

ANALYSIS 7
IMPORT DUTY CUTBACK
ON TESLA IS NO GOOD**MONEY 8**
FM ASKS IBA TO PLAY PIVOTAL ROLE
IN RESURGENCE OF ECONOMY**SPORTS 12**
VIRAT, RAHUL STATIC
AT 4TH & 6TH

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 16, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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NAVEEN'S NEXT
WITH DEBUTANT
DIRECTOR

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INCOME TAX DEPARTMENT RAIDS SIX PLACES LINKED TO ACTOR SONU SOOD

Actor Sonu Sood's premises in Mumbai and a company in Lucknow linked to him were raided by the Income Tax department, sources said today. "A recent deal between Sonu Sood's company and a Lucknow-based real estate firm is under the scanner. The survey operation has been initiated on allegations of tax evasion on this deal," sources in the Income Tax department said. The tax raids come days after the actor's high-profile meeting with Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal, who declared him the brand ambassador for his government's mentorship programme for school students in the capital.

TATAS SUBMIT BID FOR AIR INDIA SALE, CONFIRMS FINANCE MINISTRY

The government is expected to complete the bidding process of debt-laden national carrier Air India on Wednesday (September 15). Tata Sons has apparently submitted its bid for the sale. The airline received financial bids (including Tata's) for its disinvestment process, Finance Ministry said. "Financial bids for Air India disinvestment received by Transaction Adviser. Process now moves to concluding stage," Secretary, Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) stated. Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had earlier made it clear that September 15 deadline for the process is fixed and will not change.

BIG DROP IN ANTIBODIES WITHIN 4 MONTHS OF COVID SHOT, SAYS STUDY

A study of 614 fully vaccinated health workers in India found a "significant" drop in their COVID-fighting antibodies within four months of the first shot. The findings could help the government decide whether to provide booster doses as some Western countries have done. Waning antibodies do not necessarily mean that immunised people lose their ability to counter the disease, as the body's memory cells may still kick in to offer substantial protection, said the director of a state-run institute that did the study.

SC SLAMS CENTRE FOR 'CHERRY PICKING' NAMES FOR TRIBUNALS

The Supreme Court today criticised the government for "cherry picking" from its recommendations for tribunals across the country. The government has been given two weeks to complete tribunal appointments with the Supreme Court sternly saying: "Return with the appointment letters...and if someone is not appointed, then cite the reason." "We are a democratic country. You have to follow the rule of law," Chief Justice NV Ramana said during the hearing in a series of sharp remarks. "I have seen the NCLT (National Company Law Tribunal) appointments.... more recommendations were made.



Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Director of Public Health Dr G Srinivasa Rao and other officials celebrating the administration of 2cr plus doses in Telangana.

State administered 2 crore Covid doses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has achieved a significant milestone in the vaccination program against Covid, as the state has given 2 Crore(20 million) Covid vaccinations in the state, so far.

Somesh Kumar, Chief Secretary, said that that government is planning to achieve administration of another one crore doses in the State

by end of this month. 52% of persons have been covered by at least one dose. In GHMC, almost all people are vaccinated by one dose. He also informed that vaccine was administered to 38 lakh persons from high exposure groups across the state.

The vaccination process started in January, 2021.

2

Power purchase pooled cost pegged at Rs.4.32 per unit

VALLABHANENI SURESH

■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Electricity Regulatory Commission (TSERC) has considered the pooled cost of power purchase of Discoms-Southern and Northern Power Distribution Companies- for the current financial year.

It determined the pooled cost of power purchase as Rs.4.32 per unit for the last financial year and considered it for this year too.

The pooled cost of power purchase means the weighted average pooled price at which the distribution licensee has purchased electricity in the previous year from all long-term energy suppliers, excluding the purchases based on liquid fuel.

There is a provision that the purchases from traders, short-term purchases and purchases from renewable sources shall not be taken into account while determining the pooled cost of power purchase. The average pooled power purchase cost considered sources from TS Genco, National Thermal Power Corporation (NTPC), Neyveli Lignite, Sembcorp and from Chhattisgarh.

Jagan honours KCR's request of 5 members to TTD Board

SNCN ACHARYULU

■ HYDERABAD

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has honoured the request of his Telangana counterpart K Chandrasekhar Rao by accommodating five people recommended by him on the prestigious Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanam (TTD) Board.

These five names have been appointed as regular members of the TTD Board.

Jagan has appointed six people from Telangana to the Board, while one more name will be appointed as a 'special invitee'.

In the previous TTD Board prominent industrialist D Damodar Rao was appointed on the recommendation of KCR, but



his name does not figure in the list of new appointees.

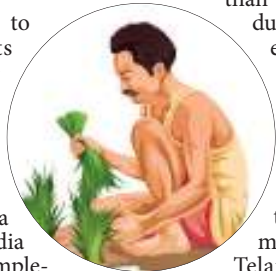
However, the new Board has MSN Laboratories vice-president Jeevan Reddy, appointed on the recommendation of Telangana IT Minister KT Rama Rao. Jeevan Reddy is brother of TRS MP Manne Srinivas Reddy from Mahabubnagar.

2

Telangana farmers yet to receive Rs 353 crore under PM-Kisan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TS farmers are yet to receive installments totaling Rs 353 crore under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi scheme, popularly known as PM-KISAN, according to a report by LibTech India that examines the implementation of PM-KISAN in 32 districts of Telangana.



As per the report, while more than 90% of the amount due was transferred, it is evident that a small but significant amount is still due as 11% of the farmers have not received the amount due to them. The total amount of missed installments in Telangana was Rs 353 crore as of 26 August, translating to money owed to more than

Mumaith Khan quizzed for six hours

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Actress Mumaith Khan appeared before sleuths of the Enforcement Directorate here on Wednesday in connection with the inquiry into the drugs-cum-money laundering case. She was questioned for six hours.

Mumaith Khan was in the list of Telangana Excise Department relating to Tollywood drugs case and was questioned by them in 2017. Mumaith allegedly used drugs and paid money to drug peddler Calvin. The officials are understood to have posed questions on these transactions and verified the bank accounts of Mumaith Khan.

2

Chakali Ilamma's anniversary on Sept 26 becomes rallying point for BCs in Huz'bad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's decision to celebrate Telangana armed struggle leader Chakali Ilamma's birth anniversary on September 26 officially as a State government event has evoked good response from the BC communities, particularly the washermen community.

The timing of the announcement, coming when the Telangana Liberation Day is round the corner, has not only taken some sting out of State BJP leaders' criticism of the TRS government for 'not giving the Telangana Liberation Day its due', but conveyed a message that the State held its Telangana armed struggle and movement leaders in high esteem, say analysts.

The decision has become another rallying point for BC communities in the Huzurabad Assembly constituency of Karimnagar district, where the ruling party is focusing all its attention, awaiting notification for the bye election any time.

On Wednesday, members of various washermen associations met

BCs, washermen associations hail govt's decision, pledge their support to TRS govt

All govt offices to celebrate Ilamma's birth anniversary: Gangula



BC Welfare Minister Gangula Kamalakhar distributing copies of the GO on Chakali Ilamma to members of washermen's associations on Tuesday.

BC Welfare Minister Gangula Kamalakhar at his residence in Karimnagar and felicitated him to express their happiness over the decision to celebrate Chakali Ilamma's birth anniversary every year hereafter.

The Minister handed over copies of the GO issued by the government for organizing birth and death anniversaries of Ilamma as a mark

of respect for an inspiring leader admired by the Telangana society.

Speaking on the occasion, Kamalakhar observed that Chakali Ilamma was "a symbol of revolutionary spirit and inspired the Telangana society to break the shackles of bonded labour under the feudal lords of the then Telangana".

2

India reported 11.8% rise in cyber crime in 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India recorded 50,035 cases of cyber crime in 2020, with a 11.8 per cent surge in such offences over the previous year, as 578 incidents of "fake news on social media" were also reported, official data showed on Wednesday.

The rate of cyber crime (incidents per lakh population) also increased from 3.3 per cent in 2019 to 3.7 per cent in 2020 in the country, according to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data.

In 2019, the country recorded 44,735 cases of cyber crime, while the figures stood at 27,248 in 2018, the data from corresponding years showed.

The year saw 4,047 cases of online banking fraud, 1,093 OTP frauds and 1,194 credit/debit card fraud, while 2,160 cases related to ATM were reported in 2020, the NCRB figures showed.

There were also 578 cases of fake news on social media, 972 related to cyber stalking or bullying of women and children, 149 incidents of fake profile and 98 of data theft, it



added.

In terms of motive, the maximum 60.2 per cent cyber crimes lodged in 2020 were done for fraud (30,142 out of 50,035 cases), the NCRB, which functions under the Ministry of Home Affairs, stated.

It was followed by sexual exploitation with 6.6 per cent (3,293 cases) and extortion 4.9 per cent (2,440 cases), the data showed.

Among states, the maximum 11,097 cyber crime cases were reported in Uttar Pradesh followed by Karnataka (10,741), Maharashtra (5,496), Telangana (5,024) and Assam (3,530), it showed.

2

TODAY**ALMANAC****Month & Paksham:**

Bhadrapada & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Navami 11:16**Nakshatram** : Purva Ashadha 28:56**Time to Avoid** : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)**Rahukalam** : 12:11 pm - 1:42 pm**Yamagandam** : 7:38 am - 9:09 am**Varjyam** : 3:07 pm - 4:39 pm**Gulika** : 10:40 am - 12:11 pm**Good Time** : (to start any important work)**Amritakalam** : 12:19 am - 1:51 am**Abhijit Muhurtham** : Nil**HYDERABAD****WEATHER****Forecast**: Partly cloudy**Temp**: 28/22**Humidity**: 83%**Sunrise**: 6:02 am**Sunset**: 06:19 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated SEPTEMBER 14, 2021 5:00 PM

Sajjanar at it again! Travels incognito as RTC bus passenger

DAVE BENNETT

■ HYDERABAD

It is one thing to observe things as a policeman in mufti and quite another to police the functioning of a public transport corporation a la an undercover agent. In his inimitable style, Telangana State Road Transport Corporation Managing Director V C Sajjanar, on Wednesday travelled in an RTC bus incognito, dressed as a common man, of course without any security personnel in tow.

Sajjanar, after waiting at the Lakdikapul bus-stop, boarded a bus that was on its way from Gandimaissamma to CBS via Afzalgunj. Donning a cap and

wearing a mask, he managed to hide his identity. Sajjanar purchased a ticket, interacted with the passengers, asking them about their experience on TSRTC buses and the corporation's services, without anyone recognising him.

After alighting the bus at the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station, the MD went around the bus station and inspected every nook and cranny of the premises. He made it a point to check the toilets as well.

Sajjanar then held a meeting with Munishekhar, the Executive Director (Hyderabad and Karimnagar), and the Rangareddy Regional Manager as well, who had reached the spot during his inspection.

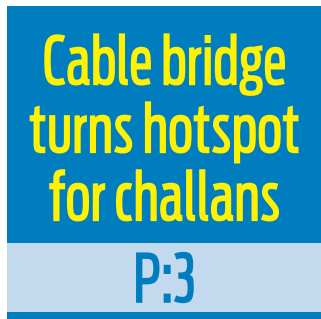
2



Incognito RTC MD VC Sajjanar at the Lakdikapul bus stop and (right) inside the bus interacting with passengers.



Incognito RTC MD VC Sajjanar at the Lakdikapul bus stop and (right) inside the bus interacting with passengers.



Cyber crime doubled every year in Telangana as per NCRB report

G RAVI KIRAN
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State has witnessed a sharp rise of 12% in cyber crimes for the year 2020, according to the NCRB, which released the crime data of 2020 here on Wednesday. Compared to the year 2018, there was an increase in crime in 2019 and at the same time, there was a decline in the number of cases in 2020. Due to the lockdown which was imposed in March 2020, crime rates fell under a few categories. Cyber crimes are on the upswing and are continuously doubling every year in the state, as per the records.

During the year, the Telangana State registered a total of 1,47,504 cases in 2020, while 1,31,254 cases were registered in the year 2019, and 1,26,858 in 2018, according to the Crime in India, 2020 report released by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB).

This includes 1,35,885 crimes in 2020, against 1,18,338 crimes in the year 2019 cases under the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and 12,916 and 11,619 under State and local laws in the years 2019 and 2020 respectively. On an average, 393 cases have been registered per a population of one lakh.

Similarly, in Hyderabad,

18,055 cases were registered in 2020, 18,051 cases were registered in 2019 and where as in 2018 it was 16012 cases.

With 827 people killed in 802 murder cases, Telangana State also reported over two murders per one lakh population and 302 deaths in 244 cases of culpable homicide not amounting to murder and 7,564 'Deaths by Negligence' in 6,615 cases at a rate of 17.6 deaths per lakh population.

Overall, 7,226 people lost their lives in 'Deaths due to Negligence' relating to road accidents in 6,288 cases at a rate of 16.8 deaths per lakh of population. In hit and run cases,

1,365 people lost their lives in 1,332 cases at a rate of 3.5 deaths per lakh population.

Telangana has also recorded 16 deaths due to 'Medical Negligence' and five 'Deaths due to Negligence of Civic Bodies'. A total of 317 deaths were reported due to other forms of negligence and 175 women died due to dowry harassment, and 701 people, which mostly comprised women, died by various forms of torture and harassment.

Due to the lockdown in 2020, crime against women and children and other categories showed a downward slide when compared to 2019.

Whereas cyber crimes were raised in 2020 due to the same lockdown, as people did all their transactions online.

A total of 5024 cyber crime cases were registered in 2020, 2691 cases in 2019 and 1205 cases in 2018.

Almost all the cases were doubled from 2018 to 2019 and also doubled from 2019 to 2020. The same trend was witnessed in Hyderabad. Similarly, 2553 cases were registered in 2020, 1379 cases in 2019 and 428 cases in 2018 were registered. These figures indicate the increase of threat from cyber criminals in Telangana State and as well as Hyderabad.



Harish distributes Rs 2 cr interest-free loans to SHGs

Waiver of farm loans below Rs.1 lakh soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

State Finance Minister T Harish Rao has said that state government is taking measures to waive loans of farmers from Rs 50,000 to below Rs 1 lakh and amount along with interest will be credited into the accounts of farmers soon.

The waiver of loans below Rs 50,000 is nearing completion and for waiver of loans below Rs 1 lakh would be taken up in the next Budget and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is formulating plans for it, he said.

Harish Rao disclosed this at Husnabad of Siddipet district on Wednesday where he laid stone for the double bed room houses along with local people's representatives.

Arrangements were also made by the state government to provide financial assistance for house construction to those with house sites and for this

Rs10,000 crore has been allotted.

In Huzurabad, Harish Rao distributed financial assets to the tune of Rs 2.13 crore to self help groups in Jammikunta town under the loans without interest scheme.

He said another amount of Rs1.5 crore would be sanctioned to other groups before the festival of Bathukamma by taking it to the notice of Chief Minister.

Harish Rao promised to start cottage industries for women in Jammikunta and for it an action plan would be formulated soon. After Telangana was formed, 1.3 lakh posts were filled and recruitment would be taken up for another 50,000 to 60,000 posts. While Telangana government was providing jobs, BJP government was removing existing jobs and closing down public sector organisations. TRS government had been

implementing several welfare schemes like Aasara, Kalyana Lakshmi, Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bima, KCR kits among others and no other State government was implementing so many welfare schemes.

Meanwhile, Social Welfare Minister Koppula Eshwar said the women who were given interest free loans should utilize them for their economic benefit but not for other expenditure. He promised marketing facilities for the products made by the SHG women.

The Ministers urged people to think carefully and elect the party that was welfare oriented. The BJP government has been increasing prices of petrol, diesel, LPG cylinder and closing down PSUs and selling away valuable assets to private sector. One should think who is distributing assets to the poor and who is burdening the poor.

‘India to become the only supplier of C-130J Super Hercules empennage’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tata Lockheed Martin Aerostructures Limited (TLMAL) recently delivered the 150th C-130J Super Hercules empennage from its manufacturing facility located in Adibatla, Hyderabad. The delivery milestone highlights the ongoing success of Lockheed Martin's hallmark 'Make in India' partnership with Tata Advanced Systems Limited (TASL) established more than a decade ago.

TLMAL, a joint venture between TASL and Lockheed Martin Aeronautics, was established in 2010 in alignment with the Indian Air Force's acquisition of its first six C-130J 30 Super Hercules airlifters. TLMAL is the single global source of C-130J empennage assemblies that are installed on all new Super Hercules aircraft produced in Marietta, Georgia, in the United States.

Empennage assemblies produced by TLMAL include the aircraft's horizontal and vertical stabiliz-

ers along with leading edges and tip assemblies. The TLMAL team also previously manufactured sets of C-130J center wing box components and introduced a cutting-edge 4,700 square-meter metal-to-metal bonding facility in May 2018. TLMAL currently employs close to 700 people.

In April 2018, TLMAL increased the indigenization of C-130 manufacturing by transitioning the production of approximately 2,200 (of 2,500+) previously imported empennage components to Tata Sikorsky Aerospace Limited (TSAL), Lockheed Martin's second joint venture with TASL. These components were previously manufactured by suppliers located outside of India. Commenting on the occasion, Sukaran Singh, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer, Tata Advanced Systems Limited, said: "The TASL - Lockheed Martin partnership is a true demonstration of collaborative workmanship in aerospace and defence manufacturing in India."

Drone corridor, Aerospace University on the anvil: KTR

Continued from page 1

KTR recalled his conversation with Jyotiraditya Scindia about manufacturing helicopter components. He said: "I never ever fail to remind my potential investors that the US President's helicopter cabin is also made from Hyderabad. The Civil Aviation Minister was here recently. I mentioned to him this and he said not only cabin, we should ensure the other stuff are also manufactured in Hyderabad. So, hopefully that day would happen and from within

Telangana". The Municipal Administration Minister added that the aerospace sector had registered steady and unprecedented growth over the last five years in TS. The State was also emerging as an Aero Engine cluster. Global aerospace players such as Pratt and Whitney and CFM International have located their India's only engine training centres in Hyderabad. GE has set up a Centre of Excellence in aero engines, while Safran has established an aero engine factory manufacturing complex engine parts.

