asia and the Middle East. Last month, Zoomcar had announced the launch of its operations in Indonesia and Vietnam. "At Zoomcar, we're focused on becoming a public company in the next 12 months. As we continuously evaluate the best possible alternatives for a public listing, our new office in San Francisco will help the company for this next phase of growth as we expand the platform and brand globally," Zoomcar CEO said.



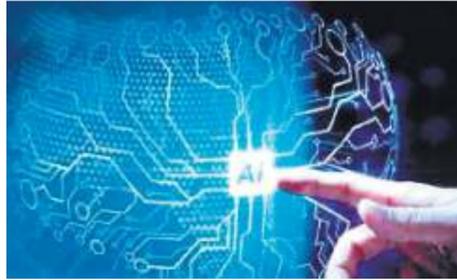
# India Artificial Intelligence mkt to reach \$7.8 bn by 2025: IDC

PNS N NEW DELHI

The artificial intelligence (AI) market in India is expected to grow at a five-year compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 20.2 per cent and touch USD 7.8 billion in total revenues by 2025, according to research firm IDC.

The businesses in India will accelerate the adoption of both AI-centric and AI non-centric applications for the next five years, IDC said in a statement.

AI software segment is expected to dominate the market and grow from USD 2.8 billion in 2020 at a CAGR of 18.1 per cent by the end of 2025, IDC said. Organisations are leveraging multiple AI applications such as CRM, ERM and others to manage operations, scale supply chains in



response to real-time or predicted demands and many more to provide benefits for their customers, improve RoI (return on investments) and achieve cost savings, it added. "Indian organisations plan to invest in AI to address current business scenarios across functions, such as customer service, human resources

(HR), IT automation, security, recommendations, and many more. Increasing business resilience and enhancing customer retention are among the top business objectives for using AI by Indian enterprises," IDC India Associate Research Director (Cloud and AI) Rishu Sharma said.

# Gold climbs Rs 269; silver jumps Rs 630

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold in the national capital on Tuesday rose by Rs 269 to Rs 45,766 per 10 grams amid rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had settled at Rs 45,497 per 10 grams. Silver also jumped Rs 630 to Rs 59,704 per kilogram from Rs 59,074 per kilogram in the previous trade. The Indian rupee depreciated 32 paise

to 74.63 against the US dollar in opening trade on Tuesday. In the international market, gold traded lower at USD 1,759 per ounce and silver remained flat at USD 22.58 per ounce. "Gold prices traded weak with spot gold prices at COMEX trading half a per cent down at \$1,759 per ounce on Tuesday. Gold prices pared previous gains on the stronger dollar for the day," according to HDFC Securities, Senior Analyst.

# HDFC Bank launches Festive Treats 3.0

PNS ■ MUMBAI

HDFC Bank on Tuesday announced its Festive Treats 3.0 campaign which will provide over 10,000 offers on cards, loans and easy EMIs.

The private sector lender has partnered with over 10,000 merchants across more than 100 locations to offer its customers an opportunity to avail deals specifically created for their personal and business needs, the bank said.

Benefits offered to the cus-

tomers include cashbacks and no-cost EMIs on premium mobile phones, up to 22.5 per cent cashback and no-cost EMI on electronics and consumer goods like washing machines and refrigerators, and personal loans starting at 10.25 per cent with instant disbursal in account.

Customers can avail car loan starting at 7.50 per cent with zero foreclosure charges and funding of up to 100 per cent on two-wheeler loans and four per cent less on interest rates, the bank said.

There is zero processing fee and funding of up to 90 per cent on tractor loans and 50 per cent discount on processing fee on commercial vehicle loans, it said.

The lender is offering collateral-free business loans up to Rs 75 lakh and 50 per cent off on processing fee, it added.

"We present Festive Treat 3.0 to make this festive season even more joyous. We have more than 10,000 plus offers which are online, offline and hyperlocal," the lender's Group Head (Payments,

Consumer Finance, Digital Banking and IT) Parag Rao told reporters.

"Our range of offers on credit cards is not just about coming back with a bang. It is about spurring India's consumption story. We are encouraged to do this since about one-third of spends on credit, debit and prepaid cards in India happens on an HDFC Bank card," he said.

Rao said that with the economy opening up, consumer spending is likely to be even better than the previous years.

# 'Pandora papers' show London is key hub for tax avoidance

PNS ■ LONDON

Transparency advocates are calling on Britain to tighten the country's defenses against money laundering and tax avoidance after a massive leak of financial data showed how London is a key destination of choice for some of the world's richest and most powerful people to conceal their cash.

The cache of almost 12 million files shows how wealthy people around the world reportedly set up offshore companies to buy property and avoid taxes.

Foreign individuals identified as beneficiaries of these types of offshore accounts in London include Jordanian King Abdullah II, Azerbaijan's President Ilham Aliyev and associates of Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan. Abdullah has denied any impropriety and Khan tweeted that his government would investigate anyone mentioned and take appropriate action if



wrongdoing is found. Aliyev hasn't commented. The leaked financial data, dubbed the "Pandora Papers," was published Sunday by the International Consortium of Investigative Journalists and its media partners, including Britain's Guardian newspaper and the BBC.

Though the purchases are legal under British law, they highlight the complicated — and often anonymous — financial practices wealthy individuals use to avoid tax, far removed from the everyday experience of most of the British population.

London is a go-to for the rich and powerful because it's home to a sophisticated ecosystem of businesses that can help in the process, including creative wealth management firms, high-end lawyers and long-established accounting firms.

A 2019 analysis by transparency group Global Witness indicated that around 87,000 properties in England and Wales were owned by anonymous companies registered in tax havens.

It said that 40% of the anonymously owned properties identified were in London and that the total value of the properties was likely to be more than 100 billion pounds (\$135 billion). Popular areas were said to include the boroughs of Westminster, where the U.K. Parliament is located, Camden, and Kensington and Chelsea.

The London property market has for years struggled to shake off a reputation for playing a central role in how rich people around the world seek to hide and accentuate their wealth, with many prime properties in the heart of the city owned by non-nationals. Russian oligarchs have been high-profile purchasers of London properties in recent years, for example.

For decades, authorities in the U.K. have pushed a light touch approach to regulation in order to attract foreign capital and talent. Critics say that has been a magnet for tax avoidance, which can be legal, as well as more criminal activities, including money laundering.

Duncan Hames, policy director at the campaign group Transparency International U.K., said the disclosures should act as a "wake up call" for the government to deliver on long-overdue measures to strengthen Britain's defenses against what he termed "dirty money." "These leaks show that there is one system for corrupt elites who can buy access to prime property and enjoy luxury lifestyles and another for honest hard-working people," he said. "Once again Britain's role as an enabler of global corruption and money laundering have been exposed with the same loopholes exploited to funnel suspect wealth into the country." T r a n s p a r e n c y

International U.K. is urging the government to close a loophole that allows companies in the U.K.'s offshore financial centers such as the British Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands to hold property in the country without requiring these companies to reveal the names of their true owners.

