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CHAY'S NEXT TOO,  
TO BE A LOVE  
STORY?

Page 12

## BIHAR MLA SPOTTED ON TRAIN IN UNDERGARMENTS BOOKED

An MLA of the ruling JD(U) in Bihar, who hit the headlines for travelling by a New Delhi-bound train in undergarments and quarrelling with co-passengers when they took umbrage, has been booked under various sections of the IPC besides the SC/ST Act, officials said here on Sunday. They said the FIR was lodged on Saturday at the GRP police station in Ara, based on a complaint lodged against the MLA Gopal Mandal. The complainant, Prahlad Paswan, had recorded his statement at GRP New Delhi on Friday soon after the train reached its destination.

## FIVE ULTRAS HELD FROM CHHATTISGARH FOREST

Five Naxals were nabbed by a joint team of the police and security forces in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, an official said on Sunday. Three tiffin bombs were recovered from the five ultras on Saturday by a joint team of the CRPF, DRG, CAF and police personnel out on a search cum area domination operation in the jungles of Kangodipara village in the Phulbagdi police station area, Sukma Superintendent of Police Sunil Sharma told reporters. A case under the Explosives Substances Act was registered against these Naxals identified as Kalmu Sanna (36), Muchaki Poja (31), Kalmu Ganga (24), Muchaki Ayata (31) and Muchaki Ayata (31), he said.

## CASE AGAINST C'GARH CM'S FATHER FOR ALLEGED DEROGATORY REMARKS

Raipur police have registered a case against Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel's father Nand Kumar Baghel for allegedly making derogatory comments against a community, an official said on Sunday. After a controversy erupted over the alleged remarks of his father, the chief minister said he was pained by such comments and asserted that nobody was above the law in his government and police will take an appropriate action in the matter. Following a complaint filed by the 'Sarv Brahmin Samaj', the D D Nagar police here registered an FIR late Saturday night against Nand Kumar Baghel (86), the official said.

## At 70%, PM Modi's approval rating highest among 13 global leaders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose approval rating, according to a US think tank, had dipped to 66% in June 2021 marking a 20-point dip from his peak position in 2019, has not only covered his lost ground but has the highest approval rating among 13 of the world's top leaders today.

As of September 2, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's approval ratings were the highest among 13 world leaders surveyed by Morning Consult.

The survey data is updated on a weekly basis.

This week, at 70 per cent, PM Modi is ahead of Mexican President Andres Manuel Lopez Obrador, Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi, German Chancellor Angela Merkel, US President Joe Biden, Australian

'The highest ranking for the country's top leader Narendra Modi in the global approval rating is a matter of pride and honour for the country'



Modi:	70%
López Obrador:	64%
Draghi:	63%
Merkel:	52%
Biden:	48%
Morrison:	48%
Trudeau:	45%
Johnson:	41%
Bolsonaro:	39%
Moon:	38%
Sánchez:	35%
Macron:	34%
Suga:	25%

## Amit Shah hails top rating of Modi

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday hailed the finding of a global survey, which ranks Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the leader with the highest approval rating, and said it reflected the 'unwavering faith' of every Indian in his works and visionary leadership. The data by Morning Consult, which regularly tracks popularity ratings of a host of global leaders, has put Modi with 70 per cent approval on the top of a list which included US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. 'Self-reliant India and its hard-working leadership are leading the world. Prime Minister @narendramodi continues to top the list of world's most popular leaders with 70 % Global Approval Rating.

## Check fake Covid vaccine, Union govt tells states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has shared a set of parameters with all states and UTs to enable service providers and monitoring teams under the national COVID-19 vaccination programme to identify any fake COVID-19 vaccines so that they are not administered in the country.

This comes days in the backdrop of concerns flagged by the World Health Organization (WHO) over counterfeit/falsified Covishield vaccine being identified in the South-East Asia and Africa region of WHO.

Currently, the Serum Institute of India's Covishield, Bharat Biotech's Covaxin and Russian vaccine Sputnik V are being administered to eligible beneficiaries under the ongoing COVID-19 inoculation drive in the country.

"It was requested that the vaccines need to be carefully authenticated before use...the information on genuine COVID-19 vaccine labels and additional information of the COVID19 vaccines in use is being enclosed for reference of program managers and service providers under the National COVID-19 Vaccination Program.

## Swaminathan Foundation hails reforms in AP agriculture sector

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a shot in the arm for the Andhra Pradesh government, the services provided in agriculture and allied sectors have come in for praise by the Swaminathan Foundation which hailed them as number one in the country. The delegation, who was on a visit to the Krishna district in the State, visited the Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBK). They praised the extraordinary services provided by the Integrated Call Centers and the Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBK) Channel.

Swaminathan Foundation representatives Dr Ramaswami Rajkumar and Dr Gopinath, along with the Integrated Call Centre team, visited the Kesarapalli RBK at Gannavaram in Krishna district on Saturday. They inspected the



place and spoke to the farmers at the centres.

Agricultural Technology Management Agency (ATMA) Director Pramila explained the services provided to the agriculture and allied sectors in the state.

Representatives of the foundation said that the call centre here was much better than the call centre run by their foundation in Tamil Nadu.

## Fake websites of popular brands duping people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Four people were arrested for allegedly running fake websites of multiple reputed brands and duping aspiring businessmen on the pretext of getting them franchise, dealership and distributorship, police said Sunday.

They said the accused -- Vinay Vikram Singh (37), Vikas Mishra (24), Vinod Kumar (27) and Santosh Kumar (32) -- were arrested during raids in Delhi, Bihar, Haryana, and Punjab.

They ran fake sites of reputed brands such as Amul, Patanjali and Haldiram by getting them registered with similar sounding domain names and promoting them through Google Ads for higher ranking and online visibility, a senior police officer said.

## Inflows rising at Prakasam Barrage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Floodwater inflows are gradually increasing at Prakasam barrage due to rains in the catchment areas upstream and release of water from the Pulichintala project. More than 69,000 cusecs of water was released from the Prakasam barrage on Sunday and over 7,500 cusecs of water was released into irrigation canals.

The Prakasam barrage received huge quantities of floodwater this

## India's Medals



The 22-year-old Nagar, seeded second, defeated Hong Kong's Chu Man Kai 21-17 16-21 21-17 in the men's singles SH6 class final to retain his unbeaten run at the Games

## Tokyo Paralympics

## Krishna secures gold, Suhas clinches silver

PNS ■ TOKYO

Krishna Nagar secured a second gold medal in badminton after Suhas Yathiraj claimed a silver as it turned out to be a Super Sunday for the Indian badminton contingent at the Tokyo Paralympics here.

The 22-year-old Nagar, seeded second, defeated Hong Kong's Chu Man Kai 21-17 16-21 21-17 in the men's singles SH6 class final to retain his unbeaten run at the Games and join compatriot Pramod Bhagat in the gold medal winning list.

Bhagat had claimed India's first gold in badminton in SL3 class on Saturday.

"This is a dream come true. I want to thank my father, mother, uncle, auntie, God, my coaches," said Nagar after winning India's fifth gold at the Games. "This is the first time that badminton has been added to the Paralympics and I hope that India will keep winning and doing their best at upcoming

Games."

Suhas ended his campaign with a silver after going down fighting against top seed Lucas Mazur of France in the men's singles SL4 class final.

The 38-year-old Noida district magistrate, who has an impairment in one of his ankles, produced an entertaining performance before narrowly going down 21-15 17-21 15-21 to two-time world champion Mazur in the summit clash.

Bhagat and Palak Kohli, however, lost 21-23 19-21 in mixed doubles SL3-SU5 class bronze medal playoff.

Nagar, who has a short stature impairment, picked up the sport after being encouraged by his cousin.

However, he started playing the sport seriously only four years back and ended up winning a bronze at Para Asian Games before claiming a bronze and silver at 2019 World Championships in singles and doubles respectively.

## Experts: 'Tunnel' beneath Delhi Assembly building needs to be investigated

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Historians and heritage experts, including those from the ASI, have called for carrying out a scientific investigation of a tunnel located beneath the sprawling building of the Delhi Assembly, which has again captured the imagination of the people.

The 'mystery tunnel', first reported around 2016, has sparked multiple speculation, and experts said it will be too early to draw any conclusion unless the structure is thoroughly examined from an archaeological standpoint or any documentary evidence is found.

The subterranean structure's mouth lies just below the floor of the assembly hall of the iconic building (Old Secretariat), which was constructed in 1912 by the British after the imperial capital was shifted from Calcutta to Delhi, and it is being planned to be thrown open to the public next year.

Delhi Assembly Speaker Ram Niwas Goel on Friday had said that historical significance of the tunnel is yet to be established but it is conjectured that the tunnel connects the assembly building to the Red Fort.

He also claimed that there was an "execution room" at the site where Indian revolutionaries were brought to by the British.

Many historians and heritage experts, including those who have done extensive research on the multi-layered history of Delhi, however, have expressed scepticism over the claims and suggested scientific investigation of the structure and the site.

A senior Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) official said that theories and conjectures abound in absence of investigation.

"So, the structures beneath need to be seen archaeologically, first. And, even if there are obstructions due to metro and flyover pillars, technology is there to investigate to test the theory. Without investigation, it would not be wise to make comments," he told PTI.

Also, the Red Fort link theory seems a bit implausible as the distance between the 17th-century Mughal monument and the British-era landmark is over six km, and with a low height, a tunnel that long would be hard to imagine as it would also be hard to navigate, the official said.

## PAGE 4 One year on, Antarvedi chariot burning case still a mystery

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Court litigations and a plethora of objections from various quarters notwithstanding, the State government is firm on shifting the Executive Capital of the State to Visakhapatnam.

While the government has initiated a series of steps to develop the Port City,

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) heavyweight and MP V Vijayasai Reddy, announced that the government had decided to turn Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram into twin cities with the development centred around the Greenfield Bhogapuram Airport.

Interacting with the media on Sunday, Reddy said that once the Bhogapuram Airport is completed



it would be the centre point to both Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram and both the cities would be developed further as twin cities in the State.

After the completion of the Bhogapuram Airport, the existing airport in Visakhapatnam city

## YSRCP heavyweight and MP V Vijayasai Reddy announced that the government had decided to turn Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram into twin cities.

would be returned to the Indian Navy. The present airport is a strategic base of the Navy. After the Bhogapuram Airport is ready, the Navy would completely take over the existing airport, Reddy said.

To ensure a hassle-free road journey to the Bhogapuram airport, the government had decided to lay a 70 m wide highway from

Visakhapatnam to the airport, the YSRCP MP said and disclosed that considering the vehicular traffic and other international standards, the Union Urban Development and National Highways departments would sanction the funds for the proposed new highway. Already, the Centre had given its nod for the new highway.

Talking about the future water needs of the region, he said that works were in full swing to bring the Godavari waters from Purushottampatnam to Visakhapatnam. The government was very keen to develop Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram with highways, flyovers, and other infrastructure facilities to meet the challenges of the future, Vijayasai Reddy said.

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
**Month & Paksham:**  
Shravana & Krishna Paksha  
Panchangam  
**Tithi :** Chaturdashi 07:38  
**Nakshatram :** Magha 17:51  
**Time to Avoid :** Time to Avoid (Bad time to start any important work)  
**Rahukalam :** 7:38 am - 9:10 am  
**Yamagandam :** 10:42 am - 12:14 pm  
**Varjyam :** 1:36 am - 3:09 am  
**Gulika :** 1:46 pm - 3:18 pm  
**Good Time :** (to start any important work)  
**Amritakalam :** 3:29 pm - 5:04 pm  
**Abhijit Muhurtham :** 11:49 am - 12:38 pm

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
**Forecast:** Thunderstorms  
**Temp:** 31/25  
**Humidity:** 77%  
**Sunrise:** 6:02 am  
**Sunset:** 06:25 pm  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated SEPTEMBER 5, 2021 5:00 PM



# Monday Mirchi

## Struggle of a senior officer

Time changes everything and those in power should always remember this. Take for example the plight of senior IAS officer VS Bhaskar who recently retired as additional chief secretary of the Assam government and came to Hyderabad to meet officials in the Telangana government. He is on an assignment to build a Bhavan for the Assam government in Hyderabad and needs help from the Telangana government. But as every officer in Telangana claimed to be 'busy', he could not meet anyone last fortnight. He called and sent messages to a number of officers in Telangana only to draw a blank. He is now wondering how to reach out to any of the concerned officers to discuss an inter-governmental issue. Since none of the officers concerned is responding, the vexed officer is now trying to meet the Chief Minister's chief advisor Dr Rajiv Sharma.

## What is in the report?

Is there more to the Election Commission of India's announcement on Saturday regarding by-poll dates for the Assembly constituencies than meets the eye? Although many circles thought that Huzurabad would also go for by-polls, the EC surprisingly announced by-poll dates for the Assembly segments in West Bengal and Odisha, while skipping those in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh.

In fact, the Telangana government had informed EC that it had no objection to the dates being considered by the poll panel. But based on the state government's report, EC finally decided not to announce by-poll date for Huzurabad.

Now BJP and Congress leaders are wondering what is in the report that was submitted by the Telangana government. They strongly believe that the report has mentioned something different that convinced the EC to skip the Huzurabad by-poll. Now top political leaders are asking journo to get a copy of the report submitted by the Telangana government to the EC to find out the 'truth'.

## 'Darawni Dharani' becomes CS' priority

Dharani portal, despite its overarching merit and support from Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, has continued to plague officials and members of the public with its seemingly never-ending problems

so much so that cynics have started calling it 'Darawni' portal, fearlessly playing on its name.

Dharani-related grievances and issues which have persisted due to lack of appropriate modules to correct them upon field verification, particularly those concerning ownership, have become potent weapons in the hands of opposition parties.

Hundreds of farmers and landowners, in the process of going round revenue offices in vain for redressal of their grievances, have understandably turned restive. No wonder, the portal has become a frightening area of operation for babus engaged to fix its so-called teething troubles.

Going against the tide, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, who also heads the Department of Revenue and is the Chief Commissioner of Land Administration, has to take the bull by the horns.

Despite being hard-pressed for time, the Chief Secretary, though busy tackling the pandemic situation with its focus on vaccination drive, keeping welfare schemes going while implementing new ones like Dalit Bandhu, and reopening of key sectors one by one to put the State economy back on track gradually, has apparently realized that it was time he turned his attention to streamlining issues related to Dharani.

Last week he himself conducted an orientation programme for newly appointed Collectors of 10 Districts on the working and importance of Dharani portal. Known to be a taskmaster CS clearly instructed district collectors to see resolution to the Dharani problems without delay.

## Trashing tahsildars

Administratively speaking, tahsildars may have lost their mojo in the revamped revenue set-up in Telangana. That does not mean babus with political connections can ride roughshod over them. An audio clip in which West Godavari District Collector Kartikeya Misra is purportedly trashing his subordinates, specifically Grade One officers Tahsildars, as 'useless fellows' has gone viral, creating ripples among the babudom in Andhra Pradesh. Everyone is shocked to listen to the words used by Misra. People feel that most of the civil servants, especially during their posting as a district collector, consider the district territory as their fiefdom and expect all their subordinates to treat them as 'Rajas'. The grades of officials working with them do not count and respect is a scarce item.

-Yours truly

# Andhra-Telangana water row may get further complicated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With both Andhra Pradesh and Telangana sticking to their stand over sharing of river waters, no end appears in sight to the water war between the two Telugu states.

The walkout of Telangana from the KRMB meeting on September 1 indicates that both states are not ready to yield and the dispute may get further complicated in the coming days.

Though Union Jal Shakti Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat exuded confidence last month that the tension between the Telugu states will ease, the outcome of the KRMB meeting suggests that the row may hot up further.

Telangana staged the walk-out after KRMB refused to concede its plea to be allowed to generate power at Srisailem hydel station.

Heated arguments between the officials of the two states were seen at the board meeting presided over by MP Singh.

Defending the power generation, Telangana's Special Chief Secretary of Irrigation Rajat Kumar argued that this is being done only to evacuate water from the reservoir to meet the state's irrigation and drinking water requirements from Nagarjuna Sagar downstream. The water was anyway getting stored at Nagarjuna Sagar and

also meeting the needs of the Krishna delta system.

The officials also told KRMB that there was no other way for Telangana to meet its large requirement of power for its lift irrigation schemes.

Andhra Pradesh, on the other hand, wanted KRMB to take steps to implement its orders directing Telangana to stop power generation.

KRMB told Telangana that power generation at Srisailem would be allowed only after meeting the water requirements for irrigation and drinking water purposes in the Krishna basin. Its chairman mooted a separate meeting to discuss the power generation issue but the Telangana delegation opposed the idea.

Rajat Kumar recalled that the Srisailem project was originally conceived to generate hydel power by the Planning Commission and that 180 tmcft water should be released to Nagarjuna Sagar dam.

After staying away from a couple of meetings of the KRMB, Telangana attended the 14th meeting to put forth strong arguments. Its officials alleged that Andhra Pradesh was raising the issue of power generation to divert attention from the RLIS and other projects being built by it illegally.

Telangana also raised the demand for allocation of Krishna water between AP

and TS in the ratio of 50:50 per cent. The board, however, decided to retain water sharing in the river between AP and TS in the ratio of 66:34 for the current year like the last six years since bifurcation of undivided AP.

AP and TS shared 811 tmc ft in the ratio of 512:299 tmc ft. Claiming that the agreement to share water in this ratio was temporarily fixed for 2015-16, Telangana wanted the ratio revised to 50:50 till an award was delivered by the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-II.

It argued that the state's requirement in Krishna increased considerably after the completion of Kalwakurthi, Nettekpadu and Bheema lift-irrigation projects.

Andhra Pradesh also wanted the ratio to be revised to 70:30 per cent but the board ruled out any revision.

Telangana also demanded that the unutilised share of the state in its water allocation for a year be carried forward to the next year. The state did not use 45 tmc ft water in 2020-21 and 50 tmc ft in 2019-20. However, KRMB rejected this demand.

Telangana was further irked by the board not accepting its demand that the surplus water over and above 811 tmc ft be accounted for. It alleged that Andhra Pradesh was diverting surplus water during flooding from the Pothreddypadu head regulator and Handri Neeva

projects.

The water disputes between the two states have their roots in the pre-Telangana era. Leaders of Telangana region in united Andhra Pradesh had always complained about the injustice meted out to the region in allocation of rivers waters and construction of irrigation projects by successive governments.

In fact injustice in allocation of water resources, funds and jobs was the slogan on which the TRS fought for separate statehood to the region.

After TS gained statehood in 2014, the disputes over sharing of water intensified as upper riparian state Andhra Pradesh was accused of drawing more water by taking up illegal projects.

The July 16 notification by the Jal Shakti Ministry added a new dimension to the ongoing row. As per the notification, from October 14, the management and control of irrigation projects on the Krishna and Godavari rivers will vest with the respective river management boards and not the state.

A total of 36 projects in the Krishna basin and 71 projects in the Godavari basin will come under the purview of KRMB and GRMB respectively.

Telangana has objected to the notification saying the states should have been consulted before issuing the same. Andhra

Pradesh has welcomed the notification but with certain riders.

Meanwhile, Telangana's TRS government has come under flak from opposition parties for what they call its failure to protect the state's interests. They alleged that the TRS government did not present a strong case in favour of Telangana at the KRMB meeting.

The Congress party has demanded immediate steps to stop Andhra Pradesh from diverting Krishna water outside the basin. They slammed Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao for not taking up the issue during his meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Rao, who was in Delhi to lay the foundation stone for an office of TRS, called on Modi and some central ministers but he did not raise the river water dispute. "CM KCR's visit to Delhi was for his personal benefit and he did not bother about the state's interests," said former minister Nagam Janardhan Reddy.

