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VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



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SAI DHARAM TEJ'S  
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WEDDING NEWS GO  
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## AT AIADMK'S JUBILEE FETE, SASIKALA MAKES STRONG PITCH FOR COMEBACK

The year long (2021-22) golden jubilee celebrations of the AIADMK's founding began on Sunday, and it was marked by a renewed and an open attempt by VK Sasikala, confidante of late party supremo J Jayalalithaa, to get back control of the party by harping on 'unity' mantra. Sasikala's strong pitch for joining forces for the sake of the 'party and people' was, however, rejected by the AIADMK, which reiterated that there is no place for her in the party. She unfurled the AIADMK flag at the T Nagar memorial of party founder and late Chief Minister M G Ramachandran here.

## MELBOURNE TO EASE WORLD'S LONGEST COVID LOCKDOWNS

Melbourne, which has spent more time under COVID lockdowns than any other city in the world, is set to lift its stay-at-home orders this week, officials said on Sunday. By Friday, when some curbs will be lifted, the Australian city of 5 million people will have been under six lockdowns totalling 262 days, or nearly nine months, since March 2020. Australian and other media say this is the longest in the world, exceeding a 234-day lockdown in Buenos Aires. While coronavirus cases keep rising in Victoria state, of which Melbourne is the capital, the state's double-vaccination rate is set to reach 70% this week, allowing for the ease in restrictions.

## BJP NATIONAL OFFICE-BEARERS TO DISCUSS POLLS, FARMERS' STIR TODAY

The BJP's national office-bearers will meet on Monday to discuss a host of issues ranging from the upcoming five state assembly polls to the farmers' agitation and the COVID-19 pandemic. BJP president J P Nadda will chair the meeting which will be attended by all its leaders who hold organisational responsibilities at the national level besides its spokespersons. The meeting assumes significance as it will take place after a considerable gap due to the COVID-19 pandemic and ahead of the party's national executive meeting next month.

## CHINA SURPRISES US WITH HYPERSONIC MISSILE TEST

China tested a nuclear-capable hypersonic missile in August that circled the globe before speeding towards its target, demonstrating an advanced space capability that caught US intelligence by surprise. Five people familiar with the test said the Chinese military launched a rocket that carried a hypersonic glide vehicle which flew through low-orbit space before cruising down towards its target. The missile missed its target by about two-dozen miles, according to three people briefed on the intelligence. But two said the test showed that China had made astounding progress on hypersonic weapons.

# AP's tax revenue increases in first 5 months of 2021-22

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

In a good augury for the Andhra Pradesh government, the first five months of the 2021-22 financial year saw a spike in the tax revenue of the State by an extra Rs 12,052.29 crore.

The State's revenue, in all, was an extra Rs 15,688.46 crore from April to August this year, compared to the corresponding period last year, state accounts by the Comptroller and Auditor General revealed.

At the same, the State almost exhausted its targeted borrowing estimate, securing loans to the tune of Rs 36,976.93 crore (99.86 per cent) in the first five months itself.

As per CAG accounts, AP's revenue from April to August was Rs 53,159.11 crore, compared to Rs 37,470.65 crore last year.

While tax revenue increased by over Rs 12,000 crore, non-tax



revenue too showed a spike of Rs 423.12 crore and Central grants by Rs 3,213 crore.

But, the revenue deficit mounted to a staggering Rs 31,188.49 crore in five months against the annual target of only Rs 5,000

crore. Capital expenditure, however, took a dip from Rs 8,608.64 crore last year to Rs 5,482.53 crore this year, indicating the state spent Rs 3,125.76 crore less on development works.

At the same time, the revenue expenditure, which includes numerous freebie doles, shot up to Rs 84,347.60 crore as against Rs 75,669.98 crore in the corresponding period last year.

Citing loss of revenue due to the Covid-19-induced lockdown last year, the State enhanced various taxes to fetch an additional Rs 20,000 crore revenue per annum.

Among the additional levies were a Rs 4,500 crore 'prohibition tax' on liquor, Rs 600 crore revised tax on petrol and diesel, another Rs 600 crore (road development) cess on petrol and diesel, Rs 300 crore levy on natural gas, Rs 2,000 crore tax on properties in urban local bodies and Rs 350 crore 'user charges' on garbage.

The land values in urban areas have been hiked by 10 to 30 per cent to realise an additional Rs 800 crore.

## Terrorists kill two more labourers in Kashmir

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Terrorists shot dead two more non-local labourers and injured another on Sunday in Kulgam district of south Kashmir, prompting the police to direct that all non-resident labourers in the Valley be brought to nearest security camps "immediately" for safety, officials said.

This is the third attack on non-local workers in less than 24 hours and is the latest in a series of shootings targeting civilians in recent weeks. A street vendor from Bihar and a carpenter from Uttar Pradesh were shot dead by the ultras on Saturday evening.

"Terrorists fired indiscriminately upon #NonLocal labourers at Wanpoh area of #Kulgam. In this #terror incident, 02 non-locals were killed and 01 injured," Kashmir zone Police said on its Twitter handle.

It said police and security forces have cordoned off the area.

## Athawale invites YSRC to join NDA

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale on Sunday invited the YSR Congress to join the National Democratic Alliance at the Centre. We want to expand the NDA. I appeal to Jagan Mohan Reddy, president of YSRC, to come and join the NDA. If he joins the NDA, he will be assured of more help to the State of Andhra Pradesh, Athawale said. "Think about it. I will talk to (BJP president) Nadda. If Jagan Mohan Reddy is ready,

definitely then I will talk to the BJP high command. That will be something positive, Athawale told the Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister.

The Union Minister was here to review the implementation of various welfare schemes. Athawale's Republican Party of India (A) is a constituent of the BJP-led NDA. Addressing a press conference, he said the YSRC always supported the (Union) government in the Rajya Sabha and the Lok Sabha.



## Delhi-Tirupati SpiceJet flight service begins

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Expanding its services, SpiceJet on Sunday launched its Delhi-Tirupati flight. Civil Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia virtually flagged off the flight, the airline said.

The airline will operate the flight three times a week till October 31, according to its statement.

From October 31, the flight on the Delhi-Tirupati route will be operated four times a week, it mentioned.

The airline already connects Tirupati with Hyderabad and Pune on its network, it stated.

# Wedding season begins

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

The auspicious time for celebrating marriages and thread marriages began from October 17. The season will now be busy with marriages and other celebrations till February 18, according to Vedic scholars.

Therefore, many marriages are lined up for 17th, 18th and 20th and 30th in October, 14th, 21st, 22nd and 29th in November, 8th, 10th, 11th, 22nd and 26th in December and again on 3rd, 5th, 6th, 7th, 10th, 14th, 16th, 17th and 18th of the same month.

Even though there are auspicious dates in June, July and August, not many marriages had taken place due to the second wave of Covid-19. Moreover, the strict rules prescribed by the government forced many to put off weddings till October.

Now, event planners, wedding hall decorators, priests, catering suppliers, beauty parlours, sellers of clothes and jewellery, tent houses and wedding hall owners would have plenty of business.

In fact, wedding halls were deserted for the past three months due to lack of auspicious times for weddings.



Even though there are auspicious dates in June, July and August, not many marriages had taken place due to the second wave of Covid-19. Moreover, the strict rules prescribed by the government forced many to put off weddings till October.

Elders who have put off marriages of their wards have

been evincing interest to conduct weddings now. The Telugu auspicious month of Aswayuja is good for the celebration of marriages.

There are several auspicious dates to celebrate weddings in the auspicious months of Aswayuja, Karthika and Margasira.

The ancient texts indicate that if marriages are celebrated during these months, the couples would be blessed with good children and prosperity, according to Vedic Scholar Gunavant Rao Joshi.

## Centre: Onion prices being stabilised with buffer stocks

Efforts on to soften tomato, potato rates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a rise in prices of three key vegetables, the Centre on Sunday said onion prices are being stabilised with the release of buffer stock, while efforts are on to soften the rates of tomato and potato.

Onion stocks are being released in the market on the first-in-first-out basis in a calibrated manner from the last week of August in a bid to moderate prices and ensure minimum storage loss, it said.

As a result of this, the retail onion price was ruling in the range of Rs 42-57 per kg in metros on October 14. The all-India average retail price of onion was ruling at Rs 37.06 per kg, while the average wholesale rate was Rs 30 per kg on October 14, it added.

In retail markets, onion was ruling at Rs 42 per kg in Chennai, Rs 44 per kg in Delhi, at Rs 45 per kg in Mumbai and Rs 57 per kg in Kolkata on October 14.

In a statement, the food and consumer affairs ministry said buffer stock of onion is being

released in states where prices ruled above all-India average and also where prices are rising over the previous month.

"Till October 12, a total of 67,357 tonnes have been released in major markets such as Delhi, Kolkata, Lucknow, Patna, Ranchi, Guwahati, Bhubaneswar, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Chennai, Mumbai, Chandigarh, Kochi and Raipur," it said.

In addition, Grade-B onions (stocks which are below the fair average quality-FAQ) are disposed of in local markets in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat, it said.

Besides releasing onions in the market, the ministry has offered onions from the buffer at Rs 21 per kg to all states and Union territories for lifting from the storage locations.

This will enable states to take up, by themselves, for market interventions either through direct supply to retail consumers through retail outlets or release in key markets to bring down prices.

## Nalgonda cops open fire on cannabis smugglers at Lambasingi in AP

A SESA CHARYULU

■ NALGONDA

The Nalgonda Police opened fire on cannabis smugglers after they attacked the police at Lambasingi ghat road of Chinthapalli police station limits in Visakhapatnam.

As per locals information, at around 6 pm on Sunday evening, 10 rounds of shots were fired on smugglers when they attacked the police officials.

A smuggler was injured in the firing. The gang destroyed a police vehicle during the raid. The police team didn't suffer any harm in the ganja gang attack. "The Nalgonda police team was attacked by smugglers and the windshield of a police vehicle was broken. The Nalgonda police have the cooperation of the local police," said DIG Ranganath.

As per the directions of the Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Nalgonda DIG AV Ranganath has sent 17 teams from Nalgonda district to Visakhapatnam on Thursday, to nab the persons smuggling cannabis from the Andhra-Orissa border, after the district police arrested several suspects.

# 10K acres in Vizag dist under ganja cultivation

VKL GAYATRI

■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Giving a big challenge to the Task Force, comprising Prohibition and Excise, Police, Revenue and other departments of Andhra Pradesh, the ganja mafia is cultivating the banned drug in huge extent of acres in the dense forest areas of Visakhapatnam Agency this year too.

Though enforcement agencies have put in their best efforts, uncontrolled ganja cultivation in the Agency areas is a stark reality. The cultivation of the Visakhapatnam variety of ganja - Seelavathi - is going on in full swing in an extent of over 10,000 acres in the forest areas, mostly on the Andhra Odisha Border (AOB).

The prime season for the ganja cultivation in the Agency pockets is from October to December and the harvesting would start from the third week of December.

After cutting the leaves, they will be dried in sunlight and sold



to the smugglers. Ganja smugglers from various parts of the country, including Maharashtra, Telangana, Delhi and Chennai, offer good amounts in advance to the tribal farmers.

As the 'podu' cultivation is not giving good returns and has become hard to maintain, most of

the tribals are looking at the ganja cultivation in the dense forest areas.

As smugglers are coming and paying advances, more tribals are getting attracted to ganja cultivation.

In fact, the task force teams have decided to destroy ganja

plantations and conducted raids at various places. Due to lack of cooperation and topographical disadvantages, the initiative did not meet with success.

However, the enforcement authorities, during the past several years, seized dry ganja and booked hundreds of cases. However, the masterminds of the crime are not coming into the picture and only small players are being arrested.

During a meeting on ganja cultivation held recently, the task force officials have decided to constitute special teams involving SEB, Police, Forest, Revenue, Village Presidents, Village Volunteers and local level employees and workers to locate and destroy ganja crops in the Agency areas.

"It is a fact. Everyone knows the areas and who is involved in the cultivation.

However, because of the local pressures and threats, no one is giving information to the forces.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

**Month & Paksham:** Ashwin & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

**Tithi:** Ashwin & Shukla Paksha

**Nakshatram:** Trayodashi 18:06

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

**Rahukalam:** 7:40 am - 9:07 am

**Yamagandam:** 10:34 am - 12:01 pm

**Varjyam:** 8:58 pm - 10:40 pm

**Gulika:** 1:27 pm - 2:54 pm

**Good Time:** (to start any important work)

**Amritakalam:** Nil

**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:37 am - 12:24 pm

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**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

**Forecast:** Mostly sunny

**Temp:** 34/26

**Humidity:** 66%

**Sunrise:** 6:09 am

**Sunset:** 05:52 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated: OCTOBER 17, 2021 5:00 PM

# Monday Mirchi

**Don't touch feet; posting in Archives Dept is fine**

George Orwell, in his satirical, allegorical novella Animal Farm wrote: "All animals are created equal, but some are more equal than others." The ringing message of the celebrated work is that power corrupts, even when idealism is at play.

The babudom mirrors this best. Some retired bureaucrats took a dig at certain IAS officers in Telangana for kowtowing to their political masters and urged them to stop fantasising about positions in the Finance, Industry or Commerce department.

It was suggested to these compliant babus that they would do well to appreciate a posting even in the Archives Department instead. The conversation was started by PV Ramesh who asked to name the states where some officials, especially IAS & IPS variety, join the party in power to hold 'good posts'. Responding to it, former health secretary Sujata Rao said: "That's always been the case...it's just less subtle and more brazen now with district collectors in Telangana touching the feet of the CM. That is new for the southern states".

This conversation took an incisive turn when a netizen pointed out that those disinclined to follow the line of the ruling party are put in the Archives Department. Ramesh said, "If all IAS, IPS officers are upright, honest, competent, apolitical, & work for public interest, as expected under the Constitution of India, there will be place for all. Archives are very important part of civilisational march; not at all insignificant." Concurring with it, Sujata said: "The value and snobbery hierarchy of finance, industry and commerce being the only imp posts is so silly."

**Will DPH face the music for gyrating to Bullet Bandi?**

Director of Health Dr G Srinivasa Rao, hours before exhorting people to follow Covid norms, was seeing gyrating to the viral song Bullet Bandi, throwing pandemic protocol to the winds. Sometime back when nurses danced to the same song, ostensibly to cheer a patient, the authorities took a serious view of the matter and launched a probe into the incident. The DPH danced as part of the just-concluded Bathukamma celebrations. Previously, during the Ganesh Immersion also he came under scrutiny for ignoring Covid norms. He perhaps likes to shake his leg even if it shakes up his department!

**Babus caught between media frenzy and gag orders**

Seeking to put an end to the fierce rivalry between the Telugu States on the sharing of Krishna as well as Godavari waters and the generation of power from Srisaikal and Nagarjuna Sagar projects, the Centre brought all the projects in the Krishna and Godavari basins under the control of KRMB and GRMB respectively at one stroke in July.

As October 14th, scheduled date for implementation of the Centre's notification neared, officials were in a tizzy with the media going into overdrive on how officials handed the situation with grave political implications. While a few TS-based dailies went with screaming headlines, attributing defiance by Telangana to hand over projects under its purview 'taken over' by the projects;

some state officials were taken back at such 'media sensationalism'.

"Media wants everything in black and white, but there are many grey areas and things do not move at the pace at which media wants," said a senior irrigation official. A retired bureaucrat was more forthcoming when he suggested that the gag orders issued by political bosses to babus, asking them not to speak to media, breeds such sensationalism.

All told, there is hardly any leeway for the babus caught between media pursuit and gag orders to say anything of significance even on crucial inter-state matters.

**The long wait for postings**

The long wait for postings continues for All India Service Officers in Telangana State, particularly for IPS officers. With no major shake-up of IPS officers after 2018, only one or two postings are being given. Vacant positions go to willing officers as full additional charge. No wonder, even in DGP office, several senior officers are awaiting postings.

Rema Rajeswari, who worked as Mahbubnagar SP, was transferred five months ago and V B Kamalasan Reddy, who worked as Karimnagar Commissioner, was transferred three months ago. Recently Additional DGP C V Anand, Vijayakumar and Vikramjeet Duggal who went to Punjab on inter-cadre deputation in 2018, came back to Telangana cadre. They are yet to get postings.

P & L IGP Sanjay Kumar Jain was given FAC of Police Housing Corporation when its MD Malareddy retired last year. Jain is already holding FAC as Director, Fire Services. ACB and Vigilance DG Purnachandra Rao retired two months ago and later Govind Singh was promoted as DG, CID and given FAC of ACB and Vigilance.

The situation is no different among IAS officers. While a handful of IAS officers are handling (read burdened with) three or more posts/departments, others are forced to twiddle their thumbs at work.

**Bifurcation blues, families and home**

People thought that bifurcation blues would last a few months for those relocating to either Andhra Pradesh.

Surprisingly, though it has been more than seven years since the combined AP state was divided and almost six years since the residual AP administration shifted from the common capital Hyderabad to Vijayawada/Amaravati; most of the babus are yet to make Andhra Pradesh their home. "Home is where the heart is", they say.

True to this dictum, on weekends these babus continue to go to Hyderabad, where they have their families settled.

They prefer shuttling between Hyderabad and Vijayawada. Even senior bureaucrats continue to leave for Hyderabad on Friday afternoon, spend the weekend with family, and return to Vijayawada on Monday morning. On Mondays, their work begins around 11:00 am or 12:00 pm.

Most of the officials want to settle in Hyderabad, where there is ample social infrastructure, after retirement. So, they are averse to shifting their families to Vijayawada. Something surely is special about Hyderabad for babus!

—Yours truly

# Severe traffic jams witnessed at toll plazas on Vja-Hyd highway

DASARA CROWD

Railway station, PNBS in Vijayawada bursting at the seams

C PRADEEP KUMAR  
VIJAYAWADA

It was quite an ordeal for the passengers heading for various destinations after the Dasara festival. The main railway station and the Pandit Nehru Bus Station (PNBS) in Vijayawada were abuzz with festival crowds wanting to return to their respective places after a weekend full of celebrations with their loved ones. To get back to work on time from Monday, they were seen trying for some means of transportation.

The Railway station in Vijayawada was jam-packed with commuters waiting for trains. The Railways has announced a few Dasara festival special trains and special express trains towards Hyderabad like Krishna Spl, Golkonda Spl, Guntur-Secunderabad Spl, Satavahana Spl.