KTR said, "We are now having discussions with various OEMs to bring aero engine MROs to our aerospace ecosystem". KTR said, "Even during Covid, none of the units functioning from Hyderabad have had to suspend their operations or go through a long phase of shutdown. It was a temporary blip and all employees have shown great resilience".

Over 30% of Mars Orbital Mission (MOM) manufacturing requirements were contributed by Hyderabad-based industries, he said.

India reported...

Continued from page 1

However, the crime rate was highest in Karnataka with 16.2 % followed by Telangana (13.4%), Assam (10.1%), UP (4.8%) and Maharashtra (4.4%), the data showed. Delhi recorded 168 such cases during the year with a crime rate of 0.8 per cent, according to the NCRB, which is responsible for collecting and analysing crime data as defined by the IPC and local laws.

Jagan honours KCR's request of 5 members...

Continued from page 1

On the recommendation of Vizag seer Swarupnanda Swami, Jagan has appointed Lakshminarayana of Sahithi Builders to the TTD Board.

J Rameswar Rao, chairman of My Home Group, Bandi Partha Saradhi Reddy, chairman of Hetero Group and TRS leader from Siddipet Mooramsetti Ramulu continue to serve as members of the new Board, on the recommendation of KCR. Also, Kalvakuntla Vidyasagar Rao TRS MLA from Koratla, a relative of KCR also made it to the Board.

These five names are on the list of regular members.

In addition to these five members, one more name, said to be of a woman reportedly recommended by KTR, will be accommodated in the special invitees list which will be made public soon.

Earlier, doubts were cast whether Jagan would honour the recommendations of KCR in appointing the TTD Board due to the recent dispute over sharing of waters between the two Telugu states.

TS administered 2 crore Covid...

Continued from page 1

Dr G Srinivasa Rao DPH Telangana said, "It is also significant to note that it took 165 days to administer 1 Crore doses and a mere 78 days for the administration of 2 Crore doses". Thanking all the stakeholders, DPH said, "Apart from the commitment of the last level field functionary of health department, the support from line departments, the backup we received from the highest level of Political & Administrative wings, enthusiastic participation of Public for Vaccination at GCHCs & PCHs has made this possible".

The state now looks forward to achieve 100%. Vaccination against Covid and a Covid free Telangana in the near future. As per Cowin dashboard, 2,00,40,525

In total Vaccination Doses have been administered of which Dose 1 was administered to 1,45,12,158 and Dose 2 was given to 55,28,367 beneficiaries. SAM Rizvi, Secretary Health, Lokesh Kumar, GHMC Commissioner, Ronald Rose, Spl. Secretary to Finance, Sarfaraz Ahmed, DPE, Dr. G.Srinivas Rao, DPH, Dr. Gangadhar, OSD to Hon'ble CM were present in the meeting.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹248
Without Skin	₹268
Broiler at Farm	₹137

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	418
VIJAYAWADA	425
VISAKHAPATNAM	425
RETAIL PRICE (in Hyderabad)	₹4.18

TS to oppose move to...

Continued from page 1

Finance Minister T Harish Rao, who has been invited to attend the in-person meeting being held after about 20 months (only virtual meetings were held all these days due to the pandemic), is expected to strongly oppose the proposal to bring petrol and diesel under the GST.

Not only Telangana, many States are likely to oppose the move as it would mean significant fall in their revenues.

For Telangana, its VAT revenue from fuels and liquor, apart from the State excise on liquor, accounts for significant proportion; it was almost 50 per cent of its estimated State Own Tax Revenue of Rs.92,900 crore for 2021-22.

Consumers in Telangana pay over Rs.58 towards taxes, including Rs.32 levied by the Centre as excise duty, on one litre of petrol. Telangana's 35.2 per cent of VAT on each litre of petrol is

among the highest in the country. It collects 27 per cent of VAT on one litre of diesel.

The Telangana government spends considerable part of its total revenue on welfare schemes and spends close to Rs.50,000 crore per annum, excluding the recently announced ambitious 'Dalit Bandhu' scheme, under which each Dalit family would be given a one-time grant of Rs.10 lakh to set up a business, trade or self-employment venture based on the skills of the beneficiary. There are expectations that the States may be persuaded to bring down the VAT rate to give some relief to consumers as an alternative to bringing fuels under the GST regime.

The Centre too, which is looking at excise duty on petroleum products as an easy and attractive source of revenue, may not push the proposal hard, sources said, though it might be compelled to give some relief to consumers.

Chakali Iamma's anniversary on Sept 26 becomes rallying point for BCs in Huz'bad

Continued from page 1

He said that Iamma, born on September 26, 1895 in Krishnapuram of Warangal district, fought valiantly against the tyranny of feudal lords and for freedom from bonded labour of the poor and downtrodden communities. Her dogged refusal to surrender the rights on the crop cultivated by the poor to feudal landlords had sown the seeds for an inspired struggle across Telangana. Though Iamma had lost her son and her family members were subjected to hardships, she did not give up her struggle against

Deshmukh Rapaka Ramchandra Reddy, the Minister recalled. Thanks to her fearless leadership, the struggle for land got intensified and the poor could take possession of about 10 lakh acres of land for cultivation. Kamalakara said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao too, drawing inspiration from Chakali Iamma, had been introducing several welfare and developmental programmes for the benefit of weaker and downtrodden sections.

He said it was a matter of pride to celebrate Iamma's birth anniversary officially on behalf of the BC Welfare

Department and on September 26, Iamma's birth anniversary would be celebrated in all government offices and instructions had been issued to all the District Collectors and the official machinery.

Leaders of Rajaka Sanghams (Washermen associations) pledged their support for the TRS government, which has been implementing several schemes for the welfare of washermen such as modern Dhobhi Ghats, 250 units of free electricity.

Chairman of State Rajaka Associations A Srinivas and other leaders were among those who met Minister Kamalakara.

Telangana farmers yet to receive Rs 353...

Continued from page 1

There are 38,40,670 registered farmers who are eligible for a total of 28,321,570 installments, adding up to Rs 5,664 crore. Of these 3,773,259 farmers benefited by receiving 26,555,628 (93.7%) installments, adding up to Rs 5,311.12 cr.

Nearly 3,413,060 (88.9%) farmers received all installments due to them, while 360,199 (9.3%) farmers received at least one installment and they are yet to receive ? 274.87cr collectively.

About 67,411 (1.75%) farmers did not receive any benefits. On an average, these farmers missed 5.8% installments amounting to ? 78.31 cr in total.

Except for Medchal, in all other districts more than 80% of farmers have received all due installments - a creditable performance. Nagarkurnool, Nalgonda, Yadadri and Narayanpet are the other four districts where scheme implementation is less positive.

In Sangareddy, Rangareddy and Nalgonda, more than Rs 20 crore is due to farmers and this requires urgent resolution, highlights the report.

As a proportion of pay-

ments due - Medchal data shows that more than 12% of the payments have been missed. Rangareddy also has nearly 10% of payments still due. Sangareddy, Vikarabad, Yadadri, Nalgonda, Mulugu and Narayanpet all have more than 7% of the payments still due.

PM Kisan was launched by the Government of India in 2018 to provide income support to farming families. Under this scheme, each farmer's family is entitled to receive ? 6,000 per annum. This amount is paid in three instalments of ? 2,000 to all registered farmers through direct benefit transfers (DBT) to their bank account.

As per the report, "Benefits of the PM KISAN were received by the majority of the registered farmers from the state. However, the number of farmers registered itself is an issue, considering the fact that the state-sponsored Rythu Bandhu has nearly 25 lakh more farmers getting benefits than the farmers registered under PM-KISAN. Even if we consider the issues like income tax payees, ROFR farmers, and only one beneficiary per family being reasons for the gap; 25 lakhs is a huge number.

FOOD CORPORATION OF INDIA
Regional Office- 4, Nehru Place, Tank Road, Jaipur-15 (Rajasthan)
E-tender Notice
An e-tender notice is invited, under two-bid system for appointment of regular Road Transport Contractor on GeM Portal for two years from various dispatching Centers to various receiving centers of Rajasthan region.
Under e-tender notice ROAD CONTRACT/RTC/03/2021, the bids shall be accepted ONLINE from 16.09.2021, 02:30 PM to 06.10.2021, 02:00 PM. All the Terms & Conditions and other details are available on Government E-Marketplace (GeM) Portal website https://gem.gov.in and Corporation's website www.fci.gov.in.
General Manager (Region)

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Cable bridge turns hotspot for challans

Cyberabad cops issue 7,463 challans for violations in a year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police have issued 7,463 challans in less than a year slapping a fine of Rs 1,000 in each case for violation of traffic rules by commuters while travelling on the cable-stayed suspension bridge on Durgam Cheruvu, which emerged as an icon in the city. The challans were imposed for over speeding, exceeding the prescribed speed limit of 30-40 kmph, for performing bike stunts by the unruly youth, posing for selfies climbing onto the bridge railing, taking selfies in the middle of the road obstructing the movement of the traffic, dancing in the middle of the bridge under tipsy conditions, cutting cakes in the middle of the bridge turning the suspension bridge into a major entertainment spot.



Some youth even post the images in social media and making them viral. The Cyberabad Police say that all these activities were prohibited on the bridge.

Employees and common man appreciate the state government of Telangana for

building a cable suspension bridge on Durgam Cheruvu.

To detect violators of the speed limit, the officials have installed cameras on the bridge. If anyone is detected crossing the limit, the police authorities are issuing challans.

During the past one year or

so, the police have registered 115 cases against the violators of rules and registered FIRs.

Cases were filed against five persons for causing inconvenience to other vehicle riders by cutting cake, 63 for indulging in other prohibited activities on the bridge, while a case was filed against a youth for performing bike stunts on the bridge and against another person for dancing on the bridge. Besides, cases were filed against 45 for taking selfies on the bridge. They were presented in court and awarded punishments.

The Cyberabad Traffic Police made it clear that the speed of the vehicles should not exceed 30-35 kmph on the cable suspension bridge. The authorities have fixed this speed limit on the nature of the road and strength of the cables.

The police have set their sights on 37 types of traffic rules violations on the bridge and issued challans on 7463 persons in the first year of throwing the bridge for public. Of them, 4492 challans were issued for parking the vehicles on the bridge in the most dangerous way.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Venkateswarlu advised the people against objectionable behaviour. He wanted the people to enjoy the beautiful cable suspension bridge in peace. If anyone behaves objectionably, the CCTV cameras will record their activities. Cases will be registered according to the seriousness of the offence. So far, 115 cases were registered. He said that disciplinary action was inevitable against those who violate the rules.

Cyb Bharosa centres flooded with domestic violence cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Bharosa centre has dealt with a total of 82 cases in the month of August alone, with 80 of those cases being related to domestic violence.

Officials said that 34 of those complaints were received through SHE teams, 15 were direct walk-ins, 13 through police stations, 11 through WhatsApp and other forms of complaints including through post.

While in 25 of the cases, the couples were reunited, 16 were on hold, 13 were sent for legal maintenance, 15 were sent to police stations and FIRs were filed, 9 were given counselling over the phone and two were referred to a psychologist.

Bharosa officials also registered two POCSO cases and are dealing with them accord-



ingly by filing FIRs. The Bharosa team counsels the children who are victims in POCSO cases with help of clinical psychologists so that the incident shall not impact their future psychological well being.

Police said that de-addiction workshops are being conducted at Bharosa Centre, Cyberabad for the families

affected by alcoholism, where women were being harassed by their alcoholic husbands.

"When a petitioner approaches Bharosa, depending upon the physical and mental condition of the complainant, the case will be referred to a social counsellor, clinical psychotherapist or legal counsellor," said a police official.

Man held for abusing minor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chatrinaka Police arrested one person on charges of sexually abusing a minor girl at Rakshampuram on Wednesday.

The accused identified as Mujeeb-ur-Rahman, 21, who was in an inebriated condition, approached the girl who was riding a bicycle and behaved in an inappropriate manner with her.

On noticing this, some local youth thrashed him and informed the police.

Mujeeb-ur-Rahman was taken into custody and a case was booked under sections of the IPC and the POSCO Act.

Drunk driver held for crash that killed two

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Shabad Police on Wednesday arrested the driver of the container truck following a road mishap in which two youngsters were killed under the lorry at Sardarnagar village in Shabad. The arrested person was identified as Syed Mathin, 35, a driver from Erragadda in Shaikpet. The owner of the truck, Mohammad Azhar, is absconding, said the police officials.

On 8 September, Syed Mathin drove a container truck in a rash and dangerous manner and under the influence of alcohol. Mathin lost control of the truck and it fell on a two-wheeler killing the rider and the pillion rider instantly. The



deceased persons, Papireddygudem Pavan and Mutpuri Vikranth, were two 18-year-old mechanics and were passing by Tirumala wines at Sardarnagar village in Shabad, when they were killed

on the spot due to the negligence of the truck driver, said the police.

Mathin's blood alcohol test reading was 237 mg/100 ml of blood, whereas the legally permissible limit in India is only

30 mg/100 ml of blood. The Shabad Police registered a case and began an investigation. Police officials said that Mathin drove the vehicle under the influence of alcohol and at a high speed in a dangerous manner, knowing clearly that it was highly dangerous and can cause serious accidents, which amounts to culpable homicide not amounting to murder. The owner of the container lorry, Mahammad Azhar, does not possess valid vehicle insurance and is punishable under the Motor Vehicle Act.

Mathin was arrested and remanded to judicial custody for a period of 14 days, while a hunt is on to nab Azhar, said the police.

HMDA allots plots to ORR oustees in RR

PNS ■ MEDCHAL, MALKAJGIRI

The Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has allotted plots to the victims of the Outer Ring Road (ORR) project through the lottery method.

Among the 27 oustees of the Srinagar village of the Maheshwaram mandal of the Ranga Reddy district, 17 were allotted plots on Wednesday.

Speaking on the occasion after handing them allotment letters, Hyderabad Growth Corridor Limited Project Director and ORR Special Collector Santhosh lauded the efforts of the farmers who voluntarily donated their lands so that the project could see the light of the day. Otherwise, the Outer Ring Road would not have been possible, he added. He thanked the farmers for giving up their lands.

HMDA State Estate Officer B Gangadhar, ORR Special Project Officer B Aparna, Tahsildar M Bhikshapathi and others were present on the occasion.



Parl Committee visits Bharosa centre in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Committee for Women Safety constituted by the Parliament visited the Bharosa Centre at Hyderabad on Wednesday.

The Committee for Women Safety from the Indian Parliament consisting of Dr Heena Vijay Kumar Gavitt, Jharna Das Baidya, Locket Chatterjee, Mamata Mohanta, Ramya Haridas, Malothu Kavitha, Riti Pathak, Satadai Roy (Banerjee), Gomati Sai, Geetha Vishwanath Vanga, Vandana Chavan, Chaya Verma, Queen Oja along with director of Lok Sabha MLK Raja, additional director Reena Gopala Krishnan, committee officer Radha Negi, assistant committee officer Raji Manish and joint secretary Navneet Mohan

Kothari visited the Bharosa Centre of Hyderabad City Police. They were received by the Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar, Additional CP, Crimes & SIT Shikha Goel and Additional Dy CP Sirisha Raghavendra.

The members of the Committee were explained the functioning of the Bharosa Centre, child-friendly court, counselling centres and all the facilities such as legal services, counselling services, medical facilities, child recreation room, victim compensation services for POCSO and Rape cases etc, which is under one roof and is perhaps the only place in the country to have such facility. The Committee appreciated and lauded the efforts made by the Hyderabad City Police in this regard.



Several idols of Ganesh were immersed in Hussain Sagar and other water bodies across Hyderabad on the fifth day of the Ganapati festival. There was no report of any untoward incident during the fifth day immersions on Wednesday.

—SV Chary

Cops intensify efforts to nab accused, release more clues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad City Police are intensifying their efforts to nab the accused Raju in the case of rape and murder of a six-year-old girl at Singareni Colony in Hyderabad.

The police officials on Wednesday released more photos and clues to identify the prime suspect in the rape and murder of a six-year-old child at Saidabad.

In this connection, under three commissionerates of the city, they have setup different teams to search for the accused. The police have informed that they are searching in public places like parks, bus stations, railway stations, metro stations, shopping malls and others. As they are suspecting that the accused would be in Hyderabad, they have focused on the city and in the surrounding areas. On the other side, locals of the

Singareni Colony are trying to mount pressure on politicians to take decisions on the encounter of the accused.

On Wednesday, Janasena Chief Pawan Kalyan visited the colony and interacted with the father of the victim.

Criticising the role of the police in this regard, he said that the police have not acted promptly, though the parents of the victim suspected the accused earlier itself and informed the same to the police. He has promised that his party would wage a relentless struggle to ensure justice to the victim. He said that the accused should be nabbed and punished.

Leaders of several political parties also demanded speedy justice for the family members of the victim.

Different pictures of the accused are being circulated in the social media.

Cops form teams

The Cyberabad Police Commissioner, Stephen Raveendra, on Wednesday said that the Cyberabad Police have also joined the hunt for the Saidabad rape accused.

The accused person, identified as Raju, remains at large despite efforts by the Hyderabad Police. Following instructions from the Telangana Director General of Police, M Mahender Reddy, the Cyberabad Police have now joined in on the hunt to nab the absconding accused.

The Cyberabad Police have formed teams including officials from Special Operations Team (SOT), mufti police, Special Branch (SB) and local law and order police stations to trace the accused, said the Cyberabad Commissioner.

10-yr-old boy drowned in pit

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 10-year-old was found drowned in a pit filled with water at Hayathnagar late on Tuesday night.

The deceased child was identified as Anirudh, a resident of Hanuman Nagar. Anirudh had gone out to play with his friends on a bicycle

informing his parents in the evening, but did not return. Relatives who realised he was missing searched for him, but could not find him.

