

**ANALYSIS 7**  
MIGHTY CHALLENGES  
IN INDIAN AGRICULTURE**MONEY 8**  
MARKETS MAINTAIN  
RECORD RUN**SPORTS 12**  
VIRAT KOHLI TO QUIT  
AST20 CAPTAIN

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 17, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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SEERAT KAPOOR  
IN DIL RAJU'S NEXT,  
SHARES PIC FROM  
REHEARSAL

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**ACTIVIST HARSH MANDER RAIDED BY ENFORCEMENT DIRECTORATE IN DELHI**

The Enforcement Directorate on Thursday raided three locations linked to activist Harsh Mander. The raids, which began at 8 am, are connected to a money laundering probe based on a FIR (First Information Report) filed by the Economic Offences Wing of Delhi Police in February this year. Mander's home (in Vasant Kunj) and his office at the Centre for Equity Studies (in Adchini) were raided simultaneously, as were two children's homes run by his NGO. The raids were carried out after hours after Mr Mander and his wife had left for Germany; he has taken up a six-month fellowship at the Robert Bosch Academy in Berlin.

**MAJOR SUCCESS: FRENCH TROOPS KILL ISIS HEAD IN GREATER SAHARA**

The head of ISIS in the Greater Sahara, who was wanted for deadly attacks on US soldiers and foreign aid workers, has been killed in an operation by French troops. Adnan Abu Walid al-Sahrawi was 'neutralised by French forces', President Emmanuel Macron tweeted early Thursday. 'This is another major success in our fight against terrorist groups in the Sahel,' Macron said, without giving the location or details of the operation. Defence Minister Florence Parly said Sahrawi died following a strike by France's Barkhane force, which battles jihadists in the Sahel. 'It is a decisive blow against this terrorist group,' she tweeted. 'Our fight continues.'

**2 BOYS FIND OVER RS 900 CR CREDITED TO THEIR BANK ACCOUNTS IN BIHAR**

Residents of a village in Bihar's Katihar rushed to ATMs and banks to check their account statement. The reason? Two schoolchildren suddenly found their accounts laden with crores of rupees overnight, and the villagers hoping for a similar luck made a dash to the banks. The two boys have accounts in Uttar Bihar Gramin Bank. They were expecting to get some money under a government scheme to buy school uniform and pay for related expenses. Along with their parents, they went to a public internet centre at the village to check whether the money had come.

**BJP VOLUNTEERS TO HELP VACCINATE OVER 1.5 CR DOSES ON PM'S BIRTHDAY**

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is aspiring to help create a record by helping achieve the nation maximum number of COVID-19 vaccine inoculations on September 17, the birthday of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, party sources said. To achieve this milestone, BJP is prepping its health volunteers to ensure that the maximum number of people get their COVID-19 vaccines on the day, BJP sources stated. India has administered more than one crore COVID-19 vaccines in a day on earlier occasions. The target that BJP is aspiring is to get more than 1.5 crore vaccines administered on the day, the BJP leader informed.

**TS IT POLICY TARGET**

# 3 LAKH-CRORE EXPORTS, 10 LAKH IT JOBS BY 2026

THE BIG PICTURE

- \* 10 lakh direct IT sector jobs by 2026
- \* Doubling annual IT/ITES sector exports to Rs 3 lakh crore by 2026
- \* 50,000 jobs in the Tier II and Tier III cities
- \* Attracting over Rs.75k cr investment and providing over 3 lakh jobs in the electronics sector
- \* Completing 5-G rollout across the state
- \* Connecting govt institutions, rural & urban households to the internet 100% via T-Fiber by 2026
- \* Digital Telangana Centre in each gram panchayat in the state
- \* Smart Cities wing to create over 40 smart regions

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State, in its new ICT Policy, has set a target of increasing total direct employment in the IT sector to 10 lakh jobs and doubling annual IT/ITES sector exports

to Rs 3 lakh crore by 2026.

Minister for Industries and IT KT Rama Rao, along with Rekha Menon, Chairperson of NASSCOM and Chairperson and Senior MD Accenture -- India, unveiled Telangana's 2nd ICT Policy.

In his address on the occasion,

**Citizens take Center stage in new IT policy- KTR**

KT Rama Rao said, "Our primary objective with regard to the 2nd ICT Policy is to empower and enable the citizens of the state, belonging to all backgrounds, take advantage of the growing digital world.

From being able to use basic smart phone applications to be able to work on advanced technologies, we will enable citizens to live a better digital life".

The first ICT Policy was announced in 2016 as a set of guiding principles for the ITE&C Department.

2

ML MELLY MAITREYI  
■ HYDERABAD

The State Cabinet has resolved to conduct the monsoon session of the Legislative Assembly from September 24. The decision was taken by the Cabinet which met under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao here on Thursday.

The sessions of Legislative Assembly and Council will start at 11-00 am on the day and on the same day the Business Advisory Committee would meet and finalise the agenda for the legislative session.

**Covid under control, no rise in cases after reopening of schools**

The Covid-19 situation in TS is under control and there has been no spurt in coronavirus cases after the reopening of educational institutions, State Medical and Health department officials said here on Thursday. The State Cabinet, which met at Pragathi Bhavan here on Thursday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, first reviewed the pandemic situation in the State. It sought a detailed account of Covid-19 cases across the country and outside. The officials concerned explained the measures being taken in various States to control the pandemic. The Chief Minister enquired about the situation in neighbouring States and the measures taken to contain the virus.

2

## Cabinet Sub Committee to study Podu lands issue

**Another panel to look into issues of Police Stations in new districts**

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Cabinet Sub-Committee has been constituted to look into issues concerning Podu lands comprehensively and come out with possible solutions and recommendations. The decision was taken at the State Cabinet meeting here on Thursday with Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in the chair.

Women and Child Development Minister Satyavathi Rathod has been appointed as the Chairperson of the Cabinet Sub Committee with Ministers Jagadish Reddy, Indrakaran Reddy and Puvvada Ajay Kumar as members.

During a review of the Home Department's plans, the Cabinet took a decision to constitute a Cabinet Sub Committee to look into the requirements of newly constituted districts in the State and take steps accordingly.

The Cabinet Sub Committee, headed by Home Minister Mohammad Mahmood Ali, with Ministers Harish Rao, Jagadish Reddy, Koppula Eswar, Prashanth Reddy, Srinivas Goud, Indrakaran Reddy, Sabitha Indra Reddy, Ajay Kumar as members, would review the functioning of police stations and address their problems.

**Cabinet clears Sangameswara, Basaveswara II schemes**

The State Cabinet has given approval for two lift irrigation schemes, after a discussion on irrigation at the meeting held here on Thursday. It approved the Sangameshwara and Basaveswara lift irrigation schemes for irrigating 4.56 lakh acres in Sangra Reddy, Andhole, Zaaheerabad and Narayankhed constituencies. It was proposed to lift 12 tmc ft of water from the right side of the Singur reservoir to provide water to 2.19 lakh acres in Zaaheerabad, Andhole, Sangra Reddy constituencies. This scheme would extend irrigation facility to 231 villages in 11 mandals of the above constituencies.

2

**Telangana Cabinet approves reservation for Gouds, SCs, STs in allotment of liquor shops**

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## Accused in minor girl's rape, murder found dead on rail track

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man wanted in the case of rape and murder of a six-year old girl here allegedly committed suicide with his body being found on a railway track in Jangaon district on Thursday morning, police said.

The incident happened two days after Telangana Labour Minister Ch Malla Reddy had on September 14 said that the accused in the case would be caught and that there should be an "encounter" against him. Family members of the accused claimed he might have been killed.

The girl was allegedly raped



and murdered in a neighbouring house at Saidabad here on the evening of September 9. Based on preliminary investigation, a senior police official said the accused P Raju, aged around 30, was found walking on the track by gangmen, who asked him to move aside

2

## Bajireddy Goverdhan appointed as chairman of TSRTC by KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Thursday appointed senior MLA Bajireddy Goverdhan, representing Nizamabad rural Assembly segment, as Chairman of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC).

The Chief Minister Office (CMO) tweeted about Bajireddy Goverdhan's appointment in its account.

Bajireddy thanked the Chief Minister for appointing him as the

TSRTC Chairman. He assured the CM that he would do '100 per cent justice' to the responsibilities entrusted to him. He said that he would make the RTC run on a new path under the guidance of the Chief Minister.

Bajireddy is a senior leader in the TRS party. A four-time MLA, he is an important leader in the erstwhile Nizamabad district. Bajireddy's native place is Ravutla village in Sirikonda mandal of Nizamabad district.

2

## Revanth Reddy eats humble pie after badmouthing Tharoor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana PCC president Revanth Reddy had to eat humble pie on Thursday, after calling his party senior Shashi Tharoor a 'donkey' the previous day.

On Thursday, Revanth, facing criticism within the party and outside for his language, tweeted: "I spoke to Shri @ Shashi Tharoorji to convey that I hereby withdraw the remarks and reiterate that I hold my senior colleague in the highest regard. I regret any hurt that may have been caused to him by my words. We share our faith

in the values and policies of the Congress Party."

An audio recording of Revanth's harsh comment is making the rounds on the internet in which he is heard calling Congress senior leader and MP Shashi Tharoor "a donkey". In the clip, Revanth also stated "Tharoor only knows English ... Language is not knowledge. Language is only a communicative skill."

Revanth Reddy also said that



people like Shashi Tharoor should be expelled from the party.

TRS party working president and TS IT Minister KT Rama Rao took to Twitter and criticized Revanth for his words. In his tweet, he said, "While scumbags like Revanth Reddy need not be responded to; it's important to expose filth. Here's his audio clip/comments on Tharoor."

2

**Fake vax certificates available on Telegram**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fake Covid vaccination certificates and fake test results of 29 different countries, including India, are being sold on Telegram, a report by Check Point Research said on Thursday.

The report says a fake vaccination certificate for India is available at about US \$75 (Rs 5,520) each.

Oded Vanunu of Check Point said there are people who don't want to take the vaccine but still want the freedoms that come with being vaccinated such as access to places.

2

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

Bhadrapada &amp; Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

**Tithi** : Ekadashi 08:07**Nakshatram** : Shrivana 27:35**Time to Avoid** : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)**Rahukalam** : 10:39 am - 12:10 pm**Yamagandam** : 3:11 pm - 4:42 pm**Varjyam** : 8:03 am - 9:37 am**Gulika** : 7:38 am - 9:09 am**Good Time** : (to start any important work)**Amritakalam** : 5:26 pm - 6:59 pm**Ahhijit Muhurtham** : 11:46 am - 12:34 pm**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 28/22

Humidity: 75%

Sunrise: 6:04 am

Sunset: 06:16 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated SEPTEMBER 16, 2021 5:00 PM

## Congress and BJP show of strength today

SNCN ACHARYULU  
■ HYDERABAD

All is set for a show of strength by the Congress and the Bharatiya Janata Party on Friday at different venues.

While the Congress party is holding its public meeting at Gajwel -- the Assembly home constituency of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, the BJP is conducting its public meeting at Nirmal in erstwhile Adilabad district.

Both the parties are trying hard to establish their credentials as an 'alternative' to the Telangana Rashtra Samiti in the state.

The Congress has predicted the downfall of the TRS government. Given that Union Home Minister Amit Shah is expected to address the Gajwel meeting,

2





# Telangana Cabinet approves reservation for Gouds, SCs, STs in allotment of liquor shops

Constitutes Cabinet Sub Committee to look into issues in Dharani portal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Cabinet has taken a significant decision to implement reservations in allocation of liquor shops to Goud community, SCs and STs from next year.

Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao has earlier given an assurance that a reservation of 15 per cent for Goud community, 10 per cent for SCs and five per cent for

STs will be implemented in allotment of liquor shops.

The Cabinet which met under the chairmanship of KCR on Thursday took a decision in line with that assurance.

KCR had also said while announcing Dalit Bandhu scheme that reservations would be provided to SC beneficiaries in various trades and businesses including liquor shops allotted by the government.

The licences of liquor shops would come to an end on October 31 in the State and thus the Cabinet decision would pave way for allotment of liquor shops to above categories as per the quota.

In another decision to find solution to persistent complaints and grievances about Dharani Portal, the State Cabinet also constituted a Cabinet Sub Committee to look into the grievances and

technical issues cropping up in Dharani Portal and suggest solutions.

Ministers Harish Rao, Prashanth Reddy ,Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Jagadish Reddy, Niranjana Reddy, Sabitha Indra Reddy are the members of the Cabinet Sub Committee on Dharani.

The Cabinet approved sanction of another Rs 100 crore in addition to the Rs 300 crore sanctioned earlier for repair of

roads that were damaged in the recent heavy rains in the State.

The Cabinet issued instructions to the Panchayat Raj departments to this effect.

Allots site to RBVRR Educational Society

The Cabinet approved allocation of 1,261 square yards of site at Narayanaguda to RBVRR Educational Society for construction of Women's Hostel.

## 10 lakh IT jobs, 3 lakh crore...

Continued from page 1

KTR said that the ITE&C Department had been successful at meeting the goals set out in the ICT Policy 2016 and in some cases even performing beyond the set targets.

Chief Guest Rekha Menon of NASSCOM said, "Telangana's growth story over the last few years has been scripted by the investments and innovations in technology. Their progressive policies have always set a benchmark, and the path-breaking initiatives are the reason behind this spectacular growth".

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, ITE&C Department, presented the features of the new ICT Policy to the audience. He said, "The second ICT Policy might not seem very different from the previous one. This is because the first one has done exceedingly well and as the saying goes, why fix something that

is not broken. The key aspect of this policy is that we want citizens to be at the centre-stage. Our focus will be on having our citizens as the biggest achievement of the government and the state."

On the occasion, an MoU was signed with Microsoft on Cloud and Cloud Assisted Technologies to support the development of the local ecosystem through start-up programs and skilling initiatives.

Telangana will establish the National Centre for Additive Manufacturing (NCAM) in partnership with MeitY under the National Strategy for Additive Manufacturing (3D Printing). The Center will be a comprehensive ecosystem of additive manufacturing in the country by enabling the adoption of additive manufacturing in the industry, prototyping new products and focusing on indigenization, access to state-of-the-art infrastruc-

ture, enabling research and development of standards and new product development, and promoting skill development activities to generate quality manpower.

The Government of Telangana has partnered with the United Nations Development Program to jointly initiate the Next Gen Gov 'Data for Policy' initiative on Food Systems to incorporate anticipatory governance models for future-fit food systems in Telangana using data-driven policymaking tools and ecosystem-driven approaches.

The Startup Telangana Portal, which aims to be the one-stop destination for the entire start-up ecosystem of Telangana, was launched. It will cater to all startup-related services in a time-bound manner, including start-up recognition, grievance redressal, mentorship, and incentive disbursement mechanism.



## 13 held for playing cards at Manikonda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Special Operations Team of Madhapur Zone apprehended 13 persons found playing the banned cards game at a residence in Manikonda on Thursday. Officials seized Rs 8,600 from them and Rs 90,34,569 in their bank that was used for the game.

informs his regular customers and references. The transaction amount per game is a minimum of Rs 25,000 and increases depending on the raise in the game. There is no exchange of money physically and coins of various denominations (5000, 1000, 500, 100, 25) are given. After the result of the game, entries of win/loss are made in a register and at the end of the day, transactions/settlements are made through internet banking. This is made as a preventive measure incase of a raid by local police.

The arrested persons have been identified as CJ. Niraj Kumar, Druva, Jagannada Rajesh, C J Ramana, Donthaloori Raja Shekar, Mittapally Pavankumar, Chikkudu Sai Krishna, Gaddamoni Santhosh, Rahul Chouhan, Hosur Raghu, Ali Hirani, CJ Karthik and V V N Srikanth.

Officials said that the organiser, Niraj Kumar, took a flat for rent at Pristine Commune, near KGN Manikonda, Raidurgam for the purpose of organising poker games at late nights on certain pre-fixed dates and

Officials seized Rs 8,600 cash, Rs 90,34,569 in bank accounts that are now frozen, 19 mobile phones, six cars and other gaming evidence, all worth Rs 1,80,00,000, from their possession.

The apprehended accused persons along with the seized property were handed over to the Raidurgam Police for taking necessary action.

## Villagers attack woman forest official, staff

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A group of villagers allegedly attacked a woman Forest Range Officer and two other staff members and poured petrol on her in Jayashankar Bhupalpally district on Thursday when she was returning from a patrolling and field inspection duty, police said.

The incident happened in Pallepampala village where a mob of 50-60 villagers attacked the woman official besides a beat officer and a driver, who were accompanying her, with sticks and threw chilly powder at them, they said, adding the group also snatched away her gold chain and verbally abused her.

One man also poured petrol on the woman forest official and also on a government vehicle which was caught on camera, police said.

After getting information about the incident a police team rushed to the spot and rescued the forest personnel and got the woman official was admitted to a hospital where she is undergoing treatment for injuries sustained in the attack, a police officer said.

The mob had also taken out a match box but was stopped by police, the police officer claimed.

The woman Forest Range Officer was returning from field inspection in the area where a family in the village as part of its "attempt of encroaching" forest land, had destroyed the forest plantation, police said.

## CM KCR appoints Bajireddy Goverdhan as chairman of...

Continued from page 1

Bajireddy's political journey began as a sarpanch of Chinnampalli village - a post to which he was unanimously elected. Later, he served as MPP member in Sirikonda mandal. He also worked as Finance Corporation director in the combined Andhra Pradesh state. He was elected

as an MLA in 1999 from Armoor, in 2004 from Banswada, in 2014 and 18 from Nizamabad rural. His family acted as Police Patel in his village in the past. Two times he was elected on behalf of the Congress party - in 1999 and 2004. Twice he was elected as an MLA (2014 and 2018) on behalf of TRS party.

## Revanth Reddy eats humble pie after...

Continued from page 1

Sent to me by a reporter. I am sure if we send it to a forensic lab, it'll match his infamous 'Note4Vote' voice."

KTR also said, "As the chairman of the Parliamentary IT Standing Committee, Shashi Tharoorji had paid some compliments to the efforts of the Govt of Telangana recently. His colleague in parliament & PCC Cheap calls him a

Donkey!! This is what happens when you have a 3rd rate criminal/thug leading the party."

KTR also tagged Rahul Gandhi asking for his response on TPCC president Revanth Reddy's words insulting a senior leader from his own political party.

Revanth Reddy has been facing criticism also from national Congress leaders for his filthy language.

