

ANALYSIS 7
GERMANY EXPECTS NEW
CHANCELLOR BY XMAS

MONEY 8
PROTECTION OF CUSTOMER INTEREST
NON-NEGOTIABLE: DY GUV OF RBI

SPORTS 11
SINDHU LOSES
IN QUARTERS

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



the pioneer



'PRABHAS NAMA'

Page 12

www.dailypioneer.com

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

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

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

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

JHARKHAD HIGH COURT RAPS CBI IN DHANBAD JUDGE MURDER CASE

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

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

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

Naidu roots for Prez rule in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday urged the Central government to put an end to law and order failures, financial bankruptcy and economic collapse of Andhra Pradesh by imposing President's Rule in the State. Naidu said that the State-sponsored terrorism of the Jagannathan Reddy regime would come to an end only when Article 356 was invoked in AP. The Centre should consider this since the TDP has made this demand for the first time though it was against President's Rule in principle.

The TDP chief concluded his 36-hour 'Deeksha' against the YSRCP government's terrorism at 8 pm on Friday.

On the occasion, Naidu said that the Jagannathan Reddy regime has made targeted attacks on all sections from the Opposition TDP leaders to the common public, employees, farmers and constitutional institutions like courts and election commission.

Naidu demanded that a CBI inquiry be ordered into the latest attack on the TDP main office in Mangalagiri which was like a temple for over 70 lakh devoted



activists of the party. Naidu asked why the YSRCP government was complacent without taking any action against the rising ganja and drug menace in the State. The value of seized heroin at Mundra port was estimated to be Rs 21,000 crore and it was being smuggled by a Vijayawada-based firm. Over Rs 8,000 crore worth of ganja was being cultivated in 25,000 acres in the Paderu Agency area. The AP government was not telling the people what action it was taking

against this. The TDP chief said that CM Jagannathan Reddy began his destruction of the State with Praja Vedika. Unsparing attacks were launched on Amaravati Capital City, Polavaram and all development work. Jagannathan Reddy did not think at all before saying that his followers' blood pressure rose up because of TDP comments against him. Jagannathan Reddy government's terrorism was evident from how he dealt with the Vivekananda Reddy murder case.

TDP chief's 'deeksha' a farce, says Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government advisor (Public Affairs), Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy termed TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu's 36-hour-long 'deeksha' a farce.

Talking to reporters on Friday, Ramakrishna Reddy wondered how a 72-year-old diabetic patient Naidu who claimed to have been on the hunger strike for 36 hours survived on just half-a-litre of water as reported by a section of media could talk for more than an hour.

Inspired by awareness drive, tribals destroy ganja crop

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Following strict police and excise raids and a series of awareness programmes to stop ganja cultivation, some tribals from hamlets in G K Veedhi mandal in the Agency voluntarily destroyed the ganja crop on Friday.

As ganja harvest is to be held in November and December, the police, excise, revenue and other department officials have intensified checks in the Agency. Meanwhile, the officials asked village volunteers and panchayat department staff to educate the tribals on the punishments for ganja cultivation. The officials had informed the tribals, during the awareness programmes, that if anyone was caught cultivating ganja, the government would deny the benefits of various welfare schemes to their families.



It is learnt that ganja is being cultivated on over 10,000 acres in the dense forests, particularly on the Andhra-Odisha border. Tribals from four hamlets that come under G K Veedhi mandal destroyed the crop on Friday. Field-level staff shot

the videos and published them on social media.

The tribals also said that they wanted to stop ganja cultivation. They have promised that they would not start the cultivation again.

CBI arrests six in AP for derogatory posts against judiciary

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Friday arrested six persons in connection with its probe into alleged derogatory social media posts against the members of higher judiciary, officials said.

The central agency had registered a case on November 11 last year against 16 people, taking over 12 FIRs on the orders of Andhra Pradesh High Court, they said. The CBI took into custody Sridhar Reddy Avuthu, Jalagam Venkata Satyanarayana, Guda Sridhar Reddy, Sreenath Suswaram, Kishore Kumar Darisa alias Kishore Reddy Darisa and Sudduluri Ajay Amruth.

"It was alleged that the key personnel occupying posts of promi-



nence in the State of Andhra Pradesh, by intentionally targeting the Judiciary, made derogatory posts on social media platform against Honourable Judges and Judiciary following some Court verdicts delivered by the Judges of High Court of Andhra Pradesh," CBI spokesperson RC Joshi said.

NIA nabs 8 terror operatives during multiple raids in J&K

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Eight operatives of various proscribed terror organisations were arrested Friday during multiple searches spread across six districts of Jammu and Kashmir in connection with a terrorism conspiracy case, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said.

The searches were carried out at 10 locations in Srinagar, Kulgam, Shopian, Pulwama, Anantnag and Baramulla districts, which also led to the seizure of electronic devices and incriminating 'Jihadi' (holy war) documents and posters, an agency official said.

With this, a total of 21 accused people have been arrested in connection with the terrorism conspiracy case which was registered on October 10.

The official identified the arrested persons as Adil Ahmad War, Manan Gulzar Dar, Sobhia and Zamin Adil of Srinagar, Hilar Ahmad Dar and Shaqib Bashir of Kupwara, Rouf Bhatt of Anantnag and Haris Nisar Langoo.

"The eight accused persons arrested are terror operatives of various proscribed terrorist organisations and have been instrumental in providing logistical and material support to terrorists," the NIA official said.

KRMB violating Bachawat Award, alleges Telangana

ML MELLY MAITREYI ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State government has conveyed its strong objection to the guidelines formulated by the Krishna Water Management Board for taking over of Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects and their maintenance, saying that they are in violation of Krishna Water Dispute Tribunal-I (Bachawat) Award.

Telangana Irrigation Department Special Chief Secretary Rajat Kumar wrote to



KRMB Chairman MP Singh seeking revision of these guidelines.

Onion prices not 'extraordinarily high': Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retail onion prices are not "extraordinarily high" to necessitate banning export of the key kitchen staple and buffer stocks are being released to cool down the prices further, Union Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Friday. State governments are of the opinion that there is no possibility

of sharp increase in onion prices in the coming days as domestic kharif onion production is estimated to be higher at 43.88 lakh tonne in the 2021-22 crop year (July-June) as against 37.38 lakh tonne in the year-ago period, he said.

Pandey said the average onion price was ruling at Rs 41.5 per kg on October 21, much lower than Rs 55.6 per kg in the year-ago period.

As per the government data, retail prices were ruling at Rs 48/kg in Delhi, Rs 43/kg in Mumbai, Rs 37/kg in Chennai and Rs 57/kg in Kolkata on Friday.

Addressing the media, the Food Secretary said: "Onion prices are not extraordinarily high. The average prices are lower than last year."

Asked about plans to ban onion exports, the Secretary said, "There

is no such scenario. Exports are lower than last year. It is better to monitor than speculate."

Market intervention has already been initiated to check prices of onion, but the rates have not reached anywhere close to the level that necessitates further immediate action as per the Essential Commodities Act, he said.

Prioritise cleanliness, CM tells officials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister Y S Jagannathan Reddy has directed the officials to give priority to cleanliness in villages, towns and cities.

During a review meeting held at the camp office on Clean Andhra Pradesh (CLAP) here on Friday, the Chief Minister directed the officials to adopt best practices in the disposal of wastes that are harmful to the environment and the people and to use the latest technologies in this regard.

He instructed the officials to ensure that the vehicles allotted to Grade 2 and 3 Nagara panchayats reach the respective cities, towns, Nagara Panchayats and Panchayats. He asked them to get electric vehicles very soon and hold discussions with the company representatives concerned.

The Chief Minister also directed the officials to take appropriate



measures to prevent any trouble from garbage transfer stations to nearby houses in towns and cities. He ordered measures to remove garbage regularly and ensure that there is no stench.

The officials informed the Chief Minister that a power plant that can generate electricity from waste is ready in Guntur. The CM asked the officials to focus on setting up these

plants in the proposed areas.

The officials were also directed to focus on the maintenance of toilets and to ensure that they are clean. Dustbins should be set up in the villages. Tests should be conducted to identify water and air pollution through Village Clinics and appropriate follow-up measures should be taken.

He told them to clean drinking

The officials were also directed to focus on the maintenance of toilets and to ensure that they are clean.

water tanks regularly, focus on the measures to be taken to prevent the spread of diseases and maintenance of sewers. Sewage treatment plants should be set up at required locations and it should be ensured that sewage water is not stored in residential areas. The Chief Minister directed the officials to appoint efficient officers in the command control room overseeing the implementation of CLAP programmes and ensure that they respond to the complaints regularly and take appropriate measures.

BJP taking TDP support to win by-poll: Kakani

India remains steadfast partner in global efforts to combat Covid: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday thanked a host of world leaders for their wishes to India on crossing the 100-crore vaccine doses milestone and underlined that the country remains a steadfast partner in global efforts towards fighting the Covid pandemic.

Wishes continued to pour in for India from various heads of state and government a day after the cumulative COVID-19 vaccine doses administered in the country surpassed the 100-crore milestone.

"Congratulations to my friend

@narendramodi and his government for administering 1 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. A huge achievement," Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison said on Twitter.

India and Australia are working side by side in the Quad grouping to expand vaccine access across the Indo-Pacific, he said.

Responding to Morrison, Modi tweeted, "Thank you, my friend @ScottMorrisonMP for your wishes on India achieving #VaccineCentury. And, congratulations to you for achieving high vaccination target in Australia."

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Ashwin & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Tritiya 27:01
Nakshatram : Kritika 21:53
Time to Avoid : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam : 9:07 am - 10:33 am
Yamagandam : 1:26 pm - 2:52 pm
Varjyam : 8:24 am - 10:12 am
Gulika : 6:14 am - 7:41 am
Good Time : (to start any important work)
Amritakalam : 7:11 pm - 8:59 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham : 11:37 am - 12:23 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Scattered thunderstorms
Temp: 33/24
Humidity: 66%
Sunrise: 6:10 am
Sunset: 05:50 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated OCTOBER 22, 2021 5:00 PM

TDP activists express solidarity with Naidu

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leaders and workers from different parts of Andhra Pradesh were pouring at the Mangalagiri party headquarters where party president N. Chandrababu Naidu continued his sit-in on Friday to protest Tuesday's attacks allegedly by the workers of ruling YSR Congress Party (YSRCP).