Police said that Anirudh slipped and fell into the pit, which was filled with rain water while cycling and playing. The Hayathnagar police retrieved the body.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The surgeons at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS) have successfully conducted a heart transplant surgery on a 30-year-old painter on Wednesday.

The donor heart, which was retrieved from a 34-year-old constable M Veerababu, who was declared as brain dead at Yashoda Hospitals, Malakpet, was transported in 12 minutes after traffic authorities created a green channel and cleared traffic between Malakpet and NIMS Punjagutta. The donor heart was transported in an ambulance, which started at around 1.44 pm from Yashoda Hospitals and reached NIMS by 1.56 pm on Wednesday.



Veerababu, who was working at Kondapur, was on leave and went to his native Khammam on personal work. While returning, his two-wheeler was hit by a bus at Gollagudem, Khammam. The

constable was immediately rushed to a local hospital and later shifted to Yashoda Hospitals, Malakpet. According to the attending neuro-physicians, despite providing intensive treatment to

revive the constable, the prognosis continued to remain poor. With no improvement in sight, the neuro-physicians had to declare Veerababu as brain dead due to severe head injuries. A series of grief counselling sessions later, the family members including his wife, decided to donate the organs of Veerababu to needy patients under Jeevandana organ donation initiative.

This is for the first time that a donor heart has been allotted to a patient at NIMS from a private hospital. Due to the chronic heart condition of the painter, the transplant surgeons at NIMS had registered his name in Jeevandana on Tuesday and within a day, the hospital was allocated with a

matching donor heart under Jeevandana.

In the last few years, the surgeons at NIMS have successfully conducted five heart transplants. However, all the five heart transplants were from the donor hearts retrieved from patients who were declared as brain dead at NIMS.

"We thank the traffic authorities for creating the green channel, which ensured the donor heart was transported to NIMS quickly. Despite the Covid pandemic, organ transplant surgeries have continued to be taken up in Hyderabad. We urge people to pledge organs for the novel cause," in-charge, Jeevandana, Dr G Swarnalatha said.

Tribals continue to battle for lands

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

The forest officials have been forcibly evicting the Chenchus, Girijans and Adivasi farmers who have been practising Podu in the Nallamala forests and reserve forest area for several generations without creating rights on the lands being cultivated by them. The livelihood of the tribals depends on procurement of forest produce and practising Podu.

It has become customary for the forest authorities to forcibly evict the tribal farmers annually at the time of tilling the land during the commencement of agriculture season.

The tribals have been eagerly awaiting that the government would create title on the forest lands being tilled by them under Podu for the past seven years. But the government did not come to their rescue, it is alleged.

The Left parties have been waging struggles continuously for the rights of tribals, adivasis and implementation of the relevant laws. While endowments lands, tank beds, plain



lands, burial grounds, Wakf Board lands, Nalas are freely encroached upon and changing hands through registration, the state government initiated no action against such persons but targeted the Podu farmers for taking action.

It is atrocious to trample upon the rights of the Adivasis, tribal and Adivasi leaders said breathing fire on the government.

Realtors, Ministers and MLAs have been freely encroaching upon the hundreds of acres of government lands freely, but the rulers of the state apparently not both-

ered about it, they complain.

However, the government is accused of targeting the Adivasis cultivating Podu lands in remote forest areas. The government is magnifying the Adivasis land rights out of proportions and causing trouble to them, the left parties' leaders said.

Several have injured in the clashes that took place between tribals and forest officials that had taken place at Kollapur, Amrabad, Atchampet, Balmur forest areas.

Cases have been foisted against tribals in these clashes. In 24 districts of the state, trib-

als practise Podu cultivation. Over 2 lakh tribal farmers cultivate 6.98 lakh acres under Podu and applied to the government for creation of title for the lands they till.

So far, the government of undivided Andhra Pradesh gave pattas to cultivate only 3,05,300 acres and did not dispose even 50 per cent of the total applications. It has been delaying creation of title. The revenue and forest officials then told that the government had rejected 82,000 applications. Over 18,660 applications have been kept pending so far.

When questioned the inordinate delay, the government foisted robbery cases against tribals and invoking the provisions of the PD Act against them, the tribals allege.

The boundary problem of the patta lands given to the tribals remained unresolved. The patta given by one department is rejected by other department giving a lot of trouble to Adivasis.

During 2018 elections, the CM went on record saying that he would personally ensure that pattas are given to Podu lands, but there was no sight of the pattas so far.

When tribals question this, the police would foist false cases against them.

The tribals demand that the government should order survey of Podu lands in the light of the New Revenue Act and allot survey numbers according to the laws of the forest and revenue departments and distribute title deeds among the Adivasis. They also demand lifting of the false cases foisted on the Chenchus, Girijans and Adivasis.

Ensure 100% vaccination in every habitation: Somesh tells Collectors

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Wednesday instructed the District Collectors to take all the necessary steps for 100 percent coverage in the coming special vaccination drive to be held all over the State from September 16.

Somesh Kumar told the Collectors to take cooperation from all the concerned departments to make sure that the special drive would be a grand success. A target has been fixed to give three lakh doses every day. The vaccination should be completed and declared as 100 percent covered in every habitation in rural areas and in every ward in urban areas.

The Chief Secretary held a video conference from Hyderabad with District Collectors, Zilla Prishad Chairpersons, additional Collectors, ZP CEOs, Municipal Commissioners, ZP officials, DM&HOs and others.



He gave directions and instructions for working in coordination for achieving the targets. The DM&HOs should get ready with clear plans. A control room should be set up in every district. Stickers should be pasted on every house where all the family members were vaccinated fully.

Somesh Kumar stressed the need for taking up this vaccination drive with a missionary zeal and all the officials from different departments should be involved. Already, over 2 crore people have already been given vaccines in the State. The elected representatives and officials had worked well to make this possible. The med-

ical and health and all the concerned departments had done well to bring Covid under control.

District Collector Hanumantha Rao told the CS that all the necessary arrangements have been made for the special vaccination drive in the district. Over 41,367 rapid tests and 8,158 RT-PCR tests have been conducted in the district from July 1 till today. Over 40 Government vaccination centres were opened in the district. Over 14.5 lakh people were eligible for vaccination and 5,75,444 people were vaccinated so far. From July to September 14, over 2,67,900 persons were given vaccines.

GANESH 'NIMAJJANAM'

'Government failed to present its case'

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Confusion over the immersion of Ganesh idols in the city prevailed due to the anti-Hindu and minorities' appeasement policy of the TRS government, alleges Rangareddy Urban district BJP president Sama Ranga Reddy.

In a statement on Wednesday, Ranga Reddy said the state government is treating the Hindus as the vote bank and failed to honour the sentiments of the Hindus. The HC Bench directions on Ganesh idols immersion stand as testimony to this.

Hindus in society are in a confused state over immersion of Ganesh idols as the govern-



ment failed to present its arguments forcibly before the HC on the PILs filed before the court, he felt.

Right from the beginning, the government, rather intentionally, did not plead its case forcefully before the HC on the

PILs about immersion of the PoP Ganesh idols harming environment, he alleged and noted that the court issued these orders as the counsel for the government abstained from attending court. Moreover, instead of present-

ing the case effectively the government sent its reply through e-mails, acting negligently, prior to commencement of the court, he said.

The government did not act properly on court directions as it is fully engrossed in minority appeasement. Moreover, the government has the evil intent of hurting sentiments of the Hindus, he alleged.

The government hatched a plan to convince the Hindus in society that it could not conduct Ganesh immersion properly due to court directions, he alleged.

Had the government taken perfect stand on the PILs, the current situation would not have raised at all.

Begin special vaccination camps in all municipal wards: Errabelli

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao has asked officials to start special vaccination camps in all habitations and municipal wards from September 16 to administer Covid vaccines to those who have crossed 18 years of age.

Participating in the video conference, addressed by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Wednesday from Hyderabad, from Hannakonda Collectorate, Dayakar Rao has asked authorities to conduct a door-to-door survey in all habitations and wards and paste a sticker on the house with statistical data on how many have received the vaccine and how



many are yet to receive it.

He appealed to District Panchayat Officers, ZP CEOs, municipal Commissioners, MPDOs, MPOs, sarpanches, zPTCs to take part in the exercise to make it grand success. Sarpanches should make all arrangements for erection of tents, providing chairs, drinking water and food arrangements for the government staff taking part in the survey.



Call to emulate Mokshagundam

PNS ■ MEDAK

Director of Megha Engineers and Infrastructures Limited (MEIL) P Ravi Reddy has called upon everyone in the country to strive to emulate renowned engineer Mokshagundam Visvesvaraya and forge ahead in their career.

His birth anniversary (Sep 15) is celebrated as Engineers' Day in the country.

Speaking as the chief guest at the Engineers' Day celebrations held in the BV Raju Engineering College held at Narsapur, near here, on Wednesday, Ravi Reddy advised students to acquire training in technical skills and inculcate the habit of observing new things.

He described Visvesvaraya was the best engineering brain in the country and was awarded Bharat Ratna for scaling dizzy heights in engineering. College principal Dr Lakshmi Prasad, College's Head of Department for Civil Engineering Dr Sridevi, Administrative Officers Bapiraju and Ashok Reddy and others took part in the event.

Pandal organisers told to observe precautions

PNS ■ MULUGU

Assistant Superintendent of Police Sai Chaitanya has sensitised the sarpanches of villages in Mulug Mandal and Ganesh pandal organisers in the mandal about the do's and don'ts during the Ganesh Nimajjanam processions.

He told them that the police department has put in many precautions to rule out any untoward incident during the immersion.

During the Ganesh Sobha Yatra, in case of any eventual-ity, the police officials advised

the organisers to inform the control room immediately.

The police department has appealed to people to observe the following precautions and cooperate with the police in ensuring smooth immersion of Ganesh idols:

The police officials prohibited the participation of children and the elderly in the 'Sobha Yatra'.

The vehicles taking part in the procession should not be overcrowded, while the people taking part in the procession should not be in an inebriated state.



Fall of TRS will begin from Gajwel, predicts Congress

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

The fall of the TRS will begin from Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's home constituency - Gajwel, said TPCC general secretary and Dalit Bandhu Siddipet district coordinator Fayeem.

The TRS government has launched the Dalit Bandhu prior to Huzurabad by-elections only to cheat the Dalits, he alleged.

The TPCC took out a rally through Dalit colonies of the town on Wednesday appealing to the party leaders and activists to make the September 17 Dalit Dandora to be held in Gajwel to highlight the anti-people's policies of the government. Later, the TPCC leaders garlanded Ambedkar statue and paid tributes.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion, Fayeem demanded KCR to implement Dalit Bandhu for all Dalits in all constituencies of the state if the CM is sincere about the welfare of the Dalits.



At every step injustice was done to the Dalits - in allotment of 2BHK houses or government jobs or allotting 3 acres of land to the landless Dalits - in KCR government, he said.

As if it is not enough, the KCR government coined the scheme Dalit Bandhu to dupe the Dalits again, he said.

For Dalit Bandhu to implement in all constituencies, he asked the MLAs to mount pressure on government by tendering their resignations.

He called upon people, leaders of political parties and activists to turn out in large numbers at the Gajwel meeting.

Contrary to his claims of making a Dalit as the Chief Minister and remain as a watch dog, the CM is looting the state, he alleged.

Besides several congress leaders SC cell, Mahila cell, BC leaders, minority leaders, NSUI and youth Congress leaders and activists took part in the rally.



'Make Shah's meet a roaring success'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Adilabad MP Soyam Bapu Rao, Bharatiya Janata Party state senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy, state vice president NVSS Prabhakar have appealed to the people to attend in big numbers to the public meeting of Union Home Minister Amit Shah at Nirmal on September 17 and make it a roaring success.

Union Home Minister Amit Shah would visit Nirmal on September 17 to address a public meeting on September 17 on the occasion of Telangana Liberation Day and also to stress on the demand to celebrate Liberation Day officially. The public meeting would be held at Veyyi Udala Marri near Nirmal where 1000 Telangana Liberation fighters have been hanged by Razakars during the fight against the erstwhile Nizam Government. As part of their efforts to

gather people for the public meeting in big numbers Bapu Rao, Narayana Reddy and Prabhakar have toured Vastapur village and nearby hamlets of Nirmal district where Gonds and Adivasis live in big numbers.

They wanted the people to attend big numbers to support the demand for official celebration of Liberation Day. The people have responded positively and promised their support.

Speaking on the occasion they stated that September 17, 1948 was a day to be written in golden letters in the history of Telangana as the erstwhile Hyderabad State has been merged with Union of India.

They said that Bharatiya Janata Party has been demanding the government to celebrate 'Telangana Liberation Day' officially since long. They said Union Home Minister Amit Shah would stress on the demand in the public meeting.

Help ryots in storing paddy: DC to officials

PNS ■ WARANGAL

District Collector B Gopi told the district officials concerned to be prepared for the purchase of paddy. Addressing the officials at the Collectorate here on Wednesday regarding the procurement of paddy during the monsoon season, he said that steps should be taken to provide proper facilities to the farmers for the purchase of paddy without any trouble at the 174 paddy centres in the district.

Earlier, he said that the officials of the Civil Supplies Department used to find out from the farmers as to how long it took for the money to be credited into their accounts. They used to find out from the rice mill owners and district marketing officials about their targets. Farmers should not face inconvenience during the rainy season, the Collector said.

He said that farmers should be provided with weighing machines, gunny bags and turpolin, he added.

12 veterinary hospitals to come up in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav said that the state government of Telangana took up the construction of 12 veterinary hospitals at places like Devarakadra, Jagtial, Mirdoddi, Vanaparathi and Sattenapalli at a cost of Rs 7.53 crore.

The Minister directed the officials concerned to supervise the speedy construction of these hospitals.

Addressing the district officials of the Animal Husbandry Department from his office

chambers here on Wednesday through a video conference, the Minister said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao raised the price of a sheep from Rs 1.25 lakh to Rs 1.75 lakh. As a result, the share of beneficiaries also got increased by Rs 12, 500, he added. He said that the Chief Minister was taking a lot of interest in the rearing of sheep in the state.

He directed the officials of the concerned departments to hold gram sabha meetings educate the beneficiaries and collect their Demand Drafts. He said that sheep would be



distributed to the 595 beneficiaries who have already paid

their DDs. He said that the government took a decision to

set up markets with the basic amenities in all the districts for purchasing sheep. The officials should chalk out plans for setting up meat processing units. The district Collectors were told to scout for 5 acres of land in this regard, he added.

The Minister said that there was a need for breeding good quality sheep through artificial insemination. He said that during the first phase, around 5.6 lakh cattle were given artificial insemination against a target of 5.12 lakh. There was a need to monitor the func-

tioning mobile veterinary medical centres at the field level and efforts should be made to vaccinate the cattle, he added.

The Minister said that suitable vacant lands of the TSLDA should be identified for growing cattle fodder. Already, land was identified in the 72 veterinary hospitals in 24 districts, he added. He directed the officials to cooperate and coordinate with the departments concerned to provide better medical facilities to the cattle and enhance milk production.

INDIA CORNER

400 families left homeless in Malda as villages fall prey to Ganga erosion

Around 400 families were left homeless in West Bengal's Malda district as their villages on the bank of the Ganges were washed away due to erosion, officials said on Wednesday. Large parts of Sarkatola, Mukundatola and Lalutola villages in Birnagar 1 panchayat of Kaliachak 3 block were washed away due to river erosion, they said. The affected families, around 400, have been provided shelter in different schools and a field in the area, they added. As relief, they have been provided rice, chura (flattened rice) and jaggery, said panchayat head Sima Halder. A number of houses, a temple, an overhead water tank, a road and paddy fields went into the river due to erosion, she said. An area of 500 m in length and 150 m in width was lost due to the erosion that happened over 10 hours on Sunday, she added. The total number of displaced people is around 3,000, officials said. Minister of State for Irrigation Sabina Yasmin visited the spot along with District Magistrate Rajarshi Mitra to take stock of the situation. Yasmin said the erosion of the Ganges is a national problem and the Centre should immediately take steps to arrest it. "I have already spoken to Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee over the issue," she said.

BJP-RSS 'fake Hindus', they 'use' religion: Rahul Gandhi

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Wednesday attacked the BJP-RSS, alleging that they were 'fake Hindus' who use religion for their benefit. Addressing the foundation day of the All India Mahila Congress here, Gandhi said that the ideology of the Congress was completely opposite of the BJP-RSS and only one of the two ideologies can rule the country. Asserting that Goddess Lakshmi stands for the power that helps one attain one's goals and Goddess Durga stands for the power that protects, the former Congress chief said while his party had strengthened these powers when in government, the ruling BJP dispensation have diminished these powers. "Ye kis prakar ke Hindu hain. Ye jhoote Hindu hain. Ye Hindu dharm ka prayog karte hain, ye dharm ki dalali karte hain, magar ye Hindu nahin hain (What kind of Hindus are they? They are fake Hindus. They use Hindu religion, they are brokers of religion, but they are not Hindus," Gandhi said, attacking the BJP-RSS.

Cabinet apprised of India-Italy MoU on disaster management

The Union Cabinet was on Wednesday apprised about an MoU signed between the NDMA and an Italian government entity for cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction and management. The memorandum of understanding (MoU), signed in June 2021, seeks to put in place a system, by which both India and Italy will benefit from the disaster management mechanisms of each other. The meeting of the Union Cabinet, chaired by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, was apprised about the MoU between the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Department of Civil Protection of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers of the Italian Republic on cooperation in the field of disaster risk reduction and management, an official statement said. The MoU seeks to put in place a system, whereby both India and Italy will benefit from the disaster management mechanisms of each other and it will help in strengthening the areas of preparedness, response and capacity building in the field of disaster management, it said.

