

ANALYSIS 7
'CABBAGE TACTIC' TO
SEIZE WATERS**MONEY 8**
FROM RUSSIA'S ROSNEFT TO AIRPORTS,
COS QUEUE UP TO TRAIN PERSONNEL**SPORTS 12**
CSK SET MI 157-RUN
TARGET

HYDERABAD, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2021; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

NABHA: DIDN'T
WANT TO COM-
PARE MYSELF WITH
RADHIKA APTE

Page 11

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**GADKARI'S CAR CLOCKS 170 KMPH
DURING EXPRESSWAY SPEED TEST RUN**

A video has surfaced on the internet that shows Nitin Gadkari examining the construction work with officials of the expressway in his car. The minister of road transport and highways is seen sitting on the passenger seat and explaining the benefits of the upcoming Delhi-Mumbai Expressway (DME). As seen in the video, the driver pressed the throttle immediately after taking a U-Turn. In a matter of few seconds, the MPV reached high speeds and clocked a speed of 170 kmph. As the highway is currently not open for people and Gadkari's convoy was the only vehicle on the stretch, thus it was safe to perform such a high-speed test.

**SPACEX CAPSULE WITH CIVILIAN
CREW SPLASHES DOWN OFF FLORIDA**

Four SpaceX tourists returned to Earth safely on Saturday after spending three days in space, successfully concluding the first orbital mission in history with no professional astronauts on board. The SpaceX Dragon capsule, whose heat shield allowed it to withstand descent, was slowed down by four large parachutes before splashing into the Atlantic Ocean off the coast of Florida at 7:06 pm (2306 GMT), according to a video feed by the company. "That was a heck of a ride for us, and we're just getting started," billionaire captain Jared Isaacman, who financed the trip with a goal of making space a bit more accessible, said shortly after landing.

**DECISION ON ALLOWING FOREIGN
TOURISTS TO VISIT INDIA IN 10 DAYS**

Amid a decline in Covid cases in the country, India may soon reopen its doors for foreign tourists for the first time in one-and-a-half years, officials said. First five lakh foreign tourists will be issued visas free of cost in an attempt to revive the tourism, hospitality and aviation sectors badly hit by the COVID-19 pandemic since March 2020 when a nationwide lockdown was announced. Top Union Home Ministry officials are deliberating with all stakeholders on the expected date and modalities for opening up of the country for foreign tourists. A formal announcement allowing foreign tourists to visit India may come within the next 10 days, an official from the Home Ministry said.

**MONEY TRAIL PRIMA FACIE INDICATES
DESHMUKH RECEIVED RS 4.7 CR: COURT**

A special PMLA court in Mumbai, while taking cognisance of a charge sheet filed against former policeman Sachin Waze and others in an alleged money laundering case, has said the money trail prima facie indicates that former Maharashtra home minister Anil Deshmukh received Rs 4.7 crore from Mr Waze and his aide Kundan Shinde. The Enforcement Directorate (ED) earlier this month filed its charge sheet against Waze, Deshmukh's private secretary (an additional collector-rank officer) Sanjeev Palande, personal assistant Shinde and 11 others in the case.

BYE BYE GANESHA**Balapur
laddu
fetches
Rs 18.90 L
P:3**

A mammoth Ganesh immersion procession was underway in Hyderabad on Sunday amid massive security arrangements and despite intermittent rains. Thousands of devotees were participating in the programmes across the city to bid adieu to Ganesh while about 27,000 security personnel were deployed as part of the elaborate arrangements for smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual rituals. Amid chanting of slogans, devotees were carrying thousands of idols to Hussain Sagar lake and more than 50 other lakes and ponds in and around the city. 'Shoba yatra', as the immersion procession is called, was underway amidst intermittent rains in Hyderabad. Hundreds of trucks were heading towards Hussain Sagar and other lakes amid the rains. The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi, the organisers of the procession, set up special platforms at Charminar and Moazzam Jahi Market to welcome idols.

-Reports inside

YSRC sweeps Parishads polls in AP

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The ruling YSR Congress made a clean sweep of the mandal and zilla parishads elections in Andhra Pradesh, routing the opposition Telugu Desam Party in almost all of the 13 districts.

Till 7.30 PM on Sunday, the YSRC bagged 385 out of 515 zilla parishad territorial constituencies and 5,565 of the 7,221 mandal parishad territorial constituencies for which elections were conducted on April 8.

The TDP 'boycotted' the elections but technically its candidates remained in the fray as the ballots were printed before the party announced its decision.

The election process for the MPTCs and ZPTCs, the second and the third tiers of the Panchayat Raj system began in March 2020 but the Covid-19 pandemic and the subsequent legal battles stretched it this far.

There are a total of 659 ZPTCs of which the ruling party bagged 126 unanimously. It also won 2,271 MPTCs unopposed. The TDP won 100 MPTCs unanimously.

Eleven unanimous winners in



Celebrations at YSR Congress Party's central office in Tadepalli on Sunday, following the party's spectacular victory in the Parishad polls.

**Till 7.30 PM on Sunday, the YSRC bagged 385 out of 515 zilla parishad territorial constituencies and 5,565 of the 7,221 mandal parishad territorial constituencies for which elections were conducted on April 8.**

ZPTCs and 81 in MPTCs died since March 2020 even before the poll process ended. Elections in eight ZPTCs and 355 MPTCs were withheld for different reasons.

TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu faced humiliation as the YSRC won all the four ZPTC seats

in Kuppam Assembly constituency represented by him. Also, the YSRC clinched 17 of the 19 MPTC seats in Kuppam.

In Chandrababu Naidu's native village Naravaripalli, too, the ruling party won the MPTC seat by a margin of 1,000 votes.

**Channi to take
oath as Punjab CM**

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Congress leader Charanjit Singh Channi will take oath as the chief minister of Punjab on Monday.

Channi, who was elected the Congress Legislature Party leader on Sunday, met the governor in the evening and said, "The oath-taking ceremony will take place at 11 am on Monday."

He was flanked by state Congress chief Navjot Singh Sidhu and other leaders.

Channi will be the first Dalit to hold the post in the state. Channi's election as the CLP leader came a day after Amarinder Singh resigned as the chief minister amid a bitter power tussle with Sidhu.

A minister in the outgoing Amarinder Singh cabinet, Channi's selection assumes significance as the dissension-riven Congress faces the Assembly polls in less than five months.

KTR gets invite for WEF meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Indicating Telangana's growing importance in the comity of nations, state IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao has received an invitation to attend the prestigious World Economic Forum's 2022 meeting, which will take place in Davos Klosters from January 17 to 21.

Appreciating the work of KTR, WEF President Borge Brende, said, "Your leadership and commitment to transforming Telangana into a leading technology powerhouse is noteworthy. As India emerges from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, its ability to quickly adapt to innovation and emerging technologies will be vital for a sustainable economic recovery. Your insights on harnessing emerging technologies for common good will be key to the discussions at the Annual Meeting."

Brende also stated that it was essential for the world's foremost political, business, and civil society leaders to come together once again to "restore trust in the abil-



ity to shape the future in collaborative ways."

While expressing his happiness over receiving the invitation to the prestigious WEF annual meeting, KTR said: "I see this invitation as recognition of Telangana government's initiatives in the fields of information technology, industry, and innovation," he said.

KTR stated that this was another opportunity for Telangana to showcase its friendly industrial policies and immense scope for global firms to invest in the State. The Minister thanked the WEF organizers for the invitation.

**Govt to set up
research wing for
communication**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is planning to set up a research unit within its information dissemination wing - Press Information Bureau (PIB) - through which it aims to strengthen daily content generated by official channels with well researched material on all significant policy decisions.

The idea behind a research unit is to ensure that all official information which PIB generates through press conferences, official handouts as well as through its social media handles, is backed with well researched and factual data, which can effectively help in dispelling any kind of lack of information or misinterpreted data, sources aware of the development said.

Liquor biz shifts to gullies, as cops wink at ban

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prohibition shifts liquor business underground. Occasional ban on sale of liquor merely moves biz to makeshift shops that operate smoothly in the gullies.

This is what happened on Sunday, the grand day of Ganesh nimmajanam, though officially there was a ban on sale of liquor.

In view of Ganesh immersion programme, the Excise Police had ordered shutdown of all wine shops in the city and banned sales of liquor from 6:00 am on Sunday to 6:00 am of Monday.

In stark violation of the ban, at many places liquor was sold openly in adjacent lanes and bylanes



right near the shops that were supposed to be closed. Officially speaking, the shops followed the orders of the police, but the sellers did not let down tipplers. They or their agents made sales in gullies near their shops. Many people got their fix, thanks to such liquor sales.

Another fact that worked in favour of the liquor shops is that the police were focused on maintaining law and order and ensuring incident-free nimmajanam.

Smart tipplers bought their stocks on Saturday itself. But late Kates too got liquor on Sunday in bylanes and gullies, thanks to makeshift shops. Even devotees, after piously immersing Lord Ganesha, went to these makeshift shops and bought liquor.

All of this came at a premium. Sellers charged 30% extra after marking up the original prices, courtesy ban. The buyers, feeling lucky that they got their stock despite the ban, did not mind the extra charge.

**Green drive
makes travel on
ORR pleasant!**

P:3

**9 of family killed in
auto-SUV collision**

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Nine members of a family, including four women and a one-year-old girl, were killed and seven others injured on Sunday after the autorickshaw they were travelling in collided with an SUV in Chhattisgarh's Kondagaon district, police said.

The accident occurred near Borgana turn under the Farasgaon police station limits, over 200 km away from Raipur, when the occupants of the autorickshaw were returning to their native place Pandaath after attending a funeral in Godma village, an official said. The SUV was heading towards Jagdalpur.

Seven occupants in the autorickshaw, including the driver, were killed on the spot. One more person died at the Farasgaon hospital while another succumbed to injuries while being shifted to Raipur, he added.

After the accident, the occupants of the SUV fled the spot, the official said.

2

New modus operandi of cyber fraudsters electrifying**DAVE BENNETT SILVERY**
■ HYDERABAD

With people's increasing dependency on smart phones, messages-driven cyber crimes have also been on the rise, cyber crime officials have warned. Going by the latest reported cases, cyber crime officials say, though fraudsters do not stick to any specific groups, a large number of senior citizens and retired employees have been targeted by common through various means.

According to officials, the latest modus operandi of fraudsters is to send their potential victim a text message concerning his or her electricity connection and warning them that it would be disconnected for

non-payment of dues.

"DEAR CONSUMER IMPORTANT. INFORMATION AFTER 10.30 PM TODAY THE ELECTRICITY CONNECTION OF YOUR HOUSE WILL BE DISCONNECTED. FROM THE

POWER OFFICE BECAUSE PREVIOUS MONTH BILL IS NOT UPDATED TO KEEP CONTINUE YOUR CONNECTION PLEASE IMMEDIATELY CONTACT WITH OUR ELECTRICITY POWER OFFICER CUSTOMER

**The 'urgency' of the matter is sought to be conveyed by the use of capital letters in the text and the abrupt timing mentioned -- 10:30 PM, which would panic any consumer, said an official.**

SUPPORT. +919066868000 THANK YOU", screams a message that a victim had received.

The 'urgency' of the matter is sought to be conveyed by the use of capital letters in the text and the abrupt timing mentioned -- 10:30 PM, which would panic any consumer, said an official. Such texts are sent mainly to older consumers, who then get back to the sender of the message for a quick solution. Once the consumer is hooked, the fraudster then deviously advises the consumer to install a screen sharing app on the consumer's smart phone, giving the fraudster all access to the phone without the victim knowing so.

2

**Country under
an undeclared
emergency: AAP**

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Senior AAP leader and Rajya Sabha MP Sanjay Singh on Sunday alleged that an undeclared emergency has been imposed in the country with the media facing consistent attacks.

"There is an undeclared emergency imposed in the country today. There are continuous attacks on the fourth estate. In this situation, adhering to true news is becoming difficult day-by-day," said Singh addressing a media event here.

"I am seeing that journalism has gradually come under the control of some industrialists, and I often think how journalism can be taken out from this web," he said.

"One reason is that the cost incurred in a copy of a newspaper is Rs 20, but it has to be sold at a very low price. To meet this gap one has to depend on the government and industrialists," he reasoned.

"The day this dependence comes to an end through public partnership, journalism will be free from this pressure," he said.

2

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

Bhadrapada & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Purnima 29:23**Nakshatram** : Purva Bhadrapada 28:02**Time to Avoid** : Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)**Rahukalam** : 7:38 am - 9:08 am**Yamagandam** : 10:39 am - 12:09 pm**Varjyam** : 10:01 am - 11:39 am**Gulika** : 1:39 pm - 3:09 pm**Good Time** : (to start any important work)**Amritakalam** : 7:50 pm - 9:29 pm**Abhijit Muhurtham** : 11:45 am - 12:33 pm**HYDERABAD
WEATHER****Forecast:** ScatteredThunderstorm**Temp:** 29/22**Humidity:** 76%**Sunrise:** 6:04 am**Sunset:** 06:13 pm**Current Weather Conditions**

Updated SEPTEMBER 19, 2021 5:00 PM

Monday Mirchi

An accomplished babu or an accomplice?

Over the past week, TS Minister K T Rama Rao has heaped praises on senior IAS officer Jayesh Ranjan using all possible adjectives. KTR has termed Jayesh as 'partner in crime', 'dear friend', and thanked him for his unstinted and lovely support over the last six years. In his public speeches, KTR has said: 'Jayesh is there all time and constantly supporting industry' and 'I can vouch that no matter what it was, Covid or GST issues, Jayesh is I think terrific'.

With big-ticket investments coming into the state, no wonder the principal secretary preserves all the praise. But the profusion of praise has also raised eyebrows in some circles that wonder if there is going to be a change in Jayesh's role.

Break into dance, goli maro protocol

Director of Public Health Dr. G. Srinivasa Rao, who tells the media often that politicians' reckless behaviour can lead to Covid outbreak, took everyone by surprise by his impulsive action during a procession leading to Lord Ganesh's immersion.

Despite being without a mask, he was seen dancing with abandon in public to the beat of drums used during the Ganesh rally.

The video of his dance has gone viral on social media, of course with netizens questioning him about his credentials to highlight Covid norms. No doubt, he is fully vaccinated and has already been infected.

But as he states in all his meetings, a mask is important. So is maintaining distance. They do go for a toss when impulse overrides reason.

Speculation that appeals to babus

The 3-capital formula is a forbidden topic for bureaucrats in Andhra Pradesh. Whenever official discussions veer towards Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's plan of three capitals, bureaucrats with wis-

dom deftly avoid the topic.

For, they know from the experience of their peers that any comment on the highly sensitive and controversial topic could land them in trouble, considering that pleas relating to it are being heard by the High Court. In fact, babus are so paranoid about it that they don't want to discuss the issue even in private. Still, a majority of the babus love Vizag and, given a chance, they are more than willing to work from there. Any day they prefer Vizag to Vijayawada.

Although dismissive of most speculations, babus have, however, latched on to one recent speculation that seems to be working in their favour: CM 'shifting' his camp office to Vizag! They now say the Chief Minister should fulfil their wishes by at least shifting his camp office to Vizag, lending credibility to 'reasonable suggestions' in this regard.

Giving loyal Das his due

With the naming of senior bureaucrat Sameer Sharma as Andhra Pradesh's next Chief Secretary all speculations about the successor to current Chief Secretary Adityanath Das have ended.

However, the topic of hot discussion in the Velagapudi Secretariat's power corridors is whether Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy will honour or, in other words, give Das his due upon his retirement in the next 10 days.

It appears that Das will get his due. For, there is a talk in official circles at higher levels that he may be appointed as Chief Advisor to look after the irrigation projects in the state and or as a Special Representative in Delhi to handle state-Centre relations related to irrigation and finance.

It would be interesting to see whether Jagan will keep in his ambit Das who has no doubt been a loyal bureaucrat. Moreover, Adityanath Das is an expert in irrigation projects with thorough knowledge of each and every project in both states, and the Polavaram multipurpose project, which is considered the lifeline of Andhra Pradesh.

-Yours truly

WHO Experts' Group to take a call on EUL for Covaxin in Oct

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) of the World Health Organisation would be meeting in October to make its recommendations on Bharat Biotech's COVID-19 vaccine Covaxin on Emergency Use Listing.

Bharat Biotech is expected to give a presentation on the Vaccine's safety and efficacy data of clinical trials (phase 1-3 trial results and post marketing) and Risk management plans and other implementa-

tion considerations, according to the SAGE draft agenda.

SAGE is authorised with advising WHO on overall global policies and strategies, ranging from vaccines and technology, research and development, to delivery of immunization and its linkages with other health interventions. Hanna Nohynek, member of SAGE, will be presenting a draft recommendation for the vaccine and the session will make its recommendations.