Former I&B Minister-GOI and

senior national spokesperson of Congress Manish Tewari said on Twitter, "Dear Mr. Revanth Reddy, Dr. Shashi Tharoor is a valued colleague of yours & mine. It would have been better if you would have spoken to him if you had some misgivings about a purported statement of his. Grace & Propriety demands you withdraw your words."

While Shashi Tharoor himself responded in a tweet and said,

"I am sure he was only expressing his fraternal feelings."

Revanth Reddy is known for using harsh and unparliamentary language towards other leaders. This is not the first time he is in news for using abusive language. On many occasions, Reddy has abused other state leaders too in the past, including Congress chief Sonia Gandhi, while he was in Telugu Desam Party.

## Congress and BJP show of strength...

Continued from page 1

The BJP state unit is hopeful that Shah will "clear the doubts of the people of Telangana and as well as party cadre" and assert that the BJP and TRS would never have alliance and that "TRS remains their main political enemy".

Of late, due to the ease with which Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao could meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as some central minis-

ters, state BJP leaders think that there is a doubt in the minds of people whether BJP and TRS are friendly parties.

Besides, several Union ministers have praised the state government's schemes. So, the BJP brass in Telangana want Shah to put the record straight about TRS-BJP ties. The Telangana BJP leaders are of the view that the Nirmal public meeting would send a clear message that the saffron party is an alternative to the TRS in the state and that in the next

Assembly elections that their party would come to power in Telangana.

The state BJP leaders are upbeat that Shah's speech at the Nirmal public meeting would help lubricate the party machinery to stand united and fight the TRS "without any compromise" to bring the saffron party to power in the state in next Assembly elections.

The Telangana Congress leaders are hopeful that the Gajwel public meeting would galvanize the party cadre to fight with the

TRS and bring the grand old party to power in the next Assembly elections.

Both BJP and Congress target the 2023 Assembly elections to come to power and end the TRS rule in the state. Several Congress national leaders, including Mallikarjun Kharge, are attending the Gajwel public meeting. Telangana Congress president A Revanth Reddy and BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar are focusing their attention to make the meeting a grand success.

## AP seeks criminal action against TS for misleading NGT on RLIS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State will be presenting its counter to the charge of Andhra Pradesh that Telangana government misled the National Green Tribunal about the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation project taken up by AP Government.

The charges and counter charges of Telangana and AP about RLIS and contempt of court petition against AP came up for hearing before the NGT Chennai Bench on Thursday.

It may be mentioned that Telangana government filed a contempt of court petition in the NGT that the AP government was constructing the RLIS

TS to present its arguments on Sept 21

without any approvals or water allocation.

After two futile attempts to visit the site in Andhra Pradesh, it may be recalled that the Krishna River Management Board team submitted a report to the NGT after visiting the RLIS site in August second week.

It mentioned in its report that no work was going on at the time of its visit but the team however mentioned in its report that it appeared that the AP government had taken up works beyond what was required for the preparation of

the Detailed Project Report.

Andhra Pradesh however maintained its earlier stand today in its arguments before the Tribunal that it had only taken up works required for DPR and other related works and appealed to the Tribunal to understand the works of public importance.

The AP alleged that Telangana gave misleading photographs to the Tribunal and criminal proceedings be initiated against Telangana State which gave wrong photos.

Telangana will present its arguments on September 21.

## Cabinet clears Sangameswara, Basaveswara...

Continued from page 1

The Cabinet gave administrative sanction for the Rs.2,653 crore project.

The Basaveswara Lift irrigation would lift 8 tmc ft of water from the left side of the Singur reservoir to irrigate 1.65 lakh acres in Narayanankhed and Andhole constituencies. This scheme would irrigate lands in 166 villages in eight mandals of the two constituencies.

The Cabinet approved the administrative sanction for Rs.1,774 crore for this project.

The Cabinet also gave its approval to the Irrigation Department to raise loans from NABARD for the above two lift irrigation schemes.

The Cabinet also approved Rs.2051.14 crore NABARD loan for the Baswapur reservoir being constructed in YadadriBhongir district under the Kaleswaram Project 15 and 16 packages.

## Covid under control...

Continued from page 1

The officials assured the State Cabinet that there was no increase in Covid-19 cases after the reopening of educational institutions and the situation was totally under control. Test kits, medical oxygen and vaccines were available and accessible.

So far 2 crore people have been vaccinated and over 2.56 crore doses were supplied and of that 1,45,19,909 pertained to the first dose and 55,36,250 to the second dose.

The Cabinet instructed people's representatives that as the special drive of vaccination commenced from Thursday, Panchayat and Municipal officers in every village, mandal and district, sarpanches, MP/MLA members, ZPTC members, MPP members, ZP chairpersons, MLAs, MLCs and other people's representatives should take an active part. All the Ministers should ensure the success of the special drive and every day about three lakh vaccine

doses should be administered, the Cabinet told the people's representatives and officers.

The State Cabinet directed the R&B and Medical and Health Department to make all arrangements for starting the new medical colleges from the next academic year.

The Cabinet also reviewed the steps taken for the construction of four Super Specialty Hospitals in Hyderabad and said the construction should be commenced soon and the structures completed at the earliest.

The Cabinet said that earlier the production capacity of medical oxygen was increased from 130 tonnes to 280 tonnes and measures should be taken to increase it to 550 tonnes.

Explaining the preparedness of hospitals should children get affected by Covid-19, Medical and Health officials said that the department provided 5,200 beds for children, medicines and other equipment at a cost of Rs.133 crore.

## Fake vax certificates available on Telegram

Continued from page 1

"These people are turning to the Darknet and Telegram. Since March 2021, prices for fake vaccination cards have dropped by half and online groups for these fraudulent coronavirus services boast followings of hundreds of thousands of people."

"I strongly recommend people to not engage these sellers for anything as these vendors are after more than just selling

you fake vaccination cards," Vanunu said.

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, in India, various state governments have mandated certain regulations for those undertaking inter-state travel by road or air to mitigate the further spread of the virus.

Travellers are required to have a negative COVID-19 test result (RT-PCR report) or a vaccination certificate to visit some states that see large influx of tourists.

The Check Point Research (CPR) report said movement regulation may have resulted in the demand for and availability of fake test results and vaccine certificates in the black market from those who do not wish to be vaccinated.

"In March 2021, the majority of the fake coronavirus certificates were advertised on the Darknet. Now, CPR sees a majority of black market activity centered around Telegram.

## Accused in minor...

Continued from page 1

The family members of the accused, who were shell-shocked after coming to know about their kin's death, claimed that he might have been killed.

"He was killed. What is left now? Initially, it was said that he was caught three days ago... Yesterday and day before yesterday, they said you will be released only if your son is caught or you will also be sent to jail. They said order has come from above to shoot him. We overheard when they were talking," the mother of accused Raju told reporters.

Officials took details from them on Wednesday and let them off in the night. When asked if he was caught, they replied in the negative, she said.

"It appears they have killed my son in the morning. They found him three days ago. But, he was hidden somewhere. They sent us and killed him in

the morning," she said.

Weeping inconsolably, Raju's wife said he used to beat her up when drunk but good when not drunk.

She used to put up with his behaviour, she said.

She asked how they would survive now as there is no male member left at home.

"The way justice has been done to them, justice should be done to us also. We are three women. There are no men in our home. How do we women survive," she said. She too claimed that "police killed (him)." The body was shifted to MGM government hospital in Warangal for post-mortem. The Railway Police registered a case and further investigations are on.

Earlier, Telangana Director General of Police (DGP) M Mahendar Reddy tweeted: "The accused of 'Child Sexual Molestation and murder @ Mogenari Colony, found dead on the railway track, in the limits of Station Ghanpur PoliceStation."

## 'Last chance' says SC

Continued from page 1

A bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana noted that this is a recurrent problem in Hyderabad and despite several directions, the state government has not complied with the orders of the Telangana High Court prohibiting the immersion of idols there.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta submitted to the court that to minimise pollution in the lake, idols would be lifted by cranes soon after the immersion and transferred to solid waste disposal sites for disposal.

"In view of the submissions, we allow this year, as the last chance, to use this lake for immersion of idols," said the bench.

The bench said that a lot of money had been spent for purification of the lake and noted, "Every year if you allow this immersion, what is the point of that beautification or money spent. It's a waste. You should've taken steps. Last minute you're coming."

After hearing a contempt petition, the court had directed the state government to permit immersion of PoP Ganesh idols in baby ponds constructed by the GHMC or separate areas/ponds which do not result in the spread of pollution into the city's main water body.

Justice Hima Kohli, who was also part of the Bench, recused from hearing the present matter as she had passed some related order as the Chief Justice of Telangana High Court.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹231
Without Skin	₹251
Broiler at Farm	₹127
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	423
VIJAYAWADA	441
VISAKHAPATNAM	441
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.23
(IN HYDERABAD)	

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SAIDABAD RAPE AND MURDER

Doubts over police version how rape accused died

DAVE BENNETT SILVERY  
■ HYDERABAD

A week after the rape and murder of a six-year-old girl from Singareni Colony in Saidabad was reported, the prime suspect in the case, Pallakonda Raju, against whom the police had launched a massive manhunt, was 'found dead' at the Ghanpur Railway Station in Warangal on Thursday.

According to police officials, he was found dead on the railway tracks. The officials, going by the accounts given by two railway employees, are of the view that Raju committed suicide by jumping in front of a moving train on the railway tracks near the Ghanpur Railway Station, which is 140 km from Saidabad.

Warangal Commissioner of Police Tarun Joshi said that they had received a 'Dial 100' call around 10 am, informing them about a dead body lying on the railway tracks. A team of police officials, led by a sub inspector, then visited the scene. Upon checking the body, the police officials identified it as that of Raju. The body was identified based on the description provided by the Hyderabad City Police and the tattoos and photos were a match.

The police official stated the 'Dial 100' call was received from two railway employees who had first noticed the youth and tried to stop him from running on the tracks. According to Joshi, the railway employees chased him for some distance before Raju jumped in front of the oncoming Hyderabad-bound Konark Express.

Speaking to media persons, the railway employees, T Kumar and Sarappa, while recounting the incident, said that they had noticed a man moving suspiciously near the tracks and initially did not pay attention to it and were busy with their work. After a while, workers from the field told them that a man had fallen on the tracks. The duo, who by then had moved further from the spot, returned to the spot in about 30 to 40 minutes and noticed the body. Sarappa then said he called the railway officials before calling the police on 100 at sharp 9:53 am. The

body was identified as that of the rape accused Raju "I called the police hoping to get the Rs 10 lakh reward that was announced," said Sarappa.

The railway employees' version has raised eyebrows among those sections of people who believe in speculative media reports that Raju was nabbed by the police within hours of the incident, but his arrest had not been disclosed to facilitate his elimination in an "encounter". These people, including netizens, see a parallel between the present 'suicide' case and the 'Disha encounter deaths' as well as the encounter deaths of the prime accused in an acid attack case in Warangal.

Given multiple CCTVs in every major bus station, railway station and at every junction, the police could not have remained clueless for a week, they say. These people believe that Raju was killed in custody, but his case was made to appear like suicide to avoid problems like those which the police are presently encountering in the SC-ordered probe into Disha encounter case.

According to a July 2020 report by UK-based tech firm Comparitech, Hyderabad was named as the city with the most number of CCTV cameras in India and the 16th most surveilled city in the world. With more than 5.8 lakh CCTV cameras (figure up to July 2020) in Hyderabad alone, the Telangana government and the state police alike pride themselves on being tech-savvy and advanced in the usage of surveillance and related technologies to promote people-friendly governance and policing.

Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar uses the sentence 'One surveillance camera is equal to a hundred policemen' often in press meets. While this has been proved right time and time again, with more than 70 per cent of criminal cases being solved using CCTV footage, some people wonder how the police failed to detect the whereabouts of a criminal wanted in a heinous crime.

The state's prestigious 'Nenu Saitham' programme, wherein the police installed CCTV cameras in colonies, was glo-



Raju's kin allege encounter

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The family members of the accused in the rape and murder of a six-year-old girl in Hyderabad's Saidabad, allege that they would not believe the suicide theory and described the death of Raju as a cold-blooded murder by the police officials. Responding on the alleged suicide, they allege that the police have encountered him. It may be recalled that the body of

Raju was found on Thursday near the railway tracks at Station Ghanpur, near here. The Director-General of Police Mahender Reddy in a twitter message said that Raju had committed suicide. However, the family members of the accused allege that the police would have shot Raju dead. They are demanding the government to handover the body of Raju to the family for performing the last rites. They are weeping inconsolably for Raju, who they said became a

victim of the police brutality. His mother said that the family members were kept in Saidabad police station. She said that her family members spent six days in the police station before they were let off by the police on Wednesday. When the family enquired the police about what was the progress in the case, she said, the police replied to them that the police got orders from above to 'encounter' him. The family has been crying for Raju since then.

rified earlier this year with officials of the tri-commissionerate areas of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda praising the initiative and boasting of their crime stats.

Earlier in the day, Telangana Minister for IT, Industries, Municipal Administration and Urban Development, K T Rama Rao, who had been misinformed about the 'arrest' of the rape accused, speaking at Telangana's ICT Policy 2 launch, said that the Government of Telangana had installed over 3,000 public Wi-Fi access points in Hyderabad. With such an advanced state of technological affairs in the state, how could the rape accused roam scot-free for a week, questioned Ravi Kiran, a private employee.

"If he had to commit suicide, why'd he go all the way to Warangal and do it", "How was he not traced till one week?", It's a political murder !! Justice should be done through "Court of Law" Not by public emotions.. anyways it ended this way" read a few of the tweets on the announcements of the Telangana police and the minister.

Drawing a parallel between the Disha case, where the accused were killed in an alleged 'encounter' without following the due course of law, netizens were speculating about what could have happened long before Raju was found dead on Thursday. Following Minister Malla Reddy's comments that the accused should be killed, the

National Human Rights Commission had submitted a plea to the court to take cognizance of the comments that the Minister had made in violation of basic human rights.

"Disha' Repeats! Rape accused Pallakonda Raju (30) first 'goes missing', then police launch massive 'manhunt' & now suddenly 'ends life' in front of a railway track at Ghanpur, Jangaon, Telangana. Stop cremation until independent post mortem is done. HC & @India\_NHRC must probe" (SIC) tweeted a user with the handle 'meeracomposes'.

Several other users on social media platforms, including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, demanded an independent enquiry into the whole incident.

T'gana ministers visit rape and murder victim's family

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A week after the rape and murder of a six-year-old girl in Hyderabad, two Telangana ministers on Thursday called on her parents and presented a cheque of Rs 20 lakh. Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali and Minister for Women and Child Welfare Satyavati Rathore visited the victim's family in Singareni Colony in Saidabad area Thursday morning. A couple of hours after the ministers' visit, police found the body of accused Pallakonda Raju, 30, on a railway track near Station Ghanpur in Jangaon district. The ministers consoled the family and also promised to allot them two-bed room house.

They assured the victim's parents that all steps will be taken to ensure that the guilty get stringent punishment. Some local residents lodged their protest over the manner the ministers visited the victim's family without any prior information. Leaders of Seva Lal Banjara Sangham tried to disrupt the ministers' visit but were stopped by the police. Later, the victim's family members said they will return the cheque to the government as they only want justice. The girl's father told reporters that the ministers left the cheque in their house. "We don't want the cheque. We want justice," he said. The six-year-old was sexually assaulted and murdered by Raju, who happened to be her neighbor, on

September 9. The incident triggered public outrage. The state government had come under criticism from the opposition for its handling of the case. The opposition leaders who visited the victim's house, found fault with Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and his cabinet colleagues for not visiting the family.

A massive manhunt was launched for the fugitive and Hyderabad police had announced Rs 10 lakh reward for any information leading to his arrest. The accused was found dead on railway track in Jangaon district. Police claimed that he committed suicide by throwing himself under a train. The body was identified with tattoo marks on hands.

Awareness key to fight crimes against women

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Women's Commission Chairperson V Sunita Laxma Reddy on Thursday said the Commission would conduct awareness programmes for school children as part of measures to prevent crimes against girls and women. The Commission would conduct programmes to promote awareness among school children so that they can differentiate between a good and bad touch, she said. The School Education Department and police would also be involved in the awareness programmes, she said. Responding to the death of the accused in the alleged rape and murder of a six-year old girl here, Sunita Laxma Reddy tweeted: "What the girl's mother wanted has happened. The girl's soul has got peace. Homage to the girl child with the death of the evil-doer."

City cops foil Sharmila's sit-in dharna for justice

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad police foiled a protest march by YSR Telangana Party (YSRTP) leader YS Sharmila, who was staging a sit-in demanding justice to the family of six-year-old girl raped and murdered last week. Police forcibly ended Sharmila's protest in the early hours of Thursday and shifted her to her residence in Jubilee Hills just hours before it revealed that the body of the accused was recovered from railway tracks. The daughter of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy was staging sit-in near the victim's residence in Singareni Colony in Saidabad area since Wednesday evening. Police swung into action after midnight and dispersed YSRTP workers staging sit-in along with Sharmila. Policewomen forcibly shifted Sharmila to a police vehicle and she was later dropped at her residence. After calling on the family of the

victim, Sharmila sat on protest. She vowed to continue the fast till justice is done to the family. She demanded a compensation of Rs 10 crore to the victim's family. She expressed concern over the crime rate in the state and said that sexual assaults on women had increased during the TRS rule. Sharmila's mother and YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) honorary president YS Vijayamma also called on the victim's family. She stated that there is an urgent need to stop heinous incidents of rape of minor girls. Vijayamma claimed that when Rajasekhara Reddy was the chief minister such incidents never happened. She recalled that when there was an acid attack in Warangal, the culprits were taken to task. The YSRCP leader sought to know why no leader from the ruling TRS had not visited the victim's family to express solidarity while almost all the opposition leaders are paying a visit to console the family.

3 peddlers held with 3 ltrs of hash oil worth Rs 9 lakh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the Special Operations Team (SOT), LB Nagar Zone along with the LB Nagar Police apprehended three drug peddlers on Thursday and seized three liters of hashish oil and other evidence all worth Rs 9,80,800 from their possession.

The arrested persons have been identified as Mallapragari Srikanth Reddy, 32, Chakali Venkatesh, 27 and Thallavalasa Kondal Rao, 43. Another person, identified as Munagapaka Venkata Raju, 32, from Vizag, is absconding, said the police officials. "Srikanth Reddy and Venkata Raju are close friends and were previously involved in transporting ganja from Visakhapatnam agency area to different areas, for which two cases were also registered against them in Rajahmundry Urban district of Andhra Pradesh. Chakali Venkatesh is a close friend of Reddy's and Kondal Rao is Raju's cousin.