Satavahana Spl.

During the first wave of Covid, the Railways allowed passengers who had only one confirmed ticket to travel, following the requisite protocols. However, after the decline in Covid positive

cases, the Railways has started issuing counter tickets (open ticket) for passengers to travel to their respective destinations, leading to mad rush on the railway station platforms and inside the trains.

On the other hand, a few people are using their own vehicles like cars to reach their destination. The PNBS is overcrowded with passengers waiting for their respective buses to return to their destination as Monday hap-

pens to be a working day. The APSRTC has been running special buses to reach out to the commuters.

Heavy traffic was reported at Chillakallu toll plaza on the Vijayawada - Hyderabad National Highway as the traffic came to a grinding halt for some time as commuters are returning to Hyderabad after the Dasara festival celebrations. The Vijayawada-Hyderabad route has become more congested as people from the Telugu states, who have gone to celebrate the festival, have been travelling to Hyderabad since morning.

The traffic congestion is expected to peak in night. Vehicles were seen lined up over long stretches before the toll plazas and motorists were found having a tough time due to traffic jam at Chillakallu and other toll plazas.

# V-P stresses need to make youth aware of Indian culture

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said the pluralistic culture of the country has the power to unite people by going beyond various social divisions in society.

Naidu, participating in the annual 'Alai Bala', a cultural event organised as part of Dasara festivities here, called for encouraging youth to be aware of tradition, culture and uphold unity in diversity, an official press release said.

He called for honouring the legacy of great leaders and to take inspiration from their lives to protect the pluralistic culture. Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan inaugurated the event.

Haryana Governor Bandaru Dattatreya, Himachal Pradesh Governor Rajendra Vishwanath



Arlekar, along with Union Culture and Tourism Minister G Kishan Reddy, Telangana Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali and leaders of different political parties attended it. The event was organised by Dattatreya's daughter

Vijayalaxmi, who is also chairperson of 'Dattanna Alai Bala' celebration committee.

Dattatreya conceptualised the 'Alai Bala' programme to bring people from varied backgrounds on a common platform. The programme has been organised here since 2005.

# Expert: Flash floods, in Kerala caused by mini...

Continued from Page 1

The damage potential of less intense rain spells (about 5 cm in 2 hours) may cause flash floods and landslides along the slopes of Western Ghats mountains and Himalayan regions. Abhilash has said in an article published in the latest issue of a state government publication.

Heavy rainfall for a short duration especially from mesoscale mini cloudburst events also brings runoff water beyond the carrying capacity of the streams and flushes off rainwater faster and rivers and midland regions of the west coast often may experience the frequent occurrence of flash floods, he

said. The combined effects of cloudburst, landslides and flash floods may get aggravated by degradation of land due to human activities such as the conversion of forests to plantation and crop fields, Abhilash opined.

Changes in Kerala's climate received more attention during recent times as evident from back-to-back drought conditions during 2015 and 2016. In 2017 Kerala was hit by the cyclonic storm "Ockhi" and catastrophic flood and landslide episodes followed during 2018, 2019 and 2020, he has claimed.

At least 18 people have died and several displaced in the extreme weather events that occurred in Kerala on Saturday.

10K acres in Vizag dist under ganja cultivation...

Continued from Page 1

Earlier, the department has conducted some exclusive raids by using sniffer dogs and drones, but in vain.

However, as Visakhapatnam has earned notoriety for ganja cultivation, the State government has directed the officials to destroy the crop without giving scope for smuggling. An action plan has been evolved to destroy the crop and very shortly the department will begin the initiative," a senior official of the AP Prohibition and Excise department told The Pioneer.

The official also confirmed that the department had collected information about the locations and was planning to take action soon.

# Terrorists kill two more labourers in Kashmir

Continued from Page 1

According to officials, the militants entered the rented accommodation of the labourers and fired on them indiscriminately.

In a message flashed to all district police in the Valley, Inspector General of Police (Kashmir) Vijay Kumar said, "All non-local labourers in your respective jurisdiction should be brought to the nearest police or central paramilitary force or army establishment just now."

"The matter is most

urgent," the message to the 10 districts in the Valley said.

The terror attack drew strong condemnation from political parties across the spectrum.

"There are no words strong enough to condemn the repeated barbaric attacks on innocent civilians. My heart goes out to their families because they leave the comforts of their homes to earn a dignified livelihood. Terribly sad," PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti tweeted.

BJP state spokesman Altaf Thakur said the killings were

"nothing but pure genocide". "The gruesome murder of non-locals is nothing but inhuman and shows the frustration of militants," he said.

CPI(M) leader M Y Tarigami said killing innocent labourers who have come here to earn their livelihood is a heinous crime.

"This is aimed at targeting the interests of people of Kashmir and this is happening at a time when the harvesting season is at its peak," he said.

Tarigami said mere condemnation is not enough and

it was time for all to come forward and unitedly raise voice against these criminals who are committing such heinous crimes.

"We appeal to civil society, political parties irrespective of their political agenda to raise their voice against such barbaric acts," he added.

Amid the civilian killings, Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha had on Sunday vowed to avenge every drop of their blood by hunting down terrorists and their sympathisers. Sinha said attempts are

being made to disrupt the peace and socio-economic progress of Jammu and Kashmir and the individual growth of people, and reiterated the commitment to the fast-paced development of the Union territory.

"I pay my heartfelt tributes to the martyr civilians and condolences to the bereaved families. We'll hunt down terrorists, their sympathisers and avenge every drop of innocent civilians' blood," Sinha said in his monthly radio programme 'Awaam ki Awaaz'.

# Nalgonda cops open fire on cannabis smugglers at Lambasingi in AP...

Continued from Page 1

Since Thursday, the Nalgonda Police have been on the lookout for ganja smuggling gangs in the Lambasingi and Narsipatnam forest areas.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Ranganath said that a police team went to the Visakhapatnam forest area to nab the smugglers.

According to Superintendent of Police BV

Krishna Rao, Nalgonda Police came to Visakhapatnam rural area to apprehend a few cannabis smugglers near Lambasingi area. He said that the police personnel opened fire to save their lives as 10 to 20 persons attacked them with stones and knives.

"In the process, a smuggler was injured. He was shifted to a nearby hospital for treatment. Now his condition is stable. No casualties were reported," said Krishna Rao.

# Kavitha to enter national politics?

SNCN ACHARYULU  
HYDERABAD

Will Kalvakuntla Kavitha, the daughter of Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Naidu, continue in Telangana politics or will she enter national politics?

Kavitha's MLC term is coming to an end in around two months on January 4, 2022. Kavitha's political future is in the hands of her father KCR. A Cabinet reshuffle is expected after the Huzurabad Assembly by-election.

On November 2 the results of the Huzurabad Assembly by-election will be declared. Kavitha is strongly expecting a Cabinet berth in the much awaited reshuffle.

Kavitha was elected as an MLC in the by-election from the Nizamabad local body constituency on October 12, 2020. The six-year term of MLCs elected in the local bodies' quota will come to an end on January 4, 2022. The Election Commission is likely to hold the elections to elect MLCs from the local bodies' quota in December 2021.

Meanwhile, the Election Commission has to hold elections to six vacant MLC seats from the Assembly quota.

TRS circles are unable to assess the political future of Kavitha as nobody knows whether KCR will ask Kavitha

to contest as an MLC again from the Nizamabad local bodies' constituency, or whether he will nominate Kavitha as an MLC from the Assembly quota or ask her to contest from the Nizamabad Lok Sabha constituency in the forthcoming Parliament elections.

In the expected Cabinet reshuffle if KCR gives a Cabinet berth to Kavitha she will contest from Nizamabad local bodies MLC seat again. Top TRS sources said KCR is still in two minds in taking Kavitha into the Cabinet. KCR's son KT Rama Rao and nephew T Harish Rao are already in the Cabinet.

If Kavitha also is given a Cabinet berth four members from a family will have representation in the Cabinet.

Sources said KCR is seriously thinking of giving a Cabinet berth to Kavitha after his entry into national politics. KCR thinks that after the next Lok Sabha elections regional parties will have a crucial role and that the BJP-led NDA or the Congress-led UPA will not get majority to form a government at Centre on their own. If that happens, KCR will play a key role in national politics.

Once KCR enters national politics he wants to take his nephew Harish Rao into Delhi politics to assist him.

# AP's tax revenue...

Continued from Page 1

The professional tax was increased for an additional income of Rs 161 crore.

"We are now reaping the benefits of the tax hike but the mounting revenue deficit is still a worrying factor. The revenues may be looking good but we are still in the red," a top Finance official pointed out.

Besides, the spiralling revenue expenditure was also a cause for concern, with interest payment (on loans) alone touching Rs 8,187.12 crore in the first five months.

"Bulk of our revenue is going towards salaries, pensions and loan repayments.

Not a single rupee is available for any other thing, leave alone development works. We are borrowing heavily to keep the freebie schemes going and that is reflecting in our accounts," the bureaucrat noted.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹256
Without Skin	₹276
Broiler at Farm	₹142

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	425
HYDERABAD	428
VISAKHAPATNAM	470
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.25

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## 'TDP cheated DWCRAs groups'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Srivenkateswara Rao (Nani) has alleged that TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu had cheated the DWCRAs groups after coming to power in 2014. The minister was the chief guest of YSR Aasara celebrations organised at Gollapudi under the Vijayawada city limits on Sunday. Transport Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani), MLAs Vasanta Krishna Prasad, Jogi Ramesh, Principal Secretary T Raghuram, MLC Kalpalatha Reddy, District Collector J Nivas, joint collectors Dr. K Madhavilatha, L Siva Sankar and others were present on the occasion.

Speaking on the occasion, Kodali Nani alleged that Chandrababu claimed introduction of DWCRAs groups in the State. The minister said Naidu cheated the DWCRAs groups by promising them to clear their debts during 2014 elections and later after coming to power diverted the funds allocated for DWCRAs groups deceiving the members of the groups.

He further said that YSRCP is the only strong party with a mass image in the State and you find only the YSRCP flags in Mylavaram or Gudivada and all other constituencies across the state.

Minister Perni Nani said that as promised by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the debts of DWCRAs

groups are being cleared in four tranches as per the schedule mentioned. He pointed out that a few banks are functioning with the funds of DWCRAs groups. He alleged that Chandrababu Naidu deceived the poor DWCRAs group members for winning the elections and after coming to power neglected them and failed to clear their debts.

T Raghuram said that the State government had issued pattas to 3,648 beneficiaries in Gollapudi village which is a milestone. Due to the negligence of the previous TDP government, drinking water and drainage has become chaotic.

Raghuram said that corruption of Rs 200 crore had taken place in Gollapudi during the previous TDP government and the Collector should investigate it.



## RPF restores lost luggage to passengers

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In quick response to the passenger grievances at the Visakhapatnam Railway Station, the Railway Protection Force (RPF) sleuths, retrieved a left-behind trolley bag containing gold ornaments, clothes and cash worth about Rs 1,05,000 from A1 coach of train 02644 Patna-Ernakulam Express and handed over the same to concerned passenger Salagrama Namani, a resident of Vizianagaram.

In another incident, at Duvvada Railway station, the RPF team retrieved one left-behind shoulder bag containing two laptops worth about Rs 1,30,000 from B-13 coach of train 02886 Krishnarajapuram-Bhubaneswar Humsafar express and handed it over to the rightful owner M Sivaduraya, a resident of Rajahmundry.

Divisional Railway Manager, Waltair Anup Satpathy and Senior Divisional Security Commissioner, RPF, appreciated the efforts of the RPF personnel for their spontaneous response and retrieval of valuable luggage.

## Govt suppressing weaker sections, says Atchannaidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP State president K Atchannaidu on Sunday condemned the ruling YSRCP leaders' attack on Dalits at Maddalakatta village in Peddaraveedi mandal of Prakasam district. Atchannaidu said that the Jaganmohan Reddy government has made it a single point agenda to intimidate and suppress the weaker sections ever since it came to power in Andhra Pradesh. The ongoing attacks were being launched just because the SCs were revolting against the YSRCP atrocities and unlawful activities.

In a statement here, the TDP leader accused Jaganmohan Reddy of perpetrating a Nazi Germany fascist rule on the peace-loving people of AP. False cases, illegal detentions, gang rapes, tonures, house arrests and vindictive actions became the order of the day under Jaganmohan Reddy's rule. How can the Dalits be blamed for the defeat of the YSRCP candidates in the Parishad elections? The CM and his party leaders were losing patience and balance



with the rising unpopularity of their Government.

Atchannaidu deplored that there was no end to the non-stop attacks, murders, murder attempts and rapes under the YSRCP rule. Such open attacks and atrocities on Dalits were not seen before in the history of the State. The YSRCP mobs resorted to attacks and murder attempts on over 158 Dalit families in the State. It was so pitiable that the Jaganmohan Reddy regime was targeting and oppressing the same Dalit

communities that have handed over power to it with a massive mandate.

The TDP leader demanded that Minister Adimulapu Suresh explain to the weaker sections why he was remaining silent when attacks were made on Dalits in his own Assembly constituency. Suresh was apparently scared and afraid of one particular community in his own party. Why was he not getting the attackers suspended from the party? The YSRCP leaders were launching vicious attacks on the SCs.

## Govt lying on power tariff and outages: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP former MLA GV Anjaneyulu on Sunday advised the YSRCP government to stop misinformation on power cuts and start initiating proper steps to prevent the current supply crisis in the State. Anjaneyulu termed it 'shameful' on the part of the government to ask the general public to use less power on fans and ACs while the ruling party MLAs and

Ministers were enjoying these facilities non-stop. Power cuts would be usually during summer season problem but the Jaganmohan Reddy regime got the dubious distinction of causing these cuts even in winter in AP.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said that the YSRCP Government was telling lies that there were no power cuts. It was a fact that daily power cuts were imposed

between 6 pm to 10 pm. The YSRCP promised free power up to 200 units in SC, ST colonies but supply was being cut there. The Ministers and MLAs owed an answer to this. The Government was trying hard to cover up its inefficiency but the power cuts had thoroughly exposed it before the public.

Anjaneyulu asked why a power generation crisis was created in AP in the first

place. Was this to buy power at Rs 20 per unit from the Jaganmohan Reddy benami power plants? The Chief Minister and his party were using every opportunity in the government to amass ill-gotten wealth.

In this process, the public and private properties were being looted all over the State. The CM's benami power generation companies were located in Sikkim and Himachal Pradesh.

## Kerala minister praises agri reforms in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kerala State Agriculture Minister P Prasad has said that the whole country is looking towards Andhra Pradesh for its priority given to the agriculture sector.

The visiting minister was accompanied by officials from Kerala and inspected the natural farming in the district and visited Rythu Bharosa Kendram at Musunuru mandal in the district on Sunday. Minister Prasad and the Kerala officials interacted with the farmers at the Musunuru mandal Rythu Barosa Kendram on various kinds of farming activities being practiced in those areas. The minister asked the AP state agriculture commissioner and agriculture officials on various

practices being followed in the state by the farmers.

Speaking to the media persons, the Kerala agriculture minister appreciated the State government initiative towards the agriculture sector across the State, encouraging organic farming, use of RBKs to help the farmers and the techniques in cultivation. He said that the team from Kerala discussed with a few Self Help Groups in the village about the support from the government.

The minister said that they are happy to learn and understand about natural farming from the farmers and the experience of the farmers carrying out natural farming in the village. He said, "We would discuss the natural farming techniques and will introduce the natural farming in Kerala."



## 47 NSG team on India tour reaches Vja

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Celebrating 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav', that commemorates the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, an elite group of 47 National Security Guard (NSG) commandos, started the 'Sudarshan Bharat Parikrama' to cover the length and breadth of India. The NSG commandos visited the famous Gandhi Hill in Vijayawada on Sunday on their way to ahead.

The commandos drove in 15 Tata Dark Harriers, this landmark rally will traverse through 18 prominent cities to cover a distance of 7,500 km in less than a month. Currently, the rally has travelled through Delhi, Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi, Gaya, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Behrampur, Vizag before arriving in Vijayawada on Sunday.



The rally will go to Hyderabad, and will continue to make pit stops at TML dealerships on the way.

NSG is an elite counter-terror force and the commandos are brave, highly motivated and specially trained to win in the most difficult of situations. Starting from the historic Red Fort in New Delhi, the 'Sudarshan Bharat Parikrama'

will tour India's major war memorials and monuments through Agra, Lucknow, Varanasi, Bodh Gaya, Jamshedpur, Kolkata, Bhubaneswar, Berhampur, Vizag, Vijayawada, Hyderabad, Ongole, Chennai, Bengaluru, Hublii, Mumbai, Ahmedabad and Jaipur, celebrating the dedication and perseverance of the nation's protectors.

## Athawale lauds AP gov't

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Union Minister of State for Social Justice and Empowerment Ramdas Athawale has appreciated the YSR Congress government in the State saying that it is laying good efforts for the uplift of the downtrodden.

Addressing the media here on Sunday, Athawale said that the Central government is promoting more welfare schemes for the Scheduled Caste communities and all the eligible ones should be aware and utilise them. The Central government is offering Rs 2.5 lakh incentive to the inter-caste marriages apart from Mudra Yojana, Awas Yojana and Jana Yojana schemes which were drafted to uplift the downtrodden communities in the society.

## Performance awards presented to cops

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Three police personnel received the weekly best performer awards for excelling while discharging duties from Krishna district SP Siddharth Kaushal here on Sunday. The SP presented three weekly best performance medals to three constables in Machilipatnam.

Machilipatnam R Peta constable Ramanjaneyulu, Machilipatnam IT Core department constable RV Nagaraju and Chilakalapudi constable B Srinivasa Rao received the weekly best performance awards.



Constable Nagaraju is an expert in using cyber technology. He helped the Police department develop the 'Each One Teach One' system wherein well-trained police personnel teach the other

police personnel and increase the capacity building in the police IT department. Chilakalapudi police station constable B Srinivasa Rao put up an excellent performance to solve the abduc-

tion case of a five-day-old baby from the Government hospital. The SP has congratulated and presented the weekly best performance award to Srinivasa Rao.

Another constable M Ramanjaneyulu attached to R Peta police station in Machilipatnam got the weekly performance award for proper use of Mobile Security Checker Device and apprehending culprits involved in various cases. The constable in his duty checked the details of 2,100 persons during the past few years with the help of Mobile Security Checker Device.