Terror suspect nabbed by Delhi cops had links with 'D- Company'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra Anti-Terrorism Squad on Wednesday claimed that terror suspect Jaan Mohammad Sheikh, arrested along with five others by the Delhi Police, had links with the 'D-Company' about 20 years back. 'D-Company' is a term used to refer to the underworld criminal syndicate controlled by fugitive don Dawood Ibrahim. The Delhi Police's Special Cell on Tuesday busted a Pakistan-organised terror module with the arrest of six men, including two Pak-ISI trained terrorists, officials said. The terrorists were allegedly planning several blasts across the country, including Delhi, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra, during the festivals of Ganesh Chaturthi,



Navratri and Ramleela, they said. Out of the six arrested men, Sheikh (47) hails from Mumbai and his family here was questioned and his home was searched by the Mumbai Police and the Maharashtra

On Wednesday, Maharashtra ATS chief Vineet Agarwal told reporters here that Sheikh was a 'henchman of the D-Company' and followed directions "from the other side of the border" when he was connected with it. The official said they have come across a "link of Sheikh with the D-Company almost 20 years back". A case had been registered against Sheikh by Pydhonie police here (at that time) in connection with firing and vandalism in the city, the official said, adding that like other accused, Sheikh was also on the radar of police. On September 13, he boarded the Golden Temple train (from Mumbai) to go to Hazrat Nizamuddin (in Delhi), but he was caught by the Delhi Police when he reached Kota in Rajasthan, the state ATS

Delhi HC notice to EC over PIL on offer of cash transfer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Wednesday questioned the Election Commission why it was "shying away" from taking action against political parties who are in violation of its guidelines on "corrupt practices" and sought its response on a PIL to declare offer of cash transfer in manifestos as a corrupt electoral practice. "Why are you shying from taking action? Start taking action. Don't just issue notices and letters. Let us see what action you are taking. Proposed actions also, you can state," said a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Jyoti Singh. The remarks were made by the bench after the counsel for the poll panel said that it has already issued guidelines in relation to "corrupt practices" and sent the same to the political parties. The bench said the Election



Commission should start taking action in view of the guidelines. The high court also sought response from the Centre on the petition which said such "note for vote" promises are in violation of Section 123 of the Representation of Peoples Act which deals with corrupt practices and bribery. The bench also sought the stand of two political parties - Indian National Congress (INC) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) -- as the petition said that "INC and TDP in 2019 general election offered cash to certain section of the society.

The INC (announced) the Nyuntam aay Yogyna -- NYAY scheme and offered to put Rs 72,000 (yearly)." It was hearing the public interest litigation (PIL) filed by two advocates -- Parashar Narayan Sharma and Capt. Gurvinder Singh -- whose counsel contended that offering of cash without any work in election manifestos has to be declared illegal. The high court, which posted the next hearing on September 24, was told by senior counsel Soumya Chakraborty, appearing for the petitioners, that "when cash is offered, not against any labour, it is not supported by any policy." In COVID, funds were put in accounts of people. (But) it was an extraordinary situation. If political parties start the trend of giving money not against any work, our industries, agriculture will finish," he submitted.

India hits out at Pakistan, OIC for raising Kashmir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Wednesday hit out at Pakistan as well as the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) for raising the Kashmir issue at the UN Human Rights Commission and said the grouping has "helplessly" allowed itself to be held "hostage" by Islamabad. At the 48th session of the human rights council, India said Pakistan has been globally recognised as a country openly supporting, training, financing and arming terrorists including UN proscribed terrorists as a matter of state policy. India's response was delivered by Pawan Badhe, first secretary in India's permanent mission in Geneva. Exercising India's rights to respond to comments made by Pakistan and the OIC on Kashmir, Badhe said it does not need lessons from a "failed state" like Pakistan which is the "epicentre of terrorism and worst abuser of human rights". He said it has become a habit for Pakistan to misuse the platforms provided by the council to propagate its false and malicious propaganda against India. "The council is aware of Pakistan's attempts to divert the

council's attention from serious human rights violations being perpetrated by its government, including in the territories occupied by it," Badhe said. "India, as not only the world's largest democracy but a robustly functional and vibrant one, does not need lessons from a failed state like Pakistan which is the epicentre of terrorism and worst abuser of human rights," he said. The Indian diplomat said Pakistan has failed to protect the rights of its minorities, including Sikhs, Hindus, Christians and Ahmadis. "Thousands of women and girls from minority communities have been subjected to abductions, forced marriages and conversions in Pakistan and its occupied territories," Badhe said in his statement. "Pakistan has been engaged in systematic persecution, forced conversions, targeted killings, sectarian violence and faith-based discrimination against its ethnic and religious minorities," he said. Badhe said incidents of violence against minority communities, including attacks on their places of worship, their cultural heritage, as well as their private property have taken place with impunity in Pakistan.

Gaganyaan mission likely to be launched by 2022

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's 'Gaganyaan' mission is likely to be launched by the end of 2022 or early 2023, Union minister Jitendra Singh said on Wednesday. The mission, originally scheduled for a launch by 2022, was delayed due to coronavirus pandemic. It aims to launch a manned mission in the Lower Earth Orbit. "We could have actually done this (launched Gaganyaan by 2022). We had planned to time it along the 75th anniversary of India's Independence, but it could not happen that way because of the inevitable delay caused due to COVID-19. "But I am sure, maybe by the



end of next year or may be (by) the beginning of 2023, we would be able to do that as well," he said. Singh, the Minister of State in the Department of Space, was addressing a webinar on 'Future of India-Oceania Space Technology Partnerships' organised by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry (FICCI) here.

He further said a brain-storming exercise by space scientists and government officials in 2015-16 helped them understand where space technology could be used. "Space technology has a role to play, virtually, in every sector," he asserted. Space technology has come very handy in the area of disaster management, the minister said, adding that space medicine is also deeply connected in the endeavour to send three Indians to space. According to the government, four biological and two physical science related micro-gravity experiments from academic institutions are shortlisted for unmanned mission of the Gaganyaan programme.

HC permits abortion of 26 week pregnancy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Kerala High Court has permitted termination of the 26 week long pregnancy of a minor rape victim, at her risk, saying that freedom of a pregnant woman in making a choice as to whether the pregnancy should be continued cannot be taken away. The court also said that under the Medical Termination of Pregnancy Act, where any pregnancy is alleged by the pregnant woman to have been caused by rape, the anguish caused by such a pregnancy shall be presumed to constitute a grave injury to the mental health of the pregnant woman. In view of the provision under the Act and having regard to the victim's age and the circumstances of her pregnancy, its con-

tinuance "would involve grave injury to her physical and mental health" and "it is in the interest of justice to permit medical termination of the pregnancy", the court said. It also directed that if the foetus survives the process, the hospital authorities have to ensure the baby's life is protected. The court also directed the hospital to preserve blood and tissue samples of the foetus to carry out necessary medical tests, including DNA mapping. The order came on a plea moved by the minor rape victim and her parents, seeking a direction to the Kozhikode Medical College to medically terminate her pregnancy as the hospital was refusing to carry out the procedure in view of its advanced stage.

Delhi govt bans storage, sale, use of firecrackers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government on Wednesday banned the storage, sale and use of firecrackers during Diwali owing to the "dangerous pollution levels" in the national capital around the time of the festival. Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that like last year, it was essential to implement the ban in order to save lives. "In view of the dangerous condition of pollution in Delhi during the Diwali period for the last three years, and like last year, a complete ban is being imposed on the storage, sale and use of all types of firecrackers. So that people's lives can be saved," he said in a tweet in Hindi. "Last year, a complete ban on firecrackers was imposed late after assessing the seriousness of the situation. This caused losses to the traders. It is an appeal to all the traders that this time in view of the complete ban, please do not stock," he said.

Crimes against women, children dropped in 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Coronavirus pandemic and subsequent lockdown resulted in a drop in traditional crimes like theft, robbery, and assault on women and children in 2020, but there was a drastic jump in disobedience to government orders, primarily arising due to violations of COVID-19 norms, official data showed. According to the latest report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on 'Crime in India - 2020', a total of 66,01,285 cognisable crimes comprising 42,54,356 Indian Penal Code (IPC) crimes and 23,46,929 Special and Local Laws (SLL) crimes were registered in 2020. It shows an increase of 14,45,127 (28 per cent) in registration of cases over 2019 (51,56,158 cases), while the crime rate registered per lakh population increased from 385.5 in 2019 to 487.8 in 2020. During 2020, registration of



cases under IPC increased by 31.9 per cent whereas SLL crimes rose by 21.6 per cent over 2019. Percentage share of IPC cases was 64.4 per cent while that of SLL cases was 35.6 per cent of total cognisable crimes during 2020. Major increase was seen in the cases registered under disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant from 29,469 cases in 2019 to

6,12,179 cases in 2020 and under 'other IPC crimes' from 2,52,268 cases in 2019 to 10,62,399 cases in 2020, the report said. Similarly, under SLL category, more cases were registered under 'other state local acts' — from 89,553 in 2019 to 4,14,589 in 2020. These together have resulted in 16,43,690 more cases registered in 2020 as compared to 2019. "These cases are primarily

those arising out of violations of Covid norms. Effectively therefore, there is a decrease in registration of traditional crime by about two lakh cases," it said. During 2020, a total of 55,84,135 IPC cases (13,27,167 cases pending from previous year, 42,54,356 reported during the year and 2,612 cases reopened for investigation) were under investigation, of which 34,47,285 cases were disposed of by police including 26,11,925 cases which were charge-sheeted, resulting in the charge-sheeting rate of 75.8 per cent. The country remained under complete lockdown from March 25 to May 31, 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic (first wave), during which movement in public space was very limited. The cases registered under crimes against women, children, and senior citizens, theft, burglary, robbery and dacoity declined, whereas Covid-related enforcement resulted in an increase of cases registered

under 'disobedience to order duly promulgated by public servant (Sec. 188 IPC)', under 'other IPC crimes' and under 'other state local acts', it said. A total of 10,47,216 cases of offences affecting the human body were registered which accounted for 24.6 per cent of the total IPC crimes during 2020, of which hurt (5,78,641 cases) accounted for the maximum cases -- 55.3 per cent -- followed by cases of causing death by negligence (1,26,779 or 12.1 per cent) and cases of assault on women with intent to outrage her modesty (85,392 or 8.2 per cent). The cases registered under offences against human body depict a marginal decrease of 0.5 per cent in 2020 over 2019 (10,52,016 cases) and the crime rate has declined from 78.6 in 2019 to 77.4 in 2020. A total of 29,193 cases of murder were registered during 2020, showing a marginal increase of 1 per cent over 2019

(28,915 cases) with 'disputes' (10,404 cases) being the motive in the maximum cases followed by 'personal vendetta or enmity' (4,034 cases) and 'gain' (1,876 cases). A total of 84,805 cases of kidnapping and abduction were registered during 2020, showing a decrease of 19.3 per cent over 2019 (1,05,036 cases). A total of 88,590 people (14,869 males and 73,721 females) were reported kidnapped or abducted during 2020, of which 56,591 (8,715 males and 47,876 females) victims were children and 31,999 (6,154 males and 25,845 females) were adult. During 2020, a total of 91,739 kidnapped or abducted people (22,872 males and 68,867 females) were rescued, of which 91,458 people were rescued alive and 281 found dead. A total of 3,71,503 cases of crime against women were registered during 2020, showing a decline of 8.3 per cent over 2019 (4,05,326 cases).

NIA court seeks case diary on bomb attack

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A special NIA court on Wednesday directed the Barrackpore police commissionerate to submit the case diary on the September 8 bomb attack outside BJP MP Arjun Singh's residence in West Bengal's North 24 Parganas district on a prayer by the agency, which is conducting a probe into the matter. The National Investigation Agency (NIA) submitted a copy of the FIR it registered in the case before the chief judge of city sessions court and in-charge of the special NIA court, Partha Sarathi Sen. The agency's lawyer, Shyamal Ghosh, said that the judge has directed the

Barrackpore police to submit the case diary in three days and produce the accused arrested in connection with the incident before the court on September 21, when the matter will be taken up again for hearing. The NIA has been told to present a report on the incident and related issues during the next hearing. B o m b s exploded outside the Barrackpore MP's Bhatpara house twice this month, first on September 8 and then on September 15. The Union Home Ministry, after the first attack, instituted an NIA inquiry into the incident.





Get that jab

In the fight against COVID-19, our line of defence must be to vaccinate the kids

As educational institutions re-open tentatively in India, parents are worried that unlike most of them, their children are not yet vaccinated against the COVID-19 virus and they may be vulnerable to infection at school. The concern is natural and understandable but clear-cut answers to their queries are not forthcoming. The States, the Centre, the state task forces, the national task force, and the host of experts need to be on the same page and clarify by when can children be expected to get the jabs, if they would be divided into age groups for the purpose, and whether the healthy among them need immediate vaccination at all. Paediatricians say healthy children are at low risk from the virus but there is no unanimity on whether it is safe for them to attend school unvaccinated. The United Kingdom is still disinclined to vaccinate healthy children in the 12-15 years age group. The doses will only offer a marginal benefit and the jabs can instead be diverted to vulnerable adults and children with co-morbidities, like chronic heart, lung and liver conditions, it argues. The British committee's hesitation arises from the concern over a rare side effect of heart inflammation from the Pfizer and Moderna vaccines. In India, out of 44 crore children, around 12 crore are in the 12-17 age group. The national COVID-19 task force is of the view that children with comorbidities should receive priority jabs, meaning thereby that healthy children are not at high risk. In any case, even though over 19 States have re-opened



schools and the rest will shortly decide on sending children back to classes, there is no indication that the vaccine for children will be available in the coming few weeks.

The ZyCoV-D vaccine has received Emergency Use Authorisation for use in 12-17 years and the field trials are on. Bharat Biotech says its Covaxin for children has tested safe in trials. Biological E's Corbevax has got the approval to conduct trials on children above five years. Covovax vaccine of Serum Institute and Novavax is conducting trials at the moment. Johnson & Johnson has applied for trials in children in the 2017 years age group. Scientists are hedging their bets on child vaccines. They say they are absolutely safe, but add a rider that the risk-benefit ratio needs to be weighed carefully. They say that infections in children are nearly always mild or asymptomatic. However, there is no doubt they still need vaccinations just as they have already been immunised against various diseases. Where do they stand on the priority list, is the question. It is not an easy question to answer as two arguments pull the Government in the other direction. One is the obvious need to prioritise vulnerable adult and children's groups. Two, how far to heed the observation of the World Health Organisation that by vaccinating their children, some countries will deprive frontline workers and high-risk of poor countries of vaccines.

PICTALK



Army personnel during a practice session ahead of the celebration of 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh', at Polo ground in Jaipur PTI

Taking wings

If all goes well, the debt-ridden Air India could have a new owner by December end

The Union Government has finally found bidders for the sought-after Air India disinvestment after Tata Sons and SpiceJet promoter Ajay Singh submitted their financial bids to the transaction adviser on Wednesday as the process now moves to its concluding stage. The new owner will be entitled complete stake in Air India and Air India Express and a 50 per cent stake in the ground handling capacity of the Air India SATS Airport Services (AISATS). Besides, as per Air India's Expression of Interest shared in January, out of the airline's total debt of ₹60,074 crore as on March 2019, the bidder would be required to absorb the "signing debt" of ₹23,286.5 crore. The rest would be transferred to Air India Assets Holding Ltd, a special purpose arrangement. Tata Sons had in 2001 expressed their interest in acquiring the Indian Airlines which JRD Tata had founded in 1932 as Tata Airlines. The proposal was not received well by the Government back then. But times have changed and the Government now views Tata as the frontrunner in the disinvestment bid which was delayed due to the pandemic. Therefore, Union Aviation Minister Jyotiraditya Scindia had made it clear that September 15, 2021 would be the last day for submitting the bid and would not be changed.

The Government's previous attempt at the bidding failed badly in 2018 after not even a single bid was received for the airline. It had offered 76 per cent stake but higher crude oil prices, insane debt and, of course, the "involvement of the Centre" were some of the reasons the bid failed. Now after having tweaked the offer, it has managed to attract two bidders. Disinvestment is just a safer alternative to the word privatisation, and the Government's promise to "facilitate air travel even for a person wearing hawai chappal (slippers)" seems arguable under this umbrella. Also, Air India has not only been a commercial air travel facility but also holds strategic importance to India. During the COVID-19 pandemic, when Indian citizens were stranded in different parts of the world, only Air India was in operation and evacuated thousands of Indian and foreign nationals. Air India would not remain the same once the private players get hold of it. Air travel can no longer be viewed as a luxury but a common amenity that is intrinsically part of our day-to-day connectivity as the last-mile auto or rickshaw trip.

The national theatre of absurd

The public mood these days borders beyond logic; moodiness and absurdity rather than rationalism is the new norm

It is time to sit back and relax. It is time to watch the theatre of the absurd. The country which is now run on the- atrics is turning into one. The dictionary meaning of the phrase aptly describes what we are witnessing right now: "A theatre in which conventions of plot and theme are distorted to convey the irrational and fictive nature of reality. It leads to isolation of humanity in a meaningless world." We are all watching it play right here right now!

People are trying hard to create a country where absurdity is the norm rather than the exception; in the zeal to outsmart opponents, stupidities galore. We are turning ourselves into laughing stock. The latest fad — nationalism — is now reaching a feverish pitch. Nothing is sacrosanct; not even your flawless past and it applies to all and sundry — individuals, organisations and now even the home-grown companies. Even the ones touted as the pride of the country are not spared. One posturing against the Hindutva joint family can lead you in trouble. The onus would be on you to prove your innocence.

The latest to fall is Infosys. The company that led India's "make in India" campaign has hit the quagmire. Even before Prime Minister Narendra Modi coined the "local pe vocal" slogan, Infosys was at it and is now being dubbed "anti-national". That is if we are to believe *Panchjanya*, the RSS mouthpiece. This is hilarious as well as a sad commentary of the state we are in. The self-styled nationalists are not only shouting nationalism but also handing out certificates of nationalism. God forbid, if you falter on your promise to deliver a project on time, you join the rank and file of anti-nationals. Reminds one of the scientists in Stalin's Russia who could not deliver on tight deadlines and ended up in Gulag.