Raju supplied the trio with the contraband to sell to needy customers in Hyderabad and its surrounding areas. The trio were aware that the police were on the lookout for marijuana and chose to smuggle and deal in hashish oil, which is comparatively easier to transport," said Mahesh M Bhagwat, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda.

Venkata Raju purchased 3 liters of hashish oil from a known person at Visakhapatnam agency area for Rs 1,00,000 per liter and then transported it to Patancheru, where it was

handed over to the trio. They then were to sell the oil for Rs 3,000 per 10 ml, said the official.

According to their plan, on Thursday morning, the trio came to LB Nagar on a motorcycle along with the hashish oil to sell it to needy customers. However, the team of police officials caught the trio and seized 3 liters of hashish oil, a motorcycle, three mobile phones and cash, all worth Rs 9,50,80 from their possession. The trio were apprehended under the NDPS act and handed over to the LB Nagar Police who are investigating.



16 trained in ATSS graduate from AFA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sixteen trainee officers successfully completed 139th Air Traffic Surveillance Services (ATSS) Course in an impressive graduation ceremony held at ATCOTE at Air Force Academy, Dundigal, here on Thursday.

Air Marshal Sanjeev Kapoor, Commandant, Air Force Academy was the Reviewing Officer on the occasion. The young military Air Traffic Controllers, after having undergone a 12 week

long course, can now perform the highly demanding and skillful task of controlling aircrafts using modern radars, a press release said.

ATCOTE is a premier Air Traffic Control Training Establishment of the country and it undertakes training for IAF Officers apart from officers from the Indian Army, Indian Navy, Indian Coast Guard, Hindustan Aeronautics Limited and officers from Friendly Foreign Countries in the field of Air Traffic Services.

Make arrangements for peaceful immersion: CP

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Rachakonda Commissioner of Police Mahesh M Bhagwat on Thursday has instructed the officials make arrangements for the forthcoming Ganesh immersion processions following Covid guidelines.

Mahesh Bhagwat directed the officials to be vigilant and deploy additional staff in sensitive areas to ensure that no communal disputes take place on Sunday.

The Police Commissioner has asked the Ganesh pandal organisers to cooperate with the police officials for the peaceful conduct of the processions.

He also stated that the retired police officers are welcomed to provide their services on the day of immersion. The retired employees would also be provided allowances for their services. He instructed the person-



nel of the bomb squad to be alert and check the vehicles and suspected areas on all major routes. Meanwhile, orders relating to prohibition of liquor, sale of fire crackers on the day of 'Ganesh Nimajjanam' would be issued on Saturday, the CP said and instructed the officials to take the help of personnel in special branch and Special Operations Teams (SOT) to gather sensitive information.

Adhere to Covid protocols, says Collector Harish

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

District Collector S Harish on Thursday performed special puja at the Ganesh pandal set up in Collectorate and prayed to the deity for success in whatever endeavour the authorities undertake.

Speaking in this connection, he asked the devotees and pandal organisers to celebrate the festival with dedication and devotion adhering to Covid protocol.

He asked all to wear masks and perform pujas. He called for implementing precautions at the time of Ganesh immersion procession.

16 persons booked for watching child porn in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Cybercrime police have booked cases against 16 people for watching child pornography.

The case was booked following information provided by the NCRB to the TS Crime Investigation Department.

"Some international agencies who monitor sexual abuse of children alerted the NCRB about some persons from the country browsing child porn. The NCRB tracked down the IP addresses and 16 of them are from the city. The details were forwarded to us and a case has been booked," an official said.

Retd Army man adopts Macaque

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

A retired Indian Army personnel has adopted a Lion Tailed Macaque at the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad on Thursday.

According to the zoo authorities, 84-year-old A Krishna Murthy, Indian Army (Retd) and a resident of Hyderabad visited the Nehru Zoo and offered to adopt a Lion Tailed Macaque for a period of six months. For this, he handed over a cheque for Rs 15,000 to Nehru Zoological Park curator VVL Subhadra Devi.

On the occasion, Krishna



Murthy said his commitment for conservation of wild animals should act as an inspiration to many and hoped that more citizens would come forward to help the Nehru Zoological Park, in achieving their goals of conservation and education.

Idol immersion: Tank Bund not pedestrian-friendly this Sunday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The traffic restrictions and fun programmes on Tank Bund on Sundays will be postponed this Sunday, on account of the Ganesh idol immersions in and around Hussain Sagar.

Urban Development Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar tweeted on Thursday saying the Sunday-Funday pedestrian eve this coming Sunday wouldn't be there.

"In view of the scheduled Ganesh Chaturthi 2021 visarjana & the accompanying traffic in & around Hussain Sagar (in accordance with court guidelines) & to ensure public safety, Tank Bund won't have "Sunday-



Funday" pedestrian eve this coming Sunday..," he tweeted.

The Funday concept was initiated last Sunday, along with the traffic restrictions from 5 pm to 10 pm. From a performance by the ceremonial Bagpiper band of the Indian Army, arts and crafts stalls, dis-

play and sale by popular artisans from Shilparamam, food trucks, a TSCO handloom stall, free distribution of saplings by the Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority and a laser show were among the treats that were well received by the public.

Mom-daughter murdered, cops suspect hubby's role

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Two women were found murdered at a house in Trimulgherry, early on Thursday morning. Police later identified that the victims were a woman and her mother and were allegedly killed by the husband following a family dispute.

Police said that Chinnababu and Pushpalatha got married 10 years ago and they were blessed with a 9-year-old daughter and a 3-year-old son. "Chinnababu suspected his wife's character and has accused her of having an affair. On Thursday morning, a similar argument broke among the couple, following

which, in a fit of rage, he picked up a grass cutting knife and attacked and killed his wife. Her mother, Kumari, who tried to intervene and stop him, also received bleeding injuries and succumbed on the spot," said the police, who received a dial 100 call from Kumari's husband. The man was not drunk during the assault, confirmed the police.

ACP Begumpet Naresh Reddy said that a case was booked under section 302 (murder) of the IPC and the accused has been taken into custody.

An enquiry is being conducted and he will be placed under arrest, police said.



# Cotton farmers in dire straits

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Cotton farmers of the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district have been hit hard steeped in a debt crisis and their hopes of recovering the cotton crop dashed against the wall.

The crop loss due to series of rains has been put at Rs 400 crore in the district. Meanwhile, the farmers have been complaining of doubling of input costs this year compared to the input costs of the last year.

The farmers of the district have nursed a fancy to grow commercial crops especially cotton. They have grown it extensively in the district. Untimely rains have caused severe loss to them.

At the beginning of kharif, there were no proper rains affecting the germination of cotton seeds. When the rains have finally arrived, the seeds have become damaged. When rains arrived for the third time, the plants did not grow the expected height and became unproductive without flowering and development of cotton pods.

The input costs to cultivate



the crop have doubled to Rs 60,000. In kharif, the area under the cotton was put at 11.43 lakh acres in the district. This includes cotton crop raised in 5.5 lakh acres in the newly created Nagarkurnool, which was a part of the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district. The area under the crop in the parts of erstwhile Mahabubnagar district Jogulamba (Now Jogulamba-Gadwal district) was put at 2,25,000 acres. The farmers of

Narayanpet (now Narayanpet district) raised the crop in 2 lakh acres, while those in Wanaparti (now Wanaparti district) raised the crop in 18,000 acres.

The area under the crop this season has increased compared to the area sown under the crop last year. Earlier, the yield of cotton per acre was 15-20 quintals, as against not even 5 quintals now.

The agricultural experts blame it on continuous down-

pour in the district. The loss of the crop in the district would be at least up to Rs 4 crore due to severe drop in the yield.

The farmers put the crop prospects at less than 30 per cent this season. The farmers have become depressed not able to find a way to clear the loans because of the crop failure.

They leaders of farmers' bodies appeal to the government to come to their rescue of the cotton farmers.

Vishvabrahmanas would be provided loans, says Minister

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Finance Minister T Harish Rao assured that people from the Vishvabrahmana community would be provided alternate employment opportunities and given loans through Vishvabrahmana Corporation.

Stating that community people had lost their jobs due to corporate jewellery shops, he assured to provide employment by giving training in Industrial park.

Harish Rao laid the foundation for the construction of Vishvakarma Manumaya Bhavan in Huzurabad on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said the Telangana government was giving top priority to the Vishvabrahmana community people.

TRS leader from the community, Ch Madhusudhana Chary got an opportunity to work as the first speaker of the Telangana Assembly. A similar kind of opportunity would also be given to the community very soon.



## DEFY THE ODDS

Health and panchayat staffers brave all the odds to vaccinate the citizens in rural habitats.

The staffer crossed flowing streams and walked miles to vaccinate people in remote habitation of Kothapalli in Bazarhatnoor of Adilabad district.

## Improve production and productivity: SCCL CMD

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Chairman and managing director of the Singareni Collieries Company Limited Sridhar on Thursday gave directions to the general managers of all coal mining areas on the plan to be followed to improve the production and productivity of the collieries and to overcome the loss of production.

Addressing them via video conference mode, he gave instructions to the general managers on how to remove

the overburden, implementation of agreements in this regard, reviewed the progress of works grounded in new opencast and underground mines, discussed precautions to be taken to overcome the losses, use of machines in underground and open cast mines and issued instructions for the land acquisition for rehabilitation and resettlement of people.

Director (Operations) N Chandrasekhar, Director PP and Finance N Balaram and others took part in the meeting.

## Collector inspects CVC in Anganwadi

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

District Collector S Venkat Rao on Thursday called upon one and all to receive the Covid vaccine without fail.

He visited the vaccination centre at an Anganwadi Center in Amistapur and inspected the vaccination process. Speaking in connection with the visit, he said that all those who are 18 years and above should receive the vaccine now. They should be sensitised on receiving the vaccine, he said asking the medical and health officials to be ready to achieve 100 per cent vaccination in the district.

## BJP demands announcement on celebration of TS Liberation Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Adilabad MP Soyam Babu Rao, BJP state senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy, state vice president NVSS Prabhakar on Thursday have strongly demanded the state government to celebrate Telangana Liberation Day officially and to make an announcement immediately in this regard.

They have toured few villages of Nirmal Assembly Constituency to gather people for the public meeting of Union Home Minister Amit Shah on September 17 at Veyyi Urila Marri near Nirmal on the occasion of Telangana Liberation Day.

They have toured villages in the remote area like Nagpur, Mandapalli, Venu Nagar, Pemb, Chettupalli and Jangu Guda of Nirmal Assembly Constituency where Adivasis live in big numbers and cam-



aigned for the public meeting. They have received a rousing welcome wherever they have gone and the people have pledged their support enthusiastically to the public meeting.

Speaking on the occasion they stated that Karnataka and Maharashtra state governments have been officially celebrating Liberation Day on September 17 in the areas which were part of Hyderabad State before 1948, since long. However the erstwhile com-

bined Andhra Pradesh government and the present Telangana government did not bother to celebrated the Liberation Day officially so far.

They said that though the Telangana Rashtra Samithi has promised during the second round of Telangana Movement that Telangana Liberation Day would be celebrated officially after the formation of Telangana State, so far it did not bother to take steps in that direction.

## 2.80 cr people above 18 yrs yet to be vaccinated

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Thursday urged people aged above 18 years to get vaccinated against Covid, pointing out that the State government was setting up vaccination at village level to cover all the people, "A total of 2.80 crore people above the age of 18 years are to be vaccinated in the State. So far, 2.17 crore people have been vaccinated. Of them, 1.45 crore got the first jab, and the remaining 55 lakh got the second jab too," he said.

The Minister was speaking after launching the special vaccination programme in several villages in erstwhile Warangal district. "The State government under the guidance of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao had made all arrangements to provide vaccine shots to the peo-

ple aged above 18 years to protect them from Covid," he said.

"The spread of the virus is under check now. However, we are taking steps to ensure cent per cent vaccination to the people in the State," he added. Dayakar Rao has urged the mandal level officials of departments to coordinate with each other and make the special vaccination drive a success. "In all the villages and towns, Asha workers, Anganwadi teachers and staff of the local bodies went door to door and prepared a list of those who had not been vaccinated. Vaccinate those who are identified and affix a sticker stating that the members of the family above 18 years were vaccinated at the home," he directed, and also asked the district collectors to appoint 'Special Officer; to oversee the progress of the vaccination process for each municipality and mandal.

## BJP forfeited its right to speak on TS Armed Revolution, says Chada

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

CPI State Committee Secretary Chada Venkat Reddy has said that the credit for leading the Telangana Armed Revolution should go to the Communist Party and felt that the communal BJP forfeited its moral right to speak on the issue.

He was addressing a gathering after paying tributes to Martyrs of Telangana Armed Struggle in Ramagundam as the CPI Bus Yatra reached the city on Thursday.

Chada Venkat Reddy said the 74th Telangana Rytanga Sayudha Porata Utsavaalu commenced in Hyderabad on a grand note.

Turning tables on the BJP, he charged the state leaders of the saffron party are trying to come to power by distorting history. He sought to know from the BJP about its existence when the Telangana Armed struggle had taken place. It had no right to speak about the armed struggle, he said.

The Communist party fought for land, food, freedom against the land lords and



against the despotic rule of the Nizams, he said clarifying that the true heirs to the revolution are the Communists.

During the armed revolution, 4500 Communists martyred, he said adding that 10 lakh acres was distributed among the landless poor.

Describing Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao as ruling the state like a true heir to the erstwhile Nizam, he said expressing his indignation towards the state administration. KCR promised the people of the state that the TRS upon coming to power would celebrate the Telangana liberation day officially, but went back on the promise, he said

terming it as improper. He appealed to the people to make the Telangana armed struggle week festivities, being held from September 11 to 17, a grand success.

CPI city unit secretary K Kanakaraj presided over the programme. CPI leaders K sankar, M Anil Kumar, Praja Natya Mandal leaders Palle Narasimha and others took part.

Earlier, when the CPI bus matra entered Ramagundam city, the city unit of the CPI leaders welcomed it near the municipal corporation office. Later, a motor cycle rally was taken out from there to main junction.

## 'Prepare plan to administer Covid vaccine to all adults'

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

District Collector Dr Sangeeta on Thursday directed the officials concerned to take steps to administer Covid-19 vaccine to all those who have completed 18 years and asked the officials to prepare plans to administer vaccines under all the PHCs from Friday onwards.

The medical and health officials, MPDOs, Municipal commissioners should work with coordination to conduct special vaccine campus in all wards in municipalities and villages, she said.

The special campus should be conducted habitat-wise and village-wise under the health sub-centres, she said asking them to take the support of the elected people's representatives, if necessary.

After administering the vaccines to all in the village, the officials should declare it as 100 per cent vaccinated village. The Special campus should be



conducted in all villages under the jurisdiction of the health sub-centre.

Availing the services of Anganwadi teachers, panchayat secretary and other panchayat workers, the data entry work should be completed.

Anganwadi workers and ASHA workers should visit all homes to conduct a survey to identify the people who are yet to receive the vaccine and stickers should be pasted on the walls of the house indicating data like how many have been vaccinated in the house and how many are yet to be vaccinated.

## Take steps to vaccinate all, says Collector

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

District Collector Narayana Reddy said that a special drive would be held for carrying the vaccination against Covid from September 16 and requested all the citizens aged above 18 to vaccinate.

The Collector was instructing the officials at a conference that was held with additional collector, municipal commissioner and others on Thursday in the district.

He instructed the officials to make arrangements for the special vaccination drive after the Telangana 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.

Narayana Reddy urged the civilians not to trust apprehensions and to come forward to undergo jab. He said that the vaccination would help prevent one from being infected by the deadly virus and protect society.

## Call to celebrate 'Maoist week' from Sept 21

PNS ■ MULUG

The Maoist Party official spokesman Jagan has called for celebration of the 17th annual Maoist week from September 21 with enthusiasm.

In a statement released to media here on Thursday, he called for repulsing the prahara attacks on Maoists by the enemies and appealed to the Maoists to take part in the people's war to liberated the exploited. The Communist Party of India (Maoists) completes 17 years of founding on September 21, he said appealed

to villagers to celebrate the occasion with enthusiasm.

Jagan said that the people have been agitating to lodge their protest against the TRS government snatching the lands of the common man to benefit the exploiters.

He said that the fight against the state government have been turning out to be militant as the government has been chasing away the farmers from their lands in the name of Haritha Haram. Jagan said the people have been fighting against the location of Tiger Zone in Kawwal in Asifabad.

Exploration of uranium has been halted in Mahabubnagar district because of the struggles launched against the exploration. He appealed to the people to fight against the release of political prisoners languishing in jails for securing basic amenities for them. He called for lending full support to the political prisoners. The Brahmanical and Fascist rulers of the BJP at the Center and TRS in the state have been serving the interests of the investors, land lords and forging ahead with the Hindu and Fascist Nav Bharat Nirman

agenda. As part of the agenda, new education policy is being pursued, Atma Nirbhar programme has been coined to make lives of the people miserable, he said.

Eliminating and arresting and sending all those who opposed the Hindutva agenda and eliminating the pluralism in the country, eliminating the revolutionary movements are some of the means to establish Nav Bharat Nirman and to establish a Hindutva society. He appealed to fight against these tendencies to establish egalitarian society.

## Hefty penalty imposed on five house owners in Dammaiguda

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Municipal Commissioner Swamy on Thursday said that a sum of Rs 10,57,662 was collected from five house owners under the limits of Dammaiguda municipality who have applied for allotment of house number but showed wrong measurements of their houses in the self-assessment, putting

the area of their houses to be less than the actual area. The municipality collected a fine of Rs 5,83,300 from a house owner Jameel Ahmed, Rs 1,93,000 from Boda Shyamsundar, Rs 1,68,000 from R Uday Kumar, Rs 54,300 M Goverdhan Reddy and Rs 51,750 from RManasa.

He warned the house owners of taking stern action against them as per Section 94 (3) of the

Municipalities Act 2019.

He said that the house owners who built their homes for allotment of house number through self-assessment and showed the area of their house less than the actual area to defraud the municipality. Upon verification by the municipal staff, the measurements were found to be wrong, he added.



## Chakali Ilamma's family thanks CM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The family members of well-known Telangana Armed Struggle activist Chakali Ilamma thanked Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao for deciding to organise Ilamma's birth and death anniversaries as State's official functions. The descendants of Ilamma, accompanied by Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, met the Chief Minister at Pragathi Bhavan on Thursday.