A large number of party supporters from various parts of the State descended on the party's central office to express solidarity with their leader.

TDP leaders alleged that due to the traffic restrictions imposed by police, those coming from other parts of the State were being forced to leave their vehicles and walk long distances to reach the



party office.

Naidu, who began the 36-hour protest at 8 a.m. on Thursday, spent the night at the protest site and resumed it on Friday morning after garlanding the statue of party founder and former chief minister N.T.

Rama Rao. The protest with the title 'fight against state terrorism' will continue till 8 p.m. on Friday.

TDP leaders and workers coming to the party office were gathering in front of Naidu sitting on a specially

arranged sofa. The TDP chief was responding with folded hands. Party leaders were addressing the gathering to condemn the attacks on party offices and leaders.

Naidu has demanded the Centre's intervention to save the people of Andhra Pradesh from what he called the drug mafia and the undemocratic and fascist regime.

The leader of opposition has urged the Centre to invoke Article 356, saying Andhra Pradesh in its present situation was a fit case for imposition of the President's rule. He alleged that Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy was growing impatient over the increasing public resentment against his government's atrocities, all round corruption and attacks on all consti-

tutional institutions. Tuesday's attack on TDP's main office was not a sporadic, isolated incident but a culmination of two-and-a-half years of a lawless, anarchic and oppressive regime, he said.

Alleged workers of YSRCP attacked TDP's central office on Tuesday in an apparent reaction to TDP spokesman Pattabhi Ram using abusive words while criticising Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy.

TDP offices in some other places in the state and Pattabhi Ram's house in Vijayawada were also attacked.

Ram was arrested by the police on Wednesday and a court in Vijayawada sent him to judicial custody for 14 days.

'Highly qualified' digital assistants seek fair deal

SNV SUDHIR
■ VIJAYAWADA

Highly qualified digital assistants, who have been working in the newly established Village/Ward secretariats, say they are disappointed and depressed with the nature of work they are being assigned and are now looking at Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for a solution to their ordeal. There are Ph.D. holders, Masters, and B Tech graduates including diploma holders among these digital assistants.

As part of the newly-introduced village/ward secretariat system for every 2,000 households, the government had recruited the staff along with Panchayat Secretary - Grade VI-Digital Assistants.

Under GO Ms No.148, issued on September 27, 2019, an amendment was made to Rule 2, AP Panchayat Raj subordinate service rules, 2010 by creating Class - A Supervisory Posts after category (5) Panchayat Secretary - Grade V, Panchayat Secretary - Grade VI (Digital Assistant), added to Grama Sachivalayam System to be village functionaries to service.

"We joined this job expecting it to be a technical post by looking at the entrance exam syllabus. Unfortunately, every department has utilised our services mainly as data entry operators though we are highly qualified persons. We are deeply upset with it. We are used by the department for data entry work. We are very much concerned about our future," said a digital assistant who pleaded anonymity.

The digital assistants said they wrote technical entrance



exams with engineering syllabus. Everyone expected this as a technical job because the notification did not have a job description.

"After joining, Panchayat Secretary - Grade VI Digital Assistants are used as only as data entry operators. If the job title is 'data entry operator', none of us would have applied for the post. Many of us left private jobs with Rs 50,000 to Rs 1 lakh to enter the government sector, to join as digital assistants without knowing the job chart. Many of us have lost a bright future," said another digital assistant.

An analysis of the qualification of these digital assistants shows that 5 pc of them hold Ph.D. degrees while 30 pc have M Tech, 50 pc B.Tech, 5 pc Diploma and 10 pc MCA / BCA/ MSC/ BSC qualifications. Overall, engineering graduates are 90 pc and technical graduates are 10 pc among them.

They are now seeking the Chief Minister's intervention to change their designation with a technical name and also 100 pc promotion avenues in any technical department. They said that as per the job chart, Panchayat

Secretary Gr VI (Digital Assistant) needs to work as database manager, IT manager, a technician for gadgets, receptionist, service provider, customer support executive, promoter, a clerk for 20 to 30 office registers and files, postal dispatcher, software maintenance, data collector, data entry operator for websites, Mee Seva provider, CSC service provider, grievance register, workflow manager, and obedient to the competent authority.

"Around 17 to 20 job roles are combined for a single job-holder. We are treated as service providers for 535 services, data entry operator for websites, receptionist, a technician for gadgets, office assistant to all and clerk for 20 office file maintenance employees. We are mostly used as slaves for every typing work by all departments. The current promotional scope is only 30 pc for Panchayat Secretary Grade VI. We request the government to provide promotion within three years with a pay scale equal to that of Panchayat Secretary Grade 5 or AE (Electrical) after probation," said another digital secretary.

KRMB violating Bachawat Award, alleges Telangana...

Continued from Page 1

The KRMB formulated the operational protocols for the Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects and forwarded them to the Telangana government for implementing the gazette notification issued by the Centre.

The Telangana government constituted a committee of experts to examine the proposals sent by the KRMB. The panel gave its opinion that the KRMB guidelines for operation and maintenance of Srisailem and Nagarjuna Sagar projects were not in line with the Bachawat Award.

"We are baffled that the KRMB took the liberty of violating the Bachawat Award. It's clearly a case of travesty of justice," officials said.

The KWDT-I (Bachawat Award) stipulates that only power generation should be taken up in the Srisailem hydro-electric project without

diversion of water to another basin. Neither the KRMB nor the Union Ministry of Water Resources have any powers to interfere in the provisions of Bachawat Award, the letter said.

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

Andhra Pradesh has been diverting Srisailem water from Pothireddypadu Head Regulator, Handri-Neeva Sujala Sravanthi to outside the Krishna basin despite

objections from Telangana and it was now trying to regularise that illegal diversion, the letter said.

There is no catchment area for Nagarjuna Sagar and water from Srisailem is released to fill NSP which would meet the requirements of agriculture, industry and drinking water requirements of both the States. Srisailem is the only water source for NSP and both the projects should have an integrated Rule Curve. As per the Award, the two reservoirs should have stipulations for the carry over storage in the Rule Curves, Rajat Kumar said in his letter.

The gazette notification in principle came into effect from October 14 but unless the Telangana government formally agrees and issues a GO handing over the projects, the Board cannot take them over.

In the meantime, the Board said that it would consider this

as a transition period and would be focusing on capacity building and other aspects.

The KRMB earlier received complaints from both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh regarding utilisation of Krishna waters. While AP complained about power generation from Srisailem, Telangana clarified many a time that Srisailem was basically a hydro-electric power station and Rule Curves in respect of Srisailem reservoir restrict consumptive use by AP only to 34 tmc ft which is the maximum drawal that could be permitted as per inter-State agreement and Planning Commission's approval, Rajat Kumar reiterated in his letter.

Telangana has been representing the Centre and Apex Council for re-allocation of Krishna waters between the two States in 50:50 ratio instead of the present 66:34 between AP and Telangana.

NIA nabs 8 terror operatives during multiple raids in J&K...

Continued from Page 1

He said the case relates to the conspiracy for undertaking violent terrorist acts in J&K and other major cities by cadres of proscribed terrorist organisations Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM), Hizb-ul-Mujahideen (HM), Al Badr and their affiliates such as the Resistance Front (TRF) and People Against Fascist Forces (PAFF).

"Further investigation in the case continues," the NIA said.

On October 13, the NIA said nine terror associates were arrested during two days of searches at 18 locations in different districts of Kashmir following the registration of the case.

Four more suspected persons were arrested during searches at 11 locations in the valley on October 20.

TDP chief's 'deeksha' a farce, says Sajjala...

Continued from Page 1

He also said that in his speech Naidu, instead of talking about the actual cause cuss word used by his party leader against the Chief Minister that led to the present unrest and commotion in the State, had talked all and sundry.

Ramakrishna Reddy also found fault with the language used by the TDP leaders at the Deeksha while Naidu was wearing a Gandhi garland that denoted peace. The YSRCP senior leader said that ganja cultivation had been thriving in Vizag region for ages and it was the present government under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had taken a tough stance against such cultivation since the last two years by setting up SEB.

He wondered how the ganja cultivation took place in the last two years when the entire moment was restricted for almost more than one-and-a-half years due to Covid induced situation. However, he



said a specially formed SEB had seized at least more than 3 lakh kilos of ganja from the perpetrators in the last two years which has been the highest seizure in the history of Andhra Pradesh. He said that it was during Naidu's regime that ganja cultivation thrived in the State and TDP leaders were actively involved in it.

He also slammed Naidu for still backing up the cuss word used by his party leader Kommarreddy Pattabhiram. He said that TDP does not deserve to be a political party.

The general election is still three years away, but

Chandrababu Naidu is asking for President Rule by misinterpreting law and order issues. He said that Chandrababu Naidu is acting as if he couldn't stay without power, although he worked as Chief Minister for 14 years.

Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy also slammed the TDP chief for setting an agenda to spread lies on ganja cultivation in order to create a law and order problem in the state. He urged the central leaders not to fall for the false propaganda of TDP against the state government and asserted that YSRCP will strongly counter it



CBI arrests six in AP for derogatory posts against...

Continued from Page 1

The agency is using available channels such as MLAT (mutual legal assistance treaty), INTERPOL to collect evidence from abroad, he said.

"During investigation, CBI had earlier arrested five accused and also filed five separate chargesheets against them. Investigation is continuing," he said.

The CBI also got a lot of objectionable posts removed from the social media platforms, public domains, he said.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹235
Without Skin	₹255
Broiler at Farm	₹129

EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	405
HYDERABAD	428
VISAKHAPATNAM	470

RETAIL PRICE ₹4.05

India remains steadfast partner in global...