Timeline goes — Infosys gets a contract of ₹4242 crores to roll out a new income tax portal. It fails to deliver on time and problems dog the system. The Minister calls Salil Parekh, the CEO, something transpires and the meeting fails in fiasco. Lo and



behold, in a couple of days, *Panchjanya* comes out with the story branding Infosys as anti-national. Please draw your own conclusions and spare the writer.

The nationalists' brigade indeed has come a long way. First, they started small branding anti-Hindutva ideologues as "love jihadis", "urban Naxals" and what have you. Now anti-national is in. The latest is branding corporate which don't bow as anti-national.

But then what is the definition of nationalism or litmus test of one's nationalism? They should praise the dear leader and the ruling party. The singing of the National Anthem or chanting "*Bharat Mata ki Jai*" is the ultimate test of one's nationalist credential. That makes both Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore anti-national. Mahatma Gandhi did not celebrate Independence. There was no flag hoisting in the Sabarmati Ashram on Independence Day. Tagore wanted universal brotherhood. He even warned about the dangers of nationalism. Tagore's fear came alive during the Delhi riots when people were made to sing the anthem while being beaten with sticks by the police.



BUT THEN WHAT IS THE DEFINITION OF NATIONALISM OR LITMUS TEST OF ONE'S NATIONALISM? THEY SHOULD PRAISE THE DEAR LEADER AND THE RULING PARTY. THE SINGING OF THE NATIONAL ANTHEM IS THE ULTIMATE TEST OF ONE'S NATIONALIST CREDENTIAL

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

HEAT OF THE 'MYSTERY FEVER'

Sir — Before people in parts of Uttar Pradesh and several other states could have a sigh of relief over the subsidence of COVID-19, they have been hit by another tragedy in the form of the outbreak of a 'mystery fever'. Epidemiologists could not clarify if it were really a mystery fever or it was so described for convenience and evasion of responsibility. In most cases it is attributed to dengue — The ICMR has found 2D strain of dengue that impacts platelet count, causes hemorrhaging and proves fatal in many samples — and in others, malaria and leptospirosis.

It is not clear what effective intervention has been made by the health departments to combat and control the infections. It is sad to notice that an air of helplessness has set in on the health front. UP Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath makes tall claims about his governance in addition to rabidly communal speeches. Perhaps, he has a peculiar idea of governance. Sanitation, fumigation, prevention of waterlogging in the monsoon season, draining out stagnant water, equipping hospitals to provide medical care for all without turning anyone away and food for kids from poor households to reduce vulnerability to diseases are low on his agenda.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

A FUEL FOR THE FUTURE

Sir — The announcement of the National Hydrogen Mission by Prime Minister Narendra Modi is a welcome step in justifying India's commitments to the Paris Agreement that would help mitigate the imminent global warming crisis. The last two years have witnessed increased momentum for green hydrogen, with many countries around the world implementing national hydrogen strategies. India is moving ahead with its hydrogen policy. Green hydrogen is being hailed as a potential miracle fuel that could help reduce carbon emissions.

The environmental impact of using green hydrogen is anticipated to be tremendously positive. Hydrogen, a zero-carbon fuel and a promising alternative to fossil fuel,

A vision beyond religion



Kudos to the Chief Justice of India NV Ramana for asking the nation to embrace the sane, tolerant and humanitarian vision of Swami Vivekananda. While the child Narendranath experimented with *hookahs* used by different communities to experience how one "loses" his caste or religion, the matured Swami Vivekananda advocated for universal brotherhood and equality of all human beings. Though Vivekananda was a proud Hindu as well as Indian, that did not deter him from pointing out the vices that had plagued the religion and the nation. Neither

did he paint an imaginary story revolving around 'glory' of ancient India by "discovering" a test-tube baby. Rama's arrows being "missiles" and Kuber's *Pushpak Rath* an "aircraft". Nor he tried to impose his religious belief upon other communities by projecting Hinduism and India superior to others; rather his true love for his own religion and country got translated into love and respect for all religions and humanity as a whole.

It is indeed a disgusting sight when the rabid orthodox pseudo-nationalist merchants of hatred, who have emerged as the self-declared "guardians" of Hindus and "holy cows" and can't hold a candle to the liberalism of the great sage, dare to project the humanitarian harmony-personified Swami Vivekananda as one of their "icons". Let India be guided by the Constitutional spirit of secularism and equality of all along with the humanitarian light of *Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam*.

Kajal Chatterjee | Kolkata

is an abundant source that gives off no emissions and can make a real contribution to the fight against climate change. Though we have various renewable energy sources, the perfect one to use for vehicles is hydrogen. Hydrogen, when used in a fuel cell, the only exhaust it emits is mere clean water. A big advantage of hydrogen and fuel cells is that the cycle is fully sustainable. Big changes are needed to utilise green hydrogen in various industrial establishments. A holistic approach is needed to develop infrastructure and formulate policies to encourage the use of hydrogen-based energy sources.

Krishna K Vepakomma | Hyderabad

TOO MANY NAMESAKES

Sir — Only old-timers know that since western part of pre-independent Bengal came to India, the state was named as West Bengal, and East Bengal turned into East Pakistan (now Bangladesh). The Central Government should accept the demand of West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata

Banerjee for passing of a long-pending resolution of the State Assembly to rename the state as *Bangla*, thus removing the ever-confusing prefix 'west'.

There has been gradual change in names and spellings of cities but the process still remains incomplete even after decades of independence. Distorted spellings such as *Jullender* and *Simla* by the British have been rectified to Jalandhar and Shimla. But spellings of cities like Delhi and Bareilly as per actual pronunciation are still to be modified. Delhi is a distorted version of *Dehli*, meaning entrance. Countries like Bangladesh and China have already respelled names of their capitals as per actual pronunciation. There are too many *Rampurs* and *Bilaspurs* in India which require renaming to avoid confusion. These places can be renamed after the heroic characters from India's history.

Madhu Agrawal | Delhi

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com



GYANESHWAR DAYAL

ity to Sewa International, an affiliate of the RSS. Dorsey's announcement sparked off controversy on Twitter itself but that proved nothing more than a storm in a teacup. What is interesting is that the grant came at a time when Twitter had suspended accounts of the right-wingers for hate speech. It included an account of actress Kangana Ranaut's. It was seen as an attempt to stifle right-wing voices; interesting coincidences there.

A couple of days from now is September 18, which happens to be the birthday of Samuel Johnson who once said that patriotism is the last resort of scoundrels. He was so damn right. Was he talking about us? By the rate we are branding people and organisations anti-nationals, the country would soon have more anti-nationals than nationals in the country. And that would be a self-defeating proposition.

The nationalists would become a minority and thus vulnerable so they shouldn't do it. An absurd argument, isn't it? It is, but then what is sane about our times!

(The writer is a columnist and documentary filmmaker. The views expressed are personal.)

SOUND BITE

In view of the dangerous level of pollution during Diwali in Delhi, we are imposing a ban on the storage, sale and usage of firecrackers.



Delhi Chief Minister

— Arvind Kejriwal



We have reaped the benefits from the membership of BRICS, most notably in the area of economic cooperation.

South African President

— Cyril Ramaphosa

The role of Maadi Baa in Balika Vadhu fits the criteria. I have been waiting a long time for something like this to come my way.



Actor

— Ketki Dave



If Chris Gayle is in your playing XI, he has to open the batting because he is not going to waste balls.

Former England cricketer

— Gautam Gambhir

Post the implementation of the new excise policy, Delhi Government will earn an extra revenue of 3,500 crore in a year.



Delhi Deputy Chief Minister

— Manish Sisodia

FIRST COLUMN

NOW IS THE NEED FOR A REALITY CHECK



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Almost all of the global women's movements have dried up in the dreary desert sand of disinterest

There are many ways in which decision-making can be structured or planning can be done. There are many ways in which the struggle for the control of the decision-making processes takes place. Ultimately, those who emerge victors in the various competing ways of doing something carry the day. The articulate in the group become cheer leaders and those who care or dare to oppose are either eliminated or left to languish or perish. This happens in matters big and small. The last few weeks have seen the emasculation of an army which was proclaimed to be one of the finest equipped in the world. The current ruling elite in Afghanistan have made no bones about their distaste for matters such as democratically elected governance. They are in control and some of the mightiest powers in the world are ready to encourage this regime. Clearly the jury has not even convened, let alone 'be out' for a decision. The international system has yet again proved




its ineptness in sufficiently holding out values and making worthwhile moves to push for them. Even the so-called cause of women's rights in Afghanistan has not echoed much in any significant part of the world. Staunch proponents of gender equality can be seen occasionally demonstrating in some city, somewhere. Indeed, counter collectives reportedly have gathered of women in Afghanistan proclaiming, in effect, that the country's establishment's views on the status of women is indeed correct and must prevail. Philosophy has little scope to sort out a seemingly contentious views especially when there are few listeners. The international bodies including the United Nations are observing a thundering silence on this issue. Almost all of the global women's movements have suddenly dried up in the dreary desert sands of abject disinterest.

This is the story not just of women's rights. It is also the story of other human rights. The existence in China of alleged concentration camps, meant for certain religious minorities, is another subject of popular global neglect. Globally, even their co-religionists are rarely raising any attention about this. This is in sharp contrast to other kinds of concerns that are being raised. One wonders whether 'politics' predominantly determines what is flagged for attention and what is not. Like the gender movement, the cause of human rights for all, including minorities, is conspicuously marked by selective outrage. In the meanwhile, the expenditure on armaments amongst the so-called super powers continues to escalate. Some media channels have been showing the might of certain super powers to link power of artificial intelligence and incredible destructive capacity of nuclear devices. The powerful nations write their own rule books. In the last three decades or so, proclaimed aggression has been practiced to eliminate the so-called 'weapons of mass destruction' and more. Reportedly, the armorial dash was for control of oil resources. The sheer ability to cover up crass commerce with lofty principles of progress seems to be the hallmark of many powerful. The time has come to realise some of the underpinning driving the truth of our times. Unless the truth is placed, squarely, on the table, any reversal of this sorry logic — where the powerful grab what they want with or without attempts at camouflage — is likely to continue.

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

Taxing the new-age digital companies

Foreign digital companies sell goods in India but do not pay taxes as they are not physically present in the country and that is a key concern



HIMA BINDU KOTA

(The writer is Associate Professor at Amity University, Noida. The views expressed are personal.)

Digital technology has not only changed the way the world works, it has also made inroads into the country's taxation system.

For years, any company which is a resident of India came under the purview of taxation laws. However, a company need not now be a resident of a country to engage in economic activity. Technology and internet have made it possible a company to be present in one country and operate in another. This has caused concerns for countries where the consumers are located as they are deprived of their share of tax collection due to archaic laws requiring physical presence of companies to levy taxes.

This inconsistency has led to an urgent need to amend

international taxation laws. To work around this issue, several attempts have been made by international organisations to derive some common consensus, particularly by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) under Base Erosion and Profit Sharing (BEPS) Action Plan I, which recommended certain interim opportunities to tackle tax challenges arising out of the new age digital economy.

One such option is the concept of 'significant economic presence' (SEP) that could be defined in two ways. First, any transaction in respect of any goods, services, or property carried out by a non-resident with any person in India, including provision of download of data or software



in India, if the aggregate of payments arising from such transaction or transactions during the previous year exceeds ₹2 crore. Secondly, systematic and continuous soliciting of business activities or engaging in interaction with 300,000 users in India. The concept of SEP was introduced within the ambit of 'business connection', which is an on-going and continuous business relation between any

two enterprises resulting in the profit of a non-resident entity.

According to the recommendation of BEPS Action Plan 1, a non-resident enterprise would be taxable if it has a SEP in that country, engaged in a focussed, continuous and sustained engagement with the economy with the help of technology and automation.

Interestingly, India has been one of the early movers in this direction. As amending the existing tax laws is a time-taking process, a committee was set under the guidance of the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT), the apex tax administrative body in India, that recommended, in 2016, an equalization levy of six percent as a viable option for India in online advertising and ancillary services. Later on, by

2020, the domain was extended to include online sale of goods and services. This will become effective from 2022 onwards.

For example, Alibaba, the internet giant, selling goods worth millions of dollars in India, is presently not taxed as an enterprise because it is not physically present in India. With the introduction of the concept of SEP, Alibaba would be taxable for the sales made in India. In addition, according to the second condition of SEP, the mere act of soliciting business from Indians and not even actual sales can subject any enterprise to taxation in. This brings companies driven by information feeds and news like Facebook and Instagram, and social networks and other engagement-based platforms, like Whatsapp, WeChat and Tiktok, under the ambit of Indian taxation rules, subject to their incomes or user base crossing the prescribed thresholds.

The SEP is also applicable to any liaison office set up in India as they are also involved in the continuous soliciting of business, bring them under its purview. This may push several foreign companies to set up their wholly owned subsidiaries to circumvent these conditions and to take advantage of lower tax rate of 25 percent as compared to 40 percent tax rate for foreign companies.

Overall, the business connection and significant economic presence will be applicable subject to the Double Taxation Avoidance Agreement (DTAA) India has with the home country of the business enterprise in question. DTAs generally have specific clauses defining the conditions under which a host country can tax foreign companies located in their countries. And since DTAs override any domestic tax regulations, it would be complicated taxing foreign companies in situations when the concept of significance economic presence in not mentioned in the same. However, such a move shows the intent of India to tax companies in this new age of digital technology. A global consensus in determining the commonly accepted thresholds for defining significance economic presence will go a long way in taxing new age digital companies.

Import duty cutback on Tesla is no good



ASHWANI MAHAJAN

Lower duties on EVs will incentivise companies to merely import from foreign markets and sell in India, and that does not add value to the Indian economy

Proposed import duty concessions for the import of electric cars manufactured by Tesla, an American electric car manufacturing company, is in public debate, having linkages with the domestic automobile industry. Whereas lobbying efforts are on for this proposal, the domestic automobile industry is vehemently opposing the same.

The American electric car company has sought lowering of import duty to 40 percent from the current 60 percent on fully assembled electric cars priced below \$40,000 and 60 percent from the current 100 percent on vehicles valued above that amount. The interesting part of the story is, there is no tangible offer from the company to begin manufacturing of this car in the country.

From newspaper reports it is being learnt that several ministries of the government have supported Tesla's proposal to lower import tariffs. Today, the Indian automobile industry is worth ₹8.2 lakh crore. Nearly 49 percent of manufacturing GDP comes from this sector, which constitutes 7.1 percent of overall GDP. The sector provides direct and indirect employment to nearly 3.7 crore people. It exports nearly \$27 billion worth of automobile products in different segments. It provides 15 percent of the total GST collected, apart from catering to the needs of the country with regard to vehicles of different types and in different segments. Along with this, a substantial auto components manufacturing sector has simultaneously developed, with significant production, employment and exports.


Today, electric vehicles account for less than one percent of the annual car sales. The Government of India has been giving a big push to the manufacturing of electric vehicles (EVs) in the country aiming to reduce dependence on the imported fossil fuels and to reduce carbon foot prints. To achieve this objective of manufacturing EVs, import duty on EV parts and components, batteries, etc., is kept between 10 and 15 percent, which is much less than import duty on components for conventional automobiles. Using this duty concession, the established Indian companies and start-ups have started creating local value additions in the country. Efforts are also being made towards long-term localisation program.

Looking at the push given by the government to EVs, it seems that India will soon be able to start meeting domestic requirements of these vehicles. If the past is any guide, we understand that protection given to the domestic automobile sector has been the key to the development of this sector, which today is not only meeting the domestic requirements, but is also exporting automobiles to the rest of the world. It is also successfully procuring most of the components from within the country. It is notable that the Indian auto components industry is also worth ₹3.95 lakh crore. The Indian auto component turnover constitutes 2.3 per cent of GDP and provides employment to five million people and exports to

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TODAY, ELECTRIC VEHICLES ACCOUNT FOR LESS THAN ONE PER CENT OF THE ANNUAL CAR SALES. THE INDIAN GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN GIVING A PUSH TO THE MANUFACTURING OF ELECTRIC VEHICLES TO REDUCE DEPENDENCE ON IMPORTED FOSSIL FUELS AND REDUCE CARBON FOOT PRINT

(The writer is Professor, PGDAV College, University of Delhi. The views expressed are personal.)



the tune of \$15-16 billion or ₹1.06 lakh crore.

India's luxury car market is relatively very small. In the year 2019-20, the total number of luxury cars sold was 40,637, which was down to 19700 during the COVID-hit 2020-21. This is because a very small section of the population can afford these luxury cars beyond rupees ₹15 lakh or, say, \$20,000. And a very miniscule segment of the population can afford to buy cars beyond ₹30 lakh. If duty concession is given to Tesla, those who can afford will obviously buy imported Tesla electric cars and there will hardly be any incentive for the company to establish a manufacturing facility in India; and the country would be deprived of capacity creation in EVs.

India has launched a flagship Production Linked Incentive (PLI) scheme to give a boost to domestic production of goods for which, so far, the country is dependent on foreign nations. Thirteen sectors have been included in this scheme. Prior to this, the phased manufacturing programme (PMP) was launched. It is a known fact that in telecom and IT hardware sectors, Indians lost the opportunity to become a manufacturing hub due to faulty policies of lowering of tariffs, and dumping by China and other countries. Thanks to PMP earlier and now PLI scheme, this sector has started showing some gains in domestic manufacturing.

If we reduce tariff on fully-assembled electric cars and cars of other companies, say, Volkswagen — who have also started staking

claim for lower tariffs on their cars — would we not be committing the same mistake of the past and miss the bus in manufacturing and technology development of electric vehicles, which we are looking forward to?

First, any reduction in custom duty on EVs will incentivise companies to merely import from the foreign markets and sell in the Indian market. This will not help in any value addition to the economy and such a move would jeopardise India's efforts to increase domestic manufacturing.