Among Ilamma's descendants who called on Chandrashekhara Rao were former Palakurthi sarpanch Chityala Ramachander, his son Chityala Sampath and grandson and granddaughters. Ministers Srinivas Goud and Satyavathi Rathod, MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and others were present.



INDIA  
CORNER

## Stalin to personally monitor implementation of govt schemes

Tamil Nadu Chief Minister M K Stalin on Thursday said he will personally monitor, in real-time, the progress of implementation of various welfare measures undertaken by his government and urged officials of the state government to expeditiously take up their implementation. Chairing a review meeting of secretaries of various state government departments, here, Stalin recalled his party DMK's 500-odd promises made for the April 6 Assembly polls and said he will monitor the various initiatives through a "dash board." Pointing out that a slew of announcements have been made in the Governor's address and the budget, besides district-specific ones and those made in the state Assembly, Stalin sought for the official's "total cooperation" in their implementation. "... I will monitor the ministers vis-a-vis implementation of the announcements. I have been insisting for the last two days that I will directly monitor them. Not just ministers, my monitoring will be in such a way that it would pertain to the secretary concerned completing the job on time," Stalin said.



## Police bust narcotics lab in Bengaluru, seize drugs worth Rs 2 cr, nab African

Police have busted a narcotics laboratory here allegedly being run by an African national and seized synthetic drugs valued at about Rs two crore. The Nigerian residing at Bettadasanapura in Electronic City here, who had reportedly come into the country on a student visa, was arrested by sleuths of the Central Crime Branch's Anti Narcotics Wing. "Narco Lab" detected by CCB...some putting their chemistry knowledge to misuse!!CCB arrest African drug peddler manufacturing MDMA drugs...supplied it by concealing in shoe sole.4 Kgs MDMA worth Rs 2 cr seized...also apparatus, chemicals,reqd for MDMA synthesis seized." Joint Commissioner of Police (Crime) Sandeep Patil tweeted. The man was operating the lab in a rented house along with his accomplices who are now absconding. "They used to ship MDMA crystals (synthetic drugs) concealed in shoe-sole by post/ courier to New Zealand and other countries", CCB officials said. "We have seized four kg of MDMA crystals from the house which was kept for selling within India and overseas", they said.



## NIF announces longlist of Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay Book Prize

Twelve books on subjects as diverse as Naxalism to Emergency and Hindutva and the Northeast to percussion instrument mridangam among others have made it to the longlist of the 2021 Kamaladevi Chattopadhyay NIF Book Prize. The longlist announced by the New India Foundation (NIF) on Thursday 'reflects a compelling picture of the diverse narratives which embody independent India's cultural, political, and social milieu in showcasing the finest non-fiction writing from and about the subcontinent', a statement said. Among the books selected are "Muscular India: Masculinity, Mobility & the New Middle Class" (Michiel Baas); "The Death Script: Dreams and Delusions in Naxal Country" (Ashutosh Bhardwaj); "India's First Dictatorship: The Emergency, 1975-77" (Christophe Jaffrelot & Pratinav Anil); "Brand New Nation: Capitalist Dreams and Nationalist Designs in Twenty-First-Century India" (Ravinder Kaur); and "India's Founding Moment: The Constitution of a Most Surprising Democracy" (Madhav Khosla). "Sebastian & Sons: A Brief History of Mridangam Makers" (T M Krishna); "The Greater India Experiment: Hindutva and the Northeast" (Arkotong Longkumer); "I Could Not Be Hindu: The Story of a Dalit in the RSS" (Bhanwar Meghwanshi, translated by Nivedita Menon).



# Rupani team out, Gujarat gets all fresh 24-member Cabinet

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Making amply clear that it is in a mood for a complete overhaul in Gujarat ahead of the 2022 state polls, the BJP on Thursday inducted 24 ministers, including 21 who have become ministers for the first time. With the fresh inductions, the strength of the ministry led by Bhupendra Patel, a first-term MLA and minister, has gone up to 25. Those sworn in at the 1.30 pm Raj Bhavan ceremony include former Assembly Speaker Rajendra Trivedi and former state BJP president Jitu Vaghani. No minister from the earlier Vijay Rupani-led ministry was inducted. Governor Acharya Devvrat administered the oath to 10 cabinet ministers and 14 ministers of state, including five ministers of state with independent charge. Bhupendra Patel (59), who was sworn in as the 17th chief minister of the state on Monday, was present at the Raj Bhavan ceremony, along with Rupani, whose sudden resignation from

the post on Saturday led to the formation of the new ministry. The following were sworn in as cabinet ministers: Rajendra Trivedi, Jitu Vaghani, Rushikesh Patel, Purnesh Modi, Raghavji Patel, Kanubhai Desai, Kirtisinh Rana, Naresh Patel, Pradip Parmar and Arjunsinh Chauhan. Trivedi, Rana and Raghavji Patel have been ministers earlier. The nine ministers of state are Mukesh Patel, Nimisha Suthar, Arvind Raiyani, Kuber Dindor, Kirtisinh Vaghela, Gajendrasinh Parmar, R C Makwana, Vinod Moradia and Deva Malam. Ahead of the swearing-in, there were speculations that senior ministers in the Rupani ministry, like Nitin Patel, Bhupendrasinh Chudasama, Kaushik Patel, Pradeepsinh Jadeja, and RC Faldu may not be included. The BJP took the "no-repeat" formula a step further by not inducting any member of the Rupani ministry. Political observers say the BJP expects to make an impact ahead of the 2022 Assembly polls with this new-look ministry.

## BJP govt strengthened Gujarat's law and order, says Amit Shah

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday credited the BJP government in Gujarat, right from the time when Narendra Modi was its chief minister, for strengthening the law and order situation and helping the state shed its 'curfew capital' tag and gain the identity of being a safe and secure state. Addressing a gathering virtually after inaugurating six newly-constructed police stations and an office of deputy superintendent of police in rural Ahmedabad, he said that thanks to the improved law and order situation, Gujarat has become a leading state in terms of industrial development. "There was a time when Gujarat was known as the curfew capital. Now, when you ask a 20-

year-old whether he has experienced a curfew, he will certainly answer in the negative. Under the leadership of (Narendra) Modi, Anandiben (Patel), Vijaybhai (Rupani) - and now with Bhupendrabhai (Patel) taking over - the BJP government worked to strengthen the law and order situation. The state no longer experiences communal riots during Rath Yatras, and people experience peace," the Union Home Minister said. "We have been doing very well in terms of law and order situation, and because of this, Gujarat has become prominent in industrial development," he added. The government, starting from the time when Modi was the chief minister, brought about radical changes in the law and order situation by adopting new measures.

## BJP leader Surendran quizzed in poll bribery case

PNS ■ KASARAGOD (KERALA)

The Crime Branch wing of the Kerala police on Thursday questioned BJP state president K Surendran in a case registered against him on the allegations that he had 'bribed' a rival candidate with a similar name to withdraw his nomination from the Manjeshwaram constituency in the last state Assembly elections. Talking to reporters after over an hour long interrogation at the guest house here, Surendran alleged that the case against him was politically motivated but cooperated with the investigation as he respects the rule of law. Sundara, a BSP candidate of Manjeshwaram constituency in the district and a namesake of Surendran, had on March 22 withdrawn his nomination papers thereby giving an edge to the BJP chief. Surendran, however, lost the election. Sundara had later revealed that a day after he filed the nomination papers, the BJP workers came to his place and asked him to withdraw the nomination. "They gave me the amount in cash," Sundara had said. He had also alleged that he was threatened by the BJP workers. Following Sundara's revelation, CPI(M) candidate V V Rameshan, who came third in the 2021 election, approached the Kasaragod district police chief seeking to register a case into the matters related to the revelation. The case was registered after recording Sundara's statement.



## PM inaugurates new defence office complexes, slams critics

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday hit out at the critics of the ambitious Central Vista project, saying they conveniently kept silent on defence office complexes being part of the venture as it would have exposed their spreading of 'lies' and 'misinformation'. He also asserted that ease of living and ease of doing business were behind the spirit of the work being done under the Central Vista project. Modi made the remarks after inaugurating two new multi-storey swanky office complexes at Kasturba Gandhi Marg and Africa Avenue for over 7,000 employees of the Defence Ministry and the armed forces. The prime minister also said that he was confident that work on the new Parliament building will be completed on time. The Opposition, including the Congress, has been attacking the government over the ambitious

Central Vista project, calling it a "criminal wastage" of resources and had urged the government to divert money to battling the Covid pandemic. In his remarks at the event, Modi said, "Today, in the 75th year of Independence, we are taking another step towards developing the capital of our country according to the needs and aspirations of new India." "These new defence office complexes are going to further strengthen our efforts to make the working of our forces more convenient and effective," he said. The prime minister said that till now defence-related work was being carried out from huts made during the second World War and these were made according to the needs of barracks and horse stables. Modi said the modern offices will go a long way in effectively carrying out all the work related to the security of the nation by the three forces.

"This is a big step towards the creation of a modern defence enclave in the capital," he said. Hitting out at the critics of the Central Vista project, Modi said, "Those people who were after the Central Vista project were very conveniently silent on this aspect that construction of a place for 7,000 employees of the Defence Ministry and armed forces is part of the project because they knew that their idea of spreading misconception and lies would be exposed when this comes to the fore." "But the country is seeing today what we are doing under Central Vista. These modern offices constructed at K G Marg and Africa Avenue will help in getting the work related to defence done effectively," he asserted. Criticising those opposed to the Central Vista project, Modi said they never bothered to find out how the armed forces personnel were working from huts.



## Centre allows prematurely retired NCLAT chairperson to continue

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The row over premature retirement of former NCLAT Chairperson Justice Ashok Iqbal Singh Cheema ended in the Supreme Court on Thursday as the Centre conceded, permitting him to continue in office till September 20 to pronounce verdicts, following the warning that the new law on tribunals would be stayed 'suo motu'. The hearing over the premature superannuation of Justice Cheema once reached a point when the bench headed by Chief Justice N V Ramana warned the Centre that it would exercise its suo motu power to stay the Tribunals Reforms Act, 2021, which was referred to by Attorney General K K Venugopal as empowering statute to retire the NCLAT head.



Justice Cheema, the former Chairperson of National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT), was to superannuate on September 20, but Justice M Venugopal was appointed as the acting head of the tribunal with effect from September 11, creating a peculiar situation where the former approached the top court. However, later K K Venugopal, on instruction from the Centre, apprised the bench, also comprising justices Surya Kant and Hima

Kohli, about the changed stand of the government leading to the closure of the row. "I have taken instructions. It was said he (Cheema) took leave to write judgments. So we have decided that he will be allowed to go to office and pronounce judgments, the current chairperson Justice Venugopal will be sent on leave," he told the bench. "The submission is accepted and consequential orders will be passed (by the government). The current chairperson will be on leave till September 20 and this order is passed keeping in mind the peculiar facts and circumstances of this case," the bench said. At the outset, the bench was informed by the top most law officer that "the government wants him to concede" on the retirement of Justice Cheema.

## Pinarayi warns those indulging in 'poisonous campaign'

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan on Thursday warned of stringent action against those indulging in "poisonous campaign" with an aim to disrupt communal harmony of the state and said they would be dealt with "mercilessly." Vijayan, at a high level meeting, directed the top brass to crack down on the efforts of certain forces to create unrest in society and cause division and hatred among the people, a CMO statement said here. The Chief Minister's statement assumes significance at a time when the southern state is witnessing a raging debate over the controversial 'narcotic jihad' remark by Pala Bishop Joseph

Kallarangatt, which was severely criticised by various political parties and cultural leaders. The opposition Congress had also expressed concern that some vested interests were using the Catholic bishop's remarks for polarising the society on communal lines through social media platforms. "Kerala is a state known for its secular tradition and religious brotherhood. A deliberate attempt to undermine this general characteristics of the state is going on from some quarters. Stringent action will be taken against such attempts," Vijayan said. Those who carry out poisonous campaigns including that through the social media platforms, with an aim to create communal division, would be dealt with mercilessly, he said.



## Hospitals, doctors can't function without each other: Union Minister

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya on Thursday inaugurated patient-centric facilities at the Safdarjung Hospital here and said hospitals and doctors are the two sides of the same coin and one cannot function without the other. He also said that doctors enjoy tremendous respect in society and their commitment in protecting people from COVID-19 has vastly increased this respect. Mandaviya inaugurated a child abuse care and elder abuse care centre in the New Block of the Safdarjung Hospital, the third PM-CARES pressure swing adsorption oxygen plant of capacity 1 MT there and a new makeshift



health facility on the hospital's premises, a health ministry statement said. On the occasion, the minister also released a booklet 'Quality ki Baat' and presented the hospital's entry-level NABH accreditation certificate, it said. Congratulating the hospital, Mandaviya highlighted that commitment and dedication of doctors are the crucial pillars

of a healthcare system and form the foundation of central government hospitals. "Hospitals and doctors are two sides of same coin. One cannot function without the other. Doctors may not realise this because of their dedication and focus on their work but they enjoy tremendous respect in the society. Their commitment in protecting us from the coronavirus has vastly increased this respect. The hospital should be a natural extension of this ethos," he said. Citing his recent unannounced visit to a hospital, the minister pointed out that there was room for improvement in easing the burden of patients and their relatives coming to the hospital, the statement said.

## Team of docs sent to investigate rising dengue, viral fever cases in Firozabad

PNS ■ FIROZABAD

The Uttar Pradesh government on Thursday sent a team of 15 doctors to Firozabad district to investigate the reasons behind the rise in cases of dengue and viral fever, which have claimed 60 lives since mid-August. Though no deaths have been reported in the last few days, the flow of patients into the government medical college and the community health centres here has continued unabated. The team, comprising 10 doctors and five specialists, took charge on Thursday, on the instructions of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, Additional

Director (Medical and Health), Agra Division, Dr A K Singh, said. Led by Dr G S Vajpayee, a specialist in communicable diseases, the team will investigate the causes behind patients not getting proper treatment before they reach the government medical college and other primary health centres in the district, he said. It will also investigate the reasons behind the increasing cases, despite efforts to stem them since last month, Singh said, adding that the team will suggest measures to control the spread of dengue and viral fever. Singh also said that a section



of the media is reporting an inflated death toll, and maintained that fatalities stood at 60. Deaths due to other diseases are also being attributed to dengue and viral fever, he said. In another development, a

team of women doctors has arrived here and it is monitoring the treatment of patients in at the government medical college. They are trying to work out ways for better treatment of patients and are continuously visiting wards, principal of the medical college Dr Sangeeta Aneja said. The team includes Dr Jaimini and Dr Ayushi from Safai and Dr Pragati from Kanpur, she said. Countering complaints of shortage of beds, Aneja said that all patients arriving at the hospital are first given primary treatment at the Trauma Centre and then shifted to different wards after proper testing.

## Covid positive, but asymptomatic kids no matter of concern: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Covid-19 in children should not be of much concern if they are asymptomatic and do not have severe infection, experts said on Thursday, amid some states, including Mizoram and Kerala, reporting a rise in cases among those aged below 10 years. They, however, stressed on the need for preparing and ramping up arrangements for any eventuality, including more children requiring hospitalisation. The percentage of infected children aged below 10 years in the total active COVID-19 cases has risen since March this year, official sources said, adding that

a larger number of cases among children are being reported from Mizoram, Meghalaya, Manipur and Kerala, among others. Mizoram registered its highest-ever single-day spike in COVID-19 cases on Tuesday as 1,502 more people, including 300 children, tested positive for the infection, pushing the state's tally to 72,883. Chairman of the COVID-19 working group of the National Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (NTAGI), Dr N K Arora, said, "If children are found positive for the coronavirus infection, but they are not symptomatic, then it is not a matter of concern because according to rounds of serosurveys conducted



in the country, children are affected to the same extent as adults." The proportion of symptomatic cases in children is extremely low and risk of severe infection

even more uncommon, Arora said. According to AIIMS Director, Dr Randeep Guleria, as restrictions get lifted and families with their children start travelling, children who have not contracted Covid will get infected and "that will reflect in the numbers". "But this does not translate to a larger number of children getting admitted or dying because of COVID-19. Most children will be asymptomatic and have mild disease. So increasing numbers that way is not a cause of great alarm. However, we need to be prepared for any eventuality, including more children requiring hospitalisation," he said.



## Terror and hunger

Apart from the dread, hunger and lack of nutrition are gnawing at the Afghan people

It is time to strike a balance between terror and hunger in Afghanistan. Millions of lives are at stake as the UN organisations involved in relief activities say food stocks may last not more than a month in the vast rural stretches. Hunger and lack of nutrition are the bywords as the country's economy is in a downward spiral. Essential commodities are already out of stock in urban stores. Scarce vegetables are selling at double the prices. Panic buying in the aftermath of the Taliban takeover on August 15 cleaned up shelves in stores with no replenishing. Flour and oil are already out of limits for the poor. In the villages, the situation is worse as families are falling back on grain and wheat stored for future crops. Drought and famine have anyway hit the country for the umpteenth time. The risk of displacement adds to the pangs of hunger for a large section of the population. The fighting before August had made over 600,000 Afghans flee homes.



The UN agencies estimate that around 3.5 million people are internally displaced. At least 10 million children, a sizeable section of them malnourished, depend on humanitarian assistance just to survive. The UN's World Food Programme has said many Afghans did not have access to cash to afford sufficient food. That is because banks had closed down after August 15. The Taliban are now negotiating with banks for re-opening branches. However, they have set a cap on weekly withdrawal of \$200 to avoid a run on banks.

Afghanistan's economic experts, now in exile, insist that the situation will lead to a weaker currency, faster inflation and capital controls. Most civil servants have not been receiving salaries for months. Many more claim they have suffered pay cuts as high as 75 per cent since the Taliban took over. There is no indication that the Taliban are bothered about the dire straits. No proactive economic decisions have been forthcoming. Their contribution has been limited to appointing an obscure official to head the central bank to address the crisis. Little is known about his actions. The Taliban cadres though appear unfazed as it is rumoured that there is enough drug and opium money in their coffers. They are currently embroiled in internal squabbles that appear to have worsened after the interim set-up was announced. The Taliban are preoccupied with settling an existential debate — their Achilles' heel, actually — between their urban political face and orthodox armed command represented by Mullah Abdul Ghani Baradar and Khalil-ur-Rahman Haqqani, respectively. The question is whether the Taliban are playing a blinking game with the rest of the world, holding the latter responsible for restoring economic order. Do they await the international community to pour money into rehabilitation works? Or expect it to recognise their interim governance apparatus? That is linked to lifting the freeze on Afghan assets worth billions of dollars; only a recognised government can take control of the funds.