The session will thoroughly discuss the clinical data on Covaxin from phase 1, 2, 3 tri-

als and post marketing studies on safety, immunogenicity, efficacy and effectiveness, besides update on global, regional and country level plans for vaccine safety monitoring, the agenda said.

Bharat Biotech recently said it has submitted all the data pertaining to Covaxin to the WHO for EUL and is awaiting feedback from the global health watchdog.

The WHO is currently reviewing the data submitted by the vaccine maker and the date for a decision on the job is yet "to be confirmed,"

according to the update available on the WHO website.

In an update on its website, the WHO said it began rolling data of the vaccine on July 6.

Rolling data allows the WHO to start its review right away, as information continues to come in, to accelerate the overall review process.

Covaxin is one of the six vaccines that have received emergency use authorisation from India's drug regulator and is being used in the nationwide inoculation programme, along with Covishield and Sputnik V.

Country under an undeclared emergency...

Continued from page 1

Singh added that a campaign should be run so that true news can reach the people.

"Efforts should be made to devise the way out through public partnership," he said.

The AAP leader, while addressing the All-India Federation of PTI Employees' Unions here, said, "If anybody is keeping journalism alive and making real news reach the people in the best possible manner, it is only the PTI."

Fomer MP accepts '#White challenge'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chevella former MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy, who has initially expressed shock over mention of his name by TPCC chief A Revanth Reddy in his white challenge, accepted the challenge on Sunday.

This came after allegations and counter-allegations on drug culture in the state took an interesting turn on Saturday with TPCC president Revanth Reddy throwing a 'white challenge', where he wanted politicians and celebrities to undergo drug analysis tests to send a positive message against drug abuse.

"Being role models for youngsters, people in public life should accept my challenge to undergo the tests and invite some more to take up the same," Revanth Reddy said on Saturday, revealing that he was inviting Municipal Minister KT Rama Rao and former Chevella MP Konda Vishweshwar Reddy to be part of the challenge.

Vishweshwar Reddy on Sunday tweeted that he will

take up the white challenge. "I accept the #WhiteChallenge and I will be there tomorrow 12 pm at Gun Park. @revanth_anumula," he tweeted.

However, Revanth Reddy re-tweeted, "Thank you for accepting the #WhiteChallenge graciously Anna. Let's meet at Amaraveerula sthupam on Monday 20th at 12 noon."

The former MP in another tweet said, "I am against drugs not only as a social activist, but also as a PARENT. A have become prevalent in Telangana. Many rich kids are taking drugs and they are ruining their lives. Now drugs are spreading across the society ruining families & society."

He also replied to the netizens over white challenge, which include, "Unfortunately, But I think it has not spread into the villages. Drug peddling is mostly in and around Hyderabad. #WhiteChallenge." "White powders, chemicals, cocaine etc. are very dangerous and should not be legalized. #whitechallenge." (sic).

9 of family killed in auto-SUV collision

Continued from page 1

Of the seven injured, three critically injured persons were referred to Raipur while four others were admitted at Kondagaon hospital,

he added. "All the victims belonged to the same family. Their bodies were shifted to the hospital for postmortem," he said, adding that efforts are on to trace absconding occupants of the SUV.

YSRC sweeps...

Continued from page 1

In the MPTCs, the TDP bagged 733, Jana Sena 110, BJP 24, CPI(M) 15 and CPI eight. Interestingly, the Congress managed to win four MPTCs two in Visakhapatnam district and one each in East Godavari and SPS Nellore. Independents have so far won 145 MPTC seats, according to information released by the Information and Public Relations Department.

Meanwhile, the State Election Commission issued a notification fixing September 24 as the date for the indirect election (by the elected members) of the president and vice-president of the mandal parishads.

Kishan knows...

Continued from page 1

The larger question is: how he could use the name of Kishan Reddy. In this backdrop, photos of Ravi Prasad and his family members with Kishan Reddy have become viral on social media.

Ravi Prasad recently donated Rs 1 crore to build Ram temple at Ayodhya. This too had become viral on social media platforms.

Now, BJP's anti-Kishan groups are adding photographic evidence of Ravi's proximity with Kishan. Party

sources suggest that Ravi Prasad might have been honoured with TTD Board special invitee position in lieu of his Rs 1 crore contribution to Ram temple.

Ravi Prasad might be an acquaintance of Kishan Reddy. There was no hard and fast rule that a Minister should recommend his name for a position on the TTD Board. Why would Kishan Reddy write to AP CM for a probe into the incident if had given the letter recommending Ravi Prasad? questioned a BJP leader, who wished to remain anonymous.

TDP humbled at the hustings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For the Telugu Desam Party (TDP), which has been facing humiliation since 2019 polls, has once again faced a drubbing in the Parishad polls, counting for which was held on Sunday.

It was a total embarrassment for the TDP as the YSRCP has won all the four ZPTCs and 98 percent of the MPTCs that come under TDP supremo and former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu's home constituency Kuppam in Chittoor district.

TDP-backed candidates also lost more than 90 percent of the panchayats that come under Kuppam to YSRCP-supported candidates in the polls held for rural local bodies in February.

Most importantly, MPTCs that come under TDP founder NT Rama Rao's native village and his in-laws that were adopted by TDP scion Nara Lokesh and his mother Nara Bhuvanewari in Krishna district also went to YSRCP.

According to the results announced on Sunday, YSRCP candidates won Gudipalle, Kuppam, Santhipuram and Ramakuppam ZPTCs.

Out of the 19 MPTCs in Kuppam mandal, YSRCP won 17 and TDP two. In Gudipalle and Ramakuppam mandals, YSRCP bagged all the 12 and 16 MPTCs respectively. In Shanthipuram mandal, YSRCP bagged 17 MPTCs out of 18.

In Naidu's native village Naravaripalle, TDP candidate has lost to YSRCP candidate R Rajaiiah who won with 1,000 votes majority.

MPTCs of Nimmakuru adopted by Lokesh where legendary NTR was born and Komaravolu belonging to NTR's in-laws and adopted by Bhuvanewari went to YSRCP.

Buoyed by the big win in Panchayat polls in February and successful implementation of meticulous poll strategy, YSRCP immediately has set its sights on Parishad polls in Naidu's home turf Kuppam in Chittoor district.

Govt to set up research wing for communication

Continued from page 1

The research unit, which would be headed by a director level official from the PIB, is expected to come into existence from this month itself. Sources further said that it will be under the direct supervision of the Principal Director General of PIB.

New modus operandi of cybe fraudsters...

Continued from page 1

The fraudster then goes on to transfer all available amounts from the victim's bank accounts to their own accounts.

Once the victim realizes that he has been conned, he approaches the police for help. However, as seen in multiple cases, the amount then gets transferred to multiple bank accounts within minutes, making it difficult even for cops to trace the amount. Using the electricity bill MO, mainly retired employees and senior citizens have been cheated, officials say.

Over the past two years, the use of smart phone for banking and other operations has increased. Kids and adults alike use smart phones for hours on end.

While complaints have been received about money being

swindled from people belonging to all ages, officials noted that in most cases, the victim willingly transfers the amounts to fraudsters. In some cases, where people are fed false hopes of making quick money, victims scan QR codes sent by the fraudsters, which ultimately leads to huge amounts being debited from their own bank accounts.

Despite umpteen awareness programmes conducted by the police and warning messages even from the applications to not scan random QR codes, cyber crime officials continue to receive the same type of complaints time and time again. "It is like they are willingly giving away the money themselves to the fraudsters. All it takes is one minute to verify the authenticity of the message or the person, instead of panicking and losing thou-

sands," said a cyber crime official from the Cyberabad Police.

In a recent case, parents of a two-year-old were conned when they were trying to buy a dog for their kid online. "The parents wanted to gift a puppy to their two-year-old daughter and looked for a dog online. They came across an ad and contacted the number provided. The conman made them transfer a total of Rs 90,000 on various pretexts, claiming that the pup was a hybrid one, and claiming vaccination, deworming and other expenses. However, soon after receiving the money, the fraudster switched off his phone," said the official.

While this was a clear case of cheating, officials said the IT Act had to be strengthened as smart phones and online transfer of funds were involved.

Another complainant lost Rs

4,417 after downloading an app from Play store. The victim complained that he opened Google chrome on his mobile phone and found an app 'Get Cashback app'. When he installed it, it directly opened through a phonepe app and asked his UPI password. Within a minute of entering the password, he lost Rs 4417.

Officials said that texts on business loans being approved were also received by victims that led to links where similar modus operandi took place and they lost money.

The police cautioned the public to not transfer funds in advance to anyone and to be wary of cyber fraudsters. People have been advised not to click on any unknown links, not to install apps, and not share OTPs and personal information like KYC information with unknown persons.

Officials asked to enforce human rights effectively

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Siddipet district president of Council for Protection of International Human Rights Kommula Swamy has called upon the administrative machinery of the state to conduct awareness camps from grassroots-level to the state-level at the top to prevent atrocities on children, women, murders and honour killings in the state by enforcing the human rights laws effectively.

Addressing media here on Sunday, Swamy appealed to the authorities to take steps for eradication of child labour completely and pave the way for the development of posterity by ensuring the children pursue higher educa-

He appealed to youth to not to become addicted to liquor and other vices and discharge their duty as a responsible citizen to become useful citizens.

tion. He appealed to youth to not to become addicted to liquor and other vices and discharge their duty as a responsible citizen to become useful citizens.

Vice-president of the body A Srinivas and other leaders were present on the occasion.

Oppn parties join hands to fight against TRS, BJP govts

Congress, CPI, TJS and TTDTP joined hands in the name of 'Maha Kutami' during the 2018 Assembly elections to face the TRS party. However, the Maha Kutami, which has lost the elections blamed the Congress party for their defeat alleging that the delay in seat sharing was the reason for the 2018 election debacle.

Later, the parties of grand alliance contested 2019 Lok Sabha elections on their own taking parts from each other. The CPM then didn't join hands with the Maha Kutami. CPM contested elections on its own in the name of Bahujana Left Front (BLF) and failed at the ballot box.

In the elections which were

held later, the Left parties extended their support to the ruling TRS while other parties contested on their own. During the Huzurnagar by-election, the CPI withdrew its support after the TSRTC strike, but extended their support to the TRS candidate Nomula Bhaghat in Nagarjuna Sagar by-election.

One of the political analysts said that the opposition parties in the state have finally come to a clarity to fight against the parties ruling at the State and Central level.

The opposition parties unity will definitely trouble the ruling TRS and also BJP, which is not in power in the state, and benefit the Congress party.



Balapur laddu fetches Rs 18.90 L

PNS | HYDERABAD: Balapur Ganesh, Hyderabad's most popular 21-kg laddu, was on Sunday auctioned for an all-time record of Rs 18.90 lakh. Ramesh Yadav, a member of the AP Legislative Council, along with Marri Shashan Reddy, a businessman from Nadargul, bought the famous laddu. The bidding started for Rs 1,116 and within a few minutes it was auctioned for the highest-ever bid amid loud cheers by hundreds of devotees. Yadav termed this as a gift to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy. Kolanu Ram Reddy, a businessman and an agriculturist who bought the laddu for Rs 17.60 lakh in 2019, also participated in the auction this year along with many others. State Education Minister P Sabitha Indra Reddy, former MLA T Krishna Reddy and several other politicians were present to witness the auction. The annual auction of the laddu in Balapur marks the beginning of the Ganesh immersion procession, which passes through various parts of the city to reach Hussain Sagar. According to Balapur Ganesh Utsav Samithi, which organises the auction every year, the laddu was sold for Rs 450 in the first auction held in 1994. Since then, this sweet grew in its popularity and price. As it is believed to bring prosperity to the winner, businessmen-politicians vie with each other to bid every year. In 2018, the laddu was auctioned for Rs 16.60 lakh. Last year, the auction was cancelled due to Covid pandemic.

RTC MD travels in bus with idol

K VENKATESHWARLU | HYDERABAD: The saying 'When in Rome, do as the Romans do' perfectly implies to the newly appointed managing director of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) managing director VC Sajjanar. The officials on Sunday travelled in a TSRTC bus in Hyderabad to carry a Ganesh idol for immersion. The Indian Police Service (IPS) officer was seen sitting in the bus holding an idol in his lap. Clad in whites and wearing a cap, the police officer travelled along with his family members and other devotees. A devotee was also seen dancing in the vehicle. The video of Sajjanar travelling in the bus with the Ganesh idol has gone viral. Sajjanar, a 1996 batch IPS officer, was the police commissioner of Cyberabad till late last month when he was transferred and posted as MD of state-owned transport body. Sajjanar, who had hit the national headlines following the killing of four accused in a gang-rape and murder of a woman veterinarian in 2019, served as the Cyberabad police commissioner for more than three years. The official is known for taking popular measures and leaving his imprint in whatever position he holds. As the Cyberabad police commissioner, he came to the rescue of migrant workers during the lockdown last year and also played a key role in rendering a helping hand to Covid-patients with blood donation, isolation centres and oxygen supply. Last week, he travelled incognito in a TSRTC bus in the city. He boarded a bus at the Mahatma Gandhi Bus Station and travelled up to Lakdikapul with very few people recognising him. Sajjanar said he has a few plans to revive the cash-strapped TSRTC.



'Jumbo yatra' on despite intermittent rains in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A mammoth Ganesh immersion procession was underway in Hyderabad on Sunday amid massive security arrangements and despite intermittent rains.

Thousands of devotees were participating in the programmes across the city to bid adieu to Ganesh while about 27,000 security personnel were deployed as part of the elaborate arrangements for smooth and peaceful conduct of the annual rituals.

Amid chanting of slogans, devotees were carrying thousands of idols to Hussain Sagar lake and more than 50 other lakes and ponds in and around the city.

'Shoba yatra', as the immersion procession is called, was underway amidst intermittent rains in Hyderabad. Hundreds of trucks were heading towards Hussain Sagar and other lakes amid the rains.

The Bhagyanagar Ganesh Utsav Samithi, the organisers of the procession, set up special platforms at Charminar and Moazzam Jahi Market to welcome idols.

About 27,000 policemen were deployed under the limits of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and Rachakonda police commissionerates as nearly 40,000 idols will be immersed in Hussain Sagar and other lakes.

Director General of Police M Mahender Reddy said they were monitoring the processions through use of technology. He said monitoring was being done from police station level to city, district and the state level through CCTV cam-

eras linked to control rooms. Animal Husbandry Minister T Srinivas Yadav sailed in a boat to see the immersion points and the steps taken to deal with any emergency.

The massive procession with large idols began from Balapur on the outskirts of the city while dozens of processions joined it enroute. The procession moved through communally sensitive old city including historic Charminar, MJ Market and Basheerbagh before reaching Hussain Sagar in the heart of the city.

"The biggest Ganesh idol, the Khairatabad Ganesh, was finally immersed. What an herculean task executed with absolute precision. Kudos to the organisers, technicians, crane operators and all stakeholder government departments," tweeted Additional Commissioner of Police Shikha Goel.

The mammoth procession has brought the entire city to a halt. GHMC has installed 330 cranes of various capacities at 33 lakes and 25 special ponds created for immersion.

A total of 40 cranes have



Minister Srinivas Yadav, Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjan Kumar takes chopper ride to monitor the processions.

Idols larger than 10 feet were being immersed from Tank Bund side while smaller idols were diverted to other points around Hussain Sagar.

Hyderabad's tallest idol from Khairatabad reached Hussain Sagar in the afternoon. The 40-foot tall and 23-feet wide idol was brought to NTR Marg, where it was immersed with the help of a huge crane. The last journey of the idol began at 8.18 am. Thousands of devotees turned up for the last puja at the pandal and also at the lake.

been deployed for immersion at Hussain Sagar. The decks for immersion in this lake were cleared after the Supreme Court allowed the immersion of idols made of plaster of Paris for this year. More than 8,000 workers, constituting 162 Ganesh Action Teams, would be posted on three shifts to ensure smooth completion of immersion. The GHMC pressed into service 20 excavators, 21 earth-movers, 39 mini tippers and 44 vehicles with 10 tonnes of capacity to remove waste after immersion.

T'gana Governor condoles demise of M Bhadracharya

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Sunday expressed grief over the demise of eminent literary and cultural personality Madipalli Bhadracharya.

The Governor stated that she was deeply saddened to know about the passing away of Shri Bhadracharya, who made an invaluable contribution to the fields of art, culture, literature, and education.

The Governor paid glowing tributes to his contribution to the promotion of Telangana language and dialect through his works like Telangana Dialect Dictionary, Yadadri Shathakam, and Adilabad Encyclopaedia.

Doc charred to death after car catches fire

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A man was charred to death after his car caught fire suddenly on the Outer Ring Road at Shamshabad late on Saturday night.

The victim was later identified as Nelapati Sudheer, 39, an orthopedic doctor working with Yashoda Hospital, Malakpet.