TPCC Revanth Reddy alleged that KCR ignored the water issue and deliberately stayed away from KRMB meetings.

BJP state president Bandi Sanjay Kumar too targeted KCR saying he stayed away from the KRMB meeting to cover up his failures. He alleged that Telangana's interests have been mortgaged in getting the Krishna water share.

## West, North India to witness heavy rainfall in next three days...

Continued from Page 1

Rainfall activity is very likely to increase with scattered to fairly widespread rains over most parts of northwest India with isolated heavy falls over Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand, north Punjab and Jammu region and east Rajasthan during September 7-9.

After recording deficient rainfall in August, the IMD has predicted above-normal precipitation in September. The rainfall deficit until August 31 was nine per cent. The deficiency until September 5 was nine per cent.

While issuing its forecast for September, IMD Director General Mrutunjay Mohapatra on Wednesday said the shortfall recorded during August is likely to be compensated with excess rainfall in the current month.

## Krishna secures gold, Suhas clinches...

Continued from Page 1

The world No. 2 also won a silver in Brazil and two gold medals in singles and doubles in Peru last year.

He also claimed two gold medals at the Dubai Para Badminton International in April this year.

Nagar, who last played Chu Man Kai in the Thailand para badminton two years ago, came into the match with a 2-1 head-to-head advantage.

It turned out to be a pulsating contest as the duo fought tooth and nail but the Indian showed better nerves to come up trumps in the end.

The duo played short rallies initially and Nagar managed to lead 4-2 and 8-6 before Chu Man clawed back and led 11-9 at the break after the Indian hit wide.

Chu Man continued in the same vein and soon opened up a 16-11 lead. But Nagar tightened his net play and covered the court well to draw parity at 16-16 before winning another

rally with a backhand return. Another backhand flick gave him three game points and he sealed it when his rival went to net.

Chu Man recovered to lead 11-7 in the second game after an initial close battle. The Thai player stayed ahead and eventually unleashed a smash to take the match to the decider.

Nagar got his act together in the decider, cruising to 5-1 lead before moving to 7-2 with Chu Man struggling with his finishing.

The Indian led 11-7 with a looping forehand return before moving to 13-8 after resumption. However, errors crept in his game, allowing Chu Man to level at 13-13.

Nagar stepped up his game in the final stages and unleashed a series of smashes. He grabbed four match points with another superb return, squandered one before rushing into the arms of coach Gaurav Khanna in celebration after his rival went wide again.

Earlier, unseeded Suhas, the district magistrate of Gautam Buddh Nagar (Noida), became the first-ever IAS officer to win a medal at the Paralympics.

"I'm quite happy with the performance but I should have finished it off in the second game," he said.

"So I'm a little disappointed that I didn't finish it off because I had a handsome lead in the second game. But congratulations to Lucas. Whoever played better is the winner."

In SL4 class, shuttlers have lower limb impairment/severe and they play standing. In bronze medal play-off, second seed Tarun Dhillon, however, went down 17-21 11-21 to Indonesia's Fredy Setiawan in 32 minutes.

In his gold medal match, Suhas stepped it up on the big stage and dominated the proceedings early on.

Suhas led 11-8 at the first break. Playing with a smile, the Indian controlled the proceedings with Mazur looking jaded. He grabbed five game

points and next pushed one at the backline to pocket the first game.

However, Mazur dug in and lead at 6-5 in the second game before Suhas again led 11-8. The Indian maintained his lead at 15-12 but Mazur grabbed nine of the last 11 points to roar back into the contest.

Suhas rode on his flurry of smashes to make a superb start to the decider but Mazur again levelled at 9-9 before eking out a three-point lead at 17-13. He sealed the contest when the Indian went to the net.

A computer engineer, Suhas went on to become an IAS officer and was at the forefront in the fight against COVID-19 pandemic as a Noida DM.

On the court, he has won gold medals at 2017 BWF Turkish Para badminton championship in men's singles and men's doubles. He also won gold in 2016 Asia championships, besides a bronze at 2018 Asian Para Games.

## Swaminathan Foundation hails reforms in AP...

Continued from Page 1

The call centre had a staff strength of 80 academics and a team of eight scientists. They said that 700 to 800 calls received every day reflects the excellent performance of the call centre.

Speaking further, the representatives said that providing seeds, fertilisers, and pesticides to farmers at the village level through RBKs was a very important and great gesture. The kiosk and digital library at RBKs are also a very good service, they added.

The team also expressed happiness over the manner in which RBKs have been transformed into knowledge hubs. The team appreciated the management of the RBK channel right from the Commissioner to the field level officers. The beneficial programmes being aired which involved partnerships from the model farmers to the common farmers were truly commendable, they said.

The team said that they would bring the innovative programmes as envisaged by Swaminathan being undertaken here to the attention of the Centre through their Foundation. The revolutionary changes brought by AP in the field of agriculture would serve as a role model at the national level, they said.

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹251
Without Skin	₹271
Broiler at Farm	₹139
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	422
HYDERABAD	398
VISAKHAPATNAM	422
RETAIL PRICE (IN VIJAYAWADA)	₹4.22

## Fake websites of popular...

Continued from Page 1

Police said during investigation they found the gang was linked to around 126 cyber fraud incidents across 16 states and duped over Rs 1.1 crore from people so far.

The police got 17 bank accounts of the gang frozen, they said.

According to police, the matter came to light after one of the gang's victims approached the police telling them she was duped by them.

In her complaint, she told the police she wanted to run a Haldiram outlet and while surfing online, she came across a website claiming to be of Haldiram and it offered franchise and dealership.

When she contacted on the given mobile number, she was asked to fill some forms, submit documents and pay various charges for verification, security deposits etc and ended up being duped of Rs 11.74 lakh over a period of two months, the police said.

When she was asked to pay another Rs 1.6 lakh on a flimsy ground, she realised she has fallen prey to a fraud in the name of Haldiram dealership, they added.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Cyber) Anyesh Roy said that during the course of investigation, it was found that a large number of fake websites are running in the name of Haldiram, and all these websites are offering franchisee of Haldiram for huge amounts.

## V-P: Medical education and treatment should be affordable for common man

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said that serving in rural areas should be made mandatory before granting the first promotion to doctors in the government sector.

Speaking at the 11th annual Medical Teachers' Day Awards function here, the Vice President said three to five years service in rural areas for young doctors was

essential while pointing out that 60 per cent of the country's population lives in the villages, an official release said.

"It (serving in rural area) must be made mandatory. I know that it will not be liked by many. But, I feel that is the need," Naidu said.

The Vice President stressed the need to increase the number of medical colleges while referring to the government's efforts

to bridge the gap in doctor-patient ratio in the country. He said the doctor-patient ratio was 1:1,456 as against the WHO norm of 1:1000.

Expressing his appreciation at the government's plan to establish at least one medical college in each district, he also pointed out that the urban-rural ratio of doctors was also highly skewed with more medical professionals opting to work in urban areas.

## Check fake Covid vaccine, Union govt...

Continued from Page 1

"The service providers and monitoring teams for COVID-19 vaccination may be informed about these details and to ensure due diligence towards recognition of counterfeit vaccines," Additional Secretary Manohar Agnani said in a letter to additional chief secretaries and principal secretaries (Health) of all states and UTs on September 2.

A genuine Covishield vial bottle will have the parameters like the SII product's label shade in dark green, the brand name with the trademark

mentioned on the original vaccine and dark green aluminium flip-off seal.

The font of the generic name is un-bold, (Recombinant) is printed at the end of the generic name, overprinted with CGS NOT FOR SALE.

The SII logo is printed on the adhesive side of the label and at a unique angle and position which can be identified by only a select few who are aware of the exact details.

The lettering is printed in special white ink to be more clear and readable. According to the parameters, the entire label has been given a special

texture honeycomb effect which is visible only at a specific angle.

At strategic locations, the honeycomb design has been altered slightly and certain additional special elements added to the texture design such that it is not visible to the layman, but people who know the subtle changes can easily check and verify the authenticity of the label and vial.

The anti-counterfeit features in the Covaxin label include invisible UV helix (DNA-like structure) which is only visible under UV light, micro text hidden in label claim dots, which is written as

COVAXIN, green foil effect in X of 'Covaxin' and holographic effect on COVAXIN. As for Sputnik, imported products are from two different bulk manufacturing sites from Russia and, hence, there are two different labels for both these sites. While all the information and design are the same, only the manufacturer name is different.

For all the imported products till now, the English label is only available on the front and back of the carton of 5 ampoule pack, while for all other sides, including the primary label on the ampoule, it is in Russian.

## Experts: 'Tunnel' beneath Delhi Assembly building needs to be...

Continued from Page 1

There are also multiple passages to reach the Yamuna river from the Red Fort. Without investigation, it is difficult to tell if the purpose of the tunnel in question was to escape or to store and if it was built before the construction of the early 20th century structure that stands over it, experts said.

Another ASI official said no communication has been received by the Archaeological Survey of India from the Delhi Assembly authorities on carrying out archaeological examination of the tunnel.

Designed by architect E Montague Thomas, the current assembly building initially served as the Secretariat of the imperial government while New Delhi capital was being built.

Located in the prime Civil Lines area, the handsome white-colour landmark, also housed the Central Legislative Assembly when it was shifted to the new Parliament House near Raisina Hill in 1927.

Historian and author Swapna Liddle also feels the Red Fort link theory remains a speculation as it has no backing of archaeological or documentary evidence.



"Another possibility is that this was a 'tahkhana' (a cellar) for storage or hiding, given the British had grown wary of the native population after the 1857 Mutiny. So, a safe passage or hideout may have been built beneath the building," she told PTI.

Liddle, author of 'Connaught Place and the Making of New Delhi' and former convener of the INTACH Delhi Chapter, also said that a conjecture that the tunnel pre-dates the assembly building also does not seem very plausible, 'as why would the British take the tunnel out in the Ridge area'.

The Delhi ridge area was a site of major actions during the First War of Independence in 1857.

Rana Safvi, historian and author of 'Shahjahanabad: The

Living City of Old Delhi', feels that it was "highly improbable" that such a long tunnel linked the two buildings from two different eras.

"The British documented everything meticulously and if there was such an arrangement, some archival record or map must have shown it. Also, logically, there seems no reason as to why would they build such a long underground passageway," she said.

City-based conservation architect and urban planner AGK Menon, however, said, if it was secret tunnel, "of course, there will be no record of it".

"The tunnel is visible, now it should be investigated thoroughly and architecturally examined before drawing any conclusion or propounding any theory," he added.



# Naidu to CM: Scrap GO 217, restore rights of fishermen

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Sunday urged Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to withdraw GO 217 and restore full fishing rights on tanks, canals, and reservoirs to the fishermen societies all over the State.

In a letter sent to the Chief Minister here, Chandrababu Naidu stressed the need for extending financial support to the Backward Classes who were leading their livelihoods based on community professions and handicrafts. The government should take up this responsibility. In the past two-and-a-half years, the socio-economic conditions of the BCs had come under threat. The dependents on long-held community professions were losing their livelihoods.

Naidu said that over 16,800 BCs had lost their positions of leadership in the local bodies after their decades-old political reservations were cut down from 34 percent to 24 percent. The government was carrying out a lot of publicity on the corporations that had no funds and no duties. The BC sub-plan was undermined and the BCs were removed from all platforms of decision-making in the government.



Naidu recalled that in the past, 75 percent subsidy loans were given to fishermen through the inland societies on nets, boats, ice boxes, mopeds, auto-rickshaws and vans. Women were given Rs 10,000 financial assistance. All such benefits were withdrawn in the past two-and-a-half years.

Alleging a raw deal to the BC communities, Chandrababu Naidu asserted that their party would strongly oppose the GO 217 as it was aimed at threatening the existence of the fishing profession. It was condemnable that the Government was putting tanks, canals, and reservoirs to auction instead of allowing fishermen's societies to hold their rights as before. The GO 217 was like a noose around the necks of the fishermen. It would reduce them to coolies, he observed.

## Pay compensation to kin of Covid-hit teachers: Lokesh

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) national general secretary Nara Lokesh on Sunday urged Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to announce compensation for the suffering families of the deceased teachers who succumbed to the deadly Coronavirus infection. Lokesh extended his Teachers' Day greetings on the occasion of the birthday celebrations of former President Dr. Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan. The teachers' impact in the moulding of lives and careers of the young generations would be significant and long-lasting. All possible help should be provided to such teachers during a pandemic crisis like the present one. In a statement here, Nara Lokesh recalled that many private teachers suffered from loss of incomes and jobs during the Covid lockdown. Some teachers were even forced to work as coolies. The present government had not extended any support for their families. Many other States had given special packages to the affected sections of society but not the



Andhra Pradesh Government. Lokesh said that injustice was done to the teachers and young teacher aspirants since the YSRCP came to power. The Chief Minister promised to take up mega DSC in the first year of his regime but he fell silent on this from the moment he won the elections. There were instances of young aspirants who took their own lives after their dreams of becoming Government teachers got shattered. Nara Lokesh said that the government had no respect for the profession of teachers. At least, financial assistance should be given to save the families of the deceased teachers from hunger pangs. The affected families would face greater suffering if the elected Government would turn totally indifferent.

# BJP politicising govt's decision on Ganesh Chaturthi: YSRCP MLA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada-Central MLA Malladi Vishnu has alleged that the BJP leaders in the State are politicising the decision taken by the YSRCP government on Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations. He pointed out that BJP State president Somu Veerajulu and other leaders are hell-bent on slinging mud on the government on every issue.

Stating that the BJP government at the Centre had completely ignored the release of funds it owed the State, Vishnu said that the State government

had postponed Dr YSR Awards programme and Teachers Day celebrations keeping in view steady progress of Covid positive cases in the State. He also said that the number of people was restricted during the Independence Day celebrations.

He said that the government wanted to celebrate Vinayaka Chaturthi celebrations on a lowkey at home in view of the safety of the public. On the other hand, mass gatherings were strictly prohibited by the police. He said that even during Ramzan and Bakrid festivals the same Covid restrictions were



imposed.

The Vijayawada-Central MLA found fault with the BJP State leaders for not putting pressure on the Centre to release Covid vaccination stocks and Covid tests in the state. He said that the AP BJP leaders were

provoking the people by saying that the State police were resorting to the arrest of the Hindus. He recalled that during attacks on temples, the Centre did not respond to the demand for a CBI inquiry and the BJP leaders were shamelessly criticising the government.

Praising the secularist principles of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, Vishnu strongly condemned BJP State president Somu Veerajulu's comments and said that the CM had a dip in Krishna river and even in the Ganga river apart from visiting several temples.

# Jupudi slams TDP for remarks on DGP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Government Advisor (Social Justice) Jupudi Prabhakar has praised Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for implementing social justice and criticised the TDP leaders for their remarks on DGP.

Speaking to the media on Sunday, he said the Chief Minister had shown his commitment to social justice in the recent appointment of 481 directors for 47 corporations, by prioritising weaker sections and embarking on a new generation of politics.

"Of the total 481 posts announced, 58 percent were given to SCs, STs, BCs and



minorities and 52 percent were allocated to women, which was never done by any state in history," Pabhakar said.

He said that the Chief Minister had always aimed to

take forward the poor and weaker sections politically, economically and socially and once again set Andhra Pradesh as a role model in implementing social justice. However, the TDP, which could not stand these good deeds being a feudal force, was only trying to irk the government.

He slammed Opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu, for neglecting the downtrodden and keeping them away from political empowerment in his tenure.

Prabhakar demanded that Naidu answer what justice he had done to the weaker sections and backward communities during his rule.

Chandrababu Naidu always looked down upon the Dalits, and was now spewing venom on the government with jealousy, he said.

Prabhakar criticised Chandrababu Naidu and his son Lokesh for cornering DGP Gautam Sawang, who belongs to the ST community. He asked them to mind their language while talking about the DGP, and slammed them for demanding resignation especially from a person who has an excellent track record.

He said that the Opposition TDP leaders had no moral right to speak about social justice for SC, ST, BC, and Minority communities.



## Krishna SP presents weekly rewards to cops

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Constable G Ramakrishna attached to the Bandar Taluka police station received the weekly best performance reward presented by district Superintendent of Police Siddharth Kaushal on Sunday.

Ramakrishna was chosen for his outstanding performance in detecting a crime.

The district police select one police personnel from home guard to Assistant Sub-inspector of police ranks for the weekly reward.

The SP said constable Ramakrishna successfully cracked the mystery behind

the death of an old woman whose body was found in a decomposed state in a drain at Kalekhanpet within the Bandar Taluka police station limits. Though no sufficient clues were available, Ramakrishna successfully cracked the mystery. The district police also presented the best performance rewards to RSI Satyanarayana of Armed Reserve, Machilipatnam, Head constable Panduranga Rao, Avanigadda, Swathi, woman head constable Dishia police station, Machilipatnam, constables Syam and Kishore of Kanchikacharla and Kaikaluru police stations.

# OBC students urge PM to include quota laws in 9<sup>th</sup> Schedule

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The All India OBC Students Association (AIOBCSA) has written a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi to include all laws related to reservations in the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

The historically neglected socially and educationally marginalised but numerically higher Other Backward Classes (OBCs) are facing severe difficulties in accessing quality education and employment due to lack of reservations or fewer reservations in states like Madhya Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Odisha, West Bengal, and other states where there is less than 27 percent OBC reservations, said AIOBCSA president Gowd Kiran Kumar.

The cap on 50 percent reservation is the reason for not implementing the reservations in such states. On the one hand, Article 15(4) and Article 16(4) give special provisions for the Union or

States/UTs to take necessary actions for the uplift of the Socially and Educationally Backward Classes (SEBC) and the other, there is a cap on the reservation by the judiciary, he added.

This legal hurdle for the empowerment of the SEBC must be addressed by placing all acts related to reservation policy must be kept under the Ninth Schedule to the Constitution, so that the law cannot be challenged as violative of any of the fundamental rights contained in Part III of the Constitution including Articles 15 and 16, and get protection under Article 31B of the Constitution. The reservations in Tamil Nadu is under the Ninth Schedule of the Indian Constitution.

"We requested the Prime Minister to take a progressive decision in order to strengthen the process of social justice system in the country and do justice to the historically neglected socially and educationally backward classes," Kiran Kumar said.

## 3 members of gold smuggling gang nabbed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Police have nabbed three members of a gang involved in gold smuggling in Vijayawada for some time now. The accused are being questioned by the Suryaraopet police.

According to sources, the Task Force officials of the Vigilance and Enforcement Department are investigating the case. Gold biscuits are brought from Saudi to India via Qatar and Singapore illegally through air and waterways. The smuggling gang was selling gold biscuits worth Rs 5 lakh for just Rs 4 lakh. The gang collects the money from the customers in advance and delivers gold biscuits after a month.

The gang has been into gold smuggling since 2018 and for the last four months, the smuggling has come to a halt.

It is alleged that the kingpin of gold smuggling is Akula Venkata Raghavendra Rao who was discharging duties in Railways and also as the Athletic Federation of India Joint Secretary. He represented India at the Asian Games in Qatar. In 2018, he came in contact with some gold smugglers.

Since then, he has been into gold smuggling and was accused in various cases, sources say.

Railway and Durga temple employees paid huge amounts for gold biscuits to the smugglers. As many as 20 employees of Railways have paid Rs 6 crore to the smugglers for gold biscuits. As many as 12 Durga temple employees paid Rs 1.5 crore to them.

As the amount paid to the smugglers was unaccountable money, they didn't come forward to lodge a complaint against the smuggling gang.

Police registered cases and started an investigation.

# Rajakas seek SC status

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP Tourism Development Corporation (APTDC) Director and AP Rajaka Sangham leader Loigidi Jayanna has said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has been working for the development and welfare of Backward Classes which is the reason behind the establishment of Corporations for them.