Continued from Page 1

Mauritian Premier Pravind Jugnauth also congratulated India and Prime Minister Modi on attaining the 1-billion vaccination mark, saying that his country commends India's leadership in pandemic response efforts.

"Thank you for choosing Mauritius as one of the first recipients under the Vaccine Maitri Programme," he said.

In response, Modi tweeted, "Thank you PM @JugnauthKumar for your

kind words. Our two countries are making rapid strides in our respective vaccination programme and fight against COVID-19."

Modi also expressed confidence that the close partnership between the two countries will continue to grow.

Maldivian Foreign Minister Abdulla Shahid said taking "281 days to get 1 billion vaccinated" is indeed spectacular.

"Congratulations to the people of India and Prime Minister @narendramodi for this outstanding achieve-

ment. This only gives hope that we can get the world vaccinated," he said.

"Thank You Mr. @abdulla_shahid for your warm words of encouragement. You can always count on India's support for your #PresidencyofHope in tackling this pandemic. India stands together with the UN in achieving vaccine equity and ensuring vaccine accessibility," Modi said.

Prime Minister of Saint Kitts and Nevis Timothy Harris congratulated India on the

major achievement of administering 100 crore vaccination doses and said it is a "significant landmark".

"Thank you @pmharriskn for your kind words. We continue to remain committed in our fight against COVID-19," Modi said.

Dominican Prime Minister Roosevelt Skerrit congratulated Modi for leading India into a massive vaccination campaign and successfully administering over 1 billion doses of the COVID-19 vaccines.

Poor roads: Ride to school hazardous for kids

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

SaveLIFE Foundation in collaboration with Mercedes-Benz Research and Development India (MBRDI) today announced findings from its new study titled 'National Study on Safe Commute to School'. The study reviews the existing status of school transport together with bringing out the challenges and areas of improvement.

The study conducted after the outbreak of the Covid pandemic, analyses responses from 11,845 respondents, including 5,711 children (of classes 6-12) and 6,134 parents with children in classes 1-12) across 14 cities in India with the intent of gathering insights across age-groups and geographies to inform how we can improve the road safety of children while they commute to school. The

cities surveyed include Ahmedabad, Bengaluru, Bhopal, Chennai, Delhi, Jaipur, Jamshedpur, Kanpur, Kolkata, Lucknow, Mumbai, Patna, Pune, and Vijayawada. "Safety is a seminal part of the Mercedes-Benz's philosophy. At MBRDI, our endeavour is to create awareness in making the roads safer for everyone in our community. With our global initiative MobileKids, which has been running for four years now here in India, shows our commitment to enhance road safety for children and thus provide valuable educational work," said Manu Saale, Managing Director and CEO, MBRDI. "The findings from this study show unequivocally the raising need for road safety in the country. We hope that this study will help all stakeholders further extend our vision of zero casualties to all modes of road transport,"

he added.

As per this study, 47% of the surveyed respondents using school transport admitted to their school vehicles not being equipped with seat belts. Additionally, 34% of the respondents using two-wheelers surveyed had not ensured their child/they were wearing a helmet while commuting via two-wheelers. It also emerged that a worrying 30% of children witnessed a crash during their commute to school, while 6% of them were themselves involved in a road crash or a near-miss situation during their commute to and from school. This finding is significant given over 30 children lose their lives in India's roads every day.

Additionally, more than half of the parents surveyed stated that school authorities took no action on the safety concerns reported to the school authorities. These

issues included overcrowding in school vehicles, congestion near the school, and over-speeding by drivers in the school zone.

The study also highlighted gaps in the safety standards of school zones too. 47% of the surveyed respondents whose child/who cycled to school reported no cycling paths en route or even around the school. 30% of those whose child/who walked to school reported missing footpaths around the school zone. It has been observed that adherence to guidelines among private transport users is lower than school-provided transport. The study has proposed some programs to build awareness among parents to equip them to ensure that schools adhere to safety norms. SaveLIFE Foundation Founder & CEO, Piyush Tewari, said, "As of date, over 25 states and Union

Territories have announced the reopening of schools. While there is a vaccine for COVID, the vaccine for child deaths on our roads is really our collective action. Our findings through this report have once again emphasised that the right to a safe commute to school is as important as the right to education itself. A comprehensive national and state school transport safety policy can ensure that."

Children face a high degree of risk while commuting to and from school due to poor road planning, limited enforcement and poor traffic behaviour. According to data provided by the Ministry of Roads Transport and Highways (MoRTH), over 11,000 children below the age of 18 were killed in road crashes in 2019 in India. This translates to over 30 deaths daily, with a 7.4% contribution to the total road crash deaths.

Trafficked minor girl rescued in two hours

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

A 17-year-old girl was trafficked by an accused named Santu Paramanik on October 19. A complaint was registered at the Child Help Line

regarding this. They passed on the information to the Telangana Police as per technical data obtained through tracking the mobile phone of the suspect. The Telangana Police formed a special team in the women safety wing. Coordinating with the Kolkata Police, the team searched for the girl and found her with the accused at Chikkadpally.

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH
RURAL WATER SUPPLY & SANITATION DEPT., GOLLAPUDI, VIJAYAWADA, A.P.
No. 47/2021-22 to 48/2021-22 E-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE Dt. 22.10.2021
Online (Reverse tendering) tenders for 1st call are invited in a procurement platform for the works for O&M of CPWS Schemes in Krishna District, under 1st Finance Commission Grant for 03 (Three) works with a total estimated cost of **Rs. 1250.00 Lakhs**. Tenders can be downloaded from E-procurement platform i.e., www.tenders.approcurement.gov.in from 26.10.2021 to 08.11.2021 upto 03.00 pm. Name and Address of Officer Concerned: Superintending Engineer, RWS&S Circle, Vijayawada. Contractors are requested to furnish their experience and other details in Zip format. Further details can be obtained from e-procurement market place on www.approcurement.gov.in.
B. Hare Ram Naik, Chief Engineer-RWS&S, Dept., Vijayawada
R.O. No. -108/CPWS/NT/2021-22, Dt. 22.10.2021

Although every possible care and caution has been taken to avoid errors or omissions, this publication is being sold on the condition and understanding that information given in this publication is merely for reference and must not be taken as having authority or binding in any way on the writers, editors, publishers, and printers and sellers who do not owe any responsibility for any damage or loss to any person, a purchaser of this publication or not for the result of any action taken on the basis of this work. All disputes are subject to the exclusive jurisdiction of competent court and forums in Delhi/New Delhi only. Readers are advised and requested to verify and seek appropriate advice to satisfy themselves about the veracity of any kind of advertisement before responding to any contents published in this newspaper. The printer, publisher, editor and any employee of the Pioneer Group will not be held responsible for any kind of claim made by the advertisers of the products & services and shall not be made responsible for any kind of loss, consequences and further product-related damages on such advertisements.

BJP taking TDP support to win by-poll: Kakani

PNS ■ KADAPA

YSRCP MLA Kakani Govardhan Reddy has alleged that the BJP is taking the support of the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) to win the Badvel by-election.



Addressing a press conference here on Friday, he lashed out that the BJP saying that it is getting support from the TDP in the Badvel by-poll. The BJP leaders were approaching the TDP leaders seeking their support in the Badvel election, he charged. The BJP would not get even the deposit in the by-election, he predicted.

He said that the BJP had prepared plans to make false allegations if the YSRCP won the election with a huge majority. The BJP is trying to protect its existence by taking support from the TDP.

"The YSRCP is ready for an open debate on the water crisis in Badvel. During the erstwhile TDP-BJP rule, water was supplied to some areas in the Badvel constituency with tankers. The YSRCP government is providing water from the Brahmasagar reservoir," he claimed.

The YSRCP MLA said that if

voters opt for the BJP in the by-poll that would go be futile exercise.

Vote for the BJP means making the vote invalid, he said. The BJP entered into the election fray aiming only to criticise the ruling YSRCP, he observed, adding that the BJP and TDP were unable to digest the implementation of welfare schemes and development being achieved. "If the word Bosedeke is a good one, let us call Chandrababu Naidu a Bosedeke," he said.

"What will Chandrababu Naidu say to Union Home Minister Amit Shah. Is Naidu going to Delhi to prostrate before the BJP national leaders? Despite the people of the State being angry, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy is exercising restraint," Govardhan Reddy said.

The YSRCP MLA reiterated that the development programmes were put on hold due

the election code of conduct in Badvel. He dared BJP State president Somu Veerajulu for an open debate on the water problem in Badvel and predicted that YSRCP is going to win the by-election with a huge majority.

Meanwhile, BJP State president Somu Veerajulu came down heavily on minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy stating that the funds meant for the development Badvel constituency were being diverted to other projects.

Talking to the media in Badvel on Friday, the BJP State chief said that acute drinking water scarcity has prevailed in Badvel constituency. The Union government had released funds for the supply of water but the YSRCP led government diverted the funds to other projects and implementation of welfare schemes, he charged. The roads in Badvel are with potholes and beyond use by the motorists, he regretted.

AP is 'drug hub of India': Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Friday expressed concern that Andhra Pradesh had emerged as the source of ganja that was being seized by the police and vigilance wings of most other states across the country.

Lokesh said that the investigating officers of Telangana, Karnataka, Kerala, Maharashtra, Delhi, Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh had already clarified that the ganja seized by them came from AP. In whichever corner of the country, the drug gangs were busted, they were being traced to Andhra these days. Within two-and-a-half years, the YSRCP regime has turned AP into a 'drug hub of India'.

In a statement here, Nara Lokesh asked the AP Chief Minister and the DGP whether they would serve notices on the top police officers of other States for referring to AP as the source of drugs. Those officers were holding press conferences and telling the country about the Andhra ganja gangs who were caught. "Would the AP Police call those officers for questioning just the way the TDP leaders were being treated?" he sought to know.