It also wants the government to crack down on professionals that help those with illicit wealth move and hide their cash in the U.K. and to properly resource the National Crime Agency to go after those suspected of having made their money through crime and corruption.

Treasury chief Rishi Sunak said Britain's tax authorities will inspect the Pandora Papers. He defended the country's record on tackling tax avoidance. "I don't think it is a source of shame because actually our track record on this issue is very strong," Sunak told BBC radio.

# Billie Eilish to be youngest singer to headline Glastonbury Festival 2022



**B**illie Eilish has been revealed as one of the headline acts at next year's Glastonbury Festival, reports Variety.com. The festival confirmed Eilish, who is 20 years old, will be the youngest solo headliner in its history. Eilish will perform on the iconic Pyramid Stage on the Friday night of the 5-day extravaganza, following in the footsteps of artists including the Rolling Stones, Jay-Z, Adele and David Bowie. It won't be Eilish's first appearance at Glastonbury, which is also known simply as 'Glasto' in the U.K. Eilish also played in 2019 on the

Other Stage. "We couldn't be happier to announce that the wonderful Billie Eilish is headlining the Pyramid on the Friday at next year's Glastonbury Festival, becoming the youngest solo headliner in our history," said Emily Eavis, Glastonbury's co-organiser. "This feels like the perfect way for us to return and I cannot wait!" Eilish recently became the youngest artiste ever to write and perform a theme song for the

James Bond franchise, with her track *No Time to Die*. She also revealed recently she spent the Covid-19 lockdown writing and recording a new album. 2022's Glastonbury will be the first in three years, with both 2020 and 2021's live events cancelled due to the pandemic. A virtual event was attempted in June 2021, with artists live streaming their sets from Worthy Farm instead, although it was beset by technical difficulties. Glasto's organisers had also hoped to host a one-day mini-concert in September but this was called off in July. Glastonbury will be held from June 22 to June 26, 2022.

# Russia to make first feature movie in space

**I**n a historic first, Russia is set to launch an actor and a film director into space to make a feature film in orbit — a project the nation's space chief has hailed as a chance to raise the prestige of Russia's space program. Actor Yulia Peresild and director Klim Shipenko are set to blast off Tuesday for the International Space Station in a Russian Soyuz spacecraft together with cosmonaut Anton Shkaplerov, a veteran of three space missions. After 12 days on the space outpost, Peresild and Shipenko will return to Earth with another Russian cosmonaut. The crew plans to film segments of a new movie titled *Challenge* about a surgeon summoned to rush to the space station to save a crew member who suffers a heart condition. Speaking at a news conference at the Russian launch facility in Baikonur, Kazakhstan, Peresild acknowledged that the training for the mission was grueling but described it as a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Shipenko said he's thrilled to be the first filmmaker in space and is keen to experiment with lighting, camera settings and other technical aspects. Once on the space station, Shipenko said he will don a T-shirt that he always wears when he begins to shoot a new movie.



Shkaplerov insisted that his entertainment-world crewmates are fully ready for the flight after their fast-track training. Dmitry Rogozin, head of the Russian state space corporation Roscosmos, was a key driving force behind the project. Rogozin described making the world's first feature film in space as a chance to raise the nation's space prestige. Some Russian media were skeptical about the plan and there were reportedly some doubts inside the Russian space program as well. Sergei Krikalev, a highly decorated veteran of the Soviet and Russian space programs who made six space flights, was fired from his post as director of Roscosmos' crewed missions in June following what some Russian media described as his sharp criticism of the filmmaking project. Krikalev was reinstated to the director's job just a few days later, apparently due to intervention by his highly-placed backers. He has refrained from public comments on the project. The Russian segment of the International Space Station is considerably less spacious compared to the US segment, leaving little room for filmmaking. It was expanded in July after the long-awaited arrival of the new lab module, the Nauka, which is yet to be fully integrated into the station. Once they arrive at the space station on Tuesday, the newcomers will join Thomas Pesquet of the European Space Agency; NASA astronauts Mark Vande Hei, Shane Kimbrough and Megan McArthur; Aki Hoshide of the Japan Aerospace Exploration Agency; and Roscosmos cosmonauts Oleg Novitskiy and Pyotr Dubrov. Filmmaking plans are sketchy, but Shipenko said that Shkaplerov, Novitskiy and Dubrov will all play parts in a new movie. Novitskiy, who is set to star as the ailing cosmonaut in the film, will take the captain's seat in a Soyuz capsule to take the crew back to Earth on Oct. 17.

# Squid Game star Jung Ho-yeon is IG's most followed South Korean actress



ever," reports nme.com. Since the show's release last month, the actress has seen her Instagram following count rise from around 400,000 to 13.5 million as of now. Earlier this week, the actress overtook veteran actress Song Hye-kyo, who currently has a following of 12 million on the photo-sharing website, to become the second-most followed South Korean actress. Just hours later, Jung's follower count soon caught up with that of Lee Sung-kyung, another model-turned actress known for roles in Korean dramas such as *Weightlifting Fairy Kim Bok-jo* and *Dr. Romantic 2*.

**S**quid Game star Jung Ho-yeon is now the South Korean actress with the highest number of Instagram followers.

Jung has garnered significant international recognition following her breakout role in Netflix's *Squid Game*, which is well on its way to becoming the streaming platform's "biggest show



# Yami opens up about incurable skin condition

**A**ctor Yami Gautam recently took to social media to share that she has a skin condition called Keratosis-Pilaris. Sharing unfiltered photos of herself on Twitter, the *Bhoot Police* actor said it's a condition where the skin erupts in tiny bumps. Stating that she finally felt comfortable enough to share this with her fans, Yami wrote, "Hello friends, I recently shot for some images and just

when they were about to go in for post-production (a common procedure) to conceal my skin-condition called Keratosis-Pilaris, I thought, 'Hey Yami, why don't you embrace this fact and accept it enough to be OKAY with it.' Yami explained what the condition meant, penning, "Just let it be... (Yes, I do talk out loud to myself). For those who haven't heard about this, it's a skin condition wherein you get tiny bumps on the skin. I promise they aren't as bad as your mind and your neighbor aunty makes it out to be." Yami Gautam further added that she had developed this condition when

she was merely a teenager — "I developed this skin condition during my teenage years, and there is still no cure for it. I've dealt with it for many years now and today finally, I decided to let go of all my fears and insecurities and found the courage to love and accept my 'flaws' wholeheartedly. I also found the courage to share my truth with you. Phew! Smiling face with open mouth and cold sweat I didn't feel like airbrushing my folliculitis or smoothing that 'under-eye' or 'shaping up' that waist a tiny bit more! And yet, I feel beautiful." Fans showered love in the comments section and praised Yami for taking this bold step.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