The State-level meeting of Rajaka (washerwoman) community was held here on Sunday in which leaders of the community from 13 districts participated and discussed their issues.

Jayanna recalled that CM Jaganmohan Reddy, during his Padayatra as Opposition leader,



promised to give MLC posts, other nominated posts as well as include the Rajaka community in the SC category. He appealed to CM Jagan to fulfil his promises which would be helpful to their community development in all aspects.

Jayanna said that recently they met Kadapa MP YS Avinash Reddy and other leaders seeking resolution of issues

and that they had promised to arrange a meeting with CM Jaganmohan Reddy and soon a delegation from the community would take their issues to the notice of the Chief Minister.

The leaders of the Sangham further said that they were planning to conduct a State-level Rajaka Garjana in the coming days.



# WG bags U-19 girls' handball title

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

West Godavari district team clinched the 7th Junior (Under-19) girls Handball championship which was concluded at Vikas educational institutions at Nunna, near Vijayawada, on Sunday. Visakhapatnam and Prakasam districts girl teams secured second and third places in the two-day inter-district tournament organised by Krishna District Handball Association. Speaking on the occasion,

Krishna - Guntur Teachers' MLC T Kalpalatha said that the State government was giving top priority to sports and games equally with education. Every student should participate in at least one sport event and playing games would help improve their health, she said.

She said that the government had been implementing sports reservation of 2 percent in education and jobs, she added.

Later, prizes were distributed to the winning teams.

Vijayawada Mayor Rayana Bhagya Lakshmi, Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) observer and Krishna district chief coach B Srinivasa Rao, Corporator Malleswari Balaram, Vikas Educational Institutions vice chairman Naredla Satyanarayana Reddy, Andhra Pradesh Handball Association general secretary P Satyanarayana Raju, Krishna district secretary N Vamsi Krishna Prasad, Vikas B.Ped College principal Dr S Raju and others were presented.

# Removal of Valmiki from Tribal dept website flayed

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Former Tribal Welfare Minister and TDP leader Kidari Sravan on Sunday strongly objected to the removal of the Valmiki, one of the sub-sects of tribal groups, from the official website. Due to this lapse by the State government, a large number of innocent students of Valmiki community are unable to upload their information to get the government welfare schemes, Sravan pointed out.

Speaking to the media, the former minister criticised the State government for trying to damage the peaceful atmosphere among the tribal groups. He demanded that the government immediately upload the Valmiki sub-sect on the official site to ensure all the eligible students and unemployed youth get their share of benefits.

Meanwhile, the CPM strongly objected to the move and demanded that Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy intervene in the matter and upload the Valmiki sub-sect in the official site.

In fact, after several brainstorming sessions, the Government of India listed the Valmiki sub-sect in the tribal groups in 1950. Only the President of India and Parliament have the right to make any changes in the list of tribal groups. However, the State government, without looking into the facts and laws, removed the Valmiki sub-sect from the list of tribal groups, CPM State secretary P Madhu said.

The CPM also demanded that the government register SC/ST atrocity cases on the officials responsible for the removal of the Valmiki community from the list of tribal groups, he added.

# Executive panel of cycling body elected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Cycling Association's (KDCA) new executive committee was elected unanimously at the general body meeting held at Sri Viswa Bharathi Vidyaniketan at Patamata in Vijayawada on Sunday.

A Sudhir Kumar was elected as the new president and D Srinivasa Rao as vice-president. Senior Physical Education Teacher K Suguna Rao was elected as general secretary, retired PET K Purushotham as joint secretary.

Advocate and senior weightlifter BKV Ramani officiated as the election officer and Krishna District Sports Authority (DSA) Athletic coach K Vamsidhar and AP Cycling Association representative V Kanakarao attended as observers.

AP Cycling Association president RVR Ramana Murthy and secretary P Murali complimented the newly-elected executive committee.



# Swarnim Vijay Varsh: Victory Flame arrives in 'Pratigya Sthal'



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the ongoing Swarnim Vijay Varsh celebrations, Victory Flame arrived at Naval Station Bheemunipatnam on Sunday. The Victory Flame was brought to 'Pratigya Sthal' where it was received by Station Commander, Naval Station Bheemunipatnam and Commanding Officer INS Kalinga Commodore Neeraj Uday and Commanding Officer INS Karna in the Captain Chetan R Upadhyay in

the presence of 1971 war veteran Commodore M Sudhakar Rao.

The Induction Ceremony was witnessed by Ch Srinivas Rao, ACP (North Zone), Visakhapatnam, other veterans, Naval personnel, and their families with great zeal and enthusiasm.

The year 2021 is being observed as 'Swarnim Vijay Varsh' by the nation on the occasion of 'Victory of Indian Armed Forces' over Pakistan in the 1971 Liberation war of Bangladesh.

As part of the celebrations, four Victory Flames were lit by the Prime Minister at the National War Memorial in Delhi on December 16, 2020, and started their journey around the length and breadth of the country.

Earlier, the Southern Victory Flame was formally inducted at Eastern Naval Command after it was brought to Visakhapatnam from Andaman and Nicobar Islands. The Victory Flame also was taken to Sainik School, Korukonda, on Saturday.



# Antarvedi chariot burning case still remains mystery

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The burning of the chariot of the famed Sri Lakshminarasimha Swamy temple at Antarvedi in EG district is still green in the memories of crores of devotees though one year has elapsed but the incident, which hurt the sentiments of the devotees, still remains a mystery.

Unidentified miscreants reportedly set fire to the sacred chariot of the temple on the night of September 5, 2020. Not a single person has been arrested in the case which reflects the indifference of the officials.

At the same time, 14 people were arrested and they were sent to jail for registering their protest against the incident.

The burning of Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple created a nation-wide sensation and leaders of all political parties have condemned it. The BJP activists held agitations in protest against the burning temple chariot at Antarvedi.

The then Executive Officer Chakradhar of the Antarvedi temple and six temple staff were suspended from duties after the incident for dereliction of duty.



Further hurting the sentiments of crores of Hindus, the suspended Executive Officer was given posting and was appointed as EO in a temple which is equal to Assist Commissioner post.

Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy announced a CBI probe into the burning of temple chariot. But the CBI has not taken up the case for investigation so far. Significantly, the person who was suspected to be



the accused was killed in a road accident two months ago, raising many doubts on the burning of chariot incident. The local police registered a case on the incident but no proper investigation was held.

Moreover, the State government failed to fulfil its promise of constructing a new chariot to the temple with its own funds. However, the Endowments department, with the CGF funds, constructed the new chariot at a

cost of Rs 80 lakh which was consecrated by Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy on February 17, 2021.

It has not been investigated to establish whether there was any conspiracy on the burning of the temple chariot or it was an accident.

BJP media in-charge Malakondaiah said that the would launch an agitation once again if the State government did not conduct a CBI inquiry into the burning of Antarvedi temple chariot.

## 2 teachers from AP state receive national awards

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Four teachers from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh were among 44 teachers who were presented national teacher awards by President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday on the occasion of Teachers Day.

From Telangana, P Ramaswamy of Siddipet and K Rangaiah of Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district received the national teacher awards.

Ramaswamy is the head teacher at Zilla Parishad High School Indranagar at Siddipet while Rangaiah is serving as acting head master at MPPS Sawarkheda of Kerameri mandal in Kumuram Bheem Asifabad district. K Phani Bhusan Sridhar and S Muni Reddy from Andhra Pradesh were the recipients of national teacher awards. Sridhar is serving as teacher at Zilla Parishad High School at Lingarajupalem in S Rayavaram mandal of Viskhapatnam district while Muni Reddy is a teacher at ZP High School at M Paipalli in Irala mandal of Chittoor district.

The Ministry of Education gives national awards to teachers every year to celebrate the unique contribution of some of the finest teachers in the country and to honour those teachers who through their commitment and hard work have not only improved the quality of school education but also enriched the lives of their students.



# Red sanders worth Rs 2 cr, vehicles seized, 13 arrested

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The Chittoor district police arrested 13 interstate red sanders smugglers and seized 3.5 tonnes of the precious wood worth Rs 2 crore and vehicles here at Ponthala Cheruvu crossroads in Piler on Sunday.

The arrested persons were identified as K Surendra Reddy (27), V Ashok Kumar Reddy (40), A Murali (29), Y Ramanjaneyulu (41), T Villesh (26), S Sanjeev (24), G Vijayakumar, S Sakthivel, R Vijaya Kumar, D Yelumalai, M Vel Swamy, C Sriramulu

Venkatesh and R Hari Murthy. While five among those arrested belong to Kadapa and Chittoor districts, eight others arrested by the police belong to different parts of Tamil Nadu.

Chittoor SP S Senthil Kumar, addressing the media about the arrests, said that special teams were formed to keep a strong vigil on the movements of red sanders smugglers in the district under the supervision of Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) Officer V Vidyasagar Naidu. Acting on specific inputs, the SEB special teams, along with

Piler urban police, conducted vehicular checks near the Ponthala Cheruvu crossroads in the early hours on Sunday.

During the checks, the special team caught three vehicles including a truck laden with a large consignment of red sanders logs.

Police seized 115 red sanders logs weighing 3.5 tons and worth Rs 2 crore along with a truck and two cars.

The SP appreciated the efforts put in by Piler CI A Sadik Ali and his team and the SEB team for arrests and a large seizure of red sanders consignment.

# 8-year old emerges breadwinner to blind parents, two brothers

PNS ■ CHITTOOR

An eight-year-old boy B Gopala Krishna Reddy, has emerged as breadwinner to his blind parents and two younger brothers and the boy earns money by selling provisions in an e-auto rickshaw at Gangudupalli village in Chandragiri mandal.

Bandi Papireddy and Revathi are blind. Papireddy lost his vision during his childhood while Revathi lost her vision a few years ago. The blind couple has three sons Gopala Krishna Reddy, Himavanthu Reddy and Ganapathi Reddy. Gopal Krishna Reddy is the elder son of the couple. The blind couple gets an old age pension from the government which is only their financial source.

Gopala Krishna Reddy, as an elder son, has taken the responsibility of leading his family. He is studying third class in the government high school.

At a tender age, the boy



somehow got an e- auto rickshaw and learned to drive. Now he sells provisions on his e-auto rickshaw and earns money to lead his family. His

family lives in a shed at the outskirts. The villagers appeal to the government to extend some financial help to the boy's family.

# Ministers inaugurate village secretariat, school building

PNS ■ ELURU

Ministers Mekathoti Sucharita, Ch. Sriranganadha Raju and Taneti Vanita inaugurated the newly constructed village secretariat building, a school building and other development works which were carried out at a cost of Rs.3 crore in Penumantra mandal in WG district at various places on Sunday.

The Ministers inaugurated the newly constructed village secretariat building, constructed at a cost of Rs.35 lakh at Mallipudi village, a Rythu Barosa Kendra (RBK) constructed at cost of Rs.21.80 lakh, a school building constructed at a cost of Rs.15 lakh and other works.

Speaking on the occasion, Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharita said that the state government was implementing many welfare schemes, at the same, development works were also being carried out. She said that RBKs are being set up across the state to better serve



the farmers.

"In the first phase, 15 lakh houses are being constructed for the houseless poor. 31 lakh women were given house patas in a bid to fulfill their own house dream", she claimed. The Home Minister said that so far 46 lakh women had downloaded the Disha app.

Housing minister Ch.Sri Ranganatha Raju said that development works, including newly constructed RBK building, school building, roads at various places were carried out at a cost of Rs.3 and they were inaugurated and made available to the people today.

# Two ancient stone idols of Hindu deities discovered

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Two stone idols of Hindu deities were discovered while ploughing agriculture land at Gannavaram in Veligandla mandal on Sunday.

According to official sources, a farmer Ambaiah was tilling his land for cultivation. He discovered two idols of Hindu gods, Sri Krishna and goddess Lakshmi Devi in his field. The ancient stone idols were intact. Lord Krishna was seen holding a flute while goddess Lakshmi Devi was seen in sitting posture in the idols.

As the news of unearthing idols Hindu deities in the field spread all over, a large number of devotees from nearby villages rushed to the field and started performing poojas.



## SHORT TAKES

## Ex-CBI JD visits M Agraharam



**KAKINADA:** Former Joint Director of CBI Lakshminarayana visited Moolastana Agraharam in Alamuru mandal in Kothapeta constituency. Village Sarpanch Lanka Vara Prasada Rao and former Sarpanch Venkanna welcomed him at the village. Lakshminarayana interacted with the villagers and knew the problems of farmers. He took 12 acres of land on lease in East Godavari and cultivated it.

## Woman axes hubby to death

**KAKINADA:** In a gruesome incident, a woman killed her husband by attacking him with an axe when he was asleep at Gadimoga panchayat in Tallarevu mandal on Sunday. The police said that the deceased was Viswanathapalli Appa Rao (48) working as a labourer in a shrimp factory. The accused cut his neck with an axe, killing him instantly. The accused Devi (45) was arrested and was sent to judicial remand. The body was shifted to the government general hospital for post-mortem examination. DSP Bhimarao and Kakinada Rural Circle Inspector Akula Muralikrishna visited the scene of offence and conducted a preliminary investigation.

## Youth washed away in canal

**KAKINADA:** A youth was washed away in Yeleru canal at Mukkolli village in Kirlampudi mandal in the district on Sunday. Police said that seven youths entered the canal for a swim and one of them was washed away and he was identified as Mahesh. According to locals, the youths were in an inebriated condition. Locals said that similar incidents took place earlier also.

## Boy drowns in water pit

**HYDERABAD:** A five-year-old boy died after falling into a water pit at Idikudi of Chandur mandal in Nalgonda on Sunday. V Bhadri, son of Venkatesh and Devakamma, died after falling into the pit that was dug for mixing pesticide in their agriculture fields. The pit was filled with water due to the rains in the last two days. The couple, along with their son and daughter, went to their agriculture fields for cultivation work. While they were busy with work, the boy accidentally slipped into the pit while playing alone. Other farmers noticed it and retrieved his body from pit and shifted him to a hospital, where doctors declared the boy brought dead.

## Auto driver killed by speeding biker, one person arrested

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A college student was arrested after he crashed his bike into an auto-rickshaw, killing the driver of the auto in the incident that occurred at Narayanguda crossroads late on Saturday night.

The deceased person was identified as 27-year-old Abdul Raheem, an auto driver by profession.

Police officials identified the motorist as Jashwanth, 20, a resident of Nallakunta studying at CMR College.

According to the police, Jashwanth along with his friend who was riding pillion,

was driving a 250 CC KTM Adventure, in a rash and negligent manner from Barkatpura when he crashed into the auto-rickshaw, which was passing from YMCA towards Chikkadpally, at Narayanguda cross road.

The auto then flipped over twice, throwing Raheem onto the road, resulting in grievous injuries. He was admitted to Osmania General Hospital for treatment where he succumbed to his injuries while undergoing treatment. The duo sustained minor injuries in the incident. The police registered a case and arrested him.

# Sale of banned gutkha, khaini goes unchecked in Guntur

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Guntur district has earned distinction for quality chillies and now the district has also earned dubious distinction for indiscriminate sale of banned tobacco products like gutkha and Khaini.

The government has banned the consumption of tobacco products like gutkha, khaini and other such products. However, they are available in the district everywhere and the gutkha trade is thriving.

The police recently seized banned tobacco products worth crores of rupees during the raids at Chilakaluripet, Dachepalli and Narasaraopet. The banned tobacco products

are brought from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka states illegally.

"Gutkha and Khaini sachets are available at all paan shops and kiosks. There are lakhs of people who consume the banned tobacco products. Some people are so addicted to Gutkha and Khaini that they consume more than five sachets per day" a youth who is addicted to Khaini told this reporter.

In some areas the banned tobacco products are sold openly in the paan shops and kiosks without any fear of police checking. The government set up a Special Enforcement Bureau especially to curb the illegal import and illegal sale of liquor and

banned tobacco products. But the SEB raids failed to deter the traders.

"Since the sale of gutkha, Khaini and other such products yield good profits in a short time, many petty traders are willing to sell by managing the police", a paan shop owner said.

There is an allegation that a noted political leader was involved in the banned tobacco products trade. The leader tried to contest in the Assembly polls in the 2019 elections but he was not given a ticket. A case was registered against him after the new government formed in the state.

"The police conduct raids on small and petty shops and

seize gutkha, khaini and other such products. But the police do not conduct such raids on big godowns where huge amounts of banned tobacco products were stored", a paan shop owner said.

The police a few months ago conducted a raid and found banned tobacco products were being made in a godown allegedly owned by a ruling party MLA. There are allegations that the police connived with the traders and that is why the sale of gutka and khaini sachets is going unabated in the district, a petty trader said. Significantly, doctors say that the consumption of tobacco products leads to mouth cancer.





INDIA  
CORNER

## 1<sup>st</sup> 'textile parcel' spl train flagged off from Surat in Gujarat to Bihar

The first 'textile parcel' special train having 25 new modified goods wagons customised to carry textile material left from here in Gujarat to Bihar with an aim to boost Surat's textile market through an economical, faster and safer mode of transport, Western Railway officials said on Sunday. Minister of State for Railways and Textiles Darshana Jardosh flagged off the train on Saturday from the Udhna New Goods Shed in Surat for Danapur near Patna and Ram Dayalu Nagar near Muzaffarpur in Bihar, the Western Railway (WR) said in a release. "Textile traffic has been loaded for the first time in customised NMG (new modified goods) wagons at the Udhna New Goods Shed. In this direction, the textile parcel special train, consisting of 25 NMG wagons, was run for the first time from the Udhna New Goods Shed carrying textile material to Patna and Muzaffarpur," said the release issued by WR chief public relations officer Sumit Thakur. "It will especially benefit the textile market of Surat area as it's economical, faster and safer. This has in-turn provided an opportunity for tapping the huge potential of the textile market and will cater to the transportation needs of textile industry godown hubs in and around the Surat city," the release said.



## PM Modi's approval rating shows popular support to his policies: BJP

BJP leaders on Sunday cited a global survey, which ranks Prime Minister Narendra Modi as the leader with the highest approval rating, to assert that this shows popular support to his pro-people policies. The data by Morning Consult, which regularly tracks popularity ratings of a host of global leaders, has put Modi with 70 per cent approval on the top of a list which included US President Joe Biden and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson. "The highest ranking for the country's top leader Narendra Modi in the global approval rating is a matter of pride and honour for the country. This is a result of people's blessings to his welfare policies for the masses," BJP president J P Nadda said. The party's chief spokesperson and Rajya Sabha MP Anil Baluni said India's prestige has risen in an unprecedented manner under Modi. BJP spokesperson Sambit Patra said, "Global leader with highest approval ratings, that's our Prime Minister Narendra Modi ji with 70 per cent approval ratings. Congratulations."



## Cong leader claims 10 Indian sailors stuck on ship in Northern Cyprus

A Rajasthan Congress leader has claimed that 10 Indian Merchant Navy sailors have been stuck on a ship anchored off a port in Northern Cyprus for a month and has sought the Centre's intervention to rescue them. The sailors are among the 13 crew members of the ship and are not being allowed to disembark, according to the family of one of them. Bundi-based Congress leader Charmesh Sharma alleged that the company that originally owned the ship sold it to another firm, which is pressuring the crew to take it to Libya. In his appeal, Sharma sought the immediate intervention of President Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Ministry of External Affairs to rescue the sailors. One of the sailors, Sanjeev Singh Rathod from Udaipur in Rajasthan, recently called his wife on WhatsApp and told her about the grave conditions he and other crew members are facing. He told her that there is a scarcity of food and their lives are in danger, Sharma told PTI on Sunday. Singh's wife Sweta said she last spoke to her husband on Saturday and he told her that the port authorities were going to block their mobile networks and internet connections. The crew members are not being allowed to disembark from the ship and are being pressured to take the ship to a port that is in a war zone in Libya, she claimed.