According to the Police, the doctor was a resident of KPHB Colony and was travelling in his Honda Amaze car when the incident occurred. Sudheer was traveling on the ORR from Nanakramguda when the car caught fire while nearing Shamshabad. Death was immediate for the doctor, who got trapped in the car and was charred immediately.

Passersby informed the Police and the fire department.



A fire tender reached the spot and the flames were doused. The body was later pulled out and shifted to the morgue for autopsy. The police suspect that the fire might have occurred due to a short circuit. Police initially had difficulty in identifying the body but were later able to do so through the car's registration.

The RGIA Police registered a case and are investigating the incident.

8 killed in three road accidents

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Eight people were killed in three separate road accidents in Telangana on Sunday, police said.

Two accidents at the same spot in Nalgonda district claimed five lives while three died in another accident in Nagarkurnool district.

Three people, including a couple, were killed when their car rammed into a container truck and then hit a tree near Muthyalamma Gudem in Kattangoor mandal of Nalgonda district. Gopal Reddy, 31, was on his way to Vijayawada, along with his wife Rachana (31), their minor daughter, and his friend Prashanth (24).

Hailing from Prakasam district of Andhra Pradesh, Reddy was working in the Rajasthan Mines Department in Rajasthan. As he had received a new job offer from South



Africa, he had resigned his job in Rajasthan and had returned to Hyderabad. They were on their way from Hyderabad to Vijayawada in a car.

According to police, the car, being driven by Prashanth, rammed into a container truck while overtaking a lorry and then hit a roadside tree. While Gopal, his wife, and friend died, the minor girl escaped with injuries.

The accident had led to a traf-

fic jam on the Hyderabad-Vijayawada highway. Meanwhile, a speeding car rammed into a truck which had stopped due to the traffic jam, killing both its occupants.

J Sivaprasad, 23 and R Vinay, 21, were proceeding to Suryapet from Hyderabad to attend a religious programme at an ashram.

In the third accident in Nagarkurnool district, three persons were killed and three others were injured, when a bus of the state-owned Road Transport Corporation hit an auto-rickshaw near Maddimadugu in Pradara mandal.

The deceased included two women of the same family, returning home after attending Kesakhandana (first hair cut ceremony) of a child at a temple in a nearby village.

They were identified as K Jambrunaiak, 65, J. Poli, 70, and auto driver J Srinu, 32.

TS records 173 fresh Covid cases, 1 death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 173 new Covid infections and one fatality on Sunday taking the cumulative number of deaths to 3,904 and the total number of positive cases to 6,63,454. The number of active cases in Telangana, as on Sunday, was 5,005.

The authorities today conducted 35,160 Covid tests of which results of 633 samples were awaited.

A total of 315 individuals have recovered with a recovery rate of 98.65 per cent on Sunday. So far, a total of 2,58,51,688 Coronavirus tests have been conducted in the State out of which 6,63,454 have tested positive and 6,54,545 persons have recovered. The Covid positive cases reported from the dis-

tricts included one from Komaram Bheem Adilabad, two from Bhadracharya Kothagudem, 64 from areas under Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC), two from Jagtial, three from Jangaon, one from Jogulamba Gadwal, 17 from Karimnagar, six from Khammam, two from Mahabubnagar, four from Mahabubabad, one from Mancherial, two from Medak, nine from Medchal-Malkajgiri, seven from Nalgonda, two from Nizamabad, three from Peddapalli, one from Rajanna Sircilla, 13 from Rangareddy, two from Sangareddy, six from Siddipet, one each from Suryapet and Vikarabad, three from Warangal Rural, 18 from Warangal Urban and two from Yadadri Bhongir district.

Two nabbed for bid to abduct minor girl

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Sangareddy Police arrested two youngsters who were caught by locals when they tried taking a minor girl away on their two-wheeler against her wishes on Saturday.

A video on Twitter emerged of a young Muslim girl from Sangareddy clearly disturbed as she spoke on the phone while her voice and hands shivered. According to Ramana Rao, Superintendent of Police, Sangareddy, the minor girl was taken by the two boys to see the ongoing Ganesh immersions. The families of both the parties were well known to each other.

The boys took the girl with them on their two-wheeler near Sangareddy town.

However, from there, the duo tried to take her to another immersion spot in Shivampet village. The girl, who refused initially, began weeping and cried out for help. Onlookers then intervened, thrashed the duo and rescued the girl. The video that went viral on social media platforms, showed the minor girl weeping and explaining her ordeal to passersby who were attempting to comfort her. The locals who gathered at the spot, thrashed the duo before handing them over to the cops.

Green drive makes travel on ORR pleasant!

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Continuing its efforts at increasing green cover in and around the city, Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority (HMDA) has taken up shade and valley plantations on the Outer Ring Road (ORR).

An intensive green drive is turning travel on the Outer Ring Road into a much more pleasant experience.

The green drive, which is being taken up all along the ORR, including at all the inter-sections, medians and also the sidewalks, has given the already stunning facility a deep shade of green all over.

As per directions of the Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, the green



drive was taken up on service roads, central median and interchanges on Outer Ring Road. Accordingly, Outer Ring Road has been divided into 20 segments and a senior official was appointed to supervise

the drive.

The efforts, in fact, began five years ago and has been on since with lakhs of saplings planted on the different stretches of the ORR. Avenue and valley plantations were

taken up on different routes, including at Narsingi, the Narsingi-Kollur route, Kollur-Patanacheru, Patancheru-Mallampet, Dundigal-Shamirpet and Shamirpet-Keesara

Maintenance and constant monitoring is being done by the HMDA's Urban Forestry wing.

Urban Development Special Chief Secretary Arvind Kumar on Sunday took to Twitter to share photographs of the latest green drive with some stunning aerial shots of the ORR and its greenery.

"An intensive green drive has been taken up on #ORR including all inter-sections, median & sidewalks," he said, adding that Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao and Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister KT Rama Rao were reviewing the progress regularly.

"You will see a pleasant difference every time you drive by," he said.

Man dies after eating biryani

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A youth has allegedly died soon after consuming the chicken biryani at a restaurant in Narasapur town in the district on Sunday.

The deceased was identified as Boda Prasad, 23, of Boda Thanda of Jalli village of Chennaraopet mandal. He has reportedly started vomiting after coming out of the restaurant and died at the side drain in front of the biryani point. It is said that he had vomited blood too. Locals who noticed the incident informed the police. The body was shifted to the local Community Health Centre (CHC) for the autopsy.

‘Ek Rupya Wallah’ network widens

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The code word used by smugglers at check posts is, 'Ek Rupya Wallah' to smuggle the PDS rice to other states.

In fact, the 'Ek Rupya Wallah' network is ever increasing. The network reached Sironcha and Gondia in Maharashtra, where the smugglers have set up their bases.

The PDS rice upon reaching Maharashtra, is finding its way to some rice mills in Telangana. The smugglers pay a part of the smuggled rice to the state government of Maharashtra towards levy rice and send the rest of the rice to the mills in Telangana illegally.

The state government of Telangana procures paddy from the farmers through IKP Centres, Primary Agricultural Cooperative Societies, market committees hands over them to rice millers for custom milling of the rice. The millers will send to the FCI 67 kg in case of raw rice and 68 kg in case of



parboiled rice for every quintal of paddy milled.

Some rice millers come into the picture here and they sell the paddy to states where the MSP is high. In the meantime, they procure the PDS rice illegally and mix it with the rice to be supplied to the government for distribution through the PDS.

First they send the rice to Maharashtra and create receipts as the seized rice and send it back to Telangana. Lakhs of rupees change hands in the whole affair.

Maharashtra government at Rs 32 a kg and sell it in open market at Rs 40 a kg.

In undivided Karimnagar, Adilabad and Warangal district, the 'Ek Rupya Wallah' business is being taken care by a single individual.

The rice will be transported to Maharashtra either through Arjunagutta or via River Pranahita or via Kaleswaram project in Mandhani.

The check-posts, revenue, police, food inspectors and civil supplies officials earn lakhs en route towards bribe.

Because of Covid, on account of the intensified security at check posts, the smugglers have changed their route. They have been bringing back the smuggled PDS rice from Maharashtra to Telangana showing it as rice seized in Maharashtra with the help of fake bills.

Recently, the police have seized the PDS rice transporting vehicles stand as testimony to this. The PDS rice vehicles entered Telangana at

Manthani from Sironcha in Maharashtra and travelled up to 70 km without any interruption by the officials.

Karimnagar has become the nucleus for the 'Ek Rupya Wallah' network from undivided Karimnagar, Warangal and Adilabad districts. Right from beggars to top officials have been involved in the illegal network. Several have been demanding the officials to check the illegal network.

District Supplies Officer of Karimnagar Suresh Reddy said that he did not receive any complaints in this regard. His team has been conducting raids immediately after receiving such complaints.

Meanwhile, DSO of Peddapalli Venkatesh said that his team of officials would not hesitate to bring anyone at anyplace to book if people provide reliable tip off about rice smuggling. Additional Collector's office is trying such cases. The seized rice would be auctioned off at the price fixed by the government.

Minister lauds people for celebrating all festivals without any religious bias

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar has said that the state government of Telangana wants people to celebrate all festivals on a grand scale.

Addressing the gathering after flagging off the Ganesh immersion procession at Gandhi Chowk in the city on Sunday, the Transport Minister asked the Ganesh pandal organisers and Sthambadi Utsav Samiti to conduct the procession without giving scope for any untoward incidents.

Later, he went round the city to inspect the Ganesh immersion procession and the progress.

He said that his organisation called Puvvada Foundation paid Rs 3 lakh towards the electricity bill of the pandal organisers and paid Rs 60,000 to get permission from the



police department.

The Minister appealed to the people to worship only clay Ganesh idols from next year as there was imminent threat to the people from the idols made of the plaster of paris.

Noting that people of all religions are celebrating their festivals on a grand note ever since the new state of Telangana is created, he said underlining the significance of the Ganesh immersion process

has had in the country.

Later, he inaugurated the free drinking water camp and butter milk cam set up on the banks of the canal here under the aegis of Awaaz Minority Development Forum.

District Collector VP Gautam, Mayor Punukollu Neeraja, SUDA chairman Vijay Kumar, police commissioner, corporations, officials, TRS functionaries and others were present.



Minister terms KCR as modern Jyotiba Phule

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Excise Minister Dr V Srinivas Goud has termed the Chief Minister of Telangana K Chandrasekhar Rao, as modern Jyotiba Phule as he is helping the SCs, STs, BCs and Minorities of society to grow economically.

Addressing SC, ST and BC associations' leaders at his camp office here on Sunday, he said that the state government reserved 10 per cent of the wine shops for SCs, 5 per cent for the STs and 15 per cent for the Gouds in the state which is unprecedented in the country.

He pointed out that the state government allotted 1,000 residential schools for SCs, STs and BCs for the growth of these communities. Further, it distributed sheep units among Golla and Kuruma communities. In the

same fashion, it helped Mudiras, trolleys and mobile units to market fish to revive the caste-based vocations in the state.

On the lines of Jyotiba Phule, KCR, whom the Minister called as modern Jyotiba Phule, has been following the Jyotiba Phule's footsteps for the development of minor communities in the state.

Reservations in all spheres of activity would usher in great change in the country, he said adding that several states were likely to emulate Telangana for the good of all.

Municipal chairman KC Narsimhulu and others were present on the occasion.

Earlier, SC and ST association and Goudas' association felicitated the Minister at his camp office for quota in the allotment of wine shops to these communities.

Miraculous escape for municipal chief, 3 others during immersion

PNS ■ JAGITYAL

Municipal chairperson Boga Sravani had a miraculous escape from a drowning accident on Sunday while immersing the Ganesh idols at the local tank here on Sunday.

She along with three others fell into the tank when the float meant for immersion of the idols lost balance due to overweight.

However, others on the float managed to rescue her and three others. The people of the town heaved a big sigh of relief as no untoward incident had taken place during the immersion.

According to reports, Sravani and others went into middle of the tank on a float to immerse Ganesh idols on Sunday.

As the float lost the balance Sravani and three others slipped and fell into water. However, they were rescued by



others on the float intervening on time averting a major tragedy in the town.

Several residents of the town voice the opinion that the incident had happened as authorities have failed to take suitable precautions near the

tank, which is the main source of supply of drinking water to the town.

The float bent throwing Sravani and others into the water as weight has been placed only on one side of the float.

Conduct vax drive with zeal: Koppula

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

Welfare Minister Koppula Eswar has directed the authorities concerned to conduct the Covid vaccination programme with a missionary zeal and appealed to elected people's representatives for complete support for accomplishing the vaccination in rural areas successfully.

Addressing the officials concerned through video conference on Sunday, he said that the Chief Minister, K Chandrasekhar Rao, launched the special drive in Telangana to administer 3 lakh doses per day and asked the officials concerned and elected people's representatives to work with coordination to administer the vaccine to the last person down the line.

People should be sensitised on CVCs in every ward or village, he said ensuring the local elected people's representatives to persuade the people to receive the vaccine.

Once the vaccine is administered, the scope for contracting the pandemic would come down drastically. Even if people were to test positive for the virus, their lives would not be in danger, he explained.



Pregnant women should be encouraged to receive the vaccine through sensitising them about the vaccine, he said calling for efforts to dispel their myths about the vaccine. He asked medical teams to sensitise the people.

There should be one doctor to supervise the activities of three vaccination centres, he said.

The Minister appreciated officials of medical and health department and employees of various government departments.

District Collector Dr

Minister performs Nava Chandi Yagam

The Minister along with Ramagundam MLA Korukanti Chander on Saturday performed special pujas in the temple of Goddess Jaya Durga and wished that the people of the state should live happily with the blessings of the deity. He was performing Nava Chandi Yagam at the temple for the second day on Saturday. The Minister sought the blessings of the Goddess to the people so that the people would not have any problems at all and lead a healthy and prosperous life. City Mayor Dr Bangi Anil Kumar, his deputy Nadiapelli Abhishek Rao, corporator P Rajesh, TRS leaders Patapelli Yellaiah, Velagolapu Srinivas, Neela Ganesh, Chelakapalli Srinivas and others were present.

Chairman Mamata Reddy, Manthani municipal chairperson Putta Sailaja and others took part in the video conference.

Teenager drowned in Tiryani waterfalls

PNS ■ ASIFABAD

A teenager accidentally drowned in a waterfall when he went on a picnic with his six friends, on the outskirts of Chintalamadara village in Tiryani mandal on Sunday. His body is yet to be fished out.

Tiryani Sub-Inspector P Rama Rao said that the deceased was identified as Daya Amith Prathap Chowdary, 17, a native of Mandamarri town.

Amith met with a watery grave when he ventured to swim at a deepest spot of the waterfall though he was not familiar with swimming. His friends realised that he drowned in the waters when he did not come out for quite a long time. They alerted police who in turn rushed to the spot. The operation to trace the body was suspended due to the darkness after sunset.

It is learnt that the youngster and his friends spent leisurely at the fall, taking photographs to share on social media platforms. He was



unaware of the depth of the fall and tried to swim in it, resulting in his death, a local said. The seasonal waterfall is flowing in its full glory due to recent rains, attracting nature lovers and tourists.

On July 21, Ram Lokade, a 23-year farmer of Devda village in Rajura Taluq of Chandrapur district of Maharashtra accidentally drowned in the same waterfall. Gurle Harish, 24, of Karanji village in Jainath mandal, met a watery grave when ventured to cross the stream near the famous Pochera waterfalls in Boath mandal of Adilabad district.

Oustees stall Udandapur reservoir works

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Udandapur reservoir works, a part of the Palamuru-Rangareddy Lift Irrigation Scheme, have come to a grinding halt as the project displaced persons vexed with the delay in rehabilitation and resettlement works have obstructed the reservoir works.

The displaced persons have been stalling the works for the past one week accusing the officials of not paying them compensation even in the past.

However, Excise Minister Srinivas Goud and Zacherla MLA Lakshma Reddy have tough time in persuading the protesters to withdraw their demonstration on Sunday. They assured payment of compensation to the displaced persons as early as possible.



The displaced farmers said that they would have no alternative except stalling the works in the absence of initiative by the government to resolve their problem.

The Udandapur reservoir will inundate not only

Udandapur and Kolluru villages but also several tribal hamlets. Over 2000 families and 10,000 people are going to be displaced by the project.

They alleged that the state government of Telangana offered them a compensation

of only Rs 3,50,000 per acre as against the open market price of Rs 50 lakh per acre. Moreover, the state government has paid the compensation to only some farmers. The displaced persons say that they have abandoned their fields and house for sake of the project.

In spite of all this, the state government of Telangana has been showing negligence in extending the compensation payable to the DPs, leaders of farmers' association allege.

Injustice to the displaced farmers by irrigation projects being built in South Telangana is being alleged, the people allege and say that it was high-time the government paid the compensation to the farmers and ensured completion of the irrigation projects.