## Coaching for AP women blind cricket team in Dec

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tahera Trust, an NGO, will sponsor the first-ever Andhra Pradesh State women's blind cricket coaching camp and later select the State team by December-end.

Tahera Trust, led by its founder chairperson Zahara Begum, will take the initiative to train the women blind cricketers either in RDT grounds, Anantapur district or Moolapaadu cricket grounds, Krishna district. The selected AP State team will participate

in the second edition of the national cricket tournament for the blind women scheduled in February/March 2022 at Bangalore, Karnataka.

Zahara Begum said that the initiative was taken in coincidence with the International Day of the Girl Child and announcement of the first Andhra Pradesh State blind women's cricket coaching camp in the State.

She recalled that in 2019 the First Women's National Cricket Tournament for Blind was conducted in T20 format on



December 16-19 in New Delhi with the participation of seven teams from Delhi, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Karnataka,

Kerala, Odisha and West Bengal. Since then, there has been a rise in popularity in women's cricket. Andhra Pradesh could not participate due to lack of funds to organise a State team of Andhra Pradesh as Cricket Association for the Blind in AP (CABAP) besides other issues such as lack of sponsors, grounds, support, financial backing, and sometimes players. A request was made by the Tahera Trust with John David, President, CABAP (Cricket Association for Blind in Andhra Pradesh)

and Gorrepati Ravindra Babu, State president, Visually Challenged Employees Association, Andhra Pradesh to help in forming the State women blind cricket team of AP.

She said that it will be the first-ever Women Blind Cricket team to be trained and selected for the state of Andhra Pradesh and hope that the sport will only grow from here continuously and look forward to the government of AP helping the women blind cricket team.



## BEE hails AP's energy efficiency initiatives

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Director General of Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE), Abhay Bhakre, has hailed the consistent efforts of the AP government in implementing energy conservation and energy efficiency programmes including Energy Conservation Building Code (ECBC) and super ECBC, and has sanctioned the 'Indo-Swiss BEEP to AP for implementation of Eco-Niwas Samhita (ECBC code for residential buildings), according to communication with Ajay Jain, Special Chief Secretary for Housing and Energy Secretary, Srikant Nagulapalli.

As part of its implementation of the Indo-Swiss BEEP technology in AP, the BEEP team is going to conduct a seminar in Tirupati on October 22 in collaboration

with APSECM, Energy department and in coordination with the Housing department to create awareness about Eco-Niwas Samhita, understanding energy efficient and thermally comfortable building design. The seminar will also discuss various challenges and ways forward for the implementation of Eco-Niwas Samhita in the city of Tirupati.

Building industry stakeholders including developers, architects, green building consultants, building-related government departments, State Urban Development Departments, Officials of Municipal Corporation, etc will participate in the seminar.

The 'Indo-Swiss energy-efficient building technology' will help reduce the temperature by at least 2 degrees inside the houses compared to conventional houses.

# Badvel by-election: Campaign by parties gains momentum

PNS ■ KADAPA

Preparations have begun for the by-election to Badvel Assembly constituency and a training programme for officials was conducted on Sunday in this regard. The training session held at Mahila Degree College in Badvel was attended by POs and APOs. The poll will be held on October 30.

Addressing the POs and APOs, Rajampet Sub-collector and Badvel by-election returning officer Ketan Garg asked them to conduct the poll in a transparent manner in a peaceful atmosphere.

"The by-election should be conducted without any flaw. The polling will be held from 9 am to 9 pm. The polling staff should have full knowledge on forms 17, 17A and 17C," he



said.

Ketan Garg said that all election officials should be imparted training on what the POs should do and what the APOs should do in the polling stations. The election staff should read the hand book

given by the Election Commission. He asked the polling officials to check the voter slips and voter identification cards before permitting the voters to cast their votes.

He said that training programmes would be conducted

on the EVMs. Joint Collector (Asara), RDO Dharmachandra Reddy and Employment Officer Deepthi, tahsildars and other officials were present.

Meanwhile, the election campaign in Badvel by the ruling YSRCP, BJP and the Congress has picked up momentum. Deputy Chief Minister S B Amzath Basha, YSRCP candidate Dr.Dasari Sudha, MLAs Kakani Govardhan Reddy, Ramireddy Prathap Kumar Reddy, former MLC DC Govinda Reddy and Municipal Chairman Rajagopal Reddy toured the constituency on Sunday. They addressed meetings and appealed to the voters to vote for YSRCP. BJP and Congress leaders also addressed meetings at various places.

# 'Fruits of welfare schemes reaching all'

PNS ■ GUNTUR

YSRCP MLA and MLCs have said that the welfare schemes are being implemented in a transparent manner and all sections of people are deriving benefits from them.

A programme was organised at the Kolli Sharada Municipal Corporation School to disburse the benefits of YSR Aasara second tranche on Sunday. MLAs Maddali Giridhar, Mohammad Mustafa, MLCs Dokka Manikya Vara Prasad, Lella Appi Reddy and Mayor Kavati Shiva Naga Manohar Naidu participated in the programme. The MLAs and MLCs disbursed money under the YSR Aasara scheme.

Speaking on the occasion, MLA Giridhar said that 87 lakh women had got the benefits under the YSR Aasara scheme across the state. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy is committed to implement all the assurance made by him during padayatra. The MLA claimed that 95 per cent



of assurances had been fulfilled in one year itself. He called upon people to utilize the opportunity and get the benefits of the schemes. "Despite financial constraints, all the welfare schemes are being implemented in the state," he made it clear.

MLC Appi Reddy said that the Jagan Mohan Reddy headed government is giving a great deal of importance to women and committed to

make them financially self-reliant. "The Disha Act is being brought to check the attacks and atrocities against women. The Disha Act is sent to the Union government's approval. The women are being given due importance in allocating power of positions. The welfare scheme benefits are being extended directly to the women," the MLC said, adding that in spite of the state suffering a big blow in the form of

Coronavirus pandemic, all welfare schemes were implemented and at the same time the development works carried out.

MLC Manikya Vara Prasad said that the YSRCP government is a pro-weaker section government. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy would remain in the hearts of women of the state forever for implementing schemes especially for them, he said. Mayor Manohar Naidu said the Opposition TDP leaders were making baseless allegations against the government, unable to digest the implementation of many welfare schemes. The TDP was creating obstacles to the government by approaching courts. MLA Mustafa, State and Madya Vimochana Prachara Committee chairman Lakshma Reddy also spoke. Mirchi yard chairman Chandragiri Yesuratnam and deputy mayor Sk. Sajeela was among those who were present.



# JAC of SCCL threatens to intensify stir

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

The JAC of SCCL trade units held at Kothagudem on Sunday with AITUC President Kadari Sunil on the Chair threatened to step up their stir and to launch intense struggles regarding the demands of SCCL contract employees.

CPI state unit Assistant Secretary Kunamneni Sambasiva Rao said that achieving demands like minimum wages, accident benefits and other benefits would be possible only through joint struggles and accused the SCCL of failing to provide them to contract workers.

The SCCL has become a pocket borough of the TRS

government, he alleged, expressing concern over the management failing to provide Category-I salaries to contract workers.

He said the Telangana Boggu Gani Karmika Sangham and recognised trade unions in the SCCL have failed miserably to resolve the problems of workers.

He demanded that the state government should release the official gazette and implement GO No.22 for workers.

CPI district Secretary Sabir Pasha, AITUC General Secretary G. Satyanarayana, IFTU Vice President Sanjeev, HMS Secretary and Vice-President Ramana Rao and others were also present.

# CONG DEMANDS EX GRATIA FOR FLOOD-HIT VICTIMS

PNS ■ JADCHARLA

Congress has demanded Rs 20 lakh compensation to bereaved family members of Raghavender and allotment of a 2BHK. It sought payment of Rs 2 lakh to other flood-hit victims and distribution of grains among the affected families.

TPCC secretary and Jadcharla Congress coordinator Janampalli Anirudh on Sunday visited flood-hit areas and presented a cheque towards compensation to Raghavender on behalf of the Congress. It may be recalled Raghavender was washed away in flood waters in the town. He also inspected body of Raghavender at the community hospital here and asked doctors to go ahead with the post-mortem on the body.

Earlier in March, the family lost a son to Covid in March and it now lost Raghavender, he said adding that the family is poor. Inspecting the 100-bed government hospital, built on Kalwakurthy road, he alleged that MLA Lakshma Reddy built the hospital without any plan in a low-lying area, paying no heed to Congress advice.

The hospital was built to ensure good demand to the 33-acre real estate venture of his aides and to the MLA's home, he alleged. On one side of the hospital, there is a culvert and on the other, there is a pond. He wondered the location of the hospital there and wondered whether the municipal commissioner shut his eyes while according permission to the hospital.

# SHORT TAKES

## Motorcycle thief held, 9 bikes recovered

**ONGOLE:** The police have arrested an inter-district bike thief and recovered nine motorcycles from him. Addeeti Yedukondala was arrested from South Bypass Junction here. The stolen bikes cost Rs 5 lakh. DSP Upputuri Nagaraju said that a series of motorcycle thefts occurred in Ongole recently. On the directions of SP Malika Garg, DSP Nagaraju formed a team led by CI V Srinivasa Reddy and SI U Punna Rao to investigate the crimes. The accused worked in chicken shops and was addicted to vices. To earn money easily and quickly, he started stealing motorcycles. The SP appreciated the police team for arresting the motorcycle thief.

## Woman found bludgeoned to death at home

**HYDERABAD:** A woman was found bludgeoned to death at Kusahaiguda on Saturday. Police suspect her relative to have killed her, while she was asleep. The victim was identified as P Lalitha, 55, a resident of Chakripuram in Kusahaiguda and a native of Gujarat. According to the Police, Lalitha was visiting her relative Shankar at Sri Krishna Colony in Kusahaiguda. Shankar, a tailor by profession, was residing along with his wife and son Arjun. The family had left for their shop while Lalitha was alone in the house. When Shankar and his wife returned home, they found Lalitha lying on the floor in a pool of blood. They informed the police who arrived at the scene and began an investigation. According to sources, Police suspect that Shankar's son Arjun, who is mentally unstable, might have smashed Lalitha's head with a boulder while his parents were away at the shop. However, due to lack of eye witnesses and CCTV camera footage, we are yet to confirm the same and Arjun is absconding. Once he is nabbed and based on interrogation, an arrest will be made, said V Madan Lal, Sub Inspector of Police, Kusahaiguda. The Kusahaiguda police booked a murder case and are investigating the incident.

# Balayya wants govt to fill tanks with Handri-Neeva water

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Hindupur TDP MLA N Balakrishna has demanded that the YSRCP government fill up irrigation tanks and projects in Anantapur district by releasing water from the Handri-Neeva project.

He alleged that the government had no intention of completing the irrigation project and providing water to the Rayalaseema region.

Addressing a round table conference, organised by the TDP on Sunday in Hindupur, he said that he is ready to launch an agitation in Delhi, if needed, for irrigation water to the Rayalaseema region.

He recalled that his father, TDP founder and former Chief Minister had launched



many irrigation projects including Handri-Neeva in the region.

"The government has no intention of filling up irrigation tanks from the Handri Neeva water. The ruling party leaders are trying to create ani-

mosity among people on the basis of caste, religion and region," he lashed out.

He demanded the government to take steps to provide water to the irrigation tanks and projects in the Anantapur district.

# MP inaugurates village secretariat building, RBK

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Narasaraopet MP L Sri Krishnadevarayalu inaugurated the newly-constructed village secretariat and the Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBK) at Nagireddypalem in Bellam Konda mandal on Sunday.

The village secretariat building was constructed at a cost of Rs 40 lakh and the RBK, at a cost of Rs 21.80 lakh. He also dedicated the CC Road, constructed in the village spending Rs.15 lakh, to the people.

Speaking on the occasion, the MP said that all the welfare schemes were being implemented as per the promise made by Chief Minister Y S

Jagan Mohan Reddy. Government schools were being renovated and facilities were being provided on par with private schools. The government is bringing administration to the people with the village secretariats, he said.

Later, the MP participated in a programme organised to disburse benefits under the YSR Aasara second tranche on the ZP High School premises. He handed over a cheque to women from self-help groups. Pedakurapadu MLA Namburi Shankar Rao, ZP chairperson Hendry Christina, ZPTCs, MPTCs and other leaders were among those who were present.



# Four killed, 3 injured as tractor-trolley turns turtle

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Four people including a woman died and three others were injured after the tractor-trolley they were travelling on turned turtle in Khammam district, police said on Sunday. The incident happened in Mudigonda mandal at around 11 PM on Saturday when a group of devotees was proceeding for immersion of Durga Devi idol in a river, they said.

# Postal dept in forefront of service: TS CS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar presented the Dak Sewa Awards for the year 2021 at a function held here on Sunday. The Dak Sewa awards were given in eight different categories to outstanding performers at the state level to the employees for their unblemished record of service, performance and productivity of the employee, devotion to the duty, leadership qualities and contribution of the employee in improving the image of the department.

On the occasion, Chief



Secretary congratulated the winners for their extreme dedication towards their duty and complimented them for taking risk during the pandemic times to do service to the society. He appreciated the efforts of the postal department in reaching

out to the people, particularly in the rural and tribal areas and providing Aasara pensions, Pattadar passbooks and others at the doorsteps of the people. He observed that the postal department employees have always been in the forefront of

service delivery and financial inclusion.

He also acknowledged the department's efforts in recognising the unsung heroes of the state like Komaram Bheem, Chakali Ilamma, Ravi Narayana Reddy and Maqbool Moinuddin and releasing a special cover to commemorate their services during the freedom struggle as part of the Azadi Ka Amruth Mahotsav.

K Devaraj welcomed the gathering. TM Sreelatha, Dr PVS Reddy and S Rajendra Kumar also spoke on the occasion.

# Protest erupts over Insta post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Mild tension prevailed at Rein Bazaar on Saturday night after locals staged a protest demanding action against a person, later identified as a minor boy, who posted derogatory content on Instagram against a particular sub-community in Muslim.

According to the police, the boy, a juvenile, had made a derogatory post against a particular sub-community of Muslim on Instagram, following which the area locals gathered at the Rein Bazaar police station, demanding action against the juvenile.

"The group had demanded us to book a case and initiate action against the persons responsible behind the alleged post as their sentiments were hurt by the derogatory tone used in it. We enquired and identified the accused, following which a case was booked and the crowd was dispersed," said N. Ranjith Kumar Goud, inspector of Rein Bazaar Police, adding that it took them about 10 minutes to clear the commotion. As a precautionary measure police patrolling was intensified in the area and its surroundings.

# Bulk purchases increase demand for veggies; prices soar

VKL GAYATHRI ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Bulk purchases made by certain customers have resulted in an increase in the demand for green vegetables, which has hit common people across the state. Since the Covid-19 restrictions are relaxed, hotels, restaurants, canteens and marts have been purchasing vegetables in bulk quantities. There is high demand for green vegetables and making use of the opportunity, middlemen have increased the prices of all commodities. Meanwhile, the sky-rocketing diesel and petrol prices that have almost crossed Rs.110 per litre are making life

harder for the common people.

Over the past two month, prices of various vegetables - such as onion, tomato, potato, brinjal, ladies fingers and even green chillies -- have almost doubled. However, vegetables in the open markets have no quality. A similar situation is prevailing across the state as bulk customers are availing almost 75 per cent of veggies at the farm level.

They offer good prices to the farmers and also assure crop insurance for the vegetables. Considering the trouble of transportation and other risk factors, the farmers are not coming to the open markets. However, not even look-

ing into the ground realities, the Andhra Pradesh Agriculture Marketing Department is claiming the Rythu Bazar prices and stressing that the situation is under control. In fact, the government-run Rythu Bazaars across the state are sharing below 10 per cent of the total vegetable sale of the state.

"It is true that the farmers are not showing any interest in the open markets. If there is no sale, they will face big trouble. Meanwhile, the bulk consumers give minimum assurance to the farmers and buy the produce at the farm level. There is shortage in supply of vegetables not only in Andhra Pradesh, but in other states

also," said a senior official of AP Agriculture Marketing Department.

Meanwhile, the record prices of petrol and diesel have also affected the vegetable prices. "Earlier, farmers had no other options than depending on middlemen and open markets. However, the trend has changed. The bulk customers are purchasing the vegetables at the farm level. As there is no trouble of transportation and, very particularly, no issue of unsold vegetables, the farmers are very happy to sell their crops to the bulk customers," says R. Venkateswara Rao, one of the leading vegetable traders in Visakhapatnam.



# Raut: 'Govt killings' have replaced 'contract killings'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Launching a stinging attack on the BJP and the Centre over the alleged misuse of investigative agencies, Shiv Sena MP Sanjay Raut on Sunday alleged that "contract killings" are now replaced by "government killings" to finish off political rivals in Maharashtra.

With some ministers in the Shiv Sena-led Maha Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government under the scanner of the Enforcement Directorate (ED), Income Tax, and at least one of them facing a CBI inquiry, Raut said that Central investigating agencies are working as "contract killers for the party in power in Delhi".

"Is there a rule of law (a rule of) raids in Maharashtra? This is the question which comes to one's mind considering the record-break raids being conducted through Central investigating



agencies," Raut wrote in the weekly column 'Rokhthok' in the Sena mouthpiece 'Saamana' of which he is the executive editor.

Earlier, Delhi rulers used to lie but now (ordering) frequent raids have become a new business without any capital investment, he stated.

"Use people's money, government machinery to remove political opponents. In the past, contract killings were the order of the day in Mumbai (when

Underworld was active). Hitmen were hired on contract to kill rivals (by gangs). This is now replaced by government killing. Central investigating agencies are working as contract killers for the party in power in Delhi," Raut said.

Finishing off the unwanted political rivals through these agencies seems to have become a new policy, Raut stated.

Referring to the arrest of Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) leader and state minister

Nawab Malik's son-in-law Sameer Khan by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Raut said Khan had been arrested under the pretext of his involvement in a drug racket and was put in jail for eight months.

"Now the court has granted him bail. The court said herbal tobacco was found in the possession of Khan and not drugs. Malik should file cases against NCB officials," Raut said in the write-up.