# Appointment of HC judges made on the basis of seniority, merit: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The process of appointment of judges to high courts is through a well established process where the HC collegium considers seniority, merit and all inputs received by the government, the Supreme Court has said while imposing a cost of Rs 5 lakh on an advocate for abusing the court proceedings by trying to stop the elevation of a judge.

A bench of Justices S K Kaul and M M Sundresh made the observation while dismissing a plea filed by an advocate seeking directions to consider the representation submitted by him and take necessary action with the proposal of appointment of high court Registrar General A Venkateswar Reddy as a judge of the Telangana High Court.

The three-member Supreme Court Collegium in a meeting held on August 17 had approved the proposal for elevation of six judicial officers as judges of the Telangana High Court including Reddy.

The top court was hearing a plea filed by advocate B. Sailesh Saxena seeking directions to the Centre, Telangana and Registrar (Vigilance & Administration) of the High Court of Telangana to consider the representation submitted by him and take necessary action as per law for proceed-



ing further with the proposal of appointment of Reddy as a judge of the Telangana High Court.

The petitioner made several allegations against the high court Registrar General and stated that his recommendation should not be processed for his elevation as a judge.

The petitioner advocate in his plea claimed that he was a legal advisor for the family of a MP belonging to the Telugu Desam Party and legal counsel for other politically connected persons and alleged that an FIR at the instance of the Registrar was filed on July 31, 2017 in pursuance to a direction issued by high court with a view to

harass him. The bench said the high court registrar general, as a responsible officer, only followed the direction passed by the high court judge.

The apex court said the high court opined that what the petitioner was attempting to do was to seek an investigation into the allegation that the evidence collected by the investigating officer in criminal complaints filed against him as fabricated and that was found to be nothing but a deflection towards derailing the course of investigation in the complaints lodged against the petitioner.

The writ petition was found to be thoroughly misconceived

and appears to be an abuse of process of law and a counterblast to the series of criminal complaints in which persons belonging to the 'so-called noble profession got involved'.

"We are surprised as the brazenness of the petitioner now filing the present petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India, the aforesaid being the finding against him, to now somehow see that the elevation of respondent No. 4 does not take place on the account of these proceedings initiated by the petitioner.

"This is gross abuse of process of law. The process of appointment of judges to the

high court is under a well known established process where the collegium of the high court considers recommending the names and in case of judicial officers by seniority and on merits. Thereafter, the proposed IB inputs and other inputs are obtained and the Government processes names.

"The collegium of the Supreme Court has the benefit of all the material before taking a call on whether to recommend the name or not. The appointment takes place thereafter by issuance of warrants of appointment. Thus sufficient safeguards exist in the system," the bench said.

The top court said the endeavour of the petitioner is to harass respondent No. 4 (high court registrar General) and abuse the court proceedings.

"We are of the view that appropriate imposition of costs seems to be the only solution. We thus dismiss the writ petition with costs of Rs 5 lakh to be deposited with the Supreme Court Advocates On Record Welfare Fund within four weeks. We also think it appropriate that the Bar Council of Telangana examines the conduct of the petitioner as a member of the 'Noble Profession' and for that purpose a copy of the order be sent to the Bar Council of Telangana," the bench said.

## Two health workers show symptoms of Nipah virus

PNS ■ KOZHIKODE

Two more people have been identified with symptoms of Nipah virus infection, Kerala health minister Veen George said here on Sunday.

The two are among the 20 high risk contacts of the deceased 12-year-old child, she said.

"We have identified 188 contacts till now. The surveillance team have marked 20 of them as high risk contacts. Two of these high risk contacts have symptoms. Both are health workers. One works with a private hospital, while the other is a staff member of Kozhikode Medical College hospital," she told reporters after chairing a high-level meeting to take stock of the situation.

She said all the 20 high risk contacts will be shifted to the Kozhikode Medical College by evening, while other contacts of the child have been asked to remain in isolation.

The pay ward at the Medical College Hospital has been completely converted into a dedicated Nipah ward, she said. The boy died at a hospital here early this morning. The samples of the boy, which were sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune, confirmed the presence of the virus.



## Nipah-infected child's last rites of done following health protocol

PNS ■ KOZHIKODE

The 12-year-old boy who passed away early this morning due to Nipah virus infection here was laid to rest at nearby Kannambarath Khabaristan by the health department officials after following complete health protocol.

The officials, clad in PPE kits, performed the last rites. Only a few close relatives wearing similar gear, were in attendance.

The Kozhikode corporation health staff sanitised the

entire area after the rituals. Later the body was buried in a 12 foot specially prepared grave.

The boy from nearby Mavor died of Nipah at a hospital here in the wee hours on Sunday.

Samples of the boy, which were sent to the National Institute of Virology, Pune, confirmed the presence of the virus.

Local authorities have geared up to check further spread of the virus in Kozhikode and surrounding areas.

## MP: MBBS 1<sup>st</sup> year students to now read about Hindutva

PNS ■ BHOPAL

MBBS students in Madhya Pradesh will be lectured about RSS founder KB Hedgewar, Bhartiya Jana Sangh leader Deendayal Upadhyaya, Swami Vivekanand and B R Ambedkar as part of the first-year foundation course, state Education Minister Vishwas Sarang said on Sunday and added the move is aimed at instilling social and medical ethics among the students.

Hedgewar, Upadhyaya, Swami Vivekanand are part of the Hindutva pantheon of the Sangh, believed to be the ideological mentor of the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP).

The minister said the first year MBBS students will also learn about Maharshi Charaka, one of the principal contributors to the Ayurveda, and sage Sushrut, known as the father of surgery in India.

"The students of the first-year course of MBBS (Bachelor of Medicine, Bachelor of Surgery) will be lectured about Hedgewarji, Upadhyayji, Swami Vivekanandji, Ambedkarji and other great personalities. Lessons on these great person-

alities will inculcate values, principles, social and medical ethics in the students," Sarang told PTI.

The next academic session for MBBS students is likely to start by this year-end.

"The National Medical Council (NMC) has said that ethical values should be the part of the foundation course in the first year (of MBBS). So we thought of incorporating these great personalities for building the character of students," he said.

The minister said states finalise the content of the foundation course.

Keshav Baliram Hedgewar, a surgeon, founded the Rashtriya Swayamsewak Sangh in Nagpur in 1925, based on the ideology of Hindutva. Deendayal Upadhyaya was one of the prominent leaders of the Bhartiya Jana Sangh, the forerunner of the BJP.

"RSS first chief Hedgewarji, Upadhyayaji, Vivekanandji and BR Ambedkarji were great visionaries and human beings. Their lives were based on values. Their thoughts, conduct, and the very personalities are inspiring," the minister said.



## 'Over 66.89 cr Covid19 vaccine doses provided to states, UTs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 66.89 crore Covid vaccine doses have been provided to states and UTs so far, and over 1.56 crore doses are in the pipeline, the Union Health Ministry said on Sunday.

The ministry said over 4.37 crore balance and unutilised covid vaccine doses are still available with the states and UTs to be administered. The vaccination drive has been ramped up through availability of more vaccines, advance visibility of vaccine availability to states and UTs for enabling better planning by them, and streamlining the vaccine supply chain, the ministry said.

## Formulate big plans for next Olympics: Anurag Thakur

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Union Minister for Youth Affairs and Sports Anurag Thakur on Sunday urged all the sports federations to formulate big plans for 2024 and 2028 Olympics so that India improves its position further.

"All the sports federations have to play an important role and we have to work together to formulate a big project so that in 2024 and 2028, India's position improves further," Thakur, who also holds the Information and Broadcasting portfolio, told reporters.

Thakur is here to take part in a host of events including interaction with the athletes.

According to him, the public perception towards sports has changed with the govern-



ment giving impetus to athletics, which resulted in India's impressive performance in the Olympics and Paralympics.

"The biggest thing is the changing attitude towards sports. When the government is giving all sorts of facilities

and when the Prime Minister Narendra Modi himself speaks to the sportspersons and encourages them, it has impact on every section of the society, whether be it individual, corporate, sports associations or any other organisation," Thakur said.

The Minister recalled that when he was in the flight, people came and complimented him saying that India has done well in the Olympics and Paralympics.

He said the response cricket used to get is now seen for Olympics games.

India won seven medals in the Tokyo Olympics including one gold and two silvers, while in Paralympics this year, the country won 19 medals including five gold and eight silver.

## Curbs eased, still security forces remain deployed in Jammu, Kashmir

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Restrictions were eased out in Kashmir, but security forces continued to remain deployed on the fourth day of Sunday following the death of hardline separatist leader Syed Ali Shah Geelani, officials said.

There are no restrictions on movement of people in the Valley, but barricades continue to remain in place along roads at several areas, especially those leading to Geelani's residence at Hyderpora here in view of the fourth day of mourning for the separatist leader.

Security forces have been deployed in strength in the city and elsewhere to maintain law and order, they said.

The traffic movement has increased across the Valley, but most of the public transport



remained off the roads, officials said.

Few shops also opened in some areas of the city as well as in other parts of the Valley, they added.

The situation is normal and

under control, officials noted.

The police had on Saturday said several preventive measures had been taken to maintain law and order, including preventive arrests of dozens of miscreants so far.

The police also said several social media platforms, including Kashmir Media Service which are running from Pakistan, have been trying to spread fake news and videos to instigate miscreants to disturb peace.

Even a few local media persons and channels have been found spreading fake news and the police are observing them, maintaining evidence and appropriate actions shall be taken against them, they said.

While voice calling and fixed-line internet services across all operators were restored Friday night after remaining suspended for two days, mobile internet services remained barred.

IGP Kashmir, Vijay Kumar on Friday said the services would be restored on Sunday after a review meeting.



## Prez confers national award on 44 teachers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

President Ram Nath Kovind on Sunday conferred the National Teachers' Awards on 44 teachers from across the country for their contribution to developing innovative methods of teaching.

The national-level awards are given on Teachers' Day to celebrate the unique contribution of some of the finest teachers in the country and to honour those who, through their commitment, have not only improved the quality of school education but also enriched the lives of their students.

Noting that every child has different capabilities and talent, the President said teachers need to focus on the all-round development of students keeping in mind their different needs and interests.

"Teachers should pay special attention to the fact that each student has different abilities, talents, psychology, social background and environment. Therefore, emphasis should be laid on the all-round development of each child according to their special needs, interests and abilities," he said during the virtual award ceremony.

"The primary responsibility of combining the inherent talents of the students lies with the teachers. A good teacher is a personality-builder, a society-builder and a nation-builder," he added.

Kovind congratulated all the teachers who received the award for their distinguished contribu-

tions.

"Such teachers strengthen my belief that the future generation is safe in the hands of our well-qualified teachers. Teachers have a very important place in everyone's life, people remember their teachers lifelong. Teachers who nurture their students with affection and devotion always get respect from their students," he said.

The President urged teachers to inspire and enable their students to envision a golden future and acquire the aptitude to fulfil their aspirations.

"It is the duty of teachers to inculcate interest in studies in their students. Sensitive teachers can shape the future of students through their behaviour, conduct and teaching.

Noting the challenges posed by the pandemic, Kovind said for the last one-and-a-half years, the whole world is going through a crisis caused by coronavirus.

"In this situation, even when all schools and colleges were closed, teachers did not allow children's education to stop. For this, teachers learned to use digital platforms in a very short time and continued the education process.

"Some teachers have developed remarkable infrastructure in schools with their hard work and dedication. I appreciate such dedicated teachers and hope that the entire teaching community will keep on changing its teaching methods according to the changing circumstances," he said.



## Trouble signs

### India needs to be utmost cautious of the unfolding developments in Afghanistan

Of all the countries in south and central Asia affected by the recent developments in Afghanistan, it is India that needs to be extra cautious as the various Taliban factions and the Haqqani Network try to settle internal rivalries, tribal divisions and disagreements to form a government in the country. India's stakes are the highest, given the association with terror of these groups currently trying to put together a government. Equally challenging is Pakistan's active role in reportedly ensuring that the government-formation talks go on smoothly. Terrorist groups inimical to India's interests exist in both the countries and it is too early to take the Taliban's assurances about respecting peaceful relations with India at face value. Hardly did India acknowledge its first formal talks with the Afghan group than a spokesperson for the latter said that they have the right to raise their voice for Muslims in Kashmir. To add to that, the terrorist group, al-Qaeda, also said that liberating Kashmir was part of its greater goal. Fighters of the Pakistan-based Lashkar-e-Taiba and Jaish-e-Mohammad are said to be in Afghanistan, opening up the possibility of using it as a base to launch attacks against India. Then there is the Haqqani Network, which has been responsible for attacks on the Indian embassy in Afghanistan and is a declared Foreign Terrorist Organisation. Such an ensemble forming a government under the supervision of Pakistan is the biggest cause of worry for India.

Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla saying New Delhi's engagement with the Taliban "has been limited" but "reassuring" is the very minimum he could convey without detailing the worries. India is monitoring how the Taliban factions play out the government-formation game. The Taliban is an umbrella of various Pakistan-based "shuras", and their office is in Doha, Qatar. The Miramshah and Peshawar Shuras want their share in the power pie though the Quetta Shura appears to be calling the shots. The Miramshah Shura predates the Quetta Shura while the Peshawar Shura is relatively new. Both have drifted away from the main group to become autonomous power centres. The Quetta Shura has the experience of running an elaborate setup complete with panels arranged like ministries covering various departments. The Doha-based leaders handle the political office but the military commanders in association with the clerics are vociferous. Mullah Yaqoob, son of Emirate founder Mullah Omar, is said to be serious about bringing in some commanders into the Cabinet. Taliban co-founder Mullah Baradar, however, is pushing for political elements. The Pashtun and non-Pashtun groups are staking their claim while the non-Pashtun tribes and the Kandahar faction of the Taliban are sorting out their differences. All the factions understand they have to share power with the Haqqani Network, whose founder was considered the mentor of Osama bin Laden. The Network has no experience in administration and would settle only for "active" duties in the government.



People clear debris from outside Goldberg's Famous Deli in Millburn, New Jersey

## Peace pipe

### The Centre has signed a tripartite agreement with five rebel groups of Karbi Anglong

After a long time, there's some good news from Assam, which had recently witnessed skirmishes at its border with Mizoram. A tripartite agreement has been signed to end the cycle of violence and take the Karbi region towards development. Nearly 1,050 insurgents had in February pledged to shun violence, setting the stage for the signing of this pact by five insurgent groups, the Assam Government and the Centre. The treaty has provisions for the rehabilitation of the insurgents who have laid down arms. Moreover, the Centre will make available a special development package of ₹1,000 crore over the next five years, which the State Government would use in the Karbi areas. The agreement paves the way for greater devolution of autonomy to the Karbi Anglong Autonomous Council (KAAC), protecting the identity, language and culture of the Karbi people. The pact would also ensure that the territory and administration of Assam are not affected, a win-win situation for everyone. Union Home Minister Amit Shah has assured that the Centre would implement the agreement in "letter and spirit". Indeed, that would be the litmus test for the pact as unfulfilled promises would lead to a chaotic situation and the credibility of the Government will suffer.

This agreement can go a long way in resolving such disputes and fulfil the aspiration of local people by offering autonomy at the local level. Most cases of insurgency stem from the fact that the administration is insensitive and does not take local sensitivities into account. The Karbi Anglong movement, which has been going on for quite some time now, has a history of violence. The Karbi district, where most of the Karbis live, had a set of demands including saving their culture, identity and recognising their language. The Karbi insurgency is among several similar "movements" that Assam has seen in recent times. Songbijit, the self-styled leader of the People's Democratic Council of Karbi Longri (PDCK), was allegedly involved in the killing of 69 tribals in December 2014 in Kokrajhar. Several cases are pending against him for allegedly killing non-Bodos and Adivasis between 2014 and 2015. Before forming the PDCK, Songbijit's National Democratic Front of Bodoland (Songbijit) was allegedly responsible for the killing of more than 200 people, mostly Adivasis and Muslims, living in the tribal districts.

# Stress on 'learning' in learning schools

COVID-19 hastened the spread of digital education but the biggest challenge is to ensure learning in schools, and transform each one of these into a learning school

Global efforts to universalise basic education have achieved a milestone in terms of attitudinal transformation: Practically every community, or people, is not only willing but also keen to send its wards to school. It severely contrasts with the erstwhile tradition amongst most people in most developing countries, India included, which were averse to schooling, particularly sending girls to school. The global literacy percentage for all males and females is 90 and 82.7. It took more than 60 years to reach the current situation when, on any day, over one billion children should be attending schools. In this encouraging scenario, however, there are several challenges. According to an estimate, 11 per cent of primary schoolchildren and 20 per cent of lower-secondary children are not in schools. Further, there are more non-learners in schools than outside schools. Access and participation deserve continuous attention and streamlining but the biggest challenge is to ensure learning in schools, and transform each one into a learning school. The insistence on learning, and not mere schooling, is no more the concern of academics and educationists alone. The NEP-2020 is conscious of this new responsibility. To imbibe learning, the learner requires a conducive environment. Clean premises, mid-day meals, appropriate equipment, drinking water and sanitation arrangement are a must, but most important is the "Teacher", and her/his own holistic learning and the values that were internalised at the teacher preparation institute. The transition from mere teaching to learning is a major advancement towards the knowledge society. It finds place in most of the dynamic education policies, and NEP-2020 is explicit about it. It will have significant implications towards evaluation and examination reforms. The pandemic created unforeseen challenges before global education policies and systems. The most daunting among these is the prevailing uncertainty on how long it would take to arrive at the normal mode of face-to-face schooling. India's education policy makers were busy finalising the new policy (after 34 years) when the pandemic struck. It was evident that education systems have to remain ever alert to such unforeseen exigencies; NEP-2020 has several indications on alternative strategies, including embedded learning, which came as a great support when children were confined home. Interestingly, what could have taken a couple of more years in utilising digital on large technologies in education was achieved in months, the remotest places not excluded. India salutes its teachers, who promptly familiarised themselves with new gadgets and techniques. The challenge appears in its enormity in most of the Government schools that function with deficiencies and inadequacies. They are to be converted into learning schools. And they require an active, alert and conscious work culture transformation. The teachers and teacher training institutions shall have to walk the extra mile, make such changes in the totality of the institutional functioning in the light of the most prominent principle of education taught to us by Sri Aurobindo: "Nothing can be taught!" Harmonise it with the eternal truth expressed by



Swami Vivekananda: "Education is manifestation of perfection already in man!" The world of education is making attempts to understand this philosophy. The Delores Commission Report of 1996, which made attempts to envision the shape of global education in the 21st century, titled its report 'Learning: The Treasure within'. The Indian philosophical — yet fully pragmatic — basis is totally tilted towards learning, and it was beautifully articulated by Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore: "Every child is blessed with two boons at the time of birth; the power of ideas and the power of imagination." No child is discriminated on this count. It is the transplanted system of education that has enslaved us in a system that makes every endeavour to impede the nourishment of ideas and imagination. One must hasten to add that even earlier, the importance of "learning" was pointed out in learned academic discourse, but in practice the system's rigidity prevailed and not much came out of it. Now that NEP-2020 has proposed organisational and structural changes of far-reaching consequences, the shift towards learning and an entirely new approach in the assessment of learning attain-

THE TRANSITION FROM MERE TEACHING TO LEARNING IS A MAJOR ADVANCEMENT TOWARDS THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY. IT FINDS A PLACE IN MOST OF THE DYNAMIC EDUCATION POLICIES, AND NEP-2020 IS VERY EXPLICIT ABOUT IT

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### STILL IN FULL SWING

Sir — It was evident from the sea of humanity at the Kisan Mahapanchayat in Muzaffarnagar that the farmers' movement for the repeal of the three farm laws is still going strong, belying the Government's expectation that it would fizzle out with the passage of time. It is the rightness of their cause — and their firm belief in its rightness — that sustains their movement in the face of the Government's callous disregard for their legitimate concerns over what the laws mean for their lives and livelihoods.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi never tires of promising to double farmers' incomes, but he is unwilling to provide protection to farmers by legalising the Minimum Support Price (MSP). Realising that it cannot dismiss the farmers' movement as politically inconsequential, the Government has decided to launch 'outreach programmes' in poll-bound Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand to regain the support of farmers. The Government could say the farm laws were needed to improve agriculture but I don't think farmers would buy it. The Modi Government is well advised to see the writing on the wall and repeal the pro-corporate farm laws. In a democracy, there is no loss of prestige in acceding to people's demand.