Lokesh deplored that more alarming and disturbing facts were coming to light with each passing day in Andhra Pradesh. The cops of other States were giving proof of how ganja grown in Visakhapatnam and other areas was being smuggled into their respective cities and towns. Even then, Jagan Reddy

CM resorting to 'provocative' politics: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior TDP leaders Yerapatineni Srinivasa Rao and Chintamaneni Prabhakar strongly objected to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's comment that there were attacks as the blood pressure of ruling YSRCP activists rose following objectionable statements against him by TDP spokesperson K Pattabhi Ram. The TDP leaders asserted that the Chief Minister was resorting to provocative politics in order to cover up his government's inefficiency and failures. The blood pressure of



the TDP activists used to rise in the previous regime also but they did not indulge in such vandalism and rioting like the YSRCP was doing now.

Addressing a press conference here, Srinivasa Rao said that the AP police were using delay tactics by not arresting any culprit involved in the

attack on the TDP central office in Mangalagiri. There was no need for the TDP to attack the Tadepalli palace. The people were totally disappointed and ready to bring down the Jaganmohan Reddy regime at the earliest given opportunity. The Tadepalli palace collapsed the day when

the destruction of the State began.

Chintamaneni Prabhakar recalled how CM Jaganmohan Reddy used to derive sadistic pleasure when his party leaders made abusive comments against Chandrababu Naidu and Nara Lokesh. The YSRCP leaders' impatience and frustration were growing over the rising unpopularity of their government. The YSRCP leaders were crossing all limits thinking that they have got money and muscle power. It was the CM and his party leaders who would do fake padayatra and fake 'deeksha' protests.

Vote for YSRCP, Sidda appeals to Arya Vysyas

KADAPA: Former minister and YSRCP leader Sidda Raghava Rao praised Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy for giving due importance to the Arya Vysya community and appealed to the community people to vote for the YSRCP candidate in the Badvel by-election. A meeting was organised in Badvel on Friday as part of the election campaign for which ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao and chairmen of various corporations and elders of Arya Vysya community attended. Addressing the gathering, Sidda Raghava Rao thanked Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy for giving due importance to the Arya Vysya community leaders and giving them key power of positions. He said that Andhra Pradesh state is being developed under the leadership of Jagan Mohan Reddy. "The Chief Minister had taken effective measures to mitigate and contain the Coronavirus pandemic. In order to do social justice to the downtrodden 76 percent of positions were given to the leaders of SC/ST/BC and minorities", he said. Chief Minister Jagan



Mohan Reddy has emerged as a role model to other states for introducing the village and ward secretariat system to resolve the grievances of people. "The Arya Vysya community people should vote for the YSRCP candidate in the bye-election and work for the victory of the candidate", he appealed. MP Avinash Reddy, MLC Govind Reddy, MLA Shilpa Ravi Chandra Reddy, state environment chairman Gubba Chandrasekhar, Arya Vysya corporation chairman Kuppan Prasad, Nellore UDA chairman Mukkula Dwaraka and municipal vice-chairman Sai and other leaders were among those who were present.

Energy codes vital for new buildings, says Ajay Jain

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government wants to provide the best housing facility to the beneficiaries under housing scheme by implementing world-class energy efficiency technology which will be a great boon for the cost-effective housing for low income groups, building sector in AP and provide healthier environment in houses apart from saving electricity.

Addressing a seminar on Eco-Niwasa Samhitha through Video Conference conducted by BEEP & APSECM in Tirupati, Special Chief Secretary to Housing department, Ajay Jain, said that the State government has strong commitment towards effective implementation of housing scheme is and providing the best housing facility to the poor people.

He stressed the need to create awareness about 'Energy Conservation Building Code - Residential Buildings' (ECBC-R called 'Eco-Niwasa Samhitha (ENS)') as the State government prepares to implement global energy efficiency practices/measures in 28.3 lakh houses with the support of Indo-Swiss BEEP and consent of beneficiaries as the Eco-Niwasa samhitha being purely voluntary.

He said that Energy Efficiency (EE) programmes such as the ECBC for commercial and residential buildings would benefit all the consumers, ecology and economy of the State.

Residential buildings will become the largest end-user of electricity in the country

The technical support of 'Indo-Swiss BEEP' in implementation of ENS in Jagananna Colonies will help to reduce temperatures inside the house compared to conventional house, enhance thermal comfort (cooling) and substantially reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions as well, Ajay Jain said.



accounting for 38 pc of the total electricity consumption. AP domestic sector alone consumes around 17,514 MU (28 pc) per annum out of the total annual demand of 60,943 MU (FY2021-22), he said.

In view of this, energy codes for new buildings are an important measure for ushering energy efficiency in the building sector. The technical support of 'Indo-Swiss BEEP' in implementation of ENS in Jagananna Colonies will help to reduce temperatures inside the house compared to conventional house, enhance thermal comfort (cooling) and substantially reduce energy consumption and reduce carbon emissions as well, he said.

He stated that Indo-Swiss Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) is a bilateral co-operation project between the Ministry of Power (MoP), Government of India and the Swiss government, being implemented by the Bureau of Energy Efficiency (BEE). The overall objective of the project is to promote energy-efficient building design and construction in India. BEEP's approach to energy-efficient building design is based on the integrated design process, climate-responsive architecture and use of modern design tools & new technologies.

Addressing the gathering, Ajay Jain said the objective of the seminar is awareness creation and capacity building about Eco-Niwasa Samhitha, understanding energy-efficient and thermally comfortable building design and discussion on various challenges and way forward for the implementation of Eco-Niwasa Samhitha in the city of Tirupati. He also mentioned that Eco-Niwasa Samhitha is only an option but not mandatory and is expected to save 20 percent energy savings by adopting it.

New Nirmal Hriday Bhavan to house 100 destitutes

C PRADEEP KUMAR ■ VIJAYAWADA

The building that houses Nirmal Hriday Bhavan, a destitute centre in Vijayawada that was established by Saint Mother Teresa, has been demolished for the construction of a new building on the same premises. The new G+1 building will accommodate around 100 inmates with two male and as many female wards. The construction is likely to be completed in 18 months at an estimated cost of Rs 3.5 crore.

According to the authorities of the care home, the inmates have been sent to various charity organisations at other places for the time-being. As many as 36 male inmates have been shifted to Missionaries of Charity, Secunderabad, and 45 women to the Missionaries of Charity, Eluru and Premdan, Gunadala.

Nirmal Hriday was opened in 1974. It was in 1973 that an old club was demolished and the land was handed over to Mother Teresa to set up a shelter for the sick destitute people of the city. Mother herself was present when the land was taken on lease from the then Collector. As of today, they have taken care of 7,461 people. They were able to trace the families of many of them and send them to their loved ones.

Many sick people were brought to the care home at their last hour. However, they were cared for. If they recover and are able to give their details, they sent them back to their homes.



Sr Marie Ancelle MC, Regional Superior, speaking to The Pioneer, said that in 2020 they approached Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy, and he granted the lease for 99 years at a nominal cost. An additional 800 square yards was provided to the existing 1,800 sq yds and the building fee was also exempted.

She said that the CM has also promised to help in the time of need. "Since then, everything has been happening very fast.

We received so much concern and support from the Collector, Commissioner, Irrigation Department, each and every one of the departments concerned for the work to be done."

She further said that they have about 10 per cent funds of the estimated cost of Rs 3.5 crore for the construction and are confident that donations will pour in as it is a noble cause. She added that their staff are still there to take care of any destitute patient who comes to them.

CM implicating TDP leaders in false cases: Anitha

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Telugu Mahila State president Vangalapati Anitha on Friday accused Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy of using his mother and other women as part of his selfish and narrow-minded political agenda in the State.

Anitha said that the CM wrongly used the Police Commemoration Day to make baseless comments against the TDP leaders. Jagan Mohan Reddy quoted the statement of Pattabhi Ram out of context.

Though nobody made any objectionable comments, the Chief Minister started misinterpreting that the TDP passed comments referring to his mother.

Addressing a press conference here, the TDP leader said that Jagan Mohan Reddy used his mother and sister for election campaigns and padayatra for coming to power. In his own padayatra, Jagan Mohan Reddy gave kisses and fondly touched the heads of lots of women. The whole State knew who tore the 'mangalsutra' of the wife of YS Vivekananda Reddy, who was Jagan Mohan Reddy's own 'babai'.

Vangalapati Anitha strongly criticised that the Chief Minister was now causing political turmoil by instigating party cadre and by implicating the TDP lead-

ers in false and baseless cases. Jagan Reddy stooped to a very low level of passing comments against his own mother by trying to take advantage of the TDP comments. The CM's betrayals of women were getting exposed one by one. The YSRCP leaders were losing credibility and goodwill among all sections of society.

The TDP leader said that it was Jagan Mohan Reddy who dragged his mother and sister to the streets for the sake of political power but not Chandrababu Naidu. Only for winning the elections, Jagan Mohan Reddy had made countless impractical promises before the elections. After coming to power, he started creating terror among the people and thereby silencing all voices of public dissent.

Condemning the YSRCP's 'ulterior plans', Anitha said that the DGP was acting like a YSRCP activist but not as the boss of the AP Police. No action was being taken even though the youth of the State was getting devitalised because of the drug and spurious liquor mafia. CM Jagan Mohan Reddy would speak all unimportant things but not about the menace of drug smuggling and the threat posed to the future of the younger generation.

Blood donation camp conducted

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A mega blood donation camp was conducted by the Eastern Fleet onboard INS Shakti on Friday as part of Navy Week-21 celebrations and Swarnim Vijay Varsh and Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav, commemorating the 50th anniversary of the victory of the Indian Armed Forces in the 1971 war and the 75 years of India's Independence.

The blood donation camp was conducted in collaboration

with the NTR Trust Blood Bank, and INHS Kalyani. The camp was inaugurated by Commodore Manav Sehgal, Fleet Operations Officer, and had the active participation of 260 Armed Forces personnel, civilians and family members who voluntarily donated blood for a noble cause. The donated blood was handed over to the participating blood bank for use by the civil society in Visakhapatnam and its adjoining districts.