NAC to organise three-month-long free skill training

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

District Tribal Welfare Officer Firangi has invited applications from the unemployed of the district in the age group of 21 to 35 online on or before October 20 to undergo three-month-long free skill training by the National Academy of Construction in Hydera-bad.

Candidates who have cleared B Tech/BE (civil), inter, ITI (civil), diploma (Civil) should apply online with the help of the portals www.nac.edu.in or <https://tribalwelfare.cg.gov.in/> before the deadline.

Inquire into Amarinder's allegations on Sidhu: Narayana appeals to Shah

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bharatiya Janata Party state senior leader Gudur Narayana Reddy on Sunday appealed to Union Home Minister Amit Shah to order a serious inquiry on Punjab Congress president Navjot Singh Sidhu's affairs in view of the allegations being made by outgoing Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh.

In a media statement, Narayana Reddy has stated that the outgoing Punjab Chief Minister has described Navjot Singh Sidhu as "security threat" to Punjab, "anti-national...unstable, incompetent man." Citing the comments of Amarinder Singh, the BJP leader said that the outgoing

Punjab Chief Minister has stated that for the sake of the country, he will oppose Navjot Singh Sidhu's name for CM of Punjab. Amarinder Singh said that Pakistan PM Imran Khan is Sidhu's good friend and Sidhu has a relation with Pakistan army chief Gen Qamar Javed Bajwa.

Narayana said that the differences between Amarinder Singh and Navajot Singh Sidhu have exposed the character of Punjab PCC chief and it was a matter of great concern to the entire nation. He said the Centre should not take the comments of Amarinder Singh lightly and should go deep into the allegations being made against Sidhu. "Without fire there is no smoke. Amarinder

Singh is not an ordinary man. He worked as Chief Minister of the most important state of the country, Punjab. He might be aware of Sidhu's relations with Pakistan. So the Centre should take serious cognisance of the allegations being made by Amarinder Singh and should inquire in detail about Pakistan," he said.

He said that Punjab is a crucial state as far as security of the nation is concerned as it has a long border with Pakistan. Pakistan was abetting terrorism in the country and aiding and abetting Kashmir terrorists and other Islamic terrorist groups. In the past Pakistan has also helped Punjab terrorist organisations to work against India.

INDIA CORNER Delhi BJP expels 3 councillors for 6 years over 'graft charges'

Cracking the whip over complaints of corruption, Delhi BJP president Adesh Gupta on Sunday expelled three municipal councillors from the party for six years, and said more heads will roll if they are found involved in financial irregularities. Gupta termed the action, coming months ahead of the three municipal corporations early next year, as BJP's "zero tolerance" policy. "Not just councillors but officers of the municipal corporations (MCDs) will also not be spared if they are found involved in corruption," Gupta told PTI. He said people should make videos if anyone "extorts" money from them in the name of MCDs and provide it to Delhi BJP so that FIR can be registered against them. The councillors who have been removed from the party over graft charges are Sadulajab councillor Sanjay Thakur in South Delhi Municipal Corporation (SDMC), New Ashok Nagar councillor Rajni Babloo Pandey in East Delhi Municipal Corporation (EDMC) and Mukherjee Nagar councillor Pooja Madan in North Delhi Municipal Corporation, according to the orders issued by Delhi BJP president.



UP govt should answer people's questions: Priyanka Gandhi

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Sunday attacked the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh, alleging that it had "failed" on several counts such as giving jobs to people, dues to farmers and in reining in price rise. The Congress general secretary said the Uttar Pradesh government should have answered people's questions on its four-and-a-half years in power, but it is continuing to peddle "lies, lies and more lies". She was referring to Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath's remarks on Sunday that Uttar Pradesh remained riot-free while the governance saw a total changeover from the past providing benefits of welfare schemes directly to the deserving. In a tweet in Hindi, Gandhi said, "On giving jobs to lakhs and filling up vacant posts, in giving dues on sugarcane, wheat, paddy, potato to the farmers, in reducing electricity prices, in reining in price rise, UP government failed". In another tweet, she alleged, "What did the BJP government make Uttar Pradesh, number 1 in malnutrition, number 1 in crimes against women, number 1 in kidnappings, number 1 in murder cases, number 1 in atrocities against Dalits."



TN govt's preventive measures kept Zika, Nipah virus at bay: Minister

Tamil Nadu Health Minister Ma Subramanian on Sunday said as a result of the stringent preventive measures taken by the government, Zika and Nipah virus were not able to enter the state from neighbouring Kerala. With Kerala reporting Nipah virus cases which resulted in the death of a boy, the government has been monitoring the situation by setting up 13 check-posts in Coimbatore district which is close to Kerala on the directives of Chief Minister, M K Stalin, the minister told reporters here. "The stringent preventive measures taken by the Tamil Nadu government, including setting up of check-posts in the border areas with Kerala ensured that Nipah and Zika virus could not enter the state," he added. Those entering the state from Kerala had to undergo RT-PCR tests and carry vaccination certificates and were sent back if they failed the test and did not carry the certificates, he said, adding despite strict restrictions Kerala was reporting more than 20,000 positive Covid-19 cases each day. Subramanian inaugurated a mega vaccination camp at a government hospital in nearby Pollachi and also opened two oxygen generators-one 1,000 LPM at a cost of Rs one crore with financial support from the Central government and another 660 LPM with CSR Assistance from ACT Grants.



Uttarakhand: Kejriwal promises jobs, dole

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

AAP leader Arvind Kejriwal on Sunday promised to take big steps to end migration from Uttarakhand, assuring an unemployment allowance and an 80 per cent job quota for people of the state if his party comes to power in the next assembly elections.

Making six promises, Kejriwal said every youth of Uttarakhand would get employment if the AAP is voted to power, and assured a monthly allowance of Rs 5,000 to an individual from every family till they got a job.

He also promised to reserve 80 per cent of both private and government jobs for the people of the state and to create one lakh employment opportunities within six months of coming to power.

A job portal, on the lines of the one in Delhi, will be launched which will provide an interactive platform to job seekers and employers, Kejriwal said, addressing a press conference in Haldwani.

A separate ministry will also be created to address the issues of unemployment and migration, the Delhi chief minister and Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) convenor added.

Kejriwal also accused successive governments of doing nothing but looting Uttarakhand's resources for years.

If voted to power, the AAP will take big steps for large-



scale creation of jobs and prevention of migration from the hills, he said.

Referring to his earlier promises of free electricity to farmers round the clock and 300 units of power to every household at no cost, Kejriwal said all these are meant to be fulfilled.

"Unlike others, we do what we say. We are going to keep all our promises. If we say we will give free power to farmers 24x7 or give 300 units of power for free, we mean it. We have done it in Delhi, and we will do it here," he added.

He asserted that all of what he has said can be done and the only thing needed is good intention.

"Successive governments in Uttarakhand have been devoid of good intentions and have only looted its resources," Kejriwal alleged.

"When we came to power in Delhi in 2015, we were asked from where would we bring the money that was needed to keep the commitments we had made to people. But we turned a deficit budget into one of profit within four years. All we did was wipe out corruption and everything else followed," he said.

Kejriwal said the AAP has run Delhi and it will bring that experience to serve the people of Uttarakhand.

Seventy-three per cent of

people in Delhi are getting free electricity, he said, adding that the Delhi model of development will be adopted in Uttarakhand.

Giving an example of how the Delhi government was saving money on every development project, he said a bridge estimated to be built at a cost of Rs 325 crore was built in Rs 200 crore only.

Given an opportunity, the AAP will help the people of Uttarakhand overcome the misery of 21 years in just 21 months.

If people want all this to happen, they must give AAP's chief ministerial candidate Col Ajay Kothiyal a chance, Kejriwal added.

7 children have succumbed to viral fever in Agra

PNS ■ AGRA

Seven children have died due to viral fever in Uttar Pradesh's Agra district so far in September, a senior officer said on Sunday.

Chief Medical Officer (CMO) Arun Kumar Srivastav also dismissed reports stating that two children succumbed to dengue in Fatehpur Sikri.

Talking to PTI, Srivastav said seven children have succumbed to viral fever in Agra so far this month.

While a 14-year-old boy died in Chachiha village on Sunday morning, two siblings died in Fatehpur Sikri's Rasoolpur village on Saturday evening, he said.

Two deaths were reported from Giriraj Dham Colony under Itmad-ud-Daulah police station area and one death was reported from Nunhai locality on Thursday. One child died in Khadia village of Khandoli, he added.

"The peculiar thing about this fever is that we are getting very little time for treatment and people are dying quickly," the CMO claimed.

Srivastav dismissed reports claiming that dengue was the cause of the two deaths reported from Rasoolpur and said that the children died due to viral fever. The CMO said Agra has reported 61 dengue cases so far this year. While 41 patients have recovered, 20 are undergoing treatment at government hospitals.

He appealed to people to immediately visit a government hospital or a community health centre in case they experience symptoms like high fever, vomiting and dizziness.



Adityanath releases report card; says UP has seen transformation

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh remained riot-free since 2017 while governance saw a complete transformation from the past with welfare schemes now reaching the deserving and the state emerging as number two in the ease of doing business, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said on Sunday while making public the report card of his rule of four-and-half years.

The BJP government has fulfilled every promise mentioned in the Lok Kalyan Sankalp Patra in 2017, he said and voiced confidence that the party tally will cross 350 seats in the 403-member House in the 2022 assembly polls.

The chief minister also hit out at the opposition, saying they were busy building their houses when they were in power and indulged in corruption for transfer and postings while the state was seen as a laggard in development and its image linked with riots.

Uttar Pradesh is now number one in implementing 44 central schemes be it the PM Awas Yojna or construction of toilets in the households and its image is no longer liked with

riots due to effective and transparent governance, Adityanath said at a press conference while listing the achievements in various fields including development, law and order and handling of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Unlike them (previous governments), we did not make luxurious houses for ourselves. Our government focused on building houses for the poor," he said, taking a veiled dig at his predecessor Akhilesh Yadav.

"Government bungalows were demolished, and there was a competition to build houses for themselves as well as huge havelis (mansions). But the four-and-half years were dedicated to good governance. And we did not build houses for ourselves, but for 42 lakh poor people of the state," he said. He said criminals were firmly dealt with irrespective of their caste and religion to provide a safe and secure environment in the state.

"UP remained free from any riots during four-and-half years unlike in the past when there used to be communal clashes every 3-4 days," the chief minister said.

He also claimed the govern-

ment displayed sensitivity at every level.

Facing criticism over the handling of the COVID-19 pandemic, the chief minister pointed out that the state has the highest number of tests and vaccinations and is among those with the lowest positivity rates.

He said the investors' confidence in the state is growing and UP has emerged as number 2 in the country in terms of ease of doing business. Accusing the previous SP government of shuffling officials frequently, Adityanath said, "Transfer and posting had assumed the shape of an industry in the previous (SP) government. Every post was sold. 'Earlier, the officials were shuffled like a pack of cards. But in the past four-and-half years, no person can level allegations of exchange of money for posting."

A booklet titled 'Vikaas ke lahar, har gaav har shahr' which listed achievements of the UP government was also released on the occasion.

"In the 2022 Assembly elections, BJP will win 350 seats (out of 403 seats), and there should be no doubts on this," the chief minister said.



Mumbaikars bid adieu to Lord Ganesh; over 450 idols immersed

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A total of 466 idols of Lord Ganesh and Goddess Gauri were immersed till Sunday noon in various water bodies in Mumbai as curtains came down on the 10-day Ganapati festival held amid various restrictions imposed for the second year in a row in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, a civic official said.

No untoward incident was reported till now during the immersions, he said.

The festival, which in normal times used to witness large gatherings and long queues on streets outside public mandals which host the celebrations, began on September 10.

This year, the Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation set up artificial lakes at 173 locations in the city, as well as idol collection centres and mobile immersion sites at various places to avoid crowding in the wake of the pandemic, the BMC official said.

Besides, there were 73 locations of immersion at natural water bodies in the city civic limits and at all these places necessary arrangements were made by the BMC, he said.

Till 12 noon, 17 idols of 'sarvajani' (public) mandals, 444

household Ganesh idols and five idols of Goddess Gauri were immersed in various water bodies here.

Out of these idols, nine of public pandals, 162 household idols and three of Goddess Gauri were immersed in the artificial ponds, the official said.

The BMC also deployed 715 lifeguards at various natural and artificial immersion sites, he said, adding that 587 steel plates were set up at the natural sites so that vehicles coming for immersions could be temporarily removed.

The civic body also arranged 338 Nirmalya kalash (containers to collect offerings like flowers and other items), 182 Nirmalya vehicles, 185 control rooms, 144 first-aid centers, 39 ambulances were arranged.

Also, 145 reception rooms, 84 temporary toilets, 3,707 flood lights, 116 search lights, 48 observation towers and 36 motor boats and 30 German rafts were facilitated at natural immersion sites, besides other electrical arrangements.

The BMC had issued guidelines to public mandals to minimise donation of garlands at the idols installed at their pandals.

Man arrested for duping job aspirants of Rs 2.4 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi Police Economic Offences Wing has arrested a 43-year-old man for allegedly being part of a racket that duped around 40 people on the pretext of getting them jobs in the Railways, officials said on Sunday. Accused Mohammad Raghbi Firoz of Greater Noida holds a post-graduate degree in psychology and a diploma in journalism and mass communication, they said.

He coordinated all activities of the racket, including collection of money from victims, filling of various forms regarding

appointment and training, besides other miscellaneous affairs in the commission of the economic offence, police said.

Two people, Brij Kishore and Sachin Kumar, were arrested in the case earlier, they said.

The police said around 40 job aspirants were cheated to the tune of Rs 2.44 crore by the accused. Most of the victims come from poor families in villages around Agra, Hathras and Patna.

According to the police, one of the accused would pose as an IAS officer and lie to the victims about good acquaintance and liaison with the Railway Board,

while others organised bogus job training sessions for them.

Fake appointment and training letters were issued, fake medical examinations conducted and three months' job training was also organised in Dehradun to earn their trust, said R K Singh, Additional Commissioner of Police (Economic Offences Wing).

Investigations revealed that the victims had no idea about the whereabouts of the accused, except for their phone numbers. They used to meet them at Paharganj hotels and near the Railway Bhawan in Delhi, the senior police officer said.

Treasure hunt at Emar Mutt in Jagannath Temple for lost hoard

PNS ■ PURI

A treasure hunt has started at the Emar Mutt (Monastery), located in the southeastern corner of the 12th Jagannath Mandir, with teams of archeologists armed with metal detectors searching for a lost hoard.

The search started on Thursday is being carried out following a request by the Narayan Ramanuj Das, the Mahant (head) of Uttarparshwa Mutt, who is in charge of Emar Mutt. The Mutt authorities as well as historians suspect that a hoard of valuables is buried inside the premises.

The belief that a stash is buried underground comes from discoveries of two earlier troves. In 2011, the police had stumbled on a treasure trove of 522 silver ingots weighing 18 tonnes inside the Mutt worth about Rs 90 crore.



Earlier in April this year 45 more silver ingots weighing about 35 kg each were found inside the Mutt. Apart from silver ingots, a silver tree and silver flowers, about 16 antique swords, and a bronze cow sculpture were also recovered from the Mutt, established by Ramanujacharya in 1050 when he came to Puri.

A special team of the State Archaeology Department in pres-

ence of officials of Shree Jagannath Temple Administration (SJTA), Puri district collector Samarth Verma, Puri SP KV Singh and trust member of the Emar Mutt, began the search inside the premises of the Emar Mutt in the pilgrim town on Thursday to trace hidden valuables.

Puri Sub-Collector, Bhabataran Sahu said: "As of now, no material was detected during Thursday's

4 die in car-truck collision in Rajasthan's Hanumangarh

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Four people were killed when their car collided with a truck in Hanumangarh district of Rajasthan, the police said on Sunday. The incident occurred on the Rawatsar-Hanumangarh Mega highway, Station House officer (SHO), Rawatsar police station, Ashok Bishnoi said. The deceased have been identified as Rajat, Neeraj, Rudraksh and Hemant, all aged between 17-20 years, he said. The bodies have been handed over to family members after post-mortem.

Security forces use pump action guns to kill low-flying drones

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Security forces that guard vital installations, airports and even their own camps have been directed to use rubber bullets bearing pump action guns to neutralise low-flying drones till an appropriate technology is found to thwart such aerial attacks, official sources said.

Also, forces like the Border Security Force (BSF) have recently installed an improvised iron pole mounted light machine gun (LMG) observation post at some of its border deployments against Pakistan to take a 360 degrees aim and shoot down drones or unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) flying at a high altitude, they said.

A latest blueprint prepared by central security agencies to counter the emerging drone threat has been reviewed by PTI and it directs security forces to use PAGs (pump action guns) that are already available in their armoury for "neutralising any low-flying UAV".

Following the directive, the central forces deployed for internal security have begun allocating PAGs to their units vulnerable to drone threats, including those deployed for anti-Naxal operations.