G David Milton | Tamil Nadu

### AGAINST ALL ODDS

Sir — It is said that man is a slave of circumstances, but circumstances cannot curtail talent and hard work and, at the Tokyo Paralympics, our para athletes proved it. Avani Lekhara, India's star shooter, made this Paralympics special. She not only won a gold medal in 10m rifle shooting, equalling the world record, but also created history by winning a bronze in 50m women's rifle shooting, becoming the first woman player of the country to win two medals in the same Paralympics. Joginder Singh Bedi had earlier won three medals in the 1984 Paralympics held in Britain and America, in which he won a silver and two

## Proud of our para athletes



The way the Indian Paralympics players clinched the all-time greatest medal haul has made the nation proud. India also earned its all-time best finish at 24th with 19 medals in total, including five golds. This is a marvellous year for India's sports history; India had earlier performed its best at the Tokyo Olympics and won its first individual gold in athletics. The Paralympics were also very special because of the enthusiasm and the never-say-die attitude of the play-

ers. The colour of the medal did not matter much because the players fought their hearts out. They also proved that mental strength and willpower can help overcome physical disability.

Players like Bhavina Patel, who started off the tournament with a silver in table tennis, and Sumit Antil, who broke the world record in javelin throw thrice to win gold, to Avani Lekhara who won two medals in the same tournament, records were broken and history was made. These milestones should be the beginning of the end of the taboo against the disabled people. India's performance in the Paralympics before the Rio Paralympics 2016 has been below average. India had won only 12 medals in Paralympics before the Tokyo edition, therefore, this tournament is a special one. However, if these players are forgotten after the Tokyo Paralympics conclude on Sunday, the whole purpose would be defeated.

Kirti Wadhawan | Kanpur

### VOTERS' INCENTIVE

Sir — The freebie culture has moved over from the 'traditional' to the more 'unconventional' varieties and, with elections in the offing, the political parties in Goa are making no bones about their plans to win over the electorate with a slew of such offers. Ahead of the

polls, for decades now, political parties across the country have been magnanimous in their assurances proffering 'material gifts' to the masses to garner their votes. But with modernism pervading every aspect these days, leaders have begun having second thoughts over their parties' appeasement tactics. They have commenced re-writing the very concept of 'gratifying voters for their support' by turning their attention to approaches that could alleviate problems for the common man. Already miffed by the escalating prices of basic commodities and fuel throwing their kitchenomics haywire, it is believed that efforts to tide over their hardships at the domestic front will be greatly appreciated by the aam aadmi. It is this mode of assistance that the present corps of think-tanks in various political dispensations is looking at.

Pachu Menon | Goa

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

## SOUND BITE

The institutions created by Nehru are being sold by the BJP Government to give a fillip to the economy. Why this hatred for Nehru?

Shiv Sena spokesperson — Sanjay Raut

Nobody wants COVID to be the virus that stole Christmas, and we have a plan and the vaccinations available to ensure that's not the case.

Australian Prime Minister — Scott Morrison

PVR's decision to screen the Tamil and Telugu versions of 'Thalaivi' is a ray of hope for the team as well as all the cine-goers.

Actor — Kangana Ranaut

For any sports person, there is no higher achievement than winning a medal in the Olympics or Paralympics. So this medal means the world to me.

Para badminton player — Suhas Lalinakere Yathiraj

No one is above the law, even if that person is my 86-year-old father. His comment against a particular community has disturbed communal peace.

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister — Bhupesh Baghel



## FIRST COLUMN MONETISATION: WRONG CHOICE

Blind privatisation, temporary or permanent, is not a solution



SHIVAJI SARKAR

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman wants to monetise assets in 13 sectors including airports, railways, roads, shipping, sports stadia and gas pipelines. Monetisation means transfer of management and privatisation means transfer of ownership. We may define monetisation as 'temporary privatisation' but how it would finally roll out is to be seen.

The assets are currently valued at ₹1.6 lakh crore worth roads, over 400 railways stations, 90 passenger trains and other assets worth ₹1.52 lakh crore, 25 airports valued at ₹20,782 crore, power transmission assets of Power Grid and others pegged at ₹45000 crore and many more.

The government proposal comes with an irony. In the 1960s, many private corporates sent their sick units for 'temporary management' to the government sector for nursing them back to health as if public sector management ran 'industrial hospitals'. The wheel has since come full circle and assets are being sent to the private sector with "ownership" in government hands.



The PSUs in those days had delivered but would the private sector do the same today?

It appears that the confusion induced by liberalization and globalization of parting with built-in infrastructure by sending it to the private sector is still being considered as the panacea for all economic and industrial ills. It must change. The political parties, including the Left and regional forces like Trinamool Congress and Telugu Desam Party, have failed to come up with alternate suggestions.

The so-called free economy enunciated by the Narasimha Rao government meant creation of assets in all sectors. But Manmohan Singh, P Chidambaram and Montek Singh Ahluwalia changed it to handing over public assets to large private companies. The policy with minor changes was adopted by all subsequent governments. It is now 30 years of "poverty management" of the nation's assets. Even in the present context, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi says he is not against National Monetisation Pipeline but asks why the sale should be confined to a selected few. Most other parties share the view.

The roads to be handed over are in good shape and the private sector will only start exploiting them for maximizing their profits by increasing tolls, fees and seek remission of lease fees showing managed losses.

The railways started commercialising its assets in the 1990s. Little has been achieved. Only two of its 90 trains were leased out. Again nothing new because some private parties in the past also used to run pilgrim or tourist specials for a fee.

The Metro in Delhi ran into losses worth ₹1784 crore against a measly surplus of ₹1084 crore in 2019. All other metros have huge losses, whether in Bengaluru, Kochi, Jaipur, Lucknow, and Noida. Are they awaiting privatization too?

There is a myth that Air India and BSNL were devastated by the bureaucrats. Can the nation forget how under UPA rule, the then civil aviation minister, Praful Patel, banned the national carrier from running in profitable sectors in order to help private airlines profit?

Similarly, the BSNL was turned sick by forcing it to lend national phone and internet infrastructure to create private sector giants. No one answers why VSNL was sold to its rival.

Why was the sick Ruchi Soya taken over? Its study may reveal how monetisation will unfold to help consumers.

The FM says that the properties leased out would be taken back. This is possible in a rent agreement without a murmur but long-term lease of 30 to 60 years could complicate things. Handing over the control of such assets to private is not considered a wise step. Blind privatisation, temporary or permanent, is not a solution.

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

# China's dictatorship diplomacy in Myanmar

The policy of promoting pariah regimes and dictators increases China's strategic depth as such regimes are globally isolated and not accountable to their people



NISHTHA KAUSHIKI

The recent news of China inaugurating its rail link to Myanmar may have been overlooked because of the Afghan mayhem. The project is a part of its sea-road-rail link under OBOR which Myanmar had joined in 2013. It connects Chengdu to Lincang which is opposite Chin Shwe Haw, a town in Myanmar's North East. Myanmar's cities of Mandalay, Lashio and Hsenwi will now see rail connectivity with other intersecting points with China. The larger purpose of this link is to connect China to the Bay of Bengal and finally to the Indian Ocean Region.

In early August, China had transferred more than \$6 million for these projects. Further, in the early months of the military coup in Myanmar, the Chinese referred to the Junta chief, Senior General Min Aung Hlaing, as the "leader of Myanmar" which became "government" by the time Taliban took over Afghanistan. To understand this equation, one must be aware of China's 'dictatorship diplomacy' that it practices towards regimes such as North Korea and some African states.

The policy of promoting pariah regimes and dictators increases China's strategic depth as such regimes are internationally isolated and are not accountable to their people. Their human rights violations are brushed aside and labeled as "internal matters". In 1955, China adopted the principles of non-interference, respect for the sovereignty of others, non-aggression and peaceful co-existence. Nevertheless, this never meant that democracy had to be insisted upon. Beijing cleverly calibrated its foreign policy in contrast to the American policies of promotion of democracy and human rights.

Myanmar is no exception. Various international reports cite simultaneous Chinese arming of the ethnic military factions of Myanmar with sophisticated weapons. In the 1960s and 1970s, Beijing had adopted a policy of arming and training a few ethnic groups in Myanmar owing to their affiliations with the Chinese Communist Party due to their ethnic backgrounds. Beijing found active sympathisers in the Communist Party of Burma (CPB) and incited them against their own government in Myanmar. Later, General Ne Wi (Revolutionary Council government) was replaced by the Burma Socialist Programme Party (BSPP) in 1974 and in the 1980s as pro-democracy movement was brutally crushed. Western sanctions were imposed on Myanmar, but China filled the military and financial void aiming not only to cut down on the Western influence but also to contain India's strategic outreach. Throughout the 1980s, China actively vetoed UN and other resolutions against Myanmar's Junta regime and was able to strategically converge with Myanmar by labelling the US as an "interfering power".

In 1994, China and Myanmar issued



AS CHINA TRIES TO RESHAPE EXISTING SECURITY ARCHITECTURES IN ITS FAVOUR, THE WEST TOO IS RECALIBRATING ITS POLICIES. FOR INSTANCE, DESPITE NOT SUPPORTING THE MILITARY RULE IN MYANMAR, THE US GOVERNMENT ANNOUNCED HUMANITARIAN AID WORTH \$50 MILLION TO MYANMAR IN ORDER TO COMBAT THE COVID PANDEMIC

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



a joint Communiqué that stressed on their common "choice" of social development. Myanmar in return always stood by China on Taiwan and 'one China' policy. From 2014-16, China was the largest military supplier to Myanmar with its arms trade totalling US\$ 440 million.

This 'dictatorship diplomacy' of China may have had two motivations. The first relates to the access to Indian Ocean by bypassing the Malacca Strait and the second is possibly to lay hands on natural resources Myanmar is known for.

China has nurtured the Junta specifically to counter the Indian presence in Myanmar. During late 1980s and early 1990s, India owing to its democratic principles had disapproved of Myanmar's military regime; China took advantage of it. The Junta had already leased Coco and Greater Coco islands to China as also important military installations near Yangon, Moulmein and Manaung and a listening facility in the Ramree Islands (in Rakhine Province). These speak of the depth of Chinese penetration. The installation of a signals intelligence (SIGINT) collecting facility at Zadetkyi Island (near Indonesia's Sabang Island) is disturbing as it is barely 600-odd km away from the Andaman and Nicobar Islands and poses a serious threat to Indian interests.

Currently, China faces its Malacca Dilemma, named after the strait, through which its major share of exports and oil imports pass through. In order to overcome its fears of India's control it made the Kyaukphyu port of Myanmar serve as a terminal for a \$1.5 billion oil pipeline and second natural gas

pipeline running to Kunming in Yunnan Province. In 2007, China sealed an oil pipeline deal that aimed to link Sittwe in Myanmar with Kunming. The following year, Myanmar stripped New Delhi of its preferential buyer status and committed itself to sell its resources to China National Petroleum Corporation for the next 30 years beginning 2013. In 2009, China announced the construction of an oil pipeline through Myanmar to Yunnan. The larger objective of these pipelines is basically to avoid the Malacca Strait as a transit for its oil and other requirements. The penetration of China can only be imagined when in 2017, the road construction project in Myanmar by an Indian company - C&C Constructions - received a setback when Indian workers were abducted by the Arakan Army and building material was damaged.

From an internal security aspect, its support to the insurgency movements of India is another objective of China. The pipelines are accompanied by a road network. In 2015, China completed road construction from the Yunnan province till the Pangsa pass on the border of Arunachal Pradesh citing trade facilitation between India, Myanmar and China. Apart from the trade, what can be the road for? In the past, the porous Indo-Myanmar and Indo-Bangladesh border have been actively used by China to supply arms via Myanmar to fuel the North-East Indian insurgencies. The process that started after the 1962 war also witnessed active training to the Naga insurgents.

Internationally, there are many examples of China's 'dictatorship

diplomacy'. In 1996, amidst the Western sanctions, Chinese companies purchased a 40 percent share in the Greater Nile Petroleum Operating Company. In 2004, when Iran was reeling under international pressure, Tehran agreed to sell to a Chinese corporation \$20 billion worth of natural gas per year. This was in addition to Beijing being the largest purchaser of its crude oil supplies. In the same year, China, opposed to the pressures on Iran, invited it to be a member of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation. Similar approaches have been made in Venezuela, Zimbabwe and North Korea.

As China tries to reshape existing security architectures in its favour, the West too is recalibrating its policies. For instance, despite not supporting the military rule in Myanmar, the US government announced humanitarian aid worth \$50 million to Myanmar in order to combat the Covid pandemic crisis.

Finally, one has no hesitation to put across the view that China's state practice of dealing with pariah regimes along with the democratic ones with the same ease increases the challenges for the world, especially India. Beijing has been able to carve an alternate vision of the world order that presents before the extremist groups and dictators a very lucrative source of gradual legitimization and recognition. The fundamental principles of international law which stand for democratisation and the respect of the wishes of the people are gradually being eroded which will threaten the existing security architectures across the regions.

## POINT COUNTERPOINT

JUST LIKE THE TALIBAN WANT AN ISLAMIC STATE, THERE ARE THOSE WHO WANT A HINDU RASHTRA. THESE PEOPLE ARE OF THE SAME MINDSET.

— LYRICIST  
JAVED AKHTAR



THE PAIN OF CALLING OUT RADICAL ISLAMISM ACROSS THE GLOBE IS EVIDENT FROM @JAVEDAKHTARJADU'S BEHAVIOUR.  
— BJP MP  
MANOJ KOTAK

# Badri 313: The Taliban's special operations unit

The question is how was the Taliban able to raise such a sophisticated force and who trained and armed its members?

After the unceremonious fall of Kabul there have been numerous reports of Taliban Special Forces Units patrolling the Afghan capital. They are always dressed in tactical outfits ready for deployment at a moment's notice instead of the traditional 'salwar' suit. Carrying US-made M4 rifles, US-style night vision devices, body armour, tactical kneepads, and tactical radios, they are capable of achieving any objective with relative ease.

The question is how was the Taliban able to fund such a highly advanced group of soldiers? The Taliban are not just some rag-tag group of rebels. They are among some of the wealthiest and most powerful in the world. Their annual income is estimated to be around \$1.5 billion.



PK VASUDEVA

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According to reports from the UN and NATO, the chief contributors are drug trafficking and opium production, kidnapping and ransom, tax collection, and donations.

According to the UN, the revenue generated from opium production in 2020 was estimated to be around \$460 million. The US itself spent \$8 billion to try and stop it but knowing the US's history with drugs, especially opium, their true motivation is highly suspect. According to a report by the CIA in 2008, the Taliban received \$106 million in donations, mostly from the Gulf States.

The special forces have been specially trained for operations such as assault and house storming with complete tactical precision, which could



be the primary reason for the 'bloodless capture of Kabul'.

These units have the latest arms and defence equipment. It is evident that the Taliban got the state-of-art equipment for the battalion from the departing US Army. It is still an enigma as to who trained them.

The Badri 313 Battalion is currently an elite military unit of the Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. The group takes its name from the Battle of Badr, which happened on March 13, 624 AD, when the

Prophet Muhammad led a victorious battle with 313 men. Elite Taliban units have been reported as being "critical to the taking over of Afghanistan". The Taliban also has another elite unit known as the Red Unit.

These troops are ideologically aligned closely with al-Qaeda. Units termed "Army of Badr" first carried out suicide attacks and raids on positions associated with the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and its allies in 2011, reported the Long War Journal. The Badri 313 Battalion already took part in an attack on the Kabul compound of G4S - the British multinational private security company-- in November 2018.

The Taliban now reported that Badri 313 Battalion had secured the presidential palace and other important

sites in the city. It was reportedly providing "security" at the Kabul Airport. On Twitter they were mocked for showing off their CIA training - their index fingers were typically not on the rifle triggers.

The unit was previously featured in promotional materials distributed by the Taliban, showing them to be equipped with modern military equipment. In July-August 2021, the Taliban released propaganda on Badri 313 Battalion in local languages, English and Arabic. Videos showed Badri 313 soldiers wearing US military night-vision gear, bulletproof jackets in camouflage clothing and modern American rifles and driving Humvees.

The Taliban now boasts of a large cache of 22 EMB-314

Super Tucano light-attack aircraft equipped with GBU-58 Paveway II laser-guided bombing systems. They have access to "attack helicopters and precision-guided munitions". They have captured six MI-24 heavy attack helicopters apparently gifted to the Afghan Air Force by India in 2019. These formidable gunships are capable of fear-some, low-level attack in ground fire conditions. It is a cause for grave concern that 11 American MD-530F light-armed helicopters designed for rapid, low-level attack missions and for special operations are now in their hands in addition to 35 US Black Hawk helicopters, 76 Russian MI-17 utility helicopters, five Cessna Combat Caravan airplanes, and 12 Pilatus PC-12

aircraft. However, they do not have trained pilots and maintenance staff for the attack helicopters for which they may depend upon Pakistan and China.

The biggest aircraft the Taliban now have access to is the C-130 Hercules. They are capable of special operations even from unprepared runway and highly flexible for even Special Forces operations. If the Taliban can get them off the ground, imagine what this means for them.

Gilles Dorronsoro, a specialist on Afghanistan at Sorbonne University in Paris, said these commandos, was part of a larger trend. "We've seen a remarkable professionalisation of the Taliban since the middle of the 2000s," he said.



Facebook sorry for “primates” label on video of Black men

NEW YORK

Facebook has apologized for putting a “primates” label on a video of Black men, according to a report in the New York Times.

The newspaper said the video was posted by a tabloid in June and showed Black men in altercations with white civilians and police officers.

After the video ended, an automatic message popped up that said “keep seeing videos about Primates,” according to the Times.

Facebook turned off the artificial intelligence feature that showed the message, the Times said, and apologized for what it called “an unacceptable error” and told the newspaper that it would investigate further so that it doesn’t happen again. Facebook on Saturday did not respond to a request for comment. But a company spokeswoman told the Times that even though Facebook has made improvements to its artificial intelligence, “it’s not perfect” and has “more progress to make.”

Artificial intelligence has mislabeled people of color before. In 2015, Google apologized after it labeled a photo of two Black people as gorillas.

Nifty up 20% since April Covid shock

Flow of foreign funds is also recovering

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Indian stock market has not just been on a bull run off late, but it has been scaling new highs. The Nifty50, which has crossed the 17,000 level, has witnessed a rise of around 20 per cent since the middle of April when the second wave of Covid-19 wreaked havoc in several parts of the country and lockdowns and curfews were re-imposed.

The country’s financial capital, Mumbai, which houses the bellwether stock exchanges, came under a curfew from April 14 due to the surging number of Covid cases. Delhi was also put under lockdown starting April 20. However, the Nifty50 has risen 19.4 per cent since its closing level of 14,504.80 points on April 13, 2021. On Friday, the Nifty closed at 17,323.60 points, its highest-ever closing level.

In its last trading session, it also touched its all-time high of 17,340.10 points.

On August 31, it hit the 17,000 mark for the first time in its history. It was the fastest 1,000-point gain for Nifty50 as it covered the journey from 16,000 to 17,000 in just 28 days.