NSTL launches course on 'Reliability Engineering'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav' celebrations, Naval Science and Technological Laboratory (NSTL) has started a short-term course on 'Reliability Engineering' in association with the Institution of Quality and Reliability (IQR), Pune.

Inaugurating the programme, Dr. Samir V Kamat, Director General of Naval Systems and Materials, said

that DRDO becomes 'QRS Champion Organisation' in the near future.

Till now, NSTL developed systems, focusing on quality and now he asked NSTL, which is in mature phase, to focus on developing reliable systems, he added.

Rear Admiral Ranjit Singh, Director, Directorate Quality, Reliability and Safety, DRDO headquarters, participated in the event through video conference. He complimented

NSTL for organising the course. He said quality and reliability as two eyes of an organisation, and with them, safety is automatically ensured. He said the NSTL Quality Policy is well-aligned with DRDO Quality Policy.

Dr. Y Sreenivas Rao, Director, NSTL, highlighted the NSTL's quality structure and explained how it is unique and apt for the design and development of world-class underwater weapons.



1,200 metric tonnes of rice worth Rs 3.11 crore seized

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Civil Supplies and Revenue officials have conducted raids at nine places during the last month and seized about 1200 metric tonnes of raw rice, worth Rs 3,11,87,000 crore, hoarded in various rice mills in the district for illegal transportation.

Joint Collector (Rythu Bharosa-Revenue) A S Dinesh Kumar, addressing a press conference here on Friday, said that the officials had conducted raids on various rice mills and seized lorries, transporting the PDS rice to Kakinada port during the last few days. The officials found huge stocks of raw rice, paddy and broken rice which were hoarded in the rice mills. Most of the seized rice was distributed to the beneficiaries under the Public Distribution System (PDS).

The Joint Collector warned of invoking the Preventive Detention (PD) Act against ration rice exporters. The JC underlined the need of creating awareness among ration card holders against selling the ration rice. He said that had taken meals, prepared with the PDS rice, with some people. He said that the rice being distributed under PDS is good quality rice.

The State government purchases 1 kg rice at Rs 39 and distributes it to ration card holders at Re 1. Some traders were procuring the PDS rice



23 tonnes of ration rice seized

PNS ■ ELURU

Vigilance officials have seized 23 tonnes of ration rice while being transported illegally at Kovvuru. Vigilance SI Nagaraju told the media here on Friday that on a tipoff, the vigilance officials conducted checking of vehicles at Gaman Bridge. They found 23 tonnes of ration rice being transported in a lorry, mini-van, and an SUV from Vijayawada to Gollaprolu



in the EG district. The officials seized rice worth Rs 4.14 lakh and the vehicles. Police said that the three vehicles were

shifted to the town police station. As many as 10 persons were arrested in this connection.

from beneficiaries and transporting illegally which is an unlawful act. A comprehensive enquiry was launched to find out from where the ration rice was being transported and from where they were procur-

ing it. The government is supplying sortex quality rice to the ration cardholders. Some people were creating apprehensions about the quality of the rice.

He said that over 600 cases had been registered against the PDS rice smugglers under section 6-A since 2018. A special drive was conducted to check the illegal transportation of PDS rice.

Miscreants make bid to rape student

PNS ■ GUNTUR

In a shocking incident, unidentified miscreants attempted to rape an engineering girl student at Motadaka village in Tadikonda mandal.

Though the incident took place on Thursday night, the girl lodged a complaint with the Tadikonda police station on Friday.

Police said that the victim was studying engineering at a college located there.

When she was going with her friend on a motorcycle in the night, miscreants threw a stick on their bike, resulting in them falling down from the bike.

The miscreants dragged the girl into nearby bushes and attempted to rape her. She screamed for help. Some passers-by heard her screams and rushed there. On seeing them, the miscreants fled the place. The victim, along with her friends, went to the Tadikonda police station today and lodged a complaint. The police registered a case and started an investigation.



Priority for women's safety: SP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Women's safety is top on the priority of Krishna district police, SP Siddharth Kaushal said here on Friday. A performance review meeting was organised at the Command and Control Hall in Vijayawada chaired by the SP Siddharth Kaushal. Police officials from across the district attended the meeting.

Participating officials gave a detailed account of cases registered across the district, investigation status and analysis of other aspects of enforcement during the meet. Daily response

aimed at resolving public issues under the 'Daily Spandana' programme besides friendly policing came up for discussion.

Speaking on the occasion, SP Kaushal said that importance is given to the welfare of the people and the staff by introducing the 'Daily Spandana' programme. Awareness programmes on the Disha app were organised with a focus on women's safety and creating awareness by organising various programmes. As part of the new measures in the Police department, an innovative programme was launched to pro-

vide departmental benefits to the families of the deceased police personnel. The police personnel directly visited the homes of women who were victims of domestic violence and rape and confidence was built among them that the police would support them when in need.

DSPs Dharmendra, Masoom Bhasha, Nageswara Reddy, Srinivasulu, Satyanandam, Mahaboob Basha, Rajiv Kumar, Bharat Mataji, Murali Krishna, Umamaheswara Rao, Ramesh, Inspectors, Cls, SIs and the staff participated.

Better governance is key, not monetisation: ICEU

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Insurance Corporation Employees' Union (ICEU) has opposed monetisation and demanded that the government improve governance and rules instead of resorting to privatisation. ICEU Machilipatnam division conducted a Study Circle programme on the National Asset Monetisation Pipeline Scheme in Vijayawada on Friday. Joint Secretary of South Central Zone Insurance Employees' Federation (SCZIEF) G.

Kishore Kumar, addressing the gathering, said that the cash-strapped Indian Government, on August 23, launched the National Monetisation Pipeline (NMP) comprising brownfield assets (i.e., existing assets) with an aggregate monetisation potential of Rs 6 lakh crore, which will be available for lease/licensing to private investors over four years, from 2021-22 to 2024-25.

Kishore claimed that actually, resource crunch is due to poor governance and huge resources can be generated by

recovering NPAs, curbing banking frauds, recovering tax arrears, etc. Gross NPAs stood at Rs 8.34 lakh crore at the end of March 31, 2021, despite loan waivers amounting to Rs 1,31,894 crore in 2020-21. The total bad loans written off between April 2014 and March 2021, a period of seven years, stands at a mind-boggling Rs 10.63 lakh crore of which only 10 to 15 percent is recovered. During the past seven years, banks suffered losses of nearly Rs 5 lakh crore due to rising frauds.

Kishore said that the public goods and services, roads, and infrastructure must stay with the government. He stated that asset monetisation may lead to the intensification of crony capitalism, creation of private monopolies and outright plunder of people's wealth by cronies thus leading to disempowerment and impoverishment of masses.

ICEU joint secretary Dr Chalakalapati Kaladhar and other leaders with employees in large numbers attended the programme.

Ryot killed as lorry hits bike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A farmer was killed by a rashly driven tipper lorry in a road mishap that was reported at Keesara on Friday. The deceased person was identified as Singireddy Ram Reddy, 71, a resident of Ramalingeswara Colony in Keesara.

According to the Police, after completing his work, Reddy was proceeding to Nagaram from Beeranguda on his two-wheeler when a rashly driven tipper lorry crashed into his bike from the rear. Due to the impact of the crash, Reddy fell on the road and received severe bleeding injuries on his head and body and died on the spot. Locals and passersby informed the police who arrived at the spot. The body was sent for post mortem examination. Based on a complaint from the deceased person's son, the Police registered a case under section 304 A of the IPC and are investigating the incident.

MAA ELECTIONS

Prakash Raj alleges foul play, political involvement in polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actor Prakash Raj, who was defeated by Vishnu Manchu in the recent elections of the Movie Artists Association (MAA), has alleged foul play by the Manchu family in the elections. He also suggests that there was political involvement in the way the elections were held.

In his recent tweets, Prakash Raj had alleged that a representative of Andhra Pradesh's ruling party - the YSRCP was present at the MAA elections, who had helped Vishnu's panel to mislead everyone during the elections. Prakash Raj went further and questioned the Election Officer Krishna Mohan, on why he has been silent on the happenings. "#MaaElections 2021 .. dear Election officer Krishna



mohan garu .. this is just the beginning.. give us the CC footage.. we will let the world know what happened.. how the elections were conducted justasking", Prakash Raj's recent tweet reads. "We already appealed for

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

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

Ever since the topic of MAA elections began, Prakash Raj and his panel members had issues with the members of Vishnu's panel. As Prakash Raj felt that the elections were compromised, he had questioned the poll officials earlier.

Mega job mela to be held at Atmakur on October 30

PNS ■ NELLORE

Minister for Industries and IT Mekapati Gautam Reddy has said that a mega job mela would be organised here on October 30 in which 22 renowned companies would participate to select candidates for jobs.

The minister said that on October 30 a major job mela would be organised at Polytechnic campus in Atmakur in which 22 corporate companies would select over 1,000 eligible candidates for jobs in their companies.

He said that industrial giants including Hero, Isuzu, Amarraja, Bajaj, Hyundai, Apache, Flip Cart, Tata Steel, Apollo, Medicover and Hetero pharm would participate in the job mela to select staff for their companies. The minister asked the job aspirants to attend the job mela.



The aspirants should enroll their qualification details in the website www.apssc.in. The candidates should attend with a resume and Xerox copies of their educational qualifications.

Missing 6-yr-old boy found dead

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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

The family stays on the four floor of an apartment building in Sirmalle Colony. They suspected that somebody might have kidnapped the child when he came downstairs. Police tried to trace the child by scanning footage from CCTV cameras in the area.