"Till a complete technology solution is found for effectively checking and neutralising a drone attack, the security forces have been asked to use what is available with them, like the PAGs."

"Those who do not have adequate numbers of these non-

lethal weapons have been asked to procure them," a senior Union home ministry officer said.

He said the security units deployed for counter-terrorist duties in Kashmir and those guarding airport boundaries have also been asked to provide these arms to their sentries deployed for observation and protection of the camps.

"It has been found that rubber pellets fired by the PAGs can effectively bring down a drone that is flying low at about 60-100 meters from the ground and attempting to either drop bombs or to conduct reconnaissance of the camp area or the installation," an officer from a Central Armed Police Force (CAPF) said.

For example, he said, the Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) guards a number of airports and facilities in the power and nuclear domain where there are either people living close to the boundary or there is vehicular movement, and hence using a lethal weapon like an INSAS rifle can cause collateral damage and injure a person.

Hence, the officer said it has been advised that if low-flying drones are detected, they should be shot using the PAGs and save larger damage to the facility and those present there.

"Various CAPFs like the CRPF, ITBP, SSB and the CISF have their camps in risk-prone areas and hence they have been advised to use pump action guns to protect their camps from drone bombings or surveillance sorties," a third officer said.



FIRST COLUMN

CONSUMERS EASY PREY TO FOOT THE BILL

A reduction in retail fuel prices is possible if additional excise duties are rolled back



AMIYA KUMAR SAHU

Petrol and diesel prices have remained close to Rs. 100 for about 10 weeks since July 8, 2021. The impact of this has been on fuel inflation (Wholesale Price Index) which averaged at more than 25 percent for the last five months.

The international crude oil price, however, reveals a different picture. Brent crude oil prices fell from \$77.16 to \$65.18 between July 5 and Aug 20, a reduction of over 15 percent. In layman's terms, the price of petrol in India could have been decreased to ₹85.

Back in 2017, the Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) were given a free hand to follow dynamic fuel pricing to make their operations more efficient. Why the OMCs have stopped daily price revisions is a mystery. Is it because they are still controlled by the government which has a majority stake in them?



The RBI has also warned that high prices would trigger higher inflation which would affect growth. But it seems the government has decided to continue milking the cash cows — the consumers.

While protection of consumers' interests necessitates government interventions, a reduction of the high prices seems to be far from reality. In May last year, the government imposed additional excise duty on both petrol and diesel, which included road and infrastructure cess - an additional revenue worth ₹1.6 lakh crore. Since the country was forced into a pandemic-induced lockdown, it made commonsense as well as economic sense, then. The fiscal situation was expected to be tight.

However, since May 2020, the total taxes on petrol have crossed ₹50 per litre. It was a paltry ₹9.48 per litre when the BJP government replaced UPA II in 2014. Is the government still expecting the fiscal situation to be similar to last year's? Let's look at the GST data which might give a clue in support of this.

Back in April 2020, when India was under a complete shutdown, the GST revenue collections fell to ₹32,294 crores from ₹97,597 crores. However, from March to August 2021, the GST collected has been ₹6,98,257 crores. This was a jump of more than 50 percent compared to the same period in the previous year.

The USD/INR exchange rate also has been favourable to import bills of crude oil. The exchange rate corrected from a peak of ₹77.10/USD in April 2020 to ₹72.26/ USD in March 2021. It now is ranging between ₹73 to ₹75.

A reduction in retail prices is unquestionably possible. All that needs to be done is to roll back additional excise duties. At present, the total excise duty on petrol exceeds ₹37 per litre. The other alternative is to bring the petroleum products under GST.

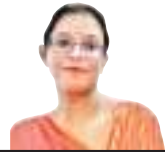
Since the government has remained stubborn after numerous pleas for a reduction in the petrol and diesel prices, a set of new questions arise: Is the government planning to put up a surplus budget in February 2022? Is it anticipating a severe third wave and lockdown similar to last year? Larger subsidy amounts are likely to be given to the poor?

Let's evaluate another argument. Higher prices would reduce consumption of the fossil fuel and help reduce global warming. But we need to reduce dependency on personal vehicles and move to large-scale adoption of public transport. But mass-rapid transport systems are not effective. If the government wants to promote electric vehicles, then we don't have the technology, capacity to produce in large quantities, and required infrastructure for re-charging battery-run vehicles.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Goa Institute of Management, Goa. The views expressed are personal.)

‘Cabbage tactic’ to seize waters

India should be wary of China using the ‘cabbage tactic’ in the Indian Ocean region the same way it tries to grab islands in the South China Sea



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

This week will witness Prime Minister Narendra Modi meeting in person with the leaders of Australia and Japan, apart from the US, a move that holds significant importance and may perhaps change India's foreign policy contours. The meeting comes in the backdrop of Australia's alliance with the UK and the US - AUKUS -- which aims to provide nuclear submarines to Canberra.

Quad and AUKUS objectively overlap with India's maritime security interests in the South China Sea (SCS). Almost 50 per cent of India's global trade transits through the SCS region. The governments of Quad focus on the freedom of navigation on high seas as a legitimate right. Beijing has actively adopted a “cabbage tactic”, which is multi-layered, to increase its leverage by capturing the SCS. This vital trade route also happens to be a potential source of natural resources such as hydrocarbons. For this purpose, it builds artificial islands by claiming its “historic rights” and then legislate-unusual domestic laws on it to exercise its “sovereignty” over them. The “cabbage tactic” is used to take control of an island by surrounding it in multiple layers of fishing boats, coast guard ships and Chinese naval and military ships to cut off the island from outside support. The more significant motive, of course, is occupying as much space as possible by threatening other countries.

The UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) does not have a provision to address the issues regarding construction, maintenance and militarization of artificial islands beyond a state's “territorial waters”. Article 60 (1) of the UNCLOS allow for artificial islands only in the Exclusive Economic Zone. Artificial islands of China beyond its territorial waters are thus farcing.

The International Court of Justice asserted the same in its 2016 arbitration, which Beijing refuted. The Chinese maritime domestic laws conflict with the UN Convention on the Law of the Sea and sharply violate the maritime rights of the other states. The UNCLOS provides the vital ‘freedom of navigation’ and ‘right to innocent passage’ on the high sea, i.e., area outside internal waters, the territorial sea, the contiguous zone, the exclusive economic zone and the continental shelf of a state to regulate their maritime trade and movement for peaceful purposes such as helping the other states in distress, scientific exploration, etc.

Chinese intentions can be ascertained by examining its 1992 Law of the PRC. Article 14 emphasized the option of using a “hot pursuit” against a foreign ship if it enters its territorial waters or the contiguous zone. Further, Article 15 insists that baseline of its territorial sea would be “established” by itself, a move



CHINA DEFENDS ITS PRESENCE IN THE INDIAN OCEAN REGION WITH A LAME EXCUSE OF COUNTERING PIRACY IN THE GULF OF ADEN. WHILE IN THE SOUTH CHINA SEA, IT EXPLICITLY MAINTAINS THAT ALL THE NAVAL VESSELS OF THE OTHER COUNTRIES MUST SEEK PRIOR PERMISSION BEFORE ENTERING THE WATERS

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



hinting towards its future expansionism.

Later, in 2011, China submitted in the UN a Note Verbale on the SCS speaking about its “indisputable sovereignty over the islands in the South China Sea and the adjacent waters”. Nonetheless, the terms “historic rights” and “adjacent waters” do not appear in UNCLOS, and there is no recognition. Further, the use of illegal terms serves the purpose of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) by expanding the scope of its ‘grey zone tactics’ and hence are a distraction to the well-established international norms and principles. China zealously guards the SCS, which was recently evident when China illegally stopped a German warship from entering it.

Accompanied by the regularisation of such words, its mention of phrases like ‘offshore defence’, ‘distant sea defence’ and its ‘interests aboard’ truly reflect its hegemonic behaviour that is set to expand to the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Its nuclear submarines are regularly sighted in the IOR and the Arabian Sea by the Indian Navy. The presence of Chinese submersibles is a clear-cut violation of Article 20 of UNCLOS, which states that “in the territorial sea, submarines and other underwater vehicles are required to navigate on the surface and show their flag”. China may be collecting critical under-sea hydrological data from the IOR to plan action in case of a limited conflict or a full-blown open war with India. Such moves are a detriment to India's core security objectives. China counters its presence by putting forward a lame excuse with its nuclear submarines to counter the piracy in the Gulf of Aden. One can only wonder how a nuclear submarine can counter piracy.

On the contrary, in the SCS, China explicitly maintains that all the naval vessels of the other countries and research ships seek prior permission before they enter the territorial waters of China. The same duplicity has been evident in its recent amendment to China's Maritime Traffic Safety Law. It now includes five types of vessels- “submersibles, nuclear-powered vessels, ships carrying radioactive materials, ships carrying bulk oil, chemicals, liquefied gas or other toxic substances” that need to report minute details to the Chinese authorities. The cargo ships are thus now questionable and more prone to sabotage through “hot pursuits”.

Further, Article 11 of the same law asserts that “Non-military vessels of foreign nationality may not enter the internal waters”. Additionally, the “military vessels of foreign nationality may not enter the territorial waters”. The pertinent question that arises is what are the limits of its “territorial waters”? As per the UNCLOS, it extends upto 12 nautical miles from the baseline of a coastal state. In the case of Beijing, will it start measuring such limits from the artificial islands that it has built in the SCS? Then in such a case, the Spratly and Paracel Islands represent a “sea grab”, similar to a land grab. Does it not then amount to infringing the freedom of navigation of other states? Such illegal occupation affects the trade routes and supply chain lines. Such dual standards need to be exposed and at various regional and multilateral levels.

China's land reclamation activities in Feydhoo Finolhu Island leased out to Beijing by the Maldives in 2016 are China's emerging footprints in the IOR. This comes in addition to its military intelligence and surveillance activities in the Coco Islands and Greater Coco islands of the Eastern Indian Ocean. The existing geostrategic realities of Chinese hegemonic intentions in the IOR are visible through China's OBOR and its attempts to remould the Asian security order in its favour. China's recent outreach to the Taliban in Afghanistan can increase its tactical manoeuvrability on land. On the other hand, Chinese nuclear submarines, illegal fishing, and surveillance activities in the IOR are set to become a significant threat to Indian security interests.

Suppose China would be successful in having land-sea dominance encircling India, in such a case, it will not only threaten India's immediate and long-term security interests, but it will also adversely affect India's economic and cyber security. China might use the “cabbage tactic” in the Indian Ocean Region in the same way as in the South China Sea. In this direction, the nation should appreciate the establishment of the Andaman Nicobar Command and the re-orientation of the battle commands, which will have joint operability of the Army, Navy and the Air Force. In the present circumstances, India's further shift towards QUAD and AUKUS shouldn't be a surprising development and should be welcomed by the nation.

POINT COUNTERPOINT

SIDHU IS AN INCOMPETENT MAN. HE HAS A CONNECTION WITH PAKISTAN. IT WILL BE A THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.
—FORMER PUNJAB CM CAPTAIN AMARINDER SINGH



SIDHU IS NOT A TRAITOR. IF AMARINDER SINGH CALLS SIDHU A TRAITOR, THEN I WILL OPEN THE WHOLE BOOK.
—ADVISOR TO NAVJOT SIDHU MOHAMMAD MUSTAFA

Why do we need nurses with disabilities?

Misconceptions about the capacity of students with disabilities to function in the clinical components of nursing education deter such applicants

From this year onwards, B.Sc.(Nursing) admissions will be made through NEET, which were conducted last Sunday. I received a panic call from the father of a young girl who was considering nursing admission but she had three missing fingers in her non-dominant hand and a curvature in her spine. The father was concerned about the National Testing Agency's urgent public notice for B.Sc. (Nursing) course aspirants in NEET 2021, which cited an Indian Nursing Council (INC) letter stating that disability reservation is only allowed for physical disabilities of 40-50 per cent and of the lower extremity. It is strange, because how could this be possible after the enactment of the Rights of



SATENDRA SINGH

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Persons with Disabilities Act (RPDA), but INC has published a gazette notice announcing this clause as well as revising its nursing curriculum for the first time since 1947. It will be implemented beginning with the new batch.

Unfortunately, the discriminatory National Medical Commission (NMC) standards for applicants with disabilities were framed by a single, non-disabled expert from this subject from a premier institution in India, who decided the ablest requirement of “both hands intact” as a must-have for MBBS admission. The Delhi High Court will be hearing a case of a girl with an amputated arm who passed the NEET exam last year but was denied MBBS admission to Lady Hardinge Medical



College, causing her to lose an academic year. Thankfully, the Supreme Court and the Goa High Court have already granted MBBS admission to girls with an amputated arm in Gujarat and Goa, respectively.

The INC does not need to repeat NMC's embarrassing gaffes. The INC's new curriculum mentions the keyword “dignity” six times, whereas NMC's patented competency-based Medical Education Curriculum does not. In the

Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, which India has ratified, and in the preamble of the RPDA, dignity is a key component.

Learning disability is now a specified disability under the new law, and it is included in the 5 per cent reservation in higher education. But where are the dyslexic doctors and nurses in India? In India, you will only see nurses who are “one-legged” or “both legs disabled”. Yes, this is the vocabulary used by the Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment and the Ministry of Health to identify, stereotype, and ‘otherize’ us in employment.

After my litigation in the Delhi HC, which pushed NMC to allow persons with disabilities of more than 80 per

cent, INC's counterpart has accepted disabilities other than lower limb and surely those above 50 per cent (INC's benchmark).

In a recent SC decision on reasonable accommodation in the instance of a doctor with dysgraphia, Dr Vikash Kumar v. UPSC, the highest court criticised an earlier order that barred blind and deaf candidates with a disability of more than 50 per cent from becoming judges. The statutory Councils are still unaware of this historical judgment on substantive equality in the RPDA era.

Leslie Neal-Boylan who has written multiple books and journal articles on nurses with disabilities has defied the myth that there are patient safety concerns. The same

myth has been refuted in 2014 by the American Association of Colleges of Nursing's white paper which identified outdated admission standards; misconceptions about the capacity of students with disabilities to function effectively in the clinical components of nursing education; and, lack of a comprehensive understanding of issues related to patient safety as barriers that deter applicants with disabilities. The Royal College of Nursing in the UK too also issued a range of employment options for nurses with severe ill health or disabilities in 2020.

We don't need superhuman robots in health care; instead, we need compassionate and caring nurses with disabilities who understand what it is like to live with a chronic

illness or disability. They adapt in unconventional ways, they demonstrate empathy and are brilliant co-workers. We may be rejecting many brilliant applicants who could be outstanding nurses like the renowned Florence Nightingale if we limit our profession to those without disabilities. I hope the INC will look into the representation of health professionals with disabilities which are endorsed by 22 nurses with disabilities from AIIMS New Delhi, Bhopal, Jodhpur, Jhajjar, NIMHANS and Delhi Government hospitals. If INC is serious about implementing the high pedestal ethos of diversity indicated in their new curriculum, they must act and collaborate with nurses with disabilities.



IDBI BANK STRATEGIC SALE

Most merchant bankers indicate 52 weeks' time

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Most of the merchant bankers who had submitted bids for facilitating strategic sale of LIC-controlled IDBI Bank indicated a time-frame of one year to complete the elaborate process, sources said.

During a presentation before the Department of Investment and Public Asset Management (DIPAM) held recently, most of the eligible transaction advisers gave a time-frame of 50-52 weeks to undertake several stages of the privatisation process of IDBI Bank, market sources said. However, the government intends to complete the transaction during the current fiscal itself. Thus the merchant banker has to find a buyer in about 26 weeks or six months.

According to market sources, as many as seven bids -- Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu India LLP, Ernst and Young



LLP, ICICI Securities Ltd, JM Financial Ltd, KPMG, RBSA Capital Advisors LLP and SBI Capital Markets Ltd -- were received.

DIPAM on behalf of Government of India had floated a tender in June inviting bids from transaction advisors from reputed professional consulting firms or investment bankers or merchant bankers or financial institutions for facilitating and assisting strategic disinvestment of IDBI Bank. The last date for submission of bids was July 13.

KPMG placed the lowest bid of Re 1, and was selected as the

transaction adviser, market sources said, adding, the firm will assist the government in the sale for Re 1.

The central government and LIC together own more than 94 per cent equity of IDBI Bank. LIC, currently having management control, has 49.24 per cent stake, while the government holds 45.48 per cent. Non-promoter shareholding stands at 5.29 per cent. The transaction advisor would be required to advise and assist the government on modalities of disinvestment and the timing; recommend the need for other intermedi-

aries required for the process of sale/disinvestment and also help in identification and selection of the same with proper Terms of Reference.