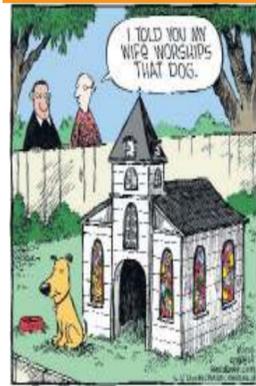
### GARFIELD



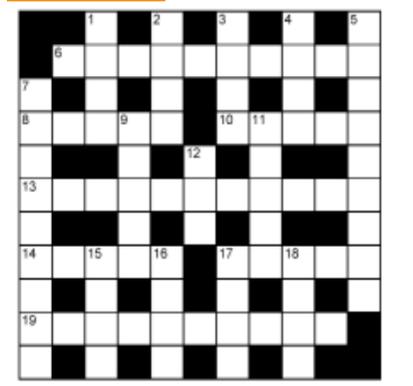
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### NANCY



### SUDOKU

**Yesterday's solution**

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

**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**

- A large naval ship
- Feeling very annoyed
- A South American dance
- A very wealthy person
- Gets closer to
- A soft type of hat
- A grower of fruit trees

**DOWN**

- Gun sound
- Don't go
- A strap for trousers
- Skinny
- The people you play against in a game
- A court game played with rackets and a shuttlecock
- A measuring stick

**11 Astonish**  
**12 Female deer**  
**15 Curved part under a bridge**  
**16 A sewed joint in material**  
**17 Hospital patients lie in these**  
**18 Go quickly**

**SOLUTION**

S	A	T	U	R	N	B	I	T
E	G	O	B	N	I			
A	C	N	E	F	U	N	N	E
T	G	O	B	S	E			
L	U	L	T	A	R	E		
P	E	A	N	T	E	R		
A	N	T	E	N	N	A		
C	E	A	S	E	D	A		
I	L	L	E	R				
L	A	M	B		P	O	O	L

## A WISE MIX OF ART AND SCIENCE

SHIKHA DUGGAL

**E**nvironmental scientist Radhika Powar is on a definitive path of changing how art is showcased with her own blend of sustainability and command. Inspiring a social change in the community of scientists too, her definition of art determining nature has a new meaning to it, with the inclusion of divine beings. In an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, she tells how she is transforming the way art is created.

**What does your artwork try to signify?**

Art for me is the depiction of my opinions, ideologies, and beliefs with the help of a canvas. Usually, my paintings represent nature, life, human relations, divinity, and different states of mind by embodying them through various modes. In my recent series of embodiments of Goddess Durga, I tried to represent the multifaceted divine being of the goddess herself and the great Indian heritage of intricate sculptural art belonging from the 7-13th century.

**Where do you draw your inspiration from?**

Fine art for me is a source that makes me the most comfortable. I take inspiration from every other lifeline, event, nature, and expression around me. I truly believe that my inspiration adds to the soul of the art. Art causes some kind of a stir up in our minds, it surprises you! It allows you to question the artist's intent. As an artist, our lives have freedom from rules that give us even more wild and imaginative creation.

**Most of your artworks have some sort of relationship with nature, how closely are you linked to nature in real life?**

Since my childhood, I was very closely connected to nature; this helped me pursue my dream of becoming an ecologist too. Since then, I was made aware of our biodiversity, how it needs us to lend a helping hand so that it can help us survive and hence I aim to work each day towards helping people come up with sustainable



ideas to protect our mother earth, not just through my information but also by creating awareness via my artwork.

**Why did you think of encapsulating Goddess Durga in your recent work?**

Durga is the supreme assimilated form of 'shakti' - the power to believe in one's multifaceted beings, it's to let their way out and control, plunging swiftly trying to lift to unknown supremacy, wherein all these elements can be seen riding majestically through battlefield whilst carrying the divine beauty within forever! As an artist, I was always inspired by the representation of Goddess Durga and when I came across the intricately carved Divine sculptures of Durga or Mahishasurmardini, carved in sandstone, limestone and schist earlier, I was enthused and wanted the world to witness her loveliness too. I feel privileged as I am getting an opportunity to showcase my art worldwide now.

**What's the natural world when you have a variety of talents for you?**

Art has its roots through nature, since age's artist and a scientist, both in their unique ways have been stimulated to perform experiments and findings, one on canvases and the other in laboratories. The complex way in which Mother Nature dwells is an ultimate, one of its kind motivation. The lovely blend is romanticising. We are fighting against the

ability joins art, it is bound to create magic. The culture is taking on social responsibilities; art on climate change, political injustice, and social policies is the fusion to look out for.

**How can we mark carbon footprint in the future?**

When we start choosing utility over comfort, is when we will be in a race to control our carbon footprint in the future.

Reduce, Reuse and Recycle — should be our policy, shift to renewable sources of energy and opt for proven sustainable

general public are working towards realising the mistakes they have made in the past, and accordingly are trying to create a sustainable future. There have been a set of norms by the government which is still under reformation.

Many are still learning about the choices they can make towards conserving our environment, but small initiatives like not using plastic, saving forests, show us a positive picture.

normalcy of a 9 to 5 job and creating something long-lasting to keep in mind.

**Since you're an environmental scientist, where do you think our country is placed, in terms of protecting the environment?**

solutions. Considering the awareness about our current environmental state, it can be said that the government and the

Since we have lived in a developing country for a few decades by now, it had hardly any idea about the environmental impacts, but today it's in the serious note of requiring a sustainable solution to the upcoming expansion.

Though constant studies and governmental bodies are implying environmental norms, yet public participation towards the protection of the environment and sustainability is the core requirement today. When sus-



## Be festive-ready with these home decor hacks

**F**estive season is right around the corner and so is the buzz for home decor. It is that time of the year when all of

us get into the mood of spicing things up around our house as we give our houses a brand new makeover.

From decor to lighting, we make sure everything is drenched in the festive fervour as we look forward to happy beginnings. While it all sounds very exciting, decorating your house before festivals can get more exhausting than exciting at times. Here are some super easy and helpful home décor hacks from WoodenStreet:

**Start with lighting**

From string bulbs to strip lights, it is time to take out all your lighting options. Setting up your place with bright lighting is one of the easiest home décor techniques. You can also invest in some good LED bulbs and lights as they will last you for a long time and you'd not have to look for replacements every year.