SHORT TAKES

Defeat BJP, YSRCP in by-poll for SCS betrayal: Congress



KADAPA: Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) working president N Tulasi Reddy said that the BJP and YSRCP betrayed the people of the state in the Special Category Status issue and called upon voters to defeat the two parties in the Badvel bye-election. Addressing a meeting at Vempalli on Friday, he said that Special Category Status is the right of AP and it would help for the industrial development of the state. "Had the Congress been voted to power in the 2014 election, the Congress government would have accorded the SCS to AP", he said. The Congress leader called upon Badvel voters to teach a lesson to the BJP and YSRCP by not voting for the candidates of the parties. Assuring that the Congress will accord the SCS to AP, if voted to power in the 2024 election, Tulasi Reddy appealed to the voters to vote for the Congress candidate in the Badvel bye-election.

Amaravati farmers to launch Maha Padayatra on Nov 1

VIJAYAWADA: The agitating Amaravati farmers are all set to launch a Maha Padayatra to highlight their plight. The padayatra will begin from Thullur village in Amaravati on November 1. The farmers, who have been agitating for over 500 days, are demanding that the Jagannad Reddy government announce Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh. The farmers are opposing the move to set up the executive capital in Visakhapatnam and the judicial capital in Kurnool in Rayalaseema. The padayatra would be held for 45 days and would end at Tirupati by the Sankranti festival covering over 400 km. Politicians, farmers, farm labourers, civil society leaders and others would take part in the padayatra to Tirupati. The Amaravati Joint Action Committee, which is organising the walkathon, plans to breathe life into the agitation and highlight the problems of the farmers of the region. As part of the padayatra, awareness meetings would be held at different places. "The protesters will expose the Y S Jagannad Reddy government. While a yatra may not be able to settle the issue, it will surely highlight the problems of the farmers," a leader of the Amaravati Joint Action Committee said. The farmers met Jana Sena Party leader Nandendla Manohar on Friday seeking support for the padayatra and said that JSP chief Pawan Kalyan has assured all support to Amaravati farmers.

Daughter, her boyfriend held for woman's murder

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

Realizing that they could not be together with Yadamma in the way, the accused decided to kill her to continue their relationship. When Yadamma was alone in the house, the duo had a heated argument with her, following which, they took a chunni and used it to strangle Yadamma to death.

Following a complaint from Yadaiah, the Police booked a case and began an investigation.

While the duo feigned innocence, based on suspicion, they were picked up on Thursday and during interrogation, confessed to the crime.

Samantha receives legal blow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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



apparently ordered that the actress could simply seek an

apology from her opponents, rather than filing defamation cases.

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

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

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

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

Public get a peek at police weapons, equipment

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Superintendent of Police Malika Garg talked in detail to the students and the public about the weapons used by the police and their functioning at the Police Weapons Exhibition organised at the District Police Kalyana Mandapam on Friday. The expo is being held as part of the Martyrs' Week observance.

Speaking on the occasion, the SP said that the exhibition is meant to raise awareness among the public about the weapons, clothes and technical tools that cops use as part of their duty and criminal investigation procedures.

The Martyrs' Week is observed to commemorate the sacrifices made by police personnel for the protection of the country and its people. Various programmes are being organised at all police stations, cir-

cle and sub-divisional offices in the district on the occasion.

The exhibition features bulletproof vehicle, communication vehicle, 207 Vajra vehicle, various weapons, their spare parts, metal detector, dragon light, rocker, bomb disposal equipment, Fingerprint Identification Network System (FINS), police control room equipment, communication man pack sets, dog squads, cell jammer, AK-47, 9mm Glock pistol, 303 LMG (light machine gun), rubber bullets, bomb blanket, vehicle inspection mirror, night vision equipment, binoculars, GF rifles, bore pump action gun, sniper gun, VHF set communication, traffic rules and symbols, traffic equipment, road safety vehicles, body-worn cameras, locked house monitoring system, Disha app, Disha vehicles, etc.



10 CRPF jawans were on duty at Ladakh's Aksai Chin on the India-China border, a large number of Chinese troops infiltrated the Indian border and at once attacked our CRPF jawans. Though they were small in number, the Indian jawans bravely confronted the Chinese troops and fought to the last drop of blood and sacrificed their lives for the country. On every October 21, we celebrate Police Commemoration Day in mem-

ory of the martyrs who sacrificed their lives in defending the nation," the SP told students and the public.

The SP also informed them that a total of 377 cops have lost their lives in the country so far this year, including 11 policemen in AP. Ten police personnel in Prakasam died due to COVID-19.

The SP informed that Grace Cancer Awareness Rally will be held on October 24, as part of which police personnel, their

families and the public can take tests free of cost. Another event is a 5K run. The participants will be provided with T-shirts and the winners will be awarded prizes. Essay writing and painting competitions would be organised for the students in all police station limits. The winners will get prizes.

A photo caption contest will also be held as part of the Police Commemoration Day. From October 21 to 28, photos will be posted daily on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. Those who give good captions to the photos as comments will be given prizes.

Additional SP B. Ravi Chandan, DSPs B. Mariyadas, U. Nagaraju, P. Mallikarjuna Rao, AR DSP K. Raghavendra Rao, Cls Srinivasa Reddy, B. Srinivasa Rao, RIs Srihari Srikanth, Subbarao, Haribabu, Srikanth Nayak and RSIs were present.

INDIA CORNER

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

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



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

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



AASU stages protest against fuel price hike in Assam

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

SIT chief probing Lakhimpur Kheri violence transferred

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

'Will continue to head probe'



five other IPS officers too have been given new postings.

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

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

too have been arrested in this case so far.

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

As the hearing commenced, senior advocate Gopal Sankaranarayanan, appointed

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

He also tagged a media report that said the trade with



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

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

touched USD 90 billion, an increase of 49 percent.

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

Priyanka to kick off 'Pratigya Yatra' from Barabanki

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress general secretary and Uttar Pradesh in-charge Priyanka Gandhi Vadra will flag off three 'Pratigya Yatras' from Barabanki

on Saturday to take to the people various resolutions adopted by the party ahead of the 2022 assembly elections. On the occasion, she will elaborate on the seven resolutions made to the people of UP apart from the election manifesto, former MP and party in-charge of Chhattisgarh P L Punia told

the media here on Friday.

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

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



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

PNS ■ UTTARAKASHI (UTTARAKHAND)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



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

the law. It told the apex court that the Union of India has not registered any case in West Bengal, nor has it been investigating any case. "Yet, as is evident from the prayers, each and every prayer in the present suit is directed either towards restraining the Union of India from investigating any case or towards quashing cases where the Union of India has allegedly registered FIRs. On the other hand, it is the Central Bureau

of Investigation (CBI) that has registered FIRs and investigated cases, but strangely, the CBI is not made a party to the suit," the 60-page affidavit filed by the Department of Personnel and Training stated.

The affidavit said that numerous investigations are being carried out against Central government employees or have either pan-India impact or impact on more than one state to investigate such offences.

Security forces defuse 2 suspected box-type IEDs

PNS ■ JAMMU

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

The boxes were suspected to be IEDs and were destroyed in-situ, they said.

This is a third instance of IEDs being detected by troops in J&K since Thursday.

APP makes case for tripartite fuel supply pact

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



www.dailypioneer.com

facebook.com/dailypioneer | @TheDailyPioneer | instagram.com/dailypioneer/

PAPER WITH PASSION

Jab half done

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

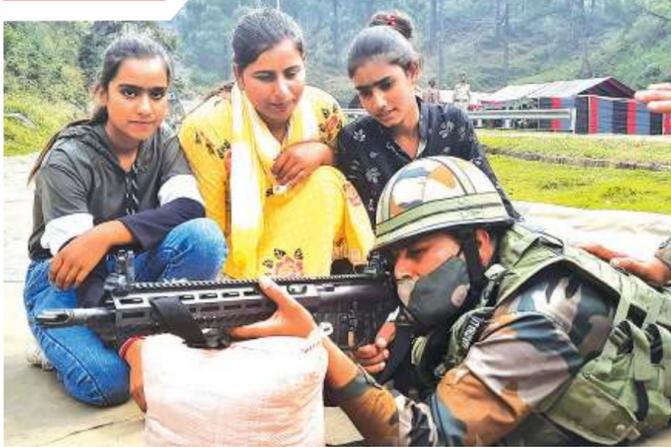
A billion vaccinations are done in India. That is a gigantic achievement. Only two countries in the world can claim the record. The other country is China. It reached the one-billion mark in June and the two-billion mark in September. As India celebrates the billionth dose, there is also the realisation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



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

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

PICTALK



An Army personnel during a workshop, in Rajouri district

Kashmir dilemma is deeply rooted

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



PRAFULL GORADIA

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

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

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

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

The Qaid's other contention

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

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

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

French Orientalist Joseph



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Rivals meet

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

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



Pakistan to represent itself, after its whining about India at the UN General Assembly 2021. Pakistan has never tasted success against India in the T20 or ODI World Cup and it would certainly look forward to changing that. The two teams have not faced each other since the 2019 ODI World Cup. The Pakistan captain Babar Azam is often compared with his Indian counterpart Virat Kohli and how they stand against each other would be worth the watch. However, ahead of the match, there was strong uproar against the India-Pak match in view of the terrorist attack on Indian Army personnel in the Poonch sector of Jammu and Kashmir on October 11. Several politicians including Union Minister Union Minister Ramdas Athawale, AAP leader Atishi Marlena and former Olympian Pargat Singh strongly called for the cancellation of the match against Pakistan. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi targeting the Government said, "Our nine soldiers died in J&K, and on October 24 India-Pakistan T20 match will happen". But apparently, the match cannot be called off under the International Cricket Council's (ICC) commitments. If the idea is to send a "strong message" to Pakistan or Pakistan-based terrorist groups, pulling out of a match will not help. Rather, the leaders should build pressure on the Government to wipe out the terrorist hideouts. That would send a strong message. That would be the solidarity the martyrs deserve.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