The transaction advisor will also assist in preparation of all documents like Preliminary Information Memorandum (PIM), organise roadshows to generate interest among the prospective buyers and suggest measures to fetch optimum value. The advisor would also be supporting IDBI Bank in setting up an e-data room and assisting in the smooth conduct of the due diligence process. As per the eligibility criteria outlined in the RFP, the bidders should have advised at least one transaction of strategic disinvestment/strategic sale/M&A activities/private equity investment transaction of the size of Rs 5,000 crore or more during the period from April 2016 to March 2021.

Decision to correct inverted duty structure to cut tax burden

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The decision of the GST Council to correct inverted duty structure on leather footwear from January 1, 2022, would help reduce tax burden of the sector and boost domestic manufacturing of manmade fibre (MMF) fabrics and garments, CLE said on Sunday.

Council for Leather Exports (CLE) Chairman Sanjay Leekha said GST (goods and services tax) on leather footwear worth less than Rs 1,000 is 5 per cent and over that value, the tax is 18 per cent, but the GST on inputs for these footwear ranges up to 18 per cent.

"We have suggested rationalisation of the tax on these footwears," he said.

The GST Council in its meeting on September 17 agreed to correct inverted duty structure on footwear and textiles from January 1, 2022.

Consumer durable makers expect double-digit growth in festive season

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The consumer durable industry is expecting double-digit growth in the festive season sales this year, despite inflationary pressure on inputs that led to price hike twice in the year, shortage of components such as chipsets and a threat of a third wave of the pandemic.

The makers such as Panasonic, LG, Haier, Godrej Appliances and Lloyds are expecting a pent-up demand and good growth in premium products across categories like large-screen TVs, front-load washing machines, and bigger capacity refrigerators.

The companies are keeping their supply chain and inventory ready for the festive season, which starts in the North and other parts from Dussehra and goes up to Diwali and usually accounts for up to 30 per cent of their sales in a month.

Makers have planned to launch new models along with a 360-degree campaign, cash backs, easy finance options as zero down payment and long-term EMI schemes. A good



festive season sales would also help them recover the losses incurred on account of the second wave of the pandemic and lockdowns.

"We are seeing a steady rise in demand for value-proposition appliances such as smart 4K Android TVs, connected range of ACs (HU series), refrigerators, washing machines, microwaves and other lifestyle appliances," Panasonic India President and CEO Manish Sharma told PTI.

He further added that due to the return of demand, the company has seen a growth of 25 per cent in August 2021 as against last year. "We are hoping to maintain the growth

momentum through festive season to make up for losses due to the pandemic."

South Korean electronic major LG had launched a range of flagship products ahead of the festive season.

"Currently, consumer sentiment is quite positive. Work from home and stay at home have created good demand for durables, as leisure travel is restricted so certain section of consumers are spending on upgrading consumer durables," said LG India Vice-President (Corporate Planning) Deepak Bansal. The company is witnessing good growth in premium products across categories, he said.

MONEY MATTERS

Fortune Park Hotels to add 5 hotels in India by Dec 2022

Fortune Park Hotels, a member of ITC's hotel group, will be opening five properties with over 375 rooms in India by the end of next year, as part of its robust expansion plans in the country.

The company has 38 operating hotels with around 2,900 rooms across 34 cities of India.

Apart from opening 5 hotels with over 375 rooms across 4 cities of India from our active pipeline by the end of December 2022, we are also in advanced negotiations for a few more projects, some of which are anticipated to open before the end of next year," Fortune Park Hotels MD Samir MC told PTI. These five hotels will be -- Fortune Resort Benaulum Goa, Fortune Park in Hoshiarpur (Punjab), Fortune Park in Tirupur (Tamil Nadu), Fortune Select in Goa and a Fortune Inn in Haldwani (Uttarakhand), he added. When asked about the business model the company follows, Samir said, "While our primary model is currently on managed hotels, we continue evaluating different operating models including franchise model."



FPIs net buyers at Rs 16K-cr so far in September

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) remained net buyers in Indian markets so far in September by investing a net sum of Rs 16,305 crore. As per

depositories data, overseas investors invested Rs 11,287 crore into equities and Rs 5,018 crore in debt segment on a net basis between September 1-17. During this period, the total net investment stood at Rs 16,305 crore. In August, FPI investment stood at Rs 16,459 crore. Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - research, Morningstar India noted that investment in Indian equities has been volatile for sometime. "However, continuing rally in the Indian stock markets would have been hard for FPIs to ignore and they would have chosen to be a part of it rather than missing out on it," he said. Also, India continues to be an important and competitive investment destination from the long-term perspective, Srivastava added. FPIs have been showing interest in segments like hotels and travel since these segments have started to do well, as per V K Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist at Geojit Financial Services.



M-cap of four of top-10 firms jumps Rs 65,464.41 crores

Four of the top-10 most valued companies together added Rs 65,464.41 crore to market valuation last week, with Bharti Airtel and State Bank of India emerging as the biggest gainers.

During the last week, the 30-share BSE benchmark jumped 710 points or 1.21 per cent. Market benchmark Sensex scaled the 59,000-mark for the first time on Thursday. From the top-10 list, Reliance Industries Limited, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance were the laggards, whose cumulative erosion was at Rs 43,746.79 crore. Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel were the winners. The valuation of Bharti Airtel jumped Rs 22,984.14 crore to reach Rs 3,99,901.97 crore. State Bank of India added Rs 19,500.28 crore taking its market capitalisation (m-cap) to Rs 4,05,221.99 crore.



VI claims to record peak 5G speed of 3 gbps during trials

Debt-ridden telecom operator Vodafone Idea on Sunday claimed to have recorded a peak speed of 3.7 gigabit per second (gbps), highest by any operator in India, during 5G trials in Pune. The company also claimed to have recorded 1.5 gbps download speed in the mid-band spectrum in Gandhinagar and Pune. Vi (Vodafone Idea) has been allocated high-frequency bands like 26 gigahertz (GHz) by the Department of Telecommunications (DoT), along with the traditional 3.5 GHz spectrum band, for 5G network trials. "In Pune city, Vi has deployed its 5G trial in a lab set-up of an end-to-end captive network of Cloud Core, new generation Transport and Radio Access Network. "In this trial, Vi has achieved a peak speed in excess of 3.7 Gbps with very low latency on the mmWave (millimetre wave) spectrum band," Vi said in the statement. The DoT had approved applications of Reliance Jio, Bharti Airtel and Vodafone in May, and MTNL later.



RBI decision to allow NBFCs apply for Aadhaar-e-KYC Authentication

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reserve Bank's decision to allow NBFCs and payment service providers to apply for obtaining Aadhaar e-KYC Authentication Licence will promote digitisation and check frauds, opined Fintech players.

The RBI has said NBFCs, Payment System Providers and Payment System Participants desirous of obtaining Aadhaar Authentication Licence - KYC User Agency (KUA) License or sub-KUA License, may submit their application to the central bank for onward submission to UIDAI.

The Reserve Bank's initiative will also help in improving trust levels among customers because only licensed entities will be permitted to conduct eKYC, said Ankit Bhatnagar, Head of Product, Msipwe.

"Now with eKYC, non-banking entities offering financial services can improve compliance and also ensure that the popular mechanism of cus-

tomers on-boarding for which they had to depend on third party players can be offered directly through a KUA licence," said Bhatnagar. Manoj Chopra, Head Innovation and Product Development, Infrasoft Technologies Limited, was of the opinion that the move will simplify customer onboarding for NBFCs, NBFC-Micro Finance Institutions (NBFC-MFI), payment system operators and payment system participants.

NBFCs are reliant on offline Aadhaar validation or paper-based authentication mechanisms like PAN verification. Since such methods involved sharing pictures of physical documents, it made the process slightly cumbersome and prone to rejections as the

quality of pictures shared may not be up to the mark, Chopra said.

"Now, by availing Aadhaar Authentication Licence - KYC User Agency (KUA) license or sub-KUA License these NBFCs can directly leverage an online database in Aadhaar and verify the identity including the photograph seamlessly," Chopra said.

Commenting on the RBI's decision, Gurjodhpal Singh, CEO, Tide (India), said it is a welcome move for the fintech ecosystem.

According to Singh, this will promote digitisation, resulting in a forward thinking approach to ensure fast delivery of financial products in the sector and thus improve experience for many customers who had been facing a lot of issues.



SELLER REGISTRATION

Amazon adds 3 more languages

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce major Amazon on Sunday said sellers will now be able to register on the Amazon.in marketplace and manage their online business in three more languages - Malayalam, Telugu and Bengali.

The move comes ahead of the festive season and will benefit thousands of existing Amazon sellers, many potential and new sellers from markets across tiers to run their business on Amazon.in marketplace in a language of their choice and preference, a statement said. With this launch, Amazon.in now allows sellers to manage their online business in eight languages including Bengali, Gujarati, Hindi, Kannada, Marathi, Malayalam, Telugu, Tamil and English. Using any of the regional languages, sellers can do everything from registering as an Amazon



seller for the first time, to managing orders, inventory and accessing performance metrics - all in the language of their preference, the statement said. This experience has been made available on the Amazon seller Central as well as on the mobile app, it added.

As Amazon works towards its commitment to digitise one crore MSMEs across India by 2025, it is important to address sellers' challenges when they seek to leverage e-commerce to expand their businesses, Amazon India Director (Seller Partner Services) Sumit Sahay said.

Comm min to observe 'Vaniya Saptah' during Sept 20-26

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry on Sunday said it will observe 'Vaniya Saptah' during September 20-26, in which a slew of programmes and events will be organised across the country showcasing India as a rising economic force, and exporter conclave. The DPIIT is organising a soft launch of the National Single Window System and Industrial Park Rating System.

C-DOT to tap all media for broadcasting disaster alerts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Sep 19 (PTI) State-run C-DOT is developing technology to intercept all media like television, mobile phones, railway announcements etc for broadcasting disaster alerts in local languages, a senior official said.

Moratorium on telecom dues allows time to transform, repair

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The four-year breather from payment of regulatory dues offered as part of the telecom relief package allows operators time to transform and repair, and may cool off price wars, according to a senior analyst at Deloitte India.

The reforms send out a strong message to the global community, and are expected to bolster confidence of investors and lenders in the telecom sector, Peeyush Vaish, Partner and Telecom Sector



Leader, Deloitte India said.

The Union Cabinet recently approved a blockbuster relief package for the stressed telecom sector that includes a four-year break for companies

from paying statutory dues, permission to share scarce airwaves, change in the definition of revenue on which levies are paid and 100 per cent foreign investment through the automatic route.

The measures, aimed at providing relief to companies such as Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) that have to pay thousands of crores in unprovisioned past statutory dues, also include the scrapping of Spectrum Usage Charge (SUC) for airwaves acquired in future spectrum auctions.

From Russia's Rosneft to airports, cos queue up to train personnel

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From Russian and French energy giants to airport operators in India, companies are queuing up to train personnel in fire safety and disaster management at state-owned ONGC's premier training institute.

Russia's Rosneft, Total of France, domestic energy majors IOC, GAIL, HPCL and OIL, private firms like Cairn, airport operators GMR and Airports Authority of India (AAI) are among a long list of clients that have at some point of time trained their personnel at the Institute of Petroleum Safety, Health and Environment Management (IPSHEM), its head and ONGC Executive Director Atul



Garg said.

The Institute, which shuts its physical training module after the outbreak of pandemic, is

this month resuming physical training after a gap of one-and-a-half-years.

"We have a backlog of

inhouse personnel who need to be trained in aspects such as sea survival to fire safety. And so to begin with we will impart training to ONGC personnel and later look at meeting industry demand," he said.

From basic fire fighting training and environment management to blowout control and disaster management, the institute offers a wide range of courses. Its vast campus in Goa houses a hostel and real-life equipment. "The Institute is equipped with simulators that are used to recreate real life like events such as fire at oil and gas pipelines, depots and tankers, wellhead blowout and fire on helicopters. Personnel are trained in controlling fire as well as

rescue at various installations in a refinery, oilfield, pipeline and fuel storage depot," he said. From fire safety management to investigating incidents and accidents, from breathing apparatus course for fire personnel to conducting search and rescue in smoke filled rooms, from helicopter landing assistance to survival at sea, the Institute offers comprehensive training.

Specialised courses such as crane operators safety, incident investigation and oil spill management are also offered, he said adding the institute is accredited to leading global bodies.

Started two decades back with the aim to provide Oil and Natural Gas Corp

(ONGC) personnel with statutory disaster management training, IPSHEM has gained popularity not just among energy peers but also in industry where fire training is a must.

"AAI and other airport operators such as one at Mumbai have sent their personnel to train in fire safety. We have requests from a lot of others but because of the pandemic we couldn't train. Now that the Institute is reopening, we will first clear the backlog of ONGC personnel and thereafter intake outside personnel," Garg said.

The Institute earned close to Rs 1 crore in 2019-20 in fee from training outside personnel.

The story of glory!



SHIKHA DUGGAL

Cinema and sports have been coming together since a really long time, and as we see nowadays, a massive audience is drawn to sports biographies! The recent performance of our sportspersons in the Tokyo Olympics and Paralympics has paved the way for our new generation to look at sports in a more professional way. Keeping all this in mind, the director of Ajay Devgn starrer *Maidaan* pays his tribute to someone who has braved the odds, overcame challenges in his life and achieved laurels for not just our city Hyderabad, but also the whole country — none other than Syed Abdul Rahim also known as 'Rahim Saab', an Indian football coach and manager of the Indian National team from 1950 until his death. Ajay Devgn will be seen playing the titular role



of the one who is regarded to be the architect of modern Indian football! We got in touch with director Amit Sharma to learn more imminent details about the film that's going on floors soon

and he had a lot to say. He begins with how ecstatic he is to see that sports based movies are accepted widely by the Indian audiences. The country has indeed woken up to its treasure of cinematic sports!

"The way people love cricket in this country, there are parts of the same nation such as Kolkata, Hyderabad, Goa, Kerela, where they are die-hard fans of football. In my research term, I noticed even the supporters don't remember the football legends. That thrust me to let the public know about the golden era of football too, because why not? Football ruled the country from the 1950s to 1960s! We today see a lot of youngsters following diverse international football groups, but how many of them know their country's contribution to it? That is what I want to show in *Maidaan*. As Boney sir opened up about in the press conference recently, about how Arjun Kapoor is more keen on watching football on the television, we are sure there are many like him, hence, this film will activate that 'power of this play' again!"

Promising to be a ground-breaking film, the director also reveals that Ajay prepared for the part from scratch, right from training in football to the Hyderabad accent, he researched everything and he is no stranger to real-life characters! "As per our investigations, Raheem Saab practiced numerous tricks with his team that was later on picked up by the European coaches and our coach has spoken of a lot in that fraternity. There was no technology or the right guidance back then; he would gain all knowledge about the sport only from the books he used to read. Not to for-

get, as once more mentioned by Boney sir, that the coach was also a psychologist and he knew the psyche of the sport he was playing," adds the director who is fully fervent about making the Deepika-Amitabh starrer *The Intern*.

The director further tells us that, to play Syed Abdul Rahim, Ajay worked on his body language and accent brilliantly.

"He did not compromise on the credibility and authenticity for even one shot. Audiences won't see him as Ajay — the star in *Maidaan*, they will see a football coach who transformed the way football was perceived in our country. Ajay sir will be seen playing real football with real players in *Maidaan*."

Amit says that not just a lot of study, but a lot of time has also been put into writing the film, some of the football players were of great help to the team, he says.

Narrating to us a very heart-felt moment, Amit recalls an interaction with one of the football players who had been coached by Syed Abdul Rahim, who, when Amit asked how the feeling was when the team won a gold medal in football, he instantly went inside and brought the national jersey along with the medals and this is what he had to say to Amit Sharma that brought tears to the director's eyes: "These are the most valuable laurels of my life, only we know how we won it, but you know what keep these with you, it is in reverence for our coach."

The director wavered and replied to the player, "We can't take this, it is your accomplishment. I'll take some pictures and craft similar medals for the film." But, he insisted and said that he is done with it and he wants to offer that for the beloved coach now, for the truest portrayal.

"There was another fascinating moment I noticed while he told us how they would sometimes cuss on the ground — now when he used the same cuss word, he looked up in the sky and said 'Sorry Rahim Saab! This kind of admiration swept me off my feet,' he concludes.



Debunking myths about Alzheimer's

Alzheimer's disease is one of the leading causes of loss of independence in an older adult. Older adults have openly expressed that it is the most dreaded disease they fear.

With Alzheimer's Day tomorrow (Sept. 21), Dr. Prem Narsimhan Naganath, Consultant Geriatric Medicine Specialist in Jaslok Hospitals, in conversation with *The Pioneer* explains myths and facts about Alzheimers.

Myth: Memory Loss is a normal part of ageing.

Fact: As people age, it's normal to have occasional memory problems, such as forgetting the name of a person you've recently met. However, Alzheimer's is more than occasional memory loss. It's a disease that causes brain cells to malfunction and ultimately die. When this happens, one may forget the name of a long-time friend or directions to return to a home they've lived in for decades.