**Don't forget the furniture**

Apart from deep cleaning the house, rearrange your furniture to give your apartment a fresh look. As festivals make for a very auspicious time of the year, it is also a good time to buy some new sofas or tables. Bring in some modern wooden items and see them transforming your space instantly.

**Say hello to colours**

It is time to introduce your space with some bright pops of colour here and there. This

home décor hack is best for people on a budget. Buy fancy cushion covers, beautifully woven rugs and stylish sofa throws to make your space look all decked up for the festive mood.

**Make the corners speak**

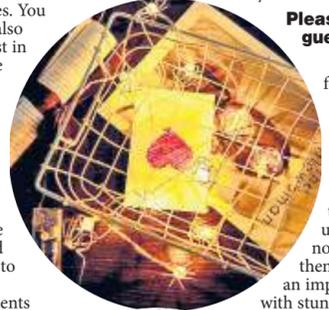
While redoing our apartments, we often overlook the walls and corners. You will be surprised to see how little detailing in these areas can do wonders to the overall home décor. To keep the festive vibe thriving, you can buy some spiritual or religious-themed items. Explore more options and invest in figurines and paintings that resonate with the aesthetics of your house.

**Please guests**

As the festive season starts to kick in, visitors begin to show up every now and then. Make an impression with stunning melamine and ceramic sets when your visitors come in. Serve them in fashionable tableware sets to give them a glimpse of your home décor taste.

Decorating your house for the festivals is no rocket science. You just have to be a little patient, make the right choices and invest in evergreen pieces for your house. You will see how things will fall into place easily and you will be all set to enjoy the celebrations.

(The author, Lokendra Singh Ranawat, is the Founder & CEO of WoodenStreet.)



## Know what overproduction of tears and blocked ducts can do to your eyes!



**T**ears, to a certain level, are vital for the eyes, as it aids in keeping the eyes lubricated and removing any foreign bodies and dust particles. Dr. Aparna Ayyagari, Consultant Ophthalmologist, Dr. Agarwal's Eye Hospital Hyderabad, explains the science behind the watering of the eyes. In medicine, an overflow of tears onto the

face, other than caused by normal crying is referred to as Epiphora. It is a clinical sign or condition that constitutes insufficient tear film drainage from the eyes, in that tears will drain down the face rather than through the nasolacrimal system.

Dr. Aparna Ayyagari says, "The main causes of watering are overproduction of tears and blocked ducts. In babies, the most common cause is

blocked ducts. Some are born with underdeveloped ducts, which can clear up in a few weeks when the duct develops fully. Lacrimal massage is suggested for the babies to open the ducts. There is also a risk of infection if the tear duct is narrowed or blocked, resulting in a stagnant tear in the tear sac. While in adults and older kids, the most common cause is overproduction of tears."

In case a foreign body enters the body, first, the eye should be washed with clean water at room temperature, and the patient should not rub the eye. In case the sensation of the foreign body persists, the patient should consult an ophthalmologist. To remove it, artificial tears for lubrication, antibiotic drops if indicated are started. Whereas, in case of chemical injury, initially the eye should be washed with copious amounts of clean water, and the patient must consult an ophthalmologist immediately.

Dr. Aparna Ayyagari shares some of the common problems related to eye-watering are as follows:

**Allergic conjunctivitis:** This is caused by an allergen that causes an overreaction by the body's immune system. It results in watering, itching, redness, and difficulty looking at the light. Patients must avoid the aller-

gen, refrain from rubbing eyes, and avoid wearing contact lenses.

While in the case of infective conjunctivitis, symptoms like redness, pain, difficulty to look at light, stickiness, discharge can be present. The infection can usually be resolved within 1 week, even without treatment.

**Dry eyes:** A person can suffer from dry eyes due to various reasons like the body not making enough tears, tear getting dried up too fast, not having the correct balance of water and mucus,

windy conditions or air conditioning directing straight at the eye, ageing, and some medical conditions (thyroid eye disease, chronic sinus infections, rheumatoid arthritis, Sjogren's syndrome, SLE etc). So, the eye reacts by producing more tears.

**Different eyelid problems** causing watering can be in turning of eyelid margin or outward turning of lid margins or incomplete closure of eyelid etc.

**Scratch in cornea** can be due to dust, sand, insect, contact lens, the patient

should see an ophthalmologist immediately to prevent further infection.

**Blepharitis,** it is due to blockage and infection of glands near the eyelid margin. Patients may suffer from watering, redness, itching, crusting over the lashes.

A sty, associated with blepharitis is a red swollen lump that forms along the edge of the eyelid, close to the lashes (external), or inside or under the lid (internal), due to inflammation or infection of oil glands.

A chalazion is the term given to sty in case it becomes chronic, without pain. If it is not resolved with warm compresses, and medical management surgery can be planned, in which by making a small incision content are scooped out.

Dr. Aparna Ayyagari adds, "For symptomatic relief, the patient has to reduce the screen time, use of glasses

with anti-reflective coating, a blue light filter can be used, and 20-20-20 rule should be practised, where every 20 minutes spent using a screen, the patient must try to look away at 20 feet distance for a total of 20 seconds and warm compresses also help. Whereas, according to the level of dryness, artificial tears and gels should be added. In case of severe dryness, new modalities like IRPL (Intense Regulated Pulse Light Therapy) can be tried to open up the blocked glands."

She concludes, "Any injury or obstruction to the tear drainage pathway can cause severe watering, for which surgical management is necessary. Also, any tumour either benign or cancerous, like lacrimal gland tumours, or tumours of paranasal sinuses can cause severe dryness, which will always require surgical intervention."



# Neesham, Coulter-Nile blow away Royals



PTI ■ SHARJAH

Jimmy Neesham and Nathan Coulter-Nile bowled exceptionally well to keep Mumbai Indians alive and kicking as they outclassed Rajasthan Royals by eight wickets in a low-scoring Indian Premier League match, here on Tuesday.

New Zealander Neesham (3/12) and Aussie Coulter-Nile (4/14) snapped seven wickets for only 26 runs in eight overs between them to choke Rajasthan for a meagre 90 for 9. The five-time champions then knocked off the runs in 8.2 overs to go up to 12 points and more importantly improve their net run-rate to -0.048. This was also the biggest victory for MI in terms of balls left (70).

Ishan Kishan (50 not out) got some much-needed confidence during the short chase as MI knocked Royals out of IPL from the league stage itself yet again as they flattered to deceive. The Royals did not have many quality Indian players except Yashasvi Jaiswal. Kishan, who has endured wretched form during the better part of the UAE leg, hit five fours and three sixes. Fittingly, he finished it with a maximum.