BLOCKING ROADS IS NOT THE WAY

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

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

Jayesh Rane | Mumbai

TOO EARLY TO CELEBRATE

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

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

Remembering Shammi



The trilogy of legendary actors Shammi-Joy-Biswajit not only carved a niche for itself in the Indian cinema, but also ruled the roost in the very presence of the firmly established Dilip-Raj-Dev triumvirate in the 1960s-70s. October 21 was the birth anniversary of a tall, handsome and energetic Shammi Kapoor who rose from the ashes of 18 flops shouting a sky-high 'yahoo' in 1960's blockbuster *Junglee*, that went to become his trademark and the heartbeat of thousands of his fans. Thereafter, Shammi Kapoor never looked behind and had to his credit numer-

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

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

Azhar A Khan | Rampur

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

Bidyut K Chatterjee | Faridabad

KASHMIR SITUATION CAUSE FOR CONCERN

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

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

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

D Nagarjuna | Hyderabad

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

SOUND BITE

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



RJD leader — Tejashwi Yadav

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



Russian President — Vladimir Putin

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



Actor — Deepika Padukone

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



India cricketer — Ajinkya Rahane

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



Congress general secretary — Priyanka Gandhi



FIRST COLUMN THE BREXIT IS NOT A 'FANTASTIC DEAL'

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



GWYNNE DYER

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



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

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

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

Germany expects new Chancellor by Xmas

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



VOLKER LENNART PLÄN

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

Private players crucial in defence manufacturing

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

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

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



PK VASUDEVA

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Observing that RBI is inundated with the complaints of



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



Petrol, diesel prices hiked for third consecutive day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Money Matters

Bank of India opens first-ever branch in Ladakh

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

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

Vedanta group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd on Friday reported a 3.9 per cent rise in its net profit at Rs 2,017 crore for the quarter ended September 30, on the back of higher revenue from operations. The company had posted net profit of Rs 1,940 crore in the year-ago period, Hindustan Zinc Ltd said in a regulatory filing. The revenue from operations in the July-September quarter increased to Rs 5,958 crore, from Rs 5,533 crore in the year-ago period, the filing said. The total expenses of the company during the quarter increased to Rs 3,571 crore, as against Rs 3,428 crore in the year-ago period.

HDFC Life Q2 net profit declines 16% to Rs 275 cr

HDFC Life Insurance on Friday reported a nearly 16 per cent decline in consolidated net profit to Rs 275.91 crore in the second quarter ended September 30. The life insurer had posted a net profit of Rs 327.83 crore in the year-ago period. Total income of the insurer during the July-September period, however, rose to Rs 20,478.46 crore, against Rs 16,426.03 crore a year ago, HDFC Life said in a regulatory filing. The net premium income increased to Rs 11,445.53 crore, from Rs 10,056.71 crore in the year-ago period.

ABB Power Sept qtr profit jumps multi fold to Rs 34 cr

ABB Power Products and Systems India on Friday posted a multifold jump in net profit to Rs 34.32 crore for September quarter 2021 due to lower base effect. The net profit of the company in the year-ago quarter was Rs 4.76 crore. The company follows January-December financial year. "Profit after tax was up 614.6 per cent year-on-year to Rs 34.3 crore primarily because of a low base of 2020 and our unwavering efforts at stabilizing our supply chains and improving other efficiencies," it said. Income stood at Rs 850.60 crore in the quarter under review compared to Rs 946.31 crore in the same period.

Rupee slips 3 paise to close at 74.90 against US dollar

The rupee weakened by 3 paise to end at 74.90 against the US currency on Friday, weighed down by a muted trend in domestic equities and firm crude oil prices. At the interbank foreign exchange market, the local currency opened at 74.82 and witnessed an intra-day high of 74.69 and a low of 74.94 against the US dollar in the day trade. The local unit finally settled at 74.90 a dollar, down 3 paise over its previous close. On Thursday, the rupee had settled on a flat note at 74.87 against the US dollar. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, advanced 0.43 per cent to USD 84.97 per barrel.

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

PNS ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

The news of the payment followed Evergrande's announcement a day earlier

Sensex falls 102 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

The 30-share BSE index fell 101.88 points or 0.17 per cent to 60,821.62. Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty shed 63.20 points or 0.35 per cent to close at 18,114.90.

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

that it was running into difficulties selling assets to alleviate its liquidity crisis and that a plan to sell its property services arm had fallen through.

Germany's DAX gained 0.4% to 15,535.16. In Paris, the

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

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

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

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

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

CAC 40 jumped 1.1% to 6,759.46, while Britain's FTSE 100 added 0.4% to 7,220.57. The future for the S&P 500 was nearly unchanged while the future for the Dow industrials gained less than 0.1%.

Kant: India can become world's edtech capital

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Demand for spices increased since Covid pandemic: Commerce Min

PNS ■ KOCHI

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

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

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

Sebi proposes capping ISINs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Earlier, the fresh issue size was Rs 525 crore.

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



and Investment Consultancy Services and some individual shareholders.

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

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

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

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

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

53% of firms exposed to supply chain attacks

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

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

Based on findings from this year's independent survey of



3,600 IT managers and remote employees at small and medium-sized companies in 18 countries across the globe, the report states that 53% of global companies have a false sense of security when it comes to

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

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

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

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

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

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



After the cult success of *Kabir Singh*, producer Bhushan Kumar will now collaborate with producers Amar Butala and Garima Mehta for *Bull*, an action film starring Shahid Kapoor. Set in the 1980s, the film is inspired by real-life events and marks the debut of director Aditya Nimbalkar, who has worked extensively with filmmaker Vishal Bharadwaj. The principal photography is slated to begin in 2022.

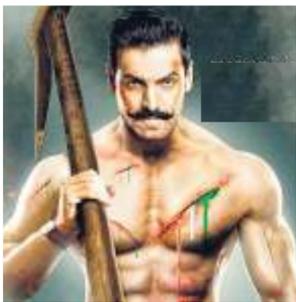
Bhushan Kumar, Managing Director, T-Series shares, "We're all set to bring the audience an action extravaganza with our second collaboration with Shahid after *Kabir Singh*. I'm elated that my association with Amar Butala and Garima Mehta could hold the key to great cinema."

Shahid Kapoor adds, "*Bull* is a full-blown action film inspired by real events from the life of Brigadier Bulsara. It is a privilege to play a paratrooper who leads his boys through a historic and selfless mission that has now become iconic for its precision and bravado. The opportunity to play a paratrooper is exhilarating and truly an honour."

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

Gulshan Kumar and T-Series presents *Bull*, a Guilty By Association production starring Shahid Kapoor, with story and screenplay by Aseem Arora and Parveez Shaikh. The film is directed by Aditya Nimbalkar and is slated to go on floors in 2022.

Anek, *Satyameva* get release dates



With theatres resuming operations in Maharashtra from this week, Bollywood has now officially gotten a go-ahead for releasing movies in cinema hall in the state and throughout the country. While many films have already announced their release schedules, Ayushmann Khurrana's *Anek* and John Abraham's *Satyameva Jayate 2* have

now confirmed their release dates. John Abraham's *Satyameva Jayate 2* is now scheduled to release on November 25. Directed by Milap Zaveri, the film stars John in an action avatar and also stars Divya Khosla Kumar. "*Satyameva Jayate 2* coming to Cinemas on Thursday 25th November. Bringing double the action and entertainment in cinema again

#*SatyamevaJayate2*, trailer out on Monday, 25th October," Nikkhil Advani wrote. Ayushmann Khurrana's next film with director Anubhav Sinha *Anek*, which is touted to be a hard hitting socio-political drama, is set to release in theatres on March 31, 2022. Ayushmann took to Instagram to share the announcement and wrote, "Thrilled to reunite with

@anubhavsinhaa for a character that pushed me out of my comfort zone & with #BhushanKumar as a support system, #Anek will usher in a different language of cinema. Mark the date for this socio-political thriller: 31.03.2022." *Anek* is said to be a spy thriller that has been shot in the North-East. Talking about the film, Sinha said in a statement, "It was a challenging film to write and a difficult one to make. We shot it in rough terrain but what makes it special is that the take-away was so gratifying. It was a delight to work with Ayushmann again who with his depiction of Joshua breathed life into the story." Ayushmann and Anubhav have previously collaborated on *Article 15*. Ayushmann's upcoming films include *Doctor G*, *Chandigarh Kare Aashiqui*, and *Action Hero*.



Bunty Aur Babli 2 teaser: OG couple troll the new pair

Sixteen years after the first film released, YRF is all set to release *Bunty Aur Babli 2*, and the teaser of the film is now out. Starring Rani Mukerji, Saif Ali Khan, Siddhant Chaturvedi and Sharvati, the teaser suggests that there will be two sets of Bunty-Babli in the film. The new teaser gives a hint at the ensuing war between the

OGs and the new Bunty and Babli. The con couples are seen trolling each other. The teaser has no film footage. Rani Mukerji is reprising her role from the original film with Saif stepping into Abhishek Bachchan's shoes. The first film ended with the con artists giving up their illegal activities and helping the cop Dashrath Singh, played by Amitabh Bachchan,

solve crimes. *Bunty Aur Babli 2* reunites Saif and Rani on screen after 12 years and the two are reminiscing about old times. The two have worked together in films like *Hum Tum, Tara Rum Pum* and *Thoda Pyaar Thoda Magic*. As they are joined by the new Bunty and Babli, Siddhant and Sharvati, they are seen asking what is happening. Director Varun Sharma says that Adi sir (producer Aditya Chopra) has changed the script. As Rani, who is married to Chopra, asks for the producer, Saif

wants the director to meet him in the make-up room. An exasperated director calls for pack-up, leaving the new cast in lurch. Saif Ali Khan previously said in a statement, "*Bunty Aur Babli 2* is a completely rebooted sequel and is set in today's time. It is a fantastic script that hooked me on instantly. It is an out and out entertainer for the entire family to sit and enjoy, and this is what I loved and connected with. Also, it is a new role, language and milieu and that's what I really look for in a script. I also love the

dynamics between the originals and the new Bunty and Babli in the film. It is fresh, hilarious and extremely engaging. Rani and I have always had a lot of fun working with each other, and I am looking forward to our creative collaboration again. It is also equally amazing to be back home at YRF again." The release of the film was previously postponed due to the second wave of the pandemic. *Bunty Aur Babli 2* is being directed by Varun Sharma and is scheduled to release in theatres on November 19.