The recent surge in the domestic stock market has been largely on the back of gradual easing of the lockdown and curfew measures, and improvement in economic activities.

India’s GDP growth rate for the April-June quarter of FY22 was 20.1 per cent due to low base and accelerated economic activity. In 2020, the pandemic had battered the country’s GDP, which had contracted by 24.4 per cent during Q1FY21.

The recent surge in the domestic stock market has been largely on the back of gradual easing of the lockdown and curfew measures, and improvement in economic activities.

Further, the receding impact of Covid, as well as the accelerated vaccination drive, have lifted the growth rate of India’s services output in

August, IHS Markit India Services PMI showed on Friday. The seasonally adjusted India Services Business Activity Index rose to 56.7 (index reading) in August as against a reading of 50 in July. The GST collections have also been robust and remained above the psychological mark of

Rs 1 lakh crore for the second consecutive month, clocking Rs 1,12,020 crore in August 2021.

The flow of foreign funds is also recovering post the impact of the pandemic in April-May, which should further boost the Indian equities. So far in the first three trading days of September, net foreign portfolio investments into the equities stood at Rs 4,787 crore, as per NSDL data.

On Friday, the Nifty50 closed at 17,323.60, higher by 89.45 points, or 0.52 per cent, from its previous close.

The BSE Sensex also closed at its record high closing level of 58,129.95, higher by 277.41 points, or 0.48 per cent, from its previous close.

“Liquidity in the domestic market has been strong for the past couple of days with FIIs putting in over Rs 6,000 crore in last four sessions itself. Further, strong service PMI data and healthy GST collection numbers boosted market sentiments,” Motilal Oswal Financial Services’ Head of Retail Research Siddhartha Khemka said.

MONEY MATTERS

M-cap of 9 of top-10 firms jumps over Rs 2.93 L-crore

Line of the top-10 most-valued companies together added Rs 2,93,804.34 crore in market valuation last week, in line with a record-breaking rally in equities, with Reliance Industries Ltd emerging as the biggest gainer. The BSE 30-share benchmark zoomed 2,005.23 points or 3.57 per cent last week. It scaled the 58,000-mark for the first time on Friday. The Sensex last week only went beyond the 57,000-level. The BSE benchmark soared over nine per cent last month. From the top-10 list, Infosys was the only laggard. The market valuation of Reliance Industries Ltd zoomed Rs 1,02,382 crore to reach Rs 15,14,017.50 crore. RIL’s market valuation jumped to a record Rs 15 lakh crore on Friday, becoming the first domestic company to attain this historic feat. The market capitalisation (m-cap) of Tata Consultancy Services jumped Rs 44,832.5 crore to Rs 14,20,935.10 crore. Bharti Airtel’s valuation rallied Rs 35,342.16 crore to Rs 3,61,540.16 crore and that of Bajaj Finance rose by Rs 33,906.91 crore to Rs 4,54,207.76 crore. The m-cap of Hindustan Unilever Ltd went up by Rs 20,712.29 crore to Rs 6,49,943.93 crore, and that of ICICI Bank gained Rs 17,373.55 crore to Rs 5,02,232.46 crore. State Bank of India added Rs 17,001.38 crore taking its valuation to Rs 3,85,007.74 crore. The valuation of HDFC Bank jumped Rs 14,954.74 crore to Rs 8,72,362.42 crore, and that of HDFC rose by Rs 7,298.81 crore to Rs 4,98,290.05 crore. In contrast, the valuation of Infosys declined Rs 3,457.12 crore to Rs 7,21,244.78 crore. Reliance Industries Ltd remained the most-valued firm, followed by Tata Consultancy Services, HDFC Bank, Infosys, Hindustan Unilever Limited, ICICI Bank, HDFC, Bajaj Finance, State Bank of India and Bharti Airtel.



Excise collection jumps 48% in April-July

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government’s collections from levy of excise duty on petroleum products have jumped 48 per cent in the first four months of the current fiscal year, with the incremental mop-up being 3-times of the repayment liability of legacy oil bonds in the full fiscal, official data showed.

Data available from the Controller General of Accounts in the Union Ministry of Finance showed excise duty collections during April-July 2021 surging to over Rs 1 lakh crore, from Rs 67,895 crore mop-up in the same period of the previous fiscal.

After the introduction of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, excise duty is levied only on petrol, diesel, ATF and



natural gas. Barring these products, all other goods and services are under the GST regime.

The incremental collections of Rs 32,492 crore in the first four months of the fiscal year 2021-22 (April 2021 to March 2022) is three-times the Rs 10,000 crore liability that the

government has in the full year towards repayment of oil bonds that were issued by the previous Congress-led UPA government to subsidise fuel.

Bulk of excise duty collection is from the levy on petrol and diesel and with sales picking up with a rebounding

economy, the incremental collections in the current year may be over Rs 1 lakh crore when compared with the previous year, industry sources said.

In all, the UPA government had issued Rs 1.34 lakh crore worth of bonds (equivalent to a sovereign commitment to pay in future) to state-owned oil companies to compensate them for selling fuel such as cooking gas LPG, kerosene and diesel at rates below cost.

Of this, Rs 10,000 crore is due to be repaid in the current fiscal, according to the finance ministry.

First, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman and then Oil Minister Hardeep Singh Puri had blamed the oil bonds for limiting fiscal space to give relief to people from fuel prices trading at near record high.

FPIs net buyers in Aug; invest Rs 16,459 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) were net buyers to the tune of Rs 16,459 crore in Indian markets in August, with majority of investment coming in the debt segment.

In equities, they invested just Rs 2,082.94 crore while debt segment saw inflow of Rs 14,376.2 crore between August 2-31, depositories data showed.

The quantum of investment in the debt segment is highest in this calendar year so far. “The main reason for FPI buying debt is the rising spread between the bond yields in US and India. The US 10-year is below 1.30 per cent and the Indian 10-year has risen above 6.2 per cent. Also, the stability in INR has brought down the cost of hedging. Expectations regarding exchange rate also are favourable. At these high valuations in equity risk-reward favour debt,” said V K Vijaya

kumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

For equities, he said “the momentum in the market and the fear of missing the momentum might have brought FPIs back to equity in August. The global scenario also turned favourable with the Fed sending a dovish message that the economy has a lot more ground to cover and rate hikes are far away”.

The investment came after the FPIs remained net sellers in July to the tune of Rs 7,273 crore.

Besides, in the first three trading sessions of September, FPIs have pumped in Rs 7,768.32 crore in Indian markets (both equity and debt).

Shrikant Chouhan, executive vice president, equity technical research at Kotak Securities, added that the rising pace of domestic vaccinations, a decent GST print for July and a sharp increase in August merchandise trade contributed to market sentiment even as PMI for August weakened.



39 mining projects of Coal India face delays

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned CIL’s 39 coal mining projects are running behind the schedule on account of delays in getting green clearances and issues related to rehabilitation and resettlement (R&R).

This assumes significance in the wake of the country’s power plants grappling with depleting stocks at their end.

“114 coal projects with a sanctioned capacity of 836.48 mty (million tonnes per year) and a sanctioned capital of Rs 1,19,580.62 crore are in different stages of implementation out of which 75 projects are on schedule and 39 projects are

delayed,” Coal India Ltd (CIL) said in its report.

The major reasons for delays in implementation of these projects are delay in forest clearances and possession of land and issues related to R&R.

CIL’s nine coal projects, with a sanctioned capacity of 27.60 million tonnes per year and a sanctioned capital of Rs 1,976.59 crores were completed with a total completion capital of Rs 1,958.89 crore during 2020-21. Four of these projects belong to Western Coalfields Ltd (WCL), three of Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) and two of Mahanadi Coalfields Ltd (MCL).



Human Biosciences plans to launch 2 wound care products

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The US-based Human Biosciences (HBS) on Sunday said it is planning to introduce two wound care products in the Indian market soon.

The two products are named ‘Medifil’ and ‘Skin Temp’, the company said in a statement.

It added that the company “plans to launch two of its wound care management products, ‘Medifil’ and ‘Skin Temp’, in India soon”.

Some of its wound care products are already available in India that are manufactured at the company’s unit in Ahmedabad, Gujarat, HBS said.

CIL initiates various CSR programmes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned CIL arm Northern Coalfields Ltd has launched various CSR schemes and projects focused on village infrastructure and education among others, amounting to Rs 2.25 crore to benefit the villagers of Singrauli in Madhya Pradesh.

These pro-people programmes have been launched as part of ‘Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav’ (AKAM) celebrations, the coal ministry said in a statement. Inaugurating the programme, Member of Parliament Riti Pathak lauded the efforts of Northern Coalfields Ltd (NCL) towards infrastructure development,

livelihood generation and overall community development in Singrauli district.

A new road constructed under NCL-CSR at a cost of Rs 1.6 crore in Semuar Panchayat benefiting about 10,000 villagers living in Pali, Semur and nearby places has also been inaugurated as part of AKAM celebrations of NCL, it said.

To further empower local women/girls and make them self-reliant, sewing machines and skill certificates were distributed to 27 women/ girls, trained in the centres under the ongoing skill development programme of NCL.

As part of ensuring modern

education amenities in remote villages, eight sets of Smart TV and computers were distributed to nearby government schools. Advanced laboratory equipment were also distributed to four government schools, helping more than 500 students to get practical knowledge in science. Besides, four water coolers with RO machines were handed over to the authorities to ensure safe drinking water for more than 1,000 school children of the surrounding areas.

During the programme, floor mats, play school slides, utensils were also handed over to the children of 43 Anganwadis located in ten panchayats of

Singrauli district. Giving further fillip to Swachh Bharat Abhiyan, a garbage collection vehicle was also flagged off and handed over to the representative of the Naudhiya Panchayat. This vehicle will ensure door to door collection of waste to pave the way for a hygienic living environment to more than five thousand local people.

Inauguration of boundary wall of a school built under NCL-CSR located in village Bhowdar of Singrauli district and visit to the Khadi and Handloom Centre set up by NCL, where around 30 women are getting training were some of the other highlights of the function.

Steel output expected to jump 18 per cent to 120 MT in FY22

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India’s crude steel output is expected to soar about 18 per cent to 120 million tonnes (MT) by the end of the ongoing financial year, Minister of State (MoS) for Steel Faggan Singh Kulaste said. The demand is expected to cross 100 MT during the current financial year, he said.

According to official data, the country produced around 102 MT steel in the financial year 2020-21, registering a fall of 6.1 per cent over FY20, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and



the lockdown necessitated to contain its spread.

“India’s production of crude steel was at 37,527 MT, a growth of 44.6 per cent, in April-July 2021. This gives me confidence that we will produce around 115 MT-120 MT in FY 2021-22,”

Kulaste told PTI sharing his estimates for the current financial year. Under the National Steel Policy (NSP) 2017, the government has set a production target of 300 MT by 2030-31.

Replying to another question related to steel consumption, the minister said it will be more than 100 MT in the current financial year 2021-22.

In the financial year ended March 2021, steel consumption stood at 93.43 MT, lower by 6.7 per cent over the previous year due to the impact of the pandemic.

Global trends to guide markets in holiday-shortened week

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The stock market is likely to continue with its positive momentum but may face bouts of profit-booking amid lofty valuations in this holiday-shortened week, analysts said.

The trading sentiment will be guided mostly by global trends in absence of major domestic events, they said. Markets would remain closed on Friday for ‘Ganesh Chaturthi’. Industrial production data is scheduled to be released on Friday, which happens to be a trading holiday.

The BSE 30-share benchmark zoomed 2,005.23 points or 3.57 per cent last week. The benchmark scaled the 58,000-



mark for the first time on Friday to close at its lifetime high of 58,129.95.

The Sensex took just three sessions to go from the 57,000-level to 58,000 last week while

the BSE benchmark soared over 9 per cent last month.

The benchmark index has gained 10,378.62 points or 21.73 per cent so far this year.

“Going ahead, market is likely to continue with its positive momentum as economic recovery and vaccination continues their northward journey. Strong liquidity and positive global cues are likely to support domestic markets to continue their movements to record levels.

“However valuations are also moving beyond comfort zones and hence could lead to bouts of profit-booking and increase in volatility,” said Siddhartha Khemka, Head - Retail Research, Broking & Distribution, Motilal Oswal

Financial Services Ltd.

“We are going to have a truncated week as the markets will remain closed on Friday on the occasion of Ganesh Chaturthi,” Santosh Meena, Head of Research, Swastika Investmart Ltd said.

“Domestically, economic data such as manufacturing output and industrial production could drive investor sentiment this week. In absence of any other major event, Indian indices are expected to mirror global cues and move in tandem with foreign bourses,” Samco Securities Research said in a note. Markets would also track movement in the rupee, Brent crude and foreign institutional investments.



I-T Dept notifies forms for exemption for sr citizens

The income tax department has notified declaration forms to be filed by senior citizens aged 75 years and above with the banks to get exemption from filing I-T return for fiscal year 2021-22. The 2021-22 Budget had introduced a provision for exempting senior citizens of 75 years and above having pension income and interest from fixed deposit in the same bank from filing income tax returns for the financial year beginning April 1. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has now notified rules and declaration forms which senior citizens would have to file with the specified bank who in turn would deduct tax on pension and interest income and deposit with the government. Such exemption from ITR filing would be available only in case where the interest income is earned in the same bank where pension is deposited. The income-tax act requires all individuals having income exceeding the threshold limit to file their income-tax returns. While the threshold for senior citizens (60 years or more) and super senior citizens (80 years or more) is slightly higher, crossing the threshold saddles one to file tax-returns. Non-filing of tax return not only attracts penalties but one also gets subject to higher rate of TDS. Nangia & Co LLP Director Iresh Dodhi said recognising the compliance burden on senior citizens, this year’s budget brought in some relief to the senior citizens above the age of 75. “The CBDT has notified the forms (Form 12BBA) for declaration by the senior citizens to the banks and notified the reporting requirement by the specified banks. With dedicated counters for senior citizens in all major banks and banks providing doorstep banking to senior citizen, this measure is expected to make life easier for senior citizens,” Dodhi added.



# Hot on OTT: Coming up this week

Here's a look at highlight films, shows and series that are scheduled to drop in the digital space this week.



**Untold: Breaking Point (show on Netflix, September 7)**

**Cast:** Mardy Fish;  
**Direction:** Chapman Way, Maclain Way  
Tennis player Mardy Fish tries to push through the mental strain at the 2012 US Open quarterfinals but bows out and is later diagnosed with an anxiety disorder; he goes public with his struggles to help athletes deal with mental health issues.



**Into the Night Season 2 (web series on Netflix, September 8)**

**Cast:** Pauline Etienne, Laurent Capelluto, Mehmet Kurtulus; **Creation:** Creators: Jason George  
Based on the Belgian science-fiction novel, 'The Old Axolotl', this series was renewed for a second season in July 2020. Passengers and crew aboard a hijacked overnight flight scramble to outrace the sun as a mysteri-

ous cosmic event wreaks havoc on the world below.



**JJ+E (film on Netflix, September 8)**

**Cast:** Elsa Öhrn, Mustapha Aarab, Jonay Pineda Skallak; **Direction:** Alexis Weak  
Elisabeth and John-John live in the same city, but they inhabit different worlds. Can a passionate first love break through class and cultural barriers?



**Maestro (film on Disney+ Hotstar, September 17)**

**Cast:** Nithiin, Tamannaah, Nabha Natesh; **Direction:** Merlapaka Gandhi  
Telugu black comedy crime thriller is a remake of the 2018 Hindi film *Andhadhun*. The film stars Nithiin, Tamannaah and Nabha Natesh.



**Mumbai Diaries: 26/11 (web series on Amazon Prime, September 9)**



**NET (web series on Zee5, September 10)**



**Dikkiloona (film on Zee5, September 10)**



**Lucifer Season 6 (series on Netflix, September 10)**



**Tuck Jagadish (film on Amazon Prime Video, September 10)**



**Tuck Jagadish (film on Amazon Prime Video, September 10)**

**Cast:** Avika Gor, Rahul Ramakrishna, Praneeta Patnaik; **Direction:** Bhargav Macharla  
It's a Telugu drama web series.



**Maestro (film on Disney+ Hotstar, September 17)**

**Cast:** Nithiin, Tamannaah, Nabha Natesh; **Direction:** Merlapaka Gandhi  
Telugu black comedy crime thriller is a remake of the 2018 Hindi film *Andhadhun*. The film stars Nithiin, Tamannaah and Nabha Natesh.



**Mumbai Diaries: 26/11 (web series on Amazon Prime, September 9)**

**Cast:** Tom Ellis, Lauren German, Kevin Alejandro; **Direction:** Tom Kapinos  
Bored with being the Lord of Hell, the devil relocates to Los Angeles, where he opens a nightclub and forms a connection with a homicide detective.

**Tuck Jagadish (film on Amazon Prime Video, September 10)**

**Cast:** Ritu Varma, Aishwarya Rajesh, Jagapathi Babu; **Direction:** Shiva Nirvana



Starring Nani in the titular character, *Tuck Jagadish* ran into controversy due to its decision to skip the theatrical window. But it finally ended on a smooth note and the film is all set to stream on September 10 on the occasion of the Vinayaka Chaviti festival. The producers of "Tuck Jagadish" made decent profits on this deal.

Said to a family entertainer, the film is directed by Shiva Nirvana. Ritu Varma is the main heroine. Jagapathi Babu plays Nani's brother. Brother sentiment is the main element.



**Dikkiloona (film on Zee5, September 10)**

**Cast:** Harbhajan Singh, Santhanam, Anagha, Shirin Kanchwala, Yogi Babu; **Direction:** Karthik Yogi  
The film title is inspired by the word 'Dikkiloona' which was used by Goundamani and Senthil in the 1993 action film 'Gentleman'. The sci-fi action film includes hints of com.

## Angelina Jolie says she 'fought' with Brad Pitt for working with Harvey Weinstein

Hollywood star Angelina Jolie has revealed that she once "fought" with her former husband Brad Pitt for working with disgraced movie mogul Harvey Weinstein.

Jolie recently opened up her life and experience during an interview with The Guardian in support of her new book, *Know Your Rights and Claim Them: A Guide for Youth*.

Written in partnership with child rights lawyer Geraldine Van Bueren QC and Amnesty International, the book is dedicated to ensuring the rights of children around the world.

During the interview, Jolie was asked about her experience of being disrespected in Hollywood.

"Well, no surprise, Harvey Weinstein. I worked with him when I was young," she said.

Jolie was 21 when she featured in *Playing By Heart*, the



1988 movie executive produced by Weinstein. In 2017, the producer was accused by numerous women of sexual assault and misconduct.

Following the multiple accusations, Weinstein was fired by his own company.

He is currently in prison after a New York jury convicted him for the rape and sexual assault of two women.

Jolie had previously said in a *New York Times* piece that she had a "bad experience".

"If you get yourself out of

the room, you think he attempted but didn't, right? The truth is that the attempt and the experience of the attempt is an assault," the Oscar-winning actor said in the new interview.

"It was beyond a pass. It was something I had to escape. I stayed away and warned people about him. I remember telling Jonny (Lee Miller), my first husband, who was great about it, to spread the word to other guys don't let girls go alone with

him," she added.

Jolie revealed that she was offered to star in Martin Scorsese's 2004 movie *The Aviator* but she declined as Weinstein was involved in the project. "I was asked to do *The Aviator*, but I said no because he was involved. I never associated or worked with him again. It was hard for me when Brad did," she said.

Jolie and Pitt started dating soon after they worked on the 2005 movie *Mr and Mrs Smith*. The couple got married in 2014 but in 2016, Jolie filed for divorce, which was finalised in 2019. Pitt's 2009 film *Inglourious Basterds* was distributed and co-financed by the Weinstein Company.