Secondly, domestic automobile companies and start-ups are consistently investing in R&D and product development and contributing to the growth of the sustainable economy. Rather than creating a disturbing policy atmosphere of favouring imports of electric cars, it would be appropriate to support and leverage the local component ecosystem by long-term policy of the central and State Governments.

Thirdly, Ola company backed by venture capitalists has launched its first electric scooter, with more than one lakh bookings on a single day. Ola and other two-wheeler (Original Equipment Manufacturers) OEMs are on the verge of setting upstate-of-the-art manufacturing plants. Any tariff reduction for Tesla will discourage future endeavours in this direction.



Fourthly, we should not also forget that Tesla's business model company does not give any opportunity to the domestic auto components manufacturers.

In the words of Elon Musk, "We have a massive amount of internal manufacturing technology that we built ourselves.... It's like okay, what are the things we want to make, design a machine that will make that thing, then we make the machine." Firstly, we do not need lowering of tariffs on assembled cars; we rather need leveraging fiscal and non-fiscal support for EVs. Lowering GST, registration fee, permit fee, road tax, PLI, tightening of regulations to motivate shift to EVs are some such measures.

Secondly, rather than discouraging investment in Research and Development by allowing direct imports of EVs, we should create an environment to increase investment in R&D. If we allow Tesla Cars to be imported with tariff reduction, we would be hampering the development of the EV ecosystem.

Thirdly, we must leverage the fastest growing unified market in the world to our advantage of long-term technology building in and by Indian companies. There is a larger opportunity and value capture in developing not-yet-mature technologies such as EVs. For example, we could have been leaders in mobile phones if we had developed our capabilities in India for mobile phones in the early 2000s. We require this technological foundation to cater to global markets in the future, and increase the exports by the automobile sector to record highs; and in any case not reduce import duty on Tesla cars.

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE BJP HAS LOST THE MORAL RIGHT TO TALK ABOUT THE APPROPRIATENESS OF HOLDING POLITICAL RALLIES IN COVID TIME. — SENIOR TMC LEADER FIRHAD HAKIM

HOW CAN THE TMC TAKE OUT A RALLY IN TRIPURA IN VIOLATION OF THE COVID NORMS IMPOSED BY THE ADMINISTRATION? — WEST BENGAL BJP PRESIDENT DILIP GHOSH

Benchmarks surge to all-time highs

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex and Nifty vaulted to fresh lifetime peaks on Wednesday, boosted by telecom and auto stocks which saw brisk buying after the government announced packages for the sectors.

A rebounding rupee and persistent foreign capital inflows added to the momentum, traders said.

Rising for the second day, the 30-share BSE Sensex surged 476.11 points or 0.82 per cent to close at its new all-time high of 58,723.20. It touched an intra-day record of 58,777.06.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty climbed 139.45 points or 0.80 per cent to its fresh closing record of 17,519.45. During the session, it touched an all-time peak of 17,532.70.

NTPC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying 7.16 per cent, followed by Bharti Airtel at 4.53 per cent.

HCL Tech, Titan, SBI, PowerGrid, TCS and IndusInd Bank also notched up gains.

On the other hand, Axis Bank, Asian Paints, UltraTech Cement, Nestle India, Sun Pharma and HDFC Bank were



among the laggards, shedding up to 0.38 per cent.

In big bang reforms, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a relief package for the telecom sector that includes a four-year moratorium on payment of statutory dues by telecom companies as well as allowing 100 per cent foreign investment through the automatic route.

The Cabinet also approved a Rs 26,058 crore production linked incentive (PLI) scheme for the auto, auto-components and drone industry to enhance India's manufacturing capabilities.

"The measures announced for the telecom and auto industry are sweeping with potential for far-reaching beneficial impact. A four-year moratori-

um on dues of the telecom sector which covers AGR, spectrum dues and interest payment will bring big relief to the cash-strapped sector. This is positive for banks, too, since banks' exposure too will decline significantly," said V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

The Rs 26,058 crore PLI

scheme for automobiles, auto components and drones is a major initiative to attract advanced auto technology and supply chains into India, he noted.

"This is a timely policy when global supply chains are looking for markets outside China for shifting supply chains. The PLI scheme's goal of investment of Rs 42,500 crore in 5 years is ambitious but achievable. In brief, bold reforms," he added.

All BSE sectoral indices closed in the green, led by telecom (3.45 per cent), utilities (2.29 per cent), power (2.01 per cent), tech (1.81 per cent), and consumer durables (1.62 per cent).

In the broader markets, the BSE midcap and smallcap gauges advanced up to 0.86 per cent.

On the global front, markets were weighed by weak China retail sales data amid a resurgence of Delta variant cases in the country.

However, US inflation data showed a slower-than-expected rise in prices, giving room to the Fed to continue with its accommodative stance.

FM asks IBA to play pivotal role in resurgence of economy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Finance Ministry on Wednesday asked Indian Banks' Association (IBA) to play a pivotal role in the resurgence of the economy in the 75th year of India's independence. "At this juncture I would urge the IBA Chairman to scout for good competent resources and technology adoption for capitalisation. IBA should not be merely an association that passes banking issues to the RBI, it must rather strive to integrate with economic reforms for boosting growth," Financial Services Secretary Debasish Panda said.

Inaugurating the Delhi office of IBA, the secretary suggested that the Association can also look at providing training and skilling to middle management banking professionals so as to unburden banks in the same task.

"IBA has a pivotal role to play in terms of research and key



banking issues and a significant role to play in the resurgence of the economy in the 75th year of India's independence," he said.

During the occasion, IBA Chairman Rajkiran Rai said IBA's transformation started in 2018 and is now more closely involved in the business side operations than mere advocacy. IBA is involved in finding new solutions for the cus-

tomers especially during the pandemic and has come up with guidelines for the cohesive functioning of the entire banking system, IBA CEO Sunil Mehta said. The Association has pushed reforms including the corporate lending system, dealing with issues like syndicate lending and multiple financing, he said.

MONEY MATTERS

Tata drives in XPRES-T EV for fleet segment at Rs 9.54 lakh

Tata Motors on Wednesday said it has launched its first electric sedan under XPRES brand – the XPRES-T EV, exclusively for fleet customers, with a price starting at Rs 9.54 lakh (net price after FAME subsidy). The sedan would come in two trims – XpresT 165 and XpresT 213, with a range of 165 km and 213 km, respectively. The two variants of XpresT 165 are tagged at Rs 9.54 lakh and Rs 10.04 lakh, while the XpresT 213 trims are priced at Rs 10.14 lakh and Rs 10.64, respectively. "Targeted at mobility services, corporate and government fleet customers, the XPRES-T EV will come with an optimal battery size, captive fast charging solution, which will ensure outstandingly low cost of ownership in addition to safety and passenger comfort, making it a comprehensive and attractive proposition for fleet owners and operators," Tata Motors said in a statement. The XPRES-T electric sedan packs a high energy density battery of 21.5 kilowatt-hours (kWh) and 16.5 kWh for two trims.



Ola commences sale of electric scooter S1

Ola Electric on Wednesday commenced the sale process of its electric scooter S1. The electric scooter, which comes in two trims - Ola S1 and S1+, is available to purchase on the Ola App only currently, and not on the website. While the sale was to start on September 8, it postponed the process by a week to September 15, as it faced "technical difficulties" in making the website for purchases live for customers. Ola is starting the purchase in batches, and prioritising users based on their dates of reservation, the company said in a statement. "You will need to pay an advance of Rs 20,000 for purchasing your Ola S1/Ola S1 Pro, and the rest before shipment. You can also avail convenient EMI options when you make the rest of the payment. "Your advance is completely refundable if you wish to cancel your booking. Cancellation is allowed only till the scooter is shipped from the Ola Futurefactory," it said in a blog post. Deliveries will start from October 2021.



Gold jumps Rs 438; silver climbs Rs 633

Gold in the national capital on Wednesday jumped Rs 438 to Rs 46,214 per 10 grams reflecting overnight gains in international precious metal prices, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal closed at Rs 45,776 per 10 grams. Silver also gained Rs 633 to Rs 62,140 per kg, from Rs 61,507 per kg in the previous trade. "Spot gold prices for 24 carats in Delhi surged Rs 438 reflecting overnight gains in COMEX gold prices," said



HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel. In the international market, both gold and silver were trading flat at USD 1,802 per ounce and USD 23.79 per ounce, respectively. "Gold prices traded steady with spot gold prices at COMEX trading above USD 1,800 per ounce on Wednesday," he added.

Telecom shares in demand; Bharti Airtel jumps over 4%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom shares were in demand on Wednesday and jumped up to 5 per cent even as the Union Cabinet approved a relief package for the sector.

Bharti Airtel jumped 4.53 per cent and Vodafone Idea rose 2.76 per cent on the BSE.

Shares of Tata TeleServices (Maharashtra) gained 4.94 per cent and Tata Communications 1.38 per cent. In big bang reforms, the Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved a relief package for the telecom sector that includes a four-year moratorium on payment of statutory dues by telecom companies as well as allowing 100 per cent foreign investment through the automatic route.

Briefing reporters on the decisions taken by the Cabinet, Telecom Minister Ashwini



Vaishnav said nine structural reforms for the telecom sector were approved.

The definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR), which had been a major reason for the stress in the sector, has been rationalised by excluding non-telecom revenue of telecom companies.

AGR refers to revenues

that are considered for payment of statutory dues.

The minister said 100 per cent FDI (foreign direct investment) in telecom via the automatic route was approved by the Cabinet. Among the measures approved were a four-year moratorium on unpaid dues, AGR and spectrum dues, he said.

Lupin launches arthritis drug in US market

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Lupin on Wednesday said it has launched generic Duexis tablets used to treat the symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis and osteoarthritis in the US market.

The company has launched an authorised generic version of Horizon Medicines LLC's Duexis tablets, 800 mg/26.6 mg, Lupin said in a regulatory filing. According to IQVIA MAT July 2021, ibuprofen and famotidine tablets had an estimated annual sales of USD 765 million in the US, it added. The product, "is indicated for the relief of signs and symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis, osteoarthritis and to decrease the risk of developing upper gastrointestinal ulcers.

MG unveils Astor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

MG Motor India on Wednesday marked its entry into the highly competitive mid-sized SUV segment in the country, with the unveiling of its all-new model -- MG Astor. The model, which comes with a personal AI assistant and first-in-segment Autonomous (Level 2) technology, would compete with the likes of Hyundai Creta, Kia Seltos and Skoda Kushaq.

Astor is based on the MG's successful global platform, ZS and comes with two engine options -- the Brit Dynamic 220 TURBO petrol engine with a six-speed AT (automatic) delivering a 140ps of power and VTi Tech petrol engine with a manual transmission and an eight-speed CVT, delivering 110ps of power.

The five-seater mid-size model would be on display at MG showrooms from

September 19, and bookings will start soon thereafter.

"The segment is highly competitive and that is why we needed to differentiate; and from that perspective, we have tried to come out with a very very compelling offering where we have many industry-first, segment-first features. The car is loaded, the car is powerful, the design is expressive," MG Motor India President and Managing Director Rajeev Chaba said. With its elegant exteriors, luxurious interiors and futuristic technology, the company believes that Astor is a desirable package that will strike a chord with the customers, he added. MG Astor's personal AI assistant depicts human-like emotions and voice.

The Paralympic athlete Deepa Malik has lent her voice to the personal AI assistant, thereby humanising the experience.

Trust between Government and industry increased, says Rajnath

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The trust between the government and the industry has increased following the scrapping of the retrospective taxation regime, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Wednesday.

In a virtual address at the Indo-US Economic Summit organised by a leading industry chamber, Singh listed a range of measures initiated by the NDA government to boost economic growth and said the global investors are now receiving "red carpet" welcome in India instead of "red-tapism".

"We have formulated progressive and investor-friendly tax policies. We have said 'Good Bye' to retrospective taxation.

"The trust between the government and the industry has increased following the scrap-



ping of the retrospective taxation. By doing this, we have rectified the mistake of the earlier government (UPA)," Singh said. He said the government is preparing for 'dynamic growth' in this entire decade and noted that there is a lot of scope for American and Indian defence firms to go for co-production and co-development of military

equipment. "The coronavirus pandemic has brought newer challenges in terms of disruption to supply chains, a downturn in industrial activities, negative growth in travel and tourism industry and there is no doubt that the Indo-US cooperation will go a long way to restore normalcy and further boost economic dynamism," Singh said.

Household debt may have declined to 34% in '22

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The household debt as a percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) may have declined to 34 per cent in the first quarter of 2021-22, according to an estimate by the State Bank of India's research report Ecowrap.

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a spike in household debt to the GDP rate. As per the report, it rose sharply to 37.3 per cent in 2020-21 from 32.5 per cent in 2019-20.

"We estimate that household debt as a percentage of GDP has declined to 34 per cent in Q1 FY22 with the commensurate rise in GDP in the first quarter, though it has increased in absolute terms," the research report released on Wednesday showed.

In absolute numbers, the household debt has increased to Rs 75 lakh crore in the first quarter of FY22 from Rs 73.59 lakh crore in FY21, it said.



It said the recently released India Debt & Investment Survey (AIDIS) report for 2018 showed an increase in the average amount of debt among rural as well as urban households between 2012 and 2018.

The average amount of debt increased by 84 per cent and 42 per cent, respectively, for rural and urban households for the six-year period ended 2018, the SBI research report said.

The state-wise trend indicates that the rural households' average debt more than doubled in 18 states for the six-

year period ended 2018, while seven states witnessed the same for urban households.

Importantly, five states, including Maharashtra, Rajasthan and Assam, witnessed a simultaneous doubling in average debt across urban and rural households during this period, the report said.

As per the AIDIS report 2018, the average amount of debt among rural households stood at Rs 59,748 and in urban households, it was Rs 1.20 lakh.

"In 2021, the rural household debt is expected to increase to Rs 1.16 lakh and urban to Rs 2.33 lakh, indicating that COVID impacted the households significantly," according to the SBI research report.

It said the debt-asset ratio, which is an indicator of household indebtedness, has increased to 3.8 in 2018 from 3.2 in 2012 for rural households. For urban households, the ratio has risen from 3.7 to 4.4.

Kerala, Madhya Pradesh and Punjab were the three states that witnessed a deterioration of at least 100 bps (basis points) in debt asset ratio over the six-year period ended 2018, the report said.

"The good thing is that in rural India, the share of outstanding cash debt from non-institutional credit agencies has declined significantly to 34 per cent in 2018 from 44 per cent in 2012," it noted.

Notably, almost all states

have registered a steep decline in non-institutional credit in rural areas, indicating the increase in formalisation of the economy, the report said.

The share of non-institutional credit has declined significantly in the case of Bihar, West Bengal, Rajasthan, Haryana and Gujarat. In Haryana and Rajasthan, which witnessed loan waiver schemes, the share of non-institutional credit declined contrary to popular perception, it said.

"This could be explained by a significant increase in penetration of KCC (Kisan Credit Cards) in these two states. Our estimates show that the number of KCC cards has jumped by 5 times over the 7 year period ended 2020," the report said.

The report believes that the recent reforms in agriculture could further help in the formalisation of the economy, despite the political cacophony.

Rupee settles 18 paise higher at 73.50 against \$

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee closed 18 paise higher at 73.50 (provisional) against the USD on Wednesday, tracking a firm trend in domestic equities and sustained foreign fund inflows.

At the interbank forex market, the local unit opened flat at 73.68 against the greenback. During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 73.50 and a low of 73.74. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.17 per cent to 92.46 after softer-than-expected US inflation numbers. "Indian rupee appreciated after two days of downward swing following weakness in dollar index, foreign fund inflows, better than expected economic data and risk-on tones," said Dilip Parmar, Research Analyst.



ART TO SATIATE HUNGER

RACHEL DAMMALA

Art has always been known to heal. It was always looked to, for reasons, solutions, and solace. Today, things aren't very different. Making perfect use of the love people have for art is a Hyderabad-based NGO, Neighbourhood Foundation. Working towards the betterment of health, education sectors, while also addressing social issues, the organisation, recently started 'Feed by Art', a nation-wide art

competition for school-going students, to raise funds for its hunger relief project.

To be held virtually, the competition accepts registration and submission of arts till September 25, 2021. How does it work? "The registration fee of Rs 100 will go to fund the foundation's Feed@100, a hunger-relief project, the uniqueness of which is that for every Rs 100 donation, it feeds

three people and two animals at one time!" So art lovers' contribution goes to not just children but animals on the street too.

Talking about the art competition, R. Hemanth, founder of Neighbourhood Foundation, tells us, "According to a 2019 report of the Food and Agriculture Organisation, around 14.5% of the Indian popula-

tion is in the underfed category. In other words, over 18 crore Indians go to sleep without food every day. We believe that the Feed by Art competition will create awareness among school-going students about the havoc hunger wreaks in the lives of fellow Indians. It will encourage them to visualise a hunger-free India. While the emphasis is laid on consuming nutrition-rich food, students will also be taught the importance of not wasting food. They will also understand the connection between the food choices they make and their health and that of the planet." The art competition too was not vaguely thought of.

It is organised to mark the forthcoming World Food Day 2021, which falls on October 16 every year. It invites submissions under four categories, each having a theme of its own - all of

them working towards healthy eating - for you and Mother Earth. Category 'I' is meant for class I-III students, and the theme for the category is 'No Junk Food'; and for category 'II', which seeks participation from class IV and V students, the theme is 'Don't Waste Food'. The third category (class VI-VIII) and fourth category (class IX-XII) feature the theme of 'Healthy

Food, Healthy Planet', and 'Hunger-Free Nation', respectively. The organisation hopes to have lakhs of students take part in the competition. A hopeful Hemanth shares, "The entire proceeds of the registration fee of Rs 100 from each participant will go to our Feed@100 hunger relief project that aims to mobilise finance and create an infrastructure that will enable it to feed about 6,000 people, and 4,000 animals every day! We are striving to realise this dream before the end of 2021."