Alec Baldwin's prop gun misfires, fatally shoots cinematographer

Authorities are investigating after confirming that a prop firearm discharged by actor Alec Baldwin, while producing and starring in a Western movie, killed the cinematographer and wounded the director. Santa Fe County Sheriff's officials said Halyna Hutchins, cinematographer on the movie *Rust*, and director Joel Souza were shot Thursday on the rustic film set in the desert on the southern outskirts of Santa Fe. Hutchins, 42, was airlifted to the University of New Mexico Hospital, where she was pronounced dead by medical personnel, the sheriff's depart-

ment said. Souza, 48, was taken by ambulance to Christus St. Vincent Regional Medical Center, where he is undergoing treatment for his injuries. Production was halted on the film. A spokesperson for Baldwin said there was an accident on the set involving the misfire of a prop gun with blanks, though a charge without a metal projectile is unlikely to kill at a moderate distance. The Santa Fe County Sheriff's office in tears. The International Cinematographers Guild confirmed that the woman fatally shot was Hutchins, a cinematographer. Hutchins, a 2015 graduate of the American Film Institute, worked as director of photography on the 2020 action film

Archenemy, starring Joe Manganiello. She was named a "rising star" by American Cinematographer in 2019. The Santa Fe County Sheriff's Officers respond to the scene of a fatal accidental shooting at a Bonanza Creek Ranch movie set near Santa Fe on Thursday. Filming for *Rust* was set to continue into early November, according to a news release from the New Mexico Film Office. The movie is about a 13-year-old boy who is left to fend for himself and his younger brother following the death of their parents in 1880s Kansas, according to the Internet Movie Database website. The teen goes on the run with his longestranged grandfather (played by Baldwin) after the boy is sentenced to hang for the accidental killing of a local rancher.

FUN

ARCHIE

CALVIN AND HOBBS

GARFIELD

NANCY

GINGER MEGGS

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5
		6		
7		8		
		9		
10				12
11				13
	14			15
16				17
				18
18				19

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

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

DOWN

- Certain
- Help
- Finished
- Plates

SOLUTION

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



Linking Hyderabad and NRIs across the world

SHIKHA DUGGAL

One might think that the only way to measure progress is by time, milestones and goals reached, but the progress of Jay Reddy, founder of VitreosHealth and Chairman of Click2Clinic, has been matchless. Disregarding the outward image of what he thought he is supposed to be, he chose to pursue what he wanted and needed. Take a look at his destiny, from studying in Hyderabad Public School to currently serving on the board of the Hyderabad Public School (Ramanthapur) Alumni as the co-chair of their entrepreneurial program, life has come a full circle for him. "Born and raised in Hyderabad, after my schooling finished, I moved to IIT Delhi and then returned to my city to associate with HCL Communications. Post that, I pursued my MBA abroad! Then came a time in 2000,

when I willingly left the corporate world and began my own entrepreneurial journey," he shares.

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

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

As he serves as a board member for HPS, he could witness how education has been blossoming every day in the city. He says it feels good to see entrepreneurs being encouraged here, with the city turning into a consumer-oriented society. There are new companies and the focus is on local markets! "Schools are realising this and Hyderabad Public School is one of the firsts to introduce this exclusive entrepreneurial program for children. We

SPARSH IS SURELY GOING TO ATTRACT MANY MORE NRIS TO THE CITY, SINCE IT'S DEVOTED TO CANCER PATIENTS. IT'S ALSO GOING TO INSTALL THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF 'DIGNITY OF DEATH' WELL.

want youngsters to look at entrepreneurship as not risk-taking but like a ladder towards another passion that one can explore," he continues. Considering Hyderabad to be a home away from home for many, according to the entrepreneur, the

outlook of the people and their acceptance make the city stand out amongst others. Very recently, the city has added another new development to its kitty which is being praised across the country. IT Minister KT Rama Rao inaugurated the state-of-the-art free palliative care facility Sparsh Hospice at Khajaguda.

Spread over 60,000 square feet, the facility has been developed at Rs 15 crore and Jay Reddy is serving as the US Trustee and Strategic Advisor for it. Commenting on the same, he says, "I'm interested in investing in the healthcare sectors too, where the Covid pandemic has exposed many holes in the system and offers many challenging opportunities to fix them. I see homocare to be a useful system in the healthcare sector in India, particularly to provide disease-specific,



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

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

refurbished manner. We must embrace the last stage of death. I will not be just raising capital but we want more awareness too." Not being able to forget those moments of success where Jay used to celebrate it at the Tank Bund and to now, since he's so well-off, the celebrations taking place at the Falaknuma Palace — it makes him feel pleasant. The last time he was here, he got to see the new Durgam Cheruvu Bridge and he calls it a landmark development for the city.

As he signs off, he talks about the one thing that he can never tire of — taking a pleasant stroll in Jubilee Hills where it's covered with a canopy of green trees, a slope-like road, and sombre silence.

Quick home makeover for Diwali

How architecture is helping people live sustainably

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

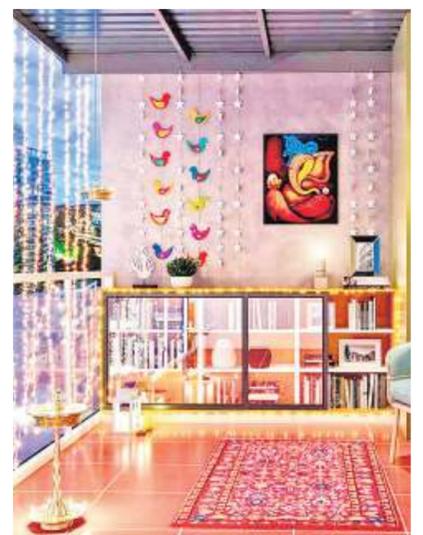
have a lot of alternatives to

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

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

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

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



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

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

Sindhu loses in quarters

PTI ■ ODENSE

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

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

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

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

An Seyoung made a



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

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

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

Sindhu tried to change her tactics by playing high lifts

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

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

On Thursday night, India's

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

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

The 27-year-old from Madhya Pradesh will lock horns with 33-year-old Tommy Sugiarto, a bronze winner at the 2014 World Championships.

However, it proved to be too daunting a task for Lakshya to match Olympic champion Viktor Axelsen as he thrashed the Indian 21-15 21-7 in a lop-sided second-round contest.

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

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

PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

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

Gavaskar feels Kohli will feel lesser pressure now that he has



decided to quit captaincy in the T20 format.

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

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

"So he can focus on his own

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ SHARJAH

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



down the equation to 33 off the last five overs.

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

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

Namibia have joined Sri Lanka in the Super 12s from

Group A.

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

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

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

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

ble-digit score.

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

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

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

T20WorldCupwindow

PANDYA WILL BE AN IMPACT PLAYER FOR INDIA: RAHANE

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

I AM READY TO BACK WARNER'S ABILITY: FINCH

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

F1 title fight could take big swing

AP ■ AUSTIN

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

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

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



Hamilton said Thursday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Teammates could play a huge role Sunday.

Valtteri Bottas drove his Mercedes to victory ahead of Verstappen in Turkey two weeks, and won in Austin in 2019 from pole position.

PTI ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

Last month, BCCI President Sourav

Fifth Test between India and England rescheduled to July 2022



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

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

England) since 2007," Ganguly had said.

India were leading 2-1 when the match was called off after the visiting players refused to step on to the field following positive COVID-19 cases among its support staff, including head coach Ravi

Benzema faces verdict in blackmail trial

AP ■ VERSAILLES (FRANCE)

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

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

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

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

AP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

Arsenal hosts Villa



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

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

Mainz hosts Augsburg with

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

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

Last-place Saint-Etienne is

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

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

SINGLES

JAISMINE EASE INTO SECOND ROUND OF WNB

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

SAMEER TO ENTER QUATERFINALS

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

AMATEUR AVANI WON HERO WDGTN SEASON

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

K RAMYA SREE

'PRABHAS NAMA'

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

Radhe Shyam preparing a love story

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

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

Mass action entertainer Salaar

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

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

Prabhas donning the role of Sri Rama for the first time

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

Science fiction mixed with action for Project K

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

A first-of-its-kind story with Spirit

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

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

K RAMYA SREE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Gaami gains Allu Arjun's praise

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

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

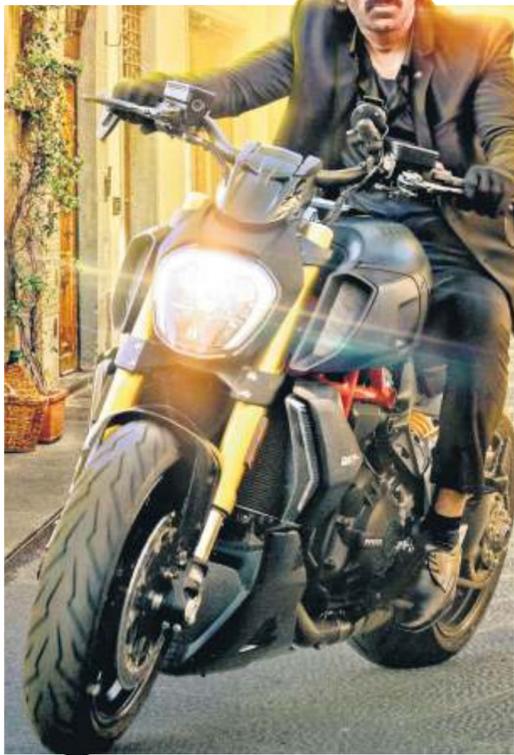
Gaami is helmed by debutant Vidyadhar Kagita and bankrolled by Karthik Sabareesh.



NATYAM WINS VENKAIHAH NAIDU'S APPROVAL



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



Ravi Teja's Khiladi moves to Dubai

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

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

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

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

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

Regina faces netizens' heat

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



SKY IS THE LIMIT



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