MI will now meet Sunrisers Hyderabad on Friday, another must-win game but they would also want Kolkata Knight Riders (12 points, NRR +0.294) to lose their last match against Royals on Thursday. In case KKR win and move up to 14 points, MI on the last day would know how much

they require to get past Shah Rukh Khan-owned team's net run-rate.

On the day, Neesham and Coulter-Nile hit the ideal length on a tacky strip as they choked Royals to the lowest T20 total by any team batting first at Sharjah.

Rohit Sharma was spot-on in deciding to bowl first and Neesham (3/12), playing his first game of the UAE leg, took the pace off his deliveries on a Sharjah track where the ball wasn't coming onto the bat.

Coulter-Nile (4-0-14-4) was equally effective with his change-ups and hitting the hard-lengths more often than not en route one of his best IPL spells. Neesham and Coulter-Nile cumulatively gave away

IPL pointstable			
	M	P	NRR
DC	13	20	+0.526
CSK	13	18	+0.739
RCB	12	16	-0.157
KKR	13	12	+0.294
MI	13	12	-0.048
PBKS	13	10	-0.241
RR	13	10	-0.337
SRH	12	4	-0.475

only 26 runs between them in eight overs and also got a whopping seven wickets, which threw Royals out of contest.

Jasprit Bumrah (2/14) was menacing as ever with crucial wickets as it was one of MI's closest to perfect bowling performance.

Royals were blown away in a space of four overs as they slumped from 41 for 1 in the last over of Powerplay to 50 for 5 by the time the first 10 was about to end. There was no looking back for MI from that position.

The in-form Sanju Samson (3) tried to slash hard without reaching to the pitch of the delivery as Jayant Yadav at point took a diving catch. Shivam Dube after the CSK heroics tried to reach at a fuller delivery on 'fifth stump' and dragged it back while Rahul Tewatia (12 off 20 balls) in the midst of a horrendous

season, tried to pull a short ball that came late and took the edge into keeper's hands.

Neesham's induction in place of Krunal Pandya, who has been a regular feature for

a good five years now, proved to be a master-stroke as he didn't give enough pace to manoeuvre and also bowled wicket-to-wicket, not experimenting much.

Evin Lewis (24 off 19 balls) once again started in rollicking fashion but the course of Royals innings was changed when talented Yashasvi Jaiswal (12) failed to ride the bounce off a

Coulter-Nile delivery to be caught behind.

Once Bumrah got rid of Lewis with an angular delivery, rest of the Royals batters fell like a pack of cards.

# Suryakumar, Ishan have relaxed after getting India cap: Gavaskar

PIANS ■ MUMBAI

Indian batting legend Sunil Gavaskar on Tuesday felt that Indian Premier League side Mumbai Indians' batting woes had been compounded by the fact that the performance of Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan had not been up to the mark, adding that the duo had "relaxed after getting the India cap."



"I think it looks to me like, Suryakumar Yadav and Ishan Kishan have just relaxed a little bit after getting the India cap. They might not have, but some of the shots they are playing -- it looks like they are trying to play these big shots just because they are India players," Gavaskar said on Star Sports.

The batting legend blamed the batters' poor shot selection for the dismal show, adding that some of the Mumbai Indians players didn't give themselves time to perfect the shots they've played during the IPL season.

"Sometimes what happens is, you gotta give yourself a little bit of time, and you gotta get your shot selection right. And I think that is where they have missed this time around, where their shot selection has not been exactly correct, and that's why they've got out cheaply," said Gavaskar.

# Dhoni set to play IPL 2022, will play his 'farewell game' in Chennai

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Chennai Super Kings skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni made it amply clear that he would be wearing his favourite yellow jersey for at least one more season and the 'Whistle Podu' army will certainly see him playing a "farewell game" at their beloved Chepaak.

While it was always on the cards, Dhoni on Tuesday for the first time dropped elaborate hints that he will be seen playing next season as CSK is set to go through a big transition phase post mega auction.

"When it comes to farewell, you can still come and see me play for CSK and that can be my farewell game. So, you will still get that opportunity to bid me farewell. Hopefully, we will come to see Chennai and play my last game over there and we can meet fans there," Dhoni said while interacting with fans during the 75th year celebrations of 'India Cements' held virtually.

If sources are to be believed then CSK will be retaining three players -- skipper Dhoni, all-rounder Ravindra Jadeja and prolific opener Ruturaj Gaikwad for the next auctions.

The iconic former India captain has not played in Chennai since 2019 as the 2020 edition of IPL was held in the UAE and CSK played matches in the first phase of the tournament earlier this year in Mumbai before it was suspended due to a breach in the bio-bubble.

Also, responding to a fan's question on his decision to retire from international cricket on August 15 last year, Dhoni said "It can't be a better day than that, 15th of August."

About CSK as a team holding its nerves in crunch situations, Dhoni said they try to keep it normal and prepare for the opposition they would be up against.

"We are a process-driven team, we believe in the process and we know that if we follow the process if we execute the plans well, if we do the small things right, we will get the desired result, we know the result is a byproduct and that also keeps us calm," he added.

Also, the CSK captain stressed about importance of living in the moment. "We live in the moment and enjoy each other's company. We know that if we play to our potential, we can beat the opposition. If the opposition has to beat us, they have to play better cricket."

# Gavaskar slams umpiring standards in IPL

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former India captain Sunil Gavaskar has slammed the standard of umpiring in the ongoing Indian Premier League.

Gavaskar made his comments after umpire Anil Chaudhary changed his decision from no ball to wide during the game between Delhi Capitals and Chennai Super Kings on Monday.

The delivery by Dwayne Bravo landed outside the pitch. "That was clearly a no-ball. We've had a couple of

decisions from TV umpires, which in these circumstances can make the difference between winning and losing, and that shouldn't happen," said Gavaskar while doing commentary on Star Sports. "These kinds of decisions should not change the game. It's a good thing Delhi won because that could have changed the game," he added.

Umpiring decisions in the IPL have come under scanner many times in the past and this season too there have been some questionable decisions made.

# Indian girls struggle at World Wrestling Championship

PTI ■ OSLO NORWAY

The young Indian wrestlers, including talented Hanny Kumari, expectedly found the going tough at the World Championship, here on Tuesday.

Competing in the 50kg category, Hanny showed some spark when she began with a 9-2 win over Korea's Miran Cheon but her challenge in the quarter-final against Russia's Nadezhda Sokolova lasted just 35 seconds.

Sokolova took a commanding 6-0 lead in the first 15 seconds of the bout, severely denting the confidence of the Indian teenager and finished the bout in no time.

In the 53kg, Pooja got a wrestling lesson from Japanese prodigy Akari Fujinami, who is yet to lose a bout in her career. Pooja did not have to play any Qualification round but lost her pre-quarterfinal by technical superiority.