The Sena leader further said the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) was raiding homes of former Maharashtra Home Minister Anil Deshmukh instead of finding out the whereabouts of Param Bir Singh, the former commissioner of Mumbai police who had accused Deshmukh of corruption with the help of some police officers when he was serving as the home minister of the state.

# Centre will provide all help to Kerala; continuously monitoring floods

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre will provide all possible assistance to the people of Kerala who have been affected by heavy rains and resulting floods, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Sunday.

He said in a tweet that the government was "continuously monitoring the situation in parts of Kerala in the wake of heavy rainfall and flooding."

"The Central govt will provide all possible support to help people in need. NDRF teams have already been sent to assist the rescue operations. Praying for everyone's safety," Shah said.

The National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has deployed 11 teams for search, rescue and relief operations in the state where the death toll from heavy rains and landslides rose to eight on Sunday.

# Heart-wrenching scenes in Kerala's high ranges

PNS ■ KOOTTICKAL (KERALA)

An elderly woman could be seen running from one person to another screaming through the rain swept roads in this high range hamlet, located at the foothills of Western Ghats mountain ranges, on Sunday morning. "I have lost everything...everything in my life...where should I go...who will give me a shelter?" the woman, clad in a tattered saree, asked aloud crying and running here and there.

The unexpected torrential rain, which pounded the village on Saturday, washed away every penny of her life time earnings and made her homeless all of a sudden.

"I begged our Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan sir to give me two cents of land to construct a 'kooora' (hut). I



have nowhere to go. My daughters' houses are also submerged. Now I am going to the church to see whether I will get a place there," she told the journalists gathered at the place.

It was the story of many hapless families in Koottickal, located in Kottayam district of Kerala which suffered severe

destruction and human casualty due to a series of landslides triggered by heavy rains yesterday.

When the extreme rains showed a slight dip this morning, a large number of people in this village could be seen as displaced and became the inmates of rehabilitation camps.

# We feel mental state of Bangla Hindus, stand by them: Imams

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Bengal Imams Association, a representative body of Muslims in the eastern state, has condemned the attacks on Hindus in Bangladesh during Durga Puja and called upon everyone to stand by minorities in both India and the neighbouring country.

The association, in a statement issued on Saturday, said that everyone should have been celebrating the festival of amity and brotherhood in Bangladesh, where at least 32,000 Durga Pujas are organised.

"Instead, some people with vested interests sowed the seeds of communal poison by circulating images of a stray incident at a pandal in Comilla to carry out large-scale arson at several puja marquee.

"Knowledge of rocket science is not needed to under-



stand the sinister game plan to create a rift among members of two communities by these forces, who are not glorifying any religion by such acts. Being members of the minority community in India, we feel the mental state of the Hindus in Bangladesh who are a minority in that country. We stand by them at this hour," Association Chairman Md Yahia said in the statement.

Md Yahia also called upon people to be alert against efforts to foment trouble by spreading rumours and fake information and images on

social media. At least four people were killed in clashes between miscreants and law enforcers and several Hindu temples and Durga Puja pandals were vandalised in Bangladesh, following which paramilitary forces were deployed in many affected districts.

Bangladesh Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina, while exchanging greetings with Hindus during a recent event at Dhakeshwari National Temple in Dhaka, had said that all the perpetrators would be hunted down and punished.

Ministry of External Affairs (MEA) has noted that the government in the neighbouring country has reacted promptly to ensure that the situation was under control and said that the Indian mission is in close contact with the Bangladeshi authorities over the matter.

# Ex-BSP MP Kadir Rana joins SP

PNS ■ MUZAFFARNAGAR

Former BSP MP Kadir Rana on Sunday joined the Samajwadi Party ahead of the 2022 Uttar Pradesh Assembly polls. Rana joined the SP in the presence of party chief Akhilesh Yadav at a function held in Lucknow.

# Heavy rains lash Delhi, parts of western UP, Haryana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Heavy rains lashed the national capital on Sunday leading to waterlogging and traffic jams at several parts of the city causing inconvenience for commuters.

The weather office had forecast a generally cloudy sky with light to moderate rain and thundershowers. The maximum temperature on Sunday is likely to settle

around 33 degrees Celsius. The Indian Meteorological Department (IMD) attributed the untimely rains to western disturbance.

Besides Delhi, moderate to heavy rains were predicted for almost all adjoining areas in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana and many of those falling under the National Capital Region.

The IMD predicted moderate to heavy rains at Loni

Dehat, Hindon Air Force Station, Bahadurgarh, Ghaziabad, Indirapuram, Chhapraula, Dadri, Greater Noida, Gurugram, Faridabad, Manesar, Ballabgarh, Sohana, Manesar, and Rewari areas of UP and Haryana. Light to moderate rainfall was predicted in Palwal, Aurangabad, Hodal (Haryana) Deoband, Najibabad, Muzaffarnagar, Kandhla, Bijnaur, Khatauli, Sakoti Tanda, Hastinapur,

Chandpur, Baraut, Daurala, Meerut, Modinagar, Kithor, Garhmukteswar, Piplakhuva, Gulaoti, Sikandrabad, Bulandshahar, Jalesar, Tundla, and Agra.

The minimum temperature on Sunday settled at 23.5 degrees Celsius, four notches above normal. The city received 3 mm rainfall in the last 24 hours and the relative humidity was 90 per cent, the IMD said.

# Rescued Kashmiri youth rejoins terror ranks

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

After being rescued from the clutches of banned ISIS terror group from Turkey in 2017, Afshan Parvez has been found to be a sleeper cell of a terror module in Jammu and Kashmir that is promoting the armed crusade against the sovereignty of the country, officials here said on Sunday.

Parvez, a resident of the downtown area in Khanyar, was 21 when he was rescued from Ankara, after his parents claimed he had been misguided by some people to join the terror ranks. And, showing a humane face, a young officer from the J&K police tied all the loose ends and brought him back to India.

But after remaining dormant for sometimes after his return from Ankara, Parvez, now 25, was again seen active but in a different way as he was using mobile phones of unsuspecting people to carry forward his agenda at the behest of the banned terror group, according to officials.

Suspicions against Parvez grew when intelligence agencies, while probing a terror case of Ahmed Nagar in Kashmir last year, noticed a voice sample and writings on a web magazine 'Voice of Hind' that supported the ISIS propaganda.

# Pollution in Delhi due to stubble burning in neighbouring states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As Delhi's air quality plunged into the 'very poor' category on Sunday morning, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that increase in pollution was due to stubble burning in neighbouring states as governments were "doing nothing" to help farmers to stop it.

He appealed to the governments of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh to understand their responsibilities towards reducing stubble burning and controlling pollution.

"For the past one month, I have been tweeting data of air quality in Delhi. Pollution has increased in

the last 3-4 days and it is due to stubble burning in neighbouring states. Farmers in neighbouring states are compelled to burn stubble as their governments are doing nothing for them (towards stopping stubble burning)," Kejriwal said in an event organised to lay the foundation stone of a 1,430 bed new government hospital in Shalimar Bagh.

The chief minister said the national capital has two kinds of pollution, one is its internal pollution that emanates from vehicles, dust, while the other one is because of stubble burning in neighbouring states of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.



# TN police missive identifies '61 sources' of tainted personnel

PNS ■ CHENNAI

A catalogue, a purported annexure of an official circular, listing '61 specific sources' that are exploited by a section of police personnel to demand bribe has surfaced in the social media with the BJP demanding to know if corruption has increased in police department with the DMK assuming power in Tamil Nadu.

The 'annexure' lists bribe money ranging from Rs 100 to as high as Rs 1 lakh and this is believed to be the 'rate per month' in case of lodges and others and for other category of people, this is a 'one time demand' for services like issuance of a 'No Objection Certificate' or for providing a copy of FIR.

The bribe is demanded mainly to allow illegal activities like smuggling including sand and for permitting gambling, banned lottery and so on.



The circular from the Tamil Nadu state police headquarters here to officials in districts has ordered stern action against such tainted elements.

The district level officials and those in the jurisdiction of police ranges have forwarded the missive to others like deputy police superintendents working under them.

Police sources, however, neither denied nor confirmed the issuance or receipt of the 'annexure,' that listed specific rates demanded by writers in police stations, sub-inspectors, inspectors, special branch personnel and those deployed in patrol duties including on the highways.

An official told PTI, "circulars mandating action against corrupt personnel are nothing new and our tough action against such elements is in the public domain." He declined to comment on the purported annexure that listed the rates.

According to the 'annexure,' tainted police inspectors demand anywhere between Rs 10,000 and Rs 1 lakh for civil disputes, up to Rs 5,000 from ganja sellers and about Rs 1 lakh from those involved in sale of banned lottery.

They also seek Rs 10,000 to Rs 50,000 from godowns storing gunpowder and for enquiry on 'current papers.' From lodges, they collect Rs 2,000, from a spa Rs 5,000, 'dhaba hotels' Rs 3,000-Rs 7,000 and from those running bars without permission Rs 2,000. From granite quarries Rs 10,000 and from sand smugglers Rs 20,000.

# Chhattisgarh govt board to promote tea, coffee

PNS ■ RAIPUR

The Chhattisgarh government has decided to constitute a board to promote the cultivation of tea and coffee in the state, officials said on Sunday.

On the direction of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel, 'Chhattisgarh Tea Coffee Board' will be formed under the chairmanship of the state's agriculture minister, an official statement said.

"The constitution of the board is aimed at encouraging the cultivation of tea and coffee in the state and to provide more benefits to local farmers and those involved in the processing activities," the CM said in the release.

He said that the target of cultivating tea and coffee on at least 10,000 acres would be

achieved in the next three years and cultivators would be given the benefits of the Rajiv Gandhi Kisan Nyay Yojana and other schemes of the agriculture department.

There is an enormous potential for the cultivation and processing of tea in the northern part of Chhattisgarh, particularly in the Jaspur district, and for coffee in the southern part, mainly in the Bastar district. Horticulture and Industry departments will play an important role to achieve this purpose, he said.

To meet the target, technical guidance from reputed national level institutions along with the support of private-sector experts, investors and consultants will be taken, he added.

## APPLICABILITY OF RTI TO INTELLIGENCE, SECURITY BODIES

# Supreme Court directs Delhi HC to decide

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court has directed the Delhi High Court to decide the applicability of the Right to Information (RTI) Act to intelligence and security organisations of the government while setting aside its order directing a department to furnish information to an employee on seniority and promotions.

A bench of Justices M R Shah and A S Bopanna said the high court passed the directions without deciding the objection of the government department that the RTI Act was not applicable to it.

"It is the specific case on behalf of the Department that the RTI Act was not applicable to the organisation/department. Despite the above and without deciding such an objection, the high court has directed the appellant to furnish the documents sought under the RTI Act without deciding the applicability of the RTI Act. That will be putting the cart before the horse," the bench said.

The apex court said the high court ought to have decided the issue with respect to the applicability of the RTI Act to the organisation or department first.



"We direct the high court to first decide the issue with respect to the applicability of the RTI Act to the appellant organisation/department and

thereafter decide the stay application/LPA. The aforesaid exercise shall be completed within a period of eight weeks," the bench said in its recent order.

The top court was hearing an appeal filed by the Centre against the 2018 decision of the high court which directed the department to provide information to the employee within 15 days.

The counsel appearing on behalf of the Centre had told the high court that the Department from which information was sought is exempted as per Section 24(1) of the RTI Act, 2005. Therefore, the order of the CIC is illegal and

contradictory to the provisions of the Section 24 of the RTI Act.

Section 24 of the RTI Act exempts certain intelligence and security organisations from the ambit of the transparency law except for information "pertaining to allegations of corruption and human rights violations".

The high court had said that since the employee was facing prejudices regarding seniority, he sought information mentioned above and that the information neither hampers with intelligence nor security nor secrecy of the petitioner organisation.

## INDIA CORNER

# Parameshwari Namboothiri chief priest of Sabarimala temple

Parameshwari Namboothiri of Kaliyakkal Madam at Mavelikkara has been selected as the next Melsanthi (Chief priest) of the Sabarimala Lord Ayyappa temple for a period of one year starting from November 16, when the annual Mandala Puja season commences. The selection of the chief priest was through a draw of lots held at the temple soproanam on Sunday morning, the Travancore Devaswom Board (TDB) said. Shabhu Namboothiri of Kuravakkad Illam has been selected as the chief priest of the adjoining Malikappuram Devi temple. The selections were made by drawing lots from a panel of priests shortlisted after interviews conducted by the TDB, which manages the hill shrine. TDB said the lots were drawn at 8 AM by the youngest member of the Pandalam royal family, Govind Varma. Meanwhile, in the wake of heavy rains, district Collector Divya S Iyer has announced a ban on pilgrimage on Sunday and Monday in view of possible dangers in the forest areas including Sabarimala and Pamba region.



# Goa Forward Party leader compares Didi to 'Durga', BJP govt to 'Bhasmasur'

Goa Forward Party (GFP) leader has kicked up a row by comparing West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to Goddess Durga who he said would eliminate the "Bhasmasur" BJP government in the coastal state, inviting a rebuke from Chief Minister Pramod Sawant. GFP working president Kiran Kandolkar on Saturday said that Goa needs to bring "Durga" from West Bengal who would eliminate this "Bhasmasur" BJP government. He had also admitted that the GFP was in talks with the Banerjee-led Trinamool Congress Party (TMC) to ally for the next year's Goa Assembly elections. "People of Goa will never tolerate such a comparison. You cannot compare Goddess Shantadurga with a human being...someone who committed atrocities on women after West Bengal election results," the chief minister told reporters. Without taking Banerjee's name, Sawant said the people have seen how that person and that party (TMC) "butchered people after the West Bengal polls".



# MP: Four hurt as speeding car rams into Durga procession; driver held

A speeding car rammed into a Durga idol immersion procession in the Madhya Pradesh capital, leaving four persons, including a head constable, injured, police said on Sunday. Police have arrested the driver and seized the car, a senior officer said. The incident occurred on the road outside the Bhopal railway station on late Saturday night when the procession was moving forward. Bajaria police station in-charge Umesh Yadav told PTI. Three persons were injured and one of them sustained serious injuries and undergoing treatment at a hospital, he said. The car also hit an on-duty police head constable, who sustained minor injuries to his leg, he said. Yadav said after the car rammed into the procession people started shouting to get hold of the car driver, who panicked and fled by reversing the car speedily. He said a case was registered. Deputy Inspector General of Police (DIG) Irshad Wali told reporters on Sunday afternoon that the car involved in the incident was seized and its driver arrested. The driver's interrogation is underway, he said but refused to elaborate.





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PAPER WITH PASSION

## Hands-on approach

Rahul will have to face electoral bullets if he becomes the Congress president again

It can now be said that Congress matriarch Sonia Gandhi has done everything she could to protect son Rahul. Whether that can stem the prospects of the party from dwindling further is another story. The Saturday meeting of the Congress Working Committee was unique. It witnessed, for the first time in recent memory, a member of the Nehru-Gandhi family forced to take note of growing dissent in the party organisation and handle it differently from the past when disciplinary action was the standard remedy. How times have changed. The dissidents make a large, powerful group and throwing them out would mean ejecting the entire second rung leadership. The Family runs the show thanks to irrational allegiance to the leadership that stills dissent beyond a point. Sonia Gandhi did not confront the dissidents. She reasoned with them. She explained to them that their main grouse – lack of a full-time president – was groundless as she was a “full-time” and “hands-on” president. She thus shielded them from her son who left the presidency after the 2019 election debacle and has since been reluctant to be elected again. She then sought patience from them to await the next president. Probably, him again. They wanted an elected president and they will get one, she told them, backing her word with a time-bound organisational election schedule. What she has managed to do in the process is show exemplary shrewdness in steering the dawdling ship in the rough seas by keeping intact all hands on the oars.



From her point of view, son Rahul's high point after becoming Congress president in December 2017 was the party forming four State Governments, including one in a coalition, after the assembly elections in 2018. He quit the following year. Rahul was not president when Congress was whipped in West Bengal. He would not be there either when the Congress fights in Uttar Pradesh. The Presidential elections would pass him by too. Sonia obliquely told them that Rahul's was not a case of power without responsibility because she was the “hands-on” power. If the dissidents had an issue, they would have to deal with her, not Rahul. As much as the dissidents would have wanted an elected leader to take responsibility for failures, they were unable to tell her that to her face. And by the time they thought of doing so, Sonia Gandhi came up with a retort cloaked in reasonableness. However, Rahul, if he is president again, will have to bite the electoral bullet in December 2022 in Gujarat and four key States in 2023. So, the 2019-2022 breather does not help him before taking on Narendra Modi in 2024. Sonia realises the ultimate irony of the Congress: The dynasty may demand a Gandhi to be president but the legacy of the party demands striving for the Prime Minister's post and nothing else. There is the minor issue of the two demands converging somewhere.

# Jinnah: Divider of the subcontinent?



PRAFULL GORADIA

The recent killings in Kashmir by Pakistan-backed terrorists remind us of what India would have been enduring had there been no Partition

Who wanted Partition? Who needed Pakistan? Certainly, the Khoja, Memon and Bohri businessmen did. They preferred competing with the Punjabi farmer than the Parsis and Banias, Marwari, Gujarati, Chettis or whichever other traditional trading communities in India. The Habibs, for example, were big grain traders in Bombay. Their junior partner Ratanlal Gandhi once asked the senior Habib why they financed the Muslim League when all their business and property was in and around Bombay? Habib's answer to Gandhi was that it was much easier to flourish against farmers than businessmen banias.

Others keen on Partition were the radical Muslims, wherever they were in India. An educated League leader of Madras — Mohammed Ismail — was a leading supporter not only of Partition but also an exchange of population, which meant that all Muslims ought to go to Pakistan and non-Muslims to remain in India. Ismail himself did not leave Madras. Yet another group of supporters were the students, past and present of Aligarh University which was described by M.A. Jinnah as “the arsenal of Pakistan”. For the rest, Muslims were interested but were unsure and therefore lukewarm. Punjab had a Muslim majority with a Muslim Premier and ruled by the Unionist Party led by Sir Sikander Hayat Khan and his successors. These leaders saw no future in Partition as Punjab enjoyed Muslim rule with the whole of the Indian market freely available to their province.