Do they await the international community to pour money into rehabilitation works? Or expect it to recognise their interim governance apparatus? That is linked to lifting the freeze on Afghan assets worth billions of dollars; only a recognised government can take control of the funds.

### PICTALK



Haitian migrants walk towards boats that will take them from Necocli to Acandí, Colombia

PTI

## AAP eyeing UP

Can it alter the script and make a mark in the upcoming Assembly elections?

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) is seriously trying its luck in the forthcoming Assembly election due next year. The party recently kicked off its campaign with a 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ayodhya. Enthused by the response, the party is likely to hold more such yatras in the coming months in other districts of Uttar Pradesh. Though the elections in Uttar Pradesh are a little away, most parties have already started activities to woo voters. And it makes sense as the stakes are high. Uttar Pradesh has 80 parliamentary seats. It is generally the Congress, BJP, Samajwadi Party and the BSP that fight the elections. But now the AAP is making inroads into the State. It has been consistently trying to make its presence felt in several States, including Punjab, Gujarat, Rajasthan and Goa. The party seems to be filling up the vacuum created by the missing Congress. The BJP and the BSP have their cadre on the ground in 'Jan Sammelan Yatras'. The SP is holding a 'Shiv Sevak Sammelan'. The Congress is conspicuous by its absence. Most of the parties are trying to woo the Brahmin voters who are disgruntled with the incumbent Government, which is seen favouring the Thakurs.



Brahmins, who make up 12 per cent of UP's population, are significant from the poll point of view. The AAP is also planning 'Chanakya Sammelans' to engage Brahmins. The 'Tiranga Yatra' in Ayodhya was led by Manish Sisodia along with the party's UP in-charge, Sanjay Singh. So far, the AAP has not had a very good response in Uttar Pradesh. Arvind Kejriwal fought against Narendra Modi and lost. During the 2014 Lok Sabha election, the AAP contested 77 seats and lost the deposit on 76. The party then contested the 2017 local body elections. It had 3,400 candidates in the fray but only 44 won. It was at number five. In the 2019 Lok Sabha election, the party failed to open its account and all its candidates lost their deposit. For the 2022 Assembly polls, it has decided to contest all the seats on its own. But the situation could change as the AAP is trying a tie-up with OP Rajbhar's Bhagidari Sankalp Morcha. Sanjay Singh is in talks with SP chief Akhilesh Yadav. He is also trying to build the party at the grassroots and strengthen the organisation. It might not win as yet but it can be a spoilsport for the ruling party.

The use of religion, a centre of devotion for the multitudes, by the BJP to achieve its political ends has become the salient and striking feature of politics in today's India. The encroachment of religion into politics has been so normalized with the nomenclature 'Hindu nationalism' over the decades that anyone who is against defining nationhood on the basis of religion is branded 'anti-national'. The retreat from secularism diminishes our identity as a pluralist democracy and our capacity to prosper.

## Pornography is the theory, rape practice

The easy access to online obscene content is making an increasing number of people getting hooked on to the extent of perversion

Online pornography has literally created a 'porn pandemic' as deadly as 'COVID-19'. Experts trace a marked correlation between watching pornography and sexual crimes. Pornography is a Greek word, which originally meant "writing about prostitutes".

Today, according to modified version of *Kuhn et al-2007*, "Pornography is a communication material provided for the purpose of arousing or gratifying a user in isolation from others or in company of others." Pornography is "perversion". It provides a field for deviant and violent fantasies to be developed eventually leading to some viewers acting out those fantasies in practice. Before the advent of online pornography, the compulsive voyeur used to haunt public places, parks and bedroom windows from where he could surreptitiously watch courting couples. Now the voyeur is privileged to watch couples on screen. After getting constantly aroused, he would prowling around in search of a soft target, mainly the tender-aged child, as many a time the voyeur has low level of sexuality and finds himself partially impotent with a grown up woman.

Alfred C Kinsey considered voyeurism to be limited solely to men, but in the US, the 1971 Commission of Pornography and Obscenity revealed that women responded to visual stimulation, pictures of nudes, in the same way as men do. According to a recent survey, a large number of users of these porn sites is not adults but adolescents.

Does online pornography have the destructive power to turn a simple normal, everyday man into rapist or murderer? Why this alarming question does not surface every time a rape with murder, especially of children and infants, hits the headlines. Ironically, there is no stringent law in India on full viewing of sexual acts online; whereas, on the contrary, the law of the land showed its utter sensitivity on obscenity under the provisions of Section 292 and 293 of IPC.

This is evident from the fact that Kamlesh Vaswani, Advocate,



petition seeking to ban pornography in India and praying for direction to the Government to treat watching of porn videos and sharing as non-bailable and cognisable offence, but the Government supported pornography in the court.

The Attorney General submitted that if someone wished to watch porn within their bedroom, how can the State interfere with such an activity? He asserted that the Government did not want to do moral policing and that we (India) cannot become a totalitarian State by banning all pornographic websites because clampdown would infringe the "Right to freedom". The State's action may raise issues regarding privacy rights.

Chief Justice HL Dattu, who had used a similar line during the previous hearing, interrupted and said: "Mr Attorney, why are you using our lines?" The Attorney General further contended: "Simply viewing an obscene object is not an offence. It becomes an offence only when someone has in possession such objects for the purpose of sale, hire, distribution, public exhibition or putting it into circulation."

Petitioner's counsel Vijay Panjwani argued that "criminal



THE ACCUSED OF THE DELHI GANG RAPE CASE OF DECEMBER 2012 HAD ADMITTED THAT BEFORE COMMITTING THE GHASTLY CRIME, THEY HAD CONSUMED LIQUOR, WATCHED PORNOGRAPHY, AND THEN DECIDED TO HAVE A PARTY

activity is a criminal activity", whether carried out in private or public. Moreover, when the obscene object has come on the internet, it has already been circulated and automatically becomes "public". Subsequently, on February 26, 2016, Additional Solicitor General Pinky Anand told Justice Dipak Misra: "It is difficult to ban pornographic websites as they do not fall under any country's jurisdiction."

Differing, the Bench said: "When obscenity is an offence under the criminal law, then why can't you define it accordingly? It has already been decided that freedom of speech and expression is not absolute." The petitioner's counsel contended: "There is technology available to block such sites. In India, there are 11 towers which receive signals from under water cables of foreign countries. A technologist from Banaras Hindu University has undertaken to block all those 11 points that receive porn contents. It is a very low-budget technology, provided the Government agrees to it." A committee under the leadership of then Communications Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad had been constituted to review this matter but he gave the statement: "We are not a control freak Government and

strongly object to the word 'Talibanisation'."

In fact, there is enough evidence available about the link between serial killers/rapists and their addiction to pornography. The accused of the Delhi gang rape case of December 2012, in their 164 Criminal Penal Code statement, had admitted that before committing the ghastly crime, they had consumed liquor, watched pornography, and then decided to have a party (they meant committing rape).

In his interview to Games C Dobson, notorious American serial killer Ted Bundy seven hours before his execution in the electric chair documented: "I was a normal person. I led a common life except for this one segment. Pornography can reach in and snatch a kid out of any house today. It snatched me out of my home 30 years ago. I deserve, certainly, the most extreme punishment society has. And I think society deserves to be protected from me and from others like me." According to Government's figures in December 2017, a child is sexually abused every 15 minutes, still the authorities are more concerned on 'naked capitalism'.

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

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### SANSAD TV GOES ON AIR

Sir — The start of Sansad TV will mark another lesson in India's democratic history. Inaugurated on the day of International day of Democracy, the new media channel will voice out the truth of India's democratic system. We all know that Lok Sabha TV and Rajya Sabha TV have been dedicatedly telecasting relevant issues of our democracy with quality information and facts. In fact, both the LS and the RS TV are especially watched by UPSC aspirants for quality preparations. Both these channels have telecasted the functioning of the two houses of the Parliament individually.

Now with Sansad TV in the picture, we can expect more quality content and information on a single platform. Sansad TV will merge the quality and technology of India's two state of the art media channels, so as to deliver the best information to its viewers. We hope that with Sansad TV, every Indian is empowered to get faithful news and right information at the right time so that citizens do not get misled by false information. Right information will empower citizens to make better decisions over the issues of national, social, economical and political importance.

Dimple | kanpur

### RAHUL'S 'FAKE HINDU' JIBE

Sir — There is substance in Rahul Gandhi's statement that the RSS and its political arm the BJP are 'fake Hindus' and 'brokers of religion'. The Congress leader has shown the courage to call a spade a spade. BJP's role in Indian politics validates Rahul Gandhi's charge of 'Dharam ki dalali'. The way he saw it, BJP is 'disrespecting and insulting godesses Lakshmi and Durga'. He elaborated that the ruling party was busy transferring wealth from people to a few corporate houses and it did not believe in *nari shakti* (women's power). Rahul Gandhi's metaphorical speech provoked the BJP to call him the 'son of a Catholic mother and a Parsi father' and ask him 'to stop lecturing on Hinduism and hurting Hindu sentiment'.

The use of religion, a centre of devo-

## Telcos get a respite



The Union Cabinet has cleared a set of structural and procedural reforms for the telecom sector in hope of rejuvenating its cash-strapped companies. The key measures announced by the Cabinet include a four-year moratorium on payment of statutory dues by telecom companies and a change in the definition of adjusted gross revenue (AGR) to exclude non-telecom revenue. The change in the definition of AGR

is momentous as it was at the centre of a long and arduous legal battle between the telecom companies and the Centre. The companies had disputed the Department of Telecommunication's definition of AGR as including revenue from non-telecom sources as well.

Since the licence fees and spectrum usage charges that the telcos have to pay the department are calculated based on AGR, there was much at stake. After nearly 15 years of legal battles, the Supreme Court upheld the DoT's definition, leading to a Rs.1.6 lakh crore payment backlog for the telcos. The change in definition does not wipe out these past dues as it does not have retrospective effect. The relief on this front is from the four-year moratorium on payments, though the companies still have to pay interest. It is a right step in the right direction. These fresh reforms will further boost efforts to invest in the digital future.

CK Subramaniam | Mumbai

tion for the multitudes, by the BJP to achieve its political ends has become the salient and striking feature of politics in today's India. The encroachment of religion into politics has been so normalized with the nomenclature 'Hindu nationalism' over the decades that anyone who is against defining nationhood on the basis of religion is branded 'anti-national'. The retreat from secularism diminishes our identity as a pluralist democracy and our capacity to prosper.

G David Milton | Maruthancode

### PLANET EARTH IS HEATING UP

Sir — A new survey by the BBC has found that the number of days when the temperature reached 50 degrees centigrade has doubled over the last 40 years. The study found that between 2010 and 2019, the temperature reached 50 degrees for 26 days on average. Between 1980 and 1990, that figure was just 14 days. The analysis shows that the frequency of exceptionally hot days is increasing every year. Every 10 years, the

overall number of days with temperature hitting the 50 degrees centigrade mark has risen. Urgent action must be taken by world leaders to control global temperature rises.

It must be understood that even below 50 degrees, high temperature and humidity could create severe health risks. As a consequence of extreme heat, disasters such as droughts and wildfires have become more frequent. Global warming, depletion of the natural sunscreen — the Ozone layer, and melting glaciers are more common than ever. Unless the countries wake up to the severity of the situation and adopt measures to mitigate global warming, our existence on this planet will be in peril. Reversing the already caused damage might be a lost cause but doing our bit can delay the onset of tragedies we're not prepared for.

Venu GS | Kollam

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

## SOUND BITE

Within 24 hours of coming to power, the AAP will provide 300 units of free electricity for residential use to every single person in UP.



Delhi Deputy CM —Manish Sisodia

We were like a hired gun. We were supposed to make the US win the war in Afghanistan, which we never could.

Pakistan Prime Minister —Imran Khan

I lived alone so it was like cake, ice cream, anything crispy and then starving for a week. I had a terrible relationship with food.

Actor —Jacqueline Fernandez

We are excited to have fans back at the IPL. It's been too long to hear that roar of KKR fans at Eden Gardens.

KKR captain —Eoin Morgan

With the Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, employment opportunities will increase in Haryana and its connectivity with other States will improve.


Haryana Chief Minister —Manohar Lal Khattar



FIRST COLUMN

BUILDING BLOCKS OF DEVELOPMENT

India has its task cut out to make itself heard in global affairs concerning its interests



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

A bunch of regional and multilateral dialogues are coming India's way between September and the last quarter of 2021. As a follow up to the BRICS summit, India participated in the Shanghai Cooperation organization (SCO) meeting in Dushanbe this week. External affairs minister S Jaishankar travelled there and Prime minister Narendra Modi addressed the meeting virtually.

In the wake of the developments in Afghanistan, any opportunity for India to spread its diplomatic clout on the events unfolding in Central Asia is crucial. The SCO has a formidable bunch of representation from nearly all countries that have a say in Central and South Asia. However, therein lies its biggest failure to develop as a regional dialogue platform for Central Asia.

The SCO has a whole laundry list of ambitious goals such as promoting mutual trust and neighbourliness among members, ensuring peace, stability and security in the region based on principles of non-



alignment and "non-targeting any third country and openness". The events in India's eastern border with direct military interventions by China in 2020 and the on-going tensions may seem contradictory to any of the goals. The SCO, like another regional platform BRICS, was primarily a body sponsored by China and Russia to challenge the US in a "unipolar" world and establish the centrality of these powers. When it was conceived, India was still aligning itself to the suddenly new unipolar world having been indecisive about the path it ought to choose for a prosperous future. However, in the last decade or so, a strategic shift has been made to migrate to a US-India strategic relationship based on mutual economic interests and security specially in the Indo-Pacific region. There is growing confidence among the two largest democracies to deal with the new challenges of the global order based on shared targets and economic prosperity.

Coming back to SCO, India focussed on the Afghanistan crisis during its dialogue with SCO leaders. It is significant since this is the second time a fortnight that top leaders of Russia, China and India spoke to one another on Afghanistan and the overall security situation in the region. The External Affairs minister held bilaterals with his counterparts of Russia and Iran on the situation prevailing in the region. Earlier, India had reiterated its position on providing non-discriminatory and direct distribution of humanitarian assistance to all groups in Afghanistan under the UN banner.


It may be recalled India held the presidency of the security council in August and managed to get a resolution passed on Afghanistan with Russia and China abstaining. The pressure from China and some other SCO members to formally recognize the Taliban government exists. India needs to watch its step. The SCO in its current avatar also needs to bring in democratic reforms and work towards mutual trust of its member-states and dialogue partners before it can challenge alliances like Nato.

Next up in September is the high-level personal dialogue of Modi with President Biden during the Quad summit. In the wake of an aggressive China emerging as a threat for the four large economies of the US, Australia, Japan and India, the Quad grouping has significant potential. The agenda of the summit consists of dialogue on critical and emerging technologies, connectivity and infrastructure, cyber security, maritime security, humanitarian assistance, disaster relief, climate change, and the Indo Pacific region. Any five of these strategic goals, if followed through, have a huge potential to create significant economic opportunities for Quad members. Its leadership needs to start publicizing its targets in their respective media for more broad-based participation.

*(The writer is a policy analyst. The views expressed are personal.)*

# As NaMo turns 71, the world turns to him

The universal farsightedness of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his ability to foresee challenges places him well above others



JASIM MOHAMMAD

On September 17 this year, when Prime Minister Narendra Modi turns 71, his fans cutting across political lines remind themselves how he has proved to be a visionary and charismatic statesman, a role model for others to follow.

Even his detractors have to acknowledge that his public image shines, as evidenced by a recent Morning Consult survey judging him the most popular among 13 world leaders.

With an acceptance rating of as high as 70 per cent, he was crowned as the tallest leader, followed by Mexican president Andres Manuel López Obrador with a score of 64 per cent. They were followed by Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi (63 per cent), German



PMs failed to. One of them is universal farsightedness that he is credited with. He can foresee the challenges lying ahead and has solutions ready for them. This quality not only made him different from his predecessors but put him ahead of other top world leaders.

Chancellor Angela Merkel (52 per cent), US President Joe Biden (48 per cent), Australian PM Scott Morrison (48 per cent), Canadian PM Justin Trudeau (45 per cent), UK PM Boris Johnson (41 per cent), Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro (39 per cent), South Korean President Moon Jae-In (38 per cent), Spanish PM Pedro Sánchez (35 per cent) and French President Emmanuel Macron (34).

No doubt, on September 24 when Modi visits the United States for a Quad summit, he is likely to meet President Biden for bilateral talks on subjects including Afghanistan for the first time after Biden rose to presidency.

There are many reasons why Modi has achieved globally what many other Indian

Modi emerged as a global messiah by reaching out to other countries with vaccines while ensuring that the vaccine supply to Indians was not adversely affected. If this was not enough, he turned health into a key global agenda at the BRICS summit that he chaired on September 9.

He "stressed the need for accelerating 'buildback' by enhancing speed and accessibility of vaccination, creating 'resilience' by diversifying pharma and vaccine production capacities beyond the developed world".

Another major success of Modi as the host of the BRICS Summit was his affirmation in the presence of Chinese President Xi Jinping about the global stand against terrorism and the unprecedented situa-

tion that has dramatically unfolded in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of troops by the US.

In the wake of the stand of Communist China, which has decided to hobnob with the Taliban in league with Pakistan to expand its presence in Afghanistan not only for commercial interests but also for secret strategic purposes, a development that can pose a serious threat to India, Modi has been able to tie smartly four other countries to the New Delhi Declaration.

The joint resolution underlined: "We follow with concern the latest developments in Afghanistan. We call for refraining from violence and settling the situation by peaceful means. We stress the need to contribute to fostering an

inclusive intra-Afghan dialogue so as to ensure stability, civil peace, law and order in the country. We condemn in the strongest terms the terrorist attacks near the Hamid Karzai Kabul International Airport that resulted in a large number of deaths and injuries. We underscore the priority of fighting terrorism, including preventing attempts by terrorist organizations to use Afghan territory as terrorist sanctuary and to carry out attacks against other countries, as well as drug trade within Afghanistan. We emphasise the need to address the humanitarian situation and to uphold human rights, including those of women, children and minorities."

Significantly it also came a day after Russia and India discussed coordinating among

themselves on Afghanistan during NSA-level talks in New Delhi. The New Delhi declaration also carries a veiled yet strong warning from Modi to Pakistan, which is not part of BRICS but is aligned with China and has been chiefly responsible for overthrowing a democratically elected and India-friendly government in Afghanistan by supporting a terrorist outfit like the Taliban militarily.