Bhateri failed to get a single point, let alone winning a round, as she lost 0-8 to Russia's Dinara Kudaeva Salikhova.

Kiran (76kg) was the only senior player on the mat for India in the morning session but as usual she struggled at the big stage.

# Sam Curran ruled out of T20 World Cup

PTI ■ LONDON

All-rounder Sam Curran has been ruled out of the ICC T20 World Cup with a lower back injury, which he sustained during an Indian Premier League game for Chennai Super Kings, the England & Wales Cricket Board said on Tuesday.

He will fly back to the UK in the next couple of days and will have further scans and a full review later this week by the ECB's medical team.

"Curran complained of back pain after Chennai Super Kings Indian Premier League fixture on Saturday against Rajasthan Royals," the ECB stated.

# DINESH KARTHIK TO LEAD TN IN MUSHTAQ ALI TROPHY

Chennai: Dinesh Karthik will lead the Tamil Nadu team in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy T20 tournament to be played in Lucknow. The team picked by the State Senior Selection Committee of the Tamil Nadu Cricket Association features a few players who shone in the recent TNPL like B Sai Sudharshan and P Saravana

Kumar. Out of favour India all-rounder Vijay Shankar has been named Dinesh Karthik's deputy in the squad, which also includes left-arm pacer T Natarajan, who has not featured in the second phase of the IPL in the UAE after he tested positive for Covid-19, and all-rounder MS Washington Sundar, who is recovering from an injury.

# Hockey India withdraws from 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Tuesday pulled out of next year's Birmingham Commonwealth Games' hockey competition, citing COVID-19 concerns and UK's discriminatory quarantine rules for travellers from the country, a day after England's withdrawal from the junior men's World Cup in Bhubaneswar over similar reasons.



Birmingham Games (July 28-August 8) and the Hangzhou Asian Games (September 10-25). HI said it can't risk sending its players to the UK, which has been one of the worst affected by the coronavirus pandemic. "You will appreciate that the Asian games is the Continental qualification event for the 2024 Paris Olympic

Games and keeping the priority of the Asian Games in mind, Hockey India can not risk any members of the Indian teams contracting COVID-19 during the Commonwealth Games," Ningombam wrote.

"Therefore, Hockey India will not be sending its men and women teams to Commonwealth Games 2022 and are informing you in advance to kindly notify the Organisers to identify reserve teams." The possibility of this withdrawal arose a few weeks back when the IOA President said that HI had indicated to him that it was more keen on players being in top form for the Asian Games which is a qualifier for the 2024 Paris

Olympics. Sources in the sports ministry had stated that efforts would be made to persuade HI to send second-string teams instead of pulling out altogether. The UK recently refused to recognise India's COVID-19 vaccination certificates and imposed a 10-day hard quarantine on travellers from the country even if they were fully vaccinated.

The discrimination was prominently mentioned in Ningombam's letter to the IOA President, who has issued instructions for co-ordination with the sport's world governing body FIH for the details of the reserve teams.

Batra heads the FIH as well.

# Chess Champion Carlsen adds one more feather to his cap

PRAVIN THIPSAY

World Chess Champion and World No 1 Magnus Carlsen added one more feather to his cap when he won the two-week Meltwater Champions Chess Tour that ended on October 4.

The Tour was organised in various legs and leagues with accumulation of cumulative points on the basis of performance in each part of it. The tour gave exposure to several talented youngsters to match their wits against the topest legends from the International Chess.

Wesley So of the USA created a flutter by defeating Magnus Carlsen on some occasions but the latter still topped the score board from the start till the end.

Here is an interesting game from the tour (Carlsen M vs Vachier Lagrave).

1.e4 c5 2.Nf3 d6 3.d4 cxd4 4.Nxd4 Nf6 5.Nc3 Nc6 6.h3 e5 7.Nxc6! [Carlsen tries a "Pater's idea" as Fischer would call it. In fact, Fischer often did the same! This this capture isn't in keeping with principles of modern Chess as it strengthens Black centre and allows back the 'd5' square. Such a capture can be justified positionally only if White can break the Black's central pawn mass with f2-f4, before Black is able to get d6-d5. Let's see how the games progresses now.]

tions starting with 8...Be7 9.fxe5 Nd7 10.Qg4 Nxe5 could expose the serious weaknesses in White's camp.] 8...Be7 9.0-0-0 10.b3

[10.f4 looks like the established strategic way of playing against Black's Central Pawn mass, but Carlsen's moves and plans always remain a mystery to the Chess world. 10...Qb6+ 11.Kh1 exf4 12.Bxf4 Qxb2 13.Qd3 Qb4 14.e5 could have been a logical follow-up of 10.f4.] 10...Nd7 11.Na4 Nf6 12.Nc3 Nd7 [Black is offering a draw indirectly.] 13.Ba3! [13.f4 or: 13.Bb2 looked more obvious.] 13...Nb6! 14.Bd3 d5 [looks good but the Soviet school might have preferred] [14...f5!] 15.Bxe7 Qxe7

[The opening hasn't been a success for the world champion. Black seems to have all the trumps.] 16.Re1! d4 17.Nb1 c5 18.Nd2 Be6 19.Qe2 f6? [An unnecessary 'safeguarding' move which loses time. Black had two better and very interesting options.] [19...a5! In style of Capablanca or Reti, or even; 19...Rf8 intending an eventual ...c5-c4 sacrifice.] 20.Recl Rc8 [20...a5! was still called for.

The wise lessons of Masters in the past shouldn't be disregarded. Unfortunately, Black follows the modern trend of discarding the old strategy as 'out of fashion', only to find himself in trouble very soon.] 21.c3 Qf7! [Black is on the wrong track, he fails to sense that opening of 'c' file is likely to change the pace of the game from static to dynamic.] 22.Rc2!

a5 [Too late and also after placing the wrong Rook at 'c8'] [22...c4? fails to the following pretty variation. 23.bxc4 Nxc4? 24.cxd4 Nxd2 25.d5! Rxc2 26.Bxc2 Bxd5? 27.exd5 Qxd5 28.Rd1 Rd8 29.Bb3!] 23.Ra1 a4 24.cxd4 axb3 25.Nxb3! [This unexpected recapture must have come as a surprise as Black now fails to judge the tactical element in the position.] 25...cxd4? [This 'Positional' move meets with a stunning and unbelievable refutation.