Jolie alleged in the interview that against her wishes, Pitt approached Weinstein to produce his 2012 film *Killing Them Softly*. The Weinstein Company ended up distributing the film. "We fought about it. Of course it hurt," the actor said.

## A look at Bollywood's female entrepreneurs

Model and wellness enthusiast Malaika Arora recently launched her investment company, Malaika

Arora Ventures, which has invested in lifestyle and wellness start-ups such as Sarva and Nude Bowls. While Bollywood's leading ladies might be in the spotlight for their films and glamorous fashion outings, there's more to them than meets the eye, for starters most of them have great business acumen and are investing their time and money into projects that go beyond filmmaking.

From setting up funding ventures to starting their own businesses, the industry's new wave of women entrepreneurs are making all the right moves, here's a round-up of some popular actresses who are boss babes in their own right:

### Alia Bhatt

With a career spanning almost 10 years, Bhatt has been a part of some spectacular films and brand endorsements. Last year, the 28-year-old launched a sus-



tainable clothing line for children 'Ed-a-Mamma' catering to the age group of 2-14 years. The actress has invested in companies like Stylecracker and Nykaa and has also launched a platform 'Coexist' that works towards animal and ecological welfare.

### Priyanka Chopra Jonas

From opening an Indian restaurant 'Sona' in New York to launching her own vegan haircare brand 'Anomaly', there's no stopping this global trendsetter. A production company under the name, the actress has delivered two successful

hits *Ventilator* and *The Sky Is Pink*. That's not all; the superstar became the face of dating app Bumble in 2018 and invested in the start-up as well. You go, girl!

### Katrina Kaif

She kickstarted her innings as an entrepreneur in 2019 with the launch of her make-up brand 'Kay Beauty', in partnership with beauty giant Nykaa. The elaborate range of cosmetics is primarily aimed at catering to the Asian skin tone and texture. It also happens to be the country's first beauty line to emerge out of Bollywood.

### Anushka Sharma

At 25, Sharma set up a production house 'Clean Slate Filmz' with her brother. Known to have produced some incredible movies and web series, she is actively involved in the process, from selecting scripts to finalizing the cast. The 33-year-old also launched her apparel line 'Nush' in 2017, which is an extension of her distinct style. A champion of animal rights, the actress has also opened two rescue animal shelters outside Mumbai with her husband Virat Kohli.

### Deepika Padukone

With a super successful career, more than a dozen brand endorsements and an exciting international work graph, Padukone is on top of her game. In 2017, she set up her own investment venture 'KA Enterprises' which has invested in Epigamia — a brand of yoghurts, hobby-based start-up FrontRow, electric taxi enterprise Blu Smart and aerospace start-up Bellatrix. Padukone made her debut as a producer in 2020 with the release of her film *Chhapaak*.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



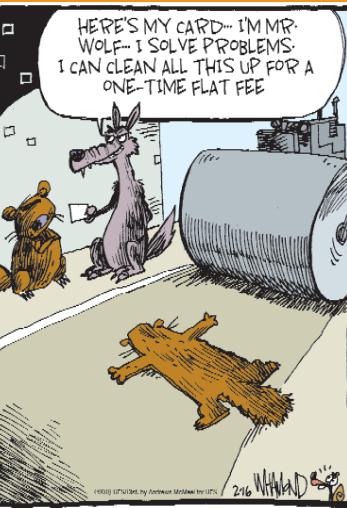
### GINGER MEGGS



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



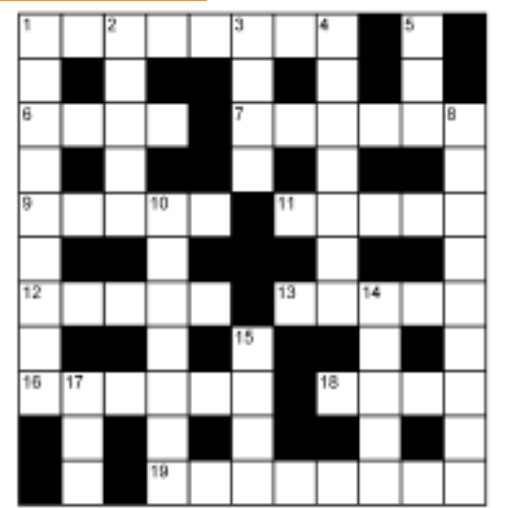
### REALITY CHECK



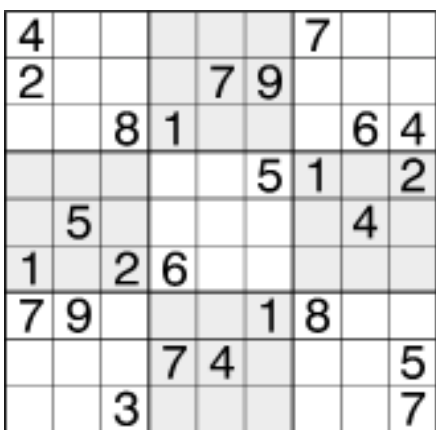
### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



### SUDOKU



**Yesterday's solution**

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

#### Rules

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

#### ACROSS

- A tank for live fish
- Mix this with yellow to get green
- Stopped doing something
- A pale purple colour
- A crown-wearing woman
- A female relation
- Workers sit at these in offices
- Hot coals left after a fire
- A list of restaurant meals
- People who work in classrooms

#### DOWN

- An emergency vehicle
- Normal

3 A feeling that makes you want to scratch

4 Check the length of

5 A female sheep

6 Large extinct animals

7 Very old

8 A person from Sweden

9 The largest continent

10 Adult males

11 A feeling that makes you want to scratch

12 Check the length of

13 A female sheep

14 Large extinct animals

15 Very old

16 A person from Sweden

17 The largest continent

18 Adult males

19 A feeling that makes you want to scratch

20 Check the length of

21 A female sheep

22 Large extinct animals

23 Very old

24 A person from Sweden

25 The largest continent

26 Adult males

27 A feeling that makes you want to scratch

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121 The largest continent

122 Adult males

123 A feeling that makes you want to scratch

124 Check the length of

125 A female sheep

126 Large extinct animals

127 Very old

128 A person from Sweden

129 The largest continent

130 Adult males

131 A feeling that makes you want to scratch

132 Check the length of

133 A female sheep



## MAKING FILMS THAT MAKE MAN HUMANE



RACHEL DAMMALA

Screenwriter and filmmaker Jaydeep Sarkar is known for his stupendous work in popular ad films for Flipkart, Horlicks, Doy care, etc. He has directed some of the most awarded commercials for India's largest brands such as Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Glaxo Smith Kline, and Peps among many others. Jaydeep's humanist style and riveting performances in his films have brought to life many stories, not just for brands but also for not-for-profit organisations such as 'Action Aid', etc. You definitely must have seen and loved his ad for Nobel laureate Kailash Satyarthi's *Bachpan Bachao Andolan* that went viral days after its release! His short film *Nayantara's Necklace* with Konkona Sen Sharma and Tillotama Shome in lead roles, opened to many rave reviews and was screened across international film festivals. He who has lent his creative genius to films like *Drona*, *Tera Kya Hoga Johnny*, *Shaurya* and *Khoya Khoya Chand*, etc., shares exclusively what format of filmmaking he loves best: all of them, for the various challenges they present. "Ads demand that the story be told in just 30 seconds or a little more. I love that advertising speaks at many levels - while it essentially talks about the product you're

trying to sell, it also engages audiences in a conversation woven into them. There are these interesting moments that you get to create into a narrative in an ad film. I love telling stories through short films, they've been so cathartic to me as well. While I haven't worked on documentaries yet, I think real stories are riveting and I'm sure they'd be a great learning experience. I'm a fan of TV series and web shows now, having the luxury of telling stories for several seasons is beautiful, some even for years of my life - it's like you get to inhabit another world for so long, and the experience has always been so enriching." Talking about feature films, the screenwriter says, "I haven't directed any yet but wrote some, the idea of telling fine stories in 2 hours, to be able to capture the audiences' imagination, and know that people are giving so much time in their lives to this story you're telling, it's such a privilege to be part of such projects. Somewhere it becomes a personal thing, you're making a film and then the film makes you too, influencing you as a person and your mind as an artist." Asked to choose between writing and directing, Jaydeep is quick to answer, "I love directing, when you're directing you're writing too, you rewrite stories during preproduction and production, and then again at the editing table. I'm primarily a director and I enjoy

doing that the most." The talented mind is all praise for the kind of stories being made for the OTT space. "The novel platform is making space for different kinds of stories, voices, diverse presentations, from across social strata, and cities. It is democratising entertainment, the visual narrative. I'm so glad I'm part of these and living during these exciting times." Jaydeep recalls how he wished to be part of the film *Monsoon Wedding*. "I remember watching it when I had just left Delhi and watched the film in a hall in Bombay. It was such a complex film, I remember how everyone felt so real, we felt like we knew these people, it's a special film that had a very personal connect." The filmmaker tells us that the current project he's working on is a project he has always wanted to be a part of, a story he wanted to tell, and is excited for it to come out the soonest. We ask him if he has a list of favourites he'd always wanted to work with, he replies, "I've got to work with some of the best people till date. I'd also love to work with Rekha, Mohan Lal, and so many such exciting actors. But definitely, an ideal cast would be one that goes with the script." About his upcoming projects, he informs that some of them are in a very nascent stage and that's he's working with a good bunch of people. Talking about how the pandemic has changed the dynamics of pre-production

and post production, he says, "We're learning every-day. It's beautiful how Zoom entered our lives, how Google Meets, etc., has made writing and preproduction remotely possible. Yet, it's a collaborative project and magic happens when you meet in person. Filmmaking is a medium through which we feed energy off each other, there's only so much you can do over a computer screen. So while the dynamics have changed, and people are discovering how technology is capable of creating energies off collaboration, I think it's only temporary and once things are fine, we hope to all go back to meet and work in person." On a concluding note we ask him to share his biggest learnings so far, he says, "Often times we wait for inspiration to come to us, but it's only when we put in the grind, things start to move. Irrespective of what happens every day, you have to show up everyday with your A-game. Magic may not happen every day, but it will when we show up no matter what, instead of waiting for inspiration to strike and things to fall in place."

## Unfur your surroundings

For many pet owners, hair shedding is a serious problem. Shedding, undoubtedly, makes a mess. As a pet owner, you have probably come to terms with the fact that regular house cleaning is the norm, especially during shedding season. While we all love our furry friends, it is important that we tackle the constant pet hair around our homes for the health and hygiene of everyone at home. And while we can see the hair our pets leave behind, there's more to fur and fluff than meets the eye.

James McCrae shares tips on how to keep your home pet-hair free

humans, so grooming your pet regularly will avoid hair being deposited all over your home. Groom your pet in the same area and spot clean this with slow vacuuming using a mini-motorised tool, designed with nylon bristles to remove embedded pet hair and dander. **Follow the top to bottom cleaning approach** Like dust, pet hair and dander can become airborne when disturbed and fall onto lower surfaces, so start cleaning up high and finish on your floors. Don't miss out on your sofa or armchairs if your pets spend time there. Soft furnishings can hold pet hair as well as pet dander, dust mixes and other aller-



### How are pet hair different?

Pet hair shares many similarities with human hair. But there are some key differences that make pet hair particularly difficult to clean. Animal hair stops growing as soon as it reaches a certain length and sheds to be replaced by new hair and this can change between the seasons. For instance, dog breeds, like German Shepherds, Collies and Samoyeds, will shed more hair during spring and autumn seasons to make way for their summer pelts, which can explain why you find pet hair constantly at certain times of year.

Pet hair has a tendency to embed onto a carpeted surface or electrostatically "stick" to a hard floor surface. This is where vacuum cleaners come to the rescue. Beyond the pet hair and food you can see, there is a host of microscopic life that pets bring in with them that's invisible to the naked eye. Pet dander is just one of those things. Composed of tiny, microscopic, skin particles shed by pets with fur or feathers. It can be shed onto surfaces or transported through the air in household dust.

When vacuum cleaners are designed, the companies test with dust from real homes and not just industry standard material, because they are aware that organic matter like pet hair and dander is often caught up in household dust and will have a big impact on how the machine functions.

### How can we maintain a healthy home while still sharing it with man's best friend?

**Practise grooming your pet regularly**

Pets shed fur all the time as their hair reaches the catagen phase - the stage in a hair's life cycle stops growing - more regularly than

gens. A mini-motorised tool is great for furniture you can't put in the wash.

### Go slow with vacuuming

Vacuuming slowly gives the airflow and brush bar more time to agitate the pet hair and remove it from the surface. Pet hair is more likely to clump on carpets or form tumbleweed on hard floor surfaces than human hair. Vacuuming little and often prevents excessive build-up of pet hair. If you're tight on time, using a robot cleaner to remove pet hair while you're out will keep pet hair under control between more thorough cleans.

### Go 360o: vacuum in different directions

Go over the carpet a few times in alternating directions to pick up more pet hair and agitate some of those embedded ones loose. But don't forget, any more than two or three times gives minimal increase according to our research.

### Peel pet hair from surfaces

Some vacuums are engineered with nylon and carbon fibre bristles at their cleaner head to disturb the hair and peel it off the surface on which it's electrostatically stuck. Using a cleaner head with a lint picker strip will stick the pet hair to it - a lint roller can do the job in some cases, but it won't be able to remove the pet dander that causes allergies.

### Wash your linen/upholstery

Washing blankets, cushions and bedding - wherever your pets spend the most time - at 60o will help to break down allergens and reduce the amount of microscopic dander that dust mixes feed on. At the end of the wash, make sure you remove any pet hair out of the drum.

(The author, James McCrae, is a senior mechanical engineer at Dyson, a household appliances company.)

K RAMYA SREE

We have all had that one photograph that makes us pause and think. Sometimes it also speaks to our imagination and made us relive the story. In photography, storytelling, usually called a photo essay or photo story, is something that drives passionate photographers to convey emotions and narratives through a few simple frames.

Monisha Ajgaonkar, a leading wedding photographer and an LGBTQ+ activist, also has an award-winning photographic series titled *Love Matters India*, to her credit. She has now come up with another photo story, *A Raksha Tale*. Directed and conceptualised by her, *A Raksha Tale* highlights the journey of Abha to Ameya, who undergoes a sex change and how she dealt with the society throughout is a riveting tale.

On how the idea of storytelling through photographs struck her, Monisha says, "Being a wedding photographer, my job demands that I visit a couple of families at their houses to sign projects. The entire concept of curating an animated video came through the photos on the walls that I witnessed at these houses. I observed there were some amazing family gathering photographs. I wanted to create a simple yet heart touching story for the viewers. It's more like giving a message to the audience on what goes behind curating these happy moments that get captured on a camera."

We ask Monisha if her personal life birthed this story, and she says, for any individual belonging to the LGBTQ community, it is very difficult for them to come out and accept the reality in front of

## Telling touching tales THROUGH PICTURES



their families. "When you know you belong to a very

strict family, it becomes challenging to make them understand your situation, as you do know they may or may not accept your reality. In the end, every person has to find themselves and want to create their own world even if the people around them are not supportive. Through *A Raksha Tale*, I wanted to recreate a 90s scenario and give a direct message to the audience that yes, 'we exist'. Hence, we came up with a concept for this film where we portrayed 'Abha', who began knowing and loving herself and over the years, came to a conclusion to accept the reality and have a



sex change to begin a new life of 'Ameya'."

About Abha's journey to Ameya, she opens up, "In the beginning, it was difficult for Abha to discover, talk through, and make her family understand her reality. She left the house as she wasn't sure who she was and was scared about being uncomfortable in the environment, and that it would affect the family bond. She wanted to find herself first so she could confidently face anyone anytime. She decided to live a life of her own and over the years, when she decided to happily accept the fact, she decided to have a sex change, and began living a new life of 'Ameya'."

The tale addresses another silent part: Abha insisting on Mansi tying the rakhi too. Monisha breaks it down, "Being the younger child in the family with one elder sister and one older brother, the younger daughter always feels that someone should have to tie a rakhi to her, thinking that even she has to be a protector of the family. This particular part in the film focuses on the overall thought process of the youngest sibling, especially of the youngest daughter in the family."

The pictorial story is sure to create waves, but more importantly, provoke people and families, especially, to think, love and protect, better.



# BETTER THAN THE BEST

India's para-athletes  
soar high in best  
ever Paralympics

PTI ■ TOKYO

Inspirical, incredible and indomitable.

India's paralympians managed to be all these and much more in an epoch-making campaign at the Tokyo Games where an unparalleled 19 medals, including five Gold, helped them sign off 24th in the overall tally — the highest ever.

The tally also included eight Silver and six Bronze medals but most importantly, it was a performance during which history was scripted almost everyday with the contingent living up to the 'Spirit in Motion' motto of the Games.

Even on the last day of competitions, the medal rush did not stop and Krishna Nagar won a Gold after Noida's District Magistrate Suhas Yathiraj signed off his brilliant run with a Silver to complete a remarkable badminton show.

The duo's performance was like icing on the cake for the contingent which found new heroes, celebrated some established ones and brought para-sports firmly into spotlight in India.

In all, 54 came to Tokyo and 17 of them left with medals around their necks.

It was an improved performance no doubt but calling it just improvement would be an understatement given that India's overall Games haul was a mere 12 before this edition.

To put things in perspective, at the 2016 Rio Games, India had 19 ath-



letes across five disciplines with four returning with medals in the end.

There were several firsts to celebrate and the euphoria lasted the entire duration of the Games.

Two athletes, shooters Avani Lekhara and Singhraj Adana, finished on podium twice, creating their own legacies in their debut Paralympics.

The 19-year-old Lekhara became the first Indian woman to win a Games Gold (10m air rifle) and later added a Bronze in 50m rifle 3 positions to ensure that her name would now be part of every India-centric Paralympic quiz.

The 39-year-old Adana, on the other hand, was a late bloomer after taking a liking to the pistol while dropping his nephew to the range.

His right hand impaired, Adana knocked off a 10m air pistol Bronze and 50m pistol Silver to ensure that India had more than one double-medalist in the same Games for the first time ever.

There was the first medal in archery through Harvinder Singh (Bronze), impaired after wrong medication for dengue, the first medal in table tennis by waist-down paralysed Bhavinben Patel (Silver) and also a remarkable two Gold medals in badminton through short of stature Nagar and a polio-stricken Pramod Bhagat.

Another shooting star rose on the horizon with Manish Narwal, all of 19, already a world champion and now a Paralympic champion as well.

Not to mention the legends — Devendra Jhaharia (javelin throw) and Mariyappan Thangavelu (high jump).

The two long-time flag-bearers of Indian para-sports, who won Gold medals in 2016 Rio, and finished on podium

again, this time with Silver medals, cementing their place among all-time greats of Indian sports.

Nearly half (8) of India's haul this time came from the track-and-field arena with javelin thrower Sumit Antil shining the brightest with a Gold en route which he shattered his own world record five times over.

Antil was pursuing a career in wrestling, as his family wanted, before a bike accident led to the amputation of his left leg, changing the course of his life forever.

At 18, Praveen Kumar

became India's youngest medalist with a Silver in high jump which came with an Asian record for the debutant, whose left leg is impaired.

Another shinning star was Sundar Singh Gurjar, who finished behind Jhaharia in javelin throw.

Gurjar lost his left hand in an accident and in his maiden Paralympics in Rio, he was disqualified after failing to register in time for his event.

He slipped into depression after the heartbreaking and had thought of never touching the javelin again but was convinced into giving it another shot by his

coaches.

This time, Gurjar was on the clock and also on the podium.

In fact, all of them, even the ones who didn't win a medal, are a personification of fortitude, having braved and beaten circumstances that were difficult at best and improbable at worst.