If China, at the behest of Pakistan, dares to play any mischief from Afghanistan targeting India in future, Modi and leaders of the three other nations would have every right to confront Jinping for violation of the agreement. And that would certainly not be a good experience for the leaders either Beijing or Islamabad.





# Markets maintain record run

Sensex breaches 59k for first time

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Market benchmark Sensex scaled the 59,000-mark for the first time on Thursday as investors remained in risk-on mode following the government's policy support measures for various sectors.

Advancing for the third consecutive session, the 30-share BSE index climbed 417.96 points or 0.71 per cent to its new closing peak of 59,141.16. It touched an intra-day record of 59,204.29.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 110.05 points or 0.63 per cent to finish at its fresh lifetime high of 17,629.50. During the session, it scaled an all-time peak of 17,644.60.

IndusInd Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, spurring 7.34 per cent, followed by ITC, SBI, Reliance Industries, Kotak Bank, ICICI Bank and Axis Bank.

In contrast, TCS, Tata Steel, Tech Mahindra, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech and Dr Reddy's were among the laggards, slipping up to 1.32 per cent.

"Driven by reforms, the Indian market kept raising its bar and traded to new record highs. Today's market rally was driven by strong buying in Banking stocks especially in PSBs. The banking sector is expected to perform well in the coming days as the sector which failed to fairly participate in the ongoing rally due to fear over asset quality is gaining traction."

"Asian markets traded with cuts as the fall in Chinese property stocks pushed Asian stocks down while European markets traded with positive sentiments," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities, said, "Ahead of the operationalisation of the National Asset Reconstruction Company (NARCL), banks provided the much needed ammunition to the bulls to notch up record highs of 59K on the Sensex. The charge of the energised bulls took India's market capitalisation ahead of France as PSU banks lent the firepower."

BSE bankex was the biggest sectoral gainer, jumping 2.12 per cent, followed by energy, finance, FMCG and oil & gas indices. Metal, tech, IT and basic materials were among the losers.

In the broader market, the BSE midcap and smallcap gauges rose up to 0.48 per cent. Asian equities sank after liquidity crisis at Chinese real estate major Evergrande Group fanned fears of a broader contagion. Bourses in Shanghai, Seoul, Tokyo and Hong Kong ended with significant losses.

However, equities in Europe were trading with robust gains in mid-session deals.

# FADA seeks clarity from Ford on compensation structure for dealers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Automobile dealers' body FADA has sought clarity from Ford about the compensation structure it is working out for its dealer partners after announcing the closure of its two manufacturing plants in the country as part of a restructuring exercise.

In a letter to Ford India MD President and Managing Director Anurag Mehrotra, FADA President Vinkesh Gulati pointed out the difficulties being faced by the company's dealers across the country.

He noted that Ford dealers were staring at huge losses as customers have started cancelling the bookings in the wake of the plant closure announcement.

Gulati said dealers were worried about the compensation structure as many were not even five years old in the system and may not have even reached the break-even point.

"We would request you to kindly share with us the broad contours of the compensation structure, which you may have planned by now for compensating our members. This will not only help us in understanding the entire compensation process but will also assist us in handholding our members and ensure that the entire process is done in an amicable and justified manner," Gulati said in the letter.

He also pointed out issues with the Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) communication sent by the automaker to its dealer partners.

"The Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) at present includes all information of any nature whatsoever under the definition of confidential information."

"While dealing with confidentiality, one can understand in case the financials owing to the proposed exit, which gets discussed with each independent dealer, should remain confidential, the recitals to the NDA should hence carry a specific description of the nature of things which needs to be kept undisclosed," Gulati said. The NDA shared by the company should have clarity, he added.

"I hence request you to kindly modify the current NDA and also let us know the same so that we can fittingly explain it to our members."



## MONEY MATTERS

### PFC issues 300 million euro bonds in European market

State-owned PFC on Thursday said it has issued bonds worth 300 million euros for a period of seven years. In a statement, Power Finance Corporation Ltd (PFC) said the issuance which took place on Monday saw a strong participation from institutional investors across Asia and Europe with a participation from across 82 accounts and was oversubscribed 2.65 times "PFC successfully issued its maiden 300 million euros 7 year euro bond issuance on 13.09.2021. The pricing of 1.841 per cent achieved is the lowest yield locked in by an Indian issuer in the euro markets," the statement said. It is the first ever euro issuance by an Indian NBFC and the first euro bond issuance from India since 2017, PFC said. PFC Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) R S Dhillon said that the overwhelming response to the issuance reflects international investor's confidence in PFC.



### Chairperson: NFRA needs to have standalone legislation

National Financial Reporting Authority (NFRA) Chairperson R Sridharan on Thursday pitched for having a "standalone legislation" for the regulator in the interest of autonomy. The regulator was constituted under Sub Section (1) of Section 132 of the Companies Act, 2013, in October 2018. Sridharan said the NFRA operates under a single section of the Companies Act. The section does not provide comprehensive coverage of all the functions and powers that are required to constitute the NFRA as a "corporate financial reporting regulator". Further, he noted that the statute treats the NFRA as a subordinate office of the corporate affairs ministry. "... in the interest of functional, financial and administrative autonomy of the NFRA, there is a compelling need for a standalone legislation."



### Startup BharatAgri raised \$6.5 million from investors

Agri-tech startup BharatAgri on Thursday said it has raised USD 6.5 million (about Rs 47 crore) from investors to expand its business. The company has raised USD 6.5 million in a Series A round led by Omnivore, with participation from existing investors India Quotient and 021 Capital, BharatAgri said in a statement. It offers farmers an app-based platform for AI-based agronomy services on a paid subscription basis. BharatAgri currently has over 33,000 active paid users and aims to expand its subscription base to 1,50,000 by March 2022. On average, farmers pay Rs 600 per acre for a six-month subscription. Based in Bengaluru, BharatAgri was founded in 2017 by Sai Gole and Siddharth Dialani, both alumni of IIT Madras.



### Rupee slips 2 paise to close at 73.52 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee slipped 2 paise to close at 73.52 (provisional) against the US currency on Thursday, tracking the strengthening of the greenback in the overseas markets.

Forex traders said a bullish trend in the domestic equities and sustained foreign fund inflows supported the local unit, while firm crude oil prices restricted the gains.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the domestic currency opened flat at 73.51, witnessed an intra-day high of 73.34 and a low of 73.52 against the American currency during day trade. The local unit finally settled for the day at 73.52, down 2 paise over its previous close.

On Wednesday, the rupee had settled at 73.50 against the US dollar. Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, was trading 0.24 per cent higher at 92.77. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark fell 0.07 per cent to USD 75.41 per barrel.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex ended 417.96 points or 0.71 per cent higher and touched life-time high of 59,141.16, while the broader NSE Nifty advanced 110.05 points or 0.63 per cent to record 17,629.50.

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# GST Council to meet on today; rate review

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The GST Council, chaired by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, will meet on Friday, which among other things may review tax rate of over four-dozen items and extend till December 31, tax concessions on 11 COVID drugs.

Also, taxing petrol and diesel under the single national GST tax and a proposal to treat food delivery apps such as Zomato and Swiggy as restaurants and levy a 5 per cent GST tax on supplies made by them would be taken up by the Council at its meeting in Lucknow on September 17.

"Finance Minister Smt @nsitharaman will chair the 45th GST Council meeting at 11 AM in Lucknow tomorrow. The meeting will be attended by MOS Shri @mppchaudhary besides Finance Ministers of States & UTs and Senior officers from Union Government & States," the Finance Ministry tweeted. The Council, comprising central and state finance ministers, will deliberate on the proposal of extending the existing concessional tax rate structure on Amphotericin B, Tocilizumab, Remdesivir and anti-coagulants like Heparin, till December 31, 2021, from the present September 30.

Tax rate on Amphotericin



45th GST Council meeting at 11 AM in Lucknow tomorrow. The meeting will be attended by MOS Shri @mppchaudhary besides Finance Ministers of States & UTs and Senior officers from Union Government & States," the Finance Ministry tweeted. The Council, comprising central and state finance ministers, will deliberate on the proposal of extending the existing concessional tax rate structure on Amphotericin B, Tocilizumab, Remdesivir and anti-coagulants like Heparin, till December 31, 2021, from the present September 30.

Tax rate on Amphotericin

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Tax rate on Amphotericin

B, Tocilizumab was cut to 'Nil', while Remdesivir and Heparin was reduced to 5 per cent in June 2021.

The Council on Friday may also discuss the proposal of reducing GST from 12 per cent to 5 per cent to seven more drugs till December 31, 2021. These are Itolizumab, Posaconazole, Infliximab, Bamlanivimab & Etesevimab, Casirivimab & Imdevimab, 2-Deoxy-D-Glucose and Favipiravir.

To curb tax evasion, the proposal to make the food delivery platforms like Swiggy and Zomato liable to pay the Goods and Services Tax on restaurant services supplied through them would also be considered by the Council.

### Hero to increase price of model range by up to Rs 3K from Sept

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The country's largest two-wheeler maker Hero MotoCorp on Thursday said it will increase the price of its entire model range by up to Rs 3,000 from September 20.

The price hike has been necessitated to offset the impact of steadily increasing commodity prices, the company said in a statement. The price hike across the range of motorcycles and scooters will be up to Rs 3,000 and the exact quantum of increase will depend on the model and the market, it added.

# India second-largest tech hub for Amazon globally: India head

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is the second-largest technology hub for Amazon globally and its teams are powering innovations not only for customers in the country but globally as well, a top company executive said on Thursday.

Speaking at Amazon India Career Day, Amazon Global Senior Vice President and Country Head India Amit Agarwal said the e-commerce company employs over one lakh professionals in India across diverse areas from engineering, supply chain, content creation, marketing, video and others.

"India is also the second-



largest technology hub for Amazon globally, with some of the most talented software developers, product managers, machine learning scientists, and research scientists as part of the team," he said.

The teams are powering innovations not only for India, but also for customers globally, building services that practically touch every aspect of the customer journey with Amazon, he added.

# Kia drives in updated Carnival at Rs 24L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kia India on Thursday said it has launched the updated version of its premium multi-purpose vehicle Carnival with a price starting at Rs 24.95 lakh (ex-showroom).

The refreshed Carnival will now feature Kia's new corporate logo giving a fresh new look to the vehicle, the automaker said in a statement.

The company has also rejigged the trim line-up with the introduction of Limousine and Limousine+ variants to offer unique product USPs at an attractive price point, it added.

The model will now be offered in four variants - Limousine+, Limousine, Prestige and Premium.

"The refreshed Carnival is a part of Kia's efforts towards offering customers an exceptional product experience that surpasses all expectations. Since its launch, Carnival has been able to create a niche for itself in the Indian market and with this product intervention, we plan to provide even greater comfort and convenience to buyers," Kia India Executive Director and Chief Sales and Business Strategy Officer Tae-Jin Park said.

To date, the company has sold close to 8,000 units of Carnival in the country, he added.

# SBI announces various offers for home loan borrowers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country's largest lender State Bank of India Thursday announced various festive offers for prospective home loan customers, including a credit score-linked home loans starting at 6.70 per cent, irrespective of the loan amount.

Earlier a borrower availing

a home loan above Rs 75 lakh, had to pay an interest rate of 7.15 per cent.

With the introduction of the new offer, a borrower can now avail home loan for any amount at a rate as low as 6.70 per cent, the bank said in a release. This will result in a saving of 45 basis points (bps) which translates to a interest

saving of more than Rs 8 lakh, for a Rs 75 lakh loan with a 30-year tenure, it said.

Further, the rate of interest applicable for a non-salaried home borrower was 15 bps higher than the interest rate applicable to a salaried borrower. The lender has removed this distinction between a salaried and a non-salaried borrower.

# NMCG signs MoU for construction of STPs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Mission for Clean Ganga on Thursday signed an agreement for the development of sewage treatment plants (STPs) in Bareilly on Hybrid Annuity PPP mode, a statement said.

The tripartite concession agreement was signed by the NMCG with the Uttar Pradesh

Jal Nigam and Enviro Infra Engineers Pvt. Ltd. in a joint venture with Bhugan Infracon Pvt. Ltd, it said. The contract was awarded at a total cost of Rs 233.72 crore. This hybrid annuity project had evoked a good response from the market with 10 bidders participating in the competitive bidding process, according to the statement.



### MTC Group, Exigo Recycling form JV

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Metal scrap processors the MTC Group and E-waste recycler Exigo Recycling Private Limited have formed a joint venture company MERPL. The joint venture company will be headquartered in Mumbai and its plants will be operational in Bengaluru and Chennai by March 2022, a joint statement said on Thursday. MERPL targets to process over two lakh tons of e-waste annually, ramping up the recycling capacity in a phased manner across ten cities in India, including NCR, Hyderabad, Ahmedabad, Kolkata, and Lucknow. In the coming days, MERPL's line of activity will also include pre-processing and recycling of Lithium-Ion Batteries and EV Batteries of different chemistries, Solar PV Module recycling, Plastic recycling, and Waste to Energy (W2E), the statement said.



GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA  
OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER (R&B) REGION NALGONDA

Tender Notice

NIT No.: 25/SE/TS/Tenders/2021-22  
Name of Work: Construction of Court Building at Devanikonda in Nalgonda District. Total: ECV Value: 450.28 Lakhs. Download of Tender Document and Submission of Bid document: 28-09-2021 @ 5:30 PM to 04-10-2021 @ 3:30 PM. Technical Bid Opening Date: 04-10-2021 @ 4:00 PM. Price Bid Opening Date: 07-10-2021 @ 4:00 PM. Further Details can be seen at e-procurement market place i.e. <https://tender.telangana.gov.in> for Superintending Engineer (R&B) Region, Nalgonda.



GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No.: 28/GHMC/MP/EE/2021-2022  
Name of Work: Construction of Community Hall and Other Works, Estimate Amount/ECV: 222.15 Lakhs. Start Date/Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: Dt: 17.09.2021 @ 11:00 AM. - Dt: 21.09.2021 @ 11:30 AM. Name & Address, Officer Cell No: Sri. D. Govardhan Goud Executive Engineer, GHMC, Kukatapally Circle-24, Cell: 9154299633. Further details can be seen at e-procurement @ <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/>



## COMPATIBILITY OVER COMPROMISE

K RAMYA SREE

**B**ridging the much-needed gap between the meaningless high turnover of hook-up/dating sites and the impersonal touch of marriage apps and services, and of course, the actual arranged marriage set up, sister duo Tanisha Ghura Kanani and Priyanka Ghura Kuka launched 'Not So Arranged.'

The essence of the Not So Arranged Compatibility Quiz is to help one gain clarity and get to know someone before making a commitment.

"Priyanka and I did a lot of research. We found similar options but not identical to what we planned. The whole concept is that we wanted to add an extra layer of science or psychology to help find an individual a match who will actually be on the same wavelength. Compatibility to some extent is based on how two people connect. We started speaking to psychiatrists to explore this further," shares Tanisha.

Post their discussion with a couple of psychologists who guided them quite well with an affirmation of there being a way to go about this and there really being a need for something like this, the sister duo found their perfect match in Panna Kamaljit, who is a clinical psychologist with years of experience in relationship counselling, premarital assessment and behavioral research.

What's their USP? They say, "The USP of this site is the Compatibility Quotient (CQ) quiz and an in-person interview. The approach is about matching personalities and compatibility, not profiles."

"With this mission in mind



and after months of deliberation and testing, our chief Psychologist designed a quiz. It has two parts that assess both compatibility and personality. The personality aspect of the quiz is based on one of the most widely used

theories of personality called the Big Five personality traits. It follows the belief that every individual has certain fundamental traits in varying measures. The compatibility aspect helps figure out a person's self-perception, values

and views about life," they tell us.

The quiz is straightforward, to the point, non-intrusive and won't take much of your time.

The best part about the quiz is that there are

absolutely no right or wrong answers.

When asked what made them to start off something like this, Priyanka shares it is because of a personal experience Tanisha had. "When I had reached a certain point in my life and hadn't met anyone yet I realized that there weren't many avenues to connect with like-minded people for a serious relationship. The arranged marriage process was very overwhelming. Looking back at this time in my life, Priyanka and I realised that there has to be a better way to do this. This is how the idea of Not So Arranged came about," shares Tanisha.

How do they tackle people who are specific about religion and caste? Priyanka shares, "We do ask questions on which caste or religion they want to connect with and we only connect them accordingly. While we encourage you to be open and meet all kinds of people, we also understand that there are limitations in terms of belief and community. At the end of the day, we are looking at serious dating to settle down into."

They also conduct a Get-To-Know-You session once you sign up, either in-person or on the video, to help understand better in terms of personality, lifestyle and habits, to curate a match that will actually compliment you.

As of now, 80 per cent of their matches continue the conversation beyond the first date.

## Mobile gaming trumps computers, consoles

AMITHA GHATTI

**T**he moment a child picks up his or her senses, they are introduced to games! Initially, there were outdoor games, however, as times passed by, online gaming has taken over, and how! Gaming is no longer a boy's arena. Even girls are unfathomably attracted towards it giving their best shots at online gaming.

There was a time when people were adamant about having the latest PlayStation at their places, where they can sit with a group of friends and chill. How ever, after the increased usage of mobile phones, the craze for PlayStation and X-box has significantly come down, especially in India with as many as 7.3 billion downloads of gaming apps.

Wondering why mobile games are growing popular over PlayStation and other games? According to many studies, it is mainly because of its affordability, better quality, free installation, and portability! Mobile gaming industries have been booming ever since people began choosing them over computer games.

According to a survey by an ad tech firm 'InMobi', the lasting impact of Covid-19 meant that people not only spent more time on

mobile gaming, but they also experimented with a lot of different apps. On average, time spent on gaming apps surged through the day with 40 percent. And according to a KPMG report, India had the highest game downloads in the casual mobile gaming sub-segment in the world in 2020 — downloads standing at 7.3 billion, accounting for 17 percent of the global mobile game downloads!

Ban or no ban, PUBG remained the trending game in the country. We've seen teenagers going crazy over the game, to the extent that youngsters have reportedly borrowed heavy money from their parents, just so that they can cross on to the next level in the game!

What made mobile games a winner over games on a computer? We're told parents are always prone to focus more on the repercussions of playing games on the PC, and are unwelcoming to look at the other side of the coin! But what is the other side of the coin?

The Pioneer got in touch with a YouTuber and a gamer named 'Krixxkro' aka Prem, who shared his opinion on the same. He shares, "PC gamers in India play indie, rpg, open-world games as a pastime or to relax. I personally think they are better than mobile gamers always. Mobile

games are free and affordable, com-

pared to games on a computer or console. Building a PC for playing games is too expensive, and Indian parents are unprogressive in the field of video games, even though it has become a profession now. Some parents don't care if their children spend time playing video games on their mobile phones, but have an issue if it's on the PC! Indian parents are hidebound about video games or eSports, hence they don't allow their children to spend time playing games on their PCs."