Myth: Alzheimer's Ds and Dementia are same.

Fact: People often use the terms Alzheimer's disease and dementia interchangeably, but there is a difference. Dementia refers to impaired memory, thinking, reasoning, and behaviour, and Alzheimer's is just one type of dementia. The terms are likely confused because Alzheimer's is the most common cause of dementia and the most well-known. But there are other types of dementia, too.

Myth: If I'm forgetting things then I have Alzheimer's Ds.

Fact: Memory problems are typically one of the first signs of Alzheimer's, but not all memory problems mean a person has the disease. Some forgetfulness is normal as we age.

Myth: If somebody in my fam-

ily has Alzheimer's I will get it too.

Fact: When a parent or a close relative gets the disease one might be worried of getting it when older. A person's chance of developing Alzheimer's is higher if they have certain genetic mutations or variations that can be passed down from a parent. However, just because a biological parent has Alzheimer's does not mean that their children will develop it.

Myth: Memory loss is the only symptom.

Fact: Memory loss is the most recognisable symptom. But other symptoms include challenges in planning or solving problems, not able to complete familiar tasks, confusion about time or place, unable to understand the relationship between space and objects, problems involving writing and speaking, inability to retrace steps, misplacing things, poor judgment, social withdrawal, and general changes in mood, personality, and behaviour.

Myth: Only older adults get it.

Fact: People can get the disease in the 30s, 40s and 50s too. This is called younger-onset Alzheimer's (also referred to as early onset)

Myth: It is not fatal.

Fact: True. Alzheimer's disease destroys brain cells and causes memory changes, erratic behaviours, and loss of body functions. It slowly and painfully takes away a person's identity, ability to connect with others, think, eat, talk, walk and going back home.

Myth: Alzheimer's Ds prevention is possible.

Fact: There are no proven ways to prevent it.

But risk factors can be controlled like lifestyle changes, healthy diet, exercise, staying mentally active and good sleep are important.

Actor Ekavali Khanna takes inspiration from Deepika Padukone's *Padmaavat*!

Veere Di Wedding actress Ekavali Khanna is currently enjoying the love and adulation she received from the masses for her performance in ALT Balaji's recent hit *Hai Taubba 3*. The anthology, which is all about strong women breaking the shackles of society, saw Khanna playing one of the unassailable women. Interestingly, Ekavali went a step ahead for her next. Ekavali ditched her vanity for the show, a bold step for any female actress in the industry. Like Deepika Padukone refrained from working on her eyebrows in Sanjay Leela Bhansali's historical drama *Padmaavat*, Ekavali did the same.

Talking about the riveting anecdote, Ekavali shared, "An interesting aspect of



Sarla's character was the way I was styled and my look was created. I don't know if people will notice but I have not done my eyebrows in the series. Because at that point of time, people were not threading their eyebrows. So it was just a little effort that I made to get into that character's headspace. I also went to wear a saree without a blouse. That was something I was not comfortable with. However, women used to wear sarees like that. So we had to stay true to the era and time. To make myself comfortable, I wore sarees without a blouse at my place. I walked into my house in my cotton sarees without a blouse to get comfortable. It was something that I think the costume and the makeup department really put their best self forward. It helped me completely break out of my own mould and embrace Sarla's look and feel."

On a parting note, Ekavali said, "That is what makes this whole experience very gratifying. *Hai Taubba* was something that I did step out of my comfort zone and it is being acknowledged; it is being accepted."

Aiming it right!



YAMINIKRISHNA BANDLAMUDI

When situation demands, success becomes mandatory. The adage holds true for 9-year-old Dolly Sivani Cherukuri from Vijayawada, who has already established a name for herself with several prestigious world records in archery. In conversation with *The Pioneer*, her parents share how their perseverance made it possible in training their daughter to reach this far. Realising dreams is undoubtedly a tough task, especially ones that demand a great deal of hard work and perseverance. But what does it actually take if the same dream has to be chased, over

and again? Doesn't it sound like a herculean task? Cherukuri Satyanarayana, 60, from Vijayawada, had a lot to say about this.

"Our son Lenin won the Dronacharya award for his outstanding talent as a sports coach, ranked 4th in archery division at an international level, is a certified level 3 coach, and has coached the Indian archery team for almost 18 years. He secured medals for the country at the Asian and World championships — but our happiness was short lived. At the young age of 24, in 2012, he met with a road accident and breathed his last, the year before he planned to secure a gold medal at the Rio Olympics. Though it hit us like a bolt from the blue, we retained our mental strength and with a determination to

carry forward Lenin's and our Volga Training academy's legacy, our couple had planned for a baby through surrogacy and were blessed with Sivani in 2015. I pinned all my hopes onto her. Sivani's mother Krishna Kumari started training her right from her bed — in bow draw, stretching exercises, and field knowledge — all since she was just two months old. Gradually, she picked up all the necessary traits and techniques of archery."

Sivani, who played for the under 9 category of archery, emerged a national champion thrice! She also entered the Asia Book of Records, India Book of Records for four times, and had to her credit, four world records by the very tender age of three.

Her coach Chandra Sekhara Laguri tells us that Sivani created her first Indian and Asian record in 2015 by shooting 5 and 7 meters respectively, in recurve division individual event at the age of 35 months. She adds, "Within a three-month gap in the same year, she created her second record mixed event with five other boys of different age groups and distances."

Sivani, world's youngest archer, was appreciated and called the second 'future Olympian' and 'second



Deepika Kumari Olympian' by World Archery Association and Bollywood star Aishwarya Rai Bachchan and director Karan Johar at the IGT television show. Also, Sivani's documentary was screened at the renowned MOMO theatre during the 60th Film Festival of New York, USA and it telecasted on Germany's popular Galileo, show which got over two million views!

Her mother Krishna Kumari Cherukuri proudly shares that their daughter, by the time she was two and a half, stood as a role model for all the archery kids, and witnessing the young talent, bow manufacturing companies started manufacturing bows even for the under five age group.

Satyanarayana, shouldered the responsibility of Volga Academy of Archery, which is named after Lenin's elder sister, who too had passed away five years before Lenin. He adds that the training centre has produced a

number of talented sportspersons for India, who not only participated in Commonwealth Games, the Olympics and different national and international competitions, but also secured number of prestigious medals for the country.

Cherukuri Dolly Sivani, the young talent, who is now in her 5th standard, is determined to secure a gold medal in the coming Olympics. She says her parents are the pillars of her success and trainers Naveen, Manoj and Purushottam Rao are doing all they can, to hone her archery skills.





● Siddhartha Daga, and Nikitha Pitti



● Nidhi



● Shikha



● Sakshi Pitti

● Sweety



● Dolze, Devanshi



● Neha Jain



● Kasula and Pavani



● Ramu



● Sruthi



UNUSUAL STROKES

A Group show at Botanika Art Gallery in Gachibowli saw many artists putting their unconventional artwork on display. The theme 'unusual' gave inception to works unlike any others.

GET READY TO BE ZOWED!

ZoWed, an online wedding planning website, opened the ZoWed Wedding Lounge in Banjara Hills. Siddharth Daga and Nikitha Pitti of ZoWed and a host of fashion influencers like Esha Hindocha, Divya Boppana, Tanusha Bajaj and actress Monica Tavanam graced the inaugural event at the store on Road No 10, Banjara Hills. Luxuriously done up in rich color tones and warm inviting interiors, the store is now ready to welcome its guests.

PARTY

Photos by SV Chary

FUN

ARCHIE



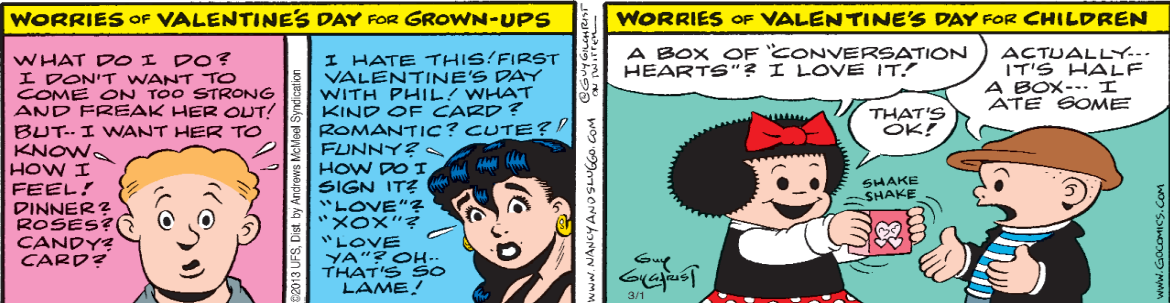
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



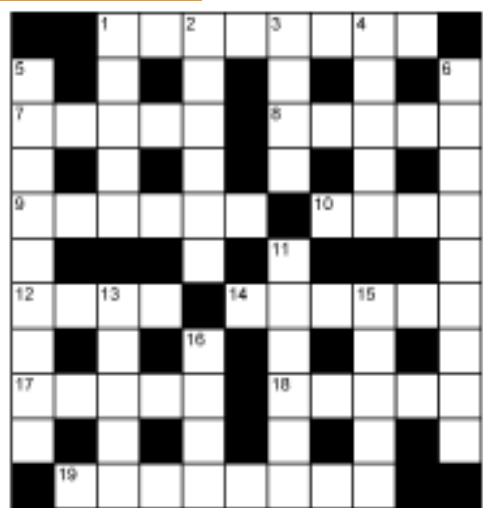
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Gets better after illness
- An item of furniture
- Move
- Painter or sculptor
- At this place
- Pleased
- A meal outdoors
- Arrive at
- A large lifting machine
- A bird's covering

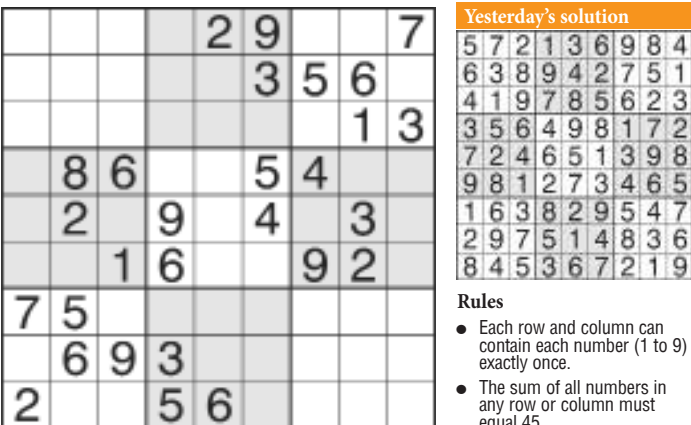
- People unknown to you
- Made longer by pulling
- Ring shape
- Not asleep
- Gets closer to
- Closed

DOWN

- A mechanical person
- A mark from a fold
- A holder for cut flowers
- Lift up



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

Dil Raju's nephew to debut opposite Anupama



Successful producer Dil Raju's nephew Ashish Reddy is making his acting debut with a fresh film titled *Rowdy Boys*. Recently, a single from the movie was released and garnered very good response. Now the latest update is that the teaser of *Rowdy Boys* will be launched on September 20 at 7 pm. A poster for the teaser has Ashish following Anupama



NABHA: DIDN'T WANT TO COMPARE MYSELF WITH RADHIKA APTE

Actor Nabha Natesh says she approached her latest Telugu feature *Maestro* as a fresh film and didn't succumb to the pressure of the black comedy thriller being a remake of the acclaimed Hindi film *Andhadhun*. Natesh stars in the film as Sophie, a role played by Radhika Apte in the 2018 original movie, directed by Sriram Raghavan. *Maestro* features actor Nithiin stepping into the shoes of

Ayushmann Khurrana to play a blind piano player who unwittingly becomes embroiled in a murder. In an interview with a news agency, Natesh said she avoided falling into the trap of comparing how Apte had performed the role to retain freshness in her portrayal. "I didn't want to compare with what she had done in the original film. My take on the character was to (understand) the mindset of a person who falls in love with a visually impaired person. Sophie looks at him as someone so strong, who has a desire for life which is beyond his visual impairment. I thought my character should stand on the zeal of his character and build it accordingly," she said. Directed by Merlapaka Gandhi and produced by Shreshth Movies, *Maestro* is currently streaming on Disney+ Hotstar. The film also stars Tamannaah Bhatia in the role originally essayed by Tabu in the National Award-winning *Andhadhun*. Natesh said in her Telugu film career of three years and of nearly seven movies, *Maestro* was the first remake she worked in. Though she had loved *Andhadhun*, the 25-year-old actor initially didn't know how to "approach" the character. Consequently, she decided the first step would be to not revisit the 2018 film. "The original film had made a huge impact. It proved that people will watch and support a film like *Andhadhun* if it's well made.

Bringing that content to Telugu, which may not have been seen before in the industry, was extremely exciting. My character is nothing like what I had done previously. "But I thought if I watch the film again, I would get into a conflict. I followed what the director was asking me to do. I didn't remember every single frame of the original film, so *Maestro* was a fresh film for me once I went on sets to begin filming." The actor made her Telugu cinema debut in 2018 with the romantic drama *Nannu Dochukunduvate* co-starring Sudheer Babu and found success featuring in movies like Puri Jagannadh's sci-fi actioner *iSmart Shankar* and last year's *Solo Brathuke So Better*. *Maestro* also fit the bill of her experimenting with the choice of projects, she said. "I constantly look forward to doing something different than what I have done before, to not be repetitive. It's embedded in me because I have done theatre, where I was trained to do characters throughout. Whatever opportunities I have been offered, my attempt has been to do something new." Even if the role isn't anything different, she said she tries to play it in a way that the audience doesn't feel they have seen her do that before. "It's probably the variations I offer or my attempt to not bore the audience with the same thing which may have worked for me and I wish to continue that going forward as well," she concluded.

Aamir in town for Chay's Love Story Unplugged

The team of *Love Story* on Sunday, welcomed Bollywood superstar Aamir Khan as the actor arrived in Hyderabad to attend the film's unplugged. The pictures of the same have been doing the rounds on the internet and Naga Chaitanya is seen welcoming Aamir at the airport with a warm hug and presenting a sapling. Aamir seems to share a great rapport with Chay, after having worked together for the upcoming Bollywood film *Laal Singh Chaddha*. The duo has spent some quality time during the shoot and learnt about each other pretty well. Apart from Aamir, even megastar Chiranjeevi joined the unplugged and fans were thrilled

to have so many stars in attendance. *Love Story* is one of the most-awaited films after lockdown to have it hitting the big screens. Directed by Sekhar Kammula, this movie is all set to release on September 24. Naga Chaitanya and Sai Pallavi will be seen playing the lead roles in the film, that also has other brilliant actors playing pivotal roles.



Aamir takes part in GIC

Now meanwhile, the versatile actor participated in the Green India Challenge at the Begumpet Airport. The 3 Idiots star, along with Naga Chaitanya and Rajya Sabha MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar, the initiator of the challenge, planted saplings on Sunday. While appreciating the efforts of RS MP Joginapally Santosh Kumar in taking forward the Green India Challenge, the Mr Perfectionist asked all the people to come forward for plantation. Aamir Khan said that he has seen many challenges, but Green India Challenge has become key driver for improving the greenery of the nation.

Actor Ram Pothineni is now on board as the new brand ambassador for CMR shopping mall in Andhra Pradesh! Earlier it was Victory Venkatesh but now Ram Pothineni turned to be the new face of the brand. Ram had earlier stayed away from brand promotions and commercial ads for many years. But it is very much evident that the

young hero has changed his track, with regard to movies and as well as brand endorsements. His recent multilingual commercial as the brand ambassador for 'Garnier' proved it and now, RAPO's charm is gonna benefit CMR shopping mall too.

Capturing his market on and off screen, he's even aiming for bigger commercial projects and multilingual releases for his upcoming movies. His upcoming bilingual film RAPO19 directed by N. Linguswamy is one of the most awaited films in Telugu and Tamil now.



CMR shopping mall signs Ram as brand ambassador



THALAPATHY VIJAY FILES CASE AGAINST HIS PARENTS

Actor Thalapathy Vijay has reportedly filed a case against 11 people, including his mother and father. The news has taken social media by storm and is currently a talking topic among industry people as well. Reportedly, the actor has filed a case seeking an injunction restraining them from using his name or the name of his fan clubs in politics.

To the unversed, Vijay's father and veteran director SA Chandra sekhar started a political party called the All India Thalapaty Vijay Makkal Iyakkam. The political party has SA Chandrasekhar as general secretary, Shoba Chandrasekhar as treasurer, and Padmanabhan as the leader, as filed with the Election Commission of India.