Neighbourhood Foundation has lined up eminent artists to be in the panel of judges to evaluate the submissions. With the Feed by Art competition, the foundation is attempting to get an entry in Limca Book of Records, Indian Book of Records, Asia Book of Records, World Book of Records, and Guinness World Records for conducting an art competition with the highest number of students. Each student participating in the competition will get an e-certificate with records mention and winners in each category will be awarded cash prizes, medals, and trophies. In addition, the artworks of the first prize winners of all four categories will be recreated on the walls in one or more metro cities. The registration can be made over the phone/WhatsApp (7200741106) or by visiting the foundation's website, <https://nhf-global.org/feedbyart/>. So go do your bit to feed children and the voiceless animals!



The changing face of digital marketing

Marketing, a decade ago, was an expensive affair. It involved a very high investment which consisted of A-list celebrities, sky-high billboards, TVCs, etc. Crores of rupees were put at risk in order to develop a campaign that in return provided zero consumer input. Many a time, these high budget campaigns tanked in the market, incurring major losses for the company. Then came digital renaissance that gave birth to the concepts of social media and digital marketing. Digital marketing has turned out to be the biggest blessing for all the newer age brands as it requires little to no investment, helps monitor your performance, and is powered by the most accurate tool in the world — the consumer. The producer can get real-time feedback from its targeted consumer, something which wasn't possible through traditional marketing. This feedback is essential to understand the demand of the consumers. With the market being so saturated, there's no space for mediocre



Adya, companies will now have to push their limits and present something exciting to the consumer. Companies have now moved on to incorporating different technologies that help them understand the mind of the consumer. The penetration of artificial intelligence has revolutionised the way we look at technology. AI solutions aid customers to navigate easily in the digital world. Companies that have taken up 'machine learning' have seen remarkable growth in their revenues. How does AI work? There's a lot of aspects attached to it but one were to summarise, Machine learning feeds computer data

and uses statistical techniques to help it "learn" how to get progressively better at a task, without having been specifically programmed for that task, eliminating the need for millions of lines of written code.

Content-based marketing has also seen a major boost in recent times. With the help of platforms such as TikTok and Instagram, companies are now able to influence the masses through content creators and influencers. Since these influential people cater to a niche audience, brands tend to capitalise on their credibility to attract new customers. This technique worked miraculously well in the pandemic as most people were glued to their phones, consuming social media content for hours. Influencer marketing has shown the best results within the fashion and beauty community. Luxury brands such as Louis Vuitton, Prada, and Clinique are constantly hiring trendy fashion, beauty influencers to upgrade their existing consumer base aka the Gen Z. Gen Z is all about utility, it



doesn't appreciate Interrupt Marketing. Pop-up ads, large banner ads, and other messages that hinder web browsing and social media feed are now considered reasons for annoyance. The youth, today, demands a seamless blend between marketing and news — an example of the same could be the success of topical posts.

Effective marketing campaigns are now appreciated by the netizens. Avid social media users don't fall prey to gimmicks anymore. The concepts of racism, homophobia and colourism are not tolerated in the social media space. A vigilant consumer, today, will support brands that align with his thought process. A brand that supports different malpractices is prone to harsh criticism and will not withstand the test of time. Hence, the branding and marketing of a product, service, concept should work in tandem with the morals, virtues of the

company. It's safe to say that the modern consumer is on the lookout for products, brands that are reliable. The same should be reflected in its marketing. Minimalism is the key to success today. Misleading claims, faulty advertising, and celebrity association only ensure temporary engagement. With newer brands entering the market almost everyday, bigger brands are not only turning their existing customers into loyalists but are also constantly working towards widening their consumer base — none of which is possible without an effective digital marketing strategy. Digital marketing is always going to be very relevant in a post-pandemic world as it perfectly encapsulates the innovations made in the field of technology. (The writer, Anoushka Adya, is the Founder of Grow, a Mental Health Platform and Lajja Diaries (NGO).)

Talking about life after marriage



K RAMYA SREE

Thanks to the lockdown, many of us are now addicted to binge watching web series, movies, shows, and everything that is available on OTT platforms.

Ankahi Kahaniya is one such interesting anthology that will start streaming on Netflix from tomorrow.

The feature, directed by Ashwiny Iyer Tiwari, Abhishek Chaubey and Saket Chaudhary, narrates tales of love, loss and longing in Mumbai.

Produced by Ronni Screwvala's RSVP Movies, *Ankahi Kahaniya* (meaning Untold Stories), stars Abhishek Banarjee, Zoya Hussain, Kunal Kapoor, Nikhil Dwivedi, Palomi, Rinku Rajguru and Delgad Hiwale in pivotal roles.

The cast and crew can't wait to know how the audiences will receive the show. Meanwhile, *The Pioneer* catches up with director Saket Chaudhary, the man behind *Hindi Medium*, *Shaaadi Ke Side Effects*, and his actors Kunal Kapoor and Zoya Hussain, to know more about the project.

Well, it's Saket Chaudhary and it is obvious that his part of the anthology is surely something to do with family, drama and emotions. His thoughts and style reflects exact the same even in this anthology. "At some point every couple wants their marriage to fail. But it is not easy for women to end relationships. Relationships are not your identity..." goes the trailer.

Saket's part of the story deals with love after marriage and infidelity. Elaborating further on how he came up with the concept, Saket tells us, "To start off, we watched a lot of anthologies on Netflix and I wanted to know how it feels to make one. Because we are feature film directors, I didn't have a lengthy story. It was just in 30 minutes that I got to convey my concept. Zeenat Lakhani, with whom I have written *Shadi Ke Side Effects* and *Hindi Medium*, and I started discussing what is it about love and relationships that we want to talk about. We discussed about the challenges people face after marriage and came up with a concept, 'Infidelity is the reality of modern marriage'. It started off with the concept of how infidelity affects marriage. Is infidelity a definite ending to a story or will it give a new beginning to the story?"

Like many others, even they were affected by the pandemic as lockdown was announced a week before the commencement of their shooting. "Everything went into pass mode for six to seven months. But we got more time to develop the script further and we started all over again. We shot during the first and second lockdowns," says he.

Saket points out that his story is quite complex and layered, as it is not a simplistic take on infidelity but a very complex one. Because his characters were very dark, exploring the story and bringing that out the real was a challenge as well as fun,

says Saket.

How did he manage to tell his story in the 30-minute slot given to him? Saket shares, "Because the story is based on a small meeting between these characters, we tried to stay true to what their interaction would be, which won't last for more than two to three days. Hence it became somewhat easy for us."

Kunal Kapoor, known for his chiseled looks, is the man of the show. The actor found the script so beautiful that he immediately jumped on board the film. He says his preparation for his role was just reading the script over and over again.

Kunal shares, "The script was so beautifully written and my character was well fleshed out that it didn't need any external preparation. This is a character, I found very relatable. What is most interesting is that the man I play has a lot of potential when he was young, but failures leading him to lower self esteem, and taking up a secure job giving up on his Tech firm. This happens often with people even in real life. A few failures, and we look forward to do something more secure rather than taking risks and doing what we love and enjoy."

However, for Zoya, constant chatting is how she prepped for the role. The actress says, "This character for me is very different from what I usually play and that's why I was very interested in doing this. The woman I play is very sweet, naïve and silly but through the journey of the film, she discovers her inner strength and perseverance that she channels in the wrong things."

Kunal Kapoor known for his stint in films like *Bachna Ye Haseeno*, *Rang De Basanti*, is also an award winning Bollywood actor. Yes, you heard it right. The actor was seen playing an antagonist in Nagarjuna, Nani starrer *Devadas*, for which he was even nominated for Best Actor in a Negative Role award. Sadly that seemed like his first and last Telugu film as he was not seen in any of the Bollywood films afterwards.

When asked why he kept himself away from the Telugu cinema despite having a great debut, he blames it on the scripts that came his way. "I would love to do more Telugu cinema. There is nothing interesting coming my way except for a typical villain role, who tortures the hero and gets beaten up in the end. Given the fact that many wonderful films are coming up from south, I want to do more of them, but it has to be interesting and is not 'typical'. Not a usual villain who loses in the end. I don't want to do any of those," says Kunal who is also running a Tech company and plans to start another tech firm on AI.

Meanwhile, Kunal also turned producer and is writing a few scripts as well. "I am very occupied these days with a lot of things are happening. I'm trying to figure out how I can make my life easier, but my curiosity always gets the better of me. I am trying to get simpler but I don't think that will happen," he concludes.





● Sarleen



● Srija



● Sony Shaik



● Vamshi Palte



● Anu Prasad



● Vishwaja



● Dimple



● Mamata



● Sunitha and Rupa



● Sneha Chowdary

PARTY

PEACE AND LIGHT

The Ekam World Peace Festival was launched by chief guest — film producer Sneha Chowdary, with a lamp lighting ceremony. Actor Sana and other guests were at the ceremony held this week. The online Ekam peace festival is going to be held from September 17-19, with over 20 million people all over the world.



● Sana



● Tabasum

Photos by SV Chary

CATWALK CALLING

Mr and Miss Telangana 2021, one of South India's freshest beauty pageants, took place at the City Centre Mall in Banjara Hills. Fashion enthusiasts and upcoming models put their talents on display for the judges at the event. The pageant goes on through September to conclude in October, through a series of rounds that will pick the final winners.

FUN

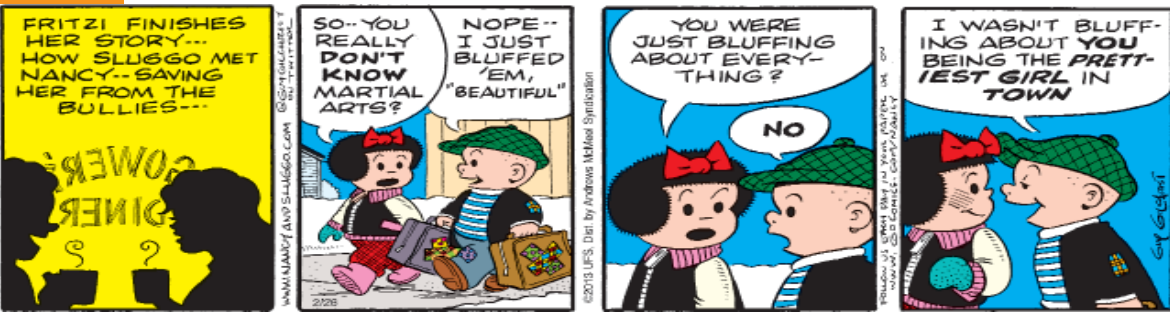
ARCHIE



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CALVIN AND HOBBS



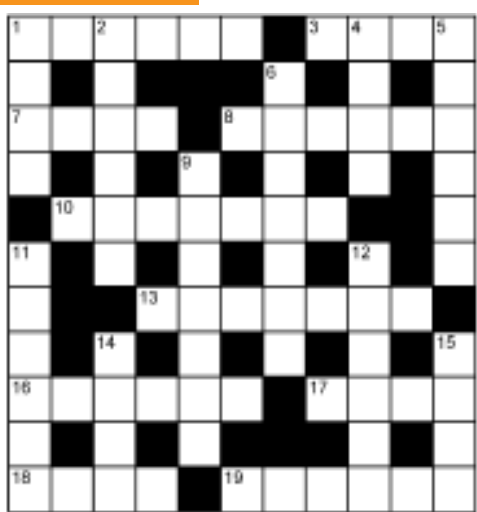
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- 1 Noon

3 Costing nothing

7 Contact by telephone

8 Purchasing

10 Rich

13 Very sore

16 A floor covering

17 Large boat

18 A red gemstone

19 Selected
- 6 Going very quickly

9 Less dirty

11 Cup and ____

12 Small trees

14 A nipping sea creature

15 Twirl around

DOWN

- 1 One of the planets

2 A meal

4 Water from the sky

5 Ninety less ten



Naveen's next with debutant director

Young Sensation Naveen Polishetty, who's on sky-high with the success of *Jathi Rathnalu*, finally gave his nod for his next project.

The film, said to give the best dose of fun and entertainment, will be helmed by debutante director Kalyan Shankar, with whom the actor earlier worked with, during *Jathi Rathnalu*.

According to the production team, Naveen was fascinated by Kalyan Shankar's idea and narration. He immediately gave his green signal to work with him. It's a unique concept to be told

in the most entertaining way, assured Suryadevara Naga Vamsi, of Sithara Entertainments.

The film is being co-produced by Sai Soujanya, wife of ace director Trivikram Srinivas under their banner Fortune Four Cinemas.

Further details about the cast and crew will be announced.



LISTENING TO UNHEARD VOICES

SHIREYA SRIKONDA

Bringing in something new to the scene, *Unheard* is a web series that is based on the Indian freedom struggle in a format you definitely have not seen before in Telugu! Starring Srinivas, Avasara, Priyadarshi, Ajay, Chandni Chowdhary, and Baladitya, the series was written and directed by Aditya KV and produced by Radhika Lavu of Ellanar films. The cast and makers of the series sit down for an interview with *The Pioneer*, and talk about how the story came to life. Aditya KV says that though he penned down the story for *Unheard* in 12 days, the preparation leading up to it took almost a decade!

"The preparation for this series started when I was in my final year of degree college. I've always had an inclination towards history, but the freedom struggle is not the most riveting topic for an 18-year-old. Still, I chose to research Gandhi for my project because all my ideas for my management course were rejected for not being 'moral' enough. I fell in love with the topic. Coupled with my pre-existing romance with the city of Hyderabad, it was an easy marriage of ideas. There's a lot of stories that need to be explored from Hyderabad."

The show is a conversational drama, and therefore is heavily dependent on powerful dialogues. The director says that while his philosophies were put on paper by him in English, they had brought in help to translate them into the Telugu and Urdu of that time.

Actor Priyadarshi Pulikonda recalls how the first reading of the script made him feel, says, "When I saw the project for the first time, I read it in English. The dialogues are word-heavy, but when you delve deep into the character, you realise there's much more than just the words. It wasn't too hard, because we focused a lot not only on the characters and dialogues,

but also on the entire time period in which the story is set. When you get into the character from that perspective, you can really understand roles like Badri, Mallesha, Anwar or Padma."

Chandni Chowdhary had a different experience. The actress of *Colour Photo* and *Bombhaat* fame exclaimed, "It was difficult for me. The first reading we had made me go 'what? My tongue can't twist this way! So I really had to do my homework. We had limited time, and I couldn't spend too much time on set trying to learn my lines. When shooting, it's very obvious that an actor hasn't perfectly learnt their lines if they're trying to remember them while performing. So it had to come naturally. I spent a lot of time making sure that I got the diction and dialogues right. I could've woken up from sleep and gotten the dialogues right!"

Srinivas Avasara, the actor fresh off the *Nootokka Jilala Andagadu* hype, says that since he previously only spoke Telugu on-screen, remembering lines was never an issue.

"Listening to the script for the first time, it was definitely an unusual story. It was the quickest yes I ever said in my life! That's because I knew I was going to be part of something unique. One episode of this series is completely in Urdu. Urdu of 1906, even. I started to appreciate non-Telugu actors more after that."

Producer Radhika Lavu, speaking on how she feels bringing in experimental formats into the industry, says, "Conversational pieces have not come into the market yet, so I had my doubts. But when I first heard the story I immediately said yes and decided that it should be worked upon. It was a journey that started last year."

Srinivas Avasara concluded the conversation saying, "Every actor hopes to experiment and experience something new with every role they take up, and I hope going forward, I get more opportunities to do something different from what I've done before."

Regina's Nene Naa trailer is to look out for

The trailer of actress Regina Cassandra's *Nene Naa*, in which the actress will be playing a double role, has been garnering many eyeballs.

The trailer of the film was unveiled by Nidhi Agerwal, Makkal Selvan Vijay Sethupathy, and star director Lingusamy.

Directed by Caarthick Raju, the trailer shows a horrific incident that took place 100 years ago, and is now repeating itself. While Regina is shown as a queen 100 years ago, she is now an archeologist and has come to resolve a mysterious case.

Simultaneously made in Telugu and Tamil, major portions of the bilingual have been shot in and around the locales of Courtallam, in Tamil Nadu. Sam CS is composing music and Gokul Benoy is handling cinematography. Sabu is the editor and Super Subbarayan has been roped in to be the stunt master.

Apart from Regina Cassandra, the others in the cast include Vennela Kishore, Akshara Gowda, Tagapothu Ramesh, Jaya Prakash, and few more prominent artists.

The film is currently in its post-production phase and the release date will be announced soon.