Similarly, Bengal was in two minds and not clearly for Pakistan. One, to support Partition or to follow the reasoning of Punjab; two, to have a united Bengal as a third separate dominion, apart from Pakistan and India. Sir Abdul Rahim, Fazlul Rahman and Sarat Bose met several times to discuss the issue. Jinnah quietly supported the idea as did the Communist Party of India. The truth was no one could visualise the concept and shape of Pakistan. Not even Jinnah; he retained his magnificent bungalow Marble House on



Malabar Hill with the intent of spending his winters there. No one foresaw that relations between the two dominions would be perpetually hostile.

Hindus abhorred the idea of their motherland's division. Visionaries like Dr BR Ambedkar and Dr Munje of the Hindu Mahasabha realised that the coexistence of the two communities was difficult, and therefore not beneficial. Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and Jawaharlal Nehru came to realise this truth in 1946 when widespread rioting began in August of that year. Punjab had witnessed bloodshed and looting but elsewhere it was business-as-usual. Jinnah was himself not a committed Muslim. His grandfather had converted to the faith led by Sir Aga Khan called Ismaili Khojas. This denomination was declared by the Bombay High Court in 1861 as half Muslim and half Hindu because of its inheritance laws. The family continued to call themselves Jinnahbhai. It was in England, where he was studying to become a barrister that he slightly altered his surname and passport to Jinnah; the ‘bhai’ was dropped. He enjoyed

pork sandwiches as well as a sun-downer (whisky) on most evenings.

Jinnah knew the cards could be loaded against him. Dead against the grain of his constitutional nature, he ordered the Great Calcutta Killing on 16 August 1946, in the hope that the riots would be retaliated against and spread in the country. Killings in Punjab alone were not sufficient. Moreover, time was running out for him. He either knew or suspected that his lungs were infected with tuberculosis (TB), which until the post-World War II period, was a fatal disease. And sure enough, TB took Jinnah's life in September 1948. He had to settle scores with Gandhi, first resorting to taking politics to the streets and villages (which Jinnah could not cope with), and later in 1928, ignoring him at the Calcutta session of the Congress. Jinnah kept avoiding the prefix ‘Mahatma’ and addressing Gandhi as ‘Minister’. The audience did not let Jinnah speak unless he addressed Gandhi as Mahatma. There must have been similar other incidents before 1928. Jinnah had to

deliver revenge to Gandhi and began with riots to which the Mahatma had no answer except touring the affected areas and conducting prayer meetings. Nor did he have a counter-strategy. Even Patel, Nehru and others in the Congress couldn't think of how to counter the League. Non-violence could not cope with brutality and violence.

Jinnah was more a brilliant advocate than a leader. He is reputed to have suits tailored at the famous Saville Row in London but until he was elected the life president of the Muslim League in 1935, he had no chudidar-pyjamas nor sherwanis (essential Muslim attire) as his brother and my grandfather's dear friend Ahmed told the latter. The brothers did not know how to perform namaz. As Ahmed told my grandfather, the brothers were culturally more Parsi and less Muslim.

(This is part one of a series on Muhammad Ali Jinnah's role in India-Pak Partition.)

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



JINNAH HAD TO DELIVER REVENGE ON GANDHI, AND BEGAN WITH RIOTS TO WHICH THE MAHATMA HAD NO ANSWER

### PICTALK



Debris collects on Lower Lake after the end of Navratri, in Bhopal

PTI

## An evil plot

The Durga Puja attacks in Bangladesh are designed to throw the country back into chaos

It is disturbing news again from a neighbour, Bangladesh. Hindu temples have been vandalised and at least three people lost their lives in the violent clashes in the People's Republic of Bangladesh. This is one of the biggest disruptions in interfaith harmony of the country that is making remarkable strides on the economic front. Sheikh Hasina's Government has been in power for quite some time. However, religious fanaticism has been on the rise in Bangladesh. It validates what writer Tasleema Nasrin has been warning about Muslim fundamentalism in the country. That the religious bigots chose Durga Puja as the occasion to rupture the social fabric of the country speaks volumes about their designs. It can have a spillover, multiplier effect and reaction in bordering India and thus it could snowball into a major issue. This would neither be good for Hasina's Government nor for her country that needs peace to prosper. If Bangladesh burns, it will be pulled back to the old days of economic hardships and misery. The Bangladesh Government has deployed the Border Guard Bangladesh (BGB) in 22 districts after the attacks. This shows that the incidents are neither isolated nor unplanned.



So far, three people have been killed during clashes between Muslim bigots and the police at Hajiganj sub-district in Chandpur. One person died later in the hospital of injuries. The police have so far detained 43 people in connection with the violence. This is one of the biggest challenges that the ruling Awami League party is facing right now. It has a daunting task to protect the Hindu minorities while not antagonising the majority of Muslims. This indeed is a tight ropewalk for Sheikh Hasina and her party. Hindus are 10 per cent of the 169 million, largely Muslim, population. The Awami League, which led the struggle for independence, harped on the Bangla language movement, not religion. But later it fell out with the military, which consolidated its position by supporting religious fundamentalists. In 1977, Zia-ur-Rahman dropped secularism. Later in 1988, General Ershad made Islam the State religion and hobbled with the fundamentalists, laying the foundation of the current rise of religious extremism. The sporadic violence has claimed several lives ever since, though this time it is more organised and designed to garner maximum mileage.

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## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### STALIN SHOWS THE WAY

Sir — The unprecedented and mammoth victory of the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam (DMK) in the local body elections is indeed a people have given to the Tamil Nadu Government, particularly for the implementation of several public welfare schemes in such a short time by the charismatic Chief Minister MK Stalin. Though the main Opposition AIADMK and its allies, particularly the BJP, tried to tarnish the image of the new Government on implementation of the election promises made by the DMK, people refused to fall into their trap, realising the sincerity with which the new Government was trying to fulfil their election promises despite the empty coffers the earlier corrupt AIADMK regime has left for them.

Looking at the manner in which Chief Minister Stalin is conducting himself, people believe that he would never let them down and make the State regain its past glory and become the number one State in the country again in all key parameters. Realising the trust of the people in them, the leaders and cadres of the DMK should also realise their responsibilities and perform their duty honestly keeping only the welfare of the people supreme in their mind.

Tharcus S Fernando | Virugambakkam

### DID NOT SEE THAT COMING

Sir — The Union Defence Minister Rajnath Singh lauded the former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi for her leadership in times of war and said it was a positive experience in harnessing women power for national development, at the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. His comments in such a positive approach in the era of bitter political rivalry reminds of similar sentiments expressed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee who called Indira Gandhi ‘Durga’ for leading the nation to victory in the 1971 Indo-Pak war.

Gone are the sweet memories of the yesteryears when the first Prime Minister of India congratulated his political rival young Atal Bihari Vajpayee for his maiden speech in the Parliament, forecasting

## Vaccination drive in full swing



The recent release of the COVID-19 anthem in the beautiful voice of Kailash Kher by the Union Health Ministry — to mark the 100 crore vaccination target — is absolutely a victory for India in terms of mass vaccination records. At the same time, we know that this is not the end of the pandemic as about only 30 per cent of the population has been fully vaccinated yet. The lyrics “tike se bacha hai, tike se bachega desh” are somewhat true when it comes to life saving causes. There was a time in India when

vaccination drives for other pathogen based diseases failed miserably. Taking into consideration the size and diversity of India's population, vaccination of 100 crores is itself a record for us.

Such songs will not only help in removing vaccine hesitancy and controversies around India's domestically produced COVID vaccines, but also set an example before the world about India's potential in the medical and healthcare sector. It will develop a nationalist sense in every Indian that we are not lagging in the fight against the COVID-19. As Indians, we should celebrate the 100 crore vaccine mark, but at the same time we also must encourage people to get vaccinated and follow the COVID protocols. The whole world is eagerly waiting for the day when there would be zero COVID-19 cases; however, that can be achieved only by the efforts of the authorities and the support of the citizens.

Kirti Wadhawa | Kanpur

a great politician of the future in him. The former Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri had sent a gift parcel of Dhoti-Kurta to a prominent parliamentarian Prakashvir Shastri, as a token of request to wear Indian attire on his first foreign trip. Such moments of political bonhomie are very rare in India's current political spectrum. Country's welfare is no longer the vision but only individual interest is what the politicians seek. Had the ethos of such leaders been alive, India's social, political and economical state would have been far better.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal | Delhi

### GOOD TO HAVE DHONI BACK

Sir — They say age is just a number. And that statement fits in perfectly for MS Dhoni, who led the Chennai Super Kings to victory in the IPL 2021. What is incredible is the way the yellow brigade bounced back after a supremely disappointing season in 2020, where they became the first team to be knocked out of the play-offs and, for the first time ever

in the history of the tournament, failed to make it to final four. But CSK's triumphant return this season, with pretty much the same squad, has shown why Dhoni has been so successful over the years despite being one of the oldest players in the tournament.

Just recently, Mahendra Singh Dhoni became the first player in the world to captain a team in 300 T20 games across various competitions during his side's IPL clash against KKR. Also, few days ago, India's T20 World Cup squad was announced with former skipper MS Dhoni reuniting the ‘men in blue’ as the side's mentor. MS Dhoni's appointment as India's mentor was a way to use his experience in the T20 World Cup. MS Dhoni is once again ready to contribute to the team and this comes as no surprise that he has decided not to charge a dime for mentoring the men in blue.

Shashank Patil | Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

## SOUND BITE

We have come a long way on the roadmap that Dr Abdul Kalam had laid out for India.



Union Minister — Hardeep Singh Puri

The way we produce, consume and waste food is taking a heavy toll on our planet...and costing us trillions of dollars a year.

UN Secretary General — Antonio Guterres

My fans have lapped up every track of mine and it's this unwavering support that pushes me to better myself with every track.

Singer — Darshan Raval

The IPL gives India an edge over other teams and makes it one of the big favourites to win the T20 World Cup.

Former India cricketer — Suresh Raina

All the party members are unanimous that Rahul Gandhi should take over as president of the Congress.

Congress leader — Ambika Soni



## FIRST COLUMN BETWEEN ROUTINE AND INNOVATION

Routine is one of the two legs of human existence, innovation is the other



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Life is full of paradoxes. The celebrated doers, thinkers, writers have a way of capturing what they have seen as the 'truth' and verbalising it. Sometimes the 'truths' are easy to understand, sometimes abstruse. Mark Twain reportedly said, "Never fail to pay yourself a compliment; it may be your only chance to get one". This is a straight forward quip with a touch of humour and irony. Some of his other, reported, quotes are a little more complex and perhaps difficult to comprehend. For instance, "For each one kills the thing he loves". One has, at times, tried to make sense of the second quote. Some claim that they can approximate what he could have meant. That is another story. The central part of this narrative is to focus on common place remarks which capture some truth in life. One of my favourite quotes is, "Keeping up with the routine is far more demanding than trying hands at innovation". When this remark is used in a public forum, sometimes, one gets reactions which total up to saying, "routine is routine, what is difficult with keeping up with it". The truth of life is that one lives in an era where amongst the buzz words, 'innovation', perhaps, tops the list. People are never tired of pleading for 'innovation' or trying to put it across as the ultimate need of life. It is a need. One does not know whether it is the



'ultimate' need or not. Of course, innovation is necessary. That is also how, change could take place to keep pace with changing requirements. However, many empiricists have found that scope for practice of innovation is bounded in many ways. This includes real world realities or time needed for the body to rejuvenate. These are two limiting items, among several constants, which cannot and will not change. It is keeping up with the routine that is so essential to keep the body as a functioning and an effective system. Similar is the story in collective living or routine of livelihood. One may move from cash to bitcoins, but the reference point of an intermediary, referred to as 'money' as a medium of exchange of goods, services, etc., is a constant. Thus, it is that life of innovation is bound by the domain of operation of the subject, nature of material, etc. It is the 'routine' which also provides formidable challenges.

The body needs a given number of hours of rest in a 24-hour cycle to repair its cells, rest its organs and unwind the stresses. This is best serviced through regular habits. Usually, the period for rest is supposed to come somewhere between sunset and sunrise, if it is in the tropical zones. The human body attuned to a 24-hour cycle needs a minimum of 6-8 hours rest. This may vary from one point of the life cycle to another, say between youth and old age. However, the range of variation remains limited. Routine is one of the two legs on which human existence walks. The other is innovation. In the interest of holistic living, almost equal thought needs to be given to the maintenance and improvement of servicing the routine requirements of life. Since the other leg on which human life moves is innovation, that too is important. As of now, it appears that the challenges and the needs of innovation are fairly well recognised. The challenges and the needs of routine need equal thought and servicing. A life well balanced, between thought through routine (serviced with determination) when balanced by innovative thinking and action, provides a good charter of success and effectiveness.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant. The views expressed are personal.)

# Why is Taiwan at the mercy of China?



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

Beijing might resolve to disable Taiwan's communications and operational systems, making the resistance very low and a war relatively bloodless

Historically, China has clashed with the former Soviet Union and Vietnam, intervened in the Korean War, and waged a full-fledged war with India in 1962 despite adopting the foreign policy 'principles of peaceful coexistence'. Today, Beijing has increased its strategic footprints worldwide, especially in Africa, through UN Peace Keeping Operations. Its support to the Taliban has been a cause of worry to many liberal states. Additionally, it is involved in disagreements and maritime territorial disputes in the South and East China Sea and boundary disputes with India and Taiwan.

Concerning India, the Galwan valley clashes and border incursions along with President Xi Jinping's state visits to India strategically communicated its intent to be recognised as an economic and military power. Recent border intrusions in two states simultaneously- Uttarakhand and Arunachal- and negatively commenting on the Indian Vice President's Arunachal visit raise questions about China's intent. A refusal to disengage beyond a certain point with India apart from repeatedly stressing its "peaceful reunification" of Taiwan by intruding into the air defence zone reflects its high running aspirations to be recognised as a great power. Further, its opaque debt trap policies pose severe challenges to the liberal world order.

The last few decades have seen China's financial and military growth which has translated into its aspiration to fulfil its 'China Dream' and has ignited its desire for hegemony. Beijing aims to attain a 'droit de regard' or "special interests" in its neighbouring areas in the South China Sea and the Indian Ocean region.

The questions that many ponder are will China use force against India or Taiwan? Is there a military conflict in waiting, a few days or months from now? The answer is most probably yes, but in accordance with China's suitability and its place of preference. The reason is not related to its insecurity viz-a-viz India or the U.S., but instead from its current perceived 'rightful place'. China is a classic case of misplaced nationalism. It firmly believes that once it can showcase its power well, it will gain entry into the 'great power club'. Such an objective aims to achieve appreciation and an increase in the rank of its social status. The use of force is thus an instrument, the effectiveness of which goes beyond the horizons of financial prosperity, military armaments and security. From a geopolitical perspective, high status brings with itself benefits such as deterrence from other more enormous powers merely by power projection and an acquired ability to influence the decisions of its neighbouring countries. New objectives such as norm-setting constitute the temptations of using force in foreign relations. Thus, a military conflict for social status remains a strong possibility. During the pandemic, as China faced



IF THE US DISPLAYS ITS WILLINGNESS TO GET INVOLVED IN HOSTILITIES, CHANCES OF CHINESE HESITATION FOR A FULLBLOWN MILITARY CONFLICT ON MULTIPLE BORDERS WILL INCREASE. THAT COULD MAKE INDIA A POTENTIAL TARGET THAT WILL TEST THE US COMMITMENTS

(The writer is an Assistant Professor at Central University of Punjab, Bathinda. The views expressed are personal.)



international isolation, it stopped with a Galwan 'clash' and kept relatively low on the question of Taiwan. As the world re-opens, those possibilities are narrowing down. Further, owing to its OBOR non-performing debts and its domestic economic crisis, apart from its financial commitments towards militarisation, there are fears that the 'bubble' can burst at any point of time. To divert its people's attention and gain another five years at the helm of the affairs in 2022, Xi might resort to force and deliberately brush aside negotiations and meaningful talks.

From another dimension, how China and Russia perceive the US withdrawal from Afghanistan is also important. Beijing had raised questions about States in South and East Asia placing their trust in America and had belittled its withdrawal in multiple statements. The decline in American commitments in finance and military may lead China to think about the feasibility of using force against its neighbours- India or Taiwan. Of the two, India has the power of responding in military terms and can ensure strong support from its European and American allies. At a strategic level, China might not want to give Russia a choice between India or itself. The Chinese stalemate with aggressive posturing will continue. However, a repeat of 'Galwan' and possible brinkmanship in various other Eastern sectors can be resorted to by China in March or April 2022, given the upcoming cold months. PLA soldiers are not physically fit

to fight in high altitude zones. A full-fledged war with India might not be its intention, and it would continue to contain India through its hybrid warfare or by using Pakistan against it. Taiwan probably will be an immediate target because of several factors. It has mild winters suitable for PLA soldiers, limited conventional offensive capabilities, and a lack of an institutionalised agreement with the US for security. Further, its non-membership in the UN, leading to its disability to speak for itself in case of open hostilities and limited outreach to the world countries also increases its risk of inviting Chinese aggression. In tactical terms, these limitations of Taiwan make it suitable for the Chinese area of action. To avoid international criticism of its Taiwan hostilities, Beijing might resolve to strike the command, control, communications and intelligence node and possibly disable the operational systems, making the resistance very low and war a relatively bloodless phenomenon leading to a "peaceful reunification". Such a move will send strategic signals beyond its immediate peripheries.

Moreover, it might also run a risk to hedge upon the world opinion in which no country would like to disrupt the essential supply chains because of the level of financial interdependencies with China. The warning to Germany and other European countries against adopting trade practices detrimental to its interests could also be associated with its posturing challenges. A territory that will be relatively easy to

capture and does not escalate into a significant war guides us to the Chinese concept of "local war under high-tech conditions" as outlined by the previous president Jiang Zemin. Thus, given the calculations that Beijing might have, there are considerably fewer chances that the Taiwan takeover might spill over into regional conflicts.

However, given the formalisation of AUKUS as a reinforcing organisation, the element of force might be less, and the spillover will also depend upon the US response. If the US displays its willingness to get involved in hostilities, chances of Chinese hesitation for a full-blown military conflict on multiple borders will increase. That could make India a potential target that will test the US commitments. In case the US does not commit itself, India's Arunachal Pradesh may be the next target. The Chinese ability to carry out interoperability operations in space and cyber technologies through militarisation of its artificial intelligence apart from conventional and nuclear operations poses a high risk to the democratic countries. Consequently, such conflicts have high tendencies to spiral into major ones and once initiated, it becomes difficult to limit them into a 'local area' due to the intensity of the emotions involved.