YouTuber Kamal, known as 'Gauntlet Gaming', believes, "It's been eight years since I started a YouTube channel, and I started playing games since my fifth class. My favourite game is the 'Assassins Creed' series". Kamal was all pragmatic about the topic, he continues to say that it helped him build accuracy, reflexes become faster! "Mobile phones are cheap and the middle-class strata can afford only mobile phones while PlayStation nearly costs 22,000 rupees. PC assembling can go anywhere from 22,000 to 6 lakh rupees. Not everyone can afford that," he concludes.

It is not just children or youngsters who are addicted to mobile games. Even adults are glued to these, to relieve their stress. While gaming, to an extent, can be your stress buster, reports suggest that mobile gaming leaves a lot of negative effects as well. Playing games on your mobile phones not only affects one's health but also makes them socially less active. With multiple options available, people, especially children, are lacking concentration and attention to detail in real life. So mobile or computer, unhealthy screentime will always be a cause for worry.



## Stress? It's affecting your diabetes too!

**D**iabetes management is a life-long process that needs constant awareness, and this can add stress to one's daily life. Stress can be a major barrier to effective glucose control. Stress hormones in a body may directly affect glucose levels. If one experiences stress or feeling threatened, the body reacts. This is called the fight-or-flight response. The body directs blood to the muscles and limbs, allowing that person to fight the situation. The body may not be able to process the glucose released by firing nerve cells if the person has diabetes.

If the body fails to convert the glucose into energy, it builds up in the bloodstream. This causes the blood glucose levels to experience a rise, making stress a potential contributor to chronic hyperglycaemia in diabetes.

Keenly noticing and keeping track of the action, such as the date and what you were experiencing or any particular activity or a pattern that is being responsible for stress, may help the patient determine specific triggers. One can figure out if this is happening with similar action points by capturing the stress

and glucose levels. Constant stress from long-term problems with blood glucose can also wear you down mentally and physically. This may make managing diabetes difficult.

Sometimes, the symptoms of stress are subtle and it may get unnoticed. But, it may affect mental and emotional well-being along with physical health.

Some of the common yet not so common symptoms are headache, hypersomnia, fatigue, anxious and dehydration.

One needs to set a regular timetable to deal with such stress. A good time slot management with the things to do helps in managing such issues. Things such as keeping your blood sugar levels within the range recommended by your doctor acts as a major contributor to manage diabetes. The liquid content in the body with the right kind of electrolytes helps in minimising the effect of a lot of co-morbidities sometimes. Choosing zero sugar hydrators that have no carbohydrates or calories benefit in keeping the mind stress-free and keeps up with the desired

liquid content in the body. Here are some ways to keep diabetes-led stress under control:

**Carbohydrate counting and portion controls:** Portion controlling and carb intakes act as a really good diabetes management plan. For people taking mealtime insulin, it's important to be aware of the amount of carbohydrates in your food.

**Plan a well-balanced meal:** Every meal must have a good mix of starches, fruits and vegetables, proteins, and fats, choose foods that are low in carbs and

have fibre that helps keep blood sugar levels more stable.

**Coordinate meals and medications:** Too little food in proportion to diabetes medications, especially insulin, may result in dangerously low blood sugar. Too much food may cause your blood sugar level to climb too high. Talk to a diabetes health care team and best coordinate meal and medication schedules can result in good reports.

**Avoid sugar-sweetened beverages:** Such beverages tend to be high in calories and offer little nutrition. One should switch to sugar-free electrolytes which act as a refresher as well as keeps the glucose levels in control.

(The writer, Dr Jayarami Reddy, is a Consultant Physician and Diabetologist in Hyderabad.)



## Making homemakers' dreams a reality

**A** recent survey suggested that 62% of homemakers aspire to start up a business of their own. A good 53% of homemakers say contributing to the family financially is one of the primary drivers to start up. The nationwide survey — Indian Homemakers' Entrepreneurship Report 2021 — amongst homemakers was done to study barriers, triggers, and enablers to embracing entrepreneurship.

The survey further found that 73% of homemakers cited lack of time from home responsibilities, 53% cited lack of guidance and 50% cited insufficient funds as the main barriers that prevent women from starting up. It also revealed that over 77% of homemakers who desire to start up, claimed technology can aid them in this journey, as it can enhance their knowledge and know-how of how to run a business.

On learning this, Britannia launched the Marie Gold My Startup Season 3.0 to democ-



ratise entrepreneurship for India's homemakers. Participants will benefit from Google's digital skilling resources and an e-program will provide Rs 10,00,000 to 10 selected homemakers to start off on their entrepreneurial journeys! All participants will be provided free access to a set of Google's digital and business skilling resources in 6 languages.

Britannia Marie Gold's My Startup campaign has successfully run across two seasons, providing funds and skill development for Indian homemakers to embark on their entrepreneurial journeys. In 2020, a partnership with NSDC helped the campaign provide 10,000 homemakers with basic communication skills, financial literacy through access to information

and communication technology (ICT), along with micro-entrepreneurial skills for social and economic self-reliance. In its Season 3, the Britannia Marie Gold My Startup campaign has been broadened to help homemakers leverage the internet to grow their businesses.

According to the survey conducted by Britannia and Momspresso, some of the popular businesses of interest are running a boutique, home tutoring, re-selling of apparel, jewelry, running a beauty parlor, among others. Starting a business of their own, would make these homemakers feel more self-confident, empowered, and feel more respected in society.

Vinay Subramanyam, Vice-President, Marketing, Britannia Industries Limited said, "We laud them for being the emotional anchor and an all-time go-to person in every family. We firmly believe that the progress the country has made sits on the bedrock of contributions and sacrifices."





● Ananya



● Neeta

### FASHION FOREVER

Aakriti Elite Exhibition, a 3-day celebration of designer apparel, jewellery, bridal wear, and home decor, began at Taj Krishna, Hyderabad. The formal inauguration of the exhibition saw many renowned fashion designers and artisans from all across the country. The expo is on till September 18, 2021.



● Gayatri



● Sashi Nahata



● Radhika and Chaya



● Sirisha



### THODA 'HAAT'KE

#### PARTY

Photos by SV Chary

The grand curtain raiser announcing a first-of-its-kind exhibition — PARAMPARA by Indian designers HAAT, saw the presence of actress Vennela and many top models. Featuring top fashion designers, lifestyle brands, and more, the exhibit is renowned for showcasing over 60 local, national and international trends in the fashion and lifestyle industry.

## Why you shouldn't miss watching *Black Widow*

AISHWARYA D

If you are a fan of Scarlett Johansson's *Black Widow* and loved *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* or *Captain America: Civil War*, you're surely going to enjoy this movie. For the uninitiated, Natasha Romanoff aka Black Widow is a fugitive for turning to Captain's side because of what happened in the movie before this one.

The movie is set between *Civil War* and *Infinity War*, and shows us what Black Widow was doing before she teamed up with Captain America and Falcon. It explains how she met the team as seen in *Civil War*. It shows the past and all the characters she knew before she became a S.H.I.E.L.D agent.

The trailer shows the movie has hand-to-hand combat skills, the espionage element along with high-tech weapons while balancing it with all the superhero elements.

#### A gist:

The opening is an idyllic suburb in Ohio 1995. The story revolves around two young sisters (one of them Natasha Romanoff), how they endure pain and hardship just to make themselves lean,



mean fighting machines who can fit into the group. The story continues 21 years later when the girls are grown up and have to confront their worst enemies from the past they left behind. Here are a few reasons you shouldn't miss watching this film:

#### She's an ordinary girl but a superhero:

Black Widow does not possess any superpower. She is fierce and her strength is through rigorous practice which has grown following years of training. She's a quick-thinker, is focused, and strong-headed.

#### We meet Natasha's family:

We know Natasha has already regarded the Avengers as her family, but did you know she had a first family? A family that always taught her to be strong and never give up.

#### The sisters' combat skills:

No increased use of CGI was done. Both sisters are shown as trained fighters, which feels fresh and realistic to understand the efforts that it takes to fight a super villain.

#### The Taskmaker:

The Taskmaker (the supervillain) is the one with a superpower. Even with their true identity shrouded in secrecy, the character was very well defined and explained, and they can mimic anyone's fighting style just by looking at them once which makes them a perfect villain.

#### Acting prowess

The movie has its share of comedy, but the characters, their expressions, body language, and dialogue delivery is impeccable. All the roles were fabulously performed. Yelena (Florence Pugh) had great scenes.

Lastly, the movie is very well shot and has all the elements perfectly executed.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



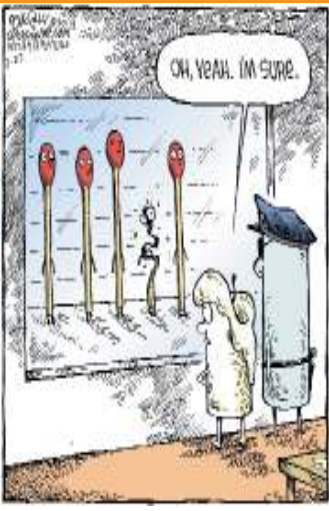
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



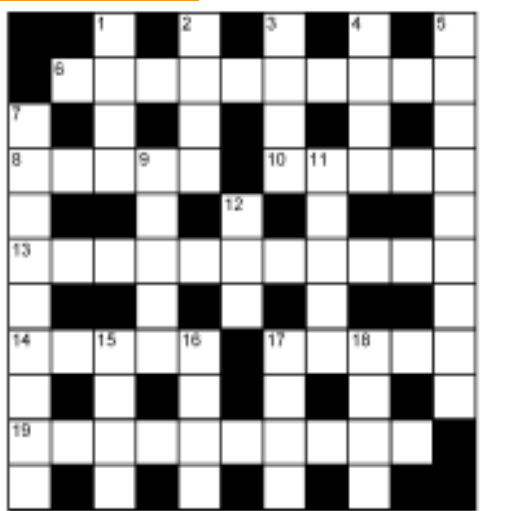
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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





## Abhiram Daggubati to fight B'wood actor?

**A**bhiram Daggubati, younger brother of Rana Daggubati, is currently working on his debut film as an actor — *Ahimsa*. The upcoming film is being bankrolled by Suresh Productions. Directed by Teja, who is known to direct romantic entertainers, this film will be an action entertainer. According to the latest update, the makers of *Ahimsa* are planning to rope in Bollywood actor Rajat Bedi, to play the role of the main villain in the Abhiram Daggubati-starrer. Actress Geethika Tiwary will be seen playing the female lead. *Ahimsa* is said to be a youth-oriented love story. Rajat Bedi, who has acted in over 50 Hindi films in Bollywood, will be making his comeback as a villain with this project. His popular films include *Khiladi*, *Indian*, *Jaani Dushman*, *Jodi No 1*, *Chor Machaaye Shor*, *Chaalbaaz*, and many more. But he is best known for playing the villain opposite Hrithik Roshan starrer in *Koi...Mil Gaya*.

## Variety of mix at the box office this weekend

**T**he releases this weekend promise a lot of talent, variety, and genres. While some are heading to a direct OTT release, others await theatres to reveal their fate. Here are a few releases to look out for:



**Maestro**  
Nithiin and Tamannaah-starrer *Maestro* is one of the biggest films to have a direct release in the OTT arena. This dark comedy thriller is all set to premiere on Disney+Hotstar on Friday. For the unversed, *Maestro* is an official remake of the 2018 Hindi film *Andhadhun*. Directed by Sriram Raghavan, *Andhadhun* featured Ayushmann Khurrana, Tabu, and Radhika Apte in the lead roles. *Maestro*'s director Merlapaka Gandhi requested everyone to watch the film and said that he will not be affected by comparisons. The film also features

Nabha Natesh in a prominent role.



**Gully Rowdy**  
Actor Sunil's *Gully Rowdy* is a comedy entertainer that releases on Friday on the big screens. Starring Sunil in the title role, the film is directed by G Nageshwar Reddy. Kona Venkat is presenting it. Neha Shetty will be seen playing the female lead. *Gully Rowdy* has generated interest with its funny promos and aggressive promotions. The film also has actors Rajendra Prasad, Vennela Kishore, Posani, and Viva Harsha in important roles. The cast definitely promises a laughter riot.

**Annabelle Sethupathi**  
Vijay Sethupathi's most awaited film *Annabelle Sethupathi* too, is all set to release on Disney+Hotstar on Friday. The horror-comedy drama, apart from Tamil, will also be dubbed

and released in 4 other languages including Hindi, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam. Also starring talented actress Taapsee Pannu, the film revolves around a burglar who gets into a palace full of ghosts. The film marks the actress' ninth venture in Kollywood. She was previously seen in Ashwin Saravanan's *Game Over*, which also released in Telugu. Backed by Sudhan S and Jayaraman under their production banner Passion Studios, the film features an ensemble cast including Jagapathi Babu, Radikaa Sarathkumar, Rajendra Prasad, Yogi Babu, Surekha Vani, Suneel, Subbu Panchu, Devadarshini Chetan, and Vennela Kishore. The film is helmed by Deepak Sundararajan, son of director-actor R Sundararajan.



**Unheard**  
Streaming portal Disney+ Hotstar is making a foray into Telugu with the upcoming series

titled *Unheard*, that is to release on Friday. It is about a series of six conversations, each of which is structured over opposing philosophies during a pivotal period in India's history such as the Chauri Chaura incident, non-cooperation movement, Hyderabad's Nizam's failed effort to join Pakistan post-independence, and many more. Produced by Radhika Lavu of Ellanar Films, it is directed by Aditya KV. The ensemble cast includes actors Srinivas Avasara, Baladitya, Chandani Chowdary, Priyadarshi, and Ajay. The music is composed by Naresh Kumar, sung by Kaala Bhairava, and the lyrics are penned by Krishna Kanth (KK).

**Ichata Vahanamulu Nilupa Radu**  
The film, which was earlier supposed to release in theatres, will now be releasing on the Telugu streaming platform Aha Video. This romantic action drama stars actor Sushanth as an architect whose life is all good with a loving mother and girlfriend. He once parks his bike in a 'No Parking' zone and this leads him on a roller coaster ride full of lies and deceit. Meenakshi Chaudhary co-stars in the lead role. Other notable releases this weekend include Plan B, Vijaya Raghavan, Bell Bottom, and Honey Trap.

## SEERAT KAPOOR IN DIL RAJU'S NEXT, SHARES PIC FROM REHEARSAL

**S**eerat Kapoor, who is known for her alluring beauty and her outstanding persona, has gained a place in the hearts of the audience. The actress, who is soon going to make her big Bollywood debut along with Tushar Kapoor, is all set to work on her next project. Seerat has paved her way to Tollywood and received a huge response for her outstanding dedication and work. From being an assistant choreographer in the film *Rockstar* to making her huge in her recent Tollywood film *Krishna and his Leela*, she has come a long way.

The actress was recently spotted at Dil Raju's studio in Hyderabad where she was seen rehearsing. The sources say that the actress also did a couple of look tests for her role. The source also confirmed that the actress Seerat Kapoor will soon be seen as a lead in Dil Raju's production. Source confirms that Seerat has bagged this role and is very happy over the collaboration, the actress had gone through various look tests and had even undergone a major hair transformation to get into the character. The actress shared a picture of her from the studio where she was seen wearing

denim hot shorts paired with a black top and with knee-high leather gumboots to the fact she was really looking very hot she also captioned the picture as "When the universe casts you in your own element! #Relive #HowSheMetHerself #Goosebumps #Gratitude #Responsibility #Belief" Feels like the actress is very happy and proud of this collaboration and we can't wait to get more updates from Seerat Kapoor on her upcoming movie!



## Haathi Mere Saathi all set to stream on TV

**E**ros Now has time and again regaled its viewers with great storylines across different genres. The latest film that shall stream on TV — *Haathi Mere Saathi*, the Hindi version of *Aranya* that released in April — is no different. The adventurous film features Rana Daggubati and Pulkit Samrat. Shriya Pilgaonkar and Zoya Hussain will also be seen essaying supporting roles in the movie! *Haathi Mere Saathi* will have a Direct-to-TV release on Zee Cinema on September 18. The makers recently posted an open letter from 'Manickam', the ele-

phant on its platform making a heartfelt appeal to everyone to work towards saving the Goliaths of our landscape, our majestic creatures, the elephants. In a sensitive note titled 'Save Us, We Have The Right To Live: An Open Letter From An Elephant', the team has thoughtfully penned down heart-wrenching notes from some of our elephants in a manner that they would have mentioned if they had the ability to speak with us. Rana Daggubati also supported the cause and said, "*Haathi Mere Saathi* gave me an opportunity to connect with the mighty elephants and work with them in person. They are the largest dwellers on land and have a huge impact on our ecosystem. This open letter is truly a praiseworthy initiative to make people aware of their plight. The majestic creatures are endangered and it's up to each and every one of us to come together for protecting them. Our movie is a small step in the same direction."



## RAM CHARAN TO PLAY A COLLECTOR IN SHANKAR'S FILM?

**S**ensational director Shankar has done several films in his career and most of them delivered a strong social message for the society. He is known to take up a social point and narrate it in his style with all the commercial ingredients. Ram Charan and Shankar are teaming up for the first time and the film got its official launch recently. The regular shoot, we hear, will commence next month. Ever since the announcement of the two collaborating was made, fans have begun speculating what Charan's role could be. Here are some interesting updates about the film: Ram Charan plays a Collector in the film and the movie is set against the backdrop of politics. The film will also discuss the Indian Penal Code and how the law is misused! Rumour has it that Shankar will narrate the impor-

ance of some of the sections of Indian law through this film. The film will also narrate how the corporate culture is impacting the life of the common man. All in all, the film is touted to be a hard-hitting social drama that will have all the commercial ingredients. Kiara Advani has been roped in to play the leading lady and Dil Raju is the producer. The makers aim for a Sankranthi 2023 release.