In 2020, there were reports about Vijay joining his father's political party. However, the *Master* actor released a statement clarifying he has no connection with whatever political party or statement his father gave out. The statement also read that he was not bound by his father's political aspirations and he has distanced himself from the same. "I don't have any connection directly or indirectly with the political statements that my father has issued. I'm not bound to follow my father's political aspirations. I request my fans not to join the party that my father has started. If anyone tries to misuse my name, photo, or my fan clubs for their political aspirations, I will take necessary actions against them", Vijay's statement released in November 2020 read.

CSK SET MI 157-RUN TARGET



Ruturaj Gaikwad of Chennai Super Kings hitting a boundary during match 30 of the Vivo Indian Premier League between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians held at the Dubai International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates

BCCI

Gaikwad rescues side with fiery 88

CSK set MI 157-run target as Gaikwad rescues side with fiery 88 Dubai, Sep 19 (PTI) Electing to bat, Chennai Super Kings scored 156 for six against defending champions Mumbai Indians in the first match of the second phase of the Indian Premier League (IPL), here on Sunday.

CSK were 44 for 4 at half-way mark after a horrendous start but Ruturaj Gaikwad rescued the side with his blistering unbeaten knock of 88 runs along with Ravindra Jadeja (26) and Dwayne Bravo, who scored 23.

Brief Scores:
Chennai Super Kings: 156 for 6 in 20 overs (R Gaikwad 88 not out, R Jadeja 26, D Bravo 23; A Milne 2/21, J Bumrah 2/33, T Boult 2/35). **PTI**

CHENNAI SUPER KINGS:		
Ruturaj Gaikwad	not out	88
Faf du Plessis	c Milne b Boult	0
Moeen Ali	c Tiwary b Milne	0
Ambati Rayudu	retired hurt	0
Suresh Raina	c Chahar b Boult	4
MS Dhoni	c Boult b Milne	3
Ravindra Jadeja	c Pollard b Bumrah	26
Dwayne Bravo	c Pandya b Bumrah	23
Shardul Thakur	not out	1
Extras:	(LB-3, WD-8)	11
Total (For 6 wickets in 20 overs)		
Fall of wickets: 1-1, 2-2, 3-7, 4-24, 5-105, 6-144		
Bowling: Trent Boult 4-1-35-2, Adam Milne 4-0-21-2, Jasprit Bumrah 4-0-33-2, Kieron Pollard 2-0-15-0, Rahul Chahar 4-0-22-0, Krunal Pandya 2-0-27-0. More PTI		



Jasprit Bumrah of Mumbai Indians during match 30 of the Vivo Indian Premier League between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians held at the Dubai International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates

BCCI

Struggling KKR look to script turnaround against RCB

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Enduring a forgettable outing in the first half of this year's IPL, two-time former champions Kolkata Knight Riders would look for reversal of fortunes when they resume their campaign against Royal Challengers Bangalore in the second phase of T20 league here on Monday.

While Virat Kohli's RCB is third in the eight-team standings with 10 points from seven games, 2012 and 2014 champions KKR are languishing at the seventh spot with just two wins out of seven ties.

And Eoin Morgan-led KKR would be hoping to make a turnaround, just like 2014 edition when they won nine games in a row to claim the title.

KKR chief mentor David Hussey also exuded optimism about scripting a turnaround, despite a nightmarish first half.

"All we have to do is win this ... We have done it before and so we can do it again... I feel we have the squad to do it also. You qualify for the finals and whole competition starts again," the Australian said.

But it would be easier said than done for KKR as they face RCB, a formidable outfit, whose captain Kohli would be gunning for success with the bat after announcing his decision to quit as India's T20 skipper following the T20 World Cup which will be held after the IPL in UAE.

Even though KKR leads in head-to-head record against RCB, winning 18 and losing 13 out of 28 fixtures played between the two sides, the 38-run defeat against Kohli's team in the first half of the event in Chennai would be fresh on their players' minds.

KKR's two wins earlier this year came against two under-



performing sides — Punjab Kings, who are placed just a rung above them, and bottom-placed Sunrisers Hyderabad.

KKR would be relying heavily on the pair of Subhman Gill and Nitin

Rana to deliver the goods in their batting department, even though the duo did not have the best of outings in the first leg.

While Gill scored just 132 runs, Rana managed 201 runs in the first seven games for KKR in this year's IPL, which was postponed in April following multiple COVID-19 cases inside the bio-bubble in India.

Besides, Morgan will need to let his bat do the talking and lead from the front.

Dinesh Karthik, Andre

Russell, Rahul Tripathy and Shakib Al Hasan too need to come good for KKR if the team harbours any hopes of making it to the play-offs.

KKR's bowling department will be on the shoulders of Kiwi Tim Southee, who came in as a replacement for Pat Cummins for the second half.

RCB, on the other hand, are currently placed in a comfortable position and would be hoping for Kohli to play freely and score big runs, especially after taking the big call of relinquishing T20 captaincy.

With Glenn Maxwell (223 runs from 7 games) and AB de Villiers (207 runs from 7) leading the run scorers chart till

now for the team, RCB's batting unit looks ominous.

Kohli (198), by his own standards, has been a little disappointing and Devdutt Padikkal (195) too would be looking for a consistent show.

On the bowling front, Mohammed Siraj and Kiwi Kyle Jamieson would lead the attack which also has Harshal Patel, Navdeep Saini and Yuzvendra Chahal, who would be desperate to answer the selectors after being ignored from India's T20 World Cup squad.

The additions of Sri Lanka duo of Wanindu Hasaranga and Dushmantha Chameera, who replaced Adam Zampa and Kane Richardson, will also hold the team in good stead as they have a good understanding of the UAE conditions.

Teams (from): KKR: Eoin Morgan (capt), Dinesh Karthik, Gurkeerat

Singh Mann, Karun Nair, Nitish Rana, Rahul Tripathy, Shubman Gill, Harbhajan Singh, Kamlesh Nagarkoti, Kuldeep Yadav, Lockie Ferguson, Pawan Negi, M Prasad Krishna, Sandeep Warrier, Shivam Dube, Tim Southee, Vaibhav Arora, Varun Chakravathy, Andre Russel, Ben Cutting, Shakib Al Hasan, Sunil Narine, Venkatesh Iyer, Sheldon Jackson, Tim Seifert.

RCB: Virat Kohli (capt), Navdeep Saini, Glenn Maxwell, Dan Christian, Rajat Patidar, Dushmantha Chameera, Pavan Deshpande, Mohammed Siraj, Harshal Patel, Mohammed Azharuddeen, Sachin Baby, Wanindu Hasaranga, George Garton, Yuzvendra Chahal, Shahbaz Ahmed, Devdutt Padikkal, Kyle Jamieson, Suyash Prabhudessai, KS Bharat, Tim David, Akash Deep, AB de Villiers. Match starts at 7:30PM IST.



Gracia Raina with kid during match 30 of the Vivo Indian Premier League between Chennai Super Kings and Mumbai Indians held at the Dubai International Stadium in the United Arab Emirates

BCCI

Gill and Rana are quality players: David Hussey

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the second phase of the IPL 2021, Kolkata Knight Riders' mentor David Hussey believes openers Shubman Gill and Nitish Rana will "shock the world" with their batting in UAE.

KKR did not have a successful opening leg of IPL 2021 and the reason was the failure of their opening pair.

Gill scored just 132 in the first seven games. His partner Rana was not a lot better, scoring just 201 runs before the season was declared postponed due to a Covid-19 outbreak in multiple team bio-bubbles.

Hussey pinned his hopes on the duo, calling them the 'next generation of Indian players'. "They both are quality players, they are determined to do very



well for the team and for themselves and they have a taste of international cricket now," Hussey told ESPNcricinfo.

"I think they are about to shock the world that they are the next generation of Indian players,

not just for one or two series but for perhaps a decade, so if they get going look out for them in the IPL." The Kolkata franchise is currently placed seventh in the points table. Hussey, however, believes his team can script a turnaround.

PATEL: WE'LL LOOK TO BUILD ON OUR HAPPY MEMORIES FROM IPL 2020 SEASON

IANIS ■ DUBAI

Delhi Capitals all-rounder Axar Patel believes that his team will look to build on its happy memories from the IPL 2020 edition ahead of the second half of the IPL 2021 starting September 19. Patel had taken nine wickets in 15 matches in the 2020 edition of the IPL, where Delhi finished as runners-up.

"When it was announced that the second half of the tournament will be held in the UAE, I thought about our performance the last time we were here. We have happy memories from that tournament as we reached our first-ever IPL final. We are looking to repeat our performance and hopefully, just go one step further in the final this season," said Patel in a release by the franchise on Sunday.



Patel, who was part of the Indian squad for the Test series in England, pointed out the massive difference in weather conditions between UK and UAE.

"It's been a drastic change for us as far as the weather is concerned. It was quite cold in England and now we are getting used to the heat here. When we stood on our balconies during quarantine, we got an idea about the heat, but we got to know the full extent of the weather conditions when we started practicing in the nets. We are looking to get used to the conditions in the next 2-3 days."

When asked about his personal goals for the remainder of the IPL 2021, the 27-year-old said, "My personal goals are always aligned with the team goals. I always think about what the team needs and then set my personal goals accordingly."

India win silver in Asian U18 Girls' Rugby Sevens Championship

IANIS ■ MUMBAI

India on Sunday won a silver medal in the Asia Rugby U18 Girls Rugby Sevens Championship 2021, losing 21-17 to the United Arab Emirates in a well-fought final held at Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

In the final, Nandini top-scored for India with seven points while Aditi Kumari and Tarulata Nair contributed five points each to the Indian score. Both teams scored three tries each. For UAE, Carmela Morrala scored nine points while Hannah Lear added seven, and Lara Botha contributed five.

India had reached the final by beating Kazakhstan 24-7 in

the semi-final with Sapna Kumari top-scoring with 10 points including two tries. Tarulata Naik scored nine points while Arti Kumari added five points.

In the two-day tournament that had five teams — Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, UAE, India, and hosts Uzbekistan -- and played in an all-play-all round-robin format, India started with a 12-10 defeat to Kazakhstan on Saturday. The girls came back strongly to blank Kyrgyzstan 63-0 with Vaishnavi Dattatray Patil scoring 15 points from three tries and defeated hosts Uzbekistan 20-5.



On Sunday, they lost to UAE girls 20-12, thus finishing third in the five-team league and qualifying for the semi-finals.

Speaking on the occasion, Rahul Bose, actor, director, philanthropist, and a board member of Rugby India, said, "This is a great moment for Indian Rugby. Both teams (UAE and India) scored three tries in the final. No disgrace losing like that!"

"For our U18 girls' team to perform as well as they did is all the more remarkable because they were 15 years old when the pandemic struck. They have never played a National tournament, leave

alone an international championship.

For them to come so far is a testament to their skill, grit, and fire to make their country proud. Our thanks to the coaching and support staff. Only rugby players know how important they are in this sport. This is a new day for Indian Rugby. We go onward and upward from here," Bose was quoted as saying in a release by Rugby India.

Vikram Ahuja, President, Rugby India said, "Heartiest congratulations to our U18 Girls team, their performance has been sensational - they displayed courage, skill, and mental toughness far beyond their years."

Shocked with Kohli's decision : Lara

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

West Indies cricketing legend Brian Lara is "shocked" with Indian skipper Virat Kohli's decision to step down as the T20 skipper after the ICC T20 World Cup scheduled to be held in the UAE and Oman in October-November this year.

In a statement issued on social media recently, Kohli had said, "Understanding workload is a very important thing and considering my immense workload over the last 8-9 years playing all 3 formats and captaining regularly for last 5-6 years, I feel I need to give myself space to be fully ready to lead the Indian Team in Test



and ODI Cricket."

"I was in shock because I think he's (Kohli) done a tremendous job, played against all the big countries -- South Africa, England, New Zealand, Australia -- beating all of them, and for me he has done a

tremendous job," Lara said during a video interaction with cricket.com on Saturday.

"This is actually his first (T20) World Cup as a captain so this will end his career as a captain after that. It's a big shock. But the kind of intensity that he plays with, I feel that sometimes it might sometimes be good to take a step away, concentrate may be on another format of the game," said Lara, one of the most charismatic cricketers of modern era.

"I have had these issues as well when I was playing? when a couple of times I stepped down as captain as it became very, very stressful," added the West Indian.

McClenaghan to Hafeez: Don't blame players for cancellation



PTI ■ CHRISTCHURCH

New Zealand players shouldn't be blamed for the cancellation of the tour of Pakistan as they were just following the advice of their government, said Kiwi pacer Mitchell McClenaghan.

The 35-year-old pacer was reacting to a sarcastic tweet by batsman Mohammed Hafeez on Saturday on eve of the departure of the New Zealand team from Pakistan.

"Come now bro. This has a bad taste to it... Don't blame the players or the organisation... blame our government. They have only acted on the advice they have received. I'm absolutely certain these young men -- all wanting to prove themselves wanted to play. They had no choice," McClenaghan wrote on his twitter handle.

On Saturday, Hafeez had taken a dig at New Zealand Cricket (NZC) for calling off their tour of Pakistan citing security threats.

"Thanks to the security of Pakistan forces to make arrangements to @BLACKCAPS to reach at airport Safe & Sound. Wonder same route & same security but no threat today???", Hafeez had tweeted.

New Zealand had arrived in Pakistan on September 11 for a white-ball series after 18 years and were scheduled to play three ODIs and five T20 Internationals.

Atletico Madrid held by Athletic Club Bilbao in La Liga

IANIS ■ MADRID

Atletico Madrid went to bed as league leaders in Spain on Saturday night, but Diego Simeone's side will be frustrated after being held to a 0-0 draw by an effective and disciplined Athletic Club Bilbao side that had the best chances to win the match.

Atletico Madrid's best and virtually only chance was a Marcos Llorente shot which bounced off the post in the second half and the visitors would have taken all three points if Inaki Williams, who was making his 200th consecutive league appearance, had been able to finish when one on one with Jan Oblak, or Asier Villalibre had been able to hit the target in injury time with



just Oblak to beat.

Atletico's frustration was compounded when Joao Felix was sent off with 13 minutes left to play after saying "you are crazy, you are crazy" to referee Gil Manzano, while Athletic remain unbeaten and have conceded just once in their first five games.

Pakistan will overcome crisis: PCB chairman after NZ tour pullout

IANIS ■ LAHORE

New Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) chairman Ramiz Raja has emphasised that the country's cricket had gone through experiences similar to the one when the New Zealand team pulled out at the last minute but it had "always moved forward".

Raja posted a video on the PCB website after the New Zealand team pulled out hours before the start of the three-match One-day International series at Pindi Cricket Ground in Rawalpindi on September 17 citing security concerns.

The chief executive of New Zealand Cricket (NZC) David White had said it was simply not possible to continue with

the tour given the advice he was receiving.

"I understand this will be a blow for the PCB, who have been wonderful hosts, but player safety is paramount and we believe this is the only responsible option."

Raja said in a video message to cricket fans that, "Our pain is shared. Whatever happened isn't good for Pakistan cricket."

But one point that needs to be emphasised is that we have gone through such experiences in the past and we always move forward.

"So I urge our fans to stand behind the Pakistan team and be its strength at the (T20) World Cup. To my team, I would like to say take out your

frustrations on the field because that is the only remedy. When you become the world's best team then everyone is queuing up in line to play series in your country. So I want everyone to take this as a lesson and move on and not be disappointed."

The PCB is reportedly planning to take up the issue with the International Cricket Council (ICC) after Raja tweeted following the cancellation of the series that, "Crazy day it has been! Feel so sorry for the fans and our players. Walking out of the tour by taking a unilateral approach on a security threat is very frustrating. Especially when it's not shared!! Which world is NZ living in?? NZ will hear us at ICC."

Indian paddlers shine in ITTF Kazakhstan Open

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian TT pairs of Siddhesh Pande and Mudit Dani, and Fidel R Snehit and Sudhanshu Grover ended their campaign with mens doubles bronze medals at the 2021 ITTF Kazakhstan International Open in Karaganda.

Both the pairs displayed a great show throughout the tournament before suffering defeats in their respective semi-finals. Maharashtra duo Mudit and Siddhesh suffered a 0-3 loss against the Saudi Arabian pair of Ali Alkhadrawi and Abdulaziz Bu Shulaybi.

In the second men's doubles last-4 clash, Snehit and Sudhanshu too went down fighting 2-3 against tough

Kazakh pair of Alan Kurmangaliyev and Kirill Gerassimenko.

The Hyderabad paddler Snehit was equally impressive in the singles category as he entered the final after defeating Pavel Platonov of Belarus 4-1 comfortably in the semifinal. The world No. 405 Indian will take on world No. 46 Kirill Gerassimenko of Kazakhstan in the gold medal match.

The pair of Kaushani Nath and Prapti Sen too stormed into the women's doubles final as they outclassed the Uzbek duo of Kamila Khalikova and Mekhrinis Norkulova 3-1 in the last-4 match. They will now face Valeria Kotcyur and Valeria Shcherbatykh of Russia in the final.