Taiwan is highlighting its plight on various world forums and simultaneously preparing for a full-scale Chinese invasion through military drills. Nevertheless, it largely remains a fault line in the security of the Indo-Pacific region.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

GOA NEEDS TO BRING 'DURGA' FROM WEST BENGAL TO ELIMINATE THE 'BHASMASUR BJP GOVERNMENT' IN THE STATE.

—GOA FORWARD PARTY PRESIDENT  
KIRAN KANDOLKAR



YOU CANNOT COMPARE DURGA WITH A HUMAN BEING, SOMEONE WHO COMMITTED ATROCITIES ON WOMEN AFTER THE BENGAL ELECTION RESULTS.

—GOA CHIEF MINISTER  
PRAMOD SAWANT

# Priyanka's broomstick message

While the Gandhi family has not been spared criticism for its handling of Punjab, little importance has been given to the limited options they had

Paradoxically, despite Congress base in Uttar Pradesh being extremely weak, Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra appear to have acted wisely in leaving nothing to chance while responding to the Lakhimpur Khericase. Protesting against her detention in Sitapur, Priyanka displayed no qualms in picking up the broomstick to "clean" the guest-house, a video-clipping of which did not take long to go viral.

As of now, though they have received ample media-coverage, chances of these communication strategies translating into Congress faring well in UP Assembly elections are dim. But yes, they certainly subdued the noise about the Congress facing a crisis of weak leadership over the



NILOFAR SUHRAWARDY

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

Punjab imbroglio. Congress has a lot at stake in Punjab but almost nothing in UP.

And this demands deliberation on yet another side of Congress-politics displayed in UP and in Punjab. Clearly, Congress is without any strong regional leader in UP. The situation is opposite in Punjab. Besides, the chances of BJP being pushed out of power soon in UP seem remote; the same may be said about it assuming power in Punjab. There is nothing puzzling about Congress facing a dilemma in Punjab, when viewed through "democratic" lens. It is debatable whether Congress high command "erred" or not in giving too much importance to regional leaders like Navjot Singh Sidhu. Democratically speaking, perhaps, Congress



leaders could not afford to ignore the manner in which Sidhu was raising his voice and also receiving media coverage. Yet, it seems, the Gandhi siblings chose not to yield to all political tantrums of Sidhu. This was reflected in opting for a least expected person to take over from Captain Amarinder Singh as CM — Charanjit Singh Channi. It is possible, negative criticism

faced by Congress leaders, due to Sidhu's style of politicking, have made the Gandhi siblings wiser about not yielding too much political space to party politicians fond of making too much noise and gaining media coverage.

Besides, media attention can never be a guarantee to earning electoral support. Presumably, this reality cautioned the Gandhi family in choosing not to concede to Sidhu's desire of succeeding the Captain as chief minister. That would have only angered the Captain further, whose wife Preneet Kaur is a Congress MP from Patiala. While expressing concern over her husband being "humiliated", she specified that she is not leaving the Congress "as of now". In addition, Congress leaders cannot

be oblivious of the strong support enjoyed by Captain amidst the protesting farmers and in Punjab. Negative campaigning indulged against him by Sidhu and his political camp is not likely to turn voters against Captain.

Captain has not refrained from sending alarm signals to Congress high command through his meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah and a possible meeting with PM Narendra Modi. The prospects of BJP making any gains in Punjab on its own are limited. Nevertheless, the party leaders will be delighted if Congress fails to return to power.

In all probability, Captain is least likely to reveal his actual political plans till the very last minute. He will keep his cards close to his chest and

meticulously observe Sidhu's "tactics", with his priorities likely to be decided by the latter's success or failure.

Notwithstanding all the criticism faced by Congress leadership about their "handling" of the Punjab crisis, there is another angle to explore. Democratically speaking, would it have been fair on their part to sideline Sidhu?

In all probability, the situation may have worsened, perhaps led to a more pronounced split within the Punjab Congress. The same has apparently been averted with the resignation of Captain. Similarly, the selection of his successor may also be viewed as an astute strategy.

While the Gandhi family has not been spared criticism for its handling of the Punjab

crisis, little importance has been accorded to the limited options they had. Interestingly, in UP, their handling of Lakhimpur Kheri case has earned them laurels. Their moves, particularly of Priyanka, have certainly gone a long way in enhancing their democratic image.

However, they had no option but to lead the protest in UP. Any decision of theirs to step aside may only lead to intra-party bickering at all levels. The party crisis witnessed in Punjab may be replayed in all States and at the national level. Also, if instead of the Gandhi siblings other party members had stepped forward in Lakhimpur-Kheri, the Congress moves would not have probably attracted much attention.

Bank of India cuts home, vehicle loan rates

PNS ■ MUMBAI

State-run Bank of India on Sunday announced a cut in its interest rates on home and vehicle loans by 35 basis point and 50 basis points, respectively.

With this cut, the interest rate on home loans starts at 6.50 per cent against earlier 6.85 per cent, and at 6.85 per cent against 7.35 per cent prior on vehicle loans, the bank said in a release.

This special rate, which is effective from October 18, 2021, till December 31, 2021, is available for customers applying for fresh loans and also for those seeking transfer of loans, it said.

The lender said it has also waived processing charges for both home and vehicle loans till December 31, 2021.



Finance Ministry to seek Cabinet nod for setting up SPV

Monetising land assets of privatisation-bound CPSEs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The finance ministry will soon move the Cabinet to seek approval for setting up a company for transfer and subsequent monetisation of land and non-core assets of privatisation-bound CPSEs, an official said.

A special purpose vehicle (SPV) in the form of a company would be set up to hold these assets which would be monetised to fetch value to

the exchequer, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) Secretary Tuhin Kanta

Pandey said. "We are talking about a company which will be there for many years, which will specialise in handling surplus land and non-core asset monetisation.

We are expecting it shortly. As soon as we get Cabinet approval," Pandey told PTI. There are some CPSEs for strategic disinvestment and "we feel certain portion of land is not really worth going with the company and those assets could be monetised", he said.

Post Cabinet nod, the Department of Public Enterprises (DPE), which is now under the Ministry of

Finance, will be entrusted with doing the asset monetisation.

The government is targeting to conclude strategic sale of BPCL, Shipping Corporation of India, IDBI Bank, BEML, Pawan Hans, Neelachal Ispat Nigam Ltd, this fiscal.

In the 2021-22 Budget, the government announced the PSE (public sector enterprises) privatisation policy as per which all PSUs will be privatised, barring four strategic sectors of Atomic energy, Space and Defence; Transport and Telecommunication; Power, Petroleum, Coal and other minerals; and Banking, Insurance and financial services.

In these strategic sectors, the government will retain only a bare minimum number of PSUs.



Petrol, diesel price hiked again; cost 30% more than ATF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Petrol and diesel price on Sunday was hiked again by 35 paise a litre and the auto fuels now cost a third more than the rate at which ATF is sold to airlines.

The fourth straight day of 35 paise per litre hike sent petrol and diesel rates to record highs across the country.

The price of petrol in Delhi rose to its highest-ever level of Rs 105.84 a litre and Rs 117.77 per litre in Mumbai, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

In Mumbai, diesel now comes for Rs 102.52 a litre; while in Delhi, it costs Rs 94.57.

With this rise, petrol is now at Rs 100-a-litre mark or more in all state capitals while diesel has touched the 100-mark in over a dozen states. Diesel crossed the Rs 100-a-litre mark in Bengaluru, Daman and Silvassa.

Petrol used in two-wheelers and cars now costs 33 per cent more than the price at which aviation turbine fuel (ATF) is sold to airlines. ATF in Delhi costs Rs 79,020.16 per kilolitre



Or Rs 79 per litre. The costliest fuel is in the border town of Ganganagar in Rajasthan where petrol comes for Rs 117.86 a litre and diesel for Rs 105.95.

Since ending of a three-week long hiatus in rate revision in the last week of September, this is the 16th increase in petrol price and the 19th time that diesel rates have gone up.

While petrol price in most of the country is already above Rs 100-a-litre mark, diesel rates have crossed that level in over a dozen states/UT including Madhya Pradesh,

Rajasthan, Odisha, Andhra Pradesh, Telangana, Gujarat, Maharashtra, Chattisgarh, Bihar, Kerala, Karnataka and Ladakh.

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

Shedding the modest price change policy, state-owned fuel retailers have since October 6 started passing on the larger incidence of cost to consumers.

This is because the international benchmark Brent crude is trading at USD 84.8 per barrel for the first time in seven years.

MONEY MATTERS

FPIs turn net sellers in capital markets in Oct

Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) have turned net sellers in the capital markets in October so far, reversing the trend of net investments in the previous two months, due to depreciation in the rupee and global factors, experts said. According to the depositories' data, FPIs have pulled out Rs 1,472 crore from capital markets on a net basis in the current month so far. A trend reversal was witnessed in the debt segment in October from the big buying in the previous two months when FPIs had invested Rs 13,363 crore in September and Rs 14,376.2 crore in August. In October so far, they pulled out Rs 1,698 crore. "This trend reversal in debt investment is due to the INR depreciation in October," said VK Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services. In equities, FPIs invested Rs 226 crore on a net basis. "FPIs who were sellers in banking stocks in the first half of September turned buyers in the second half. But they were sellers in software services throughout September."



India's coal import drops in Aug despite higher demand

India's coal import registered a decline of 2.7 per cent to 15.22 million tonnes (MT) in August this year amid the country's power plants grappling with fuel shortages. The country imported 15.64 MT of coal in the corresponding month last year. According to data compiled by junction services, "Imports in August 2021 stood at around 15.22 million tonnes... imports in August 2021 were also down by 2.7 percent over August 2020." Junction CEO and MD Vinaya Varma attributed the decline in volumes to the steady increase in seaborne coal prices coupled with the initiatives taken by the domestic miners for import substitution. However, he said, there is a spurt in demand from the power sector. "What impact it will have on imports, given the volatility in international prices, is to be seen," he added. Of the total import during August 2021, non-coking coal was at 9.08 MT, against 10.33 MT imported during August last year. Coking coal imports were at 4.37 MT, up against 3.17 MT imported during August 2020.



Lanka seeks USD 500 mn loan from India for fuel purchase

Sri Lanka has sought a USD 500 million credit line from India to pay for its crude oil purchases amid a severe foreign exchange crisis in the island nation. The move came few days after energy minister Udaya Gammanpila warned that the current availability of fuel in the country can be guaranteed only till next January. The state-run Ceylon Petroleum Corporation (CPC) owes nearly USD 3.3 billion to the two main government banks -- Bank of Ceylon and People's Bank. The state oil distributors imports crude from the Middle East and refined products from other areas, including Singapore. "We are currently engaged with the Indian High Commission here to obtain the facility (USD 500 million credit line) under the India-Sri Lanka economic partnership arrangement," CPC Chairman Sumith Wijesinghe was quoted as saying by local news website newfirst.lk. He said the facility would be utilised for purchasing petrol and diesel requirements. The energy secretaries of both India and Lanka are expected to sign an agreement for the loan soon, the report quoted Finance Secretary S R Attygalle as saying.



Govt seeks applications for NCLT, NCLAT posts

The government has sought applications for a total of 20 positions of judicial and technical members at the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) as well as the appellate tribunal NCLAT. As many as 15 posts, including that of 9 judicial members and 6 technical members, are to be filled up at the NCLT. Besides, applications have been invited for 3 positions of judicial members and 2 of technical members at the National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT). The last date for submission of the applications online is November 12, according to public notices issued by the corporate affairs ministry. In recent weeks, the government has been filling up vacancies at various tribunals, including NCLT and ITAT (Income Tax Appellate Tribunal). Last month, at least 31 people were appointed as judicial, technical and accountant members at NCLT and ITAT. On September 6, the Supreme Court said the Centre was testing its "patience" and "emasculating" tribunals by not appointing officials to the quasi-judicial bodies which are facing severe crunch of presiding officers as well as judicial and technical members.



FICCI-US INDIA STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP FORUM ROUNDTABLE

Opportunities galore in India for investors: FM

PNS ■ NEW YORK

Opportunities are galore in India for all investors and industry stakeholders with the current reset in the global supply chain and clear-headed and committed leadership in the country, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has told CEOs of top American companies.

Sitharaman arrived here on Friday after her visit to Washington DC where she participated in the annual meetings of the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Sitharaman and US Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen also co-chaired the eighth ministerial meeting of the India-USA Economic and Financial Partnership Dialogue in Washington.

"With the current reset in the



global supply chain and clear-headed and committed leadership in India, I see opportunities galore in India for all investors and industry stakeholders," Sitharaman said during her address to global business leaders and investors at a roundtable organised by industry

chamber FICCI and the US-India Strategic Partnership Forum here on Saturday.

Startups in India have grown tremendously and many are now raising money through capital markets. This year itself, more than 16 of them will qualify as unicorns, she said.

India has fully leveraged the potential of digitisation even during the most challenging times, the finance minister said. The role of technology in the financial sector is enabling pushing the frontier of financial inclusion and fintechs are playing a key role in this area, she said at the roundtable, the Finance Ministry tweeted.

Sitharaman also met Mastercard Executive Chairman Ajay Banga and Mastercard CEO Michael Miebach, FedEx Corporation CEO and Chief Operating Officer Raj Subramaniam, Citi CEO Jane Fraser and IBM Chairman and Chief Executive Officer Arvind Krishna, Executive vice president and head of Prudential Financial, Inc's International Businesses Scott Sleyster and Legatum Chief Investment Officer Philip

Vassiliou. Sitharaman met Banga and Miebach in New York. "The initiatives and progress towards financial inclusion and digital transformation formed part of discussion," the Finance Ministry tweeted.

Following his meeting with Sitharaman, Banga said India is on a "great pathway and trajectory" with its continuing reforms and he can see great momentum.

"I'm particularly impressed by the production linked incentives that have been put into place," he said, adding that they can make a big difference to the way that labour intensive industries in India can develop. "I'm very hopeful that it's not just one reform but the series of reforms that are continuing can keep guiding India on the trajectory."

Gold imports jump multi-fold to US \$ 24 bn in Apr-Sep

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold imports, which have a bearing on the current account deficit, zoomed to about USD 24 billion during April-September 2021 due to higher demand in the country, according to data from the Commerce Ministry.

Imports of the yellow metal was USD 6.8 billion in the corresponding period last year, the data showed.

Gold imports during September this year too rose to USD 5.11 billion as against USD 601.4 million in the same month last year.

On the other hand, silver imports dipped by 15.5 per cent to USD 619.3 million during April-September this fiscal.

Power Global to set up battery units in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

US-based clean energy and mobility products start-up Power Global plans to invest around USD 25 million (around Rs 185 crore) to set up a lithium-ion battery manufacturing unit and battery swapping infrastructure in India over the next two to three years, according to a top company official.

The company, which is setting up a one gigawatt hour capacity battery plant at Greater Noida in Uttar Pradesh, is also targeting to



retrofit around 8 lakh existing conventional three-wheelers in India for conversion into electric versions.

It will tap these retrofitted vehicles for its batteries, which would be offered for swapping through a subscription model.

"We are setting up a (battery) factory now in Greater Noida. This would be a one gigawatt hour capacity plant...With this about 4 lakh batteries would be rolled out from this factory per annum," Power Global's India subsidiary CEO Pankaj Dubey told PTI. Asked by when the plant will start operations, he said, "We're expecting the mass production to begin sometime in quarter three of next calendar year."

Power Global will also produce the retrofitting kit from the Greater Noida plant.

Imagine Meats to bolster product range, expand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Imagine Meats, a food venture by Bollywood couple Genelia and Riteish Deshmukh, is working on expanding its range of plant-based meats suited for Indian taste buds and expand its presence in 25-30 Indian cities by the end of the fiscal.

Speaking to PTI, Genelia said while the concept of plant-based meats has been around in the Western countries, it is yet to become mainstream in India.

"India is not so much of a burger eating nation...we love our keemas and kebabs...Globally, people are turning to plant-based meats for various reasons - some for

health, some are curious and some are doing so for ethical reasons. This is a relatively new category in India and there is a need to create awareness and educate people about this," she said.

She noted that the brand seeks to "reimagine how the masses consume meat by providing equally juicy and succulent plant-based options".

While plant-based meat is a rage in international markets that are looking at reducing the carbon footprint linked to animal farming, it is also steadily gaining ground in India with companies like Blue Tribe Foods, Veggie Champ and GoodDot bringing in a range of plant-based meats for Indian consumers.



Pak blacklists Chinese company for submitting fake documents

PNS ■ LAHORE

Pakistan has blacklisted a Chinese firm and barred it from participating in any government tender for a month over the allegations of submitting forged documents during the bidding of a government project, a media report said on Sunday.

The Chinese firm, which has not been named in the report, was blacklisted by the Pakistan's National Transmission and Despatch Company (NTDC) for submitting forged documents to the department concerned during the bidding of a project, Dawn newspaper reported.

"[The Chinese firm] is hereby blacklisted and barred from participating in all NTDC bidding/tender process with immediate effect for a period of one month on account of submitting forged and fake documents," reads a letter issued a couple of days ago from the office of the NTDC general manager.



Quarterly earnings, global cues to dictate trends in markets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Quarterly earnings and global cues will be the major sentiment driver for the equity market this week, according to analysts. Of late, Benchmark indices have been on a record-breaking run. "Quarterly results will dictate market sentiment and will be the talk of this week

as they pick up the pace. D-Street will be all ears to any management insights to forecast the future earnings trajectory.

"With the anticipation that companies would keep up their momentum from the previous quarter into the second quarter, investors may see whipsaw movements in the stock this week as results beat or miss

market expectations," said Yesha Shah, head (equity research) at Samco Securities.

Among major earnings to be announced this week are from UltraTech Cement, ACC, Hindustan Unilever Ltd, Asian Paints, Hindustan Zinc, IDBI, Bank of Maharashtra, South Indian Bank, Federal Bank and Reliance Industries Limited.

Subscriber additions to drive Jio's Q2 show

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The second quarter of the fiscal is likely to be a "healthy quarter" for telecom companies, where Jio's performance will be driven by subscriber additions, and Bharti and Vodafone Idea will benefit from tariff hikes and some recovery post-severe wave of COVID-19, according to some analysts.