The performance was a perfect end to India's Tokyo sojourn after able-bodied athletes snared an unprecedented seven Olympic medals last month, including the first individual Gold in 13 years.

But the paralympians bested their tally by quite a distance.



## Never been so happy & disappointed at same time in my life: Suhas

**Tokyo:** Indian shuttler-cum-bureaucrat Suhas Yathiraj was left with mixed feelings on Sunday after he ended his Paralympic campaign with a Silver, saying he has never felt so happy and disappointed at the same time in his life.

The 38-year-old Noida District Magistrate produced an entertaining performance before narrowly going down 21-15, 17-21, 15-21 to two-time world champion Lucas Mazur of France in men's singles SL4 class summit clash.

"Very emotional (moment). I have never been so happy and so disappointed in my life at the same time. Most happy because of the Silver medal but most disappointed because I missed the Gold medal by a whisker," he said after losing the final match.

"But destiny gives what I deserve and probably I deserve Silver medal so I am happy for

that at least."

Suhas, who has an impairment in one of his ankles, said he hoped for the national anthem to play at the Yoyogi national stadium but it was not to be as the Gold medal slipped through his fingers.

"As I said, I have never been so disappointed and most happy in my life, coming so close and yet so far but still winning a Paralympic medal is not a small feat and I am extremely proud for what I have done in last few days."

A computer engineer, Suhas became an IAS officer in 2007 and was at the forefront of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic as Noida's DM.

On Sunday, Suhas became the first ever IAS officer to win a medal at the Paralympics. "For every sportsperson, there is no higher achievement than Olympic or Paralympic, so this means the world to me," he said.

PTI

## Just want to live in this moment: Nagar

PTI ■ TOKYO

Indian badminton player Krishna Nagar said Sunday's Gold medal at the Paralympics was nothing short of a blessing as he was over the moon for just being able to compete in the Games.

Nagar defeated Hong Kong's Chu Man Kai 21-17, 16-21, 21-17 in the men's singles SH6 class final to claim the second Gold medal in badminton after Pramod Bhagat. Nagar's disability classification is for players of short stature.

"Olympics or Paralympic medal is a huge thing. We committed that we will win 5-6



medals and we have won 4 medals. One or two performances was little up and down but we will improve on that front in upcoming events," the 22-year-old said.

"Competing is a big achievement in Paralympics and we won a medal in the first edition itself. We are blessed, it is a great achievement."

Asked about his future plans, Nagar said: "I just want to live this moment and don't want to think about anything. It is a rare moment to get a Paralympic medal and I truly believe if the universe has given me so much, rest will also be good."

## There couldn't have been better gift for me on Teachers' Day, says coach Khanna

**Tokyo:** Overwhelmed by the performance of his wards at the Tokyo Paralympics, India's para badminton national coach Gaurav Khanna on Sunday said he could not have received a better gift this Teachers' day.

Indian shuttlers claimed four medals, including two Gold, a Silver and a Bronze,

at the Paralympics where badminton made its debut this year.

"There can't be a better gift then this. When I had got Dronacharya award, I had a feeling which I couldn't express but this Paralympics with these medals, the feeling is no less than that feeling. I'm overwhelmed," Khanna,

said during a virtual press conference.

"The targets have been achieved but I am a bit disappointed because I expected medals from Tarun (Dhillon) and Palak (Kohli). We will comeback and take it as a strong learning. If they had won the medals, then we could have delivered six

medals."

Asked about the future plans, Khanna said: "I am feeling like as a coach, my exam is over, the session is over, so what's next now?"

"The Olympic cycle is over, for the next Paralympic cycle, that is, for 2028, 2032 and 2036, we will have to look for youngsters. In few

months, we will have Asian Youth Games, and I am hopeful we will produce good results.

"I am working on some new young and minor players and I am sure they will be in the limelight in few months time and shine like the Paralympic Gold medalists."

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## Dubai as venue gives Pak advantage over India: Babar

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan captain Babar Azam is confident that familiarity of playing loads of matches in Dubai gives his team an advantage over India when they face-off in their opening league games of the ICC World T20 on October 24.

Pakistan have had very little success against India in ICC tournament save the 2017 Champions Trophy final but at the Dubai International Stadium, they have played 36 T20s winning 21 of them.

"The side that will execute their plans better and cash in on most of the opportunities will come out the winner," Babar said during a press meet ahead of the seven T20s against England and New Zealand.

"I know my team is oozing with confidence and looking forward to the 24 October match. The seven T20s against New Zealand and England will be crucial for us as we will like to win most of them so that we can carry that winning confi-

### Umar Akmal makes comeback after ban

**Karachi:** Pakistan's enfant terrible batsman, Umar Akmal is set to play competitive cricket for the first time since February 2020 after being named in the Central Punjab squad for the upcoming domestic season.

Umar, who was recently allowed to resume playing club cricket in Lahore, was banned by the PCB last year for not reporting spot-fixing offers made to him during the Pakistan Super League.

dence and momentum to Dubai."

Babar agreed Dubai stadium conditions will also suit Pakistan better than India.

"UAE is like our second home and we have won many T20 matches there and also became number one world side. So, yes, this is an added advantage and will give further motivation and confidence to our players."



## Patel helps Kiwis stay alive

**Dhaka:** Left-arm spinner Ajaz Patel ran through Bangladesh's top order with a career-best 4-16 as New Zealand clawed their way back into the five-match T20I series with a 52 run win on Sunday.

Bangladesh were bowled out for 76, their second-lowest T20 total, with Patel and Cole McConchie (3-15) bundling out the hosts on a slow wicket at the Sher-e-Bangla Stadium.

Bangladesh were looking to secure their first-ever T20 series triumph over the Blackcaps after winning the first two games.

They got off to a flying start

in chase of New Zealand's modest score of 128-5 when Mohammad Naim blasted Jacob Duffy for two fours in the first over.

But the innings unravelled from there.

Mushfiqur Rahim tried to salvage the chase but was left standing alone on 20 after Colin de Grandhomme picked up the final wicket.

Earlier, Henry Nicholls top-scored for the Blackcaps with 36 off 29 balls, marshalling his team's recovery in an unbroken 66-run sixth-wicket stand with Tom Blundell (30) when New Zealand were teetering at 62-5.

## India stretch their lead to 346

4th Test, Day 5  
Live on 3:30pm IST  
SONY SIX NETWORK

PTI ■ LONDON

Shardul Thakur smashed his second half-century of the match while Rishabh Pant showed required restraint while returning to form as India reached a commendable 445 for 8 at tea on day four of the fourth Test.

India have now taken their overall lead to 346 and anything in the range of 350 will be a Herculean task for the home team to chase down on a fifth day track, which has shown some signs of turn.

India did encounter another mini middle-order collapse as they slumped from 296 for 3 to 312 for 6 in a space of 10 overs in the first session but Thakur (60 off 72 balls) and Pant (50 off 107 balls) joined forces to add 100 runs for the seventh wicket.

If that wasn't enough Umesh Yadav (13 batting) and Jasprit Bumrah (19 batting) used the

long handle gleefully, adding muscle to the already beefed up total.

It did help that the pitch became flatter as the day progressed and under bright sunshine, strokeplay became easier for both the batters as they could hit through the line.

While Shardul, who is fondly called 'Beefy' by team's head coach Ravi Shastri for his Ian Botham-like exploits, is reinforcing his value as a bowling all-rounder. His three straight drives were as good as any of the shots that his illustrious seniors Rohit Sharma and Cheteshwar Pujara hit on the third day.

It was sight to behold as he picked

an Ollie Robinson (32-7-105-2) slower early and dispatched it over long-on to reach 49 and then a pull shot for a single helped him complete his fifty.

In fact a couple of his straight drives came after 50 and it was skipper Joe Root, who finally had him edge one in the slips to get England a breakthrough. By then, he had hit seven fours and a six.

If Shardul's 57 in the first innings had helped the team reach a respectable total, his approach in the second innings ensured that Pant wasn't brought about his downfall during a

number of occasions this summer.

In fact, the left hander curbed his instincts to charge down the track and played as per merit of each delivery. Only when he was in his 30's that he lofted Moeen Ali for a one bounce four and in his 40's charged out to slash James Anderson (33-10-79-1) over covers for a boundary.

His innings had 76 dot balls which showed that he had learnt from his mistakes but he was distraught when he failed to get the elevation, offering a return catch to Moeen (26-0-118-2).

In the first session of the day, Virat Kohli (44, 96 balls) showed promise with his cover drives but a beautiful slider from Moeen saw his back as his forward defensive prod found the outside edge into the slip's hands.

But amid a good batting performance, what struck like a sore thumb was vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane's another failure in what were the best batting conditions so far in the series.

## US party over for No 1 Barty

AFF ■ NEW YORK

Top-ranked Ashleigh Barty was ousted by a stunning fightback from American Shelby Rogers on Saturday while Novak Djokovic moved within four matches of completing the first men's singles calendar-year Grand Slam in 52 years.

World number one Djokovic defeated Kei Nishikori 6-7 (4/7), 6-3, 6-3, 6-2, taking his 17th consecutive victory over the Japanese star and improving to 18-2 in their overall rivalry.

"I was very pleased with the focus," Djokovic said. "Maybe at some points I wasn't my best, but I was determined and focused and that made the difference."

With a fourth career US Open trophy, Djokovic would complete the first men's singles sweep of major titles in the same year since Rod Laver in 1969.

Reigning Wimbledon champion Barty won 11 of 14



games after dropping the first set, only for Rogers to capture five of the last six games for a shocking 6-2, 1-6, 7-6 (7/5) triumph.

"I didn't want to leave," Rogers said. "I just said make balls, try to stay in this match, it can't get any worse, you've lost to her every time."

Rogers had dropped all

five prior meetings with Barty but would not be denied, breaking the Aussie as she served for the match in the eighth and 10th games as the crowd went wild at Arthur Ashe Stadium.

"I was just trying to stay in the point longer than Ash," Rogers said. "I was happy with myself for sort of problem

solving. I'm just so excited to be moving on to the next round."

Rogers will next face 150th-ranked British qualifier Emma Raducanu, an 18-year-old who routed Spain's Sara Sorribes Tormo 6-0, 6-1 in 70 minutes.

Djokovic, meanwhile, marched toward a fourth career Grand Slam title, which would break the deadlock for the men's record he shares with Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

The 34-year-old Serbian star advanced to a fourth-round matchup on Monday against 99th-ranked US wildcard Jensen Brooksby.

Wimbledon runner-up Matteo Barrettini, the Italian sixth seed, eliminated Ilya Ivashka of Belarus 6-7 (5/7), 6-2, 6-4, 2-6, 6-3. Next up is 144th-ranked German qualifier Oscar Otte, who beat Italy's Andreas Seppi 6-3, 6-4, 2-6, 7-5.

**SAKKARI BEATS KVITOVA**  
Greek 17th seed Maria

## Bopanna-Dodig pair in last 16

**New York:** Veteran Indian tennis player Rohan Bopanna and his Croatian partner Ivan Dodig advanced to the men's doubles pre-quarterfinals with a three-set win over the pair of Hugo Nys of Monaco and Arthur Rinderknech of France here.

The 14th seed Indo-Croatian pair won 6-3, 4-6, 6-4 over their unseeded rivals in

one hour and 56 minutes on Saturday night.

Bopanna and Dodig converted all three break chances they earned and also saved three of the five breakpoints they faced.

They next face fourth seeds Rajeev Ram of the USA and Joe Salisbury of Great Britain, the Australian Open runners-up this season.

Tokyo Olympic champion Belinda Bencic, a 2019 US Open semi-finalist, defeated US 23rd seed Jessica Pegula 6-2, 6-4.

The Swiss 11th seed will next face Polish seventh seed Iga Swiatek, last year's French Open champion, who beat Estonian Anett Kontveit 6-3, 4-6, 6-3.

"I was really happy with the way I played," Bencic said. "It was nice tennis."

Czech fourth seed Karolina Pliskova, this year's Wimbledon runner-up and a 2016 US Open finalist, beat Australian Ajla Tomljanovic 6-3, 6-2.

## Saina, Praneeth to lead Indian challenge

**New Delhi:** Star Indian shuttlers Saina Nehwal and B Sai Praneeth will lead the women and men's teams in the Thomas and Uber Cup Finals, scheduled in Denmark from October 9-17.

BAI also on Sunday named a 12-member Indian team for the Sudirman Cup, which is slated to take place from September 26 to October 3 in Finland.

For the Thomas and Uber Cup, Saina will be accompanied by the top-3 singles ranks from the trials — Malvika Bansod, Aditi Bhatt and Tasnim Mir — in the women's team.

The 10-member men's team also comprised of four singles players and three doubles pairs.

Alongside Praneeth and the former World No 1 Kidambi Srikanth, top-2 singles players from the trials — Kiran George and Sameer Verma — have secured spots in the team.

The country's top men's doubles pairing of Chirag Shetty and Satwiksairaj Rankireddy has been selected in the team

alongside top-2 ranked pairs from the trials.

The players, for the Thomas and Uber Cup and the Sudirman Cup, were selected on the basis of their performances in the recently-concluded trials apart from the automatic selections of the players/pairs, who are placed inside top-20 in the world rankings.

PV Sindhu has not been included in the squad as she had requested not to consider herself for the selections.

On the other hand, the 12-member team for the Sudirman Cup, top-ranked doubles pair from the trials Dhruv Kapila and MR Arjun have been named in the squad alongside Srikanth, Praneeth and doubles pair of Satwiksairaj and Chirag.

Among the women, top-2 doubles pairs from the trials, Tanisha-Rutuparna and Ashwini Ponnappa-N Sikki Reddy have been selected alongside top-2 singles from the trials Bansod and Bhatt.

PNS



# 'IF THE SCRIPT IS GOOD, THE FILM WILL BE GOOD'

**A**ctress Meenakshi Chaudhary recently made her Telugu debut with *Ichata Vahanamulu Niluparadu*. She already had two more Telugu films signed even before the release of her first one, and she says that she is clear about always taking up a film which has a strong story.

The actress, who hails from Haryana, made her acting debut with the web series *Out Of Love* and is glad that

**MY FUNDA TO BE ABLE TO TAKE UP A PROJECT WAS ALWAYS THE SCRIPT AND I WAS LUCKY ENOUGH TO GET MY FIRST FILM WHICH WAS CONTENT-BASED. I HAD A LOT TO SHOWCASE AS AN ACTOR AND NOT JUST BE A PRETTY FACE.**

she started out with a content-driven project.

"My funda to be able to take up a project was always the script and I was lucky enough to get my first film which was content-based. I had a lot to showcase as an actor and not just be a pretty face. So, strong story backing is something that I really love and I am very particular about," the actress told a news agency.

She adds, "I would give that preference and if that's good, then the film will also be good. The audience has become very smart today. So, even the bigger actors and everybody else is taking the script to be a priority. If the script is good, the film will be good. I have been fortunate enough to get good scripts at the very start of my career."

The actress will next be seen alongside actor Ravi Teja in *Khiladi* and with Adivi Sesh in *Hit 2*.

## Mahesh wishes Krishna on Teachers' Day

**F**or every human, their parents are their first teachers. This Teacher's Day, actor Mahesh Babu, who is gearing up for the release of *Sarkaru Vaari Paata*, took to his social media handle to wish his first teacher, his father Superstar Krishna. He shared a heartwarming note along with a picture of himself and his father from his childhood. The actor wrote, "Here's to the love of learning and growing each day! Thanking my

father who taught me to love, to be strong, to have discipline, compassion and humility. Will always be indebted to him and to everyone who's helped me learn and evolve in my journey. #TeachersDay (sic)."

Meanwhile, the actor is collaborating with Bollywood dancing star Tiger Shroff for a TV commercial.

A video has been shared by the makers of the commercial where the duo were seen shooting for a mouth freshener advertisement.



## SOHEL IS Mr Pregnant

**B**igg Boss fame Syed Sohel Ryan, who made his foray onto big screen after he made a promisable presence in the controversial reality show, is shooting for a romantic entertainer, a film that stars many biggies. The latest is that his film is titled *Mr Pregnant*.

The title has been raising many eyebrows, and speculation is that Sohel might be seen as a pregnant man in the film. The film is touted to be a different genre and novel, romantic

entertainer.

While actress Roopa Kodavayur of *Uma Maheswara Ugra Roopasya* fame is the leading lady, the film also stars Suhasini Maniratnam, Ali, Brahmaji, Raja Raveendra, Harsha Chemudu, Abhishek Reddy, Avinash Reddy and others. *Mr Pregnant* is directed by Srinivas Vinjanampati who is a newcomer. Sravan Bharadwaj is scoring music for the film. Appireddy and Ravireddy Sajjala are bankrolling the project on Mic Movies banner.

## Kangana happy with multiplexes screening Tamil, Telugu versions of *Thalaivii*

**K**angana happy with multiplexes screening Tamil and Telugu versions of *Thalaivii* Actress Kangana Ranaut has praised multiplex chains for screening the Telugu and Tamil version of her upcoming film *Thalaivii*. She calls it a ray of hope.

After hearing the news, Kangana, who had earlier taken to Instagram to request the multiplex owners for *Thalaivii*'s screening, said she was moved by the decision and penned a long note.

She wrote: "PVR's decision to screen the Tamil and Telugu versions of the film is a ray of hope for Team *Thalaivii* as well as all those cinegoers who are waiting to rush back to their favourite multiplex chain for a cinematic experience. I am personally moved by the kind words used for me and Team *Thalaivii*."

The actress hopes that the Hindi version of the film, based

on the life of late Tamil Nadu Chief Minister and former actress J. Jayalalitha, gets to see the light of day.

"And I hope with talks, and a passion for the theatrical experience, we can come together to find a solution so that the Hindi version can also find love and appreciation on the big screen @pvr\_cinemas\_official - Lots of Love, Kangana."

A statement on behalf of Kamal Gianchandani, CEO, PVR Pictures Ltd, Chief of Strategy, PVR Limited read: "We are thankful to *Thalaivii* team for offering a 4 week theatrical window for its Tamil and Telugu language versions. We are delighted to be able to play *Thalaivii* in Tamil and Telugu language at our cinemas, however, we are disappointed that for the Hindi language version, *Thalaivii* team has decided to offer only a 2 week window."

"We would like to appeal to Ms Kangana Ranaut, Mr Vishnu Induri & Mr. Shailesh Singh to keep a uniform window of 4 weeks across all language versions and therefore allow all cine-

mas across the country to showcase *Thalaivii* to audiences, on the big screen."

The statement further read: "Considering the severe impact of the ongoing pandemic on our business, PVR cinemas has already agreed to reduce the 8 week theatrical window to 4 weeks, for all films releasing in the near future. This is a temporary step by PVR cinemas to assist our producer partners in realising full commercial potential of their films, while keeping the sanctity of theatrical experience, intact."

The film, which will be released in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, is based on the life of the late

Jayalalitha.

*Thalaivii* showcases the varied aspects of her life, tracing her journey as an actress at a young age to becoming the face of Tamil cinema as well as the rise of the revolutionary leader that changed the course of Tamil Nadu politics.

*Thalaivii* is set to release in cinemas on September 10.



## Chay's next too, to be a love story?

**A**ctor Naga Chaitanya is awaiting the release of his *Love Story*, directed by Shekhar Kammula. Most of the actor's hit films include love tales, right from *Ye Maaya Chesave*, *Manam*, *Premam* and *Majili*. According to what we hear, the actor is planning to team up with *Majili* producers Harish Peddi and Sahu Garapati once again for his

next.

This film too is touted to be a love story. If everything goes as per the plan, makers of the upcoming project, which is still in the initial stages of discussion, will make an official announcement soon. On the otherside, Naga Chaitanya is shooting for *Thank You*, that has Raashi Khanna is the leading lady.