## Nani comes 'live' through a poster

**T**uck Jagadish, recently released and has received much love and appreciation from the film fraternity and audiences. Nani's fans were in for a special surprise when they walked into a mall expecting to see a regular poster installed as a part of the promotions, albeit, this wasn't one of those regular posters. Bridging the gap between reel and real, the 'supposedly regular' poster came live, and fans could actually interact with their favourite star Nani. Backed with state-of-art technology, this was made possible in one of the busiest malls in Hyderabad and it took the shoppers by surprise. Nani, famed to

be a natural star, because of the connection audiences have with him, extended a warm welcome to them to his *Tuck Jagadish* family through this initiative. The video is a fun interaction in Inorbit Mall Tech City, Hyderabad where a screen was installed with Nani's static image. The twist was Nani suddenly coming live on the screen having a one-on-one conversation with his fans and talking about his recently-launched *Tuck Jagadish* asking them what they thought about the film. Directed by Shiva Nirvana, the movie also stars Ritu Varma, Jagapathi Babu, Aishwarya Rajesh, Thiruveer, Vaishnavi Chaitanya, Devadarshini, and Daniel Balaji.





PTI ■ DUBAI

Virat Kohli on Thursday announced he will step down as India's T20 skipper after the T20 World Cup in UAE but will continue to lead the side in ODIs and Test cricket, a decision that paves the way for Rohit Sharma to captain in the shortest format.

"I've decided to step down as the T20 captain after this T20 World Cup in Dubai in October," the 32-year-old Kohli, who is here to compete in the IPL that resumes on Sunday, said in a statement posted on his Twitter page. "Understanding workload is a very

important thing and considering my immense workload over the last 8-9 years playing all three formats and captaining regularly for last five to six years, I feel I need to give myself space to be fully ready to lead Indian team in Test and ODI cricket," Kohli explained.

For some time, there has been speculation surrounding Kohli's future as white-ball captain especially in the backdrop of Rohit's brilliant track record of winning five IPL titles for Mumbai Indians.

The 34-year-old Rohit is Kohli's deputy in the white-ball formats and is most likely to take up the leadership role when India clashes with New Zealand in a home series in November that will feature three T20 Internationals along with two Test matches.

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah, in a statement issued by the Board after Kohli's announcement, said the body has been in discussion with Kohli for a while now.

"We have a clear roadmap for

## HIGHLIGHTS OF KOHLI'S T20 CAPTAINCY: SERIES WIN IN SENA COUNTIES

India's winning percentage under Kohli is better than Mahendra Singh Dhoni's tenure during which the side won the inaugural T20 World Cup in 2007. India have won 27 out of 45 matches under Kohli with two tied games and as many abandoned, making it a healthy winning percentage of 65.11. India are yet to win an ICC trophy under Kohli but the team's series win under him in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, England and West Indies will remain the highlights of his leadership tenure starting 2017.

- India's first T20 bilateral series win came under Kohli in 2017 when the team won the one-off game in Sri Lanka.
- The first series win in SENA countries came in South Africa in 2018 when India won 2-1.

- In the same year, India managed to beat a formidable England team in its own backyard with the series result being 2-1.
- By far the biggest overseas triumph came in New Zealand in 2019-20 season with Kohli's team trouncing the Black Caps 5-0 before going on to lose the subsequent ODI and Test series.
- In 2020, India bounced back after losing the ODI series in Australia to win the T20 rubber 2-1.
- Most recently, India beat mighty England at home 3-2 and Kohli was named the player of the series.
- Kohli remains the leading-run scorer in T20s with 3159 runs at an impressive average of 52.65 and highest score of 94 not out.

SOURCE: PTI

## I have no idea about change in leadership: Babar



PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam has brushed aside the talk on impending changes in the team's leadership and said the focus is to win the ODI and T20 series against New Zealand. Babar told a virtual media conference on Thursday that he was completely backing the selected squad.

Asked about his alleged dissatisfaction over the selected team, Babar said that he had given his input as captain as usual and insisted this was not any individual's team.

"I think the board officials and chief selector have also clarified the position on team selection so for me I am completely backing the side and expect it to do well against New Zealand."

Babar also made it clear he had been told nothing or heard anything about captaincy changes. He pointed out that it was a normal thing in the cricket world that a captain had to meet desired goals and live up to expectations. PCB Chairman, Ramiz Raja, in his first press conference had made it clear that his expectations for Babar as captain were the same as he had with Imran Khan.

## India's ODI tour of NZ postponed to 2022

PTI ■ WELLINGTON

India will not be touring New Zealand later in the year due to a packed calendar and COVID-19 related restrictions. India would have had to quarantine for 14 days to play three ODIs as part of the World Cup Super League.

A New Zealand Cricket (NZC) spokesperson confirmed to Stuff that the India games will be played after the T20 World Cup in Australia

next year. New Zealand anyway are scheduled to tour India in November for two Tests and three T20s.

New Zealand will be hosting Bangladesh, The Netherlands and South Africa in the summer besides the seven teams in Women's World Cup in March-April.

The Tests against Bangladesh and South Africa are part of the World Test Championship. "We've got to be mindful of

players coming back from a long winter and we've got to give them time at home as well," NZC chief executive David White said.

The Black Caps will undergo 14 days of managed isolation and quarantine (MIQ) after returning from India just before Christmas. That won't allow NZC to host the Boxing Day Test on December 26 and the opener against Bangladesh could begin on December 28 or later.

## Davis Cup: Indian players need to give their all against Finland



PTI ■ ESPOO (FINLAND)

India's singles players will need to back their talent with some killer instinct for the team to emerge victorious against a reasonably strong Finland in the Davis Cup World Group I tie, starting here on Friday.

Prajnesh Guneswaran and Ramkumar Ramanathan have the experience of playing the big matches. They have rubbed shoulders with better players but it's time for them to move forward from playing mere close matches. They need to deliver that knockout punch that will take India to the next year's Qualifiers.

It will be Prajnesh (ranked 165) who will open the tie for India with a match against Otto Virtanen (ranked 419). It is a splendid opportunity for India to draw first blood as Prajnesh is a superior player. Prajnesh gets close to wins with his talent but

has the tendency of giving up advantageous positions, like the one against Borna Coric in the last tie against Croatia. Maybe it's the pressure of playing for the flag but the left-hander from Chennai insists it is not the case. "Matches against good players are always close if I'm playing well."

I have won matches against good players being in the lead and I have also lost matches being in the lead. That's just the way they go," Prajnesh told PTI. "Matches which are closely fought can go either way. There is no pressure of playing for India that influences me... Sometimes there's more pressure, other times that's less."

"Again, just depends on how well I cope on that particular day," he added. But now is the opportunity for him to put India ahead.

If Ramkumar can play the same way he competed against 2014 US Open champion Marin Cilic in the previous tie against Croatia and does not miss the chances he gets, India will have a very good chance in the tie.

As the second-best ranked player from India, Ramkumar is up against Finland's number one player Emil Ruusuvuori, who is placed 74 in the world, on the opening day of the tie.

Ramkumar is taking the court for the second singles and will have a pretty good idea how he should approach the match against Ruusuvuori after Prajnesh's game.

## Shastri, Arun, Sridhar awaiting 'fit to fly' certificate

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's head coach Ravi Shastri, along with bowling and fielding coaches Bharath Arun and R Sridhar, respectively, would need to undergo a "fit to fly" test post recovery from COVID-19, which led to the cancellation of the fifth Test against England in Manchester last week. The trio have completed a 10-day isolation as per

the UK Health Protocols but, to return home, they also need to pass a "fit to fly" test, apart from negative RT-PCR reports.

"Shastri, Arun and Sridhar are all doing well physically having recovered from COVID-19. They are out of isolation."

"However, as per health protocols they need to have a CT score of 38 plus which will ensure a fit to fly certificate for them. We expect them to fly out

in next two days if all goes well with CT score," a senior BCCI official told PTI on the condition of anonymity.

The CT (CT scan) score tells about the presence of viral load in a COVID-19 affected person and how much his lungs have been infected.

A higher CT score indicates recovery and it is believed that to take long flights, one needs to have a CT score of 40.

None of the three Indian coaches currently have any symptoms and are completely fit but can only avail the return flight once they get the certificate. Shastri tested positive on the third day of the fourth Test at Oval and Arun and Sridhar, deemed as close contacts, had to be isolated. The duo also later tested positive and all of them finished their 10-day isolation on Wednesday.

## FIFA intensifies push to stage men's World Cup every 2 years

AP ■ GENEVA

FIFA intensified its push for hosting the men's World Cup every two years on Thursday by garnering support from soccer fans around the world to help combat resistance from Europe and South America.

The latest public relations tactic came in the form of an online survey commissioned by FIFA. The Associated Press does not routinely report the claims of opinion polls conducted over the internet.

The FIFA statement did not provide data, details of the polling methodology or questions asked, but claimed its findings showed "considerable differences between the so-called traditional markets and the developing football markets." European soccer body UEFA and South American counterpart CONMEBOL oppose FIFA's plan and have threatened to

boycott additional World Cups. Europe and South America combine for 65 of the 211 FIFA members — fewer than the one-third total likely needed to block any proposal.

The governing bodies of the six continental soccer federations all stage their own championships, with Europe hosting its tournament every four years halfway between the World Cups. Adding an extra World Cup in every four-year cycle would likely cut into the European events' revenue stream.

The women already have two major world tournaments in every four-year cycle because the top teams and best players compete at the Olympics as well as the Women's World Cup.

FIFA's latest survey follows one week after it hosted about 80 former international players, including several World Cup winners, for a two-day meeting in Qatar — the 2022 World Cup host country.




# Indian Premier League 2021

Remaining part of the tournament, which was postponed in May due to COVID-19 situation in India, will be played in the UAE from September 19.



**CSK**  
Chennai  
Super Kings



**DC**  
Delhi  
Capitals



**KKR**  
Kolkata  
Knight Riders



**MI**  
Mumbai  
Indians



**PBKS**  
Punjab  
Kings



**RR**  
Rajasthan  
Royals



**RCB**  
Royal Challengers  
Bangalore



**SRH**  
Sunrisers  
Hyderabad

## Points Table

As on May 2, 2021

	Played	Won	Lost	Net run rate	Points
Delhi Capitals	8	6	2	0.547	12
Chennai Super Kings	7	5	2	1.263	10
Royal Challengers Bangalore	7	5	2	-0.171	10
Mumbai Indians	7	4	3	0.062	8
Rajasthan Royals	7	3	4	-0.190	6
Punjab Kings	8	3	5	-0.368	6
Kolkata Knight Riders	7	2	5	-0.494	4
Sunrisers Hyderabad	7	1	6	-0.623	2

## Schedule

Date	Match	Venue	Date	Match	Venue
Sept 19	CSK vs MI	Dubai	Sept 28	RR vs RCB	Dubai
Sept 20	KKR vs RCB	Abu Dhabi	Sept 30	SRH vs CSK	Sharjah
Sept 21	PBKS vs RR	Dubai	Oct 1	KKR vs PBKS	Dubai
Sept 22	DC vs SRH	Dubai	Oct 2	MI vs DC	Sharjah
Sept 23	MI vs KKR	Abu Dhabi	Oct 3	RR vs CSK	Abu Dhabi
Sept 24	RCB vs CSK	Sharjah	Oct 3	RCB vs PBKS	Sharjah
Sept 25	DC vs RR	Abu Dhabi	Oct 4	RR vs SRH	Dubai
	SRH vs PBKS	Sharjah	Oct 4	DC vs CSK	Dubai
Sept 26	CSK vs KKR	Abu Dhabi	Oct 5	RR vs MI	Sharjah
	RCB vs MI	Dubai	Oct 6	RCB vs SRH	Abu Dhabi
Sept 27	SRH vs RR	Dubai	Oct 7	CSK vs PBKS	Dubai
Sept 28	KKR vs DC	Sharjah	Oct 7	RCB vs MI	Sharjah
	MI vs PBKS	Abu Dhabi	Oct 8	SRH vs RR	Abu Dhabi
				SRH vs DC	Dubai

### Qualifier 1

(1st placed team vs 2nd placed team)

Dubai

### Eliminator

(3rd placed team vs 4th placed team)

Sharjah

### Qualifier 2

(Loser of Qualifier 1 vs winner of Eliminator)

Sharjah

### Final

(Winner of Qualifier 1 vs winner of Qualifier 2)

Dubai

Timings: 7:30 pm (IST) for single match away;  
8:30 pm and 7:30 pm (IST) for slope having two matches

**KKR SponzoGraphic**

## Messi and PSG held by Brugge

AP ■ GENEVA

Lionel Messi, Kylian Mbappé and Neymar lined up together in the near-perfect attack for Paris Saint-Germain and still could not score or deliver a win in the Champions League.

Instead, it was low-key midfielder Ander Herrera who got PSG's goal in a 1-1 draw at underrated Belgian champion Club Brugge.

Though Messi saw a first-half shot strike the crossbar, he was later shown a yellow card for a foul and Mbappé went off because of an injured left ankle.

French forwards flourished elsewhere with Sébastien Haller scoring four for Ajax in a 5-1 rout at Sporting Lisbon and Christopher Nkunku netting all of Leipzig's goals in a 6-3 loss to Manchester City.

The English clubs in action combined for two wins in matches involving 14 goals as Liverpool beat AC Milan 3-2 in the Italians' return to the competition after a seven-season gap.

There was just one goal in the games involving the Madrid clubs, and Rodrigo's 89th-minute strike won it for Real Madrid at Inter Milan. Atlético Madrid was held 0-0 at home to Porto.

Debutant Sheriff Tiraspol from the Moldovan league won 2-0 against Shakhtar Donetsk from neighboring Ukraine.

Three-time European champion Messi was added to PSG's

already stellar squad last month to drive the Qatar-owned club's quest to win soccer's most coveted club prize.

The Jan Breydel Stadium in Belgium was a modest venue for the Messi-Mbappé-Neymar forward line to be unveiled for the first time. They lasted just 50 minutes together, though Mbappé did create Herrera's opening goal from a sharp first-time shot in the 15th minute.

PSG hosts City on Sept. 28 in a rematch of last season's semi-finals.

The English champion advanced after winning the first leg 2-1 in Paris.

Liverpool and AC Milan traded titles facing each other in the 2005 and 2007 Champions League finals yet had never met at any other stage of the competition. Their first match at Anfield was a typically rousing affair in

the storied venue that thrives on European nights.

Liverpool's early surge yielded only a Trent Alexander Arnold-

inspired opening goal and a penalty for Mohamed Salah saved by Milan goalkeeper Milan stunned its hosts with two quick goals just before halftime.

but the lead lasted just a few minutes into the second half before Salah leveled.

Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson clinched a 3-2 win with a sharp half-volley shot in the 69th minute.

## AIFF president Patel meets Sports Minister Thakur

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

All India Football Federation (AIFF) president Praful Patel on Thursday called on Sports Minister Anurag Thakur and briefed him about the upcoming international tournaments the country is hosting.

The AIFF president updated the honourable minister on the forthcoming major international events which are to be held in India in 2022 viz. The AFC Women's Asian Cup India 2022 scheduled to kick off in Mumbai, Navi Mumbai and Pune from January 20 onwards and the FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup India 2022 to be held from October 11, 2022, the AIFF said in a release.

Sports secretary Ravi Mittal and Sports Authority of India's director general Sandip Pradhan were also present during the meeting alongside AIFF general secretary Kushal Das and his deputy Abhishek Yadav.

## Deepak eases into second round as SSCB boxers dominate at Nationals

PTI ■ BELLART

International-medallist Deepak Kumar (51kg) led the show as Services Sports Control Board (SSCB) boxers produced an impressive all-win performance on the second day of the men's National Championships at the Inspire Institute of Sports here on Thursday.

Deepak, who had upstaged the world and Olympic Games champion Shakhobidin Zoirov of Uzbekistan during his silver medal show at the Strandja Memorial earlier this year,

## Golden sweep for Indian girls in Tunis



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's Swastika Ghosh defeated compatriot Yashaswini Ghorphade 3-2 in what tuned out to be a gripping Under-19 girls final of the WTT (World Table Tennis) Contender event in Tunis, Tunisia.

However, a little while before, the silver medallist Yashaswini won gold in the Under-17 girls final, beating Egyptian Farida Badawy 11-6 14-12 11-7.

In the Under-19 final, Swastika defeated Yashaswini 6-11 11-6 6-11 11-6 11-8.

These were not the only successes in Tunis as the Indian paddlers collected all

the gold on offer, besides some silver and bronze medals.

Suhana Saini accounted for Pritha Vartakar in the Under-15 girls final for her second international gold. She had earlier won the title during her Slovenia sojourn.

M Hansini was another Indian who excelled, winning gold in Under-13 girls event, beating Prisha Goel 11-5 11-8 11-8. In Under-11 girls category, Dhaani Jain emerged champion when she downed Ananya Muralidharan 11-4 11-6 9-11 10-12 11-7 in a tough final.

Playing her second final soon after a brief break from her gold-winning Under-17 event, the Bengaluru girl took on Mumbai's Swastika in the Under-17 section. Nicely warmed up, Yashaswini won the first game before Swastika recovered to take the second. But the fight continued unabated, as

the two shared the next two games and, in the decider, Swastika proved a notch better than Yashaswini.



started the domination for SSCB with a flawless 5-0 win against Bihar's Aman Kumar in the 51kg opening round match.

Barun Singh (48kg) and Akash (54kg) further extended SSCB's winning momentum as they managed unanimous victories against Telangana's Donald Janumala and Rocky of All India Police respectively.

Dalveer Singh Tomar (64kg) and Naveen Boora (71) were the other two boxers to progress into the second round as all the five SSCB boxers in action emerged victorious on the second day of the event.

## Delhi Capitals retain Rishabh Pant as captain



PTI ■ DUBAI

Delhi Capitals on Thursday announced that Rishabh Pant will continue as captain for the remainder of the IPL2021 season," franchise's official handle tweeted.

of the IPL beginning September 19.

It was one of the most predictable decisions considering that Delhi Capitals did well under Pant despite the fact that Shreyas Iyer led them to their first final last year.

Delhi Capitals are currently leading the IPL points table with 12 points having won six games under Pant's captaincy earlier this year after he was assigned the role in absence of injured Iyer, who had to undergo a shoulder surgery.

"JSW-GMR co-owned Delhi Capitals today announced that Rishabh Pant will continue as captain for the remainder of the IPL2021 season," franchise's official handle tweeted.

## Advani manages to defend Asian title

PTI ■ DOHA

India's ace cueist Pankaj Advani on Thursday defended his Asian Snooker Championship title defeating Amir Sarkhosh of Iran here.

The Indian great was competing in his first assignment in almost two years due to COVID-19.

Advani had won the title in 2019 before the 2020 edition

got scrapped due to the pandemic. His tally of Asian titles across both snooker and billiards now stands at 11, apart from the two Asian Games golds of 2006 and 2010.

"I'm glad to defend this title and pick up from where I left off before the onset of the pandemic. The gap only increased the drive and hunger to compete and do well on return," said Advani.