The urgency around tariff hikes has come down with Vodafone Idea Ltd's (VIL) near-term cash outflow significantly reduced, IIFL Securities said. "Second quarter is likely to be a healthy quarter for telcos, though the drivers would be different for Jio and other players," IIFL Securities said in



a recent note. It expects Bharti to "marginally outperform" Jio on sequential India mobile revenue

growth. "Jio's revenue growth is likely to be entirely driven by subscriber adds, while Bharti and

Vi would benefit from partial impact from tariff hikes (both pre-paid and post-paid) taken in July and some bounce-back post the pandemic related headwinds in 1Q (first quarter)," it said.

The report forecast five per cent and four per cent quarter-on-quarter Ebitda (earnings before interest, taxes, depreciation and amortisation) growth for Jio and Bharti consolidated and anticipated that VIL and Indus could see flat Ebitda.

"With the relief package reducing the urgency around tariff hikes, we now build-in significant price increases only in 2H 2022 versus early 2022 previously," it said.

As per Jefferies' report, telcos Reliance Jio and Bharti may

post a 5-7 per cent sequential rise in revenue alongside a steady margin for the second quarter of FY22.

Bharti's growth will be led by segmented tariff hikes taken in the second quarter ended September, while Jio's growth will be driven by continued subscriber growth, it further said.

Credit Suisse, in its earnings preview note, said that 2Q FY22 is expected to mark higher subscriber churn and 4.5-6 per cent sequential average revenue per user (ARPU) growth for Airtel and VIL over actions on the minimum recharge plans and some recovery after the impact from the second wave of COVID-19 in the first quarter of FY22.



## SWARLIPI: A NEW WAY OF LEARNING MUSIC

AMITHA GHATTI

**H**ave you heard of an instrument called the "harmonium"? Have you watched someone play it? If yes, how often did you see someone playing it? The answer is definitely not as common as we've seen a guitar or a piano performance. Well, the humble harmonium is not very different from how a piano is played or sounds. While it is rare these days that we get to watch people play the harmonium, here's someone who is putting in efforts to change that. Meet Pranee Marathe, a music scholar who has developed a new age notion system structure in online learning modules for music. He developed something called a new 'swarlipi' that can be adopted while learning music online, and emphasises the need for structured and focussed learning modules.

The Pioneer got in touch with Marathe to understand this swarlipi, his classical music journey, and more.

He starts by sharing his opinion on both contemporary and Indian classical music: "Contemporary music and Indian classical music have a lot of similarities, as well as differences. Many music albums are based on classical music. If you have been trained in classical music, which gives a good introduction to music, it's easier to adapt to any contemporary kind thereon. Classical music has been scientifically proven to have medical effects for it being soothing, and calming. So in the end, after a long hectic, tiring day, it's only evitable that one turns to classical music. One, as an audience, may not even understand the technical nuances but what's soothing to ears can be soothing for the soul."

Marathe started his musical journey when he was 6. That's when he developed an interest in, and started learning harmonium, from his father who is his guru too. Soon, at the age of 12, he gave his debut concert and since then, started performing with many Indian classical music stalwarts in India, as well as abroad. Marathe says he was very fortunate to spend a lot of time with his father and those practical experiences where he accompanied his father was extremely valuable. "My father taught me the concept of

"*riyaz*", which is the most important thing if you want to pursue music. '*Riyaz karoge to raaj karoge*' which means 'you will rule if you practice'. These are some lessons that I will carry with me forever, and make sure that I will impart that knowledge to future generations as well."

Marathe performed at major concerts in Pune and other places, and also received a scholarship from the Ministry of Culture, the government of India, for his contributions to music with his harmonium. He also played an important role in Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, Pune, in creating a curriculum for music, crafting learning material as a harmonium faculty, and also served as an examiner on the esteemed panel.

On teaching and learning music, he says, "The first and foremost thing is to ensure that the student understands that learning any instrument cannot be a crash course. It's a journey of learning, exploring, and practicing from day one. Then we start with teaching the basics, commonly known as 'alankars or paltas', which contribute to strengthening the finger positioning techniques. Thereon, we begin with a raag, which includes its 'chalan', 'bandish compositions', 'aalapi', 'taans'."

He even provides his students with additional material to practice at home which enhances their understanding of the concept and raga. All this, when learning was an in-person process.

Later, due to the pandemic, when Marathe started teaching music online, it became difficult for teachers to train students because of the lack of required material already, with having to spend hours and hours writing notations of compositions, taking pictures of them, and sharing it with their students. The tools on the computer as the symbols in the script were not available. That is when he realised that a special font and software are needed to digitise the notation which requires specialised resources. While teaching at Gandharva Mahavidyalaya, he felt the need for

having a system that is easier to write, check and follow. When it comes to examining the students, he believes that one cannot use the traditional system online.

"As a music teacher and a performer, I always think of ways to make it easier for the students to learn and practice music, hence, developing a new notation system that is simple in this digital age was important, and I think, having played a significant role in the field of the harmonium as a teacher as well as the performer, helped this endeavour of mine," the artist tells us.

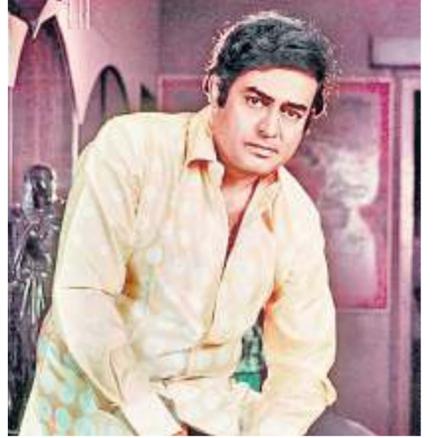
Technology has made a lot of things easier, and as a teacher, Marathe was able to give feedback easily after students asked their queries while learning online. He created new 'paltas' in different scales and ragas which help students in increasing their speed. Each module has specific goals with interactive tools online to teach.

There has been a drastic shift from the traditional 'guru shishya parampara' to the modern, much more practical way of learning. Also, unlike earlier times, people are more aware of the fact and choose to have two career options and not completely depend on music for their bread and butter, he observes. Music, in general, has been gaining more attention due to the various reality shows, glamour added to it, and that is bringing more people and making younger generations more interested in looking at it as a career. He says, "I would also like to say that the adaptability of the artists has increased. Earlier, every artist belonged to a specific gharana

and takes his/her training for years under one guru and style, but now, they are becoming more aware of various things, and are trying new things, looking outside the box."

On a concluding note, he says that a community works and succeeds on the principles like sharing, collaborating, and supporting.

Especially amongst harmonium players, everyone belongs to different gharanas, and majorly are accompanying singing artists, so it becomes even more important that there is a cultivation of ideas when they meet. Very few people are aware and have heard of harmonium solos like any other instrument. He feels that a harmonium artist can get more recognition once harmonium solos become more mainstream.



## How Sanjeev Kumar got his screen name!

**D**o you know why actor Sanjeev Kumar adopted his screen name?

While he himself thought his real name Harihar Jethalal Jariwala was not befitting for an aspiring actor, renowned director Kamal Amrohi suggested he should have a unique and impressive screen identity.

Actor-playwright Hanif Zaveri and insolvency lawyer Sumant Batra have come out with an authorised biography of the two-time National Award-winning actor titled *An Actor's Actor* in which they provide several such interesting anecdotes about him.

During his initial days, Jariwala would often say his name was "not befitting for an aspiring actor" and discuss with his friends the various possible names he could adopt.

"He decided that it should begin with the letter 'S', as his mother's name began with an 'S' (Shantaben), and should end with 'Kumar' as most actors' names ended with 'Kumar'. After a gruelling debate and discussion, the name 'Sanjay Kumar' received unanimous approval, and Hari was credited in both *Ramat Ramade Ram* and *Aao Pyar Karen* by this name," the book, published by Penguin Random House, says.

While Jariwala was shooting for *Nishan*, he met the versatile writer-producer-director Amrohi, who asked him to come over to Filmistan Studio Goregaon the following day to discuss two new films he was currently working on — *Aakhri Din Pehli Raat* and *Shankar Hussain* (1977).

Shankar Hussain was to be Jariwala's next project. "When Hari went to meet Amrohi he was told to do a screen test with a few difficult dialogues in Urdu. The ever-diligent Hari delivered the dialogues in four different ways. Thoroughly impressed with Hari's confidence, Amrohi suggested that Hari work with his assistant Baqar to fine-tune his Urdu," the authors say.

The hiccup with Jariwala's name came up again with Amrohi. The director told him that his name was not impressive enough for an actor and decided to change Jariwala's screen name to Gautam Rajvansh and Vidya Manjrekar's (who initially played the protagonist's sister and later played the lead) to Al-Saheba, the book says.

Both the actors accepted Amrohi's suggestion, and Jariwala refrained from telling him that he had already decided on Sanjay Kumar as his screen name, it says. "Unfortunately, a day before the shooting was to start, the lead actress withdrew from shooting. Extremely caught up with *Pakeezah* (1972), in which his wife Meena Kumari was playing a pivotal role, Amrohi shelved *Shankar Hussain* after just a few shots with Vidya as the new lead."

Both *Badal* and *Nishan* were on the floor when Sanjay Khan's superhit film *Dosti* (1964) released and he instantly became a household name. Jariwala was in a dilemma yet again, since two Sanjays could not rule the screen at the same time.

"Aspi Irani advised him to alter his name once again. Hari was reluctant because two of his films had already been released as Sanjay Kumar. However, *Aao Pyar Karen* focused on Joy Mukherjee, and *Ramat Ramade Ram* was a regional film. He decided to take his chances, and Sanjeev Kumar was born," the authors write.

Now that his name was fixed, the only other thing that needed fixing was his appearance. Jariwala put away his trademark kurta-pajama and bought a red T-shirt and a pair of white trousers for interviews with directors and producers.

The authors also mention how Jariwala knew his destiny was irrevocably tied to Indian cinema, but many hurdles stood between him and his goal. "Overcoming most of them required divine intervention, but some, like his voice, he believed he could work on."

According to his guide C H Intwala, Jariwala was worried about his "weak voice". Jariwala worked hard on his dialogue delivery, practising the same lines in various pitches and tones and modulating them with different hues of emotional intensity. Intwala would supervise his dialogue-reading sessions every evening.

"At the time, Hari had no idea that the voice he was striving to alter would one day help him carve a niche for himself in the world of cinema, and, later, would become a staple for mimicry artists, although they would find it near impossible to reproduce the various nuances that affected his tone," the book says.

The book has a foreword by actor-turned-politician Shatrughan Sinha.



## Debjani's motherly idea of love-at-first-sight

SHIKHA DUGGAL

**A** love story that brings to you a very relevant social cause to the forefront, *Ennemmo Janmala Bandham* premiering on Star Maa, will force you to stop and think! While the basic premise of falling in love post marriage is not new, television actress Debjani Modak will put a spin on the plot by making this heart-felt story about embracing motherhood her own. Who has said

that it is only applicable to be a mother only if you carry the child in your womb? The actress, along with the cast goes on to eradicate these non-conforming thoughts for all the Telugu audiences.

Having fertility issues isn't a crime! "The Telugu television industry is very new for me. I consciously wanted to take up this project, one for the theme that they are exploring and the other, to understand Telugu content. This one's a remake of the Hindi serial *Yeh Hai Mohabbatein* and we are hoping this one could be a very familiar story for all the urban audiences who can resonate with it. Conventional norms should go now and give way to pragmatic acceptance."

Debjani, who will be seen playing the role of a dentist, shares the serial's idea of love-at-first-sight. She talks about how her "love" in this show is a motherly one towards a child. Fulfilling the crisis from both ends in this new soap opera, you will see a new version of acknowledging interpersonal relationships. The actress highlights how it is not



the fault of any woman who can't conceive, so why judge? "I am sure this drama will not take any controversial route, instead it is so reflective. It will try changing the audience's minds. 'Attachment' is what the serial will thrive on. Despite not being able to conceive, women still have the right to feel motherhood. She may not be able to bear a child in her womb but she can still love it. Adoption can be another way of embarking on a journey of motherhood," adds the lead protagonist. Though Divyanka Tripathi has done a commendable job in playing 'Ishi Maa' in the Hindi version, Debjani tells us that she'll add her own style and not duplicate Divyanka. She wants to explore freshness!

Talking about the radical change in television content these days, she reflects, "Dealing with fertility issues is going to be

something new on Telugu television. It is creating something 'real' for the viewers, without blowing the trumpet of 'pattimpulu'. I have dealt with it personally, my pinni's daughter was unable to conceive. Her husband and in-laws knew it, but they never discriminated and by God's grace, she conceived nine years later, through surrogacy."

A good show often stands firm on good scripts and this holds true to the new serial! "Initially, I was apprehensive of playing the role. I needed validation from my director, I wanted to be sure he thought I would be an up-to-the-mark mother in the serial. He corrected me saying 'you are not the mother but have developed that attachment!' Even off-screen, I was able to build that bond with the child artist, despite the language barrier. It is going to be an engaging serial, worth the watch."



# CHHETRI CREDITS YOUNGSTERS

PTI ■ MALE

Talismanic skipper Sunil Chhetri played a pivotal role in India's eighth SAFF Championships title triumph by striking five goals but he credited the young brigade for team's victory.

The 37-year-old Chhetri, Indian football's torch bearer for the last 10 years, went past legendary Pele and equalled Lionel Messi when he scored the team's opener -- and his 80th goal -- against Nepal in the summit clash on Saturday.

"Look at the youngsters -- it feels good for all of them. It's all due to their hard work. We were here for 20 days till the final, staying on an island, riding the waves every day for practice sessions, and matches," Chhetri said in a release from All India Football Federation.

"We made it special as we were not so good in the first two games. It was tough from there to come up and play the way we did," added Chhetri after his third triumph in the SAFF Championship as a player.

Chhetri, who has won the regional tournament in 2011 and 2015 also, was referring to the draws against Bangladesh (1-1) and Sri Lanka (0-0) in the first two matches which had attracted criticism.

## SAFF CHAMPIONSHIPS TRIUMPH



"Didn't start like we should have, but ended exactly how we wanted. Proud of this bunch and the way we got things on track," he later said in a tweet.

Chhetri, who scored five out of India's eight goals, was all praise of the other two Indian goal getters on Saturday -- Suresh Singh and Sahal Abdul Samad.

Sahal, on his part, said it was an "unbelievable" moment and "a miracle."

"I don't know what hap-

pened inside the box. I came in for the last 4-5 minutes. My teammates have been working hard -- it all goes to them," he said. "But I just don't remember what happened inside the box. I got it and went in. This is an amazing feeling."

Head coach Igor Stimac, who was banned from the dugout in the summit clash after being red carded in the earlier league match against Maldives, let the players

take centrestage. "The boys have done it," he quipped.

Stimac became the third foreign coach after Jiri Pesek (1993) and Stephen Constantine (2015) to clinch the title with the Indian team.

The Blue Tigers dedicated the trophy to their two injured teammates -- Farukh Choudhary, and Brandon Fernandes, who weren't able to travel to the ground. With the title win, India extended their dom-

ination in the regional tournament. Saturday's final was the 12th for India in 13 editions.

The players leave for Bengaluru Sunday night from where they will join their respective clubs for the Indian Super League.

However, the U-23 players, including goalkeeper Moirangthem Dheeraj Singh, will stay back in Bengaluru for a couple of days before flying to Dubai for the AFC U-23 Qualifiers on October 20.

# BCCI invites application for head coach's post

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A couple of days after convincing former India captain Rahul Dravid to take up the responsibility, the BCCI on Sunday issued advertisement for the post of head coach and three support staff as per Lodha Committee mandated constitution.

It is a foregone conclusion that Dravid, who is currently heading the NCA and has been the guiding force behind the India A and U-19 programmes, is set to take over unless something miraculous happens.

Dravid has already informally agreed during his discussion with top BCCI officials in Dubai on the sidelines of IPL final.

However, the BCCI needs to have a Cricket Advisory Committee (CAC) in place and they will have to make a formal recommendation to the BCCI apex council, if one goes by the book. The last date of application for all posts is October 26. That is the reason the BCCI has now issued the advertisement for the head coach's post for a period of two years till 2023 ODI World Cup, along with positions for batting, bowling and fielding coaches.

Ravi Shastri, along with bowling coach Bharath Arun and fielding coach R Sridhar, will complete tenure at the end of India's T20 World Cup campaign next month. Batting coach Vikram Rathour, though he doesn't have any performance to show during his two-year tenure from 2019 till date, is expected to get an extension if he applies.

For the bowling coach's position, the long-standing India A and U-19 coach Paras Mhambrey, a trusted ally of Dravid, is expected to get the job. For the head coach's post, the incumbent will have to play either 30 Tests or 50



ODIs, along with experience of either coaching a national team for two years or any IPL team for three years. He will be in charge of team of support staff ranging between 14 to 16 people.

"The successful candidate will be responsible for developing a world class Indian cricket team which delivers sustained success in all conditions and formats, inspiring current and future generations of cricketers and stakeholders with their approach to the game," the advertisement stated.

The head coach will be responsible for reviewing, maintaining, and enforcing the disciplinary codes within the Indian men's team.

The BCCI also feels that the incumbent head coach "needs to demonstrate great organizational and tactical strengths and will be responsible for setting out and then executing short, medium and long term plans for the development of the Indian team."

Gambhir: Hardik should be picked only if he does proper bowling in warm-up games

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former India opener Gautam Gambhir is of the opinion that star all-rounder Hardik Pandya can be a part of the Virat Kohli-led team's playing XI in the T20 World Cup only if he is able to bowl at his best in the warm-up matches.

Hardik has not bowled regularly for India and his IPL side Mumbai Indians since returning after undergoing a back surgery in 2019.

Hardik was initially chosen in India's 15-member squad for the T20 World Cup as a batting all-rounder but as it became increasingly clear that he may not be able to bowl during the showpiece, the selectors brought in Shardul Thakur at the expense of Axar Patel to beef up the seam-bowling department.

"For me, Hardik Pandya gets into India's playing XI only if he does proper bowling in both warm-up games, not only in the nets. There is a huge difference between bowling in the nets and against quality batsmen like Babar Azam and that too in the World Cup," Gambhir said on Star Sports show Game Plan.