Team F3 back in action



Talented writer and director Anil Ravipudi is all set with the sequel of

F2 titled F3. All the lead actors Venkatesh, Varun Tej, Tamannaah, and Mehreen will reprise

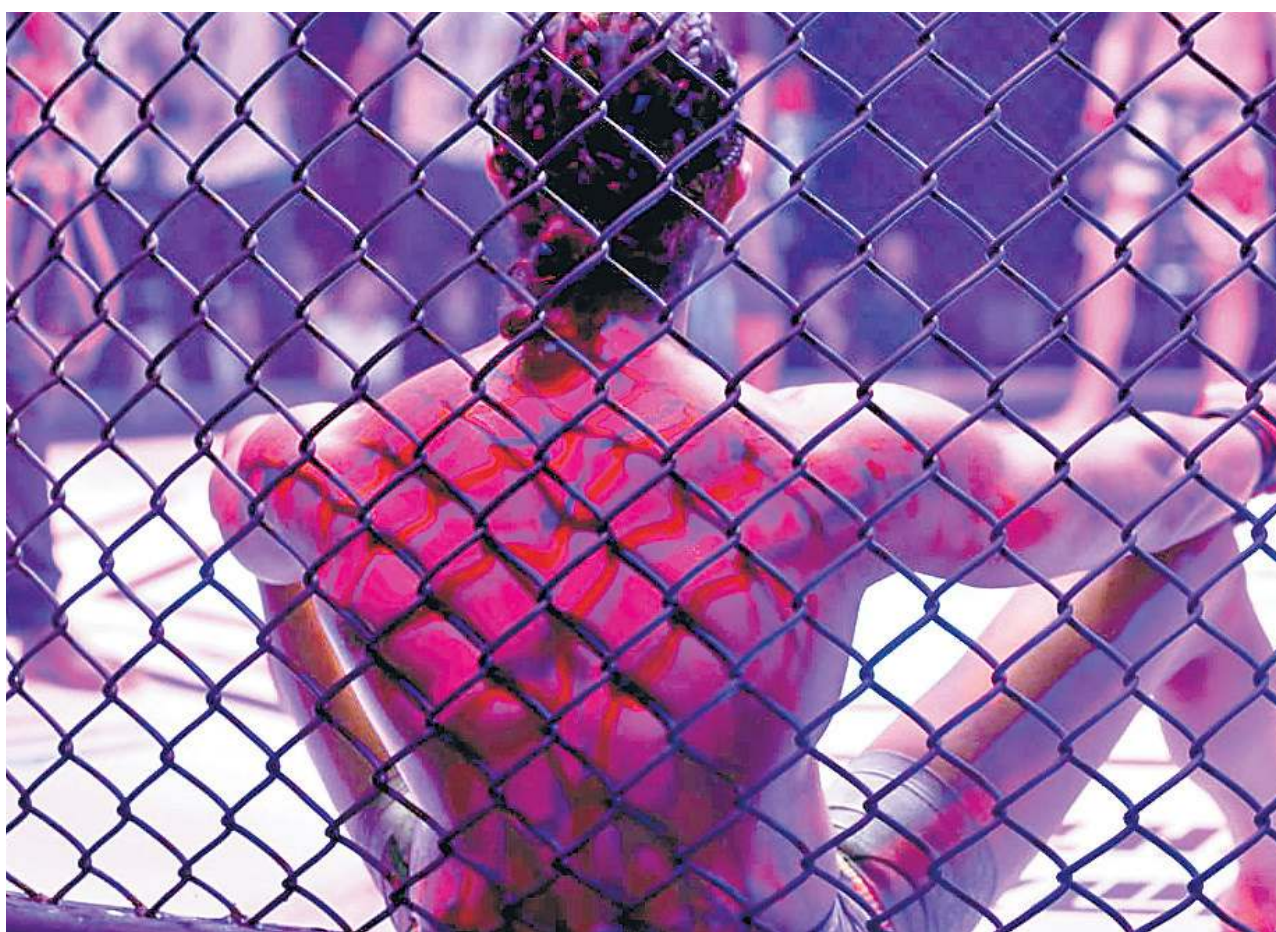
their roles from the original. The shoot of the film had been kept on hold due to the second wave of the pan-

demic and Varun Tej wanted to complete the shoot of his boxing drama Ghani. Venky too wanted to take a refreshing break. Hence, the shoot of F3 is all set to commence from the first week of October. Sources tell us that the entire second half of F3 will be shot in a single schedule. The makers initially wanted to shoot the pending portions in Mysore but the situation has not been favourable. The makers also had plans to erect a special house set for the film. But the plans, we hear, have now been changed. The rest of F3 will be shot in the prestigious Taj Falaknuma Palace in Hyderabad. A long schedule has been planned and most of the pending shoot will be wrapped up in Falaknuma Palace.

Devi Sri Prasad is the music director for the film and Dil Raju's Sri Venkateswara Creations will be bankrolling the film.

The film is aimed for a release during Sankranti 2022. Anil Ravipudi revealed that F3 will have double entertainment throughout the film.

BLOOD, SWEAT, AND VIOLENCE



Actor Vijay Deverakonda is back in the ring. The actor is shooting for his next big film *Liger* directed by Puri Jagannadh. The film which has a sports background, required Deverakonda to undergo rigorous training to make scenes look more natural. On Wednesday, the film's team released a picture of the actor in the boxing ring. "Back to the ring.. With the motto. BLOOD SWEAT VIOLENCE #LIGER #Salaacrossbreed," tweeted the team.

Virat, Rahul static at 4th & 6th



PTI ■ DUBAI

India captain Virat Kohli and star batsman KL Rahul maintained their fourth and sixth place respectively among the batsmen while no Indian bowler featured in the top-10 in the ICC T20 rankings.

The top seven batsmen led by England's Dawid Malan maintained their rankings while South African keeper-batter Quinton de Kock is now ranked eighth while West Indies Evin Lewis has dropped a place to be ninth

in the list.

Among bowlers, Tabraiz Shamsi still holds the pole position followed by Wanindu Hasaranga and Rashid Khan.

India's top ranked bowler in the list is veteran pacer Bhuvneshwar Kumar at 12th while injured off-spinner Washington Sundar is the other in the top-20 at 18th place. Yuzvendra Chahal is the only bowler who has shown improvement and is now 25th although he has been dropped from the Indian team for the T20 World Cup.

In the all-rounders' list, the only Indian among the top-20 is Hardik Pandya, who is just about managed to make the list with 98 points.

The Indians last played a T20 series in Sri Lanka and hence haven't played any games in the shortest format.

Bangladesh fast bowler Mustafizur Rahman has moved up two places to eighth after finishing with eight wickets in the series against South Africa while Nasum Ahmed (up 25 places to 15th) and Mehedi Hasan (up four places to 20th) have also made notable

progress.

However, Shakib Al Hasan has conceded the top spot for all-rounders to Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi.

In the ODI rankings for batters, Jaskaran Malhotra of the United States, who struck sixes in an over from Papua New Guinea's Gaudi Toka in a World Cup Super League 2 match, has rocketed 169 places to 132nd.

In the bowlers' list, Nepal leg-spinner Sandeep Lamichhane is now in top-100 at 91st place.

Limited spectators allowed at IPL

New Delhi: Limited spectators will be allowed into the stadiums when the much-awaited Indian Premier League resumes in the UAE this weekend, the event's organisers announced on Wednesday.

The IPL, which was suspended midway in May due to COVID-19 cases in its bio bubble, will resume from Sunday with defending champions Mumbai Indians taking on Chennai Super Kings at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium. "This match will be a momentous occasion as IPL will welcome the fans back to the stadiums after a brief hiatus owing to COVID-19 situation," an IPL statement said.

"Matches will be played at Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi with limited seating available keeping in mind the COVID protocols and UAE government regulations," it added.

It will be the first time since 2019 when the IPL will be played in front of an audience.

Last year, the league was played behind closed doors in the UAE while the first half of the 2021 edition was also played inside a strict bio-bubble. Although the league organisers did not specify the exact number of fans who would be let in but sources said their presence would be 50 per cent of the stadium capacity.

"Fans can buy tickets starting September 16 for the remainder of the tournament on the official website www.Ipl20.Com. Tickets can also be purchased on PlatinumList.Net," the league organisers said.

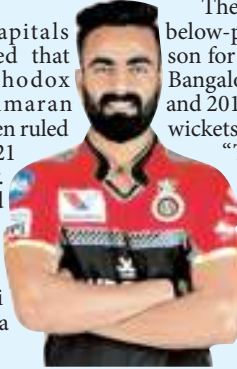


Delhi Capitals include net bowler Khejroliya in main squad

PTI ■ DUBAI

Delhi Capitals on Wednesday inducted left-arm seamer Kulwant Khejroliya in the main squad for the upcoming second half of this year's IPL after left-arm orthodox spinner Manimaran Siddharth was ruled out of the tournament due to quadriceps strain.

"Delhi Capitals today announced that left-arm orthodox bowler Manimaran Siddharth has been ruled out of the IPL 2021 due to an injury. The 23-year-old incurred a quadriceps strain during training in Dubai," Delhi Capitals said in a release.



Left-arm medium fast bowler Khejroliya, who is already part of the Delhi Capitals team's bio-bubble as a net bowler, was readily included in the main squad.

Khejroliya, who plays domestic cricket for the Delhi state side, has so far taken 17 wickets in 15 T20 matches at an average of 23.29.

The 29-year-old had a below-par IPL debut season for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL 2018 and 2019 seasons, taking 3 wickets in 5 IPL matches.

"The DC support staff is currently overlooking Manimaran Siddharth's rehabilitation programme in Dubai," the release added.

Manika Batra not in India squad



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Star paddler Manika Batra was on Wednesday left out of the India squad for the Asian Championships beginning September 28 in Doha after she did not attend the mandatory national camp in Sonapat.

In the absence of the world number 56th player, 97th-ranked Sutirtha Mukherjee will lead the women's team. The other members are Ayhika Mukherjee (ranked 131) and Archana Kamath (132).

Veteran Sharath Kamal (ranked 33) will spearhead the men's challenge in the compa-

ny of G Sathiyam (38), Harmeet Desai (72), Manav Thakkar (134) and Sanil Shetty (247).

Powerhouse China is not taking part in the event, raising medal hopes in the men's team event. Singles and doubles competitions will also be conducted. The Table Tennis Federation of India had made it clear that any player not attending the camp will not be considered for selection. The team was picked on Wednesday and was subsequently published on TTFI website. The federation had made attendance in camps compulsory following the

Will try and replicate 2017 Champions Trophy final: Hasan Ali

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan seamer Hasan Ali is confident that his team can beat arch-rivals India in the opening match of the ICC T20 World Cup, replicating its convincing win in the 2017 Champions Trophy final at the Oval. Since then, Pakistan has played India twice in the 50-over format and got thrashed both times — at the 2018 Asia Cup in Dubai and the 2019 ODI World Cup in England.

Before every global event, there is always a lot of hullabaloo from the Pakistan corner but till date, they haven't beaten India in either 50-over or T20 World Cup games.

In fact, they have also failed to beat India in practice games.

"When we won the Champions Trophy (in 2017), it was a very good time for us and we will try to beat them again in the T20 World Cup.

We will give our best. Playing against India is always a pressure game because of the expectations of fans from both countries," Hasan told a virtual media conference on Wednesday.

Will try and replicate 2017 Champions Trophy final: Hasan Ali

PTI ■ KARACHI

Women's team: Manav Thakkar, Sharath Kamal, G Sathiyam, Harmeet Desai, Sanil Shetty. Men's doubles: Sharath Kamal and G Sathiyam; Manav Thakkar and Harmeet Desai.

Women's doubles: Sutirtha Mukherjee, Sreeja Akula, Ayhika Mukherjee, Archana Kamath.

Mixed doubles: Manav Thakkar and Archana Kamath; Harmeet Desai and Sreeja Akula.

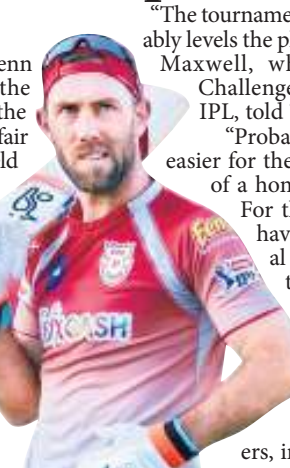
IPL in UAE will level playing field for T20 World Cup: Maxwell

PTI ■ DUBAI

Star Australian all-rounder Glenn Maxwell believes having the Indian Premier League in the UAE will level the playing field "a fair bit" in the T20 World Cup to be held at the same venue next month.

The IPL will resume on September 19 in the UAE after being suspended in May due to the second wave of COVID-19 in India, which led to multiple cases inside its bio-bubble.

It will be followed by the T20 World Cup from October 17.



"The tournament being in UAE probably levels the playing field a little bit," Maxwell, who plays for Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL, told 'icc-cricket.Com'.

"Probably makes it a little bit easier for there not to be as much of a home ground advantage. For the IPL to be there to have a lot of international players that are potentially going to be in that World Cup over there playing, I think it's probably levelled the playing field a fair bit."

Australia's top players, including Steve Smith,

David Warner, Aaron Finch and Pat Cummins, have not competed in the last few months and will be back in action at the IPL. Maxwell said the IPL stint will help the preparation of the Australian players.

"The fact we've got a lot of guys going over for the IPL as a preparation, get a few games in those conditions, it's going to do wonders for our batters," he said.

"Our bowlers are going to be up and firing by the time the tournament starts. I can assure you everyone is looking forward to hitting the ground running over there."

Australia will have to battle it out against defending champions West Indies, world number one England and South Africa in a tough group in the Super 12 stage.

Juventus beats Malmö 3-0 for 1st win since Ronaldo's exit

AP ■ MALMO (SWEDEN)

Juventus claimed its first win of the post-Cristiano Ronaldo era by beating Malmö 3-0 in the Champions League after a flurry of first-half goals. Alex Sandro's 23rd-minute opener was followed by goals in the space of 60 seconds by Paulo Dybala — from the penalty spot — and Alvaro Morata on the stroke of half-time in the south of Sweden on Tuesday.

Juventus has failed to win any of its three games in Serie A this season, the last two being losses that came after the departure of Ronaldo to Manchester United.

A trip to the Swedish champions offered some respite from its domestic problems for Massimiliano Allegri's team, which can take some momentum into a big match in the Italian league against AC Milan on Sunday. "We came here after some bad results, but we knew that this is another competition and we knew what to do," Dybala said.

"We did it, playing with serenity," Sandro's goal — a stooping header from a right-wing cross from Juan Cuadrado that was flicked on by Rodrigo Bentancur — came just as Malmö was starting to apply some pressure on Juventus. After that, the visitors dominated.

Bayern beats Barcelona 3-0 for 1st loss of post-Messi era

AP ■ BARCELONA

Bayern Munich showed Barcelona exactly how dreary life will be without Lionel Messi when it dealt the Spanish team its first loss since the exit of the star forward.

Thomas Müller scored a goal and Robert Lewandowski added two more to help Bayern ease to a 3-0 victory at Camp Nou in their Champions League opener on Tuesday.

Müller's 34th-minute strike took his career tally to seven goals against Barcelona, including the two he netted in the 8-2 shellacking Bayern dealt Barcelona the last time they met in August 2020.

Without Messi to rely on as it had for years, Barcelona was running scared from the start as it focused on protecting itself from another embarrassing



ing defeat. The final score hid the total dominance of the Bundesliga powerhouse. Julian Nagelsmann's team turned the once great attacking juggernaut of Barcelona into a jittery bunch hunkered down in their own area.

Lewandowski capitalized on Bayern's complete control

with goals in the 56th and 85th, both times putting in rebounds from shots that came off the post to the striker.

"We gave little away at the back," Müller said.

"Going forward, we could have scored one or two more. It's a lot of fun playing here, the boys enjoyed it."

Performance in first match will set tone for DC this IPL, says Kaif

PTI ■ DUBAI

Assistant coach Mohammad Kaif reckons the first match in the second half of the Indian Premier League will set the tone for the rest of the tournament for table toppers Delhi Capitals. The second leg of the T20 league, which was suspended in May due to the increasing COVID-19 cases in India and multiple infections in the IPL bio-bubble, is scheduled to resume in the UAE from September 19.

The Capitals are currently perched on top of the points table with 12 points from eight matches.

"There has been a big break after the first half of the IPL, but we are fortunate that most of the players have been playing international cricket regularly," Kaif was quoted as saying in a media release.

"We have a well-balanced side as there are players with international cricket experience and domestic players, who have been putting in good performances. The first match is going to be crucial for us."

"Our performance in the first match will set the momentum for us," he said.

Players picking up bits of information on UAE conditions in IPL will help SA at T20 WC: Boucher

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Head coach Mark Boucher hopes South Africa's T20 World Cup bound players can pick up "bits of information" about the UAE conditions during the Indian Premier League which he feels will stand the team in good stead during the marquee ICC event.

The 44-year-old emphasised that the players need to manage themselves during the league so that they can peak at the right time as a unit for South Africa.



"We've spoken to the guys going to the IPL. They need to stay quite disciplined and realise we want to peak at the right time as a unit," Boucher was quoted as saying by 'ESPNCricinfo'.

"They'll be picking up bits of information about playing in those conditions that will really get them ready for a big tournament and if they manage themselves well and get some good time in the nets and get used to facilities it will stand us in good stead."

The IPL, which was suspended midway in May due to multiple cases of COVID-19 in its bio bubble, is scheduled to be held in the UAE from September 19 to October 15.

The T20 World Cup is slated to begin on October 17 in Oman and UAE.

Have deepest concerns on 'place of boxing' in Olympics: IOC



PTI ■ LAUSANNE

The International Olympic Committee on Wednesday "reiterated its deepest concerns" on boxing's place in the 2024 Paris Olympics, citing "unresolved" issues with the International Boxing Association's governance structure, financial situation and the scoring system even as the AIBA promised to "exceed" the laid down criteria.

In a letter addressed to AIBA President Umar Kremlev, IOC Director General Christophe De Kepper said the Olympic body's Executive Board has asked him and its

Chief Ethics and Compliance Officer to "follow up" on the situation. The AIBA responded by saying that it is doing everything that that IOC expects from it.

"AIBA has been working on comprehensive reform for some time now and is grateful for the IOC's public acknowledgment that a step forward has certainly been taken in terms of good governance..." the AIBA stated in an e-mail to PTI, responding to the IOC letter. In the four-page communication, IOC expressed dissatisfaction with the work done by the AIBA to address concerns related to its governance,

finances and the refereeing and judging system that has been under intense scrutiny since the 2016 Rio Olympics.

"On the basis of the above, the IOC Executive Board restated its deepest concerns and reiterated its previous position regarding the place of boxing in the programme of the Olympic Games Paris 2024 and future editions of the Olympic Games," the letter stated.

The AIBA said it would do more than what has been mandated to regain the IOC's confidence. "Wide-ranging reforms are already underway in terms of financial integrity, good governance and sporting integrity, including all the areas mentioned by the IOC and more," the AIBA said.

"Independent experts are involved in each of these sectors. AIBA is confident these reforms will see AIBA meet and even exceed the criteria laid down by the IOC for reinstatement." The IOC said while it acknowledges that AIBA has taken "a step forward in the direction of better governance" but several concerns remain unaddressed.