Over a hundred years ago, German Grandmaster Richard Teichmann opined "Chess is 99% tactics" and the Chess playing engines seem to support it. The world seems to be getting back to Paul Morphy's 'Golden era of Chess.' [25...c4! would have maintained equilibrium.] 26.Nc5! Rc7 [26...Bd7 wouldn't have halted White's offensive. For example, 27.a4! Kx8 (27...Rxc5! 28.Rxc5 Nxa4 29.Rc7 winning more material.) 28.a5 Na8 29.Nxd7 Qxd7 30.a6 h6 31.Rb1 Rb8 32.Rcb2 with fatal penetration at 'b7'.] 27.Nxe6! [White has a 'Bad' Bishop, Black has a 'Powerful' 'Protected Passed Pawn'. What more could you want? But Carlsen proves all strategic concepts wrong as now it is the initiative which decides the outcome!] 27...Rxc2 28.Qxc2 [This wins very convincingly but surprisingly World Champion misses the simple] [28.Bxc2! Rc8! 29.Rb1 Qxe6 30.Bb3 Rc4 (30...Nc4 31.Rc1) 31.a4!] 28...Qxe6

[The position seems to be

fine for Black except the position of the misplaced Knight. Had the Knight been on 'c3', Black might have been better here. But Znesko-Borovsky's "Knights need Pawn-support" becomes the deciding factor now.] 29.a4 Ra8! XABCDEFGHY 8r++-+k+( 7+--+zpp' 6-sn+qzp+& 5+-+zp+-% 4P+-zpp+-+ \$ 3+-+L+-+P# 2+-Q+-zPP+ 1+-tR+-+mK-! xabcdefghy [29...Rc8 30.Qb2 Rxc1+ 31.Qxc1 Qc8 32.Qb1 Qc3 33.Qb5 h6 34.Bf1 would have been a lesser evil but that, too, wouldn't have changed the outcome.] 30.a5! Rxa5 31.Qc7! [The finale takes place in style of Paul Morphy, unexpected and elegant! Black can't save the unsupported Knight.] 31...h5 [31...Ra8 32.Rc6 Rc8 (32...Qb3 33.Rxb6 Qxd3 34.Rb7 is similar to the game.)] 33.Rxe6 Rxc7 34.Rxb6 32.Rc6 Qb3 33.Rxb6! [White doesn't even halt to retreat the Bishop.] 33...Ra1+ 34.Kh2 Qxd3 35.Rb7-1-0

[The game emphasises on the importance of the concept of 'safety of King' which is wrongly considered 'out of fashion' by some 'modern' players. Carlsen's "Tactical judgement" reigns supreme as it clearly prevailed over his 'anti-positional' play such as permitting protected passed pawn to opponent, using Bishop as a blockader and surrendering central superiority to his opponent. A remarkable game indeed!]

Pravin Thipsay is Grandmaster and Former national Chess champion

# Mandhana is good candidate for India captaincy after World Cup

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Flamboyant opener Smriti Mandhana should be handed over India captaincy after the upcoming Women's World Cup, regardless of the result in the mega event, the team's former coach WV Raman said on Tuesday.

Mandhana, 25, has evolved into one of the team's key players since making her international debut in 2013.

"Captaincy has got nothing to do with age but I am convinced that Mandhana can be the captain. She is a good reader of the game and has already played few years of cricket," Raman said during a virtual interaction. "It can be a good time and giving captaincy to a younger cricketer means they can lead the side for a stretch for some years.

"But this is not the right time for handing over captaincy because of the upcoming World Cup. So just to hold on to whatever is happening in recent past and perhaps, after the World Cup, regardless of the results, I think the captaincy can be handed over to Smriti Mandhana," he added. Currently, 38-year-old veteran Mithali Raj is the captain of the India's Test and ODI side while Harmanpreet Kaur, 32, is in charge of the T20I team.

Mandhana will enter the three-match T20 International series against Australia on a high, having scored a magnificent maiden hundred in the one-off day/night Test against the hosts.

Raman guided India to the T20 World Cup final last year before the world went into the lockdown due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Raman was however replaced as coach by Ramesh Powar earlier this year.

He also remained hopeful about the emergence of a good crop of fast bowlers



in women's cricket, with Jhulan Goswami in the winter of her career and people like Meghna Singh bursting onto the scene with much promise.

"We need to develop a programme for fast bowlers. In fact, I had a discussion with Rahul Dravid earlier on this. We were planning to start a programme wherein three fast bowling coaches would watch matches and identify talent.

"But when it was just going to be implemented, the pandemic set in and everything went into lockdown. "It's good to see a Pooja Vastrakar backing Jhulan in building up the pressure. Meghna Singh is also there.

"I am sure Dravid will carry forward the programme in the future. If it is done in the manner we have planned, in three years we might see a few fast bowlers emerging," Raman said.

## MAA Elections: Irked Jr NTR won't cast his vote

**A**ctor Jr NTR is said to not cast his vote in the upcoming MAA elections, which are due to be held on October 10. The *Aravindha Sametha* actor is reportedly unhappy with the polarisation that has happened between the camps led by senior actor Naresh and the other side at MAA.

Yesteryear actress and MAA General Secretary Jeevitha Rajasekhar recently revealed NTR's views on the ongoing tussle. She had said, "The other day, I happened to bump into Jr NTR at a party. He inquired

about the situation at MAA. I told him it's not normal. I then sought his vote for our panel. He suggested that he is too disappointed with the happenings at MAA to take any side. I see where he is coming from."



This year, Prakash Raj and Vishnu Manchu are the contenders for the top post. Jeevitha is a member of the former's panel. Manchu's panel is backed by the incumbent, Naresh. Initially, Jeevitha wanted to contest as the President of the association but she later joined Prakash Raj's panel to contest for the General Secretary post.

Now meanwhile, in response to this revelation, Vishnu had said, "Forget NTR and others, even I am disgusted with the murky controversies and developments in MAA elections. The association's reputation has been tarnished with some people going to the media and making unnecessary controversies."

## Samantha's father backs his daughter's decision

**A**fter the most-loved couple, Samantha Ruth and Naga Chaitanya called it quits, social media continues to be full of reactions, videos and posts about how heartbreaking the news has been, to fans. Chay and Sam parted ways ending their four-year-old marital relationship, they made their announcement via a post on their Instagram handles.

Now for the first time, Samantha's father Joseph Prabhu reacted to the news of the divorce. He said that the moment he heard about the divorce, his mind became blank and he was speechless.

Joseph, however, was quick to clarify that he believes in his daughter's decision and trusts that she had taken the decision keeping various things and people's best interests at heart.

Samantha and Naga Chaitanya had requested all to respect their privacy and help them get over with this phase and move on in life. Nagarjuna too said that it was unfortunate for the couple to part ways.

Fans on social media have been consoling the couple, and their family, saying things will be alright in the coming days. Sources now say that Naga Chaitanya is currently staying in a hotel while Samantha is in Chennai shooting for her upcoming project. She is said to have kept their luxury home in Gachibowli to herself.