"He has to bowl in the practice matches and the nets, and he has to bowl 100 per cent. If you are thinking that you will come and bowl just at 115-120 kph, I will not take that risk," the World Cup-winning former opener added.

# OMAN BEAT PNG BY 10 WICKETS

PTI ■ AL AMERAT (OMAN)

Ludhiana-born Jatinder Singh smashed an unbeaten 73 as co-hosts Oman thrashed Papua New Guinea (PNG) by 10 wickets in the opening Group B first round match of the T20 World Cup here on Sunday.

Courtesy Jatinder's 42-ball-knock and his opening partner Aqib Ilyas's 50 not out off 43 balls, Oman chased down a modest 130-run target in only 13.2 overs.

None of the PNG bowlers could create any trouble for Jatinder and Aqib as they went about their

business in confident fashion from the onset.

While Jatinder had seven fours and four sixes in his knock, Aqib's innings was laced with five boundaries and one hit over the fence.

Very strong against slow bowlers, Jatinder would rock back and hit them er mid-wicket for sixes as he carried his form from the Qualifying tournament in 2019 where he was the highest run-getter for his adopted country.

Earlier, skipper Asad Vala struck a fine half-century before rival captain Zeeshan Maqsood returned with figures of 4/20 with his



slow left-arm orthodox which restricted PNG to 129/9.

"They were batting very well when I got the wickets. Because we got the wickets, they couldn't put on a big total. I just try to keep it tight and not give away loose balls. We knew the wicket was playing very well, we needed to make sure we didn't give away loose balls and easy boundaries," Maqsood, who was adjudged 'Player of the Match' said at the post-game presentation ceremony.

Sent into bat, PNG lost both their openers for no score before Vala smashed 56

off 43 balls with the help of four boundaries and three sixes while Charles Amini made 37 off 26 balls to stitch 81 runs for the third wicket.

But thereafter, PNG witnessed another batting collapse as they lost their next six wickets for just 37 runs.

Maqsood was certainly pick of the bowlers for Oman but medium pacers Bilal Khan (2/16) and Kallemlullah (2/19) also chipped in with a couple of wickets each.

Oman will play Bangladesh in their next Group B match on Tuesday, while PNG will also take on Scotland the same day.

# Neeraj records KO win

PTI ■ DUBAI

Indian professional boxer Neeraj Goyat notched up a Technical Knockout win over Congo's Beke Rico Tshibangu in the Amir Khan-supported Super Boxing League's Crypto Fight Night here.

Goyat notched up the win in the third round of his bout on Saturday night.

The triumph in the welterweight bout continued Goyat's three-year unbeaten streak in the circuit.

Goyat, after the fight, once again challenged Khan for a showdown.

Khan, when asked about it, did not give a definitive response.



"There have been talks in the media about the same and the fans, for them when this happens will definitely be exciting as this would be the hotly anticipated bout as per them," Khan, a former Olympic medalist, said.



# Decision on Dhoni's retention will be taken only after knowing rules: CSK

PTI ■ CHENNAI

A call on whether to retain Mahendra Singh Dhoni for the next season of the IPL will be taken only after knowing the rules of the system, a top Chennai Super Kings official said on Sunday.

The retention rules have not been laid down as yet and two more teams are set to be added in the 2022 edition.

"The rules of retention are not clear yet...We are not sure about the number of retentions that will be allowed. And a call on that will be made once the rules are known," the official told PTI when asked about the possibility of using a retention card to retain the talismanic Dhoni.

The iconic CSK skipper is the toast of the cricketing world after guiding the franchise to a fourth IPL title on Friday in Dubai.

Earlier, Dhoni had said that he would like to create a roadmap for the next 10 years for CSK.

The skipper had said that he hadn't decided how he would fit into the retention scheme of things.

"Again I've said it before, it depends on the BCCI. With two new teams coming in, we have to decide what is good for CSK," he had said after his team defeated Kolkata Knight Riders by 27 runs in the IPL final.

"It's not about me being there in the top-three or four. It's about making a strong core to ensure the franchise doesn't suffer. The core group, we have to have a hard look to see who can contribute for the next 10 years," he had said.

The CSK official also said any celebrations by the team would wait till the captain returns after finishing his role as a mentor with the Indian T20 World Cup team in the UAE.

# Do it for Virat: Raina's message to India's T20 WC players

PTI ■ DUBAI

Former India cricketer Suresh Raina says Virat Kohli deserves to draw the curtains on his T20 captaincy stint by winning the shortest format's World Cup in the UAE and Oman.

Kohli will step down from T20 captaincy after the World Cup and Raina said the talismanic batter deserves a befitting farewell from his teammates.

"For India, the message at the ICC Men's T20 World Cup is simple -- do it for Virat Kohli.

"It will probably be his last time at this tournament as captain, so it's very important for him to make everyone believe we can do it and for us to get behind him," Raina wrote in a column for ICC.

"India fans can't wait for the ICC Men's T20 World Cup 2021 to start for this reason. We have the players, we have the momentum - we just need to go out there and execute now."

Raina feels the Indian players featuring in the IPL in the UAE could help them during the World Cup.

"All of our players have just played the Indian Premier League in the UAE and they have played themselves into top form with eight or nine games in this environment.

"This gives India an edge on all other teams and makes them one of the big favourites to win the T20 World Cup in my opinion," he said.

"The conditions in UAE are



very similar to what we play India and also in Pakistan. It's a good opportunity for the Asian teams to come and play their natural game."

Raina believes the key to India's success in the tournament lies in the performance of top three batters.

"For me, the key to success for India's batting lies in the top three. Rohit Sharma is a gun player -- he has a brilliant record at ICC events in the past and had a great IPL.

"We need Rohit, KL Rahul and Virat to bat through to 15 overs and lay the platform. They can set the momentum for the India team by doing this," he said.

"There are lots of electric combinations in the middle order and obviously Rishabh Pant is

going to play a key role there. Hardik Pandya is also very capable as a power hitter."

"But if the top three are still there at that stage of the innings, there is no target that India can't chase," Raina added.

He believes mystery spinner Varun Chakravarthy is going to play a crucial role for India in the tournament, considering the slow nature of the pitches in the UAE.

"My experience in the IPL was that the wickets in UAE and Oman will be very, very challenging when it comes to the mystery spinners.

"That makes Varun Chakravarthy the main guy in the India bowling attack. He has showed he can exploit the pace of the pitches," Raina said.

# IOC supports concerns over FIFA's plans

IANS ■ LAUSANNE (SWITZERLAND)

The international football federation, FIFA's plans to hold its flagship Men's World Cup every two years has raised heckles in the clubs' circuit. The plan to switch the Men's World Cup from a quadrennial schedule to a biennial is now causing concerns among other international federations too.

On Saturday, the Executive Board (EB) of the International Olympic Committee (IOC) took note of FIFA's plans to change the football competition schedule and to hold the World Cup every two years and supported the calls for wider consultation. It has also shared its concerns over these plans.

"A number of International Federations (IFs) of other sports, national football federations, clubs, players, players associations and coaches have expressed strong reservations and concerns regarding the plans to generate more revenue for FIFA," the IOC said in a release.

Their concerns are mainly due to this move's impact on



other sports as the increased frequency and timing for the World Cup would create a clash with other major international sports. This includes tennis, cycling, golf, gymnastics, swimming, athletics,

Formula 1, and many others. "This would undermine the diversity and development of sports other than football," the IOC said in a release after the EB meeting. It will also have an impact

on the principle of gender equality in FIFA as the increases in men's events in the calendar would create challenges for the further promotion of women's football.

The increased frequency of the World Cup will also impact players' welfare as the plans, in particular, the doubling in the frequency of the World Cup would create a further massive strain on the physical and mental health of the players, the IOC release noted.

"The IOC shares these concerns and supports the calls of stakeholders of football, International Sports Federations, and major event organisers for a wider consultation, including with athletes' representatives, which has obviously not taken place," the release said.

FIFA president Gianni Infantino's plans regarding the frequency of the Men's World Cup have been opposed by the Continental federations for Europe (UEFA) and South and Central Americas. The Asian and African confederations have supported the move.

# Shafali, Radha shine in Sydney Sixers win in WBBL



PTI ■ HOBART

India's Shafali Verma struck a half-century and Radha Yadav scalped two batters in Sydney Sixers' five-wicket win in the Women's Big Bash League but Poonam Yadav's effort did not yield a desired result as her team Brisbane Heat lost its match on Sunday.

Young opener Shafali struck 57 off 50 balls with six hits to the fence in Sixers' successful run chase against Hobart Hurricanes, who made 125 for nine.

Apart from Shafali's knock, Sixers skipper Ellyse Perry hit 27 runs off 33 balls as they reached 129 for five in 19.3 overs.

Left-arm spinner Radha got rid of compatriot Richa Ghosh (46 of 46) and Sasha Moloney (22 off 16 balls) to help Sixers restrict Hurricane to a modest total.

In another match, leg-spinner Poonam dismissed experienced Beth Mooney (40) and Heather Graham (6) to help Brisbane Heat restrict Perth Scorchers to 137 for seven after inviting them to bat first.

Keerthy Suresh's promising line-up of films



## 'MEB addressed marital issues that were long-pending'

K RAMYA SREE

**P**resented by Mega producer Allu Arvind, Akhil Akkineni and Pooja Hegde's recently released *Most Eligible Bachelor* opened to a positive response, giving Akhil the much-needed hit.

Co-produced by Bunny Vasu and Vasu Verma, *MEB* managed to get into the list of successful films of the year. Bommarillu Bhaskar, the director of the film, opens up on what went into making the film, his journey, and more.

The director is known to bring reality to the screen. All his films are based on what he observes in real life and so is *MEB*. Bommarillu remains to be the director's most successful film. The father's character in the film, played by Prakash Raj, is something one can never forget. When asked if he took inspiration from his father to pen that character, he says, "After *Bommarillu*, everyone asked if my father too was a strict man and if I took my character's inspiration from him, but my father, although a school's headmaster, gave us all the freedom we needed. So no, it wasn't inspired by him."

He further shares, "I grew up mostly in my friend's house. The real incidents that took place there were taken

into *Bommarillu*."

The director has been making family-oriented films in his 15-year-old professional life. When asked why, he shares, "I grew up with my cousins and not friends. That's why I have more family-oriented films than ones with friends or other stories."

He says he never takes any tension when there's a gap between each of his films. "I want to convey a story and I want my audience to relate to my story. Every movie I make should give happiness. I feel successful when I see the smiles on the faces of all my producers and I am happy to see the smiling faces of all those around me," he shares.

In the case of *Most Eligible Bachelor*, he shares, "I want to discuss the qualifications we need for a successful marriage. Every wedding is full of celebrations, but no one has clarity on how to survive post that. We do not know the dynamics of it. I want to say this with an interesting point, with my limitations, with my funny layer on freedom, so we decided to make this movie as a light-hearted one."

"When we want to tell someone the only emotion we have, we can not describe the pain we feel, if they do not come at the right time. In the film, we show how painful that suffering can get," he adds.

The director cannot stop

speaking about *Bommarillu*, the biggest hit in his life. For him, the film gave him many lessons to take home. He says it gave him the energy to technically be a writer.

People who follow Bhaskar's work clearly know the importance he gives to music in his films.

For example — the *Leharayi* song from *MEB*, which is creating ripples in the industry.

Talking about his love for music, he shares, "I like music very much. Gopi Sundar gave wonderful music for *MEB*. I enjoy music in my movies. I select songs that are apt for the situation. I want the audience to enjoy even those five minutes."

"I was very happy to hear that all the youth who watched this movie found that what this film talks about, needed to be addressed. Many, in fact, called me up to appreciate the story," said Bhaskar on a concluding note, adding he still has some stories up his sleeve, to be told, and that he will soon reveal the details of his next stories.



## Thaman felicitates folk singer Mogulaiah



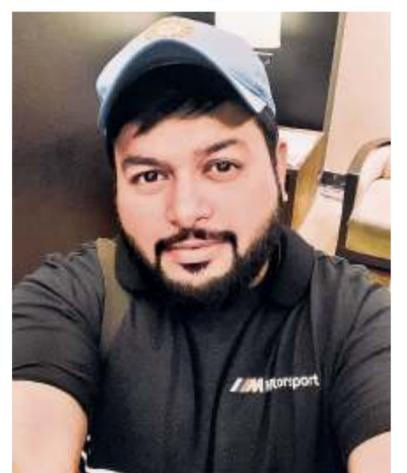
**T**haman, who has been delivering multiple chartbusters and musical hits in recent

times, seems to be on a high with such good numbers. His recent composition for Pawan Kalyan and Rana Daggubati's upcoming movie *Bheemla Nayak* is a musical sensation, with the song being an instant hit.

Thaman, who recently appeared for Star Maa's 'Parivaar Awards', had felicitated folk singer — Mogulaiah, who crooned the super hit *Bheemla Naya* title song. Offering him a shawl and a bouquet at the gala event, Thaman also expressed that he has been blessed to have Mogulaiah on board for such an iconic song. "The song *Bheemla Nayak* is still making

ed over a cheque of Rs 2 lakh rupees by Pawan Kalyan. It is not a small thing that a folk singer receives such recognition and is identified by noted musicians. Mogulaiah is known for playing Telangana's rare and special musical instrument — Kinnera — and he signs well.

Meanwhile, the second song titled *Anthaa Ishtam* from *Bheemla Nayak*, sung by K.S. Chitra, was released only a couple of days ago. The song has been receiving millions of views on YouTube and social media.



Pinisetty playing the male lead, and Jagapathi Babu will be seen in a crucial role as her coach.

The film boasts proudly of a female-dominated crew, lead by co-producer Shravya Varma.

In the new poster, Keerthy Suresh is seen winking one eye to shift her complete focus, as she is ready to shoot the target with her gun, all this, while she places her other hand on her hip. The poster shows Keerthy Suresh as a village belle. The actress will be seen as a shooter in the sports rom-com.

The makers, through the poster, have also announced to release of *Good Luck Sakhi* to be in November. Directed by Nagesh Kukunoor, *Good Luck Sakhi* is a multi-lingual film made simultaneously in Telugu, Tamil, and Malayalam languages. Popular producer Dil Raju is presenting the film while Sudheer Chandra Padiri is producing it on Worth A Shot Motion Arts banner.

Rockstar Devi Sri Prasad has scored music while Chirantan Das has cranked the camera.

**S**uperstar Mahesh Babu's much-awaited flick *Sarkaru Vaari Paata*'s new shooting schedule began recently in Spain. Along with Mahesh Babu and the film's lead actress Keerthy Suresh, other prominent members of the cast too are part of the ongoing schedule.

On the occasion of Keerthy Suresh's birthday on Sunday, the makers released a "second shade" of the actress from the film. Keerthy, who appeared in a saree and ethnic wear in the film's blaster, looks super stylish in the poster. Draped in a bodycon dress paired with a denim jacket, Keerthy flashes a delightful smile.

*Sarkaru Vaari Paata* is jointly produced by Naveen Yerneni, Y. Ravi Shankar, Ram Achanta, and Gopichand Achanta under Mythri Movie Makers, GMB Entertainment, and 14 Reels Plus banners.

Music sensation Thaman SS renders soundtracks for the film, while R Madhi is the cinematographer. Marthand K Venkatesh is the editor, while AS Prakash is the art director.

*Sarkaru Vaari Paata* is scheduled for release on January 13, 2022.

Meanwhile, the makers of the actress' next, the woman-centric film *Good Luck Sakhi*, unveiled a new poster on her birthday. The film has Aadhi



## 'Natyam is more than just Bharatanatyam'

K RAMYA SREE

**A**ctress-dancer Sandhya Raju has been in the news for quite some time now, for her upcoming film *Natyam*.

*Natyam* is a self-produced film starring Sandhya Raju as a famous dancer. The film, directed by Rewanth Koru konda and produced under the banner of Nishrinkala Film, will be released on October 22. The pre-release event of this dance-themed film was a great success with the who's who of Tollywood gracing the event. It turned out even special with Mega power star Ram Charan coming out in

support of the film.

Senior actress Bhanupriya will also be seen in a pivotal role in the film.

Ram Charan, who saw the film earlier, is sure *Natyam* will be a success. He says, "Even though our films are late, fans are always looking forward to it. I want our industry to regain its former glory. I did not come here because our family knows Sandhya Raju. I watched the movie earlier. I enjoyed every minute of the film. It manages to entertain, as well as inform. I appreciate Revanth for making such a film."

Heaping praises for Sandhya Raju, the actor says, "If 20 of us make a movie together, here only one woman can make a movie like this. We are going to see what female power means with this movie. I want a producer and director to come out successful after this movie. I know how hard it is to make films as a producer. We have to watch this movie for the will of Sandhya Raju *garu*."

Urging people to go to the theatres to watch films, he says, "We are going to restaurants and bars, let's also go to the theaters, and give back the great revenue the theaters deserve. This film is not just about Bharatanatyam, it contains all kinds of emotions. You must watch this movie for that," concluded Charan.

## Sai Dharam Tej's recovery, wedding news go hand in hand

**T**elugu actor Sai Dharam Tej, who was hospitalised

after his bike accident, has been recovering quite well. Reports suggest that Sai Dharam has been discharged, and is currently residing at his residence.

While the actor celebrated his birthday a couple of days ago, his cousins - Allu Sirish, Niharika Konidela, Sreeja, Varun Tej, and others had extended their warm wishes on their respective social media profiles.

Niharika Konidela also posted a video with a message wishing Sai Dharam on his birthday. Allu Sirish's post wishing Sai Dharam sparked a rumour on Sai Dharam Tej's marriage.

Allu Sirish wrote, "I really hope this is your last birthday as a single man and soon you will come up with your wedding news."

This message has triggered rumours that Sai Dharam Tej is to get married soon, as per his family's wish to start a family.

It is reported that Sai Dharam Tej's family, especially his mother wants him to get married, and start a family as soon as possible. Post Sai Dharam Tej's accident, his family seems to be dealing with that trauma, for a while now.

Sai Dharam is currently undergoing physiotherapy and recovering from a brutal accident, that could have gotten worse. In his recent post, Sai Dharam mentioned that he is healing quite well, and thanked everyone for their prayers. Sai Dharam Tej's recent movie *Republic* attracted praises from all and did well at the box office. He would start shooting for his upcoming movies after he recovers fully.