## Gautham Menon, A.R. Rahman weave magic with Bathukamma song

**E**very year, many musicians join hands to celebrate the auspicious festival of Dasara, which glorifies Telangana's rich traditions. This year music maestro A.R. Rahman come forward to render tunes to a Bathukamma song!

The song, *Allipoola Vennela*, directed by yet another fine filmmaker Gautham Vasudev Menon, has been launched by MLC K Kavitha on Tuesday.

The song shot in the districts of Telangana was released ahead of the first day of Bathukamma. The Bathukamma song was sung by Uthara Unnikrishnan, penned by Mittapalli Surender, and choreographed by National Award winner Brinda.

A.R. Rahman took on Twitter to launch the song, he tweeted "Bathukamma Pandaga Subhankshalu (in Telugu)! A festival of life. A celebration of togetherness. Bringing you a glimpse of the beauty of Bathukamma through #AllipoolaVennela along with Telangana Jagruthi."

MLC Kavitha in response tweeted,

"The festival of colours, melody and togetherness Bathukamma is here! Here's sharing a glimpse of the special song for Bathukamma by @arrahman @menongautham and a dream team for all my sisters."

Bathukamma festival is an integral part of Telangana and it identifies with the cultural identity of the people from the state across the globe. Former Member of Parliament Kalvakuntla Kavitha led Telangana Jagruthi played a crucial role towards cultural integration and for strengthening the roots of the Telangana Movement. Since then, Telangana Jagruthi has been an active force that represents the cultural and literary landscapes of Telangana not just in India but internationally as well.

The recent collaboration with ace director Gautam Vasudev Menon, legendary music composer A R Rahman, and Kavitha-led Telangana Jagruthi, has added to the festive atmosphere of Telangana and has given especially the women of Telangana, another reason to enjoy colourful and joyous Bathukamma festival.

## SHARWANAND completes dubbing for Maha Samudram

**A**ctor Sharwanand, as we know, is all set to rule the big screens this month. His next film is an action and romantic movie — *Maha Samudram* which is directed by Ajay Bhupathi. The much-awaited saga also has Siddharth in the lead role. This Ajay Bhupathi directorial venture is an intense love story with *Sammohanam* girl Aditi Rao Hydari and Anu Emmanuel playing female leads.

*Maha Samudram*, is all set to hit the big screens on October 14, on the occasion of Dussehra.

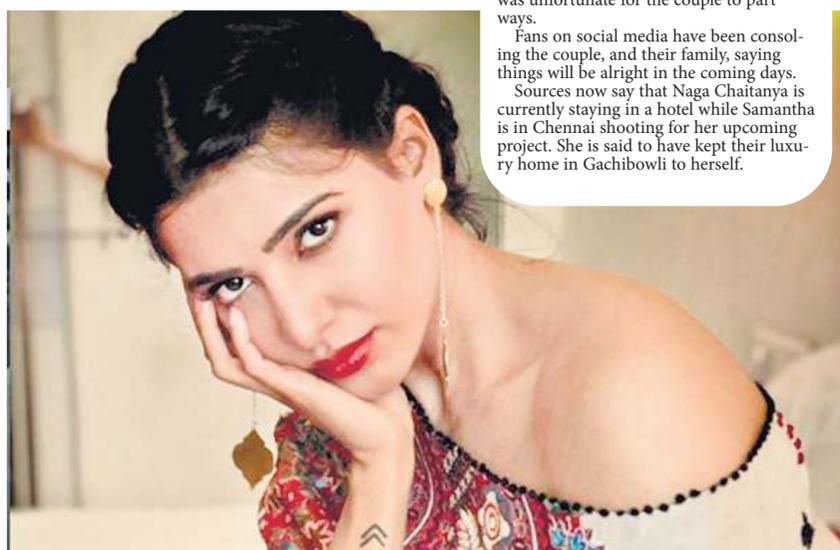
Now according to the latest update, Sharwanand has completed the dubbing for *Maha Samudram*. The *Malli Malli Idhi Raani Roju* actor himself

confirmed the same by sharing a post on his Twitter handle.

The shooting of *Maha Samudram* was wrapped up in July. Post-production work is in full swing in Hyderabad. The film was initially meant to release on August 19, but was postponed due to the Coronavirus pandemic. Sources revealed that the makers shot major portions of the film in Goa and Visakhapatnam.

Apart from the lead actors, the film *Maha Samudram* also has *KGF* fame Garuda Raam, Jagapathi Babu, and Rao Ramesh in important roles.

Sharwanand and Siddharth starrer *Maha Samudram* which is produced by AK Entertainments, has editing by Praveen KL, cinematography by Raj Thota, and music by Chaitan Bharadwaj.



## Hari Hara Veeramallu shoot to resume in November



**P**awan Kalyan and director Krish's period drama *Hari Hara Veeramallu*, as we know, had to halt its shooting in March this year. The film's team has been unable to resume since then, due to various reasons, including Pawan having to complete his other commitments.

Recently, elaborating on the movie and its shooting schedules, director Krish said that he had completed 25% of the total shooting portion until now.

"We filmed some important

sequences on Pawan

Kalyan. Charninar, Machilipatnam Port, and other period sets had already been erected. We stopped the shoot in March as Covi-19 cases began to rise again. We will resume the shoot in the second week of November. If we complete one major episode in the next schedule, the first half of the film gets completed," Krish had revealed.

The director is currently promoting *Konda Polam* which will hit the screens this Friday. *Konda Polam* stars Vaishnav Tej of *Uppena* fame, and Rakul Preet Singh. Krish is confident of completing *Hari*

**Krish and team are confident of completing the shoot of Hari Hara Veeramallu in the next two or three months.**

*Hari Veeramallu* in the next two or three months. Produced by AM Rathnam's Mega Surya Productions, the period drama has Nidhi Agerwal as the leading lady. Bollywood actress Jacqueline Fernandez plays another key role in the film.

## It's a wrap up for Akhanda

**N**andamuri Balakrishna and Boyapati Srinu's third outing together, *Akhanda*, wrapped its entire shooting part. The final song was recently filmed at Annapurna Studios.

The makers look like they are planning to release the film during Diwali weekend. An official announcement about the same is to be made soon. The promotional campaign will be intensified once the release

date gets locked.

Balakrishna who plays a dual character will be seen as an Aghora in one of the roles. Pragya Jaiswal is the leading lady opposite the *Legend* star in the mass action entertainer. Poorna plays the second female lead in the film. It also has actors Jagapathi Babu and Srikanth playing negative roles.

*Akhanda* is being bankrolled by Miryala Ravinder Reddy, while S Thaman renders soundtracks.

